

The AMCC team sends greetings with this newsletter, about the progress and achievements obtained from 2016 to mid-2017.

1. WOMEN'S TECHNICAL TRAINING SCHOOL.

Basic technical courses Level II carpentry course.



The majority of people who participated on this course were youth from the Labranza # 2 community located on the west side of the municipality and others were from the urban area. The course started in September 2016, with graduates from the introductory courses of 2015 and 2016; eight students (five women and three men)

finished the course. They expanded their knowledge and technical skills in the use and handling of machines, designs and budgets of more complex furniture, doing individual practical work making and installing doors and windows for the model house and other projects on the AMCC premises, demonstrating greater autonomy and security to work as apprentices in the trade.

Electric welding course

This course started on June 27, 2016, as a practical course, where the participants learned the importance of health and safety, the use of manual and electrical tools, welding equipment, as well as learning the process of welding and elaboration of gates and grills, designing ones for two windows. Six participants took part (three young women, one adult woman and two young men), and it ended on September 14, 2016.

Specialty courses:

Zinc soldering course.

This course began on August 4, 2016, with the participation of 10 women and three men and took place in Labranza # 2, participants also coming from three other neighbouring communities (San Jose de Pire, Naranjita and Santa Teresa). During the process, the participants acquired basic technical knowledge on the use and handling of manual tools for the manufacture of metal silos and



products. In the practical classes, they made 72 baking tins, eight silos and seven portable stoves. For the women, it was important to reveal their capacity to make silos and baking tins, to open up other opportunities and prove that technical trades are gender neutral.

Electrical installations



This course started on September 4, 2016, during which ten students participated and graduated - two young women, four adult women, one young man and three adult men. It was held on Sundays, because most of the participants were university or secondary school students, or people who work during the week. They

acquired basic technical knowledge of electricity, and the group did the wiring and electrics in the AMCC model house, laboratory and study kiosk.

Design, installation and maintenance of photovoltaic solar energy systems.



The course started on October 16, 2016 with nine participants, originally from Estelí, Managua and Condega. All of them graduated, four young women, three adult women and two adult men. During the course, they learnt about the use and application of photovoltaic solar energy. Four field hands on practical classes were held: the first

consisted of electrical measurements; secondly, the installation of a solar photovoltaic system for pumping water in the community "Las Brisas" in the municipality of Somoto; thirdly, they worked on the maintenance of existing solar PV systems in the "Linda Vista Natural Reserve", in the community of El Bramadero, municipality of Condega. The last one was the installation of the solar photovoltaic system in the model house of the AMCC, in coordination with the electrical installations course.

AMCC Natural Building Course 2017.

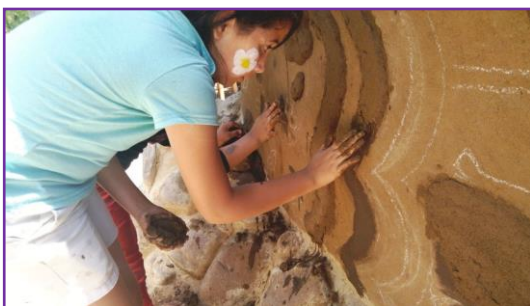


Every year there is a natural building course in AMCC, this year it ran from January 23 to February 17. Theoretical and practical classes on improved adobe and earth plastering were held in the new building for the welding area, also stage 1 of the wall adjoining "La Granja" (made of reinforced adobe), and on earth floors and murals in the bedrooms of the model house. 10 young women,

three adult women, three young men and three adult men were on the course from different parts of Nicaragua and other countries.

There was a field trip to Totogalpa, Ocotal and the community of Mozonte. Participants looked at different construction systems and earth finishes, so that they could analyse the context of traditional and improved techniques. For AMCC it was very important to have the two facilitators (Rosa Delmy and Magda Nohemí Castellano) from FUNDASAL (El Salvador) for reinforced adobe systems and the facilitator Liz Johndrow (Nicaragua Pueblo Project, USA) in light-weight construction and finishing techniques.

Monthly Natural Building Workshops 2016 and 2017



AMCC continues to promote the development of natural building skills with young women and other local people to promote traditional and improved building systems, through good practice in earth construction, to contribute towards the preservation and

responsible use of natural resources,

During this period, there were five monthly two day workshops:

- **Sculpture workshop** with young women from Nací para Volar group and three men from the "Conexión Activa" network – the workshop also included a debate on gender violence. They also carried out recreational activities and made sculptures and paintings in the Study Kiosk.

- **Treatment of fissures and cracks in adobe** buildings with four people from the community of Santa Lucia, which was a good opportunity for the team of teacher trainees, made up of local young people, to share their theoretical and practical knowledge about repairing adobe buildings. Prior to the AMCC workshop, the team did a study in two communities and two neighbourhoods about earth built housing.

- **Improved adobe construction workshop** with first and second year students from the Faculty of Architecture of the engineering university, UNI Managua. In simultaneous workshops, 18 participants (50% women and 50% men) rotated and learnt about the basic stages for building a wall in adobe – earth tests, adobe brick making, foundations, stem walls and adobe bricklaying. We thank their tutor, the architect Martha Julia Acevedo, for motivating her students to adopt techniques in more sustainable building systems.

- **Earth plastering workshop** with 17 participants (six young women, seven adult women, one young man and three adult men) working on the perimeter wall between La Granja and the AMCC, achieving 90% of the plastering of the wall and also carrying out coarse plastering hands-on experience on the welding classroom building.



- **Sculpture and Painting Workshop**, with the participation of 15 people (six young women, five adult women, two young men and two adult men) who carried out sculpture practices with an environmental theme, achieving 70% of the sculpture on the perimeter wall, and did floor painting practice in the rooms of the model house.

Open days



On November 24 and 25, 2016, AMCC held the annual "Open Day" event for the local, national and international participants; in the mini-workshops there were 31 participants (60% women) from the urban and rural area of Condega, also from Managua, Estelí, Totogalpa, the USA and Argentina. Five young trainee instructors, graduates of the

annual courses of natural construction, facilitated mini-workshops, who sharing different techniques: earth tests, improved adobe building, earth floors, coarse and fine plasters, elaboration and application of earth-based paints. All participants enjoyed contact with earth, and 70% of the group participated in more than one workshop.

Other people who visited included three members of the super adobe network in Nicaragua, also there was media coverage by Estelí's ABC stereo radio and the newspaper La Prensa, who reported on the experience of the AMCC in the field of natural building. See link:

<http://www.laprensa.com.ni/2016/11/30/departamentales/2143023-casas-de-adobe-mejoradas-en-esteli>

Technical requalification.

- AMCC continues to strengthen the capacities of the target groups, through hands-on and work experience in the field:
- **- Natural Building:** five graduates of the natural building courses (three women and two men), were requalified by facilitating natural building workshops, where they shared their knowledge and technical experiences on earth construction. Likewise, AMCC promptly contracted a graduate, a local builder who formed his own work crew and carried out repairs on the model house, also progress was made on the study kiosk.
- In the municipality of San Pedro de Lóvago, four graduates (three women and one man) from the improved adobe course of 2016, gained experience in the application of plasters and earth-based paints, developing techniques to finish the model house that was built during the previous adobe course that was given at the request of the local council.
- AMCC also had the support of two volunteers, one from Spain who joined the natural construction team, on the study kiosk, and another from the US, graduated from the 2015 natural construction course, who started a permaculture design with a focus on the use and management of water on the premises.



- **Zinc soldering:** A graduate of soldering was re-qualified as a facilitator of the course taught in the community Labranza No 1. This allowed her to develop more confidence in the practice of the trade, a first teaching experience and in with other women.

Carpentry and Electric Welding: Three graduates of these courses worked on the model house and multipurpose building.

1. POLITICAL INFLUENCE AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Naci para Volar group (Born to fly) - NPV 1

In the last semester of 2016, there were 6 workshops, three with young women aged 12 to 15 years and three workshops with young women aged 16 to 25 years. They analysed puberty, discussing the biological, psychological, social and emotional changes that happen during this stage of their lives. They reflected on the situations that young women have, what they must be prepared to face, that if they do not have the information and the necessary conditions, they must understand the consequences. At the end of the process, the young women lose their fear, gain more confidence, and begin to express themselves when talking about sexuality.



Phrase of young NPV: "Being a woman does not mean that because I have my reproductive organs, I am going to give birth, I decide whether to have children or not". Frase de joven NPV".

In January 2017, 31 young women participated in a meeting, from the different communities of the municipality of Condega. They all had been in different training processes. The meeting was to update them about the work of the organization and the opportunities it offers to young women who wish to join a technical course.

An exchange and dialogue was held between the NPV group and Putney School (USA) group, the latter who had also come on the natural building course. Ten young women from NPV and six from Putney School participated, which consisted in getting to know each other, and being able to share the different contexts of both countries in relation to the current situation of women.

Naci para Volar 2 (NPV 2)

In the second semester of 2016, there were four meetings with 40 young women, to converse about their life projects, dreams, goals and projections; they were also consulted on the models and profiles that young women in the future should have to establish and lead a youth organization.



In the first semester of 2017, three youth consultations were held with eight young coordinators to propose the founding of a new youth organization, where they discussed individual and collective leadership, reflecting on the strengths they have, how they envisage the present and the future.

Recreational activities.

Batucada

In the second semester of 2016, there were 6 batucada practices, where the girls created different musical tones, in the same way they worked on the lyrics of some songs, modifying them to express about the defence of women's rights. In November 2016, there was a two-day session, which a young Chilean Manuela Toro, woman facilitated with six young NPV women, where she shared strategies on body expression, rhythm and batucada instrument making out of recycled and household materials.



Youth camps

Prior to the youth camp, there were three sessions of learning by doing preparation, with three coordinators, who were selected by the NPV youth team. They organized, coordinated and facilitated the different activities.



On the 6th, 7th and 8th of December, 2016, 17 young women took part in the camp, 13 from NPV1 and four students from the basic carpentry course. The methodology implemented

during the process allowed them to reflect on the causes and consequences of teenage pregnancies, women's rights, enjoy and learn through "playful and educational" activities. In the final evaluation, one young woman expressed "I could be free for three days" and another said "I was able to wear the clothes that I am forbidden to put on at home". AMCC considers it important that the girls get to know other places, where they can have fun, exchange experiences and stories that contribute to their personal growth.

In December 2016, for the first time 14 young women from NPV2 organised their own camp, they carried out different activities in their communities to raise funds and finance it, which took place near San Juan del Sur. It was a space where the young women were able to share their experiences outside their homes, a moment just for them, where they could enjoy themselves but also reflect on their context and make proposals to contribute to young women's' development.

Local pedagogical reference group.



During the second semester of 2016, four meetings were held, with the participation of 13 teachers from different schools in the municipality, who critically analysed and identify situations of abuse and violence experienced by children and adolescents in the family environment. The knowledge acquired has allowed them to share in parent's meetings, as well as providing support to children who are victims of

abuse. For this process, it was supported by the organization Aguas Bravas, who provided information and material to the teachers.

Parent's training meetings

During the period, four meetings were held with parents, where topics of self-esteem and gender violence were shared, which generated debate and discussion, about how gender violence affects their children in the different spaces where they participate. These processes have been very positive since they have improved their confidence and communication with their daughters, they are more flexible about the participation of their daughters in the training processes.

Action and Mobilization

Women's celebrations and campaigns

Eight training meetings were held in 2016 and five in 2017, with the participation of NPV coordinators, prior to each day. The activities were organized, planned and facilitated by these young women, using their own ideas and initiatives, they elaborated political statements, organised marches, made informative material, banners, generating debates and discussions amongst the participants.

- September 28 day for the "right to decide"



Young women from NPV, coordinated a batucada march, through the main streets of the Condega and ended at the Condega Women's Network, attended by 80 people (68 women and 12 men). It managed to generate an impact on the population of Condega, as the girls made use of their batucada and raised their voices with slogans in which they demanded respect for their bodies and lives and to stop the street harassment. They brought their demands and proposals to build a different society in which women are heard and treated as human beings, to speak and decide for ourselves.

25 de noviembre día de la "No violencia hacia la mujer":



This event was carried out in coordination with other organizations, Matagalpa Women's Collective with the group "Nuestra Cara", which does spontaneous theatre, presenting a play called "Everything on the table". 100 people participated in total, 86 women and 14 men. Young women generated a debate about the situations that women experience daily in their relationships, on how the imposition of roles and social mandates are continually reproduced.



As part of this event, contact and coordination was established with the Matagalpa Women's Network, where the video "Walking towards autonomy" was launched, which brings together four testimonies of women. In this space, ideas and collective work proposals were exchanged and feedback was given to the AMCC team.

- March 8 - International Women's Day



In 2017, the 30th anniversary of AMCC was celebrated in this activity, with the participation of 80 people. The video "Walking towards autonomy" was presented, where the participants contributed ideas and proposals to show the video in other spaces. Also, a march was held with the

participation of 119 women and 29 men, organized in coordination with the Condega Women's Network, demanding justice and repudiating the assassination of Sandra Abigail Acuña, a 27-year-old woman who was murdered by her ex-partner in the community of Guayucali. Leaders from Octupan (Condega), the Leadership Institute (Nueva Segovia) and relatives of the young woman joined AMCC in the event. We joined the international women's strike, pronouncing ourselves, making public demands, and raising our voices.

- June 5 - International Environment Day



For this day, a forum was held with the participation of 54 people (47 women and 7 men), where a debate was generated on the current context of the environment, at the same time proposals were generated on topics such as learning to recycle and saying no to consumerism. To prepare the event young women developed capacities to elaborate recycled products.

- Update of murals



Prior to each event the young coordinators of the NPV group prepared educational materials and updated three murals, two located in rural communities and one in the AMCC facilities. These are to disseminate information on sexual and reproductive rights, care and protection of

the environment, to keep the population informed about the social context in which we are living.

CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Advances in the construction of the AMCC premises

Promoting self-build and job placements for the young graduates of the different



courses, through the development of practical classes, technical requalification and temporary employment of young graduates, during this period it was possible to do the following:

The technical team made up of natural building and carpentry trainees, were enthusiastic to prioritize finishing the model house, for example, a waterproofing barrier with cement floor was built to prevent water filtering into the foundations, metal gutters were built and installed to drain rainwater, perimeter pavements and floors made in the kitchen and terrace, earth floors and paintings in the bedrooms, and the bathroom walls were finished with tadelakt. The doors and windows with security grills were installed, all to ensure that NPV group can move in by 2018.

Management and mobilization of funds

The staff in charge of the formulation and management of projects maintain themselves active to enable AMCC to function and survive. For this period we have received the support of TDH-Germany, World Day of Prayer (Germany), Winds of Change Foundation (USA), Huarte and Villava Town Halls (Navarra).

Exchanges and alliances

In September, 2016, AMCC made a visit to FUNDASAL (Salvadoran Foundation for Development and Minimum Housing), with the aim of getting to know about their work and establishing alliances and exchanges of experiences, specifically in earth building. FUNDASAL supported the facilitation of the natural building course in AMCC, 2017.

Also in September, 2016, the Matagalpa Women's Collective invited three young women from the NPV partake in a self-defence course, which consisted of providing techniques and tactics, so that women can react, take care of themselves and their own lives, to protect themselves. At the same time Grupo Venancia in Matagalpa invited another three young women from AMCC to receive a week-long workshop on Cabaret Theatre with the group Las Reinas

Chulas (Mexico). These courses helped to develop capacities in these young women with the aim of reproducing their experiences with others.

In a national meeting of the Nicaraguan Initiative on Women's Human Rights, that took place in January, 2017 three women from AMCC participated where they created strategies for the organization at the local level to create networks to report crimes against women and how to localise defence workers in each territory to be able to have more impact.

There were three articulation meetings with the Condega Women's Network, to come together to carry out joint activities and events.

One of the practices of the AMCC, is resource exchange, for example, Sobeyda Obando, an artist from Matagalpa, took the Natural Building course, on a half scholarship, paying back AMCC with a shoe decorating workshop, sharing painting techniques for banner making and two self-defence workshops.

SMAK Mesoamerican Seminar

From 22nd to 26th May 2017, two people from AMCC (the architect Fátima Sánchez and a young woman Julieth Cárcamo, who is part of the Natural Building team), participated in this SMAK-6 seminar of the MESOAMERI-KAAB network. This is a platform that comprises of 20 civil society organizations from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, for the first time was part of this exchange. This space is a reflection that favours exchanges, to reinforce processes of influence and social production of housing, working in favour of the use of local materials in housing improvement projects and the environment in the different contexts of Mesoamerica. In this space, AMCC, apart from being part of the network, is part of the coordinating council. To conclude, a declaration was made on the struggle for indigenous lands and against the policies of governments and transnationals in this context.

Strategic evaluation and planning

Since October 2016, the collective process began of evaluating the period 2012 – 16. This was completed in March 2017 and continued with the construction of the Strategic Planning for the period 2018 - 22, which implied holding of four day meetings, twice month, until May 2017. A new document was produced which sets out the new mission, vision and strategies of the AMCC.

External communication

External communication that is carried out through people and the media, this has meant that more people and groups know about AMCC's work. At local level, a banner making course is taught annually and currently there are two

young women who make the banners autonomously and have started offering their services locally, specifically for the educational centres which they attend.

AMCC offers the following courses: Basic Carpentry, Introduction to Electric welding, Photovoltaic Energy Systems, Zinc soldering, Natural Building and Improved Adobe, Electrical Installations, amongst others, according to the demand of the population.

To contact or obtain more information about the work carried out by Asociación de Mujeres Constructoras de Condega (AMCC)

Facebook: AMCC-Condega

Blog: www.amcc-condega.blogspot.com Para contactar u obtener más información acerca del trabajo que realiza Asociación de Mujeres ConstrNew YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrk7W8jloGMZDZNP2iOvVhA/videos>

Website: www.mujeresconstructoras.org

You are invited to watch the video "Road to Autonomy" also with English and German subtitles. They are found on the new You Tube channel. uctoras de Condega (AMCC)

AMCC STAFF

Felipa Nery González Ruiz	President of AMCC / Resp. Carpentry area
Obdulía del Carmen Gutiérrez Rivera	Executive Director
Pilar Castellón Burgos	Administrator
María Fernanda Pineda	Resp. Youth Initiatives Program.
Fátima Sánchez Medina	Technical Coordinator
Pablo Ochoa	Resp. Self-build area
Wilmaría Patricia Calero Talavera	Administrative assistant.
Keylin Castillo	Resp. Development and monitoring.
Diana Leticia Merlos Bellorín	Resp. Stores and Welding Area
Eveling Hernández	Volunteer of the Youth Initiatives Program
Miguel González	Caretaker
Francisca Amanda Centeno Espinoz	Advisor
Helen Shears	Technical Adviser