



Los Niños Strategic Plan Fiscal Year 2005-2006

The attached document provides a synthesis of planning work with input from field *promotoras*, staff and board representatives. It includes program and institutional developments in 2004.

- vision, purpose, and mission;
- program objectives; and
- institutional objectives

The first document presents the vision, purpose and mission as well as a consensus-derived definition of community development, the key theme of Los Niños activities.

The next section outlines the program strategic objectives and provides the detail of activities for this year.

The final section outlines the institutional objectives with corresponding detailed activities for FY 2005-2006.

Vision

Los Niños envisions a world where people are called to participate fully in the development of their community. These self-reliant efforts address issues of social justice and human dignity.

Purpose

Los Niños provides opportunities to awaken human potential through self-reliant activities that promote community development and food security. Strong communities with healthy children are the foundation of a strong civil society.

Mission

To improve the quality of life by creating opportunities for children and their families to discover their human potential through participation in the development of the community.

Community Development

Los Niños defines Community Development as a participatory process where community members identify community needs and organize themselves to take the actions necessary to improve their quality of life.

Vision

Los Niños tiene la vision de un mundo donde las personas participan plenamente en el desarrollo de su comunidad. Participacion en actividades auto-gestivas se trata con temas de la justicia social y de la dignidad humana.

Proposito

Los Niños ofrece oportunidades para despertar la potencial humana por medio de actividades de auto-gestion que promueve el desarrollo de la comunidad y seguridad alimenticia. Comunidades fuertes con hijos sanos es el cimiento de una sociedad civil fuertes.

Mision

Impulsar oportunidades de superacion humana, a traves de procesos participativos en el desarrollo de la comunidad, mejorando la calidad de vida.

Desarrollo Comunitario

Los Niños entiende el desarrollo comunitario como un proceso participativo que se da en las comunidades de base al identificar sus necesidades, organizarse y emprender la acciones para satisfacerlas, mejorando con ello su calidad de vida.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

PROMOTE FAMILY HEALTH AND FOOD SECURITY:

Los Niños promotes strategies that contribute to community food security. Community food security is defined as “all people in a community obtaining culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through non-emergency food sources at all times”. The Los Niños approach integrates nutrition, health and ecology (organic gardening) into a community approach that offers community members self-reliant methods to address their food needs. In addition to the activities listed below, Los Niños needs to develop ways to measure the impact of their actions in this arena.

- Continue to provide and improve community classes in nutrition, preventative health and ecology (organic gardening). Target is to offer 100 classes annually.
- Continue to research new topic areas (monthly), provide information and/or workshops as identified by *promotoras* and review budget needs to address themes identified.
- Complete translation to English versions of the manuals for training and promotional purposes.
- Expand our network of technical assistance/materials (USDA, UC Davis). Ask board for input and support.
- Support the production of nutritious products available to participants.
- Continue participation in the Ecology coalition and the development of a model garden at EcoParque.

PROMOTE FAMILY FINANCIAL SECURITY: Micro Credit and Employment

Community and individual family well-being is enhanced by providing access to credit and supporting training for establishing income generating activities. This increase in household income provides more disposable family income to address child health and support education costs. Health and education are needs identified by Los Niños program participants. Activities that generate income provide a means to create self-reliant systems to address the identified needs.

- A revolving loan fund has been established targeting community businesses that address community issues such as childcare and lunches for school children. Los Niños is establishing a community bank fund targeting many more participants. The intention is to create a self-financing bank system providing access to mini-loans for small household businesses. Initiating a savings group is a first step.
- Many participants are interested to market self-produced products.
- Also *promotoras* are seeking ways to be paid for the training they offer in new venues.

All these activities are “social businesses” --- market structured, resource-generating activities with a social purpose.

- Provide training/information on family budgeting and marketing of self-produced products.
- Create training to support micro credit programs: accounting, business plans
- Systematize the micro-loan program; beginning with simple savings groups
- Support *promotoras* in the development of the savings/emergency fund project.
- Build fund for micro-loans with protocols and reporting systems.
- Create business plan for structure and sales of products; includes support to community members and products of Los Niños. Triple project included for the production of honey, cactus and fruit.
- Define and create materials, guidance and backing for *promotoras* to teach and be paid. This includes fees for training paid to Los Niños

PROVIDE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP EDUCATION

Los Niños' community leadership education program provides community outreach volunteers training including leadership, food security, business development, community-organizing while they secure secondary credentials.

- Many of the community leaders have not had the opportunity to complete basic education, having migrated north, married early and dedicated most of their lives to their families. Los Niños is now working with Simon Fraser University of Vancouver Canada and the Ibero-Americana University of Tijuana in implementing a program that brings the “university to the community”, provides equivalencies for education levels and offers skills to enhance the community work. Participants will learn more about community health, computers, business management and accounting. Los Niños supervises the four centers that provide these educational opportunities. An essential element to develop the work is building local capacity. This includes strengthening local non-profit management and systems. Los Niños is also developing strategies with Mexican non-governmental agencies to build capacity for governance and fund acquisition and management.
- Continue to implement the Promotora Community Development Education Program (Women, Poverty and Education).
- Research the feasibility of creating a computer and English language program to include *promotoras*, children and the community at large
- Los Niños continues to develop capacity among the *promotoras* and sees the opportunity for them to play a role in the education program. Los Niños definition of community development calls for integrating community efforts to be in response to community needs. Create ongoing meeting schedule to integrate activities and strategies among departments.
- *Promotoras* to provide orientation and tasting for targeted student groups with focus on Community Development; Develop themes based on participating group. Market oral histories.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR VOLUNTEER AND SERVICE PROGRAMS

PROMOTE AND EXPAND SERVICE LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

Los Niños works with U.S. groups to spread understanding about community development by arranging experiential visits to the border region. Visiting students acquire an understanding of Mexico, experience the economic poverty of the region and the richness of the community relationships. Through community service, the students work side-by-side with Mexican community members to improve schools and build community centers. Students raise funds to cover their stay and support some of the construction costs. The program targets grassroots community development while also accomplishing the objective of awakening participants to the realities of the border.

- Continue to implement the development education visiting student program. Build leadership and vision working with team.
- Design a long-term volunteer program to be responsible for group management and with specific goals/objectives/learning opportunities for each volunteer. Build volunteer team.
- Deepen relationships for additional engagement with visiting schools: improved pre-trip relationship and follow up, support for “green campaign”, website linkage, parent participation, and alumni participation.
- Define and channel groups to Mexicali and develop visiting program in Mexicali
- Investigate attracting new visiting groups gradually targeting groups to receive technical support for Los Niños and additional funding.
- Formalize visitor curriculum and accreditation
- Review the community process of coordination and method of targeting community construction projects for visiting student groups with *promotoras*. Create strategies for projects other than concrete.
- Investigate impact of visiting groups in the communities, create evaluation process.
- Support new programs for exchange for Mexican participants to visit/experience the U.S.
- Build fund for infrastructure (construction) with protocols and system. Create system for proposals, community plans. Define criteria to be oriented for community impact (common good).
- Analyze and capture data related to funds for impact purposes on construction projects.

DEVELOP AND PROMOTE VOLUNTOURS

Los Niños has created a social enterprise to serve the San Diego/Baja Border Region. The enterprise, VolunTours™, combines travel, education, cross-cultural exchange, and volunteerism while directly supporting community development and the economic

self-sufficiency of low-income residents. By developing and offering half-day and full-day “consumable” travel experiences, or “VolunTours”, the venture will address community-determined needs and accommodate client objectives (e.g. team building/bonding, corporate social responsibility, global citizenship, etc.). Residents earn income through fees for coordination and implementation. Remaining “profits” are reinvested in Los Niños for institutional development, program expansion, and resident vocational training.

- Create corporate positioning strategy to include marketing materials and website
- Expand and formalize advisory management team/Think Tank
- Coordinate with Service Learning staff and develop systems to include VolunTours™
- Continue to engage with Destination Management Companies as partners and continue to participate in Convention Bureau and like memberships/activities.
- Expand network of non-profits and community initiatives collaborating with VolunTours™
- Define projects that can be conducted in a meeting scenario (i.e., hotel ballroom) that can support community development (i.e. construction of beehives)

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR THE INSTITUTION

ADMINISTRATIVE/STRUCTURE REVIEW

Development governance and decision-making roles while strengthening staff and field benefits and professional development.

- Proceed with planning/discussion on board role and development; create committees to focus on specific programs/objectives
- Investigate and report for discussion on governance and decision making structures. Define board role and increase interaction with staff and field. Participate in leadership/vision development workshops
- Continue to develop staff compensation, benefits, and professional development plan. Focus on personnel policies and job descriptions (self-assessed). Create self and program evaluation processes.
- Define relationship with *promotoras* and communities and report. Where to go from here? Develop participatory self-evaluation with *promotoras* to support them assess their progress and development. Develop association of *promotoras*?

LEGAL/FISCAL ISSUES

Establish a solid legal structure in Mexico and address fiscal systems issues.

- Complete development of Mexico A.C. including agreement with Los Niños, Inc.
- Complete development of internal systems including database and accounting procedures.
- Upgrade computer systems and ramp up staff competency.

CONDUCT ANALYSIS OF LOCATIONS/EQUIPMENT/VEHICLES

Assess facilities to serve program development.

- Recommendation to board for San Diego/Tijuana and Mexicali locations. Purchase facility? Financial and program analysis. Consider presence in San Diego. Incorporate “green campaign” into design.
- Purchase equipment for promotion and training.
- Create vehicle replacement plan. Incorporate “green campaign” into plan.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Develop a comprehensive marketing plan and implement the resource development plan in concert with the Board of Directors and consultants.

- Continue to implement resource development plan. Review quarterly with budget managers. Include focus on presence in San Diego.
- Complete new promotional materials to tell our story with annual timeline for mailings, annual report, press releases.
- Develop an overall communications plan to include the necessary tools (logo, database, website, above materials, video and photos) for the purposes of outreach, funding, education and social business.
Comments: High priority on website applications!!
- Develop and implement 30th Anniversary activities. Potential elements: “green campaign”, annual bi-national week, anniversary walk, anniversary weekend. Announce new locations, focus on website.
- Develop long-term plan for social businesses of Los Niños to include the sale of products, fees for training, cookbook, for example.

