

2016



2026

A DECADE OF LEARNING
A LIFETIME OF IMPACT



Annual Report 2025

A Note from CREA's Board Chair

Dear CREA Community,

It is a pleasure to share CREA's 2025 Annual Report and to reflect on a year of steady progress, deepened impact, and continued commitment to expanding access to educational resources in rural Nicaragua. As CREA enters our 10th year, we reflect on how a one-room lending library has grown into a Library + Learning Center with outreach programs that now reach thousands of children and youth. Guided by our mission to elevate Nicaraguans and their communities through literacy and learning, CREA remained focused on strengthening the quality, consistency, and reach of our work.

CREA's staff and Board of Directors worked together to support children and youth across their full educational journey, from early childhood through higher education. As in past years, demand for our programs remained strong throughout the year.

In 2025, CREA built on the success of our library services, academic success, and youth development programming by expanding services in outreach communities and continuing early learning opportunities for young children. Students' reading, academic, and practical skills were strengthened through consistent, small-group learning experiences designed to meet students where they are and support steady progress.

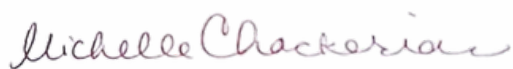
Technology was integrated across CREA's programs to support learning at every level. Primary students were introduced to tablets and learning games, while older students engaged in computer-based learning to support math, science, and problem-solving. Using technology helps students build skills that are increasingly important for continued education and future opportunities. CREA also built on robotics programming for adolescent girls to expand access to hands-on STEM learning, recognizing that girls remain significantly underrepresented in most STEM fields globally.

Investing in our teachers remained a priority for CREA. Ongoing professional development strengthened instructional quality across programs and ensured that learning experiences were consistent, responsive, and grounded in effective practice. By supporting CREA's educators, who live and work in the communities we serve, we continue to build long-term local capacity.

In 2025, thirty-one students were receiving university scholarships and are studying fields such as accounting, business administration, English, architecture, veterinary medicine, and systems engineering. These scholarships support first-in-family graduates as they continue their education beyond secondary school, keeping educational pathways and opportunities open that are often limited for rural students.

None of this work would be possible without the generosity and commitment of CREA's supporters. Your belief in CREA's mission allows us to respond to community needs, strengthen educational pathways, and remain a steady presence for children and youth as they grow and learn. On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your continued support and for being part of CREA's community.

In partnership,



Michelle Chackerian, Board Chair

VISION

Minds Wide Open

MISSION

Elevating Nicaraguans and their Communities
through Literacy + Learning



Library Services



Academic Success



Youth Development

At its heart, CREA has three core programs that work together to engage hundreds of children, youth, and their families in rural Nicaraguan communities every day. We also have a robust professional development program to ensure our staff continually grow, enrich their expertise, and deliver the highest quality educational support.



Library Services

Provides young learners and their families access to books and programming designed to teach discrete literacy skills, promote reading proficiency, inspire critical thinking, and foster a joy of reading.

12,103

**BOOKS AVAILABLE AT
THE CREA LIBRARY +
LEARNING CENTER**

380

**VISITS FROM CREA
MOBILE LIBRARY TO
REMOTE COMMUNITIES**

4,549

**CREA BOOKS IN THE
HANDS OF COMMUNITY
MEMBERS**



CREA continued to build momentum in literacy programming at the Library + Learning Center and in outreach communities, creating daily opportunities for children to read, listen to stories, and learn alongside one another. Reading instruction was expanded to an additional outreach site, bringing structured literacy support into another rural community where books and learning opportunities are limited.

Guided Reading, developed by CREA Board Member and early literacy specialist Gay Su Pinnell, remained the foundation of literacy instruction. Small reading groups allowed teachers to respond to individual learning needs and support steady progress.

Whether reading independently or alongside peers, students spent more time with books and strengthened habits that support continued growth as readers.



Interactive read-alouds and writing as a response to literature strengthened comprehension and encouraged students to express ideas about what they read. As students participated more actively in reading and writing activities, they develop greater confidence, which helps them stay engaged with learning and build skills they need to succeed in school.

Mommy + Me strengthened early language development by engaging moms and young children in shared learning activities that build foundational literacy skills and support school readiness.



Academic Success

Provides children and youth with critical, supplemental learning support to finish primary and secondary school.

345

**PARTICIPANTS
SUPPORTED
THROUGH
OUTREACH**

4,440

**HOURS OF ACADEMIC
SUCCESS LEARNING
AT CREA AND IN
OUTREACH
COMMUNITIES**

572

**TOTAL
PARTICIPANTS
ENGAGED IN CREA'S
ACADEMIC SUCCESS
PROGRAMMING**



Academic Success programming focused on consistency and depth, with students receiving regular, small-group support in language, math, and core subjects throughout the school year. Instruction emphasized structured approaches, giving students repeated opportunities to practice and apply new skills. More frequent, personalized learning support through outreach to local communities helped students strengthen foundational skills and stay on track as they progressed from primary school into secondary school.



Hands-on math instruction played a central role in helping students make sense of numbers and concepts. Through activities using simple manipulatives such as dice and blocks, students practiced problem-solving and built understanding step by step. This approach supports learning that students can apply both in the classroom and in everyday situations.

In reading, teachers worked with students in small groups on foundational skills such as letter sounds, decoding, and vocabulary. This approach helped students build a stronger foundation for reading and comprehension over time.

Technology-supported learning complemented in-person instruction with tools such as Khan Academy. This allowed for self-paced learning and reinforced skills introduced during lessons, helping students continue building skills independently.



Youth Development

Supports the academic, social, and emotional growth of adolescents as they strive to reach their goals and create positive change in their communities.

31

YOUTH CURRENTLY
AT UNIVERSITY ON
CREA SCHOLARSHIP

131

ADOLESCENTS
ENGAGED IN DAILY
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

9

ADOLESCENT GIRLS
PARTICIPATING IN
WEEKLY ROBOTICS
CLASS



CREA's Youth Development programming continued to provide adolescents with consistent extracurricular opportunities to build life skills, develop leadership, and grow socially and emotionally. Youth participated in a range of learning experiences, including digital literacy, English, art, and gardening, that encouraged teamwork, problem-solving, and accountability.

Youth also received ongoing academic support and vocational guidance to help them identify interests, strengths, and future possibilities as they plan for life beyond secondary school and into early adulthood.



Through CREA's robotics program, adolescent girls designed, built, and programmed robots and then presented their projects at a robotics exchange. For many students, this was their first opportunity to share their technical work in a public setting, building confidence and communication skills.

Youth Development programming also emphasized health education and informed decision-making. Adolescents participated in sessions on topics such as healthy relationships, pregnancy prevention, responsible technology use, and mental health, strengthening knowledge that supports their well-being and leadership within their communities.

Creative classes such as CREAciones (art) gave youth space to express ideas, reflect, and work through projects from start to finish. Through art, students explored cultural themes, shared stories, and connected learning to their own experiences and communities.



Community Events

CREA hosted a series of events to engage with the broader community, collaborate with children, youth, and their families in the rural area where we work.

284

**FAMILIES ATTENDED
THE 2024
EDUCATION AND
HEALTH FAIR**

721

**TOTAL HEALTH
SERVICES PROVIDED**

182

**PARENTS AND
GUARDIANS
PARTICIPATED IN
CREA FAMILY CLUBS**



CREA hosted its annual Education and Health Fair, bringing together families and local health providers. Families from rural communities across Tola accessed free medical consultations in pediatrics, general medicine, dentistry, emotional health, and optometry, along with health education workshops and screenings.

The event also created opportunities for CREA's team to share health information with families while highlighting CREA's broader literacy and learning programs.



Family Clubs engaged caregivers as active partners in their children’s education. Through regular, interactive sessions held at the Library + Learning Center and in outreach communities, families gathered to share and exchange ideas about supporting children’s education at home. Activities focused on the importance of education and shared family values such as respect, empathy, responsibility, and communication.

Community events like Day of the Book brought children, youth, and families together to celebrate reading and storytelling. Through engaging activities, these events highlighted books as a shared experience and reinforced reading as a meaningful and joyful part of community.



Professional Development

Believing education is a pathway out of poverty, CREA promotes professional development for all its employees to strengthen the capacity of our team and set good examples for our participants and the communities we support.

37

TEACHERS AND STAFF
EMPLOYED AT CREA
FROM LOCAL
COMMUNITIES

14

STAFF SUPPORTED IN
UNIVERSITY STUDIES

500+

HOURS OF
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT



Professional development remained a priority in 2025, strengthening instructional quality across CREA programs. Through ongoing online and in-person training, teachers deepened practices in math, reading, and writing while building skills in classroom management and leadership.

Bilingual literacy specialists returned to provide workshops and coaching in reading and writing instruction, with continued focus on supporting students who need additional help. Math training emphasized conceptual understanding and hands-on strategies across grade levels, while additional professional development supported effective use of technology, student engagement, and consistent teaching practices.

Celebrating 10 Years of Literacy and Learning



As CREA marks its 10th year, we are deeply grateful for the community that has made this work possible. What began as a one-room lending library has grown into a Library + Learning Center and a network of outreach programs that support children and youth across rural communities in Nicaragua.

This progress is made possible by the generosity of our donors, the dedication of our staff, and the leadership of our Board of Directors and Advisory Council. Thank you for believing in CREA's mission and for supporting literacy and learning in rural Nicaragua over the past decade. We look forward to the next 10 years. Thank you.

