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## ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS 2015

### And fourth breakfast

“Educate the child and you won't need not punish the man”. This is the sentence of Pythagoras used by Lucía Baráibar, president of the association, to welcome the Members' Assembly 2015 of Amigos de San Cristóbal.

“We are delighted to be with you today to celebrate the first 10 years of Amigos de San Cristóbal. Thanks to the vision of Nancy and David Orr, this association was founded with the mission to offer solidarity and opportunities for people most in need, through the financing of projects and thus have a more just society in an environment of peace and equality” were her words.

She thanked the Mexican and foreign volunteer work, providing resources of all kinds and mentioned the names of all people who throughout these 10 years have chaired the organization. She also thanked the work of donors, members, sponsors, Empresas Amigas, and the operating team and encouraged those present to join this great



effort. “Each of us can be part of this project”, said the president.

“We can remember”, Lucía said at another point of her speech, “all the former Presidents of Amigos as well as their Board Members, since they have achieved many goals that today make us a strong and more professional organization. Thank you so much to David Orr, Jack Nelson, Diane Livingston, José Mijangos, Lourdes Herrasti, Ernst Riedwyl and Hileana García. I

would also like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of directors and advisors who I had the opportunity to work with: Nancy Orr, Margarita Rojas, Ann Conway, Anita Smart, Bruce Ferguson, Edmundo Ortiz, Deborah Colvin, Israel Amezcuia, Alma Silva, Adriana Aguerrebere, Brian Fuller, Alison Abbott and John Cronin. As an organization, we have faced countless challenges and adversities, but always pleasantly surprised to find people with a big heart,

willing to help.

Thank you so much to the 25 local businesses that support us with their membership. And of course, all of this wouldn't be possible without the generous donations from Hahn Air Foundation and Nico Gormsen, Kellogg Foundation, and our partners from Mayan Educational Foundation and Project Neighbors. As well as the hundreds of anonymous donors from different corners of the world; they have supported us throughout these 10 years".

Ana Cristina Vázquez, chief operating officer, made mention of the projects funded in 2014 and Edmundo Ortiz, treasurer, presented the financial report of the organization: revenues and expenditures of the budget of 2014 and 2015, noting an increase in the resources granted projects in this 2015. As a novelty, a system of specific bank accounts for each funding source, this in order to achieve greater transparency for the donor.

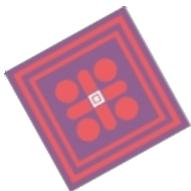
Ana Cristina also presented the 2015-2016 Executive Council, welcoming Poo Gustavo Enrique Poo Ramírez as a new member. Thus, in addition, the board is comprised of: Lucia Baráibar (President), Alma Silva

(Vice President), Anita Smart (Secretary), Margarita Rojas Nandayapa (Vocal), Deborah Colvin (Vocal) and Israel Amézcua (Vocal).

On the other hand she mentioned the events organized with the aim of promoting philanthropy, and maintain close communication with members and donors, raise public awareness of local social issues and motivate them to contribute with donations.

Carlos, a young man being trained in Chantiik Taj Tajinkutik, testified to the audience; he is the best example of perseverance and fruits that can be reached through projects like Chantiik.

The event ended with a raffle and gratitude to all who have supported us in this time.



## CONCERT TO BENEFIT OF AMIGOS DE SAN CRISTÓBAL

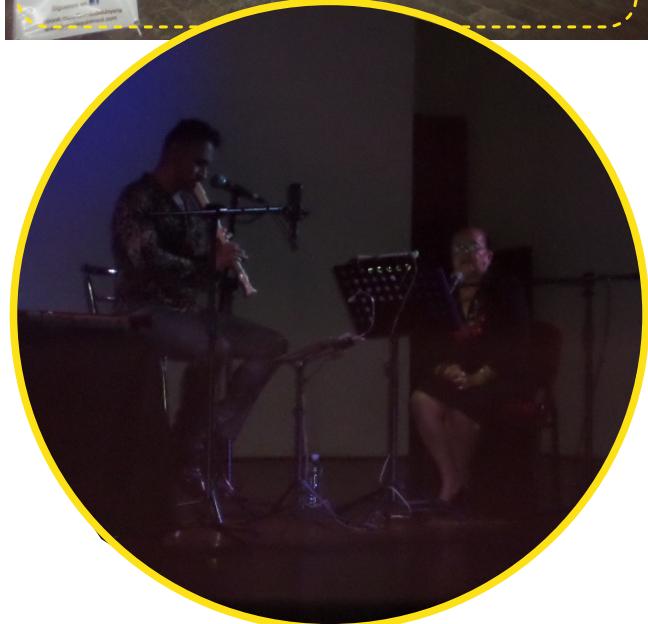
**Horacio Franco y Martha Madrigal**

**O**n May 2 Friends of San Cristóbal celebrated its 10th anniversary with a special fundraising concert performed by the master flautist Horacio Franco, accompanying poems of Chiapas poet Martha Madrigal.

The event was held in the Auditorium of the Faculty of Law of the Autonomous University of Chiapas (UNACH).

Ana Cristina Vazquez, chief operating officer, gave a few introductory words about the work done by Amigos de San Cristóbal; Orly Heiblum, voluntary collaborator, read a small semblance of the two artists, which served as an introduction. She thanked as well all who so generously agreed to share their art with us, and Lucía Baráibar, president of the organization, thanked the sponsors of the event (Action COACH Chiapas, Friends of Fine Arts, Mexico Total Quality Dental PLUS San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Remax Integral San Cristóbal, Hotel Villas Casa Morada, Restaurant Plaza Real, Quinto Sol Jewelry, Santé Caffé, Hotel Bo, PROSUR Foundation, Mero Lek Print, Viva la Radio, UNACH, Quinto Sol Boutique, House & PC Accessories). The Wall Books also helped on the distribution and sale of tickets.

Many people came to listen to "In Love Cruise", a journey through a series of love poems written by the Chiapas poet and music by internationally renowned flutist Horacio Franco, Mexican artist recognized worldwide as the best representative of his instrument. Maestro Franco offers about 150 concerts a year, performing in important venues such as the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, Carnegie Hall in New York, the Philharmonic Hall in Berlin, the Tokyo Bunca Kaikan and the Tzavta Hall in Tel Aviv, among others. He has participated in England, United States and Mexico in education projects as well as numerous



concerts to benefit different causes. An always supportive man, he studied music in Holland and has transformed the vision of the recorder-usually considered a school or amateur instrument – in a professional and respected instrument. He has lifted the value of this instrument in the professional music scene.

Martha Madrigal, writer of short stories and poetry, is a native of the state of Chiapas. She has published eight books and her work can be found also in six anthologies. Martha especially enjoys Haikais writing, poetic genre on which she won a contest whose jury was chaired by Nobel prize winner Octavio Paz. She has presented her poetry on the radio, in the Ateneo de Madrid, at the Embassy of Mexico in Madrid, in Mexico City and in the interior of the republic.

After the concert, a bouquet of roses was delivered to the artists and one on David and Nancy Orr, founders of Amigos de San Cristóbal.

Horacio Franco, at the microphone, talked about the importance of linking projects that support vulnerable populations with art, music and poetry. Martha Madrigal also expressed her excitement about being in her homeland and revive the environment and experiences in her life that have been linked with the state of Chiapas.

The event was a success, thanks to the collaboration of a large group of volunteers, led by Orly Heiblum, organizer of the event, and Lucia Baráibar, head of the Events Committee. Thanks also to our executive director, Ana Cristina Vazquez, who accompanied at all times to artists and oversaw the entire process of advances of the event.

Thanks also to all friends and collaborators who supported with the purchase of their tickets this noble cause.



## THE DONNA HART RECOGNITION 2015

Voces Mesoamericanas



Last June 3 the Donna Hart Wilcox recognition was given to the organization “Voces Mesoamericanas Acción con Pueblos Migrantes, A.C.”, one of the organizations benefiting from Amigos de San Cristobal during 2015.

This year Voces Mesoamericanas received this award for their work and their innovative project of comprehensive support to the migrant population. Every year the Projects Committee gives this recognition to remember a wonderful and caring woman who had a special affection for San Cristobal, the state of Chiapas and its people.

Four years ago, a generous anonymous donor, who has been supporting the organization since the very beginning, offered to establish a fund in memory of Donna. In other words, for every dollar that people

donate in her honor, this donor will contribute another weight to reach the figure of \$ 3,000 USD.

Anita Smart, chief of the Projects Committee, and Ana Cristina Vazquez, Operations Director of Amigos, gave the plaque to Deyanira Clériga, representative of the winning organization.

Ana Cristina described the work of the organization that attends migrants detained on the road, missing migrants, migrant children and youth, migrants died far from home; migrants to those who violated their labor rights and of all kinds. All with a psychosocial, providing comprehensive support information, legal advice, training, channeling cases, care in their mother tongue, etc.

“We have all at some point been migrants or descended from immigrants, so we would have to reflect ourselves in the mirror of the brothers and sisters who decide to leave their land. I am very happy to give this recognition, which is simple, but that symbolizes admiration for the



work they are doing every day. Thanks for letting us be part of that work."

Anita Smart meanwhile said: "We are aware that the issue of migration is an extremely important topic worldwide. Migration from South to North is a global issue. It is therefore important not only to talk about the issue but also create opportunities to recognize that it is a phenomenon that is already there, knowing that it is not something incidental, but a reality that is growing every day and it has many implications".

Deyanira introduced all members of the team and in her acceptance speech said: "In Voces Mesoamericanas we refuse to believe that the world is what we are experiencing, we refuse to believe that injustice is normal, that violence is normal. So we get up every day with love, passion and commitment to believe that we can change that reality. We always have a very fast working rhythm and we never stop to think about the importance of our work; external eyes

help us to value and reaffirm efforts and struggle for the defense of rights. We believe in what we do and we are happy to share it with you too".

In the event we had a few members of Amigos de San Cristóbal, as well as representatives of the Project Committee, the Voces Mesoamericanas team and a group of US students.



## "CHILDREN ACCOUNT REPORT 2014"

### Children's rights

Last April 7th the report "Children account in Mexico 2014" was presented in the Casa de La Enseñanza, located in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas.

The event had several interventions that focused attention on providing various reflections to advance the construction and implementation of the new Law on Children and Adolescents in the state of Chiapas. The speakers delved into the importance of continuing to work for the rights of Mexican children and noted that, for ten years, the paper has become a valuable source of information for specialists in the field.

Jennifer Haza, director of the organization Melel Xojabal, mentioned some of the shocking figures that exposes the report, in the areas of education, food, work, motherhood, violence and migration. For her part, the young Tzeltal Cinthia Velasco, shared it means

to be a girl, student and working in Chiapas.

Also, Juan Martín Pérez, of the Network for the Rights of Children in Mexico (REDIAS) described, among other things, the impact on public policies based on evidence. Katia Lozaga, Mexico representative for UNICEF, spoke of the importance of resources in defense of the rights of children and adolescents in our country.

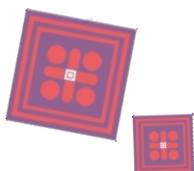




Congresswoman Ana Valdiviezo referred to the commitments of the State Congress on the Law of Children and Adolescents in Chiapas. Finally, Nikté Nandayapa, of Save the Children, spoke of the involvement of civil society to ensure the rights of Children and Adolescents in the Chiapas state.

In this very same matter, the component Members of the LXV Legislature in the State Congress unanimously approved the *Measure on the Rights of children and adolescents in the state of Chiapas* proposed by Governor Manuel Velasco Coello, same as was referred to this popular sovereignty for analysis.

In its preamble, the president of the Commission for Assistance to Women and Children, Ana Valdiviezo said the new law will create better living conditions for children: "this LXV Legislature has shown its concern, working integrally with the powers of the state to prioritize full respect for the rights of children".



## "THE CITY OF GIRLS"

### **Training and development**

Last May 18th was a great day for the Yannini Group Foundation. It opened with great enthusiasm and formality "The City of Girls", the first of its projects focused on girls and youth women in the region of Los Altos de Chiapas. It is a project created, promoted and operated by a multidisciplinary team from the civil society whose professional, social and geographic origins are diverse and complementary.

"The City of Girls" will have different training and integral development programs for girls, teenagers and young women. The initial program is instruction in tourist services and training as housekeepers, food and beverage preparation, technical maintenance, reception and tour guides.

The background will be strengthened with wellness, emotional intelligence, motivation and leadership dynamics as well as creative expression, computer

and English courses.

The City Girls involves not only training in technical subjects. It means implementing a comprehensive plan of human and social development for the program includes projects that students develop in their homes, neighborhoods and / or communities, so that the wellness experienced in the training center can be taken to their families and social environment.

The courses are totally free, as well as transportation and food for those girls who come from communities of Los Altos. The City of Girls will be a place of fellowship, welfare and development for them.



"The City of Girls" is located at Flavio A. Paniagua, in the historic center and occupies part of *La Enseñanza. Casa de la Ciudad*, a beautiful and emblematic architectural space of great tradition in the educational life of San Cristóbal.

In Amigos de San Cristóbal we are very proud of this project. We have the absolute certainty that it will be a success. Congratulations to our beloved Judy Yannini and her team!



## THANKS DEAR JUDY!

### Donation of office furniture for Amigos

Judith Yannini is an exceptional woman. Experienced entrepreneur, exemplary mother, philanthropist and dear friend, Judy has accompanied the journey of Amigos de San Cristóbal for several years.

Last month, Judy made a generous donation of office furniture to our organization, which has helped to significantly improve our working conditions.

It is for people like Judy that Amigos de San Cristóbal can fulfill its mission. From these pages we give our heartfelt thanks to this extraordinary lady.



## OFFSPRING OF OUR HANDS, OFFSPRING OF OUR HEARTS THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN MEXICAN LEGISLATION

### Editorial

When a country is not able to guarantee the well-being of its children and adolescents, something is going very wrong. It is undeniable that governments strive to implement policies that go in this direction. Unfortunately, speeches and good intentions do not always translate into direct and lasting benefits to the

target population.

There are several mechanisms to assess whether these actions are working. One is to establish indicators.

#### What is an indicator?

"Variables used to measure the progress made toward the goals" (CELADE, 2002).

## What is an indicator of human rights?

These are data that allow us to evaluate the behavior of the State as well as complying with its obligations on human rights and to what extent.

For the authorities, the task is more difficult than it seems. An example:

Public institutions are constantly talking about the federal government's efforts to eradicate child labor. The reality, according to organizations grouped in the Social Committee Against the Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, shows that, according to official figures, 2.5 million children work in Mexico, of which 40% do not attend school. The figure does not record children laborers, the majority being indigenous migrants, so the number rises, at least twice, ie 5 million. This, because when migrating from one state to another, these children are not detected in formal surveys or because they have been co-opted by drug trafficking, trafficked and many other invisible evils.

It is a fact that, despite public speeches and official support programs, many children and adolescents must work to contribute to the sustenance of their families. In most cases, under even more precarious conditions, exposed to all kinds of abuses and dangers. The prohibition of child labor does not resolve the need for these infants and, instead, makes possible all kinds of abuses and exploitation.



The reality asks that instead of banning child labor, this is regulated under the principles of protection of child rights.

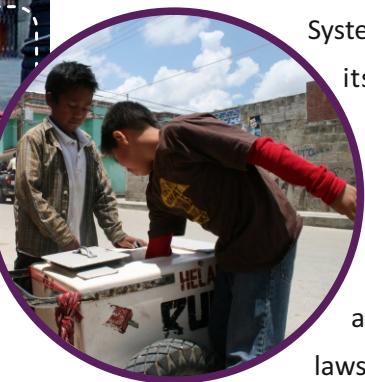
This leads us to another mechanism for evaluating public policies in this area: the revision of existing laws.

## Mexican law and children's rights. A little history

On September 21th, 1990 Mexico ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and thus took an important step by committing to amend its legislation, policies and institutional practices under a new premise: the recognition of children and teenagers as subjects of law. Until then, childhood and adolescence were viewed as objects of charity or charities in the best case. A radical change that ensure full respect for all their rights by the State and society was needed.

However, what was a substantial change at the legislative level, it was not in the social and institutional aspect. Often, treaty ratifications and amendments to the laws are applied by a society that understands that its legislation is not enough to guarantee their rights and solving their problems, which demands a change. If lawmakers also understand that the rules no longer respond to the current parameters, this transformation occurs. But in Mexico, as in several of the countries that





signed and ratified the CRC, both society and institutions were not even aware of all that it implied recognition of children and teenagers as subjects of rights.

An example of this cultural change occurring after the legislative change is that it took ten years before the Constitution of the United Mexican States incorporate the new paradigm. This recognition is reflected in Article 4, in which for the first time the phrase "rights of children" appears in several paragraphs. Months after the Law on Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents (LPDNNA, for its acronym in Spanish) was approved. This law is Regulatory of the Article 4, and develops all the rights of children and adolescents as well as the implications for Mexico, based on the orientation and principles included in the CRC.

LPDNNA approval showed that some legislators and policymakers understand the need for policy and institutional changes that could make current the CRC in the country and break the existing welfare system. In order to land the contents of the CRC in national legislation, the LPDNNA collected an exhaustive catalog of the rights of children, and the consequences the recognition of these rights implied at legislative and institutional level. LPDNNA dictated the pattern to follow throughout the country, so that the states were on approving state laws protecting the rights of children and teenagers.

However, the adoption of these local laws was not accompanied by the necessary reforms of adaptation that should also happen in the penal codes, civil, procedure codes, laws creating and regulating the

System of Integral Family Development (DIF, for its acronym in Spanish), and others.

Although local laws protecting the rights of children and adolescents almost always included a transitory article stipulating that there were repealed the articles and rules incompatible with such laws and that they should be reformed, the fact

is that this formula had no effect.

Mexico worked then, and even now, in a policy inconsistency, where some laws adhere to the CRC while others, particularly those concerning the special protection subsystem, still feature the outline safeguard and welfare system prior to the convention and contrary to it.

To solve this inconsistency, it was necessary a code to code and law by law reform in all states, at federal and municipal levels. This meant a complete review of all the regulations of the country so that the rights of children harmonized with the CRC. The task was daunting and even more difficult by the resistance to abandon the traditional institutional inertia and persistence in the perception of children as objects of protection, rather than as subjects of rights. This resulted in the LPDNNA and their local counterparts to stay in a general and program scope, with no real impact on other legislation or public policy despite collecting important principles and obligations that were supported the rights of children and teenagers.

For this reason, the Congress finally decided to amend Article 73 of the Constitution and empower itself to issue rules that establish the concurrence of the federation, the states, the federal district and municipalities in this issue. This allowed also to expressly introduce in the Constitution the principle of the Best Interests of the Child as a guide for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies on children and teenagers.

A great opportunity to approve a General Law on this subject was thus opened, whose scope is national and

that, without encroaching on the federal, or local powers, regulate the articulation of a true system of guaranteeing the rights of childhood and adolescence for the country, which has so far been lacking. This law was discussed for several months and finally approved in Congress in December 2014.

### The Chiapas case

On June 2th, the State Congress unanimously approved the Bill of Rights of Children and Adolescents of the State of Chiapas, which were met the deadline for its creation in the General Law on Girls, Children and Adolescents, published in December 2014. Without ignoring the enormous importance of the fact there are some troubling issues. Let's see:

Several organizations working in the defense of the rights of children participated in the workshops with the Commission on Care for Women and Children, in February, where they warned of the need for adequate allocation of public resources for Integral Operating System Protection and development of a policy, institutional framework and appropriate public policies and quality. With this in mind, they made an appeal to congressmen for the point to be considered in the final rule and in the budget planning process. However, the chapter on budget and qualities of it was removed.

With particular concern the experts say that congressmen failed to establish the responsibility and obligation of the State to allocate resources tagged to ensure the right to food, housing, health and education of children and teenagers deprived of parental care or family served in the Welfare centers, falling only such responsibilities in organizations of civil society.

Furthermore, nothing is mentioned in relation to the guarantees for due process and the prohibition of detention and application of alternatives for children and adolescent migrants and refugees, so they will not be protected from arbitrary detention and will continue to be subject to deportation without respect

for their interests.

Organizations that have expressed these and other concerns published a deployed last June 3 where they express:

"... Our commitment to promoting the successful implementation of the LDNNACH and reverse the serious situation of violation of rights of the nearly 2 million children and teenagers living in the state, of which 84% live in poverty, and one out of 3 speak an indigenous language. Chiapas is the entry point of hundreds of Central American children and teenagers fleeing violence in their country, so we demand the highest respect for international human rights standards and mechanisms for the active participation of civil society in the regulatory processes and legal and institutional harmonization.

"We urge the relevant authorities to respond to the mandate of respect and enforce the rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of Children and not legislate below the provisions of LGDNNA. This includes ensuring the informed and effective participation of children and teenagers in decision-making processes that affect them in their immediate and future environment and as well as to generate broad, transparent and inclusive mechanisms.

"While this Act means a breakthrough to address the backlog, it is crucial to have investment and political will of the State Executive, Legislature and municipal councils to develop and build a statewide policy, institutional framework and public policy capable of ensuring the effective exercise of the rights of children and teenagers in Chiapas."

The document is signed by the Alianza por la Salud, Alimentación y Nutrición en Chiapas (Alliance for Health, Food and Nutrition in Chiapas); Aldeas Infantiles SOS México en Chiapas (SOS Children's Villages Mexico in Chiapas); Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Matías de Córdova, AC (Fray Matias de Cordova Human Rights Center); Red por los Derechos de la Infancia y Adolescencia en Chiapas (Network for



the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Chiapas: Chantiik Taj Tajinkutik, AC, Desarrollo Educativo Sueniños, AC, Melel Xojbal, AC, and Save The Children – SYJAC, AC; Voces Mesoamericanas – Acción con Pueblos Migrantes, AC (Mesoamerican Voices - Peoples Action with Migrants); and Red por los Derechos de la Infancia en México (Network for the Rights of Children in Mexico: REDIM, for its acronym in Spanish).

In 2015 Amigos de San Cristóbal is accompanying the work of Chantiik Taj Tajinkutic and Voces Mesoamericanas. In past years we have supported Melel Xojbal and Sueniños. For this reason, we join their urge to secure and defend the rights of our

children and adolescents, offspring of our hands, offsprings of our hearts.

Ana Cristina Vazquez. Operational Director of Amigos. With information from La Jornada (multiple items and dates) and "Children account report 2014".



## THANKS EMPRESAS AMIGAS!

Growing

We already have 26 Empresas Amigas. Thanks to these responsible partners for their loyalty to Amigos and for having confidence in our project.

