

Introducing **FIVE FILMS** DOCUMENTING OUTCOMES OF THE CAO DIALOGUE PROCESS IN NICARAGUA

In 2012, CAO commissioned a series of films to document the outcomes of a four-year dialogue process between Nicaragua Sugar Estates Limited (NSEL), and ASOCHIVIDA, an association of 2,000 former sugarcane workers and their families affected by Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) in Chichigalpa, Nicaragua.

FILMS: MICROCREDIT PROJECTS

As part of the dialogue process, NSEL donated funds to a revolving *microcredit* facility to support community entrepreneurs. A business development expert has provided additional support to the parties since 2010 to implement these and other projects. Three films highlight the stories of several beneficiaries of the microcredit fund. They include former NSEL workers and ASOCHIVIDA members suffering from CKD and their family members and introduce the viewer to a bakery, a hardware store, and two village stores in Chichigalpa, which have benefited from and prospered as a result of the microcredit loans.



Microcredit beneficiary, Bakery in Chichigalpa

FILM: FOOD AID

As part of agreements reached at the dialogue table, since 2009, NSEL has committed to provide up to 2,000 ASOCHIVIDA members with basic food provision. The food packages, consisting of rice, beans, grains, and sugar, are distributed monthly. This support has helped mitigate the most immediate needs of families with members suffering from kidney disease who are too sick to generate income to provide food for their families, and families of those who have died. The food aid was renewed in 2011 and 2012, and will continue through May 2013 under the current agreement between the parties.



Distribution of monthly food packages at ASOCHIVIDA's offices

FILM: MEDICAL RESEARCH BY BOSTON UNIVERSITY

An important aspect of the dialogue process has been an independent study into the causes of CKD by Boston University, which was chosen jointly by the parties from a pool of nine institutions. Boston University's work builds on that of other researchers and indicates that the unusual form of CKD observed in former NSEL workers is prevalent throughout the Pacific zone of Central America and in Asia. The research showed that the disease is also impacting workers in other industries, as well as some adolescents that have not yet entered the workforce. Boston University's work is unprecedented in Nicaragua considering its scope, rigor, and unrestricted access to the company's operations.



ASOCHIVIDA member in Chichigalpa, Nicaragua

More information about the films is available at:

CAO Web site: www.cao-ombudsman.org

 Facebook: www.facebook.com/CAOoffice