

NICARAGUA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN ACTION GROUP (NSCAG)

Annual Report January to December 2007

In 2007 NSCAG's work focused on the development of solidarity links between Nicaraguan and UK trade unions, with a particular emphasis on young trade unionists. This included a speaker tour of two young member representatives from the FNT (Nicaraguan National Workers Front). We would like to thank all those who contributed to this work, whether a trade union individual, branch, region or national office.

Linking Young Trade Unionists Project

After the successful application to the UNISON International Development Fund in 2006 for the FNT Young Trade Unionists Project, the year 2007 saw the start of UNISON funded education and training for young trade unionists in Nicaragua. Since January, the FNT has run a number of youth training workshops and have set up the FNT Youth Council to coordinate national activities to support young members and encourage them to become more active in their union. In September 2007, the FNT Youth Council organised a National Youth Assembly, the first of its kind for young Nicaraguan trade unionists.

After a number of trade union appeals and fundraising applications, by July 2007 enough money had been raised- mainly from the CWU, UNISON, NSCAG affiliate donations and a grant from the Andrew Wainwright Reform Trust- to initiate the UK side of the Linking Young Trade Unionists Project. This project is working to raise awareness of issues for young workers in Nicaragua, build active and practical young member solidarity links and coordinate a number of international solidarity building activities.

The first of these solidarity building activities - a speaker tour - took place at the end November when two Nicaraguan young member representatives, Carlos Tinoco (FNT Youth Coordinator) and Freddy Fritoria (FNT Youth Secretary) visited the UK to meet with young activists and share experiences and ideas on young member organising and how to develop sustainable and effective solidarity links. During the speaker tour the Nicaraguan representatives also ran a workshop at the Latin America Conference 2007 on youth organising and young member solidarity.

The next activity within in the Linking Young Trade Unionists project is a delegation visit, to be held in February 2008, giving young members from the UK an opportunity to visit Nicaragua and meet with young Nicaraguan activists, including participating in the 2008 FNT Congress and a youth solidarity seminar. Preparation for the delegation visit begun at the end of the year, drawing on links made during the speaker tour as well as existing trade union and young member affiliates and contacts.

Other trade union work

In 2007 NSCAG also attended UNISON, CWU, PCS and BECTU annual conferences by running a stall with the aim of raising awareness, distributing information about our current projects and campaigns, maintaining key trade union links and raising funds through the sale of NSC and NSCAG produce.

NSCAG also maintained regular contact with our key trade union affiliates at a member, branch, regional and national level through briefings, mail outs and appeals.

Affiliations

9 national unions were affiliated at the end of 2007: BECTU, BFAWU, CWU, FBU, NUT, PCS, UNISON, UNITE (the new name for the merged AMICUS and T & G) & USDAW. The total number of branches and regions affiliated at the year end (2007) was 72. Others, not affiliated, donate when requested.

	Dec 2005	Dec 2006	Dec 2007
AMICUS / MSF	24	22	now in UNITE
CWU	12	9	8
FBU	1	1	1
GMB	0	0	2
NUT	8	5	5
PCS	2	1	0
T & G	13	13	now in UNITE
UNITE	n/a	n/a	31
UNISON	29	28	24
USDAW	1	1	1
TOTALS	90	80	72

This year (2007) only one new branch or region affiliated. A major aim for 2008 is to produce a new TU affiliation leaflet and to have it distributed, where possible with a covering letter from the general secretary, to branches and regions.

Staff: Samanther Maher & Anna Cooper.

NSCAG Executive members:

Jan – July 2007 (until NSCAG AGM)

Ruby Cox, Jane Freeland, Dave Godson, Bob Hardie, Gay Lee, Michael Macneil, Christine Oddy, Martin Roger, Bernard Roome, Jessie Russell.

July – Dec 2007

Ruby Cox, John Drewery, Jane Freeland, Dave Godson, Bob Hardie, James Lazou, Gay Lee, Michael Macneil, Joan Neary, Christine Oddy, Bernard Roome, Jessie Russell.