

# South North Nexus



**2021 YEAR IN REVIEW**

# TOGETHER WE CAN POSITIVELY SHAPE OUR SHARED FUTURE!



The year 2021 will likely be remembered as a year with a number of starts and stops, ups and downs, with challenges for all, both locally and globally.

While 2021 was again a departure from the norm, South North Nexus (SNN), in its second year of operation, had several achievements that we are grateful to share with you.

With our great team, partners and donors, SNN contributed to making the world a bit better in 2021. SNN was started with the objective to share learning and innovation between South and North and to address pressing issues that affect us all.

The 2021 Year in Review highlights some important learning and achievements, and what could have worked better. We are optimistic that open discussion and the willingness to learn will truly help us come together to address our most pressing challenges, including climate change, and to rebuild a better world for all.

# About us

## Our mission

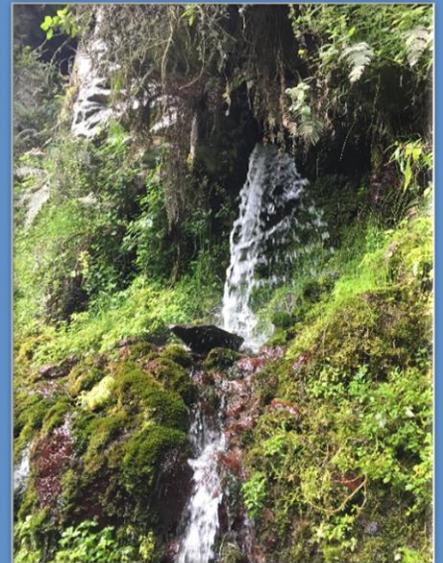
South North Nexus is an international, non-partisan, non-profit platform that brings together South and North representatives to take risks to learn, innovate, share, and promote successful solutions within the framework of the United Nations Strategic Development Goals. Essential is developing a common understandings among South and North communities, organizations, the private sector, and individuals, regarding urgent problems and essential solutions.



## Our vision

South North Nexus works for innovative solutions, and equity and social justice for all, with special attention to the most vulnerable. We are committed to global development that sustainably protects livelihoods, communities, and the planet. SNN is a platform that brings people together to:

- Find and share solutions that build resilience in the face of climate shocks.
- Promote dignity for those furthest behind.
- Assure access to basic human rights, including food, water, shelter, healthcare, and education.



## Our values

South North Nexus works for innovative solutions, equity and social justice for all, with special attention to the most vulnerable.

# SNN 2021 Highlights



South North Nexus is two years strong, and we celebrate our partners and the successes we have achieved together. In 2021 SNN listened and supported the voices of women, children, men and adolescents in Kenya, Colombia, Mongolia, Nicaragua, those stuck along the Mexico-USA border and migrants in Montana, USA.

In 2021, SNN achieved exciting results and accomplishments in a number of areas. Thanks to the contributions of donors, team members, and volunteers, we were able to:

- ❑ Strengthen our relationships and partnerships. We worked with wonderful groups of committed people in 6 countries to address the most pressing problems facing those with the smallest voices.
- ❑ Share results from our work on climate, migration, food security and food systems, gender empowerment, inequalities and related social justice issues. We participated in conferences and webinars, produced a newsletter dedicated to the situation in Nicaragua, and shared information on our website, and on Facebook and Instagram.
- ❑ Develop a SNN 2021 goal-oriented strategy to achieve and promote our vision.
- ❑ Use the knowledge from the Kenya Livelihood Analysis to guide the implementation of concrete actions in a pilot project.
- ❑ Continue to strengthen our Board of Directors with members from a diverse range of geographic, gender, and professional backgrounds.
- ❑ Secure funding from committed donors and work with a wonderful network of volunteers.

# 2021 Project Highlights

## Kenya Pilot Project

South North Nexus is working with Blessed Community Empowerment Organization (BLEC) and Innovative Concepts to empower women to build resilient livelihoods in Turkana, Kenya.

A strategy emerged from a joint Livelihood Analysis conducted last year with community members to design and test women-led actions that enhance the resilience of livelihoods and ecosystems. Access to clean water and preventing malnutrition arose as urgent priorities.



Based on the successful pilot, the project will continue in 2022 with a deeper focus on responding to prolonged drought, livelihood adaptation and increased access to resources for women and their families. Please read more below.

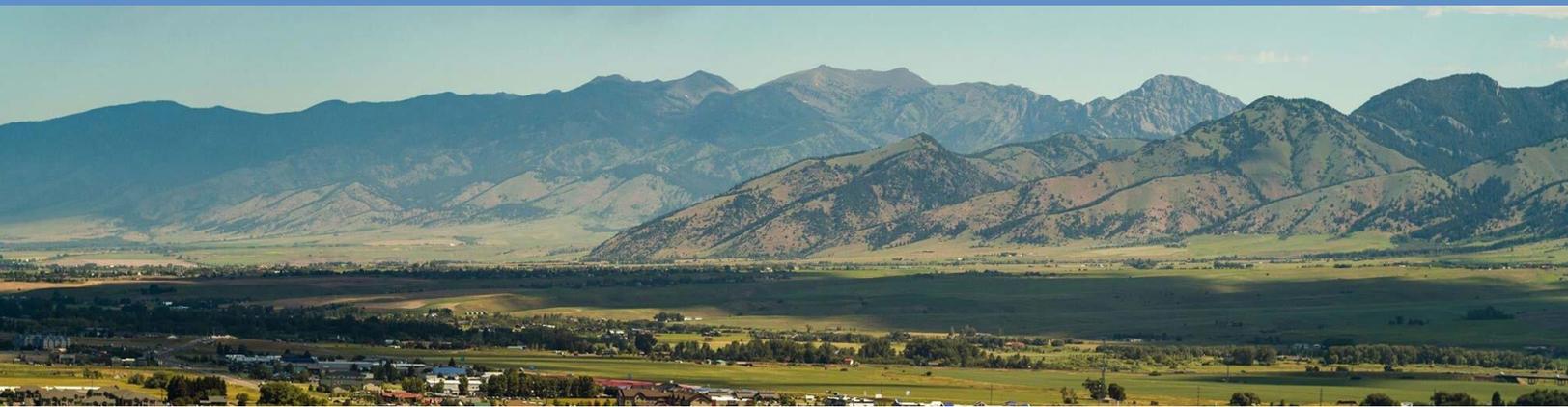


# Migrant Legal Fund

The Migrant Legal Fund offered migrants and their families legal assistance to address pressing issues related to their residency in Montana, USA.

Some of the migration issues that came to our attention included: preparation for “court order to appear” dates, change of venue requests, assistance with asylum requests, and responses to deportation orders.

Actions included support for document preparation, lawyers’ fees, and travel for court appearances. Funds helped families comply with their immigration process responsibilities, including asylum requests and helped ease the stress of living in a new country.



## Migration and Occupational Health Livelihood Analysis

South North Nexus and Montana State University School of Nursing are partnering in the Gallatin Valley, Montana, USA to bring greater understanding regarding the opportunities and challenges faced by the migrant population in the valley.

Conversations with a range of stakeholders centered around housing insecurity, legal status, employment and healthcare, with particular emphasis on occupational health injuries and safety measures. Occupational health issues were an important component of the livelihood analysis as many workers are employed informally without health insurance benefits. Both migrant and non-migrant workers were interviewed to understand the different challenges faced by each group.

The livelihood framework incorporated a holistic approach, with different issues and challenges documented for men, women and adolescents.

# Migration and Occupational Health Livelihood Analysis

While the analysis is not final, preliminary results show that:

- Discrimination exists in the workplace, school and people's daily lives.
- Housing is a major challenge and many workers are tied to their employer because they provide housing.
- Navigating the immigration process is very difficult, especially for non-native English speakers and those without the means to obtain legal assistance.
- Lack of health insurance and an understanding of how the system works result in many challenges for migrant workers and their families.
- While employment is easy to find, undocumented workers are not always paid the going rate or retained if injured on the job.
- Migrant workers and their families suffer from stress and anxiety due to their situation and are not able to obtain medical care except for emergency situations.

*SNN has already started looking into possible policy and program actions that could address some of these issues.*

***More to come in 2022!***



# Children at the US-Mexico Border



South North Nexus traveled to the Mexico-US Border to better understand how women and children are coping with immigration rules that keep them in Mexico. The SNN team met with over 15 organizations along the border between Texas and Mexico, and spoke with many migrant women, men, adolescents and children. Shelter, nutrition, child stress and immigration processing all emerged as pressing issues.

One of the areas visited was Reynosa, Mexico where approximately 2000 people were living in a tent camp and many more in shelters, surviving mainly thanks to the generosity of locals. And their conditions were dire as migrants face an uncertain future, poor nutrition, unhealthy living conditions and exposure to violence.

Close partnerships were forged and in early 2022 the SNN team will travel again to Ciudad Juarez to conduct a rapid child nutrition and stress assessment. Findings will contribute to a better understanding of the magnitude of these problems and SNN will work with local partners to determine how best to support the most urgent needs of migrant children and their families. Families fleeing violence, food insecurity and the effects of extreme climate events, are simply seeking to keep their families alive under the most extreme conditions.



# Promoting Dialogue in Nicaragua

Working with a number of partners, South North Nexus promoted dialogue, advocated for social justice and human rights, and shared information with the broader international community and the media.

## Nicaragua: Triple-Crisis Threatens More Instability, Poverty, and Migration

By William Vigil\*



The report *“Nicaragua’s Converging Crises: impact and Challenges to Support its Vulnerable Populations”* was prepared by a team of economists and development specialists. It offered an overview of the combined impacts from the last three years of political unrest, COVID-19, and two back-to-back Category 4 hurricanes (Eta and Iota in November 2020). The report concluded with important recommendations for the international community and for the people of Nicaragua.

SNN helped organize two high-level forums with the aim of fostering analysis and dialogue among Nicaragua’s civil society: “Tourism and Development” and “Social Indicators for Nicaragua”. These discussions included a panel of distinguished academics and practitioners who advocated for action to address the socio-economic crisis in the country. Also, in 2021 SNN collaborated with former Costa Rican presidents Oscar Arias (’87 Nobel Peace Prize) and Luis Guillermo Solís, the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress, American University, INCAE Business School, The Wilson Center, The Carter Center, and other individuals and organizations to bring attention to and promote action to improve the situation in Nicaragua.

SNN also provided a platform for international stakeholders concerned about Nicaragua to have up-to-date information and to meet on a regular basis. Important for the discussion is “Nicaragua Update”, a weekly report on the state of human rights and democratic institutions, widely distributed among public and civil society organizations.

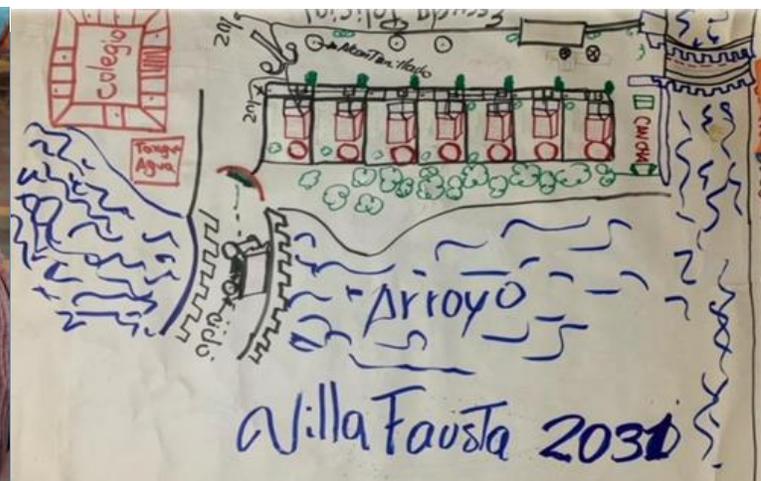


# Livelihood Analysis in Colombia

South North Nexus and BioRegions International continued to undertake “Livelihood Analyses” across bioregions to better understand how communities and families are coping with and adapting to a variety of shocks such as climate, conflict, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

A robust study was finalized in La Guajira, Colombia with Fundación Tierra de Indios which examined livelihood impacts due to climate, environmental and economic shocks and conflict. The Colombia study provides an in-depth look at how conflict contributes to the loss of livelihoods and increased migration.

Our approach relied heavily on listening and engaging in participatory and collaborative learning to strengthen resilience and enable families, communities, and local entities to better plan for and respond to shocks.



## What We Learned:

The Livelihood Analysis highlighted several community concerns in La Guajira, and how climate is affecting the traditional way of life for the Wayu people.

Communities acknowledged a need to diversify livelihood assets, highlighting the importance of handcrafts, especially for women,

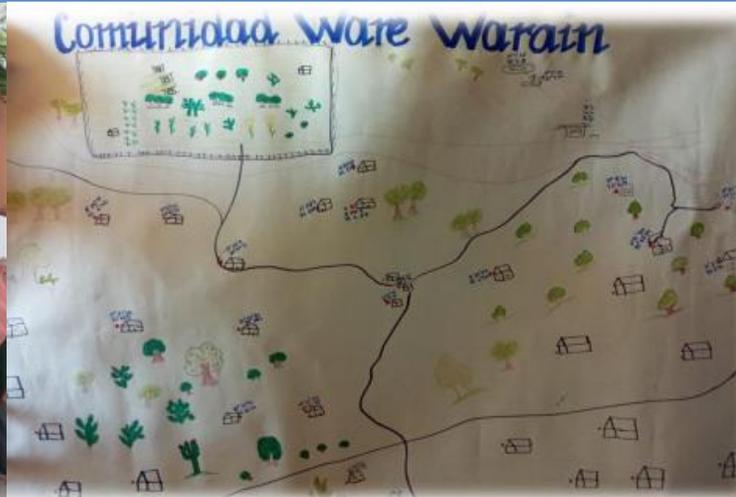
and the urgent need for more advanced forest and ecosystem management techniques.

The study also showed the importance of training and skill building, particularly on gender roles, empowerment and rights, and culturally appropriate adaptation and risk management.

# Livelihood Analysis in Colombia

Other findings included:

- ❑ Conversations exposed the similarities and differences in the visions for livelihoods among the communities who participated in the study and the institutions, foundations and agencies interviewed. This is important because these are the social and political actors that intervene with programs and projects in indigenous communities, with actions that are not always aligned to the communities' own priorities.



- ❑ Climate change must be integrated effectively into all initiatives to strengthen the livelihoods of communities, considering their culture and specific priorities. Important actions include:
  - Improving access to statistical and socioeconomic information, especially related to climate impacts.
  - Empowering and improving the participation of Traditional and Women's Authorities and local women.
  - Integrating the work of Traditional and Women's Authorities with national authorities and international agencies.
  - Putting food security and sovereignty at the center, through strategies that strengthen local and traditional production systems.
  - Recovering forests as a system that provides ecological, economic and food services and benefits.
  - Developing broad strategies and plans that integrate the different socio-economic and structural dimensions affecting the local environment.

SNN and Fundación Tierra de Indios will implement a pilot project to develop skills and solutions with families, communities, and local governments that address the urgent climate impacts affecting people's livelihoods in La Guajira.

# 2021 Project Spotlight - Kenya

The 9-month pilot project reached 240 women and supported more than 240 small businesses. These vibrant businesses enable women to better manage risk and mitigate the impacts from reoccurring drought. We are pleased to share two stories from women whose livelihoods are more resilient and hopefully will continue to become even more so.

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**240 women  
reached**



**240 small  
businesses  
supported**

The project reinforced the importance of SNN-BLEC's strategy to put women's rights at the center of its Kenya program.

The EWREP project focused on four outcomes and achieved concrete results related to:

- ❑ Increased women's capacities and skills, their expanded roles, and income generation opportunities.
- ❑ Improved management of traditional livelihood assets.
- ❑ Increased local government and community engagement to support livelihood resilience.
- ❑ Increased access to water for human consumption and community horticulture.

# Stories of Change

## Enhancing Women Resilience and Empowerment (EWREP) in Turkana County, Kenya

Pauline Lonyaman and her children were struggling to put a meal on the table before they became part of the Enhancing Women's Resilience and Empowerment Project.

*"As a family, we have not fully recovered and yet the drought is looming again."*

With the project she now buys chickens and goats, then fattens them to fetch better prices.

*"My big appreciation to SNN-BLEC for identifying me and training me, giving me business skills and new opportunities"* With her new knowledge she can now afford food for her children.



**Pauline Lonyaman**, 45 years old, 5 children, youngest is 6 years

Lokunyuk Lotiono is a widow, her husband another victim of the drought. Before this project she had never been engaged in business or a women's empowerment group.

*"We have only three women's empowerment groups. These are not enough if we want our community to really advance and not be devastated every time a drought comes."*

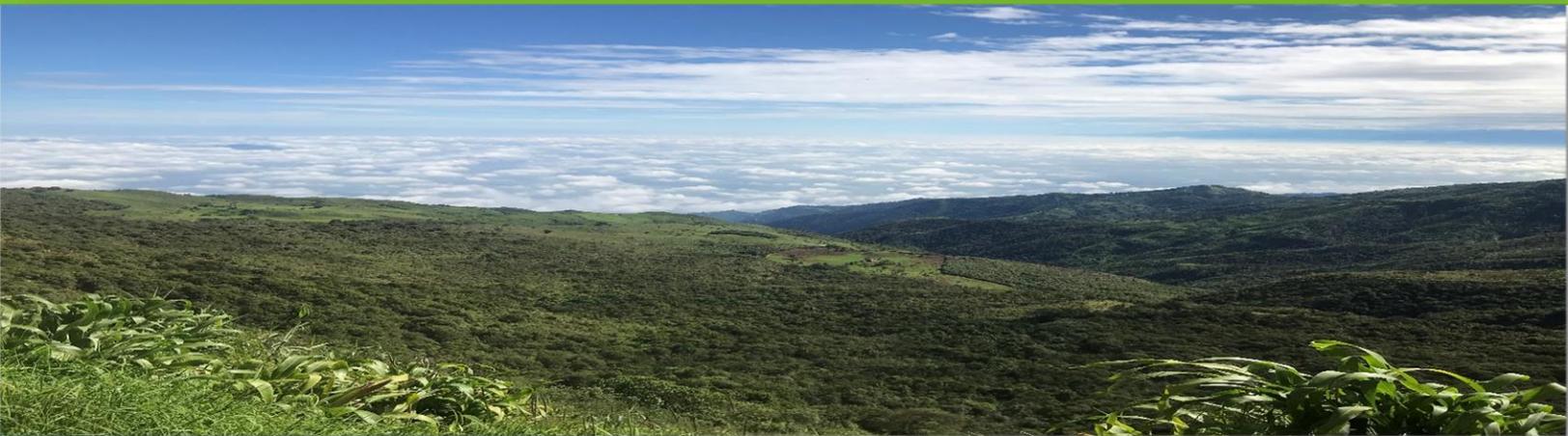
Before joining the project, she used to collect firewood and sell it at the fish market. Now firewood is not being collected because it is difficult to access due to the drought. There was no money, only enough to buy maize and she found it difficult to start her small business. With the project she was able to open her little store.

*"We are very happy with the women empowerment business training. Please tell the lady (Deborah) not to forget us"!*



**Lokunyuk Lotiono**, 45 years old, 7 children, youngest is 12 months

# Our Team



## Co-Directors



Deborah Hines

William Vigil



## Board of Directors

Justin Haring  
Treasurer

Susan Higgins

Deborah Hines

Hélène Papper

Henry Vega  
Technical Advisor

William Vigil



## Promoting Rights

*"Critical Issues on Human Rights and Development"* SNN Co-Director Deborah Hines examines the international legal bases that support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food and nutrition, and argues that hunger is neither inevitable nor acceptable. Edited by Stephen P. Marks and Balakrishnan Rajagopal. Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.



# Interns and Volunteers

SNN is grateful to work with an impressive group of university students from Claremont Mckenna College, Montana State University, and American University. Our interns contributed generously to research on migration, climate, gender, and project support issues. Their experience with SNN contributes to their professional development with “real life experiences”. SNN thanks each one of them and wishes them the best as they move forward!



*“During my internship with SNN, I worked on a variety of interesting projects related to human rights and global health, which not only allowed me to improve my research skills but also provided me with hands-on experience to complement my university courses. In addition, I had the unforgettable opportunity to participate in a trip to the Texas-Mexico border that focused on addressing malnutrition among migrants. This experience greatly expanded my perspective on this issue and reinforced my interest in working in this area in the future.”* Nina Ellard – American University



A heartfelt thank you to all our donors. Because of you, SNN is working on solutions with those most vulnerable to shocks and creating a more sustainable and just future for all.

What happens to our shared climate, lands, food systems, and water sources directly affects livelihoods, regardless of where we live today.

# Thanks to our Donors

Please join the  
conversation,  
volunteer and  
donate.



# Get involved

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us once again the importance of connecting, sharing ideas and solutions, and collaborating for change. We all can be agents of change, for ourselves, our communities, and beyond. South North Nexus is deeply committed to these goals.



**WE NEED YOU TO  
MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**



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