

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS:

by Louise Vandenbosch and Gordon Price

In preparing for this year's Annual General Meeting, I read over Heart-Links' Annual Report for 2010, the year I first became involved. It struck me that much has changed but much has remained the same. At our core, we remain committed to working in solidarity with our partners in northern Peru. We remain committed to honouring the Heart-Links legacy of Solidarity Trips to Peru that ensure these friendships and partnerships continue year after year.

Now to the changes . . .

Heart-Links continues to flourish in our new home at Innovation Works. Many like-minded folks occupy this space, supporting and nourishing us as we go about our daily business. In December we participated in Innovation Works' Meaningful Market, where we were able to introduce lots of Londoners to the little organization with the big heart. People bought our Café Femenino coffee, heard our story and were captivated. It felt very good to be part of a larger social movement.

Sadly, this year we say good-bye to long-time volunteers Christine Troughton and Laurie Donnelly. Christine has worked tirelessly in many, many roles to keep the torch lit at Heart-Links. I can truthfully say we would not be around today if it wasn't for Christine. Laurie Donnelly is stepping down after many years as member and then co-chair of what is now the Solidarity Committee. Under her watch, the precision work of recruiting, preparing, sending off and receiving home again our Solidarity Trip participants has run like a well-oiled machine. Please join us in thanking both Christine and Laurie for sharing with us their time and talents over so many years.

We also say good-bye to Violeta Nauca Navarro, who provided leadership to our agents in Zaña for many years. Heart-Links sent a special thank-you to Peru to acknowledge Violeta's contribution.

At Heart-Links we do our best to keep up with technology. To that end, an ad-hoc committee assisted us this year in selecting a new donor database system. Our old system had served us well for many years, but it was no longer up to the task. Many thanks to Kathleen Schreurs, Melissa Taylor-Gates and Heather Sercombe, who joined Ruth, Fraser and myself to conduct research and make recommendations. Our supporters may not notice the difference, but this change will be a tremendous help to the Finance, Fund Development and Administration committees and to our volunteers.

Embracing technology again, we produced a 15-minute video that introduces the work of Heart-Links and its partners and asks, "What do we mean when we say solidarity?" The film premiered at our Share the Love event in February 2018 and is

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Louise Vandenbosch, Co-chair

Gordon Price, Co-chair

Fraser Macdonald, Treasurer

Tatiana Fernández, Secretary

Cecilia Inguane

Sarah Pol

Shannon Theriault

Janet Tufts

available to watch online on Vimeo (our website has a link). The video was the work of Duncan Spilsbury and Natalie Lawrence, who came to us through Western's Community Engaged Learning. Heart-Links is grateful to Western CEL for their financial support of this project as well.

Our last big change was our decision to host a meeting of the groups from this region who fund or work in community development in northern Peru. In October, representatives of six organizations got together to share experiences and compare notes. We hope to make this an annual gathering that fosters collaboration and reduces duplication of effort.

This year, Shannon Theriault and Janet Tufts joined the Board, and Tatiana Fernández took on the position of Board secretary. All three are great additions. Sadly, we said good-bye to Rose Makini, who had come to us through the DiverCity OnBoard sponsored by Pillar Nonprofit Network.

Now for the same . . .

The Executive Committee of Ruth Taylor, Fraser Macdonald, Gordon Price and myself continues to meet monthly to ensure Heart-Links' affairs are well managed both here in Canada and in Peru. (See page 5 for Gordon's recap of our Peru Projects.)

The Solidarity Trip Committee has been busy preparing five new Solidarity Trip participants, who will be travelling to Peru in June with trip leader Sheila Horrell. Janet Tufts has stepped in as co-chair with Laurie Donnelly to provide leadership to this committee. Long-time volunteer Lina Bowden has resigned as co-chair but remains on the committee. Many thanks to Lina for all her work over the years. We hope this year's trip participants come back enthused and committed to the organization and to the people they meet in Peru.

The Community Engagement Committee, under the leadership of Sarah Pol and Tatiana Fernández, raised the bar with their second annual Share the Love, held in February 2018. This fundraiser offered an enthusiastic crowd a little warmth on a cold winter's night. Many thanks to this committee for their dedication and hard work. It really helps keep Heart-Links in the spotlight here in London.

At last year's AGM, we were facing the unhappy prospect of our Treasurer Fraser Macdonald's resignation. I'm thrilled to report that shortly thereafter Fraser's plans changed, and Heart-Links continues to benefit from his skill and dedication. Fraser provides leadership to the Finance Committee, who assist him in preparing budgets, checking financial statements and getting Heart-Links ready for our year-end review.

Gordon has provided leadership to the Peru Projects Committee. Their work of coordinating with our Peruvian partners to review and fine tune project proposals, of making recommendations to the Board, and of monitoring approved projects is anything but straightforward.

The Fund Development Committee has been strengthened this past year by new committee members who have brought new energy and new ideas. Raising funds is never easy, but it is essential to the work we do in Peru. As Fraser highlights on page 4, fundraising was at an all-time high in 2017.

In the fall of 2017, Shannon, Janet, Gordon and Ruth embarked on a monitoring trip to solidify friendships and commitments, check in on projects and ensure that the Heart-Links dollars were well

HELLOS AND GOOD-BYES

A warm thank-you to the following new volunteers and collaborators:

Melissa Taylor-Gates, Mounir Al-Bugha, Brian Whitelaw, Puneet Kaur, Duncan Spilsbury, Natalie Lawrence, Kathleen Shreurs, Heather Sercombe.

Welcome (or welcome back) to these new committee members: **Linda Lustins, Mariela Garnica, Melissa Ostrowski, Michael Loebach.**

Our enormous and heart-felt gratitude to **Christine Troughton, Laurie Donnelly, Rose Makini, Violeta Nauca and Lilia Morales.** We wish you well and hope you keep us in your thoughts.

spent. They returned both satisfied and grateful that Heart-Links has the privilege of partnering with such committed and inspiring people.

A great big thank you to our Operations Coordinator, Ruth Taylor. Ruth has been the “glue” that keeps the committees functioning so well. We all really appreciate her talents.

As always, we are encouraged by all the support Heart-Links receives. Without people giving of their time, their talents, and their dollars, we could not go on. So, a tremendous thanks.

We are looking forward to 2018, which is well underway.

SPECIAL THANKS TO Huron Student Union, Ivey Community Consulting Program, Patrick’s Beans, Shout Sister, My Sisters Place Microenterprise, Ricardo & Grupo México, Seeds of Hope, the Sisters of St. Joseph, London Community Foundation and Western Community Engaged Learning for connecting with Heart-Links this year. We appreciate your support!

SOLIDARITY TRIP COMMITTEE

by Co-Chairs Laurie Donnelly and Janet Tufts

The first thing, before reporting on our work, is a quick note on our name change. Since last year’s annual report, we’ve gone from Work/Awareness Trip Committee (WAT) to Solidarity Trip Committee. This shift reflects the more intentional focus within Heart-Links over the past few years on *solidarity*.

In 2017, for the second time in Heart-Links’ history, the Board had to make the tough decision to cancel this annual trip.

Severe flooding had hit Chiclayo and the Zaña Valley in early spring, and while our safety would not have been a major concern, we worried about burdening our partners in the aftermath of recovery. They had enough to worry about without trying to showcase their programs and host their Canadian friends (although they would have gladly done it, so generous they are!).

Given the circumstances, our Committee found itself in mid-2017 with a group of eager trips applicants and over a year to plan the next visit. A gift in many ways.

One of our key priorities, we knew, had to be sustaining interest and enthusiasm over the coming year and supporting trip participants in creating a strong group bond. Three pre-trip meetings became our primary focus, one of which would be a retreat led by our friends Seeds of Hope, a lay community of women connected to the Ursuline Sisters of Chatham and communities of women in Chiclayo, Peru.

Seeds of Hope provided us with another wonderful opportunity—implementation a bursary program. Because of their generous donation, we were able to offer subsidies to reduce the cost of the 2018 trip for individuals in financial need. Thank you, Seeds of Hope!

Finally, our Committee took 2017 as an opportunity to improve and enhance some of our processes and promotional materials, bringing us more in line with today’s tech-savvy world. We feel we had achieved a good year of re-grouping and positioning ourselves to continue to introduce people to the unforgettable experience of walking in solidarity with our partners in northern Peru.



FINANCE COMMITTEE

by our Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee, Fraser Macdonald

Heart-Links is in a strong financial position and remains capable of funding our work in Peru for the foreseeable future. Our investment portfolio is independently managed by external advisors at Scotia Wealth Management, and our accounting, financial statements and reporting are subject to annual review by external auditors at BDO Canada. All government (CRA and Industry Canada) regulatory reporting, which is completed annually, is up to date. Administrative expenses are reasonable and within budget.

YEAR	CAD to PERU
2017	139,964
2016	117,768
2015	98,359
2014	79,539
2013	64,565
2012	66,488
2011	42,628
2010	34,685
Last 8 years = \$643,996	

Financial Highlights of 2017:

- Fund balances as of December 31, 2017, exceeded \$600,000.
- Peru Project expenditures for 2017 were \$139,964 and are projected to exceed \$128,000 in 2018, based on approved projects now in progress. Projects are approved following a rigorous review by the Peru Projects Committee and the Board.
- Heart-Links continues to work with third parties on jointly funded projects managed by Heart-Links. In 2017, we worked with the Cambia Development Foundation as well as the Roncalli International Foundation, and we anticipate additional opportunities in 2018.
- Heart-Links participated in workshops with BDO and implemented, where required, several risk management measures designed for organizations like ours. The Board has called for regular, ongoing review to ensure we follow sound business practices.

The Finance Committee met as required to review Heart-Links’ financial reports.



PERU PROJECTS COMMITTEE

by Chair Gordon Price

In 2017 Heart-Links funded nearly \$140,000 in projects through our partners in northern Peru, by far the most annual funds ever provided in our organization's 25-year history. The following is a summary of those projects.

CAJAMARCA

Asociación Civil Esperanza, ACIES (NGO)

Construction of a facility for the Esperanza Centre for Alternative Education

This project involves a new partner agency for Heart-Links. ACIES works with children and their families in the impoverished urban district of Quiritimayo, Cajamarca. Many of these families have been pushed off their traditional lands by mining and other extractive industries. In the city, the children are often left alone for long periods while their parents are at work. As Indigenous people, they encounter discrimination and racism everywhere. The centre offers these children an after-school program that respects and values their Indigenous heritage. Children draw on the ancestral knowledge of their community, create new knowledge through hands-on projects, and learn independence and sustainability by growing a garden and using its produce. For many years the school operated out of a local church hall, but a change in management meant they had to move out. Through this project, ACIES is constructing a facility that will serve as the centre's permanent home in Quiritimayo.

You can follow ACIES's work on their blog at <https://aciesesperanza.jimdo.com/>

The facility will be built with significant community involvement over two years at the cost of \$15,000 each year.

Rural Libraries Network (NGO)

Republication of the 20-book series *Enciclopedia Campesina*

The Rural Libraries Network has been working in the mountains of Cajamarca for over 40 years, supporting and preserving the culture and traditions of the Indigenous campesino communities. The *Enciclopedia Campesina*, a collection of 20 books that document every aspect of campesino life, is the cornerstone of the Rural Libraries Network's literacy program. In this program, community members help each other learn to read and write in small informal settings and reading circles. The network emanates from over 500 small libraries located in the homes of local "librarians." Heart-Links was involved in the collection's initial publication over 20 years ago.

From years of use, the original collection is in very poor condition. With funding from Heart-Links, Rural Libraries will reprint, over the next two years, 1000 revised copies of each of the 20 titles.

The work of the network can be followed on their blog, Wonderings of the Rural Libraries of Cajamarca, at <http://rurallibrariesofcajamarca.blogspot.ca/>



Since revision of the volumes is still underway, printing has not started. Heart-Links has committed to funding the first two years of a five-year undertaking at the cost of \$13,500 each year.



CHICLAYO

Centro Esperanza (NGO)

Women's leadership training in San Borja

This project, a continuation of Centro Esperanza's work in the impoverished San Borja community, focused on two initiatives: 1) to strengthen the leadership and management capacity of the women involved with the neighbourhood's community development committee; 2) to strengthen the leadership and "emotional intelligence" of boys and girls to improve their social life and school performance.

Devastation wrought by this year's El Niño severely damaged and in some instances destroyed homes in San Borja. The women's committee drew on their leadership skills to work with first responders and to address a wide variety of needs experienced by the community.

The project spanned one year at the cost of \$14,000.

Centro Santa Angela (NGO)

Ecological program

In 2017 Heart-Links continued to support Centro Santa Angela's work to address environmental challenges confronting the José Leonardo Ortiz district in Chiclayo. This year's project saw the development of a model for a community-based response to environmental degradation. Leaders in a first neighbourhood carried out a variety of initiatives to engage their community, such as cleaning up the local park, planting trees and flowers, and reducing waste in the local community kitchen. It is Centro Santa Angela's intention to eventually replicate this model in neighbourhoods throughout the district.

You can follow the team's work on their Facebook page, Programa Ecológico Centro Santa Angela.

The project spans two years at the cost of \$12,500 each year.

Succession planning

With financing from Cambia Development Foundation, Heart-Links is supporting a two-year project with Centro Santa Angela to create a succession plan for this 32-year-old agency. The aim is to ensure continuity of the centre's vision and work beyond the present leadership. To this end, Centro Santa Angela is developing and implementing a leadership training program for young people who are currently participating in the centre's projects.

The project spans two years at the cost of \$14,500 each year.

Leadership school

With financing from Roncalli International Foundation, Heart-Links is supporting a two-year project with Centro Santa Angela to operate a school for community leaders. The school aims to train and support local leaders as they participate in the social, economic and government institutions of the José Leonardo Ortiz district of Chiclayo. Among their accomplishments in 2017, the 50 participants accompanied and advocated for families affected by the El Niño emergency. The continuing work of the leaders is well documented on their Facebook page, Escuela De Lideres Jlo.

The project spans two years at the cost of \$9,000 each year.



ZAÑA

Zaña Valley Team

Transition to a non-governmental agency

In keeping with Heart-Links' strategic plan to work exclusively with Peruvian non-governmental agencies, Heart-Links funded the second year of a two-year project to support our Zaña agents' incorporation as a legally constituted non-governmental organization. This project provided team training and legal support to facilitate the transition.

Early childhood development and nutrition

This after-school program served children from 6 to 13 years of age in Aviación, Mocupe and Zaña. Each program, led by a trained teacher, addressed the social, cognitive, artistic and nutritional needs of approximately 20 participating children. Support in reading, mathematics and art, along with a nutritious snack, was provided daily. Additional resource staff, including a psychologist, gave workshops on topics such as self-esteem, feelings and emotions, positive leadership and healthy eating. Liaison is maintained with the participating children's schools, where significant improvement has been noted in the behaviour and learning of many of the children.

Adolescent leadership

This project involved 25 teenagers from the three communities of Aviación, Mocupe and Zaña, who met on a weekly basis throughout the year. A wide range of workshops were provided, on topics such as management of feelings and conflicts, self-esteem, healthy sexuality, appropriate use of social media, cultural identity and violence against women. During the program, several participants were elected to their student council, the government of which also became a workshop topic.

Promoting volunteerism

Fifteen post-secondary students from Aviación, Mocupe and Zaña participated in this program. Workshops provided the students with a greater understanding of the socioeconomic realities of families in the Zaña Valley as well as of the services and resources available in the area. As part of the program, these

volunteers-in-training ran activities with participants in the other Zaña projects and assisted with aid efforts following the flooding caused by El Niño.

Women's support program

This program is a continuation of last year's women's empowerment project. While providing a space for women from Aviación, Mocupe and Zaña to come together for practical and emotional support, this year's emphasis was on income generation. After receiving training in the production and marketing of ancestral crafts, the women displayed and sold their creations at local fairs.

The Zaña Valley Team projects were for one year at a cost of \$44,000.

Latidos (NGO)

Literacy and entrepreneurial programs at the Miraflores Library

This project provided staffing and resources for two program initiatives at the Miraflores Library.

The first was an after-school program that offered homework support and promoted literacy among children in partnership with area schools and Promolibro (a federal government agency). An outreach component involved the librarian's visiting an area school on a bicycle-powered library and reading to grade four students.

The second component was a weekly support program for women that included workshops in which mothers and their children made crafts together.

The project was for one year at the cost of \$5,700.

EL NIÑO EMERGENCY FUND PROJECTS

In response to devastating flooding in Peru during the 2017 El Niño, Heart-Links initiated an emergency fund campaign. With generous support from the Ursuline Sisters, Cambia Development Foundation and approximately 75 individual donors, we were able to raise over \$25,000 on very short notice.

Funds were provided for emergency response projects by Centro Esperanza and Centro Santa Angela in Chiclayo and Latidos in Zaña. Expenses included the purchase of rubber boots, masks and water pumps for first responders; emergency food and tents for relief camps; and home reconstruction materials. It was inspiring to see that much of the community leadership in response to the emergency came from individuals who were active in the various leadership training programs Heart-Links has supported.

HEART-LINKS LAZOS DE CORAZÓN is a small London-based nongovernmental organization that works to advance community development in northern Peru. We partner with organizations in Peru to finance and accompany initiatives in education, leadership training, women's empowerment and health, among others. We also organize an annual trip to northern Peru for anybody who is interested in learning what it feels like to walk in solidarity with people from another part of the world.