

Harold Nielsen, In Memoriam: Rooted in Reciprocity and Cooperation

On November 11, 2013, the Center for Global Education lost one of its greatest friends and supporters; our global community lost a visionary. Harold Nielsen passed away, just a few short years after his wife, Louise. Harold experienced 97 rich years and CGE and Augsburg College are grateful to have been a part of them.

The relationship between CGE and the Nielsen family began when Harold and Louise traveled on a CGE program to Mexico. Louise was very much the instigator of the trip, encouraging her husband to embrace the experience. Harold described the experience as transformative. Transformative is a word we use and hear often at CGE, and we believe many of our sojourners experience transformation to some degree. But the degree to which Harold experienced it was nothing short of exceptional. Harold would go on to travel with CGE to El Salvador, Guatemala, Israel, Jordan, Nicaragua, the Philippines, and Syria

When Harold and Louise traveled to Nicaragua, he was particularly impacted by the worker-owned cooperatives, a concept which further inspired major changes in the Nielsen's lives. Adopting a form of social ownership similar to a cooperative, Harold would go on to sell his very successful company—Foldcraft, which manufactures restaurant seating—to his employees through an

employee stock ownership program.

Proceeds from the sale of Foldcraft went towards creating the Winds of Peace Foundation (WPF), an organization that has a primary purpose of addressing global problems of poverty, injustice, and lack of opportunity. The foundation has a special emphasis on Nicaragua and the development of women, Indigenous people, and cooperatives. WPF prioritizes grassroots efforts. Harold's foundation makes some of the following possible:

Indigenous issues: WPF strives for the restoration of Indigenous peoples' civil and legal rights by supporting the development of their own solutions. Partnerships in this area include an alliance with NUMAJI, a youth association of six different Indigenous groups from the north.

Women's issues: WPF particularly partners with initiatives that promote community solidarity, independence and sustainable development, for and by women. Partnerships in this area include relationships with a number of rural women's rights organizations. One example is Grupo Venancia, an organization that trains rural girls and young women in leadership skills so they can organize the women in their own rural communities.



Harold and Louise Nielsen

Rural development: WPF understands that the increasingly global agricultural marketplace can be incredibly difficult on the rural poor. Cooperatives and a cooperative spirit have been a key to overall development in rural areas of Nicaragua and, to that end, WPF has partnered with rural cooperatives in many areas of Nicaragua, including the San Juan del Rio Coco region and the provinces of Nueva Segovia, Estelí, Matagalpa, and Jinotega.

While CGE was proud to play a role in Harold's life, we are immensely grateful for the ways in which he gave back—playing his own role in our sustainability and growth, and the transformation of other travelers. The Nielsen's generous

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Harold Nielsen, In Memoriam (continued)

gifts included the study center in Managua to CGE. They also provided seed money to CGE towards some of our marketing efforts over the years, including the production of a video about our programming entitled, "Lessons From a Distant Road." The video and marketing funds were indicative of the types of support Harold believed in, as these were efforts that would help CGE develop in the long-term. Much like with WPF partners, Harold wanted to help CGE, but he also wanted us to secure our own sustainability. Over the years, the Nielsen's generous gifts to our organization amounted to nearly \$500,000.

In a letter dated July 24, 2007, shortly after the Niensens were given a lantern at CGE's 25th Anniversary celebration, Louse wrote, "Thank you so much for the lovely lantern, it will be treasured. It is a true symbol of our relationship with the Center for Global Education. In 1983, on our first trip, a light was turned on in our lives. It started as a tiny seed in our hearts, which grew into the Winds of Peace Foundation. We are grateful to the staff and the many wonderful people we have met through the Center, for the inspiration and help in



Sign outside CGE's Nicaragua study center, which Harold Nielsen gifted.

our work." Alas, as both WPF and CGE believe, the best and most productive relationships are reciprocal and we, in turn, thank the Nielsen family for their generosity, innovation, sense of adventure, and activism, for it has been instrumental in every achievement in which we have played a part.

To learn more about the Winds of Peace Foundation, visit their website at peacewinds.org.

From Student to Professor: A Profile of Hillary Mealman

By Grace Lundergran, International Resident Advisor, Mexico



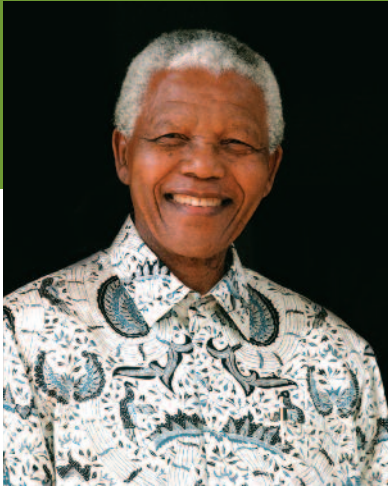
CGE-Mexico is thrilled to welcome Hillary Mealman back to Cuernavaca this spring as our social work professor. Hillary was a CGE student in 2003 during our very first Social Work in a Latin American Context semester program. That semester greatly impacted her, and her work since then has been directly related to CGE and what she learned. After graduating from Winona State University, Hillary returned to Cuernavaca and worked as CGE-Mexico's social work

intern/resident advisor for three years. She then earned a Master of Community Practice Social Work from the University of Minnesota. Her other work experience has included supervising volunteers and running programs at a Lutheran church in Guatemala City, as well as extensive work with the Latino community in Minnesota. She currently works as a family support social worker at a high school in Minneapolis, where she interacts with many Latino families and often serves as an interpreter in meetings with parents.

Hillary says, "Every day I see in myself the lessons I learned during my time as a student and as a member of the CGE-Mexico team, and I want more of this for myself as a professional social worker and as a member of the global community. My previous experience with CGE-Mexico has shown me that when we humble ourselves to an international experience, we can truly see glimpses of our world through different eyes as the intersections between ourselves and the world become illuminated."

Hillary has a deep understanding and a contagious enthusiasm for CGE pedagogy and the ways that students can be transformed by their experience here. We are eager to have Hillary be part of our staff again, and we know that she has a lot to contribute to our students.





Nelson Mandela: CGE Reflections from South Africa

Dictation from Molefi Mataboge, CGE consultant in Johannesburg, South Africa (as told to Linda Raven, Program Coordinator, CGE-Southern Africa)

When Nelson Mandela was released, we all expected him to come out of prison with anger. His approach shocked all of us. He came out talking

about reconciliation. I was a part of the Presidential Awards Program. It was copied from a similar program in England and had three levels; he presented certificates to participants who had achieved gold level. For me, I got the opportunity to see the human side of him. **Even just shaking his hand was something out of this world. I have met a lot of people in my life, but he had such a remarkable presence that I never encountered from anyone else.** His presence in the room – you could feel that he was “someone,” but he was not influenced by his position. Even in a hotel, he would want to meet the person who cleans. He had the memory of an elephant. Once he met you, he might not remember your name, but he would remember your face. The second time I met him, I was overwhelmed by the fact that he was able to remember me and asked how I was doing. Coming from Mandela, that was something else.

I would say that he held this country together. He had to hold the country together because people were angry and were talking about rebellion. Mandela was able to pull those we call enemies to sit down and talk. He was a great listener. He listened to not only those he agreed with, but also those he disagreed with. He even convinced the right wing militants to participate in Parliament, by just telling them that they would not be able to engage from the outside, so they might as well come in and convince everyone about their cause.

In South Africa, we have those who feel that he gave in too much in the process of reconciliation to accommodate the white minority, but it never made anyone lose respect for him as a person. He was also able to reflect later and say, “I could have made a better decision here, or this one was a good one.” That’s what made him a hero. That’s why I don’t think there will ever be another Mandela.

Words from Lejeune Lockett, former CGE staff person in Southern Africa

I distinctly remember my first visit to South Africa in 1981 when apartheid was still in full swing. In fact, the very week I was there with 16 members of my high school drill team, the South African soccer team was being boycotted in the World Cup games held in the U.S. Had I not been there to observe the effects of the apartheid policies with my own eyes, I would never have understood the fight for freedom and what Mr. Mandela and so many others stood for. I would not have valued the harmony among racial and ethnic groups in that country that we can openly see today.

Fast forward to 2003 when I began to travel more frequently to and through South Africa, visiting Robben Island, the Townships, the Apartheid and District 6 museums, enjoying shopping centers and restaurants, experiencing a new sense of freedom, and a nation of promise—it was a new day, all under the significant leadership of President Mandela.

Fast forward to 2013. I feel so grateful for the opportunity to celebrate his life and recognize how his efforts directly shaped my own life. **We should never underestimate the power of our connectedness, regardless of time, space, and distance.** As my Namibian colleague, Dax, would always say, “I am because we are.”

Education Abroad Conferences Descend on the Twin Cities

Minneapolis has been lucky to play host to two major education abroad conferences in November. The first was the Forum on Education Abroad’s Standards of Good Practice Institute, which focused on curriculum and teaching. Dr. Ann Lutterman-Aguilar, CGE Academic Director and CGE-Mexico Director; Regina McGoff, CGE Director; and Sarah Pradt of HECUA, presented a well-received session called

Academic Coursework: Finding Roots and Sources in the Local Context. The session explored community-based learning strategies and explored research that documented how learning objectives are achieved outside the classroom and enhanced by the local community.

The second event was the Council on International Education Exchange’s (CIEE) annual conference. CGE worked with CIEE to offer a pre-conference

faculty development seminar. It looked at issues of intercultural accommodation, integration, and assimilation, and involved an encounter and exchange with Minneapolis’ East African community. Dr. Ann Lutterman-Aguilar also presented at the conference (along with Dr. Tracy Bibelnieks of Augsburg College) on the topic of integrating study abroad into STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programs.

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