



AMIGOS
OF COSTA RICA

2019 Annual Report

Amigos of Costa Rica is a supporting organization of the CRUSA Foundation

 **CRUSA**
Cambiando **VIDAS**

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A Year to Celebrate

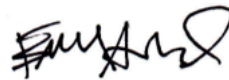
2019 was an incredible year of tremendous growth for Amigos of Costa Rica. Total funds raised increased from \$1.25 million in 2018 to over \$4 million in 2019. The number of Amigos of Costa Rica Affiliate organizations increased, with the addition of 30 new organizations, raising the total number of Affiliate Organizations to 83. In 2018 there were about 766 individual transactions received by Amigos of Costa Rica, and that number rose to 1,500 in 2019.

Amigos of Costa Rica was able to further its mission by responding to increasing numbers of inquiries from individuals, families, and corporations wishing to engage with Costa Rica's nonprofit sector. Many inquiries involved those seeking volunteer opportunities or other direct collaborations. Amigos of Costa Rica also made important progress in the increase of collaborations that will provide additional support to Amigos of Costa Rica Affiliate Organizations.

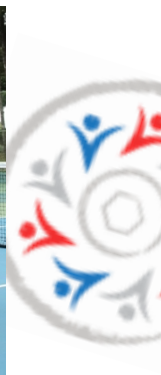
Amigos of Costa Rica is thriving. Costa Rica has friends and supporters around the world who have shown how enthusiastic they are to support those working for the wellbeing of a country they love. Costa Rica has innovative nonprofit organizations offering exciting solutions to challenges being faced.



Muni Figueres
President



Emily Arnold
Executive Director





Amigos of Costa Rica and the CRUSA Foundation

Amigos of Costa Rica was established in 2000 by the Costa Rica - United States Foundation for Cooperation, known as the CRUSA Foundation. Amigos of Costa Rica was created as a supporting organization of the CRUSA Foundation, with the role of fundraising for the benefit of CRUSA projects and to further CRUSA's goal of fostering sustainable development in Costa Rica. Since the inception of Amigos of Costa Rica, CRUSA has both guided and fully funded the work of Amigos of Costa Rica. The work of Amigos of Costa Rica would not be possible without the CRUSA Foundation, and, indeed, Amigos of Costa Rica would not exist without CRUSA.

The relationship between Amigos of Costa Rica and the CRUSA Foundation is a legacy of CRUSA's own unique history. The story begins in the mid 1990s, as Costa Rica was set to stop receiving aid from the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Normally as a country exits USAID's program, funds are spent down and the program is closed. In Costa Rica, a different pathway forward was proposed by leaders from both the Costa Rican and US communities: the creation of a nonprofit entity that could continue the collaboration between the two nations for the purpose of furthering the sustainable development of Costa Rica. To that end, CRUSA was established in 1996 and an endowment was created with the remaining USAID funds. Four years later, CRUSA established Amigos of Costa Rica to complete the vision of bi-national friendship and collaboration.

In the last 19 years, the relationship between Costa Rica and the United States has continued to evolve. Many US citizens come to Costa Rica on vacation or to live there full time. Costa Ricans venture to the US for higher education and employment. While citizens of both countries are learning and working alongside one another, additional connections are formed between the two countries. Amigos of Costa Rica has seen increasing generosity of US citizens in supporting philanthropic efforts in Costa Rica, and with CRUSA's support and guidance we look forward to continuing to help both those from the US and from around the world as they invest in Costa Rica's future.

Vision:

Amigos of Costa Rica will be the preeminent advocate for philanthropic engagement in Costa Rica.



Mission:

Amigos of Costa Rica contributes to the well-being of Costa Rica by connecting donors' values and resources with vetted non-profit solutions.

In Support of Costa Rica

Amigos of Costa Rica provides support through affiliate organizations to projects that drive impact. This year, we welcomed 30 new organizations, bringing our total to 83.

Amigos of Costa Rica Affiliate Organizations:

Abriendo Mentos*	Fundación Lifting Hands*
Acción Arte*	Fundación Mar a Mar
ACOS Surf*	Fundación Neotropica
Amigos del Aprendizaje (ADA)	Fundación Quirós Tanzi
ADUALEA*	Fundación UCR*
ADI Uvita*	FUNDECISE*
Agua Tica*	Fundecooperación
ALCCI*	Geoporter*
Aldeas Infantiles SOS	Guardavidas de la Zona Sur*
ALIARSE	Guanacaste Community Fund
ALTENER*	LAST
AMOR Animales de Nosara	Misión Tiburón
Animales de Asís*	Monteverde Community Fund
ASANA	Monteverde Friends School*
Asobitico	Monteverde Conservation League
Asociación de Seguridad de Nosara	Nicoya Peninsula Waterkeeper
Asociación Pro Asojoven	Nosara Animal Care
ATEC	Nosara Food Bank
Biblioteca David Kitson	Nosara Civic Association
Caminos de Osa	Nosara Firefighters
Casa de las Estrellas*	Nosara Scholarship Organization
Cedes Don Bosco	Obras del Espíritu Santo
CEPIA	Previda
CINDE*	Proyecto Daniel
Costas Verdes	Raising Coral
Creciendo Juntos	Recicla Nosara
Del Mar Academy Foundation	Refuge for Wildlife
Democracy Lab*	Ruta de la Clima*
Dress Your Rights*	SIBU Wildlife Sanctuary
Escuela Costarricense de Oportunidades*	SIFAIS*
Escuelita de Nosara	SOMOS Foundation*
Esperanza Summer School Camp	Soy Niña
Face of Justice*	Tambor Bay Turtles*
FECOP	TeenSmart
FUNBAM*	Ticos y Nicas Somos Hermanos
FUNDAMUN*	Tortuguiones
Fundación Acción Joven	Transforma*
Fundación Arca Verde	Turtle Love*
Fundación Ayúdenos para Ayudar*	Veragua
Fundación Corcovado	Voice of Guanacaste
Fundación Horizontes	Women's Club of Costa Rica
Fundación Isla del Coco (FAICO)	*denotes new in 2019

Achievements

With 83 Amigos of Costa Rica Affiliate Organizations working all over the country, the impact of the over \$4 million raised by Amigos of Costa Rica this year was incredible. Some highlights of these impacts include:

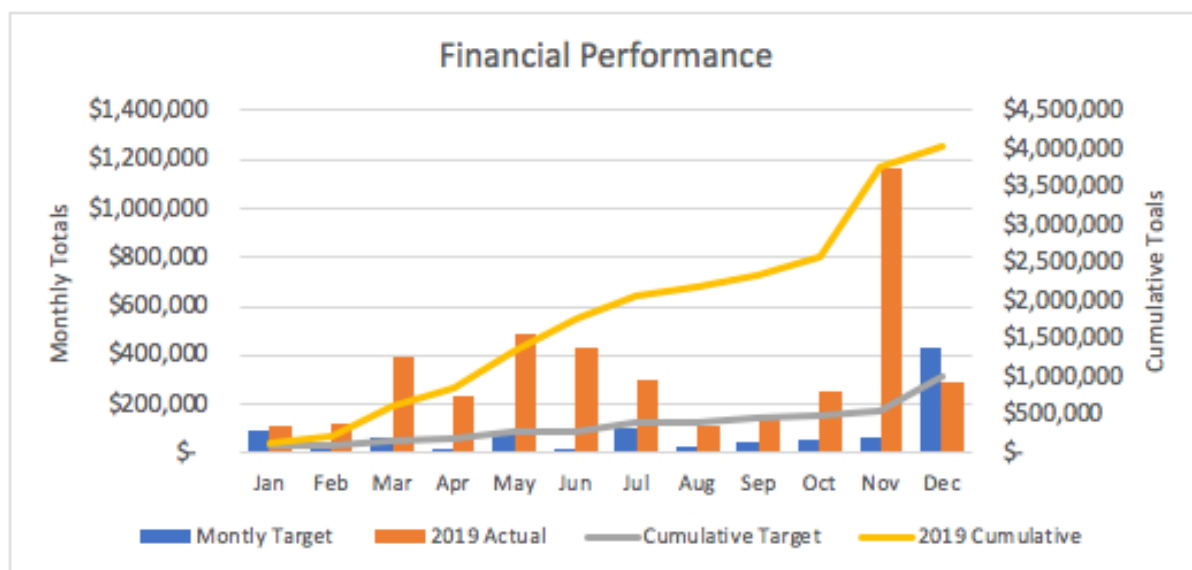
- The distribution of more than 350 bicycles to children along the Central and Southern Pacific Coast by **ACOS Surf**. By working with Amigos of Costa Rica, ACOS was able to more than triple the number of bikes donated. These bicycles were given to children to help them travel to school. Communities were selected by distance to school and limited economic opportunities for parents in the region.
- Thanks to a grant by the Lillian Lincoln Foundation, the **Instituto Clodomiro Picado at the University of Costa Rica** received funding via the **Fundación UCR** to undertake a number of infrastructure improvements that will allow them to meet the standards of the World Health Organization for the production of antivenom.
- **The Nicoya Peninsula Waterkeeper** established a regional recycling center, and is collaborating with a company called Bionic that transforms plastics collected from marine and coastal environments and transforms them into high-grade textiles and polymers. So far, the collaboration has processed 113 tons of recyclable materials.
- The **Fundación Arca Verde** worked this year to complete a visitor's center for their botanical garden that will feature a restaurant and a meeting room. This infrastructure will allow this vast botanical garden with over 1600 plants to receive and educate many guests in the coming years.
- **Internet for San Josecito:** In late July, Amigos of Costa Rica received a call from a donor who wished to grant \$22,500 to support a project in the Central Pacific, but they needed a US-based nonprofit to receive the funds. Through our incredible network, we were able to welcome the **ADI Uvita** as an Amigos of Costa Rica Affiliate Organization to take on the role of administering the funds. The donation we received was matched by many other generous donors, allowing ICE to begin the installation process of connecting San Josecito to broadband internet. A community without cell phone service will soon have internet connectivity allowing local families to access greater learning and employment opportunities.



Growth trends

Funds Raised

In 2019, Amigos of Costa Rica raised an impressive **\$4,053,315.52**. 1500 individual donations were made, nearly doubling the transactions from 2018 (762). Affiliate organizations benefiting from funds received by Amigos of Costa Rica increased from 45 organizations to 64 organizations. The funds raised in 2019 exceeded both our targets and our projections.



Growth Summary

	2018	2019
Total funds raised	\$1,246,527.71	\$4,053,315.52
Total number of donations	762	1500
Donations \$10,000 - \$19,999	6	12
Donations >\$20,000+	9	54
New Affiliate Organizations	18	30
Affiliate Orgs Receiving Funds	45	64

Amigos of Costa Rica successfully exceeded every metric in 2019, and growth was seen not just among large donors, but the everyday donations of individuals who felt a strong connection to and desire to contribute to projects benefitting Costa Rica.

Making Connections

In 2019 Amigos of Costa Rica continued to thrive by facilitating connections, solving shared problems, and achieving shared goals. This open and collaborative strategy provided a steady stream of inquiries from people and organizations interested in contributing to the well-being of Costa Rica. The highest percentage of inquiries received were donors asking for support in making donations (30%). The second-highest category of inquiries to the organization was a tie between organizations seeking to become affiliates (23%) and individuals and groups seeking volunteer opportunities in Costa Rica (23%). Some examples of the inquiries that we have received include:

Jessica Scheeter, Johnson Ohana Foundation

"Hello! I am the non-profit coordinator for the musician Jack Johnson and we are looking to partner with environmental non-profits for an upcoming concert in Costa Rica. We invite the non-profits to engage with fans with an educational table at the concert and offer a \$1000 donation to support their programs. The Amigos of Costa Rica platform seems like the perfect way to support local non-profits, since you have already done the vetting. We have a few groups in mind listed on the site that I would like to invite to join as All At Once Non-Profit Partners and I'm wondering if you can assist with introductions or sharing contact information. I also want to make sure I understand the donation process via the Amigos site. Perhaps we could set up a brief phone call today or tomorrow? Looking forward to hearing back...thanks so much!"

(Result: Five Amigos of Costa Rica Affiliate Organizations were able to attend the Jack Johnson Concert to share their work with concert-goers. These organizations also each received \$1000 from the Johnson Ohana Foundation)

Agustina Moppett, Director of International Alliances, CommonLit

Agustina wrote presenting CommonLit, a free platform that promotes literacy with instructional materials for students in grades 3-8 which are available in Spanish. Agustina was looking for a way to get these materials to organizations and teachers across Costa Rica which could use them.

(Result: Through the affiliate program, Amigos of Costa Rica connected Agustina with organizations which could leverage these materials. Eight organizations connected with Agustina.)

Martin Lasalle, Abriendo Mentas, Potrero, Guanacaste

"I am writing because we are interested in being part of Amigos of Costa Rica network. I believe that being part of the network will help us increase our reach and get more people to know what we do!"

(Result: Abriendo Mentas and their projects were reviewed and subsequently added to the Amigos of Costa Rica Affiliate program enabling donors to make an impact)

Vanessa Auger, US Embassy, San José, Costa Rica

"I am with the U.S. Embassy in San Jose, and we are looking for an organization to receive the leftovers from our Embassy Independence Day event. This is food being prepared by a hotel caterer. In the past, we have had a significant quantity left over that ends up in the trash."

(Result: Through Amigos connections, the leftover food was donated to SIFAIS, which works in La Carpio)

Vanessa, US Citizen

"We are going to Nosara, Costa Rica and have boxes of toothbrushes and T-shirts from a local dentist that we would like to donate to kids in need. Can you give us names of schools that we can donate to?"

(Result: Vanessa was connected to the Nosara Food Bank, which distributes these kinds of items to families in need)

Connecting donors' values and resources with vetted nonprofit solutions is at the core of the Amigos of Costa Rica mission. In 2019 Amigos of Costa Rica was able to successfully leverage the network of Affiliate Organizations and collaborators to connect many donors with the communities who could benefit from their contributions.

Building Relationships

In addition to web inquiries, Amigos of Costa Rica has also added value to a number of other foundations, organizations, donors, and processes.

Family foundations beginning their engagement in Costa Rica consult with Amigos of Costa Rica to learn more about engaging in philanthropy in Costa Rica. Amigos of Costa Rica is able to provide them with insights on Costa Rican culture, connect them with potential partners, vet nonprofits that they are interested in supporting, and connect them with like-minded funders.

Creative innovative problem solvers also come to Amigos of Costa Rica to share their ideas, brainstorm, and get important feedback on their proposals. From wealthy individuals exploring new ways to engage in philanthropy in Costa Rica, to seasoned non-profit professionals considering strategic engagement, Amigos of Costa Rica has provided significant value to many initiatives in different stages of their development.

Website Analytics

Overall, the website analytics demonstrate that more people are finding the Amigos of Costa Rica website and that the site is working more efficiently for them. In comparing the 2018 with 2019, we are seeing:

	July – Dec 2018	Jan – June 2019	July – December 2019	% change (July-Dec 2018 to July-Dec 2019)
Total website users	4598	5993	6787	32% increase
Website sessions	5760	7966	8917	35% increase

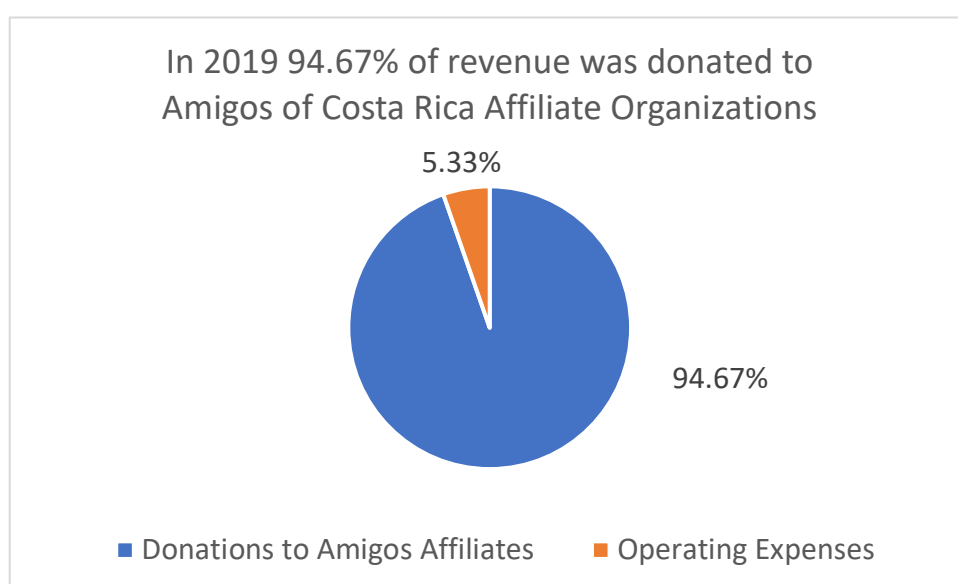
How do people find the Amigos of Costa Rica website?

About half of our visits are coming from organic searches, meaning people are entering keywords into Google and selecting our site. When people want to find nonprofits organizations or volunteer opportunities in Costa Rica, their search brings them to Amigos of Costa Rica. About 30% of visits come through direct searches, where people enter the name of our website. About 12% of site visitors are referred from other websites, with about 11% of visitors arriving via social media.

Developing Capacity Internally

In 2019, Amigos of Costa Rica grew rapidly, while continuing to improve internal systems and processes. There were many lessons learned and opportunities for improvement. For example, the Affiliate Organization reporting process is both labor intensive and time consuming. After this process concluded in Q2, new policies and a new procedure manual was put into place to increase efficiency of the reporting process to be undertaken in 2020.

The growth of Amigos of Costa Rica is illustrated by the very low operating costs relative to the donations received.



Improvements have been undertaken to enable Amigos to sustain and increase growth in 2020 and beyond. These included:

- Improvements to the Amigos of Costa Rica website including processes designed to help affiliates keep projects up to date
- Continued implementation of the Salesforce.com platform to improve tracking reliability and reporting
- In person reviews and meetings with affiliates in Costa Rica including trips to San Jose, Guanacaste, and the Central Pacific regions. Pending funding, additional travel will be scheduled to provide on-the-ground capacity building support and growth
- Identification and selection of a new firm to conduct the audit and support filing of required tax documentation for the organization

Additionally, Amigos of Costa Rica has undertaken a detailed governance review, as directed by the board of directors. This important activity helps ensure the long-term success of the

organization and provide assurance to donors and affiliates alike that the Amigos is operating in the most appropriate and effective way to protect funds and manage operations, while enabling donors to give to meaningful projects within Costa Rica. This governance review is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2020.

2019 also saw an increase in inquiries that had more complex and longer-term implications. These included long-term giving, donations of significant amounts of pro-bono support services, and donations other than cash (e.g., land, equipment). As Amigos continues to evolve to meet its mission and vision, it is anticipated that continued operational improvements will be made. In 2020, we anticipate improving and standardizing our materials to provide insight and support to donors, streamlining and enhancing the affiliate review process, opening up additional volunteer opportunities to support Amigos directly, and enhancing our social media and marketing activities to drive additional engagement.

Conclusions

Amigos of Costa Rica is growing rapidly, in the number of organizations served as well as the amount of funds raised. 2020 is poised to be another year of growth, expansion, and capacity building helping Costa Rica.

There is much to do, however, and the organization needs to continue on its journey to formalize and standardize processes, enhance opportunities for individuals to contribute, and provide insight to the organizations on the ground to enable greater impact through meaningful, scalable, sustainable projects.

Additionally, there are a variety of opportunities to drive greater impact including enhancing relationships with key organizations in Costa Rica like the Costa Rica USA Chamber of Commerce, hotels, multinational commercial organizations, and travel agencies that cater to American travelers. In so doing, Amigos of Costa Rica can continue to increase impact and provide a valuable and effective means to meet its mission and vision.





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