



Cabarete Sostenible Annual Report

March 2021 – March 2022



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A message from our Executive Director:

Dear Friends and Supporters of Cabarete Sostenible,

It's been quite a journey since we first embarked on our mission in 2020, and I wanted to take a moment to update you on our progress and share some exciting developments.

Cabarete Sostenible (CS) was born as a collaborative effort in response to the food shortage crisis that swept through the Dominican Republic due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We brought together NGOs, community leaders, food providers, and volunteers, all determined to make a difference. Fast forward to August 2021, and we achieved a significant milestone – official incorporation as a non-profit organization, "Asociación de Beneficio Publico," in the Dominican Republic.

Our initial focus was broad, aiming to help those affected by the crisis, but over time, we've honed in on specific demographics that are especially vulnerable: the elderly, disabled individuals, and unemployed single parents. What we initially thought of as "short-term efforts" has evolved into a continuous program because these groups continue to require food relief and support.

As we transitioned away from the immediate crisis of the pandemic, we took a step back to reevaluate our vision and actions. We recognized the importance of critically examining our approach and avoiding colonial, racist, and savior mindsets when engaging with our community. To that end, our team and volunteer leaders participated in a transformative two-day workshop led by Ruth Pion on Anti-racist and Decolonial Training and Reflection. This experience equipped us with the necessary tools and historical knowledge to ensure our work is rooted in fairness and respect.

Cabarete Sostenible is a small grassroots organization, but our dedication and passion for our mission are unwavering. We are incredibly thankful for your support, which has been instrumental in our journey so far. It's been an eventful year, and we're excited to share our year in review with you.

In abundance,

Moraima Capellán Pichardo
Executive Director
Cabarete Sostenible





Who we are:

Mission:

Provide food relief to the neediest families and develop food sovereignty through civic regenerative agro-forestry and the creation of social enterprises.

Vision:

Eradicate food insecurity and foster a Cabarete where no one goes hungry; where the historically excluded are nourished with a variety of food options that honor their nutritional needs and respect their cultural background.

Values:

Our philosophy is to both feed a family with fish for a day, and provide them the tools to fish for a lifetime.

1. Patience

At Cabarete Sostenible, we are careful about what is labeled or dismissed as “culture” that could actually be conditioned habits meant to sustain systems of inequality. Our communities are hungry for more than what they are taught. We will strive to create an enriching environment for innovation. We will work to dismantle outdated belief systems. We understand that this work takes time, takes empathy, dedication to unlearning and profound care for each member of our community. We will move with patience and understanding.

2. Active Engagement

We are not saviors; we are active participants in our progress and collective improvement. Meaningful engagement is achieved with boots on the ground, listening to the needs of the people we are trying to help. We will not impose our desired solutions and we will remain open to the actual needs, wants and wisdom of our community.

3. Social Justice

We seek to create long overdue racial and social equity by returning to ancestral practices that were violently interrupted through an extreme capitalist system. Cabarete Sostenible leads with an anti-racist and decolonial perspective.

We promise to never:

- Engage in poverty porn; we must not forget the dignity of those we are helping by showcasing their poverty or lack of access.
- Make decisions without the input of those directly impacted by or involved.

We may not always get it right, but please hold us accountable.





Summary of 2021 and Q1 2022 Activities:

Food Aid Program



Cabarete Sostenible executed eleven food ration pack distributions totaling 1,100 food packages:

March 9, 2021	July 13, 2021	November 13, 2021
April 13, 2021	August 10, 2021	December 11, 2021
May 11, 2021	September 14, 2021	January 22, 2022
June 17, 2021	October 12, 2021	February 12, 2022



By working with local distributors and farms, we have achieved a high food safety standard. Each food package is designed to provide four individuals with up to two week's worth of supplemental nutrition. The local public school has provided the space for our volunteers to package these items for an effective and uninterrupted distribution program.

- In total we estimate that around **4,400 people benefitted** from our emergency food aid over time.
- Of the 1,100 food packages that have been distributed since March 2021 until February 2022, the beneficiaries of the food aid are broken down as follows:
 - o 3% are single parent homes
 - o 20% are homes with one or more persons are elderly
 - o 76% are unemployed households with one or more children

The CS monthly food distribution is carried out in the following neighborhoods of Cabarete: Callejón de la Loma, La Cienega, Barrio Blanco, Rinconada, Jardin Deportivo, Islabon, Centro de Cabarete, Punta Goleta (Kite Beach), Bombita, and El Play.

CS community questionnaire:

Street and home addresses are not updated nor reliable in our region and for most of the island. Accurate government information is limited and/or inaccessible making the targeting of vulnerable families particularly challenging. Relying on word of mouth and trusted community leaders helped propel the initial emergency food relief efforts but brought its own set of conflicts as we moved forward. We were confronted with the reality that our sources of information were often biased and prejudiced.

Our solution: our own version of a census. The “Cabarete Sostenible Questionnaire” aims to gather important demographic data that enables us to identify vulnerable populations such as the elderly, single parents, and persons with disabilities. Our objective is to reach each home, but the questionnaire is completely voluntary and confidential.



So far the **results** we have gathered through our questionnaire show that:

- **76% of families surveyed indicated being economically / nutritionally affected by the covid-19 pandemic**



- 44% indicated having a high level of nutritional need
- 31% confirmed by us are suffering from severe food insecurity

Community Garden:



CS opened the first community garden on Kite Beach in April 2020. Volunteer led, this public space serves as both an information and hands-on educational center. When we were first given access to the site in April 2020, we mobilized quickly to clean up garbage and debris, create paths and sections of garden space. Unfortunately, on May 7, 2021, the landowner asked us to leave the site as he had begun to “plan a small project.” A few days later, we found that our garden crops had been sprayed with herbicide, effectively killing all of our food production. While we were never able to confirm who sprayed the garden with harsh chemicals, Cabarete Sostenible was forced to vacate the premises and incurred a huge loss of material, labor hours and morale for our team and volunteers.



CS saw an opportunity for a new space in the heart of the Callejon de la Loma, the second largest neighborhood in Cabarete. Formerly the dojo of Academia de la Costa, the new space included a cafe space and large backyard for gardening. CS volunteers designed renovations of the space to transform it into what became La Cocina Comunitaria and the new Jardín Comunitario. It officially opened in December of 2021.

The Community Garden hosts monthly orientations for incoming gardening volunteers and open hours Monday through Friday. Unlike common community garden models, our space does not charge the public for use of garden beds. We coordinate group work, to learn and grow together, with the mutual agreement that all goods harvested from the garden will be used for the food aid program or to generate funds for the organization via the farmers market.

Activities and events have included: Syntropic Agriculture course, compost workshops, Harvesting and Cooking days, Seed exchange and planting workshops, among others.

Fun fact: CS was able to use the existing structure that once hosted the dojo of Academia de la Costa to create a greenhouse. We have recycled as much of the wood materials as possible throughout the garden, even the cana roofing was transformed into a nutritious compost that we utilized in the soil of the garden beds.

La Cocina Comunitaria - Community Kitchen



The creation of the La Cocina Comunitaria, arose from our need to find a new location for the community garden. La Cocina provides a multi-purpose space to train volunteers, community members, host events and serve as a base camp for the development of the CS community farm.

Beginning in December 2021, La Cocina is our meeting and work space for the monthly Food Aid Program. CS utilizes the space to host practical, educational and fundraising events for all the community of Cabarete.

In addition to our community program, La Cocina is also the hub for our social enterprises program. The concept for the kitchen was created as a shared space in collaboration with Woke Foods, a farm-to-table restaurant and CS runs a beach almond processing workshop. Woke Foods is a women-led cooperative, founded by Ysanet Batista Vargas, serving a menu of ancestral and Caribbean plant-based food.



With the collaboration of volunteer engineer Daxton Barnett, Cabarete Sostenible has created the concept and timeline for a new beach almond processing machine. Due to the increased cost of the kitchen renovation, we prioritized the community center and put the machine project on pause. Without the machine, our team is manually managing all processing and production of beach almond products at the community kitchen. Working with Jivelis Santana, a young mother from the neighborhood of La Cienega, Cabarete Sostenible provided the initial investment, processing space tools and equipment to create a series of nut butters which have successfully been sold at the weekly farmers market.

At the Community Kitchen, Jivelis helped organize the monthly programming, guided incoming volunteers, assisted in the weekly farmers market and most importantly she ran her own social business making beach almond and peanut butters. Jivelis earned a percentage of sales for each nut butter sold on top of her salary as a registered employee.

In collaboration with Woke Foods, from May 2021 to March 2022, CS campaigned to raise the funds necessary to renovate the community kitchen and greenhouse of the community garden:

Original Budget	Actual Budget (adjusted after inflation, rising costs of materials, unforeseen repairs)	Total Funds Raised
14,000.00 USD	\$28,651.77 USD	\$23,361.13 USD





Community Farm: La Finca Comunitaria (previously, Laguna Cabarete Eco Farm)



Previously named “Laguna Cabarete Eco Farm,” La Finca Comunitaria is located inside the Monumento Natural Lagunas Cabarete y Goleta. This Natural Monument, which was also previously named Parque Nacional El Choco, is categorized as a protected area, category 3 by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic.

The location of the Finca is accessed at the end of Callejón de la Loma and past the Cabarete Caves. A long term lease between CS and the landowner of La Finca was signed at the beginning of March 2021 providing CS with long-term usage rights to 29 acres of land for a period of 10 years.

After understanding the status of La Finca as a protected area and the importance of this area for the overall health of the island, CS went back to the drawing board. We discarded the original ideas of using La Finca to develop aquaponics, pisciculture and even a compost for eggs plan that while an integrative way to manage organic waste to create compost and raise chickens, it would not be appropriate for the needs of this land.



The Community Farm is currently 29 acres of undeveloped farmland which the soil had been previously damaged and eroded through the raising of cattle and small-scale monoculture by nearby family farmers. This is a reflection of the reality of the area where many of the families left are composed of seniors that can no longer sustain themselves through farming. With increasing restrictions, poverty and conflict with Ministry officials, many have chosen to sell their land to foreign investors. Even though it is a “protected area” as the legal landowners, the Ministry can’t prevent the sale of these lands. Community organizers are concerned that this will drive not only gentrification in the area but that it will further weaken any environmental objectives as it is unknown what the foreign investors have planned for these sites.

In May 2021, our core team attended an intensive workshop on Syntropic Agriculture hosted at Finca Tierra Negra in the city of La Vega. Led by experts Jose Ferreira and Mauro Rosito, this course presented a solution to the planting strategies that can be adopted at La Finca to ensure a regenerative management of this land. During the workshop, we created bonds and communication channels between Finca Tierra Negra, Quisqueya Permacultura and Mauro Rosito, all leaders in using agroforestry to transform food production and care for the environment.



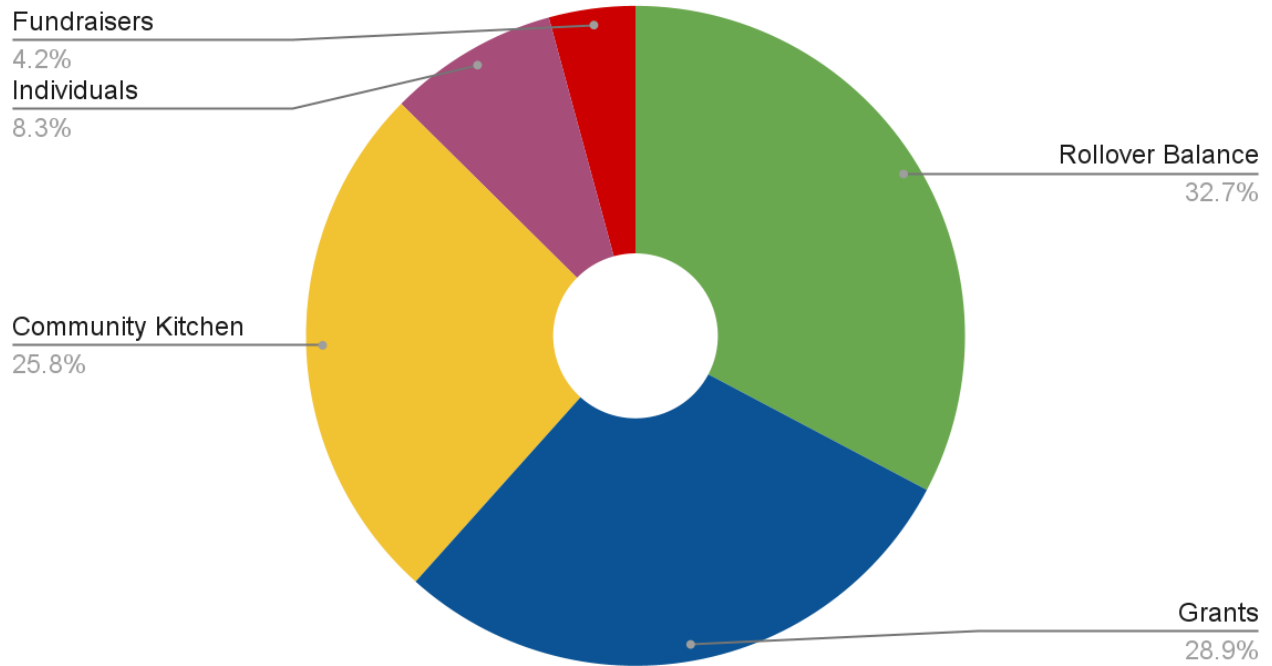
With the mentorship of Mauro Rosito, our vision for La Finca shifted towards using syntropic agroforestry to grow food in abundance *and* repair damaged soil to regenerate the forest. The approach of Syntropic Agriculture is regenerative and conserves natural resources because it imitates and accelerates the systems of the rainforest. The rainforest ecosystem consists of hundreds of different plants, all growing symbiotically in a dense space. Their requirements for sunlight or other nutrients vary; for instance, the big, tall trees provide shade and shelter for smaller plants. In addition, the plants bloom at different times and subsequently develop their fruits throughout the year.

On December 11th and 12th of 2021, CS co-hosted its first Syntropic Agriculture workshop with Mauro Rosito at La Finca. Attended by 30 participants from throughout the island, this 2 day intensive course included theoretical and scientific lectures as well as hands-on activities. The concepts were immediately put into practice by planting three tree lines that integrated annual and perennial crops, fruit and native timber trees. Six students from the Cabarete community joined the workshops on a full scholarship and five students on a partial scholarship. Over 800 seeds and seedlings were planted over the course of the weekend!



January 2021- December 2021 Financials Summary:

Income

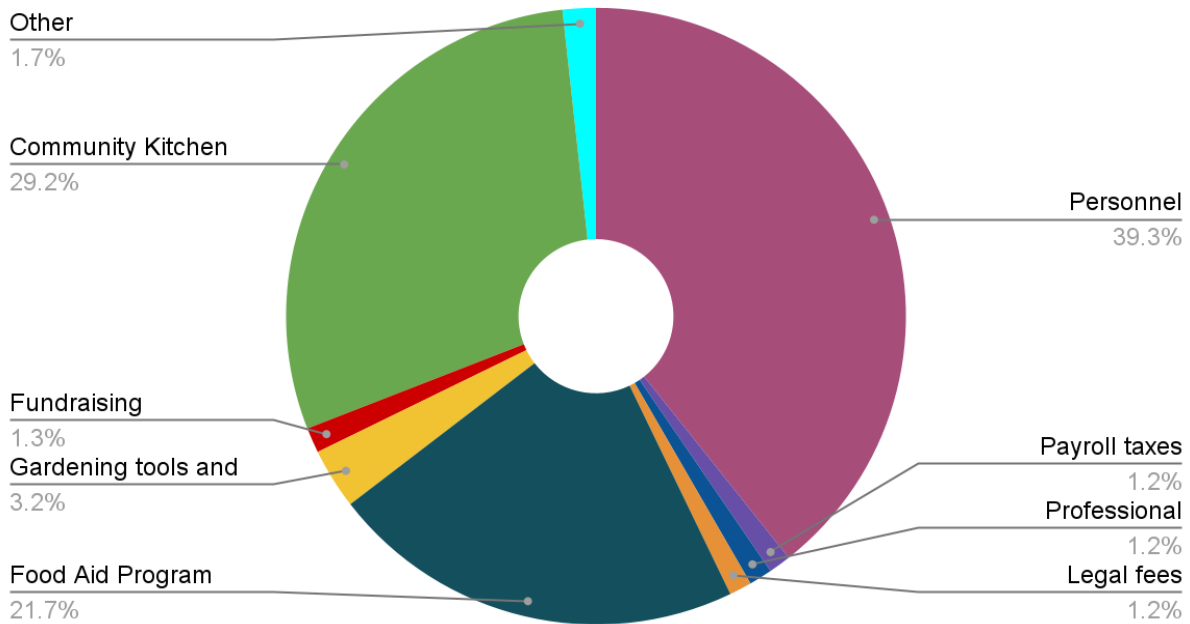


<u>Income in USD</u>	
Rollover balance from 2020:	\$26,517.80
Grants:	\$23,405.79
Community Kitchen Campaign:	\$20,886.73
Individuals:	\$6,763.34
Fundraisers:	\$3,438.21
Total Income:	\$81,011.87



January 2021- December 2021 Financials Summary:

Expenses



<u>Expenses in USD</u>	
Personnel:	\$25,898.05
Payroll taxes and benefits:	\$769.66
Professional development:	\$800.00
Legal fees:	\$776.29
Food Aid Program:	\$14,296.52
Gardening tools and materials:	\$2,098.02
Fundraising expenses:	\$874.99
Community Kitchen:	\$19,237.61
Other:	\$1,142.32
Total expenses:	\$65,893.46



Thank you to our donors

\$1,000 - \$24,000 USD	
Fondation Philippe Daher	Charlie's Foundation
Why Hunger	Dean Alistair
Brad Funk	Anna Reeve
Carey Pope	Linn Baumgardt
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Emma Yora	

\$10-\$500 USD		
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\$10-\$500 USD		
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Our Team

President

Tomas “Papo” Soñé

Executive Board

Moraima Capellán Pichardo

Iskania Livanessa Perez

Thierry Daher

Ysanet Batista Vargas

Director of Questionnaire and Food Aid Program

Jenny Simoes

Community Kitchen Administrator

Jivelis Santana

Volunteer Coordinator

Mery Jane Garcia Ynfante



“Cabarete Sostenible offered me the opportunity to learn about all of these new concepts of food sovereignty and how to create mutual aid. I never graduated from high school, I come from a tough background and did not have the resources to be able to get ahead,” said Jivelis. “It has made a huge difference in my life to feel the support provided by Cabarete Sostenible as well as the tools to create the collaborations of the nut butters.”

Jivelis Santana - Community Kitchen Coordinator