It is our pleasure to present to you Otra Cosa Network’s Annual Report for 2015. The report includes some great examples of our successes in the fight against illiteracy and injustice, including highlighting our work with our HELP Programme.

The evidence is overwhelming that empowering women and girls is essential to reducing poverty. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by poverty and by illiteracy. They play a hugely disproportionate role in lifting their families and entire communities out of poverty. In this Annual Report you’ll find some great examples of our important work on our programmes, which of course involves working with both women and men, girls and boys.

Environmental degradation in Huanchaco represents a fundamental challenge. This is also part of our environmental educational mission. We are committed to helping the local communities become more resilient in the face of this enormous challenge and to advocating at local, regional levels to mitigate these problems.

All our fantastic work could not be achieved without the great international support from our partners such as Litworld International and our partners who trust us with international volunteering such as: HorizonCosmopolit, Commundo and Cooperating Volunteers as well as all the universities such as Sheffield and Portsmouth among others.

Thanks to the European Year of Development Fund we organised an exhibition that showcased photographs depicting Otra Cosa Network’s work; a unique way of raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals; with young Peruvians sharing inspiring personal stories through photographs and videos, through a mini tour around England during October to December 2015.

I am proud of our many accomplishments over the past year and of the tireless work of our amazing staff and volunteers in Peru. I hope the stories and evidence in this Annual Report will inspire you to join us in supporting our work.
2015 has been a fantastic year for Otra Cosa Network, full of lots of hard work and exciting changes! We have expanded to have three staff members in Peru and this has made a huge difference to what we’ve been able to achieve as an organisation. I’m very proud to have led such a fantastic team in Peru – I couldn’t have asked for more passion and dedication from the staff and we’ve had many incredibly talented volunteers from both Peru and abroad, who have been an absolute inspiration and have contributed so much to the communities they worked with.

Our main focus this year has been on improving the quality of our work in the community. This has meant that we’ve put a lot of emphasis on our five HELP projects and the results of this can be seen in each of the projects, although perhaps most notably in HELP Youth where we opened a brand new all-concrete skate park in Cerrito. We’ve also endeavoured to strengthen our relationships with our partner projects. Through mutual agreement, some partnerships have ended, but this has given us the capacity to provide more consistent support to our partner projects overall, something which we feel is very important.

Strengthening our community relationships has also played an important role this year. Not only did we create a brand new logo to help OCN become more visible within the community, but we’ve also strived to create new local partnerships. We were especially excited to start collaborating with students from Universidad Privada del Norte, who we trained to deliver workshops to younger children, as part of our HELP Environment programme. In addition to this we have been incredibly lucky to be able to count on the support of local businesses, organisations and individuals in terms of donations and enabling us to carry out a record level of local fundraising which all goes directly to our projects and partner projects.

We would like to thank everyone who has been involved in making this year so successful and look forward to continuing to work together in order to support our local communities throughout 2016 and beyond.

Jenny Kehoe
Operations Manager
We held our annual partner meeting in August with 13 representatives from different partner projects, where we discussed how we can improve our work together. We mainly spoke about OCN – partner communication and inter-project communication and collaborations.

With the continued support from LitWorld in New York, we expanded our literacy programme from two to four clubs, which now have a total of 88 members.

With the grant we received from LUSH at the end of 2014 we were able to hire a second Assistant Manager to run our environmental project. In our collaboration with 40 university students from UPN (Universidad Privada del Norte), they taught 20 workshops, reaching 200 children with workshops on climate change, ecosystems and recycling! We also continued to hold our monthly ‘Yo Cuido mi Playa’ campaign focusing on training youth to be environmental leaders.

We completed the construction of our all-concrete skate ramp! This was celebrated with a grand opening ceremony with games, skating, food and music and over 100 people from the community participated. We signed a lease with the owner of the land guaranteeing us rent-free use of the land for five years. This was an extremely important achievement as it enables us to make long-term plans for our work with the youth of Cerrito de la Virgen.

We received a large donation from a school in the United States that allowed us to provide school materials to over 45 students who attend an after school club in Las Lomas, as well as purchase four new classroom sized whiteboards for Las Lomas school.

Local fundraising and monetary donations came to a total of 15,074 Peruvian Nuevo Soles in 2015! 100% of these funds raised or donated locally go directly into one of our HELP projects or the support our partner projects.
Otra Cosa Network continues to be lead by our Directors, Peter and Juany Murphy, who work part-time from the UK to oversee the overall operations of the organisation and supervise the staff. Jaci Braga stepped down as the Operations Manager in January and Jenny Kehoe took over the role after almost two years as our Assistant Operations Manager. This year we hired two new Assistant Managers, Amy Christensen who began in January and Beata Gullberg who joined the team in June. The Board of Trustees has overall control of the charity, and is responsible for making sure that Otra Cosa Network is doing what it has been set up to do: making a difference in the local communities where we serve through dedicated volunteerism.

NEW STAFF MEMBERS:

AMY CHRISTENSEN - ASSISTANT MANAGER OF VOLUNTEERS AND MARKETING, PERU
Amy grew up in Seattle, USA and attended Washington State University where she studied Business Finance and Economic Sciences. She previously worked with a community empowerment organisation based in Mexico, where she coordinated the volunteer groups. She began with OCN as a HELP English volunteer and spent five months teaching English in two of the local schools, as well as filling the role of HELP English coordinator. Amy joined the staff team in January 2015 and is responsible for volunteer management and marketing. She also manages the HELP English programme and looks after the finances in Peru.

BEATA GULLBERG - ASSISTANT MANAGER OF ENVIRONMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS, PERU
Beata (Bibi) was born and brought up in Sweden. She studied social science with a particular focus on education, and wrote her thesis on the intercultural learning experience of expatriates. She previously worked in fundraising with the Swedish Red Cross and first came to Huanchaco to volunteer for eight months as the HELP Women Coordinator and HELP Literacy: Girls’ LitClub Coordinator. Since June 2015 she has been part of the staff team, where she is responsible for managing our HELP Environment and HELP Youth programmes, as well as looking after our relationships with partner projects.
Otra Cosa Network runs five of our own projects, which are all part of the Huanchaco Education and Learning Programme (HELP). HELP is dedicated to advancing the education possibilities and resources for lower-income children and adults in Huanchaco and the surrounding shanty towns. The five projects include:

HELP Women: Promoting women’s empowerment in Huanchaco.
HELP Environment: Teaching children about local solutions to global environmental issues.
HELP English: Providing equal education opportunities through access to English classes.
HELP Literacy: Improving children’s self-confidence and social-emotional skills through reading and writing.
HELP Youth: For children to play, learn and be creative in a safe and inspiring environment.
Throughout 2015 we continued to focus our efforts on working with the comedor group of women that has been organised through the local church. A comedor is like a cross between a soup kitchen and a community centre. Many of the women who attend are single mothers and live in difficult circumstances, so the comedor provides a real lifeline to them, as it allows them to feed themselves and their children well and cheaply, as well as providing a safe space where they can come together and receive support. The HELP Women programme aims to build on this by offering different skills classes to the women to give them the opportunity to receive an (extra) income and put food on the table. In addition to this we offer workshops on issues such as health and other relevant topics, as well as occasional fun activities to allow the women time out to just enjoy each other’s company. Finally we offer support to their children through extra activities that they otherwise would not be able to access.

This year our sewing classes have continued, albeit not without a few difficulties. Early in the year the women had taken on overly-complicated projects and felt disheartened by their lack of progress, so when they restarted in October it was agreed that they would start new much easier project: tote bags. The mums liked the idea and in just three weeks two of the mums finished their bags. As a result, the sewing students started to realise that once they’ve improved their sewing skills, they will be able to sell their products and make some extra income.

In 2015 we decided that once a month we will hold our weekly volunteer lunch at the comedor. This provides the women with the chance to hold a fundraising ‘pollada’ and the volunteers pay S/.10 each for lunch, which then goes to where it is most needed, as decided by the women (this could be medicine for a child, school uniforms for those who don’t yet have them, etc).

In February we took the 10 mothers and 20 children that had been attending the comedor during the summer holidays went on a day trip to Lake Conache. It was an amazing day and allowed both the women and their children to just relax with games and laughter at the lake. We also had various celebratory events, including Mother’s Day crafts and treats and a movie night with snacks for the mums and their kids in one of the local bars, JanPix, which was a great success.

« Before I came here, my thoughts were about what I could give them. Now I have volunteered here, my memories are about what they have given me.»
Jody, HELP Women Volunteer
This year HELP Environment, the newest of our five HELP projects, really came into its own. We held monthly “Yo Cuido Mi Playa” ("I take care of my beach") campaigns, where we taught the participants about climate change, global warming, the three R’s (reduce, reuse, recycle) and ecosystems, while working together in groups, solving problems and playing games. The children realised that they are part of a bigger movement, working on local solutions for global issues. During 2015 we had a total of 159 children and youth participating in our “Yo Cuido Mi Playa” campaigns, with six out of ten participants being girls, and the average attendance per campaign was 39 children.

Our local and international volunteers also carried out a series of workshops at some of our projects, teaching around 100 participants about the environment. Through the initiative of one of our local volunteers, who has previous experience in hydroponic gardening, we started our first hydroponic garden at one of our partner projects, involving around 40 children over three months, teaching them about sustainable gardening. The result was lettuce, spinach and coriander which made for a yummy salad and a great sense of accomplishment. The garden was possible thanks to a fundraising event thrown by our volunteers on site in Huanchaco, raising 269.40 Peruvian Nuevo Soles (approx. £55.50).

In 2015 we also strengthened our relationship with Universidad Privada del Norte, a local university in Trujillo, and for the second semester of 2015, 40 first year students from their environmental engineering programme carried out a total of 20 workshops in our projects and local schools. They taught 200 children about how to take care of the environment. It was great for the youth of Huanchaco to have some young local role models to look up to.

Our work with HELP Environment also caught the eye of the local TV channel Sol TV, who invited us to talk about our projects in general and HELP Environment specifically. This gave us a chance to reach the entirety of the city of Trujillo, which has almost 700 000 inhabitants, and proves that the environment is a subject that matters to the local populace, and is worth fighting for, even though we do still have a long way to go!

For the upcoming year we aim to bring hydroponic gardening to our partner schools, which are struggling with very few resources and do not have the possibility to expand the mandatory curriculum with extracurricular activities. We also strive to expand our work with the Universidad Privada del Norte, including even more students and youth.
In 2015 our HELP English programme had over 370 students in three primary schools in the Huanchaco area. A strong majority of the students who attend these three schools come from low income families and live in shanty town areas surrounding the main town of Huanchaco. We also had a volunteer spend a few months teaching in the mountain village of Yanasara in their secondary school.

At the beginning of the year we were fortunate enough to have a volunteer with us who had many years’ experience of teaching languages. She spent a month going through our curriculum, preparation packet and introductory powerpoint for HELP English and making suggests and edits to this programme. The work she did helped our volunteers to feel more prepared and supported in their roles with HELP English.

In May we linked up with an elementary school from Seattle, USA who helped raise funds to purchase sets of school supplies for over 45 students, as well as to purchase four new classroom-sized whiteboards for the school in Las Lomas.

Throughout this year we had 33 volunteer teachers helping make this school year great. We strengthened our relationships with the schools and received a lot of positive feedback from the school directors and teachers about the improvement in consistency of the programme. It was, however, not without challenges. We are continuously growing and improving our English curriculum to provide our volunteers with more support in their role. As the year went on we continued to collect new resources to embellish our English classes and further assist the volunteer teachers.

Looking forward, during the first few months of 2016 we will partner with the local library to provide free summer classes to any children who are interested. We have also been working to raise the funds to provide all of our older students from third to sixth grade with English workbooks. This will not only give the students more opportunity to advance further in the language but will also help to further guide the volunteer teachers through their lessons. Next school year we will also be taking on seven additional classes increasing our total student body to over 500 students in the Huanchaco area.

«For our kids to learn English, for us that is a blessing. This is something that only the private schools have, those who pay. Here there is no money, here we have kids from very low income families. So this really helps us and gives them an opportunity. »

Mireya, Local Teacher Las Lomas School
Our LitClubs run once a week as an after-school activity for children aged 8-16 years old in order to help them engage with and enjoy reading, writing and storytelling, whilst promoting self-confidence. The leaders of our LitClubs are members of the local Huanchaco community and the LitClubs are single-sex environments which aim to provide the children with positive role models of their own gender. The LitClub curriculum is based around seven key strengths which are designed to foster trust and mutual respect between the members of LitClub: Belonging, Curiosity, Friendship, Kindness, Confidence, Courage and Hope.

In 2015, 88 children and teenagers regularly attended our LitClubs: 60 girls and 28 boys. This year we doubled the number of LitClubs that we run: having started the year with just two LitClubs, we finished with four. In May, we launched our third LitClub: Girls’ LitClub Las Lomas. This is our second LitClub for girls, as well as our second LitClub in Las Lomas, complementing the existing Boys’ LitClub in the area. In September we split our large Girls’ LitClub in Cerrito into primary and secondary-aged groups. This allowed us to create two groups at different levels. The older girls in particular have been very enthusiastic about having their own, more ‘grown-up’ group and all of the girls have benefitted from the smaller group sizes.

In March we celebrated ‘World Read Aloud Day’ and in October all of our groups put on events for ‘Stand Up for Girls’, which celebrates the rights of girls – something that is particularly important for both girls and boys in communities where machismo-related issues can be particularly strong. These two events are celebrated by LitClubs around the world and gave us the chance to invite parents, siblings and friends to come along for the occasion. We celebrated the events with guest speakers, music, games, food and of course, reading aloud. The LitClub members read aloud with a microphone, and it was great to be able to see the improvement in their reading and confidence levels from last year.

At the very end of 2014 our Girls’ LitClub in Cerrito started a pen-pal exchange with another LitClub group in Colombia. This has been going well in 2015. The girls have continued to send letters to their Colombian counterparts and have enjoyed receiving responses.

In 2015 we were able to significantly expand our three LitClub libraries, which between them received just over new 250 books, including both national and international authors.
We started off the year moving in to our newly constructed all-concrete skate ramp, and in the first half of 2015 we managed to sign a contract for rent-free use of the land for five years, securing the continuation of our HELP Youth programme. During the year we also managed to build extra concrete ramps, increasing the diversity and diversion of our ramp, challenging our young athletes to improve their skating further.

In our new location we were also able to construct a small classroom, where we have started to increase our non-skate activities. These activities have ranged from arts and crafts, to reading and homework help, to workshops about the environment. Through the art workshops, our volunteers and the youth at the ramp created original and personal murals decorating the walls of the ramp, increasing the feeling of pride and ownership amongst the young community we work with.

Our community at the Skate Ramp has been of a considerable size, with an average of 40-50 children attending the ramp each month and a daily average of 15 children and youth skating, being creative in the side room, learning new things or simply socialising with each other and the volunteers. In total, we have well over 100 children and youth participating at the ramp with varying consistency; a third of the participants being girls. We continue to strive to attract both boys and girls with different activities, always considering the wide span of age of the participants as well, which ranges from 2 - 18 years old.

Apart from the every day running of the ramp, we have also organised a couple of events that have stood out during the year. There were several internal skate competitions, at one of these we brought in judges from the neighbouring city of Trujillo, and all of the participants received great prizes donated through sponsors. We also held a fantastic re-opening ceremony after having built the new concrete ramps, where over 100 people from the local community attended. At both of these events we had full-page coverage in the regional newspaper.

Besides the local media coverage, a french videographer made a short film about the ramp, which was then used to promote fundraising efforts for the project. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FW0myi6_UdI.) The fundraising effort following the video resulted in an impressive £1272.00, which together with the help of a donation from the local construction company Repalsa who donated 1580.87 Peruvian Nuevos Soles (approx. £325.00) of concrete and many of the construction materials we needed, made our dreams of an improved ramp come true. In addition to this, we also received a donation from Rice and Dreams of US$520 (approx. £351.60) and we raised 1080.70 Peruvian Nuevo Soles (approx. £222.40) locally, which funded the events, activities and materials at the ramp throughout the year.
During 2015 we worked hard to focus our efforts and improve the quality of our existing partnerships. By mutual agreement we have stopped working with some of our previous partners, including the local day nursery “Cuna Más”. The children’s home in Leymebamba has also become self-sufficient and no longer needs help from external volunteers, which is great news. By choosing to focus on the quality of our existing partnerships, really strengthening those relationships and not accepting new partner projects, we are now able to provide more consistent support to our partners projects, something which we feel is very important.

In August we had a successful partner meeting, attended by many of the partners we still work with, where our director Juany Murphy held a training in Monitoring and Evaluation. We also evaluated our partnerships and the network we have established, and together decided to further improve and increase our communication between OCN and projects, as well as between projects and the volunteers and even between projects. For instance, thanks to the connection at this meeting, our HELP Literacy teacher was able to give the staff of the special needs school training in different massage therapy techniques.

Since an important part of the work OCN does happens in the partner projects, we also arranged three project tours during the year, giving our volunteers the a chance to visit our partner projects and get an insight into the extensive network of institutions and organisation with which OCN works.

For 2016, we will continue to strive to improve the quality of our partnerships and our communication, so that our partners get the most out of the experience, and so that our volunteers feel like they are supported and arrive well-prepared for their tasks.
It has been an educational year for our International Relationships. 2015 will not be forgotten easily. It was eventful to say the least! We expanded our university and school relationships, partnered with other charities in the UK and were able to host a wonderful photo exhibition around England using a grant we were awarded by Bond. We have created stronger relationship with our international partners HorizonCosmopolite and Commundo as well as developed new partnership in Spain with Cooperating Volunteers.

This year we continued to welcome fantastic MA researchers from Sheffield University. Three students came to do their fieldwork research with our projects, working with our HELP Women and HELP Literacy programmes and looking into the effect of tourism on our communities. The research that they carry out is useful for OCN in terms of evaluating the impact of our projects and presence in the community. We also began working closely with Portsmouth University’s year abroad programme and had two of their students complete their year working in our HELP Women and HELP Youth programmes. For the first time, Solihull and Myton schools from the UK were able to send young students (aged 16-18) to participate, giving these 14 teenagers the incredible opportunity to broaden their horizons by experiencing another culture ahead of their university studies.

In other exciting news, we were involved again this year in the 37th Leamington Peace Festival in June, with Evelyn’s Gift we were able to take over 250 dresses that were distributed among our local projects in Peru and we were able to use a free office space in Coventry which enabled us to host two interns from Belgium and Italy.

Thanks to Bond and the European Development Fund, OCN was awarded a grant to host a photography exhibition around England to share ‘Our Voice’ (Nuestra Voz). This unique touring event was a photographic and video exhibition that attempted to amplify the voices of marginalised youths in Peru and to empower them to share their experiences. The photographs and essays were provided by young people from the areas where we work, all of whom participate in our partner FairMail’s social enterprise.

The exhibition also focused on aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals, both providing clear information about what the goals entail and how OCN is contributing towards their achievement. The exhibition focused on six of the Sustainable Development Goals: women’s and youth empowerment, skills training, health, education and climate change and challenged the audience to take action towards the implementation and achievement of the goals. Social photography was used as a means of communication, in order to give the young people the chance to have their voices heard and to express their views on sustainable development. It showed the young photographers’ determinism, resilience and eagerness to learn as they used their images to share meaningful moments from their own lives. Moving encounters and scenes from the rubbish dump, sad realities and colourful photos were amongst those shared to record the feelings and voices of the young Peruvian photographers.

These exhibitions took place in seven venues: University of Portsmouth, SOAS University of London, University of Sheffield, University of Birmingham, Oxford Brookes University, Solihull School and Warwick.

One of the photos from the Nuestra Voz exhibition:

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**International Relationships**

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**Partner Relationships**
In 2015 we had 106 volunteers and interns from 15 countries around the world, including 10 local Peruvian volunteers. Our volunteers ranged from 16 to 57 years old, although 80% fell into the 18 to 30 age bracket. Some volunteers and interns came as part of their university studies in modern languages, development studies, international relations or other similar subjects as part of their course studies to get experience and gain university credit, whilst others came independently.

Upon arrival in Huanchaco, our volunteers receive an induction and walking tour of the town to help them settle in. Our in-country staff is there to provide support and supervision throughout the volunteers’ stay, as well as arrange social activities to help bring our tight-knit volunteer community together and ensure that new volunteers feel at home.

Many of our volunteers chose to work in more than one position so that they could experience different areas. For some this meant holding a position in the OCN office to get a closer look at the workings of a small NGO as well as taking on a role in the community. For others they found two different community projects to gain exposure to different aspects of the communities we work in. We believe that this flexibility not only offers a unique opportunity to our volunteers, but also allows us to better serve the communities that we work with, as our volunteers develop a greater understanding of the local culture and way of life.

"Overall, this has been an incredible experience, which surpassed all my expectations. This trip not only allowed me to forge friendships with locals as well as volunteers from all over the world, but it has also put certain things into perspective..."
2015 was a successful year for Otra Cosa Network financially, with Income before exceptional items up over 13%. This enabled us to fund a third full-time staff member in Peru during 2015 and more than double our spend on Projects, making it now our largest single category of expenditure and facilitating substantial progress on our 5 HELP projects.

Total Income before exceptional items, at £42,990, increased by £5,056 compared with 2014. This was primarily due to increases in Volunteer payments, £2,257 including £2,800 from two school groups, successful fundraising events up £1,180 and other donations up £3,479 partially offset by reduced ongoing grants down (£1,043) as 2014 included the one off LUSH grant.

Total Expenditure before exceptional items at £42,966 increased by (£11,472) (36%) relative to 2014. This primarily reflected substantially increased spend on ongoing Projects of (£5,666) including both HELP Environment, funded from the 2014 LUSH grant, the LitWorld project where we added additional groups of boys and girls and our other HELP projects. There were also significant increases in Peru based salaries and expenses (£1,834) and Housing expenses (£2,450) where we moved from a 2 person Peru team in 2014 to a 3 person team for 2015, generating substantial additional local capacity to run our Projects and serve our volunteers well. UK based salary increases primarily reflect higher levels of UK minimum wage rates. Other expenses include exchange rate losses on increased transfers to Peru.

OCN managed marginally better than break even for the year excluding exceptional items with a £24 surplus on an Income of £42,990. So we spent 99.9% of our ongoing Income.

2015 included exceptional items of Group Travel and a one-off grant for a touring photographic exhibition. During 2015 we spent £5,458 of this £7,000 grant and spent on Group Travel £31,717 of the £36,810 received during 2015. Including these exceptional items OCN made a surplus of £6,649. However the £24 surplus before exceptional items above better reflects the underlying and ongoing performance of OCN during 2015.