



# “ARCOIRIS THRIFT STORE” East Harlem, NY. USA

## SUMMARY OF PROJECT

**Organization carrying it out:** Arcoiris Cooperative

**Contact person for further information:** Edmundo Flores

**Year it began:** 2016

**Year it ended:** on-going

## The reason for the Project and its objectives

**What was the context of this Project? What is/was the need to which this Project responded?** East Harlem is one of the communities in NY where many poor families face social and economic problems. All the members of Arcoiris live in this community and they are invested in the betterment of its neighborhood, they wanted to offer affordable clothing and household items to EH residents.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

**Please give a brief description of the Project:**

**What is/was its main objective:** To help community members as they face many challenges, the economic constraints being one of them.

**What is/were the main activities:** It is open to the public every day except Sundays. The thrift store accepts referrals from a shelter in the community, giving clothing at no cost for all members of the family when needed. They also respond to emergencies/disasters like the Hurricane Harvey in Texas and Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico providing clothing to organizations who sent these items to those affected.

This year the thrift store held a special sale and all the money collected went to support two programs of the Little Sisters in Cali, Colombia.

**The main results of the activities:** People in the community can dress their families with high-quality clothing and also acquire home goods at a very low cost. Thrift store activities generate and sustain supportive social networks for coop members and customers.

## MODEL OF INTERVENCION

**The team which participated in the Project:**

**Describe the people who were involved in developing it: ie salaried? Volunteers? Both?**

An advisory committee was formed with volunteers to help with the development of the project, these included members of the coop, members of LSA, and friends. Now that the project is established, members of the coop can receive remuneration from their work. Volunteers are also needed to help with the many demands of the store; driving to collect donations is an important task that is been accomplished by a volunteer.

**Benefits of the Project:**

**What were the principal benefits for the participants and for the local community?**

**What changes were produced in individuals, and in families through in this project?**

This thrift store provides a living wage for coop members and gives people in the community opportunities to buy with dignity so they can provide their families with high quality goods. It is also a friendly place where people in the community gather to reconnect or create new friendships.

**Other organizations involved:** LSA Family in Mission, Sisters of the Good Shepherd who closed their program “Handcrafting Justice” and donated many items to Arcoiris.

**The Budget and the way of financing the Project:**

**Was there funding from government, or totally voluntary funds or both?**

Loans from friends were obtained and a grant from LSA International Solidarity Fund was received. All the items for sales are free donations that come from individuals and organizations, who believe in the mission of the thrift store and who are also aware of the needs of the community. The store also gets donations from a thrift store located in the downtown area.

**How sustainable is/was the Project into the future?**

The loans had been paid almost in their totally. The donor base has increased and hopefully donations will continue coming and increasing in the same way.

**How was our charism made present/alive through this Project?**

Members of the coop have been touched directly by the work and spirit of LSA so they try to practice and share with others what they have learned by being attentive to the needs of those coming to the store, embracing new comers, open to new friendships and cherishing old ones and giving the community a place where they feel safe and welcomed.

**Signed:** Norma Flores

**Date:** January 20, 2018