

**Gregorio Sanchez**  
**2025 CARTHA Fellow**

I am an indigenous man descended from the Nahua group of the Sierra Norte of the state of Puebla in Mexico. I am currently doing a PhD in Social Economy and Solidarity. I studied as a technician in industrial maintenance and received an undergraduate degree in Biology. With a specialty in global health, I have a master's degree in public health in health systems.

I have participated as a volunteer in the Xicotepec project since 2009, this project was created by Rotarians from District 6000. That is how I first met CARTHA Founder Usha Balakrishnan who belongs to the Iowa City Noon Rotary Club in District 6000. I have been influenced in my academic career by the professionalism and humanity of some members of the Rotary Club District to the point of shifting the focus of my academic training from the natural sciences to the social sciences in order to serve my fellow human beings in a better and more efficient way. Rotarians in District 6000 have served as role models and mentors to me.

I am doing my doctoral thesis project in the indigenous population where I was born, with three different Nahua, Totonac and Otomi groups, especially with the people of the communities that are in charge of protecting the natural area protected by the Federal Government "Carmen Serdán", who are involved, the local non-profit Civil Association "Friends of Kolijke", the health personnel of the IMSS-BIENESTAR Xicotepec Hospital, and the servers who work at the "Ocomantla Community Center". My action-participatory research consists of finding the cooperative strategies and social support networks that exist in the community in the absence of efficient public health protection services; as well as to empower the especially indigenous population to defend their fundamental rights, promote food sovereignty and the decolonization of the health system through workshops and training of intercultural skills of health personnel and public servants, also promote the rescue of ancestral knowledge on the sustainable management of ecosystems and the pharmacognosy of the flora of the cloud forest, in addition to initiating the use of ethical finance in the process of commercialization of goods produced in the region. All of the above with the purpose of projecting and promoting the creation of a cooperative society in this area, which favors the well-being of the mainly indigenous community.