



El Porvenir's mission is to improve the standard of living of poor people in Nicaragua through sustainable self-help water, sanitation, and reforestation projects.

Breaking Out of Poverty:

Victoria Hernández Díaz lives in a one-room brick home with a tile roof and dirt floor in Terrabona, central Nicaragua.

Before partnering with El Porvenir on a water system, Victoria and other members of her community walked 2 kilometers to a creek. There, they waited in long lines for a chance to fill their buckets with dirty water. They didn't have latrines, but went to the bathroom outdoors. This practice contaminated their environment and led to illness (diarrhea and parasites) in people as well as in animals (who ate the human waste) they raised for food. The families also did not have healthy hygiene habits.

Constant illness from dirty water led to extra expenses for Victoria's family: going to the doctor, buying medicine, and missing work. Many women carried all of the water they needed for the day—10 gallons—from the creek in one trip. Each woman carried one bucket on her head and an equally heavy bucket on her hip. The heavy load of water carried by these women already debilitated by diarrhea was just too much. Many women suffered miscarriages.

Now families have metered water taps right outside their door. Walking only a few steps, they can get as much water as they need.

No longer do they wait until dark to practice open air defecation. They walk out the door to their own family latrine whenever they want. After using the latrine, they wash their hands; already they are healthier.

Victoria has more time now that she doesn't walk back and forth to the creek, so she has

opened a small store in her home where she sells rice, sugar, snacks, and more. She also bakes bread to sell. Her children have been able to attend school regularly and are doing better at their studies. Her husband works as a day laborer on private farms and also has his own small farm plot.

With clean, safe water and good hygiene, this family has been able to triple its daily income! Victoria and her husband earn \$6/day—much higher than the 80% of Nicaraguans who live on less than \$2 a day.

To read Victoria's story in her own words, please turn to page 3.



February 2013: Go Birding with Carole Harper, El Porvenir Founder

Birding in Nicaragua is a wonder-filled adventure!

Because of its location and geography, Nicaragua is a special place for birding. Both resident and migrant species abound in a wide variety of eco-regions: dry forest and cloud forest, tropical rivers, a volcanic crater lake, an archipelago of islands, and some of Nicaragua's most impressive nature reserves. Our itinerary will take us to each of these types of habitat during 8 days of birding.

On past trips, participants have sighted the rufous mot-mot in the Indio Maiz Biological Reserve, roseate spoonbills and jabirus nesting in the Solentiname Archipelago, the emerald toucanet and long-tailed manakin in the mountains, and the gray-necked wood rail in the Papaturro River.

Traveling by air-conditioned mini-bus, we will take daily bird walks guided by Nicaraguan experts, enjoying the stunning natural beauty of the country. In the evenings, participants will relax with a good meal and comfortable accommodations.

Those who want to see El Porvenir's sustainable development projects may stay on for an extra day at the end of the birding trip, for a small additional cost. We will visit water, sanitation, and reforestation projects in rural communities and meet the community members who built them.

Our tour leader is Carole Harper, who founded El Porvenir in 1990 and lived for many years in Nicaragua. She has led numerous other tours including previous birding tours and eco-tours.

Space is limited, so sign up soon!

Trip dates are February 23–March 4, 2013

Cost: \$1,350 per person, includes airport transfers, hotels, restaurants, health insurance, in-country transportation, interpreters, and guides. International airfare is not included.

For more information and a detailed itinerary, please contact:

Jo Buescher, Delegations Coordinator

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Turquoise-browed Motmot or guardabarranco, the national bird of Nicaragua. Photo courtesy of Glenda Denniston.

Victoria Hernández Díaz, in her own words:

I was born and raised in San Agustín, Terabona. My parents are very poor and sent me to school for only 3 years. I barely learned to read and write. I have 8 brothers and sisters. Because I am the oldest, my parents took me out of school so that I could help my mother take care of the house. I helped with cooking, cleaning, washing, and taking care of my brothers and sisters. At 15, I left with my boyfriend. We lived with my in-laws for a year and then my husband built a mud house for us. We have been improving it over time.

I am now 30 years old and have 3 children. Two of our children go to school [the third is a baby]. My husband works on private farms and on our small plot of land. I help with expenses with my small store and by baking bread to sell. Everyone comes to buy; my work is going well. I worry about the future and taking care of my children. I want to give them everything they need and send them to school so they can succeed.

Before, we didn't have a latrine or water. We drank dirty water. We carried it long distances, and it took a lot of time because we had to wait in line to fill our buckets. I didn't know any better. During my pregnancy with Carlitos, I carried two large buckets of water: one on my head, one on my hip. It was hard on me. Before Carlitos, I had two miscarriages because of carrying heavy water buckets.

The drought affected us as well because the place we all went for water dried up. Then we had to drink water from the stream where the horses that had skin disease went into the water. Many children got sick

during that time; some died. The children couldn't go to class because they had to help carry water instead; it took so long that they missed school.

Now that we have clean water at our homes, our lives are better. Our children go to school on time. Our homes are clean, and we have more savings because we don't have to spend money on medicine.

Before we had latrines, we had to go out to the field. I was embarrassed because people could see me. Now I have a latrine. My children and I use it with confidence. I learned that we have to wash our hands after using the latrine, and I've taught my children to wash carefully. All of this is due to what I have learned in El Porvenir trainings.

Now I have more time to take care of my family and my store. I am the Treasurer of the Water and Sanitation Committee, and I receive the monthly payments from families for water. We have a C\$12,000 (\$522) fund [for future maintenance]. I am proud because I have earned the trust of my community; I deposit the payments and

show the account statements.

I like to go to the El Porvenir meetings and share with my family and neighbors what we can do to better our lives and be healthier. If we do things well, we are going to be well. My dreams are to have a clean community, without sickness, and strong relationships with my neighbors and family in a united community.

We will always care for the water system and latrines; we will not let them fail.

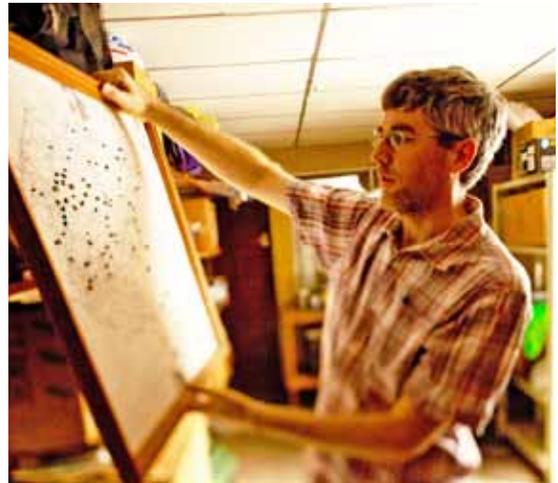


Victoria (seated) receiving a payment for water from a community member; user fees are collected for future maintenance of the water system.

Talk with El Porvenir's Executive Director, Rob Bell

We invite you to join El Porvenir's Executive Director, Rob Bell, by phone and/or computer to talk about the benefits to rural Nicaraguans when they have clean water to drink and a safe latrine to use. Rob will also talk about what it means when Nicaraguans learn healthy hygiene habits and take steps to protect their micro-watersheds.

Rob will talk about how lives, like that of Victoria Hernández, are changed when people build their own water and sanitation infrastructure. He will also share an overview of El Porvenir's achievements in 2011. Photographs and other images will be available at the meeting link below if you would like to access the meeting via computer. There will be time for questions at the end.



Rob Bell, El Porvenir Executive Director, has lived in Nicaragua for 12 years. For 6 of those years, he has led and shaped El Porvenir. Please join us April 23rd for a chat with Rob.

Photo credit: Forest Woodward

Monday, April 23, 1:30-2 PM Eastern time

Dial-in number: 559-546-1200

Meeting ID: 657-093-227

Meeting link (*optional*): <http://www.FreeScreenSharing.com/meetings/657-093-227>

***Please RSVP to Alexis Gleason at info@elporvenir.org or 303-861-1499 as the number of callers is limited.**

Clean Water for Nicaragua



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