

July 11, 2018

The crisis in Nicaragua continues and so does the work of El Porvenir. In the last week, we've completed two wells, a handwashing station, and many latrines. Hygiene education and watershed restoration are actively going on as well.

Quite a few people have asked about our staff in Nicaragua, wondering how they are doing. Two of our staff members, Cesar Enoc del Castillo and Yesenia Matamoros, shared the following with us:

The El Porvenir team thanks you for your concern for each one of us and our families. During these last months, our work and families have changed because of what's going on in Nicaragua. A couple of times we have had to close our offices because of security concerns, and this time has allowed us to be with our families and communities.

The areas most affected are San Lorenzo, Camoapa, and Waslala where our staff are unable to work regular hours.

Thanks to our way of working—without political or religious bias—we have earned the respect and support of the communities where we work. This allows us to keep working during this momentous time in which we Nicaraguans are living.

Today, more than ever, we reiterate our commitment to our mission, that we will continue supporting rural communities, those who have been and continue to be the most affected.

We will continue to work for clean water and healthy communities.

Please reach out with your concerns, and know that we appreciate all the messages of support!

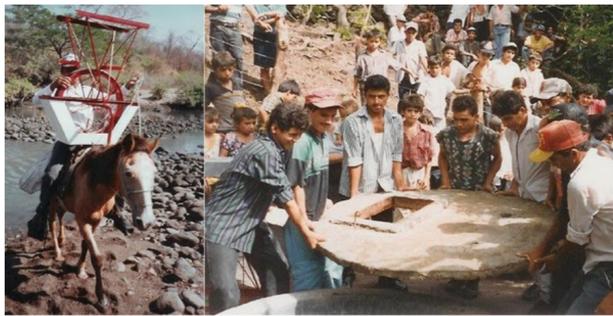
Sincerely,
Rob Bell
Executive Director

June 19, 2018

The instability in Nicaragua continues. It's made us think back to when El Porvenir began back in 1989. Then, the Contra War was still going on; some sources say it ended in 1988 and others will tell you it went on into the early 1990s. Regardless of the exact end date, the effects didn't end in 1988. In 1989, the Nicaraguan people had just been through two decades of war. The country was torn apart, people were worn down, and resources were few.

That year, we worked with communities to build 4 water projects. A bit of hope in a difficult time.

Nicaraguans are some of the most resourceful people you'll meet, as you can see in these photos from the early days. They can figure out how to get a rope pump to a distant community, and they work together on difficult tasks.



Now it's 2018, and there is instability in Nicaragua again and road blocks across the country. **But the need for clean water projects is still there.** We are experiencing a temporary slowdown in our work: but it is only a slowdown. **We are still working and getting projects done.** No matter what's going on politically, people need clean water and improved sanitation. They also need jobs. We have 32 staff members in Nicaragua, and they need to be able to feed their families.

As in the photos above, we think Nicaraguans will come together and figure out how to move forward. They've done it so many times: after an earthquake, after a hurricane, after a war.

No matter what comes next, we plan to be there, too, continuing to partner with Nicaraguans.

We are continuing our important work during the instability and are truly appreciative of the support we have received from so many of you. If you'd like to make a special gift to keep projects moving forward and be part of hope in a difficult time, please do so at elporvenir.org/donate

Sincerely,
Rob Bell
Executive Director

June 5, 2018

There are an increasing number of news articles about the crisis in Nicaragua. We want to let you know how El Porvenir staff and communities are being impacted. Because of safety concerns, the Peace Corps and other foreign volunteer groups have left Nicaragua, but El Porvenir is staying for many reasons:

- We are committed to our mission: Partnering with Nicaraguan communities on life-changing and life-saving water and sanitation projects is what we do.
- Our staff is primarily Nicaraguan who are known in the areas they work in; so far, they are less impeded by the road blocks than others. Our staff live in Nicaragua, and this work is their livelihood. They aren't going anywhere, and El Porvenir isn't either.
- Our work is more important than ever as government funds once earmarked for water and sanitation are being diverted into dealing with the crisis.
- We are still getting project work done. Latrines, hand-washing stations, water systems, health education training, and watershed restoration projects are happening right now. Work in Ciudad Dario, Terrabona, and El Sauce is relatively unaffected. This photo of students with their new school handwashing station and latrines in the background was taken May 22:



Despite the continued effectiveness of El Porvenir and its staff to provide life changing improvements to rural Nicaraguan communities, there have been impacts and procedural modifications resulting from the crisis:

- There are gas shortages in Camoapa and Waslala. Cement in San Lorenzo recently ran out. With the road blocks, we expect the shortages to continue. That might slow us down with project completions, but it won't stop us.
- Our Managua staff are required to leave early most days because buses don't run after 3 PM. Outside of Managua, there aren't many buses anymore. If you've ever traveled to Nicaragua, you know that buses are a main form of transportation.
- Once a month, one staff member from each of our field offices come to Managua for a meeting. This month, one couldn't come because he would have had to cross through 5 of the 38 road blocks set up across Nicaragua. Our staff usually pay C\$20-30 (C\$ Cordoba, Nicaraguan currency: Approximately C\$20 = US\$1) to take the bus; in one instance, a staff member had to pay C\$200 to get through just one of the road blocks. So far, our staff have been able to get through local road blocks without issues.
- To protect our staff during the crisis, we have implemented increased security procedures to include no travel at night, avoiding areas without cell phone coverage, keeping phones charged at all times, informing co-workers of where staff are going and their projected return time, as well as many other procedures. We are doing everything possible to keep our staff safe.

We are fortunate to continue our important work during this crisis and are truly appreciative of the support we have received from all of you. If you'd like to make a special gift to keep projects moving forward and give hope for a brighter future, please do so at elporvenir.org/donate

Sincerely,
Rob Bell
Executive Director

May 11, 2018

We've heard from so many of you about what's going on in Nicaragua these last weeks. Thank you for your emails, calls, posts, concern, and encouragement. We share your concerns, and we hope the situation improves quickly and peacefully. El Porvenir doesn't take sides or get involved in politics: our commitment is to the rural poor of Nicaragua who have the same needs today as they did before the protests began. The rural poor are the most likely to be impacted as they are the most vulnerable.

You may know that the State Department raised Nicaragua from a Level 2 Travel Advisory to a Level 3: Reconsider Travel. This is having and will continue to have a significant impact on Nicaragua's economy. As of today, 5 of our volunteer work trip groups have been canceled, and we expect more. We are heartened by those who say this is a postponement, not a cancellation as well as by the groups who are still committed to coming. These cancellations directly impact the communities who were ready to build projects funded by these trips, the hotel and restaurant owners who host our groups, and the effects keep rippling out.

For groups that are still planning to visit us, know that your safety is our top priority. Our staff closely monitor the news and work to keep you safe. **If we don't think it is safe, we will tell you.** Protests are typically in specific urban areas; to date, they have not been where El Porvenir works.

After a brief interruption, our Managua and field staff are back to developing projects and working side by side with communities who desperately need water and sanitation services. Our work is more important than ever as the Nicaraguan economy will suffer from reduced tourism; economists are predicting at least a 100 million dollar decrease. Income from work trips is about 13% of our overall budget; we are preparing for lower income and working to raise the funds for the projects that were to be built with income from the canceled groups.

We urge you to make a special donation today at elporvenir.org/donate so that we can continue to partner with rural Nicaraguans on much needed water, sanitation, and watershed projects. In 2017 alone, El Porvenir worked with 20,271 rural Nicaraguans to build 24 water projects, 6 school hand-washing facilities, 405 latrines, and 81 fuel-efficient stoves. Additionally, community members planted 102,840 trees throughout their watersheds. We plan to work with even more people this year, but we need your help to be able to do that.

We hope for peaceful and just resolution in Nicaragua.

With much gratitude to you,
Rob Bell
Executive Director