

Support Safe, Sustainable Water Systems for Rural Communities in Northern Nicaragua

Anywhere you travel in northern Nicaragua you will find communities with limited or no access to safe drinking water. In this drought stricken area of cash-crop agricultural production, people rely on rivers - that frequently slow to a trickle or dry out entirely - or on old and contaminated wells that are regularly dry. Lack of access to potable water is not only extremely detrimental to health - especially that of children - it also impedes economic and social development. Women and children in communities without consistent access to potable water spend a considerable portion of each day seeking water. This takes time away from other important activities such as school, work and time with family.

Since 2004, working with Centro Humboldt in Nicaragua, and with the support of CIDA and our generous donors, Change for Children has provided potable water systems for 73 communities in the country's drought stricken north. This project has accomplished far more than the awesome task of providing clean water to 25,000 people, it is a project with a holistic vision of environmental protection and preservation as well as a project that promotes access to water as a human right.

Centro Humboldt (www.humboldt.org.ni) has been a leading organization in Nicaraguan civil society since 1990. Their award winning work is based on the belief that community development revolves around sustainability.



Today, Change for Children and Centro Humboldt are working together to introduce sustainable potable water systems into an additional 35 communities in rural North-western Nicaragua. Through a needs assessment process, Centro Humboldt has prioritized communities for water access and engaged community members in choosing the water system most appropriate for them.

As construction begins in each community, residents come together to participate in digging, drilling and building water systems. Centro Humboldt engineers and social workers facilitate the process, which concludes in the formation of Community Water Management Committees. These Committees, made up of the women and men who will provide for the sustainable management of the water systems, ensure that they are well maintained.

During this phase of the project only solar and hand crank pumps will be used to pump water to the surface from great depths and also to fill water tanks that will allow gravity fed systems to provide water to multiple communities from one well site.

Safe drinking water, taken for granted by so many, can truly transform the reality of an entire community. Especially when that community is involved in its provision and its management.

This project is generously supported by the:
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Human Dignity, Healthy Communities, Global Justice

Change for Children is an Edmonton-based charitable organization with a 33 year history of supporting sustainable grassroots community development in Latin America and Africa. In Canada, CFCA provides an award-winning Global Education program that engages the public in a process of awareness raising, analysis and action on issues of global justice.