



PIPELINE

THE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF AGUA PARA LA VIDA

a letter from Gilles

Bagin, France
November 2009

When Charlie, Anne and I started what later became Agua Para La Vida in early 1987, the Nicaraguan farmers (campesinos) we visited told us that they badly needed clean drinking water. We gave little thought to the proper structure for providing it. We just wanted to invest our time and some money to help them get this water and it was fun.

In 1993, we reflected that committed and capable Nicaraguan actors had to be the mainstays of this development effort if it were to be sustainable and to grow. This led to the creation of ETAP, our unique technical school for campesinos that trains young, local men and women to be skilled enough to direct drinking water projects without a supervising engineer. ETAP created and continues to create a small group of such technicians, some of whom stay and run our own projects. The rest of them are available for employment by other NGOs and by municipalities taking charge of their water systems.

The local group was complemented first by specialized masons, skilled social workers, and later by a dedicated Nicaraguan director, Carmen Gonzalez, and by an accountant. In the same time we expanded the scope of water projects by systematically including a latrine construction program with each water project, by initiating a long-term hygiene education program and by taking steps to preserve or restore the watersheds upon which the spring water supply depend. Finally we viewed the ultimate measure of success for our pilot venture as the ability for the Nicaraguan APLV group to be capable of true operational (administrative, technical and financial) autonomy.

This year's exciting news is that we have just started implementing that ultimate step in what we are striving to make a model of sustainable water development: We have decided that instead of looking for a foreign successor for our octogenarian executive director, someone should take a good look at where APLV stands, examine its strengths and weaknesses, and help the Nicaraguan group achieve operational autonomy over a period which we visualize as about two years.

This requires a lot of time and a little money. It requires also dedicated attention to details. But we have run into a young couple, Cecile and Denis Barea who have volunteered to be the prime movers of this endeavor. Their combined experience encompasses NGO field management and professional enterprise efficiency-promoting skills. After a short but intense period of exchanges both direct and by Skype, the Bareas have submitted a detailed preliminary plan. They arrived in Nicaragua on the 4th of November and are now hard at work.

Meanwhile APLV's activities continue unabated. As the rest of this letter shows, several projects have been completed this year and quite a few new ones are being planned. Carmen has been successful in securing a rapidly increasing fraction of our financing, and next spring a new ETAP class will follow the presently graduating one. Furthermore APLV is now a member of Peer Water Exchange, an international collaboration of drinking water organizations that are project executors as well as fund providers and that acts as a clearing and counseling house for its members. Two projects have already secured financing through this group.

The new developments will not of course make your participation obsolete. It is clear that for instance whether the appeal for always insufficient funds will originate from the US, France or Nicaragua, the funds themselves will have, for the foreseeable future to be provided from outside Nicaragua. And further technical and pedagogical progress should also continue to be offered from abroad. The real significance of the change is that at its end the Nicaragua group will have achieved juridical, administrative and operational maturity and independence, which is the real test of development.

But APLV needs you and your contributions every bit as much as before. Please renew your precious commitment.

Wishing you all a fruitful new year,

Gilles Corcos, Executive and Technical Director

other news

HELP FROM FRANK MERIWETHER

This Washington State water engineer retiring this fall has volunteered to help our Rio Blanco technical crew. He visited our Rio Blanco center last spring and is scheduled to get involved with our work this month. Among other things, Frank is an expert on the raising of fish in ponds, an extension of our projects which we are considering in some cases.

THE END OF AN ETAP CLASS AND THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ONE

Graduation is scheduled for this month for the current ETAP class of eight. We are currently recruiting students for a new class to begin in the spring.

Board of Directors:

Gilles Corcos
Charlie Huizenga
Anne Corcos
RJ Bunnell
Bill McQueeney
Kelly Naylor
Debbie Parducci

Our Mission:

To help small, rural communities of Nicaragua develop and maintain access to safe drinking water.

To preserve and protect the watersheds that provide water to these communities.

To educate these communities about health and hygiene so that they achieve the full benefit from their safe drinking water.

To provide training and education in all aspects of designing, building, and maintaining drinking water systems in order to achieve local autonomy in rural drinking water development.



Cecile and Denis Barea at the APLV office

THE BAREAS AND A BOLD STEP TOWARDS AUTONOMY FOR THE NICARAGUAN TEAM

An important recent initiative: Denis and Cecile Barea, a relatively young French couple have volunteered to spend two years in Nicaragua to first study the possibility of a transition to technical, financial and administrative autonomy for the Nicaragua APLV group and then help it become a reality. They have provided a plan for this gradual transition and have already landed in Managua to take part in it. This is an exciting new development that is consistent with APLV's long-term goals and which follows on the heels of progress in the areas of finding financing from within Nicaragua, the selection of a Nicaragua Board of Directors and the application for official indigenous status for the Nicaraguan group.

2009 projects

VARSOVIA — FUNDED BY RURAL WATER VENTURE

- Present population is 225 people, system designed for 468 people
- Distribution network pipes have a total length of 12,359 m
- Project completed in November 2009

QUIRRAGUA — FUNDED BY RES PUBLICA+ PEER WATER EXCHANGE

- System designed for 194 people
- First of three projects depending on the same abundant spring (the others being San Isidro and El Carmen)
- Project to be completed in December 2009

LAS VUELTAS — FUNDED BY EL PORVENIR

- Present population is 652 people
- This project takes its water from a torrent and required a deviation dam, pre-filter, settling channel and filter
- Project completed in October 2009

LOS RODRIGUEZ — FROM FUNDS RAISED BY FRANK MERIWETHER

- A very small project close to another village which was a previous project
- Project completed in 2009

upcoming projects

LOS PINARES — TO BE FUNDED BY NAMLO, ANA CAMPANA JUDGE FOUNDATION, AND THE LAIRD NORTON FOUNDATION

LA ISLA — TO BE FUNDED BY RURAL WATER VENTURE

MONGALLO — TO BE FUNDED BY THE JAPANESE EMBASSY, SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF SIUNA

SAN FELIPE — TO BE FUNDED BY EL PORVENIR

SAN ISIDRO — TO BE FUNDED BY PEER WATER EXCHANGE, THE MUNICIPALITY OF MATIGUAS, AND APLV DONORS

A number of other villages have asked for our help where projects have been found technically possible. These include:

EL BONETE

EL CARMEN

EL CARRISEL

MONKEY POINT

These projects can be completed with ***your help!***



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- I would like to receive this newsletter via email
- I'm interested in visiting Nicaragua and learning more about APLV projects while I'm there
- I would like to support APLV and help provide people in Nicaragua with safe drinking water and enclose:
 - \$50 – material cost for 500 seedlings for reforestation
 - \$150 – material cost for a latrine for one family
 - \$250 – sponsorship for one APLV technical student for one month
 - \$500 – material cost for a drinking water system for one family
 - \$1000 – cost of drinking water, latrine, and health education for one family

get involved

Agua Para La Vida is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible.
Make checks payable to Agua Para La Vida. Donations can also be made online at: www.aplv.org