

## 2010 projects

### LOS PINARES — POPULATION 310

FUNDED BY ROTARY OF COLORADO, LAIRD NORTON FAMILY FOUNDATION, ANN CAMPANA JUDGE FOUNDATION

### LA ISLA III (REHABILITATION) — POPULATION 470

FUNDED BY RURAL WATER VENTURES

### SAN ISIDRO — POPULATION 218

FUNDED BY PEER WATER EXCHANGE

### EL CARMEN — POPULATION 266

FUNDED BY RES PUBLICA, APLV & ANN CAMPANA JUDGE FOUNDATION

### EL CARRISAL — POPULATION 171

FUNDED BY RURAL WATER VENTURES

### MONGALLO — POPULATION 530 (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)

FUNDED BY JAPANESE EMBASSY, APLV & HERMANOS POR LA SALUD

### SAN FELIPE — POPULATION 359

FUNDED BY EL PORVENIR, AGUA PARA EL PUEBLO AND APLV

## upcoming projects

**PALAN BUENA VISTA**— FUNDED BY A PRIVATE FOUNDATION

**PALAN BILANPI**— NO FUNDING SOURCE YET

**LA ESPERANZA**— PARTIAL FUNDING FROM THE LAIRD NORTON FAMILY FOUNDATION

**WALANA , EL ACHOTE**— NO FUNDING SOURCE YET

**LIRIO DEL VALLE**— PROPOSED TO RURAL WATER VENTURES

**LA CHOCOLATA** — PROPOSED TO JAPANESE EMBASSY

**CANO SECO** — PROPOSED TO RES PUBLICA

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

## rehabilitation of projects and financing

Each year we need to set aside money for the rehabilitation and expansion of our previous projects. Our projects are designed for population growth, but sometimes communities grow more quickly than anticipated (sometimes due to the new water project!). Rehab turns out to be more important than previously imagined. For example, we have found that our concrete tanks have developed serious leaks more frequently than is acceptable. Starting with some of this year's projects the design of our tanks has been modified to address this issue. Last year \$15,000 from our undedicated funds were earmarked for rehab and expansion and this year the Dutch embassy provided \$10,000 for this purpose.



Agua Para La Vida

2311 Webster Street  
Berkeley, CA 94705

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive this newsletter via email. My email address: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to support APLV in bringing clean drinking water to the people of Nicaragua.

Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of:

- \$25 – material cost for drinking water for one person
- \$50 – material cost for 500 seedlings for reforestation
- \$100 – material cost for a latrine for one family
- \$200 – sponsorship for one APLV technical student for one month
- \$300 – material cost for drinking water for one family
- \$1000 – cost of drinking water, latrine, and health education for one family

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 (APLV). Donations can also be made online at: [www.aplv.org](http://www.aplv.org)

get involved

THE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF

Agua Para La Vida



### December 2010

#### Board of Directors:

Gilles Corcos

Charlie Huizenga

Anne Corcos

RJ Bunnell

Bill McQueeney

Kelly Naylor

Debbie Parducci

## 2010: a banner year for APLV

We end 2010 with an impressive record of solid accomplishment: SEVEN completed projects bringing our total to 66 functioning gravity flow water systems. Seven more projects are ready to go with funding already provided for two. We trust, and this is a continuing challenge, that the money for the other five will find its way into our coffers. In addition, the students from the fourth class at our innovative technical school, ETAP, (Escuela Technica Agua Potable) are ready to work as licensed water technicians. The fifth class is in its seventh month of work-study. We proudly dedicate this newsletter to ETAP.

This past year, like so many others, has seen the horrific toll of natural disasters worldwide that tug at the heartstrings of every feeling human being. The age old problem of contaminated water and its cost in human lives, especially children's lives, exists quietly through all the cataclysmic events that scream and fade away. Many NGOs including

APLV have been addressing the issue of access to clean water for the poorest village populations for a long time. APLV is in its 24<sup>th</sup> year and continues, village by village, to improve lives, now 20,000 strong, by helping them rid themselves of the scourge of polluted water. It has been found that dollar for dollar, money spent on potable water has the best record of lives saved.

The biggest challenge to providers of aid to the poorest people in the world is not only improve matters for the short term but help in ways that can be continued and maintained by the local beneficiaries. The change must be enduring, not just an expensive, flash in the pan that will rust into disuse or revert to the former contaminated state. ETAP is aimed at meeting that challenge.

Gilles and Charlie learned early on that there was local talent to be tapped and realized that not only could we learn from poorly educated farmers who had practical local knowledge, there were some of them who could learn, while working together with us, how in fact gravity water systems worked. It took a leap of faith, a lot of courage, and a big imagination, to conceive of starting a school that would teach the basics of water technology through a work-study program combining theory and practice. ETAP was on its way.

Gilles, retired professor emeritus of engineering from UC Berkeley, wrote the texts, provided the syllabus, and went back to teaching in an improvised school in our water center in Rio Blanco. He had invaluable help from APLV board members Charlie Huizenga of UC Berkeley Architecture Dept. and Philippe Vial, Prof. of Mathematics, University of Geneva, Switzerland. (Prof. Vial's computer program, NEATWORK as well as Prof. Corcos' materials are available, free of charge, online). The three year program, which confers a degree of water technician, is now recognized by the Nicaraguan department of education, Inatek. Teaching to students with little mathematical background is a daunting task but with the use of computers ETAP has forged ahead. (Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, take note).

## a salute to our heroes

**Professor Gilles Corcos**, (picture upper right this year in Nicaragua) who at 84 continues to amaze everyone with his incredible determination in spite of physical handicap, to guide his "baby" into adulthood; to trouble shoot and solve problems as they arise, in Nicaragua or from France or Berkeley, and to patiently encourage Agua Para La Vida in Nicaragua to be a sustainable, autonomous venture.

**Bill McQueeney**, (photo middle left), chairman of the board of Rural Water Ventures, an NGO which funds APLV projects year after year through imaginative fundraising activities. Bill often accompanies Gilles in Nicaragua.

**Michael Campana**, the generous and enthusiastic chairman of the Ann Campana Foundation that supports water projects. His offer this past August to match any donation made to ETAP sparked a lot of giving and we are enormously grateful to him. He also donated to ETAP a water well drilling rig for teaching purposes.

**Anne Corcos** for her constant and consistent support wherever it is needed but especially for her matching funds and providing scholarships for indigenous people so they might join the ETAP classes.

**Charlie Huizenga**, co founder of APLV and a champion fund raiser for APLV, proponent and entrepreneur of "green" engineering, a provider of technical support, computer assistance, newsletter know-how and general good cheer.

**Carmen Gonzalez**, Exec. Director in Nicaragua who has been largely responsible for 50%(!!!) of our funding from Nicaraguan donors, notably the Japanese and Dutch embassies. She is spearheading the transition from a foreign based to a Nicaraguan based NGO, (ONG) which we expect to be recognized by the Nicaraguan government in the near future, clearing the road to Nicaraguan autonomy. Thank you, Carmen.

**Our faithful donors** whose generous support has helped keep this ambitious and impressive enterprise afloat.





# you are right to support **APLV!**

## *a letter from Gilles*

There are many NGOs working worldwide to help increase access to pure drinking water for the large and destitute population of impoverished countries. But APLV is contributing not only a solid record of completed and functioning village systems (66 by latest count) but also providing a model of development which, while perhaps not unique, is far from usual.

To appreciate it you might trace the evolving perspective of the providers of external help to the developing world. Briefly, during a first phase after World War II, development work in foreign countries took the form of the exportation of modern technologies without much regard either for the ability of the local population to use and maintain the infrastructure provided, or for them to learn to duplicate these constructions.

Following the failure of many such costly projects, a reaction, spearheaded by small NGOs, notably Oxfam, held that progress was more assured where the solution was simpler and carefully adapted to the local needs. There arose further the conviction that the development projects should be formulated and executed by the collaboration, on an equal footing, of the agents of the external help agencies and the benefiting population.

This attitude progressively gained ground and found numerous expressions\*. This is a laudable idea but has in some cases been carried to extremes with the conviction that it was essential for the benefiting population to be at least equal, or more than equal

partners in all phases of the creation of a project including its design. If you reflect on how things are done in your country you will realize that even in a rural setting the user of a sewer system, a water distribution or an electric network neither does nor wants to participate in their design. The motivating idea is that at some point in its development, the country must be able to become autonomously capable of carrying it out. But for this it is only necessary that a sufficient number of local technicians and workers be trained.

**The answer is not for every beneficiary of a water system to be participating in the technical aspects of its design. THE ANSWER IS ETAP!**

ETAP (Escuela Técnica de Agua Potable) is an APLV innovation: a school which teaches young farmers to become technicians who are capable of carrying out by themselves all phases of the conception and creation of a sophisticated water delivery system such as a gravity system which requires complicated calculations of various sorts. We have demonstrated that after three years of training the graduating technicians can be entrusted with the design and execution of a complete project and rarely require any help. This is how we see the logical transfer of technical competence.

\*(See for instance <Lessons learned from the WASH project>, a publication of the U.S. Agency International Development in 1990)



*An ETAP student learning to put up a suspension pipe bridge with a sky hook.*

# thoughts from the **Bareas**

In putting this newsletter together, we asked Denis and Cecilia Barea, the current professors at ETAP, if they would give us some impressions of their experience in such an unusual educational environment.

## *Cecilia's Impressions*

Five months ago we recruited 8 students from rural Nicaraguan villages for the fifth class of ETAP, (Escuela Técnica de Agua Potable). They have started their work to become Water Technicians. When my husband Denis and I were asked to write an article for the newsletter, we thought it a good idea to ask the students how they felt about these last five months. Here are some rough translations of the words of some of them.

**Orlando, 20 years old:** "From the moment I entered the school, I felt so grateful to my teachers, to the organization APLV, and to the donors. Like the teachers, the APLV technicians work hard to make the practical part very rewarding. My parents also feel very grateful because without this opportunity, I would not have studied. That is why I am motivated to continue studying here and to finish this course with a lot of success."

**Karla, 19 years old:** "This course is a great opportunity to go ahead. It represents what I have always wished: teachers who teach for real, always doing the best for us in order to understand everything and have clear ideas. I feel gratitude for all I am receiving here."

**Maycol, 20 years old:** I have gained wide knowledge with the teaching method that Denis and Cecilia are using. It is probable that I will be a good technician thanks to this way to give lessons. Thank you very much to all who make our dreams a reality because like that we will help our communities. I will be a good technician. I promise."

**From Cecilia:** The quality we need the most as teachers is the real will to understand each of them and to find the best way to explain things, adapting to each individual. This takes patience. Sometimes I am asked a question where I know the answer but I have to struggle to find the way to make myself understood. The questions are clever and force me to rethink my own solutions. This is both interesting and challenging.

Here we care about them, we care that they understand which was not so much the case in their previous school but we have an advantage : we have only 8 students! We are very lucky. The more they advance and learn, the more they demand. All of this is very positive. I hope we will satisfy their demand and achieve the level they require to be good technicians.

## *Denis' Impressions*

Fortunately our students are clever and catch on rapidly to the methods. The most difficult for them are the abstract concepts and the geometrical representations. But they have a good practical sense. They are hard-working and determined. It is very gratifying to teach them. They are so grateful for this opportunity. For us, this is a wonderful experience as ETAP gives us the possibility to change the lives of these students and even more, of the village people who will benefit from the work they will do when they finish their studies. With this school we don't give them a fish, but we teach them how to fish. It makes a big difference.



*From left to right : (up) Francisco, Karla, Dimas, Wendy, Lewis, (down) Cecilia, Maycol, Orlando, Dixon, Denis. Photo by: Jon Polka*



*ETAP students Karla, Francisco, Dimas, and Lewis learning how to use surveying equipment.*