



Meeting in Waspam, Nicaragua, among community members, the community leader, and the Committee for Potable Water and Sanitation during the installation of water pipes, assisted by the municipal engineer from Uhri. (UNV Program, 2012)

## Préserver l'environnement

The Joint Programme for Governance of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene - supported by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and the United Nations System in Nicaragua - was initiated in response to Goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): ensuring environmental sustainability. Above all, it was focused on providing access to clean, safe, and quality water for the inhabitants of rural communities so they can enjoy better health.

The municipality of Waspam, located on the banks of the Coco River, is characterized as being the largest municipality of Nicaragua. It has an area of 9,341.71 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 43% falls within the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve.

It borders the Republic of Honduras to the north; the municipalities of Rosita and Bonanza to the south; the municipality of Puerto Cabezas and the Caribbean Sea to the east; and the municipality of Cúa Bocay to the west.

The Extreme Poverty Map of Nicaragua indicates that 64.1% of the inhabitants of this

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municipality live in a state of extreme poverty, and of those, 83.5% reside in rural areas. It is a subsistence economy with high levels of poverty, an underdeveloped infrastructure, and emerging socio-political and institutional development.

Due to its geography, it is characterized as being one of the municipalities most vulnerable to natural phenomena and social issues (political issues, emigration, immigration, border disputes, nutritional problems, economic issues, limited employment opportunities, and minimal access to basic services); it is also characterized as being difficult to access by road.

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Above all, it was focused on providing access to clean, safe, and quality water for the inhabitants of rural communities so they can enjoy better health. In addition, the programme intends for the beneficiary population—especially the young children and women who are usually responsible for bringing water to the home—to be safer while transporting it.

Throughout the process, in addition to implementing a water system, the programme has also worked on community capacity building; participants from different levels have been involved in these activities. These measures have taken place through academic and technical training at a regional, municipal, territorial, and communal level.

In each of the mentioned processes, UNV and the United Nations System in Nicaragua have provided support and accompaniment for the regional, municipal, territorial, and local participants in all of the undertaken activities (which included in situ visits and working with technical staff).

Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize the significance of further strengthening the levels of coordination and developing a common agenda, especially when it comes to organizing interventions for communities. Volunteer action is a large part of this.

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**Article translated from Spanish by UN Online Volunteer Jeremy Orloski.**

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• Nicaragua • environmental sustainability • water • environment

Sustainable Development Goal: