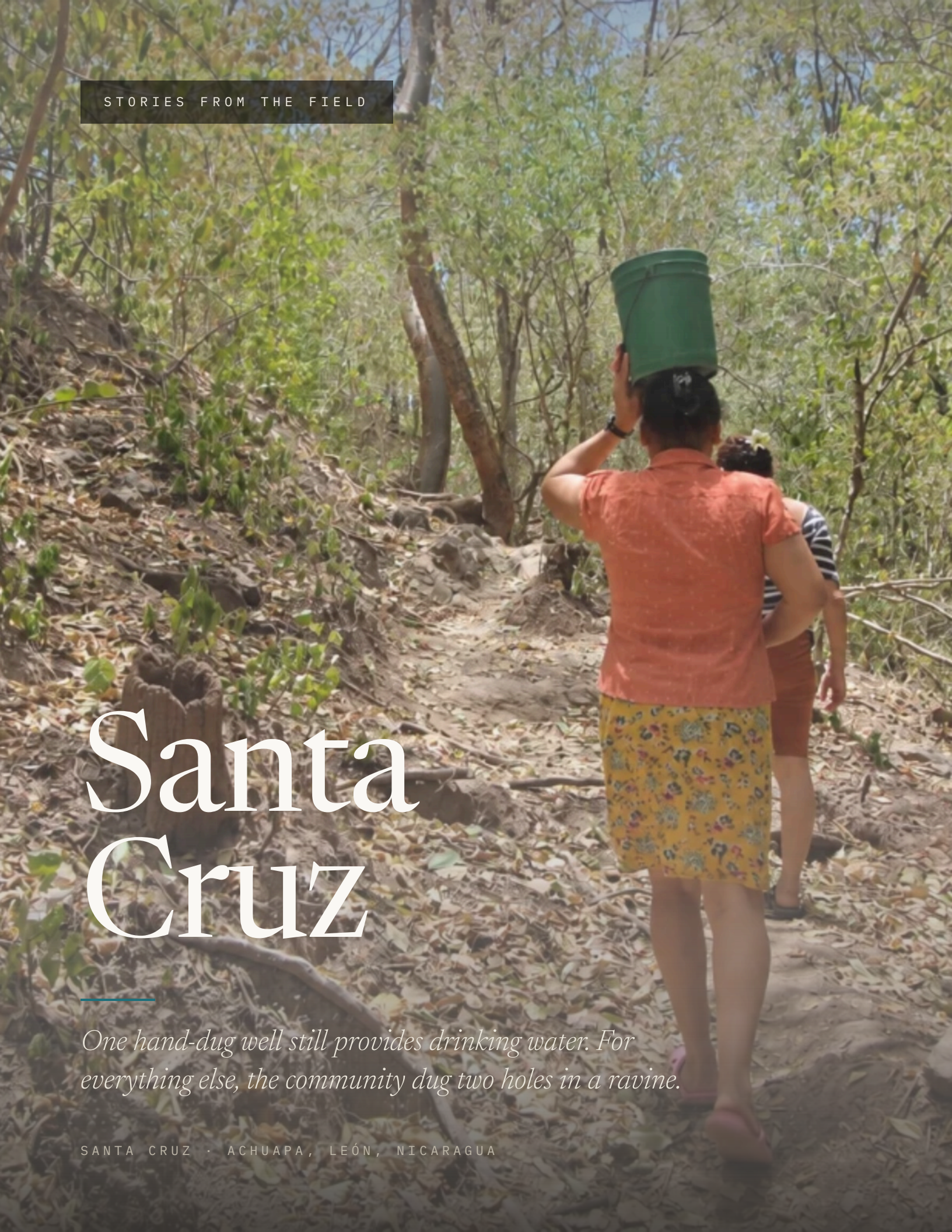


A woman in an orange shirt and a yellow floral skirt is walking away from the camera on a dirt path. She is carrying a green bucket on her head. Another person is partially visible behind her. The path is surrounded by dense green foliage and trees.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Santa Cruz

One hand-dug well still provides drinking water. For everything else, the community dug two holes in a ravine.

SANTA CRUZ · ACHUAPA, LEÓN, NICARAGUA

One jug of drinking water a day. Everything else is three kilometers away.

The community of Santa Cruz has three hand-dug wells. One of them, about 600 meters from the houses, still provides water, but only enough to drink: a single jug per family a day. The rest are dry or contaminated.

So the community dug two holes in a ravine to supply itself. Water for everything else—cooking, washing, bathing, and laundry—is carried from there, roughly three kilometers away, in jugs, buckets, bottles, or whatever other containers they can find. They bring it back on foot, on horseback, or by ox cart.

Paubla and Lesbia, two mothers from the community, described their daily routine: up to seven trips for household water and three or four more for drinking water, making the journey on foot with their daughters. The school has no water at all.

A DAY, COUNTED

7

trips a day for household water

3–4

more trips for drinking water

3 km

to the holes dug in the ravine

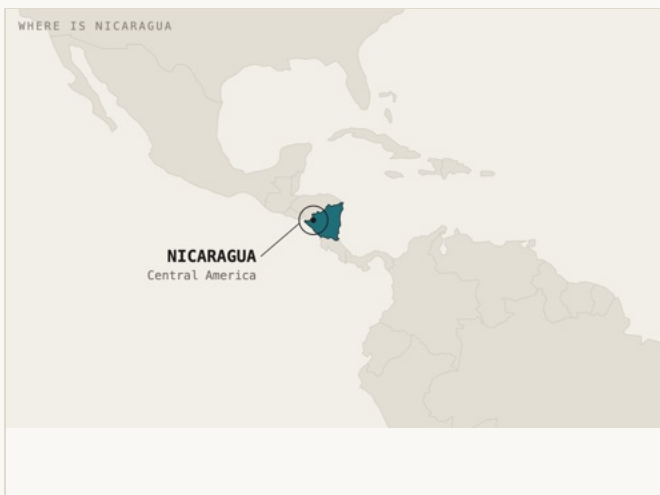
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water at the primary school

38

households a well would serve

WHERE THIS IS



THE ROAD FOR WATER



“Acarreamos el agua desde allá hasta nuestras casas. La llevamos en bidones, baldes, como podemos.”

“We haul the water from over there all the way to our houses. We carry it in jugs, buckets, however we can.”

TESTIMONY

“Yo les sirvo de ángel de la guarda. Aunque me duele el alma porque a mí me cuesta conseguir el agua, no podría negarles un vasito de agua.”

“I act as their guardian angel. Even though it pains me because getting water takes so much effort, I couldn’t refuse them a small glass of water.”

PAUBLA · MOTHER IN SANTA CRUZ, RELATIVE OF A CAPS MEMBER

Paubla and Lesbia – both related to members of the community’s water committee, the CAPS – make the walk every day, their daughters alongside them. They used to go down to a hand-dug well near the houses; since it dried up, their household water comes from the holes dug in the ravine, three kilometers away.

Children run out of water in their bottles on their way to and from school and knock on doors along the road to ask for more. Paubla fills their glasses from the jugs she spent the morning carrying. “No podemos negarles un vasito de agua,” she says – we can’t deny them a little glass of water.



What the day costs

“Llenamos ese bidón y después ya no da más agua” – we fill that jug, and then no more water comes out. The well 600 meters away runs dry after each family fills one jug, so the rest of the day is spent making the long trips to the ravine.

The consequences affect people’s health, as carrying water every day wears the body down. Children are affected too: they dig shallow holes to bathe in and arrive late to class.

In Santa Cruz the day is organized around the absence of water, and every day begins with the walk to collect water.

POVERTY OF TIME

Poverty takes many forms. One is a lack of time: households spend hours on essential tasks like hauling water, leaving less time for anything else. Here, water comes at a cost measured not only in distance but also in time—hours that could otherwise be spent in school, working, or pursuing other productive activities.



The water is carried home in whatever holds it – jugs, buckets, bottles.

ON FOOT AND ON HORSEBACK

Families carry water home on foot, on horseback, or by ox cart.



Transporting water by ox cart.



The three-kilometer walk to the ravine.



Collecting water from one of the holes in the ravine, one container at a time.



Waiting for a jug to fill with drinking water at the nearest well.



THE SCHOOL

There is no water at the school.

A well in Santa Cruz would serve the classrooms as well as the houses. When asked whether the water would reach the school, community members answered immediately: yes, and it would benefit the children.

Primary school • no water supply

Children fetch or are given water before class

What the community brings

José Morales, the community's primary school teacher, lays out how Santa Cruz intends to participate in the project: asking for the well, digging the trenches, and keeping the system running throughout its working life through the community's water committee, the CAPS.

01 · TAKING PART

“Como comunidad, hemos expresado nuestra necesidad de contar con agua y nuestra disposición de participar en el proyecto, aportando los insumos y el apoyo que estén a nuestro alcance para contribuir a su desarrollo.”

“We have expressed, as a community, our need for water and our willingness to take part in the project, contributing whatever supplies and support we can to help it move forward.”

02 · LABOR AND MATERIALS

“Estamos dispuestos a aportar con mano de obra y zanjas del lugar del proyecto hacia las demás casas beneficiadas por el proyecto, así como otros materiales que estén a nuestro alcance y los que no cubra el proyecto.”

“We are willing to contribute labor and dig the trenches from the project site to the other homes served by the project, and provide any other materials we can that are not covered by the project.”

03 · KEEPING IT RUNNING

“Para mantener el sistema del pozo y que nuestro beneficio sea duradero, el CAPS echará a andar todas las medidas necesarias para mantener las buenas condiciones del pozo, recaudando fondos y manteniendo las buenas condiciones de cada instalación.”

“To maintain the well system and ensure lasting benefits for the community, the CAPS will take all necessary steps to keep the well in good condition, raising funds and keeping every part of the system in good working order.”

JOSÉ MORALES · PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER, SANTA CRUZ



What a well would change

When asked what a drilled well would mean to them, community members gave a simple answer: “Sería de gran utilidad para nosotros” – it would be of great use to us. “Es algo que tanto le rogamos a Dios que se haga realidad, porque con la perforación de un pozo podríamos tener agua aquí en Santa Cruz” – we pray so earnestly to God for this to become a reality, because with a drilled well we could have water here in Santa Cruz.

Clean water in the community itself, rather than holes dug in a ravine three kilometers out. The ten or eleven daily trips would end, giving families back the hours they now spend collecting water.

Above all, it would protect the community's health. José Morales reports that many people have recently fallen ill with stomach and intestinal infections. Families now drink from a shallow well and from holes dug in a ravine; a drilled well draws from deeper, protected groundwater, giving them a safer source for drinking, cooking and washing.

The water supply would also reach the school, giving children drinking water there and helping them arrive on time without stopping at houses along the road to ask for water.

And it would take the daily strain off the women and girls who carry the load. “Usted sabe que jalar agua debilita a uno” – you know that hauling water wears a person down.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Drilled well with pump

ALSO SERVED

The community's primary school

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION

Distribution system, labor, trenching, materials, CAPS-led maintenance



A member of our team carrying out the seismoelectric survey at the proposed well site.