



## Photographer Q & A CAROLINE LEAL El Porvenir

By: Stephanie Fraser

**1. Was the trip to Nicaragua different than you expected it to be?**  
Of course! In spite of my extensive travel experience, I'd be lying if I said I knew exactly what I was getting myself into, from the moment I clicked 'Apply' on your website to the moment I landed on the tarmac in Managua, Nicaragua.

**2. What are some things that you did to capture what EP is doing?**  
El Porvenir is a great example of a grassroots organization that understands the need to work with local community towards local issues. I traveled with El Porvenir to all of their offices across the country, from west to east, to photograph their work. Generally, I spent two days with staff shadowing their daily work. I was able to learn about their hygiene education workshops, their well construction projects and their reforestation initiatives.

**3. Why is eco-tourism so important? Did this trip change your perspective of travelling abroad?**

To me, there is no other way to travel than to do it responsibly. I'm happy that the travel bug has hit so many people fueled by curiosity of other cultures and countries. However, with this mass tourism comes

a hefty price, environmental and socio-cultural issues taking the biggest hit. Done wrong, travel can be a very selfish thing (I want to see this, I want to eat this, here's a picture of 'me' in front of this) and even a way to brag about all the pretty places one sees. But real, meaningful travel is about connecting with local communities with as little disruption as possible to local life. This trip to Nicaragua reminded me that ethical and meaningful travel trumps a week at a resort any time.

**4. From the point of view of a volunteer, what do you think the organization needs from this point on? What can people do to help?**

El Porvenir is very well organized with their local staff and community leaders. They also host volunteer groups to come and help construct wells and latrines. But ultimately, money is what is needed. Their website is full of information on how to help. Small donations have a great impact.

**5. What is something that you found difficult about your trip?**

My greater difficulties were personal as I became sick on the airplane and ended up with bronchitis for the whole time I was in Nicaragua. I'd also say that even though I

loved the aspect of traveling to new towns every two days, it was hard to develop deeper relationships with the people I photographed which is challenging when seeking more candid and natural poses. I generally had 20 minutes per family so it was definitely a rush to photograph. I think the task would've been easier if I just stayed with one or two communities and developed a connection and story with the subjects.

**6. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience?**

I simply want to thank your team for talking me on. I am truly humbled to have been chosen to represent Photographers Without Borders and am so excited to see what else is in store for your wonderful team of photographers.

Visit El Porvenir online:  
([www.elporvenir.org](http://www.elporvenir.org))

Visit GroupRev to donate:  
([grouprev.com/elporvenir](http://grouprev.com/elporvenir))

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