

Dominga Escalante

Community: Santa Teresa, Somotillo, Chinandega
Occupation: High School Teacher
Position: Secretary, Community Water Committee



Water service

enhanced with a cell phone

Easier Communication

But as the saying goes "stay positive during hard times." Having a cell phone has helped Ms. Dominga to save time and effort: *"The cell phone shortens the distance, and communication is faster because I can locate people immediately. I have an internet signal here that allows me to have my WhatsApp and to use Messenger and Facebook that makes it easier for me to keep track of things."*

It is not easy to learn how to use the new technology, but it is important because communication can be instantaneous. You never stop learning. If this project trains us to use this technology, our communication will be modernized and our Water Committee as well. We can also look for information about water rights laws on the internet, solve difficulties through consultations, and schedule a meeting."

The cell phone makes it is easier to communicate with officials in the municipal office and between members of the Water Committee (CWC). We can also look for information about water rights laws on the internet, solve difficulties through consultations, and schedule a meeting..."

Access to Information

"As a high school teacher, I would like to be part of this network because you learn from the experiences of other CWCs, and the experiences are very useful. For example, right now we are installing water meters at each house but we are not reading them yet. When we read these numbers, we do not know what it means or what value we can give it. We need more information. But I know that through the internet I can access the experiences of experts. They will be able to tell me how or in what way to use the water meters. This will help us to solve this problem."

"I am very sure that once all the water meters are installed, we will be able to better manage the water services and charge a fair rate for the water usage. This is another great resource for sustainability; the pump will work less because, knowing that the meter registers everything consumed, people will be more concerned about not wasting water."

Information and communication technologies are making communication easier between Dominga Escalante, secretary of the local Community Water Committee (CWC) in the community of Santa Teresa, and the municipal officials of Somotillo, Chinandega. The community has a water well that was drilled after Hurricane Mitch in 1998, and although the community has always managed its own well, it was not formally organized as a CWC.

"Now, thanks to the coordination with the municipality office, we are requesting a water tank and tower, and we are legalizing our CWC..." says Dominga, who values the support of Change for Children (CFC) in the improvements to the water service system.

Closing the Distance

"We have always had some coordination with technicians of the Water and Sanitation Management Unit (UMAS) at the municipal office in Somotillo: they come to visit us or we go there to maintain good smooth communication."

However, getting from the community to the municipal office in Somotillo, about 10 kms away, can be difficult. Dominga explains that Water Committee members have to figure out how to get to town on their own. Members do not have vehicles and the committee does not have enough funds to cover the cost of transportation. To catch the bus into town, it is necessary to walk to the main road, about 20 minutes away. The problem is the dangers associated with heavy rainfall and crime that has increased due to the political and economic crisis in Nicaragua. Women are particularly cautious about walking alone after dark.

