



## Nicaragua

By Monya Lemery, Latin America Regional Director | August 3, 2009

Nicaragua is the second poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere after Haiti. Yet, it has made a comeback from the days of wars and revolution to boast itself as the safest country in Central America. Tourism is less developed than several of the neighboring countries allowing visitors to enjoy Nicaragua's unexploited side.

IE3 Global Internships offers internships a [Asociación Fénix \(AsoFenix\)](#) in conjunction with Green Empowerment, a non-profit based out of Portland, Oregon.

**AsoFenix** is a NGO based in the capital city of Managua with years of experience in the area of renewable energy. Its staff is comprised of engineers, university students, technicians, and community organizers. They are seeking interns in the fields of engineering, renewable energy, agroforestry, public health and related majors. Intermediate Spanish competency preferred, however, a multi-week, intensive language training can be arranged for students with less Spanish. Minimum 6 months; unpaid internship. Interns will be working in rural communities in the region of Boaco (about 1 1/2 hours driving time from the capital), with occasional visits to the main office in Managua. The staff at AsoFenix are well prepared to receive interns and are very excited to collaborate with IE3 Global Internships. For students interested in "green job", community development, health care in a developing nation, and renewable energy, this internship offers amazing hands-on experience. AsoFenix would love to receive groups of interns who are committed to staying for a minimum of 6 months (they prefer 12 months).

The Regional Director for Latin America, Monya Lemery, recently visited Managua. In addition to meeting with folks at AsoFenix, she met with a few other organizations who may be interested in receiving interns in the future.

**Esperanza en Accion** - Esperanza en Acción, ("Hope through Action"), is a Fair Trade organization based in Nicaragua that provides Nicaraguan artisans with the tools to lift themselves out of poverty by offering technical assistance and quality consultation in addition to education and practice in calculating a fair wage. Esperanza en Acción also works to



connect these artisans to local and international fair trade markets so that they receive a living wage for their work. Additionally, we strive to educate people of the 'First World' to empower us all to help transform the global economic system into one that is fair for ALL people.

Monya Lemery met with Yamileth Perez, the Director of the Artisan Program, who is an inspiration to all who meet her. She is a single mother of four daughters; their home is in one of the poorest and most dangerous barrios in Managua. This is the location of La Chureca, the vast city landfill where 1000 people live and work, digging through mountains of trash and filth to collect specific products to sell to intermediaries to be recycled. Half of those who work in the dump are children, who begin working when they are as young as five years old. Yamileth spent many years working in the dump and her small children helped by washing plastic in their home, which was a shack made of plastic and cardboard. Now Yamileth lives in a home of solid concrete cinderblocks and is earning a good salary working for Esperanza en Acción.



Some ideas they have for interns would be to assist with fundraising, administrative work, inventories, providing workshops, and elaboration of projects. Website for [Esperanza en Accion](#).

**Ola Verde Restaurant** - The mission of Ola Verde is to maintain its position as a local leader in the development and marketing of high-quality food products derived from bio-sustainable and/or organic agriculture in Nicaragua. Being committed to social responsibility, Ola Verde emphasizes local produce, harvested during its season, with high nutritional value. Ola Verde believes in the philosophy of fair-trade. Ola Verde also supports education and accordingly, contributes continuously to nutritional education within the community through articles in the national press, its televised nutrition and cooking programs, its nutrition and cooking classes given regularly to community members, and in education programs for producers. The key words that define Ola Verde are “Deliciosamente Saludable” which is Spanish for “Deliciously Healthy”, organic, ecologic sustainability, culinary creativity, and quality. About 95% of all their ingredients are derived from Nicaraguan agriculture or oceans. [Website for Ola Verde](#).



Ideas they have for an intern would be to conduct a study of changes in dietary preferences due to the work of Ola Verde and founder Carla Fjeld. Other options for research would be useful to them, such as an impact study, consumer surveys, gathering data on similar or related projects worldwide, research and write proposal submissions or articles about the work of Ola Verde, etc.

**Connections through Portland State University** - interns could work with Dr. Keren Brown Wilson, professor at the Institute on Aging at Portland State. Currently she is President of the Jessie F. Richardson Foundation, a charitable organization working to promote affordable, innovative housing and long-term care. The Foundation provides technical assistance, training, and research on assisted living. Its focus is on low-income and special-needs populations. In addition, the Foundation has an area of focus in Latin America that includes direct aid to the elderly in Nicaragua. Dr. Wilson would be interested in having interns work in the areas of health education for elders,

community building, conducting health needs assessments of elders, identifying resources in communities that could be used to assist elders, offering health education workshops for health workers or elders or community members, running community awareness campaigns about issues related to the elderly, etc.