

## Your elective in the Rio Coco, Nicaragua

Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Over the past 40 years it has overcome a cruel dictatorship, a bloody civil war and natural disasters, including a hurricane in 2007. 44% of the population lives in rural areas and has poor access to health care services, water and sanitation and education.



Bilwaskarma Sub-territory is located in the Waspam municipal district of the Rio Coco in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region of Nicaragua (the RAAN). The RAAN is a remote and impoverished area where 80% of people live on less than a dollar per day.

Many of the people in this region are from indigenous minority groups such as the Miskitu and Sumo-Mayagna people. Around 60% lack access to clean water, 62% have no electricity and 85% still cook using firewood.

The sub-territory is divided into three sectors that groups 10 communities (villages). Eight of them have a health post where nurses provide basic primary care. There is one doctor at the Bilwaskarma clinic, pictured here. Some of the services provided are:

- General care
- Women and children:
  - Prenatal care
  - Delivery
  - Birth control
  - Newborn care
  - Care of children (especially the under 5s)
- Immunization
- Vector transmitted disease control (malaria and dengue)
- Communicable disease control (tuberculosis)
- Treatment of chronic diseases (diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, etc.)

## Elective opportunities

Students will be able to participate in different activities (accompanied by the clinic staff or Health Poverty Action technical promoter):

- Patient attention and care, according to norms and procedures
- Community health programme, according to planned activities: training traditional birth attendants and volunteer health promoters, monitoring health post performance

Dra. Fresia Thompson, director of the clinic will supervise students during their stay