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**Nicaragua
Education Sector Assessment
1975**

**Managua, Nicaragua
Washington, D.C.**

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PREFACE

This education sector assessment has emphasized a description of the existing educational system and the national environment within which it operates, in terms of the policies, goals, and national development needs of Nicaragua. In addition, as time and personnel permitted, other social, economic, and physical factors were considered to determine how the educational system might be modified to better serve overall national development goals and to help adjust any recommended educational development efforts to the cultural, geographic, and economic realities of Nicaragua.

The major goals of the assessment were to describe the existing educational system; to contrast that system with national development needs and goals; to identify major constraints to both educational and national development; and to make recommendations for action in the educational sector.

Once the data on educational and other conditions and resources were gathered and the educational projections made, it was possible, in conjunction with Ministry officials, to perform a constraint analysis and to recommend courses of action for education that would have potential for positively influencing overall national development.

Definition of the processes to be followed in conducting the assessment began with discussions in Nicaragua between officials of the Ministry of Public Education and USAID, and in Washington, D.C., between representatives of the Academy for Educational Development, Inc., and personnel from USAID/Nicaragua and AID/Washington. The format of the report conforms in general to the guidelines presented in A-703 and in the Latin American Bureau's "Operational Outline of a Sector Assessment." The Academy's assessment team consisted of an educational research specialist, an educational economist, an educational psychologist, two educational administrators, a university curriculum specialist, and a communications technology specialist; two AED staff members provided backup support. An officer from USAID/Nicaragua contributed a section on women's role in education and development, an economics specialist from AID/Washington provided valuable assistance on the economic analysis section, and other USAID/Nicaragua officers supplied on-site logistical and technical assistance, including the provision of clerical support.

Following discussions in Washington with representatives from the Bureau for Technical Assistance, the Bureau for Latin America, and the Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination, and a review of previous assessments in Bolivia, Peru, and Panama, the team went to Nicaragua, where the assessment was conducted from September 8 through November 14, 1975.

The team received assistance and cooperation from many Nicaraguan agencies and individuals. Much credit is due to personnel of the Ministry of Public Education, who participated in this study by gathering data, suggesting information sources, arranging on-site visits, and making other

valuable inputs during the development of the constraint analyses and action recommendations. In addition, various departments within the Ministry of Public Education and other Nicaraguan agencies gave fully of their time and personnel as needed, including the Minister of Education who held a final meeting with team members, Ministry counterparts and USAID officers to review a draft of the report, adding his comments, including some very current data not previously made available to those present. These data have been noted in the final report.

Each assessment team member, on the basis of his or her particular expertise, was assigned and held responsible for certain sections of this document in what is referred to as a "vertical analysis," or an in-depth description and analysis of a particular, well-defined area apart from the other areas being studied. This was accomplished with the assistance of Nicaraguan counterparts. After completion of the "vertical analysis," the team conducted the "horizontal analysis," or the determination of priority needs and constraints as indicated by all the data, and definition of recommended educational reform efforts. The results of the "horizontal analysis" effort are presented in Sections III and XI of this document.

The assessment covered the whole national territory of Nicaragua. Recently, the USAID Mission to Nicaragua has been concentrating part of its rural development efforts in two regions of the country. In the Rural Development Loan (Education) proposed for FY-77, emphasis will be given to Regions II and V. Departments included in these two regions are given below. Therefore, to the degree possible, as much specific information as was available on those two regions is presented in the text of this document.

REGION II
CENTRAL PACIFIC

Managua

Masaya

Granada

Carazo

REGION V
CENTRAL INTERIOR

Matagalpa

Jinotega

Esteli

Furthermore, emphasis has been given to urban-rural differences, since disparities are so great and since AID priorities are in the rural sector. Aggregate data in many cases did not sufficiently describe the magnitude of some of the educational issues in Nicaragua, so that, wherever possible, necessary breakdowns were made. Again to the extent possible, analyses were also made by sex. A separate section is included on the role of women in the educational process.

Problems and Limitations of the Assessment Process

The major problems and limitations of this process relate to lack of

data and possible inaccuracy of the data that do exist. In many areas, the data were fairly reliable and accurate (numbers of classrooms, level of training of teachers, curricular data, conditions of the schools, etc.), but in other cases, most notably where recourse was made to the censuses of 1950 and 1963, there was no assurance that the data were even as accurate as that of the last census (1971) which, in itself, has required considerable correcting by Nicaraguan agencies and has numerous remaining defects and omissions.

Data were also notably lacking in the area of manpower needs. Where this information was required, the best sources of estimates were used (e.g., USAID, OAS, ODECA, Central Bank of Nicaragua, the Planning Office of the Ministry of Economy, and the National Planning Council). Unfortunately, the time allowed for the development of this assessment did not permit even the relatively simple sampling procedures that could have served to validate the estimates made.

In addition, the quality of the educational data used was restricted by the difficulties in accurate data-gathering in the rural areas of Nicaragua and in obtaining complete data from the private educational institutions. All available data from the rural and private schools were used without correction.

It is believed that the recommendations made within this document could constitute a genuine, positive step forward educationally and nationally for the people of Nicaragua and could lend necessary direction to investments in education that would both increase the probability of making better investments and result in faster returns on those investments.

GLOSSARY

AID - Agency for International Development

BNN - National Bank of Nicaragua

CARE - Cooperative for American Remittances Everywhere

CEDOC - Communication and Documentation Center for Rural Development

CEFER - Centros Familiares de Educación Rural

CEICA - Centro de Educación Integral Campesina

CEPA - Centro de Educación Promocional Agraria

CEPAD - Comité Evangélico Pro-Ayuda al Desarrollo

CRS - Catholic Relief Service

DIEN - Departamento de Investigación y Evaluación Educativa Nacional

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