

Evaluation
AIFLD Cooperative Agreement
524-0316-A-00-5065-00

Submitted to
USAID/Nicaragua

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Purpose of Evaluation.....	4
II.	Background.....	5
III.	Goals and Objectives of the AIFLD/CENDEL Labor Studies Program.....	6
	o Modernization and Professionalization of Nicaragua's trade unions through education, training and participation.	
	o Enhancing the capabilities of current and future leaders to better represent the interests of their unions and bring social justice to the workplace.	
	o Enable organized labor to fully participate in the political and economic development of the nation.	
IV.	Scope and Administration of the Labor Studies Program.....	9
	o The Labor Advisory Council	
	o The Project Information Unit	
	o The Curriculum	
	o Recruitment, Selection and Evaluation of Participants	
	o Recruitment, Selection and Evaluation of CENDEL Instructors	
	o Other Observations Regarding CENDEL Administrative Staff and Facilities	
	o Special provisions of the Cooperative Agreement	
V.	Findings and Conclusions.....	19
VI.	Recommendations.....	20
VII.	Other Issues.....	22
	o Role of AIFLD Country Program Director	
	o Administrative Support to Trade Union Centrals	
VIII.	Annexes	
	1 Evaluation Scope of Work	
	2 List of Persons Interviewed	
	3 Total Number and Percentage of Participants in Forums	
	4 CENDEL Work Plan	
	5 Number/Percentage of Participants in 7-week training	6
	CENDEL Lesson Plans/Subject Matter Content	
	7 List of Participants/Trade Union Organization Represented	
	8 Participant Breakdown by Forums	
	9 Participants in Special Seminars by Organization and Percentages	
	10 Student Evaluation Criteria/Factors	
	11 Instructor Evaluation Criteria/Factors	
	12 Statistical Breakdown of Men and Women Participants	
	13 List of CENDEL Instructors/Backgrounds	
	14 CENDEL Students Success Stories	
	15 CUS Report of Activities June 1 through December 31, 1995	

I. PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

This evaluation was undertaken at the request of the USAID Mission in Nicaragua and responds to a series of questions contained in the Mission's scope of work (**see annex 1**). The principal aim of the evaluation was to assess the degree to which the Mission-funded education and training program of the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) has attained the objectives set forth in the existing Cooperative Agreement (524-0316-A-00-5065-00) between the Mission and AIFLD. The current Agreement expires on April 30, 1996.

In conducting the evaluation, a series of interviews were held with USAID and U.S. Embassy officials in Nicaragua; extensive interviews were held with the AIFLD Country Program Director (CPD); the Education Director and staff of the labor studies center (Centro Nicaraguense de Estudios Laborales--CENDEL); CENDEL instructors; current and former CENDEL students; the Secretary-Generals of the major trade union centrals; trade union leaders at the Federation and local levels; local NGOs familiar with the activities of CENDEL; and Nicaraguan public and private sector representatives familiar with CENDEL and its training program (**see annex 2**).

As part of the evaluation, the policies and administrative procedures of the labor studies center were reviewed and discussed with AIFLD and CENDEL staff. The composition and adequacy of the CENDEL staff, the curriculum and course content were examined. Also, in measuring the effectiveness of the labor studies program, particular consideration was given to the question of whether the education needs of local trade union organizations were being met and the extent to which AIFLD had tailored the labor studies program to specific local needs such as:

"...a more inclusive approach to building an independent, democratic labor movement by moving away from support for specific organizations to a program of labor education open to all union members who wish to participate";¹

"Institute a more transparent, participatory design to ensure that the proposed labor education program is responsive to the training needs of Nicaraguan union members";²

More specifically, AIFLD's overall compliance with special provisions (identified as items a through e, in the evaluation scope of work) of the Cooperative Agreement was also assessed. Interviews with CENDEL instructors and administrative staff dealt with methods for recruiting and measuring student progress while at CENDEL; and established procedures for evaluating instructors and students.

Interviews with USAID, U.S. Embassy officials, AIFLD and CENDEL staff, and the Secretary Generals of the major trade union organizations of Nicaragua focused specific attention on the issue of financial sustainability of CENDEL. Also explored was the issue of whether the major trade union organizations of Nicaragua would continue to rely on CENDEL for their labor education needs or launch alternate efforts.

¹ See Cooperative Agreement, Attachment 2, Program Description, items 1) and 2), page 10.

² Ibid.

II. BACKGROUND

A 12 month Cooperative Agreement between AFL-CIO/AIFLD and USAID/Nicaragua provided funding in the amount of \$400,000 for labor development through a comprehensive education and training program.

This Agreement succeeded a previous two-year arrangement between USAID/Nicaragua and AFL-CIO/AIFLD which provided approximately \$3 million in administrative support and training to unions affiliated with the Congreso Permanente de Trabajadores (CPT), a pro-democratic labor federation. At the time of this evaluation, trade union leaders interviewed noted that the CPT was no longer a cohesive group of unions and was about to disperse as a unified democratic labor front. Apparent differences among its leaders over support for presidential candidates and divergent alliances with political parties were given as reasons for the demise of CPT unity.

The overreaching objective of the previous two-year AIFLD program had been to maintain a visible democratic labor movement, under the auspices of the CPT, to counterbalance Sandinista labor and to safeguard the fragile democratic process initiated by the 1990 general elections. Given that objective, more than 80 percent of the funds allocated to CPT-affiliated organizations had been utilized primarily to subsidize the operational costs of trade union organizations, with the balance of the funds invested in staff training and education.

The cooperative agreement currently in force, dramatically shifts the direction of the AFL-CIO/AIFLD program in Nicaragua away from subsidies to unions associated with the CPT (under the agreement approximately \$30,000 was allocated for administrative support to labor centrals) and more emphasis on direct training and education of union members. The agreement requires AIFLD to make a conscious effort to recruit, for training members of all unions that adhere to democratic principles and policy of non-violence. This new orientation is fully consistent with the recommendations contained in an evaluation of the previous AIFLD program.

III. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE AIFLD EDUCATION PROGRAM

As specified in the Cooperative Agreement, the goal of the AIFLD program is to strengthen and modernize the Nicaraguan labor movement through the education and training of union members so that it can more effectively represent the interests of workers, and play a more constructive political and economic role in society, based on a shared commitment to democracy.

This goal is supported by three objectives and a series of corresponding indicators by which to measure the attainment of the objectives. The indicators were utilized to assess the impact of the overall labor studies program and whether the specific objectives had been fully or partially accomplished by AIFLD and CENDEL during the first year of CENDEL operations.

Objective one:

- **Modernize and professionalize the labor movement through education, training and participation.**

Indicators: Unions are more democratic and professional, as exhibited by (a) holding of competitive and highly participatory elections for union leaders and officials;
(b) transparency of union decision-making and financial operations; (c) rank and file involvement in decision-making; and (d) unions covering a

greater percentage of their expenses through membership dues.

Comments: Based on comments obtained during interviews with Secretary Generals of the major trade unions of Nicaragua, CENDEL instructors and staff, the AIFLD CPD, the Director General of the Ministry of Labor and other observers, it can be concluded that the labor studies program is having a positive impact on the trade union movement of Nicaragua, particularly in promoting trade union democracy and greater transparency in the way unions are administered and decisions made by their leaders.

According to several CENDEL graduates who participated in recent trade union elections the principles of trade union democracy and transparency in decision making were the cornerstone of their campaigns. The response of the rank and file was overwhelmingly positive as indicated by the results in several trade union elections, notably the teachers union of Managua election and the disaffiliation of a CST union and subsequent reorganization into an independent union of teachers comprising 160 members. CENDEL students interviewed noted that reference to these democratic principles had met with acceptance of the rank and file. The concepts learned in their labor studies program had been integrated in their election to achieve their objectives.

Objective two:

- **Enhance the ability of the current and future leadership to better represent its members and bring social justice to the workplace.**

Indicators: Nicaraguan Confederations have in place fully functioning departments for women's affairs, contract negotiation, workers' rights and education. In addition, the number of women in leadership positions on national labor committees as well as within local unions will have increased.

Comments: Based on interviews with senior trade union leaders of the Teachers Federation and other major trade union organizations, one can conclude that the trade union movement of Nicaragua is committed to expanding the role of women in all labor activities. Several of the trade union centrals are establishing departments of women's affairs, in addition to other components dedicated to contract negotiations and women's rights.

Trade union women now comprise nearly 30% of the membership in trade unions and an important aspect of this commitment is the enrollment of trade union women in the labor studies program now comprises 39% of the student body at CENDEL. In addition, women are encouraged to assume leadership positions in their respective unions (a CENDEL graduate was elected president of the Managua Teachers Union in her first attempt at elective office). Trade union women who do not seek elective office are being encouraged to actively join women trade forces and national groups which are dedicated to advancing the cause of women's rights.

As evident from the participation in CENDEL-sponsored "foros" a large percentage of the attendees were trade union women (**see annex 3**). The foros attended and the corresponding percentage of women who participated are listed below: **Cooperativismo:** (22 participants; **percentage of women: 77%**); **Planificacion:** (15 participants; **percentage of women: 53%**); **Codigo Laboral y Contratacion Colectiva:** 56 participants; **percentage of women: 25%**); **Foro de Mujeres para preparar un documento para los Candidatos Presidenciales:** 33 participants; **percentage of women: 100%**); **Foro de Maestros para preparar un documento**

para los Candidatos Presidenciales del 96: 32 participants; percentage of women: 66%); Ley de Carrera Docente: 34 participants; percentage of women: 64%);Codigo Laboral y Contratacion Colectiva: 63 participants; percentage of women: 30%). CENDEL students enrolled in the 10 seven-week training cycles comprise 39% of the overall student body.

Objective three:

- o. **Enable the labor movement to fully participate in the political and economic development of the nation.**

Indicators: Organized labor is making a constructive contribution to national debate on key issues of importance to labor as demonstrated by: (a) appearances of labor leaders on radio and television to present labor views on issues; (b) press reports identifying clear union positions on labor issues; (c) holding of national forums for presidential candidates on labor issues; and (d) presentation to public of union position papers on labor issues.

General Comments: In the relatively short period of less than one year, the labor studies program appears to have had a great impact on promoting trade union democracy and better defining the role of unions in civil society, concepts which, heretofore, had not been incorporated nor addressed in any of the training sponsored by Nicaraguan trade union organizations at any level. Classroom discussions in several of the CENDEL classes visited during the evaluation were dedicated to such concepts.

As a consequence of the training, several instructors interviewed noted a correlation between the subject matter taught and increased trade union activities on a general scale. This process is complemented by the active participation of senior trade union leaders in political party activities and supporting a variety of presidential candidates.

Representatives of public and private sector institutions including officials of the Ministry of Labor and local NGOs such as the Center for Democracy concur with the views. They emphasized a rare opportunity for creating a "bottom-up" trade union movement in Nicaragua through basic education and trade union democracy. Manuel Mendoza, the founder of CUS, one of Nicaragua's major trade union organizations with regional and international ties, and a well respected trade union leader with extensive international experience, credits CENDEL with "empowering trade union members and redefining the role of trade unions in a political and economic context which is quite different than had been the case during the Cold War." In his interview at CENDEL, Mendoza noted that the concepts which students are being exposed to in their training at CENDEL "are creating a deeper understanding of their role as trade unionists in the broader society, and as a consequence will be in the future able to defend their collective interest and are better able to promote social justice."

Comments related to specific activities: Two national forums sponsored by CENDEL in conjunction with the Teachers Confederation of Nicaragua and the National Committee of Trade Union Women demonstrate the commitment of the trade union movement in defining its proper role relative to the political and economic development of the nation. The collective positions which emerged from the two forums feature the shared vision of the two groups relative to the upcoming national elections and hope presidential candidates will integrate in their respective platforms.

In support of this objective, AIFLD has also provided support for a pilot weekly radio program coordinated under the auspices of CUS-affiliated unions in the region of Matagalpa. The purpose of the program is to facilitate interaction between trade unionists and community leaders. The radio program promotes dialogue and encourages the trade union community to debate relevant issues. The program appears to be successful in that it has promoted a greater understanding of local and regional issues and brought them to the attention of community and national leaders.

IV. SCOPE AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE LABOR STUDIES PROGRAM

In assessing the effectiveness of the labor studies program it was necessary to review CENDEL's administrative procedures and practices. In doing so, specific consideration was given to how policies and procedures were developed and whether they have proven adequate. During the interview process an effort was made to elicit views as to how CENDEL is perceived by students, instructors, administrators and other observers in its overall mission as a labor education and training center.

The Labor Advisory Council:

Soon after the establishment of CENDEL in June 1995, the CPD conducted a series of consultations with the respective leaders of Nicaragua's trade union centrals to determine their education and training needs and also to enlist their participation as members of CENDEL's Labor Advisory Council. As envisioned by AIFLD, the Council would set policies and guide the overall development of the labor studies program. While initially agreeing to accept the invitation to jointly work with AIFLD in the development of CENDEL's policies and programs, preoccupation with other issues unrelated to the labor studies program, coupled with divisions within and among the leadership of the trade union centrals precluded their joining the Council.

Given the difficulties encountered by AIFLD to enlist the participation of trade unions' leaders as active members of the Advisory Council members, an alternative course of action was pursued. The latter called for the formation of an ad hoc committee which would carry out the functions of the Council. The Committee, which is composed of the CPD, the CENDEL Education Program Director, and a founding member of the Confederation of Sindicalist Unity (CUS) and senior instructor at CENDEL, was able to design a comprehensive labor studies curriculum as well as an action plan to guide CENDEL through its first year of operation (**see Annex 4**).

In addition to the curriculum and the action plan, the Committee also defined administrative policies and systems for evaluating the students and instructors. In doing so, the Committee consulted the directors of education of the major trade union organizations in Nicaragua; relied on AIFLD's institutional experience with labor education programs conducted in Latin America; and developed a core curriculum around the basic concepts of trade unionism, trade union structure and finances, and collective bargaining.

In formulating the labor studies curriculum, the Committee also examined education materials developed at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies and those published by other labor organizations such as the ILO and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

Interviews with CENDEL administrators, instructors, students and guest lecturers confirmed that CENDEL is operating a credible program of labor

studies which provides for basic, intermediate and advanced training for men and women from throughout the labor community of Nicaragua.

In retrospect, while the Labor Advisory Council would have formally institutionalized the joint process of planning and executing a labor studies program, virtually the same objectives were realized by the ad hoc Committee formed by AIFLD. Being a technical committee, the latter may have avoided the likely politicization of the process which is inevitable when the leadership of the nation's trade union centrals committed to different ideologies serve as institutional policy-makers. Representatives of the trade union community at the trade union level as well as others interviewed, concur with this assessment and credit the success of CENDEL to its non-ideological character as a training institution.

Taking all of these factors into account, the administration of the labor studies program appears to be sound and the procedures established for self evaluation are effectively producing the intended results spelled out in the Cooperative Agreement.

AIFLD/Project Information Unit (PIU):

As envisioned in the current Cooperative Agreement, AIFLD has established the PIU as a mechanism for tracking the overall progress of CENDEL students following their graduation from the labor studies program. Additionally, PIU plans call for publication of a newsletter featuring the activities and experiences of CENDEL students within their respective trade union organizations and the community at large. Decisions regarding the PIU and its activities are handled by informal committee consisting of the AIFLD Country Program Director, the CENDEL Director of Education, and one senior instructor.

In "developing a formal system of contact with training graduates to help ensure they apply their training," the PIU has held a series of periodic "encounters" for CENDEL graduates. The encounters have enabled graduates of the labor studies program to exchange information about their trade union activities with the CENDEL staff and with students currently enrolled in the program. Discussions have been wide-ranging; some have focused on their experiences in trade union elections, worker rights and working conditions in free trade zones, new and recent experiences with collective bargaining.

CENDEL graduates regard the encounters as useful opportunities to exchange information with CENDEL staff and their peers. They also benefit by maintaining contacts and forging closer ties with other trade union members that participated in the labor studies program. The proposed PIU newsletter is expected to publicize these and other activities of former CENDEL students including their participation in special seminars and public forums scheduled in the future.

As part of its outreach efforts, AIFLD has held discussions with the Center for Democracy to explore the possibility of CENDEL graduates serving in the election monitoring process being devised by the Center for Democracy and other civic organizations. Such effort is aimed at expanding opportunities for graduates of the labor studies program to participate in civic activities which impact on trade union organizations and their role in the promotion and strengthening of civil society. The proposed joint effort follows a previous cooperative arrangement which permitted the Center for Democracy staff to audit several courses at CENDEL on the subject of trade union democracy and the role of unions in civil society. Center for Democracy instructors now lecture on these topics in their respective democracy training.

Curriculum:

CENDEL's comprehensive curriculum was designed to fulfill the labor education needs of Nicaraguan unions. The training includes basic, intermediate and advanced courses (**see annex 5**).

The courses comprising the basic group include: **Motivacion, Fines y Objetivos Sindicales, Oratoria, Historia del Movimiento Sindical, Procedimiento Parlamentario, Principios y Fundamentos Cooperativos, Derechos y Deberes Sindicales, Estructuras y Administracion Sindical, Relaciones Humans, Taller de Dirigencia Sindical, Derechos Humanos y de Asociacion.**

Intermediate courses include: **Actas y Estatutos Sindicales, Analysis de Problemas y Toma de Decisiones, Prensa y Propaganda Sindical, Seguridad Social, Historia del Movimiento Sindical Internacional, Practicas de Oratoria, Hygiene y Seguridad Industrial, Organizacion Sindical, Principios y Objetivos de la Contratacion Colectiva, Instruccion Civica, Derechos de la Mujer Trabajadora, and Integracion Economica.**

The advanced level of training includes courses on: **Principios de Economia, Technicas de Contratacion Colectiva, Derecho Laboral, Principios de Economia, Constitucion Politica de Nicaragua, Accion Politica Sindical.**

Students enrolled in each of the ten seven-week training cycles will have received a total of 115 hours of instruction. All of the courses are taught by experts and include trade unionists, academicians, representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations and special lecturers. CENDEL students receive transportation assistance, materials, and light meals as part of their training. Typically, classes are held in the evening and at the end of each cycle, students attend a graduating ceremony and receive a diploma (**see annex 6**).

In interviews with leaders of Nicaragua's major trade union organizations, including: CUS, CAUS, CNMN, CTN, CGT-i, MJN, and MNMN, USAID/Nicaragua was applauded for its support of the labor studies program. Nearly all of the representatives of the labor centrals expressed the view that no other labor education program exists in Nicaragua which fulfills the educational needs of its members. Other than the limited number of advanced seminars for senior trade union leaders offered regionally by the ILO, the ICFTU and a select number of international unions, the USAID-supported program is one of the few labor studies programs in effect in Central America. Commenting on this topic, the Director General of the Ministry of Labor characterized the CENDEL training as "unique because it was devoid of trade union ideology and the fact that its student body is truly representative of a wide spectrum of trade unions in Nicaragua." The student body includes both Sandinista and non-Sandinista trade unionists (**see annex 7**).

At the time of the evaluation nine of the training cycles planned by CENDEL had been completed. A total of 198 students will have been graduated from the program at this point. Of this total, 74 graduates will have been women (39% of the total student body). A total of eleven major trade union organizations are represented among the graduates.

In addition to the ten 7-week training cycles, CENDEL plans a series of "public forums on national issues that directly affect the daily lives of Nicaraguans." The proposed forums would focus on privatization, worker mobility, Central American Economic Integration, and labor code reform. As described in the Cooperative Agreement, the forums are designed to "help labor

participate more fully in the democratic process" of the nation.

To date a series of one-and two-day forums have been completed in which a total of 277 CENDEL students have participated. Of this number, 155 were women, for a 56% participation. The participants represented all trade union centrals, CNMN, and the Teacher's Federation. These forums addressed the following issues: Cooperativismo (October 1, 1995); Planificacion (January 18 y 19, 1996);Codigo Laboral y Contratacion Colectiva (November 4 y 5, 1996); Foro de Mujeres para preparar un documento para los Candidatos Presidenciales del 96' (October 26 y 27, 1995); Foro de Maestros para preparar un documento para los Candidatos del 96' (August 19 y 20, 1995); Ley de Carrera Docente (January 27 y 28, 1996); Las Relaciones Humanas y el Magisterio (January 6, 1996);Codigo Laboral y Contratacion Colectiva (March 16 y 17, 1996) (**see annex 8**).

CENDEL has completed a series of special 5-day seminars on specific topics to augment training provided during the 10 training cycles. The CENDEL graduates selected for this purpose are those who demonstrate the highest potential for trade union leadership. These seminars include: "Liderazgo Sindical y Administracion Publica" I (December 11-15, 1995); "Liderazgo Sindical y Administracion Publica" II (March 25-29, 1996). A total of 39 CENDEL graduates representing nine major trade union organizations in Nicaragua participated in this special training. Fourteen of the participants were women, for 36 percent of the total number of students that attended (**see annex 9**).

As with the public forums, the "special seminars" series will facilitate the exchange of views on relevant policy issues, but also encourage consensus building on issues of mutual interest, and developing labor strategies through coalition-building with public and private sector institutions in Nicaragua. CENDEL instructors and staff participate in the preparation and coordination of the first public forum.

Recruitment, Selection and Evaluation of Participants:

In accordance with the Cooperative Agreement, the evaluation of the training will be "fully participatory," enabling students to rate the courses in general, the performance of the lecturers, and provide suggestions to make the course better.

Recruitment/Selection of CENDEL Students:

Since its inception, CENDEL has maintained a close-working relationship with all trade union centrals and their respective education departments. This relationship has paid off in the key areas of curriculum development and recruitment and selection of students admitted to the labor studies program at CENDEL.

Once nominated by their respective trade union organizations, students are interviewed by CENDEL staff and registered. The registration form on file at CENDEL contains basic background information, level of education, employment history, trade union affiliation and responsibilities, and references.

The criteria for selection and admission to the labor studies program are the nominees' literacy skills, motivation, and ability to absorb theories and concepts; also, their potential for future leadership, which is determined by their past and current activities within their respective

unions. Students are also admitted on the basis of their commitment to trade union democracy and principles of non-violence. Political party or trade union affiliation is not a criteria for admission to CENDEL.

Successful completion of the labor training at CENDEL is considered the initial step in education of future trade union leaders. Approximately thirty-nine percent of the students are women. The graduation rate of those admitted to the 7-week training cycles is nearly 100%.

Evaluation of Students:

Procedures established by AIFLD/CENDEL for evaluating students include forms and criteria that measure students' progress during their 7-week training cycle. This process requires instructors to score and analyze the performance of each student for each class attended. Factors considered are: (a) class attendance, (b) class participation, (c) ability to communicate with other students and the instructor; tolerance for the views expressed by others, (d) degree of assimilation of material presented, and (e) oral and written expression of views; individual and group work products. Each of the five categories of performance is given a weight of 20%. Depending on the overall score received, student performance is to be rated as: Excellent (90-100); Very Good (80-90); Good (70-79); Satisfactory (60-69); or Deficient (0-59).

During the course of the seven-week training, instructors are encouraged to conduct periodic conferences with students to review progress. Additional conferences may be arranged with the Director of Education to review special needs or assistance required by students. According to CENDEL staff, this process has enabled them to clear up problems, reinforce study habits, and to pinpoint subject areas where tutoring assistance may have been necessary. Evaluation criteria and forms utilized by instructors as part of the evaluation of students are attached (**see annex 10**).

During interviews with AIFLD and CENDEL staff, the criteria, forms and procedures followed in the evaluation of CENDEL students were discussed. Similar discussions were held with current and former students. Reactions regarding evaluation procedures were generally positive and students acknowledged that the process was transparent and straight forward. They noted that they had been thoroughly briefed on all aspects of the evaluation process.

Recruitment, Selection and Evaluation of CENDEL Instructors:

As with the recruitment, selection and evaluation of CENDEL students, a similar process is applied to the labor studies center staff.

Recruitment and Selection of CENDEL Instructors:

The Education Program Director, along with the CPD, carry out an on-going process of consultations with individuals and organizations in both the public and private sectors to identify and recruit instructors that match CENDEL's training activities. This has resulted in the recruitment of an impressive group of experts with extensive background and capabilities. Among the instructors at CENDEL are attorneys, university professors, trade union leaders, civil servants and governmental advisors, parliamentarians, mayors, high school teachers, experts in specific subject areas such as the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Security. The president of the Human Rights Commission of Nicaragua, political party leaders, the staff of the Center for Democracy and other local NGOs active in

civic activities are among the guest lecturers at CENDEL.

Evaluation of CENDEL Instructors:

The evaluation of instructors is carried out by the CENDEL Education Program Director, the CPD, as well as the trainees. A form is utilized to score the performance of instructors based on the following factors: (a) overall effectiveness, (b) knowledge of subject matter and effectiveness in transmitting information and concepts, (c) accessibility to students, and (d) lecture content. For categories a and b, the students are asked to score the instructors on the basis of excellent, very good, good, regular, or deficient. For category c, the rating factors are: always accessible, sometime accessible, almost never accessible, never accessible.

Students are also required to rate the labor studies program based on the following criteria: (a) administrative effectiveness (b) adequacy of facilities, (c) quality of meals, and (d) adequacy of education materials. These categories are rated on the basis of: excellent, very good, good, regular, or deficient. Students are also encouraged to provide recommendations for improving the curriculum and/or the overall administration of the labor studies program. The form also provides space for other observations students wish to note and does not require them to identify themselves by signing their name (**see annex 11**).

Overall, these procedures were found to be adequate and effective. Based on interviews with AIFLD and CENDEL staff, and with current and former students, CENDEL appears to have in place a continuing system for assessing and evaluating its training activities to assure that the training responds to the needs of participants.

Other Observations Regarding CENDEL's Administrative staff and facilities:

As provided for in the USAID/Nicaragua-AIFLD Cooperative Agreement, the CENDEL staff is composed of the AIFLD CPD, the Director of Education, Accountant, Executive Secretary, two Janitors, two Watchmen, and a Driver. This level of staff appears to be adequate to carry out the current level of activities envisioned by CENDEL. However, the Education Director requires a deputy to assist him with research functions, as well as planning and administration of activities. Current clerical staff appears too limited to assist with these functions.

The evaluation concurs with the expressions conveyed by CENDEL instructors, senior trade union leaders and USAID and Embassy officials regarding the adequacy of the CENDEL's administrative and technical staff. The capabilities and performance of the Education Program Director were particularly noted as was his contribution to the success of CENDEL during its first year of operation (**see attached list of instructors, professional occupation and subject matter taught at CENDEL**).

The site of the labor studies center is adequate due to its central location. However, this residence is inadequate as a training facility. Classrooms are too small and severely hamper students in terms of proper lighting, ventilation, noise control and adequacy of space.

Specific Comments Re: Special Provisions of the Cooperative Agreement:

The following comments relate to specific provisions of the Cooperative Agreement and the extent to which AFL-CIO/AIFLD has complied with items a

through d outlined in the evaluation's scope of work.

Item a (1): Ensure that the training and education provided under the agreement is offered to members of all unions supportive of democratic labor principles, regardless of their ideology or political affiliation.

Comment: An examination of AIFLD and CENDEL program files, including quarterly reports filed with the Mission DI office reveal that AIFLD has reported on the number of students registered and graduated in each of the 10 training cycles, their respective trade union affiliation, and statistical breakdown between men and women participants (**see annex 12**).

Item a (2): Ensure that the established Labor Advisory Council of CENDEL is comprised of a representative mix of Nicaraguan trade unions which endorse democratic labor principles.

Comment: As discussed earlier, the Labor Advisory Council was not established due to circumstances beyond AIFLD's control (discussed in item IV. above). The decision of the Labor Centrals not to become members of the CENDEL's Executive Board has not diminished their commitment to support the labor studies center and to benefit from its training activities. Their cooperation with AIFLD and CENDEL staff has been very productive to date.

Item b: Explore opportunities to collaborate with other local institutions in the education and training of union members and in the sponsorship of public policy fora.

Comment: Through its outreach efforts, AIFLD has collaborated with public and private institutions in Nicaragua in planning the labor studies curriculum, and in exploring joint activities with local NGOs active in civil society enhancing activities. As a result of these efforts, CENDEL has responded to requests by the Center for Democracy and other groups such as the National Youth Movement of Nicaragua and the National Women's Movement of Nicaragua to provide special training workshops. CENDEL has also requested their assistance in planning its forums and special seminars series. These collaborative efforts have benefitted CENDEL by attracting experts from the public and private sector who provide advisory services and directly participate in CENDEL's activities.

Moreover, CENDEL's outreach efforts have been successful in publicizing the contribution of CENDEL and in creating a greater understanding of the role of labor unions in a democratic society.

Through its outreach efforts, AIFLD has engaged the National Human Rights Commission in providing a series of lectures to CENDEL participants on human rights. The aim of the lectures is to create a greater understanding within the trade union community of the linkages between human rights and internationally-recognized worker rights.

Item c: Submission by September 1, 1995 to the SDI Project Coordinator, a detailed strategic plan for developing CENDEL into a financially sustainable institution.

Comment: As a consequence of not being able to institutionalize a Labor

Advisory Council as had been envisioned in the Cooperative Agreement, this requirement has not been met. The AIFLD CPD has promised to make the issue of financial sustainability of CENDEL a priority issue in 1996. The likelihood of the trade union movement being able to contribute financially to support the labor studies program it relies on to fulfill its education needs is difficult to predict at this time. Union members pay no dues and their organizations are severely constrained in terms of available resources. Formulating a strategy and a corresponding action plan for attracting non-USAID donors remains the only plausible alternative for AIFLD at this time. Such training institutions are looked upon as a potentially favorable investment by the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) office of the Inter-American Development Bank.

V. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- o Generally, AIFLD has fulfilled most of the provisions outlined in the Cooperative Agreement relating to the Goals and Objectives of the trade union education program; staffing of CENDEL and administration of the labor studies center; the special provisions outlined in section VI and VII of the evaluation Scope of Work.
- o Areas of the cooperative agreement as yet unfulfilled and requiring further attention include: the establishment of a Labor Advisory Council; submission to USAID/Nicaragua of a plan for the long-term financial sustainability of CENDEL; and completion of national-level forums on: The role of labor in a democracy; New, less adversarial collective bargaining techniques; Labor Code Reform and worker rights; and Regional economic integration.
- o AIFLD is to be commended for establishing a fully functioning labor studies center and developing a comprehensive curriculum that meets the labor education needs of Nicaraguan trade union organizations. Success in these efforts was accomplished in a relatively short period of time and demonstrates the considerable capabilities of the AFL-CIO and its regional institute in the field of labor education and training.
- o The USAID-AIFLD supported labor studies program is unique in that it is the only comprehensive form of training in existence in Nicaragua and one which, through sustained effort over a period of five years, has the potential for fully achieving the strategic objectives of:
 - (a) Modernizing and professionalizing the labor movement through education, training, and participation;
 - (b) Enhancing the ability of the current and future leadership to better represent its members and bring social justice to the workplace; and
 - (c) Enabling the labor movement to fully participate in the political and economic development of the nation.
- o The evaluation concurs with the view expressed by the majority of those interviewed that success of the labor studies program can be attributed to the non-ideological nature of the curriculum; the administrative and technical capabilities of the staff; diverse course offerings; quality, experience and expertise of the instructors; the AIFLD/CENDEL outreach/collaborative efforts with local NGOs; and the relative success of CENDEL graduates in attaining leadership positions within their respective trade union organizations and the general community (**see annex 13**).

- o AIFLD should be commended for exceeding the goal of women trade union participants in the 10 seven-week training cycles and the series of forums and special seminars completed. Trade union women that have successfully completed the basic, intermediate and advance courses of training offered by CENDEL is 39%, while their participation in the forums and special seminars exceeds this number as indicated in the evaluation attachments.
- o Specific dividends of the labor education program can be measured in terms of the increased trade union activism reported by CENDEL graduates; accession of CENDEL graduates to leadership positions in key trade union organizations following competitive elections; the creation of new unions; and demands for transparency in union decision-making and financial operations of trade union organizations conveyed in their election platforms. Based on feedback received from CENDEL graduates, CENDEL estimates that approximately 10% of the 198 students who completed the CENDEL training program have been elected or appointed to leadership positions during 1995 (**see annex 14**).

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

- o Building on the early success and credibility of the labor studies program, it is recommended that the program be extended for one additional year to reach a wider trade union audience and maximize USAID investment aimed at strengthening and modernizing the Nicaraguan labor movement through education and training.
- o Consistent with the USAID mission Democracy/Governance strategy, continuation of the labor studies program will enable CENDEL to extend its training to a larger pool of trade union organizations throughout Nicaragua. Expansion of CENDEL training to areas beyond the capital would accelerate the process of promoting a "bottom-up" trade union movement that is truly democratic and one which would contribute constructively to the national debate on key political and economic issues of importance to labor.
- o In addition to the comprehensive training provided by CENDEL that include training cycles, forums and special seminars, consideration should be given to creating a core of trade union instructors who can be relied upon to provide trade union education in the future. Training of trainers would take place in-country and at the George Meany Center. Training in the development of curricula and course materials using the Instructional System Development (ISD) methodology is recommended. Methodologies and course content developed by the George Meany Center should be considered for this purpose.
- o USAID/Nicaragua and AIFLD should collaborate closely in developing options for planning the long-term financial sustainability of CENDEL. Pursuing this objective should be AIFLD's top priority during the second year of CENDEL operations. AIFLD efforts, both formal and informal, should include discussions with the Inter-American Development Bank and a follow-up proposal to the IDB's Multilateral Investment Fund for support of CENDEL as a pilot program.
- o AIFLD should explore anew the possibility of establishing a Labor Advisory Council as provided for in the existing cooperative

agreement. Priority should be given to having the education department directors as council members rather than the respective Secretary-Generals of Nicaragua's major trade union organizations. Also, consideration should be given to the possibility of expanding membership on the Council to include academicians and representatives of appropriate local NGOs and other organizations (the Center for Democracy, the National Education Association, the National Youth Movement of Nicaragua), which share a mutual interest in promoting the goals and objectives of the labor studies program.

- o AIFLD should proceed with the planned phase-out of administrative support funds to trade union centrals (under the current cooperative agreement, approximately \$30,000 were allocated for administrative assistance to unions). Continued administrative support to trade union centrals decreases the availability of funds for trade union education programs.
- o The new AIFLD CPD and the USAID/Nicaragua SDI Project Coordinator should agree on work plans covering the activities of CENDEL in the context of a follow-on Cooperative Agreement. The latter should reflect the need to develop appropriate strategies for the long-term financial sustainability of CENDEL.
- o Every effort should be made to provide for a small labor studies library within CENDEL to facilitate student and staff research on topics addressed as part of the labor studies program. The George Meany Center, the ILO, ICFTU and publications of labor colleges in the U.S. and in Latin America should be contacted for this purpose.
- o As part of its outreach efforts, CENDEL should proceed with the planned publication of a newsletter which would feature CENDEL training activities, activities and experiences of its student graduates and general information of interest to the trade union community. Such a publication would provide visibility and recognition for CENDEL training programs.
- o AIFLD should consider replicating the CENDEL model in other countries of Central America having similar needs.

VII. OTHER ISSUES

Observations on the Role and Responsibilities of the AIFLD Country Program Director:

The AIFLD CPD serves a dual function in Nicaragua. His primary responsibility is to oversee the Administration of the labor studies program and the various activities of CENDEL requiring coordination with and the participation of the trade union movement of Nicaragua. As part of this function, the CPD must assure that the goals and objectives of the labor studies program are met; that special provisions and other requirements contained in the AIFLD-USAID/Nicaragua Cooperative Agreement are satisfied; and that the labor education program is adequately evaluated in accordance with established criteria and policies. Finally, it is the responsibility of the CPD to certify all program expenditures incurred during the grant period.

A corollary function of the CPD's effort to build an independent Nicaraguan labor movement through education and training are his duties as the official representative of the AFL-CIO in-country on union-to-union matters of

a regional and international nature. To fulfill this mission, the CPD maintains day-to-day contact with specific Nicaraguan trade union organizations and coordinates joint regional and international trade union efforts involving appropriate Nicaraguan labor organizations. These activities often include mapping out strategies or specific joint actions taken by the AFL-CIO and regional labor organizations before international organizations such as the ILO, the OECD, WTO, World Bank, and the IDB. Unions are specifically interested with regional issues related to economic integration, worker rights and trade, privatization policies, migrant workers, labor law reform, and relations with employer groups and governments.

The day-to-day presence of the CPD in Nicaragua as in other countries of the region allows for a more efficient process of communication and joint actions by affiliated union organizations. In this respect and in relation to his responsibilities under the Cooperative Agreement, the dual role of the CPD in Nicaragua is not materially different from those in other countries of Latin America. One notable administrative difference is that in Nicaragua his salary and benefits are met exclusively by the Cooperative Agreement. Generally, throughout Latin America AIFLD's country program directors are supported by the USAID/W regional grant. Nicaragua is not currently covered by the regional grant which is funded and managed by USAID/G/DG.

Administrative Support to Trade Union Centrals:

A relatively small portion of the existing Cooperative Agreement with AIFLD, \$30,000, is dedicated to providing continued administrative support to the Congreso Permanente de Trabajadores (CPT) and its affiliated unions.

During the course of interviews with the AIFLD CPD, it was confirmed that during the period the Agreement has been in force, AIFLD has continued to provide administrative support to several trade union organizations including CUS, CAUS, CNMN, and CGT-i. These limited funds have been utilized to support union organizing drives, expenses associated with collective bargaining efforts, and expenses incurred in support of the legalization of newly formed unions through the Ministry of Labor. A report by CUS, the Confederacion de Unificacion Sindical, illustrates the activities for which administrative support funds were applied during the period of June 1 and December 31, 1995 (see annex 15).

The AIFLD CPD noted that no reports had been filed with USAID/Nicaragua during the year describing how administrative support funds had been apportioned to various trade union organizations in Nicaragua. No detailed report was made available by AIFLD for examination during the course of the evaluation.