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PD-AAB-094-EI

A.I.D.  
Reference Center  
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7p.

PROJECT APPRAISAL REPORT

Country: NICARAGUA

As of: June 30, 1970

Project Title: Education Planning and Development

(Contract between Ministry of Public Education and SALA,  
as represented by University of Oklahoma, only)

Project Number: 524-11-690-023

US Obligation Span: FY-67-72

Funding Table \$000

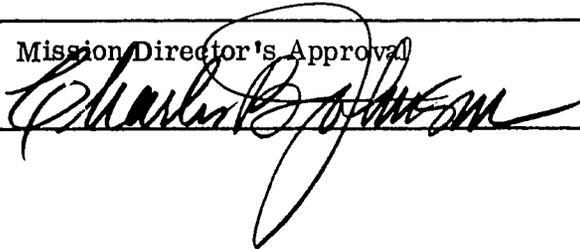
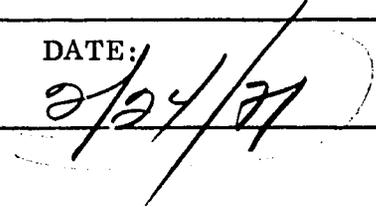
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Contract Services</u>
Cumulative to June 30, 69	179.5	179.5
Operational FY-70	70	70
Budget FY-71	130	130
Budget 1 FY-72	150	150
Estimated Total Cost	529.5	529.5

Host Country Contribution: In-kind services, counterpart relationship

Implementing Agent: Ministry of Public Education

Project Manager: Peter E. Tobia, HRES

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Mission Director's Approval:  DATE: 

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A. SUMMARY STATEMENT OF PROJECT'S PURPOSE:

To provide technical services to the Ministry of Public Education through a contract between SALA and the Ministry of Public Education in educational planning, education administration and other specialized areas. SALA provides advisory and consultative services to the Ministry of Education.

B. SELECTED OUTPUT TARGETS TOWARD END-OF-PROJECT STATUS: (Targets taken from SALA's Plan of Operation)

1. Curriculum Development Primary Level, grades 2, 3 and 4
2. Canton School District Organization
3. Improvement of Normal School Programs, including alterations needed to better implement the new Primary Education Curriculum
4. Personnel Administration

C. STATEMENTS ON THE PROGRESS STATUS OF EACH INDICATOR:

1. Primary Level Curriculum Revision: The timetable for the revision of the Primary Level Curriculum Revision program set by the Ministry of Public Education is being met. The status of this program follows:

Grade 1 Revised in 1967, implemented in 1968 (prior to SALA contract)

Grade 2 Revised in 1968, implemented in 1969 (see note below)

Grade 3 Revised in 1969, implemented in 1970 (see note below)

Grade 4 Being revised in 1970, to be implemented in 1971  
(see note below)

NOTE: SALA Educational Planning Adviser assisted in this revision

2. Canton School District Organization - The Ministry's overall development plan calls for the reorganization of the six year primary level and the five or six year secondary level into a

4-4-4. The 4-4-4 plan consists of a four year primary level school at the Canton level, a four year intermediate level school at the District level, and a four year secondary level school at the Regional level. In some cantons four grade elementary schools are being built and staffed. Due to the political sensitivity of this plan, the Ministry has not implemented this proposed reorganization. It is doubtful at this time if it will be fully implemented, even though with SALA's assistance much of the planning phase has been completed.

3. Improvement of Normal School Programs, including alterations needed to better implement the new Primary Education Curriculum: This target has been redesigned to involve training of teachers in the implementation of the new Primary Education Curriculum - SALA personnel advised in the planning and attended seminars for "multipliers", (teacher trainers from the normal schools, selected teachers from various parts of the country and school directors). The purpose of these seminars was to orient these "multipliers" in the implementation of the second and third grade revised curriculum for the primary level. These "multipliers" were then to conduct seminars in the new curriculum for teachers of the second and third grades throughout the country. Unfortunately, this system of orientation has not been adequate, since the majority of these "multipliers" do not have the responsibility for the implementation of the program. Therefore, in the future, this type of orientation will be provided in seminars to the Ministry's Departmental Inspectors, their assistants, and other selected persons. These inspectors do have the responsibility for implementation and they will be given the responsibility of conducting additional orientations seminars in their respective departments.
4. Personnel Administration - SALA personnel, upon request from the Ministry of Public Education, prepared a study for the reorganization of the Ministry of Education. This study was presented in draft outline form to the Minister; however, due to financial considerations, personality problems of Ministry personnel, and the social and political issues involved in a reorganization, the plan has been put aside.

SALA advisers also prepared a study of the "Escalafón" (personnel system) in outline form upon a direct request from the Ministry to SALA. This study and a proposal was presented to the Ministry in October 1969. To date no definite action has been taken on the proposal other than internal discussions. The problem seems to be that the proposed salary scales and retirement benefits will require an increase in the Ministry's budget beyond levels currently considered feasible.

In addition to the targets taken from the SALA's Plan of Operation discussed above, SALA personnel have assisted in discussions on secondary school basic cycle curriculum (Junior High School in U.S. terms); in giving lectures in an in-service training program for educational supervisors and administrators; in evaluation of orientation seminars; in educational planning; in development of instruments for data collection; in teacher training and in various other advisory functions. SALA advisers are physically located in the Ministry of Public Education, Educational Planning Office and as such are called upon from time to time to advise various members of the Ministry on educational matters as specified in the contract.

**D. GENERAL SUMMARY OF PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS:**

In 1967, at the request of the Ministry of Public Education, USAID/N agreed to fund a contract with a University to provide professional advisory services. SALA was selected for this contract jointly by the Ministry and USAID. Because of delays in staffing, the contract did not begin until September 1968.

Two serious problems confront the Ministry both at the time the request was made for professional advisory services and still today. These two problems are: 1. The need for reform of the overall personnel and administrative functions of the Ministry of Education; and 2. The need to develop an educational plan which can be implemented to provide the type of human resources required by Nicaragua.

The first problem is very difficult to cope with due to the factors listed in C.4 above. The second problem, in addition to financial

resources, is difficult to solve due to the lack of adequate data, coordination within the policy making strata, lack of authority within the Ministry in the decision making process, and certain political pressures.

Of the two problems listed above, it was found during the first eighteen months of the SALA contract that even though the Ministry stated and entered into a contract with SALA, it was not ready to act on plans which call for major reforms in personnel and administration. However, it was ready to implement both qualitative and quantitative programs developed through the educational planning process. The best example of this interest is the planning and implementation of the revised curriculum at the primary education level which is on schedule.

It is therefore, in this area of educational planning, where SALA will concentrate in future contracts. No further efforts by SALA advisers will be expended in the area of personnel or administration reform.

E. NARRATION OF GENERAL PERFORMANCE OF THE CONTRACTOR:

In the area of general educational administration, experience has shown that the Ministry was not ready to act on recommendations for reform. Another adverse factor was that the SALA adviser, who, on paper, appeared to be highly qualified, proved to be ineffective in Nicaragua. One of the major reasons for this ineffectiveness was his inability to communicate with his counterparts in Spanish. This adviser was unable to speak Spanish when he arrived and even with in-country language training he still was unable to communicate effectively. Therefore, he was replaced upon completion of a year of service here in Nicaragua. The current adviser presently is concentrating his efforts in the development planning phase of the project. The USAID will avoid having this same experience happen again by requiring that a candidate for SALA positions have a reasonable command of the Spanish language before coming on board in Nicaragua.

F. NARRATION ON GENERAL PERFORMANCE OF IMPLEMENTING AGENT:

The general performance of the Ministry of Public Education in this project has varied. Some of the reasons for this have been discussed previously in Sections D and E. Additional reasons for this varied performance are felt to be:

1. The Ministry was not wholly prepared to implement this program. For example, the original contract (A-1) called for four man-months of short-term services; however, as yet the Ministry has not utilized any short-term services. Also there has been a shortfall in the assignment of counterparts to this project.
2. The multitude of activities described in the original contract A-1 under the sub-paragraphs of ARTICLE I, Statement of Work. Neither SALA nor the Ministry were able to provide personnel to even start to carry out any substantial portion of the activities listed. Therefore, the Ministry and SALA concentrated on the qualitative educational planning activity since the Ministry had a Presidential mandate to revise the primary level curriculum on a schedule basis, one grade each year.
3. The absorption and assimilation capacity of the Ministry to effectively utilize technical services. In the case of the curriculum revision aspect, the Ministry had in being an operational committee engaged in revising the curriculum as well as an educational planning section. The SALA adviser in this area, therefore, had a counterpart in the director of educational planning and a committee to work with. The SALA adviser in personnel and administration, however, did not have a specific person to work with. When one was assigned temporarily, the counterpart was usually someone like the chief administrator of the Ministry. A person in this capacity, although desirous of working with a SALA adviser, found it almost impossible due to the nature of his responsibilities as Chief Administrator.

G. PROPOSED ACTIONS

As a result of the experiences described in D-F, the Mission had several meetings between USAID and Ministry personnel to discuss the future direction of this program. (The Minister of Education and the USAID Director attended two of these meetings). It was agreed at these working sessions that while the curriculum revision program would be continued, the main effort by both the Ministry and Contractor would be directed toward the preparation of an educational development plan.

The Minister of Education and the Contractor prepared a new contract (approved by the USAID), which delineated the new efforts by both parties in the planning area. A revised Project Agreement was prepared based on the new contract. The Contractor then prepared a new Plan of Operation which discussed in detail the new planning effort and the Contractor's and Ministry's support obligations for both the planning and curriculum revision efforts; this was signed by both parties and approved by the USAID. (As these actions occurred after the time period embraced in this report, i. e. after June 30, 1970, this will be discussed in more detail in the PAR covering the FY-1972 period).

The Ministry and the Contractor have been working on the Plan for the past two months. According to Contractor's progress reports, and discussions with Ministry personnel, Ministry counterparts have been mobilized and assigned to the program, and the program is on schedule.

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