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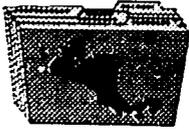
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# Special Report

July 1995

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# Promoting Community Participation in Municipal Services: The Potable Water Project in Matagalpa, Nicaragua



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July 1995

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 1991, an agreement was reached with national authorities to devolve (on a pilot basis) the administration of the local water service in Matagalpa, Nicaragua, to the municipal level. Local administration, through the municipal water company AyAMAT (*Acueductos y Alcantarillados de Matagalpa*), has given the municipality the chance to serve the community in a much more efficient and responsive manner. Indeed, significant advances have been made in terms of coverage and quality of service during the time that the municipality has administered the service through AyAMAT. Furthermore, community participation in water service improvement projects has been fostered principally through a compensation program of wages/municipal bonds (60%/40%) for local workers participating in the improvement efforts as well as through the outright sale of municipal bonds which has generated more than \$25,000. The incentives built into the compensation program have significantly contributed to the level of local participation and have fostered community management of the project. Nevertheless, the municipality faces some potentially difficult challenges, particularly in terms of repaying debt contracted to finance the first stage of the new project and in finding the necessary financing for the remaining stages of the project and for possible future endeavors.

In 1993, an evaluation of the Matagalpa water service, funded by the USAID Regional Housing and Urban Development Office for Central America (RHUDO/CA), recommended that the mayor's office solicit greater community participation in the project as well as increase outside funding. RHUDO/CA asked the Regional Information Clearinghouse to provide technical assistance to the municipality in the design and implementation of a local communications/promotional campaign for the Matagalpa water service in order to help the municipality to: 1) continue to expand and improve the water service; 2) receive broad-based support for the

project; and 3) recover costs for municipal efforts in this sector.

Through meetings with Matagalpa municipal officials in May and September 1994, RIC staff learned that the municipality currently pays for radio and local cable television announcements which focus on selling municipal bonds and communicating brief messages about plans for improving the water service. RIC staff observed that the mayor's office would need a more focused and intensive promotional effort, using various means of communication, in order to overcome the challenges it currently faces.

In collaboration with the Mayor of Matagalpa, Mr. Frank Lanzas, and other municipal officials, RIC staff constructed a and helped to implement a promotional campaign for the water service, to take place over a one year period, which included the following activities:

- (1) Meeting of Auxiliary Mayors/Community Leaders
- (2) Student Contests Focused on "The Importance of Water and its Conservation for the Population of Matagalpa"
- (3) Municipal Water Week
- (4) City-Wide Poster Campaign
- (5) On-going Campaign Efforts (such as informational flyers and radio announcements)
- (6) Measuring the Campaign's Impact (using a simple survey instrument)

The intensive promotional campaign for the newly decentralized water service in Matagalpa represents a unique effort to promote greater communication between the municipality and its citizens and, thus, increase civic participation at the local level. In reviewing the overall success of the campaign, some general lessons learned



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have be extracted which may be applicable in municipalities throughout Central America.

- (1) Starting with the youth of the community lends creativity, enthusiasm and a greater sense of community to the campaign and allows local leaders to open debate on an issue from an environmental/ technical viewpoint rather than a political one.
- (2) Allowing the community to create the message of the campaign fosters a greater sense of community ownership not only in terms of the project or problem in question but also in terms of the campaign itself.
- (3) An intensive campaign, gaining the broadest exposure through various media, keeps the issue at hand on the minds of residents and allows the issue to be discussed openly within the community.
- (4) In implementing a promotional campaign, such as that undertaken in Matagalpa, very little expense is necessary; smaller cities can start small, simple and practical. However, in most instances, outside assistance in initial stages to help orient the municipality will be necessary.
- (5) Leaders from various sectors of the community must be brought into the effort early on to keep them informed and to solicit their support in carrying the message to the community.
- (6) A variety of participation mechanisms are needed to gain interest in and support for the issue at hand. It will also be necessary to implement a concrete and practical response to the problem which the municipality, along with the community, is trying to solve. In the case of Matagalpa, the municipal bond program serv d

as the concrete, practical anchor for the campaign.

The Municipality of Matagalpa has made great strides in improving the local water service and in informing its citizens as to municipal efforts in this area as well as the importance of water and water conservation. With the RIC's assistance in designing and implementing the promotional campaign, the Municipality has been able to reach even more of its citizens and build on the sense of community pride and responsibility for the water service which has developed through increased local involvement in the project. Greater community participation will help to foster a lasting sense of local ownership of the water service in the years to come. Furthermore, the success of this pilot project will demonstrate the benefits of municipal administration of local public services and may have important implications for future decentralization efforts in Nicaragua.



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### I BACKGROUND

#### A. History of the Water Problem in Matagalpa

The Municipality of Matagalpa is located in the central plateau of the Darinese mountain range in central Nicaragua, approximately 100 Km. north of the capital, Managua. The city occupies an area of approximately 580 hectares and its current population is estimated at about 90,000. The Municipality of Matagalpa has historically been of great importance in Nicaragua as it is the Departmental (i.e. provincial) seat and is home to large and productive coffee farms, a principal economic export.

Matagalpa's water service infrastructure dates back to 1962 when the treatment plant and its distribution network were designed based on a population of 25,000 and a 25 year estimated life span. Due to the earthquake which hit the capital of Nicaragua, Managua, in 1972, Matagalpa presented a safe and clean alternative to the destruction left in the capital. Therefore, a great number of refugees made their way to Matagalpa, thus, significantly increasing the urban population in the city and placing increased demand on the water service. This situation became even more difficult in the 1980's when civil war forced rural dwellers into surrounding cities, seeking protection. Many make-shift houses have been constructed in the mountainous perimeter of the municipality, placing an even greater burden on infrastructure and services.

It is also important to mention that during this time of rapid population growth, due primarily to in-migration, the treatment plant and distribution networks received very little maintenance. Furthermore, deforestation has become an increasingly grave problem in the North Molino (*Rio Molino Norte*) and San Francisco (*Rio San Francisco*) River basins; this is even further complicated by problems of soil erosion and water pollution stemming from the disposal of coffee by-products into the water supply. Nonetheless, these two basins continue to supply Matagalpan with water, albeit at a rate

that has been reduced by almost 50% due to these environmental problems.

In 1990, the current municipal government conducted studies of the water service and found that, at its maximum capacity, the plant could treat 1,500 gallons per minute (gpm) of water. In the dry season (January to March) only 700 gpm actually reached the plant, representing approximately 20-25% of what the current Matagalpan population actually needs.

#### B. Administration of the Water Service

In view of this situation and the apparent lack of capacity on the part of the central water and sewerage agency (*Instituto de Acueductos y Alcantarillados - INAA*) to address the problems, the municipal government of Matagalpa approached the central government, via the regional INAA office, proposing that the municipality take over administration of the local water service. On March 3, 1991, an agreement was signed between the central agency and municipal authorities which devolved administration of the water service to the local level including oversight of subsidiary water services in municipalities throughout the Department of Matagalpa. A municipal water company, called AyAmat (*Acueductos y Alcantarillados de Matagalpa*), was structured, under the general direction of the mayor and municipal council, and took over all aspects of administration at the local level, including meter reading, maintenance of customer accounts, bill collection, maintenance, and technical analysis and planning.

New personnel were hired to cover invoicing and the sale of invoicing services to subsidiary water services in other municipalities within the Department; setting up accounting systems in subsidiaries; and creating a systems maintenance (computer) section within the AyAmat offices. Although invoicing for subsidiary water services is performed by AyAmat and a centralized accounting system exists, each subsidiary is in charge of its own meter reading, which is then reported to AyAmat,



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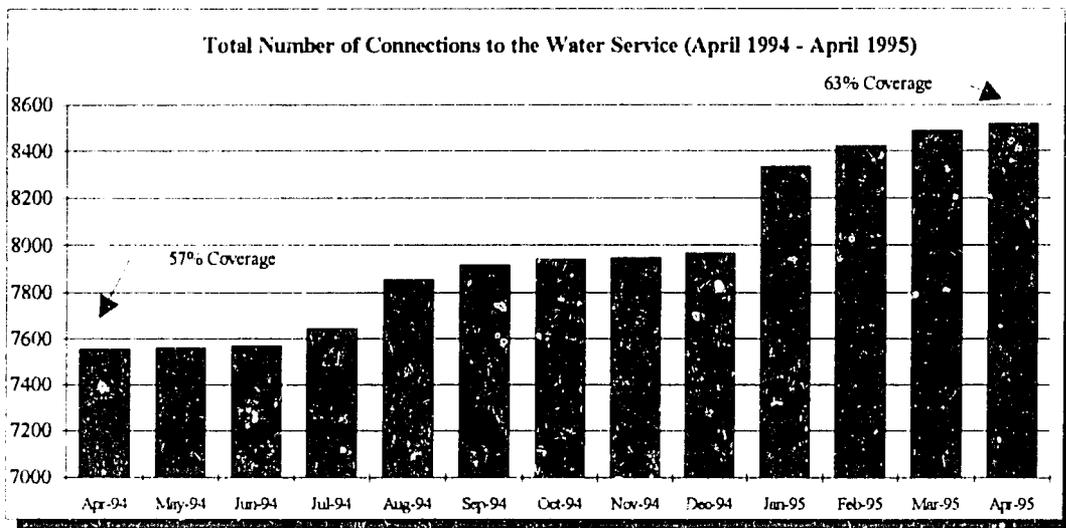
and collection systems.

AyAmat has approximately 138 staff members, including 7 professionals, who are employed via a collective contract. A community relations section handles all claims, organizes communities to work in improvement projects and is in charge of the program which seeks collection of delinquent accounts. In 1991, the number of complaints lodged at the local INAA office was 135 per month; in November of 1994, after AyAmat had taken over administration of the water service, this was

### C. USAID Role

Matagalpa is the first municipality in Nicaragua in which administration of the public water service has been devolved to the local level. By 1993, the municipality wanted to review the performance of AyAmat and the general model adopted by the city through which local administration of the water service is carried out, in terms of finance, administration and technical engineering practices. Matagalpan officials approached the Regional Housing and Urban Development Office for Central

GRAPHIC 1



reduced to 26 complaints per month.

Under the new local administration of the water service, various studies have been conducted in order to find immediate solutions to the water problem in Matagalpa particularly in the dry season when water is so scarce. AyAmat, in cooperation with municipal authorities, has designed the Matagalpa Potable Water Project which has an estimated cost of \$2 million. Details of this project are included in Section II. A. below.

America (RHUDO/CA), a part of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), in November of 1993, asking that the Office fund an evaluation of the decentralized water service, under the auspices of the RHUDO/CA regional municipal development project, known as the Local Government Regional Outreach Strategy (LOGROS).

This evaluation found that a significant improvement was made in terms of efficiency with the decentralization of the water service. The number of water leaks and the time required to fix these leaks and perform other repairs was decreased, as were the number of com-

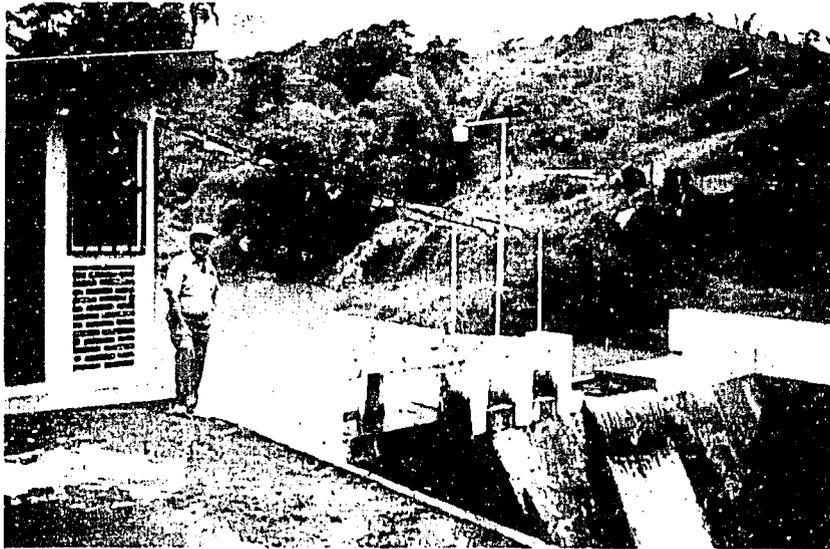


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plaints lodged with AyAmat, as mentioned earlier. Additionally, the municipality realized a 37% increase in the population supplied by the water service as well as an almost 20% increase in the collection rate. Nonetheless, serious deficiencies in service were still apparent, in terms of coverage and response to actual demand. The evaluation found that the municipality needed to

USAID/RHUDO/CA-funded evaluation, the municipality developed the Matagalpa Potable Water Project which is designed to solve the immediate needs of the Matagalpan population and which will mitigate the serious water deficiency in the dry season (January-May). The Aranjuez River is a natural tributary stemming from the larger Jigüina River (*Rio Jigüina*): Aranjuez has a



The Director of AyAmat, Elpidio Tijerino Molina, at the dam constructed under Phase I of the Matagalpa Potable Water Project.

complete an investment plan, based on initial studies conducted by the city, which would bring water to Matagalpa from the Aranjuez River (*Rio Aranjuez*) in order to meet the needs of the population at least in the short term. RHUDO CA has maintained regular contact with the Municipality since the evaluation was completed and, indeed, the Office has financed another technical assistance effort in 1994/95 in cooperation with the Regional Information Clearinghouse (USAID/G-CAP/RIC) (see Section II. C. below for details).

## II. THE WATER PROJECT

### A. Design of the Water Project

Based on their own studies and the findings of the

annual water flow which oscillates between 1,800-2,700 mm (millimeters per minute) which is considered sufficient to meet the needs of the Matagalpan population.

The municipality solicited the help of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) which funded the construction of two water tanks of 100,000 gallon capacity each. These tanks allow the city to control fluctuations in pressure in the waterways which distribute water throughout Matagalpa and thus allow the municipality to make repairs to pumping equipment when necessary. The remaining work to be carried out under the project which will bring water from the Aranjuez River has been designed in four phases.

#### Phase I

The first phase of the project has already been com-



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pleted, consisting of the construction of a dam (396.61 meters<sup>3</sup>) which contains three submersible pumps, each with its own separate control panel that meets all INAA (national) requirements.

### Phase II

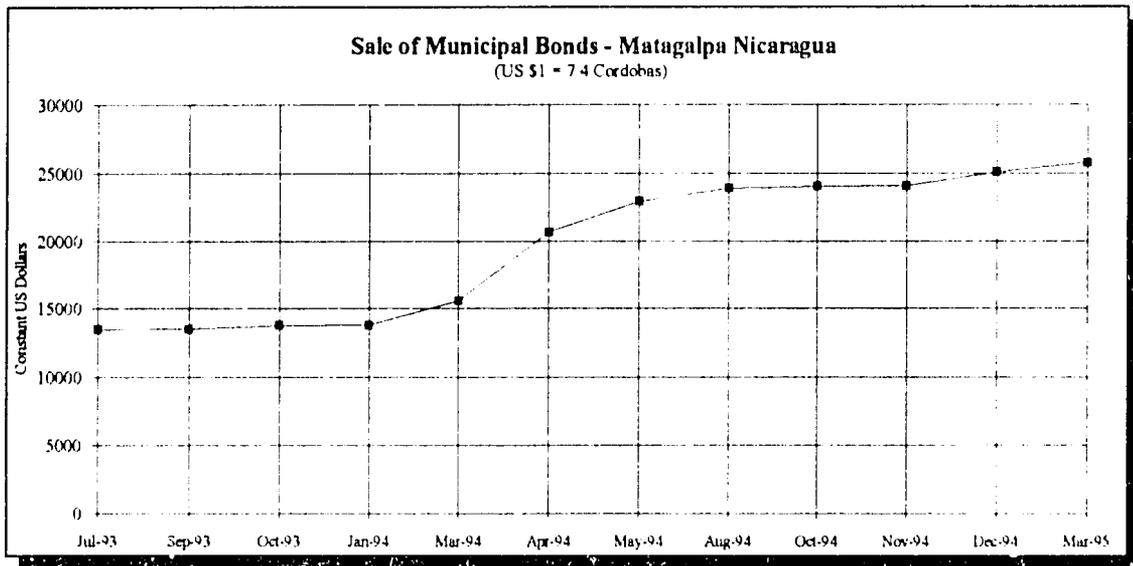
As originally conceived, the second phase of the project included the construction of a new water treatment plant 130 meters above where the current plant is located so as to treat and distribute the new waters coming from the Aranjuez (Jigüina) River using the force of gravity. However, the municipality has recently reconsidered this option and now plans to use 4 high-powered Israeli-

500,000 gallon capacity around which the 4 new filters will be distributed. Also planned for this phase is the laying of cement pipes which will connect all the water tanks located on the periphery of the city, which in then allow for the distribution of water throughout the city via gravitational force.

### Phase IV

The final phase of the Potable Water Project will include the construction of a second dam on the Aranjuez (Jigüina) River located approximately 4 km. to the north of the dam completed in Phase I. This will include the laying of new pipes at the dam site as well as the instal-

GRAPHIC 2



made filters, which can perform the same job as the new treatment plant for approximately 20-30% of the cost. The old treatment plant will also be repaired and improved during this phase in order to increase its current capacity from 1,500 gpm to 2,000 gpm (gallons per minute).

### Phase III

Two more tanks will be constructed in this phase, one with a 100,000 gallon capacity and the other with a

lation of pumps and new methods of water treatment. The second dam will bring 1,000 additional gallons per minute (gpm) to the city, thus, helping to meet the demand of the population especially in the dry season.

### **B. Methods of Financing**

The municipality financed Phase I of the project, at a cost of approximately \$425,000, in two ways: com-



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mercial loans and municipal bonds. Local banks have loaned the municipality, at fairly high interest rates, the majority of funds needed to cover costs of this Phase, though some funds have come from the sale of municipal bonds. Initial work on Phase II has also begun; all work completed thus far under this second Phase has been funded through the assignment of 10% of municipal revenues to improvements in the water service (by municipal council decision) and the sale of bonds.

The Matagalpa municipal bond program began in 1993. The bonds have a ten year life and gain 3% annual interest. Bond values start as low as \$20 so that they are accessible to a broad section of the population. To date, over 260 bonds have been issued with a value of over \$25,000.

The Municipality is currently seeking a US \$1.5 million loan from the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI). Prospects for local approval are good and, with the funds in hand, the Municipality believes that it can complete all three remaining phases of the project within 8-10 months.

### C. Community Participation

#### 1. Compensation Program

The Municipality of Matagalpa has also begun a unique compensation program by which workers in the project are paid 60% of their wage in cash or check and 40% in a municipal bond. Thus far, 150 Matagalpan laborers have participated in the program. The workers can then hold these bonds as an investment or they can use the bonds to buy their connection to the water service (installation costs are 250 Cordobas or approximately \$35).

This program, as well as the sale of municipal bonds in general, has had a positive effect on the municipality as well as the community. The municipality has increased the issuance of bonds and connections to the water service; the community, in turn, has gained greater access

to the bond program as well as the water service and feels a greater sense of involvement in the project, particularly in the case of the laborers who typically represent a more marginalized sector of the community. Thus, the municipality has been able to foster community participation, both in the improvement project itself and through the bond program.

#### 2. Promotional Campaign for the Water Service

Nonetheless, the municipality faces some potentially difficult challenges, especially in the repayment of the debt contracted to finance the first stages of the project which have been or are currently being implemented, and in finding the necessary financing for the remaining stages of the new project and for possible future projects. RHUDO/CA, in its continued communication with the municipality, recommended that greater community participation be solicited in the project in order to reach a broader section of the population and that outside funding be increased. RHUDO/CA solicited the assistance of the Regional Information Clearinghouse (RIC), a project of the US Agency for International Development for Guatemala and Central American Programs (USAID/G-CAP), which is operated through the Academy for Educational Development (AED).

The RIC specializes in collecting, analyzing and disseminating information in the region, related to trade and investment, natural resource management, economic cooperation and integration and municipal development and decentralization. RIC staff, having considerable experience in the design of information and communications campaigns, visited the Municipality of Matagalpa in June and September of 1994 and, through meetings with municipal officials and community leaders, learned that the municipality paid for radio and local cable television announcements that focused on selling municipal bonds and communicating brief messages about plans for improving the water service<sup>1</sup>. RIC staff observed that the mayor's office would need a more focused and intensive promotional effort, using various means of communication, in order to overcome the chal-



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allenges it currently faces. In collaboration with the Mayor of Matagalpa, Mr. Frank Lanzas, and other municipal officials, RIC staff constructed a promotional campaign for the water service which has the following objectives:

- Raise awareness among the municipal population about the problems being faced in the delivery of the water service and the advances that have been achieved due to the efforts of the mayor's office, thus helping to create an atmosphere of community/municipality cooperation in regards to the delivery of potable water.
- Departing from the self-interest of the community, create an attitude of community responsibility in reference to the extension and improvement of the water service.
- Improve the level of cost recovery for the water service and the new projects, by strengthening the municipal bond program and the other programs which are implemented.
- Prepare materials and messages which can be presented to the Matagalpa community soliciting greater community responsibility and participation.

The actual components of the campaign were designed with these objectives in mind. After careful consideration with municipal officials, the RIC focused initial efforts principally on the youth of Matagalpa as well as community leaders (auxiliary mayors) in order to give a grassroots energy to the campaign and to encourage family involvement through the enthusiastic participation of the students in campaign activities; likewise, community leaders were motivated to bring the message of the campaign to the neighborhoods which they represent. Given this focus, initial campaign efforts (February to August 1995) were designed and carried out as follows<sup>2</sup>:

**(1) Meeting of Auxiliary Mayors/Community Leaders** - In March 1995, the municipality called a meeting

of the 165 "auxiliary mayors" or community leaders who are chosen by the mayor to represent the various communities within the city. The purpose of the meeting was to ensure that the auxiliary mayors were well informed as to the progress of the water project, its accomplishments and its future goals, the bond program and the importance of community participation in the project and in water conservation. The RIC helped prepare the agenda and also designed and produced two hand-outs for the meeting: one which explained in simple terms the phases of the Potable Water Project as well as financing (including the bond program) and the other which explained the promotional campaign. Meeting participants were asked to help make citizens within their respective communities better aware of the water service project and the accomplishments realized by the municipality as well as the upcoming events of the promotional campaign.

**(2) Student Poster Contest** - As the campaign kick-off event, the RIC suggested that the municipality hold a poster contest in the secondary schools of Matagalpa in May 1995, asking the students to create a logo and/or a slogan for the campaign which demonstrates the theme "The Importance of Water and its Conservation." The logo and the slogan would lend greater continuity and familiarity to the campaign as they would be included on all future publicity efforts related to the water service project. Indeed, the municipality expanded upon this idea and included contests for best water game, dance, essay, play, song, parade float and water queen so that a wider range of young talent could be tapped. The municipality received donations of prizes from local businesses, banks and individual sponsors and organized panels of judges for each contest representing various sections of the local community. The RIC assisted in the development of contest rules and the design and production of the announcement poster.

All 11 directors of the Matagalpa secondary schools as well as the Departmental Representative from the Ministry of Education helped in planning the event, and came together to form the Steering Committee for all student



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activities. The RIC prepared a planning schedule for the committee for the months of April-June in order to help organize events in a timely fashion. The Mayor of Matagalpa, the Director of AyAmat and the Director of the River Basin Protection project visited each of the schools during the weeks following the announcement of the contests (May 1995) in order to provide the children with a clear and complete picture of the history and the current situation of the water problem in Matagalpa so that they were prepared to participate in the events.

**(3) Municipal Water Week** - In order to involve a larger portion of the community, the RIC suggested holding a Municipal Water Week with events, open to the public, taking place each day. The municipality chose June 5-9 as Municipal Water Week which in-

cluded the presentation and judging of various student contest entries each evening in the local theater (open to the public) and the final day reserved for the announcement of the contest winners and special presentations.

Four large banners announcing the events of Water Week were placed strategically on the main streets of Matagalpa. Additionally, various radio announcements on the municipal radio station promoted the event in the weeks prior to Water Week, an article was written in the national newspaper "La Prensa" and the events themselves were broadcast live on the municipal station as well as the local catholic radio station. On the final day, each secondary school decorated their "water" floats which carried their Water Queens and paraded through-

out the city, finishing at the local theater where the winners of the various contests, including best float and Municipal Water Queen, were chosen and presented with the prizes donated by the local businesses. The large theater where the event was held was filled to capacity, with many people standing in the rear due to lack of space. Those in attendance included students, teachers, municipal officials (including the mayor, the AyAmat and River Basin Project directors and council members),

families, religious, political party and community leaders, and reporters.



AyAmat's Water Queen rides on one of 11 "water" floats which paraded through Matagalpa on the final day of Municipal Water Week.

**(4) Poster Campaign** - The RIC is currently in the process of designing a new campaign poster which includes the winning logo and slogan unveiled on the final day of Municipal Water Week. This poster will be displayed throughout Matagalpa in order

to present a short and visual message to the population who will identify with the new logo of the water service and feel a greater sense of community pride and ownership as the logo and slogan were developed by a young Matagalpan. Additionally, municipal officials plan to record the various songs written by students and play them on the municipal radio station as another part of the on-going information campaign effort.

**(5) On-going Campaign Efforts** - In addition to the special events noted above, the municipality also continued, during this 6 month period, to broadcast radio announcements regarding the bond program. RIC staff proposed some modifications to the radio announcements in order to provide greater information to the public.



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Additionally, the RIC worked with municipal officials in designing (one half page) promotional flyers which were included in the distribution of the approximately all 8,000 water bills distributed each month. These flyers focused on the bond program and discussed the accessibility of the program to people of varying economic means and presented concrete tips of how to conserve water both in and outside the home.

**(6) Measuring the Campaign's Impact** - In order to determine what percentage and which sectors of the population the campaign is reaching, the RIC has suggested that the municipality implement a simple survey instrument to be administered by the AyAmat. AyAmat personnel responsible for delivering water bills will be held accountable for the distribution and collection of this survey that will sample various sectors of the community in order to measure who is getting what type of information about the water service project and through what means. The results of the survey will be used to help the municipality design further phases of the promotional campaign — to target the sectors of the population which have been missed by initial campaign efforts and to re-focus efforts within the media (i.e. radio, posters, newspapers, flyers, etc.) that prove to be most effective.

### III FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The municipality plans to continue a number of activities after RIC involvement in the campaign ends. Radio announcements, as noted earlier, will be continued and new ones added such as those which use the songs developed by the school children. Interviews were conducted with various sectors of the community during Municipal Water Week and a special radio presentation reporting on the event and the opinions of those interviewed will be made in July. Also, the poster campaign, using the students' winning designs, will take place in August and promotional flyers will become a regular part of the distribution of water bills, at least on a quar-

terly basis.

Municipal officials have asked the municipal council to formally and permanently recognize June 5-9 as Municipal Water Week in Matagalpa so that the event can continue in the future. Indeed, the municipality has been combining efforts under the water project and the river basin project, as these projects are inextricably related, and plans to use a number of the strategies and techniques learned during the campaign in providing information of the river basin project in addition to the water project.

### IV LESSONS LEARNED

The intensive promotional campaign for the newly decentralized water service in Matagalpa represents a unique effort to promote greater communication between the municipality and its citizens and, thus, increase civic participation at the local level. In reviewing the overall success of the campaign, some general lessons learned can be extracted which may be applicable in municipalities throughout Central America.

- **Starting with the youth of the community** - Focusing initial campaigns efforts on the Matagalpan youth was beneficial in a number of ways. First, school children were able to apply their creativity and enthusiasm, which gave a very positive energy to the campaign, while at the same time they learned more about their community and were educated as to how the water service actually functions and how environmental problems such as deforestation and pollution affect this service. Secondly, students usually have a greater sense of community simply because they are more connected to it through school attendance; this educational community has a further benefit in that the schools themselves have the institutional capacity to be able to initiate and carry out community based activities, such as the campaign



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contests, and to encourage the active participation of local youth. Indeed, the Ministry of Education Representative was able to institute a program during the campaign which gave grade points to students who participated in the events. Lastly, beginning with the youth focuses on the issue at hand as a technical rather than a political problem. Their early participation in the campaign allows the introduction of the water problem as a community and technical/environmental issue rather than opening up a political debate from the outset.

- **Allowing the Community to “Style” the Campaign** - It is important in community participation efforts and local information campaigns that the message come from within the community as they know best what is needed and what will be best received and understood by local residents. This also fosters a sense of ownership, not only in terms of the project in question but also the communications campaign itself, as well as a sense of community responsibility to solve the problem. In the Matagalpa promotional campaign, the logo and slogan were designed by a local youth whose designs were chosen through a competitive process that allowed for the participation of all secondary school children, in both public and private schools. Because a strong sense of community was reinforced to the students through the informational seminars held at the schools (prior to the student contests) the designs focus on water as a community resource that must be cared for by all.
- **Intensive Campaign** - An intensive campaign is one in which the desired message receives the broadest exposure through various media. In Matagalpa, the municipality’s main goal was to foster a greater sense of community awareness of and responsibility for the troubled water service. This was achieved principally through the use of

informational flyers (which were included in all water bills), newspaper articles, radio announcements, student contests and the municipal bond program. Moreover, this important message came not only from the municipality but also from AyAmat, the press, local church leaders, teachers, principals and even students themselves through their contest entries. Implementing a campaign of fairly high intensity keeps the issues at hand on the mind of local residents and allows the issues to be discussed openly within the community. Thus, awareness is created and heightened which peeks the interest of the local population and, ideally, persuades them to take action and/or change behavior. The more intensive the campaign, the quicker the community will become interested and, thus, take action.

- **Basic Tools and Capacities Needed** - In implementing a promotional campaign such as that undertaken in Matagalpa, very little expense is necessary. In smaller cities, the municipality can start small, simple and practical. In larger metropolitan areas, more high-tech means, such as video, television and computer technology, may be required as the city needs to reach a broader, more sophisticated audience. However, in smaller municipalities, a very practical, low-tech approach can be taken whereby the municipality will learn how to implement a promotional campaign and what works best within their community and why. Nonetheless, it is important to note that smaller municipalities with little to no experience in implementing information and communications campaign will almost always need a catalyst, such as was the RIC’s role in the Matagalpa campaign. Outside assistance in initial stages helps to orient the municipality by providing innovative ideas upon which the municipality can expand and building municipal staff confidence which can help them in continuing similar efforts on their own.



## Promoting Community Participation in Municipal Services

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- **Involvement of Community Leaders** - In order to gain the broad support needed for a successful promotional campaign, leaders from various sectors of the community must be brought into the effort early on, keeping them informed as to campaign activities and seeking their support in carrying the message to the community. Political leaders should be included but not to any greater or lesser extent than local business people, bankers, clergy, minority or interest group representatives, etc. The municipality should consider the role of each within the community and solicit their support as they are best able to provide it.
- **Variety in Mechanisms of Participation** - If one general lesson was learned from the Matagalpa Promotional Campaign for the local water service, it is that a variety of participation mechanisms are needed to gain interest in and support for the issue at hand. In the campaign, the Municipality of Matagalpa provided ways in which a broad sector of the population could participate, including local businesses, the educational community, and youths and their families; the municipality also reached out to others via radio announcements, newspaper articles and informational flyers delivered to homes. Yet, it is important to note the great significance of the municipal bond program in the success of the promotional campaign. Indeed, the program served as the concrete, practical anchor for the campaign which showed that the municipality was seeking a solution to the water problem in a very practical way that demonstrated concrete results, such as the construction of the new water tanks and an increase in water connections. The program also helped to create a greater sense of local ownership in the water project through the sale of bonds to the community at large, while keeping the purchase price of the bonds within the reach of a broad section of the local population. Additionally, the compensation program (60% wage / 40%

bond), which was instituted under the municipal bond program, allowed a sector of the population that might otherwise have been marginalized from the water project activities, a chance to be a part of this community effort as well as an opportunity to buy their connection to the water service.

The Municipality of Matagalpa has already made great strides in improving the local water service and in informing its citizens about municipal efforts in this area, as well as the importance of water and water conservation. With the RIC's assistance in designing and implementing the promotional campaign, the municipality has been able to reach even more of its citizens and build on the sense of community pride and responsibility for the water service which has developed through increased local involvement in the project. Greater community participation will help to foster a lasting sense of local ownership of the water service in the years to come. Furthermore, the success of this pilot project in Nicaragua will demonstrate the benefits of municipal administration of local public services and may have important implications for future decentralization efforts in Nicaragua.

### ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Since that time, the cable television station has closed.
- <sup>2</sup> Due to the long vacation period for school children (end of November to the beginning of February) as well as the almost one month delay in opening the schools due to a teachers' strike, the campaign was not begun until March 1995.

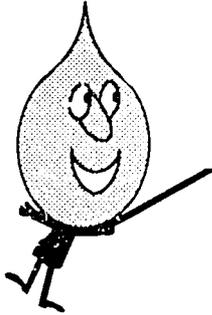
**ANNEX 1**

**Announcement Poster for Student Contests**

# ¡¡ GRANDES CONCURSOS ANIMATE Y PARTICIPA!!

*Estudiantes de Escuelas Secundarias de la Municipalidad de Matagalpa*

## EN LA SEMANA MUNICIPAL DEL AGUA



**PODRAS PARTICIPAR EN UNO O EN TODOS:**

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. Logotipo       | 5. Declamación |
| 2. Lema           | 6. Baile       |
| 3. Obra de Teatro | 7. Juego       |
| 4. Canción        |                |

**EL TEMA ES:**

“La Importancia del Agua y su Conservación para la Población de Matagalpa”

**¡¡PARA LOS GANADORES HABRAN LINDOS PREMIOS!!**

El último día para entregar los trabajos será el 26 de mayo de 1995.

**¡¡Apresurate!!**

NOTA: Puedes obtener las reglas para participar en los concursos en la dirección de tu Escuela.



**ANNEX 2**

**Informational Flyer Promoting Municipal Bonds**

# BONOS MUNICIPALES

*Una Inversión en el Futuro de Matagalpa*



La Alcaldía está trabajando por el pueblo. Ha iniciado la primera etapa de un proyecto que se llama Aranjuez-Matagalpa con el propósito de solucionar el problema de abastecimiento de agua potable en Matagalpa. Ya la Alcaldía y AyAMAT (Acueductos y Alcantarillos de Matagalpa) han logrado varios avances en la cobertura y calidad de este servicio y de esta manera más Matagalpinos tienen acceso al vital líquido que es el *AGUA POTABLE*. Pero.....

*QUE PUEDE HACER USTED PARA FORMAR PARTE DE ESTE GRAN ESFUERZO Y DE ESTA MANERA LOGRAR QUE TODOS LOS MATAGALPINOS TENGAN AGUA????*

## ¡¡ Puede adquirir su bono!!

El problema del agua potable es un problema de todos y juntos tenemos que resolverlo. Contribuya adquiriendo su bono en la tesorería municipal de Matagalpa y de esta manera estará haciendo realidad el proyecto de abastecimiento de agua potable en Matagalpa. Hay bonos desde \$20 (o su equivalente en cordobas) como ve no necesita ser millonario. Adquiera su bono hoy y hará una gran inversión en su futuro y el futuro de Matagalpa.



Alcaldía Municipal de Matagalpa (ALMAT)

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Alcaldía Municipal de Matagalpa (ALMAT)

## **ANNEX 3**

### **Informational Flyer on Water Conservation**

# RECOMENDACIONES PARA

## CONSERVAR EL AGUA

ALCALDÍA MUNICIPAL DE MATAGALPA  
(ALMAT)

Ahorrando agua usted ahorra dinero.  
Las siguientes recomendaciones le  
ayudarán en dicho ahorro:

### FUERA DE LA CASA

- Cuando lave su bicicleta o  
automóvil use una cubeta con agua



y jabón, luego enjuague en otra  
cubeta sólo con agua.

- Para regar sus plantas  
no use manguera si no  
regadera.
- Riegue sus plantas cada  
tres días, especialmente



por la mañana para disminuir la  
evaporación del agua.  
Abstengase de regar las plantas  
durante las horas de más  
consumo de  
agua.

- Plante en el  
jardín solamente  
plantas nativas  
de la región u  
otras que  
requieren un  
volumen mínimo  
de agua para vivir.
- Coloque material orgánico  
(hojas secas, residuos de frutas,  
verduras, etc) alrededor de las  
bases de las plantas del jardín.  
Esto ayudará el desarrollo y  
disminuirá la evaporación del  
agua. Construya bordes de tierra  
alrededor de las  
bases de las  
plantas para  
detener el agua.



*¡ No te Pierdas nuestro siguiente volante, te traerá buenas ideas para que  
ahorres agua y dinero!*

# RECOMENDACIONES PARA

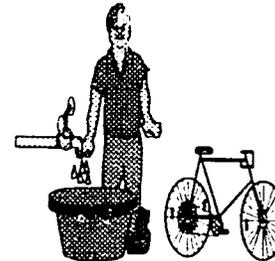
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## **ANNEX 4**

**Campaign Poster Showing Winning Logo and Slogan  
(designed by Matagalpan Student and computerized by the RIC)**

¡MATAGALPINO!



AGUA, SALUD Y VIDA  
ES NUESTRA ALTERNATIVA