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Community Action for Reading and Security

Gender Analysis



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Photo Credit: CARS mural at the *Colegio San José* in Bluefields, Nicaragua

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Nicaragua Community Action for Reading and Security Activity

Gender Analysis

Submitted to:

Alicia Slate, Contracting Officer's Representative

USAID/Nicaragua

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Author:

Virginia Lambert

Submitted by:

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ACRONYMS

APA	Aprendo, Practico, Aplico, active learning method for primary school
CARS	Community Action for Reading and Security
CIPRE	Center for International Policy and Evaluation
EpC	Espacios para Crecer
FADCANIC	Fundación para la Autonomía y el Desarrollo de la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex
MINED	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PIC	Plan de Intervención Comunitaria
PAC	Plan de Acción Comunitaria
PROGRES	USAID Program for Reading and Security
RACCS	Región Autónoma de la Costa Caribe Sur
SEAR	Sistema Educativo Autónómico Regional
URACCAN	Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaragüense
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

The Gender Analysis for the USAID/Nicaragua Community Action for Reading and Security (CARS) activity, carried out in April 2015, sought to identify the aspects of program implementation where gender relations and gender gaps may affect achievement of expected results, and ways in which the activity may contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment. The activity is implemented in five municipalities of the *Region Autónoma de la Costa Caribe Sur* (RACCS), which is characterized by multi-cultural and multi-lingual diversity, a broadly dispersed population, and high rates of poverty.

CARS is focused on two principal objectives, improvements in early grade reading and improved citizen security. It is implemented in selected primary schools and the associate school communities, through sub-grants to local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and universities. To date, the principal mechanism for implementation has been the formation of non-formal afterschool programs, *Espacios para Crecer* (EpCs) or Spaces to Grow for students who are struggling in school and having difficulty in learning to read. (Additional approaches to enhance early grade reading and security are being implemented as the activity progresses. CARS recently began providing assistance to private and subsidized preschools and primary schools.)

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the gender analysis examined gender differences among ethnic and social groups, the effect of gender on CARS implementation and results, and the CARS capacity for gender integration. While the analysis utilized available secondary reference materials and CARS documentation and data on gender relations in the region, it was based primarily on interviews with CARS and partner staff, other key informants about gender in the region, school and EpC staff and faculty, and parents. Field work was conducted over a two-week period in close collaboration with CARS staff.

The analysis found clear evidence of the importance of gender relations in the implementation of the project and the value of integration attention to gender dynamics and gaps in planning, activities, monitoring, and reporting. Key observations include the overriding description of gender relations across ethnic and social groups in terms of *machismo*, with expectations for male dominance in decision-making, leadership, and income generation, and women's primary responsibility for childcare and household management. *Machismo* also is cited by people in the region as the underlying factor in the prevalence of gender-based violence, intra-household violence, and high rates of adolescent childbearing.

Recommendations are presented for each of the report sections. They are intended to increase gender integration in CARS implementation to improve outcomes and results, and to increase the positive effect of the activity on gender equality and empowerment. The recommendations are:

1. Include a gender analysis in the socio-educational assessment at the initiation of CARS activities in each community.

2. Provide gender training to the facilitators, field technical staff, and primary teachers to increase awareness of gender- and ethnic-related discriminatory behavior and techniques to manage it.
3. Analyze and take actions to resolve problems associated with the inclusion of youth as participants in the EpCs alongside primary school underachievers.
4. Streamline and monitor the planning process for community mobilization.
5. Act to contribute to USAID priority objectives for gender equality in the activities with the partner NGOs.
6. Include gender awareness and training as part of the local capacity development with partner NGOs.
7. Create a CARS gender policy.
8. Include a gender plan of action in the annual work plan.
9. Establish semi-annual review of gender integration.

Introduction

The Gender Analysis for the USAID/Nicaragua Community Action for Reading and Security (CARS) activity focuses on program implementation to improve understanding of gender and social inclusion in CARS and to recommend approaches to gender integration that contribute to activity results and to gender equality and inclusion.

Gender analysis is a social science analytic tool to identify, understand, and explain gaps between males and females in households and communities and the relevance of gender norms and relations in the activity context, i.e., primary schools or the school community. It typically involves examining whether the activity will affect men and women differently. It compares the roles, norms, rights, and opportunities of men and women and the relations between them. It also considers whether the gaps between men and women may affect the activity results, how the gaps can be addressed, and ways the activity may contribute to increasing equality.

The USAID Policy for Gender Equality and Female Empowerment (2012) affirms that “gender equality and female empowerment are core development objectives, fundamental for the realization of human rights and key to effective and sustainable development outcomes.” Accordingly, gender equality and female empowerment should be integrated into all activities, and USAID should pursue an inclusive approach to foster equality.

USAID requires gender analysis at the strategic level, in the design of projects, and in the implementation of activities. At each stage the analysis becomes more grounded in the realities of actual day-to-day operations. The focus is on identification of actions or approaches to:

- Mitigate any negative effects of gender gaps on the activity (e.g., Are girls less likely to attend EpCs because they are needed to work in the house in the afternoon? Do security concerns have the same effect on school/EpC attendance for girls and boys?);
- Identify different needs and priorities of men and women;
- Avoid perpetuating traditional power imbalance (e.g., manifestations of *machismo*); and,
- Seek ways for the activity to contribute to greater equality.

In addition, USAID investments are directed at three overarching gender-related outcomes: to reduce disparities in access to and control over resources; to reduce gender-based violence (GBV); and to increase women’s participation in decision-making and realization of their rights.

The Terms of Reference for the CARS Gender Analysis cites six guiding questions:

- (1) What actions are recommended for CARS, partner NGOs, schools, and SEAR to improve gender and social inclusion in their programs?
- (2) How are community members being served or not served under CARS as related to gender and how can this be improved?

- (3) What is the current status of gender dynamics in early grade classroom and educational facilities? What behaviors exist that are detrimental to equality and how can this be improved or changed?
- (4) How are partner NGOs and schools addressing gender and social inclusion in their institutions, training plans, and implementation?
- (5) Are CARS training materials, training plans, and education materials gender sensitive and socially inclusive? How can they be improved?
- (6) What gender factors need to be considered for the different, ethnic, linguistic, and social groups (e.g., people with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex (LGBTI) persons) to optimize program outcomes?

The body of the report is in four parts, which are structured around these questions:

- Background on gender in the regional context and CARS
- Analysis of gender in CARS implementation and results
- Analysis of CARS capacity to integrate gender dynamics in programs
- Actions to improve gender and social inclusion considerations

Methodology

The field work for the gender analysis was carried out over a two-week period in April 2015, approximately 18 months after CARS began. Virginia Lambert, an independent consultant, was responsible for the design and reporting of the analysis. Thalia Dixon of the CARS staff worked with Ms. Lambert throughout the assessment and took the initiative in arranging interviews and field visits.¹ Her knowledge of the region and experience in CARS were invaluable.

The gender analysis utilized a rapid assessment methodology. While the study included a review of academic studies, project documentation, and the limited available secondary data, it was based primarily on interviews and group discussions with the CARS team and partners, key informants with knowledge of gender relations in the region, and with school officials, parents, and CARS facilitators in several communities (See the list of individuals interviewed in Annex C). The consultant also carried out a rapid desk review of training and classroom materials developed to date. Finally, the gender analysis included an examination of the project monitoring and data collection system in terms of the collection and dissemination of statistics and indicators to contribute to the understanding of gender dynamics and of the effectiveness of various approaches and tools.

¹ USAID guidance emphasizes that the team implementing the activity be involved in the analysis so that it does not become either an academic exercise or an outside assessment.

Background of the CARS Activity

CARS is one of two USAID/Nicaragua activities in the *Region Autónoma de la Costa Caribe Sur* (RACCS) to implement the USAID Program for Reading and Security (PROGRES). It is a four-year activity, implemented by DevTech Systems, Inc., that began in November 2013. The purpose is (a) to improve early grade reading outcomes and (b) contribute to reducing citizen insecurity in five municipalities of the RACCS, Bluefields, Kukra Hill, Pearl Lagoon, Corn Island, and *Desembocadura de Rio Grande*. It is headquartered in Bluefields.

CARS has four components: (1) Improving formal and non-formal reading programs; (2) Community Engagement; (3) Local Capacity Development; and, (4) Knowledge generation and management. In each municipality, the activities are carried out in selected primary schools (grades 1- 3), and the associated school communities. To date, implementation has focused on the establishment of non-formal after-school programs in these schools to boost the reading and comprehension skills of underachievers in grades 1 through 3. The programs, called *Espacios para Crecer* (EpC) or Spaces to Grow provide an engaging, interactive curriculum to support struggling students to learn and to enjoy learning. Each EpC consists of approximately 25 students and a facilitator from the community, often a teacher. CARS trains the facilitators and provides the lesson plans, which consist of games and music as well as academic exercises for the three-hour daily sessions.

While CARS started with the EpCs, component 1 also will include pre-school programming to prepare children to enter school, development of materials and training for primary teachers on how to teach reading, and a diploma program in reading instruction for primary school teachers in private schools. The latter aspects of the program are just getting underway and therefore are not included directly in the gender analysis.

The Community Engagement (Community Mobilization) component, component 2, begins with the selection of the primary schools where CARS might potentially consider working, made jointly with the Ministry of Education (MINED) and the Center for International Policy and Evaluation (CIPRE). When a school is identified to be eligible for consideration by CARS and CIPRE, the EpC and community mobilization team convenes a general assembly in the school community (director and teachers, parents, and community leaders) to explain the program and to get their written agreement to participate and to form an EpC. Subsequently, parents and school and community leaders engage in a participatory process to identify additional needs and a plan of action for the community.

CARS is implemented through competitive sub-grants with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and universities. To date, six sub-grants have been awarded to NGOs to manage the field work in assigned municipalities. Component 3 focuses on strengthening the capacity of these organizations as potential future direct recipients of USAID funds. Component 4 calls for CARS to contribute to the body of knowledge and database about education and security in the RACCS.

Overview of Gender Relations in the RACCS

In social and economic terms the RACCS, located in southeastern Nicaragua, is defined by diversity. The highly dispersed population of 382,100 occupies an area 27,407 sq. km. Bluefields, with a population of 45,547, is the largest urban center.² Internal transportation is limited, with a heavy dependence on travel by boat.³ According to the 2005 population census,⁴ 63% of the population is rural. The area has three major population groups, the Afro-Caribbean *Kriols*, whose mother tongue is Kriol English, various indigenous communities including the *Misquitos*, *Ramas*, *Garifunas*, and *Ulwas*, and the numerically dominant (and growing) Spanish-speaking *mestizo* population. While historically, the local economy of the *Kriol* and indigenous communities was built around fishing, the *mestizos*, who arrived more recently, depend on agriculture and livestock. The region is autonomous to protect its unique ethnic and cultural diversity. Approximately 50% of the population of the region is female in spite of reportedly high rates of out-migration by men. A high dependency ratio reflects the relatively high birth rate and subsequent “youth bulge” as well as the out-migration of working age adults for employment.

According to the 2005 population census, approximately a fourth of the households in the region are headed by women, which is lower than the national average (30%). The average masks considerable variation within the region, however. The proportion of female-headed households in the agricultural rural areas is relatively low, but the urban municipalities of Corn Island and Bluefields show very high rates of 46% and 50% respectively. This situation is most common among *Kriol* households, followed by *mestizo* households. Approximately a third⁵ of the children in primary school are being raised by grandparents or other relatives or friends. The USAID/Nicaragua Youth-At-Risk Assessment (2011) estimated that in Bluefields depressed neighborhoods only about one in ten families is a traditional nuclear family with both the mother and father present.⁶

Another key contextual factor is the level of poverty in the region. According to figures from the 2009 Living Standards Measurement Survey, the poverty rate is at least ten percentage points higher in the RACCS than the national level. Poverty affects 68.8% of the rural population and 36.3% of the population in urban areas.⁷ The poverty statistics reflect the lack of employment opportunities in the region and equally high levels of underemployment. The majority of both men and women who are employed work in the informal sector (urban: 65% of men and 69% of women; rural: both men and women are greater than 80%). Men are more likely than women to be self-employed, in agriculture or fishing. Most employed women work in the service sector.

² Population figures are from the 2005 Census of Population, which is the most recent census. (*Instituto Nacional de Información de Desarrollo*)

³ Limited mobility tends to affect women more than men especially in rural areas because of their home-based responsibilities (e.g., child care, meal preparation), thus increasing their isolation, which affects access to health care, education, information, and other services.

⁴ 2005 was the most recent census of population.

⁵ CARS, *Informe Final Línea de Base EGRA 2014*

⁶ The FADCANIC baseline study for their youth-at-risk program (EduExit) showed that 49% of the participants came from female-headed households.

⁷ Extracted from the 2011, *USAID/Nicaragua Youth-At-Risk Assessment*. These percentages include both the North and South Autonomous Regions.

The rate of employment is higher among Kriol women in urban areas, primarily in education, health, NGO, and donor projects. Also, women are much more likely than men to report no economic activity or work as unpaid family labor.⁸

Migration for employment is a critical factor in the region. Although historically men were more likely to move, increasingly women also are migrating internationally and to work on cruise ships. Land tenure and control are major sources of tension in the region, and of conflict among ethnic and economic groups (e.g. communal vs private), especially with the influx of *mestizo colonos* and threats to communal indigenous lands. For registered property, across all ethnic groups, women as individuals or jointly with spouses hold only 17% of the land that is titled.⁹

The lack of data and statistics for the region, especially data disaggregated by sex, is a major impediment to analysis and planning. The 2008 *Diagnóstico de Género en las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe*, prepared by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank provided an overview of gender differences and gaps for the northern and southern autonomous regions (RAAN and RAAS) and comparisons across ethnic groups. In terms of the subjects directly related to the CARS activity, the study noted:

- No difference between boys and girls in enrollment in basic education, although girls outnumber boys by more than 10% in secondary schools, while 10% more males than females are registered in adult education. (Source: Ministry of Education).
- No difference between adult males and females in terms of illiteracy, although there is a large gap between rural and urban areas. Approximately 50% of the rural population is illiterate compared to 20% of the urban population, and rural women are less likely to read and write (54%) than rural men (48%). (Source: 2005 Population Census).
- Young men are more likely than young women to access technical education, while more women than men are enrolled in university. In both cases, the preference is for traditional, stereotypical areas of study.¹⁰ In general, girls are not encouraged to prepare for technical careers because they are seen as jobs designed for men.
- The USAID/Nicaragua Youth Assessment for the region found that only two of ten young people of an appropriate age for secondary school, are enrolled and about 20% of those who enter drop out without finishing. The drop-out rate from primary school in the RACCS is 17%, the highest in the country. Based on 2010 statistics, only 42% of young people ages 15-19 had completed primary school.

⁸ Extracted from the World Bank/IDB, *Diagnóstico de Género en la Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe 2008*, based on the 2005 Population Census. In the *Regiones Autónomas* (north and south combined), 78% of the women compared to 17% of the men reported no economic activity. In urban areas, the percentages were 61% of women and 34% of men.

⁹ Recent news reports cite escalating violence due to land tenure disputes, particularly in the northern part of the Autonomous Regions between *colonos* and indigenous communal lands. In 2012, the International Forestry Center (CIFOR) conducted several studies on gender and tenure in the region. Citations are included in Annex B.

¹⁰ “La segregación de género en las especialidades persiste: las mujeres siguen concentrándose en carreras como sociología, ciencias de la educación, hotelería y contabilidad pública, y los hombres en agroforestaría, pesca o administración de empresas.” (op cit, World Bank/IDB, page 12)

While there are no significant gender gaps between males and females in access to education, at least at the primary level, large gaps do exist in terms of access to health services, and in vulnerability to violence and insecurity. Although access to health services in the region is weak overall, it is generally agreed that women, and particularly young women, have better access than young men, in part because of childbearing. A significant issue for young men is their lack of knowledge about their bodies and reproductive health. They are particularly vulnerable to untreated sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and lack understanding and any sense of responsibility for sexual behavior and pregnancy. According to the USAID Nicaragua Youth Assessment (2012, page Roman numeral “x”), “the rate of STDs in the RAAS is 164 per 100,000 inhabitants, the highest among all regions of Nicaragua. The national average is 43.9 per 100,000 people.” Prevalence statistics are somewhat unreliable especially in comparing young men and women because young men are less likely to access health services and be tested.

The rate of adolescent pregnancy and birth is higher in Nicaragua than elsewhere in Central America, and even higher. In RACCS, 30% of adolescent females are mothers, compared to 19.9% nationally.¹¹ Adolescent motherhood in the RACCS is consistently identified in the literature and in key informant interviews as one of the greatest risk factors for young women and as the prime example of gender inequality. Whereas young women must leave school to give birth and care for children, young men do not, and are assumed to bear no moral or financial responsibility as fathers. Although the FADCANIC (*Fundación para la Autonomía y el Desarrollo de la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua*) baseline survey¹² found that 45% of the young men and women think that both parents should be responsible for raising children, the interviews with mothers and others in the community showed a general sense of adolescent childbearing and care not as evidence of inequality but rather as part of the natural state of affairs, and a result of girls’ carelessness. Men, even as boys, are assumed to have much more individual freedom than women and girls.

The high rate of teenage childbearing is closely tied to the recognized inequality in exposure to gender-based violence and intra-familial violence, which are seen as serious social issues linked to the broader issues of increased drug trafficking in the region, as well as drug and alcohol use among young people. The acknowledged risks of violence and insecurity for youth and adolescents, especially girls, do not seem to translate directly to a sense of insecurity for primary school children, however.

Gender Differences among Ethnic and Social Groups

- What gender considerations need to be considered for the different ethnic, linguistic, and social groups?¹³

¹¹ World Bank and IDB, Diagnóstico de género en las regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe, 2008. The data is from INEC 2005.

¹² Eric Ramirez Avendano, Informe Final, Estudio de Conocimientos, Actitudes, Creencias y Practicas Relativas a Riesgos Sociales Que Inciden de la Sobre la Vulnerabilidad Niñez y Juventud. Cinco Municipios RACCS, FADCANIC, 2015.

¹³ The question specifically referenced gender considerations for persons with disabilities and LGBTI persons. These two areas were not investigated during the consultancy primarily due to the absence of literature on these topics, and too few encounters with the issues in the field. The subject of sexual orientation did not come up in

While all key informants agreed that differences in gender roles and relations exist among ethnic and social groups, the interviews did not present any clear consensus on what those differences are or how they can or should be integrated in the CARS activities. Further, there seems to be no systematic academic literature on the subject, and minimal data disaggregated by ethnicity and sex.¹⁴ Respondents agree that gender norms in the region are defined by *machismo* whereby men:

- Have to be in charge and to hold leadership positions;
- Support the family but women care for the family;
- Frequently abandon their female partners and children, but when they are around they have the last word and may control how women and children spend their time and where they go (this is reportedly decreasing); and,
- As boys have more freedom than girls, are less likely to be controlled, and may have priority in school enrolment.

Further, gender-based violence is frequent, in terms of assault and rape, incest, sex with minors, prostitution and trafficking of young girls, and intra-familial violence. Domestic violence usually is not reported because it is not seen as a crime but simply as a manifestation of *machismo*, and issues within the family are to be managed privately.

The differences across ethnic and social groups tend to be cited as variations of degree rather than as different sets of norms. For example, informants state that women tend to be stronger in Afro-descendant groups (*Kriols* and *Garifunas*), to take independent decisions, and to be in leadership positions. *Machismo* is strongest in the mestizo and indigenous communities. For example, among the *Misquito*, young women are often forbidden to leave their homes and communities. Similar restrictions have been observed in mestizo families.

Gender norms and roles are social characteristics; however, they evolve and change over time in response to the social and economic environment. For example, observers also cited differences in gender-related behavior between rural and urban areas in the RACCS. Nuclear families are more common in remote areas, reportedly intra-familial violence is more accepted in rural than urban communities, and young girls have less mobility in rural areas because of physical dangers in travel. Young women are more vulnerable to abuse and trafficking in urban populations. Religious leaders also influence gender norms in different ways depending on the community and the church, and this impact may be particularly strong in rural communities. Observers also note that women, regardless of ethnicity, do take decisions and act independently when men are absent.

conversations about primary school children. Issues related to inclusion for children with disabilities were observed in two situations but both were young boys.

¹⁴ One exception is the data cited above on the higher proportion of female headed households in Kriol communities, and the greater presence of extended family households.

Recommendation:

Include a gender analysis in the socio-educational assessment at the initiation of CARS activities in a community. In the interviews conducted for the gender analysis, gender differences among ethnic and social groups were described in terms of a continuum rather than stark differences. Some descriptions reflected expectations based on stereotypes rather than actual behavior. To the extent possible given resource constraints, the gender analysis should be done on a community-by-community basis to avoid relying on assumptions and pre-conceived notions about how men and women behave in a particular culture, and to be sensitive to gender dynamics in situations where boys and girls from various ethnic groups interact.

Effect of Gender Relations on CARS Implementation and Results

Two of the guiding questions for the gender analysis examine the relevance of gender considerations in CARS component activities:

- What is the current status of gender dynamics in the classroom and educational facilities?
- How are community members being served or not served under CARS as related to gender?

One of the main conclusions of the two-week rapid assessment of gender dynamics in CARS is that gender relations do have an effect on implementation. Taking account of gender relations in planning and implementation, in line with the USAID Gender Policy, should increase the effectiveness of the program.

The purpose of CARS is to improve early grade reading and security in five municipalities of the RACCS. It is implemented in selected primary schools and the associated school communities, which consist of students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators, and concerned community leaders. In this region, the primary school community is dominated by women. Schooling and the care of children, especially at the primary level, is traditionally women's work. Within the family, the mother is responsible for childcare and is the primary link between the household and the school.¹⁵ Primary teachers are overwhelmingly women, as are the school directors, staff, and administrators, although the proportion of women decreases as rank increases.

This same pattern has been extended into the CARS EpCs, where the overwhelming majority (85%) of the facilitators is young women.¹⁶ When the facilitators visit the students' homes, they usually meet with the mothers. Fathers rarely take an interest in school performance and few fathers attend the *Escuela de Padres y Madres*, which CARS seeks to use as a tool for mobilization in support of the school community. A father usually only intervenes when his child is accused of wrongdoing.

¹⁵ The presence of women in the schools also may reflect the high proportion of female-headed households in urban areas, and the fluidity in household composition (i.e., the mother's partner may not be the father of the children in school.) In some communities, the absence of men in the school may reflect the absence of men in the community because of migration for work abroad or on ships.

¹⁶ Clearly the fact that primary school personnel are women is positive from the point of view of employment opportunities for women, especially since they are formal sector jobs.

In the classroom and EpCs:

Because of time constraints the gender team had limited opportunities to observe behavior in the classrooms and the CARS EpCs, relying primarily on interviews with the parents, facilitators, and technical staff that interact with the children on a daily basis. Likewise, because little data is available to document classroom activities,¹⁷ most of the information gathered is anecdotal.

Many observers recounted instances of bullying, discrimination, violence, and abuse – girls and boys do not want to play together, teachers are abusive in language and in their discipline, and children from different ethnic groups refuse to associate with each other. Stories were also recounted of access to drugs and alcohol even in primary school and of children who were clearly abused, some sexually, at home. At the same time, without monitoring data or a random survey, there is no way to know the frequency or generality of these cases. None of the mothers interviewed voiced concern about the safety of their children in the school and the EpC, and their assessment of the EpC was generally positive – the children enjoyed being there and they were learning. Discussions were couched in terms of the prevailing culture of *machismo*, as examples of “the way things are.” At the same time, attendance is clearly an issue in the EpCs so it is possible that the experiences of the mothers who attended the group discussions were not representative.

Several points follow from these discussions. Because *machismo* and discrimination are seen as normal, teachers and facilitators are often not sensitive to gender-related behaviors and situations that are harmful or disruptive. Teachers and facilitators would benefit from gender and inclusiveness training on how to identify these situations and how to deal with them.¹⁸

Children are socialized at home and in the community about how boys and girls should behave, including presumptions about appropriate roles and relations of dominance and submission. The school and the EpC can either reinforce these behaviors or provide alternative positive models for gender roles and relations across ethnic groups. While teachers, facilitators, and technical staff may have been introduced to the concepts of gender and ethnic relations in the normal school or training, understanding inequality in theoretical terms is not the same as acting on it. The training facilitators receive about inequality and socialization should include specific techniques (through hands-on methods and role-playing) not only to defuse difficult situations but also to encourage positive interactions of cooperation and collaboration between boys and girls.¹⁹ Another suggestion that emerged from a discussion with a group of facilitators was to have periodic (monthly/quarterly) meetings of facilitators and field staff to share experiences about social interactions in the EpCs and to discuss how to respond to them. These meetings also could be an opportunity for additional hands-on gender training.

¹⁷ According to CARS staff, MINED does not systematically publish data on enrolment, dropout, or attendance. The interview at SEAR affirmed this situation. The CARS database to monitor attendance/dropout for the EpCs was under construction at the time of the fieldwork.

¹⁸ Procedures for these cases, especially those with legal implications, could be included in the CARS gender policy.

¹⁹ According to participants, the current EpC training does not include awareness of gender-related interaction of boys and girls in the classroom. In this case, the concern is particularly with the dominant/subordinate aspects of *machismo* rather than traditional male/female roles. These same behaviors also may be reinforced through reading materials, activities, and games in the EpCs.

A related observation that deserves further investigation and corrective action is the effect of having older children (youth) who have not attended school in the EpCs with the young children. This situation was raised by several facilitators in group interviews about gender dynamics in the EpCs. The young people (more or less ages 12 to 15) are at a different stage than the young children in their identity as males and females, and in their interests. In one case a facilitator reported that a young man confronted her saying that since he is a man she cannot tell him what to do. Another facilitator pointed out that these young people often have partners – some may have children. The interaction between the young adults and the primary school age children adds a potentially negative element in the socialization process. CARS currently is analyzing this situation to formulate recommendations, taking into account MINED policy and response in public schools with multi-grade classrooms as well as considerations for the safety and protection of children, and the importance of inclusion and the right of all children to an education.

In the community:

The activities of the community mobilization component of CARS begin with the selection of a school for participation in CARS. Field technical staff from the CARS team and from the NGO working in the municipality meet with a general assembly of the school community to explain the CARS program and the EpC. The field staff also prepared a baseline socio-educational assessment of the community to identify key issues in the school and the achievement levels of students in the school. If the community agrees to collaborate with CARS, together they agree on a *Plan de Intervención Comunitaria* (PIC), which includes the formation of the EpC and the *Escuela de Padres y Madres*.²⁰ In the case of private subsidized preschools and primary schools the process will be similar. *Escuelas de Padres y Madres* and Reading Plans will be established, as well as Community Action Plans.

The next step, using the school and the EpC as the base, the field staff work with the community leaders to form an Analysis Committee composed of parents, school and EpC staff, and community leaders to carry out investigations and discussions with community members to draw up a list of priority issues for the school community (related to reading and security), and to set a plan for implementation. This plan is called the *Plan de Acción Comunitaria* (PAC). This component is not yet fully developed in CARS.²¹ It is to be implemented by the NGO field staff and EpC facilitators, and once the plan is approved a CARS grant will be allotted to be used as seed money to implement the plan. To date, only a few Analysis Committees have been formed in Corn Island and Bluefields. Examples of two PACs from Corn Island were available for review, but these sites were not included in the field visits for the gender analysis.

Several observations about participation may be useful as this process is formalized. First, CARS should monitor the participants and leadership in the process, by gender and by relationship to the school. Men and women often see the school differently and may have different priorities for the plan of action (e.g., men may focus on infrastructure whereas women may be more concerned with discipline problems). Ideally, both points of view will be heard. The monitoring

²⁰ This information is based on an example of a PIC provided by CARS staff for the school *Monseñor Salvador Sheffler* in the municipality of Bluefields.

²¹ For example, the NGOs and field staff (i.e., *técnicos*) only entered the process in the past four months.

should be done both quantitatively by recording who attends and leads the meetings and through detailed staff field reports that document the decision process.

The CARS team also intends to use the MINED model of the *Escuela de Padres y Madres* as a tool to increase parents' understanding and investment in their children's schooling and in the school community.²² The standard model and curriculum covers nine monthly meetings in a year. School personnel reported that so far, participation has been very weak especially of fathers. Various options have been raised for increasing the effectiveness of the *Escuelas* that include changing the meeting times, improving notification of the parents, and modifying the curriculum. Gender – the absence of men - is clearly a factor in this situation. This point is discussed below in the section on Next Steps.

Based on the existing examples of PICs and PACs, another observation is that the process would move quicker and be easier to track if CARS develops a concise, structured format for the plans (with bullets and tables) to reduce the time spent in preparation of the document per se. The team also should monitor the implementation process and the achievement of benchmarks and results listed in the PACs. A six-month review with the field staff may be useful in refining the process and understanding differences among communities (and ethnic groups.)

Recommendations:

- **Provide gender training** to the facilitators, field technical staff of CARS and the partner NGOs, and perhaps teachers to increase their awareness of gender-related and (ethnic) discriminatory behavior among primary school children and to prepare them with hands-on techniques to manage specific situations.
- **Analyze and take actions to resolve problems associated with the inclusion of youth as participants in the EpCs alongside primary school underachievers.**
- **Streamline and monitor the planning process for community mobilization**, including the *Escuelas de Padres y Madres*, with attention to and documentation of the participation and leadership of women and men.

Capacity of CARS to Integrate Gender Dynamics

This section addresses two of the guiding questions:

- How are partner NGOs and schools addressing gender and social inclusion in their institutions and in turn in their training plans and implementation?
- Are training materials, training plans, and education materials used in the region and thus produced under CARS gender sensitive and socially inclusive? How can they be improved?

²² The CERCA (Civic Engagement for Education Reform) approach, utilizing a school report card as a tool for community engagement, is not a part of the *Escuela de Padres and Madres*.

As per the USAID gender policy, USAID activities should not only take account of the impact of gender dynamics on implementation but also seek to advance gender equality and female empowerment. Both aspects of the policy mandate are pertinent to these questions.

Partner NGOs:

At the time of the gender analysis, three NGOs had sub-grants under CARS²³ and were implementing EpCs, *la Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaragüense (URACCAN)*, *Fundación Zamora Terán*, and *Fundación Hermanamiento Rama*. The three grantees vary in size, experience, and profile, and in approach to gender integration:

- *Zamora Terán* is a national and local-level organization dedicated to primary education. It has programs throughout Central America and considerable experience with international donors. The foundation has a gender policy, including a requirement for gender equality in hiring and staff. *Zamora Terán* has six field staff in CARS, three men and three women.
- URACCAN is a regional university founded in 1992. The campus in Bluefields has a *Centro de Estudios y Formación de la Mujer Multi-étnica* and began a masters' program in gender studies (*Maestría en Género, Etnicidad y Ciudadanías Interculturales*) in early 2014. The center also provides gender awareness training for faculty and students, and other local organizations. The University has a gender policy, but operational procedures and indicators for the policy have not yet been defined. At present, the six URACCAN field staff for the CARS sub-grant are women. (The accountant and information specialist are men.)
- *Fundación Rama* is a small, relatively young foundation headquartered in Rama, and working with CARS in the Kukra Hill municipality. It has no gender policy and little experience with the subject. Its three technical field staff are men. At present, none of the NGOs provides training on gender to either technical field staff or EpC facilitators. Only URACCAN purportedly included gender awareness as a qualification for field staff positions.

In general terms, in this region as elsewhere in Nicaragua, there is broad awareness of the meaning of gender dynamics and of calls for gender equality. The SEAR seven-year strategic plan for education in the region includes a component defining the intercultural perspective on gender, with three objectives, gender equality, elimination of gender-based violence, and recognition of the rights of women and children. It is significant in establishing a legal framework and institutional responsibility for gender, but, as in the case of the URACCAN gender policy, it has not been operationalized. Teachers report that they received an orientation to gender dynamics as part of their academic training, and regional NGOs like FADCANIC and *Zamora Terán* have defined an organizational gender strategy. At the same time, there seems to

²³ The second group of sub-grants was being signed at the time of the fieldwork.

be little organization to work to achieve change (i.e., women's organizations or advocacy groups) and little experience in applying this theoretical gender awareness in the classroom.²⁴

The conclusion, as noted above, is that in order for CARS activities to avoid the negative effects of gender inequality in project implementation, and to have a positive effect on equality and empowerment through results that contribute to the reduction of gender-based violence, greater equality in access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making, CARS needs to act not just to increase gender awareness but to internalize this awareness in the activities themselves.

The Local Capacity Development component of CARS, which is directed to the partner NGOs, is utilizing the USAID *Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) Tool*. OCA is a self-assessment tool that measures seven key aspects of organization management, and is intended to generate an internal participatory process to strengthen the weak points in the organization structure. The role of CARS is to facilitate the assessment with each NGO (to be repeated annually), and the capacity building process.

To date, CARS input to this process has involved facilitating the initial administration of the assessment tool. CARS has also held training sessions with the NGOs, focused on management of the CARS sub-grants and on the responsibilities of the NGOs for the various CARS components. In the future, CARS is likely to take a more active role in organizational capacity development through periodic training on various topics included in the OCA assessment and through quarterly interactive NGO meetings to review progress and propose additional training or workshops. Gender awareness should be a part of this training. The training and the meetings would provide an opportunity to insert the topic of gender relations in organizational management and in the CARS programming, building on the varied experience of the partner organizations.

Recommendations:

- **Act to contribute to the USAID priority objectives to increase gender equality** (i.e., to reduce violence against girls and women, and to improve girls' and women's access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making.) Examples of positive actions might include:
 - On-going training in methods and hands-on techniques to deal with bullying, violence, or other manifestations of *machismo*. Role-playing has been used effectively for this purpose.
 - Monthly meetings with technical field staff and facilitators to share experiences and ideas about how to manage various situations.

²⁴ For example, when the NGO technical field staff and facilitators were asked why the school community is dominated by women, they gave the same stereotypical responses as the parents, e.g., women are better than men in taking care of children, men are not used to being with children so they are not as qualified to work as EpC facilitators, men do not know how to care for children with *cariño*, or men have to work and therefore cannot attend school meetings. These types of responses accept the stereotype as normal or natural – just as many see expressions of gender-based violence as normal rather than as wrong.

- Guidelines and procedures to deal with behaviors that cause insecurity for students or interfere with their ability to learn to read in the EpC.
- **Include gender awareness and training as a part of the local capacity development with partner NGOs, as well as the CARS core team.**

Training materials:

The gender analysis also was directed to examine the training materials, training plans, and education materials used in the region and those produced under CARS in terms of gender awareness and social inclusiveness. Historically, the focus of the research on gender bias in educational materials at the primary level has been on bias against girls, with attention to male-centric language, socialization in traditional gender roles, and depiction of boys/men as dominant and as decision-makers. More recently, some researchers also have examined these materials from the point of view of young boys, who, in this region for example, on average have lower levels of academic achievement than girls and are more likely to drop out of school. In this case, the materials have been assessed in terms of their perceived relevance to the daily life of the boys and their expectations about their future.

An in-depth review of the gender and social inclusion content of the educational materials would involve development of a systematic methodology to quantitatively document specific references and examples, and is beyond the resources allocated for the gender analysis. The analysis in this report identifies points of concern that may benefit from further attention and provides preliminary guidance on topics to be examined in a more complete analysis. The review is based on the list of seven forms of bias from the University of Pennsylvania, included in Annex D.

In the EpCs, CARS is using an adapted version of the modules developed under an earlier EpC project in Central America focused on the elimination of child labor. The materials have been modified to use gender-inclusive language (e.g., *niñas y niños*) and to include examples from Nicaragua and the RACCS. The EpC modules available for review show the lesson plan for each day without detailed content. The language is gender inclusive and most references are to Nicaragua although a few references to Guatemala remain. These could easily be modified to address the ethnic diversity of the RACCS (rather than Guatemala.) The drawings of a boy and girl on each page do not look like children from the RACCS but this is not a serious issue unless it is replicated elsewhere because the students do not see this manual. The content of the lessons in terms of stories, examples, exercises, and games depend on the facilitators. A more complete review will require examining the supplementary reference materials given to the facilitators and the facilitator training.

CARS also has drafted guides for teaching reading and comprehension in grades 1 to 3, based on the *Aprendo, Practico, y Aplico* (APA) method. The APA materials have more complete content than the EpC modules and the two sets of materials are clearly aligned with one another.²⁵ A cursory overview raised several points. In general, the language is gender-inclusive but it is less complete than the EpC modules and would benefit from another review. The materials include

²⁵ It is not clear to this reviewer how these draft materials are to be used in CARS. Attention may need to be given to the presentation and formatting, especially if they are to be used as reference materials.

frequent examples and references to the RACCS, although the multi-culturalism and diversity are not emphasized. For example, the presentation on family might need to be more open-ended in this region. While examples include both boys and girls, the balance seems to be toward boys. Also, many of the illustrative stories are about animals rather than people but they still tend to exhibit stereotypical gender roles and characteristics (e.g., mothers as care-givers, fathers as workers or producers, or males as leaders, girls as attractive.)

Moving forward, specific criteria could be defined for a rigorous (quantitative and qualitative) review of the materials, drawing on previous research of this type.) Numerous examples of this type of research are available online. The sources of bias listed in Annex D may provide a useful guide. Another approach, in addition to or in lieu of this research, would be to use the stories and examples from the materials in training discussions with facilitators and teachers to get their feedback on what messages are being communicated, and the students have responded to them.²⁶

Next steps

- What actions are recommended to be taken by CARS, partner NGOs, schools and the local educational government (SEAR) to improve gender and social inclusion considerations in their programs? What actions are recommended to make these improvements sustainable?

The focus in the RACCS and the SEAR is the multi-cultural and multi-lingual structure of the population and the importance of preserving this diversity in the education system. Within in this context, gender dynamics and gaps, and their effect on behavior are considered to be cross-cutting, but generally are accorded less attention in education and inclusive development.

The predominance of women in the primary school communities emphasizes the importance of gender relations to CARS activities and results. At the individual level, within the school setting, gender relations also affect behavior, learning, and achievement, through factors like responsibilities of girls and boys in the family (sibling care, chores, and child labor), gender-based violence, adolescent pregnancy, and expectations for adult roles.

As a four-year activity, the CARS team cannot expect to erase the over-riding norms of *machismo* in the region, or the poverty and other contextual factors inter-woven with this behavior. On the other hand, gender relations are not set in stone and cannot be taken as given or normal. Gender relations change over time and the CARS activities can influence the direction of change.

In the school community:

Relatively few men participate in the primary school community, which is the focus of the EpCs and the community mobilization component of CARS.²⁷ CARS needs to analyze the causes and

²⁶ The consultant provided comments to CARS on the criteria use in the selection of materials and books for EpC and school libraries. In addition to avoiding negative messages about gender and social inclusion, CARS also could focus on materials that convey positive messages about diversity, tolerance, cooperation, and collaboration. The question of relevance also is important. The topics and stories need to engage the new readers, especially the boys.

²⁷ Both boys and girls participate in the EpCs, with a reported overall majority of boys. It is not clear whether there are differences between boys and girls in absenteeism or drop-outs.

effects of the fact that few fathers and other men attend the *Escuela de Padres y Madres*, which CARS utilizes to increase parental investment in their children's schooling and security.

When asked why fathers do not come to the meetings, the standard response from mothers and school staff (directors, teachers, and EpC facilitators) is that men cannot attend because they are working, and it is culturally understood that schooling is considered a mother's responsibility. In urban areas, the preponderance of single-parent households is likely also a contributing factor. Given the ethnic and economic diversity in the region, the underlying explanations probably are not the same across communities. CARS and NGO field staff and the EpC facilitators should investigate this question at the local level. The response to the situation, and therefore the effectiveness of the community mobilization component, should be based on this investigation.

Two contrasting hypothetical scenarios for community mobilization are presented to illustrate the value of this community level investigation.

- One possibility might be that the *Escuela de Padres y Madres* and the community mobilization process could be effective by using them as a platform to strengthen women's role in decision-making and leadership in the community. If men are not interested in or available to work with CARS, the team could decide to move forward with the women. By organizing, setting priorities and an agenda for action, and securing funds to carry out their plan, the women active in the school community could take an independent role in community improvement.
- A different possibility would be to make adjustments to try to increase male presence. In some communities, the *Escuela de Padres y Madres* and the community mobilization may be ineffective and marginalized because men ignore them. CARS could use various techniques to bring men into the process, e.g., scheduling meetings on weekends, holding the meetings away from the school where men are more comfortable, convincing a few male leaders to recruit other men, or directly inviting both parents. With representative participation, the priorities and actions might have broader support and resources. (It will be important, however, to organize and monitor the process so that women's active role does not diminish as a result.)

While these scenarios are hypothetical and schematic, they illustrate the potential effect of gender roles on CARS results and of the CARS activities on gender equality. Clearly, on-going monitoring, analysis, and discussion by CARS and NGO field staff are essential. In the community mobilization process, it will be important to have field notes for monitoring. Community committees also should maintain written files.²⁸

In the classroom and the EpC:

Specific recommendations were presented above for training, and for meetings among facilitators and partner NGOs to increase awareness of gender dynamics in the classroom and techniques for dealing with them. The need to examine teaching materials, libraries, classroom decorations, and songs and games in terms of the messages being conveyed about gender

²⁸ In both cases, a standardized format is recommended.

relations and social inclusiveness also were discussed. These same action areas may also be relevant for SEAR and classroom teachers.

The dearth of men in the primary school also may have an effect on education and learning. In this region, boys tend to be less successful than girls in academic performance and reading. In part, the difference in reading achievement is explained by different developmental patterns for girls and boys, but boys also are more likely than girls to drop-out of school, at the primary level, and they are less likely to continue to secondary school. One hypothesis to explain this pattern is the absence of positive male role models in the schools and the cultural definition of the school as a woman's place. CARS activities could help break down this gender-related barrier by actions such as having male facilitators in the EpCs, encouraging young men to work with the EpCs in reading and in areas like sports, art, and music,²⁹ and encouraging fathers as well as mothers to visit the EpCs and share their skills and interests with the children, or to help out with school improvement projects.

Recommendations:

- **Take positive actions to improve gender equality and female empowerment.** Consider options such as leadership training or joint discussions sessions for women active in the CARS communities, meetings with men to understand and encourage their participation, and/or engagement of young men with the students in the EpCs.
- **Join with and draw on other local organizations and resources related to gender,** such as the women's center at URACCAN and NGOs such as FADCANIC, to actively integrate gender factors into CARS implementation. This could be done through joint workshops, sharing of resources, joint training, etc. The collaboration may also contribute to the CARS objective to contribute to the data and body of knowledge about the region.
- **Collect and analyze information to monitor the gender aspects of all activities.** This monitoring should include quantitative data, for example, on attendance in the EpCs for boys and girls, participation in the *Escuelas de Padres y Madres*, or change in reading scores. This type of information is essential to understand and correct problems related to participation in the EpCs and the community. It also should include field notes and observations, beginning with the initial socio-education assessment of the community. The field staff as well as the core staff should be engaged in deciding what information they need to act effectively.

Concluding Observations about Gender Integration in CARS

The CARS design document cited attention to gender gaps and inequality, and the CARS contract requires attention to gender and inclusiveness issues in implementation. The actions recommended for CARS and its partner NGOs are intended to improve the performance of the project and contribute to gender equality in the region. Given the evidence of the importance of

²⁹ A positive example occurred during the field work for the gender analysis. As part of the communication program, CARS invited two young male artists to work with children in EpCs in several communities to paint murals about reading.

gender relations in CARS implementation, the team should take steps to make gender analysis more visible.

- The lack of programmatic attention to gender (except in terms of disaggregation of data on participation and results by sex) has caused tension among the CARS staff whereby some staff, especially field personnel, recognize the manifestations of gender disparities and *machismo* and seek a response while others point to more immediate and direct priorities, and see gender inequalities as given, contextual factors.
- Minimal baseline information or diagnostic material is available on gender relations in the school communities where CARS is working. The CARS focus on inclusiveness in the multi-ethnic, -lingual, and -cultural context of the region and of each community has not taken into account gender differences. Attention to gender needs to be cross-cutting with these other factors on a community-by-community basis.
- Continuous monitoring of activities and results is especially important in an experimental activity like CARS. The utilization of the EpC model and reliance on the *Escuela de Padres y Madres* in RACCS, with a highly diverse and mostly rural population, are untested. Indicators of participation disaggregated by sex, for students (enrollment, absenteeism), parents, teachers, facilitators, and community leaders will provide the data to assess what works and where there are problems, and make adjustments in the models. At this point, when questioned about relative participation of males and females, the staff responds in terms of general impressions and anecdotes, which are sometimes contradictory. Periodic collection of quantitative monitoring data, systematic feedback from field personnel, and inclusion of gender indicators in periodic reviews of activities and results are necessary for effective attention to gender in CARS.

Recommendations:

- **Create a CARS gender policy.** The gender policy will identify priority concerns and suggest measures to track these issues. The policy will be consistent with the USAID gender policy. The policy will also identify the standards about gender for the participating NGOs and for the CARS staff. The policy may spell out the procedures for the CARS response to potentially harmful situations due to GBV or other security issues. It is recommended that all members of the staff and representatives of the partner NGOs participate in developing the policy through facilitated discussions.
- **Include a gender plan of action in the annual work plan.** The two-week introduction to gender analysis for CARS is the starting point for meeting the contract requirements on gender. The recommendations in this report should be assessed by the CARS team and actions to implement those that are considered viable and congruent with the gender policy should be included in the annual work plan.
- **Establish periodic reviews of gender integration.** A format should be developed for semi-annual discussion of progress in gender integration, as part of the overall activity reviews and quarterly reports.

Annexes

Annex A: Terms of Reference

Annex B: Documents Consulted

Annex C: Individuals Interviewed

Annex D: Seven Forms of Bias

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Annex A: Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

COUNTRY: Nicaragua

ACTIVITY NAME: Community Action for Reading and Security

ACTIVITY NUMBER: AID 524-C-13-00001

NAME OF THE CONSULTANCY: Gender Analysis for CARS: improving an understanding of gender and social inclusion in the CARS Activity in order to ensure more equitable results

LOCATION: Bluefields, Nicaragua and Arlington, Virginia

DATES OF CONSULTANCY: April 2015 (16 days)

BACKGROUND

The purpose of CARS is to: (a) improve early grade reading outcomes, and (b) diminish citizen insecurity in the five municipalities of the RACCS, Nicaragua. The five municipalities include: Bluefields, Kukra Hill, Pearl Lagoon, Corn Island and the Desembocadura de Rio Grande. Gender is important to consider in terms of how indicators vary based on gender characteristics and it is essential to examine gender-based crime and violence, specifically.

CARS focuses on a four pronged approach, it includes: (1) strengthening the capacity of local non-governmental organizations, (2) creating a system of information sharing for decision-making, (3) building the capacity of communities, (4) providing services and products, including high-quality training materials and classroom materials to teachers, students, parents and larger communities. Each of these four prongs must be examined for their gender sensitivity and consideration of social inclusion.

A gender analysis for the CARS Activity is required. It should help improve the understanding of the role of gender and social inclusion in the CARS Activity and the educational system of the CARS communities. The analysis of gender should not be a repeat of previously conducted USAID analysis in the region, but should focus specifically on CARS, the municipalities served by CARS, the gender and key social dynamics within the communities served by CARS and within the NGOs to be partnered with under CARS.

A gender analysis should be a contribution to the educational system of the RACCS,

Suggest that the study should also point out the participation of boys and girls as main actors in this process, their opinion is important to identify barriers to gender diversity on the region

STTA OBJECTIVES

There are two objectives of the STTA support; the first is to review existing literature and information (including data available) to date with regard to gender in the RACCS. See, for example, the Gender Analysis produced by USAID (2012) and UNICEF's interviews and key findings from its Human Centered Project Design; the gender analysis to be produced under CARS must build upon existing literature and investment made by USAID and clearly targeted for the sub-regional and multiple ethnic contexts of the RACCS region. It must also rely on gender analysis produced by other donors and lending agencies in Nicaragua. The second objective is to provide a current status report and analysis of gender dynamics in the CARS Activity. This will include focusing on the current reality and *specific* actions that can be applied and/or implemented in the region by CARS and other actors. As articulated this includes answering the guiding questions:

- (1) What actions are recommended to be taken by CARS, partner NGOs, schools and the local educational government (SEAR) to improve gender and social inclusion considerations in their programs? What actions are recommended to make these improvements sustainable?
- (2) How are community members being served or not served under CARS as related to gender and how can CARS serve the populations better?
- (3) What is the current status of gender dynamics as observed in early grade classroom and educational facilities? What specific behaviors and attitudes (such as bullying, discrimination, harassment, violence and abuse) exist that are detrimental to gender equality? How can they be changed/improved?
- (4) How are partner NGOs and schools addressing gender and social inclusion in their institutions and in turn in their training plans and implementation?
- (5) Are training materials, training plans, and education materials used in the region and those produced under CARS gender sensitive and socially inclusive? How can they be improved?
- (6) What key gender considerations need to be considered for the different ethnic, linguistic, and social groups (e.g. people with disability and LGBTI persons) to ensure the best program outcomes?

The deliverables of the STTA support require:

- (1) A research design to be implemented in order to answer the guiding questions, the design should be no more than 3 pages
- (2) The development of a protocol in combination with data collection instruments; these will largely focus on interview techniques and potentially a small survey for members

- of institutions supported by CARS (e.g. NGO staff, a sample of community members, minimal interviews with CARS staff).
- (3) An instrument to determine the criteria by which training materials, plans and education materials evaluated on their sensitivity to gender and social inclusion.
 - (4) A draft of the analysis of 15 pages, not including Annexes; the Annexes should include a bibliography, research design, instruments etc.

Considerations:

When observing classrooms and schools, it should be taken into account that there usually are not as many complex gender dynamics or gaps that could be resolved by interventions directly to the students. Focusing specifically on the gender dynamics and gaps of the students' surroundings (especially in-classroom observations to see teacher interactions and also any opportunity to understand intrafamiliar dynamics) and how they can have a positive impact on shaping the students' social dynamics will likely contribute more valuable and useful information. It should also be noted that gender-based violence is not always against women and girls, or perpetuated by men.

MAIN RESULTS [CALENDAR TO BE SUBMITTED BY GENDER SPECIALIST]

The consultancy seeks the result of providing recommendations to improve gender equality within the educational system of the RACCS, specifically within the CARS Activity. The consultancy will focus on making recommendations that promote impactful change in this regard.

The activities suggested to achieve these results are the following:

Literature review

Develop instruments for qualitative interviews

Observation in school classrooms, both EpCs and regular school

Focus group with boys and girls

Interviews/focus groups with parents, teachers, EpC facilitators and youth over 15 years of age.

As needed, conduct select key stakeholder interviews in institutions in the RACCS (Ministry of Education officials, other donors, NGOs, academics)

Organization of data presented to client

Analysis and writing of report(s), presentation (TBD)

REPORTS

The draft report(s) should be written in English and should be submitted in an electronic file. It will include a cover, executive summary, main document, and all annexes. The report will be 1.5 spaced and not exceed 15 pages. The report should focus heavily on specific recommended actions by CARS, NGOs, local government and local actors to improve gender imbalances and inequities.

A final report will be due within 16 days of the receipt of comments from CARS (COP Richard Fisher) and USAID (COR Alicia Slate). All modifications shall be made to the client's satisfaction.

COORDINATION

Coordination should be facilitated by the COP, Richard Fisher.

QUALIFICATION

Academic Degree/level and years of professional experience: Master's degree in gender studies or a related field, ten years of experience working in international development or a related field

Language: Spanish, English

Areas of expertise: international development, gender analysis, gender studies, labor expertise, public policy, education policy, regional expertise: Central America

Skills: qualitative research methods

Annex B: Documents Consulted

Booth, John A. and M. Seligson (Vanderbilt University, Barometer of the Americas). *Cultura Política de Democracia en Nicaragua y en las Américas, 2012. Hacia la igualdad de oportunidades*. April 2013

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Ramirez Avendano, Eric *Informe Final, Estudio de Conocimientos, Actitudes, Creencias y Practicas Relativas a Riesgos Sociales Que Inciden la Sobre la Vulnerabilidad de la Niñez y Juventud. Cinco Municipios RACCS*. FADCANIC 2015

USAID *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy*. March 2012

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USAID/Nicaragua *Country Development Cooperation Strategy, FY2013-FY2017*. July 2013

USAID/Nicaragua Gender Analysis. Final Analysis. November 2012

USAID/Nicaragua *Youth-At-Risk Assessment*. 2011

World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank *Diagnóstico de Genero en las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe*. 2008

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Annex C: Individuals Interviewed

CARS Staff

Richard Fisher, Chief-of-Party
Henry Myers, Deputy Chief-of-Party
Rendel Fredericks, Administration and Finance
William Poling, Sub-grants
Angie Martinez, Communications
Miguel Núñez, Monitoring and Evaluation
Neida Chow, Monitoring and Evaluation
Melvin James, Education
Santiago Gonzalez, Education
Sara Carter, Education
Mirna Villalta, Education
Roberto Hodgson, Community Mobilization
Thalia Dixon, Community Mobilization
Glery Silva, Technical Field, Community Mobilization
George Enriquez Cayasso, Technical Field, EpCs
Maria Lourdes Montiel, Technical Field, EpCs

USAID/Nicaragua

Alicia Slate, COR

Key Informants

Nubia Ordoñez, SEAR
Hazel Wilson, FADCANIC
Annette Fenton, FADCANIC
Dominga Hernández, FADCANIC
Deborah Robb Taylor, FADCANIC
Antonia McCoy, Centro de Estudios y Formación de la Mujer Multi-étnica, URACCAN
Visit to EpC, Colegio San Jose, Bluefields

Desembocadura del Rio Grande (Karawala)

Alicia Christian, teacher and MINED coordinator
Francisco Santiago Williams, pre-school advisor
Luis Martinez Aragon, secondary teacher and pedagogy advisor
Ismael Nicasio, teacher and CARS facilitator
Sara Cathral, community leader
Kenya Wilson, CARS facilitator

Laguna de Perlas

Adeli Martinez, technical advisor, primary bilingual education
Carmen Dixon, MINED Delegate

Ivon Cutbert, Escuela Beula Lighbum – Director, EpC facilitator, EpC assistant and facilitator-in-training, 7 mothers

Fundación Hermanamiento Rama

Leonel Bolaños – technical field staff
Misael Casco – technical field staff
Boris Howard – technical field staff
Brunilda Oliva – EpC facilitator
Sonia Castro – EpC facilitator
Jaruzelkyt Lacayo – EpC facilitator (recent)

URACCAN

Yovira Garcia - technical field staff
Berjanelle Budier - technical field staff
Yelicet Hodgson - technical field staff
Maura Mejia - technical field staff
Narda Wilson - technical field staff

Fundación Zamora Terán

Zeneida Treminio – mobilization technical staff
Carlos Garcia – technical field staff

Annex D: Seven Forms of Bias



Seven Forms of Bias

Curricular bias in materials and structure include:

Invisibility: Under-representation of certain groups, which can imply that these groups are of less value, importance and significance.

Stereotyping: Assigning only traditional or rigid roles or attributes to a group, thus limiting the abilities and potential of that group; denying students knowledge of the diversity and complexity of, and variations among, any group of individuals.

Imbalance/Selectivity: Presenting only one interpretation of an issue, situation, or group; distorting reality and ignoring complex and differing viewpoints through selective presentation of materials.

Unreality: Presenting an unrealistic portrayal of this country's history and contemporary life experience.

Fragmentation/Isolation: Separating issues relating to people of color and women (or other protected groups) from the main body of text.

Linguistic Bias: Excluding the roles and importance of females by constant use of the generic "he" and sex-biased words. Linguistic bias includes issues of ethnicity, culture and language proficiency as well. (Bethke, 1985)

Cosmetic Bias: Creating an illusion that particular texts or materials have been infused with equity and diversity when in fact minimal efforts to conduct research and address diversity throughout the entire text have been made. Shortcuts to transformations of texts include adding a few pictures and adding "special focus sections" that discuss, yet segregate information about under-represented groups with exceptional or stereotypic stories. (Sadker/Lerner, 1997)

For more information, contact:

DevTech Systems, Inc.
1700 North Moore St.
Suite 1720
Arlington, Virginia 22209
703-312-6038
www.devtechsys.com