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# USAID/NICARAGUA GENDER ANALYSIS

FINAL ANALYSIS

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### **DISCLAIMER**

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.



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# ACRONYMS

ADS	Automated Directives System
AECID	Agencia Espanola de Cooperacion Internacional para el Desarrollo
AMUNIC	Association of Nicaraguan Municipalities
APRODER	Partnership for Progress and Rural Development
CAPS	Committees on Water and Sanitation
CANTERA	Center de Comunicacion y Educacion Popular
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CEDEHCA	Centro de Derechos Humanos, Ciudadanos, y Autonomicos
CEIMM	Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones de la Mujer Multiétnica
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COSEP	Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada
COSUDE	Swiss Cooperation Strategy for Central America
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DG	Democracy and Governance
dTS	Development & Training Services
DO	Development Objectives
ECMAC	Community Based Distribution of Family Planning Services
EG	Economic Growth
EU	European Union
FADCANIC	Fundacion para la Autonomia y el Desarrollo de la Costa Atlantico de Nicaragua
FED	Multidonor Fund for Gender Equity and Sexual Reproductive Rights
FEMUPROCAN	Federacion Agropecuaria de Cooperativas de Mujeres Productoras del Campo de Nicaragua
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Gender Equity Model (World Bank)
GON	Government of Nicaragua
GRUN	Government of Reconciliation and Unity
HDI	Human Development Index
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INTA	Instituto Nicaraguense de Tecnologia Agropecuaria
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FP	Family Planning
FSN	National Food Security
FUNIDES	Fundacion Nicaraguense para el Desarrollo Economico
FUNICA	Fundacion para el Desarrollo Tecnologico, Agropecuario, y Forestal de Nicaragua
IBIS	Danish member-based development organization
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INIM	Instituto Nicaraguense de la Mujer
IP	Implementing Partner
IR	Intermediate Results
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean

LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, and Transgender
LSMS	Living Standards Measurement Survey
LOE	Level of Effort
MAGFOR	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Forestry
MAM	Movimiento Autonomo de Mujeres
MARPS	most-at-risk populations
MINED	Ministry of Education
MINSA	Ministry of Health
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MSM	Men Who Have Sex With Men
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NSRH	National Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OEU	Organization of the European Union
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organization
PROCOSAN	MOH integrated community health program
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
RAAN	Region Autonoma del Atlantico Norte
RAAS	Region Autonoma del Atlantico Sur
SEAR	Sistema Educativo Autonomica Regional
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SMSEs	Small médium sized enterprise
SOW	Scope of work
SPFS	Special Program for Food Security
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TA	Technical Area
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
TO	Task Order
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
URACCAN	Universidad de las Regiones Autonomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaraguense
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID/W	United States Agency for International Development/Washington
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
USG	United States Government
WEF	World Economic Forum
WPS	Women, Peace and Security



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## I. PURPOSE

This gender analysis is intended to inform the development of a well integrated 2013-2017 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for USAID/Nicaragua. The specific objective is therefore a robust gender analysis report that includes practical and forward-looking recommendations to strengthen the Mission's integration of gender concerns into the CDCS. The gender analysis report identifies significant sector-specific gender issues and constraints that need to be addressed in USAID/Nicaragua's existing and planned portfolio related to the Mission's Development Objectives (DOs), Intermediate Results (IRs), sub-IRs, and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan.

To ensure alignment with USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, the gender analysis and recommendations are adapted to be closely aligned with USAID/Nicaragua's CDCS DOs to increase the ability to engage in democratic governance and reduce the vulnerability of targeted populations in Nicaragua. This gender analysis is in turn intended to inform and shape the development of the CDCS. Further, the seven new gender indicators presented in the Gender Policy are adapted into specific results with targets and indicators for integration into the CDCS Results Framework. The analysis also considers other initiatives and action plans underway such as the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index, the USG Women, Peace, and Security National Action Plan, and the USG Gender-Based Violence Strategy.

## 2. CONTEXT

Nicaragua, similar to many of its neighboring countries throughout Latin America, has made significant progress toward growth and overall poverty reduction over the past two decades, including improvement of gender parity in education and maternal and child health outcomes. USAID/Nicaragua has played a key role in making advances in decreasing the national fertility rate and improving national contraceptive use. USAID/Nicaragua has contributed to decreasing causes of maternal and neonatal death in the country, achieving a 50 percent reduction of post-partum hemorrhage from 1.4 percent in 2009 to 0.7 percent in 2011.

Women's movements, comprised of civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, and individuals, have made great contributions in advancing women's rights, laying a solid legal foundation for the advancement of women's rights and gender equality, and in supporting female leaders at both community and national levels.

However, significant gender gaps remain in Nicaragua in women's control over assets, decision-making, access to justice, and to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) care for adolescent girls and boys, and men. These gender gaps are particularly prominent in more rural areas such as the food insecure North Central region of Nicaragua, as well as the conflict and poverty-affected Caribbean Coast with a higher concentration of ethnic and linguistic minorities.

Nicaragua has not been able to escape the rooted culture of machismo and the high prevalence of gender-based violence that prevails throughout Latin America.<sup>i</sup> This presents obstacles in advancing economic growth, reducing poverty, increasing democratic participation, and achieving gender equality in the country. The culture of machismo is enforced from birth for boys and girls by their parents, formal education, institutions, and society at large.

As a consequence, women and girls, particularly in more rural, traditional, and indigenous parts of the country in the Caribbean Coast and North Central Region, have low self-esteem which inhibits their ability to become leaders, participate in democratic governance and other traditionally male-dominated arenas, and to be economically productive. Women are also primary caretakers of children and household tasks, inhibiting time available for civic participation and economic activities. The culture of machismo also fuels the fire of violence and GBV, particularly in areas with low school attendance such as the Caribbean Coast and food insecure areas such as the North Central Region. This makes boys vulnerable to criminal and gang activity, and girls vulnerable to rape, sexual abuse, and early pregnancy, which perpetuates the cycle of poverty and violence.

### **3. GENDER GAPS AFFECTING THE ABILITY TO ENGAGE IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

Three critical gaps have been identified that directly relate to USAID/Nicaragua's development objective to increase the ability to engage in democratic governance.

**First, there is low municipal capacity to implement laws on gender equality and gender-based violence.** Despite a strong legislative framework nationally, laws are not being implemented locally. This is a direct result of a lack of resources to implement laws, as well as a lack of action-oriented practical gender awareness training.

**Second, women and girls are excluded from traditionally male-dominated public and private decision-making spaces, particularly at community levels.** The pervasive machista culture relegates women to traditionally female-dominated leadership roles in health, education, and food security, while men still dominate municipal leadership positions and traditionally male positions such as finance and cadastral positions. In more traditional and rural areas, it is not uncommon for men to object to their wives or partners participating as leaders. Lastly, women are burdened with childcare and household duties that limit their available time to participate in civic duties and leadership positions. The lack of adequate water infrastructure and technology in poor rural areas further burdens women's time spent on household chores and agricultural labor, reducing free time for civic participation.

**Third, women and girls, particularly from ethnic and linguistic minority groups, as well as members of the LGBT community, lack the confidence and knowledge to demand their rights.** Women and girls in Nicaragua have an interest in civic participation but often lack the self-esteem and confidence required to participate. This is rooted in a machista culture, particularly in more traditional areas, which instills in girls from an early age that they are subservient to men. Poor women and girls, especially those belonging to ethnic or linguistic minorities, often lack the education that can empower them to demand their legal rights and access to justice. The independent media can play a strong role in advancing popular education on rights, but systematic training of journalists on gender issues and laws is lacking.

### **4. GENDER GAPS AFFECTING VULNERABILITY OF TARGETED POPULATIONS**

Four critical gaps have been identified that directly relate to USAID/Nicaragua's development objective to decrease vulnerability of targeted populations, particularly on the Caribbean Coast and the North Central Region.

**First, adolescent girls and boys face different gender-based constraints to continue education in primary and secondary school.** Both boys and girls may leave school on the Caribbean Coast because of lack of interest, domestic violence, and disintegration of the family.<sup>ii</sup> Boys are more likely to leave school prematurely when their time is more valued as laborers, predominantly in the agriculture sector, or when they engage in illicit or criminal activity. Girls are more likely to leave school prematurely when their

parents face resource constraints and favor sending boys to school over girls, or when girls are valued more at home for assisting with domestic chores. As girls reach secondary school age, they leave school due to pregnancy and may be expelled from schools in more traditional, rural or faith-based schools if they become pregnant, despite the Law on Equity of Rights and Opportunities that prohibits expulsion or discrimination on the basis of pregnancy.<sup>iii</sup>

Boys without education and economic opportunities become vulnerable to involvement in illicit activities and are vulnerable to experiencing increased violence as a result of criminal activity and machismo as gangs fight amongst one other over property and resources. Girls become vulnerable to early pregnancy, early marriage, and sexual and GBV. Out-of-school girls are also at more risk of being socially marginalized without access to safe public spaces and restricted mobility by their parents. They are less likely to have self-esteem, confidence, and knowledge and awareness of their rights.

**Second, adolescents are not being effectively reached to prevent pregnancy, sexual and gender-based violence, and the spread of HIV/AIDS and STIs among vulnerable populations.** In the insecure RAAS (Region Autonoma del Atlantico Sur) and RAAN (Region Autonoma del Atlantico Norte) pregnancy rates are one of the highest in the country (3.0 and 4.5 children per woman, respectively)<sup>iv</sup> and teen pregnancies among girls age 10-19 account for 30.6 percent of all pregnancies in the region. In 2009, half of maternal mortalities in RAAS were teenagers in the poorest and most rural areas.<sup>v</sup> Almost half (46.3 percent) of women age 15-24 in the RAAS have already been pregnant once and only 24 percent of women age 15-24 in the RAAS use family planning (FP) methods in their first sexual intercourse.<sup>vi</sup>

In Miskito families and communities on the Caribbean Coast and indigenous families and communities in the North Central region, the culture of machismo is well-ingrained.<sup>vii</sup> Sexual norms are such that a girl is considered “eligible” once she reaches puberty; it is not uncommon, especially among out-of-school girl youth, to fall prey to sexual attacks when she is as young as 11 or 12 years old.<sup>viii</sup> Girls and young women often become mothers while in their early teens, in many cases as a result of rape.<sup>ix</sup> There were more than 1,095 reported rapes of girls and women ages 6 and above in 2011 in the RAAS, most as a result of violence within families, which have caused cases of incest.<sup>x</sup> Young mothers often depend on their partners, if the male stays and supports her, and the generally low levels of schooling of adolescent girls cause greater subjugation so that machismo becomes more acute.<sup>xi</sup>

In Bluefields in the RAAS 63 percent of the total HIV/AIDS cases in 2009 were among men in at-risk groups. In addition, over half (54 percent) of HIV/AIDS cases among the age group 10-19 were girls, although this may be attributed primarily to increased screening efforts among adolescent girls by the Ministry of Health.<sup>xii</sup> There is a strong correlation of SGBV and negative cultural stigma with the exposure of adolescents to STIs, including HIV.<sup>xiii</sup> Few adolescents access SRH services because of shame or fear of reprimand. Only 59 percent of women in the RAAS or RAAN without any formal education know of some STIs, compared to women with advanced schooling who have a 97 percent understanding of STI risks.<sup>xiv</sup>

**Third, women have disproportionately less access to productive resources, which compromises households’ abilities to become more food secure.** Basic health and nutrition education for mothers and fathers are critical to increasing household food security. This includes exclusive breastfeeding of infants until at least six months of age. - Women’s access to productive resources is critical to increase food security. Food security tends to rise with the percentage of revenue managed by women and with their involvement in the management of household resources (including financial resources) and intra-household decision making.<sup>xv</sup> However, decision-making regarding use of resources within households is dominated predominantly by men.<sup>xvi</sup> In very rural, indigenous, and traditional areas it is also not uncommon for male fathers, partners, husbands and boyfriends to restrict movement and opportunities for girls and women,

such as prohibiting a young woman from attending a technical skills workshop that would provide her with income-generating opportunities.<sup>xvii</sup>

Most women in Nicaragua do not have land titled in their name, have little access to credit, limited access to goods and resources, and little or no technical assistance.<sup>xviii</sup> In mixed production units, female access to means of production or essential resources such as land, credit, technical assistance is subordinate to men.<sup>xix</sup>

Further, women primarily enter the labor force through informal markets, explaining why 8 out of 10 women are employed in microenterprises, as employees, self-employed or unpaid workers.<sup>xx</sup> Despite accounting for half of the labor force, the Economist Intelligence UNITEN assigns Nicaragua a score of 8.3 (compared to the average in Latin America of 27.4) on a scale of 0 to 100 for economic opportunities for women in Nicaragua considering the kind of jobs they have access to, working conditions, income they earn, and access to resources.<sup>xxi</sup>

Maternity leave is legally guaranteed for 12 weeks and employers are legally responsible to pay 60 percent of wages to a worker if she is not entitled to social security benefits which include maternity coverage.<sup>xxii</sup> Although legally guaranteed, requesting maternity leave and time-off to manage and attend family-related illnesses are a burden for some women, as their employers may not grant leave or pay for sick-leave.<sup>xxiii</sup>

**Lastly, women face barriers in rising to key leadership and decision-making of productive organizations and associations, particularly at top-levels.** Women in leadership roles are good for business in Nicaragua and can ultimately advance production efforts to increase incomes for poor families and reduce their food insecurity.<sup>xxiv</sup> However, in Nicaragua women play a small role in larger business enterprises where decisions are made. Only 10.3 percent of all cooperatives nationally are led by women,<sup>xxv</sup> only 8.5 percent of large firms with over 100 employees have a top female manager, and only 33 percent of large firms can claim female participation in ownership.<sup>xxvi</sup> It is important to both empower women already involved in leading cooperatives for the betterment of women, families, and their communities, as well as to support additional opportunities for increased numbers of women to rise to leadership positions.

Overarching reasons for women's lack of participation in top decision-making positions include: lack of equitable opportunities; domestic and labor violence; household time commitments; difficulty securing finances; poor education; low confidence and self-esteem; and machista culture within institutions and businesses.<sup>xxvii</sup> Female entrepreneurs have less access than males to training, productive resources, and business development services. Training often follows traditional roles and shuts women out of more productive high-growth sectors, and women's assets are consistently of lower value than those owned by men, which reduces collateral available to take out loans.<sup>xxviii</sup> Lastly, many women work as informal business owners of micro-enterprises that are not able to move forward or receive assistance and technical support due to their informal status.<sup>xxix</sup>

## **5. EFFECTS OF GENDER ROLES ON PROJECT AND VICE VERSA**

The different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace, and household will affect the work to be undertaken within all development objectives. Women's time burden within households and limited mobility in more traditional rural or ethnic/linguistic minority areas will require targeted efforts during program and project activities to effectively reach and engage female beneficiaries. Persistent machista attitudes will be challenging to overcome and erode to ensure that both women and men are supported in their decision-making positions. As such underlying attitudes and gender

biases must be effectively addressed in training and capacity building activities to ensure that project benefits are maximized.

Without adequately taking into consideration gender differences in design and implementation of project activities, potential adverse impacts and/or risks of gender-based exclusion could result. Although there are widespread efforts in Nicaragua to empower women and girls as leaders and decision-makers, there are no consistent efforts to reach men and boys to support their wives, daughters, sisters, and colleagues in this process. Due to the lack of male engagement, well-intended female empowerment programs can have unintended negative consequences such as: 1) an increase in domestic violence and/or divorce as women's self-esteem and confidence increase and change the existing power dynamic within her home and marriage; and 2) a shifting of the burden of childcare and household work to an older school-age daughter who may then drop-out of school to support her mother as the mother spends more time engaging in civic leadership or economic activities.<sup>xxx</sup>

Women's current lack of access to productive resources, including land and credit, results in significant disparities between women and men. As such, programming that does not carefully integrate concrete actions to remove gender-based constraints to access resources may risk reinforcing and widening the gap between women and men. Lastly, poorly trained life skills trainers or early reading promoters may inadvertently reinforce existing gender stereotypes among young girls and boys by transferring their own gender-based biases into their teaching styles, communication methods, and interactions with students.

## 6. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The USAID Gender Policy expects that all DOs integrate the following outcomes: 1) Reduce gender disparities in access to public and political decision-making spaces and positions at local and regional levels, 2) Reduce cultural acceptance of gender-based violence; and 3) Increase capability of women, girls and boys, particularly from ethnic and linguistic minority populations, to realize their rights, determine their life outcomes, and influence decision-making in households, communities and societies. As such, the following recommendations, including suggested results, indicators, and potential activities are developed in-line with these outcome objectives as they directly relate to USAID/Nicaragua's DOs, Intermediate Results (IRs), sub-IRs, and planned activities in the upcoming CDCS. The following is an illustrative list of recommended actions (**full list can be found in Section IV**).

**Illustrative gender-specific results indicators for the development objective to increase the ability to engage in democratic governance include:**

- Proportion of municipal budgets allocated to gender implementation plans/ activities and gender-based violence reduction (*Target: minimum of 5 percent of municipal budget*)
- Proportion of female leaders who report increased self-esteem and ability to lead at the conclusion of USG-supported training/ programming, disaggregated by age and ethnicity (*Target: 75 percent of trained female leaders*)
- Number and percentage of USG-supported media tools and reports that address gender equality and gender-based violence (*Target: 10 percent of media tools and reports*)

**Illustrative gender-specific activities for the development objective to increase the ability to engage in democratic governance include:**

- Provide capacity-building training to municipal officials to conduct gender analyses that will assist in identifying and investing in infrastructure projects that will reduce women's time burden (E.g. particularly in collecting water)

- Train local male (boys and men) community leaders, including religious leaders, in gender awareness using male engagement techniques, focused on addressing entrenched culture of machismo and gender-based violence
- Train male and female journalists in gender-awareness to critically assess and report on key gender equality issues for men, women, girls and boys, members of the LGBT community, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, including gender-based violence and SRH issues, including awareness of national laws combating violence against women, equality and rights, and equal access to land and other productive resources

**Illustrative gender-specific results indicators for the development objective to decrease the vulnerability of targeted populations:**

- Number and percentage of early grade reading materials used in USG-supported programs with gender-appropriate language and positive gender role imagery (*Target: 100 percent of reading material*)
- Proportion of life skills participants that view gender-based violence as less acceptable after participating in or being exposed to USG programming, disaggregated by sex and ethnicity (*Target: 50 percent of participants*)
- Proportion of time the target population allocates to unpaid household activities and paid/ unpaid productive activities disaggregated by age (10-29, age 30 and over) and sex (*Target: Women's work burden is reduced by 20 percent through improved technologies, services, and infrastructure*)
- Number and proportion of FtF Innovation Pilots granted that are designed explicitly to develop time-saving technology that reduces women's work burden (*Target: 50 percent of FtF Pilots*)

**Illustrative gender-specific activities for the development objective to increase the ability to decrease the vulnerability of targeted populations:**

- Systematically train life skills promoters: to promote positive communication between girls and boys and address violence at its root causes (including machismo, sexual violence, violence against LGBT and HIV affected populations, and violence between boys and young men and between ethnic/linguistic minorities); to impart conflict-resolution skills with an emphasis on respectful communication; and to focus education on identifying and referring boys and girls to appropriate community psychosocial support referrals;
- Target girls from underserved and marginalized ethnic and linguistic minority populations that may have restricted mobility from their homes (E.g. not only those that are already empowered enough to negotiate with their parents to leave the home and participate) as well as youth that are part of the LGBT or HIV-positive population;
- Include husbands, fathers, and colleagues of women being trained to encourage and support women in their productive roles (E.g. conflict-resolution and communication; gender awareness and gender-based violence training; positive examples of male/ female partnerships where a couple is working together and supporting one another as a productive unit in the home and on the farm; community-level celebrations led and supported by respected male and female community leaders to make visible the accomplishments of women in securing livelihoods, as well as men who support them);

# I. PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

## I.I PURPOSE

This gender analysis is intended to inform the development of a well integrated 2013-2017 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for United States Agency for International Development (USAID) /Nicaragua. The specific objective is therefore a robust gender analysis report that includes practical and forward-looking recommendations to strengthen the Mission’s integration of gender concerns in the CDCS. The gender analysis report identifies significant sector-specific gender issues and constraints that need to be addressed in USAID/Nicaragua’s existing and planned portfolio related to the Mission’s Development Objectives (DOs), Intermediate Results (IRs), sub-IRs, and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plans.

## I.II METHODOLOGY

The period of performance is September 5, 2012 through November 9, 2012 with three weeks of fieldwork carried out in Nicaragua from September 17, 2012 through October 5, 2012.

Data and information were collected via extensive literature review and in-country first person interviews, focus groups, and workshops with stakeholders representing USAID/Nicaragua technical officers, USAID/Nicaragua implementing partners and beneficiaries, civil society organizations, donors, and research/ public policy institutions. The gender analysis team lead developed all interview, focus group, and workshop agendas and guides, and the team lead and in-country consultant co-facilitated all meetings and focus groups.

The team lead also managed ongoing data analysis and synthesis of information collected via interviews and documents throughout the fieldwork phase. A validation workshop was held with USAID/Nicaragua technical teams where the gender analysis team presented key findings and recommendations on how USAID/Nicaragua could support gender integration in its programs. The goal of this workshop was to provide the opportunity to USAID/Nicaragua to discuss key findings and recommendations to be incorporated into the final analysis.

To ensure alignment with USAID’s Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, this gender analysis and recommendations are adapted to be closely aligned with the USAID/Nicaragua’s CDCS DOs to increase the ability to engage in democratic governance and reduce the vulnerability of targeted populations in Nicaragua. Further, the seven new gender indicators presented in the Gender Policy<sup>1</sup> are adapted into specific results with targets and indicators for integration into the CDCS Results Framework.

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<sup>1</sup> From the USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy: 1) Number of laws, policies, or procedures drafted, or adopted to promote gender equality at the regional, national, or local level; 2) Proportion of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income, or employment); 3) Proportion of females who report increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of USG-supported training/ programming; 4) Proportion of target population reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political opportunities; 5) Number of laws, policies, or procedures drafted, proposed, or adopted with USG assistance designed to improve prevention of or response to gender-based violence at the regional, national, or local level; 6) Number of people reached by a USG-funded intervention providing GBV services (e.g. health, legal, psycho-social counseling, shelters, hotlines, others); 7) Percentage of target population that views gender-based violence as less acceptable after participating in or being exposed to USG programming

This analysis considers other USG initiatives and action plans as relevant for shaping recommendations. As such, the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index is adapted to specific results and measurements in the area of agricultural productivity and economic growth. Similarly, opportunities are identified to align Mission programming with priority actions outlined in the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) National Action Plan (NAP). Finally, the gender analysis identifies synergies and opportunities to align Mission objectives with the USAID implementation plan for the USG Gender-Based Violence Strategy.

The following questions frame the overall gender analysis. As required by the USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) 203.6.1, the intent of these questions is to optimize the Mission's contributions to gender equality.

1. How will the different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace, and household (for example, roles in decision-making and different access to and control over resources and services) affect the work to be undertaken?
2. How will the anticipated results of the work affect women and men differently?

The gender analysis includes review of key gender issues and gender-based constraints in Nicaragua and assessment of the institutional context supporting gender integration both from the Mission's and Nicaraguan perspectives. Based on this analysis, recommendations are provided on how USAID/Nicaragua can support gender integration in its programs and achieve development outcomes that improve the status of women and men in Nicaragua without disadvantaging one group in support of the other.

As part of the analysis, host-country systems relevant to gender are reviewed, identifying areas where the USAID five-year strategy meets Nicaragua's national development needs in regards to promoting equal opportunities and women's participation in economic development. Available Project Appraisal Documents (PADs) are also reviewed to assess the gender dimensions within each and connect them with national and USAID gender strategies. Recommendations are proposed by sector to mitigate any observed shortcomings. Lastly, donor contributions to gender equality and female empowerment related to the Mission's anticipated DOs are identified as part of this analysis to assist the Mission in identifying opportunities to leverage the work of others and achieve maximum impact on its gender objectives.

During fieldwork and analysis several limitations were presented.

First, is the lack of quantitative impact results and studies in Nicaragua. Although there is an abundance of country studies and reports with data, few include analysis of that data, impact results and evaluations on the effects of policies and projects on gender equality, female empowerment, communities, and families, etc. This should be considered a research and learning gap for Nicaragua as a whole. As such, many of the promising practices identified rely on anecdotal evidence of success, rather than firm impact evaluation results. Further, much of the data available in Nicaragua is outdated (2005-2007). A USAID-supported Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) project is supporting a national agricultural census with robust data on gender and land, credit, etc., but the results have not yet been finalized or released.



# II. OVERVIEW

## II.1 MACRO GENDER CONTEXT

Nicaragua, similar to many of its neighboring countries throughout Latin America, has made significant progress toward growth and overall poverty reduction over the past two decades, including improvement of gender parity in education and maternal and child health outcomes. USAID/Nicaragua has played a key role in making advances in decreasing the national fertility rate and improving national contraceptive use. USAID/Nicaragua has contributed to decreasing causes of maternal and neonatal death in the country, achieving a 50 percent reduction of post-partum hemorrhage from 1.4 percent in 2009 to 0.7 percent in 2011.

Women's movements comprised of civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and individuals, have made great contributions in advancing women's rights, laying a solid legal foundation for the advancement of women's rights and gender equality, and in supporting female leaders at both community and national levels.

However, significant gender gaps remain in Nicaragua in women's control over assets, decision-making, access to justice, and to SRH care for adolescent girls and boys, and men. These gender gaps are particularly prominent in more rural areas such as the food insecure North Central region of Nicaragua, as well as the conflict- and poverty-affected Caribbean Coast with a higher concentration of ethnic and linguistic minorities.

Nicaragua has not escaped the rooted culture of machismo and the high prevalence of gender-based violence that prevails throughout Latin America<sup>xxxii</sup> and is at the heart of existing gender inequalities in Nicaragua. It presents obstacles to advance economic growth, reduce poverty, increase democratic participation, and achieve gender equality in the country. The culture of machismo is enforced from birth for boys and girls by their parents, formal education, institutions, and society in general. As a consequence, women and girls have low self-esteem, particularly in more rural, traditional, and indigenous parts of the country such as in the Atlantic Coast and North Central Region. This inhibits women and girls ability to become leaders, participate in democratic governance and other traditionally male-dominated arenas, and to be economically productive. Women are primary caretakers of children and household tasks, inhibiting time available for civic participation and economic activities. The culture of machismo also fuels the fire of violence and gender-based violence, particularly in areas with low school attendance such as the Caribbean Coast and food insecure areas such as the North Central Region. This makes boys vulnerable to criminal and gang activity, and girls vulnerable to rape, sexual abuse, and early pregnancy that continues the cycle of poverty and violence.

The Human Development Index (HDI) provides a composite measure of three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and income. Nicaragua's HDI is 0.589 (on a scale of 0-1) which gives the country a rank of 129 out of 187 countries with comparable data, placing Nicaragua below the regional average of 0.731 for all of Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>xxxii</sup> The HDI gives Nicaragua a gender inequality index score of 0.51 where 1 equals the most gender inequality, on par with Honduras and trailing behind all other countries in Central America except for Guatemala (0.54).<sup>xxxiii</sup>

However, the 2011 World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, which provides a framework for assessing gender-based disparities through benchmarks based on economic, political, education, and health criteria, ranked Nicaragua as markedly better than does the HDI gender inequality index. The Gender Gap

Index placed Nicaragua at 27<sup>th</sup> globally with an overall score of 0.7245 (1 being perfect gender equality). Nicaragua ranked second in the Global Gender Gap Index in Central America, following closely behind Costa Rica (25<sup>th</sup>) and leading ahead of Panama (40<sup>th</sup>), Honduras (54<sup>th</sup>), El Salvador (94<sup>th</sup>), Belize (100<sup>th</sup>), and Guatemala (112<sup>th</sup>).<sup>xxxiv</sup>

## **II.1.1 DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE**

### **1. POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT AND LEADERSHIP**

The World Economic Forum Gender Gap report assigned Nicaragua a political empowerment score of 0.304 and is ranked 21 out of 135 countries in 2011 for political empowerment of women.<sup>xxxv</sup> A 2010 USAID-supported study found that an important and significant difference between Nicaragua and the larger region is that Nicaraguan women and men have no significant difference in preference for democracy, but women are less active than men in party-campaign activism. Women are also slightly but significantly more likely to support the rule of the law in Nicaragua than are their male counterparts.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Compared to other Central American countries, Nicaragua's male-female ratio in parliament score (2011) of 0.26 is ahead of all others, except for Costa Rica with a high score of 0.63.<sup>xxxvii</sup> In all of Latin America (2009) Nicaragua fell in the middle of the spectrum, Cuba lead the LAC region with close to 43.2 percent of female participation in the principal national legislature, and Belize came in last with 0 percent women in their legislature.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Women have assumed key decision-making roles within Nicaragua's National Assembly where women, as of 2012, hold 40.2 percent of seats.<sup>xxxix</sup> Nicaraguan political parties nominate 1 woman for every four men (22.5 percent nominated candidates were women in 2006); although a new law requiring 50 percent candidates are female will likely change this in the upcoming 2012 election.<sup>xl</sup> Women also account for 25 percent of magistrates in the national Supreme Court of Justice.<sup>xli</sup>

At municipal levels in Nicaragua only 5.9 percent of all mayors nationally are female (2009). Compared to the rest of LAC, Nicaragua comes in 13<sup>th</sup> place out of 18 countries, although this is also likely to change after the 2012 election with a 50 percent quota for female candidates. Venezuela currently has the highest percentage of female mayors (18.2 percent), while Nicaragua is currently on par with Paraguay (6 percent) and Argentina (6.1 percent), ahead of countries such as Uruguay (0 percent) and Honduras (3.4 percent).<sup>xlii</sup>

However, when female candidates are voted into office they tend to be concentrated in lower positions. From 1996-2006, only 25 percent of elected women in Nicaragua were in higher positions of decision-making, compared to 40 percent of elected men in equivalent positions, while 48 percent of elected women were concentrated in lower and less powerful decision-making positions compared with 35 percent of elected men in similar positions.<sup>xliii</sup>

### **2. ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

Other critically important issues within the democracy and governance (DG) sector related to access to justice, the legal framework, municipal capacity to institutionalize and implement gender equality-related laws, and gender-based violence are described in detail in subsequent sections of this analysis. Broadly, a strong national-level legal framework exists, such as Law 648 (February 2008) on equality rights and opportunities and Law 779 (February 2012) that aims to prevent and eradicate violence against women.

However, despite recent gains in advancing the legislative framework to address gender equality and gender-based violence in Nicaragua, the capacity to implement laws is low at local levels, particularly in more rural areas. Further, not all municipalities have gender units or commissions as required by law, particularly in more rural areas. Municipalities and officials lack the resources and technical skills to develop and implement gender action plans, conduct gender analyses, and integrate gender-responsive budgeting in municipal planning.<sup>xliv</sup>

For example, there is poor capacity and knowledge on how to implement Law 779 (Violence Against Women). When victims of gender-based violence overcome tremendous personal obstacles to come forward to report a crime, municipal officials (including local judicial clerks and judges, and police, and technical officers) do not consistently know how to appropriately handle the case, what services to offer the victim (including psycho-social referrals or assistance in hiring a lawyer), or how to begin investigations. However, more recently there has been improvement in this area and there have been increased numbers of victims reporting cases. One area that is particularly lacking in Nicaragua is that officials and police do not know how to properly collect evidence in the case of GBV or sexual assault, which hinders a victim's ability to demand justice without proper evidence collection.<sup>xlv</sup>

## **II.1.2 ECONOMIC GROWTH**

### **I. POVERTY AND FOOD SECURITY**

Poverty in Nicaragua remains a rural phenomenon with 65 percent of poor (1.5 million people) and 80 percent of the extremely poor (612,000) living in rural areas.<sup>xlvi</sup> In addition, the poverty rate on the Caribbean Coast is at least ten percentage points higher than the national level where poverty affects 68.8 percent of the population in rural regions, compared to 16 percent of the general Nicaraguan population living below the poverty line.<sup>xlvii</sup>

Lack of access to food due to poverty is a root cause of food insecurity in Nicaragua; although food supplies at the national level have increased, people are still food insecure because they lack the purchasing power needed to access an adequate diet.<sup>xlviii</sup> Basic health and nutrition education for mothers and fathers are critical to increasing household food security, including exclusive breastfeeding of infants until at least six months of age, which is currently a declining trend in Nicaragua.

Households headed by women, young people under 15 years of age, and indigenous people are among the poorest and most disadvantaged groups in rural Nicaragua.<sup>xlix</sup> Household heads that are 35 years of age or younger are 9 to 13 percent poorer, and those household heads that have completed primary school or secondary school have consumption gains of 17 and 36 percent respectively, compared to a household head who had not completed primary school. Larger households tend to be less well off, particularly those who have more infants and young children, but also those with more adults and seniors. Seventy percent of Miskitos, the largest indigenous group in Nicaragua, are classified as poor.<sup>i</sup> Women in Nicaragua are more likely to live in extreme poverty,<sup>ii</sup> and female-headed households comprise 38.1 percent of the households in the food insecure North Central region of Nicaragua, a number which is increasing due to poverty and employment migration.<sup>iii</sup>

### **2. ACCESS TO PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES**

Nationally 20.4 of household residence titles are in a woman's name, higher in urban areas (39.3 percent) than in rural areas (20.4 percent).<sup>liii</sup> In both urban and rural areas the majority of women who do hold titles in their names to their households are either separated (45.7 percent) or widowed (31.7 percent).<sup>liv</sup>

The Gender Gap report score for women's access to land ownership is 0.50, and women's access to finance programs score is 1, 1 being the worst and 5 being the best score.<sup>lv</sup> Female farmers in Nicaragua are as efficient as male farmers but they produce less because they control less land, use fewer inputs and have less access to important services such as extension advice.<sup>lvi</sup>

Most rural women cultivate land that is not theirs; only 15 percent of women hold title to land under their own names.<sup>lvii</sup> In turn, the lack of female land tenure limits access to credit, as the financial system requires land collateral in order to have access to credit. This lack of credit prevents women from being able to afford the land registration fee and registration of titles.<sup>lviii</sup>

Women receive only 11 percent of all bank loans nationally.<sup>lix</sup> In urban areas 73.7 percent of household heads that access some type of credit or micro-finance are female heads of household.<sup>lx</sup> However in 2005, only 26.3 percent of rural female-headed households accessed any type of credit compared to 43.1 percent of rural male-headed households.<sup>lxi</sup> Further, on average men secure 2.6 times the loan amount<sup>2</sup> than females in rural areas.<sup>lxii</sup> Lastly, 19.4 percent of male loan recipients use loans for agriculture production, as opposed to only 7.9 percent of females.<sup>lxiii</sup>

As a result of limited access to credit, female-headed households in Nicaragua have less access to agricultural inputs. On average male-headed households own 2.4 agricultural livestock compared to 1.4 for female-headed households.<sup>lxiv</sup> Fertilizer use by female-headed households is 16 percent compared to 31 percent of male-headed households.<sup>lxv</sup> Mechanical equipment use is 12 percent for female-headed households compared to 32 percent of male-headed households in Nicaragua.<sup>lxvi</sup> Only 26.3 percent of the agricultural producers benefiting from technical assistance are women.<sup>lxvii</sup>

### 3. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT

The Gender Gap report gave Nicaragua an economic participation score of 0.619, ranked 79 out of 135 countries in 2011.<sup>lxviii</sup> With a score of 0.6 Nicaragua also follows closely behind El Salvador (0.61) in the male/female labor participation rate, on par with Panama (0.6) and just slightly ahead of Belize (0.59), Costa Rica (0.56), Guatemala (0.55) and Honduras (0.5).<sup>lxix</sup>

Twenty-five percent of firms nationally have female participation in ownership.<sup>lxx</sup> Thirty-two percent of small firms with fewer than 18 employees have a top female manager, but only 8.5 percent of large firms with over 100 employees can say the same. Sixty-two percent of small firms in Nicaragua have at least one female participating in ownership, compared with only 33 percent of large firms with female participation in ownership.<sup>lxxi</sup> Further, unionized business women are typically found predominantly in the urban or Micros, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector with a formalized company, and they are typically around forty years old with no children under the age of five.<sup>lxxii</sup> Only 10.3 percent of all cooperatives nationally are led by women.<sup>lxxiii</sup>

Approximately 44.6 percent of women and 67.7 percent of men are participating formally in the active labor force in urban areas, compared to 27.3 percent of women and 79.5 percent of men in rural areas.<sup>lxxiv</sup> Thirty-five percent of full-time enterprise employees in Nicaragua are female, close to the regional Latin America average of 38 percent.<sup>lxxv</sup> Thirty-eight percent of the total labor force in the non-agricultural paid labor sector in Nicaragua is comprised of women.<sup>lxxvi</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Men, on average receive 7,967 in rural loan amounts compared to females that receive 3,013 cordobas on average

Women primarily enter the labor through informal markets, explaining why 8 out of 10 women are employed in microenterprises, as employees, self-employed or unpaid workers.<sup>lxxxvii</sup> Despite accounting for half of the labor force, the Economist Intelligence UNITEN assigns Nicaragua a score of 8.3 (compared to the average in Latin America of 27.4) on a scale of 0 to 100 for economic opportunities for women in Nicaragua considering the kind of jobs they have access to, working conditions, income they earn, and access to resources.<sup>lxxxviii</sup>

In mixed households in rural areas, women's participation in productive agricultural activities varies but generally is higher in poorer households and represents up to half of the labor force.<sup>lxxxix</sup> In Latin America, 5 percent of women and 32 percent of men participate in the formal agriculture market, 10 percent of women and 20 percent of men in industry, and 25 percent of women and 30 percent of men in services.<sup>lxxx</sup> Women in Nicaragua comprise 70 percent of technical education students in the commercial and sector services, but make-up only 25 percent of technical students in agro-forestry and only 10 percent women in industry and construction.<sup>lxxx</sup>

Seven percent of women and 25 percent of men are engaged in formal rural employment for wages.<sup>lxxxii</sup> Approximately 20 percent of both women and men are engaged in rural wage work part-time; slightly over 50 percent of both men and women in rural wage work are employed seasonally, and 38 percent of formally employed women are employed in low-wage work compared with 35 percent of men.<sup>lxxxiii</sup>

Controlling for industry, work experience, and education level, women earn only 55 percent of their male counterpart's wages in urban areas and only 24 percent in rural areas.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> On average, women heads of household in urban areas earn 2.7 percent less than male heads of household, while rural female heads of household earn, on average, 13.9 percent less.<sup>lxxxv</sup>

Maternity leave is legally guaranteed for 12 weeks and employers are legally responsible to pay 60 percent of wages to a worker if she is not entitled to social security benefits, which include maternity coverage.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Although legally guaranteed, requesting maternity leave and time-off to manage and attend family-related illnesses are a burden for some women, as their bosses often do not allow leave or pay for sick-leave.<sup>lxxxvii</sup>

### II.1.3 EDUCATION

The Gender Gap report gave Nicaragua an education attainment score of 1 and was ranked 25 out of 135 countries. This score was an improvement from 2006, when it received a 0.994 score.<sup>lxxxviii</sup> However, the UNDP Human Development Indicators (2011) gives Nicaragua a score of 0.69 in the population over age 25 that has at least a secondary education (comparing male/female ratios), coming in last after all Central American countries (0.74 in Guatemala, 0.85 in El Salvador, 0.88 in Honduras, 1.03 in Costa Rica, 1.05 in Panama, and 1.07 in Belize).<sup>lxxxix</sup>

Boys in Nicaragua receive less education, on average, than their female counterparts. Nationally, boys age 15-19 have attended school for an average of 6.62 years compared to 7.46 years for girls.<sup>xc</sup> Seventy-eight percent of boys and 83 percent of girls complete primary school.<sup>xc</sup> Only 27 percent of boys complete secondary school compared to 48 percent of girls.<sup>xcii</sup> Eight-five percent of males age 15-24 are literate, compared to 89 percent of their female peers.<sup>xciii</sup>

A key challenge in education, however, continues to be boys performing better in "hard" subject areas such as math and science, and girls in "softer" subjects, pointing toward cultural and educational gender biases that encourage learning of boys and girls in traditionally "male" or "female" subject areas. In technical

vocational training a gender divide can also be seen in the subjects that boys and girls choose (E.g. boys in mechanics and girls in sewing).<sup>xciv</sup>

In the insecure Caribbean Coast, there is more gender parity in school absenteeism than there is nationally. In the RAAS and RAAN only 43 and 42 percent of all youth from 15 to 19 years of age finished primary school in 2010 compared to the national average of 65 percent.<sup>xcv</sup> In both coastal regions, only two of every ten youth who are appropriate age attend the first cycle of secondary school, and for the second cycle only one in every ten youth attends school (the lowest rates in the country).<sup>xcvi</sup> In the RAAS, 45 percent of school age boys 40 percent of girls are not in school, and 25.6 percent of girls and 25.2 percent of boys are illiterate.<sup>xcvii</sup>

In the RAAN 30 percent of mothers have no education, and among mothers educated to grade 4 or higher, the fertility rate is 3.3 percent compared to the fertility rate of 5.2 among those with no education; this results in lower incomes and poorer consumption patterns.<sup>xcviii</sup>

In Nicaragua it is estimated that 8 percent (109,380) of children ages 5-14 are engaged in child labor and not attending school and 7 percent of children ages 7 – 15 are combining work and school. Of the total amount, 18 percent are males and 11 percent are females.<sup>xcix</sup> 70 percent of children working age 5-14 are in agriculture, 19.2 percent are in services, and 9.6 percent are in manufacturing. Working children in Nicaragua carry heavy loads, use dangerous tools, and are exposed to dangerous pesticides and fertilizers. Domestic servants in third-party homes are subject to abuse, and boys and girls in depressed areas are at risk of trafficking for sexual exploitation.<sup>c</sup>

## II.1.4 HEALTH

The Gender Gap report gives Nicaragua a health and survival rate score of 0.976, and ranked the country 58 out of 135 countries in 2011.<sup>ci</sup> For women age 45-49 at the time of the survey, the mean marriage age for women is 21 years old, with<sup>cii</sup> 10 percent of females married by age 15, and 41 percent of females married by age 18.<sup>ciii</sup> In 2006, the mean marriage age for adolescent girls age 15-19 was 13 years old.<sup>civ</sup> Early marriage is not only considered a form of GBV, but is also a key risk factor for girls in early sexual intercourse and early age at first birth.

### I. REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY

National gains have been made in improving maternal health care and access to care for women. The national fertility rate decreased from 3.3 children per woman in 2001 to 2.7 in 2007.<sup>cv</sup> The national contraceptive prevalence rate is 72.4 percent and the unmet need for FP decreased from 23.9 percent of women of reproductive age in 1993 to 10.7 in 2007.<sup>cvi</sup> As of 2011, 95 percent of women nationally receive at least one antenatal care visit.<sup>cvi</sup>

The national maternal mortality rate has declined significantly by one third to 62 deaths per 100,000 live births as of 2011.<sup>cviii</sup> This places Nicaragua as the Central American country with the second lowest maternal mortality rate behind Costa Rica with an average of 44 deaths, but ahead of Panama (71), Belize (94), and Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala (all 110).<sup>cix</sup>

However, the maternal mortality rate remains high in the RAAN and RAAS at 187.5 and 119.8 maternal deaths, respectively, in 2011.<sup>cx</sup> Poor rural women in Nicaragua are still less likely to receive appropriate medical attention for childbirth than wealthier urban women. Nationally 78 percent of women receive



assistance from a skilled health professional during childbirth, but only 30 percent of poor rural women receive assistance, compared to 98 percent of wealthy urban women.<sup>cxv</sup>

Adolescent girls are also not receiving access to the SRH care that they need. Nicaragua's adolescent fertility rate was the highest in Central America in 2010 at 112.7 births per 100,000 adolescent girls age 15-19, compared with 107.2 in Guatemala, 93.1 in Honduras, 82.7 in El Salvador, 82.6 in Panama, 78.7 in Belize, and 65.6 in Costa Rica.<sup>cxvii</sup> Twenty-five percent of all births in 2009 occurred among girls aged 10-19, and adolescents accounted for 22 percent of all maternal deaths in 2010.<sup>cxviii</sup> In 2011, adolescent girls accounted for 25.4 percent of all births nationally, and 51.3 percent of all adolescents who gave birth lived in rural areas.<sup>cxix</sup>

In the insecure Region Autonoma del Atlantico Sur (RAAS), pregnancy rates are one of the highest in the country (3.9 children per woman) and teen pregnancies among girls age 10-19 account for 30.6 percent of all pregnancies in the region, reported by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and MINSILAIS RAAS for 2011.<sup>cxv</sup> In 2009, half the women that died in RAAS as a result of pregnancy were teenagers and were in the poorest and most rural areas.<sup>cxvi</sup> The Caribbean Coast and the North Central regions accounted for 52.2 percent of all maternal deaths in the last 10 years.<sup>cxvii</sup> Almost half (46.3 percent) of women age 15-24 in the RAAS have already been pregnant once and only 24 percent of women age 15-24 in the RAAS use family planning methods in their first sexual intercourse.<sup>cxviii</sup>

Compounding this issue is that Nicaragua is one of only three countries in the world which maintains a blanket ban on abortion, even in cases of rape, incest or life-threatening pregnancies. In September 2007 Nicaragua's National Assembly voted in favor of a new penal code that maintains this controversial ban, mandating imprisonment for any person who is involved and/or assists women in an abortion, penalizing a woman seeking an abortion with up to two years in jail. There are no exceptions to this law, even in the cases of rape, incest, and if the woman's life is in danger.<sup>cxix</sup> The Catholic Church plays a strong role in influencing society and has played an active role in politics in Nicaragua, particularly in the adoption of this penal code. The women's movement in Nicaragua views the adoption of the abortion ban as a tremendous setback on the advancement of women's rights in the country.<sup>cxx</sup>

## 2. HIV/AIDS AND STIS

The overall HIV/AIDS prevalence is relatively low in Nicaragua, but efforts in the country are focused on prevention as it is spreading to at-risk populations. The most at-risk populations (MARPS) include men who have sex with men (MSM) with a prevalence of 10.6 percent, transsexuals with a prevalence of 18.8 percent, bisexuals with a prevalence of 5.1 percent, and female commercial sex workers (2.4 percent).<sup>cxxi</sup> Young boys are vulnerable as many gay youth in Nicaragua begin sexual activities by age 10, especially along the Caribbean Coast.<sup>cxxii</sup> Female HIV prevalence is 0.10 percent of the population aged 15-49, compared to 0.3 percent of the male population.<sup>cxxiii</sup>

Between 1991 and January 2012 there were 171 reported HIV Cases in RAAS (Bluefields 118, Corn Island 23, Pearl Lagoon and Karawala 8 each), and 15 new cases reported thus far in 2012. In Bluefields in the RAAS 63 percent of the total HIV/AIDS cases in 2009 were among men in at-risk groups. In addition, over half (54 percent) of HIV/AIDS cases among the age group 10-19 were girls,<sup>cxxiv</sup> although this may be attributed primarily to greater national screening efforts among adolescent girls and young pregnant women; only recently have increased numbers of at-risk men been targeted for testing.<sup>cxxv</sup>

There is a strong correlation of SGBV and negative cultural stigma with the exposure of adolescents to STIs, including HIV.<sup>cxxvi</sup> Few adolescents access SRH services because of shame or fear of reprimand. Only 59

percent of women in the RAAS or RAAN without any formal education know of some STIs, compared to women with advanced schooling who have a 97 percent understanding of STI risks.<sup>cxxvii</sup>

### **II.I.5 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

GBV that predominantly affects girls, women, boys, and members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community in Nicaragua seriously restricts advancements in democratic governance and economic growth by fostering an environment and culture of inequality, intolerance, and violence that perpetuates the cycle of poverty.<sup>cxxviii</sup> GBV is considered a public health and safety issue in Nicaragua, affecting nearly 48 percent of women who are married or in union.<sup>cxxix</sup>

Complaints of domestic and sexual violence in Nicaragua rose by 9 percent in 2010 compared with 2009, for a total of 34,763 complaints. A total of 8,383 victims of domestic and sexual violence were children and adolescents (24 percent of all cases). Of these 86 percent were girls and 79 percent of cases occurred in their own homes.<sup>cxxx</sup> National offenses of adolescents who were criminally charged in 2010 include rape (22.2 percent), aggravated robbery (21.4 percent), assault (12.3 percent) and homicide (6.5 percent).<sup>cxxxi</sup> Violence against sex workers in 2009 was estimated at 33 percent in Managua and 12.6 percent in Chinandega.<sup>cxxxii</sup>

The LGBT and HIV/AIDS-affected community members are targets of verbal abuse and discrimination. For example, 15.8 percent of the men in Managua and 7.7 percent of the men in Chinandega have experienced some type of abuse or mistreatment due to their sexual orientation or for being transsexual, and 40.1 percent of persons with HIV (predominantly MSM and transgender persons), report experiencing discrimination, either through isolation or verbal abuse.<sup>cxxxiii</sup>

Children, especially girls, from poor rural areas throughout the country are most vulnerable to trafficking due to lack of economic opportunities, increased regional trade, semi-porous borders, and development of communications technology.<sup>cxxxiv</sup> Nicaragua is a source and transit country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. However, the Government of Nicaragua (GON) fully complies with minimum standards for elimination of trafficking which has resulted in Nicaragua moving from the Tier 2 Watch List in 2010 to Tier 1 in 2012 according to the USG 2012 Trafficking in Persons Report.<sup>cxxxv</sup>

## **II.II NATIONAL PLANS AND INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS**

### **II.II.1 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND STRATEGIES**

The GON ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1981, which eliminates discrimination against women and ensures their civil, political, economic, and cultural rights. It requires the State to take action to eliminate discrimination against women in organizations and businesses. However, the CEDAW Optional Protocol has not been ratified, which would allow women to directly submit claims and demands to the CEDAW Committee when justice fails within the country.<sup>cxxxvi</sup>

In 2007, Nicaragua submitted its sixth periodic report<sup>3</sup> after which the CEDAW Committee made numerous recommendations to Nicaragua on how to decrease discrimination against women. Since then the GON has incorporated a number of these recommendations. Two recommendations that have not yet been realized by the GON include: developing a comprehensive strategy to modify and eliminate negative cultural

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<sup>3</sup> This is the last periodic report submitted; the report due in 2010 is currently two years overdue.  
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attitudes and stereotypes that reinforce discrimination involving all sectors of society; and review legislation on abortion in order to remove sanctions against women.<sup>cxxxvii</sup>

In 2008 the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights applauded the GON's efforts to adopt laws to protect equality rights and opportunities. However, the Committee suggested additional measures to strengthen legal rights in Nicaragua including: prosecution and investigation of femicides, timely measures to assure effective access to justice to the victims of GBV, and allowing exceptions to the general prohibition of abortion for cases of therapeutic abortion and pregnancy resulting from rape or incest.<sup>cxxxviii</sup>

Nicaragua is also a signatory of international agreements to further access to quality of education for all including the World Declaration for All and the Dakar and Jomtien Agreements. Further, Nicaragua is a signatory of the 2021 Education Goals signed in the Declaration of the Mar de Plata that commits all participating countries to use the Programs of Metas 2021 as the principal instrument to address the challenges in the education sector in the region.

Nicaragua became a signatory of the UN Millennium Declaration in 2000. The only MDG3 (Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women) goal is to eliminate gender disparity in all levels of education and includes one indicator to measure increase proportion of seats held by women in the National Assembly by 6.75 percent.<sup>cxxxix</sup> In addition, MDG5 (Improve Maternal Health) has one goal to reduce maternal mortality by 75 percent.<sup>cxl</sup> Nicaragua is a priority country in the Global Partnership for Education that provides additional financial support to countries in development that are lagging behind in achieving the MDGs on education.

## **II.II.2 NATIONAL PLANS AND STRATEGIES**

The 2008-2012 National Human Development Plan (NHDP) emphasizes gender equity and rights of women, children, and youth as one of the founding principles of the governmental Power Citizen Model which commits the GON to promoting participation and leadership of women in political, economic, and social development processes. The NHDP recognizes women as agents of change that require access to productive assets and resources, equal participation, equal rights and equal opportunities.

The Nicaraguan Institute for Women (INIM) is guided by twelve strategic actions including: promotion of citizenship awareness of gender equality; education in SRH and human rights; promotion and visibility of women leadership in all spheres; achievement of 50 percent of women or more in leadership positions within institutions, political parties, and social movements; promotion and visibility of women's participation in electoral processes as candidates and voters; training and support to female electoral candidates; promotion of human values and coexistence among families and communities; promotion of a sense of national identity among women within a diverse, multiethnic and multilingual culture; promotion and defense of conservation and restoration of natural resources and environment among women; promotion of a human rights and human development model among women in accordance with principles of justice, sustainability, peace, and wellbeing for all people without discrimination; and promotion of solidarity and commitment to eradicating poverty and its consequences among women.<sup>cxli</sup>

The NHDP's Agricultural and Forestry Strategy promotes gender equity by improving access to productive resources (E.g. technical assistance, financing, land, and training) and the integral care of children for women workers in infant development centers.<sup>cxlii</sup> As part of the Agricultural and Forestry Strategy, the Food Production National Program<sup>cxliii</sup> objective is to stimulate food and agro-export production with an emphasis on sovereignty of food production by poor and small agricultural producers. Some gender-specific strategies of the program include: access to rural education and training by men, women, youth, boys and girls through the promotion of curriculum transformation and scholarships with emphasis on eradication of

child labor; support to family, community and school gardens; education on nutrition; organization and association of men and women producers; integrating gender in subprograms with an emphasis on promoting and making visible women’s leadership; training women and men in irrigated production and management and development of water resources; and reducing gender inequalities and inequities through the different links of the coffee production chain.<sup>cxliv</sup>

The 2012 Capacity Development Plan for implementation of gender practices within PRORURAL national institutions, of which the Ministry of Agriculture is a member, prioritizes the following activities: creation of gender units within public institutions; conducting gender institutional assessments, including identification of training needs and potential gender indicators for national programs; gender studies, including public spending in the agricultural and livestock sector; and integration of women’s organizations in the sectoral table of PRORURAL.

The National Strategy on Sexual and Reproductive Health (NSRH) has a rights focus to address socially assigned roles and stereotypes that harm women and men through changing the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of men and women to respect their bodies and enjoy their health and relationships with others. Prioritized areas of work include: adolescent health; sexual education; safe contraception; maternal, perinatal and neonatal health; STI and HIV/AIDS prevention and care; prevention of GBV, prevention and care of oncological diseases; infertility and sterility; post-reproductive health; male access to reproductive health services, and promotion of sexual and reproductive rights linked to gender awareness.<sup>cxlv</sup> According to the UNFPA, implementation efforts of this strategy have contributed to advances in achieving the MDGs related to reproductive health and rights.<sup>cxlvi</sup>

The Ministry of Health (MOH) works with the RAAS and RAAN in the Caribbean Coast to implement a plan, Marco de Planificacion de Salud para Personas Indigenas y Comunidades Etnicas, that integrates traditional medicine practices of indigenous people in public health services and promotes healthcare of pregnant women, taking into account their cultural practices and traditions.<sup>cxlvii</sup>

The Nicaraguan Commission for HIV/AIDS released a National STI HIV/AIDS National Communication Strategy (2011-2015) that calls attention to vulnerable groups including women, MSM, and transsexuals with targeted messaging for each distinct risk group.<sup>cxlviii</sup> The Strategy identifies the “feminization” of HIV as a trend at the country level among adolescents and identifies gender inequality as a key risk factor due to cultural sexual norms based on machismo, lack of adolescent sex education, and social exclusion.<sup>cxlix</sup>

The Ministry of Education (MINED) Strategic Plan (2011-2015) incorporates items from Article 23 of the Law 648 that address inequalities in access to education and retention as well as ensuring respect, non-discrimination, mistreatment, non-exclusion of girls and boys, and pregnant adolescents during school. Equity is also emphasized in rural schools and indigenous and Afro-descendent communities. The plan includes the following approach on gender equality: implementation of gender practices through the educational process to drive the transformation of relations between men and women from an equity perspective; education of teachers in gender practices; analysis and development of pedagogical tools and improvement of educational materials with the integration of a gender module into the standard curriculum; and incorporation of gender practices in all objectives and initiatives.<sup>cl</sup>

## **II.III PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **II.III.I NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND POLICIES**

#### **I. NATIONAL LAWS AND ARTICLES**

Article 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of Nicaragua mandates full equality of people before the law, their right to equal protection, and non-discrimination because of birth, nationality, political beliefs, sex, language, religion, origin, economic position, social condition, or other causes.<sup>ci</sup> In addition, Article 46 mandates that every person enjoys protection of the State and recognition of all rights inherent to the human person, unrestricted respect, promotion, and protection of human rights and full enjoyment of the rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of the United Nations, and other American Declarations.

Additionally, a new Article 82 was incorporated into the Constitution (15 May 2012) which reforms the Electoral Law, requiring political parties and alliances to present 50 percent male and 50 percent female candidates on ballots. It establishes required proportional representation between women and men for elections and in decision-making positions in public administration. It requires all political parties and civil society organizations to promote equitable participation of men and women in decision-making positions.

Law 648 (February 2008) on equality rights and opportunities mandates that the State play a direct role in promoting the equality between men and women, and establishes required proportional representation between women and men for elections and in decision-making positions in public administration. It requires that all political parties and civil society organizations promote equitable participation of men and women in decision-making processes, and that all institutions create Equality Commissions. Regional and municipal governments are mandated to apply this law.

Law 779 (February 2012) aims to prevent and eradicate violence against women. The law sets protection measures to prevent violence, punish perpetrators, and assist victims. It includes specific definitions of different types of violence such as misogyny, physical, workplace, economic, property, psychological, sexual, and femicide. The clauses define economic violence against a spouse, former spouse, girl-friend, or anyone connected through a blood relationship and criminalizes the removal of property or value that is jointly entitled to a woman, destruction of property, or limiting the use of property or assets.<sup>clii</sup> The law also requires that each municipality have a district court specialized in violence.

Law 693 (July 2009) requires a strong gender equality focus in the implementation of food and nutrition security initiatives, particularly concerning equal access to inputs and resources, and requires application of a gender focus in all food security policies, strategies, and projects. It establishes commissions focused on food self-sufficiency, food security and nutrition at the regional, departmental, and municipal levels. It also establishes the National Fund for Food and Nutritional Security and Sovereignty.

Law 717 (May 2010) creates a Land Fund to purchase land for rural women in order to provide legal and material appropriation of land for poor rural women. It targets female-headed households to improve quality of life, gender equity and their empowerment. In addition, the law requires improvement of access to credit and mortgages for women. The Land Fund is managed by a committee with delegates from private banks, INIM, Instituto de Vivienda Urbana y Rural (INVUR), and a network of rural women's organizations that were proponents of the Law.

## **2. NATIONAL POLICIES**

INIM's policy document (2006) defines the promotion of gender equality in all national policies and actions. There is an emphasis on the implementation of affirmative action within institutions to promote equality between men and women. Some actions to affirm gender at the organizational level (institutional mission, management style, planning, recruitment, collective agreements, services, training, etc.) are included. The

policy provides actions to modify unequal salaries between men and women, address gender stereotypes, and combat the use of discriminatory language within institutions, among others.

The Food Security Policy (November 2009) recognizes four dimensions of food security: availability, access, consumption, and utilization with an overall objective to ensure production, availability, and stability in the food supply of food that is nutritious, culturally acceptable, and sold at “fair” prices. The following gender priorities are within the Policy: organization of women and participation for social change; access to productive resources; equity in participation; and promotion of equal rights and opportunities. Specific priority actions include: promote women and youth organizations to participate in agricultural, forestry, aquaculture and fish farming activities; production of supplies (i.e. seed, fertilizer) by farmer, women, and youth organizations; and delivery of productive resources and projects to families.<sup>cliii</sup>

In 2011 the GON adopted the National Policy on Early Childhood,<sup>cliv</sup> to implement comprehensive interventions to restore the rights of children under six. It emphasizes equal rights and access to protection and opportunities and the deconstruction of traditional models that perpetuate unequal relations beginning in early stages of life within families, schools, and communities. Education, health, early stimulation, child care centers, food security, self-esteem as part of identity, and prevention of all forms of violence are among the policy components.<sup>clv</sup> The educational component specifically addresses the promotion of a new masculinity and parental responsibility different to predominant traditional patterns, family involvement in the education of boys and girls; and development of preschool curricula integrating issues of health, nutrition, sexuality and family involvement. Further, the Policy specifies actions to promote a non-violence model for families, implement sex education in preschool and primary schools, and prevent sexual and commercial exploitation of children.

In 2009 the Ministry of Family, Adolescence, and Children released a guideline document for the care of girls, boys, and adolescents who are in sexual and commercial exploitation. The guidelines provide legal national, regional, and international legal frameworks, procedures and tools for detection, catchment and risk assessment, emergency care, registry and follow-up by public officials of involved institutions.<sup>clvi</sup>

## **II.III.2 NATIONAL AND MUNICIPAL CAPACITY TO ADDRESS GENDER GAPS**

### **I. NATIONAL CAPACITY**

As evidenced by the number of policies, plans, strategies, and laws focused on gender equality that have been produced and approved in recent years, high capacity for formulating policies addressing gender issues exists at the national level. Some national institutions have already initiated the creation of and implementation of gender policies. Gender commissions and offices have also been created or reactivated in most national government institutions. This includes the technical gender unit in the National Assembly which provides technical assistance to the President, Board, and Parliamentarian commissions on gender issues and assists in incorporating gender perspectives into new laws.

There are several examples of the operationalization of institutional gender policies. The Interagency Committee on Women and Rural Development, chaired by INIM, supports national gender equality programs, projects, policies and strategies in agriculture, environmental and natural resources. There is an ongoing capacity development plan within the PRORURAL program which aims to strengthen the implementation capacity of gender practices through the development of a gender unit, exchange of experience by institutions, research on public spending, analysis, and program evaluations. Further, there is a pending action plan to institutionalize a gender perspective in the Ministry of Energy and Mines, a

gender strategy within the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Trade; and a pending proposal to reform Law 550 (Financial Management and Budget Regime) with a gender perspective.

However, gender awareness processes are still lacking institutionally to ensure that Law 648 and gender policies are appropriately implemented. As a result gender-specific outputs, targets, objectives, and concrete activities are often lacking following the development of policies.

The 2012 National Budget of the Republic of Nicaragua allocated to INIM is approximately US\$470,125<sup>4</sup> for the year, percent This money is allocated primarily to assist INIM in incorporating gender practices in public policies through the implementation and monitoring of Law 648; promoting the rights of women with an emphasis on skills development for effective participation in political, economic, social, and cultural spaces; and implementing training plans for strengthening knowledge, skills, and abilities of gender promoters in government institutions and municipalities.

## 2. REGIONAL AND MUNICIPAL CAPACITY

National law requires all government entities to have a fully functioning gender unit or gender committee, including at the municipal level.<sup>clvii</sup> Regional Secretarias de la Mujer exist in RAAN and RAAS on the Caribbean Coast and gender commissions exist in municipalities throughout the country. However, at local levels, particularly in rural areas, there is a lack of strategies and action plans which provide the structural ability to implement gender policies and laws promoting equal access to resources and justice.<sup>clviii</sup> Much of this may be attributed to a lack of allocated funds to implement existing plans.<sup>clix</sup> Further, where women's commissions or gender commissions do exist, technical implementation capacity is often limited.<sup>clx</sup>

The Association of Nicaraguan Municipalities (AMUNIC) has adopted gender awareness methodologies that have been implemented in 153 municipalities in the country with the assistance of the FAO.<sup>clxi</sup> The Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones de la Mujer Multiétnica (CEIMM) is also collaborating with IBIS, a Danish donor agency, to operationalize a gender focus in the SEAR (Sistema Educativo Autonomico Regional) at the municipal level on the Caribbean Coast in coordination with women and education commissions.<sup>clxii</sup>

The Joint Gender Program implemented by INIM and several sector institutions with the assistance of UNFPA and other UN Agencies was a recent collaborative initiative focused on the institutionalization of gender practices in 15 municipalities. This program promoted gender mainstreaming in the municipal budget cycle by producing and validating manuals, and created gender commissions and policies in eight municipalities.<sup>clxiii</sup>

### II.III.3 CIVIL SOCIETY EFFORTS TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY

The Women's Movement pre-dated the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua but grew both in reach and in political importance during that period. In subsequent years, following a split with the Sandinista party and splintering of the dominant organization into sub-groups and service-oriented NGOs, it has evolved into a non-partisan, activist, and visible force within civil society. The movement has been effective in focusing attention on women's issues and in pushing the government to adopt gender mainstreaming as a part of ministry strategies. Women's organizations have played a key role in delivering services like health care and legal services into small communities and remote rural areas. Through study, organization, and participation in international women's events, women's organizations have become increasingly skilled in the tools of gender analysis.<sup>clxiv</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> C\$11,283,000 (In Nicaraguan Cordoba) for INIM budget out of annual C\$42,256,764,412 total expenditure for GON in 2012.

The women's movement in Nicaragua at this point in time has two overarching objectives: 1) The exercise of full citizenship for women given that women cannot exercise their rights in authoritarian contexts and recognizing that a democratic system offers more and better opportunities for recognition, extension, enforcement of women's rights, and possibilities to influence the public sphere in favor of women; and 2) the right to live without violence and the right to decide.<sup>clxv</sup>

There is not sufficient space in this analysis to comprehensively highlight all of the efforts of more than 150 relevant Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working on gender equality, GBV, and women's empowerment issues in Nicaragua. The work of specific CSOs most relevant to USAID's work is highlighted in appropriate sections of this analysis where there is opportunity for partnership. However, the following organizations should be mentioned for their national level coordination and work:

- **The Women's Network Against Violence (Red de Mujeres Contra la Violencia)**, with over 150 member organizations (including care centers, unions, associations, and churches) and an unknown number of individual members provides a national participatory space for coordination and political action.<sup>clxvi</sup> The Network is now in the process of developing a new organizational strategy to strengthen its capacity to provide effective thought leadership and to define guidelines for expanding its influence in the public arena. The Network promotes awareness campaigns and monitors the incidence of GBV, including femicide. The network also actively mobilizes complaints and political statements when a victim of violence needs to be heard and protected. It also mobilizes when other gender issues affect a woman or group of women.
- **The Women Autonomous Movement (MAM)** organizes the women's political movement at the national level. They focus on developing the political capacity of women and build alliances with international, local, and national partners. It emphasizes equality, freedom and solidarity to build a political, economic, and social system with equality in democracy and on transforming unequal power relationships in the implementation of laws. It also emphasizes individual integrity, freedom of violence, respect to sexual diversity, exercise of reproductive rights, and economic, social, and legal rights under equal conditions.

A recent USAID assessment found that very few CSOs have experience in the area of justice. Therefore, past USAID programming worked with CSOs on technical capacity-building and the implementation of advocacy strategies. As a result a women's rights coalition was formed with 21 CSOs which successfully lobbied the GON Ministerio Publico to improve coordination and handling of domestic violence cases. It has also been active in advocating for better attention to women as victims of crime.<sup>clxvii</sup>

#### **II.III.4 DONOR ACTIVITIES ON GENDER ISSUES IN NICARAGUA**

There are numerous donors working in Nicaragua explicitly to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Others are working on gender integration within strategic priorities related to food security and economic growth, democracy governance, SRH, and education. Many donors have gender policies, strategies, action plans, and indicators that inform their work. This section briefly highlights those efforts, expanding on them as appropriate in **Section IV: Recommendations** where there may be opportunity for partnership.

The United Nations has numerous organizations actively pursuing gender equality initiatives in Nicaragua, including UN-Women Nicaragua, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF). Broadly, these donors are working

toward institutional strengthening at national and local levels to improve capacity of gender analyses, programming, and gender-responsive budgeting; increasing female leadership capacity; preventing and responding to GBV; improving FP, access to SRH, reducing adolescent pregnancies, and preventing HIV/AIDS among at-risk populations including MSM, transgender, and adolescent girls; and strengthening education opportunities for boys and girls, including adapting gender-appropriate language and curriculum.

Various donors are working on GBV and equality efforts via the media, including the World Bank and the Organization of the European Union (OEU). The Agencia Espanola de Cooperacion Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID) is working on increasing access to justice for victims of GBV. The Peace Corps is working in rural communities on GBV, male engagement, and inclusion of vulnerable groups including ethnic/linguistic minorities and members of the LGBT community.

Numerous organizations including IBIS and the Common Fund for Civil Society and Governance, Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and AMUNIC are working toward increasing local municipal capacity for institutional gender integration through the formulation and implementation of gender policies and gender-responsive budgeting.

Lastly, various donors including the FAO, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), UNDP, the Swiss Cooperation Strategy for Central America (COSUDE) and the World Food Program (WFP) are working on increasing access of women to productive assets and promoting equal opportunities for men and women in small medium sized enterprise (SMSEs) and financial services, and improving nutrition for pregnant and lactating mothers.



# III. USAID MISSION STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ASSOCIATED GENDER ANALYSIS

## III.I ABILITY TO ENGAGE IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE INCREASED

### III.I.1 USAID STRATEGIC PRIORITY ALIGNMENT WITH GON GENDER PRIORITIES

USAID/Nicaragua's strategic priorities under this DO are to: improve the accountability of targeted local governments and administration of public resources; enhance the capacity of key leaders and strengthen civil society; and strengthen independent media presence and enhance research and policy analysis. Relevant GON Gender priorities aligned with these include:

- **Promotion of participation of women in political processes and leadership in all areas.** This is supported by the emphasis of gender equity as a founding principle of the governmental Power Citizen Model (NHDP); the promotion of citizenship awareness of gender equality; promotion and visibility of women leadership; achievement of 50 percent of women or more in leadership positions within institutions, political parties, and social movements; promotion and visibility of women's participation in electoral processes as candidates and voters; and training and support to female electoral candidates (INIM and Article 82 of the Constitution); and
- **Required incorporation of gender in all public policies by all municipal institutions,** progressively creating equality commissions within them to coordinate, follow-up, and evaluate respective application and allocation of resources (Law 648); and
- **Improvement in accessing justice for victims of violence** and implementation of gender and human rights awareness training (National Anti-Violence Strategy supporting Law 779).

### III.I.2 GENDER CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### I. GENDER GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

**GAP #1: There is low municipal capacity to implement laws on gender equality and gender-based violence.**

Despite tremendous recent gains in advancing the legislative framework to address GBV in Nicaragua, implementation capacity at local levels is low, particularly in more rural areas. Further, not all municipalities have gender units or commissions as required by law, particularly in more rural areas. Municipalities and officials lack the resources and technical skills to develop and implement gender action plans, conduct gender analyses, and integrate gender-responsive budgeting in municipal planning.<sup>clxviii</sup>



For example, there is poor capacity and knowledge on how to implement Law 779 (Violence Against Women). When victims of GBV overcome tremendous personal obstacles to come forward to report a crime, municipal officials (including local judicial clerks, judges, police, and technical officers) do not consistently know how to appropriately handle the case, what victims services (including psycho-social referrals or assistance in hiring a lawyer), or how to begin investigations. One area that is particularly lacking in Nicaragua surrounds the improper data and evidence collection by officials in the case of GBV or sexual assault, which hinders a victim's ability to demand justice without proper evidence collection.<sup>clxix</sup> However, more recently there has been some improvement in local capacity in these areas, which resulted in increased numbers of victims reporting cases.

In addition to lack of technical capacity, resources, and knowledge to implement laws at the local level, pervasive machista attitudes exist within local organizational structures. The ingrained personal beliefs, perceptions, and experiences of municipal and law enforcement officials and judges influence to what extent and how well individuals in power implement laws. Many officials and judges still view GBV as a private family problem rather than a public concern.<sup>clxx</sup> There are cases of men found guilty of domestic violence and given inappropriate sentencing, such as house arrest or mediation, which further endanger the victim.<sup>clxxi</sup>

However, the existence of strong national laws with top-down mandates provide a leveraging opportunity to advance GON's and USG's strategic priorities on promoting gender equality and reducing GBV.

**Gap #2: Women and girls are excluded from traditionally male-dominated public and private decision-making spaces, particularly at community levels.**

There are certainly examples of strong female leaders at the community level, including participation in community networks, but they are most typically found in traditionally female-dominated spaces such as health and education rather than in traditionally male spaces such as in finance and cadastral leadership positions.<sup>clxxii</sup> Further, when women do assume roles as leaders in traditional men's spaces, they often experience discrimination and face barriers in carrying out their decision-making roles.<sup>clxxiii</sup> Women, boys, and girls belonging to an ethnic or linguistic minority are even more likely to be marginalized, particularly in places on the Caribbean Coast and in traditional rural areas.<sup>clxxiv</sup>

At the very root of this dynamic is the prevalence of machista culture.<sup>clxxv</sup> Girls from a young age, especially in rural and indigenous areas, are treated as second class to their brothers. Boys are raised to become men that view women as their property, and girls are raised to become women that accept their subordinate positions, fostering a culture of authoritarian male leaders.<sup>clxxvi</sup> Within households, particularly in rural and more indigenous areas, men may not allow their wives or partners to assume leadership positions or attend trainings, presenting an enormous cultural barrier to female participation in development programs and as leaders. Men often have control over women's access to healthcare and control the movement of girls and boys, particularly in rural areas such as Jinotega.

Lack of access to potable water, household chores, and child care also inhibits women's abilities to participate as citizens in democracy and as leaders. Women spend, on average, 16 hours per day performing paid and unpaid household work in Nicaragua, leaving little time for attending civic engagement activities or attending trainings to increase their capacity to assume roles as leaders.<sup>clxxvii</sup> Men do not typically assist with child care or household tasks in Nicaragua, and little outside support exists for women without childcare options.<sup>clxxviii</sup> The lack of access to technology and potable water (only 68 percent of the rural population uses improved drinking sources) further constrains women's time.<sup>clxxix</sup>

The new Constitutional Article 82 that requires 50 percent female candidates for elected positions and in decision-making roles in public administration will likely present an opportunity that will dramatically increase the percentage of women in local municipal positions following elections this November 2012. However, that is just the beginning in fostering female leadership at local levels; even though more women are rising to leadership positions nationally and municipally they still lack full and equal participation as decision-makers. As such, a tremendous amount of work must be devoted to ensure that women are given the required training and resources needed to help them succeed in their new roles, and perhaps even more importantly, training will be required to foster a positive and supportive atmosphere where male colleagues respect and support their female counterparts, challenging personal machista beliefs and attitudes.<sup>clxxx</sup> Lastly, women rising to leadership positions alone will not ensure that gender equality will be prioritized in policy decisions; both male and female leaders require appropriate training to address gender equality and GBV issues in their decision-making roles as leaders.

**Gap #3: Women and girls, particularly from ethnic and linguistic minority groups, as well as members of the LGBT community, lack the confidence and knowledge to demand their rights.**

Women and girls have interest in civic participation but often lack self-esteem and confidence to participate, rooted in a machista culture which instills in girls early on that they are subservient to men. Pervasive GBV that disproportionately affects women, girls, boys, and members of the LGBT community reinforces the cycle of depressed self-esteem and confidence, pre-requisites for citizens to exercise their democratic rights, report incidences of violence and demand justice, and to become leaders and decision-makers.<sup>clxxxi</sup>

Citizens, especially women and those belonging to ethnic/linguistic minority groups or who are members of the LGBT community, need to be educated and empowered about what their legal rights are and how to claim them.<sup>clxxxii</sup> Poor persons living in rural areas, as well as in marginalized urban communities, have little real access to the justice system, which tends to be expensive, delay-ridden and incomprehensible to many. In addition, information about the justice system is not widely available in an understandable format.<sup>clxxxiii</sup>

National- and regional-level data available in Nicaragua demonstrate the lack of knowledge and self-esteem young girls, in particular, have when it comes to their negotiating and decision-making power. The high percentage (24 percent) of girls nationally age 15-19 currently married or in a union, and the high percentage (28 percent) of women age 20-24 that have given birth before age 18 are suggestive.<sup>clxxxiv</sup> So too is the statistic that a total of 8,383 victims of domestic and sexual violence in 2010 were children and adolescents (24 percent of all cases), and of these 86 percent were girls and 79 percent of cases occurred in their own homes.<sup>clxxxv</sup>

Nicaraguan citizens, especially those who belong to communities that have historically been marginalized such as indigenous groups, generally distrust the institutions charged with administration of justice. Outreach workshops are critical to facilitate change and encourage citizens to recognize that fundamental rights to justice should be promoted by communities and individual citizens in collaboration with the justice institutions.<sup>clxxxvi</sup>

CSOs and the independent media play a critical role in incorporating gender perspectives into their work. However, there is not always qualified gender expertise within institutions in developing and implementing sound gender policies and action plans.<sup>clxxxvii</sup> Too often CSOs develop gender policies but are limited technically in practically implementing policies.<sup>clxxxviii</sup> A real opportunity exists to integrate gender awareness and analysis training into already planned USAID CSO-capacity building activities. Further, there are a multitude of CSOs USAID could partner with that are working toward gender equality and against GBV

with activities focused on building confidence and self-esteem of female leaders while supporting engagement of men and boys as role models to erode the culture of machismo.

Further, the independent media and journalists have played an important role in advancing gender equality efforts. Media in Nicaragua has extensive reach. A UNICEF survey found that 95 percent of females age 15-19 in Nicaragua use at least one type of information media at least once per week.<sup>clxxxix</sup> For example, a newspaper article written played a critical role in spurring interest in drafting a gender policy for Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada (COSEP).<sup>cx</sup> USAID has existing and planned activities in training journalists, which can be leveraged to integrate gender awareness training and knowledge about laws, policies, and strategies to inform the general population.

## **2. EFFECT OF GENDER ROLES ON WORK TO BE UNDERTAKEN**

The different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace, and household will affect the work to be undertaken. Women's time burden within households and limited mobility in more traditional rural or ethnic/linguistic minority areas will require targeted efforts during program and project activities to effectively reach and engage female beneficiaries.

Further, although the new law requiring 50 percent female participation in elected and public administration leadership positions is expected to be successful in the upcoming elections, persistent machista attitudes prevalent in rural municipalities will be challenging to overcome to ensure that both women and men are supported in their decision-making position. Men traditionally dominate decision-making over public administration, planning, and spending which may influence how well gender-responsive budgeting and gender equality activities can be implemented. Further, the underlying personal attitudes and experiences of men and women in leadership positions as victims and perpetrators of violence can significantly hinder training or capacity-building efforts; therefore, underlying attitudes and gender biases must be effectively addressed in training and capacity-building activities.<sup>cxci</sup>

Lastly, men are not significantly involved in traditionally female-dominated spheres, including family health, nutrition, and education, and may be quick to dismiss gender equality issues as "women's issues." Since men are more likely to be receptive to messages about gender equality when received from another man, particularly if that man is a respected community leader, the lack of male role models may present challenges in bringing about meaningful and sustainable changes toward improved attitudes on gender equality and an erosion of machista culture.

## **3. EFFECT OF ANTICIPATED RESULTS ON WOMEN AND MEN**

The anticipated results of the planned work may affect women and men differently. Without adequately taking into consideration gender differences into the design and implementation of project activities potential adverse impacts and/or risks of gender based exclusion could result.

Although there are widespread efforts in Nicaragua to empower women and girls as leaders and decision-makers, there are no consistent efforts to reach men and boys to support their wives, daughters, sisters, and colleagues in this process. Numerous experts in Nicaragua cite examples of well-intended female empowerment programs that have two unintended negative consequences due to lack of male engagement in the process: 1) an increase in domestic violence and/or divorce as women's self-esteem and confidence increase and change the existing power dynamic within her home and marriage; and 2) a shifting of the burden of childcare and household work to an older school-age daughter who may then

drop-out of school to support her mother as the mother spends more time engaging in civic leadership duties or alternative income-generating work.<sup>cxcii</sup>

Further, despite the new law requiring 50 percent female participation in elected and public administration leadership positions, there is a high risk that project activities could still marginalize or exclude women in political and governance processes. If, for example, gender awareness training is not integrated into municipal capacity-building with an emphasis on eroding underlying social norms and attitudes that perpetuate a culture of machismo, efforts to assist municipalities could reinforce existing gender stereotypes of men in leadership and decision-making processes and women in subordinate roles.<sup>cxci</sup>

### II.1.3 PROMISING PRACTICES

Although there is a multitude of examples of projects and activities in Nicaragua working toward strengthening gender equality and empowerment of female leaders, concrete impact evaluations with demonstrable quantitative or qualitative results could not be identified, particularly as it relates to male engagement in this process and measuring household- and individual-level impacts. As such, this section identifies promising practices in fostering female leadership that subjectively appear to be having positive impacts, but the actual results of these practices have not been systematically measured.

***Promising Practice #1: Integrate gender training and capacity building to promote female leadership and participation in politics and public administration to strengthen governance and municipal budgeting.***

Efforts exist in Nicaragua to directly build capacity of female leaders working within government institutions, many of which are supported by previous USAID projects. For example, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) has a 50 percent quota for female participation, specialized training modules for women, workshops for women including capacity-building or specialized counseling for women committees in political parties, and "training of trainers" events with political parties. NDI works closely with INIM and youth organizations of political parties to utilize appropriate gender language within training.<sup>cxci</sup> The USAID-supported Democratic Leadership Development Program (NDI) encourages meaningful political party presence at the national and local levels, and supports civil society oversight of the electoral processes. The program trains young leaders in leadership and political management. The program graduated 415 political party and civil society young leaders. Eleven of these graduates, including five women, have been elected, promoted, or appointed to leadership positions within their party. In addition, five political parties in seven municipalities developed three-year strategic plans on adopting practices for greater responsiveness to party members with a focus on adopting practices to increase youth, minority, and female membership.<sup>cxci</sup>

The Partnership for Progress and Rural Development (APRODER) launched a recent project, *Promotion of Citizen Participation through Strengthening the CDM of San Pedro de Lóvago*, which creates a Gender and Youth Municipal Development Committee and encourages women to participate in 50 percent of managerial positions in the CDM. A FUNDEMUNI project, *Development of Inclusive Leadership with the Municipal Budget*, focused on including women in the development of municipal plans including gender-responsive budgeting via capacity-building of Gender Committees in the Mozonte Township of Nicaragua.

***Promising Practice #2: Support increased capacity of grassroots organizations and CSOs to lobby and advocate for female inclusion in municipal decision-making processes.***

An AMC project, *Capacity Building of Management and Advocacy for the Right of Water Resources*, targeted female participation in shaping the Committees on Water and Sanitation (CAPS) and in training in

15 communities in the municipality of El Tuma-La Dalia. A FUNDEMOS project, *Strengthening Grassroots Organizations for Negotiation, Consensus and Cut in Municipal Management Responsibility in the Ayote, New Guinea, El Rama, Bullocks Wharf and Almond*, integrated gender awareness in capacity training for decision-making in local women's associations. Lastly, the Leadership Institute Segovias project, *Strengthening Grassroots Organizations for Negotiation, Consensus and Liability Management in the Mozote Quilalí Municipality* increased participation of local women's organizations in socially driven municipal audits.

***Promising Practice #3: Use media as an opportunity to educate men and women on their rights, as well as to promote positive perception and beliefs on gender roles among society at large.***

IRI produces a radio program, *Coffee with You* that percent ensures female protagonists are portrayed as leaders making positive change in their communities and male characters as child care providers who take part in FP and health. Some content is focused on the prevention of adolescent pregnancy. The program has integrated school visits, interviewing boys over the radio to ingrain a sense of equality through positive peer pressure, asking them if they believe that girls and boys both have the same right to go to school. The radio show airs at times when both younger and older men and women might be listening in to the radio show, taking into consideration, for example, that at 11AM women might be be at home cooking.<sup>cxvii</sup>

### **III.1.4 APPLICATION OF USG NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY**

The USG National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security (WPS) has strategic priorities and actions that may be applied to USAID/Nicaragua's strategic priorities to improve local governance, increase advocacy for democratic processes, and increase dissemination of independent information.<sup>5</sup> The following are priority actions and principles of the NAP on WPS that are not intended for USAID/Nicaragua to follow rigidly, but are rather meant to simply inform and guide recommendations and indicators, as appropriate and applicable, in subsequent sections of this analysis.

- **Integrate and institutionalize a gendered approach to peace and security** by: 1) developing strategies that reflect strong gender analysis and clear approaches for advancing gender equality and female empowerment; and 2) tracking investments in women, peace, and security, and monitoring progress with indicators designed to measure gender equality, GBV, and women's empowerment results.
  
- **Promote women's participation in peace processes and decision-making** by: 1) increasing women's participation and leadership in peace building processes through training, financial support to address key barriers such as childcare and transportation costs, and assisting with developing and communicating strategic platforms for action; 2) improving recruitment and retention of women in government through programs that build skills and capacity of female candidates for office, parliamentarians, civil servants, municipal officials, police officers, and judges; 3) empowering women to play leadership roles in the civic arena through programs to build professional capacity of female journalists and engage local women, including female youth, in peace and policy dialogues; and 4) strengthening civil society's ability to advocate for development and implementation of gender-sensitive laws and policies related to land reform, political parties, elections, justice, human rights, gender-responsive budgeting, and national gender.

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<sup>5</sup> Identified overlapping strategic priorities of the NAP on WPS and USAID/Nicaragua's strategic priorities are integrated in suggested indicators and recommended activities in section IV.

- **Strengthen protection of women and children from harm, discrimination, and abuse** by: 1) targeting underlying norms, attitudes, and behaviors that perpetuate GBV through support for research and evidence-based interventions; and 2) combating impunity and supporting women's access to justice through programs to build capacity of governments to investigate and prosecute GBV including via assistance centers.

## III.2 VULNERABILITY OF TARGETED POPULATIONS REDUCED

### III.2.1 USAID STRATEGIC PRIORITY ALIGNMENT WITH GON GENDER PRIORITIES

USAID/Nicaragua's strategic priorities under this DO are to: improve reading performance; increase work force and life skills; increase community engagement in creating a positive environment for at-risk children and youth; increase adoption of agricultural practices and access to credit; and improve support for food security investments. Relevant GON Gender priorities aligned with these include:

- **Promotion of human values and coexistence among families and communities** and a sense of national identity among women with a diverse, multiethnic, and multilingual culture (INIM);
- **Promotion of factual and legal equality between Nicaraguans** and their effective participation in economic and social development and ensure full exercise to all Nicaraguans of their political, economic, social and cultural rights, and to eliminate any obstacles (INIM);
- **Prioritization of health interventions on sexual and reproductive rights linked to gender awareness** with a focus on adolescent health, sexual education, safe contraception, maternal, perinatal and neonatal health, STI and HIV/AIDS prevention and care, prevention of gender violence, prevention and care of oncological diseases, infertility and sterility, post reproductive health, and men's access to reproductive health services (NSRH);
- **Implementation of the Marco de Planificacion de Salud para Personas Indigenas y Comunidades Etnicas on the Caribbean Coast** that integrates traditional medicine practices of indigenous people in public health services and promotes healthcare of pregnant women taking into account their cultural practices and traditions;
- **Incorporation of gender equality principles and adaptation of Law 648 on gender equity to address inequalities in access to education and retention** with an emphasis on equity in rural schools and indigenous and Afro-descendent communities by: ensuring respect, non-discrimination, mistreatment, non-exclusion of girls and boys, and pregnant adolescents during school; incorporating a gender module into basic education curriculum that promotes a new masculinity and parental responsibility different from traditional patterns; integrating HIV preventive education with secondary and primary girls and boys; utilizing curriculum to drive the transformation of relations between men and women from an equity perspective; educating teachers in gender practices; and analyzing and developing pedagogical tools to improve educational materials including (Education Strategic Plan, National Policy on Early Childhood);
- **Improvement in accessing justice for victims of violence** and implementation of gender and human rights awareness training by changing environment with prevention, detection, and supportive actions to victims of domestic and sexual violence; increasing community participation;

increasing access of victims to legal, medical, psychological, and shelter services; and empowering victims to enable individual and family change (National Anti-Violence Strategy for Law 779);

- **Legal requirements for local governments to adopt and implement policies to support women's access to productive resources** by: providing legal and material appropriation of land to poor rural women through creation of a land fund; facilitating women's access to technical assistance; and improving access to credit and mortgages for women (Article 17 of Constitution); and
- **Improvement in gender equality in food security** by: increasing access to rural education and training for women, men, boys, and girls; supporting family, community and school gardens; providing nutrition education; promoting integral care of children for women workers; strengthening organization/association of men and women producers; mainstreaming gender in subprograms and making visible women's leadership; training women and men in irrigated production and management/development of water resources; and integrating a strong gender equality focus in implementation of all food and security initiatives through creation of gender units, conducting gender assessments, and using gender indicators in programs (NHDP, Agricultural and Forestry Strategy, and National Food Policy and Law 693).

### III.2.2 GENDER CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### I. GENDER GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

##### **Gap #1: Adolescent girls and boys face different gender-based constraints to continue early education in primary and secondary school.**

Boys have slightly less schooling on average than girls on the Caribbean Coast. In the RAAS, 45 percent of primary and secondary school age boys are not in school compared to 40 percent of their female peers. Illiteracy rates are comparable between boys and girls in the RAAS (25.6 percent of girls and 25.2 percent of boys are illiterate, respectively).<sup>cxvii</sup> However, many experts identify that boys are still given preferential treatment for schooling in Afro-descendent and indigenous communities as girls are more valued at home helping their mothers.<sup>cxviii</sup> Parents are also hesitant to allow girls to leave home in fear of their daughters becoming pregnant.<sup>cxix</sup> In some rural areas of Nicaragua the average number of years of education for female household heads is 1.7 years compared to 2.7 years for male household heads.<sup>cc</sup>

Few job opportunities and low levels of schooling makes boys and girls vulnerable to the prevalence of drugs, trafficking of drugs, alcohol abuse, disintegration of family and community ties, school abandonment, sexual abuse and risky sex, unemployment and bleak prospects for a job. Boys and girls are both vulnerable as perpetrators and victims.<sup>cci</sup>

Both boys and girls may leave school on the Caribbean Coast because of lack of interest, domestic violence, and disintegration of the family.<sup>ccii</sup> Boys are more likely to leave school prematurely when their time is more valued as laborers, predominantly in the agriculture sector, or when they engage in illicit or criminal activity. Girls are more likely to leave prematurely if parents face resource constraints and favor sending boys to school over girls, or when girls are valued helping the family with domestic chores. As girls reach secondary school age, they may leave school due to pregnancy and may be expelled if they become pregnant, particularly in more rural, traditional, or religious schools. Primary school infrastructure and quality of materials is also poor, contributing to girls and boys both leaving school.<sup>cciii</sup>

Girls and boys on the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast are impacted in different ways by inadequate access to the educational system. Boys, without education and economic opportunities, become vulnerable to involvement in illicit activities. They are vulnerable to experiencing increased violence as a result of criminal activity and machismo as gangs fight amongst one other over property and resources. They are more likely to become young fathers that perpetuate the cycle of violence and poverty with their sons and daughters. Girls, without education and chances of economic independence, become vulnerable to early pregnancy, early marriage, and sexual and GBV. Out-of-school girls are also at more risk of social marginalization without public safe spaces and restricted mobility. They are less likely to have self-esteem, confidence, knowledge and awareness of their rights. They are at risk of becoming young mothers without education, skills, or economic empowerment that perpetuate the cycle of violence and poverty.

Afro-descendent or indigenous adolescent girls on the Caribbean Coast are extremely vulnerable to isolation, marginalization, GBV, early child marriage, early pregnancy, and HIV/AIDS and STIs.<sup>cciv</sup> Although there is a center for children with disabilities in Bluefields, there is no access for rural children, and girls with disabilities such as Down's syndrome, are at increased risk for sexual violence and incest.<sup>ccv</sup>

Infancy, early childhood, and adolescence are critical and opportune times when young children are internalizing values and attitudes about 'correct' behaviors.<sup>ccvi</sup> Young men are most receptive to more equitable versions of masculinity and to more informed perspectives regarding their roles and responsibilities in reproductive health and intimate relationships. As such, early reading programs are a key entry point where girls and boys learn values and where cycles of violence and poverty can be broken by eroding the culture of machismo, perhaps at less of a cost and higher success than trying to change attitudes of adults. Further, life skills training which targets out-of-school male and female adolescents is another critical activity to systematically integrate proven strategies that challenge prevailing gender roles and acceptance of GBV in the community.

Further, community engagement activities are opportune times to ensure a comprehensive and systematic approach is taken that challenges prevailing gender roles and fosters positive male and female role models for youth focused on prevention of GBV. Further, the Church is a powerful and influential force that shapes cultural and individual values in Nicaragua, which should be systematically engaged to ensure that this power is being positively leveraged.<sup>ccvii</sup>

**Gap #2: Adolescents are not being effectively reached to prevent adolescent pregnancy, sexual and gender-based violence, and the spread of HIV/AIDS and STIs among vulnerable populations.**

In the insecure RAAS and RAAN pregnancy rates are one of the highest in the country (3.0 and 4.5 children per woman, respectively)<sup>ccviii</sup> and teen pregnancies among girls age 10-19 account for 30.6 percent of all pregnancies in the RAAS region.<sup>ccix</sup> In 2009, half the women that died in RAAS as a result of pregnancy were teenagers and were in the poorest and most rural areas.<sup>ccx</sup> Almost half (46.3 percent) of women age 15-24 in the RAAS have already been pregnant once and only 24 percent of women age 15-24 in the RAAS use FP methods in their first sexual intercourse.<sup>ccxi</sup>

In Miskito families and communities on the Caribbean Coast and indigenous families and communities in the North Central region, the culture of machismo is well-ingrained.<sup>ccxii</sup> Sexual norms are such that a girl is considered "eligible" once she reaches puberty. It is not uncommon, especially among out-of-school girl youth, for them to fall prey to sexual attacks as young as 11 or 12 years old.<sup>ccxiii</sup> Girls and young women often become mothers while in their early teens, and in many cases as a result of rape.<sup>ccxiv</sup> Rates of incest, sexual abuse, and rape of girls age 6-16 are alarmingly high on the Caribbean Coast, with many cases not reported and criminal offenders rarely brought to justice. There were more than 1,095 reported rapes of girls and women ages 6 and above in 2011 in the RAAS, most incidences a result of violence within families,



which have caused cases of incest.<sup>ccxv</sup> Between 2005 and 2009, approximately 50 percent of reported rape victims were adolescent girls.<sup>ccxvi</sup>

Young mothers often depend on their partners, if the male stays and supports her, and the generally low levels of schooling of adolescent girls cause greater subjugation so that machismo becomes more acute.<sup>ccxvii</sup> Many adolescent mothers suffer social exclusion and their sons and daughters have high probabilities of remaining in the same situation, making it difficult to break the cycle of poverty from one generation to the next. The children of teen moms are more likely to: have their basic health and nutrition needs unmet; be at higher risk of death or illness; have more difficulties studying in school and learning to read; have less access to employment opportunities; be vulnerable to criminal activity or victims of violence; and become pregnant early on and continue this cycle.

A recent USAID review of FP projects identified that there is a lack of outreach targeted specifically to adolescent girls and boys in the region.<sup>ccxviii</sup> Another study identified the following reasons for girls in the RAAS not using FP methods: 25 percent of girls reported that they did not expect to have intercourse, 25 percent did not know any contraceptive method, and only 32.7 percent report having ever received information on SRH.<sup>ccxix</sup>

Between 1991 and January 2012 there were 171 reported HIV Cases in RAAS (Bluefields 118, Corn Island 23, Pearl Lagoon and Karawala 8 each), and 15 new cases reported thus far in 2012. In Bluefields in the RAAS 63 percent of the total HIV/AIDS cases in 2009 were among men in at-risk groups. In addition, over half (54 percent) of HIV/AIDS cases among the age group 10-19 were girls,<sup>ccxx</sup> although this may be attributed primarily to greater national screening efforts among adolescent girls and young pregnant women; only recently have increased numbers of at-risk men been targeted for testing.<sup>ccxxi</sup> There is a strong correlation of SGBV and negative cultural stigma with the exposure of adolescents to STIs, including HIV; few adolescent girls and boys access SRH services because of shame or fear of reprimand. Only 59 percent of women in the RAAS or RAAN without any formal education know of some STIs, compared to women with advanced schooling who have a 97 percent understanding of STI risks.<sup>ccxxii</sup>

The prostitution of adolescents, beginning at 14 years of age, is growing in the RAAS through the occurrence of parties and other “social events organized by drug traffickers,” some estimating that two of every five young women are involved in prostitution throughout the region.<sup>ccxxiii</sup> Young girls from indigenous communities near the Nicaragua-Honduras border on the Caribbean Coast are reportedly trafficked by drug gangs in connection with international drug trafficking with their families’ permission for up to \$2,000 to be sold or “borrowed” for several months.<sup>ccxxiv</sup> Cultural acceptance of this is reinforced by the ancient practice of Talamana among the Miskito people which requires families of victims of rape or abduction be given payment as restitution; as such Talamana is being utilized by drug traffickers for the purchase and sale of girls and adolescents.<sup>ccxxv</sup>

More recent recognition that men, particularly in more poor and rural communities, control girls’ and women’s access to reproductive health care has resulted in growing numbers of plans and programs addressing male engagement in FP and health initiatives.<sup>ccxxvi</sup> Girls lack the power and self-esteem to make decisions for themselves about themselves; they don’t believe they have control over their own bodies and boys believe girls are their property. Sexual education is *not* sufficient; early training is needed for boys and girls on how to make decisions and to promote positive images of gender roles.<sup>ccxxvii</sup>

There is great opportunity to draw on men’s sense of responsibility and positively engage them as fathers in this way. This requires listening to the voices of fathers, recognizing their own needs and interests, and making it clear how men themselves will benefit when they are actively engaged as fathers. Men and boys

play a critical role in changing negative gender roles that continue cycles of violence and contribute to early adolescent pregnancy and ultimately constrict growth and increased democratic governance.

There is also great opportunity to leverage faith-based organizations to positively engage adolescent boys and girls, men and women to redefine and promote positive gender roles to erode the culture of machismo. Churches in Nicaragua have tremendous cultural, social, and political influence and are already working with at-risk populations on the Caribbean Coast.

**Gap #3: Women have disproportionately less access to productive resources, which compromises households' abilities to become more food secure.**

Women's access to productive resources is critical to increase food security; the higher a Nicaraguan woman's education, skills and experiences the greater food security of their homes.<sup>ccxxviii</sup> A recently completed five year empirical community and household study on food security, nutrition, and gender in two communities of Nicaragua found that food security tends to rise with the percentage of revenue managed by women and with their involvement in the management of household resources (including financial resources) and intra-household decision making.<sup>ccxxix</sup>

However, decision-making regarding use of resources within households is predominantly dominated by men.<sup>ccxxx</sup> In very rural, indigenous, and traditional areas such as Jinotega the machismo culture is permissive of alcohol and GBV. It is also not uncommon in these areas for male fathers, partners, husbands and boyfriends to restrict movement and opportunities for girls and women, such as prohibiting a young woman from attending a technical skills workshop that would provide her with the skills necessary to secure regular income-generation.<sup>ccxxxi</sup>

GBV in Nicaragua cannot be divorced from gender equality since violence effects power in relationships, entrenched in a culture of machismo. Beyond the obvious human rights and social costs of violence, GBV also results in significant economic costs by lowering worker productivity and incomes and lowering rates of accumulation of human and social capital. It is estimated that lost wages due to family violence amount to 1.6 percent of GDP in Nicaragua, calculated by estimating lost earnings of abused women.<sup>ccxxxii</sup>

Most women in Nicaragua do not have land in their names, have little access to credit, little participation in the decision-making process on the use of resources, limited access to goods and resources, and little or no technical assistance.<sup>ccxxxiii</sup> Traditional cultural values and practices in Nicaragua do not consider women as independent citizens, rooted in patriarchal ideological patterns recognizing the man as the head of household. In mixed production units, female access to means of production or essential resources such as land, credit, technical assistance is subordinate to men.<sup>ccxxxiv</sup>

As a result, during the implementation of the Agrarian Reform Law of 1981, the land titles issued to individuals defaulted to the man as the head of household.<sup>ccxxxv</sup> Although there are numerous recent reforms promoting female land ownership, these customary traditions still prevail. Most rural women cultivate land that is not theirs; only 15 percent of women hold title to land under their own names.<sup>ccxxxvi</sup> Land ownership is fundamental to accessing other productive resources including credit, technology, and technical training and extension services. Land ownership can determine eligibility for credit and cooperative membership, resulting in a significant barrier for women to access these essential productive resources, which in turn decreases food security for vulnerable rural families.

Women need more credit to grow their businesses, get goods to market, and increase their families' incomes, but they often face obstacles in meeting requirements to secure enough capital.<sup>ccxxxvii</sup> Women receive only 11 percent of bank loans nationally.<sup>ccxxxviii</sup> In 2005, only 26.3 percent of rural female-headed

households accessed credit compared to 43.1 percent of male-headed households.<sup>ccxxxix</sup> Further, men secure, on average, 2.6 times the loan amount<sup>6</sup> than females in rural areas.<sup>ccxi</sup> Lastly, banks reportedly discriminate on the basis of sex by requiring women to have a husband, brother, son, or father co-sign on a loan application, whereas men are not required to have their spouse sign as a co-applicant.<sup>ccxli</sup>

As a result, female-headed households in Nicaragua have less access to inputs. On average, male-headed households own 2.4 agricultural livestock compared to 1.4 for female-headed households.<sup>ccxlii</sup> Fertilizer use by female-headed households is 16 percent compared to 31 percent of male-headed households.<sup>ccxliii</sup> Mechanical equipment use is 12 percent for female-headed households compared to 32 percent of male-headed households.<sup>ccxliv</sup> Both men and women face challenges with unreliable markets and limited access to technology, although women are slightly more disadvantaged; 10 percent of all male-led and 2 percent of female-led farms have access to irrigation.<sup>ccxlv</sup>

Women also face significant barriers in access to extension services and training they need in order to connect to markets, learn how to improve crops, use new technology, and better manage their production. Seventy-four percent of agricultural producers benefiting from technical assistance are men.<sup>ccxlvi</sup> One reason may be that many extension and training services are provided through cooperatives, most of which are private for-profit firms. In order to be a member of many cooperatives, land ownership is frequently a requirement, which automatically decreases the number of women that may access training.

Further, there is still a cultural perception that does not recognize women as producers, despite the fact that women are active throughout agricultural value chains.<sup>ccxlvii</sup> Personal biases and gender-based stereotypes held by extension workers can result in resistance to adopt inclusive training practices for women and men. Only two universities in Nicaragua offer gender in agriculture courses as part of training of technical workers at university level.<sup>ccxlviii</sup> Further, technical agricultural workers are predominantly male, which often creates a barrier for women who may be uncomfortable working with a male, or husbands or partners of women that are not comfortable with a male extension worker speaking to “his woman.”<sup>ccxlix</sup>

Lastly, women are burdened by the roles they play as producers, mothers, and community members, constraining their free time to participate in activities that might increase their productivity and incomes.<sup>cc</sup> In Nicaragua women work an average of 16 hour days per day completing all of their paid and unpaid productive roles within their homes and on their farms.<sup>ccli</sup> Nationally, 82.2 percent of women and 51.3 percent of men are engaged in reproductive work, and women spend an average of 5.5 hours per day performing reproductive work, while men spend an average of 2.9 hours on similar work.<sup>cclii</sup>

In families where men migrate, women are often forced to take on additional roles and responsibilities for agriculture, and limited social assistance for the disabled results in additional responsibilities of women, who are typically care providers. Women’s heavy workload affects their health, and ultimately their productivity and the amount of time they can dedicate to income-generating activities. When extension trainings, cooperative meetings, etc. do not take into account women’s more limited schedules, child care responsibilities, or location of the meeting (and the time it requires to travel to and from the meeting), this often prohibits women from participating. Labor-saving technologies that reduce women’s time spent on domestic activities and in farm production are critical to freeing up time for women to be more productive and efficient while decreasing their burden.

Numerous opportunities are present in Nicaragua that can be leveraged to promote women’s access to productive resources to increase food security. First, there is some perceived positive change in gender equality within households and men assisting with child care. Positive male role models need to be

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<sup>6</sup> Men, on average receive 7,967 in rural loan amounts compared to females that receive 3,013 cordobas on average

identified and publicly celebrated, and examples need to be highlighted of successful male/female (husband/wife) productive teams working collaboratively as partners to increase their families' incomes. Second, there are many examples of strong female community leaders throughout Nicaragua in rural areas that can be used as role models, such as a female leader in Jinotega working with a USAID project who successfully demanded that the municipality provide a community meeting space.<sup>ccliii</sup>

Women in Nicaragua also tend to be very community-oriented and have a natural tendency to come together to support one another. This natural tendency can be leveraged to reduce barriers. For example, group lending or savings mechanisms may work well among women to increase access to credit and finance. Savings groups such as these can also be key entry points to address issues such as empowerment and GBV and provide a community support network for women. Further, women may be amenable to coming together to provide rotating collective child care and cooking services in order to free their time to attend trainings, meetings, and engage in productive activities.<sup>ccliv</sup>

#### **Gap #4: Women face barriers in rising to key leadership and decision-making positions at top levels of productive organizations and associations.**

It is important to include women in decision-making positions in cooperatives and productive organizations to increase inclusion, transparency, sustainability, and competitiveness. Women entrepreneurs are leaders and are effective in their roles, and can be perceived as more efficient in their time use than men. Women are also recognized as being diplomatic and strategic. The World Bank and IFC have a plethora of documentation of women in leadership roles being good for both development and private business (E.g. “investing in women is smart economics”)<sup>7</sup> and can ultimately advance production efforts to increase incomes for poor family and reduce their food insecurity.<sup>cclv</sup>

Women play a small role in larger business enterprises where decisions are made in Nicaragua. Twenty-five percent of firms nationally have female participation in ownership.<sup>cclvi</sup> Only 10.3 percent of all cooperatives nationally are led by women.<sup>cclvii</sup> Thirty-two percent of small firms with fewer than 18 employees have a top female manager, but only 8.5 percent of large firms with over 100 employees can say the same. Sixty-two percent of small firms in Nicaragua have at least one female participating in ownership, compared with only 33 percent of large firms with female participation in ownership.<sup>cclviii</sup> Only 19 percent of all micro-businesses that are members of Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada (COSEP) are owned by women, and only 4 percent of medium-sized firms and 6 percent of large firms are owned by women.<sup>cclix</sup> Company boards that are members of COSEP, on average, are comprised of 19 percent women.<sup>cclx</sup>

Female firms have between 30 and 70 percent lower median profits than among male-owned firms according to a number of firm surveys from the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Region.<sup>cclxi</sup> Although relatively large female-owned firms are as productive as male-owned firms, micro and small female-owned firms are less productive than male-owned firms, where the majority of female-owned firms are found.<sup>cclxii</sup> Lower performance and smaller size can be attributed to female entrepreneurs having fewer employees, owning property of lower value, participating less in business training, and working fewer hours.<sup>cclxiii</sup>

Overarching reasons for women's lack of participation in top decision-making positions include a lack of equitable opportunities, domestic and labor violence, household time commitments, difficulty securing finances, poor education, and machista culture within institutions and businesses.<sup>cclxiv</sup> Female entrepreneurs do not have lower overall entrepreneurial ability than males, but are less likely to have access to training,

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<sup>7</sup> For reports, data, studies, and statistics on investing in women being good for private business, see World Bank and IFC including: <http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/cd22ec6a#cd22ec6a/1>; <http://live.worldbank.org/women-private-sector-good-development-and-business>; [http://www1.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/bb0b20004d0481febbebfff81ee631cc/IFC-issue-Brief\\_AM12\\_Women-and-Business.pdf?MOD=AJPERES](http://www1.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/bb0b20004d0481febbebfff81ee631cc/IFC-issue-Brief_AM12_Women-and-Business.pdf?MOD=AJPERES);

productive resources, and business development services. Training often follows traditional roles and shuts women out of more productive high-growth sectors.

Women's assets are consistently of lower value than those owned by men, which reduces collateral available to take out loans.<sup>cclxv</sup> In 2001 women owned only 36 percent to 41 percent of the value of household physical wealth.<sup>cclxvi</sup> Women rely more often on machinery and equipment for collateral than men in Nicaragua, accounting for more than 35 and 41 percent of collateral used by medium and large female-owned firms, respectively. Male-owned firms using this type of collateral is ten percentage points less for medium size firms and twenty percentage points less for large firms.<sup>cclxvii</sup> Further, in Nicaragua men report experiencing fewer barriers and requirements when deciding to borrow or invest. For example, 56.5 percent of medium size firms owned by women and 39.5 percent of male-owned firms report that they required collateral or a deposit in order to obtain financing. For large firms banks typically demand 80 percent collateral for those that are women-owned compared to 42 percent for male-owned firms.<sup>cclxviii</sup>

The formalization of enterprises is a major obstacle for many MSMEs.<sup>cclxix</sup> It is expensive and difficult to formalize a business in Nicaragua and women in particular lack the time, knowledge, and confidence to go through this process without support. Thus, many women work as informal business owners of micro-enterprises and are not able to move forward or receive assistance and technical support (E.g. belong to organizations that can provide networking, skills development, etc.) due to their informal status.<sup>cclxx</sup>

The lack of self-esteem is an obstacle for women and young women who grow up without a sense of confidence in a machista culture.<sup>cclxxi</sup> Women's leadership skills, negotiation skills, capacity to make assertive demands, and teamwork have not been effectively developed.<sup>cclxxii</sup> Also, women affiliated with chambers of commerce and COSEP member organizations in general do not know their economic and political rights.<sup>cclxxiii</sup> Regulatory burdens affect both male and female entrepreneurs, but female entrepreneurs tend to feel less equipped to maneuver complex procedures. They report not having sufficient information on business registry procedures and enforcement of regulations. Women also feel more vulnerable to corrupt officials. Female entrepreneurs have more difficulty accessing networks and markets for their products.<sup>cclxxiv</sup>

The patriarchal culture in Nicaragua is reflected in the organizational culture of many large businesses, cooperatives, and organizations, which discourages the participation of women. The laws and policies governing business associations do not generally incorporate gender equality.<sup>cclxxv</sup> Typically, older men are not used to working with women in what can be categorized as an "Old Boys' Club" mentality where assertive behavior from women is seen as masculine and frowned upon.<sup>cclxxvi</sup>

Further, women have disproportionately less free time to devote to developing their businesses and participating in leadership positions.<sup>cclxxvii</sup> Women are primarily responsible for the care of their home and family, and as a telling result COSEP has no women in their child bearing years (age 25-35) participating as members.<sup>cclxxviii</sup> The profile of a unionized business woman is one who works in the formal urban Micro, small, medium enterprise (MSME) sector, a business partner, older than age 40 with children older than 5 years, and divorced.<sup>cclxxix</sup>

However, many opportunities exist to support women in decision-making and leadership roles in Nicaragua. Many private firms and organizations such as COSEP are beginning to understand the importance of gender equality and are working on implementing gender policies and action plans to actively engage women in decision-making positions and support women as entrepreneurs. The experience of these organizations can be drawn upon as best practices and they can be used as role models for other private industries and organizations.

Additionally, there are many successful female role models and entrepreneurs that have succeeded with the support of their husbands and male colleagues that can be used as mentors. Further, there are numerous networks and organizations that are increasingly providing support for women entrepreneurs to overcome personal, cultural, and institutional obstacles to growing their businesses and incomes and becoming decision-makers and leaders.

## **2. EFFECT OF GENDER ROLES ON WORK TO BE UNDERTAKEN**

The different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace, and household will affect the work to be undertaken. Women's time burden within households and limited mobility in more traditional areas will require targeted efforts during program and project activities to effectively reach and engage female beneficiaries. Particularly in more rural and indigenous areas where men have more control over girls and women, targeted efforts need to be made to engage men. Engaging men is critical in ensuring females can safely participate in life skills training and in programs focused on increasing economic productivity.

Persistent machista attitudes will be challenging to overcome and erode to ensure that both women and men are supported in their decision-making positions; underlying attitudes and gender biases must be effectively addressed in training and capacity-building activities to ensure that project benefits are being maximized.

Lastly, men are not typically involved in traditionally female-dominated spheres, including health, nutrition, and education, and may be quick to dismiss gender equality issues as "women's issues." Since men are more likely to be receptive to messages about gender equality when received from another man, particularly if that man is a role model or respected community leader, more men need to be engaged. The lack of men involved as positive role models, community members, and family members may present challenges in bringing about meaningful and sustainable changes toward improved attitudes on gender equality and an erosion of the machista culture.

## **3. EFFECT OF ANTICIPATED RESULTS ON WOMEN AND MEN**

The anticipated results of the planned work may affect women and men differently. Potential adverse impacts and/or risks of gender-based exclusion could result unless gender differences are adequately taken into account.

Although there are widespread efforts in Nicaragua to empower women and girls as leaders and decision-makers, there have not been consistent efforts to engage men and boys to support their wives, daughters, sisters, and colleagues in this process. Numerous experts in Nicaragua cite examples of well-intended female empowerment programs that have two unintended negative consequences due to lack of male engagement in the process: 1) an increase in domestic violence and/or divorce as women's self-esteem and confidence increase and changes the existing power dynamic within her home and marriage; and 2) a shifting of the burden of childcare and household work to an older school-age daughter who may then drop-out of school to support her mother as the mother spends more time engaging in alternative income-generating work.<sup>cclxxx</sup>

In addition, poorly trained life skills trainers or reading promoters may inadvertently reinforce existing gender stereotypes among young girls and boys. It is critical that all male and female trainers, educators, and promoters are trained with a vetted program that challenges their own personally held beliefs and

stereotypes on traditional gender roles, and that ensures they can become champions of positive gender roles in all of their work with youth and their families.

Lastly, women's current lack of access to productive resources, including land and credit, results in significant disparities between women and men. Programming that does not carefully integrate concrete actions to remove gender-based constraints to access productive resources may risk reinforcing and widening the gap between women and men. This in turn may reinforce and perpetuate power imbalances and cycles of violence in traditional communities.

### III.2.3 PROMISING PRACTICES

Although there is a multitude of examples of projects and activities in Nicaragua working toward improving education outcomes and quality for boys and girls, providing life skills training, and integrating gender equality and female empowerment in food security initiatives, concrete impact evaluations with demonstrable quantitative or qualitative results could not be identified.

#### ***Promising Practice #1 Positively change male and female attitudes for increased gender equality and male participation in traditionally female-dominated areas of health and education.***

The USAID-supported FamiSalud project<sup>cclxxxix</sup> mid-term evaluation identified interventions that improved gender equality, male participation, and female leadership within communities. Specific activities included training health care personnel to understand gender equality and the importance of male involvement for healthy outcomes. Ministry of Health (MINSa) officials received awareness training targeted to modify their preconceptions regarding the relationships between men and women, and to incorporate gender equality concepts into their professional practice and in their daily activities. More men were trained in Community Based Distribution of Family Planning Services (ECMAC), allowing them to perform activities usually performed by women and promoting joint work of both men and women within the family and community.

Outcomes included increased participation of men in weighing sessions for their babies and prenatal visits, and increased presence of women in decision-making positions in organizations and community activities. Men in the community were motivated to accept change, empowered with more information, which resulted in men becoming gradually more involved in seeking solutions to family and community health care problems. Both women and men now have a higher acceptance of medical care and it has helped women to learn more about their rights and has increased their decision-making power within the households, empowered with information and knowledge.

#### ***Promising Practice #2: Engage entire communities, faith-based groups, and parents to support male and female youth leadership.***

The Centro de Derechos Humanos, Ciudadanos, y Autonomicos (CEDEHCA) focuses on community development with Afro-Caribe and Miskito people on the Caribbean Coast with activities to strengthen the autonomy process through democratic processes. The Gender, Age, and Ethnicity Policy addresses requirements for participation of men, women, youth, and representatives of various ethnicities in decision-making positions and membership throughout all of their activities.<sup>cclxxxii</sup>

The Youth Setting New Horizons program operates in 15 communities on the Caribbean Coast. It holds workshops and devotes time to meet with parents trying to educate communities on the importance of educating girls in order to overcome barriers that girls face to participate in leadership trainings and sports activities.<sup>cclxxxiii</sup> There are approximately 500 young people (ages 15-24) participating in Youth Horizons in RAAS and RAAN. Regional and municipal youth councils with formal legal status are created and supported. Male and female youth leaders participating in the program are elected to serve as youth secretaries, and 60 percent of these leaders are young women.<sup>cclxxxiv</sup>

CEDEHCA also conducts community awareness campaigns to detect and combat violence against women and addresses needs of rape victims.<sup>cclxxxv</sup> Their project dedicated to SRH includes an objective to decrease teen pregnancy. They work with girls on developing self-esteem, cultural identity, and knowing their rights as women and Afro-descendants. Girls' parents, religious and community leaders are expected to play an active supportive role and be engaged both before program inception and on an on-going basis.<sup>cclxxxvi</sup>



***Promising Practice #3: Implement a gender policy that includes concrete M&E indicators measuring results on decision-making and community perceptions.***

Fundacion para la Autonomia y el Desarrollo de la Costa Atlantica de Nicaragua (FADCANIC), one of USAID's implementing partners, elaborated a new Gender Policy in 2010, and they are in the process of implementing a Gender Action Plan to implement it at the project level, including specific indicators and targets.<sup>cclxxxvii</sup>

In the education sector, FADCANIC is working with girls and boys (ages 10-24) in school and after-school curriculum, integrating SRH, GBV, and justice issues in their work. They are working to increase leadership of women as decision-makers at the community level, recognizing that it is important for youth to observe respectful interactions between their parents and to see their mothers as community leaders. Although they have found it more challenging to work with fathers, they are making efforts to engage both mothers and fathers while learning at the same time that it is better to engage men and women separately.

They also have projects aimed to defend rights of women where they work with municipal officials in Bluefields, focusing on non-violence, self-esteem, leadership, and conflict resolution in communities. They implement gender training in communities, and after identifying women's constraints in attending trainings due to child care, they hired a teacher to care for children while parents attend training workshops.<sup>cclxxxviii</sup>

***Promising Practice #4: Promote female leadership with community and male support to elevate women's status and include women's needs in setting food security project agendas.***

During specific activities of the FAO Special Program for Food Security (SPFS)<sup>cclxxxix</sup> they worked with 22 rural communities through a system of community promoters that acted as spokespersons for their communities. The practice to encourage women promoters in FSN (Food Security and Nutrition) activities is currently being adopted by a Nicaraguan national institution like the Instituto Nicaraguense de Tecnologia Agropecuaria (INTA) extending it to the rest of the country in 131 other municipalities. The participation of women as community promoters was encouraged throughout the project and their number increased from 200 in 2003 up to roughly 600 in 2010, around 30 percent of the total number of promoters (2,200). Mechanisms that made success possible include: 1) Setting "family" as a productive unit so that activities were shaped on the different needs of women and men within the households; 2) Women and youth benefited from tailored activities integrated with self-esteem development, entrepreneur programs, etc.; 3) Setting gender targets, involving gender experts in integrating and implementing specific gender activities; and 4) Full time FAO gender specialist backstopping projects (cost spread over several projects of FAO's portfolio).

The presence of women promoters contributed to ensuring that women's concerns were taken into account. The reputation of women promoters in the community improved, as well as their self-esteem and the communities' social capital. As a result, there were changes in mentality and perceptions by raising awareness on women's and men's contributions to household productive outputs. The program had a positive impact on intra-household relations and on women's self-esteem. The role of women as direct food producers and leaders of other productive activities such as horticulture and husbandry was recognized and enhanced, providing specific capacity development trainings to 5,246 women and 6,954 men. Enhanced respect within the community for women promoters was observed.

***Promising Practice #5: Take a family approach to productive development projects, considering the unique needs and responsibilities of all male and female producers within a productive family unit.***

The USAID-supported project, ACORDAR, has closed out but they had success integrating gender in a value chain agriculture project and leveraging funds from the private sector. At the heart of this success was a well-developed gender policy with project funding allocated to implement the policy and well-defined qualitative indicators for evaluating statistics and monitoring the project's progress. Part of their success was in their general approach to incorporate all family members into the production process and training technical staff in the field to approach women and men as equal production partners. As a result they experienced less resistance from men, and women report increased feelings of empowerment.<sup>ccxc</sup> In addition, at the beginning of the project only 18 percent of producer associations/ cooperatives members they worked with were women, but at the end of the seven year project period (2012) 40 percent of members were female. The project also worked with one micro-finance partner with a gender policy and one bank with a gender policy, resulting in high participation of women in micro-finance loans.<sup>ccxci</sup>

### III.2.4 APPLICATION OF USG NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

The USG National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security (WPS) has strategic priorities and actions that may be applied to USAID/Nicaragua's strategic priorities to improve the safety and competitiveness of at-risk children in the Caribbean Coast and enhance opportunities for sustainable income growth in at-risk rural areas in the North Central region.<sup>8</sup> The following are priority actions and principles of the NAP on WPS that are not intended for USAID/Nicaragua to follow rigidly, but are rather meant to simply inform and guide recommendations and indicators, as appropriate and applicable, in subsequent sections of this analysis and indicators.

- **Integrate and institutionalize a gendered approach to peace and security** by: 1) developing strategies for countries threatened by insecurity that reflect strong gender analysis and clear approaches for advancing gender equality and female empowerment; and 2) tracking investments in women, peace, and security, and monitoring progress with indicators designed to measure gender equality, GBV, and women's empowerment results.
- **Promote women's participation in peace processes and decision-making** by: 1) increasing women's participation and leadership in peace building, reconstruction, and transitional processes through training, financial support to address key barriers such as childcare and transportation costs, and assistance with developing and communicating strategic platforms for action; 2) empowering women to play leadership roles in the civic arena through programs to build professional capacity of female journalists and engage local women, including female youth, in peace and policy dialogues; and 3) building resilience through assistance that supports women's roles in the management of natural resources and adaptation to climate change.
- **Strengthen protection of women, youth and children from harm, discrimination, and abuse** by: 1) promoting the safety of women and girls in conflict settings through research and programming around innovative technologies (E.g. solar lighting, fuel-efficient stoves, or mobile phone applications) that have the potential to reduce vulnerabilities to violence and abuse; and 2) targeting underlying norms, attitudes, and behaviors that perpetuate GBV through support for research and evidence-based interventions.

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<sup>8</sup> Identified overlapping strategic priorities of the NAP on WPS and USAID/Nicaragua's strategic priorities are integrated in suggested indicators and recommended activities in section IV.

- **Promote women's roles in conflict prevention** by: 1) engaging women in community-based conflict mitigation; 2) investing in women's economic empowerment through micro-finance programs and assistance that links women to markets, builds their skills and leadership in business and agriculture, and increases their access to productive assets such as land and credit; 3) increasing access to education, including programs targeting girls' enrollment and retention and safety in schools; and 4) promoting the access of women and girls to quality health services in crisis and conflict-affected environments, including their ability to make and influence decisions about healthcare and social services management in their communities.

# IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The USAID Gender Policy expects that all DOs integrate the following outcomes: 1) Reduce gender disparities in access to public and political decision-making spaces and positions at local and regional levels, 2) Reduce cultural acceptance of GBV; and 3) Increase capability of women, girls and boys, particularly from ethnic and linguistic minority populations, to realize their rights, determine their life outcomes, and influence decision-making in households, communities and societies. As such, the following recommendations, including suggested results, indicators, and potential activities are developed in-line with these USAID outcome objectives as they directly relate to USAID/Nicaragua’s DOs, Intermediate Results (IRs), sub-IRs, and planned activities in its upcoming CDCS.

## IV.1 ABILITY TO ENGAGE IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE INCREASED

### IV.1.1 POTENTIAL RESULTS AND INDICATORS

**Table 1: Potential Results Indicators for Development Objective: Ability to Engage in Democratic Governance Increased**

Result	Indicators (Output and Outcome)
<p><b><i>Increased knowledge and ability of government leaders and officers (in targeted USAID-supported municipality programs) to implement national laws related to gender equality and GBV</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of municipal laws, policies, ordinances or procedures drafted, or adopted to promote gender equality at the regional or local level</li> <li>- Proportion of municipal budgets allocated to gender implementation plans/ activities and GBV reduction (<i>Target: 5% of municipal budget</i>)</li> <li>- Number and percentage of USG-supported infrastructure-related municipal projects that explicitly address labor saving technology for women in production or reduce time use on household chores (<i>Target: 50% of projects</i>)</li> <li>- Proportion of female public officials who report increased self-esteem and ability to manage at the conclusion of USG-supported training/ programming (<i>Target: 75% of female public officials</i>)</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Strengthened advocacy efforts of civil society organization efforts (in targeted USAID-supported municipalities) to lobby government to implement laws related to gender equality and GBV</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proportion of female leaders who report increased self-esteem and ability to lead at the conclusion of USG-supported training/ programming disaggregated by age 10-29; age 30 and over, ethnicity (<i>Target: 75% of female leaders</i>)</li> <li>- Proportion of local leaders trained that agree with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political opportunities disaggregated by age 10-29 and age 30 and over, male/ female (<i>Target: 80% of local leaders</i>)</li> </ul>

Result	Indicators (Output and Outcome)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number and percentage of civil society groups supported by USG assistance that advocate for issues including gender equality, GBV, rights of ethnic and linguistic minorities, and LGBT rights (<i>Target: 20% of CSOs</i>)</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Increased number of USG-supported media campaigns and research initiatives that integrate gender analysis, gender equality, GBV, HIV, SRH issues</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number and percentage of USG trained journalists reporting increased knowledge on national laws related to gender equality and gender based violence disaggregated by gender (<i>Target: 80% of journalists</i>)</li> <li>- Number and percentage of USG supported media tools and reports that address gender equality and gender based violence (<i>Target: 10% of media tools and reports</i>)</li> <li>- Number and percentage of USG-supported studies in which gender analysis tools are applied (<i>Target: 90% of studies</i>)</li> <li>- Number and percentage of USG-supported studies related to gender equality, female empowerment, and GBV as they relate to food security and democracy and governance (<i>Target: 15% of studies</i>)</li> </ul>

#### IV.1.2 SUPPORTING STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

The following are potential supporting strategies and national resources, including activities or initiatives by other donors, host country government institutions, and civil society groups where there may be potential areas of collaboration or partnership.

- **The Nicaraguan Institute for Women (INIM)** is guided by twelve strategic actions including: promotion of citizenship awareness of gender equality; achievement of 50 percent of women or more in leadership positions within institutions, political parties, and social movements; promotion and visibility of women’s participation in electoral processes as candidates and voters; training and support to female electoral candidates; promotion of a human rights and human development model among women in accordance with principles of justice, sustainability, peace, and wellbeing for all people without discrimination.
- **The Joint Gender Program implemented by INIM and several sector institutions with the assistance of UNFPA and other UN Agencies** was a recent collaborative initiative focused on the institutionalization of gender practices in 15 municipalities. This program promoted gender mainstreaming in the municipal budget cycle by producing and validating manuals, and created gender commissions and policies in eight municipalities.<sup>cxcii</sup>
- **The Common Fund for Civil Society and Governance** is a multi-donor fund that supports civil society for democratic governance in Nicaragua managed by IBIS, a Danish NGO. It works to strengthen capacity of civil society, increase the participation of civil society in national democratic

processes, and harmonize donor support to civil society organizations.<sup>ccxciii</sup> The Fund finances gender equality projects for local CSOs, including formulation of gender policies at the municipal level.

- **AMUNIC (Association of Nicaraguan Municipalities)** has already adopted gender sensitive methodologies of work, fostering their application in 153 municipalities across the country. This work, supported by the FAO, can be drawn upon and applied in partnership with FAO. FAO and AMUNIC may have useful lessons learned and/or materials that can be used or drawn upon rather than recreating the wheel.
- The **OEU** is working on a media initiative related to gender equality promotion and the **World Bank** is launching a campaign called HACKATON where they plan to establish a telecommunication structure to reach people suffering from GBV.
- **Puntos de Encuentro** is an organization focusing on capacity development of youth and adult women to promote and defend gender and intergenerational equality and diversity through training and education, production of mass media communications, and lobbying.
- **FUNDEMOS** works to strengthen local governance, promoting female leaders in public/community spaces to increase presence in public decision-making spaces..
- **Federacion Agropecuaria de Cooperativas de Mujeres Productoras del Campo de Nicaragua (FEMUPROCAN)** works with cooperatives emphasizing youth leadership, education and empowerment, production and entrepreneur development, and institutional strengthening.
- The **AECID Integral Program for the Promotion for the Right of Women to Live Free of GBV** (Phase 2) provides free quality care to domestic and sexual violence victims; accompanies and monitors cases; promotes public defenders to provide access to the justice system to low-income people; and provides municipal training to strengthen outreach workers network on their legal expertise for them to better serve the population.
- **CEIMM-URACAAN** (Bluefields) works in the RAAS conducting capacity training for female leaders in the region (working with university students, authorities, and some at the municipal level). CEIMM has been involved in shaping policies for equality and violence against women in RAAS and RAAN; conducting capacity training for women leaders in municipalities, and working on issues specific to Miskitos, Afro-Caribe, and other indigenous populations.

### IV.1.3 POTENTIAL FOR SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

The following illustrative list of potential activities is suggested for USAID/Nicaragua to consider incorporating into its CDCS and specific project activities. All potential activities are suggested for USAID/Nicaragua targeted municipalities only. These potential activities may be considered at the strategic level, but should not replace specific project-level analyses to identify specific and appropriate actions and levels of engagement. Suggested activities are provided by each USAID/Nicaragua-planned Intermediate Result (IR) and sub-IR as follows:

- 1.1 Effectiveness in Local Governance Improved
  - o 1.1.1: Accountability of Targeted Local Governments Improved
  - o 1.1.2: Administration of Public Resources Improved
- 1.2 Advocacy for Democratic Processes Increased
  - o 1.2.1: Capacity of Key Leaders Enhanced

- 1.2.2: Civil Society Strengthened
- 1.3 Dissemination of Independent Information Increased
  - 1.3.1: Independent Media Presence Strengthened
  - 1.3.2: Research and Policy Analysis Enhanced

Per USAID/Nicaragua’s request, suggested potential activities are categorized in order of priority for each sub-IR (high, medium, low). However, all recommendations for specific activities are based on analysis of existing gender gaps in the country and are closely tailored to be integrated into existing planned activities in the CDCS to ensure activities avoid unintended negative effects. Potential activities may individually strengthen each planned activity in the CDCS from a gender perspective, while collectively building upon one another to maximize impact. Thus, all of the potential activities are considered to be of high importance as they work in concert to target underlying cultural beliefs of men and women as well as institutional barriers. For example, only addressing institutional problems while not addressing beliefs will not have the same impact as working comprehensively to address both.

**Table 2: Potential Activities for Development Objective: Ability to Engage in Democratic Governance Increased**

IR	Activity	Priority	Resources
1.1	Target self-esteem and confidence training to assist women elected and public officials to flourish in an otherwise male-dominated sphere, ensuring a comprehensive approach is taken to positively engage their spouses, parents, and siblings (as appropriate) to support them	Medium	Medium
1.1	Train and encourage senior managers and local leaders, particularly men, to become visible advocates of gender equality to erode the culture of machismo that persists, particularly in rural municipal institutions	Medium	Medium
1.1	Provide training to local elected officials and municipal gender commissions to understand and implement GON strategies, plans, and laws related to gender equality, GBV	High	Medium
1.1	Provide capacity building training to municipal officials to conduct gender analyses that will assist in identifying and investing in infrastructure projects that will reduce women’s time burden (E.g. particularly in collecting water)	High	Medium
1.1	Provide technical assistance to municipal public service officers to apply gender-responsive budgeting in municipal planning	Medium	Medium
1.2	Train local male (boys and men) community leaders, including religious leaders, in gender awareness using vetted male engagement techniques, focused on addressing entrenched culture of machismo and GBV	High	Medium
1.2	Train local community female, youth, LGBT members, and ethnic/ linguistic minority leaders with a focus on self-esteem and confidence building with an inclusive approach that engages men and boys as partners to foster and promote an environment of gender equality	Medium	Medium

IR	Activity	Priority	Resources
1.2	Target and select CSOs for capacity building support that are able to effectively represent the interests of, empower, and mobilize populations including women and girls living in poverty or rural areas, at-risk boys and girls, women and girls with disabilities, indigenous women and ethnic/ linguistic minorities, and members of the LGBT community while at the same time engaging with men as partners to uproot the culture of machismo	High	Low
1.2	Strengthen the presence and capacity of CSOs to advocate for and lobby the justice system and municipalities to effectively implement national laws addressing gender equality and GBV and target underlying norms, attitudes, and behaviors that perpetuate GBV and a culture of machismo (E.g. facilitate outreach to families, community and faith-based organizations, and community leaders to promote behavior change communication)	High	Medium
1.3	Train male and female journalists in gender-awareness to critically assess and report on key gender equality issues for men, women, girls and boys, members of the LGBT community, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, including GBV and SRH issues, as well as fomenting awareness of national laws combating violence against women, equality and rights, and equal access to land and other productive resources	High	Medium
1.3	Ensure media tools and outlets such as web sites, blogs, mobile phones, etc. integrate appropriate targeting and messaging to groups of men, women, girls, boys, members of ethnic and linguistic minorities, and the LGBT community	High	Medium
1.3	Integrate into media and social marketing activities themes and topics on gender equality, GBV, and SRH, family planning to prevent early pregnancy, engaging men and boys as partners, and increasing the uptake of HIV/STI testing and counseling among high risk populations such as MSM and transgender populations	Medium	Medium
1.3	Integrate in outreach and media activities promotion of positive imagery of men and boys that confront traditional ideas of masculinity (E.g. showing men and boys caring for children and babies, involved in FP, etc.) use strong female protagonists as characters in media, carefully select local and national celebrities to be used in media campaigns as role models men and women that demonstrate in their public and personal lives that they practice gender equality, and promote visual communication materials with positive images of males and females taking part in decision-making roles	Medium	Medium



IR	Activity	Priority	Resources
1.3	Ensure gender analysis is applied to USG-supported research and policy, particularly in the subject areas of democracy and governance, political participation, food security, and other economic growth areas, with an emphasis (where appropriate) on analyzing the social and economic costs of GBV in Nicaragua	High	Low

#### IV.1.4 ANTICIPATED RESISTANCE

Implementing the above recommended activities will not come without challenges. First and foremost, public officials, leaders, and institutions must recognize that gender inequalities exist in the first place. Without this basic understanding as a foundation it will be difficult to convince those in decision-making positions for the need to take action. “Gender equality” also needs to be appropriately understood by public officials and leaders not as something that refers to women’s issues that women alone should be responsible for, but as something that women and men must work on together. Gender awareness trainings for local officials and community leaders can contribute to this understanding.

Second, public officials, administrators, judges, and community leaders may hold personal beliefs and judgments about traditional gender roles and biases about members of ethnic/ linguistic minorities or the LGBT community. In their personal lives, professionals in charge of implementing laws and policies on gender equality and GBV may be victims or perpetrators of violence themselves.

There is a perception that once there are 50 percent females in decision making positions, the work to achieve gender equality will be accomplished, not recognizing that placing women in leadership positions alone will not translate directly into gender equality in the implementation of policies and laws. Thus, engaging men as partners and ensuring appropriate training is critical to ensure that men feel secure in sharing positions of power with women, that women have the confidence and capacity to succeed in their roles, and to ensure both women and men are equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to implement gender awareness laws and policies.

Lastly, resources are always a constraint. In order to implement trainings, develop and implement gender action plans, and integrate gender analysis and awareness into institutional frameworks within municipalities and CSOs, resources are undeniably required. Because GON does not have sufficient funds to allocate to municipalities to implement national laws and policies, there will likely be resistance from fiscal agents and decision-makers in allocating already constrained budgets to gender-specific activities. Where possible, it will be optimal to partner with other donors already working on gender-responsive budgeting and gender training at the municipal level, and to target a minimum of 5 percent of general budgets to fund gender equality action plans or activities, understanding that monetary allocation is only a small component of implementing gender-responsive budgets.<sup>9</sup>

## IV.2 VULNERABILITY OF TARGETED POPULATIONS REDUCED

<sup>9</sup> A minimum target of 5% of general budgets allocated to fund gender equality action plans or activities is identified as it is an internationally recognized standard minimum amount of budget allocation, although there could be a wide variation in what is appropriate by sector; gender-responsive budget analyses are required to identify appropriate allocation levels. See UN Women’s page for more resources on gender responsive budgeting including best practices, lessons learned, and training guides and tools at: [http://www.gender-budgets.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=15&Itemid=187](http://www.gender-budgets.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15&Itemid=187)

## IV.2.1 POTENTIAL RESULTS AND INDICATORS

Table 3: Potential Results and Indicators for Vulnerable Populations

Result	Indicators (Output and Outcome)
<p><b><i>Reduced cultural acceptance of GBV and gender inequality of early learners (boys and girls)</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number and percentage of early reading materials used in USG-supported programs with gender-appropriate language with positive gender-role imagery (<i>Target: 100% of reading material</i>)</li> <li>- Number and percentage of reading specialists delivering content to students trained in gender-appropriate language, communication, and confidence building disaggregated by sex (<i>Target: 100% of specialists</i>)</li> <li>- Proportion of readers reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal opportunities to education, disaggregated by sex and ethnicity (<i>Target: 50% of readers</i>)</li> <li>- Proportion of readers that views GBV as less acceptable after being exposed to USG programming, disaggregated by sex and ethnicity (<i>Target: 50% of readers</i>)</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Reduced cultural acceptance of GBV and gender inequality of adolescent boys and girls</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number and percentage of USG-supported private workforce partners providing internships/ job opportunities to adolescents that adopt and implement a gender action plan and/or activities inclusive of anti-violence and anti-discrimination actions using World Bank GEM Model (<i>Target: 30% of partners</i>)</li> <li>- Number of youth referred to GBV services (e.g. health, legal, psycho-social counseling, shelters, hotline, others) disaggregated by sex, age, and ethnicity</li> <li>- Number and percentage of life skills trainers trained in gender-appropriate language, communication, peaceful conflict resolution, and confidence building, disaggregated by sex (<i>Target: 100% of trainers</i>)</li> <li>- Proportion of life skills participants reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political opportunities, disaggregated by sex and ethnicity (<i>Target: 50% of participants</i>)</li> <li>- Proportion of life skills participants that view GBV as less acceptable after participating in or being exposed to USG programming, disaggregated by sex and ethnicity (<i>Target: 50% of participants</i>)</li> </ul>

Result	Indicators (Output and Outcome)
<b>Reduced cultural acceptance of GBV within community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number and percentage of local media campaigns that include gender equality and non-violence messaging (<i>Target: 100% of campaigns</i>)</li> <li>- Number of community or neighborhood action plans or procedures drafted, or adopted to promote gender equality in neighborhoods and local communities</li> </ul>
<b>Decrease of women's time burden</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proportion of time target population allocates to unpaid household activities and paid or unpaid productive activities disaggregated by age (10-29, age 30 and over) and sex (<i>Target: Women's work burden is reduced by 20% through improved technologies, services, and infrastructure</i>)</li> <li>- Number and proportion of FtF Innovation Pilots granted that are designed explicitly to develop time-saving technology that reduces women's work burden (<i>Target: 50% of FtF Pilots</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Increased capability of women and girls to influence decision-making in households, communities, and societies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Percentage of target population that views GBV as less acceptable after participating in or being exposed to USG programming, disaggregated by sex, age 10-29, age 30 &amp; over (<i>Target: 50% of target population</i>)</li> <li>- Proportion of females who report increased self-esteem, confidence, and ability to assume decision-making roles in the community at the conclusion of USG-supported training/programming, disaggregated by age 10-29; age 30 and over (<i>Target: 75% of females</i>)</li> <li>- Proportion of target population reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political opportunities- disaggregated by sex, age 10-29, age 30 and over (<i>Target: 50%</i>)</li> <li>- Proportion or percentage of USG-supported micro-businesses that graduate in size (disaggregated by sex, age, marital status of owner, disaggregated by size of business)</li> <li>- Proportion or percentage of informal businesses that are formalized with USG assistance (disaggregated by sex, age, marital status of owner)</li> </ul>

Result	Indicators (Output and Outcome)
<p><b><i>Increase of women's access to productive resources (including credit)</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proportion of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, technical assistance, income, or employment), disaggregated by age 10-29; age 30 &amp; over (<i>Target: 30% female</i>)</li> <li>- Number/ percentage of technical/ loan officers reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political opportunities, disaggregated by sex and age (<i>Target: 75% of officers</i>)</li> <li>- Number of lending institutions receiving USG-supported loan guarantees that adopt and implement a gender action plan (<i>Target: 60% of institutions</i>)</li> <li>- Number and percentage of USG-supported evaluations or analysis of food security investments conducted that incorporate Feed the Future's Women in Agriculture Index measurements (<i>Target: 100% of evaluations and analyses</i>)</li> </ul>

## IV.2.2 SUPPORTING STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

The following are potential supporting strategies and national resources, including activities or initiatives by other donors, host country government institutions, and civil society groups where there may be potential areas of collaboration or partnership.

- The **National Human Development Plan (NHDP) 2008-2012**<sup>ccxciv10</sup> emphasizes gender equity and rights of women, children, and youth as one of the founding principles of the governmental Power Citizen Model which commits the GON to promoting participation of women in political, economic, and social development processes and their leadership in all areas. The NHDP recognizes women as agents of change that require access to productive assets and resources, equal participation, equal rights and equal opportunities.
- **The National Strategy on Sexual and Reproductive Health (NSRH)** has prioritized interventions including adolescent health, sexual education, safe contraception, maternal, perinatal and neonatal health, STI and HIV/AIDS prevention and care, prevention of GBV, prevention and care of oncological diseases, infertility and sterility, post-reproductive health, male access to reproductive health services, and promotion of sexual and reproductive rights linked to gender awareness.
- The **National STI HIV/AIDS National Communication Strategy (2011-2015)** calls attention to vulnerable groups including women, MSM, and transsexuals with targeted messaging for each distinct risk group.

<sup>10</sup> According to the Minister of External Relations in an interview on Oct. 10, 2012, the new Plan is still unpublished due to pending negotiations of a Financial Economic Program with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

- The **Ministry of Education Strategic Plan (2011-2015)** includes the following strategies: implement gender practices through the educational process to drive the transformation of relations between men and women from an equity perspective; educate teachers in gender practices; analyze and develop pedagogical tools and improve educational materials with the integration of a gender module into the curriculum; and incorporate gender practices in all objectives and initiatives.
- **UNFPA** supports the implementation of the comprehensive care model for victims of GBV; is developing and implementing guidelines for a humanitarian response that includes GBV prevention and care; works on adolescent SRH and education with goals to improve access to comprehensive, high-quality reproductive health services with a focus on HIV prevention and adolescent pregnancy; and strengthens capacity of local and national institutions to implement comprehensive sexuality education and counseling, including HIV prevention.
- **UNICEF** utilizes gender analysis to determine needs of children and adolescents in its programming; has initiatives to involve men in childcare responsibility, gender equality and nonviolence education, formation of positive concepts of masculinity among adolescent, and for the empowerment of adolescent women; and targets 24 municipalities for supporting prevention of and response to situations of violence, commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking in collaboration with the GON Programa Amor.
- **The FAO-led Technical Food Security and Nutrition Secretariat**, comprised of GON Ministries and a donor working group, focuses on improving interagency coordination in food security and increase policy dialogue between donors and government on respective issues and is mapping all food security initiatives. There is one thematic working group on gender, and the Secretariat is working to integrate gender nationally within institutions, while also implementing capacity building trainings and programs at municipal levels.
- A donor coordination body, **CIG PRORURAL**, assists the GON, including the Ministry of Agriculture, in identifying priorities and strategies, action items, and developing policies for the PRORUAL program. UNDP, FAO, and CIDA are members. Within CIG PRORURAL there are thematic groups coordinating on subjects including violence, nutrition, food security, production, and capacity building. Donors also provide technical assistance and finance the implementation of the GON Capacity Development Plan (2012) within PRORURAL.
- **PROCASUTR/IFAD** provides financial and technical support for strengthening meeting spaces for rural women organizations.
- The **Multidonor Fund for Gender Equity and Sexual Reproductive Rights (FED)** has eight donor members (including Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Luxembourg, and UNFPA) supporting implementation of 43 projects throughout the country, some of which are working to re-institute the right to abortion on medical grounds.
- **World Food Program (WFP)** is implementing school feeding programs with nutrition education in Jinotega, Nueva Segovia, Madriz, and Matagalpa with outcomes focused on strengthening capacities and coordination of government and civil society to promote food security and nutrition focused on most vulnerable groups; ensuring full access to health services, including reproductive health; reducing the economic and social burden on women, children, and vulnerable groups brought about by disease; and promoting education of children, adolescents, youth and adults, with an emphasis on disadvantaged populations.

- The **(2007-2012) COSUDE** mainstreams gender into all of their programs with a focus on promoting equality of opportunities between women and men in access to resources and services. Their work is focused predominantly on supporting SMSEs with financial services; technical assistance and professional training; trade policy and macro conditions improvement; promoting governance and public finances with an emphasis on budget support; risk disaster mitigation; and providing infrastructure and local service delivery emphasizing water and rural sanitation and reinforcement of national and local response capacities to natural disasters.
- The **AECID Improving Primary Health Care Program** focuses on preventing violence among young women and children in El Cuá and La Dalia and aims to reduce domestic and sexual violence and provides psycho-social, legal and medical care for victims and their families. Implementing partners for both programs include local governments and judges.
- **CEDEHCA** is working to ensure that all language in materials and curriculum is gender-appropriate; work with the Ministry of Education to take into consideration gender issues; and work with adolescent boys and girls on SRH and youth leadership initiatives.
- **FEMUPROCAN** is an organization of women producers who are members of 100 cooperatives. The federation has 4,200 members, out of which 2,200 women are directly served in five departments: Madriz, Managua, Granada, Matagalpa, and Jinotega, and the RAAS.
- **Red de Hombres Contra la Violencia** is a male-led CSO that works with men in their communities on the “I’m a Real Man campaign” working to change the stereotype and image of masculinity. They also work on HIV/AIDS awareness with groups of men to teach responsibility in using condoms and safe sex. The Red is concentrated in Managua but operates nationally with chapters throughout the country.
- **Peace Corps** is working in rural communities on GBV, male engagement, and inclusion of vulnerable groups such as ethnic/linguistic minorities and the LGBT community.
- **CEIMM-URACAAN** (Bluefields) is working on education development initiatives in the RAAS and RAAN for formal school curriculum without gender biases, etc. This experience may be leveraged to integrate a gender lens into informal school curriculum in the Caribbean Coast.
- The **Centre for Prevention of Violence (CEPREV)** has developed significant experience in violence prevention in Managua and other rural regions. It has closely collaborated with the National Police in reeducating young people affiliated with gangs in their neighborhoods. The working methodology of the NGO questions the predominant authoritarian family model within the society by promoting a democratic family model as the basis for developing positive values and adequate self-esteem in children. CEPREV has developed three training manuals it uses to train municipal officers, community leaders, CSOs, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations in the areas of: 1) Family authority and violence; 2) How Machismo Affects Men; and 3) Youth and violence/ self-esteem.
- Centro de Comunicacion y Educacion Popular (**CANTERA**) is an NGO with considerable experience in informal education to foster local capabilities of community groups, women, men, youth and children. It has built a curriculum for gender awareness and training considering gender, intergenerational perspectives and promoting ethics and spirituality. CANTERA has provided information training to FADCANIC on methodologies for approaching GBV and entrepreneurship, and works on political empowerment, training women on self-esteem and empowerment, fighting

GBV, supporting women involvement in businesses, and implementing social and economic programs to overcome poverty.

### IV.2.3 POTENTIAL FOR SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

The following illustrative list of potential activities is suggested for USAID/Nicaragua to consider incorporating into its CDCS and specific project activities. All potential activities are suggested for USAID/Nicaragua targeted municipalities only. These potential activities may be considered at the strategic level, but should not replace specific project-level analyses to identify specific and appropriate actions and levels of engagement. Activities are listed by each planned CDCS Intermediate Result (IR) and sub-IR priorities corresponding to the following:

- 2.1 Safety and Competitiveness of At-Risk Children and Youth Improved
  - o 2.1.1: Reading Performance Improved
  - o 2.1.2: Work Force and Life Skills Increased
  - o 2.1.3: Community Engagement in Creating a Positive Environment for At-risk Children and Youth Increased
- 2.2 Opportunities for Sustainable Income Growth in At-Risk Rural Areas Enhanced
  - o 2.2.1: Adoption of Innovative Agricultural Practices Increased
  - o 2.2.2: Access to Credit Increased
  - o 2.2.3: Support for Food Security Investments Enhanced

Per USAID/Nicaragua’s request, suggested potential activities are categorized in order of priority for each sub-IR (high, medium, low). However, all recommendations for specific activities are based on analysis of existing gender gaps in the country and are closely tailored to be integrated into existing planned activities in the CDCS to ensure activities avoid unintended negative effects. Potential activities may individually strengthen each planned activity in the CDCS from a gender perspective, while collectively building upon one another to maximize impact. Thus, all of the potential activities are considered to be of high importance as they work in concert to target underlying cultural beliefs of men and women as well as institutional barriers. For example, only addressing institutional problems while not addressing beliefs, will not have the same impact as working comprehensively to address both.

**Table 4: Potential Activities for Development Objective: Vulnerability of Targeted Populations Reduced**

IR	Activity	Priority	Resources
2.1	Integrate gender training in training for teachers, volunteers, or promoters addressing how to communicate effectively with boys and girls with respectful, gender-appropriate language; how to identify vulnerable boys and girls at-risk for violence and assist in referring them to appropriate services as needed	High	Medium
2.1	Increase number of males in volunteer and teaching positions that can provide positive mentoring and serve as role models for young boys (while maintaining an adequate number of females to serve as role models for young girls)	Medium	Low

IR	Activity	Priority	Resources
2.1	Design curriculum and select reading materials that: 1) include gender-appropriate language and that promotes positive images of men and boys in caring positions (E.g. men caring for kids or cooking/ woman working, leading a meeting) and girls and women as protagonists and leaders, ensuring that text is free from sexist language and images; 2) facilitate reading promoters in teaching lessons and leading discussion with students in a fun and engaging way about gender roles; and 3) encourage confidence and self-esteem building and promote respect and positive communication between boys and girls	High	Medium
2.1	Systematically train life skills promoters to promote positive communication between girls and boys and address violence at its root causes (including machismo, sexual violence, violence against LGBT and HIV affected populations, and violence between boys and young men and between ethnic/linguistic minorities); conflict-resolution skills with an emphasis on respectful communication; and education on identifying need and referring boys and girls to appropriate community psychosocial support referrals	High	Medium
2.1	Integrate positive parenting skills into life skills training materials to teach girls and boys how to engage in effective and respectful communication in the home- between couples and with children, and promote a culture of non-violence and positive gender roles (E.g. boys helping with household chores, playing a role in pregnancy and child care)	Medium	Medium
2.1	Target girls from underserved and marginalized ethnic and linguistic minority populations that may have restricted mobility from their homes (E.g. not only those that are already empowered enough to negotiate with their parents to leave the home and participate) as well as youth that are part of the LGBT or HIV positive population	High	Medium
2.1	Consistently engage parents and families of girls and boys to ensure that girls (in particular) do not face conflict or violence for leaving their homes to participate in trainings and are granted permission; and to promote and foster improved home environments in which boys and girls can thrive with their newly trained life skills, and to have healthy positive role models within their homes	Medium	Medium
2.1	Ensure any newly formed private-public partnerships to provide youth with internships or work force opportunities ensure gender equitable and safe working environments with girls and boys, utilizing the World Bank GEM model <sup>11</sup> to encourage private partners to adopt and implement gender action plans	Low	Medium
2.1	Integrate behavior change communication in community advocacy and community building techniques that supports girls' safety and rights via: increased participation of parents in monitoring safety of school environment, increase collaboration between schools and community services related to violence, increased awareness of sexual harassment	Medium	Medium

<sup>11</sup> See internationally-recognized World Bank Gender Equality Model (GEM) best practices and success in the LAC region here: [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLAC/Resources/257803-1269390034020/EnBreve\\_159\\_English\\_Printable.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLAC/Resources/257803-1269390034020/EnBreve_159_English_Printable.pdf)



IR	Activity	Priority	Resources
	and violence at the community level, awareness of sexual harassment/violence among the broader community, and community policing focused on detecting violence against boys and girls		
2.1	Engage men and boys in the community as allies, advocates, role models, change agents, and partners in teaching and delivering non-violence messages and promoting positive images and role models for masculinity and ensure that any local or national community leaders or celebrities engaged in efforts demonstrate and encompass ideals of gender equality and non-violence (E.g. being a sports hero isn't enough to be involved in community messaging- he should also be someone that demonstrates what it means to respect his wife/ girlfriend, help with child care, etc.)	High	Medium
2.1	Guarantee sex-disaggregated youth-friendly services and safe spaces that accommodate girls and boys from various minority groups, including members of the LGBT, HIV positive, and ethnic and linguistic minority populations.	High	Low
2.2	Give preference in competitive selection process to work with firms that demonstrate a willingness to practically integrate and promote gender equality in their work and institutionally and work closely with partners to adopt the World Bank Gender Equity Model (GEM) that focuses on working with the private sector in a participatory approach to adopt good gender practices (E.g. Private sector firms can reduce barriers to women's participation in formal sector employment with policies to reduce gender wage gap, provide flexible schedules through part-time and flex-time employment, encourage targeted hiring of female employees in decision-making positions, etc.).	High	Low
2.2	Increase number of female extension agents to work with female producers and train both male and female extension agents in gender awareness and practical strategies to communicate effectively with male and female producers, tailoring technical assistance training to men and women, and on gender equality and GBV	Medium	Medium
2.2	Increase women's access to productivity-enhancing inputs, practices, and services for agriculture that can reduce their time burden by offering extension services and training to women's groups, schools, and community health systems and training women in post-harvest management of beans and grain learning handling techniques, cooperative leadership, bookkeeping, and financial management, and facilitate greater investment in storage and drying facilities	Medium	Medium
2.2	Accommodate women so they may participate in extension services and technical training by: holding technical training and extension services in places that are easily accessible and a short distance for women who often lack access to transport and time to travel; ensuring training schedules consider time constraints of women; and incorporating a realistic child care solution (E.g. provide child care in room next to training with healthy, nutritious snack and a pre-approved video or story that shows positive gender roles and images)	High	Medium

IR	Activity	Priority	Resources
2.2	Use social marketing tools to promote gender equality in SME development, land titling, financial services, and other programs (E.g. land titling communications with radio messages or posters that show images of women participating with men too); include targeting to educate women on their land rights and equality rights, including Law 717 supporting purchase of land by rural women and Law 693 that requires equal access to inputs and resources; include messages on gender equality, promote positive images of men in caring roles, FP, etc.	High	Low
2.2	Foster female leadership in cooperatives, communities, and within households with capacity building in management and technical skills, forums that promote learning and sharing about examples of other women like them that have overcome adversities (such as abusive relationships) and are now successful; connecting women to existing networks and new markets for women entrepreneurs and opportunities for mentoring relationship to build their skills and grow their businesses from micro to small, medium, and large enterprises.	Medium	Medium
2.2	Include husbands, fathers, and colleagues of women being trained to positively engage them to encourage and support women in their productive roles (E.g. conflict-resolution and communication, gender awareness and GBV training; provide positive examples of male/female partnerships where a couple is working together and supporting one another as a productive unit in the home and on the farm; community-level celebrations led and supported by respected male and female community leaders, including religious leaders, to make visible the accomplishments of women in securing livelihoods, as well as men who support them).	High	Medium
2.2	Use school feeding programs as an opportunity to target entire families to include both men and women in learning about access to nutritious food and preparing nutritious food; as an entry point for promoting gender equality during children's formative years, using innovative advocacy and learning methods (E.g. reading carefully selected books of interest to kids with female protagonists/ images of boys and men caring for children, etc.); and engaging men and boys to assist with food preparation and providing to kids to promote positive images of men in caring roles for young boys and girls.	Medium	Low
2.2	Implement trainings that promote leadership and assist women in gaining ownership and management of SMSEs and producer/trade associations, helps them to participate in marketing boards and key ministries by providing training in financial management and completing loan applications.	Medium	Medium
2.2	Train male and female loan officers in relevant laws to decrease practices that discriminate against women such as requiring spouse's signature to guarantee a loan	Medium	Medium

IR	Activity	Priority	Resources
2.2	Give competitive preference to lending and financial institutions that have an effective gender implementation plan or can demonstrate a commitment to addressing gender-based constraints in their lending practices	High	Low
2.2	Integrate functional literacy, microenterprise development, management, marketing, GBV, legal rights to access land and credit, self-esteem, leadership, nutrition, and FP topics into agricultural extension services and technical training (Both women and men should be included in training on these subjects- separately where appropriate- that addresses gender based violence and improving effective communications)	Medium	Medium
2.2	Assist private sector and local communities to establish financing mechanisms such as savings incentives programs, revolving loans funds, and producer group financing to facilitate secure access and land tenures for women; create savings and lending groups where appropriate where women members can borrow from their savings fund to conduct small income-generating activities in crop production	Medium	Medium
2.2	Integrate principles of Feed the Future's Women in Agriculture Index into all activities within IR 2.2 for effective food security investments that promote gender-competent agricultural innovation practices (E.g. focus activities and M&E on women's role in household decision-making around agricultural production; women's access to productive capital; women's income; women's leadership roles within the community; and women's labor time allocations)	High	Medium
2.2	Target FtF Innovation Pilot grants on technologies and innovations that explicitly reduce women's work burden at home and in production (E.g. connect homes to water or provide cook stoves to reduce household chores; provide farm tools to reduce drudgery and time spent in the field for weeding, post-harvest activities, seed-bed preparation, planting; improve crops with higher yields and that are better adapted to pests and diseases; integrated pest management techniques; conservation agriculture such as no-tillage systems; biological nitrogen-fixation technologies that improve soil fertility such as agro forestry innovations or grain legumes)	High	Low
2.2	Include in agriculture research and studies, where applicable, impact evaluation of agriculture interventions on GBV and household relationships (and vice versa)	Medium	Low
2.2	Involve more women in agriculture research and higher education to enhance the development of female-friendly technology	Low	High

#### IV.2.4 ANTICIPATED RESISTANCE

Implementing the above recommended activities will not come without challenges. First and foremost, there is an ingrained culture of machismo, particularly in the Caribbean Coast and the North Central region

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among more indigenous, rural, and traditional populations. Men may be particularly resistant to change, both as fathers and boyfriends of early learners and out-of-school youth, as well as husbands, partners, and colleagues of female farmers.

Men are ultimately the gatekeepers of the current cultural status quo. They have the power to determine whether or not their daughters attend a life skills training event, or if their wives are able to join an agricultural cooperative. It is therefore critical that all planning and activities take into account that men may feel threatened and be fearful of perceived power shifts. Therefore, they must be positively engaged, identifying positive male role models within communities to lead the way.

Further, men within communities may be hesitant to attend any meetings or trainings that they believe are about “gender” or “women’s issues.” It therefore may be more practical to talk to men about “gender” in the context of improving the family unit’s well-being, economic security, and safety. Further, it will be critical to communicate to men what they can get out of the training and how they and their families will benefit from the training. Lastly, any gender training should focus on positive reinforcement of masculine images that leave men feeling empowered to support gender equality rather than making them feel attacked, wrong, or diminished.

Private companies and financial institutions may likely be resistant to dedicating resources and efforts to adopting gender equitable practices. It would be best to work with private companies and financial institutions by marketing gender equality as something that is good for business; it will result in more efficiency, increased profits, and more innovations. Using the World Bank’s GEM approach to encourage private businesses and companies to elect to adopt gender equitable practices has been used successfully in the private sector in Mexico.

Lastly, anyone involved as promoters, trainers, or technical officers and community leaders may hold personal beliefs and judgments about traditional gender roles and biases about members of ethnic/linguistic minorities or the LGBT community. In their personal lives, they may be victims or perpetrators of violence themselves. It is therefore critical that all people involved in project activities interacting with beneficiaries have training to challenge traditional beliefs and stereotypes to ensure that project activities are not reinforcing negative behaviors.

# V. CONCLUSIONS

Gender analysis is an important tool for informing and strengthening USAID/Nicaragua's 2013-2017 CDCS. It enables the Mission to recognize gender-based constraints that may impede achievement of country priorities and identifies opportunities to promote gender equality within the country. The USAID Gender Policy expects that all DOs integrate the following outcomes: 1) Reduce gender disparities in access to public and political decision-making spaces and positions at local and regional levels, 2) Reduce cultural acceptance of GBV; and 3) Increase capability of women, girls and boys, particularly from ethnic and linguistic minority populations, to realize their rights, determine their life outcomes, and influence decision-making in households, communities and societies.

This gender analysis has identified that underlying all structural and institutional challenges that prevent gender equality from being achieved is an ingrained culture of machismo and pervasive GBV. As such, USAID/Nicaragua can most effectively leverage its limited resources in addressing these underlying root causes of gender equality. Interventions and strategic actions that focus on positively changing attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of men, women, boys, and girls will be critical in achieving long lasting, meaningful, and sustainable change to reduce vulnerability and increase democracy for future generations of Nicaraguans.

USAID/Nicaragua is well-positioned to succeed in fully integrating the findings and recommendations of this gender analysis into its CDCS. First and foremost, the Mission's institutional leadership and technical staff are well-versed champions of gender equality, fostering a positive environment of political will that can turn ideas found in this analysis into concrete actions. Second, USAID/Nicaragua is already working with a multitude of partners that also have political will and varying capacity to meaningfully integrate gender equality issues strategically and programmatically. (**Annex 4** of this analysis further discusses ways in which USAID/Nicaragua may strengthen and support institutional and partner work on gender integration). Third, there are numerous donor and CSO efforts that have already created tools and piloted projects that USAID/Nicaragua can utilize, partner with, or build from; USAID/Nicaragua does not have to start from scratch, which will save valuable and limited resources. Lastly, the national legal and policy framework provides a positive and enabling environment to support USAID work toward gender equality at local levels.

# ANNEXES

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## **ANNEX 2 BASIC CONCEPTS**

### **Sex**

The classification of people as male or female. At birth, infants are assigned a sex based on a combination of bodily characteristics including: chromosomes, hormones, internal reproductive organs, and genitalia.

### **Gender**

A socially defined set of roles, rights, responsibilities, entitlements, and obligations of females and males in societies. The social definitions of what it means to be female or male vary among cultures and change over time. Gender identity is an individual's internal, personal sense of being male or female. For transgender people, their birth-assigned sex and their own internal sense of gender identity do not match.

### **Gender equality**

Concerns women and men, and it involves working with men and boys, women and girls to bring about changes in attitudes, behaviors, roles, and responsibilities at home, in the workplace, and in the community. Genuine equality means more than parity in numbers or laws on the books; it means expanding freedoms and improving overall quality of life so that equality is achieved without sacrificing gains for males or females.

### **Gender equity**

Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must often be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on an equitable basis, or a "level playing field." Equity leads to equality.

### **Gender-based Violence**

Violence that is directed at an individual based on his or her biological sex, gender identity, or perceived adherence to socially defined norms of masculinity and femininity. It includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse; threats; coercion; arbitrary deprivation of liberty; and economic deprivation, whether occurring in public or private life. GBV takes on many forms and can occur throughout the life cycle. Types of GBV can include female infanticide; child sexual abuse; sex trafficking and forced labor; sexual coercion and abuse; neglect; domestic violence; elder abuse; and harmful traditional practices such as early and forced marriage, "honor" killings, and female genital mutilation/cutting. Women and girls are the most at risk and most affected by GBV. Consequently, the terms "violence against women" and "gender-based violence" are often used interchangeably. However, boys and men can also experience GBV, as can sexual and gender minorities. Regardless of the target, GBV is rooted in structural inequalities between men and women and is characterized by the use and abuse of physical, emotional, or financial power and control.

### **Gender Analysis**

Gender analysis refers to the systematic gathering and analysis of information on gender differences and social relations to identify and understand the different roles, divisions of labor, resources, constraints, needs, opportunities/capacities, and interests of men and women (and girls and boys) in a given context. USAID requires that the findings of a gender analysis are used to inform the design of country strategic plans, Assistance Objectives, and projects/activities. A gender analysis can be conducted at: the macro level, analyzing socio-cultural, economic, health, or demographic trends and legal policies and practices at the national or regional level; and/or at the micro level, examining gender relations, roles, and dynamics at

the community or household level within the context provided by the macro analysis. Taking a macro or micro focus depends on the purpose for which the analysis is being undertaken. For example, a gender analysis conducted to inform a country strategic plan will most likely assess the issues from a broader, more macro level, whereas a gender analysis conducted for the design of a project/activity may look at the issues from both a macro and micro perspective.

## **Gender Assessment**

A gender assessment involves carrying out a review, from a gender perspective, of an organization's programs and its ability to monitor and respond to gender issues in both technical programming and institutional policies and practices. USAID Missions often carry out a gender assessment of their portfolio to determine whether gender issues are being effectively addressed in Mission-supported programs and projects. A gender assessment is a very flexible tool, based on the needs of the Mission, and may also include a gender analysis at the country level. If a gender analysis is included in a gender assessment, this meets the ADS requirements. If a gender assessment reviews the internal policies and practices of the operating unit (e.g., USAID Mission), this is very similar to a gender audit. A gender audit addresses not only gender in programming issues but also in the practices and policies of the Mission as a whole, such as human resource issues, budgeting, and management, to provide a comprehensive picture of gender relations at several levels within the organization. Findings from a gender assessment have been used, for example, to inform a country strategic plan or a Development Objective and/or develop a Mission Gender Plan of Action or a Mission Order on gender.

## **Gender Gaps**

A gender gap represents the disproportionate difference between the sexes in attitudes and practices. A gender gap can exist in access to a particular productive resource (for example land), in the use of a resource (for example credit), or levels of participation (such as in government).

## **Gender-Based Constraints**

Gender-based constraints are factors that inhibit either men's or women's access to resources or opportunities of any type. They can be formal laws, attitudes, perceptions, values, or practices (cultural, institutional, political, or economic). Some examples include:

- Customary laws dictating that only men can own land is a constraint on agricultural production since it can prevent women from producing or marketing or obtaining credit.
- A law that prevents pregnant teenagers from attending school is a gender-based constraint since it disadvantages girls relative to boys in obtaining an education.
- An HIV/AIDS program that is located in an ante-natal clinic is a gender-based constraint if men are reluctant to get tested in this setting.

## **Gender Integration**

Gender integration involves identifying and then addressing gender differences and inequalities during program and project planning, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Since the roles and relations of power between men and women affect how an activity is implemented, it is essential that project and activity planners address these issues on an ongoing basis. USAID uses the term gender integration in planning and programming. Conducting a gender analysis and/or gender assessment is the first step for ensuring successful gender integration into programs and policies.



## **ANNEX 3 SCOPE OF WORK**

### **BACKGROUND**

USAID/Nicaragua is developing a new Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for 2013-2017. The CDCS is a USAID-wide strategic initiative that seeks to leverage long-term planning and careful analysis to maximize development resources. The central guidance on the CDCS requires a country-specific development hypothesis and sets forth the goal, objectives, results, indicators, and resource levels that guide Project Design, Implementation, Evaluation, and Performance Management, and informs annual planning and reporting processes. The CDCS must reflect Agency Policies and Strategies, and also should incorporate priorities and input from key stake holders, including host country governments, local civil society, private sector organizations, the State Department, the broader USG interagency and other donors.

A gender analysis that includes the examination of the technical areas of the Mission's portfolio is required to generate the necessary information to ensure the completion of a well-integrated CDCS for Nicaragua.

### **STATEMENT OF WORK**

#### **Mission Gender Assessment**

##### **I. PURPOSE**

The gender analysis will be a forward-looking document that combines socio-economic and demographic analysis of the country from a gender perspective. The analysis will be aligned with the scope and aims of the anticipated Development Objectives (DOs) that the Mission plans to include in its strategy to guide its work during the next five years. The gender analysis should take into account the areas where USAID/Nicaragua is currently working and provide recommendations on how the Mission can strengthen gender integration at the sectorial level. In addition, the analysis should include concrete recommendations and their resource implications on ways to mitigate gender inequality that can be integrated into USAID/Nicaragua's DOs, Intermediate Results (IRs), Sub-IRs, Results Framework (RF), Monitoring and Evaluation Plans, and Indicators. The SOW for this analysis is being procured with the belief that a full, complete, and up-to-date analysis of constraints to gender equality in the areas where USAID/Nicaragua works will result in more sustainable development outcomes and more effective use of funding.

##### **II. PROPOSED ACTIVITIES**

#### **Gender Analysis Report:**

The document will include the following sections:

##### **A. Overview**

This section should provide a broad overview of the significant gender issues for Nicaragua at the macro level, citing any relevant assessments or studies completed recently that provide an overview of the country context and statistics related to gender, including reference to any international indices such as the WEF Global Gender Gap, UNDP Gender Inequality Index and the OECD Social

Institutions and Gender Index. It should also include a brief description of the policy environment and capacity to address gender gaps at the national and sub-national levels, including: whether the government has a gender action plan and commitments to international agreements (CEDAW, MDGs, etc.), as well as a snapshot of civil society's efforts to promote gender equality (e.g., confirming existence of a women's movement?) and information on what other donors are active in the country on gender issues.

## **B. Mission's Strategic Priorities and Associated Gender Analysis**

This section will focus specifically on the sectors that the Mission will address in the CDCS. The outcome of the gender analysis will be used to make decisions at the CDCS level and help identify where additional analysis might be needed at the project and activity level. The analysis should cover the following DOs sectors:

1. Democracy and Governance – Citizens' expectations of Democratic processes and Good Governance raised  
Geographic scope: National
2. Education & At-Risk Youth: At-Risk Children and Youth in Targeted Municipalities on the Caribbean Coast supported and better prepared for work, citizenship and community life  
Geographic scope: Caribbean Coast (RAAS)
3. Economic Growth: Increased economic activity in poverty stricken North Central Region  
Geographic scope: North-central region

Based on an understanding of USAID's overall programs and the findings from the desk research, the analysis should address the following:

- (i) Discussion of USAID's strategic priorities for the sector and a discussion of alignment with GON gender priorities.
- (ii) Provide detail on the gender constraints/disparities as they relate to the strategic priorities identified in section (i) above. Be specific about the gender gap(s) to be reduced. What are the opportunities for redressing gender gaps in each strategic priority? Including:
  1. How will the different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace, and household (for example, roles in decision-making and different access to and control over resources and services) affect the work to be undertaken?
  2. How will the anticipated results of the work affect women and men differently?
- (iii) What is the profile of women's leadership in the main institutions in each sector? What are the opportunities to promote leadership of women in each strategic priority?
- (iv) Discussion of best or promising practices to address gender constraints/disparities and opportunities, based on: a) Impact evaluations; (b) Evidence project that is scalable or replicable with measurable/demonstrable results; (c) Geographic concerns/distinctions in gender perspectives; and (d) Other indicators of promise to produce demonstrable results. This may include government, other donor, civil society, or USAID/Nicaragua evaluations or activities that have been examined for positive results.

(v) Identify areas where National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security principles can be applied.

(vi) The gender analysis should also identify potential adverse impacts and/or risks of gender based exclusion that could result from suggested approaches, such as: (a) Displacing women from access to resources or assets; (b) Increasing the unpaid work or caregiver burden of females relative to males; (c) Conditions that restrict the participation of women or men in project activities and benefits based on pregnancy, maternity/paternity leave, or marital status; (d) Increasing the risk of GBV, including sexual exploitation or human trafficking, sexually transmitted diseases, and HIV/AIDS; and (e) Marginalizing or excluding women in political and governance processes.

(vii) Because males and females are not homogenous groups, the data cited in the analysis should also to the extent practical and relevant to strategic program choices, disaggregate by income, region, race, ethnicity, disability, and other relevant social characteristics and where appropriate, make explicit reference to the specific needs of young girls and boys, adolescent girls and boys, adult women and men, and older women and men.

### **C. Recommendations**

For each sector or proposed DO: provide recommendations (top line, followed by more detail), bounded by Mission priorities identified in section B above. Drawing from the analysis, identify:

1. Potential results (and associated indicators) that could be used to measure the results of integrating gender into the CDCS and future projects and activities.
2. Potential supporting strategies and national resources, including activities or initiatives by other donors, host country government institutions, and civil society groups, and any potential areas of collaboration or partnership.
3. Potential for specific activities, as related to gender equality in the country program and the possible need to target particular issues relating to gender equality and women's empowerment.
4. Identify opportunities to build on existing successful programs.
5. Anticipated areas of resistance or constraints, and how to cope with such.

## ANNEX 4 USAID/NICARAGUA INSTITUTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

This gender analysis is only the first step in informing USAID/Nicaragua's CDCS and laying the groundwork to meaningfully integrate gender analysis throughout project design, implementation, and evaluation. This analysis should enable the Mission to recognize gender-based constraints that may impede achievement of country DOs and to identify promising practices and specific activities that may be useful in overcoming constraints in order to maximize intended results with a focus on equitable and sustainable development.

Beyond this, however, it is critical that the operationalization of the USAID Gender Policy is effective Mission-wide throughout the technical development of projects, planning, SOWs, contracts, staff performance and training. USAID/Nicaragua released a Mission Order (MO) 201-1 on April 27, 2012 intended to "clarify and systematize the Mission's policy on gender and to establish procedures to ensure effective integration of gender issues throughout its programs." The Mission Order is another critical foundation that USAID/Nicaragua has succeeded in establishing to put the Gender Policy into action.

The Mission might find it useful to develop a Gender Action Plan for institutional operationalization of the Mission Order at some point in the near future before the upcoming CDCS is rolled out. The Gender Action Plan could clearly define, among other things, specific activities that specific staff is responsible for, including specific milestones, reporting requirements, and timelines. This could also include specific criteria for staff performance review, identify gender training needs for USAID staff and implementing partners, detail explicit reporting requirements and monitoring processes for implementing partners, identification and planning of implementing partner learning exchanges, and specific Mission resource requirements to fund all institutional gender-related activities.

During field interviews with current USAID/Nicaragua implementing partners across all sectors, numerous issues were discussed on how efforts might be made to improve the operationalization of the USAID Gender Policy within USAID/Nicaragua's current and future projects and overarching gender equality objectives expected of implementing partners. This information should be useful to the Mission in identifying areas where additional focus is needed to support the effective implementation of the MO:

- 1) Most implementing partners do not have gender experts or the technical capacity on their staff to practically develop and implement sound gender action plans. Implementing partners stated that they want to do better work on gender equality but that isn't necessarily where their expertise lays. Therefore, they need USAID to provide concrete actionable guidance, training, and gender expertise to help them develop action plans. Most importantly, implementing partners need resources to accomplish this; they nearly unanimously suggested that unfunded mandates are not helpful because they are limited in what they can do without appropriate funding.
- 2) Implementing partners noted that having a gender training once for a few hours is not sufficient to transfer technical skills that will translate into real actions. Further, for some partners, particularly those that are private firms rather than NGOs, gender training and capacity building has to be approached like a business negotiation (E.g. In the context of USAID having a policy integrating gender equality into all agency efforts and throughout the program cycle, similar to most other donors, USAID/Nicaragua has to "sell" the idea of gender training to make partners see why they want and need it, rather than from a human rights perspective).
- 3) Implementing partners are eager to learn and share among one another. When focus groups were held with implementing partners as part of this gender analysis field work, it was for some partners the first time that they were meeting one another. They want to learn from one another about

successes and challenges. They want to share best practices. It would be a welcome activity for USAID/Nicaragua to host regular workshops or meetings to facilitate partner exchanges, and/or to take advantage of annual partner meetings to include gender equality in the agenda.

- 4) Implementing partners want practical gender analysis and evaluation tools from USAID that meets USAID's expectations and provides them with concrete guidance and actions to fulfill USAID's requirements, including sector-specific technical guidance. As outlined in the MO, the USAID GenDev website has numerous tools available that may be very useful to implementing partners that could be shared with them. However, as mentioned before, sharing tools is not enough without ensuring partners have adequate expertise and resources to use the tools.
- 5) SOWs and reporting requirements need to include concrete indicators that measure real impacts and results and not just outputs. Many implementing partners are not measuring or monitoring the actual impact of projects on the lives of men, women, families, and communities. Thus, they don't know how they are actually doing and if what they are doing is working. Many can cite examples of where something has worked, but there is an overall lack of data to support anecdotal evidence of success. Project partners expressed an enthusiastic interest in strengthening outcome-based evaluations, but this requires technical guidance in developing gender-specific indicators, training, and resources to implement surveys and impact evaluations. As detailed evaluations involving surveys can be costly to implement, USAID needs to be careful in selecting when to implement evaluations and design the project accordingly.
- 6) Some partners have informally used gender selection criteria in the formal selection process to work with firms or NGOs. It was not a USAID requirement, but in those cases this has translated into success in having project beneficiary firms or NGOs understand from early on that gender awareness and activity is important, and has translated into greater gender integration in project activities. The simple step of ensuring that all SOWs and selection processes that USAID begins consistently and systematically includes gender-specific requirements (E.g. analysis, evaluations, etc.), reporting criteria, and selection criteria can go a very long way to provide incentives to implementing partners and beneficiaries to practically operationalizing the USAID Gender Policy at the project level.

The USAID/Nicaragua Mission is very well poised to successfully integrate gender throughout its CDCS process and institutionally due to the eagerness, political will, and high capacity at all staff levels.

## **ANNEX 5 GENDER ANALYSIS TEAM**

### **Jessica Menon, Lead Gender Consultant**

Ms. Menon has over ten years of experience in gender integration. She has conducted gender analyses of multi-sector projects such as DG, economic growth, education, at risk youth, human trafficking, GBV, and HIV/AIDS. Her gender analyses work includes an examination of how women and men relate to one another and how pragmatic, realistic change will be facilitated by engaging men as key partners in gender equality efforts. She is familiar with USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy and has applied its principles in her work with USAID. Ms. Menon conducted a gender assessment of USAID/Paraguay's portfolio on gender and agricultural value chains and market access; and identified possible entry-points for incorporating gender in potential new programs and developed gender appropriate indicators. Most recently, she conducted a gender analysis as part of USAID's project proposal requirements for the new Alternative Development Program in Peru. A fluent Spanish speaker, Ms. Menon has worked in over a dozen countries worldwide including in Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Honduras, and El Salvador. She holds a Master of International Policy and Development from the Georgetown Public Policy Institute at Georgetown University.

### **Rosemary Vega, Local Gender Consultant**

Ms. Vega is a development professional with 15 years of experience working on gender issues in Nicaragua. She holds a Master's in Public Administration from the Monterey Institute of International Studies and postgraduate diploma in Gender Equality from the Latin American Faculty for Social Sciences. Her professional experience includes conducting gender analyses, designing and delivering gender trainings and workshops, and monitoring and evaluating projects for attention to gender issues for organizations such as Oxfam, SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, World Food Program, United Nations Populations Fund, and the World Bank. In addition, Ms. González has practical experience in all three of USAID/Nicaragua's development objective sectors including: democracy and governance, education and at-risk youth, and economic growth. From 2001 until 2007, she served as the Social Development Advisor and Gender Focal Point for the Embassy of Finland. In this capacity she monitored programs in the education and governance sectors. Ms. González also monitored and evaluated non-governmental organization (NGO) projects related to governance, human rights, and agriculture for the Embassy of Norway and conducted research in the agricultural sector for Canadian and World Bank-funded projects. She is a native Spanish speaker and is fluent in English.

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[http://www.undp.org.ni/files/doc/1297707054\\_unifem-guia-1-\[30-oct-2010\].pdf](http://www.undp.org.ni/files/doc/1297707054_unifem-guia-1-[30-oct-2010].pdf)

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<sup>cclxxxv</sup> Interview with Michael Campbell (CEDEHCA) in Bluefields, Nicaragua September 25, 2012.

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