

Education

Introduction

In the United States, we view education as a basic right of all citizens, regardless of social position or socioeconomic status. This is our reality. In Nicaragua, as in many developing countries, the philosophy is similar, but the reality is quite different.

In Nicaragua and throughout the world, education levels are directly related to social and economic development. Statistics indicate that nearly 70% of school-aged children in Nicaragua do not complete higher than a 4th grade education.

Despite more than a decade of democracy and subsequent opportunities for economic growth, Nicaragua continues to be among the poorest countries in the Western hemisphere. According to the World Fact Book, 50% of the population live in poverty, and 19% live in extreme poverty.

These conditions contribute greatly to the stark inequities among the social classes in Nicaragua. Despite such disparity, however, many of Nicaragua's poor and disadvantaged continue to value education and show a strong desire to educate their children.



The lessons in this section of the *Resource Guide* are structured to provide students with a glimpse into the lives of Nicaraguan students and their families and to encourage discussion on the relationship between educational opportunities and economic success.

Education: Impacting Lives and Society

Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- compare school environments between their school and Nicaraguan public schools.
 - predict problems/difficulties associated with these environments and their impact on society.
 - draw conclusions and suggest solutions to improve the educational system in Nicaragua.
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Materials (English/ Spanish)

- Photos depicting actual public & private schools in Nicaragua in 2002.
 - Student Handout: **Fact Sheet: Education and Society in Nicaragua**.
 - Student Handout: **Reflective Questions**.
 - Overhead projector, transparency, and overhead markers.
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Activities

1. Distribute a copy of the student handout entitled **Fact Sheet: Education and Society in Nicaragua** to each student.
 - a. Direct students to read fact sheet regarding education in Nicaragua.
 - b. Show the photos of different Nicaraguan public school classrooms.
 - c. Ask the students to make general observations about what they see.
 2. Group students in pairs or small groups.
 - a. Instruct students to make a list of at least 5 differences between their school and the Nicaraguan schools in the photos.
 - b. Encourage students to list striking differences, because duplicate responses will be eliminated during sharing.
 3. Ask each group to present their comparisons, eliminating those that have been mentioned by previous groups and asking students to add observations to their lists that they had not thought of in their own group.
 4. Distribute a copy of the student handout entitled **Reflective Questions** to each student. (This handout that will guide students to predict the impact of the Nicaraguan educational environment on the lives of the students and on society at large.)
 - a. Direct students to work in their groups again to develop thoughtful written responses to these questions. (Teachers may want to assign a few questions to each group.)
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- b. Have the students choose a spokesperson from each group to present their responses.
 - c. Allow for reaction from other groups after each presentation.
 - d. Guide students to create possible solutions to improve the educational system in Nicaragua. (Either the teacher or a designated student can summarize student solutions on an overhead transparency.)
 - e. Conduct a vote on the most feasible solutions and encourage students to explain the reasoning behind their choices.
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Fact Sheet: Education and Society in Nicaragua

Cost of Living Current monthly living expenses of a family with two children, calculated in US dollars (Costs taken from “Salario Minimo,” an article in the Nicaraguan newspaper *La Prensa* Summer, 2002).

Rent	\$120
Food	\$270
Clothing	\$ 15
Medicine	\$ 10
Education	\$ 10
Water and Light	\$ 15
Transportation	\$ 10
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Total	\$450

Yet, an average worker’s salary is approximately \$97 US a month! Teachers make approximately \$60 a month.

Education

- Illiteracy has grown in Nicaragua in the last years from 25.1% in '90 to 34% in '98.
- 1.7 million Nicaraguans have entered the 21st century without being able to read a book or write their names.
- More than 1/3 of the elementary schools are incomplete, offering only 3 or 4 grades.
- There are about 200,000 children between the ages of 7 and 12 that have no access to elementary education.
- In 1998, 47 out of every 100 school-age children did not attend school.
- Nicaragua has the lowest percentage of children who finish elementary schooling in Central America.
- A high percentage of minors work in the streets, in the fields, in industry, and in homes.
- In 1996, 20.02 % of children and adolescents between the ages of 10 and 18 were working.

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**Education
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- The principal reason that young children work is due to the poverty level of the family.
- Basic public school education costs 10 cordobas to register, and 5 cordobas per month.
- Children are required to have uniforms and new shoes in September. Notebooks, pencils, and school supplies are to be provided by families. (Exceptions may be made by specific schools.)
- Students attend school 5 ½ hours a day.
- Compulsory education is only to the sixth grade.
- Many classrooms are lacking in basic supplies and are crowded with 40-60 students. (This is the norm.)
- Uniforms cost \$5 U.S.
- Required consumable workbooks cost about 25 cordobas each, and 4 – 6 are required for each student each semester.
- Elementary school teachers must complete grade 6 then attend “teaching school” for secondary education. Secondary teachers must have a college education.
- Secondary schools are not accessible to many students—they are too far away and no transportation is provided.
- Only 25% of public school students who enter first grade finish the sixth grade.
- For every 1,000 students, only ten graduate from college.

Source

Oscar-René Vargas. *Nicaragua: después del Mitch . . . ¿qué?* Centro de Estudios de la Realidad de Nicaragua, 1999. pp. 99-100.

Reflective Questions

1. How is tourism affected by illiteracy?
2. How does inadequate education impact the labor force?
3. How can people hope to attain a higher standard of living with insufficient basic skills?
4. Why would it be difficult for students to work several hours after school each day?
5. How do these educational and employment factors contribute to the growing numbers of people who decide to leave the country?
6. What happens in the future to a country that loses a lot of its young citizens?

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7. How does living in poverty affect children's performance in school?

 8. What would motivate high school age students to want to pursue a career in education? What happens if there aren't enough teachers?

 9. What other problems might occur as a result of the desperate situations that so many families face?

 10. Given the fact that many people work hard for so little money, why would young people value education as a means of improving their future?
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1.



2.



3.



4.



Clases en la Escuela

Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- analyze the similarities and differences between student schedules in Nicaragua and the United States.
 - evaluate the impact of classroom instruction upon a person's future opportunities.
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Materials

- Student Handout: **Vocabulario**
 - Video clip of a Nicaraguan student describing her daily schedule.
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Activities

1. Distribute the student handout entitled **Vocabulario** and review with the class the spelling and pronunciation of each of the Spanish vocabulary terms.
 2. Direct students to identify the classes they have in their schedule. (This may be done in English or in Spanish, depending on the type of class and the level of the students.)
 - a. They may even create a sample schedule of their day or week, labeling the classes, times and days of the week in Spanish.
 - b. Direct students to brainstorm what classes they believe students would have in Nicaragua.
 3. Play the video clip of a Nicaraguan student explaining her daily schedule and routine. (Depending on the level of the class, you may need to replay the clip several times, and Spanish language dictionaries may be needed.)
 - a. Ask students to construct a daily schedule for this student labeling the classes, times and days of the week in Spanish.
 - b. Ask students to identify the similarities and differences between their schedule and those of the Nicaraguan student.
 4. Direct students to calculate the amount of hours they spend spent in the classroom. Record their calculations on the chalkboard.
 - a. Direct students to perform the same calculation for the Nicaraguan student, based on her schedule.
 - b. Ask students to compare the amount of classroom instruction they receive to that experienced by the Nicaraguan student. How will that affect their overall education? Why?
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- c. Ask students to hypothesize why a student in Nicaragua attends school only a half-day. (Many leave school in order to work to help their families.) What does this imply about their family's economic situation?
5. Review with the class the following facts:
- a. In Nicaragua, 90% of the children do not attend pre-school, and the ones that do, come from the urban areas. In the rural areas only 3% of the children have access to this type of education.
 - b. Only 25% of public school students in Nicaragua who enter first grade finish the sixth grade.
 - c. In the United States, school districts spend from \$4,375 to \$6,825 per year to educate each student. The Nicaraguan Education Ministry spends an average of \$43 per year, according to UNESCO.
 - d. Children are required to have uniforms and new shoes in September. Notebooks, pencils, and school supplies are to be provided by families.
 - e. In 1998, 47 out of every 100 school-age children did not attend school.
6. Concluding Activity:
- Direct students to write a short reflective essay in answer to the following question: "How important is it to get a good education? If you were a student in Nicaragua, how would you be affected by the limited educational opportunities? What does that imply about the future of Nicaragua?"
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Vocabulario

English	Spanish
Religion	religión
Spanish	español
Math	matemáticas
Science	ciencia
History	historia
Geography	geografía
Music	música
Art	arte (expresion artística)
Reading	lectura/literatura

Uniformes en la Escuela

Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- identify the various parts of a Nicaraguan school uniform.
 - explain how the colors of the uniform reflect national pride.
 - evaluate the impact of uniform regulations on the average Nicaraguan family.
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Materials

- Student Handout: **Uniformes**
 - Student Handout: **Vocabulario**
 - Video clip of child describing her uniform
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Activities

1. Distribute the student handout entitled **Uniformes**.
 - a. Direct students examine the photograph and to read the first paragraph on the handout.
 - b. Ask students to explain why the uniforms are blue and white. How does this reflect national pride?
 - c. Ask students to hypothesize why Nicaraguan students are required to wear uniforms.
 2. Direct students to read the remaining paragraphs in the handout.
 - a. Ask students to explain why attending school may be an economic hardship for many Nicaraguan families.
 - b. Given the financial state of the majority of the population, how does this regulation affect education?
 3. Distribute the student handout entitled **Vocabulario** and review with the class the spelling and pronunciation of each of the Spanish vocabulary terms.
 4. Play the video clip of a child describing her uniform. (Depending on the level of the class, you may need to replay the clip several times, and Spanish language dictionaries may be needed.)
 5. Concluding activity (optional)
 - a. Using dark blue and white construction paper, crayons, or colored pencils, direct students create paper-clothing cutout of a Nicaraguan school uniform.
 - b. Instruct students to correctly label each part of the uniform with the correct Spanish vocabulary term.
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Uniformes

During the Spanish occupation and colonization of Nicaragua the Spaniards created the first schools. It is traditional to wear uniforms and this tradition has been carried into today's society. Even within the public schools the children are required to wear uniforms. The boy's uniform consists of a white button shirt (camisa) and blue pants (pantalones), with shoes that are blue or black. The girl's uniform consists of a white shirt or blouse (blusa), and a blue or blue plaid skirt (falda). The county's colors are blue and white, and this can be seen on their flag. The colors of the uniform echo the country's colors.

Because uniforms are required for all children attending school. The very poor children are unable to attend school because they cannot afford to buy uniforms. Even though clothing is relatively cheap in Nicaragua, many families have many children. They often cannot afford to send all of them to school. The students may also have to buy paper and other supplies that are also cost prohibitive. The total cost comes to approximately \$50 per year (or 700 cordobas).

Because of these burdens many children do not attend school. An estimated 1/2 of the population does not attend elementary school. This statistic only gets worse as the age of the child gets older. The children may also be needed at home to work or help take care of the other children.



Vocabulario

English	Spanish
Coat	el abrigo
Sweater	el suéter
Blouse	la blusa
Skirt	la falda
Dress	el vestido
Shirt	la camisa
Pants	los pantalones
Jacket	la chaqueta
Boots	las botas
Shoes	las zapatos
Socks	las calcetines
Stockings	las medias
T-Shirt	la camiseta
Hat	el sombrero
Raincoat	el impermeable
Robe	la bata
Pajamas	el pijama
Bathing suit	el traje de baño

Education in Post-Sandinista Nicaragua: A Case Study Approach

Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- examine the role of education in Nicaraguan society.
 - explore the relationship between education and economic opportunity in Nicaragua.
 - contrast theory with practice with regard to education in Nicaragua.
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Materials

- Student Handout: **Educational Overview**
 - Student Handouts: **Photos**
 - Case Study #1
 - Case Study #2
 - Case Study #3
 - Case Study #4
 - Student Handouts: **Case Studies**
 - Case Study #1: Luis Sánchez
 - Case Study #2: Kaledonia Chebez
 - Case Study #3: Luis Antonio
 - Case Study #4: Francisco Alvarado
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Activities

1. Divide students into small groups. (Ideally, each group will have a different case study, though this may not be possible in larger classes.)
 - a. Distribute a copy of the student handout entitled **Educational Overview** to each student.
 - b. Direct students to read the handout and to compare educational opportunities in Nicaragua to those in the United States. How do they account for the differences?
 2. Distribute one of the **Photos** to each group.
 - a. Direct students to create a written profile of the person(s) in the picture in the context of his or her educational experience.
 - b. Explain that they should base their ideas on the picture and what they have read.
 - c. Ask each group to present their pictures and profiles to the class.
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**Activities
(continued)**

3. Distribute the **Case Studies**.
 - a. Instruct the groups to read their case study and to compare it to the profile they created.
 - b. Ask each group to present their pictures and case studies to the class, emphasizing the reality of the situations faced in the case study and how it compares to their initial profiles. What are the similarities and differences? How do you account for them?
4. Discuss the profiles and students' reactions, impressions, etc. as a whole class.

Teacher's Notes

- The case studies included in this lesson are the product of personal interviews conducted by the research team in Nicaragua.
 - This lesson may be modified for Spanish classes by providing translations of the case studies in the target language and conducting discussions partially or completely in the target language.
 - The following web site provides a detailed look at education during the Sandinista period:
[lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+ni0036\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+ni0036))
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Educational Overview

Education and Social Disparities in Nicaragua

In the United States, we view education as a basic right of all citizens, regardless of social position or socioeconomic status. This is our reality. In Nicaragua, as in many developing countries, the philosophy is similar, but the reality is often quite different.

In Nicaragua and throughout the world, education levels are directly related to social and economic development. Statistics indicate that nearly 70% of school-aged children in Nicaragua do not complete higher than a 4th grade education.

Despite more than a decade of democracy and subsequent opportunities for economic growth, Nicaragua continues to be among the poorest countries in the Western hemisphere. According to the *World Fact Book*, 50% of the population live in poverty, and 19% live in extreme poverty.

These conditions contribute greatly to the stark inequities among the social classes in Nicaragua. Despite such disparity, however, many of Nicaragua's poor and disadvantaged continue to value education and show a strong desire to educate their children.

The illiteracy rate in Nicaragua at the beginning of the 1980's was approximately 45%. During the period of the Sandinista government, educational programs and adult literacy campaigns contributed to the decline of that figure to 12.9%. Unfortunately, that rate could not sustain itself, and the illiteracy rate has risen significantly in recent years. It is currently estimated that almost one of every three Nicaraguans over the age of 15 is literate.



Case Study #1



Case Study #2



Case Study #3



Case Study #4

Case Study #1: Luis Sánchez

Luis Sánchez is 12 years old. He lives with his mother Connie and his sister Daniela in Leon, a small city about an hour from Managua. Luis attends a private school in Leon. He wears a uniform, as all students in Nicaragua do, and attends class from 7:00 to 11:45 each day. He enjoys playing soccer and baseball, and gets good grades. His mother, who holds a master's degree in accounting, manages a local restaurant. Luis wishes he could see her more. In order to send him and his sister to private schools, Connie works a double shift at the restaurant. She is gone when Luis gets up in the morning, and he goes to bed before she gets home. On Mondays, the one day per week his mother has off, Luis is in school. Connie works approximately 90 hours per week, and makes 3,200 cordobas a month, the equivalent of a little less than \$230 US dollars. Luis considers himself lucky, because many children his age can't go to school because their parents can't afford uniforms and materials. He hopes to go to college someday.

Case Study #2: Kaledonia Chebez

Kaledonia Chebez is 11 years old. She lives with her two sisters and her grandmother in a one-room house in Leon, a small city about an hour from Managua. The house has dirt floors, no windows and plenty of disease-carrying mosquitoes. Her grandmother, Isabel, is 78 years old. She washes clothes for a living, but she has no washing machine. She washes each item of clothing by hand in a small wash tub that sits outside of her very modest home. She makes less than one cordoba, about 7 cents, for each piece of clothing. She can't see well, so sometimes Kaledonia helps her. Kaledonia's father died when she was a baby, and her mother moved to Costa Rica to find work. Kaledonia and her sister Mauristania attend a private school near their home. Their younger sister Chela is 8 years old, but she has never gone to school. Her grandmother can't afford to send all three children on her salary of less than \$30 a month. Kaledonia and her sisters often beg for money from tourists to help pay the monthly fee for their school. If they get too far behind in their payments, they won't be permitted to attend.

Case Study #3: Luis Antonio

Antonio Calero is 16 years old, and has never gone to school. His parents' meager income doesn't provide enough money for luxuries like books, uniforms and school supplies. It often doesn't provide enough money to buy food and other necessities. A family friend taught Antonio to read, and he is proud to say he was able to teach his younger brothers, who have also never had any formal education. Antonio came to Granada from Managua in search of odd jobs. He plans to give the money he makes to his family to help them buy food. On a good day, he can make \$3.00. Antonio recently started attending a small school in Granada for disadvantaged and homeless children. The school, called Nueva Esperanza (New Hope), is operated by Donna, a woman from the United States. There, Antonio receives food, shelter and an opportunity to learn. Antonio's family may resist him staying at Nueva Esperanza, because he can make money for the family working on the streets. If that should happen, Donna will offer to pay the family or give them a weekly food ration in exchange for allowing Antonio to stay at the school.

Case Study #4: Francisco Alvarado

Francisco Alvarado is 13 years old. He lives with his mother, his father and his older brother near Managua. His father is a lawyer and the former minister of education in Nicaragua. He moved his family to the United States when the Sandinistas took power in 1979. Francisco was born there, but has lived most of his life in Nicaragua, where he returned with his family in the early 1990's. Francisco and his brother, José Antonio, attend the American School in Managua. The school's tuition is \$300 a month, higher than the average monthly wage of many Nicaraguan workers. When Francisco graduates, he will likely continue his education in the United States. His sister is studying art in Miami.

Computers and Technology

Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- determine the degree of access the average Nicaraguan has access to computers and the Internet.
 - evaluate the extent of technology education in Nicaragua.
 - Evaluate the role of Internet cafés in Nicaraguan life.
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Materials

- Student Handout: **Accessing the Information Age**
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Activities

1. Begin the lesson by taking a survey of the class.
 - a. Ask students to raise their hand if they have a personal computer in their home. Take note of the number and write it on the chalkboard.
 - b. Ask students to raise their hand if they are taking or have taken a class in school on how to use a computer or on computer applications. Take note of the number and write it on the chalkboard.
 - c. Ask students to raise their hand if they have ever used a computer to access the Internet. Take note of the number and write it on the chalkboard.
 - d. Ask students to examine the results of the survey and to determine the degree of access they have to computer technology and the Internet. Is access readily available? Why or why not?
 2. On the chalkboard write the number 585.
 - a. Explain to the class that this number reflects the number of personal computers in the United States per 1,000 inhabitants, according to a published report by the World Bank in the year 2000.
 - b. Now write the number 9 on the chalkboard and explain to the class that this number represents the number of computers available in Nicaragua per 1,000 inhabitants.
 - c. Ask students to evaluate the difference between the two numbers. How much access does the average Nicaraguan have to computers and the Internet as compared to the average American? To the students in the classroom?
 3. Distribute the student handout entitled **Accessing the Information Age**.
 - a. Direct students to read the first section, entitled *The Average Family*.
 - b. Ask students to estimate the possibility that a family whose income was 800 cordobas per month would have enough to buy a personal computer for \$1,000 (14,000 cordobas).
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4. Direct students to read the next section, entitled *Computers in the Schools*.
 - a. Ask students to compare the opportunities that they have to learn computers to those of the students at Escuela Solidaridad.
 - b. Ask students to speculate on how their job opportunities in the future would be affected if they didn't have access to computer training.
 5. Direct students to read the next section, entitled *The Internet Cafés*.
 - a. Ask students to hypothesize why the cafés are mostly used by tourists and university students. Why wouldn't the average Nicaraguan utilize the cafés?
 - b. Ask students to explain the uniqueness of Puerto Café Benjamin Linder.
 6. Direct students to read the final section, entitled *Community Agencies*.
 - a. Ask students if they have any similar programs in their communities (YM/WCA, public libraries, etc.) How do such programs benefit the community?
 - b. Ask students to assess the difficulties that such a community-based program might face, particularly in such an impoverished area as Subtiava. (Lack of funding for repairs, etc.)
 7. Take another survey of the class by asking students to raise their hand if they have a television in their home. Take note of the number and write it on the chalkboard.
 - a. Ask students to raise their hand if they have a Nintendo or other video games in their home. Take note of the number and write it on the chalkboard.
 - b. Ask students to raise their hand if they have ever gone to a video arcade. Take note of the number and write it on the chalkboard.
 - c. Ask students to determine the degree of access they have to of this type of entertainment. Is it readily available? Why or why not?
 8. Ask students to place themselves in the situation of an average Nicaraguan family that earns 800 cordobas per month. What type of access would they have then?
 - a. Explain that in Nicaragua (in the cities) you will find Nintendo cafés. Like the Internet cafés, children pay a small fee to play Nintendo for an hour.
 - b. The Nintendos are used items and are usually sent to Nicaragua by family members living in the United States. The people running the games can make enough to buy more machines and games from the profits.

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c. Also explain that televisions are more common in Nicaragua, but many families do not own one. They are only able to see broadcasts in stores or in public places like bars and restaurants.

9. Concluding Activity:

Direct students to write a reflective essay in answer to the following question: "How has technology affected my life? If I lived in Nicaragua, how would my life be different?"

Accessing the Information Age

The Average Family

Approximately 50 percent of the population live in poverty and 19 percent live in extreme poverty. Almost half of the population lacks access to safe water, illiteracy is still high (34%), and there is a whole generation that was unable to attend school or saw its education interrupted by the war.

The Gross National Income per capita is used by the World Bank to measure the average income of a country's citizens. It is the dollar value of a country's final output of goods and services in a year divided by its population. The GNI per capita of the United States is \$34,800; Nicaragua's is \$480.

To provide a further example, the starting salary of a Nicaraguan schoolteacher is 800 cordobas per month. It takes about 14 cordobas to equal one U.S. dollar. Therefore, a beginning schoolteacher earns just over \$57 a month.

Computers in the Schools

The Digital Opportunity Initiative published a report in July 2001 saying that countries are at a "critical juncture," a time when access to information technology can improve living conditions in developing nations or leave the country further behind. The report found that regions developing technology-supportive infrastructures, policies and educated work forces will be better equipped to reap the benefits of economic development than those that don't.



In Nicaragua, however, most public schools are not wired for computers or access to the Internet. In the Escuela Solidaridad in Managua, for example, students can take a voluntary typing class as a prelude to possibly having access to a computer keyboard in the future.

The Internet Cafés



Internet cafés are very common in the cities of Nicaragua. In Granada, for example, there are four within a four-block radius of the central plaza. These independent business rent computer time for those who want to use a computer. The cost is relatively inexpensive by U. S. standards, and the service is reliable. For example, it would cost you 30 cordobas per hour to use a computer at the Internet K@fé in Granada. (Approximately \$2.15 in U.S. currency.) You may pay by the hour, half hour, or quarter hour.

The Internet K@fé opened in 2000 and was the first Internet café in Granada. It has nine networked computer terminals. The business gets from 70 – 90 people per day, but 75% of its customers are tourists. Others are students from the universities. The computers are mostly used for e-mail and chat.

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**Puerto Café
Benjamin
Linder**

Internet cafés throughout Nicaragua repeat this pattern of usage. Some, however, have a slightly different approach. The Puerto Café Benjamin Linder in Leon has 14 computer terminals, a printer, and a scanner. Like the Internet K@fe in Granada, it charges 30 cordobas per hour and has approximately 75 users per day, mostly tourists and university students using them for e-mail and chat. However, part of the money received from the patrons of the café and its restaurant is used to pay for prosthetic limbs for the people of the region. This is part of the Polus Center Project, based in Boston, that developed the program to provide prosthetics for those injured by the war. Free prosthetics paid for from these funds are provided by the Walking Unidos Clinic in Leon.

Community Agencies

Many community agencies are trying to fill the gap created by lack of funding and infrastructure development. One such organization is the Centro de Capacitación Indígena in the Subtiava section of Leon. This ethnic community center for the descendants of the region's original inhabitants has developed a training program for local students in the use of computer applications (Microsoft Office). The center has developed a collaborative with a university in Managua to certify the graduates of the program once they complete the eight-month course. The person behind this initiative is Benito Téllez Maradiaga.



**Ligna Maria
Torrez studying
PowerPoint**

There is a great demand for this service because there is nowhere else in the community where students can come and receive such training. There are a total of twenty students who come in two and a half hour shifts, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. They must also spend four hours on Saturday. Students like 14 year-old Ligna Maria Torrez come in the morning then attend a standard school program in the afternoon.

The program has problems, however. All of the machines are older, donated computers, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain them. Many of them are no longer serviceable, and only five are still in working order. In addition, with computer technology advancing, students will switch machines during class so that each can use the faster computers.
