International Service Learning Program at Lasell

Shoulder to Shoulder
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Nicaragua Shoulder to Shoulder

MISSION STATEMENT

The Nicaragua Shoulder to Shoulder service-learning experience provides opportunities for students to volunteer for literacy, public health, and social justice, while working side by side with community members, gaining understanding through cultural exchange, and examining issues related to poverty and development. By designing academic components in conjunction with their courses, student participants connect a service trip to Nicaragua with their individual majors and unique interests.

The name Shoulder to Shoulder summarizes the mission of Lasell’s international service-learning programs. It points to our work ethic, our desire to learn from others, and our commitment to presenting Lasell College volunteers as guests, rather than tourists. In traveling to developing communities, we see poverty firsthand and listen to the stories of those struggling with poverty on a daily basis. Although we cannot “fix” such daunting problems with small groups during short visits, we gain insight into other cultures and complex issues of social injustice and economic development, and carry these lessons home with us to share with others. I look forward to a fruitful partnership between Lasell College and our friends in San Juan Del Sur, Nicaragua. Our students intend to engage in volunteer work and feel eager to help others in Nicaragua; however, I know that through working “shoulder to shoulder” with members of the community, we will be the true beneficiaries of an invaluable learning experience.

Lydia Pittman
Director, Nicaragua Shoulder to Shoulder

Lasell College – Where The Classroom Is The Real World
History

1522-1822 (Colonial Period)

Early civilizations in Nicaragua were, much like those in most Central American countries, large and complex tribal territories in which “warfare, slavery, and involuntary tribute by the weak to the strong were among the basic ingredients.”

In 1522 Nicaragua was “discovered” by Gil Gonzalez a sailor under contract by the Spanish crown. The two missions of these quests were to convert souls to Christianity, and to find and obtain gold and other riches. These explorations lead to Spanish interest in another quest by Francisco Hernandez Cordoba in 1524.

The most tragic and lasting results of the conquistadors were the impacts on Nicaraguan demographics. In the first decades the indigenous population of Nicaragua was reduced from roughly one million to tens of thousands. The three largest contributing factors to this were disease (by far the most significant impact), slavery, which killed and relocated thousands (more than 50% of whom died during sea journeys from Nicaragua), and the third and least significant factor, the outright killing of natives in battle.

This demographic holocaust resulted in the Nicaragua known today. Today Nicaragua is largely mestizo in racial type and almost entirely Spanish speaking.

Nicaragua formally declared independence on 30 April 1838.

1823-1935

Cornelius Vanderbilt, owner of the Accessory Transit Company of America was providing transit for Americans through Nicaragua, and supported the expedition of William Walker. William Walker wanted to take over Nicaragua as a slave state. In 1855 he entered Nicaragua with a small band of mercenaries armed with a new type of quick-action rifle. In 1856, a new regime was formed and Walker was elected president. On September 22, he suspended the Nicaraguan laws against slavery in order to gain support from the southern states in America and declared English to be the country's official language. His government was formally recognized by the United States that year. Then, in a reversal of alliance, Cornelius Vanderbilt backed a coalition of Central American states who fought against Walker. In 1857, Walker returned to Tennessee briefly and then sailed to Nicaragua again with more followers. There he was taken prisoner by the British and turned over to Honduran authorities, who tried and executed him on 12 September 1860.

An important factor to remember about this time period is the underlying fact that terms like “manifest destiny” and “imperialism” were not dirty words. Many people, not just the political figures of the United States, believed that the U.S. had a major role to play in the colonization of Latin America. Zelaya was the conservative leader of the country at this time, and among other things that ‘annoyed’ Washington, Zelaya refused a U.S. grant that would have been a step toward a canal, and would have made several Nicaraguan regions U.S. sovereign states.

This and many other sources of friction eventually culminated in a situation where Washington let it be known that it would look kindly on a conservative overthrow of Zelaya. In

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1 Mestizo—any person of mixed blood. In Central and South America it denotes a person of combined Indian and European extraction. In some countries—e.g., Ecuador—it has acquired social and cultural connotations; a pure-blooded Indian who has adopted European dress and customs is called a mestizo (or cholo).
1909 the Zelaya government made the unfortunate mistake of executing two U.S. mercenaries. This resulted in the U.S. severing any and all diplomatic relations with Nicaragua. The Zelaya government soon collapsed and for two years the Nicaraguan financial and diplomatic position suffered greatly. The Nicaraguan government was soon replaced with a U.S. puppet government that received loans from the U.S. that went almost entirely into the pockets of the corrupt rulers.

Benjamin Zeledon, fed up with the situation his country was in, used the connection he had made working under the Zelaya Administration to start a rebellion.

“The U.S. could hardly permit the overthrow of the Conservative authorities. [If the rebels won] all of the efforts of the State Department to place Nicaragua on her feet politically and financially would have been useless, and the interests of the New York bankers…. Would be seriously imperiled”

Therefore, under the old pretext of protecting American lives and property, U.S. Marines were sent into Nicaragua. Zeledon, against any and all American imperialism, condemned America for invading a smaller nation. However, Zeledon’s fate was sealed when he spoke out against America and he was killed in battle. Before he was buried, the “young patriot’s body” was dragged through the small town of Niquinohomo where conservative troops kicked and beat his lifeless corpse, right before the eyes of young Augusto Cesar Sandino.

It is relatively easy to sum up the opinions of Sandino regarding U.S. military presence.

“The sovereignty and liberty of a people are not to be discussed, but rather, defended with weapons in hand.” Sandino led a long guerilla war against the U.S. military. Eventually, the U.S. military withdrew in January 1933. In February of 1933 Sandino signed a peace agreement with the Sacasa administration. This document ended conflict and partially disarmed the guerrillas. In addition it gave amnesty to Sandino’s men. Sandino’s joy was short lived because he was soon deceived, captured, and executed. Not surprisingly, military presence is not the only form of intervention available to the U.S. The importance of the National Guard of Nicaragua was realized, and a calculated decision was made to hand over control of this army from the U.S. to Anastasio Somoza Garcia. From this chair of power, it took Somoza all of four years to secure a dictatorial system and have complete control over the country as well as to build a remarkably evil relationship with the United States government.

1936-1972 (Somoza Era)

“In 1936 Anastasio Somoza, the head of the National Guard, staged a coup to bring down President Sacasa. Five months later, he became president of Nicaragua. He started a dictatorship, with the support of the United States that lasted until his assassination in 1956. He was succeeded by his two sons Luis and Anastasio. The Somoza dictatorship ended in 1979 when the Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (FSLN) successfully waged a campaign against the National Guard, which was loyal to the Somoza family, and wrested control from the Somoza family. Because the Somoza family was plagued by corruption, many of their colleagues and beneficiaries, fearing prosecution for their actions, fled the country. The United States, concerned about the collectivization efforts of the Sandinistas and their acceptance of aid from Cuba and the Soviet Union, began to covertly arm the Contra opposition.”

The Anastasio Somoza administration started in 1937 and ended in 1956. The policies of Anastasio were: 1) Maintain the loyalty of the National Guard by keeping command in the “family” and promoting corruption among guardsmen in order to psychologically separate them from their fellow countrymen. 2) Maintain the support of the U.S. government. 3) Assassinate...
any potential political contenders. By 1956 the U.S. government had aided the growth of Anastasio’s fortune to the amount of $50 million. One Nicaraguan patriot was not going to watch Somoza ruin has nation, and in 1956 Roberto Lopez Perez did what he thought any true Nicaraguan patriot should have done and he shot and killed Anastasio Somoza.

Luis Somoza replaced his father and ruled for a decade (1957–1967). Luis was arguably the most intelligent of the Somozas, and understood that to maintain power in Nicaragua the family would have to lower their profile as well as to create an illusion of democracy, modernization, and development. Luis did a relatively good job of this, and in 1967 he strongly disapproved of his brother Anastasio running for president. However, Anastasio was the commander of the National Guard and there was little his brother could do to stop it.

Anastasio Somoza Debayle had an even more detrimental effect on the country than either his father or brother. His love of power prompted him to change the Constitution to allot himself more time in office, and to allow himself to technically hand over power, just to take it back again. The first major event to compromise Anastasio’s power was the 1972 earthquake in the heart of Managua. “The earthquake left approximately 10,000 dead and some 50,000 families homeless, and destroyed 80 percent of Managua's commercial buildings.” While allowing the National Guard to plunder and sell relief aid, he also channeled international relief aid into his own account and spent none of his more than $300 million fortune to help his fellow Nicaraguans. Much of that fortune was openly stolen from U.S. loans to Nicaragua. The final straw on the back of the Somoza régime came when a team of professional assassins killed Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, a well known journalist who spoke out against the Somoza administration, as he drove to work on January 10, 1978. This marked the beginning of “the peoples struggle”. In July of 1979 Somoza fled to Miami on a jet arranged by the U.S. The Sandinista insurrection had won unconditionally.

1973 - 1994

The beginning of the Sandinista administration in Nicaragua was not taken lightly around the world and particularly in Washington. Though the Carter administration did not actively protest Sandinista rule, it was not happy about the change. In the book *Nicaragua: Living in the Shadow of the Eagle*, Tomas Walker effectively breaks down the Sandinista period into four parts:

1. This period is characterized by optimism and euphoria. This period preceded the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980.
2. The second period began with the realization that the new U.S. administration had hostile intentions, and lasted until the spring of 1982. Although this time period was the beginning of a horrible time for the Sandinista administration, it was also a time of blanket socialist policies, most famously the 1980 literacy campaign. At this time Reagan had started his massive propaganda campaign against the Sandinista government.
3. Next came the three year period between 1982 and the 1985, when Daniel Ortega was elected. This was marked by the beginning of massive CIA sabotage, and economic stagnation. The level of CIA intervention was unprecedented. By 1984 the CIA was funding, training, and arming 15,000 Contra troops. Proportionally, such an invasion force on America would amount to 1,280,000 troops.
4. The final five years of Sandinista rule was a time of death, destruction, and economic collapse brought on primarily by the Contra War and other U.S.-orchestrated programs of
destabilization. This was the downfall of Sandinista rule. The major success of this period was that Nicaragua had its first democratically elected president, Daniel Ortega.

The Contra war of 1990 left Nicaragua highly divided. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro was elected president of Nicaragua that year. She had become a prominent leader after the 1978 assassination of her husband, Pedro Chamorro, a respected publisher and editor of the daily newspaper La Prensa, who consistently investigated the corruption of the Somoza family. Violeta Chamorro founded her administration on the principle of national reconciliation. She is credited with leading the country through the transition from war to peace, stabilizing the economy, and initiating a market economy.

Post 1995

In 1997, Arnoldo Alemán Lacayo became the president of the Republic, running under the Liberal Alliance party. He hated the Sandinista party and was rumored to have made a fortune off the war. The Alemán administration was a great disappointment to anyone that had hoped for democracy. The extreme polarization of party values in this period blocked any cooperation. The history books will remember Alemán.

“Berlin-based anti-corruption lobby group Transparency International has ranked Alemán as the world's ninth most corrupt leader in history for embezzling a total of approximately $100 million from the people of Nicaragua.”

In the election of 2001 Daniel Ortega lost again to Enrique Bolanos Geyer. The major problem posed to Bolanos was the end of the age of “structural adjustment” and the onset of realizations that IMF interference had left Nicaragua and many other countries paralyzed and virtually unable to do anything about their suffering poor. Also Bolanos went after Alemán and formally charged him with the $100 Million dollar embezzlement in 2002.

“Nicaragua held a general election on 5 November 2006. The country's voters went to the polls to elect a new President of the Republic and 90 members of the National Assembly, all of whom will serve five-year terms. Daniel Ortega (FSLN) won the race with 37.99% of the vote. In the last 16 years, the National Opposition Union (UNO) in 1990, the Liberal Alliance (AL) in 1996 and the Constitutionalist Liberal Party (PLC) in 2001 have all defeated the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) candidate Daniel Ortega in three consecutive presidential elections.”

Today, Ortega’s approval rating is down. And achievements by his administration have been small.

- For more information on the current Nicaraguan government see http://pila2008.wordpress.com/category/nicaragua-update/. It is an article titled “Politics and Institutions in Latin America.”
Current Events
The 2006 election put Daniel Ortega and the FSLN in charge again for the first time since 1989. Daniel Ortega’s base has always been with the poorest of the poor who believe that he is looking out for their best interests.

The last few years have been uncertain times for Latin America. In the last two years Nicaragua moved from the 4th to the 2nd poorest country in the western hemisphere. The per capita income dropped from $3,400 to 2,900. The effects of uncertain times also create political instability. In 2008 corruption allegations in local and mayoral elections were so widespread that the U.S. and the E.U. froze all economic aid. Neighboring Honduras ousted President Manuel Zelaya when he proposed changes to the constitution that were deemed illegal.

This past year similar changes were proposed by Mr. Ortega in Nicaragua, including the removal of a constitutional ban on presidential and mayoral re-election. As of October 19, 2009 these term limits were effectively removed, opening the door for Ortega who plans to run for re-election in 2011.

With Nicaragua’s history of ruthless dictatorship, presidential term limits are a very touchy subject for many Nicaraguans. Many now worry that Ortega will try to keep his power until it is taken from him. However, among his supporters the belief is “Ortega is the great leader of the FSLN. He will stay as long as he wants, because he is watching out for all of us.”

President Ortega’s popularity remains particularly strong among the poorest Nicaraguans. However, many believe that this kind of assault on constitutional law is a very bad sign. Many fear the repercussions of these actions and pray for a peaceful resolution. True national opinion on this move is hard to discern. The re-election ban was put in place in the 1980’s by the opposition party, and predicting how far Ortega plans to push his ‘assault’ on the limitations of power is difficult.
General Information

The Pacific coast of Nicaragua was settled as a Spanish colony from Panama in the early 16th century. Independence from Spain was declared in 1821 and the country became an independent republic in 1838. Britain occupied the Caribbean Coast in the first half of the 19th century, but gradually ceded control of the region in subsequent decades. Violent opposition to governmental manipulation and corruption spread to all classes by 1978 and resulted in a short-lived civil war that brought the Marxist Sandinista guerrillas to power in 1979. Nicaraguan aid to leftist rebels in El Salvador caused the US to sponsor anti-Sandinista Contra guerrillas through much of the 1980s. Free elections in 1990, 1996, and 2001 saw the Sandinistas defeated, but voting in 2006 announced the return of former Sandinista President Daniel Ortega Saavedra. Nicaragua’s infrastructure and economy, hard hit by the earlier civil war and by Hurricane Mitch in 1998, are slowly being rebuilt.\textsuperscript{xxi}

Capital: Managua

Area - comparative: Slightly smaller than the state of New York

Land use:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Arable land}: 14.81\%
  \item \textit{Permanent crops}: 1.82\%
  \item \textit{Other}: 83.37\% (2005)
\end{itemize}

National holiday: Independence Day, 15 September (1821)

Highest point: Mogoton 2,438 m Mogoton is a peak on the border of Nicaragua and Honduras. It rises 2,438 m above sea level and is the highest point in Nicaragua.

Population: 5,995,928 (July 2010 est.)

Death rate: 4.28 deaths/1,000 population (July 2010 est.)

Infant mortality rate:

total: 24.16 deaths/1,000 live births
male: 27.14 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 21.03 deaths/1,000 live births (2010 est.)

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 67.5\%
  \begin{itemize}
    \item male: 67.2\%
    \item female: 67.8\% (2003 est.)
  \end{itemize}

Suffrage: 16 years of age; universal

Budget:

revenues: $1.421 billion
expenditures: $1.511 billion (2009 est.)\textsuperscript{xxii}
Identification

Officially identified as the Republic of Nicaragua, the origin of the country’s name is attributed to more than one source. According to one story, it was Nicarao, an indigenous chief at the time of the Spanish invasion, for whom the Spaniards named their conquest. Nicarao is a Nahuatl name, Nahuatl being the language of the Aztecs. A related story traces the origin back further, saying that chief Nicarao took his name from his own people, who derived the name based on the geographic location of their land. Nicaragua may be a combination of nic-atl-nahuac meaning “next to the water” in the Arawak language.

Government

Modeled on the democratic system of the United States, the Nicaraguan government is divided into three branches: the executive, the legislative, and the judicial. The executive branch is made up of a president, vice president, and an appointed cabinet. The legislative branch, with a 92-member National Assembly, enacts the country’s laws. As in the United States, the judicial branch is comprised of a supreme court and lower, local courts.

Nicaraguan Geography & Climate

There are three temperature zones in Nicaragua. In the lowlands (Pacific and Atlantic coast) temperatures vary roughly between 72° F at night and 86° F at daytime (22° C - 30° C). Temperature can reach 100° F in May (38° C). This is the climate zone that San Juan Del Sur is located in, along with 80% of Nicaragua’s population. The central part of the country is about 9° F (5° C) cooler, and in the mountains in the north, it is about 18° F (10° C) cooler.
Current Economy

Nicaragua has widespread underemployment, one of the highest degrees of income inequality in the world, and the second lowest per capita income in the Western Hemisphere. While the country has progressed toward macroeconomic stability in the past few years, annual GDP growth has been far too low to meet the country's needs, forcing the country to rely on international economic assistance to meet fiscal and debt financing obligations. In early 2004, Nicaragua secured some $4.5 billion in foreign debt reduction under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, and in October 2007, the IMF approved a new poverty reduction and growth facility (PRGF) program that should create fiscal space for social spending and investment. The continuity of a relationship with the IMF reinforces donor confidence, despite private sector concerns surrounding Ortega, which have dampened investment. The US-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) has been in effect since April 2006 and has expanded export opportunities for many agricultural and manufactured goods. Energy shortages fueled by high oil prices, however, are a serious bottleneck to growth.xxv

Quick Facts

GDP - per capita (PPP²): $2,900 (2010 est.) (Down from $3,400, 2006)
Unemployment rate: 8% (2010 est.) plus underemployment³ of 46.5% (2008 est.)
Population below poverty line: 48% (2005)
Exports - commodities: coffee, beef, shrimp and lobster, tobacco, sugar, peanuts
Economic aid - recipient: $471 million (2006 est.)

The Human Development Index - going beyond income

Each year since 1990 the Human Development Report has published the human development index (HDI) which looks beyond GDP to a broader definition of well-being. The HDI provides a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy), being educated (measured by adult literacy and gross enrolment in education) and having a decent standard of living (measured by purchasing power parity, PPP, income). The index is not in any sense a comprehensive measure of human development. It does not, for example, include important indicators such as gender or income inequality nor more difficult to measure concepts like respect for human rights and political freedoms. What it does provide is a broadened prism for viewing human progress and the complex relationship between income and well-being.

The index was developed in 1990 by Indian Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen, Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq, and Sir Richard Jolly, with help from Gustav Ranis of Yale University and Lord Meghnad Desai of the London School of Economics, and has been used since then by the United Nations Development Programme.xxvi

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² PPP – Purchasing Power Parity – conversion to USD using a basket of goods
³ Under-employment -- Suboptimal utilization of labor, also termed sub employment. Visible under-employment involves working fewer hours than a person normally works, or prefers to work. Invisible under-employment involves under-utilization of a person's skills, qualifications, or experience in a job that is lower grade than their usual job, or involves a skills mismatch, and may lead to low productivity and low income.
Human Development Index: Nicaragua

Of the components of the HDI, only income and gross enrolment are somewhat responsive to short term policy changes. For that reason, it is important to examine changes in the human development index over time. The human development index trends tell an important story in that respect. Between 1980 and 2007 Nicaragua's HDI rose by 0.79% annually from 0.565 to 0.699 today. HDI scores in all regions have increased progressively over the years (Figure 1) although all have experienced periods of slower growth or even reversals.

Figure 1: HDI Trends

Source: Indicator table G of the Human Development Report 2009
This year's HDI, which refers to 2007, highlights the very large gaps in well-being and life chances that continue to divide our increasingly interconnected world. The HDI for Nicaragua is 0.699, which gives the country a rank of 124th out of 182 countries with data (Table 1).

### Table 1: Nicaragua’s human development index 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HDI value</th>
<th>Life expectancy at birth (years)</th>
<th>Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and above)</th>
<th>Combined gross enrolment ratio (%)</th>
<th>GDP per capita (PPP US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Norway (0.971)</td>
<td>1. Japan (82.7)</td>
<td>1. Georgia (100.0)</td>
<td>1. Australia (114.2)</td>
<td>1. Liechtenstein (85,382)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122. Guatemala (0.704)</td>
<td>72. China (72.9)</td>
<td>98. Swaziland (79.6)</td>
<td>96. Kuwait (72.6)</td>
<td>128. India (2,753)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123. Egypt (0.703)</td>
<td>73. Colombia (72.7)</td>
<td>99. Vanuatu (78.1)</td>
<td>97. Paraguay (72.1)</td>
<td>129. Viet Nam (2,600)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>124. Nicaragua (0.699)</strong></td>
<td><strong>74. Nicaragua (72.7)</strong></td>
<td><strong>100. Nicaragua (78.0)</strong></td>
<td><strong>98. Nicaragua (72.1)</strong></td>
<td><strong>130. Nicaragua (2,570)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125. Botswana (0.694)</td>
<td>75. Saudi Arabia (72.7)</td>
<td>101. Tunisia (77.7)</td>
<td>99. Bahamas (71.8)</td>
<td>131. Moldova (2,551)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126. Vanuatu (0.693)</td>
<td>76. Romania (72.5)</td>
<td>102. Solomon Islands (76.6)</td>
<td>100. Moldova (71.6)</td>
<td>132. Pakistan (2,496)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>182. Niger (0.340)</td>
<td>176. Afghanistan (43.6)</td>
<td>151. Mali (26.2)</td>
<td>177. Djibouti (25.5)</td>
<td>181. Congo (Democratic Republic of the) (298)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By looking at some of the most fundamental aspects of people’s lives and opportunities, the HDI provides a much more complete picture of a country’s development than other indicators, such as GDP per capita. Figure 2 illustrates that countries on the same level of HDI can have very different levels of income or that countries with similar levels of income can have very different HDIs.
Figure 2: The human development index gives a more complete picture than income.

Source: Indicator table H of the Human Development Report 2009
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Poverty Index (HPI-1)</th>
<th>Probability of not surviving to age 40 (%)</th>
<th>Adult illiteracy rate (% ages 15 and above)</th>
<th>People not using an improved water source (%)</th>
<th>Children underweight for age (% aged under 5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Czech Republic (1.5)</td>
<td>1. Hong Kong, China (SAR) (1.4)</td>
<td>1. Georgia (0.0)</td>
<td>1. Barbados (0)</td>
<td>1. Croatia (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66. Maldives (16.5)</td>
<td>72. Bahamas (7.3)</td>
<td>98. Swaziland (20.4)</td>
<td>100. Ghana (20)</td>
<td>56. Thailand (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68. Nicaragua (17.0)</td>
<td>74. Nicaragua (7.9)</td>
<td>100. Nicaragua (22.0)</td>
<td>102. Nicaragua (21)</td>
<td>58. Nicaragua (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69. Indonesia (17.0)</td>
<td>75. Brazil (8.2)</td>
<td>101. Tunisia (22.3)</td>
<td>103. Lesotho (22)</td>
<td>59. Syrian Arab Republic (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70. Namibia (17.1)</td>
<td>76. Colombia (8.3)</td>
<td>102. Solomon Islands (23.4)</td>
<td>104. Azerbaijan (22)</td>
<td>60. Kuwait (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135. Afghanistan (59.8)</td>
<td>153. Lesotho (47.4)</td>
<td>151. Mali (73.8)</td>
<td>150. Afghanistan (78)</td>
<td>138. Bangladesh (48)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The IMF and Nicaragua

The IMF in Nicaragua

http://ifis.choike.org/informes/1104.html

The government of Nicaragua is at a crossroads in its relations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). After submitting the 2007-2010 Plan and completing the first review in 2009 it has struggled to comply with the following reviews. Failure to comply is explained by the fact that in 2009 Nicaragua has had to face the consequences of the global crisis in the middle of another internal crisis due to, among other things, the cut-back of foreign aid.

In October 2007 the Executive Board of the IMF approved a three-year Special Drawing Rights (SDR) 71.5 million (about US$ 111.3 million) arrangement under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) for Nicaragua in support of the government’s economic program.

In September 2008, the first review of Nicaragua’s performance under this arrangement was completed. The Executive Board approved to increase financial support under the program by SDR 6.5 million (about US$ 10 million) to SDR 78 million (about US$ 120.4 million) to help Nicaragua cope with the negative effects of a series of natural disasters in 2007. The result of this first review allowed an immediate disbursement to Nicaragua of an amount equivalent to SDR 18.4 million (about US$ 28.4 million).

The Executive Board also approved waivers of non-observance of two performance criteria related to delays in the approval of the 2008 budget and the adoption of measures to discourage theft in electricity consumption.

However, in the process of the so-called second and third reviews of the 2009 program there has been a deadlock in negotiations on issues that have arisen concerning the elimination of exemptions to non-productive institutions and agencies in the country, the elimination of indexation of pensions of social security beneficiaries and a tax reform. This has led to an exchange of missions since last May including a mission comprised of financial sector representatives that visited Washington for talks with the Managing Director of the IMF, Dominique Strauss Khan.

Top government officials note, one the one hand, that impositions are not acceptable and that it was a government decision to maintain and implement the program; on the other hand, the President of Nicaragua has commented on the negotiations, calling the IMF "the Fund of International Death, which has sown death all around the world and want to continue sowing with absurd conditionalities that would cause a traumatic effect on the country."

Failure to comply is explained by the fact that in 2009 Nicaragua has had to face the consequences of the global crisis in the middle of another internal crisis due to, among other things, the cut-back of foreign aid.

The government has made great efforts to reactivate the financial cooperation by some donor countries including several EU nations that have suspended their net financial contributions in the form of Budget Support due to political reasons. The EU and the US have “frozen” the disbursement of substantial amounts of economic cooperation and have conditioned the renewal of such flows to a revision of the results of the municipal elections held in November 2008.

The EU and the US have conditioned its continued support to government transparency. The US suspended disbursement of US$ 64 million from a program of the Millennium Challenge Account Corporation after the Nicaraguan political opposition denounced fraud in the November municipal elections.
This crisis has caused a downward revision of US$ 193 million in tax revenue budgeted through two budget reforms, which have caused severe cut-backs in government spending. And a new downward revision in tax revenues, amounting up to US$ 50 million, is still pending.

The IMF approved a disbursement of US$ 150 million that became part of the international reserves of the Central Bank of Nicaragua. This amount was assigned to Nicaragua as a result of a G-20 decision adopted at its London meeting in April, aiming at injecting liquidity into the global economic system by complementing foreign exchange reserves of member countries with a one-time allocation of SDR equivalent to US$ 250 billion.

xxx

CAFTA (Central American Free Trade Agreement)
By Katarina Wahlberg, Global Policy Forum http://www.globalpolicy.org
August 2004

In February 2004, I spent two weeks in Nicaragua doing field research on trade, agriculture and development. In this process, I met with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), labor and agriculture associations, and a couple of farmers’ cooperatives. As I began my conversations, I realized that it was impossible to talk about trade and development in Nicaragua without talking about CAFTA - the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

A few weeks earlier the Central American countries had finalized talks with the United States on CAFTA after just one year of negotiations. Similar to other free trade agreements, CAFTA is based on the assumption that promoting free trade will produce economic growth and development. CAFTA is in many ways modeled after the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and critics fear therefore that the many negative effects of NAFTA will be repeated in CAFTA. In Mexico NAFTA put many small and medium producers out of business, it increased unemployment in the manufacturing sector, and caused environmental degradation as farmers increased the use of pesticides and fertilizers to better compete with US products. Some claim that CAFTA will have even worse effects in the Central American countries as these are less industrialized and skill levels are significantly lower than in Mexico.

Divide and Conquer
CAFTA can be understood in the context of a US strategy to divide opposition in negotiations for other larger trade agreements. After difficulties in furthering negotiations of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and in the World Trade Organization (WTO), the US embarked on a strategy of “divide and conquer,” pursuing bilateral trade agreements to prevent poor states from forming alliances, such as the G20+ that formed in the WTO negotiations in Cancún in September 2003. (The Cancún negotiations collapsed after a group of more than 20 poor states refused to accept further trade liberalization without concessions from the rich countries on their agricultural subsidies.)

The huge power imbalance with the US leaves the Central American countries with little bargaining clout over CAFTA. The combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Central
America is 0.5% of the US GDP, and Central America heavily depends on aid and access to the US market. CAFTA goes much further in liberalizing trade than the WTO and the FTAA. For example, in the WTO a country earning less than US$ 1000 per capita (which Nicaragua does), receive some form of special and differential treatment. Therefore, if CAFTA is ratified, the Central American states will have little incentive to join any future alliance in WTO or FTAA negotiations.

Unequal Trade Agreement
CAFTA is the first sub-regional agreement negotiated between such unequal trading partners. While agriculture contributes only 2% to the GDP of the US, it contributes 17% to the GDP of Central America on average, and in Nicaragua it represents 32%. Moreover 36% of the labor force in Central America is employed in agricultural activities, whereas the agricultural sector in the US employs only 2% of the labor force. Finally the US is Central America's most important trading partner, about 40-50% of Central American exports go to the US. Meanwhile, Central America accounts for only about 1% of total US trade. Due to these asymmetries CAFTA will have much deeper and wide-reaching effects in Central America than it will have in the US.

CAFTA and the Nicaraguan Society
The people and organizations that I met with were very concerned with how CAFTA would affect the Nicaraguan society. They feared that CAFTA would lead to a flood of agricultural imports from the US, damaging the livelihood of millions of small farmers and threatening food security in the country. As one of Latin America's poorest countries, Nicaragua's small and medium farmers already face many difficulties making a living on their production. Poverty and unemployment are widespread. The informal sector sustains a large part of the population. In Managua, the streets are filled with street vendors, car washers, shoe shiners and others "employed" by the informal sector. Many people try to flee from poverty by migrating to Costa Rica or the US. Already 10-15% of the Nicaraguan population has immigrated to Costa Rica.

What's Next
On May 28, 2004 trade ministers of the US, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica signed CAFTA. Before becoming law however, the US Congress and National Assemblies in the Central American countries must also ratify the treaty. Because of the presidential elections in the US in November 2004, it is still not certain when President Bush will present the treaty to the Congress for ratification. Many say it will not happen before the elections.

When I met with the organizations in February, they were in the midst of evaluating the final text, and deciding what new strategies to adopt after it had become clear that the treaty had not included their proposals. Some of the organizations mentioned that one alternative would be to lobby their government to adopt laws ensuring labor standards and investment in social security to counter the effects of the treaty. The CID initiative is now lobbying against CAFTA ratification by the US Congress and the Central American parliaments.

Read the full article at http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/220/47242.html
**Currency**

The **córdoba** (ISO 4217 code: NIO) is the currency of Nicaragua. It is divided into 100 *centavos*. Last year, according to the CIA *World Factbook*, inflation was reported at 9.0% compared to the U.S. inflation of 2.7% (which most experts contest is actually closer to 5.0%). In spite of the struggling U.S. dollar, recent years have show a slow depreciation in the value of the Córdoba denoted by this symbol (C$). As of Jan. 01, 2008 the Córdoba was trading at 18.033 for 1 USD. In the last five years the USD has gained 1 Córdoba per year in exchange.

**Currency tips**

- It is easy to make round numbers to do easy conversion in your head quickly (ex. 20 Córdoba = 1 USD).
- Around the 15th and 30th of every month, banks are more crowded because people receive their paychecks on those days. Keep this in mind when you have to visit the bank. In general, the banking system in Nicaragua is old fashioned and slow. But if you only use the ATM’s, you will not be bothered by this.
- U.S. dollars are widely accepted in San Juan Del Sur and much of Nicaragua, but it is best to use small bills only.

**Currency converter**

US Dollar (USD) to Nicaraguan Córdoba Oro (NIO)
Interbank rate for January 24, 2011

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</table>
**Coins:** There are coins for C$5 and C$1, as well as 50¢, 25¢, 10¢, and 5¢.
**Banknotes:** There are banknotes for C$500, C$100, C$50, C$20, C$10. Also available but rarely used are 25¢, 10¢, 5¢, and 1¢ banknotes.
Cultural

**Nicaraguans**

**National Identity** - Like other Latin Americans, Nicaraguans place a great importance on family and the protection of personal *dignidad*, or dignity. This extends outward to a collective feeling of national pride among the Nicaraguan people. This nationalism is represented by heroes and martyrs in the history and folklore—especially the leaders fighting against colonial influences.\textsuperscript{xxxii}

**Symbolism** - Volcanoes dominate the landscape of Nicaragua as well as the art and consciousness of Nicaraguans.\textsuperscript{xxxiii}

**Social Problems and Control** - Poverty is the most pressing social problem in Nicaragua, and has been for decades. In 1994 the United Nations identified poverty and unemployment as the two reasons why Nicaraguans do not believe in the salve of democracy. The report asserted that 75 percent of Nicaraguan families live in poverty, and that unemployment hovered at 60 percent. Because of the uneven distribution of wealth, as well as the economic and political upheavals of recent decades, the poor have even suffered during periods of economic growth. In the 1970s, 30 percent of personal income flowed to the richest 5 percent of households. During the agricultural export growth in the Pacific lowlands and central highlands, many peasants were pushed off their land and ended up as low-wage migrant laborers.

The drug problem in Nicaragua was considered quite modest as of 1993, despite the country's position along a drug transit route from South American to the United States.\textsuperscript{xxxiv}

**Relative Status of Women and Men** - The status of men and women has changed since the revolution of the 1980s. As the revolution sought to liberate poor Nicaraguans, it also managed to liberate women from their subordinate role in the Hispanic culture. Women established neighborhood committees to organize urban resistance. Women gained the respect of male soldiers when they fought, and died, alongside them. Estimates are that women comprised about 25 percent of the Sandinista Front of the National Liberation Army.\textsuperscript{xxxv}

**Family**

As in many Latin American countries the family and extended family are very important.

**Domestic Unit** - Like many Hispanic cultures, family relationships are highly valued and include relatives beyond the nuclear family unit. The word *compadrazago*, which literally means copaternity, indicates the bond among children, parents, grandparents, and godparents. With a high fertility rate, households are large—generally comprised of six to eight persons—and include grandparents and aunts and uncles. In rural areas, large families are regarded as a blessing: parents have help with chores and farm work. In urban settings, large families with extended kin allow for creative ways in which to house entire families, despite the space constraints of city living.\textsuperscript{xxxvi}

**Kin Groups** - Loyalty to kin is strong and extended families often reside together, sharing the childrearing duties as well as any resources of the household. The notion of kin may be extended to those not related by blood or marriage with the tradition of naming godparents.\textsuperscript{xxxvii}
Other

National Drink

Macuá
Served: On the rocks
Standard garnish: lemon slice
Standard drinkware: Highball glass

* 2 parts white rum (preferably Flor de Caña)
* 2 parts guava juice
* 1 part lemon juice
* sugar to taste

Preparation:
Blend the ingredients with 1 cup of ice and serve well chilled. Garnish with an orange slice

The Macuá is a cocktail made with white rum and fruit juices, usually lemon and guava juice. It is noted as the national drink of Nicaragua. The drink is named after a tropical bird native to the country.
San Juan del Sur

San Juan del Sur existed as a sleepy little fishing village until 1851, when the California Gold Rush transformed her to become part of a transit route established to facilitate the trip between the east and west coasts of the United States. Passengers leaving from the east coast would travel to the Caribbean side of Nicaragua, navigate up the Rio San Juan, then through Lake Nicaragua, to “La Virgen”, where they would disembark and load up on horse-driven buggies to cross the 10-mile stretch of land between Lake Nicaragua and San Juan del Sur. Once in San Juan del Sur, passengers would board ships and head for California. The fishing still went on, and remained as the key industry for San Juan del Sur.

From the 1940’s until the late 1990’s, San Juan del Sur acted as one of Nicaragua’s largest shipping ports, where wood, cattle, and other agricultural products were exported, and goods ranging from automobiles to farm equipment were imported. The fishing still went on.

Since the late 1990’s, tourism and foreign investment in real estate have become the largest industries in San Juan del Sur. Streets are lined with charming homes and store fronts built of wood painted in vibrant colors. Internet cafes, restaurants, Spanish schools, and other tourism related businesses now occupy the fronts of local homes.

Amidst the boom in tourism and foreign investment, San Juan del Sur maintains its charm as a fishing village. Some fisherman have transformed themselves to provide water taxi service and fishing and surfing trips to tourists, but there is still a very strong fishing industry to be seen. Tax revenues from tourism and real estate development have enabled the mayor of San Juan del Sur to make improvements to public areas, including the park, sports center, and beach front. In October of 2002, the port of San Juan del Sur celebrated its 150th anniversary as a city.
Newton Sister City

The Newton Sister City program has been traveling to San Juan del Sur since 1988. “We (Sister City Program) have built or renovated seventeen school houses in the 200-square mile San Juan school district, constructed model homes for teachers and innovative water-purification systems for remote villages, painted and renovated existing schools, rebuilt playgrounds, sponsored teacher workshops, and trained a San Juan English teacher at Newton North High School. We also serve as the pass-through for major grant-funded Adult Education for women.”

Just like the Shoulder to Shoulder program, the Sister City Program is also committed to donating school products to the San Juan district in any way they can.

“We organize many volunteer initiatives. Work and friendship brigades from Newton South High School collaborate with their Nicaraguan counterparts on school-related work projects. We send college students from all over the country to help teach English or work on Public Health projects and live with local families. We arrange for professional volunteers to visit our Sister City--including teachers and doctors. We helped the dentists and dental technicians of Project Stretch establish San Juan's first dental hygiene outreach program. We also cooperate with the New England Chapter of VOSH --Volunteers in Optometric Service to Humanity--to give eye exams and recycle thousands of pairs of eyeglasses in the San Juan area.”

Newton Sister City is also responsible for starting The Workshop for Appropriate Technologies and the Free High School for Adults.

http://sanjuandelsursistercityproject.wordpress.com/

Contacts:
David Gullelte (david.gullelte@simmons.edu)
Margaret Gullelte (mgullelte@msn.com)
To receive Newsletter, e-mail Jason Schweitzer: jasons24@hotmail.com.
Group Projects

Water

In January 2006 the Newton/San Juan del Sur Sister City Project opened a new workshop on “Appropriate Technology” that aims to grapple simultaneously with both public health and environmental problems by constructing products including BioSand water filters, and EcoStoves. “Appropriate Technology” is best defined as the search for cheap and clever ways for people with limited resources to solve perennial dilemmas—such as contaminated water and smoke-filled kitchens, without importing expensive materials from abroad. The workshop Director, Fidel Pavon, oversees the construction, installation, and maintenance of “Appropriate Technology” products, and educates their recipients on the products’ importance for public health.xli

“Nicaragua is one of many countries around the world that is facing water pollution, floods, and droughts related to environmental degradation and pressures from the international financial institutions to raise consumer fees for water and privatize their water services.

For many families in Nicaragua, particularly in the countryside, accessing safe water can be a difficult daily challenge. The challenge becomes even greater during the dry season. About a third of the population in Nicaragua does not have potable water.

In rural areas, the number of people without potable water is much higher, about 72 percent. Many households in rural areas are dependent upon shallow hand-dug wells or natural springs and rivers, streams and lakes. However, many of the rivers, streams, and lakes are polluted with pesticides, residential sewerage and industrial waste and toxins. Sewerage coverage is very limited, serving only 800,000 inhabitants (34 percent of the urban population) and the condition of many sewerage collection systems has deteriorated. The lack of sewerage treatment causes a grave public health problem.”xlii

Read the full article at:
http://www.citizen.org/cmep/Water/cmep_Water/reports/nicaragua/articles.cfm?ID=13174

Library

The San Juan del Sur Biblioteca Móvil, located in the town of San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua, was established in November 2001 on the patio of Hotel Villa Isabella, by owner Jane Mirandette. In January 2002, the library moved down the street to its own building, four local employees were hired, and the San Juan del Sur Biblioteca became the first stationary public lending library in Nicaragua. A bookmobile now visits 30 local villages on a rotating basis, issuing library cards to children and adults, and allowing them to borrow books from bins carted throughout the countryside in a pickup truck.xliii
Adult High School

“The Free High School for Adults, which opened in 2002, provides second chances for people who thought they might never get any. Its hundreds of students include women who were illiterate until an earlier partnership provided two large literacy programs in the San Juan area. Many graduates wanted to continue on to secondary education, which for the neglected (the rural poor, especially women) is essential at this historical moment. But the regular high schools in Nicaragua accept no one over 18 and no woman who has had a baby.

The Free High School operates in San Juan proper in a Saturday School (so that people who work all week—maids, night watchmen, fishermen—can attend), and it also comes directly to farm folks in 21 widely scattered rural communities.

With Nicaragua rivaling Haiti as the poorest country in the hemisphere, secondary education that teaches health and critical thinking and that develops social consciousness, as our program does, may produce the leaders of the future that this small country desperately needs.”
**Student Projects**

The required academic component for Nicaragua Shoulder to Shoulder might take the form of a linked credit, honors component, or simply a version of a paper or project that everyone else in a class is doing, but with a topic relating to Nicaragua in some way. Below are examples of projects and topics students have chosen in the past.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Project/Topic</th>
<th>Department/Course</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kristen Augenfeld ‘10</td>
<td>The Fashion Industry and <em>Maquilas</em> (sweatshops) in Nicaragua</td>
<td>20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Century Fashion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashley Baril ‘09</td>
<td>Graphic design for Newton/SJDS Sister City Project</td>
<td>Senior Graphic Design portfolio</td>
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<td>Joey Bitzer ‘09</td>
<td>Examining the History of Indigenous People in Nicaragua</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary major in Peace and Justice Studies</td>
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<td>Chelsea Comeau ‘08</td>
<td>Literacy and the Education System in Nicaragua</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>Nordian Davis ‘11</td>
<td>The Murals of SJDS and the Nicaraguan Mural Tradition</td>
<td>Art</td>
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<td>Georges Fadel ‘08</td>
<td>“Is Nicaragua For Sale?”; Tourism and Foreign Direct Investment in SJDS</td>
<td>Cross-Cultural Management</td>
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<td>Molly Fawcett ‘09</td>
<td>Mental Health Services in Nicaragua</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<td>Camille Gillman ‘08</td>
<td>Web design for: <a href="http://shouldertoshoulder.lasell.edu">http://shouldertoshoulder.lasell.edu</a></td>
<td>Graphic Design Senior Thesis</td>
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<td>Ivan Gonzalez ‘09</td>
<td>Historical and Cultural Significance of Poetry in Nicaragua</td>
<td>Post-Colonial Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelly Hall ‘09</td>
<td>Social Welfare Services in Nicaragua</td>
<td>Human Services</td>
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<td>Valentina Hernandez ‘09</td>
<td>Business Climate in Nicaragua and SJDS</td>
<td>Cross-Cultural Management-linked credit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daniel Iles ’08</td>
<td><em>Nicaragua Shoulder to Shoulder Travel Guide</em> (this book!)</td>
<td>Independent project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Mayer ‘11</td>
<td><em>7 Days in Nica</em> documentary film</td>
<td>Honors Component- hospitality</td>
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<td>Kayla McKenna ‘09</td>
<td><em>Nicaragua: A History Through Poetry</em> book (on Blurb.com)</td>
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<td>Amanda Miller ‘09</td>
<td>A Nicaraguan vs. American Diet</td>
<td>Nutrition</td>
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<td>Demetrick Nealy ‘09</td>
<td>Nicaragua-inspired fashion sketches</td>
<td>Fashion Design senior portfolio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica Vivona ‘09</td>
<td>Group Dynamics and Cohesion Strategies for Shoulder to Shoulder</td>
<td>Dynamics of Small Groups</td>
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The Trip

What to Bring

☐ Flashlight with batteries
☐ Wristwatch or travel alarm clock
☐ Notebook and pen for journal and reflections
☐ Photocopy of your passport (kept separate from your passport)
☐ Swim suit and towel
☐ Insect repellent with DEET
☐ Sunscreen
☐ Hand sanitizer
☐ Dramamine if you experience motion sickness
☐ Immodium in case of travel sickness
☐ Any prescription meds you take (fill your prescriptions well in advance!)
☐ Any over the counter meds you may need (Allergies? Migraines?)
☐ Clothes for warm weather (tank tops, flowy skirts, t-shirts, light pants)
☐ Sneakers
☐ Sandals or flip-flops
☐ Jeans
☐ An outfit you don’t mind getting dirty (a few t-shirts or tank tops)
☐ Hoodie or jacket for lower temperatures at night and air conditioned places
☐ Small gifts for your homestay or other friends you make
☐ Spanish-English dictionary or printout of useful words and phrases
☐ Spending money for snacks, souvenirs, phone cards, internet café, etc.

X  NO clothing with inappropriate words or symbols (marijuana leaves, beer logos, etc.)
X  NO high heels, expensive jewelry, fancy uncomfortable clothing
Airport and Baggage Tips:

To simplify your security screening:

- Place all liquid containers in a separate clear plastic, Ziploc bag
- Individual liquid containers should be no larger than 3.4 ounces/100 ml.
- Examples Of Liquids/Gels/Aerosols: the following items may be transported in carry-on baggage only if in a 3.4-ounce container or smaller and transported in a one-quart clear, plastic, zip-top bag. Otherwise, these items must be packed in checked baggage only.
  - Toiletries - shampoo, toothpaste, mouthwash, perfume, shaving foam, aerosols, deodorant, eye care products
  - Cosmetic products - perfume, hair spray/gel, lip gloss, mascara, nail polish, makeup removers/cleansers, foundation
  - Non-solid food items - soups, syrups, pressurized food containers (cheese or whipped cream), gelatin, pudding, yogurt
  - Liquid soaps, sanitizers, bath oils, bubble bath
  - Any creams, ointments or lotions
  - All other liquids/gels not listed here

Checked baggage recommendations:

- **Do not lock your baggage** due to Transportation Security Administration screening of every checked bag.
- Place your **name and address on the inside and outside** of your baggage
- **Carry valuable items** such as electronic equipment, cameras, film, cash and jewelry with you on board
- **Carry necessary items such as medication, prescriptions and keys with you on board**

Restricted items:

- Liquids, gels, and aerosols larger than 3.4 ounces must be packed in checked luggage
- Cutting instruments such as Swiss Army knives, scissors may not be carried on and must be packed in checked luggage
- Cigarette lighters and matches may NOT be packed in checked luggage
- For a complete list of items prohibited by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) please refer to http://www.tsa.gov.
Past Years’ Travelers Said:

I feel amazing and feel like this experience I’m getting is one of a kind. I can’t even find words to describe everything I feel. All I know, however, is that I’m loving this!  -Valentina Hernandez

Doing work this morning felt good, however I wish there was so much more I could do. One week is not enough to help these people. I feel as though I need to dedicate my life to something bigger like this. -Amanda Miller

I’m learning more everyday about the culture and how they survive in Nicaragua. I think it is amazing how one person can do so much for the community. After the long adventure through the streams and rocks, I realized the people living “in the middle of nowhere” want to live a better healthy life. Fidel is an amazing man who makes this possible for them! I’m trying to do and learn as much as possible on this trip!  -Ashley Baril

I’ve been high this whole trip.
-Joey Bitzer (when asked to share his “highs and lows” of the experience)

Our community meeting yesterday was probably the most interesting adventure of my life… I applaud Fidel and all the work he does for the communities.  -Nordian Davis

This trip has been utterly awe-inspiring and has opened new avenues for my mind and heart.
-Amanda Miller

Forget being like Mike, I want to be like Jane and Fidel. Their quest for knowledge and their determination give me something to look up to. It just proves I have so much more learning to do.
-Demetrick Nealy

What interested me the most was the huge difference between the poor people of San Juan del Sur and the tourists who come in to catch the waves. It’s like the surfers have no idea that the locals are there and in trouble; they don't even stop to consider the economic crisis that is Nicaragua and the hand that the United States has had in it.  -Chelsea Comeau

Trying, and failing, to understand the economics of this one little town, made me realize just how complicated poverty and economics are. The amount of complexity in just one little town, one small tiny town, is astonishing.  -Daniel Iles

I really had the experience of a lifetime in Nicaragua.  -Kristen Augenfeld

We got to see a TON of stuff donated to the library- Jane is AMAZING! I aspire to be half as successful, happy, and ingenious as her… we all should!  -Camille Gillman

THANK YOU! again for allowing us to be a part of the program. I probably won't remember everything that I learned in class when I graduate but I'll definitely remember our trip to Nicaragua and all the incredible people that we met.  -Nordian Davis
Common Spanish Phrases

Greetings
Hello / Hola
Goodbye / Adios
Good morning/good day / Buenos dias
Good afternoon / Buenas tardes
Good evening/night / Buenas noches
How are you? / Como esta usted?
Very well thank you / Muy bien, gracias
See you soon / Hasta luego
That’s all right / Esta bien
Don’t worry / No se preocupe

Useful Statements
I (don’t) like it / (No) me gusta
I’m not sure / No estoy seguro
I don’t know / No se
I think so / Creo que si
I’m hungry (thirsty) / Tengo hambre (sed)
I’m tired / Estoy cansado
I’m ready / Estoy listo
Leave me alone / Dejame solo por favor
One moment please / Un momento por favor
Come in / Adelante
It’s cheap (expensive) / Es barato (caro)
It’s cold (hot) / Hace frio (calor)
It’s too much / Es demasiado
That’s all / Es todo
Thank you for your help / Gracias por tu ayuda
Taxi please / Taxi por favor

Opposites
Before (After) / Antes (Despues)
Early (Late) / Temprano (Tarde)
First (Last) / Primero (Ultimo)
Here (There) / Aqui (Alli)
Now (Then) / Ahora (Entonces)
Small (Large) / Pequeno (Grande)
Empty (Full) / Vacio (Lleno)
Few (Many) / Pocos (Muchos)
More (Less) / Mas (Menos)
Beautiful (Ugly) / Bonito (Feo)
Better (Worse) / Mejor (Peor)
Clean (Dirty) / Limpio (Sucio)
Cold (Hot) / Frío (Caliente)
Free (Taken) / Libre (Ocupado)
Open (Closed) / Abierto (Cerrado)

Common Phrases
Yes / Si
No / No
Please / Por favor
Thank you / Gracias
You’re welcome / De nada
No thank you / No gracias
Sorry / Perdone
What is your name? / Como se llama?
My name is ____ / Me llamo ____

Language Problems
Do you speak English? / Habla Ingles?
Do you understand me? / Me entiende?
I don’t speak Spanish / No hablo Español
Please speak slowly / Hable despacio por favor
I don’t understand / No entiendo

Questions
Where is(are)? / Donde esta(estan)?
When? / Cuando?
Who? / Quien?
Why? / Por que?
What? / Que?
How much is (are)? Cuanto es(son)?
How far? / Que distancia hay?
I want (would like...) / Quiero...
What is the matter? / Que pasa?
Can you help me? / Puede usted ayudarme?
Can you show me? / Puede usted enseñarme?
Can you tell me? / Puede usted decirmee?

In A Restaurant
I’ve reserved a table / Reserve una mesa
Waiter(Waitress) / Camarero(Camarera)
May I have the menu? / El menu por favor?
May I have the wine list? / La lista de vinos?
I’d like... / Quiero...
A little more / Un poco mas
What will you drink? / Que desea beber?
This is bad / No esta buena
One beer please / Una cerveza por favor
Glass of water / Un vaso de agua
Ice (cubes) / Hielo
The bill please / La cuenta por favor
Cheers! / Salud!
Breakfast / El desayuno
Lunch / El almuerzo
Dinner / La comida(la cena)
Recommended Reading


Recommended Viewing

War on Democracy by John Pilger (available via Google Video)

Nicaragua: A Nation’s Right to Survive by John Pilger (available via YouTube)

 Debunking myths about the "Third World" by Hans Rosling (available via YouTube)

More Sources Available in the Library


Nicaraguan peasant poetry from Solentiname / translated with intro. by David Gullette.

Poets of Nicaragua, a bilingual anthology, 1918-1979 / Steven F. White, editor.


Méndez, Jennifer Bickham. *From the revolution to the maquiladoras: gender, labor, and globalization in Nicaragua*.

Moon handbooks. *Nicaragua*.


Enríquez, Laura J. Agrarian reform and class consciousness in Nicaragua.


Going to school in Latin America / edited by Silvina Gvirtz and Jason Beech.

Gender, sexuality, and power in Latin America since independence / edited by William E. French.

Pictures from a revolution [videorecording].


Cabezas, Omar. *Fire from the mountain: the making of a Sandinista*.

The Gospel in art by the peasants of Solentiname / edited by Philip and Sally Scharper.
Mestizo- any person of mixed blood. In Central and South America it denotes a person of combined Indian and European extraction. In some countries—e.g., Ecuador—it has acquired social and cultural connotations; a pure-blooded Indian who has adopted European dress and customs is called a mestizo (or cholo).

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vii Walker, Thomas. Pg 18

viii Walker, Thomas. Pg 19

ix Walker, Thomas. Pg 19

x Walker, Thomas. Pg 23

xii Walker, Thomas. Pg 31


xx http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8316445.stm


xxii www.CIAworldfactbook.com
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Vilas, Carlos M. State, Class and Ethnicity in Nicaragua: Capitalist Modernization and Revolutionary Change on the Atlantic Coast, 1989.
