

Life in Democracy Programme in Nicaragua

Final Evaluation

Final Report

**Lars Eriksson
Lola Ocón Núñez
Ruth Santisteban
Maaria Seppänen**

Impact Consulting Oy Ltd
November 2012

ABBREVIATIONS

ACJ	Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes (<i>Christian Youth Association</i>)
Albanisa	Nicaraguan–Venezuelan semi-public company
AUSJAL	Asociación de Universidades Confiadas a la Compañía de Jesús en América Latina (<i>Association of Christian Universities in Latin America</i>)
CARUNA	Caja Rural Nacional (<i>National Savings Cooperative</i>)
CENIDH	Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos (<i>Nicaraguan Centre for Human Rights</i>)
CMAJ	Comisión Municipal de Adolescencia y Juventud (<i>Municipal Commission of Adolescents and Youth</i>)
COSEP	Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada (<i>Higher Council of Private Enterprise</i>)
CPC	Consejos del Poder Ciudadano (<i>Citizen Power Councils</i>)
CREADA	Centro de Recursos y Dinámicas Asociadas (<i>Resource Training Centre</i>)
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
EJN	Emprendedores Juveniles de Nicaragua (<i>Young Entrepreneurs of Nicaragua</i>)
EUR	Euro
FAP	Fondo de Apoyo al Periodismo (<i>Journalism Support Fund</i>)
FSLN	Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (<i>National Sandinista Party</i>)
FUNDEMOS	Grupo FUNDEMOS; non-profit organisation
FVBdeCH	Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro (<i>Violeta Barrios de Chamorro Foundation</i>)
FyA	Fe y Alegría
IEEPP	Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas (<i>Institute of Strategic Studies and Public Policies</i>)
INDE	Instituto Nicaragüense de Desarrollo (<i>Nicaraguan Development Institute</i>)
INJUVE	Instituto Nicaragüense de la Juventud (<i>Nicaraguan Youth Institute</i>)
INPYME	Instituto Nicaragüense de la Pequeña y Mediana Empresa (<i>Nicaraguan SME Institute</i>)
JCI	Junior Chamber International
JOENIC	Red de Jóvenes Empresarios de Nicaragua (<i>Network of Nicaraguan Young Entrepreneurs</i>)
LpN	Libros para Niños (<i>Books for Children</i>)
MARENA	Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
PROFAMILIA	Asociación Pro-bienestar de la Familia Nicaragüense (<i>Nicaraguan Family Welfare Association</i>)
RAL	Red de Amigos de Lectura (<i>Friends of Reading Network</i>)
REN	Red de Mujeres Empresarias de Nicaragua (<i>Network of Nicaraguan Entrepreneurial Women</i>)
UCA	Universidad Centroamericana (<i>Central American University</i>)
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USD	US Dollar
LiD	Life in Democracy Programme

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1. INTRODUCTION.....	6
2. CONTEXT	8
2.1 Overall context	8
2.2 Context of the Media Component.....	10
3. THE PROGRAMME.....	11
3.1 As a whole.....	11
3.2 The Partner Organisations.....	14
4. FINDINGS.....	17
4.1 Programme relevance and design	17
4.2 Programme effectiveness and impact.....	18
4.2.1 Introduction	18
4.2.2 Economic and self-efficacy activities among youth and women.....	19
4.2.4 Creative initiatives in research, education and teaching	26
4.2.5 Impact on the Media	30
4.3 Programme Efficiency and Management	31
4.3.1 Instability in the flow of resources	31
4.4 Efficiency and Management of the Partner Organisations and their project components in the Life in Democracy Programme.....	33
5. SUSTAINABILITY	35
6. AID EFFECTIVENESS AND FINNISH VALUE ADDED	36
7. CONCLUSIONS.....	36
8. RECOMMENDATIONS	37
8.1 To Finland and other Cooperation Agencies	37
8.2 To Civil Society Organisations.....	37
9. LESSONS LEARNED	38

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation of the Life in Democracy Programme (LiD), co-financed by Finland, was carried out at the conclusion of the programme in order to make a judgement on its outputs and work methodologies, as well as its relevance and sustainability. This information would be used to determine the advisability and feasibility of replicating this type of intervention in other locations under similar conditions, including the possibility of future projects in Nicaragua. Another objective of the evaluation is to provide recommendations to: i) other cooperation agencies, on the best way to support Nicaraguan civil society and; ii) to the civil society organisations themselves.

Another important task of the evaluation team has been to analyse if the “programmatic approach” has contributed to greater efficiency in the implementation of the programme, as well as in the results and impact, in comparison with the traditional “project” approach. In this case, the Terms of Reference define “programmatic approach” as a joint action carried out by several organisations under one programme (which sounds like a circular definition) and with common objectives. The generally accepted essential criteria for what is a programme are that various actors, various lines of action or various projects aim at one and the same general objective or common objectives, but also that there is some operational relations between these different elements. Life in Democracy responds to these criteria.

The evaluation was carried out by a team of four consultants, who also undertook the evaluation of another support programme for three of the most important organisations in Nicaragua that work with the topics of human rights, governance and transparency. No less than ten organisations have participated in these two programmes, and one organisation has participated in both. These two programmes cover a great many municipalities and communities throughout the country, with a great variety of participants and stakeholders.

The Embassy of Denmark was the first agency to take interest in the Life in Democracy initiative in Managua, in 2009. It commissioned a study on “opportunities for strengthening democracy” and on the role that civil society organisations might play in this regard. This study served as a basis for designing the Life in Democracy Programme, and concluded that political legitimacy and tolerance of opposition are attitudes necessary for maintaining long-term democratic stability in Nicaragua. Surveys show that tolerance had dropped from 62% in 1999 to 55% in 2004 and to 50% in 2008. In 2008, 65% of the population trusted the institutions in general, while only 43% trusted the Supreme Electoral Council, 41% the justice system and 38% the National Government. The same survey revealed that 72.6% of the population felt that the political parties are corrupt.

Said study also included the results from various focus groups, which observed that “attitudes are more prevalent than values and... determinism and providential philosophies are ever present.” The seeming lack of progress in living conditions was another factor, as well as hopelessness and frustration among young males over 25. Women seemed to be a little more positive and had hopes for their children’s future. Youth had and have a proactive attitude; they are clearly aware of their role as social actors in determining their own future and that of their community.

As to the situation of civil society organisations, the study highlights the fact that many of these feel persecuted by the Government and that the Government views them as politically aggressive opponents, which must be controlled or repressed.

Based on this analysis (and on another one about the media) the same team of consultants, in collaboration with the Danish Embassy, designed the three year Life in Democracy Programme (2010-2012), which includes the objectives and strategies summarized below.

On the one hand, the programme intends to stimulate the capacities of youth and heads of households to initiate and strengthen economic activities, seek alliances, form mutual assistance networks, become their own protagonists, set their own agendas and negotiate with local and national authorities. On the other hand, it encourages a rapprochement of the social networks and the media through a renewal of journalism practices that focus more on the interests of the people. This involves an allocation of resources to broaden educational opportunities for journalists, allowing empirical journalists to become more professional, prepare and follow model reports and forge alliances with universities, organisations and social networks. All of this can be summarised in a single objective: "Capacity building and strengthening of democratic governance in Nicaragua to increase equity and general welfare of the population."

The programme can be considered as well designed in a conceptual or purely theoretical sense, but from the organisational or feasibility point of view it became too ambitious and complex; the number of specific topics is very large and their cause-effect relationships are analysed with excessive optimism. The programme was executed by eight NGO type civil society organisations that took on two components, seven sub components and four sub subcomponents. The partner organisations had not previously worked together, and under the LiD Programme, they mainly continued doing what they had always done, scattered throughout the country. There was also little coordination or strategic leadership. One strategic and various technical committees were formed, but there was never a true "Programme Coordinator" to call meetings and implement decisions.

Another factor that hindered the progress of the LiD Programme was the withdrawal of the Danish Cooperation in 2011 instead of 2012. They had not only promoted the Programme, but had contributed a large portion of the funds. There was great economic uncertainty in 2011 for the partner organisations, until Finland stepped in to take over the role abandoned by Denmark.

Yet another problem had to be faced when the Government of Nicaragua requested that Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro be pulled out of the Programme in 2011, for taking a political stance that was viewed as unfriendly. The Foundation had signed a manifesto in favour of an opposing candidate in the upcoming presidential elections. Its workload had to be redistributed among the other partners; this was done only partially.

The "programmatic approach" did not work very well for the LiD Programme, even though it was designed to meet the more or less universal programme criteria. The organisations have, to a great degree, continued to work independently, for the reasons already mentioned: lack of previous collaboration experience, lack of geographic focus and lack of common leadership.

The LiD Programme was created in a top-down manner. The partner organisations were selected and invited to participate in the Programme after the basic design was completed. When they accepted, they probably did not do so only because they considered themselves able to implement the activities, but because, to a great degree, these organisations are sustained with contributions from the international community and cannot afford to reject this type of offer.

The LiD Programme is not sustainable. It was officially closed on 31 August 2012 and no one has made any effort to revive it. The only thing that kept it together in the end was the support from Finland; without this aid there is no incentive to continue.

Nevertheless, in its short, albeit turbulent life, the LiD Programme produced certain results that may survive without external aid. The work with youth to create enterprises and influence local policies has had interesting effects, with growth potential, even though the small focal groups are scattered. Collaboration between two of the organisations (Fe y Alegría and Libros para Niños) in the area of education, has grown and shows evidence of continuing to grow on its own merits. The media component has had positive results in preserving a certain media plurality, supporting independent journalists and directing its attention to the rural areas to improve the quality of investigative and civic-minded journalism.

The main conclusion of the final evaluation of the LiD Programme is that the programme design was based on a good analysis of the “current situation” in 2009. However, the intervention design was not well conceived; it was not able to translate an interesting conceptual framework into an effective intervention proposal. In general, the Programme has been characterized for having ambitions disproportionate to the available means and time.

All the same, we recommend that the Government of Finland and the other cooperating agencies consider the possibility of providing specific support to consolidate and multiply some of the LiD results:

- ✓ Continue to support a scholarship fund for journalists, so they may continue defending media plurality. One option could be for UCA to manage the funds.
- ✓ Support UCA in communication training for youth and women’s organizations.
- ✓ Consider the possibility of supporting a more geographically focused project for young entrepreneurs.

1. INTRODUCTION

As set forth in the corresponding Terms of Reference¹, this evaluation of the Life in Democracy Programme (LiD), co-financed by Finland, was carried out during the conclusion of the programme in order to form an opinion on its outputs and work methodologies, as well as its relevance and sustainability. This information would be used as an input when determining the advisability and feasibility of replicating this type of intervention in other locations under similar conditions, including the possibility of future projects in Nicaragua. Another objective of the evaluation is to provide recommendations to: i) other cooperation agencies, on the best way to support Nicaraguan civil society and; ii) to civil society organisations, on how to have an effective impact on governance and human rights, with emphasis on the inclusion and participation of youth, women and the private sector.

Another important task of the evaluation team has been to analyse if the “programmatic approach” has contributed to greater efficiency in the implementation of the programme, as well as in the results and impact, in comparison with the traditional “project” approach. In this case, the Terms of Reference define the programmatic approach as a joint action carried out by several organisations under one programme (which sounds like a circular definition) and with common objectives. The generally accepted essential criteria for what is a programme are that various actors, various lines of action or various projects aim at one and the same general objective or common objectives, but also that there is some operational relations between these different elements. Life in Democracy responds to these criteria. On the other hand, when the ToR in this case talk about “programmatic approach”, this is not because LiD is a programme (and not a project) but because the term is used to denote an intervention that in some way satisfies the alignment and ownership principles of the Paris Declaration. This evaluation is based on the understanding that the LiD programme is, indeed, a programme as far as its internal construction is concerned.

The evaluation covers the entire programme period, from 2010-2012. The main difficulty encountered in this evaluation had to do with the change of external financier or promoter halfway through the programme, when Denmark left and Finland took over. Since Denmark finished its cooperation with Nicaragua and closed its Embassy in Managua, it was not possible to interview anyone regarding this change, nor were any documents available on this matter. We could only interview one former Danish Cooperation officer who is now in another country. We did not have access to the audit reports that the programme partners delivered to the Danish Embassy up to August 2011. We also were not able to interview anyone from Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, which participated in the LiD at the beginning (but was “pulled out,”) ² as the team was not able to procure an appointment with any representatives, neither through their own contacts nor with help from the Embassy of Finland or other channels

The agreements between Finland and the partner organisations expired on 31 August 2012. The evaluation team fieldwork took place between September 3 and October 5 of 2012. The team was present during the official closing ceremony that was organised by the partner organisations on September 20 and which enjoyed the full participation of women and youth groups that had been part of the Programme, as well as other stakeholders.

¹ See complete ToR in Annex IV.

² See other comments on this topic in 4.3.2.

The evaluation was carried out by a team of four consultants who, parallel to this work, had the job of evaluating another large “programme”³ that dealt with human rights, governance and transparency. No less than ten organisations have participated in the two programmes, and one of them has participated in both. The ten organisations and two programmes have covered a great many municipalities and organisations in various parts of the country, and have benefited a wide array of groups. This meant that the evaluation team had to carefully plan its activities in order to visit and interview all the categories of actors that could contribute information, from women and youth groups and municipal officers to state authorities and cooperating agencies. For this purpose, an optimal balance was sought between individual work and collective teamwork.

The principal methods used to collect information have been: semi-structured personal interviews with a variety of stakeholders, especially the partner organisations; focal groups with women and youth; interactive discussions and; analysis of an abundant documentation. A small survey was also carried out among the participants of both programmes, to try and capture their degree of knowledge and opinions on the current socio-political situation in Nicaragua. A preliminary analysis of their answers showed that the survey could not make a reliable and useful contribution to the evaluation, based on a rigorous statistical analysis, as was intended. The main reason for this is the great heterogeneity of the mass of actors that have participated in the programme in one way or another. Another reason is the low level of education of one particular segment of the participants, i.e. the women, many of whom had difficulty understanding the questions, even though the consultants orally explained them. For example, questions having to do with newspapers do not make much sense to a population that can not read or does not have access to this type of media, especially in rural areas. Nevertheless, the work done with the survey allowed observations to be made that were important for the general evaluation of the usefulness of the programme.

A great deal of time and effort was invested in researching data to verify the fulfilment or not of indicators that could result in valid conclusions regarding the effectiveness and impact of the LiD Programme. Unfortunately, the use of indicators is a weak point in this programme. Many of the indicators established during the design are impossible to measure or lack quantifications of goals and objectives. Furthermore, none of the organizations, or the programme as a whole, has had a good monitoring system to record results, using the established indicators. Therefore, the evaluation of impact and effectiveness has been largely based on qualitative elements. This is not necessarily a bad thing, considering how difficult it is to quantify factors such as governance and empowerment, but it does point out the need to create better indicators when designing projects and programmes.

The evaluation team had at their disposal a great many documents on the identification, creation and execution of the LiD Programme (agreements, plans, various types of reports, etc.) A large part of this material was provided by the Embassy of Finland in Nicaragua, in a very timely, but not very systematic fashion. This was later completed with other documents from the partner organisations, also in a disorganized manner. On a couple of occasions the documents were sent only after great insistence and persistence on the part of the team. In some cases, the progress reports were not in any coherent order, and sometimes the documents did not indicate authors or dates and lacked the relevant indices.

³ Programme for Institutional Support to Civil Society Organisations. Important contributions were made within this framework to three organisations: Ethics and Transparency, The Institute of Strategic Studies and Public Policies (IEEPP) and the Nicaraguan Human Rights Centre.

The LiD partner organisations are generally small and “poor,” and a couple of them were very slow in presenting documents and organising field visits. On the other hand, once the contacts were established, all have been very willing to help and friendly.

2. CONTEXT

2.1 Overall context

The study that was commissioned by the Embassy of Denmark in 2009 and used as a basis for designing the Life in Democracy Programme, states that:

“Political legitimacy and tolerance of the opposition are identified in Nicaragua as necessary attitudes for maintaining long-term democratic stability. Tolerance has dropped from 62% in 1999 to 55% in 2004 and 50% in 2008. In 2008, the percentage of the population that trusted public entities was: 65% the media, 61% the army, 60% the Catholic Church, 53% the police, 45% elections, 43% the Supreme Electoral Council, 41% the justice system, 38% Government, 36% congress, 36% the Supreme Justice Council, 33% the President and 24% the political parties. A total of 72.6% of the population think that the political parties are corrupt and 90% feel that women should participate in politics at the same level as men.”⁴

Said study also included the results from various focus groups, which observed that, “attitudes are more prevalent than values and... determinism and providential philosophies are ever present.” The seeming lack of progress in living conditions was another factor, as well as hopelessness and frustration among young males over 25. Women seemed to be a little more positive and had hopes for their children’s future. Youth had and have a proactive attitude; they are clearly aware of their role as social actors in determining their own future and that of their community.

The figures and observations cited above demonstrate a syndrome that could be attributed to the concentration of political and economic power during the last few years, in just a part of the ruling party and its close supporters. The widespread lack of trust in the government, politicians and public entities on the part of the citizens, and the indifference and passivity of large segments of the population (as citizens), are factors that justify the implementation of civil society support programmes that raise the levels of governance, citizen participation or inclusion and respect for human rights. At the same time, it is an environmental factor that hinders the implementation of such programmes and limits the possibility of success.

The Life in Democracy Programme was identified and designed two years after the change of political ideology in Nicaragua with the installation in government of President Ortega and the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN), at the beginning of 2007. At this time the country concluded a “liberal” or “neo-liberal” phase that had lasted 16 years and started to build a new economic, political and social model, included in the National Human Development Plan, and named Citizen Power. It aspired to create a direct democracy based on citizen participation. According to this model, participation is channelled through a new grass-roots entity, the Citizen Power Councils, geared to become the basic tool to ensure compliance

⁴ “Cooperation Opportunities for Strengthening Democracy; The Royal Embassy of Denmark in Nicaragua,” author is unknown. However, it is understood that the study was carried out by consultants Antonio Belli and Claudia Pineda. The information in the cited paragraph are from the Latin American Public Opinion Project, from Vanderbilt University.

with the will of the people in all decisions, thus fomenting the notion of “The People President.”

Since their inception, there has been a lot of controversy regarding the CPC. Various sectors of society view the CPCs as partisan entities. There is no doubt that they do wield a lot of influence and are protagonists in the implementation of central government programmes for food security (Zero Hunger) and micro credits for women (Zero Usury) Many criticize them for mobilising political support for the ruling party (in other words, that they are used as patronage instruments.)

The aforementioned 2009 study on the envisioned social democracy in Nicaragua, and which later served as a basis for creating the Life in Democracy Programme, contains the following, very apt analysis⁵ of the public discourse, the situation of civil society, and the common points of agreement between these two elements.

Public discourse

- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are instruments of the parties (opponents) and behave as political adversaries.
- CSOs play roles imposed by the international cooperation in accord with a neoliberal project, in opposition to the new revolutionary government project.
- The problem is only with a politicized segment of intellectuals from CSOs that have their own political project in opposition to the FSLN and the Government.
- The CPCs are the true organised expression of the popular sectors and represent a revolutionary alternative to the spaces co-opted by false representatives.

The situation or position of civil society

- Nicaraguan civil society continues to be weak and is limited by the weakness of the state institutions.
- There are no democratic political channels to articulate the demands and interests.
- There is a culture of corruption within the state environment.
- There has been a decrease in social public services.
- Persistent generalised poverty.
- Tendency of the CSOs to take on tasks that should be carried out by the State, especially in the areas of social services and defence of human rights; this could result in a further weakening of the state institutions.

Possible common points of interest

- Strategies for strengthening civil society that include a more specific vision on how to also strengthen the State.
- A need to build trust in the institutions, their democratisation and social control.
- A strategy to revert structural poverty by modifying the structure of inequality, profit redistribution and access to social services.

- A strategy of incentives for the more dynamic sectors of the economy and small and medium enterprises, based on the individuals’ capacity to create their own opportunities.”

⁵ Taken from a PowerPoint presentation by consultant Antonio Belli.

2.2 Context of the Media Component

The Life in Democracy Programme contains two main components: i) the self-efficacy of social actors and; ii) the media. The second component merits an explanation when viewed within the context of the Programme, as it is more politically sensitive than the first one.

The main expected result of the media component was an increase in “the capacity and willingness of the media to support social debate and dialogue processes, as well as strengthen the capacities of the agents of social change to protect, consolidate and increase the democratic spaces and practices.”⁶ The focus was on supporting the links and collaboration between the media and the organisations that participate in public-private dialogue spaces for increasing the efficiency and efficacy of public management, thus protecting and increasing the conditions for the full exercise of rights.

In order to fully understand the possible scope of the media component, one must first take into account the changes that have come about in the media in Nicaragua after the inception of the LiD Programme. Only three media elements have been left intact (as to capital and owners) in Nicaragua; a radio station (Radio Corporación,) a weekly journal (Confidencial, con Esta Semana en TV) and the doyen of the daily newspapers (La Prensa). The free television channels are under the direct control of the Presidential family (although, in some cases, hidden within the “cluster” of Albanisa companies,) and include four private channels and the recently resurrected government channel 6 (in November of 2011). Three other channels and nine radio stations have been purchased by a Latin American company, represented in Nicaragua under the legal name of “Retensa”. Most of the programmes on these channels are “canned goods”, with few national programmes and a marked absence of any criticism of the political life and economy of the country. The second largest newspaper, El Nuevo Diario, also changed ownership. The governmental political party bought part of the shares and its editorials are now less critical of the government.⁷

Analysed as a whole, the Nicaraguan media has, in recent years, lost part of its role as guardian and watchdog of the political power; it has ceased to be the famous “Fourth Power.”⁸ The manner in which public funds have been used for state propaganda has only contributed to this trend. Eighty per cent of these funds are allocated to Channel 4, owned by the Presidential couple, and the rest are for the official and allied radio stations in the capital. This results in self-censure and economic difficulties for the independent media, above all in the interior of the country.⁹ The Government’s communication policy has had a real and measurable impact on Nicaraguan journalism.¹⁰ The LiD Programme has faced some real problems in the area of communications. Many of the goals related to defending freedom of expression and promoting a public-private dialogue, have been very difficult to reach.

⁶ The document, “Programa Vida en Democracia,” September 2009, pgs. 19-20.

⁷ Hopmann et al. (2012), pgs.87-89.

⁸ Although in Nicaragua this would be a Fifth Power, because the Supreme Electoral Council is the Fourth Power; its decisions cannot be appealed to a higher court.

⁹ Uriarte B. 2011 (also cited in Hopmann et al., pg. 93.) The cited article was a result of a VeD scholarship for investigative journalism.

¹⁰ Hopmann et al., pg. 104.

3. THE PROGRAMME

3.1 As a whole

The 2009 study proposed the following:

- Build democratic attitudes in social change agents that have been selected based on their potential for democracy in Nicaragua.
- Strengthen the willingness to associate as a condition for building interpersonal trust and synergy.
- Facilitate the relationship between the Government and the citizens through a social dialogue based on policies linked to integrated local development, youth, recreation and education.

Based on the previous, the same team of consultants discussed the matter with the Embassy of Denmark, and presented a proposal for a programme with the following conceptual design:

“The concept is simple. The Programme is designed to stimulate the capacities of youth and female heads of household to initiate and consolidate their own economic activities, seek partners, build mutual help networks, establish their agendas and negotiate them with the local and national authorities on what should be their daily “Life in Democracy.”

On the other hand, the Programme aims to bring these groups and ordinary citizens in general closer to the media agendas. With this objective, resources are assigned to expand the educational supply for journalists, increase the professionalization of empirical journalists and facilitate the links between the journalists, media, universities, civil society organisations and networks.

The purpose of the Programme is to develop innovative and exemplary actions and disseminate them widely through national and local media. Similarly, the aim is that the media, without abandoning their watchdog role, broaden their agenda with reports about different social groups, their needs and problems, options and proposals, as well as success stories, thus enriching public debate.”¹¹

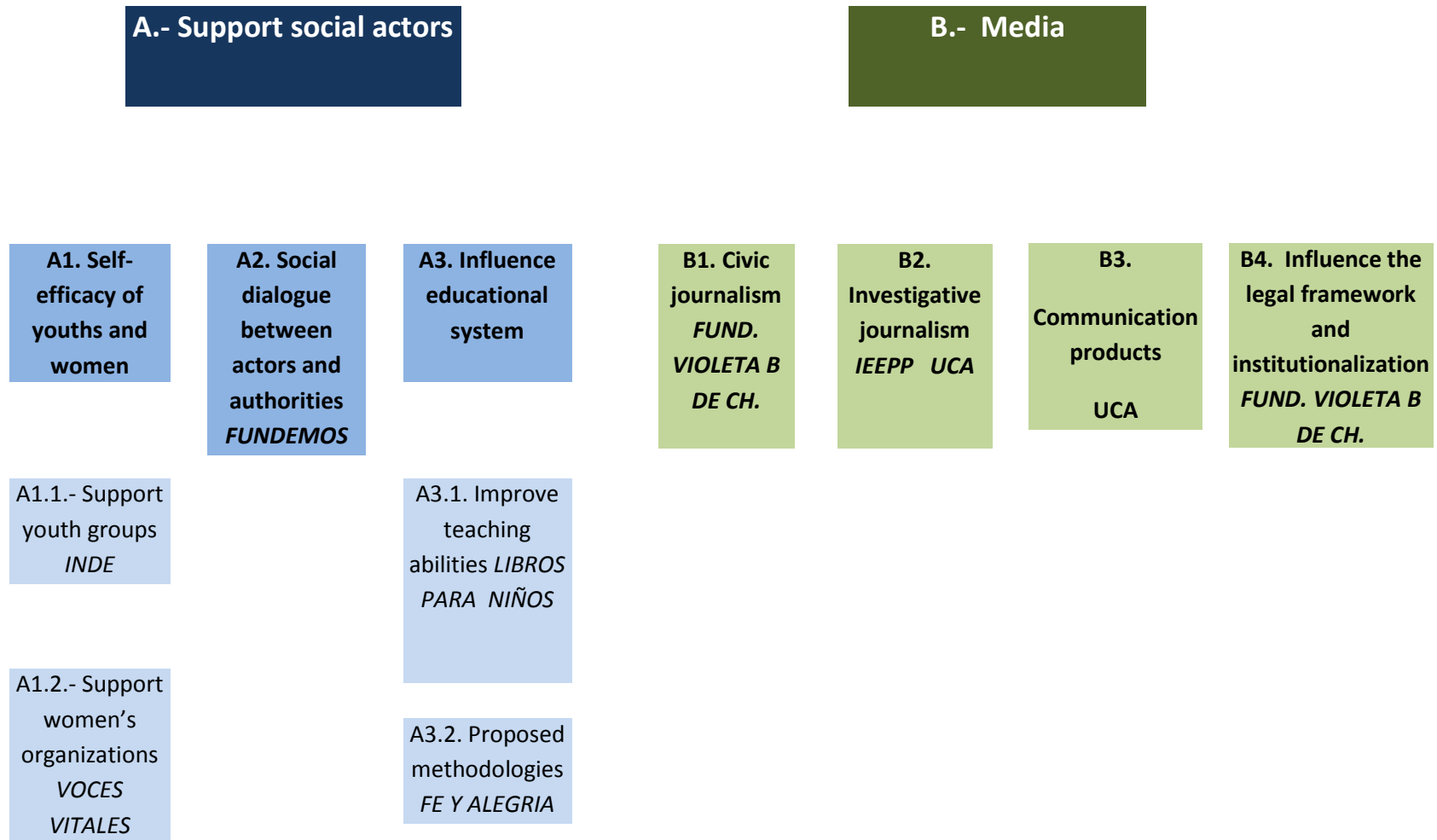
Although the design concept of the LiD Programme may seem simple, it is anything but that in operational terms. It contains two components, seven subcomponents and 4 sub subcomponents, to be implemented by 8 organisations in various subject and actor combinations. The description of the objectives, strategies, activities and job distribution takes up 50 of the 90 pages of the Programme document, as is presented in graph form in Fig. 1. The following clarifications are made to this graph:

The *Development Objective* of the LiD Programme is: “to strengthen the development capacities and democratic governance in Nicaragua, thus increasing equity and the general welfare of the population.”

Component A. Social Actors is aimed at strengthening different social actors by means of education and by improving dialogue between these and the authorities. For that purpose, the component contains a subcomponent by the same title, for youth and women. The concept of self-efficacy was proposed by psychologist Albert Bandura in 1977, and is described on page 12 of the Programme Document as follows:

¹¹ Life in Democracy Programme Document; September 2009, page 4

Fig. 1 Structure of Life in Democracy Programme



“The concept of ‘self-efficacy’... refers to the conviction that you can take appropriate actions in any given situation to obtain the desired results. Self-efficacy is not an awareness of your own real abilities, but refers to what you think you can become through the use of these abilities. By themselves, these abilities are not enough to guarantee optimum performance, you must also believe in them in order to make full use of them.”

Subcomponent A1. Self-efficacy. It was executed for youth by INDE, through the Youth Entrepreneurial Programme; and for women by Voces Vitales.

A2. Social dialogue. It was executed by FUNDEMOS. It must be noted that FUNDEMOS is also the coordinator of component A and serves as a liaison between Finland and the other four organisations that work on this component, in matters related to fund transfers and merging of reports.

A3. Methodological proposals. It was also divided between two organisations: Fundación Libros para Niños is in charge of improving teaching abilities and tools for creating values and skills needed for life in democracy (through work with regular teacher-training schools) while Fe y Alegría is in charge of evaluating the proposed methodologies and extracting lessons for formal teaching.

Component B. Media aspired to “increase the capacity and willingness of the media to support social debate and dialogue processes, as well as strengthen the capacities of the social change agents to protect, consolidate and increase the democratic spaces and practices. ...”¹² This component was divided into 4 subcomponents:

B1. Civic journalism was conceived as a bridge between the media and the various expressions of civil society, to promote greater understanding between the news agencies and the citizen agendas, at a national as well as local level. Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro was in charge of this sub-component, but was expelled from the Programme in 2010 due to certain politically tinged complications.¹³ This subcomponent was then taken over by IEEPP. Due to this change, the Journalism Support Fund, which previously was designed for promoting investigative journalism, was expanded to include civic journalism projects.

B2. Investigative journalism has been mainly executed by Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas (IEEPP), which has supported and stimulated this type of journalism through a scholarship fund for independent journalists. The Universidad Centroamericana (UCA) supported the efforts to strengthen investigative journalism through various training processes (especially in the rural areas). UCA also developed their own work with their own media and/or partners through a network of local radio stations for democratic governance.

B3. Communication products: Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro was in charge of contracting stations to transmit the material produced by Universidad Centroamericana, in coordination with an Editorial Council, comprised of various programme partners. The University also had an information production unit to facilitate the incorporation of citizen innovations in the media.

¹² Programme Document, page 19

¹³ See 4.3.1

B.4. Influence the transformation of the legal framework and the institutionalization of accountability mechanisms. Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro was also in charge of coordinating this subcomponent. It was geared to help transform the legal framework for the Nicaraguan media, as well as to encourage its correct application.

The Programme Document calls for a “simple management structure” for the LiD Programme; but in reality it is very complex. It proposes a Strategic Management Committee; two Operational Management Committees, one for each component; an Editorial Council for selecting content and; an Advisory Council to complement the capacities of the implementing organisations. Paradoxically, it does not suggest the presence of any type of operational coordination or “Executive Director.”

The Programme Document contains a very tentative budget, which distributes the resources among the various components, subcomponents and partner organisations, without providing any criteria for the distribution.

The potential participants and stakeholders in the Programme are from a very heterogeneous group. The direct beneficiaries of the self-efficacy topics are women and youth groups in a dozen municipalities. For other activities, such as the efforts to increase transparency and governance through the media and other mechanisms, all of society must be considered as potential direct or indirect beneficiaries. In this sense, the big questions (which are not answered in the Programme design) finally refer to: i) what effect certain limited interventions in a few municipalities might have on the governance of the whole country and; ii) to what degree the media, especially the written, helps to improve governance and respect for human rights in a country with high levels of functional illiteracy, low levels of formal education and little presence of the written media, especially in rural communities where the majority of the people live.

3.2 The Partner Organisations

3.2.1 FUNDEMOS is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation that was founded in 1991. Its mission is to strengthen democracy as a way of life, by promoting democratic values and practices to build a just and united Nicaraguan society.

The Institutional Program that FUNDEMOS has implemented for the past 15 years contributes to: a) developing the capacities and skills of local SCOs so they can make their interests known through advocacy and political lobbying activities with the local governments; b) the institutionalisation of the relationship between SCOs and the municipal governments for greater efficiency in determining the priorities of the social agenda and of investment and its control; c) the promotion of measures, regulations, laws and policies that contribute to stimulate the development and feasibility of the municipal governments and; d) developing liaisons with national entities specialised in municipal matters, cooperation organisations and national SCOs that promote these topics for national and local debate.

The role of FUNDEMOS within the LiD Programme was to strengthen the Youth and Gender Commissions, train youth promoters and promote social audits by youth and women. This would be achieved by providing training, forming commissions, ascertaining the needs and priorities of youth and women, promoting meetings with the municipal authorities and

forming networks and campaigns.

3.2.2 Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro (FVBdeCH) is a politically independent, non-profit organization, which works for the consolidation of freedom of expression and with projects that strengthen leadership of national journalism, civil society and democratic institutions. During the first year of the LiD Programme, FVBdeCH was in charge of civic journalism within Component B (Media). It also sponsored Voces Vitales while it sought legal status. Throughout its three and a half years of existence, FVBdeCH has had support from Denmark, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Technoserve, CARUNA, Voces Vitales, Red Global and the Government of Finland. It has worked with more than 400 women in 21 municipalities.

3.2.3 Instituto Nicaragüense de Desarrollo (INDE) has worked with the LiD Program through one of its partners, Emprendedores Juveniles de Nicaragua (EJN.) It is a non-profit educational organization that was founded in 1992. EJN is a member of Junior Achievement Worldwide, which helps the upcoming generations to develop an entrepreneurial spirit and to value free enterprise. Its mission is to create and execute innovative programmes for the complete development of the person. In its 20 years of existence, more than 38,000 youths and adults have actively participated in its programmes, with 58% female participation. Since 2007, the programme provides seed capital to enterprising youths to support them in setting up their businesses. It has helped set up almost one hundred youth enterprises

EJN-INDE was in charge of supporting youth groups in the LiD Programme, to build their economic and social entrepreneurial capacities, as well as improve their leadership tools. It also promoted networks to determine the political and economic priorities of the groups and promote a youth policy for its implementation through alliances with agencies. It provided spaces for youths to state their opinions, placing great emphasis on the cause-effect analysis and the origins of the conditions around them, so they could identify the social causes of opportunities and threats to each enterprise.

3.2.4 Voces Vitales de Nicaragua was founded in February of 2009 with support from Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro and USAID. In June of 2012, it obtained legal status as a non-profit organisation. The objective of Voces Vitales is to train emerging women leaders and transform them into agents of change that can help strengthen the development of the country. In Nicaragua they focus their efforts on promoting economic development among women leaders that are creating economic opportunities. Through various projects they train and develop mentorships that contribute to strengthening the entrepreneurial capacities of women, giving them greater opportunities for economic development and leadership development.

Voces Vitales has been responsible for promoting citizenship in the LiD Programme, improving the position of women as a whole within society through the transfer of knowledge from successful businesswomen to emerging women leaders. They also promoted personal and collective growth and visibility of women, exercised influence by strengthening existing networks and created reference forums for creating policies.

3.2.5 Libros para Niños (LpN) was founded in 1993. It has a team of promoters committed to children's literature that has been a true pioneer in the region. Since 1995, LpN has implemented a central strategy of promoting reading through the Story Corners, as well as in hospitals and large public areas. Since 2009, it has diversified its strategies and now has a lending library of more than 150,000 high quality children's books to thousands of homes in marginalised areas. It currently has 22 Story Corners, 12 Reading Spots, 9 Reading Routes and

8 Friends of Reading Networks. During the last three years it has directly served more than 90,000 children through activities that promote reading in various departments throughout the country. Since 2003, it also promotes the production of quality children's books in the country; more than 40 titles have been published and more than 1000,000 books have been distributed.

LpN has contributed to the LiD Programme by creating a set of dynamic activities called "Centro de Recursos y Dinámicas Asociadas (CREADA)", which supports teacher training, professionalization and updating, and strategically aims at training citizens who are able to control their own destiny. This effort coincides with the objective of creating a new teaching culture that includes theory, practice, research and curricular study.

3.2.6 Fe y Alegría is an international movement of integral popular education and social promotion, based on the values of justice, liberty, participation, fraternity and respect for diversity, aimed at the impoverished and excluded population, for the transformation of societies.

The mission of Fe y Alegría is to have a world where people can have the opportunity to receive education, fully develop their abilities and live with dignity, building societies where all the structures are for the service of humanity, and to transform situations that generate inequity, poverty and exclusion. In order to achieve this end, it is committed to working on four fundamental processes that have to do with the quality of the educational system: management, teaching/learning, citizen training and interrelation with the community; the last two are based on building collective projects that allow the educational community to positively assess the specific cultural identity and share in the responsibility of building a democratic society.

As part of LiD, Fe y Alegría developed strategies to support training at teacher training schools in the country, the professionalization and updating of teachers, through recreational learning that contributes to strengthening citizenship. It has also worked with youth commissions at centres that support recreational and community teaching processes; helped form student organisations and commissions with alternative methods for democratic exercise (theatre, forums, movies, cooperative learning and exchange of experiences with various student organisations; monitoring and follow-up of youth activities in and out of school; organisation and training of young journalist commissions.

3.2.7 Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas (IEEPP) is a non-partisan, non-profit civil organisation dedicated to improving and supporting citizen participation in public matters and to providing conceptual and methodological support to public policies for good governance. It places special emphasis on analysing national and regional processes that contribute to strengthening transparent and democratic management of the State. IEEPP works with civil society through a managerial system that organizes efforts and generates public policy proposals. It serves as reference point for dialogue with the State, influencing decision-making and public policy control for better governance. As part of the LiD Programme, IEEPP was responsible for managing the Journalism Support Fund.

3.2.8 Universidad Centroamericana (UCA) was the first private university created in Central America. It was founded in Nicaragua by La Compañía de Jesús in 1960, as a non-profit, autonomous education institution, for public service and Christian inspiration. UCA forms part of Asociación de Universidades Confiadas a la Compañía de Jesús en América Latina (AUSJAL), comprised of 31 universities in 14 countries within the region. UCA offers courses related to

journalism (university degrees in social communication.) It was responsible for the investigative journalism and products of communication subcomponents of the LiD Programme.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Programme relevance and design

It is easy to maintain that the LiD Programme is highly relevant to Finland's development policies. Finland's 2007 Development Policy Programme states: "Development of democracy and rule of law, as well as the strengthening of human rights and active civil society, create the conditions for an economically, ecologically and socially sustainable development." The Government of Finland's Decision-in-Principle Document, dated February 16, 2012, states that, "Finland's development policy and cooperation are based on human rights. The priority areas are: 1) a democratic and responsible society that promotes human rights...4) human development." That is precisely what the Life in Democracy Programme hopes to achieve.

This program is also relevant from the viewpoint of Nicaragua's 2009-2011 Updated National Human Development Plan, which sets aside considerable space for the topics of "transparency and probity", "citizen safety", "access to and quality of justice" and other similar topics. Of course, in these areas practice and theory are far apart, whether it is due to lack of resource allocation or little governmental tolerance of differing political views. Nicaragua is not a country with political prisoners, but with undue manipulation of the electoral processes, little respect for the Constitution and a marked confusion between the ruling party and the State; in other words, a country with troubled civic rights. These conditions increase the degree of relevance of programmes such as LiD from a formal viewpoint. Now, whether it is relevant from an operational viewpoint and has a chance of success under the adverse conditions of the real world is one of the main questions that this evaluation will attempt to answer.

As previously mentioned in Chapter Three, the LiD Programme design is based on a study of civil society and its relation to the State, which we feel is of good quality. The Programme design, reflected in the "Life in Democracy Programme Document," dated September 16, 2009, also has a logical and coherent *conceptual* design, except for the following: i) there is a large gap between the development objective and the specific objectives and ii) it has a weak definition of objective indicators. The activities that were foreseen for ten or twenty municipalities in just a couple of years cannot possibly have enough impact on the governance of the whole country.

The main weakness in the design is that it does not place enough importance on operational feasibility. It is not an easy matter to have eight different civil society organisations working together in harmony on topics of governance and human rights, especially if there is not a coordinator or director in charge of the various Strategic Management, Operational Management and Advisory Committees, to make sure they implement their decisions. The Programme implementation time is much too short. The territorial aspect has been ignored: the various partner organisations each basically work in the municipalities and areas where they have traditionally had projects, thus restricting the coverage area. This is critical to a programme that wants to influence municipal policies through a sophisticated combination of

efforts on different levels and themes. Such a complex system of activities all seeking the same objective, should have been implemented by actors that were closer, not only thematically but geographically.

The Programme was designed by a small team of local consultants. The exercise included personnel from the Embassy of Denmark and representatives from the organisations that were finally included as programme partners or executors. Most of the interviewees agree on the following:

- The Danish Embassy consultants played a leading role as promoters and main analysts of the conceptual design and in selecting implementing organizations;
- A consultation process was carried out with the organizations and some small adjustments were made to the traditional activities that they normally carried out so that they could take on new roles within the framework of the Programme, but they mostly continued doing the same things they did before the Programme;
- The Danish Embassy ignored two important proposals from the other actors: i) the need for a Programme Coordinator or Executive Director and; ii) the need to pay more attention to having the components and implementers meet one another in the field.

One of the persons who participated in the programme formulation on behalf of Denmark, considers that the lack of a coordinator was not due to an oversight, but was a deliberate decision; that the Embassy wanted to allow the organizations themselves to become coordinators, to “take ownership,” from the very beginning. This is a perfectly sound idea, but it did not work in practice. It was also thought during the design stage, that the Programme would have more funds and be able to cover many more municipalities. This is an unconvincing argument, even in theory.

The aforementioned observations allow us to conclude that the proposal for collaboration and united efforts of eight partner organisations did not emerge from the organisations themselves, but was introduced by the cooperating sector. This means that the eight organisations did not have any previous experience working together, but agreed to become partners for this specific programme. Very likely one of the motivating forces was their economic interest; many NGOs compete for funds from the international community. In summary, the LiD Programme design was a top-down process. For the organisations, LiD became a great job opportunity or an offer that “they could not afford to turn down.”

4.2 Programme effectiveness and impact

4.2.1 Introduction

There are certain matters that must be first explained in order to properly introduce the topic of the efficacy and impact of the Life in Democracy Programme.

Methodologically speaking, self-efficacy was supposed to be the conceptual basis for change in youth and women. It was supposed to strengthen their abilities as social actors and allow them to influence the welfare and democratic governance of Nicaragua, but it was not fully developed, and other methods were used by the partner organizations. Each organisation worked with its own concepts and methods for leadership, empowerment, self-esteem, citizenship and others. In addition, they did not develop any indicators for measuring self-

efficacy, even though there is a vast bibliography on the subject. They did not create baselines relevant to the benchmarks, which makes it difficult to objectively define changes in youth and female heads of households that participated in the Programme. Therefore, it is difficult to measure effects.

The Social Actors Component developed conceptual workshops with the partner organizations to establish synergies and unite efforts. In May of 2011 they worked on the following guidelines¹⁴:

“To consciously become a social subject is a gradual process of empowerment that requires the socially marginalised actors to: access more information, develop their vision and identity and state their political will, conceive and carry out actions to influence public policies in order to negotiate solutions to their needs. A relevant aspect is that of autonomy of the social subjects regarding the guidance by the State, the NGO’s, etc.”

The concept of empowerment was also defined as:

“A powerful and ambiguous concept. According to the theoreticians, it implies top-down processes that “transfer” power to a receptive subject (grant power); down-up processes that self-empower the actor (acquire power)...”

These definitions imply processes that start with personal changes to achieve effective leadership based on self-esteem and personal autonomy; it supposes the recognition of the transforming power of other persons, that have similar problems, needs and interests, to build a joint proposal based on the organisations of peers to develop influence processes that bring about changes in the collective condition and position.

All leaderships (individual, group and social) base their success on personal values and are strengthened by establishing democratic mechanisms, promoting new leaderships and sharing power.¹⁵

4.2.2 Economic and self-efficacy activities among youth and women

Self-efficacy of youth

The objective of this subcomponent was: “To increase the sense of self-efficacy and the response capacity of the participating youths to overcome problems, take advantage of opportunities within their business and solidify their political and economic priorities.” This was based on a training strategy designed at the Entrepreneurial Training Workshop (112 hours) of the Youth Entrepreneurial Programme, called, “The Company,” and another Youth Leadership Training Workshop that lasted 100 hours, with practical exercises in self-management of social and community projects.

The first indicator refers to the internal influence exercised by the youths by incorporating INDE Junior into the COSEP structures. In practice, the National Board of Directors and its chapters were formed in six departments of Nicaragua where the LiD Programme was

¹⁴ Power Point presentation by Antonio Belli, programme designer and adviser.

¹⁵ Lamas, Marta; *Mujeres al Timón*. México 1998.

operating and at two universities where it had previously worked. They have still not joined COSEP.

The Programme reports show attempts to establish coordination with Instituto Nicaragüense de la Juventud, INJUVE, to influence its plans and/or other national investment plans; but there is no evidence of visits to COSEP to present youth priorities, or of these being included in the influence agenda of this organisation.

The Youth Leadership Workshop Programme¹⁶ includes the objective of “promoting political and social participation in the permanent exercise of democratic practices, acquiring local development concepts and tools and community work.” The workshops include topics dealing with youth public policies, citizen participation and negotiation and community management.

Within the framework of the “United for a Day” project, youth groups designed and developed social and environmental projects as well as projects dealing with sexual non-violence, by collecting money and mobilizing other support; this allowed them to put into practice the personal and collective skills that they had acquired at the workshops. Projects that provide support in matters of environment, non-violence sex and the ecology were also part of this project. Some of the activities were coordinated with public institutions such as the Ministry of Health, MARENA, Mayors’ Offices and others.

In Juigalpa, Boaco and Chontales, youth groups organised youth forums within the context of Law 392 on Promotion of Integrated Youth Development and public policies on youth, citizen participation and the 2011 National Report on Human Development, presented by the UNDP. They addressed topics of education, health, environment, employment, entrepreneurship, sports, culture, social, juvenile and domestic violence, citizen participation and democracy. The result was a Local Youth Agenda, which was presented to the local authorities and political, social and business leaders. Furthermore, the UNPD Report on Human Development of Youth was presented to the various INDE chapters for discussion. It was also included in the focal groups for a more in-depth analysis.

A few of the young entrepreneurs received courses from UCA on communication, preparing bulletins, radio spots and other topics, which gave them the confidence to present their demands to the local radio and television stations. Furthermore, they presented these to the radio programme “Emprende Joven” of Radio Universidad. The focal groups, comprised of representatives from both types of workshops, identified their own changes, some related to self-efficacy (Table 1).

Around 70% of the 19 leadership groups that were organised continue as members of the Junior Chambers. Others do not work together, especially in the capital and large cities like León). In a group interview with members of the first phase, they expressed concern about the disappearance of the support from LiD; another interview with members of the second phase revealed that they still called on the external agent even to meet and go out to eat together.

¹⁶ Attendance at the Leadership Training Workshops was a total of 565 youths: Managua (144), Masaya (69); Granada (71); León (66); Nueva Segovia (27); Matagalpa (26); Bluefields (51); Juigalpa (63), and Boaco (48).

Another topic that was included in the Programme was training¹⁷ youths to set up their own businesses, through the “learn by doing” methodology. This is an interactive and participative methodology that enables youths to become empowered with the knowledge they acquire. During the three years, 68 microenterprises were formed in the production and service sector, and 70% of these are still in operation. In the Managua focal group, it was observed that two out of six enterprises survived, but the number of members had decreased, leaving some of the businesses in the hands of individuals or family members. The training had just recently concluded in Juigalpa and Boaco, so some of the enterprises were brand new.

Table 1. Young Entrepreneurs; Changes

Personal changes	Group/collective changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am more proactive and positive. • It helped me reinforce my potential and creativity. • I learned to be organized and efficient. • We learned that we have worth as individuals. • We learned to identify our leadership abilities. • We examined ourselves and developed our leadership. • Greater awareness and sharing. • We identified our strengths and weaknesses. • Personal strength to appear before the authorities. • I now know what I want as a person. • I realize the importance of teamwork. • I have learned to not be afraid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have understanding, tolerance and respect for others. • Better organization. • Overcome difficulties. • Improved communication. • Reach a consensus for making decisions. • Better teamwork. • To share leadership. • Delegate responsibilities. • Prepare, manage, execute and evaluate community projects.

A Network of Nicaraguan Entrepreneurial Youths (JOENIC) was created to encourage the association of the youths that participated in the LiD Programme. They now have their own webpage and are on Facebook. They suggested that more training should be given after setting up the businesses, on topics of marketing, legal matters, etc., and that they would like to make their own decisions regarding their association, rather than having them made by the promoters.

The best enterprises joined the departmental and national fairs organised by INDE or by the Instituto Nicaragüense de la Pequeña y Mediana Empresa (INPYME). They also held a business meeting with Wal-Mart. In addition, they were able to participate in three National Congresses for Entrepreneurial Youths and Leaders, where they presented their products; some of the participants received scholarships from universities in the United States.

One of the Programme results has been the design of a statistical monitoring system for entrepreneurial youths at a national level; it is now undergoing validation of its instruments. Even though one of the reports proposed a baseline of 10 key indicators for measuring the impact of training on entrepreneurship, as well as leadership at the end of the programme, no information was available for it to be considered a good monitoring exercise.

¹⁷ 565 youths participated in La Compañía workshops; 147 from Managua, 210 from the Pacific Coast and the rest from 5 Departments in the interior.

Self-efficacy of female heads of households

This sub-component¹⁸ was executed by Voces Vitales, and its objective was to “strengthen the platform of entrepreneurial capacities in women to achieve greater participation in the national economy and in the decisions regarding municipal, sector and national budgets, thus ensuring that the viewpoint of entrepreneurial women is included in these.”

The proposed indicators were very ambitious, if we take into account that Voces Vitales was recently formed and that influencing budget policies implies first elevating women’s citizenship; this is a topic that is rarely touched by women’s movements in Nicaragua or the rest of the world.

Citizenship is a concept that alludes to an active, protagonist and participative role and that, in the case of many women, has a direct relation to gender roles and conditions. Furthermore, it is a continuous cumulative process that is achieved when there is at least a minimum awareness of the condition of political subject and a certain organized force that enables actions that will transform the power relationships at all levels. In this case, the efforts carried out by Voces Vitales were not relevant nor sufficient to meet the results indicators, such as: “incorporate the viewpoint of entrepreneurial women in the implementation of municipal, sector and national budgets, based on results provided by the Ministry of Economy...establish a multi-trade forum, comprised of businesswomen from the whole country, to guarantee the inclusion of their viewpoint in the trade organizations and results-based budgets presented by the Ministry of Economy.”

The Programme focused on leadership workshops, economic mentorships, the youth programme “Encontrando Tu Voz,” forums and a communication strategy to strengthen the position of Voces Vitales and make women’s contribution to the economy more visible. Forty leadership and economic and citizen empowerment workshops were planned for 2009-2010 in 20 municipalities with 25 women at each workshop, as well as economic mentorships for women who already owned a business and met the following criteria:

- 1) Female leader who owns her own micro or small business in the formal or informal sector;
- 2) 19 to 65 years old;
- 3) Leadership potential proven through economic, social or political transformation at a local or national level (dynamic and with a will to progress);
- 4) With a vision to improve herself and have a multiplying effect in her community;
- 5) Her business must be more than a hobby; it must be her livelihood
- 6) Does not want to close her business, she wants to make it grow;
- 7) Provides the information requested by Voces Vitales Nicaragua;
- 8) The urge to excel.

Since one of the expected results of the Programme was the inclusion of women’s interests in municipal, sector and national budgets, the workshop program changed during the second phase, to include:

¹⁸ This component was suspended in March of 2011 with the sudden withdrawal of support from Denmark to Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro. The funds were transferred to INDE, who continued managing Voces Vitales until the end of the Programme.

- 1) Self-esteem and empowerment;
- 2) Leadership and organization for influence;
- 3) Introduction to municipal budgets and local economic policies and;
- 4) Participation in influence spaces.

Voces Vitales was able to train 671 women from 22 municipalities in 13 departments of Nicaragua at their one-day workshops. Despite the geographic and thematic distances, they were able to build and strengthen collective leaderships for developing processes to influence policies and economic matters. The participants of the focal groups identified key personal changes in their lives. Some of the women trained in leadership were from the Gender Commissions supported by FUNDEMOS, and were able to identify similar effects in their lives. (Table 2)

Five economic mentorship programmes were developed, benefiting 80 apprentices, who received support from 72 mentors. Statistical data from the 30 apprentices in the second stage highlights the following: 37% are married, 17% have a live-in partner and 6% are separated. Of these, 43% have a university education, 43% completed high school and 14% only went to grade school.¹⁹

Table 2. Women and Leadership; perceived changes

Voces Vitales Participants	FUNDEMOS Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have more self-esteem and a will to excel • We feel encouraged to continue working • My self-worth as a woman has increased • Machismo is so common and it affects our self-esteem. When another person says we are worth something, we feel better. • I can be more positive, change my attitude. • We have more courage to speak out. We were interviewed on radio and television. • We learned to be honest with ourselves and more responsible. • We learned that where there is a will there is a way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It helped to know myself, to renew interest in projects. • I was able to internally reflect, analyse my abilities and reprogram my goals. • We rejuvenated and decided to no longer be just housewives • I came here to find myself, know myself and value my potential. • I realized that I had always lived for other and not for myself. • I dared to set up my own micro enterprise, without help from Voces Vitales.

The businesses were from 0 to 44 years old, averaging 10 years. Of these, 80% are owned solely by women, 17% are family owned and 3% are cooperatives. They are broken down as follows: 50% are manufacturing, 33% commercial, 10% belong to the services sector and 7% to agro industry. Of these, 50% are formal, 63% are micro enterprises and 37% are small enterprises. A total of 97% of the apprentices do not belong to any trade association, 20% have participated in trade shows or international fairs and only 7% have participated in export training events or workshops. They identified several positive effects on their companies:

¹⁹ Medrano, Antonio. Final Report on the Consultation for Monitoring, Evaluation and Systemization of Voces Vitales Nicaragua within the Life in Democracy Programme.

- Increased sales
- Greater production; more employment for youths
- Improved product appearance
- Improved business image: mannequins, better organization
- Greater control over sales and inventory
- More friendly to customers
- Know how to calculate the cost of each product
- Better marketing; know to reach the client
- Business growth. I have another business now
- Greater control

In interviews with five mentors and in a focal group with twelve apprentices, various aspects were identified as being in need of improvement:

- 1) Not enough work time (1 day leadership workshop, 1 ½ days mentorship workshop and 12 -18 hours of working with mentors);
- 2) The selection criteria for pairing up mentors and apprentices need to be revised; sometimes the two parties are not in the same type of business;
- 3) They try to empower women without taking into account gender roles and conditioning factors;
- 4) We need change indicators for the enterprises;
- 5) Things are sort of left up to will of the mentors; there needs to be a solid commitment mechanism for the mentorships;
- 6) We need more follow-up on the implementation of recommendations;
- 7) We need to receive teaching materials and presentations to strengthen our newly acquired knowledge.

One day training workshops on the use of Internet were given to 61 apprentices. They were able to open an e-mail account and enter several sites related to their business interests, look for images and save them. This tool will facilitate the marketing of their products.

The two forums that were organized with female entrepreneurs and high profile and politically active women were an encouragement and motivation for the women who participated in the leadership and mentorship workshops. They were able to create a network or platform of entrepreneurial women that can influence economic policies. Some women expressed that Voces Vitales should join already existing coordination bodies, such the COSEP Chambers, the Nicaraguan Network of Entrepreneurial Women, and the Permanent Congress of Entrepreneurial Women, among others.

4.2.3 Impact on Municipal Policies

The objective of this component, implemented by FUNDEMOS, was to improve the inclusion and participation of youth and women's organizations in the public-private dialogue spaces in the municipal environment. In this sense, they worked on reactivating and/or creating the Adolescent and Youth Municipal Commissions (CMAJ) and Gender Commissions in 11 municipalities. FUNDEMOS concentrated its efforts on non-Sandinista municipalities.

FUNDEMOS developed a process to strengthen the members of the Commissions so that they could influence the inclusion of youth and women agenda topics in the municipal budget allocations. The Commissions are comprised of members from other civil society organizations

such as Red de Mujeres de Chontales, Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes, ACJ, PROFAMILIA, CENIDH, etc. The strengthening process included training workshops, accompaniment, conferences, exchange of experiences, social audits, etc.

Six one-day workshops were held for 771 participants, 346 from the Youth Commissions and 425 from the Women's Commissions. The workshops addressed the following topics: relevant municipal legislation such as the Citizen Participation Act, the Public Information Access Act, the Municipalities Act, the Budget System Act, the Municipal Transfer Act and the Youth Act. Courses were also given on Influence and Lobbying, Social and Gender Auditing and Local Power. The female members of the Commissions participated in the Leadership workshops developed by Voces Vitales and some of the youths joined the INDE workshops on economic entrepreneurship.

FUNDEMOS supported the elaboration of the Youth and Women Municipal Agendas in nine municipalities and also their presentation and discussion at schools and in other fora. The youths and women later met with national candidates and other economic actors and presented their agenda, with support from INDE, Fé y Alegría, Voces Vitales, Libros para Niños, UCA, CREADA, IEEPP. FUNDEMOS supported the Gender Commissions for two days to help them prepare a national agenda to present to the aforementioned actors.

The municipal, as well as the two national agendas, represented a very valuable initial effort, but are too general in content. They are not based on legislation relevant to the themes selected. In other words, they are thematic agendas and not political agendas; they make no reference to State legislation or policies on youth and women rights, or to their enforcement. Political agendas based on assigned rights reinforce democracy, rule of law and citizenship – subject agendas do not necessarily accomplish that.

The agendas were presented to the Municipal Councils in plenary. This was followed-up by letters and project profiles requesting resources or by acting in participatory municipal budgeting events. The political influence exercises resulted in the approval of 18 initiatives. (Table 3)

Table 3 Projects approved by Municipal Governments			
No	Project Name	Municipality	Commission
1	Youth Scholarships (Computer Courses)	Matiguás	Youth
2	Plan Techo	Matiguás	Gender
3	Banco de Tierra	Granada	Youth
4	Construction of a Sports Centre	Rio Blanco	Youth
5	Youth Scholarships (Computer Courses)	Rio Blanco	Youth
6	Budget allocation for operation	V. Sandino	Gender
7	Budget allocation for operation.	Acoyapa	Gender
8	Budget allocation. Youth Work Enterprise.	Acoyapa	Youth
9	Budget allocation. Youth Work Enterprise.	Acoyapa	Gender
10	Budget allocation for operation.	Boaco	Gender
11	Budget allocation for operation.	Santa Lucia	Gender
12	Sport equipment	Santa Lucia	Youth
13	Paving of road next to stadium	San Nicolás	Gender
14	Budget allocation for operation.	San Nicolás	Gender
15	Budget allocation for operation.	San Nicolás	Youth
16	Purchase of industrial mills for Cooperative	La Trinidad	Gender

17	Construction of Culture Centre	La Trinidad	Youth
18	Improve Soccer Fields	La Trinidad	Youth

A third of the approved initiatives were for small amounts (less than US\$ 500.00) for the operation of the education and sports commissions. The focal groups were able to determine that the projects they promoted reproduced the reproductive role of women by presenting initiatives that benefited the entire population (garbage cans, improving quality of health services, gifts for seniors and school supplies for children, among others.) There were few petitions for economic enterprises, and none had to do with gender-based violence prevention or preventing teen pregnancies, which is a widespread problem in Nicaragua.

In addition, after the training workshops, the Youth Commissions carried out social audits. They used the scorecard tool²⁰ to evaluate urban road construction. A survey was carried out to determine the degree of citizen participation in petitioning the project, its relevance to their needs, the economic contributions made by the citizens, the quality of the infrastructure and the social benefits of the projects.

The focus groups also recognized another social audit process involving opinion polls on the quality of municipal services, such as garbage collection, solid wastes, the quality of the attention in the Civic Registry and the Public Information Access Office, among others. Here, the youths and some of the women who participated in the Commissions, worked as interviewers, paid by FUNDEMOS. The scorecards for the opinion polls were processed at the FUNDEMOS office in Managua.

The meetings with the municipalities to present the results of the social audits and the opinion polls were arranged by FUNDEMOS. The results were presented to the Municipal Governments and, in some cases, to the plenary of the Municipal Development Commissions. The Youth and Women Commissions suggested actions to improve municipal public management and citizen participation in the project management cycle. In Santa Lucía, they reported that improvements had been made in the quality of the health services provided. In other cases, the Municipal Government expressed willingness to incorporate some of the suggestions resulting from the audits.

The evaluation team was surprised to note that, in some municipalities, the results were presented by the FUNDEMOS Training Coordinator and not by the Youth and Women Commissions and/or Gender Commissions. The youths and women were also not present at the national press conference. This does not help to make visible the leadership of the main social actors of the LiD Programme.

4.2.4 Creative initiatives in research, education and teaching

Libros para Niños

This subcomponent was executed by Libros para Niños (LpN) and Fé y Alegría (FyA). Its objective was defined as “Increasing the practices and tools of the social actors to contribute to their individual and organized participation as protagonists in overcoming obstacles to development.” The proposal was to influence the national education system through two

²⁰ Grupo FUNDEMOS. Social Auditing Manual, Programme on Transparency; USAID. 2007.

strategies: i) improve the teaching abilities by supporting technical and methodological instruments at the teacher schools (LpN); ii) promote model experiences in the application of training instruments and methodologies at pilot schools (FyA).

The two proposed indicators focused on the national education system. Despite the agreement signed between LpN and the Ministry of Education to work at 8 teacher-training schools²¹, the project presented at the national meeting of principals and assistant principals of schools was not approved by the new school authorities, after a change of Minister in April 2010. Added to this, the Director of Libros para Niños died in May of 2010, and the creator of the methodological framework for the Centros de Recursos Alternativas y Dinámicas Asociadas returned to his/her country of origin.

The organisations had to adapt to these situations and were able to work with two teacher-training schools (an official school in Chinandega and a Fé y Alegría rural educational centre in Lechecuagos, León) and a few other institutes that were identified along the way. The results were achieved by changing the way they worked with civil society organisations. They encouraged students, teachers and principals to become protagonists in community works through innovative means such as theatre, dance, painting, etc. The initiatives are summarised in Table 4.

The Ministry of Education at a national forum with teacher-training schools recognized the importance of the Chinandega experience. Through the CREADA, the school collaborated with the police on matters of violence, which is of great concern to the Nicaraguan citizens. The theatre presentations given by youths often deal with the topic of violence. The children were very aggressive when they started making the puppets and were frequently punished by their mothers. Now they have started to explain to their mothers how they should be treated.

In general, the behaviour patterns change as the children become involved with the theatre presentations, dance, puppets and community work. Although no attempt was made to measure these changes, they were evident through observation and direct interaction with the beneficiaries. The students and teachers change when they work

Table 4 Educational initiatives used in the rural areas	
Area	Initiatives and participants
Matagalpa	Theatre, dance, puppets, story corner, Friends of Reading networks. Various commissions (communication, culture and research) Total: 76 persons
Carlos Núñez Sur	Friends of Reading networks, dance Total: 26 persons
León	Theatre, dance, story corner, Friends of Reading networks, communication. Various commissions (communication, culture and research) Total: 80 persons
Chinandega	Dance, theatre, puppets, 2 story corners, Friends of Reading network, communication Research Commission Total: 161 persons
Mateare	Friends of Reading network, theatre, dance Communicators (youth)

²¹ A Normal School is an educational institution for training teachers.

Table 4 Educational initiatives used in the rural areas	
Area	Initiatives and participants
	Total: 25 persons
	TOTAL: 368 persons directly benefited

with the community. Internal democracy is strengthened; the youths are integrated in the various groups and with their teachers. It is no longer a vertical education.

The most important case of coordination between Fe y Alegría and Libros para Niños occurred in León. While there is sometimes a lot of rigidity and authoritarianism among the principals of the teacher-training schools, Fé y Alegría is experienced in working with community organizations and leaders and in the León case CREADA fit in quite nicely and the work improved with the methodologies introduced by Libros para Niños. The pedagogical research and activities carried out in the community revealed that violence was a priority issue, and this was key in assisting students in their community work. The work was enriched by the Story Corner and by involving the students in the Red de Amigos de la Lectura (RAL).

“Tómame en Cuenta” (Take me into Account), an event organised by all the LiD partner organisations, was an important one, where youth and women could present their proposals to different political parties. As a result, INDE and Voces Vitales have requested that the LpN reading promoters have an exchange with the entrepreneurs and youths from the “Encontrando tu Voz” programme created by Voces Vitales. Everything was paid for by the organisations, each contributing what they could.

LpN contributed to the LiD Programme with Reading Corner facilitators, even though it did not receive any financial assistance from the municipalities. It experimented with volunteers and learned that it could work. This contributes to the sustainability of this type of reading programme in the rural areas of Nicaragua.

Fe y Alegría

The official LiD Programme document did not contain a specific indicator for Fe y Alegría; it should contribute to the same result set out for Libros para Niños. FyA proposed to actively participate by developing activities that enabled leadership development among youths in the participating educational centres. They were able to adapt a results indicator: “A total of 40% of the organized youths have been able to carry out recreational, investigative and educational initiatives in their communities on important topics such as violence, environmental protections and art.”

At the beginning of the LiD Programme, Fe y Alegría carried out a baseline survey of more than 400 students from 10 educational centres, to gather the opinion of students on the meaning of citizenship. The survey did not reveal much information, so an expert was hired and she expanded the diagnosis to 18 educational centres. Of these 9 are Fe y Alegría and 9 are public centres. Surveys and focal groups were used to consult the students on various aspects related to citizenship. The answers reveal a lack of knowledge on the subject and served as a basis for designing the Citizenship Course for youths.

Fe y Alegría also focused on training the Student Government Bodies to prepare Student Agendas. These are based on student consultations from first to ninth grade, on their needs and the activities they would like to develop in their centres and communities. In addition,

they assisted the youths to form work commissions on: learning reinforcement, student monitors, sexual and reproductive health, environment, culture and sports.

Medium and long-term activities were developed with the youths. Furthermore, it was observed that the adolescents in the focal groups were able to reflect and change attitudes and mind sets in a relatively short time. They have learned to analyse the context they live in, identify problems and community activities and, based on this, to propose actions that inform, raise awareness, and make others reflect and become involved in making small changes in the community (every little step is important). The changes that the youths identified are in Table 5.

Table 5 Social attitudes and youth behaviours

Personal changes	Collective changes
Greater ability to express ideas	We exchange ideas with other people
Respect for the right to vote	
Developed strategic communication abilities through new techniques	We plan activities with students, teachers and the community
Critical thinking	
Present my viewpoint without being aggressive	We have learned teamwork
Be more communicative with my family	We generated changes in ourselves and in persons in the community
We motivated people with our presentations and that brings satisfaction	We know our rights and responsibilities
We are agents of social change	We interact with the community
We use our time on worthwhile activities	We participate in citizenship spaces
We learned how to do community research	We worked in reforestation, recycling, neighbourhood clean-up and fund drives
Contemporary dance makes us more disciplined	We showed that we could
Our decisions are by consensus	We participated in festivals
	We have better organization and communication
	We have a better image to present to students from other sectors

The 1,239 youths from the Fe y Alegría centres are now organised as social protagonists, integrated in work commissions and included in community activities to address sensitive issues such as violence, environment, sexuality, quality education, fund-raising for infrastructure and reading promotion, among others.

Among the most immediate effects are quality training on topics that are important for life and democracy and the exercise of rights and responsibilities in a more systematic way. These youths now have the knowledge and the tools to claim and exercise their rights. They have developed organisational and communication skills that enable them to express themselves and enter into dialogue with the education authorities on matters that directly affect them. They can look beyond their educational centre and offer specific proposals that support the social development of the community. They have also improved their communication skills with their equals, families and communities and are better able to address topics such as violence, pregnancy, rights and environment. UCA offered courses for the Fe y Alegría communicators on social communication, and through Radio Universidad Y Conexiones they

were able to produce various audio-visual products, an interactive CD and several communication media appearances.

Through the LiD Programme, FyA was more involved with the community in a few specific places, resulting in new lessons learned that could be incorporated in the methodological proposals of these organizations. Unfortunately, the activities were carried out in a very small fraction of the population and the interaction with other Programme partners was minimum, except for LpN. We conclude that the programme has little chance of sustainability.

In any case, LiD gave Fe y Alegría the opportunity to:

- Work with new networks and organisations;
- Develop the community theatre proposal as a tool for awareness, reflection and participation in topics of social interest in the centres and the communities.
- Explore theatre as a forum for reflection and debate within the educational centres and the community.
- Strengthen its work with the communicators' network within the same organization.
- Develop and validate the proposal for citizenship training and positioning messages on the exercise of rights and responsibilities.

4.2.5 Impact on the Media

Due to the sudden departure of Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro from the Programme, the evaluation team was not able to contact the organisation or have access to any reports from their short participation; therefore, it is not possible to measure any impact it may have had. However, the civic journalism theme was taken up by IEEPP and integrated into the Journalism Support Fund, and UCA completed the training in this methodology.

Civic journalism is understood as a journalistic work methodology that consists of speaking out for the citizens through the reports, instead of the "traditional" journalism, where the protagonist or the journalist is an expert on the subject. UCA makes a distinction between civic journalism and citizen journalism; the latter denotes an approach where the citizens themselves write the articles, edit their own reports, radio programmes, etc. According to academia, Nicaragua is still a long way from citizen journalism, but civic journalism has made an impact on the journalists that participated in the LiD Programme. The evaluation interviews agree on this point: for many communication professionals, the idea of having the citizens relate their own experiences, instead of interviewing the true or supposed experts in the matter, has been an innovative idea that has changed the outlook of many journalists. Although LiD did not invent civic journalism in Nicaragua, it certainly has given it a big push. It is also evident that LiD has improved the journalistic skills of civic as well as investigative journalists.

On the other hand, if we analyse the themes of the journalism projects through the FAP scholarships, it can be concluded that they do not complement the strengthening of social change actors, which was the other component of the intervention. Women were important subjects for the articles produced, thanks to scholarships (for example, 33% of the 170 scholarships in 2010, and 505 during the sixth round of scholarships in 2012) and so were children, although to a lesser degree. However, they were treated as victims in the reports

(women murdered, victims of domestic violence, child labour, etc.)²² and not as actors and defenders of their rights. It is true that these types of situations occur on a daily basis in Nicaragua, but it is here suggested that FAP did not encourage an approach more in line with the supreme LiD objective, which it was authorized and able to do as a scholarship system.

The FAP has started several journalist networks such as Red de Periodistas de Investigación, Red de Radios Locales, informal report exchange networks and colleague networks. The local radio stations network was also promoted by UCA. These more or less formal training events have resulted from the meetings that IEEPP organised for the scholarship holders within the context of each invitation to apply. Despite reticence on the part of some of the media to publish the results of the more politically delicate products of the scholarships, according to interviews on the subject, many of the national coverage newspapers have opened up a little to publishing editorials with a civic journalism flavour.

Another effect of the media component and FAP has been the support given to the pluralism of voices among the media. Given the economic situation in the country, the scholarship fund has been somewhat of a blessing to the smaller media and independent journalists, above all in the rural areas. Therefore, LiD has contributed to decentralizing the media.

Finally, we can mention that the UCA training and advice in communication, preparing spots, radio and television vignettes and others, has helped strengthen the capacities of the partner organizations in this area and contributed to the sustainability of the enterprises, community organization and political influence of youths that participated in INDE, Fe y Alegría, FUNDEMOS and Libros para Niños. Some of the youths produced radio spots to promote the products and services they were able to develop through INDE's La Compañía Programme, and the students from the normal schools supported by Fe y Alegría were able to better manage the audio visual means, improve their abilities to interview, create reports and participate on the student body, thus strengthening the Red de Jóvenes Comunicadores of Fé y Alegría.

4.3 Programme Efficiency and Management

4.3.1 Instability in the flow of resources

The LiD Programme management was seriously compromised by a real lack of harmonisation among the donors, leading to great financial instability. By lack of harmonisation we refer to the departure of cooperating agencies starting in 2008. Apparently there was no coordination in this sense, neither between the cooperating agencies, nor with the Government of Nicaragua. No blame is being ascribed, but it definitely had a negative impact on many of the interested parties.

The LiD Programme commenced in November of 2009. On November 11, the Embassy of Denmark, as Programme promoter, signed an agreement with FUNDEMOS, granting aid in the amount of USD 1,664,500 for the execution of Component A (Social Actors). FUNDEMOS then

²² The 2010 FAP annual report also indicates that less than 30% of the projects presented for scholarships were by female journalists (50 of the 170 projects were presented by women journalists.) We understand that although this is not the responsibility of the fund or of IEEPP, it does suggest a certain bias in the profession, especially if we take into account that more than half the graduates in social communication and journalism are women.

signed agreements with Fe y Alegría, INDE and Libros para Niños for the execution of the respective sub subcomponents. On that same date, Denmark signed agreements with IEEPP and UCA for USD 1,000,000 and USD 1,200,000, respectively, for supporting the execution of Component B (Media.) On 31 December, a similar agreement was signed with the Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro in the amount of 2.2 million US Dollars. Voces Vitales entered the programme through an agreement with VBdCh. Contributions to the programme were made also by Finland, the United Kingdom and Sweden, channeling their support through the Danish Embassy.

Just a few months later, at the end of April of 2010, Denmark announced that they would be closing their bilateral cooperation to Nicaragua by the end of 2012. In February of 2011, they announced that they would be leaving by the end of that year instead of the next, because the Government of Nicaragua refused to accept using part of the funds to finance electoral observation. Since the Embassy of Denmark is no longer in Nicaragua, the evaluation team has not had access to any type of written or official report on the execution of the LiD finances for the aforesaid period. The only information available has been obtained from interviewing the partner organisations. They state that the sudden departure of Denmark resulted in great uncertainty for the LiD partner organisations for a good part of 2011. According to two of the partner organisations, it became known in March that the Finnish Embassy was preparing a proposal for financing a continuation of the Programme that would be submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland in June. This proposal was approved in July, but it did not take effect until September of 2011, when Finland signed agreements with FUNDEMOS for EUR 543,418 and with IEEPP and with UCA for EUR 128,291 each. According to the minutes from a meeting on September 13, 2011, on that date, the two countries and the partner organisations formalised the “official transfer of agency leader (sic) from the Embassy of Denmark to the Embassy of Finland.”

In short, the LiD Programme faced great economic uncertainty and a sort of general orphanhood for most of 2011. Nevertheless, according to the incomplete collection of audit reports we were able to obtain for the period starting in September of 2011, the organisations have efficiently executed the planned activities within the framework of the available financial resources.

4.3.2 Programmatic Approach vs. Traditional Project Approach

Added to the LiD financial problem is the organizational weakness due to the flaw in the programme design, as already commented in 4.1. For a while, at the beginning, the Programme had a part-time advisor who, when interviewed by the team, strongly insisted that he was not a coordinator, but just an advisor. The person in question was one of the Programme designers. When asked why a coordinator or manager had not been included in the design, he said that they wanted to, but the idea was not well received by the Embassy of Denmark. One of his colleagues on the design team corroborated his statements. During the time that LiD has been financed by Finland, one of the partner organizations (FUNDEMOS,) has had certain coordinator responsibilities, although these have been basically limited to serving as an intermediary for transferring funds to the smaller partner organisations (Fe y Alegría, INDE, Voces Vitales and Libros para Niños) and condensing and channelling progress reports to the Embassy of Finland. FUNDEMOS also hosted coordination meetings with the partner organizations during the first half of 2012.

The economic instability and the lack of strategic leadership of the Programme are factors that have prevented the “programmatic approach” from producing any added value, in comparison with the traditional project approach. The evaluation team has held discussions with many of the managers of the LiD partner organisations, allowing us to conclude that any one of these could have carried out most of their VeD work under individual projects, without thinking about a programme approach neither for the internal organisation of the intervention nor with regard to its insertion in any “programme” of the partner country.

It is important to mention that the cohesion and continuity of the Programme were also affected by the sudden departure of Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro. According to a reliable source, this organisation was withdrawn from LiD at the request of the Presidency of the Republic, for having committed an act that the Government perceived as non-friendly political interference. This intermezzo is an example of what can happen when the donor community tries to implement Paris Agenda principles (ownership and alignment) with civil society, when there is not sufficient convergence of ideas with the partner country government.

4.4 Efficiency and Management of the Partner Organisations and their project components in the Life in Democracy Programme

The various LiD partner organisations were generally very flexible and showed varying degrees of efficiency in their use of the resources for developing the programmed activities. This, despite the uncertainties regarding funds during the first phase (Table 6 illustrates this situation). However, they did not focus on monitoring their results or indicators, so it may be concluded that there is space and reason for an improvement of their overall efficiency, meaning inter alia more attention to the measurement of costs of the results as a basis for optimizing the use of the resources (better cost/ impact rate).

INDE, which has had twenty years of experience with its youth enterprises programme, managed the resources well by incorporating the leadership course as a strategy for improving the youth enterprises and strengthening their citizenship. They were also flexible in using additional funds received upon Denmark’s exit, to strengthen the marketing capacities of the young entrepreneurs. Their management and administrative structure is sound, given their years of experience handling funds from various cooperation agencies; it has also been reinforced by an advisor from the German Cooperation.

Voces Vitales is a recently created organisation (2009) and it had to depend first on Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro and later on INDE, since it had not yet obtained legal personality when VeD started. This organisation did not execute any funds between April and December of 2011; for the first five months because FVBdCh had to leave the Programme and for the next four months for unknown reasons. Its operation and management depend almost exclusively on its Executive Director. It carries out its work by hiring individual companies or consultants for organising its workshops, mentorship programmes, forums and contests and it has a temporary administrator. In summary, this is an organisation with a very fragile management and too dependent on external agents (consultants), which still has not achieved a solid conceptual basis and methodology and does not have stable human resources or an independent financial administration.

Table 6: Financing of Component A of the Life in Democracy Programme						
	Multi-donors and Denmark: November 2009 – August 2011			Finland; September 2011 – August 2012		
Organisation/ Component	Approved Budget	Adjustment (1)	Adjusted Budget	Approved Budget	Adjustment (2)	Adjusted Budget
INDE/EJN	357,545	-68,883	288,662	138,154	-7,000	131,154
Libros para Niños	245,782	-72,544	173,238	93,847	-4,707	89,140
Fe y Alegría	259,551	-73,669	185,882	88,000	-1,438	86,562
Voces Vitales	N/D	N/D	N/D	164,220	-8,551	155,669
FUNDEMOS	653,463	-75,972	577,491	166,979	-8,404	158,576
Coordination and Administration	148,159	-30,599	117,560	36,000	-1,674	34,326
Communication Campaign		50,000	50,000	60,000	12,500	47,500
Total	1,664,500	271,667	1,392,833	747,200	44,274	702,927

1) Adjustments: Amounts not delivered by Embassy of Denmark at close of Programme

2) Adjustments due to loss during Euro currency exchange

Source: Evaluation team, based on report from FUNDEMOS

The management by Libros para Niños was flexible and had a difficult time adapting to the loss of its Executive Director and methodology creator for Centros de Recursos y Dinámicas Asociadas, CREADA. It also had to learn to work with civil society organisations, despite its agreement with the Ministry of Education. The organisation has extensive experience working with international cooperation and makes efficient use of its resources.

Fe y Alegría Nicaragua is a national organization that is part of an international Jesuit organisation, thus it has used the same technical, methodological, administrative and financial procedures and systems for decades. Its management is service related, and by working with normal schools managed by mystical religious staff and teachers, it guarantees efficient use of the finances.

FUNDEMOS, in its double role of coordinator/administrator and executor of one the components, showed great experience in managing resources, but little leadership, especially at the beginning of the Programme. This organization handled the biggest portion of the financial resources, but the commissions it worked with and the results obtained regarding municipal policies and investments for youth and women, do not tally with the high amount invested.

One of the weaknesses in the Programme coordination, identified by some of the partner organisations, was that they had no knowledge regarding the total budget for the Social Actors Component, the allocations for each of the organizations or the amount of funds assigned to FUNDEMOS for administration. It was not until the “Denmark crisis” that they received

information on these aspects and were able to “coordinate better”. According to FUNDEMOS, the initial budgets were negotiated directly by each organisation with the Danish Embassy, based on the objectives and results established in the programme document. The total programme budget, the two component budgets and the budgets for each partner organisation were made known openly in one of the first meetings held at the Embassy. These comments suggest that there was, at least, a less than appropriate handling of financial information on the part of the Embassy of Denmark – and one that was hardly conducive to a synergistic and smooth work among the partners.

It is appropriate to conclude this chapter by pointing out that all the LiD partner organizations have been audited every 4 months by auditors hired by the Embassy of Finland, as of the date when the Finnish financing started to be used. The evaluation team has analysed a sample of the numerous audit reports and has interviewed the auditors. On this basis we may maintain that there have been no irregularities worth mentioning as regards the handling of the funds by the organisations and that, moreover, they have obtained acceptable value for money.

5. SUSTAINABILITY

The LiD Programme can not have any sustainability as a programme because it was executed by a heterogeneous group of organisations that had never before collaborated among themselves and which were recruited or invited to participate by the Programme designers, including the Embassy of Denmark, without having had sufficient participation in the programme formulation. If the Programme had been more geographically focused, it might have produced a more real and lasting alliance between some or all of the organisations, with a view to continuing their work together. But that was not the case. The only real collaboration observed, that might continue, is that between Fe y Alegría and Libros para Niños, who have joined efforts to continue the Story Corners and a few other activities.

The principal uniting force in this Programme has been Finland’s economic contribution, which has helped the organisations to continue with their normal work, with a slight temporary cohesion under the LiD philosophy and objectives. The follow-up provided by the Embassy of Finland, through audits and analysis of results and progress reports has helped to maintain a certain programme character. As soon as these elements disappear, the organisations will most likely return to their previous situation and each working separately.

Nevertheless, the Programme did produce certain results or impacts that may survive on their own, without the presence of an international cooperation programme. We are basically referring to the Media Component. The journalist scholarship fund, managed by IEEPP, allowed the dissemination and rooting of the civic journalism philosophy and strengthened the investigative journalism abilities of the participating journalists. UCA has enhanced the communication capacities of some of the youths and has decided to include the topic of civic and investigative journalism in all its teachings. Many youths are now involved with their communities and some have started enterprises; this element has the potential to continue without the Programme. And the same applies to the collaboration between Libros para Niños and Fe y Alegría with their Story Corners.

6. AID EFFECTIVENESS AND FINNISH VALUE ADDED

As demonstrated throughout this report, the LiD Programme has been reasonably efficient in adverse circumstances. In other words, it has carried out most of its planned activities within the given time and resource framework. Conversely, it has not fully and clearly met its ambitious and partly diffuse objectives. This means that, the limited effectiveness of the Programme is due more to problems with its organisational design and operational feasibility *ex ante* than to a weak execution.

By logic, the effectiveness of the Finnish aid to this “institutionalised” or “institutional support” programme has also been limited. It is possible to envisage a situation where a supported programme or organisation is more effective than the external aid it receives, if the directly involved actors work very well. But it is hardly possible that an external support could be judged as any more effective than the programme or organizations it supports, if effectiveness is defined as the degree of accomplishment of the objectives of the programme or the organization. . .

It is not possible to identify any significant value added by Finland’s aid to this Programme, in the sense that it did not include any transfer of technology or experiences that might be termed “Finnish.” At best, it could be said that Finland’s decision to “save” the Programme after the Danes and others withdrew, and the fact that this decision was implemented in a rather short time, has amounted to a sort of added value.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- The fundamental idea of the LiD Programme was in line with Finland’s development policy and the Nicaraguan problems that the Programme was designed to solve, such as poor participation and exclusion of large segments of the population, in an environment of reduced democratic governance.
- The LiD Programme design was based on a good analysis of the “current situation” in 2009. However, the intervention design was off, in the sense that it was not able to translate an important conceptual intervention into a practical intervention. In general, the Programme was characterised by having ambitions out of proportion to the resources and time available.
- The decision to develop attitudes in adolescents and youths to help them become social actors was a good decision; they represent a large segment of the population in countries like Nicaragua. The selection of female heads of households, in their roles as mothers concerned about the future of their children, contradicts the gender and women empowerment theory, and is very difficult to carry out in practice.
- The Programme executed its activities with acceptable efficiency, but due to the design weaknesses, was not able to meet its numerous and broad objectives with more than a limited degree of success.
- This Programme meets the necessary intervention criteria for a programme. The Programme objectives and strategies were determined first, and then, based on these, the

individual “projects” were designed for the various actors. A programme and its objectives should be reflected in a logical “cascading” framework, where the general objectives of the project become the specific programme objectives. That is how it worked in this case.

- Although the LiD was designed for a programme, we did not observe any specific advantage to the “programmatic approach” in this case. The Programme incorporated too many themes, too many partners, too many scattered locations, and combined these with insufficient coordination mechanisms and poor strategic leadership.
- The execution period was too short for such a complex programme. The youth and women empowerment and influence processes require personal empowerment, building of alliances and networks and political influence, elements that need a lengthy period of time. This was lacking, especially for women.
- The external financing of the Programme was too unstable, due to the fluctuating participation of various donors. This can be viewed as a symptom of a lack of real harmonization among the cooperating agencies, despite their frequent protests to the contrary.
- Based on the previous, the Programme is not sustainable, but has produced certain results that may survive, such the elements of journalism and youth empowerment.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 To Finland and other Cooperation Agencies

We recommend that the Government of Finland and the other cooperation agencies consider the possibility of providing specific support to unify and multiply some the specific results from the LiD Programme:

- ✓ Continue to support a scholarship fund for journalist, so they may continue defending a certain media plurality. One option could be for UCA to manage the funds.
- ✓ Support UCA in communication training for youth and women organisations.
- ✓ Consider the possibility of supporting a more geographically focused project for entrepreneurial youths.
- ✓ Continue supporting children and youths that are studying at the teacher training schools, given the strategic importance of creating democratic values and attitudes in youths and their involvement in community activities.

8.2 To Civil Society Organisations

We also have some recommendations for the civil society organisations that worked with or might work in the future with this type of programme. These suggestions are from the current participants in the LiD Programme:

- ✓ There is a need for a good initial dissemination process and the selection process needs to be fine-tuned to ensure that the participants remain and work on the objectives.
- ✓ In order to guarantee the sustainability of the collective political influence activities, the coordination with the youths needs to be strengthened locally as well as with JCI and the recently created INDE, with the high school student bodies and the municipal Youth Commissions.
- ✓ Monitor the agendas that were created and shared with the municipal authorities and regional government.
- ✓ The monitoring mechanisms must be based on democratic attitudes and values, assertive communication, community self-management, financial and market indicators for youth enterprises and others. They must focus on results and indicators and not just of the efficient development of the activities programmed with the allocated resources.

9. LESSONS LEARNED

- In order to design a good project or programme, a design team is required that includes highly qualified specialists who are able to properly analyse a problem and formulate a coherent theoretical and innovative solution to it, as was the case for the LiD Programme. But it also requires the capacity to translate the conceptual response into a work strategy and work plan that is feasible in practice; this demands the participation of organisational or managerial talents. Both elements are equally important.
- Citizen strengthening programmes cannot be implemented without a clear and systematic gender and generational approach and without actions for building alliances and networks to develop the community management and political influence processes.
- The citizenship of youth and women must be systematically strengthened through alliances and management practices. It is NOT possible to form leaders in three days.
- A conscientious audit of activities does not guarantee good monitoring of objectives, and even less so without baselines.
- In order for the organizations to work well together, they must be selected based on common interests and should know each other to some extent.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I

SOURCES AND DOCUMENTS

General bibliography

Aráuz Ulloa, Manuel (consultant): *El marco institucional de Nicaragua – Historia reciente, desafíos y oportunidades*; January 2009.

Belli, Antonio y Pineda, Claudia: *Construcción de una nueva identidad – Vida en Democracia*; undated PowerPoint presentation.

_____ ” _____ ” _____: *Taller de acción estratégica – Informe*; PowerPoint ; presentation; May 2010.

_____ ” _____ ” _____: *Marco conceptual – Imaginario social democrático*; PowerPoint presentation; May 2010.

_____ ” _____ ” _____: *Marco conceptual - Fondos de Cooperación en Equidad y Gobernabilidad*; undated PowerPoint presentation.

Evaluation – Country Programme between Finland and Nicaragua; Evaluation report 2012:1, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Evaluation of programmes promoting participatory development and good governance - Synthesis report; DAC Expert Group on Aid Evaluation; Paris 1997.

Finland’s Development Policy Programme 2012; Unofficial draft 15 May-2012.

Finnish value-added: boon or bane to aid effectiveness?; University of Helsinki; 2012.

Hopmann, Cornelius et al. (2012). *Los medios y el periodismo ante el desafío digital. El caso de Nicaragua*. Managua: Cinco Centro de Investigaciones de la Comunicación.

Medrano, Antonio: *Informe Final de la Consultoría Monitoreo, Evaluación y Sistematización Voces Vitales Nicaragua dentro del Programa Vida en Democracia*

Observatorio de medios (2012). *Managua, Medios, Audiencias y Democracia. Puntos de Reflexión*. Managua: Universidad Centroamericana, marzo 2012.

Oportunidades de cooperación para el fortalecimiento de la democracia; Embajada Real de Dinamarca en Nicaragua; no authors indicated, not dated.

Programa Vida en Democracia; programme document; 16 September 2009

Uriarte Bermúdez, Adrián (2011) Publicidad estatal es malversada y sectarizada, in *El Nuevo Diario* 9.1.2011, at <http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/92056> (visited en 26.9.2012).

Wallace Salinas, Arturo: *Medios y Democracia en Nicaragua - Una Caja de Herramientas para la Cooperación Internacional*; January 2009.

Working documents of the programme and its partner organizations

- Protocols from programme coordination meetings held between January and July 2012

Fe y Alegría

- Festival Nacional de Teatro, Fe y Alegría, octubre del 2011.
- Festival Nacional de Teatro, Fe y Alegría, julio del 2012.

Informes a DANIDA

- Curso de Ciudadanía, Fe y Alegría.
- Encuestas sobre ciudadanía, Fe y Alegría.
- Informes de Fe y Alegría de marzo del 2010 a marzo del 2011.
- 9 informes de Ciudadanía, Fe y Alegría.

Informes a Finlandia

- Sistematización de Protagonismo, Fe y Alegría, de enero-diciembre del 2011.
- 2 informes, Fe y Alegría, 2011 a abril de 2012.

FUNDEMOS

- Agenda de Mujeres Santa Lucia. Grupo FUNDEMOS. Red de mujeres del Municipio de Santa Lucia. Crea Comunicaciones.
- Manual de Auditoria Social, Grupo FUNDEMOS, Abril del 2007.
- Vida en Democracia, FUNDEMOS. Agenda de Mujeres Boaco.
- Red de Mujeres Chontaleñas, FUNDEMOS, Agenda de Mujeres Acoyapa.
- Vida en Democracia, FUNDEMOS. Agenda de jóvenes Santa Lucia.
- Agenda de Mujeres - Programa Vida en Democracia, FUNDEMOS.
- Jóvenes participantes en el Programa Vida en Democracia. Crea Comunicaciones.
- FUNDEMOS, Red de Mujeres Chontaleñas. Agenda de Mujeres Chontaleñas 2009-2015.
- FUNDEMOS, INFORME NARRATIVO CONSOLIDADO, Septiembre 2011- Diciembre 2012, Programa Vida en Democracia.
- 4 Informes de Vida en Democracia, Fundemos, de 2009 a Marzo de 2011.
- Plan Operativo Anual, FUNDEMOS, Enero 2011 a Agosto de 2011.
- Matriz de Resultados, FUNDEMOS.
- Proyectos Aprobados por los Gobiernos Municipales, FUNDEMOS.

IEEPP

- Convenio Dinamarca – IEEPP; 2009.11.11
- Enmienda a convenio Finlandia – IEEPP; 2011.09.07.
- Informes narrativos (2)
- Informes financieros (2)
- Informes de auditoría (2)

INDE

- Informes DANIDA, INDE, enero 2010 a agosto de 2011.
- INDE, Emprendedores Juveniles Nicaragua, "LA COMPANIA" Funciones y Formatos.
- INDE, Diagnostico Organizacional de Adolescentes y Jóvenes, Forum Syd, Febrero del 2007.
- INDE, "Tenemos autonomía cuando podemos interactuar plenamente en la vida de un país, de una región, del mundo entero"; Irina Perez Sanchez.
- INDE, Plan de Comunicación de Voces Vitales Nicaragua, Voces Vitales, Septiembre del 2010.

- 4 Informes Finlandia, INDE, 2011 a 2012.
- Agenda Juventud Juigalpa, EJA, INDE.
- Evaluación de Políticas Públicas de Juventud Nicaragua, 1996-2006.
- Mi Diario Vital, Voces Vitales Nicaragua.
- Política Nacional para el desarrollo integral de la juventud.
- Red de Empresarios de Nicaragua, 2012.
- Agenda Joven Juigalpa, INDE. Informe Narrativo, INDE, septiembre 2011 a diciembre 2011.
- Informe Técnico, INDE, Enero-Abril 2012.
- Borrador Informe Narrativo, INDE, Mayo-Agosto 2012.

LIBROS PARA NIÑOS

- Libros para Niños. Herramientas Metodológicas del Centro de Recursos Alternativos y Dinámicas Asociadas (CREADA)
- Libros para Niños. Documento rector del CREADA. Comunidad Lechecuagos, León.
- Libro para Niños. Documento rector del CREADA. Escuela Normal Darwin Vallecillo Chinandega.
- Libros para Niños. Sistematización. CREADA CHINANDEGA: Una experiencia exitosa en el abordaje del tema sobre violencia.
- Libros para Niños. Documento rector del CREADA. Las Hormiguitas ADIC y Grupo Venancia Matagalpa.
- Libros para Niños. Herramientas Metodológicas del Centro de Recursos Alternativos y Dinámicas Asociadas (CREADA) Libros para Niños. Documento rector del CREADA. Las Hormiguitas ADIC y Grupo Venancia Matagalpa.
- Libros para Niños. Sistematización. CREADA CHINANDEGA: Una experiencia exitosa en el abordaje del tema sobre violencia.
- Libros para Niños, Sistematización de la Experiencia en la Comunidad Lechecuagos, León.
- Libros para Niños, Sistematización de la Experiencia en Matagalpa.

UCA

- Convenio Dinamarca – UCA; 2009.11.11
- Contrato entre Finlandia y UCA; 2011.09.07
- Informes narrativos (2)
- Informe financiero sep – dic 2011
- Informe de auditoría sep – dic 2011

VOCES VITALES

- Planes de Comunicación de Voces Vitales Nicaragua, septiembre 2010.
- Voces Vitales, Listado General, Boaco.
- Reporte del II Programa de Mentoría Económica de Voces Vitales.
- I foro: “Mujeres Voces Vitales de la economía”
- Agenda, Voces Vitales, Acoyapa.
- Taller de empoderamiento y liderazgo, Voces Vitales, Matagalpa 2012.
- Reporte Publicity, Voces Vitales, noviembre 2011.
- Informe del I encuentro Nacional “Encontrando tu Voz”, Voces Vitales.
- 4 informes de Voces Vitales en Programas Vida en Democracia.
- Indicción de Mentoría Económica, Voces Vitales.
- Informe Final Consultoría y Monitoreo, Voces Vitales, septiembre 2012.
- Informe Final y Mapeo, Voces Vitales.
- Mi diario Vital, Voces Vitales Nicaragua.

- Evaluación de taller de liderazgo y empoderamiento ciudadano, Voces Vitales.
- Memoria del II Encuentro Nacional, Encontrando tu Voz, mayo 2012.
- Taller de Liderazgo y Empoderamiento Económico, Voces Vitales, junio 2012.

ANNEX 2

INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Embassy of Finland in Nicaragua

Eeva-Liisa Myllymäki, Chargés d'affaires
Jaakko Jakkila, Councillor on Governance
Markku Lehto, ex Councillor on Governance (2008-2010) by Skype
Lillian Tom, Programme Officer
Mario Zeledón Castillo and colleague, auditors hired by the Embassy

International cooperation agencies in Managua

José Luis Sandino, COSUDE/Switzerland
Lotta Valtonen, KEPA/Finland
Kathleen Beckman, GIZ/Germany
Ricardo Rodríguez, GIZ/Germany
Silvia Porras, Netherlands
Jakub Dolezel, Luxembourg
Alicia Louro-Peña, European Commission
Patrick Reboud, European Commission
Patricia Gómez, former staff member at the Embassy of Denmark (interviewed in Helsinki)
Sergio Pivaral, Nicaragua country coordinator, IBIS
Jairo Valle, Coordinator Governance/Governance Fund, IBIS

Media

Patricia Orozco, Coordinator, Radio La Primerísima/Onda Local
Carlos Fernando Chamorro, Director, Confidencial (digital newspaper)
www.confidencial.com.ni

Partner organisations and beneficiaries

INDE: Self efficacy in youths

Interviews

Name	Title
Ana Carolina Alfaro	Directora Emprendedores Juveniles de Nicaragua y Coordinadora VeD
Paul Kesler	Asesor Emprendedores Juveniles
Sergio Arguello	Presidente INDE

Focus groups

12 jóvenes del Programa La Compañía y Liderazgo	Municipio de Juigalpa
6 jóvenes idem	Municipio de Boaco

8 jóvenes idem Managua, León, Granada, Masaya

Voces Vitales: Auto eficacia de mujeres

Entrevistas

Ana Zavala Hanon (vía Skype)	Directora
Francis Ruiz	Administradora Talleres y Mentorías
Jazmín Solís	Mentora y Consultora
Pastora Palacios	Mentora
Ana Carolina Alfaro	Mentora
Mayra Flores	Mentora

Grupo Focal

12 mujeres empresarias aprendices	Mozonte, Ocotal, Puerto Cabezas, Matiguás, Bluefields,
-----------------------------------	--

FUNDEMOS: Diálogo e incidencia jóvenes y mujeres

Entrevistas

Patricia Mayorga	Directora Ejecutiva
Rafael Gutiérrez	Coordinador VeD
Armando Chavarría	Alcalde de Acoyapa
Regina Alvarado	Presidenta Red de Mujeres Chontaleñas

Neylan Mairena	Presidenta, Grupo de mujeres empresariales, La Trinidad
----------------	---

Silvia Mairena	Tesorera...La Trinidad
----------------	------------------------

Grupos Focales

2 jóvenes de la Comisión de Juventud y 7 mujeres de la Comisión de Gender	Municipio de Acoyapa
---	----------------------

5 jóvenes de la Comisión de Juventud y 8 mujeres de la Comisión de Gender	Municipio de Santa Lucía
---	--------------------------

6 jóvenes, 6 mujeres	Municipio de Boaco
----------------------	--------------------

Libros para Niños: Habilidades de Adolescentes a través de CREADAs

Entrevistas

Gloria María Carrión	Directora Ejecutiva
Alvaro Gutiérrez	Coordinador Técnico del Proyecto
Sandra Mendieta	Coordinadora Chinandega y Matagalpa
Karen Crespo	Comunicadora

Grupos Focales

12 niñas y niños Rincón de Cuentos Escuela María Eugenia	Comunidad Lechecuagos, León
10 niños/as y 2 jóvenes promotores de Red de Amigos de Lectura, RAL	Comarca Los López, Lechecuagos

Fé y Alegría: Habilidades de Adolescentes y Jóvenes

Entrevistas

Fernando Cardenal Martínez, S.J	Director Ejecutivo
Silvio Gutiérrez	Sub Director Ejecutivo. Coordinador VeD
Jealtha Marquez	Coordinadora de Promoción Social
Bladimir Mairena	Promotor Socio-Educativo
Giovanni Mendoza	Maestro-Acompañante
Martha de Trinidad	Promotora Socio Educativa

Grupos Focales

8 estudiantes Colegio Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Ciudad Sandino	Bello Amanecer. Ciudad Sandino. Managua
16 jóvenes estudiantes y 4 docentes Escuela Normal Lechecuagos	Lechecuagos, León

IEEPP: Fondo de Apoyo al Periodismo

Entrevistas

Claudia Pineda Directora Ejecutiva de IEEPP

José Alfonso Malespín Responsable del Fondo

Grupo Focal

6 periodistas becados por el Fondo

Wendy Quintero, Diario HOY

Adrián Uriarte, independiente, Managua

Karen López, independiente, Matagalpa

Eloisa Ibarra, Correo para Ciegos (digital)

Julio C. López, radio local

Hirtcia Gutiérrez, Estelí TV

UCA: Productos de comunicación, periodismo de investigación

Entrevistas

Renata Rodríguez Vicerrectora Académica

Iris de los Angeles Prado Decana

Gonzalo Norori Coordinador VeD

Other civil society organisations

Sofía Montenegro, Directora Ejecutiva, Centro de Investigación de la Comunicación (CINCO)

Silvio Prado, Director, Centro de Estudios y Análisis Político (CEAP)

Other

Antonio Belli, Consultor-formulador del programa

ANNEX 3

Version 8.6.2012

Terms of Reference for Evaluation of “Life in Democracy” Civil Society support programme in Nicaragua

1. Background to the final evaluation

The Government of Finland has financed during 2010 - 2012 two civil society support programmes in Nicaragua, “Institutional Support to Civil Society Organisations” and “Life in Democracy Programme,” that are coming to their completion during the second half of 2012. The evaluation field missions of both Programmes are timed for September 2012, in order to guarantee better conditions for evaluations before the municipal elections of November. Due to the same timing and context, as well as similarities in thematic fields and actors of the programmes, the two evaluations are put together in one contract. This is expected to result in more efficiency and benefits in analysis of the findings, as the two evaluations can be carried out during one field mission and the evaluation teams can contribute to each other’s learning process. Both evaluations have, however, their respective Terms of Reference and separate reports will be expected. This is the Terms of Reference for the final evaluation of the “Life in Democracy” Civil Society support programme.

1.1. Context of the “Life in Democracy” Civil Society support programme

Political context in Nicaragua

Nicaraguan Civil Society, as it is known today, has developed during the last 20 years, after the Sandinista Revolution of 1979 and the following decade of nationalist – leftist FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional) rule that was marked by civil war and economic difficulties, though also by significant development in social sectors. When the FSLN lost the power in the elections of 1990, a variety of NGO’s were founded. Many of them dedicated to advocacy work, others to complement the State institutions in work related to social development, human rights, environmental protection and so on. Many foreign donor countries channeled their funds through these organisations, as the central governments were reducing the public sector budgets.

The 2006 presidential and parliamentary elections brought FSLN back in power after 16 years of right-leaning liberal governments. Although in rhetorics the FSLN continues with its leftist and nationalist tone, in terms of economic policy, it has pursued a line similar to the previous governments, however with a new focus on social development, including many social programmes, and a new understanding of political participation. The Government launched its new National Human Development Plan including its concept of civil society participation, based on “direct democracy” or “citizen power”. The Development Plan highlights also the concept of human development, expressed as increment of opportunities and capacities of people, guaranteeing an effective respect of their rights and liberties. The Plan includes also in its objectives “structural transformations to overcome exclusion and liberate the potential of the excluded: the poor, the women, the youth, the indigenous peoples, the afrodescendants, the disabled, among others.” Participation of women and youth is recognised as one of the

major priorities. Governance is understood as the capacity of interaction between the State and the society. In order to progress to higher levels of governance it is necessary to strengthen public institutions, the participation of civil society organizations, private sector.

In spite of the significant role given to organised civil society in the Development Plan, the practical policies were not showing so much room for open citizen participation. Civil society organisations, especially those dedicated to citizen participation, policy advocacy or human rights promotion, considered the concept of “citizen power” restricting their autonomy and limiting the right to participation exclusively to party-led structures. The highly questioned municipal elections of 2008 and increased politization of state institutions, among some other factors, followed by strong critics from the civil society, led to open conflict between the Government and Civil Society Organisations promoting democratic governance or human rights in 2008 – 2009. Since then, however, the tensions have been eased. The Government has loosened its control over CSOs, and on the other hand some CSOs have moved away from controversial themes in order to focus their work on other fields. However, a constructive dialogue remains lacking.

The independent media has enjoyed of notable confidence among citizens, compared to other institutions. According the polls (M&R Consultores), in 2005 the media was the most trusted institution with 67 % confidence. In January the media was holding the second place, after the Army, with 80,4 % of confidence.

Finland’s Development Cooperation Policy

Finland’s Development Cooperation Policy (2007) emphasizes good and democratic governance and human rights as objectives themselves and as cross-cutting themes indispensable in order to create an enabling environment for sustainable development. The Development Cooperation Policy and the *Guidelines for Civil Society in Development Policy* (2010) recognize the importance of “well functioning and wide ranging civil society that supports citizens’ participation in society, thereby strengthening the preconditions for the development of democracy and good governance”. Among the main roles of the civil society, the Guidelines mentions: civic education, promotion of knowledge of rights, learning about local democracy practices, increasing grassroots participation, and so on. According to guidelines, “civil society plays a key role in monitoring the activities of public authorities”. The empowerment of women and youth is considered strategic in order to reduce poverty in sustainable manner.

1.2. Description of the “Life in Democracy” Civil Society support programme

The “Life in Democracy” Programme was a result of conclusions of a study that identified the youth (16 – 25 years old) and the female heads of household as key actors with capacity and will to take responsibility of development and social change. Based on this study and mapping of capable and independent civil society actors, seven non-governmental organisations and one university were selected as partners to the Programme with objective to support human development and governance to be implemented in 2009 – 2011. The selected organisations were: Fundemos, Instituto Nicaragüense de Desarrollo (INDE), Voces Vitales, Fundación Libros para Niños, Fe y Alegría, Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y de Políticas Públicas (IEEPP), and Central American University (UCA).

The Programme is designed in order to stimulate the capabilities of the youth and female heads of household to initiate and consolidate their own economic activities, search partners,

build mutual help networks, establish their agendas and negotiate them with the authorities. On the other hand, the Programme aims to bring these groups, and the ordinary citizen in general, closer to the media agendas. With this objective, resources are assigned to expand the educative supply for journalists, to professionalization of empirical journalists and facilitating the links between the journalists, media, universities, civil society organisations and networks.

The purpose of the Programme is to develop innovative and exemplary actions and disseminate them widely through national and local media. Similarly, the aim is that the media, without abandoning their watchdog role, broadens their agenda with reportages about different social groups, of their needs and problems, options and proposals, as well as success stories.

The Programme began with common funding by Denmark, Sweden, Finland and United Kingdom. The funds were channelled through Denmark that functioned as lead donor during the first year and half of the Programme. Due to withdrawal of other donors, Finland decided to increment its share of funding for one additional year, in order to guarantee greater impact and sustainability of initiated efforts.

Development objective:

Development and democratic governance capacities strengthened to increase equity and general wellbeing in Nicaragua.

Strategy:

- Strengthen capacities and interactions among local actors to generate proposals and influence local and national decisions and public policies
- Strengthen the work of the media and their alliances with the social actors to improve public administration oversight and promote the exercise of citizenship.

Results:

1. Increased sense of self-effectiveness of youths and female heads of household through planning and implementation of their own economic activities, and constructing of their political and economic agendas.

Implemented by: Instituto Nicaragüense de Desarrollo (INDE), Programa Voces Vitales

Some key Indicators:

- INDE Junior is a member of COSEP (Supreme Council of Private Enterprises).
- Priorities of youth enter into the COSEP agenda, in the INJUVE (Nicaraguan Youth Institute) plans, and the real plans of the government.
- Youth participating in media programmes to make themselves heard about the situation they face and to promote the fulfilment of the National Youth Policy.

- Increased participation of youth in municipal and departmental spaces for exercising economic, political, and social influence.
 - The National Youth Policy is revised and functioning in coordination with INJUVE.
A system for statistical follow-up of youth entrepreneurship is created and implemented nationally.
2. Increased exercise of social dialogue and channels of interaction for youth and women at municipal level.

Implemented by: FUNDEMOS

Indicators:

- Municipal Investment Plans increase allocations for issues on the agendas of women and youth.
 - 80% of the Municipal Agendas for Youth that participate in the Project are put into the Municipal Public Agenda.
 - 80% of the women that are part of the Project have an influence on municipal policies.
 - 80% of the results from the social audit process are presented to the municipal government in order to strengthen the public-private dialogue.
3. Increased practices and tools for active citizenship

Implemented by: Fundación Libros para los Niños, Fe y Alegría Nicaragua

Indicators:

- 40% of the participants of the Programme have repeated in their communities creative-investigative-educative teaching initiatives.
 - 80% of the education centres that participated have incorporated and maintain at their centre alternative resources in their teaching activities.
4. Increased capacities, functions and links of media with social actors

Implemented by: Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro (the first year of the programme), Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y de Políticas Públicas (IEPP), Universidad Centroamericana (UCA)

Indicators:

- Number of national or local media that give space to works of investigative journalism.
- Number of investigative journalism works that report on and document undue behaviours and possible abuses of power.
- Percentage of issues prioritised on the citizen agendas that are picked up and covered by the different media.

- Number of works of civic journalism published in the national and local media.

Programme Budget (USD – indicative amounts):

DONOR	2009 - 2010	2011 - 2012
Denmark	1 850 000	
Sweden	550 000	
UK	1 120 000	
Finland	560 000	1 000 000
TOTAL	4 080 000	1 000 000

Brief presentation of each partner of the Programme:

Grupo FUNDEMOS was founded in 1991 with an objective to strengthen the democratic governance, civil society participation and rule of law. In the beginning the foundation was specialised in capacity building of political parties, syndicate leaders and civil society. More recently it has specialised in social auditing, in capacity building of civil society organisations, municipal governments and youth and women’s networks. As part of “Life in Democracy Programme” FUNDEMOS implements the sub-component on social dialogue between local authorities and youth and women’s groups. Fundemos also administrates the funds of Social Actors component (implemented by INDE, Voces Vitales, Libros para Niños and Fe y Alegría). Other projects have been financed by Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany USAID and Multidonor Fund for Democratic Governance.

INDE was founded in 1963 by a group of private sector entrepreneurs in order to promote integral national development. The Young Entrepreneurs’ Programme of INDE was set up with support by the Embassy of USA with a purpose to train secondary school students in entrepreneurship providing them tools and capabilities to facilitate their access to working life, to have alternative life options and to contribute to formation of new entrepreneurial initiatives.

Voces Vitales is a global network that was created in 1997 by Hillary Clinton and Madeleine Albright to promote empowerment of young women in fields of political participation, economic development and human rights. The network is functioning in over 150 countries. The Nicaraguan section of Voces Vitales has been working since 2009 beginning as a programme of Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro. The main activities include knowledge transfers from experienced and successful entrepreneur women to young women who are beginning their careers. Other funding has been provided by Denmark, Sweden, UK, USAID, GIZ, Walmart Technoserve, among others.

Fundación Libros para Niños (FLPN) has been working since 1993 with objective to contribute to an integral development of children, especially in the most unprotected sectors. This is done

through promotion of reading amongst children. FLPN has promoted children's literature, established libraries for children and so called "story corners" with community support.

Fe y Alegría was founded in 1955 in Venezuela as a jesuit organisation. The Nicaraguan section is founded in 1971. Fe y Alegría's principal objective is to provide integral and quality education to the impoverished and excluded sectors in order to contribute to sustainable development of the country.

IEEPP was founded in 2004 with a mission to monitor and give technical assistance in formulation, monitoring and evaluation of security policies. In 2007 its thematical scope was widened to analysis of transparency of public budgets, and in 2010 to analysis of social inclusion, especially in the fields of education and health with a focus on children, youth and women. As part of "Life in Democracy" Programme, IEEPP implements a fund for investigative journalism. During 2009 – 2012 IEEPP has received institutional support from the Governments of Denmark and Finland, and additionally project support from European Union, Multidonor Fund for Democratic Governance, National Endowment for Democracy, Christian Aid, Open Society Foundation, Save the Children.

Central American University (UCA) was founded 50 years ago as a jesuit education institution. The communication school of UCA is the oldest one in its field in Nicaragua, and most of the nicaraguan journalists got their degree in this University. UCA focuses its goals on high quality education in order to contribute to the national development. As part of the "Life in Democracy Programme", UCA implements several activities: a specialized training system in investigative journalism, a media observatory, a journalist team dedicated to promote civic information among the media, a local radio network and a journalism award. UCA started implementing an investigative journalism programme in 2003 with institutional support from the Government of Norway.

Fundación Violeta Barrios de Chamorro was founded in 1990s, with an objective to strengthen the freedom of press and stimulate responsible, constructive and free dialogue on issues related to national development. Main activities are related to capacity building in journalism and leadership.

2. Rationale, purpose and objectives of the evaluation

Rationale and purpose: The funding agreements between the MFA and the organisations of "Life in Democracy" Programme will finish in September 2012. This evaluation helps to assess the results at the completion stage of the Programme and gives inputs for considering under similar conditions the relevance of this type of assistance in which several civil society organisations are grouped together under one programme in order to search synergies and greater development impact. Especially valuable it is to have external opinion on effectiveness, impact and sustainability, as well as conditions required by this kind of aid modality.

One of the main objectives of the evaluation is to analyse whether the programmatic approach (i.e. organizations working under same programme and with common results) has resulted in better efficiency, results and impact compared to modality of individual projects, in which the organisations may have more independence as they can concentrate exclusively in their own priorities. In this sense, the success of collaboration and that of common funds administration should be assessed. Also the selection of the organisations should be taken into account. It is of interest to both donor and the partner organisations to learn the principal lessons and recommendations to develop the instrument.

It is expected that the evaluation will provide concrete and strategic recommendations to donors in how to support the Nicaraguan Civil Society effectively and sustainably. Also recommendations to Nicaraguan CSOs in relation to effectiveness and impact of work in fields of governance and human rights in Nicaragua are expected.

Use of the results: The results of this evaluation are to be used in the first place by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and the Embassy of Finland in Managua. They will serve to assess the recent development cooperation in Nicaragua, and it gives inputs for considering possible future cooperation in Nicaragua as well as in other contexts. The evaluation is equally important to the partner organisations as it provides valuable external opinion and recommendations related to their strategies and their implementation. Finally, the evaluation will benefit other donors supporting Nicaraguan civil society.

3. Participation and partnership as an approach to the final evaluation

This evaluation has two main audiences: Finland and other donors who are interested to find effective and sustainable ways to support civil society in general and particularly in the fields of governance and human rights; and civil society organizations which are interested to develop their management and operation. In this sense, it is essential to involve the key stakeholders closely in the evaluation process. These terms of reference have been prepared by the Embassy of Finland, but also have been reviewed by the organizations. Although the Embassy of Finland is the main client of this evaluation, in the field phase of the evaluation it is of fundamental importance to ensure sufficient time for each organization to present their views. Given the political polarization of Nicaraguan society especially in politically sensitive issues that are the emphasis of the work of the organizations supported, it is equally important to ensure sufficient time and effort to interview or otherwise take into account the different sectors of the society. This includes the central and local governments, the private sector, other civil society organizations, representatives of the media, academia and other donors.

4. Scope of the final evaluation

Time span: 2009 - 2012

Stakeholder groups:

The supported organisations themselves. Each organization has its main office in Managua (Fundación Libros para Niños in Diriamba).

Target groups:

- Municipal Governments: Granada, Matiguas, Río Blanco, La Trinidad, Boaco, Santa Lucía, Villa Sandino, Santo Tomás, Acoyapa, San Nicolás.
- Media: Confidencial, La Prensa, El Nuevo Diario, Local Radio and TV Stations. UCA has supported a network of local radio stations located in Bilwi, Bluefields, Matagalpa, Camoapa, Chinandega, Bocana De Paiwas, Nandaime and Managua.

- State institutions: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, Ministry of Education, Institute for Youth (INJUVE), Institute for Women (INIM)
- Other Civil Society Organisations and private sector: COSEP, Coordinadora Civil, Federación de ONGs, Red de Desarrollo Local, Red de Mujeres Chontaleñas
- Youth and women's groups in the municipalities of: Granada, Matiguas, Río Blanco, La Trinidad, Boaco, Santa Lucía, Villa Sandino, Santo Tomás, Acoyapa, San Nicolás. Juigalpa, Puerto Cabezas, Bluefields, Masaya, Estelí, Ocotal y Matagalpa.
- Participants (youth) of study centres of Fe y Alegría and citizens involved in the activities of Fundación Libros para Niños in the municipalities of: Estelí, Matagalpa, Mateare, León, Somotillo, Ciudad Sandino y Managua.

Donors

Embassy of Finland

DANIDA (the lead donor during the first years)

SIDA (participated in the Programme in the beginning)

DFID ((participated in the Programme in the beginning)

Delegation of European Union (coordinates a group of donors supporting civil society)

Embassy of Germany (lead donor in Basket Fund for Democratic Governance)/IBIS

USAID (significant donor in Nicaragua)

SDC (significant European donor)

UNDP, UNFPA (significant actors in empowerment of women and youth)

5. Issues to be addressed and evaluation questions

5.1. Cross-cutting objectives and evaluation questions

A particular emphasis in this evaluation should be placed in gender and social equality, human rights and easily marginalised groups and governance issues. In case of this particular programme these are not only cross-cutting issues, but among the principal development objectives. Environmental vulnerability, climate change and disaster risk issues should be taken into account but not emphasised as their relevance in this Programme is minor.

HIV/AIDS is not a major development challenge in Nicaragua, so it is not necessary to be in focus of the evaluation.

Evaluation questions on the cross-cutting objectives

- Was adequate and appropriately disaggregated baseline data available on the cross-cutting objectives for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?
- Were adequate resources and expertise allocated for implementation that promoted cross-cutting objectives?
- Were cross-cutting objectives systematically and explicitly integrated into programme implementation, monitoring and reporting?

5.2. Evaluation criteria and evaluation questions

The **principal objectives** of the evaluation are to analyse the **relevance** of the Programme and functioning and role of each organisation from point of view of both national context and Finland's development cooperation policy, to provide an evidence-based **impact** analysis of the Programme, in spite of the relatively short implementing period, i.e. to which degree the Programme succeeded in its goals to empower women and youth of their own development and improving the role of media in promoting the exercise of citizenship and does this reflect in strengthened human development and democratic governance capacities to increase equity and general wellbeing in Nicaragua. Also the **sustainability** of the activities and functioning of the Programme, as well as those of each organisation and of the results they have achieved is of special interest. Furthermore, the evaluation should provide evidence and analysis on the **efficiency and effectiveness** of the Programme and of each organisation in results based management. It should be analysed whether the programmatic approach (i.e. organizations working under same programme and with common results) has resulted in better efficiency, results and impact compared to modality of individual projects. Alongside the organisations, also the role of the Government of Finland and the Embassy of Finland in Managua as donor and partner will be analysed.

Relevance

Relevance refers to the extent to which the objectives of the programme are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and Finland's policies.

Problems, needs

- Are the objectives and achievements of the programme still consistent with the needs and priorities of the stakeholders, including the final beneficiaries?
- Are the organisations selected to the Programme the most relevant ones considering the objectives to be achieved and the national context?

Policy priorities

- Are the objectives and achievements of the Programme consistent with the policies of the partner country?
- Are the objectives of the Programme consistent with Finland's development policy?
- Has the situation changed since the approval of the programme?

Efficiency

The efficiency of a programme is defined by how well the various activities transformed the available resources into the intended results in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness. Comparison should be made against what was planned.

Value for money

- How well did the activities transform the available resources into the intended outputs/results, in terms of quantity, quality and time?
- Can the costs of the programme be justified by the results?
- Were the donor contributions provided as planned?

Development effectiveness

Effectiveness describes if the results have furthered the achievement of the objective of the programme. The evaluation is made against the related indicators.

Achievement of immediate benefits

- To what extent did the Programme achieve its purpose?
- How are the results/outputs applied by the beneficiaries and other intended stakeholders?
- Did behavioral patterns change as planned in the stakeholder groups?
- Quality of capacity building?

Development impact

Impact describes how the programme has succeeded in the attainment of its overall objective, i.e. targeted impact for its beneficiaries. The evaluation is made against the related indicators.

Achievement of wider benefits

- What is the overall impact of the programme, intended and unintended, long term and short term, positive and negative?
- Are the results and the programme purpose making a contribution towards improved development and democratic governance capacities, and improving equity and well-being in the society?
- Do the indicators for the overall objective show that the intended changes have started to take place? In whose lives are the governance and human rights impacts starting to make a difference?
- Did the organisations contribute to accountability relationships and collaboration between state and non state actors?

Sustainability

Sustainability can be described in this case as the degree to which the benefits produced by the Programme are expected to continue after the external support has come to an end.

Continuation of the achieved benefits

- What are the possible factors that enhance or inhibit sustainability, including ownership/commitment, economic/financial, institutional, technical, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability aspects?
- Are the benefits produced by the programme likely to be maintained after the termination of external support?
- Who is to take over the responsibility of financing the activities, or have they become self-sustaining?

Has the Programme built the capacity of the beneficiaries in a way that can eventually lead to a full self-sustaining activity level?

Programme management and administrative arrangements

Sound management

- What was the quality of work planning, monitoring and reporting incl. use of indicators, resource and personnel management, financial management, cooperation and communication between stakeholders?
- Were important assumptions identified? Were risks appropriately managed, including flexible adaptation to unforeseen situations?

Aid effectiveness (Effectiveness of aid management and delivery)

- The degree of complementarity between the national development plans and political agenda and those of the CSO's?
- Existence of alliances between the CSO's themselves and between the CSO's and public institutions? has there been improvement?

- The benefits of the programmatic approach (i.e. organizations working under same programme and with common results)? Has it resulted in better efficiency, results and impact compared to modality of individual projects? The quality of coordination between different organisations?
- Accountability and transparency of CSO’s regarding their activities? Has there been improvement?

Finnish value added

- What was the added value provided by the Finnish support?
- What are the distinctive features of Finland’s support?

6. Methodology

The choice of methodology will be left to the tenderer to propose. It is expected, however, that multiple methodologies are used, both quantitative and qualitative. Validation of results must be done through multiple sources. No single statements should be taken as a general outcome and evidence should always be provided for statements.

In the methodology chapter of proposal the following should be included:

- reports, documents, materials to be analysed during the desk study phase;
- the data collection tools that will be used, including any planned surveys, questionnaires, field observations, reference to administrative records and management reports, key interviews, etc;
- data analysis methodologies to be applied.

The methodology will be developed during the inception phase by producing an evaluation matrix including a detailed description of the methodology to be applied by the evaluators.

7. The evaluation process and time schedule

It is expected that the evaluation will be completed in 13 weeks, from the signing of the contract, according to the following indicative schedule. The evaluation field missions of both programmes (Life in Democracy and Institutional Support Programme) are timed for September 2012, in order to guarantee better conditions for evaluations before the municipal elections of November.

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8	WEEK 9	WEEK 10	WEEK 11	WEEK 12	WEEK 13
Desk study, field trip preparation and inception reports (of both evaluations)	█	█											
Approval of the inception reports by MFA		█	█	█									
Travel to Nicaragua				█									
Field Trip to Nicaragua: Managua (briefing and de-briefing at the Embassy, meetings with all the organisations, other donors, government and non state actors), municipal visits.				█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Travel								█					
Presentation of the findings in the MFA									█				
Draft final reports										█	█	█	█
Comments of the MFA											█	█	█
Final report													█

8. Reporting

The evaluation team must submit the following deliverables, separate for each evaluation (i.e. for each Terms of Reference), all in English and the final report and presentation also in Spanish:

➤ **Inception report**

The desk study results are included in the inception report as a concise analysis of the policies, guidelines, and other documents studied for the evaluation. The Inception report must also contain a plan for the field study, i.e. what kind of questions need to be clarified by interviews, who will be interviewed in the Ministry and in the Embassy, who will be interviewed in the partner organisations and in the field, outline of the questions to be asked in the interviews etc.

The Inception report must include detailed work methodologies, a work plan and detailed division of labour within the evaluation team, list of most important meetings and interviews (including questions), detailed evaluation questions linked to the evaluation criteria in an evaluation matrix, reporting plans including proposals for tables of contents of the reports.

➤ **Presentation on the field findings**

Presentation on the field findings must be given in the Embassy of Finland in Managua and in the MFA.

➤ **Draft final report**

Draft final report amalgamates the desk study and the field findings. The evaluation report presents findings, conclusions based on evidence, recommendations and lessons separately and with a clear logical distinction between them and integrating the evaluation results on cross-cutting objectives.

The MFA and the relevant stakeholders will submit comments on the draft final report to the consultant. The comments will be submitted in 1 ½ weeks after receiving the draft report. The draft final report is commented only once. The commentary round is only to correct misunderstandings and possible mistakes, not to rewrite the report.

➤ **Final report**

The final report must be submitted 10 days after receiving the comments. The final report must follow the report outlines agreed on during the inception phase.

➤ **Presentation on the evaluation findings**

The evaluation team is expected to give a PowerPoint supported presentation on the evaluation findings, both English and Spanish versions.

The reports should be organized logically according to the dimensions detailed in the chapter on evaluation criterias and they should be written in clear and concise language. Each report is subjected to specific approval. The evaluation team is able to move to the next phase only after receiving a written statement of acceptance by the MFA.

9. Expertise required

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is looking for an experienced evaluation team. Preference is given to experience from developing and/or transition economy countries, preferably from various contexts, including Central America. References from the last 15 years are regarded as the most relevant. Team Leader shall have fluency in written and spoken English. Other proposed persons of the Team(s) shall have fluency in Spanish and working knowledge of English.

The evaluation task of the programme “Life in Democracy” suits well to 2 experts, of whom one is named Team Leader. In search of mutual contributions between the two evaluations (“Life in Democracy” and “Institutional Support to Civil Society Organizations” –programmes), the Team Leader should be the same person in both of them. It is possible also to combine the tasks of expert in Women’s and Youth empowerment with those of the experts of the evaluation of “Institutional Support to Civil Society Organisations in Nicaragua” provided that the qualifications are met in the same person. In case of combination of the tasks, the roles of each expert and the division of tasks between them must be clearly defined.

Expertise areas:

1. Team Leader, International (0-30 points)

- Proven solid experience in planning, implementing, monitoring or evaluation of civil society support programmes, especially focused on good governance and human rights. (0-15 points)
- Proven experience as a Team Leader in development cooperation evaluations. (0-12 points)
- Proven understanding of development questions, knowledge of Finland’s development cooperation policy is considered as an advantage. (0-3 points)

2. Women’s and Youth empowerment, International or National (0-20 points)

- Proven, solid experience in planning, implementation and/or evaluation of development programmes related to women’s or youth economic and political participation in developing or transition countries, preferably including Central America. (0-15 points)
- Proven experience in planning, implementation and/or evaluation of NGO projects (0-5 points)

Team as a whole (0-20 points)

- Understanding of Central American political contexts (0-5 points)
- Experience of the whole Team(s) in planning, monitoring and evaluation of development interventions with Project Cycle Management (PCM) and Logical Framework Approach (LFA) approaches, preference is given on participatory planning (0-5 points)
- Team(s)’s education in addition to the minimum requirements (0-3 points)
- Team’s language capabilities in addition to the minimum requirements, Finnish is deemed as an asset. (0-2 points)

- Experience in mainstreaming cross-cutting objectives (gender and social equality, climate sustainability) in project/programme evaluation, planning or monitoring (0-5 points)

10. Budget

A lump sum of 120.000 Euro in total is budgeted for the implementation of both evaluations: “Life in Democracy Civil Society support program” and “Institutional support to civil society organizations “.

11. Mandate

The evaluation team is entitled and expected to discuss matters relevant to this evaluation with pertinent persons and organizations. However, it is not authorized to make any commitments on behalf of the Government of Finland.

ANNEXES:

1. OECD/DAC and EU quality standards for evaluations
2. Outline of Evaluation Report