



Evaluation of the Strategy for Norway's Culture and Sports Cooperation with Countries in the South Case Country Nicaragua

Report 3/2011 – Study



Norad

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Evaluation of the Strategy for Norway's Culture and Sports Cooperation with Countries in the South

**Case Country Nicaragua
July 2011**

Nordic Consulting Group

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Preface

The Strategy for Norway's culture and sports co-operation with countries in the South covers the period 2006-2015, and it is stated in the Strategy that it "will be evaluated and, if necessary, modified in 2010".

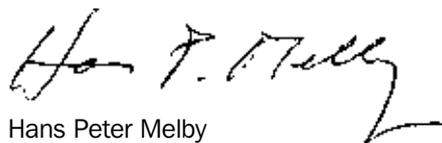
The evaluation started in December 2010. It is the second evaluation commissioned by the Evaluation Department that specifically covers Norwegian support in the cultural sector. The first one was the Evaluation of Norwegian Support to the Protection of Cultural Heritage, that was carried out in 2008 and 2009.

Internationally, there seems to be a lack of independent comprehensive evaluations in culture and sports, in particular the latter. The present evaluation thus deals with an area that has not as yet been covered comprehensively with great frequency, even if there are a larger number of program and project evaluations – more in culture than in sports. We have not identified a previous broad evaluation that covers support in both the cultural and the sports sector.

We hope that the main evaluation report provides useful answers as to how the Strategy should be executed in the years to come, and how it may possibly be modified. In five supplementary reports the evaluation also gives information about specific projects and programs in the case countries India, Mozambique, Nicaragua, the Palestinian Area and Zimbabwe. Altogether, 40 projects have been analysed, with emphasis on cost efficiency, sustainability and gender equality in most cases. For the period of this evaluation, 2006-2009, 850 million NOK were allocated to culture and sports in 48 different countries.

The main report and the five country reports, written in English, are available electronically and in printed versions. In addition, the reports regarding Mozambique, Nicaragua and the Palestinian Area will be available electronically in Portuguese, Spanish and Arabic respectively.

The evaluation has been carried out by Nordic Consulting Group A.S., Oslo, in collaboration with Andante – tools for thinking AB from Sweden.



Hans Peter Melby
Acting Director of Evaluation

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List of abbreviations

AECID	Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (Spanish International Development Cooperation Agency)
APC	Asociación de Promotores de la Cultura (Association of Culture Promoters)
ASCAN	Asociación de Cantautores Nicaragüenses (Association of Nicaraguan Singers-Songwriters)
CCEN	Centro Cultural de España en Nicaragua (Spanish Cultural Center in Nicaragua)
CCS	Comité de Coordinación y Seguimiento (Coordination and Follow up Committee)
CNE	Centro Nicaragüense de Escritores (Nicaraguan Center for Writers)
COSUDE	Swiss Agency for Development
FLPN	Fundación Libros para Niños (Foundation Books for Children)
FNC	Foro Nicaragüense de Cultura (Nicaraguan Forum for Culture)
FONMUNIC	Fondo Histórico Documental de la Música Nicaragüense (Historic Document Fund of Nicaraguan Music)
FUNDEMOS	Grupo para la Gobernabilidad Democrática y Participativa.
GRUN	Gobierno de Reconciliación y Unidad Nacional (Government of Reconciliation and National Unity of Nicaragua)
ILO	International Labour Organization
INC	Instituto Nacional de la Cultura (National Institute for Culture)
INCH	Instituto Nicaragüense de Cultura Hispánica (Nicaraguan Institute of Hispanic Culture)
INPYME	Instituto Nicaragüense de Pequeñas y Medianas Empresas (Nicaraguan Institute of Small and Medium Enterprises)
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	Non-governmental organization
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
NWA	Norwegian Writers Association
OPC	Office of Program Coordination
PACNIC	Programa de Apoyo a la Cultura Nicaraguense (Program of Support to Nicaraguan Culture)
PRORURAL	Programa de Desarrollo Rural (Rural Development Program)
RAAN	Region Autonoma del Atlantico Norte (Autonomous Region of the Atlantic North)
RAAS	Region Autonoma del Atlantico Sur (Autonomous Region of the Atlantic South)

UCA	Universidad Centroamericana (Central American University)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNI	Universidad Nacional de Ingeniería (National University of Engineering)
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UPOLI	Universidad Politécnica (Polytechnic University)
WTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization

Executive Summary



Executive summary

Background

This report forms part of the evaluation of the Strategy for Norway's Culture and Sports Cooperation with Countries in the South. Nicaragua was one of the countries to be visited as part of the evaluation process. The country studies are not project evaluations, but seek to synthesize information from selected interventions – in the case of Nicaragua, all on-going interventions. The overall aim of the evaluation, to which this report will contribute, is to assess the relevance and impact of the Norwegian Strategy on culture and sports.

Norwegian funding to culture

Donor funding to cultural projects and programs started at a time when the Nicaraguan government drastically deprioritized the culture field. Despite the lack of governmental commitment, cultural activities were popular amongst the general population which had become accustomed to a diverse cultural program due to the importance and support that had been given to cultural activities during the revolutionary years in the 1980s.

The Norwegian support to culture and sport in Nicaragua is characterized by: first, no funding allocation to sport projects; second, all funding to culture projects and programs has been channelled through the embassy in Managua. The funding by Norway which dates back to the early 90's, was until 2008 channelled to a series of small projects with different implementing partners. In 2009, all implementing partners were brought together under one program: the Program for Support to Nicaraguan Culture (PACNIC).

The Program for Support to Nicaraguan Culture (PACNIC) served to continue funding the same implementing partners, but reduced the administrative costs at the embassy and increased the synergies between implementing partners locally. The program also aims to strengthen national capacity both in terms of man power/skills and in terms of infrastructure. The total allocation to culture is approximately 4.5 Million NOK per year. Since 2009 all the funds available for culture have been disbursed to the PACNIC. The funds allocated to culture are primarily from the embassy's budget (3 Million NOK), but also from the regional budget (1.5 Million NOK). The whole budget allocation is a discretionary allocation decided upon locally, and not mandated by the ministry in Norway.

The evaluation

The Nicaragua country case study was two weeks long and undertaken by a team of local and international consultants. The first week was carried out by the local focal point alone. The local focal point and the international consultant conducted the second week of work in Nicaragua jointly. All projects identified in the database, which are currently funded, were focused upon during the visit. During the field visit managers of projects; Embassy, government and other donor representatives were interviewed, as were direct beneficiaries. The team has supplemented information gathered through key interviews, project documents, and some independent evaluations, and government documents.

Government and political implications

The Nicaraguan Institute of Culture (NIC), the governmental body in charge of culture sector activities nation-wide, is perennially underfunded and suffers from continual staff changes at the high management levels. This demonstrates both the low priority that is given to culture in this day and age, and that high government offices are likely victims of political meddling which has more to do with the individual goals of the executive than with ensuring a healthy national cultural program. The inability of the government to adequately support cultural activities and programs underscores the need for donor aid support.

The current political environment in Nicaragua threatens to substantially reduce donor aid to Nicaragua. This is likely to have a serious impact on the Norwegian program. While the PACNIC program was established in 2009, with a three year work-plan, and an intention for funding well beyond 2011, at the time of the field visit the future of the program was uncertain. Norway will be closing its embassy in Managua, ending a 30 year presence in the country, next July. This departure, which was announced late in 2010, is an affront to the long term strategy and commitment to culture by Norway.

Results

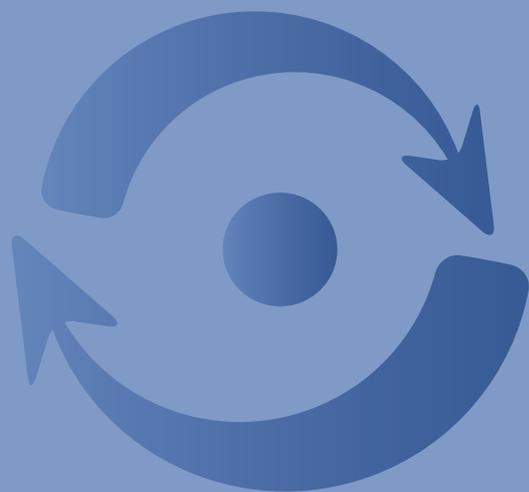
Overall the Norwegian culture portfolio gets a high score on the following aspects: strengthening institutional frameworks, fostering synergies, building capacities and in so doing increasing the likelihood for sustainability. The portfolio has also made some headway with projects that have the support of the economic livelihoods of the beneficiaries in mind. Lastly, the Norwegian efforts must be commended for their achievements in increasing the quality of cultural expression both at the local/amateur level with the teaching of music, dance and fine arts to children and youth in the provinces; and at the professional level in the field of literature by fostering competitions and publishing high quality works. At this time the Norwegian portfolio includes only very limited exchange efforts. This is largely attributed to the distance between Nicaragua and Norway, the costs of exchange and the language barrier. Similarly no sport project is currently being funded. Sport, we were told, was not a field that required imminent budgetary support and hence other fields have been prioritized.

At the time of this evaluation the portfolio included a single program. The program is an umbrella which encompasses previously funded projects and a number of new initiatives. The program includes work in the area of music, dance and fine arts (i.e., training of teachers and of students); promotion of literature (i.e., established writers, identification of new talent, publishing and dissemination of works); institution building (i.e., government support); and the restoration of cultural venues (i.e., theatre, establishment of Ibsen garden, – a venue which will be used for small events).

The use of the Strategy

The Strategy for sports and culture was not known by the Nicaraguan implementing partners. While the Strategy is well known to the Embassy, it has not been used by any of the implementing partners in the design process of their respective projects. However, the individual projects and by extension the program are de facto in line with key features of the Strategy.

Main Report



1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is based on one of the five country studies conducted in the framework of the Evaluation of the *Strategy for Norway's Culture and Sports Cooperation with Countries in the South*, launched in August 2005. The evaluation aims to examine:

- The Strategy¹ itself and the process through which it was created.
- The implementation of the Strategy.
- The results as well as the detailed implementation process at project level through visits to five countries and a sample of projects in each country.

Based on the above the evaluation aims to present findings, conclusions and recommendations regarding the continuation and possible modification of the Strategy.

Five countries were selected by Norad to be visited and serve as country cases for the evaluation. Nicaragua was one of the five countries selected to be a country study. The objective of the country studies is to synthesize information from case studies of specific interventions/projects. In Nicaragua the interventions funded by Norway were examined within the local political and socio-economic context in order to assess the relevance and impact of the Norwegian Strategy for Culture and Sports at the local level. The main findings from the Nicaragua case study are presented here.

Nicaragua has received funding from Norway in the field of culture since 1994. Two events preceded Norwegian funding to Nicaragua in the culture field: first, the 1994 meeting between writers in Oslo, where the relationship between Nicaraguan Center for Writers (Centro Nicaragüense de Escritores-CNE) and the Norwegian Writers Association (NWA) was born; second, the birth of the initiative to support the edition and distribution of work by Nicaraguan writers in Nicaragua which was initiated in 1995. Since then cooperation between the two countries has expanded to other genres and evolved to the current cooperation framework, which includes the participation of civil society in the culture field and relevant governmental bodies.

Norwegian cooperation in Nicaragua has been characterized by long standing support to the same actors, for similar initiatives, expansion has generally meant a wider geographic coverage of projects, rather than the inclusion of additional actors. The focus on a limited number of players has allowed for the professionalization of products and processes. In 2009, prompted by the Norwegian embassy's wish to

1 The term 'Strategy' is capitalized throughout this report when reference is being made to the 'Strategy for Norway's Culture and Sport Cooperation with Countries in the South.'

consolidate its dealings with actors, and guided by the Embassy's interpretation of the Strategy, five (the 3 member organizations of the Music Consortium, the Foundation Books for Children (Fundación Libros para Niños-FLPN) and CNE) institutions which had previously received Norwegian funding became members of a joint program: Program of Support to Nicaraguan Culture (PACNIC). In this way they benefit from a joint administration, cooperation with other players in the culture field, a higher visibility in the cultural scene; and are more amenable to Norway by reducing the attention they require from the embassy; and meeting the embassy's need to streamline its beneficiary base. Aside from the above-mentioned members of PACNIC, who had a long-standing relationship with Norway, the Nicaraguan Institute of Culture² (INC), the national governmental entity in charge of the cultural sector, also joined PACNIC. The inclusion of the INC was a deliberate effort guided by the Embassy's action plan which in turn has been strongly influenced by the Strategy. Thus the inclusion of INC can be at least partially attributed to the Strategy. In addition to promoting inter-institutional collaboration and alliances Norway has also been distinct from other donors by focusing their funding on strengthening and developing national and local capacities, with a strong bias towards the youth, and the less favoured groups (i.e., low income areas) and territories (i.e., geographically distant areas which are hard to reach).

In the following pages, the findings from Nicaragua will be delved into in more depth. In addition to examining the usefulness, implementation and impact of Norway's Strategy in the Nicaraguan national context as well as of the projects that are implemented locally; the country study will also note how Norway's imminent and unexpected withdrawal from Nicaragua will affect the field of culture locally.

It is worth highlighting here that this report does not delve into the field of sport at all because Norway has never been involved in funding sport projects in Nicaragua. The only effort to include sports as part of the Norwegian embassy's portfolio was made in relation to trying to include Nicaragua in the Norway Cup. This effort, the embassy explained, was not successful as the Nicaraguan ad hoc and informal modus operandi of sport activities did not meet the minimum requirement established by the Norway Cup. Furthermore, the embassy stressed that sport projects in Nicaragua do not require financial support in the way that culture does.

1.2 Conducting the visit

The country study took place between February 28th and March 12th, 2011. The work was commenced (first week) by Myrna Moncada, the country study focal point, and was concluded (second week) jointly with Ananda S. Millard. Myrna Moncada prepared the visit by contacting partner organisations and organising a schedule for visits/interviews. The embassy in Managua facilitated and organized 1.5 days of field visits. The evaluation team, an embassy representative, members of the organizations being visited as well as an evaluator who is currently conducting a project evaluation of the efforts funded by the Embassy locally participated in the field visit. Myrna Moncada also conducted a number of interviews during the week of February 28th – March 5th, prior to the arrival of Ananda S. Millard on March 6th.

2 The Institute of Culture has the equivalent authority as a Ministry.

Both evaluators have jointly conducted the data analysis and write-up of this report. At the end of the visit the evaluation team met with the Norwegian Embassy Counsellor and Project Officer in charge of culture for an informal de-brief and presentation of preliminary findings.

The evaluation team covered all seven projects funded during the evaluation period, which were identified in the evaluation database, and also made efforts to contextualize and understand work by UNESCO and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). Norway is not currently funding NPA work in the field of culture, UNESCO however, does receive donor funds directly from Norad part of which they funnel to the PACNIC project as their implementing partner's contribution to the program. Efforts to meet with other international NGOs were made, but said interview requests were refused on the grounds that the focus of the NGO was neither culture nor sport.

The evaluation team employed a number of data collection mechanisms. The principal tool for data collection was a series of key interviews with both individuals and groups (i.e., in the case of collaborative work between organizations). The principal respondents included management personnel from all projects, key embassy staff, representatives from other donor agencies/embassies, as well as beneficiaries, instructors of the music consortium and municipal authorities. A list of all respondents can be found in Annex 2. In addition a number of informal interviews were conducted with beneficiaries, staff working with projects, and observers at cultural events. These interviews were short and took place along-side cultural events.

Table 1. Projects Reviewed and Interviews by Categories

Stakeholder Categories	Number of Respondents
FUNDEMOS	1
National Institute for Culture (Government Ministry Level) (Instituto Nacional de la Cultura-INC)	1
Music Consortium: Association of Culture Promoters (Asociación de Promotores de la Cultura-APC) Historic Document Fund of Nicaraguan Music (Fondo Histórico Documental de la Música Nicaragüense-FONMINIC) Kinteto Group (Group of music teachers and band)	7
Nicaraguan Centre for Writers (Centro Nicaragüense de Escritores-CNE)	8
Foundation Books for Children (Fundación Libros para Niños-FLPN)	4
Nicaraguan Forum for Culture (Foro Nicaragüense de Cultura -FNC)	5
Children taking part in the FLPN mobile Library	Active interviews 6; observed and loosely interacted with +/-30
Youth and children taking part in the music programs organized by the Music Consortia	Active interviews 7; observed and loosely interacted with +/-30
Children taking part in visual arts projects in the program organized by PACNIC	Active interviews 4; observed and loosely interacted with +/-30
Adults taking part in the PACNIC Program (artists, teachers etc.)	Active interviews 7; observed and loosely interacted with +/-20
Totals	Interviewed 50 Interacted with 120 Total: 170

Data gathered through interviews was supplemented by document review. Documents examined include project documentation (i.e., plans, contracts, activity reports etc.); documentation produced by other donors, Nicaraguan government documents, as well as products from funded projects. A list of all documents reviewed is available in Annex 1. Web pages from partner organizations were consulted when available. Given the nature of the projects and the areas of interest for the local media, the media has paid comparatively little attention to cultural efforts funded by Norway in rural or low-income areas. Thus, news media proved to be a weak source of data for events which are not high profile.

Observation/field visits were an additional tool used to gather data. A number of events organized by the Music Consortia and FLPN were visited during the Country study. This allowed the evaluation team to observe first-hand how the projects are executed and received. While key interviews are the principal data source employed in this report, other data sources have proved useful in both contextualizing and elucidating information gained during interviews.

1.3 A note on reliability

The Nicaraguan country study benefitted from the limited number of projects which are funded locally. While efforts were made to meet as many respondents as possible, the extensive geographic coverage of the projects funded by Norway – a clear strength of the support – made it impossible for the evaluation team to visit more than a few examples of project/program implementation in the field. We visited for example, three FLPN reading corners (libraries in publicly accessible locations), of the total of sixteen reading corners nation-wide. Similarly, we attended three presentations (two music and one dance) which represented three municipalities, but it should be noted that the PACNIC program is being implemented in twelve municipalities nation-wide. Therefore, it is fair to say that despite our best efforts and the welcomed and extensive collaboration from the Embassy, we were only able to interview a small sample of stakeholders. Undoubtedly this was the biggest challenge for the evaluation team. One of the strengths of Norway's support in the field of culture – the focus on rural areas and disadvantaged populations – made the country study more difficult. However, since on the one hand the emphasis of the country studies is on how the Strategy has been and is being implemented, individual projects are not the sole unit of analysis. And on the other hand there is no reason for why the findings in other areas would have been different since the areas visited were chosen due to proximity and accessibility and not because they are seen as being more illustrious examples of the work by PACNIC. To this end while the observations and interviews in the field can strictly only reflect on the areas visited the shortcoming does not seriously threaten the validity of this country study.

The interview guidelines provided in the inception report were followed during the interview, and were in most cases, sent to respondents prior to the interview. In fact many respondents supplied the interview answers in writing at the time of the interview. This allowed the discussion during the interview to focus on aspects that the interview guide did not focus on in particular. There are both benefits and drawbacks to respondents being able to review interview guides. On the one hand it enables the respondent to prepare, but on the other it may serve to restrict the response given because respondents are influenced by the guide. The latter essentially limits the likelihood of random influences or influences on the response which arise during the interview itself. While it is not possible to validate each interview protocol (i.e., the protocol employed and factors which may have affected the single event) only corroborated data is employed in this report.

2. A review of culture and sports activities

2.1 Activities before 2005

The first two Norwegian funded agreements in the culture field were signed at the end of 1994: one between the NWA and the Nicaraguan Writers Center (Centro Nicaragüense de Escritores-CNE). This agreement was co-financed by the NWA and Norad. In the period between 1995 and 2005 five separate agreements between the partners were signed and funded by Norad. These agreements led to the creation of the CNE-NWA-NORAD Editorial Fund. The fund sponsored all genre of Nicaraguan literature with the objective of promoting cultural and national identity; public interest in literature, particularly among young students; and fostering cultural exchanges in the literary field between Norway and Nicaragua.³

The second funding agreement signed in 1994 was between Norad and the following organizations: Culture Promoters Association (Asociación de Promotores de la Cultura – APC), Association of Nicaraguan Singer-Songwriters (Asociación de Cantautores Nicaragüenses – ASCAN), Group Kinteto (Grupo de Cámara Kinteto), Historic Document Fund of Nicaraguan Music (Grupo de Fondo Histórico Documental de la Música Nicaragüense – FONMUNIC) and the National University of Engineering (Universidad Nacional de Ingeniería – UNI). These organizations founded the so-called “Music Plan” which had five components and whereby each organization was responsible for executing a single component of the plan. In the period between 1998 and 2005 after the initial funding agreements mentioned above had been successfully executed, two successive three-year funding agreements were signed between the above mentioned organizations and Norad.

However, starting in 1998 the organizations were no longer funded bilaterally, but rather as a Music Consortium. The institutions that made up the Music Consortium worked under a joint work plan, with APC administering the funds. This approach to funding was agreeable to the Embassy, as it appeared far more efficient than funding each agency separately. Due to numerous reasons, which are not all too clear to the evaluation team, ASCAN and UNI withdrew from the Music Consortium at the end of the first funding agreement, while the other three organizations remained in the Consortium and continue to carry out projects with Norwegian funding to date. The objective of the projects by the Music Consortium has always been to promote the study and historical knowledge of music; and foster education/capacity building and diffusion of Nicaraguan music, particularly among children and young people.

³ This section is based on an analysis of the end of project/program documents for the period. Archives of the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Managua.

Between 2003 and 2005, the Embassy funded a project championed by the Books for Children Foundation (Fundación Libros para Niños – FLPN). The project focused on the publishing, printing and dissemination of books to children and young people. The objective of the project was to promote reading and thought stimulation amongst the target population. An additional objective was the promotion of children’s literature.

In parallel to the above mentioned projects, Norway, through the Embassy, funded a large number of small initiatives such as films, book fairs and other activities whose goal or objectives are documented in the Embassy archive but are not readily available because the PTA document system was introduced later. The aforementioned small activities absorbed a large proportion of the funds available to the Embassy for culture projects. Additionally, small projects were administratively burdensome and difficult to monitor and assess. According to financial reports provided by the Embassy of Norway in Nicaragua between the years 1995 and 2004 an estimated 16 million NOK was disbursed to culture projects, 65% of which were allocated to small projects.

2.2 A portfolio analysis

An examination of the 2005–2011 portfolio clearly shows two phases in the funding modus operandi: 2006–2008 and 2009–2011.

2.2.1 Phase 1: 2006–2008

The first phase of the funding period 2006–2011 was marked by “business as usual”. Essentially, the Embassy continued to fund the same organizations, which were funded until 2005, for the same kind of projects and in the same way. In short, the Music Consortium composed by APC, FNC and Kinteto; FLPN and CNE continued to receive Norwegian donor funds for their individual programs based on individual project proposals. The following table illustrates the funding distribution of the Norwegian embassy culture portfolio for 2006–2008:

Table 2 Projects and Disbursement in the Years between 2006–2008

Agreement No.	Project Title	Organization	Grant (NOK)
NIC-02/308 and NIC-07/013	<i>Literature for Children</i>	FLPN	621,468.00 800,000.00
NIC-04/276	<i>Plan for the Development of Nicaraguan Arts, Phase IV,</i>	Consortium APC-FONMUNIC-Kinteto	3,430,000.00
NIC-05/034	<i>CNE Editorial Fund, Phase VI</i>	CNE	1,707,200.00
NIC-05/038 and NIC-07/022	<i>Project Support to the Coordination and Reinforcement of the Cultural Sector in Nicaragua</i>	FUNDEMOS and INC	1,100,00.00 250,000.00
NIC-05/017 and Addendum	<i>Pilot Theatre Training</i>	UPOLI	330,000.00 220,000.00
Total			8,458,668.00

Source: The agreement numbers mentioned on the far left column.⁴

⁴ The agreements mentioned in this table have also served as the source of information for this report in general.

During this phase the Music Consortium (APC, FNC and Kinteto), FLPN and CNE focused on expanding their geographic coverage and the type of activities they supported. For example, the Music Consortium came to include dance, painting and theatre in addition to music. For its part, the focus of the joint FUNDEMOS – INC Project was to strengthen existing mechanisms to encourage citizen participation in the cultural sector; including strengthening linkages between civil society and the public sector, building institutional capacity and restoring the physical infrastructure of the INC. UPOLI, the Polytechnic University, led a pilot project entitled *Theatre Training* which was developed in the framework of the Henrik Ibsen Centennial, as part of the Theatre Program of the Department of Culture of the Polytechnic University. The project appears to have succeeded in training beneficiaries in the field of theatre and disseminating Ibsen's work through numerous events organized in coordination with local authorities in different cities throughout the country.

2.2.2 Phase 2: 2009–2011

The second phase started in 2009 with the establishment of the Program of Support to Nicaraguan Culture – PACNIC. This initiative incorporated all funding to culture projects under a single program. UNESCO, through the LINK project (System of Local Autochthonous Knowledge), is also an implementing partner. The LINK project adds an important element of multiculturalism to the program. The LINK project is dedicated to documenting the cultural traditions, knowledge on livelihood and language of the Mayagna people who reside in the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve in the northeast of Nicaragua.

The PACNIC has a three year life span (2009–2011) and a total budgetary allocation from Norway of 13,100,000 NOK. The shift from individual projects to the PACNIC program means that all organizations receiving Norwegian funds apply for funds jointly, have a single program administration led by FUNDEMOS and report on progress made jointly. The establishment of the PACNIC effectively ended the funding of individual efforts and in so doing streamlined the administration of the funding for both the Embassy and the implementing partner. Additionally, the PACNIC drastically reduced the funding of single ad hoc events that did not fit into a larger plan. Between 1994 and 2005 almost 65% of Norwegian funding was allocated to single ad hoc events, today ad hoc events are funded by The Swiss Agency for Development (COSUDE). COSUDE is a minor partner to the PACNIC and in this capacity funded the program to the tune of US\$ 32,000 in 2009. The COSUDE funds are specially destined to cover costs of small/ad hoc cultural initiatives. The funds for small ad hoc initiatives disbursed by COSUDE are administered by FNC rather than by FUNDEMOS. While COSUDE's financial contribution is proportionally miniscule, the funding constitutes a step towards the harmonization and alignment of international cooperation efforts in the field of culture in Nicaragua. Notably the aforementioned coordination and alignment did not give way for an inter donor discussion on respective strategies.

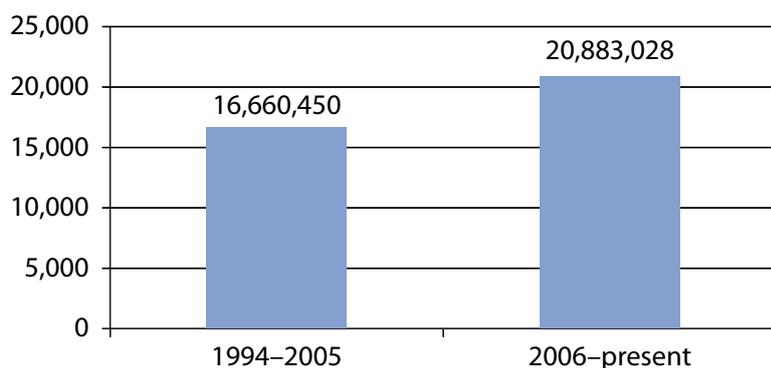
The process which shifted the funding models from single implementing partner institutions to the PACNIC was carried out as a joint exercise whereby all organizations which now form part of the program participated together with the Norwegian embassy as a facilitator, and external facilitators/experts as advisors, in a transition

and coalition/program-building workshop. The workshop aimed at ensuring that each partner agency clearly understood both its role and obligations. The initial effort to ensure that all member organizations to the PACNIC understood their roles seems to have paid off and while the building of a working successful cooperation takes years to fine tune, the general performance and output to date appears good. Aside from reducing administrative costs at the Embassy and within the participating organizations, the PACNIC has served to ensure a more coordinated approach to programming in the field of culture in Nicaragua by strengthening/building closer relationships between participating organizations. Simultaneously, the PACNIC has been instrumental in the development of national capacities in the field of culture. The latter is directly linked to the type of projects that are carried out under the umbrella of the PACNIC.

The sustained financial support by Norway to culture in Nicaragua, together with the creation of the PACNIC, has contributed to inducing a debate on more effective support mechanisms within and between some donor agencies and implementing partners alike (i.e., COSUDE, Spanish Cooperation (Agencia Española de Cooperación-AECID); Hivos, a Dutch NGO; Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). This discussion could in the future mature and give birth to actual operational changes in the way culture projects are conducted. However, Norway's sudden withdrawal from Nicaragua, due to be completed mid-2011, is likely to end the aforementioned debate as the debate itself is in an embryonic stage and has not yet gained sufficient momentum to continue without Norway's encouragement.

Between 1994 and 2005, Norway allocated a total of 16.6 Million NOK to cultural projects and programs in Nicaragua. From 2006 to date the funding allocation has been of almost 21 Million NOK. In short, there has been an increase in funding for culture albeit small. The more substantial change in funding has been the shift from small individual projects to one large program. The latter may have a considerable impact on the efficiency of the projects and hence, on the funding available for operational work. The funding distribution is noted in the graph below.

Figure 1: Funding by Norway before and after 2005



Source: NIC-0003 Financial Overview.

2.3 Strategic priorities

Norwegian development and humanitarian funding for Nicaragua started in 1987. The funding volume has always been in the mid-range. Norway's involvement in Nicaragua, and funding allocated to Nicaragua, has been characterized by being aligned with national governmental and sectorial plans/strategies. As a consequence, the vast majority of funding disbursed to projects and programs in Nicaragua have been allocated directly to government programs either at the national, regional or even local level.

The framework for cooperation between Norway and Nicaragua is governed by the priorities, targets and amount of funds determined by the 'Tri-Annual Plan for Use of Development Funds' for the Embassy in Nicaragua. The thematic priorities in the aforementioned plan have remained constant over the years. The current priorities that will be in effect until 2013 are:⁵

1. Sustainable management of natural resources, including support to clean and renewable energy.
2. Good governance including improvement of the situation for women.

While culture is mentioned in the Triennial Plan, it is not a thematic priority. This identifies a gap between the Strategy which clearly highlights the importance of culture and cultural programs, and frames culture within a rights-based approach, and as an essential element for sustainable development, and the priorities assigned to the Embassy in Nicaragua. It is notable, however, that while culture is not a key component of Norwegian strategy for Nicaraguan cooperation, the country action plan for the culture sector designed by the Embassy paid close attention to the strategy as a guiding and framing document. In addition there is a tangible incoherence between the Strategy on the one hand and the financial backing provided to execute said Strategy on the other hand. The funding allocation provided to the Norwegian Embassy in Nicaragua does not include a line item for cultural activities.⁶ The average funding allocation for donor aid to the embassy in Nicaragua has been/

⁵ Triennial Plan for Use of development funds, 2011–2013. Royal Norwegian Embassy in Managua.

⁶ Triennial Plan 2011–2013, Section 3.1; the items of the Regional Allocation items are: good governance and human rights, education, environment, climate and agriculture, budget support, energy/oil, gender and equity and HIV/AIDS, and "other sectors" (none specified).

is 65.5 million NOK annually (67.44 million NOK in 2009 and 60 million NOK from 2010 onwards).

Since 2009 the average funding allocation to culture projects in Nicaragua by Norway has been 4.5 million NOK per year: of this, 3 million NOK are from the Global Allocation to Culture budget line (chapter 160.73) and the remaining 1.5 million NOK comes from Norway's Regional Allocation for Latin America which is managed by Nicaragua. The head of the Cooperation department at the Embassy can be largely credited with the channelling of funds from the regional allocation to the culture projects/programs this decision has been based on his willingness to support, and appreciation for, the value of the culture initiatives in Nicaragua. Essentially, the funding of the projects/program has been largely dependent on individuals at the Embassy rather than supported by a strong policy/funding born at the ministerial level in Norway.

The discretionary modality of Norway's funding of culture projects in Nicaragua threatens the sustainability of the current program. Following the closure of the embassy later this year all support to Nicaragua will be managed from the Norwegian embassy in Guatemala; thus PACNIC is at the mercy of the decisions/priorities identified at the Norwegian Embassy in Guatemala. Given the rich and visible cultural sphere of Guatemala compared to the relatively invisible Nicaraguan culture, at least to third countries, some fear that the Embassy in Guatemala will not prioritize the Nicaraguan program despite its success thus far. One way to secure that the culture program in Nicaragua continues is to guarantee a culture line item in the budget of the Norwegian Embassy in Guatemala destined for Nicaragua. Such a line item would need to remain close to 4.5 million NOK a year in order for PACNIC's work to continue at the same output level.

Of course an argument could be made for having other donors assume responsibility over the PACNIC; however, this is an unlikely possibility since Norway is one of the few donors who funded culture projects to begin with and one of an even smaller group who funded work in rural areas of the country. Moreover, the difficulty in securing alternative funding for culture, as well as other areas, is expected to increase with the progressive withdrawal of donors from Nicaragua.⁷

2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

The current culture program PACNIC, and the projects which preceded its creation, have been subject to different mechanisms and instruments for monitoring and evaluation. The mechanisms currently in use are noted below:

- **Annual Meetings:** This mechanism has been in effect since 2009 and it is applicable to the program only. The annual meeting brings together the entire Committee which is composed of the coordinators of each participating institution and Embassy staff. The principal goals of the meeting are two-fold: to coordinate activities between members of the program, and to follow-up on activities conducted by individual members of the program. The latter includes assess-

⁷ The UK, Sweden and Denmark have already left and Austria will soon follow. The donor community will, by mid-year, be effectively reduced to Switzerland, Germany and Spain.

ment of general progress made, execution of plans, and a discussion of both the favourable and unfavourable factors that have affected any one work-plan. Based on the discussions at the meeting, decisions on adjustments to the work-plans are made. The outcome of the annual meeting is recorded in minutes, which are used to monitor the follow up of decisions taken.

- **Semi-Annual and Annual Activity and Financial Progress Reports:** The format for activity and financial reporting has, since the start of the program in 2009, been standardized. This means that all organizations participating in the program employ a common template. All reports are quality assured by the Office of Program Coordination (OPC). The OPC is managed by FUNDEMOS.
- **Final Physical-Financial Reports:** At the closing of each project cycle, and contingent on the quality of the work conducted, the embassy may choose to conduct additional checks on the organization before approving further support.
- **Annual Audits:** All accounts, both at the program level and at the implementing partner level, are audited on an annual basis.
- **Field Visits:** The embassy staff responsible for the program routinely visits program implementation events/sites.
- **Mid-Term and End of Project Evaluations:** Prior to the restructuring, from individual projects to the program, project evaluations were carried out. At the time of writing a program evaluation was on-going.

In general terms, the recommendations from previous evaluations have been used to guide shifts in the way Norway allocates funding and in the emphasis made by individual efforts. Specifically, project evaluations have led to: strengthening of the gender component within projects; including efforts to preserve historical documents; adding efforts to train music instructors; improving the quality of children's books; and lastly, but perhaps most significant, the shift from individual projects to the creation of the program (e.g., PACNIC). The latter was a recommendation made by the 2006 Evaluation of the Project Portfolio that was, as has been noted earlier in this document, put into effect in 2009.

Another, albeit informal, monitoring and evaluation mechanism are the reports on high profile individual events which are reported by mass media at national and local level (television, radio and written press). Mass media in Nicaragua regularly announces and/or comments on high profile cultural work, including those funded by Norway. In so doing the media has become an indirect source of monitoring of high profile events. For example – musical activities, writers' contests and book presentations carried out by CNE and/or FLPN get ample and regular media coverage. Notably the media does not report on the vast majority of events carried out in the framework of the PACNIC program because these are not regarded as high profile events.

3. Cultural policies and dynamics in Nicaragua

3.1 Current trends and developments in sports and culture

Nicaragua's cultural diversity stems from, on the one hand, the fusion of Spanish colonial heritage, indigenous roots and African influences; and on the other hand the rescuing of cultural practices/heritage of individual ethnic groups. This extreme diversity is observable in the languages spoken, religious and traditional practices, and folkloric tradition that are visible throughout the country. In some cases cultural identities and expression have been clearly amalgamated while in others the fusion is less drastic.

Historically the Nicaraguan government's attention to cultural programs has varied from close attention to almost complete disregard. The way culture has been treated by different governments has influenced both the way culture has come to be understood by the population at large, and how cultural programs have been implemented by local organizations/artists irrespective of governmental policies. Given the relative influence different governments have had in framing the current cultural scene, the different political periods and their respective perspectives on culture are briefly mentioned here.

The Sandinista Revolution in the 1980's marked a zenith for culture and cultural programs in Nicaragua. During this period Nicaragua experienced one of the largest state-sponsored and state-led cultural programs of its history. The support to cultural programming was executed under the banner 'democratization of culture' which aimed to reclaim the broader national cultural identity. This was an affront to the way the previous regime defined and promoted culture, which had a clear focus on western influenced fine arts and catered only to an upper class audience-oligarchy. In this vein, the revolutionary policy of the 1980s also envisaged the fostering of cultural expression as a way to sustain both the revolutionary identity and its ideals. Therefore, the cultural program supported by the Sandinista revolution was submersed in a strong revolutionary political ideology. Despite the clear politicization of cultural manifestations, the cultural program fostered the recognition and preservation of the different regional cultural identities/manifestations, facilitated the propagation of autochthonous cultural expressions, supported traditional arts and crafts, and invested in training/capacity building and education on a variety of art forms including libraries, cinema and so called sport institutes, as well as research on culture/cultural expression. Multiple art forms were promoted at cultural centres – the establishment of local unions charged with the propagation and preservation of cultural expression in all its forms was encouraged. The collection of efforts made by

the revolution led to the popularization of cultural programs, which in turn led to the appreciation of culture by most, if not all, segments of society.

The heyday of the 1980's came to an end in 1990. From 1990 to 2006 Nicaragua witnessed a steep decline in the importance/value given to cultural programs and expression. The period was marked by a reduction in overall public spending and a rise in the emphasis placed on poverty alleviation activities. In Nicaragua culture/culture programs were not then, and are not now, considered mechanisms to achieve/work towards poverty reduction. The drastic reduction of public spending on culture opened the space for the flourishing of programs funded through donor aid and championed by civil society organizations. In short, the donor community, in partnership with civil society, tried to fill the gaping hole that was left by the government in the field of cultural programming. However, despite all efforts the lack of an overarching strategic vision and guidance from the state⁸ and a weakened INC has resulted in a cultural sector which was fragmented, piece-meal and uncoordinated – where individual projects had varied degrees of success. During this period, the INC was allocated 0.075% of the national annual budget, underscoring the low importance given to the sector.

Since 2007 there has been a government policy for culture. However, this policy has not served to instigate a cultural hey-day similar to that experienced in the 1980s during the revolution. The Nicaraguan policy's overriding theme is the recognition, protection and promotion of Nicaraguan cultural diversity. The National policy conceives culture as a right which should be both recognized and stimulated, as well as a vehicle for the fostering of national dignity including national pride and the pursuit of national sovereignty (i.e., employing a sense of identity as a mechanism to underscore the importance of sovereignty). Along this vein, the policy emphasizes the need to strengthen national identity, particularly amongst the younger generation, which it notes as threatened by globalization trends and migration patterns. At an operational level, the policy emphasizes research and capacity building programs.

The Nicaraguan policy, unlike the Norwegian Strategy, does not explicitly link culture and development. Although it does mention that the interrelation between tourism and culture should be strengthened as a mechanism to increase the economic revenue generated by the country's cultural heritage (tangible and intangible), including natural resources which also form part of the national heritage. The document stresses the links between culture and environmental conservation and rehabilitation, and proposes that programs to raise awareness and foster citizen participation be established. A common thread noted throughout the policy is the need to decentralize cultural programs in favour of Municipalities taking the lead. It is noteworthy that the law governing the rights and obligations of Municipal governments calls for Municipalities to have their own local capacity in the fields of cultural program promotion and cultural heritage preservation. While the Law of Municipalities clearly outlines the areas that are to be decentralized and how, the policy on culture does not delineate a clear decentralization process.

⁸ Five-Year Culture Plans were formulated, but these were by and large not implemented.

The INC is aware that a shift in responsibilities for cultural programs and cultural heritage preservation from the central government to Municipal government will require that culture is prioritized in municipal budgets, development plans and annual operational plans. Essentially, significant financial resources and capacities must be transferred to municipalities. This transfer of funds and skills has not yet taken place, making the strategic goal and the aforementioned legislation unrealizable. In short, the Nicaraguan policy is a brief document which only provides very macro-level policy aims and a list of actions that should be undertaken, but which is not contextualized into any existing institutional framework that has the capacity, manpower or financing to operationalize the document. Similarly, the document is not framed within any current cultural trend. For its part, the National Human Development Plan (2009) omits culture almost completely. The only mention of culture in the document pertains to the Inter-Cultural Bilingual Education Program in the Caribbean Coast.

Despite the aforementioned policy and government implementation shortcomings, it is important to note that the policy on culture does not exist in a vacuum. Indeed, there are a number of pre-existing policy instruments; investments made by the public, private and donor sectors to the culture field; institutional frameworks and on-going processes in the culture field which could be used to further operationalize the goals of the national policy. Despite this, the years since 2007 have been categorized by projects which were often short term and with limited scope, as was mentioned in Chapter 2. A few exceptions to this apply – one is the Norwegian PAC-NIC which was initiated in 2009 and which has been the focus of much of this country case study as it emerged from the earlier more piece meal approach to funding. Second, the Spanish Cultural Centre in Nicaragua (Centro Cultural de España en Nicaragua-CCEN), which is currently being established and which emerged from the Nicaraguan Institute for Hispanic Culture (Instituto Nicaraguense de Cultura Hispanica-INCH). INCH continues to exist along-side the CCEN whereby CCEN will be the overarching umbrella institution. The goal of CCEN is to bring together multiple sub-projects and in so doing benefits from synergies between individually funded initiatives. Notably, however, the Norwegian and Spanish efforts differ substantially in that the former focuses primarily on rural and disadvantaged populations, while the latter targets the educated and wealthier urban population of Managua.

Overall, the period since 2007 has been typified by the support of donor funds and the creation/revival of local unions who have funded their own cultural initiatives, artists employing their trade as an income generating activity and in this way keeping their art form alive, and folklore utilized as a touristic attraction and perpetuated in this way. The period has been also characterized by the general neglect of some arts and crafts,⁹ audio-visual production, museums, archaeological preservation and cultural capacity building and research activities. There are at the moment, some limited efforts by external donors to support previously neglected fields. Despite the generalized neglect of the culture field by the national government in the last years, some key advances should not be overlooked. Chief among the

⁹ Crafts have been supported albeit not from a cultural perspective, but as a commercial export sector through the Nicaraguan Institute of Small and Medium Enterprises (INPYME).

advances made is the recognition of the importance of Caribbean culture in terms of the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual characteristics of the region. This recognition led to the implementation of the Statute of Autonomy of the Caribbean Region which although existing had not been applied. The statute of Autonomy is a framework for a number of laws protecting the culture of the Caribbean.¹⁰ Within the framework of the statute the *Regional Autonomous Education System* and the *Autonomous Health System*, were established. The legislation, together with the first mentioned system, fosters the preservation, research and recovery of the linguistic patrimonies of the indigenous and ethnic groups in the region. For its part, the autonomous health system fosters the work in the field of cultural practices which pertains to traditional medicine.

The future success of a Nicaraguan cultural program depends in large part on the government's ability to bring together key national institutions such as: the Nicaraguan Institute of Culture; National Library; National Theatre, Choir and Orchestra; National Archives and Museums; and national schools of Dance, Theatre, Music and Plastic Arts – with civil society and organizations which have played key roles in the promotion of culture¹¹ over the past two decades. While none of the aforementioned institutions/actors were consulted in the formulation of the current policy, there is a general consensus that the current government regards culture as higher in the priority list than previous administrations have. It is, however, a concern that culture and culture programs are politicized in favour of a political view rather than to safeguard national practices per se.

3.2 Bottlenecks and demand for development cooperation

Undoubtedly, the principal and most pressing bottleneck to the continuation of support to culture in Nicaragua is the imminent departure of many donors, including Norway which has been mentioned earlier. Lack of coordination between different donor agencies supporting the culture sector is also a problem. While some coordination has taken place, and discussions between donors on how to move forward in improving coordination has also been on the agenda, few substantial efforts have materialized.

The limited funds allocated to culture efforts/programs by the national government also threaten the future of the sector. The lack of government funding over the last two decades has also resulted in the deterioration of buildings which were previously restored with donor funds. This makes new commitments by donors more difficult to secure and increases the need for the national government to show their financial commitment to maintain/sustain initiatives that were initiated with donor funds. Another specific challenge that will be faced by the government is the need to produce bilingual educational material to meet the requirements established by the *Regional Autonomous Education System*; however, this will require substantial funding which does not appear to be available at this time.

¹⁰ For example, the law on *Official Use of the Languages by the Communities from Atlantic Coast*.

¹¹ These organizations include: the Nicaraguan Centre of Writers, Nicaraguan Forum for Culture, the Union of Plastic Artists, the Association of Composers and Singers-songwriters, Ortiz-Gurdian Foundation, Mejia Godoy Foundation, Camerata Bach, Nicaraguan Association of Cinematography, Books for Children Foundation, Nicaraguan Association of Women Writers, to mention a few.

The limited number of implementing partners in Nicaragua is an additional bottleneck. A low number of actors means on the one hand that projects and programs are potentially limited by the available expertise, and on the other hand that there is little competition in the sector. Also, partners locally are largely unaware of the Norwegian Strategy and therefore, are unable to frame their efforts within the context of the Strategy. This applies to both implementing partners who focus on culture projects only and implementing partners that are involved in development efforts more broadly. The shift between individual projects to PACNIC (e.g., all organizations under one umbrella) has not led to a more in-depth local understanding of the Norwegian Strategy. Notably while the earlier projects and currently the PACNIC are in line with the Strategy, it seems the Strategy did not seriously influence the way the work is conducted. The Embassy did conduct a meeting to explain the Strategy to partners, but this has not greatly influenced local partners and their work. As mentioned previously, the Embassy is well aware of the Strategy and has used it as a frame from which its efforts with PACNIC have emerged. Therefore while the partners are unaware of the Strategy the in-depth knowledge had by the Embassy does mean that the Strategy has an influence over projects albeit in an indirect way.

3.3 Activities of other donors and donor collaboration

Aside from Norway, the following donors are currently active in the field of culture: Spain and Switzerland. The Spanish efforts right now are primarily focused on the establishment of the Spanish Nicaraguan Cultural Centre (Centro Cultural Español Nicaragüense-CCEN). The centre aims to be a venue for exhibitions and events, as well as a resource centre. It is based in Managua and caters to the population of the capital, who are interested in artistic expression – particularly efforts which are contemporary and have a western influence.

Spain also channels funds through the UN system to support the execution of the Millennium Development Goals-MDGs. One of the largest cultural projects in Nicaragua today, but limited to the Caribbean Coast, is the “Cultural Recovery and Creative Productive Development on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua.” The project is a collaborative between six UN agencies (WTO, UNESCO, ILO, UNIDO, UNDP, UNICEF) and the Government of the North Atlantic Autonomous Region, the Regional Government of the South Atlantic Autonomous Region, the Nicaraguan Institute of Culture, and the Nicaraguan Institute of Tourism. The budgetary allocation to the project is of \$8,486,000 USD.

Switzerland’s efforts focus primarily on development projects where cultural expression is used as a means to attain a development goal. The Swiss as mentioned in chapter two also contribute to the PACNIC.

While we know that the United Kingdom, Denmark, Austria, Sweden, and Holland funded projects in the fields of culture and/or sport during the time period covered by this evaluation, we were unable to gather verifiable data on these donors because they had all left Nicaragua prior to the start of the field visit. While some of these donors still have active projects in the country they are in the phase out stage of their work and staff were not available to discuss their earlier work.

4. Achievement of objectives

4.1 Project performance in relation to objectives

The funding program, and hence analysis, is presented in this chapter and is divided into two phases. The first phase is from 2005 to 2008, and the second started in 2008 and is currently on-going.

4.1.1 Phase 2006–2008

During this period, five organizations were funded. Each organization led one project. Together the projects championed by these institutions had twelve objectives, the majority of which (10) were very similar to the objectives of individual projects funded prior to 2006. This is not surprising since three of the five organizations funded had similar projects dating, in some cases, back to 1994. The table in Annex 3 outlines the projects/organizations, and respective objectives, for the 2006–2008 time-period. The reports by the different institutions show that all objectives were reached to an acceptable standard. The key achievements based on objectives are outlined in detail in annex 4.

4.1.2 Phase 2009–2011

As was mentioned earlier, in this phase projects and institutions were organized under a single program: the PACNIC. The PACNIC has the following objectives:

- Promote the diverse cultural identities found in Nicaragua as a pillar from which human development can become sustainable. Alongside this goal, to foster and strengthen attitudes and behaviours which favour respect and mutual understanding.
- Facilitate, promote and support cultural development efforts which are dynamic, sustainable and which guarantee the access to and enjoyment of cultural events that encourage the nurturing of a rich cultural national identity.

Each one of these objectives has indicators that facilitate their translation into concrete actions. To this end the program has been divided into three components related to:

- Improvement of cultural entities in terms of their competencies, coordination and network formation;
- Improvement of the quality and quantity of cultural products. This is understood as including: professionals working in the culture field; creativity of individual cultural expressions; and the conservation and protection of the cultural heritage; and
- Increase the appreciation for, enjoyment of and awareness of the value of culture in the context of national identity.

These components contain several outcomes that jointly seek to:

- Strengthen capacities and self-esteem of the institutions and target groups;
- Improve knowledge about the Mayagna people;
- Establish the National Museum of Music;
- Improve information about cultural activities of the program to expand the access and participation of the public.

The results achieved by the PACNIC can be easily seen as an expansion and deepening of the progress made by individual organizations prior to 2009. One example of the progress that is underway through the PACNIC, and which has been a long-term aim of a number of the involved parties, is the National Museum of Music. If the Museum is in fact established and made operational, this success will have to be credited, at least in part, to the creation of the PACNIC and the cooperation between different parties which the program has nurtured.

The results of the first year of operations show a good degree of progress which makes the achievements of the more difficult objectives more likely, for example the establishment of the Music Museum. The most noteworthy advances so far are: the smooth coordination and administration of the program; the restoration of the Nicaraguan Institute of Culture building; the increase in the number of literary contests and of publications in both contemporary adult and children/youth literature; the expansion of activities in the field of fine arts, dance and music; the continuous training and equipping of musical groups; the consolidation of dance and painting groups; the commitment and allocation of small budgets to Municipalities for the development of culture programs; the expansion of the Children's Reading Corners and Reading Routes; and the publication and distribution of 800 copies of the Mayagna Culture book,¹² among others.

4.2 Highlighting areas of high achievement

The interviews and field visits conducted during the country visit suggest that the sustained support by Norway has led to considerable achievements and impact, particularly in making a cultural program available to rural municipalities and in highlighting the rich culture of the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean – although efforts linked to the last mentioned are not fully completed yet. The principal achievement of the projects and program are: improved access to and quality of cultural expression; development of social capital; strengthening of institutional capacities; and manufacture and dissemination of cultural expressions.

In the following section, the most important results from Norwegian cooperation since 1995¹³ are presented, as identified by the organizations and people interviewed:

- Training of more than 600 young members of musical municipal music groups; training of seventeen music teachers who have officially recognized degrees and are currently involved in 'train-the-trainer' efforts with music monitors (second level trainers) and students. Sixteen groups, which have emerged from the 600 trained individuals, including one composed of women only – have become

¹² A brief presentation of the book: *Mayagna Knowledge of the Co-existence of People and Nature: Fish and Turtles*. Organized by UNESCO and conducted by Paule Gros and Frithz Nacilio Miguel.

¹³ Data has not been disaggregated in a way that would allow us to provide quantitative information for the period after 2005 only.

professional and have demand in their respective municipalities. The last mentioned allows participating members an additional income source.

- More than one hundred authors and illustrators of children's literature have been trained. Some forty-eight young people, one hundred secondary school teachers, and an unknown number of university literature instructors have been trained annually in contemporary literature.
- Improvement in the quality of all the products and services generated by all projects are noticeable. Most evident is the progress made in the field of children's literature with the quality of books, both content and print quality, as well as the Reading Corners having reached an undeniable high calibre.
- The archiving (organization, classification and safekeeping) of all musical scores held by the Music Fund. The Music Fund constitutes the largest national collection of original scores/cultural heritage of the country. The material from the Music funds was also employed as part of the development of the Music Plan, and as a source material for the methodology used for music education.
- Diffusion of Nicaraguan music through the music project activities, the production and dissemination of discs and videos, and through radio and television programs.
- Production and diffusion of contemporary literature (167 publications, exceeding annual targets), cultural magazines (bi-annual) and more than ten titles of national children's literature.
- Rescue of threatened cultural expressions due to globalization. These include work in the following areas: songs and rhythms (traditional musical genre); artisan crafts; legends; languages; and customs. All of these efforts aim to contribute to the strengthening of national identity.
- Expansion of locations which facilitate access to learning, and enjoyment of different national cultural expressions, including: music, dance, painting, literature, theatre and artisan crafts. These efforts have focused on rural and disadvantaged populations.
- Lastly it is important to highlight that the PACNIC program has successfully built a structure that supports the establishment and strengthening of networks between public and civil society culture actors.

4.3 Highlighting areas of low achievement

In the following section, the areas which have encountered the most difficulty and made little progress are described:

- The rehabilitation of the National Museum of Music has not advanced at the expected speed. The delays over the last year are primarily due to lack of funding. The difficulty in securing funding for this venture led to the re-allocation of \$30,000 US which in turn negatively affected other activities within the PACNIC. A visit to the site confirmed that little progress, aside from a new tin roof, has been made in the restoration of the building. Given that the buildings are in semi-ruins and that the area where they are located is known as an insecure quarter of Managua, the success of this project will require both financial support and commitment by the central government as well as support from other government bodies to secure that the area becomes safer and more welcoming to the public. While committed in spirit, the government has yet to take tangible measures to ensure that the project moves forward.

- While some synergies, primarily administrative, between the members of PACNIC have taken place and are a move forward, these could be far more commonplace. For example, PACNIC members could collaborate in the conduct of workshops, printing and editing of books and other like material (i.e., public project presentations, etc.). It should be stressed that each organization does hold a considerable wealth of information based on years of experience in their respective fields.
- With the exception of the relationship between the writers association in Norway and Nicaragua respectively; there has been little cultural exchange between Norway and Nicaragua.
- There has been little interest on behalf of government bodies to make active use of the book on Mayagna Culture. It should be noted that the use of the book in schools nationwide requires the authorization of the governmental educational authorities. Once the book was published in June 2010, copies of the volume together with a letter requesting support in disseminating and using the book were sent to the Minister of Education, but there has been no reply to date.
- Financial sustainability remains a clear challenge and underdeveloped area. Not only because artists tend not to concern themselves sufficiently with financial matters, but also because it is difficult to find ways to secure financial sustainability of artistic expression. The exceptions include FLPN and CNE, which have made the most important advances in this field. Still, the last mentioned institutions must work to develop a marketing strategy to reinforce progress made.

5. Implementation of activities

5.1 Project identification and planning

The implementing partner identification in Nicaragua by Norway has been a somewhat organic process. As mentioned earlier in this report, the initial funding/support to cultural activities emerged from a bi-lateral agreement between the NWA and CNE. Over time, other institutions have sought funding from the Embassy. However, there has never been an official call for proposals – rather organizations have been approached bi-laterally on the basis of their expertise, and of Norway's funding priorities. Most recently, with the creation of the PACNIC in 2009, additional organizations were approached. FUNDEMOS, for example, was approached to take on the administrative lead of the program. This seemed, and still does for some, like an odd choice on behalf of the Embassy since FUNDEMOS does not focus on cultural activities. FUNDEMOS was chosen as the administrative lead for two reasons: first, FUNDEMOS was known to the embassy through a small initiative which had been funded by the Embassy, administered by FUNDEMOS, and executed by a third organization; second, FUNDEMOS does not implement projects of their own in the field of culture. It was the opinion of the Embassy that having an organization which did not implement any aspect of the culture Program deliverables charged with the administrative duties would safeguard against competition in project operationalization. Thus far it appears the plan has succeeded.

While the process for identifying partners is neither competitive nor open, it is worth mentioning that all the key organizations working in the fields of interest to Norway have been identified and are part of the PACNIC (i.e., literature, music, dance, etc. in rural or marginalized areas). In other words, there seems to be no need for additional efforts to identify possible implementing partners. Given the departure of the Norwegian Embassy from Managua later this year it is doubtful that any new partner will be identified or funded in the future irrespective of what happens with the PACNIC, which has been funded by Norway since its birth in 2009. Implementing partners generally regard Norway as an easy donor in so far as they do not restrict the implementation of projects or unduly push a Norwegian agenda. Having said that, Norway has always had very clear goals regarding what it aimed to attain with its support to the field of culture in Nicaragua: mainly ensure that a cultural program reach the rural and disadvantaged population. It is worth noting here, therefore, that while the projects and program after 2005 have been in line with the Norwegian Strategy it would be unfair to say that the Strategy has played a pivotal role in defining the work in Nicaragua.

5.2 Roles and responsibilities of partners

Prior to the creation of the program in 2009, different implementing partners were responsible for reporting to the Embassy on progress made, funds utilized etc. Likewise, the Embassy was responsible for following-up on individual projects, commissioning evaluations, conducting field visits etc. With the creation of the program, the roles and responsibilities of the different actors have been streamlined substantially.

Currently, resulting from the creation of the program, the roles and responsibilities of the individual partners are as follows:

The Embassy: Is responsible for evaluating program proposals, attending the annual meetings (see Monitoring and Evaluation above), generally following up on the program partners, and ensuring the smooth working of the program from a donor perspective.

COSUDE: Is an affiliate donor to the PACNIC. As such COSUDE's role is limited to meeting its financial commitment to the program.

FUNDEMOS: This is the organization which is in charge of administering and ensuring the smooth day-to-day operation of the PACNIC. FUNDEMOS is responsible for disbursing funds to the individual implementing partner; collecting, quality assuring and compiling progress and financial reports from the implementing partners; and overseeing the support that the program provides to the National Institute for Culture (INC). The last mentioned includes both capacity building at the Institute as well as physical reconstruction of the premises. In fact, the office of the FUNDEMOS Program Coordinator is based at the INC.

Implementing Partners: (Consortium, FLPN, CNE, INC, UPOLI, UNESCO): Each implementing partner is tasked with carrying out their individual projects, reporting on said projects to FUNDEMOS, participating in the annual meetings and generally working towards ensuring that the program attains its overall goal. Each partner is also responsible for contributing to the program. Their contribution could be in kind, financial, etc.

5.3 Cross-cutting issues

The PACNIC program includes three cross cutting issues: gender, environment and anti-corruption in accordance with the 2007 and 2010 Guidelines issued by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Gender: The program which has been under implementation by Norway in Nicaragua since 2009 has a clear gender agenda. In fact, the operational plan for the program 2009–2011 identifies gender as encompassing not only gender equality within the implementing partners, and the beneficiaries – but also the importance of employing cultural activities to promote the importance of gender equality at a conceptual level. The latter can be understood as a clear affront to some cultural norms/traditions in Nicaragua. Given the focus of the program in rural and marginalized areas/populations, the idea of challenging gender constructions is no small undertaking.

Notably the program has made visible progress. Examples of this include the targeting of both girls and boys with the mobile libraries: essentially, encouraging reading on an equal gender basis. The music projects that aim to teach music to children and youth have succeeded not only in including both boys and girls, but in mobilizing girls to play musical instruments which have been traditionally played by males exclusively. While these examples may seem inconsequential, they do point to a push towards challenging gender constructions.

As pertains to the staffing of projects, in the current program cycle (2009–2011) four of the seven organizations are led by females: APC, FLPN, CNE and FUN-DEMOS. The first mentioned has a strong gender policy which is implemented in all activities carried out by the Music Consortium. Similarly, at the Embassy the Project officer is a female. Therefore, the Coordination and Follow up Committee (Comité de Coordinación y Seguimiento-CCS), the body that governs the Program, is made up of five females and four males, including the two Embassy members.

Environment: From a general perspective, the program promotes attention to the environment and the idea of individual responsibility towards the environment. With one exception, the UNESCO-LINKS Project, the above concept of environment is a general value rather than something which is actively introduced into the projects. The UNESCO-LINKS project, however, has as one of its key objectives to promote the environmental conservation of the Mayagna People's homeland.

Anti-corruption: This is an important cross cutting issue at the embassy level and hence, it is in the operational plan of the PACNIC and thus noted here. In so far as anti-corruption is concerned, the program – and by extension all implementing partners – is subject to clear anti-corruption mechanisms which demand transparency. The program work-plan also stipulates the measures that will be taken if corruption is suspected. These include: a demand for regular financial audits, clear guidelines for all competitions that are carried out within the framework of the program (i.e., writers competitions), and the reporting of any malfeasance to the donor and to the national competent authorities.

5.4 Sustainability of results

Here sustainability will be discussed with a focus on both the financial, organizational/institutional aspects as well as human aspects (i.e. attitudes, identities and capacities). From an institutional/organizational and financial perspective: The program work-plan 2009–2011 clearly denotes that financial sustainability of the program cannot be achieved in this short timeframe. With one exception – the Theatre Pilot Project – all established efforts have been operational for multiple years. Of course it should be stressed that in the early years of cooperation, large proportions of funding were allocated to ad hoc initiatives that by their very nature were not sustainable. While all the projects, the above exceptions aside, have been operational for multiple years and solid efforts to create sustainability have been made – including capacity building in the government, framing the projects within government structures such as the Municipalities and Culture houses, coordinating and fostering networks etc. – the program is somewhat vulnerable. However, a number of hopeful factors contributing to the likelihood of sustainability are worth mentioning.

The employment of local structures: The program relies heavily on the utilization of local structures/mechanisms to achieve its goals. For example, reading corners established in locations which are already existing/sustainable, utilization of cultural centres as the venue for music courses, etc. – this increases the likelihood of sustainability.

Sale of craft: Some artisans and musicians have managed to perfect their skills to a degree which enables them to sell their craft, and hence, the cultural form is becoming increasingly sustainable. In addition, the two organizations involved with the publishing of books sell some of the books they publish. Therefore, the sale of books could become a way by which they could sustain their individual projects in the long term.

Donor diversification: The APC for its part has a link to the central government, a solid presence at the municipal level, and multiple donors (Norwegian funding constitutes 12.5% of their income), thus it is less threatened by the potential loss of Norwegian funds. The other organizations in the Music Consortium have no current ability to generate funding through their own trade and hence, their sustainability is more threatened than that of their counterparts. Ultimately, long-term longevity of the programs depends on either donor or government funding. The latter is unlikely given the current available funds within the government budget and the limited importance given to the cultural field in recent years.

While the above examples are hopeful, the fact remains that at this time none of the efforts within the program are fully sustainable from an organizational and/or financial perspective. Therefore, if funding from Norway is halted the immediate halting of activities is almost certain. Not least because the area of Norwegian interest – rural and marginalized populations – has not been a population favoured by other donors, but also because donor funding for culture projects is increasingly scarce and the government has a minuscule budget for the sector.

If we now turn to human sustainability, there are a number of issues worth mentioning: First, it is important to stress that at the individual level the projects and program have a high level of sustainability. This is exemplified by the examples below:

Capacity building: Since the majority of the projects have a capacity building component (i.e., lessons on music, dance, craft, etc.), the capacity itself will remain with those who have participated in the program irrespective of whether the program continues or not.

Attitudes: The program provides a population the opportunity to access a cultural program, and it has also utilized the program to challenge cultural convention. Gender constructions, for example, have been challenged through PACNIC program activities. In this way PACNIC can be understood as the start of a possible cultural transformation.

Identity: As is clear the revolutionary years laid the foundation for a strong appreciation for cultural representation of identity (i.e., traditional music, dance, theatre etc.).

PACNIC has thus far supported the same type of cultural expression. Here it is worth noting that discussions with end users such as children and youth who studied dance, music, fine arts or who were members of the mobile library noted the initiatives as highly valuable to their own individual development. They noted that learning about their own culture was important to their own sense of identity.

6. Results in relation to the Strategy for sports and culture

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents results in relation to the Norwegian Strategy, rather than the individual project/program objectives. To this end, the analysis will focus on the four key aspects highlighted in the Norwegian Strategy for sports and culture listed below.

- Contributing to strengthening institutional frameworks.
- Contributing to cultural exchanges between Norway and Nicaragua.
- Increasing the quality of artistic and cultural expression.
- Utilizing cultural and sports activities as catalytic instruments to further other development goals.

The table below provides an overview of the above. The last column of the table notes whether or not the rights-based approach is evident and produces results in the project. The rights based approach and inter-institutional collaboration, as well as strengthening of civil society are also discussed in the final sections of this chapter.

Table 3. Summary assessment of results in relation to the Strategy

Project/ Partner	Institutional frameworks	Cultural exchange	Quality of cultural expression	Further development goals	Rights-based approach
PACNIC	3	0	3	2	3
FUNDEMOS	3	0	3	0	3
INC	3	0	3	0	3
Music Consortium	3	1	4	4	4
FLPN	3	1	4	1	4
CNE	3	3	3	1	3

Scale of assessment:
0 – no results visible, 1 – marginal results, 2 – some results, 3 – significant results, 4 – very high results.

6.2 Strengthening institutional frameworks in culture

Before proceeding, it is first important to discuss how institutional frameworks may be strengthened and what strengthening means in terms of tangible changes. From a general perspective institutional strengthening can be understood as:

- Improved policies and regulatory mechanisms within the sector.
- Strengthened networking between partners within and between sectors.
- Strengthened organisational structures.
- Improved individual knowledge and skills.

Norway's involvement in Nicaragua in the field of culture has been keenly involved in the last three aspects noted above. To this end the Norwegian efforts have generally shown good results. As is explained in Chapter 2, Norway has made substantial efforts to build relationships, informal and formal, between actors in the culture field. The first formal agreement that brought together multiple organizations in an effort to strengthen the field through active networking was the funding of the Music Consortium in 1998. It is noteworthy however, that the organizations member of the Music Consortium operated as a de facto consortium from the start (e.g., 1994) and this served to facilitate the formalization of the consortium in 1998. The most recent and considerable achievement in networking is the creation of the PACNIC which effectively brought together all key civil society actors in the field of literature, music, dance, fine arts – the government, and to a lesser extent the UN, and other donors. The program has proved an effective way to promote synergies between actors within the culture sector, and streamline overhead costs at the Embassy.

In so far as improving organizational structures is concerned, the principal Norwegian achievement has been in linking civil society to the government and public sector, on the one hand; and strengthening the government body – mainly focused on the INC- on the other hand. The INC has been largely neglected for the past two decades since the cultural field stopped enjoying a central role in the political agenda. This neglect has led to both infrastructural decay and limited investments in capacity. While the efforts to strengthen the institution made through Norway's program is positive, the lack of funding to the INC will remain an enduring challenge – as will the consistent staff changes made to the management. These two issues threaten the sustainability of Norway's support to the government. Yet despite this threat the efforts made within the program as pertains to strengthening organizational structures must be commended. Not least because a principal benefit from the creation of the program has effectively been the establishment of a new organizational structure which brings together organizations – and fosters cooperation, alliances, synergies and so forth. While this accomplishment is worthy of praise, the process of building a working and sustainable program is a long one and hence, the attention this effort requires for the years to come to ensure long-term success should not be underestimated.

In the area of improving knowledge and skills, the Norwegian program has done superbly. Unlike other donors, Norway has made substantial efforts to reach populations which would otherwise be neglected. This includes both rural populations and urban poor populations which normally do not have access to cultural programs. The Norwegian funded projects have generally focused on the aforementioned populations; and the program which has been in effect since 2009 places a solid emphasis on these populations. Moreover, the music, dance, fine arts, crafts – and to a lesser extent the literary components of the program – have solid capacity building at their core. The aim of these programs is to train individuals from the target populations in cultural expressions, or to build capacity through contact with cultural expressions (i.e., reading, writing). In addition, the program has a capacity building component aimed to strengthen the cultural body within the national government. It's safe to say that the overarching goal of the program as a whole is the improvement of knowledge and skills of individuals, therefore even if the program

does not survive in the long term much will have been gained by the individual beneficiaries.

6.3 Contributing to cultural exchanges between Norway and Nicaragua

While cultural exchanges are one of the areas of key importance to Norway, there have been very few exchanges between Nicaragua and Norway. This is primarily attributed to the distance between Norway and Nicaragua, and the language barrier. The exchanges that have taken place are in fact largely limited to the respective Norwegian and Nicaraguan writers associations. Indeed, the whole exchange has only included thirty individuals (twenty Norwegians and ten Nicaraguans). Moreover, the exchange effort often takes place within the context of the International Poetry Festival, which takes place in Granada on an annual basis. Two other single events (e.g., workshops) have included exchange components, but again the efforts have been minimal. Hence, it's safe to say that in the area of exchange the Nicaraguan experience leaves much to be desired. However, given the limited funds available and the costly nature of exchanges, particularly when individuals are sent to Norway (e.g., costs of stay in Norway are high), the limited focus on this strategic goal can be understandable. Still, it should also be highlighted that the 'classic' approach to exchanges which was mentioned above is not the only possibility in this day and age. Therefore, programs such as the one in Nicaragua could benefit from exploring exchange options which do not require physical travel and hence are not so expensive.

6.4 Increasing the quality of artistic and cultural expression

Here the quality of the expression as well as the efficiency of delivery are noted. Tied to this the positive and negative aspect of the efforts are also mentioned. The Norwegian effort in Nicaragua also bodes well in so far as improving the quality of artistic expression. Still, before proceeding further, a few issues regarding how "quality" is defined are noteworthy. For some success in increasing quality means only achieving a professional standard or meeting the standards expected in countries such as Norway. However, an argument can be made for understanding 'quality' contextually. In the case of Nicaragua the Norwegian funding has been guided by the notion that the pursuit for 'high quality' must not diminish the ability that individuals have to access the services or products offered by the cultural program. For example, some of the books published by the program are very inexpensive prints, but this is arguably not a compromise in quality. Rather the recognition that in order for books to reach the target readership they must be inexpensive. Therefore, the quality of the literary material (e.g., the content of the book) rather than the print itself is prioritized. In this way, it can be argued that the project is increasing the quality of artistic and cultural expression since the majority of the efforts have at their core the building of capacity in the cultural field, and increasing the availability of artistic and cultural expression to the masses. For example:

- Improving the training available to children and youth in music, dance and fine arts.
- Improvement of local craft-making skills.
- Increasing the quality and the accessibility of books available to the public.
- Increasing the availability and the quality of literature and print to children.

Some of the above projects have been operational as individual efforts for many years, and hence, their success has been visible. For example, musical bands formed by youths who were trained under the Norwegian funded projects are now beginning to emerge and be recognized regionally. An additional example is the books published by Books for Children. The volumes have been recognized internationally for reaching a very high quality of both the stories and the illustrations. This means, on the one hand, that the effort has led to the professionalization of the art form and also that the art has become an income generating activity for some beneficiaries.

As regards the efficiency of efforts made by Norway, the effort in Nicaragua must be commended for shifting from projects to a program. This shift has had a considerable impact on the efficiency of the funding by reducing the administrative burden on the Embassy, and promoting local partners to capitalize on each other's strengths and limit duplication.

Without a doubt one of the principal positive effects of Norwegian collaboration is the support for cultural programs in rural and disadvantaged communities, this can also be regarded as an improvement in quality. This achievement is noted multiple times throughout this report. As regards negative or unintended consequences, the evaluation can only speculate that one aspect can be the creation of dependency on behalf of the government. While efforts to strengthen the government have been made and are commendable, the Norwegian effort has not deliberately imposed conditions on the government to ensure that the governmental counterparts meet their commitments. This can be visible in earlier efforts of restoration of museums, for example, which are now in decay and requiring renewed attention. While this drawback falls outside the period of evaluation it is noted here because the evaluation feels it is important that Norway clearly delineate its expectations of the government to ensure that Norwegian efforts have a long term impact beyond the life of the project.

6.5 Utilizing cultural activities as catalytic instruments to further other development goals

The principal aim of the Norwegian effort in Nicaragua in the field of culture has not been on utilizing cultural activities as a catalyst for other development goals. However, some components of the projects have led to income generation and in this way contribute to economic growth. Yet this contribution is at the individual level (i.e., an individual finds a market for his/her trade). Norway has not focused on marketing/promoting the marketing of the skills that have been imparted by projects they have funded. This lacuna is a deliberate one. First, there are existing mechanisms by which individuals, such as craft men/women and musicians, can sell their trade locally and therefore, Norwegian involvement would be somewhat superfluous. Second, Norway's priority has been on reviving cultural expression irrespective of whether or not it contributes to furthering development goals. Third, the funding available to culture is very limited and this has forced the Embassy to narrow its focus.

However, it is important to note that Norwegian funding, through other agencies, is employing culture and sport as a catalyst to further other development goals. NPA, for example, does not underscore their efforts as belonging to the culture and sport

realm, but does highlight that much of their work includes both cultural expression and sport as a mechanism to achieve development objectives, primarily in their work with youths.

6.6 The rights-based approach to culture

This Strategy introduces the notion of a rights-based approach to culture. The Declaration of Human Rights as well as other declarations of political, economic and social rights, clearly state that culture and the expression of identity has a value of its own. Culture is not only a means to achieve rights in other areas of one's life, but a right in and of its own. The projects and program that the evaluation team looked at do not refer to a rights-based approach when the project objectives are formulated, likewise the project and program reporting does not mention achievements in relation to rights. However, still the evaluation team felt that efforts in Nicaragua generally rank high on the rights based approach because rights based is imbedded into the actual work. For example, respondents do note cultural expression as a right and as a key objective of their individual initiatives. Moreover, end-users, including children, identified cultural expression, particularly traditional/folkloric activities, as their right and obligation to Nicaraguan society. This view is likely to be linked to the view imparted during the 1980s Sandinista revolution, which is outlined in chapter 3. The aforementioned view has seemingly survived despite the low importance given to the sector by the National governments over the last two decades. Thus, as noted in chapter 3, it seems that the political history of how culture is treated in a particular environment can have considerable implications. In the context of Nicaragua examples of culture being understood as a right extend from aspects such as the ability of a group to conserve their language, to the ability to learn a musical instrument and play traditional popular music. Moreover, it seems apparent in Nicaragua that the ability that certain groups have of keeping their cultural identity, through the exercising of their rights, enables them to demand that other rights be respected. For example the work with the Mayagna and the preservation of their culture and language could help the Mayagna people defend their rights to their land, the biodiversity, etc, of the territory they occupy at a later date. In short, it is important to stress that while projects and programs do not highlight the rights based aspect of their work in their reports this is not because 'rights based' is absent, but rather because 'rights based' is at the very core of the work done.

6.7 Collaboration and the strengthening of civil society

As pertains to the strengthening of civil society and the role of local partnerships, the Norwegian effort in Nicaragua is commendable. First the PACNIC program works with a series of local partners and grants the different partners a solid role in the management, execution and general conduct of the program. In this way, Norway has funded and followed up on, but generally allowed for institutional development and inter-institutional relationships to be built and strengthened. Building collaborative relationships between partners that previously worked independently is a process which needs to be strengthened over time. The Nicaraguan program has not yet achieved all that it can in terms of collaboration between organizations within the program, but progress has been made and this merits recognition in terms of improving efficiency. Thus far the program has served to strengthen civil society, as a number of the organizations in the PACNIC are part of civil society.

6.8 Concluding remarks

Assessing the cultural support in Nicaragua we can say that the project thus far accomplishes the following key aspects:

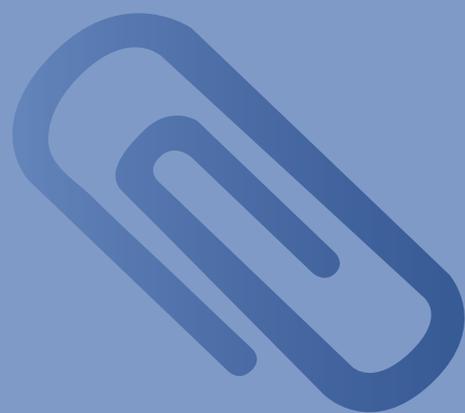
- Ensures better access to cultural goods and creates better conditions for free cultural expression and participation particularly amongst rural and marginalized populations.
- Improves the quality of cultural expression while keeping it accessible to the general public.
- Employs cultural expression as a tool to foster attitudes/behaviours which foster respect and mutual understanding.
- Builds capacity amongst the end-beneficiaries.

The PACNIC effort has been successful in providing individuals, particularly the young from rural and low-income marginalized area better access to cultural goods. It has done this by supporting a variety of initiatives ranging from different forms of music and dance to literature. Simultaneously the program has strived to improve the expression of multiple art forms. As mentioned earlier in this chapter the question of quality of an art form has been an issue of much discussion in Nicaragua and one that has led the PACNIC together with the Embassy to a contextual definition of quality. The program also employs culture as a medium to challenge cultural convention such as gender roles. Lastly, the program has succeeded at building considerable capacity both at the professional and amateur level.

In sum, the portfolio has evolved favourably over the years. The effectiveness and efficiency of Norway's cooperation has improved over time. Norway's efforts have also served to instigate cooperation between civil society organizations and between civil society and the government. The Norwegian effort has succeeded; it seems, in populating the country with numerous forms/genres of cultural expression and in building capacities at the governmental level (i.e., institutions) and individual level (i.e., local artists). This, together with Norway's long-term commitment to culture projects/programs all around the country, has served to make Norway visible not only in Managua but in much of the country. The effort to focus on rural and marginalized communities has been seldom prioritized by other donors. This makes Norway's imminent departure from Managua and the uncertain continuation of funding to the program beyond the Embassy's closure all the more problematic.

As regards the Strategy, it is fair to say that it has not been actively used by partner agencies. One of the reasons given for this is the language barrier. While some limited efforts to convey the Strategy to partner agencies seem to have been made these were small and a long time ago. Given that the partner agencies have remained the same through the years, the shift from projects to a program has not had an impact on the utilization of the Strategy, nor in how the Embassy sees the work at the strategic level. The shift from projects to program does however open an opportunity for further utilization of the Strategy locally in a more deliberate way. At the moment work in Nicaragua is in line with the Strategy rather than guided by the Strategy.

Annexes



ANNEX 1: Bibliography

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Material revised for publication quality assessment

Books for Children Foundation: 20–25 books

Consortium APC-FONMUNIC-Kinteto: 15–20 books, 5 CD/DVD

Nicaraguan Centre for Writers: 5 books

Nicaraguan Forum of Culture: 5–10 books

PACNIC: 3 books

ANNEX 2: List of interviewees

NAME	TITLE/OCCUPATION	ORGANIZATION
1. Sandra Baez	Program Coordinator	FUNDEMOS Group
2. Donald Chamorro	Kinteto and Consortium Director	Consortium: CPA-Kinteto-FONMUNIC
3. Emilia Torres	Director CPA and Consortium member	Culture Promoters Association (CPA)
4. Alfredo Barrera	Director FONMUNIC and Consortium member	FONMUNIC
5. Pedro Quiroz	Board member	CPA
6. Alvaro Murillo	Executive	CPA
7. Rigoberto Ortiz	President of Board	CPA
8. Linda Gutierrez	Dance teacher, Jinotega Municipality	CPA
9. Bismark Treminio	Professor Plastic Arts, Jinotega Municipality	CPA
10. Alfredo Rivera	Music Instructor, El Sauce Municipality	CPA
11. Manuel Hernandez	Music Instructor, El Sauce Municipality	CPA
12. Julio Calero	Music Instructor, Pueblo Nuevo Municipality	CPA
13. Carlos Blandón	Music Instructor, Jalapa Municipality	CPA
14. Jezabel Solórzano	Independent	CPA
15. Juan Oviedo	Coral Director, Central Bank of Nicaragua	Independent musical artists
16. Lilian Meza de Rocha	President, Foro Latina	Independent musical artists
17. Bayardo Martinez	TV producer and Artistic Director, Channels 11 and 32	Independent musical artists
18. Edgar Orochena	Coral Director, Managua Mayor's Office	Independent musical artists
19. Douglas Nakashima	LINKS Program Director	UNESCO Paris
20. Claudia Valle	Adjunct Secretary	UNESCO Nicaragua
21. Vida Luz Meneses	President of the Board	Nicaraguan Centre of Writers

NAME	TITLE/OCCUPATION	ORGANIZATION
22. Manuel Ortega Heegs	Vice president of the Board	Nicaraguan Centre of Writers
23. Luz Marina Acosta	Program Manager	Nicaraguan Centre of Writers
24. Klaudhia Artola	Administrator	Nicaraguan Centre of Writers
25. Yolanda Rossman	Writer – Caribbean Coast	Nicaraguan Centre of Writers
26. Blanca Castellón	Writer and Vice President of the International Festival of Poetry	Nicaraguan Centre of Writers
27. Jose Adiac Montoya	CNE Published writer and participant of the CNE poetry workshops	Nicaraguan Centre of Writers
28. Anastasio Lovo	Instructor at the 1 st Poetry Workshop	Nicaraguan Center of Writers
29. Eddy Kull	Writer and member of Ibsen Group	
30. Gloria Carrión	Executive Director	Books for Children Foundation
31. Gabriela Tellería	Coordinator Editorial Fund	Books for Children Foundation
32. Lisett Rivera	Coordinator	Las Hormiguitas (NGO) hosting a Children Book Corner, Jinotega
33. Aleyda Ortiz	Volunteer Children Reader/in charge of a neighbourhood Children's Tales Corner	Books for Children Foundation
34. Lony Ruiz	Children's book illustrator and author/ Participant in illustration and literary creation workshops	Books for Children Foundation
35. William Grisby	Participant in children's books illustration and literature workshops	Books for Children Foundation
36. Cairo Amador	President of the Board	Nicaraguan Forum of Culture
37. Silvio Teran	Executive Secretary	Nicaraguan Forum of Culture
38. Melvin Wallace	Coordinator of the Literature Program	Nicaraguan Forum of Culture
39. Henry Pietry	Coordinator of the Literature Program	Nicaraguan Forum of Culture
40. Salvador Espinoza	Executive Secretary of the Board	Nicaraguan Forum of Culture
41. Benjamin Phillips	Director	Save the Children
42. Carmen Lang	Country Program Coordinator	Norwegian People's Aid(Ayuda Popular Noruega)

NAME	TITLE/OCCUPATION	ORGANIZATION
43. Ole Overaas	Chief of Cooperation	The Royal Norwegian Embassy
44. Vania Martínez	Program Officer	The Royal Norwegian Embassy
45. Jose L. Sandino	Program Officer	COSUDE
46. Miguel García	First Secretary	Embassy of Spain
47. David Ruiz Lopez-Prisuelos	Coordinator	Cultural Centre of Spain in Nicaragua
48. Luis Morales	Director Minister	Ministry of Culture
49. Jamilett López Guerrero	Deputy Mayor	Masatepe
50. Gloria Montenegro	Deputy Mayor	Jinotega

ANNEX 3: Project objectives 2006–2008

Organization/ Projects	Objectives
CNE Editorial Fund, Phase VI. (CND)	<p>Improve the printing, dissemination and sales of national and international authors (literature), with a focus on new/emerging authors.</p> <p>Strengthen institutional capacity and management of the CNE.</p> <p>Promote the dissemination of Nicaraguan literature in Norway and also of Norwegian literature in Nicaragua.</p>
Literature for Children (FLPN)	<p>Stimulate the writing of literature for children and youth.</p> <p>Increase the cultural capital (i.e., social and human capital) of children's literature produced in Nicaragua.</p> <p>Improve the promotion and sales of the published books in order to build in a mechanism for economic self-sustainability within the project.</p>
Plan for the Development of Nicaraguan Arts, Phase IV. (Music Consortium)	<p>Consolidate a plan for the development of Nicaraguan music.</p> <p>Promote the creation and practice of new artistic expressions in field of music.</p> <p>Promote project activities to support traditional cultural expressions.</p> <p>Promote gender equality awareness amongst the target group.</p>
Support to the Coordination and Reinforcement of the Cultural Sector in Nicaragua (FUNDEMOS-INC)	<p>Develop and strengthen civil society involvement, representation and access to the decision making process in the cultural sector.</p>
Pilot Theatre Training (UNPOLI)	<p>Motivate the artistic vocation of the Nicaragua youth reinforcing the respect of human rights and values.</p>

The aforementioned set of objectives is characterized among other things by:

- The majority of projects focus on the consolidation and expansion of previous achievements (earlier projects).
- The majority of the principal indicators used to measure achievement of the goals are qualitative in nature. The aforementioned qualitative indicators are often complemented with quantitative indicators.
- All projects include capacity building as an objective.
- The music consortium is the only organization which includes the promotion of gender equality as an objective of their work.

- The literature projects are the only projects which include an objective geared towards achieving some kind of financial self-sustainability (i.e., through the sale of books).
- Only one objective (CNE) refers to the exchange of artists, writers only, between Nicaragua and Norway.

ANNEX 4:

Detailed achievements based on objectives 2006–2008

CNE Editorial Fund: CNE has become the reference editorial for the publication and promotion of national literature. From the start of the project until 2008, 103 works in different genres (i.e., novels, essays, poetry, short stories and folk tales) were published. The annual contracts stipulated the publication of eight works annually – this goal has been surpassed. Thus far the CNE editorial fund has been able to provide a publishing space for more authors, including young writers from rural communities and the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean, than were originally envisaged particularly since their publication speed has exceeded expectation. The project includes a competitive component where authors are encouraged to submit works which are then evaluated by an independent board. The winning works are published and launched at public events. Each work which wins a competition is printed – 50% of the prints are donated to libraries nationwide while the other 50% are sold in bookshops and also by CNE directly.

Additionally, seminars have been developed and conducted for university literature professors in coordination with the Ministry of Education. These seminars have been used as an additional venue through which the works by national authors can be disseminated. The workshops have also served to strengthen teacher performance and build relationships between national writers and educators. This is the only project with has an active relationship and exchange with a Norwegian organization: the Association of Norwegian Writers. Within this framework, twenty Norwegian writers have come to Nicaragua and ten Nicaraguan writers have gone to Norway, but currently these exchanges are mostly limited to the participation of Norwegian poets in the International Poetry Festival organized on an annual basis in Granada, Nicaragua.

Literature for children: The objectives of the project have been amply achieved through the implementation of a variety of activities: Reading Corners, Friends of Reading Networks and Reading Routes (i.e., a mobile library: a pick-up truck which takes books on a regular basis to rural areas around Nicaragua), among others. Together these initiatives have provided access to books to thousands of children in rural areas and low-income urban neighbourhoods. In 2007 alone, over 49,000 visits to Reading Corners were registered. The printing and dissemination of literature for children and youth was promoted through the publication of more than sixteen titles and the organization of numerous workshops targeting young writers and illustrators. The workshops enjoyed hundreds of participants. Half of the prints are donated to public and school libraries and the rest are sold. Here again, book sales are seen as a mechanism by which the program can secure its own longevity. The

sale of books is ever growing – in fact in 2008 sales increased 200%. The success of the project has prompted the exploration of expansion to other Central American countries.

Plan for the development of Nicaraguan arts, phase IV: In this phase, expansion into new disciplines (i.e., painting and dance) and new geographical areas (thirteen additional Municipalities) was achieved. The main results can be highlighted as follows: the establishment of seventy musical groups with a total of 606 participants (i.e., end beneficiaries) of whom 40% were women; the validation of a new methodology for learning/teaching music; almost forty musical festivals in several municipalities nationwide (attended by some 47,000 people); the publication of the first General Academic Catalogue of Nicaraguan Music; fourteen educational concerts; the distribution of relevant research material to some cultural centres; and lastly the project has also conducted a limited number of short trainings on gender equity and sexual reproductive health. This project, much like the Literature for Children Project, often provides the only opportunity that children and youth in rural and low income urban areas have to participate in a cultural program be it music, dance, reading, etc.

Support to the coordination and reinforcement of the cultural sector in Nicaragua: The objective of this project is relatively general and the programmed activities have little coherence with the central idea of the project. While the principal objective of the project is to support and encourage the participation of the civil society in decision-making processes in the culture sector, its operational focus has been almost solely dedicated to the institutional strengthening of the INC.

Only two activities carried out by the project nurtured the coordination mechanisms between the INC and civil society actors. Still, the value of the institutional strengthening is seminal, particularly the support to the conceptual, strategic and normative frameworks of the Institute. For example, the project fostered the institutional reorganization of the INC, which permitted the creation of the Direction of Cultural and Scientific Research and the Municipal Councils of Culture. The project also focused on renovation of the building which houses the institute. The renovation work allowed for the creation of the Exhibition Room “El Gueguense” which is housed at the institute and exhibits a selection of national handcrafts; and the establishment of the Henrik Ibsen Garden. A final result which is noteworthy is the editing, printing and distribution of the Cultural Atlas which aimed to promote national cultural heritage (i.e., tangible and intangible).

Pilot theatre training: The objective of this project was quite general in character but the results were very concrete. The project achieved all its planned outputs: eleven presentations of the play ‘Peer,’ the training of twenty young actors to perform the play, and distribution of biographical information about Ibsen in six cities. The plays were shown with the support of the municipal authorities and other actors. An additional output, which was not planned for, was the training of 1,500 students on the history of art, with an emphasis on the national play El Gueguense.

EVALUATION REPORTS

- 1.99 WID/Gender Units and the Experience of Gender Mainstreaming in Multilateral Organisations
- 2.99 International Planned Parenthood Federation – Policy and Effectiveness at Country and Regional Levels
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- 4.99 Evaluation of the Tanzania-Norway Development Cooperation 1994–1997
- 5.99 Building African Consulting Capacity
- 6.99 Aid and Conditionality
- 7.99 Policies and Strategies for Poverty Reduction in Norwegian Development Aid
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- 10.99 Evaluation of AWEPA, The Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa, and AEI, The African European Institute
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- 3.10 Synthesis Main Report: Evaluation of Norwegian Business-related Assistance
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- 5.10 Study: Evaluation of Norwegian Business-related Assistance Bangladesh Case Study
- 6.10 Study: Evaluation of Norwegian Business-related Assistance Uganda Case Study
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