

Mainstreaming Gender Equality

Sida's support for the promotion of
gender equality in partner countries
Country Report Nicaragua

Ted Freeman, Team leader
Milagros Barahona
Ane Bonde
Sarah Forti
Britha Mikkelsen
Guadalupe Salinas

This report is part of *Sida Evaluation*, a series comprising evaluations of Swedish development assistance. Sida's other series concerned with evaluations, *Sida Studies in Evaluation*, concerns methodologically oriented studies commissioned by Sida. Both series are administered by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit, an independent department reporting directly to Sida's Board of Directors.

Reports may be *ordered* from:

Infocenter, Sida
S-105 25 Stockholm
Telephone: (+46) (0)8 690 93 80
Telefax: (+46) (0)8 690 92 66
E-mail: sidaorder@elandersnovum.se,

Reports are also available to *download* at:

<http://www.sida.se/evaluation>

Authors: Ted Freeman, Team leader , Milagros Barahona, Ane Bonde, Sarah Forti, Britha Mikkelsen, Guadalupe Salinas

Cover photos: Tina Gue and Heldur Netocny, Phoenix

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

Sida Evaluation 02/01:2

Commissioned by Sida, Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit

Copyright: Sida and the authors

Registration No.: 2000-3561

Date of Final Report: January 2002

Printed by Elanders Novum, Gothenburg, Sweden 2002

ISBN 91 586 8847 1

ISSN 1401-0402

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Sveavägen 20, Stockholm

Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64

Telegram: sida stockholm. Postgiro: 1 56 34-9

E-mail: info@sida.se.

Website: <http://www.sida.se>

Preface

In 1996, gender equality was established as a goal for Swedish development co-operation, and one year later Sida formulated an Action Programme for promoting gender equality. The Action Programme focuses on a mainstreaming strategy for working towards the gender equality goal. According to such a strategy, gender equality should pervade all development policies, strategies and interventions.

The evaluation deals with gender equality in country strategies and projects. It is based on case studies in Bangladesh, Nicaragua and South Africa. This is the country report for Nicaragua. The country reports for Bangladesh and South Africa are published as Sida Evaluation Reports 02/01:1 and 3. The main report is published as number 02/01 in the same series.

The evaluation is the result of an extended process involving many actors. It rests primarily on contributions from representatives of partner organisations in Nicaragua, and Sida and Embassy staff. The evaluation was carried out by, Cowi Consult, Denmark in co-operation with Goss Gilroy, Canada.

Lessons from the evaluation will be fed into a planned revision of the Action Programme. The evaluation will also form a basis for Sida's reporting to the Swedish Government on the results of efforts to promote gender equality.

Stockholm, January 2002

Stefan Molund
Acting Head of Department for
Evaluation and Internal Audit

The synthesis report and the country reports constituting the Mainstreaming Gender Equality evaluation are listed below:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 02/01 | Mainstreaming Gender Equality – Sida's support for the promotion of gender equality in partner countries |
| 02/01:1 | Mainstreaming Gender Equality – Country Report Bangladesh |
| 02/01:2 | Mainstreaming Gender Equality – Country Report Nicaragua |
| 02/01:3 | Mainstreaming Gender Equality – Country Report South Africa |
| 02/01:4 | Integración de la Perspectiva de Igualdad de Género – Informe de País Nicaragua |

Table of Contents

Acronyms and abbreviations	iii
Executive Summary	v
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Scope of the Nicaragua Country Case Study	2
1.2 Analytical Dimensions of the Key Evaluation Issues	3
1.3 Methodology	10
2 Gender Equality – Country Context in Nicaragua ...	13
2.1 Basic Gender Equality Indicators	13
2.2 National Commitments to Equal Rights of Women and Men	14
2.3 Economic Policy	15
2.4 Inter Family and Sexual Violence	16
2.5 Gender Equality and Efforts to Reduce Participation in the Political System	16
2.6 National Machinery for Promoting Gender Equality	17
2.7 Summary	18
3 Country Strategy and Dialogue on Gender Equality	19
3.1 The Transition From a Country to a Regional Strategy	19
3.2 Dialogue on Gender Equality	27
4 Mainstreaming Gender Equality – Four Interventions in Nicaragua	33
4.1 Summaries of the Four Interventions	33
4.2 Gender Equality Goals	34
4.3 Mainstreaming	42
4.4 Analysis: Mainstreaming Gender Equality	47
5 Poverty Reduction and the Goal of Gender Equality	53
5.1 Poverty and Gender Equality in the Four Interventions	53
5.2 Analysis: Poverty Reduction and Gender Equality	57

6	Stakeholder Participation and Gender Equality	59
	6.1 Stakeholder Participation in the Four Interventions	59
	6.2 Analysis: Stakeholder Participation and Gender Equality	66
7	Changes and Other Effects in Gender Equality	69
	7.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Gender Changes in the Four Interventions	69
	7.2 Practical and Strategic Gender Changes	71
	7.3 Women's Empowerment Effects of the Four Interventions ...	74
	7.4 Male Roles and Masculinities	77
	7.5 Analysis: Gender Equality Changes	78
8	Lessons Learned	81
	8.1 Country Strategy and Dialogue	81
	8.2 Mainstreaming	82
	8.3 Poverty Reduction	83
	8.4 Changes in Gender Equality	83
9	Concepts in Gender Equality	85
Annex 1	Application of the Planned Methodologies in the Nicaragua Case Study	89
Annex 2	Country Context	93
Annex 3	Persons Interviewed	107
Annex 4	Bibliography	114
Annex 5	Study Object Grids: Nicaragua	118
Annex 6	Terms of Reference: Evaluation of Sida's support to development cooperation for the promotion of Gender Equality	132

Acronyms and abbreviations

CAST	Change Assessment and Scoring Tool
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CS	Country Strategy
CEDECHA	Atlantic Coast Centre for Human Rights
GTZ	German Technical Co-operation
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IIDH	International Institute for Human Rights (Central America)
INIM	National Women's Institute
MIFAMILIA	Ministry of the Family
MINED	Ministry of Education
MINSA	Ministry of Health
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organisation
PRODEL	Urban Development Program
PROSILAIS	Program in Support of Local Integrated Health Systems
RAAN	North Atlantic Autonomous Region
RAAS	South Atlantic Autonomous Region
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TORs	Terms of Reference
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
URRACAN	Autonomous University of the Atlantic Coast Region of Nicaragua
UTV	Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit

Acknowledgements

The evaluation team sincerely thanks all those who took time and trouble to help us with this challenging assignment in Nicaragua. We were grateful to rely on the time and generous participation of officials of ministries and agencies of the Government of Nicaragua as well as the staff of civil society organisations and of individual women and men in the different towns and cities we were able to visit. Staff at the Swedish Embassy in Managua took time out from very busy schedules to share in constructive and open discussions on gender equality in Nicaragua. In particular, thanks are due to Sara Martínez Bergström for her help in logistics for the team and to Anders Rönquist for his interest and enthusiasm. As team leader for the Nicaragua country study I would like to express my particular appreciation for the essential role played by the national consultants on our team.

Executive Summary

– Nicaragua Report

Introduction

In 2000 Sida commissioned an *Evaluation of Sida's support to development cooperation for the Promotion of Gender Equality* with three objectives: 1) to assess how Sida's mainstreaming strategy is reflected in the country strategy process; 2) to assess the strategic and practical changes with regards to the promotion of gender equality that interventions supported by Sida have contributed to or may have contributed to; and 3) to provide an input to a deeper understanding of the concrete meaning of concepts in interventions supported by Sida (gender equality, empowerment of women, stakeholder participation, strategic and practical changes with regard to gender equality and mainstreaming). The evaluation included three country case studies. This report covers Nicaragua, with Bangladesh and South Africa the subjects of separate reports.

The Nicaragua study team assessed the treatment of gender equality in the Country Strategy (and most recently in the Regional Strategy). They also analyzed the gender equality content and results of four interventions selected for detailed study: Support to the National Police Academy, Urban Development (PRODEL), Support to Local Integrated Health Systems (PROSILAIS), and Support to Democratic Development on the Atlantic Coast (RAAN-ASDI-RAAS). The Nicaragua Country Study took place from March 18 to April 6, 2001. The team comprised Ted Freeman, team leader; Guadelupe Salinas, Olimpia Torres and Milagros Barahona, national consultants; Britha Mikkelsen, overall evaluation coordinator from COWI who participated for the final week; and Sarah Forti and Ane Bonde, also of COWI.

The key study issues derived from the Terms of Reference for the overall study are:

- To what extent is Sida's mainstreaming strategy reflected in the *Country Strategy Process* for Nicaragua?
- What has been the *gender equality content* of the four chosen Sida supported interventions in Nicaragua?
- What is the relationship in each intervention between the pursuit of gender equality as a goal and the need to address *poverty reduction*?
- *Which changes* have occurred in the gender equality situation as a result of the four interventions?

- How can the experiences of the four interventions reviewed assist in a deeper understanding of the use and *meaning of concepts* such as gender equality, women's empowerment, and practical and strategic changes.

A major goal for the evaluation was to identify lessons for future policy and strategy revision and to facilitate the use of these lessons in practical development cooperation efforts.

The evaluation team relied on key informant interviews with Sida staff in Stockholm and Managua, with partner agency staff, with service delivery personnel, with cooperating and observing civil society organizations, with local experts and, most importantly, with women and men (and youth) participating in the four interventions. These interviews were sometimes combined with workshops and small group work on analytical tools such as SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). In addition, of course the evaluation team carried out a structured review of all available documentation on the gender equality situation in Nicaragua as well as documents relating to the Sida Country Strategy and to the four interventions. A series of structured guidelines, concept papers and checklists were used by the evaluation teams in each country to ensure a common approach to the evaluation. For a review of the team's experience in applying the methodologies of the country study for Nicaragua, see Annex 1 to the Report.

The Environment for Gender Equality in Nicaragua

Gender equality remains a challenging goal in the Nicaraguan context. On one hand, there is clear evidence of the burden of inequality which women face in terms of differences in income and the experience of poverty, in negative health outcomes, in victimization due to inter family and sexual violence and physical abuse; and in under-representation and poor access to political decision making. For the most part these costs of inequality are recognized in Nicaragua by civil society and by government.

It is also clear however, that there have been inconsistencies in the response of the national government to the goal of gender equality. Serious challenges to local groups working for the promotion of gender equality and for international cooperation to promote gender equality include the absorption of the National Women's Institute into the Ministry of the Family; recent statements and policies put forward by senior cabinet Ministers in areas such as teaching of sexual rights; the apparent close alliance between some government Ministers and the conservative elements of the Catholic Church; the stance of the Government of Nicaragua at recent international conferences relating to gender equality; and the relative closure of the party political system.

In contrast to the more open approach of the previous government, the current stance (2001) means that local and international agencies promoting gender equality are now "swimming upstream" to a large extent and limits the opportunity for overt dialogue and advocacy.

On the other hand, there are recent signs of a political re-examination of at least the intensity of opposition to many gender equality measures and goals. Of equal importance, there remain opportunities to work with a number of agencies and departments of the Government of Nicaragua. As pointed out to the team by Sida officers and others in Managua, at program and project level there is considerable interest in addressing the goal of gender equality.

It is important not to discount the difficulty, at present, for a bilateral donor to conduct an open and meaningful dialogue with the Government of Nicaragua at highest levels on the problems and possibilities of gender equality. On the other hand, there are avenues for promoting gender equality within and outside the Government of Nicaragua.

Country Strategy and Dialogue on Gender Equality

The 1997 *Country Strategy* for Nicaragua benefited from a very intensive review of the national situation in gender equality carried out in 1994 and followed up with further work in 1996. The CS also was developed in a period of very high interest in gender equality (Nicaragua was one of five countries participating in an initiative to promote increased partnership in gender equality emanating from the Programme of Action for Promoting Equality Between Women and Men in Partner Countries) at Sida headquarters and in the Embassy in Managua.

The resulting 1997 Country Strategy included a specific priority objective for gender equality based on a sound analysis of the conditions of women and men. It also made gender equality a strategic focus for dialogue with the Government of Nicaragua. On the other hand, the transition from a Country Strategy specific to Nicaragua to Nicaragua's inclusion in the Regional Strategy for Central America seems to have contributed to a diminishing of the visibility of gender equality as a priority goal. In this type of transition, it seems to be critical that gender equality issues and actions are maintained in terms of visibility and clarity and, in particular, that country programs developed out of the regional strategy retain a focus on gender equality.

In Nicaragua, Sida has continued to conduct a *dialogue on gender equality* at government-to-government, intervention specific, and civil society levels. Unfortunately, government-to-government dialogue has been severely constrained by the strong differences between the two governments over important policy matters.

Intervention-specific dialogue on gender equality varies in intensity from one Sida supported intervention to the next, largely dependant on factors such as the experience and interest of the Sida managers involved and receptivity and interest of national counterparts. There has been an absence of a systematic approach to assessing the opportunities for gender equality dialogue in each of the interventions and responding to those opportunities.

Turning to dialogue with civil society, it does not seem that the difficulties of dialogue with government have led Sida to systematically increase its efforts at dialogue along the intervention-specific and civil society axes. Despite the positive aspects of the FORUMSYD administered Gender Equality Fund, both parts of the changed Sida strategy toward civil society organizations and NGOs (a more technical working relationship and the administration of a key program through FORUMSYD) have contributed to the perception from some on the Nicaraguan side of a reduced profile and a diminished commitment to working outside government.

This perception may be unfair given the commitments made and it may be a temporary problem present only while the new program gains momentum. On the other hand, coming as it does during a period of diminished dialogue with government, the perception that Sida is less committed to working directly with civil society presents a serious challenge to efforts to promote gender equality.

Mainstreaming Gender Equality

Gender Equality Goals

While the original focus of the National Police intervention was improving the human rights situation in Nicaragua through improved police training and policies, it did include efforts to address practical gender needs of women police trainees. In addition, the intervention benefited from a prior recognition within the National Police of a need to address gender equality issues and from the work of other international cooperation agencies (GTZ, for example, funded gender equality curriculum components in as a supplement to the traditional curriculum of the academy). Finally, the Police Academy intervention did include specific gender equality components relating to the post-graduate training course and the medium term modernization plan.

Faced with a high level of conflict, political instability promoted by the major national political parties and a strategic focus on improving the transparency and accountability of regional and local structures, the RAAN-ASDI-RAAS program has not, until now, included an explicit effort to address gender equality in democratic governance on the Atlantic Coast. The recent Sida funded evaluation of the program did address gender equality, and (as detailed in the sections which follow) there are opportunities for the program to address gender equality goals much more directly in future phases.

Gender equality goals are present in PROSILAIS, but they tend to be focused on different levels of understanding and different definitions of what is gender equality, ranging from attention to women-specific diseases to efforts (in the youth clubs for example) to directly address gender relations in sexual behavior. PROSILAIS presents an example of the co-existence of different definitions of gender equality and different responses to the problem of how to

promote gender equality. What is not clear yet is how extensive and effective are the efforts to make the different goals in gender equality operational.

PRODEL, on the other hand, has reportedly achieved a high level of participation by women and has explicitly targeted those high levels. At the same time, however, this targeting is not based on an analysis of gender differences in the need for credit and other forms of support in urban programming. PRODEL's targets for women's participation are also not accompanied by either a gender equality strategy for the program or by efforts to monitor and evaluate gender equality.

If there was one strong theme emphasized repeatedly during the interviews, workshops and group meetings carried out with Sida staff, delivery agencies, government counterparts, women's rights organizations and participants in each of the programs it was the fact that the time for addressing gender equality is now. Each of these interventions as it enters its next phase has at least reached a stage of strong interest among key stakeholders in a more structured attempt to define gender inequalities and identify meaningful gender equality goals, strategies, activities, and measures.

Gender Mainstreaming

None of the four interventions evaluated in Nicaragua presents a fully developed model of gender mainstreaming. The intervention which shows the most clear signs of an effort to mainstream gender equality is the support to the Police Academy and National Police which combines some diagnostic mechanisms for examining gender equality (with elements of both gender analysis and participatory program development) with fairly explicit gender equality goals, targets, and follow up mechanisms and benefits from a receptive institutional culture and support from other international agencies.

PROSILAIS is the next most active intervention from a gender mainstreaming perspective in that it does encompass both gender equality goals (with varying interpretations) and measures to implement them. On the other hand, it lacks a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating gender equality and some of its gender equality focused activities are somewhat uncoordinated and partial.

PRODEL represents perhaps the most disappointing of the four interventions assessed from a gender equality mainstreaming perspective. A program in urban development which focused on public infrastructure and credit support to poor families for housing and enterprise development would appear to demand a gender equality strategy and a mainstreaming approach based on evaluative experience over the past ten to fifteen years around the world. Perhaps because of its already high participation rate for women, the previous phases of PRODEL have not included a structured analysis of different needs of men and women or of the inequalities which may be present in the system of credit application approval and use.

Finally, the Democratic Development on the Atlantic Coast intervention has, over its first two phases, chosen not to attempt a gender equality mainstreaming approach based on the need to build a legitimized system of local democratic institutions (including a transparent system with reasonable financial accountability) during a period of conflict and political instability.

The evaluation team identified a series of factors which seemed to constrain or facilitate gender mainstreaming in the four interventions:

Constraints to mainstreaming relating to Sida's capacity and operations

- Absence of gender equality expertise in the design phase of Sida support to interventions;
- An apparent absence of the required competency in analysing gender inequalities among some Sida staff;
- A possible expectation that the problem of gender equality is the responsibility of the gender focal point at the Sida Embassy and that other officers are not equally responsible for implementing the gender equality policy and strategy;
- Differences in the level of interest and commitment of Sida staff responsible for a given intervention;
- Perceived conflicts between the policy of gender equality as a priority and the operational needs of projects and interventions;
- Lack of use of sector-specific guidelines, prompt sheets and other tools relating to gender equality mainstreaming;
- Non-inclusion of gender equality issues in many project and program evaluations, reviews, assessments, results reports, etc.

Constraints Relating to Conditions Outside Sida

- The existence of national and regional conditions (for example post-conflict peace-building) which contribute to the over-riding of gender equality as a priority;
- The requirement for socio-economic programs to be economically and financially self-sustaining;
- Limited gender equality skills and capacities among the staff of partner agencies;
- Indifference or resistance on the part of senior and middle managers in partnering agencies.

Clearly, with appropriate planning, training, resources and consistent senior management support Sida and its partners in developing countries may be able to convert each of the constraints listed above to an enabling factor for

gender mainstreaming. The Report points out that conditions in each of the four interventions visited suggest that there are significant opportunities for strengthening gender mainstreaming in further phases and that in some interventions, steps are being taken to do so.

Gender Equality and Poverty

In each of the four interventions examined there are opportunities to better link gender equality efforts to the combating of poverty. For example:

- in the intervention supporting the National Police and the Police Academy there is the clear possibility of linking improvements in more equitable and more effective police services for women and girls to efforts to improve the poverty situation of women and their families;
- in the PRODEL project there is an opportunity to support the economic assistance provided to women for housing and commercial credits with a higher level of non-financial support to improve the effectiveness of the financial credits and support gender equity in the commercial arenas;
- in PROSILAIS, improvements in health service to meet the gender needs of women and girls can be linked to efforts to improve the economic and work status situation of women health workers and volunteers, and,
- the public works and small scale industry components of the Atlantic Coast project can be strengthened from a gender equality perspective going forward. Perhaps more importantly, the gender needs of women and girls in the two Atlantic Autonomous Regions can be fully incorporated into efforts to develop and implement regional anti-poverty programs.

Participation and Gender Equality

Each of the four interventions examined included mechanisms, structures and processes for some form of stakeholder consultation and stakeholder involvement in program planning and direction. In some of the interventions (PRODEL, RAAN-ASDI-RAAS)¹ these processes were limited and did not encompass some major components of the intervention program. They are often “instrumental” in the sense that they serve to provide inputs for program managers to make adjustments to the interventions rather than representing direct involvement by primary stakeholders in program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Nonetheless, the picture painted by these four interventions with respect to stakeholder participation as *it relates to gender equality and women (and youth) partic-*

¹ As noted above, participatory planning methods through workshops with key stakeholders are being used in the preparation of the third phase of RAAN/ASDI/RAAS although it was not clear at the time of the team’s evaluation mission to Nicaragua how much these processes would influence the gender equality content of this intervention.

ipation can be described as positive with a potential for further development. The participatory mechanisms developed and implemented for each intervention have at least some degree of relevance for addressing issues of gender equality. In the case of the Police Academy and PROSILAIS, (and to a lesser extent perhaps, the infrastructure component of PRODEL) the evaluation team was able to identify instances where the participatory mechanisms had been used by women stakeholders to identify and pursue objectives and interests directly related to gender equality. This may have occurred in RAAN/ASDI/RAAS as well but the evaluation team's limited time in the Atlantic Region did not allow for a full examination of the Technical Units and INDEL components of the project.

Changes in Gender Equality

At least some gender equality changes have been identified in relation to each of the four interventions examined.

In order of significance, intensity and durability of the gender equality changes observed, the Support to the Police Academy and National Police program has clearly seen the largest number and the most significant changes. This was foreseeable in that the intervention was the only one that specifically targeted a major cultural and organizational change in gender equality within an institution. Further, the Police Academy intervention was complementary to structural changes and initiatives already under way within the police force and to support from other donors and NGOs. The key challenge for this intervention will be to follow through so that gains made are not lost but are extended throughout the National Police.

In the case of PROSILAIS, significant practical and strategic gender changes have been identified in reproductive health and family planning choices and in improved access to services for women. It is not clear how widespread these changes may be or to what extent they will be extended in future.

In the case of PRODEL and the Atlantic Coast interventions, observed changes for individual women participants came about through access to services and resources. In a sense, since they do not imply a *change* in either the rate of women's participation or in their roles, one might question whether they represent gender equality changes at all.

It is clear, however, that only PROSILAIS and the Police Academy interventions successfully extended gender equality changes into the area of women's strategic gender interests. This seems to be a consequence of their explicit recognition of gender equality goals (and in the case of the Police Academy, targets for change in gender equality).

Finally, the Police Academy and PROSILAIS projects have also had more significant impacts on women's empowerment and on the recognition of necessary re-examination of male roles and masculinities in their prospective institutions. Once again, it is important to draw some link between these two

interventions and their associated effects and the relatively higher level of mainstreaming (and of participation) noted for each of them when compared to PRODEL and to RAAN/ASDI/RAAS.

Factors Promoting Gender Equality Change

- It is not surprising, perhaps, that the two interventions with *the most significant level of mainstreaming* (the National Police Academy and PROSILAIS) also provide evidence of the most significant associated gender equality changes observed by the evaluation team members and by external stakeholders.
- The linking of gender equality in service delivery and in internal institutional arrangements to an important and immediate institutional imperative such as modernization and professionalization for the National Police or improved effectiveness in health services for PROSILAIS helps to build an internal constituency for gender change and thus influences results;
- Formal or informal structures such as the consultative counsel on gender in the Police Academy project (formal) or the informal networks of women and men health professionals with an interest in gender in PROSILAIS can serve as both a monitoring mechanism and a source of internal advocacy in support of gender equality change;
- One of the key factors in enabling and sustaining gender equality change at the institutional level is the presence of publicly (within the institution) designated leadership for gender equality goals at the most prestigious levels of the organization; and,
- Interventions which establish explicit and quantitative goals in gender change, (such as the goals in the National Police to reach higher levels of women's representation in key managerial and operational functions historically almost exclusive to men) have an advantage in the promotion of more strategic gender change since the associated change in traditional male and female roles and the institutional share of power is very visible.

Lessons Learned

Country Strategy and Dialogue

1. In preparing a country or regional strategy document, it is essential that the gender analysis component of the country context be explicitly included (with sufficient space) in the appropriate section of the strategy document and that it should be linked to activities and interventions described under different priority areas and not only to gender equality as a separate priority.
2. In the transition from a country-specific to a regional Sida strategy it is important that gender analysis and gender equality content is developed for each country in the region. The transition to a regional strategy also means

that country program plans become critical in the development and description of gender equality goals for the strategy and for interventions.

3. Sida's historical record of strong and public support to gender equality in any country can represent an important organizational asset, especially in relation to policy dialogue. This asset can be sustained and renewed over time. Indeed, civil society organizations involved in supporting gender equality tend to place considerable importance on the continued public presence and leadership of Sida as a representative of international donor sentiment regarding gender equality.
4. Sida seems to lack a structured and systematic approach to determining which should be the key messages conveyed in dialogue with partners concerning the policy content of specific interventions, especially with regard to cross cutting priorities such as gender equality. Without such an approach the extent and quality of dialogue on gender equality tends to vary according to the personal interest and capacity of the officers (and international consultants) involved.

Mainstreaming

5. There is a need for greater recognition of the essential role of systematic and structured gender analysis in the design, development and evaluation of Sida supported bilateral interventions if the strategy of mainstreaming is to prove effective as a means of achieving the goals established in the Policy and Action Programme.
6. There are still important institutional obstacles to the effective implementation of a mainstreaming strategy at Sida (many are common to most bilateral development agencies). These include: apparent lack of available gender equality expertise during the design phase of interventions; perceptions that the gender focal point bears most responsibility for addressing gender equality; differences in personal interest among Sida officers; insufficient questioning of some "technical" factors which at first appear to inhibit the gender equality potential of some interventions; under-use of design tools in gender equality; and lack of attention to gender equality issues in intervention monitoring and evaluation.
7. It is difficult for Sida alone to advocate for and ensure the presence of meaningful gender equality goals. In those cases where the counterpart agency has started its own process of identifying and achieving gender equality goals, Sida's support can be much more effective. This benefit of the counterpart agency's receptiveness is magnified if other international sources of support are also addressing gender equality.
8. Where Sida has a long history as the key partner providing support to a major initiative and its implementing institution, there is a clear opportunity for the agency to introduce and to sustain a strong dialogue on gender equality which should, in turn, contribute to mainstreaming.

9. There are often opportunities to link gender equality objectives from one intervention to another as one means of mainstreaming. In Nicaragua for example, three of the four interventions studied involve agencies already working together in some region of the country on issues which relate to gender equality (support to the National Police, Democratic Development on the Atlantic Coast and PROSILAIS) yet none of the interventions provided direct support to that interaction. Staff at the embassy acknowledged in discussions that this would be a fruitful area to pursue for strengthening the gender equality impacts of the different interventions.
10. The understanding of gender equality is not uniform over the life of an intervention or even among the staff at different levels of an intervention at any point in time. Definitions and understandings of gender equality may develop and improve during the life of a program. With this in mind, program managers need to be open to a gradual focusing and improvement in gender equality goals during any given phase of a program. They need not necessarily wait for the four yearly transition from one phase of an intervention to the next to refine and improve gender equality goals. This, of course, would imply an ongoing investment by Sida in training and mobilization for field and headquarters officers so that they are equipped to take advantage of the opportunities which may arise for promoting gender equality during the life of a given intervention.

Poverty Reduction

11. The issue of poverty reduction is often inter-linked with the question of how best to address gender inequalities. The interventions in Nicaragua provide examples of how efforts to address gender inequalities could be linked to strategies to reduce poverty. Examples include improved access to gender strategic health services for women, better access by women to effective protection from violence and improved access by women to fair treatment by the justice system. At the same time there is no automatic link between measures to address gender inequality and efforts to reduce poverty. It will require an explicit analysis of how gender inequality relates to poverty if attempts to address one are to assist in mitigating the other. For example, knowledge that the National Police force provides one (admittedly difficult) road out of poverty for some Nicaraguans, heightens the urgency that young and poor Nicaraguan women be provided a reasonable chance of taking that road.

Changes in Gender Equality

12. Where interventions have contributed to a group sense of women's empowerment through improved knowledge, access to redress for rights infractions, support to women by senior institutional officers, etc. this empowerment has provoked some resistance and has necessitated bringing men into the loop of attention to gender inequality. Of equal importance,

empowerment may be restricted to part of an institution or community and can prove short-lived when changes are not rolled out through the entire organizational culture. Empowerment of women will thus require extended work throughout institutions to avoid reversals.

13. Effective programs to address gender inequality and to promote women's empowerment will, sooner or later, require direct attention to male roles and to socially determined definitions of masculinities. In Nicaragua, at least, there is an existing national debate on this issue. At the same time, violence by men against women and children is a key entry point for the discussion of male roles and masculinities and represents one possible path for dialogue on gender inequality and its redress. The topic of intrafamilial violence and violence against women remains very controversial in Nicaraguan society. If it is to be used as a valid entry point for discussion of masculinities, great care must be taken in the design of initiatives in this area.
14. The more specific and complete the definition of gender equality used in the evolution of a specific intervention, the more likely it is that the intervention will be designed and implemented to contribute to strategic gender changes. This places an even greater importance on the use of gender analysis and of mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving gender equality, despite the apparent institutional obstacles.
15. Besides the strength and clarity of gender equality goals and the extent of gender mainstreaming, there are other factors which influence the different types of gender change associated with Sida supported interventions. The most apparently important of these include:
 - The linking of gender equality in service delivery and in internal institutional arrangements to an important and immediate institutional goal other than gender equality;
 - Formal or informal structures within programmes and institutions to serve as both a monitoring mechanism and a source of internal advocacy in support of gender equality change;
 - Designated and visible leadership for gender equality goals at the most prestigious levels of the implementing organization; and,
 - The presence of explicit and quantitative goals in gender change since they highlight the visibility of proposed changes in traditional male and female roles and of a different sharing of power within the institution concerned (although this may give rise to resistance and a need to more visibly and formally include men).
16. In the period since 1996, civil society in Nicaragua (and some of the institutions supported by Sida) has begun a re-examination of traditional male roles and masculinities and a nascent national dialogue on the need to re-define masculinities in a more positive way. Sida gender interventions in the future will need to consider how they can creatively contribute to this dialogue in Nicaragua and in other countries.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This draft report presents the results of the first country field study mission component of the Evaluation of Sida's Support to Development Co-operation for the Promotion of Gender Equality. The evaluation is being carried out for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency by a consortium with COWI of Copenhagen as the lead firm assisted by Goss Gilroy Inc. of Ottawa.

The purpose of the evaluation is:

- To assess how Sida's mainstreaming strategy is reflected in the country strategy process;
- To assess the strategic and practical changes with regard to the promotion of gender equality that interventions supported by Sida have contributed or may contribute to.
- To provide an input to a deeper understanding of the concrete meaning of the following concepts in interventions supported by Sida: gender equality, empowerment of women, stakeholder participation, strategic and practical changes with regard to gender equality and mainstreaming.

In addition to consultations and document reviews carried out at Sida headquarters in Stockholm, the study methodology provides for case studies at the country and intervention level in Nicaragua, South Africa and Bangladesh. The Nicaragua field mission was carried out between March 18 and April 6, with South Africa to follow in late April and Bangladesh in May.

The evaluation team for Nicaragua consisted of seven persons. Ted Freeman of Goss Gilroy Inc. served as the team leader for Nicaragua and is a member of the core team for the overall evaluation. Sarah Forti and Ane Bonde of COWI both acted as international consultants specialising in gender and evaluation. Milagros Barahona was the lead national consultant on the Nicaragua team. Guadalupe Salinas served as the national consultant specialising in the programming in the North and South Atlantic Autonomous Regions and on the Police Academy intervention. Olympia Torres served as field evaluation specialist working with Ane Bonde and Sarah Forti in their work with PROSILAIS and PRODEL. Finally, Britha Mikkelsen, the overall evaluation co-ordinator joined the team to take part in the final week of the mission in Nicaragua.

The team would like to thank all the women and men who provided their time and their insights and who shared their experiences during the evaluation mission.

1.1 Scope of the Nicaragua Country Case Study

In each country, the evaluation study teams were responsible for assessing the Country Strategy and its treatment of gender equality along with four interventions chosen from the health, urban development or democratic governance sectors. In Nicaragua the four interventions chosen were:

- Democratic Governance: The Police Academy and National Police (Academia Policia);
- Democratic Governance: Support to Strengthening Democracy on the Atlantic Coast in Nicaragua (RAAN/ASDI/RAAN);
- Urban Development: the Program for Local Development (PRODEL);
- Health: Support to Local Integrated Health Systems (PROSILAIS).

The interventions were selected by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit at Sida based, in part, on the criteria that gender equality was reportedly mainstreamed in each and each may have contributed to changes with regard to gender equality.

The key issues covered by the Nicaragua field mission are drawn directly from the Terms of Reference for the overall study (*Evaluation of Sida's Support to Development Co-operation for the Promotion of Gender Equality*) and from supplementary meetings and discussions between the evaluation team members and the project authority. These key issues may be summarised as follows:

1. To what extent is Sida's mainstreaming strategy reflected in the *country strategy process* for Nicaragua?
 - a. What has been the quality of the gender analysis in the country strategy process;
 - b. To what extent and how is gender equality promoted in the dialogue with the partner country during the process?
2. What has been the *gender equality content* of the four chosen Sida supported interventions in Nicaragua? More specifically:
 - a. To what extent have the interventions focused on gender equality as a priority? Is the goal of gender equality reflected in the design and implementation (and evaluation and monitoring) of the interventions? What obstacles are present which could prevent the interventions from addressing gender equality? What opportunities are present?
 - b. What evidence exists of the use of a mainstreaming strategy for including gender equality as a goal of the interventions?

3. What is the relationship in each intervention between the pursuit of gender equality as a goal and the need to *address poverty reduction*? Is there any conflict between gender equality and poverty reduction goals in the intervention? Are there real or potential synergies?
4. What has been the overall level of *stakeholder participation* in the intervention as it relates to the question of gender equality? What are the obstacles and opportunities for stakeholder participation in the area of gender equality?
5. *Which changes* have occurred in the gender equality situation in Nicaragua as a result of the interventions? To what extent have there been changes in meeting the practical gender needs of women and/or in advancing their strategic gender interests?
 - a. Have the interventions had a positive effect on women's empowerment?
 - b. Have they addressed, and/or led to changes in male roles and in conceptions of masculinities?
6. How can the experience of the Nicaragua country strategy and the four interventions reviewed assist in a deeper understanding of the use and meaning of the *concepts* of:
 - a. Gender equality;
 - b. Empowerment of women;
 - c. Stakeholder participation;
 - d. Strategic and practical changes with regard to gender equality;
 - e. Mainstreaming; and,
 - f. Male roles and masculinities?

In attempting to address these evaluation issues, the evaluation team was guided by the outcome of the Inception Workshop carried out in Stockholm in early March. The participants in the workshop emphasised the need to balance a retrospective and prescriptive approach to the evaluation. As a result, the Nicaragua team has tried to develop lessons learned which will contribute to realising future opportunities for supporting gender equality rather than shedding light only on past performance.

1.2 Analytical Dimensions of the Key Evaluation Issues

In order to provide a more concrete background to the analysis which follows in the report, it is useful to briefly outline some of the ways in which the evaluation team framed its analysis of key issues within the context of Sida's programme and of conditions in Nicaragua.

1.2.1 Dialogue on Gender Equality

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation emphasised the importance of a dialogue on gender equality between the Government of Sweden and host governments in order to ensure shared commitment to this important goal. In addition, the discussions between the evaluation team members and staff at Sida headquarters in Stockholm pointed out the way the dialogue on gender equality may supplement specific gender equality actions in bilateral interventions. In essence, a number of Sida officers reminded team members that what happens outside of specific interventions in the form of dialogue may be equally important to what happens within the interventions.

In order to adequately assess the issue of dialogue and its use in promoting gender equality, the Nicaragua study team examined three different types of dialogue:

1. Direct government-to-government dialogue on gender equality between the Governments of Sweden (represented by the Swedish embassy and its staff) and the Government of Nicaragua but outside the dimensions of specific interventions.
2. Formal and informal dialogue on gender equality within the context of specific interventions using the four case study interventions as test cases; and,
3. Dialogue between Sida and specific civil society organisations (CSOs in Nicaragua (or coalitions and public for a of SCOs).

1.2.2 Defining Gender Equality Goals

As indicated in the Action Programme for implementing Sida's Gender Equality Strategy, equality between men and women represents a goal of Swedish Development Co-operation with mainstreaming selected as the defining strategy for achieving that goal. In light of this fact, the Nicaragua evaluation team needed to establish a reasonable level of expectations when examining the four interventions for goals in gender equality. Given the fact that the Sida's Action Programme for Promoting Equality Between Women and Men in Partner Countries (with its constituent Policy and Action Plan) was officially published in April 1997 and was pre-dated by a considerable body of Sida-published work on gender equality¹, it seems reasonable that Sida supported development co-operation interventions developed in the 1996–1997 period would exhibit some formal commitment to gender equality goals.

On the other hand, three of the four interventions studied by the team in Nicaragua (RAAN-ASDI-RAAS, PROSILAIS and PRODEL) were not en-

¹ For example, *Gender Equality in Development Cooperation; Taking the Next Step*, Sida 1995; *Gender Equality Experience and Results Analysis Exercise*, Beth Worniuk for Sida, 1996. *Mainstreaming: A Strategy for Achieving Equality Between Men and Women*, 1996.

tirely new projects but later phases of ongoing interventions. Only the support to the Police Academy and the National Police seems to have been a more or less new initiative when the current phase was in development. It is perhaps not entirely surprising therefore that these three interventions seemed to follow along prior lines of goals and commitments with little formal recognition of gender equality as a goal.

Finally, it was important for the team to establish which goals in gender equality should be reflected in the design or implementation of an intervention. As pointed out in the *Inception Report* prepared during the first phase of this evaluation, Sida's *Action Programme for Promoting Equality Between Men and Women in Partner Countries* provides a working definition of gender equality:

Equality between women and men refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality is not a women's issue but should concern and engage men as well as women. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Equality includes both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The quantitative aspect concerns the equal distribution of women and men in all areas of society. The qualitative aspects refers to the need to give equal weight to the knowledge, experience and values of both women and men as a means of enriching and directing all areas of societal development. Equality between men and women is seen as both a human rights issue and a pre-condition for and indicator of sustainable people centred development.

In short, an attempt to address gender equality should consider and deal with:

- Socially defined roles and expectations;
- Changes in gender relations;
- Variables over time and geography;
- Power and inequality;
- Institutions, and,
- Multidimensional links to economic, political and social interactions.

This characterisation of gender equality in terms of a fairly complex set of relations between men and women was of critical importance to the analysis carried out by the Nicaragua evaluation team since it meant that simple targeted levels of participation by women cannot – in themselves and in the absence of any evidence of a change in the relative situation of men and women – really be seen as gender equality goals since they often may not represent any effort to address inequalities.

1.2.3 Mainstreaming

If the gender goals question deals with the “what” is intended to be achieved in gender equality, the question of mainstreaming confronts the issue of “how” to achieve those goals and is, therefore, quite closely linked .

Sida's Policy on Gender Equality (1997) provides a description of what is expected as gender equality is mainstreamed into policies, programs and interventions.

“Mainstreaming implies that attention to equality between men and women shall pervade all development policies, strategies and interventions. Mainstreaming does not simply mean ensuring that women participate as well as men in a development agenda that has already been decided upon. It aims to ensure that women as well as men are involved in setting goals and in planning so that development meets the needs of both women and men. Mainstreaming thus involves giving attention to equality in relation to analyses, policies, planning processes and institutional practices which set the overall conditions for development. Mainstreaming requires an analysis of the potential impact on women and men of development interventions in all areas of social development. Such analysis should be carried out **before** the important decisions on goals, strategies and resource allocation are made.”

Clearly, mainstreaming is thus not an all or nothing proposition. Interventions might reasonably be expected to exhibit some but not all of the characteristics described under mainstreaming in the Policy.

With the realisation that interventions might be partially mainstreamed, during the pre-evaluation workshop in Stockholm, the members of the evaluation team developed and proposed a six-point classification system to assess the level of mainstreaming in a given intervention. The scale was structured as follows:

1. ZERO mainstreaming which is quite self-explanatory and implies either no mention of gender equality or an obviously superficial reference;
2. PRO FORMA mainstreaming meaning a merely token sentence or paragraph is found in project design documents with no evidence that it effected the structure or activities of the intervention;
3. INTEGRATED mainstreaming meaning that a systematic gender analysis was done but there is little or no evidence that it effected project design;
4. INSTITUTIONALISED mainstreaming meaning that the findings of the gender analysis were evident in some aspects of intervention design;
5. IMPLEMENTED mainstreaming meaning that the intervention went ahead and implemented the gender equality changes suggested by the gender analysis; and,
6. MONITORED AND EVALUATED mainstreaming meaning that systems for monitoring and evaluating the interventions gathered the necessary data and conducted the appropriate analysis to report on the gender equality results of the intervention.

Importantly, this scale represents a process model of mainstreaming and attempts to identify how and where considerations of gender equality should inform the project identification, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation cycle in major bilateral interventions supported by Sida. It was es-

pecially important in that it allowed the evaluation team to classify interventions where some degree of attention was paid to gender equality as a theme or priority but where essential elements of the mainstreaming process may have been left out so that the end effect on program design, implementation and monitoring has been quite slight.

1.2.4 Poverty and Gender Equality

A key issue for this evaluation concerns the extent that there may be synergies and complementarities in efforts to reduce gender inequality and efforts to reduce poverty.

In addressing this issue, the Nicaragua team members first had to assess how the different interventions had defined poverty and targeted the poor (and especially how the poor had been defined in the intervention process). Where interventions did focus on poverty, the question becomes how much is known about the different ways in which men and women and boys and girls are experiencing poverty. Finally, the team focused on whether efforts to address poverty would be improved or hampered in their effectiveness where gender equality considerations are built into the interventions.

1.2.5 Stakeholder Participation and Gender Equality

The Inception Report to this evaluation proposed that participation of stakeholders (especially primary stakeholders) in the design, development, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs in development co-operation could be assessed using a modified scale which ranks stakeholder participation across seven different levels:

1. Passive Participation (as recipients of information);
2. Participation in information giving;
3. Participation by consultation;
4. Participation for material incentives;
5. Functional participation (forming groups to meet pre-determined project objectives);
6. Interactive participation (participation in joint analysis leading to action plans and the formation of new local institutions);
7. Self-Mobilisation (taking initiatives independent of external institutions).

The inception report also emphasised that stakeholder participation should be examined from the perspective of at least three groups:

- *Primary stakeholders* are those who will be directly or ultimately affected by the intervention, either positively or negatively;
- *Secondary stakeholders* are intermediaries such as implementing organisations, or other individuals, persons, groups or institutions involved in an intervention (including funders);

- *Key stakeholders* are those of the primary and secondary stakeholders who can significantly affect or influence an intervention either positively or negatively.

The challenge for the Nicaragua evaluation team was first to establish the level of primary stakeholder participation in the intervention (regardless of gender concerns) and then to identify the extent to which women and men (and youth and children) could be seen as participating in ways that promoted gender equality.

In the end, the evaluation team found it most useful not to restrict our review of participation to primary stakeholders since much of the consultation and participatory project development and management in the initiatives takes place at the level of secondary stakeholders. The approach used was to document the *mechanisms* used in each intervention to promote participation and to assess how those mechanisms influenced the gender equality content and orientation of the intervention.

1.2.6 Changes in Gender Equality

Having examined each intervention to see the extent to which they included gender equality goals; how they did or did not reflect a mainstreaming approach to gender equality; how poverty reduction and gender equality inter-related; and, how participation did or did not contribute to understanding gender equality needs and actions an important question remained for the Nicaragua evaluation team: What changes in gender equality have occurred as a result of these four interventions (or what changes in gender equality have occurred with a contribution from these four interventions among other factors)?

In examining gender equality changes related to the four interventions, the evaluation team looked at four different aspects of gender equality:

- a. What qualitative and quantitative changes in gender equality can be linked to the interventions (or to situations which the interventions have contributed to)?
- b. Have the interventions had a positive effect on women's empowerment;
- c. Have the interventions identified a need for changes in male roles and the definition of masculinities and have they contributed to such changes?
- d. Have the interventions contributed to improvements in meeting women's practical needs and advancing their strategic interests?

In the absence of a sector or initiative specific baseline analysis of gender conditions relative to each initiative, the Nicaragua team relied on either quantitative descriptions of the gender equality related outputs of projects or on observed and reported differences among women and men project beneficiaries to assess the type and level of gender equality changes associated with each intervention.

The Nicaragua team also focused on different dimensions of the reported changes in gender equality associated with the four interventions. These included:

Empowerment:

The *Inception Report* discusses some of the characteristics of women's empowerment found to be particularly relevant in assessing the changes brought about in some relation to the four interventions examined in Nicaragua:

- Empowerment is not something that can be done to people, rather women need to be the agents of their own empowerment. Outsiders and outside organisations can help create the conditions favourable to women's empowerment;
- Empowerment can occur at the personal, relational and collective level where it has different meanings.
 - *Personal* empowerment involves developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity. It involves undoing the effects of internalised oppression;
 - *Relational* empowerment involves developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship and the decisions made within it;
 - *Collective* empowerment occurs when individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had on their own.

In addition, the evaluation team felt that empowerment included important elements of knowledge, self awareness, and self esteem for women (whether personal or collective) and that it required not only knowledge of the rights of women but some means – addressed within or outside the intervention – to put that knowledge into practice.

Strategic and Practical Changes in Gender Equality

In addressing this question, the Nicaragua study team was guided by the definitions of practical and strategic needs and interests presented in the *Inception Report* which defined the two categories as follows:

Practical gender needs and changes

Practical gender needs derive from daily living conditions and the prevailing gender roles of women and men. Therefore, women and men – when consulted separately – will often identify different practical needs, for example women for an easily accessible water source and men for roads. Because practical gender needs are related to daily living conditions and to women's and men's need to meet their basic welfare requirements, they are quite easily perceived and articulated. Because practical needs are embedded in the existing gender-based division of labour, women and men may agree on the changes but realising these needs may still be problematic.

Strategic gender interests and changes

Strategic gender interests are related to power structures and derive from the subordinated position of women in relation to men. Strategic gender interests exist at several levels, for example women's lack of voice within the household, women's lack of influence on decision making in government and lack of recognition and value placed on unpaid household work in national accounts.

Strategic gender changes are related to strengthening women's position in society *in relation to men*. These changes include women's increasing consciousness of their subordination, increasing their opportunities for choice and self-determination, and organising together to bring about transformation of their own position and of the prevailing social order in which they live. Strategic gender interests and changes are, therefore, highly contested.

1.3 Methodology

The methodologies used by each country case study team have been largely identical with important operational variations to deal with the specific operational context of the Sida program of co-operation in each country. These methodologies were reviewed in meetings with Sida staff in Stockholm in early March 2001 and adjusted to take account of their observations. In addition, the methodologies and their application were refined in a team workshop over two days with participation with at least three members of each country study team.

The basic methodological steps in the Nicaragua country case study were as follows:

1. A structured review of Sida documents on the Nicaragua country strategy and program and on the four interventions prepared from documents provided by the Evaluation and Audit Division resulting in preparation of a documents review summary with information on gender equality relevant to each intervention;
2. Interviews with Sida personnel in Stockholm (including consultants where appropriate) with knowledge of either the evolution of the Nicaragua country strategy and approach or of the four interventions chosen for review;
3. Preparation of draft study object grids for each of the four interventions and for the country strategy. The study object grids provide a matrix of the key issues (in short form); the specific sub-questions associate with those issues; key data sources and the methods to be used in addressing the issues and sub-issues. The study object grids are presented in annex 5 below;
4. In developing and refining the study object grids, team members were guided by concept papers and sector-specific prompt sheets developed during the inception phase of the study;

5. Prior to arrival of the international members of the study team, national consultants conducted preliminary stakeholder interviews and contacted key project co-ordinators and organised, as much as possible, key informant interviews, workshops, and other evaluation contacts;
6. During the evaluation mission, members of the study team met and conducted single and group interviews with a wide range of key stakeholders, participants and beneficiaries of the four interventions as well as with Sida staff at the embassy and with project co-ordinators. Annex 3 below provides a listing of the people interviewed by team members. In addition, team members gathered copies of recent evaluations and reviewed newer project documents not available at Sida headquarters. It was also possible for team members to access key documents providing direct evidence of the gender equality content of specific interventions in such areas as strategic planning, curriculum development, operational plans etc. Wherever they were available (from interviews or documents, team members gathered quantitative data on the gender equality effects of the interventions);
7. To the extent possible, study team members conducted a series of more structured workshops and participatory consultations with women, men and youth participants and beneficiaries associated with each of the four interventions;
8. In contacts with primary stakeholders, evaluation team members were able on a number of occasions to carry out a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis workshop focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of efforts to address gender equality in the four interventions examined. Similarly, in assessing the extent of changes in gender equality, evaluation team members used the Change Assessment and Scoring Tool (CAST) as a means of categorising changes and their significance.
9. In the third week of the field study, team members met and prepared detailed briefings on the preliminary findings and conclusions of the study relating to each of the interventions. These were presented in a series of four debriefing discussions/workshops with stakeholders from each of the four interventions carried out over a two-day period in Managua.
10. A study mission de-briefing and discussion of overall findings and conclusions was carried out with Swedish Embassy staff on the final day of the field mission.
11. Results of the country case study were compiled by team members and consolidated in this report.

It is important to note that the evaluation team was careful to ensure that no real or apparent conflicts of interest would influence the findings and conclusions of the study. For that reason, Milagros Barahona, who has been involved in supporting the management and development of the Police Acade-

my and National Police project, was not involved in the review or assessment of that project which was examined by two other members of the team (Ted Freeman and Guadalupe Salinas).

It is also worth noting that the team did have more complete access to key decision makers for some interventions in comparison to others. This was a result of either the agency involved making more key informants available, the existence of a richer body of evaluative and informative documentation, or the vagaries of chance during the team's mission to Nicaragua. On the other hand, the evaluation team, with the assistance of the Swedish Embassy in Nicaragua, worked to overcome these differences by, for example, increasing the number of site visits to projects outside Managua so that a broader field perspective could enlighten interventions where meetings with the project authority were limited due to staff availability. As noted, below, the team is confident that the findings reported are based on a sufficient review of the key informants and documentary sources accessible within the time and resources constraints which a study of this type must necessarily face.

Annex 1 to the Report presents a brief examination of the Nicaragua evaluation team's experience in implementing the methodologies of the study and provides observations on which aspects were particularly effective and which were more difficult. In general terms, the evaluation team is confident that the findings reported below are well supported by the data gathered during the study and by the analytical methods which are referred to throughout the report.

Chapter 2

Gender Equality – Country Context in Nicaragua

Annex 2.0 to this report provides an extensive discussion of the key aspects of gender equality and the national social, economic, and political context in Nicaragua. In the interest of brevity, this section summarises some of the key information from Annex 2.0.

2.1 Basic Gender Equality Indicators

Table 2.1 below presents some basic indicators of gender equality in Nicaragua measured at three different dates (1993, 1996 and 1999).

In the most basic terms, it seems clear there was a considerable increase in both women's participation rate in the labour market and their rate of employment between 1993 and 1996 from 30.3% for participation and 26.4% in occupation rates to 48.0% in participation and 40.7% in occupation. This rate of increase was not sustained, however and both participation and occupation rates for women did not change significantly from 1996 to 1999.

Most of the indicators in table 2.1 indicate that the basic structural differences between men and women in Nicaraguan society have changed little if at all in the period from 1996 to 1999. Women continue to have less access to land ownership and to positions of management and ownership in the formal employment sector. While poorer women do have comparable access to credit, the loans they receive continue to be much smaller than those provided to men. In addition, the basic health indicator of maternal mortality has not moved significantly according to PAHO estimates made in 1997 (MINSAs data reports a drop of maternal mortality from 159 in 1993 to 130 in 1997/98) and induced abortions remain a significant cause of maternal mortality although accurate data are very difficult to find regarding this controversial issue.

Similarly, women in Nicaragua continue to suffer from sexual violence and common assault although trend data in this area is difficult to secure because of the recent improvements in the reporting of crime statistics on a gender disaggregated basis.

Moving beyond a statistical overview of gender equality, it is useful to examine some of the contextual and qualitative aspects of the national effort (from all stakeholders) to address gender inequalities in Nicaragua.

Table 2.1 Gender Indicators						
Indicator	1993		1996		1999	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Labour Market Part. Rate (%)	64.6	30.3	73.2	48.0	76.5	48.0
Rate of Occupation (%)	55.7	26.4	66.4	40.7	72.4	44.5
Sub-Employment (%)	42.5	44.6	43.4	44.0	80.3	90.9
Un-Employment (%)	13.8	12.7	9.2	16.3	5.4	7.3
Employed in Formal Sector (%)	53.0	42.0	62.6	75.4	67.3	75.9
Manager/Owner (% among emp.)			4.3	0.8	5.4	1.6
Direct Cash Income			29.1	33.2	27.7	37.6
Salaried Employee			46.6	38.0	44.8	37.6
Non Compensated Family Work			20.0	28.0	22.1	25.3
Access to Credit (Among Poor)						
As % of Beneficiaries			51.0	49.9	54.9	45.1
Access to Credit (Among Poor)						
As % of Loaned Amounts			67.4	32.6	68.2	31.8
Access to Training (Among Poor)			4.6	4.3	6.2	6.5
Access to Land (Registered Own Name)			68.0	13.0	67.0	13.0
Access to Land (Registered Jointly with Partner)			3.0	3.0	8.0	8.0
Maternal Mortality Rate ²		159		160 (PAHO-97)		139
Women victims of Sexual Violence		1,239				1,289
Victims of Common Assault					9,797	9,081
Homicide Victims					551	72

Sources: 1993 Data: *Análisis de La Situación Actual de La Población Nicaraguense: Análisis de Género*. Sida, 1994.
1996 and 1997 Data: *De Beijing a Nueva York – Balance – Del Movimiento de Mujeres de Nicaragua sobre los compromisos de Beijing*,
Iniciativa Nacional Para El Surgimiento A La Plataforma De Acción Mundial (Oxfam Canada and Ford Foundation, 2000).

2.2 National Commitments to Equal Rights of Women and Men

Nicaragua has formally adopted or endorsed most of the international legislation that refers to the equal rights of women and men. It has also endorsed the Action Plans derived from the UN world conferences held during the 1990s.

Some of the international treaties and conventions relating to gender equality are already part of the National Constitution; others have the status of ordinary law, while still others are considered only moral commitments.

² There is considerable debate in Nicaragua over the most accurate measures of maternal mortality. The document prepared for the follow-up to Beijing reports that PAHO estimated maternal mortality as high as 160 in 1997 while a rate of 139 per 100,000 live births is used as the baseline figure for 2000 in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Program (PRSP) of the Government of Nicaragua. MINSAs, on the other hand, has reported a figure as low as 106 for 1998 in the Integrated Attention Information System.

Among the most important national and international commitments to equal rights for women made by the Government of Nicaragua have been its ratification of international human rights declarations (e.g. the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on the Rights of Children) which have the force of constitutional law in Nicaragua. At the level of ordinary Nicaraguan Law commitments include the Convention on Political Rights of Women and the Inter-American Convention on the Concession of Political Rights to Women. Nicaragua is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979).

There are still serious omissions, in national legislation, specific regulations and in legal procedures relevant to Nicaragua's formal commitments to equality between women and men. In addition, many representatives of organisations addressing gender inequalities have argued that barriers to the achievement of gender equality are being reinforced by movements to close the political system and by the development of strong ideological links between the governing political party and the conservative hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Nicaragua. This trend has been reflected, for example, in increasingly conservative positions taken by the Government of Nicaragua in international meetings and in efforts to revise the criminal code to make access to therapeutic abortion impossible.

2.3 Economic Policy

Researchers have identified a masculine bias in economic policies in a number of recent studies. This bias is usually documented in terms of the disproportionate negative impact of economic policy (especially macro-economic policy and structural adjustment) on women. For example:

- Cuts in public services have transferred an increasing burden of unpaid service to women, particularly in primary health, and pre school education;
- State reform programs have meant greater unemployment for women. Women's share in public service employment declined from 41% in 1992 to 12% in 1996. At the same time, women have less access to the best jobs in the small private sector because employers see maternity and women's responsibilities within the family as factors reducing their contribution to profits;
- Banking system reforms have meant increasing exclusion for women because of stricter security requirements for loans which many cannot meet;
- Economic sectors where women have traditionally had a large presence, such as textiles and food processing have been among those most negatively effected by the opening of Nicaraguan markets to international trade competition;

- Establishment of local outlets of large transnational retail and service chains has led to the elimination of many small privately owned outlets where women's presence as workers and owners was quite high; and,
- the reduction of the formal sector and reliance on the informal sector for growth have combined to force many women to accept activities and jobs under deteriorated labour conditions and for very low wages.

Researchers on gender equality issues have also been critical of the recent Poverty Reduction Strategy Program (PSRP) as lacking in analysis of the gender situation in Nicaragua with a resultant failure to include concrete measures to ensure equal access for women and men to critical economic resources and to improvements in services. For a more complete discussion of the PSRP and Nicaragua's participation in the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) see Annex 2.

2.4 Inter Family and Sexual Violence

Since 1993, government and civil society organisations have carried out large-scale awareness campaigns to sensitise public opinion on domestic violence. In 1998, the Police reported 30% of registered crimes against persons were crimes of sexual and inter family violence. The same year a national survey indicated that 29% of women living with a partner had been physically or sexually abused by them. An IDB study estimates that this type of violence reduces women's income in Nicaragua (and national income) by USD 29.5 million (1.6% of the 1996 GNP). The negative effect on income would be much higher if estimates included expenses in health, police and legal services, and other long-term effects.

Inter family and sexual violence in Nicaragua represents one of the most dramatic, widely recognised and deeply damaging manifestations of inequality between men and women. It is recognised as a critical challenge by state and civil society and represents a rallying point for those who campaign for gender equality and women's rights

2.5 Gender Equality and Efforts to Reduce Participation in the Political System

Nicaraguan media and periodic opinion surveys report perceptions among large segments of the population that democratisation processes are being reversed by means of arbitrary measures taken by the present government that have greatly limited participatory mechanisms. One of the most difficult measures for women's organisations was the so called "pact" or agreement between the party in government and the main opposition party allowing legislation which effectively eliminates smaller parties from participating in national elections slated for November 2001.

This trend to a party political system dominated by two or three large parties of the centre right and centre left is seen by many analysts and observers (especially by representatives of women's rights organisations such as the members of the Network Against Violence) as a serious threat to progress in support of gender equality. It replaces a strategy of openness (associated with the previous government) and reduces the space for small parties and organisations of civil society. This threat is made more serious by the perception that the party currently in power has a strong interest in promoting policies under a "pro-family" rhetoric in order to actively undermine commitments and progress toward gender equality.

2.6 National Machinery for Promoting Gender Equality

The Nicaraguan Women's Institute (INIM) has long represented a strong source of research and advocacy for women's equality in Nicaragua. One of the strong features of INIM has been its autonomy from other Ministries of the national government and its ability to conduct research and take public positions other Ministries may have found uncomfortable.

In 1998 the Nicaraguan Women's Institute (INIM) ceased to be autonomous and became a Directorate of the newly created Ministry of the Family (MIFAMILIA). This Ministry is seen by many as part of an effort to dilute the progress made by INIM in advocacy and to weaken actions favourable to gender equality. The creation of the Ministry of the Family was preceded by a year of public debate and strong lobbying in the National Assembly. The main actors in the debate were the different groups of the national women's movement and representatives of fundamentalist Catholic groups who held high government positions and were simultaneously leading the "Pro Life" activities in the country.

Recent changes in the leadership of both the Ministry of the Family and INIM seem to favour a return to a relatively autonomous functioning of INIM and a withdrawal of the new Ministry from strong ideological confrontations with women's groups (and with donors) on issues like the prohibition of the term "gender" in official documents. Similarly, the MIFAMILIA seems to have reduced – to some degree – its strong opposition to the promotion of sexual and reproductive rights.

Similarly, a number of organisational and policy developments at the national level may present opportunities for a more active promotion of gender equality.

These include:

- a) the reactivation, in early 2001, of the National Commission of the Rural Woman created under the former government;
- b) approval by the President, also in early 2001, of the National Anti Inter family Violence Plan;

- c) the election of an Ombudsman in 1999 and the nomination of an Ombudswoman in 2000;
- d) The recreation in 2000 of a National Commission Against Maternal Mortality.

2.7 Summary

Gender equality remains a challenging goal in the Nicaraguan context. On one hand, there is clear evidence of the burden of inequality which women face in terms of differences in income and the experience of poverty, in negative health outcomes, in victimisation due to inter family and sexual violence and physical abuse; and in under-representation and poor access to political decision making. For the most part these costs of inequality are recognised in Nicaragua by civil society and (to some extent) by government.

It is also clear however, that there have been inconsistencies in the response of the national government to the goal of gender equality. Serious challenges to local groups working for the promotion of gender equality and for international co-operation to promote gender equality include the absorption of INIM into the Ministry of the Family; recent statements and policies put forward by senior cabinet Ministers in areas such as teaching of sexual rights; the apparent close alliance between some government Ministers and the conservative elements of the Catholic Church; the stance of the Government of Nicaragua at recent international conferences relating to gender equality; and the relative closure of the party political system.

In contrast to the more open approach of the previous government, the current stance (2001) means that local and international agencies promoting gender equality are now “swimming upstream” to a large extent with limited opportunities for overt dialogue and advocacy.

On the other hand, as noted above, there are recent signs of a political re-examination of at least the intensity of opposition to many gender equality measures and goals. Of equal importance, there remain opportunities to work with a number of agencies and departments of the Government of Nicaragua. As pointed out to the team by Sida officers and others in Managua, at program and project level there is considerable interest in addressing the goal of gender equality

It is important not to discount the difficulty, at present, for a bilateral donor to conduct an open and meaningful dialogue with the Government of Nicaragua at highest levels on the problems and possibilities of gender equality. On the other hand, there are avenues for promoting gender equality within and outside the Government of Nicaragua.

Chapter 3

Country Strategy and Dialogue on Gender Equality

3.1 The Transition From a Country to a Regional Strategy

Sida's Action Programme for Promoting Equality Between Women and Men in Partner Countries included a specific initiative to promote increased partnership around the implementation of the Platform for Action in five countries in five different regions (Namibia, Tanzania, India, Estonia and Nicaragua). Common to all five countries were efforts to promote mutual exchange and support on follow-up to the Platform for Action and on the promotion of equality between men and women.

The main direct result of this commitment seems to have been a series of exchanges at fairly high level between Nicaragua and Sweden in the area of gender equality. For example, senior Swedish figures in the promotion of gender equality (including, for example, a former leader of the liberal party and a nationally known economist active in gender equality) visited Nicaragua in the spring of 1996 to discuss gender equality issues. Similarly there were exchanges between a delegation from Nicaragua to Sweden on violence issues and a return visit by Swedish police officers dealing with the issue. Finally, a Swedish expert on gender statistics made a working visit to Managua.

These initiatives, combined with the generally high profile given to gender equality by the Embassy in Nicaragua in the 1996/97 period seems to have contributed to the strength of the 1997 Country Strategy for Nicaragua when examined from a gender equality perspective.

3.1.1 The Country Strategy – 1997

The evaluation team was not able to conduct a detailed review of the process used to develop the 1997 Country Strategy due to time and resource constraints (our key focus was meant to be placed on the evaluation of the interventions themselves) and due to difficulties in accessing the persons involved. As a result, the strategy was evaluated mainly through a direct analysis of its content.

The country strategy document for Nicaragua³ dates from December 1997 and covers the period from January 1998 to January 2002. It is available in a Spanish version which was used by the evaluation team in discussions with Sida officers, government officials, multilateral agencies, and representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active in promoting gender equality. This Strategy document is, however, in the process of being superseded by a *Strategy for Swedish Co-operation With Central America and The Caribbean* which has been prepared (in draft form) and which will cover the period 2001 to 2005⁴.

Because discussions and research on the 1998–2002 country strategy began in early 1997 and were consistent with earlier bilateral agreements (see the Agreement Between the Government of Sweden and the Government of Nicaragua on Development Co-operation 1996–97) there is a common tendency among those interviewed to view the current Country Strategy for Nicaragua as originating somewhere around 1996. Indeed, the strategy was quite often referred to as the “96 Strategy”.

Regardless of its exact dating, the current Strategy may be the last for Nicaragua for some time since the decision has been taken to include the country in the regional strategy process. As such it is worth examining from a gender equality perspective.

The key elements of the December 1997 Country Strategy from a gender perspective include:

- the country analysis;
- the stated policies and priorities in international co-operation of the Government of Nicaragua;
- the key elements of a dialogue with Nicaragua; and,
- the objectives and general lines of Swedish co-operation.

a) Country Analysis

The country analysis section of the Strategy does include a paragraph identifying the underutilisation of the potential of women to contribute to sustainable development of Nicaragua. It points out the lack of access of women to property ownership with subsequent limitations to their access to credit, education, technical assistance, and technology. The analysis also notes the progress made by the women’s movement in the previous 15 years and the potential of the movement to enter into new political and social sectors. On the other hand, the analysis points out that recent elections had led to a considerable decline in women’s political representation and a fear that prior gains might be in danger over the coming years. It should be noted that the analysis of gender equality in Nicaragua is very brief in comparison to the more lengthy discussions of economic conditions, indebtedness, poverty, reliance on external co-operation, etc.

³ Landstrategi Nicaragua, Sida, December 1997.

⁴ Estrategia Para La Cooperación De Suecia Con América Central Y El Caribe, February 2001.

On the other hand, the evaluation team was able to verify that a fairly comprehensive review of the situation of women and men's equality in Nicaragua was carried out in 1994 (see *Analysis of the Current Situation of the Nicaraguan Population A Gender Analysis*) and in 1996 just prior to the preparation of the Country Strategy. As a result, there is evidence that a thorough analysis of gender equality was available to the authors of the 1997 Country Strategy and that it did influence the identification of goals and priorities.

The relatively brief coverage of the gender equality situation in the document itself seems to have resulted from competition for space among the different aspects of the country context rather than from any deliberate effort to downgrade gender equality as a priority. Indeed the high profile goals established in relation to gender equality would argue against such a conclusion.

b) Development Policies and Priorities of the Government of Nicaragua

The section describing the policies and priorities of the Government of Nicaragua is important in that it provides an indication of whether the GON was willing to include equality between women and men as a priority in the section of the document setting out its own intentions. This section sets out eight key development goals for Nicaragua relating mostly to poverty alleviation, macroeconomic stabilisation and modernisation of the public and private sectors.

It is important not to read too much into the very brief statement of GON priorities since the section is very brief and any one of these goals could be expanded to include a gender equality perspective. Nonetheless the two-page section has only one statement of intent on gender equality and it is made clear that such a statement is in response to Swedish interest. The statement reads (in translation) "Alluding specifically to the Swedish objective of promoting equality of opportunity through development co-operation, emphasis has been placed on the strategic importance of activities which strengthen the productive capacity of women and in so doing improve their living standards and possibilities for participation in political life⁵".

Some of those present at the Embassy during this period (and earlier) indicate that there was some considerable resistance to certain aspects of gender equality and the language used to describe it on the part of the Government of Nicaragua. Examples of the kind of resistance evident on the part of Nicaragua as early as Beijing were its expressed reservations and strong lobbying against paragraphs that could be perceived to legitimise homosexual relationships or which supported a right to abortion.

c) Key Elements of a Sweden/Nicaragua Dialogue

In the segment of the document dealing with proposals for future support to Nicaragua, the Strategy indicates a very high priority for gender equality. It establishes three themes for dialogue with Nicaragua: Democracy, Gender

⁵ Country Strategy for Nicaragua, p. 12.

and Poverty. Under gender aspects, one focus of dialogue is to be equality of opportunity as a human right in accordance with international conventions subscribed to by Nicaragua in the area of rights of women and children. A second focus will be equality of rights and opportunities between women and men in social and economic areas with recognition of the importance of women as protagonists in social and economic development.

There was no indication in interviews with Sida staff at the Embassy and in headquarters that the current difficult situation regarding government to government dialogue on development priorities was seriously inhibiting relations with the GON in 1996. The general trend under the current government, has, however been characterised as a steady decline in receptiveness to meaningful dialogue on policy goals, especially those relating to equality. If serious problems in dialogue had developed prior to 1996, they are not explicitly reflected in any strategy or action plan encompassed in the Country Strategy itself.

d) Objectives and Themes of Swedish Co-operation

As with dialogue, gender equality has a high profile in the stated objectives of Swedish co-operation with Nicaragua. Swedish co-operation is to contribute to:

- I. A strengthened democracy, improved public administration, national reconciliation, and increased respect for human rights.
- II. Increased equality between men and women in their opportunities both for social and economic development and in their influence on politics and society;
- III. Reduction in poverty through just and sustainable economic and social development.

The strategy goes on to identify specific goals and give examples of possible activities under each of the three main objectives.

There are five sub-goals in *democratic development* including improving human rights (including support to the police and judicial systems), strengthening democratic institutions, promotion of reconciliation, strengthening processes of autonomy for the Atlantic Coast, and promoting increased popular participation.

The description of goals and actions in *gender* (phrased as equality of opportunity for men and women) begins with a statement that the aspect of gender is a transversal theme to be taken account of in all areas of co-operation. It then identifies four sub-goals relating to participation of women in society (with Swedish support to INIM), promotion of more equitable legislation and better treatment of women by the judicial system, combating inter-family violence and supporting women victims of violence, and promoting educational activities to improve women's access to labour and credit markets.

In *combating poverty* the strategy identifies four main areas of co-operation; a) action to improve social services such as health, infrastructure investment and urban environments; b) actions to improve investment in the poorest sectors to improve production; c) macroeconomic action in basic areas such as debt reduction; and, d) actions in support of a national anti-poverty policy.

Analysis: The 1997 Country Strategy for Nicaragua

Despite a somewhat brief analysis of the situation of inequality between men and women in Nicaragua and an apparently lukewarm response to gender equality issues by the GON, the December 1997 Country Strategy does include a strong and explicit statement that gender equality is one of three priorities for dialogue between Sweden and Nicaragua and an explicit commitment to gender equality as one of three main objectives for co-operation (with sub-objectives in key areas such as legislation, economic and social participation and violence).

The commitments to gender equality made in the 1997 Country Strategy were also consistent with prior statements and agreements on Swedish co-operation with Nicaragua. For example, Article 2 of the Agreement Between the Government of Sweden and the Government of Nicaragua on Development Co-operation 1996–1997 states, inter-alia that “All co-operation should be guided by the principle of equality between men and women, the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment.”

There are perhaps three areas in which the 1997 Country Strategy for Nicaragua could have been stronger from a gender equality perspective. The country analysis section could have included a more detailed assessment of quantitative and qualitative information on gender equality (which was available from local studies of gender equality funded by Sida). As already noted, it seems that the main reason the gender analysis segment was presented in a very summarised form seems to have been competition for space with descriptions of other social and economic aspects of the situation in Nicaragua. Further, and perhaps more importantly, the gender analysis presented in the 1997 Country Strategy presents an accurate portrait of the conditions and challenges facing women and identifies some of the key issues which need to be addressed if gender equality is to be effectively pursued.

In a second area which could be improved from a gender equality perspective, the descriptions of activities to be supported by Sida under the three goals of democratic development, gender equality and poverty were distinct and separate despite the statement that gender equality should be transversal (i.e. mainstreamed). This part of the Strategy provided a strong opportunity to illustrate some of the ways in which democratic development activities and poverty reduction actions can and should be linked to gender equality.

The relative separation of the activities may have made it more difficult to mainstream gender equality into interventions formally gathered under the priorities of democratic development and poverty alleviation. To some ex-

tent, one may argue that the relative importance of explicitly linking the gender equality priority to interventions in democratic development and poverty alleviation only really became evident to the evaluation team after analysing the extent of mainstreaming in those interventions. The concrete lesson seems to be that it is necessary to draw out the link between gender equality and interventions in such priority areas as poverty alleviation in order to lay a strong basis for mainstreaming. The authors of the 1997 Strategy could not have been expected to foresee such a need given that this was the first Nicaragua Country Strategy which had given such high priority to gender equality.

Finally, there could have been an indication in the Country Strategy that results in the promotion of gender equality should be monitored and evaluated during the life of the strategy and of the interventions carried out. This lack of attention to gender equality issues in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of bilateral interventions has been a recurring theme in the Nicaragua case study, one which does not seem to match the high level of public commitment to gender equality evident in the Strategy and in Sida's general policy stance in Nicaragua. With the exception of the recent evaluation of RAAN/ASDI/RAAS (and the very recent evaluation of PRODEL), gender equality issues are most often absent from the reports submitted by individuals and teams charged with monitoring and evaluating the four interventions studied in Nicaragua.

On the other hand, the strengths of the 1997 Country Strategy and the resulting document need to be acknowledged. The country analysis section does link the achievement of gender equality to other national developmental goals and gender equality remains as an explicit, high priority and high profile joint goal of Sweden and Nicaragua.

Conclusion: The 1997 Country Strategy

- The 1997 Country Strategy for Nicaragua did include a specific priority objective of gender equality based on a sound analysis of the conditions of women. It also made gender equality a strategic focus for dialogue with the Government of Nicaragua. There is no reason to believe that subsequent difficulties in mainstreaming gender equality at the intervention level are somehow a result of weaknesses in the 1997 Country Strategy.

3.1.2 Gender Equality and The Transition to a Regional Strategy

It appears that gender equality as a major goal of Swedish development cooperation with Nicaragua may suffer a reduction in profile and relative importance as Nicaragua is rolled into the Regional Strategy for Central America and the Caribbean. As an example of the relative decline of gender equality as a strategic goal, where equality between men and women is one of three principle areas of dialogue and one of three specific, high level strategic goals of the 1997 Nicaragua Strategic Plan, in the draft 2001 to 2005 Strategic Plan the wording on objectives may be translated as follows:

The strategy seeks to establish the criteria for Swedish co-operation with the region in accordance with the general objective of Swedish co-operation to reduce poverty and with the specific objectives of democratic development of society and reductions in social and economic inequality. The strategy will also seek to maintain a rights perspective.⁶

Clearly, the references to equality and rights will allow for exploration of gender equality issues and could encompass a strategy of mainstreaming of gender equality in the Nicaragua program, but they are not nearly as clear, direct and explicit as the references in the 1997 strategy.

It should be acknowledged that the draft regional strategy does include a reference (p. 5) to the need to increase the participation of women and indigenous peoples in efforts to strengthen democracy. The long section on social vulnerability and the requirement to build equality also notes in several places the relative burden of poverty for women and notes that women and children are especially affected by the increase in violence (non-military) in the region.

The draft regional strategy sets out four thematic priorities:

- Popular participation in political processes;
- Strengthening human Rights;
- Good governance and democratic conduct of society; and,
- Conflict management and reconciliation.

Each of these thematic priorities is described in some detail in the strategy and significant areas of activity and possible interventions are discussed under each. In each case some dimensions of gender equality are covered. For example, under popular participation in political processes the strategy notes that participation of women and indigenous peoples must be addressed. Similarly, under strengthening rights the strategy for the region suggests that special attention must be provided to the rights of women and children, especially relating to freedom from violence.

Analysis: Gender Equality and the Transition to a Regional Strategy

In general, it must be said that the draft regional strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean does not exclude gender equality as a goal and does include enough “hooks” to allow a creative embassy and dedicated project officers with a concern for gender equality to develop and implement programs and interventions that will promote gender equality. On the other hand, the draft strategy does strongly suggest that gender equality, *as an explicit goal in its own right*, has a significantly diminished position relative to its weight in the 1997 Country Strategy for Nicaragua.

In the transition from a country-specific to a regional Sida strategy it seems clear that the under lying, country-specific gender analysis and gender equal-

⁶ Estrategia Para La Cooperación De Suecia Con América Central Y El Caribe 2001-2005 (Traducción preliminary, no official, p2.

ity content has been diminished for each country in the region. This may not be the case for other countries in the region but was certainly the case for Nicaragua.

As pointed out by Sida personnel at the Embassy in Managua, the draft regional strategy represents only the framework within which the program for Nicaragua will be developed in coming months. As a regional framework it will necessarily be more abstract than a Country Strategy document. They emphasised that the opportunity to raise gender equality as an explicit goal and to “put flesh on the bones” as to how the Nicaragua program will contribute to that goal will come as the operational planning of the program of Swedish development co-operation in Nicaragua is developed. If gender equality is to be restored to something close to the level of apparent importance it received in the 1997 strategic plan, it will be important that the development of more detailed plans for Sweden’s program of development co-operation with Nicaragua include strong efforts to address gender equality through women specific and mainstreamed initiatives.

The 1997 Country Strategy for Nicaragua and the very high emphasis given to gender equality in the period immediately before and after 1997 seems to have represented a kind of high water mark for the priority of gender equality in the Nicaragua program. The transition to a regional strategy for Central America and the Caribbean for 2001 to 2005 gives a strong appearance that gender equality is a lower priority and with much less explicit goals. This may be offset somewhat during development of operational plans for the overall program of co-operation in Nicaragua but efforts to raise the visibility and priority of gender equality will need to be initiated very soon if they are to effect the design of interventions currently in the planning stages.

Conclusions: Country Strategy

- The Sida Country Strategy for Nicaragua 1998–2002 demonstrates the value of an explicit, high priority gender equality goal given clear visibility in the gender strategy. It provided a basis for some of the interventions and women specific programming developed in the same period to be linked to the Country Strategy and at the same time to respond to some extent to the Sida Policy and Action Programme on Gender Equality.
- The Sida Country Strategy for Nicaragua could have been somewhat stronger from a gender equality perspective if it had explicitly pointed out possible linkages between the gender equality goals and activities in democratic development and poverty reduction, the other two major goals of the program. The absence of a specific link from gender equality to other priority areas may have contributed to the absence of gender equality goals and the apparent weakness of a mainstreaming approach in some of the interventions in Nicaragua.
- The transition from a Country Strategy for Nicaragua to Nicaragua’s inclusion in the Regional Strategy for Central America seems to have con-

tributed to a diminishing of the visibility of gender equality as a priority goal. In this type of transition, it seems to be critical that gender equality issues and actions be maintained at the level of the regional strategy and, in particular, that country programs developed out of the regional strategy retain a focus on gender equality.

3.2 Dialogue on Gender Equality

3.2.1 Government-to-Government

As noted in section 2.0 above, the current context for gender equality as a priority in Nicaragua is very problematic when viewed from the perspective of national government commitment. Indeed, the current policy stance of the national government on a wide range of issues relating to good governance, autonomy for the Atlantic Coast, democratic opening to civil society and promotion of different aspects of equality has led to a difficult situation for many co-operating countries. Interviews with Sida staff (and representatives of like minded donors) indicate that formal dialogue with the Government of Nicaragua on issues such as gender equality has virtually halted.

This situation has not, of course, arisen abruptly. Interviews and discussions with Sida staff at the Embassy in Managua and in Stockholm, supplemented by discussions with civil society organisations and with representatives of other donors indicate that the openness of the GON to dialogue on gender equality (and other sensitive policy issues) has been subject to a steady decline in recent years.

The government of Doña Violeta Chamorro, while opposed to certain aspects of a gender equality agenda representing a challenge to Catholic Church positions, was quite open to dialogue with donors, with Sweden playing a very important role in that dialogue. Sweden, along with other donors, was apparently an important voice in advocating for the relative independence of the Women's Institute (INIM).

The arrival in power of the Aleman government was marked by a strengthening of conservative tendencies with regard to equality and, especially, to gender. Civil society organisations working in gender equality areas reported to the evaluation team that some central ministries of government became increasingly opposed to their relative independence and freedom of action and that they increasingly fear being co-opted and directed by government rather than co-operating in a common effort. The Aleman government clearly had difficulties with the relative independence of INIM and despite forceful opposition from the international community, after an initial effort was turned back, was able to subordinated INIM within the Ministry of the Family. As already noted, a recent IDB financed reform program of the Family Ministry seems to have provided for some increased autonomy of INIM within the Ministry itself.

The current situation is so difficult that the Swedish Embassy in Managua has indicated that the annual agreement on development co-operation for 2001/2002 will not include indicative budgets for Sida support to specific interventions as a sign of Sweden's difficulty with many important policy issues. One staff person at the Embassy in Managua characterised formal communications with the central decision making bodies of the Government of Nicaragua as "a monologue in which we express our interests and priorities and the GON goes its own way". It is important to emphasise that informal contacts with representatives of other bilateral donor countries indicates that this is a shared view in the development community in Nicaragua.

Perhaps one indicator of the Government of Nicaragua's policy stance on issue relating to gender equality may be found in the fact that during the evaluation mission to Nicaragua the woman who currently heads INIM (the National Women's Institute) was the opening speaker in the "Day of the Unborn Child" sponsored by the Catholic Church.

It seems unlikely that a more fruitful, two-way discussion on gender equality will be possible in the period between now and the national elections in November 2001. Sweden is not alone among countries engaged in development co-operation in Nicaragua in adopting an informal "wait and see" policy to dialogue in key policy areas until after the planned elections.

3.2.2 Dialogue On Interventions

Another important opportunity for dialogue on gender equality as a priority theme (and goal) is provided by the working level contact between Sida officers located at the Embassy and their counterparts for each intervention. These counterparts may be acting as project co-ordinators in a project office or working within the lead departments and agencies involved in the intervention on behalf of the Government of Nicaragua.

The dialogue may be documented in annual consultative meetings (when these are held) or may take place through informal discussions during site visits, reviews and evaluations.

With reference to the four interventions studied in Nicaragua, the record appears quite mixed. There is little documentary evidence of a formal dialogue on gender equality in annual consultations or in structured review exercises such as evaluations. A notable exception to this rule is the recently completed evaluation of the Atlantic Coast intervention. This evaluation included a formal mandate to evaluate gender equality impacts and a specialist in gender analysis as part of the three-person evaluation team⁷.

On the other hand, there is evidence that some of the Sida officers in the embassy have carried out a dialogue on gender equality and have tried to

⁷ Strengthening Democracy on the Atlantic Coast in Nicaragua – Programa RAAN-ASDI-RAAS 1994–2000. Sida Evaluation 00/19

raise the profile of gender equality during discussions with project office staff, government counterparts, multilateral agencies, and other donors. In particular, the project officer responsible for PROSILAIS and Atlantic Coast interventions has met informally with counterparts (including multilateral agencies and other donors) to discuss ways of strengthening the gender equality dimension of some activities.

The extent of dialogue on gender equality issues varies considerably from intervention to intervention and from one responsible Sida officer to the next.

3.2.3 Dialogue with Civil Society

A third type of dialogue presents itself as an opportunity to advance gender equality as an important goal of national policy and of international co-operation – dialogue with and through civil society organisations (CSOs). During the previous national government, the policy of the Government of Nicaragua was much more open to participation by CSOs in important policy discussions and in co-delivery of important national initiatives.

During that same period, the Swedish Embassy pursued a policy of close contact with CSOs, including those engaged in advocacy and action in pursuit of gender equality. Sida officers at the Embassy and representatives of national women's organisations (as well as staff of multilateral agencies such as UNICEF and PAHO) remarked that the Embassy was seen as a centre of dialogue with and among Nicaraguan civil society organisations. The Embassy also had direct relations with a number of CSOs and provided direct support to, for example, the Network of Women Against Violence.

In part because of the difficult administrative burden of managing direct funding relations with a large number of NGOs, Sida has adopted a different strategy in recent years. Sida staff pointed out two major elements in this newer strategy. In the first instance, Sida has supported the development of tools for Nicaragua (and regional) NGOs such as the recent guidebook for NGO evaluations.

In the second instance, Forum Syd, an association of 136 Swedish NGOs formed in 1995 has been contracted to implement the Gender Equality NGO fund that was previously under the direct responsibility of the Embassy in Managua (and was a principle channel of dialogue and interaction with Nicaraguan NGOs involved in advocacy and programming for gender equality). Forum Syd was successful in winning the contract for this work largely on the basis of its very strong links to Swedish civil society and there work with a similar fund in human rights in Cambodia.

On the positive side, this change in Sida's relationship with civil society organisations in Nicaragua has the objective of promoting a self-sustaining capacity among local organisations and providing a strong link between a Swedish and Nicaraguan civil society.

As part of their dialogue with local NGOs, Forum Syd has jointly drafted a form of “country program” with the objectives of promoting gender equality and strengthening the institutional capacity of local NGOs active in the area. Their three priority working areas are:

- Participation and leadership of women;
- Improvement of women’s labour market performance;
- Prevention of violence.

One important benefit of the Forum Syd administered program may be closer relationships with a smaller number of NGOs than was possible when the program was directly administered from the Embassy. Thus, while the wider impact of Sida/civil society dialogue may be diminished, there may be a deepened relationship with some NGOs active in promoting gender equality.

It is also worth noting that, while advocacy and public dialogue on policy issues such as gender equality is seen by the Embassy as one of the roles to be played by Forum Syd in implementing the program, staff of Forum Syd reported that they were somewhat uncomfortable with the possible perception that they were “speaking for the Embassy” which they see as not compatible with their role as a civil society organisation.

The reported reduction of Sida’s profile of dialogue and support to NGOs active in advancing gender equality in Nicaragua (and to other types of NGOs) is offset in part by the very important observation made by the staff of more than one organisation that they do rely on Sida, when it is called upon to make a public policy statement on gender equality, to publicly express its strong support and that the Embassy has continued to do so.

3.2.4 Analysis: Dialogue on Gender Equality

In comparison to the activity level reported in the mid-to-late 1990s, direct dialogue between the Governments of Sweden and Nicaragua relating to gender equality has seriously diminished (as reported by Embassy officials and others) as has dialogue on a wide range of policy issues. This situation is not unique to Swedish co-operation with Nicaragua, but is reported by more than one Embassy as the appropriate response to current, official policy at Cabinet Level. On the other hand, the apparent dearth of opportunities for direct government-to-government dialogue on gender equality policy issues suggests that the Embassy should have developed an alternative strategy which would emphasise either or both of the areas of intervention specific dialogue or dialogue with civil society as possible alternatives. If blocked on one axis (government-to-government) it seems reasonable to expect that the Embassy would seek to increase its efforts at gender equality dialogue on a more open axis.

This increased effort is not immediately evident in the area of intervention-specific dialogue since the extent and quality of dialogue on gender equality varies considerably among the four interventions evaluated. While some of

the interventions studied show evidence of an informal dialogue on gender equality, this is limited in scope and does not cross all four interventions. Nor is there a systematic approach to identifying both the need and the opportunity for intervention-specific dialogue on gender equality.

It is difficult to isolate which factors may have promoted dialogue on gender equality within a specific intervention and discourage it in another. Some worth mentioning however include:

- The lack of a systematic approach for assessing where such a dialogue is needed and/or possible;

It seems striking that there is no apparent co-relation between the extent of dialogue on gender equality within a specific intervention and the apparent need and opportunity for such a dialogue. For example, PRODEL as a program dealing with urban livelihoods and living conditions seems to represent a clear opportunity for discourse on gender analysis between and among Sida officers and implementing agencies. As another factor, Sida has had a central role in the program from its beginnings and seems to have been well positioned to take a very strong position on gender equality in comparison to, for example, PROSILAIS where it deals with a powerful central Ministry in the form of MINSA. Despite this, and with the exception of the recent workshop on strategic planning, the PRODEL project is one of the least mainstreamed of the four interventions evaluated in Nicaragua and shows very little evidence of a dialogue on gender equality.

- The identification of a core donor with main responsibility for gender equality as a priority;

In multi-donor supported initiatives such as PROSILAIS, the consortium of supporting donors (providing both funding and technical support) sometimes informally or formally designates a key player for promotion of gender equality. In the case of PROSILAIS UNICEF has apparently assumed this role but continues to rely on Sida and others for support. There is a risk that this burden sharing, no matter how informal, may lead Sida to assume that the level of dialogue on gender equality is higher than it really is.

- The personal interest of Sida managers, international consultants and national co-ordinators in gender equality issues;

There seems to be a direct co-relation between the level of interest and concern of personnel involved in managing, guiding, co-ordinating and evaluating a given intervention and the level of dialogue within that intervention relating to gender equality. This is perhaps to be expected but the dimension of this which seems to be especially evident in Nicaragua is the important role of international consultants and national project co-ordinators. The key question seems to be how to ensure a reasonably consistent commitment to discussing gender equality with counterparts among different Sida managers, international consultants and national co-ordinators with very different levels of interest.

Turning to gender dialogue with civil society, it does not seem that the difficulties of dialogue with government have led the Embassy to systematically increase its efforts at dialogue in this arena. Despite the positive aspects of the Forum Syd administered Gender Equality Fund, both parts of the changed Sida strategy toward civil society organisations and NGOs (a more technical working relationship and the administration of a key program through Forum Syd) have contributed to the perception from some on the Nicaraguan side of a reduced profile and a diminished commitment to working outside government.

This perception may be unfair given the commitments made and it may be a temporary problem present only while the new program gains momentum. On the other hand, coming as it does during a period of diminished dialogue with government, the perception that Sida is less committed to working directly with civil society presents a serious challenge to efforts to promote gender equality.

Conclusions: Dialogue on Gender Equality

- While the situation regarding government to government dialogue on gender equality has been very difficult for some time, there is no evidence that Sida in Nicaragua has developed an alternative strategy of a renewed or intensified emphasis on dialogue in one or both of the areas of intervention-specific dialogue or dialogue with civil society.
- The conditions in Nicaragua, while not favourable to a direct dialogue with the National Government on gender equality, paradoxically, do present opportunities for a strong gender equality focus in specific interventions. At a working level, despite some resistance, counterpart agencies of government, regional authorities, civil society organisations, and program delivery agencies all show evidence of a willingness to address gender inequalities through program activities. There remains scope for a meaningful strategic priority for gender equality despite resistance in certain quarters of the national government.
- An important inhibiting factor in intervention-specific dialogue on gender equity is the lack of a systematic approach to assessing which interventions provide the greatest opportunity for direct dialogue on gender equality and where that dialogue may be best applied.
- Dialogue with civil society organisations and with counterpart agencies involved in development and delivery of bilateral initiatives supported by Swedish co-operation is critically important at a time when dialogue with the central level of the national government is difficult. This places renewed importance on effective strategies for dialogue on gender equality between the staff of the Embassy and counterparts and civil society organisations. Administrative arrangements may be handled by a contracted agency like Forum Syd, but they cannot substitute for active dialogue originating from the Embassy.

Chapter 4

Mainstreaming Gender Equality – Four Interventions in Nicaragua

As noted in section 1.1, much of the evaluation team’s work in Nicaragua focused on four Sida supported interventions in the three different sectors of democratic governance, urban development and health:

- Democratic Governance: The Police Academy and National Police (Academia Policia);
- Democratic Governance: Support to Strengthening Democracy on the Atlantic Coast in Nicaragua (RAAN/ASDI/RAAN);
- Urban Development: the Program for Local Development (PRODEL);
- Health: Support to Local Integrated Health Systems (PROSILAIS).

4.1 Summaries of the Four Interventions

The intervention to provide *support to the National Police Academy* has been a single phased project running from 1998 to 2001 and encompassing improvements in physical infrastructure at the academy, training of police instructors, technical assistance on curriculum development, and socio political studies on policing issues. The results of the socio-political studies and consultations with civil society have been incorporated into the draft medium term plan for the modernisation of the National Police in Nicaragua. In addition, the intervention included the development of a training program for management level professional officers in the National Police of Nicaragua. The stated objective of the intervention was: “To contribute to the strengthening of democracy and security of civil society in Nicaragua through support to the Police Academy and the building of a professional and modern police corps who respect its mandate and human rights”.

The evaluation focused directly on the campus of the Police Academy located in Managua and on National Police headquarters, also in Managua. Because recruits are drawn from across the country and graduates are posted to precincts throughout Nicaragua, the impacts of the intervention can be expected at national level.

The *PROSILAIS* intervention aims to establish locally autonomous and integrated and comprehensive health systems in Nicaragua. It is currently in its third phase (2000–2003). *PROSILAIS* builds on the *SILAIS* model for local health systems which encompasses 17 health districts across the country and is active in 6 of those (Léon, Chinandega, Estelí, Madriz, Nueva Segovia, and the Autonomous Region of the South Atlantic). *PROSILAIS* is based on a model of health care delivery which expands the outreach of the *SILAIS* system through community health providers. The model also relies on an extension of epidemiological and disease surveillance systems so that they can support the work of mobile health brigades.

The objectives of *PROSILAIS* include decentralisation of management, improved quality and coverage of health care, improved health knowledge in the population, improved local capacity, and improved integrated health care for women with a gender focus.

The Local Development Project (*PRODEL*) focuses on providing services to the poor in urban settings in Nicaragua in order to mitigate the negative effects of structural economic adjustment and to support the peace process and decentralisation. *PRODEL* was in the late stages of its second phase (1998–2001) during the evaluation team's field work in Nicaragua. It has supported improvements to urban infrastructure, credit for housing improvements, credit to micro-enterprise and institutional support to the executing agency.

The intervention for Strengthening Democracy on the Atlantic Coast in Nicaragua (*Programma RAAN-ASDI-RAAS*) was established to build on substantial Swedish support to the democratic process of regional elections held in the North and South Autonomous Atlantic Regions in 1994. The six year program (1994–2000) was extended into 2001 and a further phase was in its early design stages during the evaluation field work in March 2001. Support to democratic development on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua has focused on supporting the evolution and development of regional and municipal democratic institutions. The program has encompassed support to electoral processes, regional counsels and administrations, and direct support to the administrative capacity of municipalities. In its latest phase, the *RAAN-ASDI-RAAS* program has also included investment in small scale local public works and an industrial development component. In assessing this intervention from a gender equality perspective, the evaluation team had to be especially sensitive to the interplay of political, social, economic and ethnic tensions that dominates relations between the Atlantic Coast regions and peoples and the remainder of Nicaragua.

4.2 Gender Equality Goals

As noted in section 1.2.2 above, the evaluation team workshop on methodology held in Stockholm in early March developed a model of mainstreaming which included as a critical first step the existence of explicit gender equality goals within a given intervention where mainstreaming had occurred. Some

have questioned this assumption based on the grounds that such gender equality goals might represent an artificial “add on” component to the program and thus substitute for a deeper process of gender analysis or fail to connect to the broader elements of the program.

On the other hand, the team members feel strongly that the absence of explicit gender equality goals in an intervention dramatically reduce the possibility that the program will genuinely impact on the unequal relations between women and men which may prevail in a given sector or area of operation. Equally important, the absence of gender equality goals contributes to a situation in which monitoring, evaluation and other learning and accountability tools are not used to address the gender equality contribution of the intervention and, as a result, the intervention may miss opportunities which arise over its life-cycle to make alterations in program design and operations so that gender equality impacts and effects are greatly increased.

The evaluation team members do not contend that gender equality goals should be predominate in mainstreamed interventions or that they should over-ride other priorities, only that the intervention should somehow recognise where and if a contribution to gender equality can and should be a goal.

As already noted, the Action Programme⁸ points out that it is essential that the gender needs of women and men should be analysed prior to project design so that they can be taken account of and so that projects can have a positive effect on equality. One of the key mechanisms for such an effect must be seen in the existence of clear goals relating to gender equality.

It is important to note, in this regard, that the interventions reviewed by the evaluation team in Nicaragua were all nearing the end of a first or second phase in their implementation. This means that the current phases were designed just prior to the publication of the Action Programme so cannot be expected to fully reflect its contents. On the other hand, the ideas, policies and principles of the Action Programme were under discussion at Sida for some time. It seems highly likely that the basic content of the Action Programme could be expected to begin influencing Sida programming some time before its publication.

Support to the Police Academy and the National Police

During the original design phase, the intervention in support of the National Police Academy (NPA) and the National Police of Nicaragua did not specifically include gender equality or a change in gender relations as a goal of activities focused inwardly on support to the police or outwardly on the improvement of services to citizens. On the other hand, it is important to note that the design of the project did allow for a consideration of the practical gender needs of women police cadets in order to address the problem of a

⁸ Sida's Action Programme for promoting equality between men and women in partner countries: Action Plan, p8. Sida, April 1997.

trend to declining numbers of women enrolling in the national police and maintaining careers there.

It is not clear precisely which organisational partner initiated the focus on practical gender needs during the development of the police academy project. What is clear is that Sida as the key donor agency, the Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos (IIDH) as the facilitating agency and the Policia Nacional were in agreement that efforts to modernise and develop the National Police Academy should include positive steps to encourage greater participation by women cadets.

The kind of practical needs assessed included improvements in the dormitories (cleanliness, lighting, access to water for clothes washing, security, space etc.), improvements in the food served to cadets (through construction of a new kitchen) and improvements in medical services and counselling. It is important to note that male recruits benefited from these changes as well but that the intervention specifically identified the negative effects of poor infrastructure on participation by young women and set out to address them.

In this and other areas the intervention was fortunate to be associated with a counterpart with its own reasons for focusing on gender equality and with its own mechanisms for doing so. As an example, both before and during the intervention, the National Police in Nicaragua established a range of specific mechanisms and objectives relating to women's more equitable participation in the national police and to improved equity of attention to women and men by the police as they carry out their duties. Examples include:

- establishment of a National Gender Council under the leadership of a Commissioner of the National Police (a woman) with representation from every level in the Police and every Department in the Country;
- a formal commitment to gender equality within the National Police;
- establishment of special police units (Comisarias de la Mujer y La Niñez) under the Criminal Investigations directorate with a mandate to provide attention to cases of violence against women and children and youth;
- goals for the promotion and retention of women in leadership positions in operational as well as administrative areas of policing and at senior and intermediate ranks.

“You must not under-estimate the importance of conditions of life in the police academy for cadets: clean water, healthy food, personal space, hygiene. If we are not provided basic conditions which allow for self respect, how can we be taught to respect the human rights of those we serve.”

A male graduate of the police academy.

One of the key activities and outputs of the first phase of this intervention has been the development of a Medium Term Plan for the Modernisation

and Development of the National Police⁹. That plan was developed based on a series of consultative diagnostic workshops and includes budgeted components relating to a gender equality focus in the development of the National Police and in attention to violence against women and improved treatment of women by the police.

Another key output was the development of a post-graduate training course with a specific gender equality component for superior level officers in the National Police.

Democratic Development on The Atlantic Coast

In contrast to the intervention in support of the National Police Academy and the National Police, it is fair to say that the Programa RAAN-ASDI-RAAS as it is termed in Nicaragua has not included gender equality goals of any real description in either its first or second phases (The second phase of the program covers the period 1997–2000). The rationale for not focusing directly on gender equality in this important Sida supported intervention as provided by program staff and consultant concerns the very high level of conflict in the North (RAAN) and South (RAAS) Atlantic regions at the time of the programs development (when the first meetings of the regional councils supported by the program took place, representatives of different sides of the conflict in the regions attended with their arms) and the need to establish the legitimacy of autonomous governance mechanisms over the course of the program. This high level of conflict and political instability was confirmed to the team members during their interviews in the RAAN and RAAS regions.

At the same time, it is important to note that researchers in the regional university and representatives of organisations representing women and different ethnic groups in the two autonomous region were careful to point out to the team members that local women leaders (especially in the Miskitos community) took a prominent role in the earliest work of the peace movements in Nicaragua. Indeed, a number pointed out that the process which culminated in the end of the war really began in the Atlantic regions and was led by local indigenous women in its earliest stages. It seems that political developments in the Atlantic regions early on in the post-war period tended to replace or marginalise this leadership of women (a phenomenon experienced in the Pacific areas as demobilisation led to some re-assertion of pre-war leadership roles by men). Without a formal gender analysis component in the original (or in the second) phase of the RAAN/ASDI/RAAS interventions, it is difficult to know at this time just how much consideration was given to strengthening the role of local women leaders through the program in its earliest stages.

It should also be acknowledged that the program in its latest phase (1997–2000) has developed a sub-program of support to local public works using a participatory planning method called INDEL which is meant to strengthen

⁹ *Programa De Modernizacion y Desarrollo de La Policia De Nicaragua Para El Fortalecimiento De La Seguridad Ciudadana: Document De Proyecto-October Del 2000.*

the economic and infrastructure base of the communities and which may, through participation, address some gender equality issues (although this is by no means an automatic assumption). The program took an important step toward addressing gender equality at the end of the latest phase when a three-person evaluation team – which included a gender equality specialist from the region with experience in multi-ethnic development programs – was directed to examine (among other issues) the gender equality impact of the program¹⁰. That evaluation did point out that those women who were employed in the Municipal Technical Units funded under the program reported empowering effects of their technical training and employment.

PRODEL

Unlike the program for Strengthening Democracy on the Atlantic Coast, PRODEL in both its phases did include some goals relating to gender equality. For example one of the stated objectives of the most recent phase of this urban development program is “to increase the participation and representation of women in decision making, planning, management and negotiation of resources and projects”. Women’s basic needs for access to credit, employment and basic services are identified in the project documents and the 2nd phase project document targets 35% representation by single women heads of households with regard to the household credit component.

Similarly, there is a high rate of women’s participation in the infrastructure and in the household and employment credit components of the program (although women and men must meet strict requirements for loan guarantees).

On the other hand, there is little evidence of specific project components or activities with practical measures for attaining the gender equality related goals mentioned above. For example, the credit components of the program do not register single women heads of households as such so it is difficult to see how they are targeted. Similarly, there is no systematic gathering, consolidation and analysis of gender disaggregated data so that the outcomes of credit granting decisions can be analysed on a gender basis. Finally, with the exception of the targets for women’s overall participation, it was not until a February 2001 Seminar on Strategic and Operational Planning and the Operational Plan for 2001, that practical measures for implementing and operationalising gender equality goals in PRODEL began to be developed.

PROSILAIS

Taken at the global level, the PROSILAIS project (which provides direct support to the development of local integrated health systems in selected Departments of Nicaragua) does not have a goal of gender equality as defined in section 1.2 above. On the other hand, PROSILAIS does have a major stat-

¹⁰ *Strengthening Democracy on the Atlantic Coast in Nicaragua; Programa RAAAN-ASDI-RAAS 1994-2000. Hans Peter Buwollen, Maro Rosales Ortega, Leticia Velásquez Zapeta – Sida Evaluaton 00/19.*

ed goal of “improved integrated health care with a gender approach”. As the evaluation team met with stakeholders at many levels in the PROSILAIS project system and explored the meaning of the term gender approach, three important meanings emerged:

1. Gender approach as attention to women (and women’s health needs);
2. Gender approach as attention to both sexes; and,
3. Gender approach in terms of perceived inequalities in the situation of men and women

Evolving Definitions of Gender Equality Among SILAIS Stakeholders

“The majority of users of the health system are women, so that is a gender approach” – A PAHO employee involved in PROSILAIS.

“In the SILAIS they don’t see that women have both brains and relations. They only see a uterus” – Women’s NGO representative.

“Before gender meant just women. Now gender means both men and women. A gender approach in health means that we attend men and women equally and promote the participation of both” – A nurse in a SILAIS health post.

“In the gender training, both for health staff and the community, we start with the sensibilisation of the male sex about women’s important role. We promote women’s self esteem and even have to begin to decrease men’s self-esteem” – Doctor, director of a SILAIS.

“Gender means that we are equal, men and women. We women have the same rights as men. For instance the right to be respected – Trained midwife.

The first of these three elements of a gender focus (attention to women’s health needs) represents a modernisation of the earlier SILAIS goal of “improved integrated health care for women in the fertile age, or improved maternal and child health care”. As such they allow for the health service to focus on women’s needs in relation to pregnancy and delivery, needs which are biological and universal and which do not require the program to address social and cultural aspects of gender and gender inequality.

The second meaning of gender equality (attention to both sexes) represents an improved understanding of gender equality goals but it can be quite distorted in its application. For example, some MINSA staff interviewed see attention to both sexes as a problem of re-dressing a regrettable tendency for the health system to meet only the needs of women and therefore see this aspect of gender equality not in terms of equality of roles and responsibilities but rather in terms of diverting resources and attention to men’s health needs.

The third meaning (addressing gender inequalities and addressing men’s roles and responsibilities in health care and health promotion in order to redress inequalities) is a much more rounded view of gender equality as a goal. This understanding was expressed – in more or less those terms – by different

stakeholders at all levels of the SILAIS system. What is perhaps more important is the fact that there are elements of the program which are responsive to a gender equality approach, for example:

- a priority assigned to women of child-bearing age (not in itself indicative of a gender approach but important in addressing some practical gender needs);
- gender training for staff and the community network of health volunteers;
- youth clubs for adolescent women and men focusing on sexual education and gender relations;
- promotion of participation of both men and women in community health work;
- combination of a gender and risk identification approach which identifies women and girls as high risk groups;
- recognition of intra-family violence as a public health problem.

On the other hand, there are some weaknesses in the way that gender equality as a goal has been articulated and implemented in PROSILAIS. For example:

- there is no specific gender equality strategy for PROSILAIS as has been pointed out in several evaluations;
- gender training has not been systematic and continuous;
- the practical implications of defining family violence as a public health problem are not clear from a service standpoint; and,
- the health information system is not designed to provide sex disaggregated information.

Analysis: Goals in Gender Equality

While the original focus of the National Police intervention was improving the human rights situation in Nicaragua through improved police training and policies, it did include efforts to address practical gender needs of women police trainees. In addition, the intervention benefited from a prior recognition within the National Police of a need to address gender equality issues and from the work of other international co-operation agencies (GTZ, for example, funded gender equality curriculum components in as a supplement to the traditional curriculum of the academy). Finally, the Police Academy intervention did include specific gender equality components relating to the post-graduate training course and the medium term modernisation plan.

Faced with a high level of conflict, political instability promoted by the major national political parties and a strategic focus on improving the transparency and accountability of regional and local structures, the RAAN-ASDI-RAAS program has not, until now, included an explicit effort to address gender equality in democratic governance on the Atlantic Coast. The recent Sida

funded evaluation of the program did address gender equality, and (as detailed in the sections which follow) there are opportunities for the program to address gender equality goals much more directly in future phases

Gender equality goals are present in PROSILAIS, but they tend to be focused on different levels of understanding and different definitions of what is gender equality, ranging from attention to women-specific diseases to efforts (in the youth clubs for example) to directly address gender relations in sexual behaviour. PROSILAIS presents an example of the co-existence of different definitions of gender equality and different responses to the problem of how to promote gender equality. What is not clear yet is how extensive and effective are the efforts to make the different goals in gender equality operational.

PRODEL, on the other hand, has reportedly achieved a high level of participation by women and has explicitly targeted those high levels. At the same time, however, this targeting is not based on an analysis of gender differences in the need for credit and other forms of support in urban programming and is not accompanied by either a gender equality strategy for the program or by efforts to monitor and evaluate gender equality effects and impacts.

If there was one strong theme emphasised repeatedly during the interviews, workshops and group meetings carried out with Sida staff, delivery agencies, government counterparts, women's rights organisations and participants in each of the programs it was the fact that the time for addressing gender equality is now. Each of these interventions as it enters its next phase has at least reached a stage of strong interest among key stakeholders in a more structured attempt to define gender inequalities and identify meaningful gender equality goals, strategies, activities, and measures.

This current interest in addressing gender equality at the working level of the interventions seems to arise from a combination of factors including informal contacts with some Sida officers, the influence of other bilateral agencies, the continuing public campaigns of women's rights organisations, the high level of public awareness of violence against women, the interest of the media and even the legacy of a strong commitment to equality by previous governments.

Conclusions: Gender Equality Goals

- The goal of improving gender equality was explicit and directly linked to inputs, activities and measures in only one of the four interventions studied, although one other did include a gender approach to improving services as a goal. Not surprisingly, the project with an explicit gender equality goal, expressed in terms of improving women's relationship to men in the cultural and power structure of an institution, also produced the clearest gender equality changes. This outcome highlights the need to include gender equality as an explicit goal of interventions (during both the design and implementation phases) if they are to produce gender equality changes.

- There is no direct correlation between the apparent gender relevance of a given intervention and the presence or absence of goals in gender equality. Other factors seem to determine this aspect of programming (see factors enhancing or inhibiting gender mainstreaming in the next section).
- The different definitions of gender equality in use during the evolution of a second intervention have contributed to a situation in which it is not clear which aspects of g/e are meant to be most directly affected by the project. Similarly, there are no accountability measures or goals associated with this project since the general direction of g/e goals has not been determined.
- While a third intervention does have a goal for women's participation, this is not based on an analysis of different needs among women and men. Further, the project lacks measures to specifically encourage women's participation as well as the means of monitoring different participation rates and achievements for women and men.
- It is also clear, however, that gender equality goals cannot simply be inserted into interventions by the supporting agency. As the Police Academy project seems to illustrate, an organisation which is disposed to setting goals and targets relating to women's roles and achievements in relation to men represents an important starting point for developing gender equality goals and supporting them with senior management commitment and with structures and processes for effective monitoring.

4.3 Mainstreaming

Clearly the inclusion of gender equality goals is not the sole (or perhaps even the most important) aspect of mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving gender equality. As noted in section 1.2, the use of gender analysis in design, the inclusion of activities and measures to facilitate gender equality impacts, the development of monitoring and evaluation tools (including gender disaggregated data) and the institutionalising of a gender approach are all aspects of mainstreaming worth examining in the four interventions in Nicaragua.

Mainstreaming in Support to the Police Academy

The level of mainstreaming of most aspects of gender equality in the police academy intervention followed a similar path to the development of gender equality goals and targets. The mainstreaming which did occur did not result from a specific gender equality analysis carried out prior to the project but grew over time from the focus on gender needs (especially of women police cadets and officers) and from the structures and processes relating to gender equality put in place both before and during the intervention by the National Police but with support and encouragement from Sida Embassy staff and from IIDH as the facilitating agency.

Aspects of the intervention (other than the inclusion of gender equality goals) providing evidence of mainstreaming as a strategy include:

- The participatory diagnostic process (secondary stakeholders) used in workshops to prepare the five year modernisation plan for the national police and which included a large workshop on gender equality and the treatment of violence against women and youth;
- The adoption by the National Police during the life of the project of specific goals for the level of women's participation in training, in operational positions, establishment within the National Police of a structure (the gender council) for continuous consultation with women police officers on their practical and strategic needs and for monitoring and follow-up on the results of efforts to improve recruiting, training, and career results for women police officers.

Not all of these aspects can be directly attributed to the intervention but they do relate to it and have been incorporated into a key product (the medium term plan) which itself could form the basis of any future phase of the intervention.

In summary, although a mainstreaming strategy was not explicit in the original design of the intervention (which focused more broadly on improving the human rights record of the National Police), fairly robust elements of mainstreaming have arisen during the latest phase of the program as a result of continued interest by external agencies (including Sida) and the recent preoccupation of the National Police with the dual problems of promoting a higher level of participation by women in all aspects of the police and improving the way that the National Police provides equality of treatment and respect to women and men (including their need for personal security and justice).

The Police Academy intervention provides an interesting object lesson in that it seems to suggest that the single most important factor in successfully integrating gender equality into an intervention may be the attitude and receptivity of the institution involved. Since attention to women's practical needs within the police structures and the needs of women citizens outside the structure became identified (at least to some extent) with much wider questions of institutional modernisation and efficiency a fairly strong supportive structure of senior managers developed fairly early on in the process. This informal network of senior officers continues to have a major influential role within the National Police and should be able to safeguard those gains made to date.

At the same time, it was important that this institutional acceptance of gender equality within (and beyond) the intervention naturally linked to an interest on the part of external donors (Sida, GTZ) and of local civil organisations involved in training and education of the police (in particular the Red Contra La Violencia). Thus there was a strong co-relation between the interest of outside agencies in promoting a gender equality perspective and the interests of the National Police from a modernisation and efficiency standpoint.

Under the scale of mainstreaming described in the Section 1.2 the Police Academy would be designated as level 4–5 with both institutionalised aspects of mainstreaming and clear evidence of implementation.

Support to Democratic Governance on the Atlantic Coast

As with the question of the presence or lack thereof of gender equality goals, this intervention has not exhibited other aspects of the dimensions expected from a mainstreaming approach with the notable exception of the recently completed evaluation. Similarly, the main reasons given by the co-ordinating staff of the intervention and by Sida officers and advisors have included:

- The historical levels of conflict in the early phases of the intervention when it was necessary to concentrate on measures to promote peaceful reconciliation of warring parties and the conversion of armed conflict to political co-operation and competition;
- The complex linguistic, cultural, and ethnic makeup of the Atlantic coast region which combines with the history of conflict to produce strong divisions and cleavages across gender lines and means that other forms of inequality (economic, political, access to natural resources) take precedence in the medium to short term. One example of this can be found in recent armed invasions (apparently by groups of armed bandits from outside the area) of farmland held by ethnic families in the North Autonomous Regions. These isolated communities have been subject to terror attacks involving murder and rape with the apparent goal of clearing the land for “settlers” from the Pacific region;
- The limited (at least previously) body of knowledge and expertise on gender equality issues in the Atlantic Regions; and,
- The need to focus on probity and transparency of operations of regional councils and municipal bodies so that democratisation retains a positive image among residents of the region.

The evaluation team was not able to test the extent to which these explanations would have made a mainstreaming approach to gender impossible during past phases. As already noted, the key informants interviewed in both RAAN and RAAS indicated that there were opportunities for focusing on women’s leadership roles during the first two stages of the intervention. However they also acknowledged the difficulty of dealing with the political party evolution of governance structures. This evolution has tended to favour stronger political linkages and control from central party offices in Managua and has tended to exclude women and/or isolate them and reduce their roles (despite the fact that the Governor of RAAN is a woman).

Other than the reported success of the interventions latest stage in including a significant proportion of women in the municipal technical units as recipients and beneficiaries of technical training there is very little evidence that Sida managers, international consultants or national program co-ordinators have emphasised gender equality as an important issue in dialogue with the

key stakeholders during the first two phases of the program. This situation has improved with the recently completed program evaluation and may be improved during the development of the anticipated third phase of the program.

The evaluation team's focus in assessing mainstreaming in RAAN/ASDI/RAAS intervention has been on the identification of opportunities for mainstreaming in the phase currently under development. That examination has revealed considerable interest among stakeholders as well as a much stronger base of research and understanding of gender inequalities and their cause. In short, while the explanations above may have held for the first two phases of the intervention, they seem much less valid as the third is being developed.

It seems that the period since 1996 has included considerable research and advocacy work done by local institutions (particularly by the regional autonomous university) in identifying gender inequalities and in examining the interplay between factors such as ethnicity, gender, poverty and geography. This work has contributed to a much better understanding of the need for action on gender equality. There is also an interesting alignment of organisations promoting gender equality and those advocating regional autonomy so that the supporters of gender equality are among the strongest advocates of autonomy.

It will be essential to undertake a realistic and adequate gender analysis in the preparation of the third phase of this intervention. A start on this process was begun with the inclusion of a gender specialist in the evaluation of the first two phases of the project carried out in 2000. Similarly, plans were under way – during the team's mission to Nicaragua – to undertake training in gender analysis for the project co-ordinating team and for planning workshops with civil society organisations (including women's organisations) in preparation for the planned third phase of this project.

Under the six-point scale of mainstreaming described above, the Democratic Development on the Atlantic Coast intervention ranks as a level two (pro-forma) but with some elements of level six (monitored and evaluated) as a result of the most recent program evaluation.

PRODEL

As already noted mainstreaming represents a process which begins with an analysis of gender inequalities in the area of scope of an initiative and proceeds through the development of explicit goals, the alteration of project/program design to meet those goals, dialogue with partners, and the monitoring and evaluation of gender equality effects¹¹. Measured against this standard, PRODEL does not provide evidence of mainstreaming gender equality.

As noted in section 4.1, both PRODEL's earlier phases did include the goal of a high level of participation by women and a reference to single women

¹¹ See Guiding Principles: Mainstreaming equality into policies, projects and programmes. In Sida's Action Programme for promoting equality between women and men in partner countries. P.11. Sida, 1997

heads of households as a key target group. They did not, however, include measures to identify and deal with barriers to women's effective participation or to monitor and evaluate the effect of project participation on women's equality of economic and social opportunity.

In a real sense, mainstreaming has only been approached as a strategy for supporting gender equality through PRODEL as recently as the February 2001 workshop to develop an operational plan for the year to come. There is an opportunity to follow up this opening with a concerted effort to undertake a meaningful gender analysis and develop a gender equality strategy for PRODEL which is truly mainstreamed.

Under the six-point classification system developed by the evaluation team to assess mainstreaming PRODEL must rate as a level two (pro-forma) in that its participation goals for women have not been backed up with specific implementation measures relating to gender equality.

PROSILAIS

While it has more mainstreaming elements than PRODEL, this critical health sector intervention in Nicaragua cannot be said to have applied a mainstreaming strategy for gender equality.

On the other hand, as noted above, the intervention does include the goal of improved integrated health care with a gender approach which has been interpreted by stakeholders at all the levels of the intervention in very different ways. Further, PROSILAIS has included program elements directly aimed at gender equality in its design and implementation. These include priority for some aspects of reproductive health (not in itself a gender equality initiative but related to women's health needs), gender training for staff, youth clubs with a focus on sexual education and gender relations, and recognition of violence against women and children as a public health problem.

PROSILAIS has not, however, developed an explicit gender equality strategy and has not followed through on the goals relating to gender equality by modifying the system of health statistics to allow for sex disaggregated data collection and analysis. The lack of a gender equality strategy for PROSILAIS has been explicitly noted in several recent evaluation reports.

In summary, PROSILAIS does exhibit some of the important elements of a mainstreaming approach, including at least one goal in gender equality and some program elements specifically aimed at achieving it. The absence of an explicit gender equality strategy and the lack of a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating gender equality, however, means that PROSILAIS represents a partial form of gender equality mainstreaming; one that seems surprising given the wide range of practical and theoretical material available on the essential link between health sector programming and gender equality (see the Inception Report, Annex 7.4, Prompt Sheet Number 4. *Health Systems/Health Sector and Equality Between Men and Women*).

On the six-point scale developed by the evaluation team for assessing the extent of mainstreaming of gender equality in interventions, PROSILAIS represents a combination of a level two (pro-forma) mainstreaming but with some elements of level five (implemented) mainstreaming in that it does include some specific activities related to its gender goals.

4.4 Analysis: Mainstreaming Gender Equality

None of the four interventions evaluated in Nicaragua presents a fully developed model of gender mainstreaming. The intervention which shows the most clear signs of an effort to mainstream gender equality is the support to the Police Academy and National Police which combines some diagnostic mechanisms for examining gender equality (with elements of both gender analysis and participatory program development) with fairly explicit gender equality goals, targets, and follow up mechanisms and benefits from a receptive institutional culture and support from other international agencies.

PROSILAIS is the next most active intervention from a gender mainstreaming perspective in that it does encompass both gender equality goals (with varying interpretations) and measures to implement them. On the other hand, it lacks a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating gender equality and some of its gender equality focused activities are somewhat uncoordinated and partial.

PRODEL represents perhaps the most disappointing of the four interventions assessed from a gender equality mainstreaming perspective. A program in urban development which focused on public infrastructure and credit support to poor families for housing and enterprise development would appear to demand a gender equality strategy and a mainstreaming approach based on evaluative experience over the past ten to fifteen years around the world. Perhaps because of its already high participation rate for women, the previous phases of PRODEL have not included a structured analysis of different needs of men and women or of the inequalities which may be present in the system of credit application approval and use.

Finally, the Democratic Development on the Atlantic Coast intervention has, over its first two phases, chosen not to attempt a gender equality mainstreaming approach based on the need to build a legitimised system of local democratic institutions (including a transparent system with reasonable financial accountability) during a period of conflict and political instability.

The relative lack of progress in mainstreaming gender equality into these four interventions raise two important questions;

1. Why has mainstreaming gender equality been applied as a strategy in such a limited way in the four interventions?
2. What is the situation at present in Nicaragua with regard to these four interventions, could mainstreaming succeed as an approach in the future?

Conclusions Part One: Factors Which Constrain or Promote Gender Mainstreaming

Constraints to Mainstreaming

a) Constraints Relating to Sida's Capacity and Operations

- Absence of gender equality expertise in the design phase of Sida support to interventions; an absence which tends to become institutionalised in the historical life of interventions as they move from phase to phase.

It is interesting that the evaluation team was not able to identify a specific detailed gender analysis carried out in the design phase of three of the four interventions (PROSILAIS, PRODEL and RAAN/ASDI/RAAS). For the Police Academy intervention, one may argue that the consultations held during the development of the five-year modernisation plan represent a collective and participatory form of gender analysis but there is still a striking absence of formal gender analysis in the design work on these interventions given the theoretical role of gender analysis in mainstreaming. It was clear from the team's interviews and discussions with key stakeholders in Nicaragua that sectoral experts (internal and external to Sida) involved in the design phase of projects were not able to bring to bear expertise in gender analysis. This in turn meant that there was little interest in addressing gender equality issues during subsequent monitoring, evaluation and program re-design and re-development.

- An apparent absence of the required competency in analysing gender inequalities among some Sida staff;¹²

Despite the requirement that all Sida staff be trained in gender equality and gender analysis, there remain clear differences in the level of knowledge, awareness and interest among program managers with regard to advocating for gender equality as a priority and for contracting for or carrying out intervention specific gender analysis. This arises in part from confusion over the question of whether or not a formal gender analysis should be carried out during the design of each intervention.

- A possible expectation that the problem of gender equality is the responsibility of the gender focal point at the Embassy and that other officers are not equally responsible for implementing the gender equality policy and strategy;

While there is an understanding that gender equality (along with other Sida priorities) must be the concern of all officers, it is difficult to avoid a situation where this responsibility becomes identified over time with the gender focal point, especially where that person is especially energetic and enthusiastic. Paradoxically, this may give rise to the assumption that

¹² According to the Action Program p.7, Sida 1997 "All personnel working with development cooperation are expected to have the professional competence to promote equality between women and men in whatever issues they are working on and to recognize when there is a need for expert competence".

the focal point person can be expected to “take care of” this issue with a diminished expectation that other officers will follow through on attention to gender equality as a priority in the interventions they manage.

- Differences in the level of interest and commitment of Sida staff responsible for a given intervention (the personal factor);

As already noted, this difference is to be expected but it remains an important factor in determining how extensive mainstreaming can be expected within a given intervention. It is also important to note, however, that external international consultants and partner donor organisations also have an important influence on program design and may have very little training in gender equality (or interest). This seems to have been an important factor in the design of both RAAN/ASDI/RAAS and PROSILAIS.

- Perceived conflicts between the policy of gender equality as a priority and the operational needs of projects and interventions;

Sometimes decisions on the technical direction of a given intervention seem to prohibit or at least inhibit efforts to make meaningful efforts to address gender inequality. As an example, the very strong emphasis placed on economic sustainability in the re-design of PRODEL may make it difficult to finance the non-lending components of the program which seem essential to ensuring women attain more equal access to program benefits. Similarly, the focus in the current phase of RAAN/ASDI/RAAS on transparency, accountability and technical capacity at the municipal level, while it will benefit all citizens, makes it difficult to also focus on the representation of women and their strategic interests in the development of democracy on the Atlantic Coast.

- Lack of use of sector specific guidelines, prompt sheets, and other tools relating to gender equality mainstreaming;

It is difficult to know whether the tools developed by Sida for mainstreaming have suffered from a lack of use because they are inappropriate to the program design, development, negotiation and implementation processes used at field level or if they have not been disseminated widely enough or simply overlooked. Certainly, some of the Embassy staff in Nicaragua reported that they had not been able to make use of the tools that exist. On the other hand, others report that they have the capacity to use the tools and have done so. There is an apparent need to link efforts to improve the general awareness of gender equality as a goal to the tools and guidelines which have been developed by Sida.

- Non-inclusion of gender equality issues in many project and program evaluations, reviews, assessments, results reports etc.

Only the most recent evaluations of RAAN/ASDI/RAAS and PRODEL seem to have included gender equality issues in their terms of reference and/or made specific provision in the evaluation team and

methodologies for gender equality questions to be evaluated. This seems to confirm the difficulty of monitoring and evaluating for gender equality dimensions of interventions in the absence of some recognition of gender equality as a priority during project design.

These problems, reported to the team or evident from the history of the interventions themselves, re-iterate the need for continuous leadership at the headquarters and Embassy level if gender equality is to be a meaningful, high priority goal of Swedish development co-operation and if mainstreaming is to be used as a strategy to achieve that goal.

Clearly, each of these constraints represents at least the potential to create a positive factor by addressing the shortcomings each one deals with.

b) Constraints Relating to Conditions Outside Sida

In the absence of a more visible and concrete effort on the part of the interventions to implement a mainstreaming strategy for gender equality it is difficult to assess the different types of resistance which might be faced by a vigorous effort to instil gender equality as a priority (backed by a strong gender analysis) into the projects. On the other hand, it is possible to identify some based on the experience of, mainly, the interventions reviewed:

- the existence of national and regional conditions which have the effect of over-riding gender equality as a priority

In the case of at least the first project to support democratic development on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, the overwhelming priority given to the peace-making process and the need to develop basic institutions to make regional autonomy effective created a context in which gender equality issues could easily be overlooked, especially in the absence of a structured approach to gender equality. As already noted, however, the history of the peace process in Nicaragua suggests that there was some opportunity for including women's organisations as key actors in the first two phases.

- the requirements for socio-economic programs to be economically and financially self-sustaining;

As projects such as PRODEL are increasingly pushed toward economic and financial sustainability there is a tendency for program designers to assume that technical constraints may mean that the program cannot "afford" a genuine gender equality mainstreaming.

- limited capacity among staff of the partner agency;

For each intervention, Sida staff and external consultants obviously are not the ultimate determinants of project content and the realities of project implementation. This means that locally engaged staff working in project co-ordination offices and the staff of partnering agencies are critical actors in efforts to achieve gender equality through the programmes they work on. Interviews carried out by the evaluation team in relation to

each intervention indicate that there is considerable interest in gender equality on the part of many partnering staff. On the other hand, these same staff often have very little training in gender equality, including gender analysis.

- indifference or resistance on the part of senior and middle managers in partnering agencies.

For those interventions with significant gender equality content, there are real problems of either resistance to gender equity changes or general indifference to the issue. In the case of the National Police project, there is evidence that the changes achieved to date are leading to a situation where some middle level police managers are either resisting advancement by new female officers or are questioning the need for a consultative structure to address the institutional needs of women officers.

Factors with a Potential to Promote Mainstreaming in the Future

While mainstreaming as a strategy can only be seen as partially applied in these four interventions, the situation in each of them suggests that a mainstreaming strategy can and should be applied to the phases currently under development.

- In the Atlantic Coast regions the evaluation team identified a strong set of civil society organisations (NGOs, church based organisations, university research teams, multilateral project agencies, etc.) with a strong commitment to gender equality and a clear understanding of the need for local democratic institutions to respond inequality.
- There is little or no verifiable resistance among implementing agency staff to the idea that gender equality needs to be systematically addressed in the next phases of the projects. That is not to say that gender equality can be achieved without resistance, far from it, in any of the interventions. But in the words of one key informant, “the question is on the table” in democratic development, in health care and in urban and economic development: how can gender equality as a goal in Nicaragua be advanced by this intervention?

There is no longer any real question among working level staff of Sida’s counterparts of the legitimacy of the question or the goal. What is questioned is how to contribute to gender equality through a specific intervention. It seems clear that mainstreaming gender equality represents a strategy for answering just such a question.

Conclusions Part Two: Mainstreaming as a Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality

- At the time of the evaluation mission there was little evidence in the four interventions evaluated that Sida in Nicaragua had engaged in a coherent and systematic effort to implement a strategy of mainstreaming.

- Two of the four interventions had successfully incorporated some aspects of a gender mainstreaming approach through incremental change over time, but this was not the result of a systematic application of support or guidance from Sida (although there was an effort to provide ongoing dialogue on gender equality in two of the interventions).

Chapter 5

Poverty Reduction and the Goal of Gender Equality

5.1 Poverty and Gender Equality in the Four Interventions

Support to the Police Academy

It is important to note that the Police Academy intervention has no formal or stated anti-poverty mandate or goal. On the other hand, a key element in any anti-poverty strategy is improving access for the poor to basic service in health, education, water, nutrition, etc. Similarly, access to a reasonable level of personal security and safety (including safety from ill-treatment by the police) may be seen as one component of the fight against poverty. This should also apply to women's special gender needs in personal security.

The relationship between poverty and the National Police in Nicaragua is both very close and very complex. The National Police deal with poverty both as an internal issue (the poverty of some police officers and their families) and as an external condition of their work (they work largely among the poor). The key informants interviewed pointed out the following inter-relationships between poverty, gender equality and policing in Nicaragua;

- The police force represents one avenue out of abject poverty in Nicaragua and the recruits for the force come from a wide spectrum of localities and population groups, often including the very poor¹³. As a result it is essential that young poor women have access to this path from poverty even if it is a hard one;
- The fact that many police recruits (male and female) are drawn from the very poor means that police training must deal with problems of self-esteem and self worth common to poor people, including the engendered ways that poor self esteem effects young women recruits;

¹³ It should be noted that this does not imply a policy on the part of the National Police of targeting the poor as a source of recruits. Rather it reflects the low levels of pay and harsh working conditions of the National Police, especially in the lower ranks. Nonetheless, informants at all levels noted that the NP provides many recruits with a viable (if hard and lengthy) road from poverty).

- For many poor people, including poor women, the National Police are the only arm of the state with which they have direct and regular contact. It is essential that the poor (including poor women) receive just treatment from this most visible form of state power or their conception of the state will be utterly cynical;
- The national police are very familiar with the dynamic of poverty for two reasons: in the lower ranks they are among the poorest salary earners in the country and face poverty directly; and their “clienteles” are largely drawn from the poor where the largest numbers of victims of crime are found; and,
- The aspects of poverty directly impacting on women’s personal security including family violence, alcoholism, and sexual abuse are as prevalent in the families of police officers as elsewhere in society.

Thus, in the case of support to the National Police Academy and the National Police of Nicaragua, there is no simple dichotomous relationship between poverty and gender equality. Efforts to address gender equality in policing are neither automatically or by definition complementary (or in conflict with) efforts to address poverty. Rather, efforts to address gender equality have a clear poverty dimension and can, with care, be linked to the task of reducing poverty. For example, better police attention to inter-family violence should provide poor women with an improvement in personal security and help to avoid the terrible personal and family economic consequences of violence against women.

There may be a direct opportunity during the implementation of the five year plan for modernisation of the National Police to build a better conceptual basis for linking the gender equality components of the plan to efforts to address poverty, especially for women, children and youth.

Support to Democratic Development on the Atlantic Coast

At the macro level, the first and second phases of the RAAN/ASDI/RAAS intervention have focused on establishing the functional bodies necessary for regional and local democratic governance and on ensuring greater transparency and efficiency for those bodies. The most recent phase also includes a facility for small scale public works and some investment in local industrial development so it may be said to provide at least one mechanism for addressing poverty. The main rationale for the program, however, is the development of regional and local governance with political legitimacy and reasonable efficiency and probity. In the long run these can be expected to under-pin a more sustainable economic development but they cannot be characterised as direct anti-poverty programs.

The most important current debate on poverty reduction in the Atlantic Coast Regions concerns the current draft of the National Strategy to Combat Poverty which was presented at a full day discussion and workshop with

leaders of civil society in the Northern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN) during the visit of the evaluation team to Puerto Cabezas (Bilwi as the residents of RAAN refer to their capital). The perceptions reported at that meeting (and by participants at a similar workshop in RAAN) was that the draft plan was a *fait accompli* requiring no real input from residents of the coastal regions and not in their interest.

The belief of many residents of RAAN and RAAS is effective implementation of the law of autonomy (Law 28) so that they may gain effective control of the resources of the region will be necessary if poverty is to be effectively dealt with. Extreme poverty is measured at much higher prevalence rates in both Atlantic Regions than in the rest of the country.

Because the intervention on the Atlantic Coast deals mainly with the machinery of democratic government much of its activities and outputs may not relate directly to either gender equality or poverty in the short term. On the other hand, the public works and economic development aspects of the program at municipal level deal directly with efforts to improve infrastructure and stimulate economic activity. In these areas there will clearly be some opportunities to link gender equality goals and efforts to reduce poverty. However, key informants interviewed in the region felt that the overall question of regional poverty is much more closely linked to much broader questions of control over the exploitation and benefits of natural resources and the conflict between regional and national levels of government.

PRODEL

Of the four interventions examined, PRODEL represents the most direct effort to address poverty and unemployment and has great potential towards poverty alleviation. In fact, the origin of PRODEL relates, at least in part, to efforts to address the potential increase in urban poverty resulting from the reduction in public sector employment associated with structural economic adjustment programs throughout the 1990s.

While poor urban residents represent the target group for PRODEL, these cannot, for the most part, be seen as the very poor or those in extreme poverty (with some important exceptions). The level of personal guarantee required for the granting of the loans and the financial sustainability requirement applied to enterprises accessing the credit available seem to indicate that the program targets families and persons living above the level of the poorest. Nevertheless the majority of the beneficiaries interviewed clearly stated that the credit helped improve living conditions and most of the interviewees were women. In somewhat of a contradiction, the team also met women beneficiaries who had benefited from the credit support to micro-enterprise only to the extent that it helped them to survive in continuing conditions of extreme poverty.

PRODEL could be more effective in trying to prioritise poverty reduction for poor women but this would require further analysis of economic activities

and social roles and responsibilities of women and men in order to better identify relevant priority groups such as women single headed households. The project could also examine the possibility of introducing specific financial packages for poor women.

The key interface between poverty reduction and gender equality in PRODEL concerns whether or not the economic structure of the program can be altered so that it contributes more effectively to gender equality without destroying the basic, microeconomic design of the credit component of the project. Some aspects of this design include:

- Treatment of participants/beneficiaries as clients so that they are assessed and related to as individuals with credit requirements on more or less a banking model. This promotes personal service and efficiency but limits opportunities for empowering consultative mechanisms among groups of women;
- Insistence on financial measures consistent with the local credit market in order to promote self-sustainability of the program. This approach implies a near market rate of interest, strong security requirements and fees for non-financial services, all of which may limit the access of poor women to much needed technical assistance.

It should be noted that these aspects of PRODEL (market orientation, relatively high interest rates, fees for services, etc) limit its ability to reach very poor clients both men and women (although some clients interviewed were clearly still among the very poor). Still, there is considerable scope for examining the self-sustaining and market related aspects of PRODEL's design to see if they can be slightly modified or augmented to allow for a better synergy between poverty reduction and gender equality work. In this area it seems that gender equality and poverty reduction are not by definition in conflict but certain aspects of a cost-recovery model for micro-credit need to be modified and supplemented (by non-financial technical assistance for women credit users for example) in order to eliminate conflicts rising from the program model. If these adjustments were made, it seems clear that PRODEL could increase its effectiveness in addressing poverty by better meeting the credit and technical assistance needs of women "clients".

PROSILAIS

One of the main rationales of PROSILAIS is to strengthen the capacity of the health system to meet the needs of poor people in more remote geographic locations throughout the country. Local, integrated and sustainable systems of attention to health are meant to meet needs and provide services which were not available from the centralised system which the SILAIS have supplemented. The evaluation team's visits to three SILAIS indicate that the establishment and development of the SILAIS, especially the mobile health brigades, have improved access to basic services, most of which are provided free and are of direct interest to poor women. In almost all models of poverty

and poverty alleviation, improved access to essential , basic social services in areas such as health are seen as important components in a direct anti-poverty approach.

Not only are there not direct contradictions or conflicts between the goals of gender equality and poverty reduction in PROSILAIS; there are evident points of possible linkage and greater synergy. Two examples are readily available:

1. The risk approach adopted by the Integrated Health Care strategy for the SILAIS places a premium on pre-identification of high-risk groups and individuals for preventive attention. In this approach there is an implied link between poverty, gender and high risk. For instance, poverty is often directly associated with very high levels of fertility and attendant risks of too closely spaced births, high maternal mortality, high maternal malnutrition, infant mortality, etc.
2. While there is no definitive proof that intra-family violence is more present in poor families than others, there is recognition among SILAIS staff and community members that poverty heightens problems of violence. A SILAIS health strategy that identifies intra-family violence as a public health issue provides an avenue for linking gender equality, freedom from violence and poverty reduction in a single strategy.

5.2 Analysis: Poverty Reduction and Gender Equality

In at least three of the four interventions studies (Police Academy, PRODEL, PROSILAIS) the issue of poverty seems to be clearly inter-linked to the question of gender equality. In these interventions, a more effective gender equality approach can and should be linked to more targeted and effective measures to deal with poverty. This congruence or synergy between poverty reduction and the promotion of gender equality is not automatic and must be addressed in the intervention design and development process if poverty alleviation and gender equality activities are to be effectively linked. For example, the five year modernisation plan for the National Police may be improved through more explicit recognition of the need to provide all women (and especially poor women) with access to justice and improved personal security in order to avoid the severe economic consequences for women of isolation, lack of access to employment and its benefits, and the direct costs of violence. Similarly, PRODEL could be modified in its design in order to ensure that women as clients have more equal access to the positive economic benefits of the program and by doing so could extent its anti-poverty impact to some critical populations it may not be reaching.

Even a brief review of poverty reduction and gender equality goals in each of the interventions not only illustrates the absence of any *inherent* conflict between the two goals but identifies possible strategies for *linking* them. Some-

times, as in the case of PRODEL, certain aspects of program design may make it more difficult to link poverty reduction and gender equality, but these are often open to slight modifications or supplemental activities (admittedly at some cost) to eliminate these technical contradictions.

On the other hand, the basic synergies and linkages identified will not serve to ensure that gender equality and poverty reduction goals are complementary unless much more effort is made during program design and development to understand poverty and how it interacts with gender inequalities.

Conclusions: Poverty Reduction and Gender Equality

- In each of the four interventions examined there are opportunities to better link *gender equality* efforts to the combating of poverty. For example:
 - in the intervention supporting the National Police and the Police Academy there is the clear possibility of linking improvements in more equitable and more effective police services for women and girls to efforts to improve the poverty situation of women and their families;
 - in the PRODEL project there is an opportunity to support the economic assistance provided to women for housing and commercial credits with a higher level of non-financial support to improve the effectiveness of the financial credits and support gender equity in the commercial arenas;
 - in PROSILAIS, improvements in health service to meet the gender needs of women and girls can be linked to efforts to improve the economic and work status situation of women health workers and volunteers, and,
 - the public works and small scale industry components of the Atlantic Coast project can be strengthened from a gender equality perspective going forward. Perhaps more importantly, the gender needs of women and girls in the two Atlantic Autonomous Regions can be fully incorporated into efforts to develop and implement regional anti-poverty programs.

Chapter 6

Stakeholder Participation and Gender Equality

As noted in the methodology section above, evaluation team members were able to conduct a series of structured interviews with key stakeholders from both the primary and secondary stakeholder categories. They were also able to undertake short workshops and SWOT analysis sessions with small groups of primary stakeholders for three of the four interventions (Police Academy, PRODEL, PROSILAIS).

This section focuses on the extent to which women and youth participated in the different aspects of each of the intervention in ways which supported rather than impeded efforts to address gender inequalities.

6.1 Stakeholder Participation in the Four Interventions

Support to The Police Academy

The intervention in support of the Police Academy and the National Police presents an interesting pattern for stakeholder participation. On the one hand, a para-military organisation such as the National Police of Nicaragua with its vertical command structure and very clear lines of authority would not seem to represent a positive forum for stakeholder participation in the design and development of an intervention. On the other hand, when consultation and dialogue does take place and positive solutions are identified, the command structure of an organisation of this type allows for fairly rapid action.

In analysing stakeholder participation relating to this intervention, the evaluation team focused on three separate structures for consultation and participation. One of these pre-dates the intervention but is important in understanding the context of consultation and participation in the reform and modernisation of the National Police from a gender equality perspective. The second was an integral part of the structure of the intervention. The third type of participation may be seen as an outcome of continuous work on the issue of gender equality by this intervention – by concerned supporters and officers working within the National Police. Each is worth examining briefly:

b) The consultative council on gender of the National Police.

In the period after 1990, the Nicaragua police have experienced a decline in the relative numbers of women police officers, especially among new trainees. In response to this decline and in an effort to improve the career prospects of women police officers, the National Police established (on March 8 1996) a Consejo Consultivo de Género. The National Police also undertook a series of consultations with female cadets and officers at all levels of the organisation and in all geographic departments of the country. This in turn led to the development of policies and targets in gender equality. In 1997, a Commissioner was appointed to head the Consejo Consultivo and to provide leadership on the gender equality policies of the National Police in order to redress inequalities faced by female police officers at all levels.

The Consejo Consultivo, with its permanent status, leadership at a high level in the National Police and a membership of women (at this time all members are women) from all levels in the force represents an important form of continuous stakeholder participation in policy development and monitoring. It has evolved from a purely consultative body to one which influences policy and practices. The next step for the Consejo Consultivo is to broaden its membership so that male officers can be brought more fully into the dialogue on gender equality (although a small group of male senior officers has been consistent in its support of gender equality as an element in the modernisation of the police force).

If one applies the seven point scale outlined in section 1.2 above to the Consejo Consultivo mechanism represents elements of level 3 (participation by consultation), 5 (functional participation) and 6 (interactive participation). It is perhaps this last form of interactive participation which most characterises the council since it does contribute to goal setting and the development of action plans on gender equality initiatives within the National Police and does so from an explicit gender equality perspective.

c) The consultative workshops for development of the Medium Term Plan

During the development (as an integral part of the intervention) of the medium term plan for modernisation and development of the national police, the project office organised and mediated a series of consultative workshops held in Managua and dealing with specific aspects of the modernisation program. These workshops involved officers of the National Police, academics, journalists, church representatives, representatives of women's rights and other human rights organisations, representatives of other Ministries with dealings with the Police, and representatives of political parties. Taken as a group the workshops featured a strong mix of government agencies, researchers and academics and civil society organisations. Of particular interests were workshops on:

- The National Police and the Rights of Children and Adolescents;
- The National Police and the Administration of Justice;
- The National Police and the Social Prevention of Delinquency; and,
- The National Police and Treatment of Inter-Family and Sexual Violence.

These consultative workshops reportedly had a direct effect on the content of the Medium Term Plan which, as noted earlier, touches on gender equality in a number of its components (those dealing with improved police services, human resource development, and a section dealing with a focus on gender equality).

From the perspective of gender equality issues and concerns, the consultative workshops on the modernisation plan for the National Police represent a level 3 (participation by consultation) on the seven point scale proposed by the Inception Report. It is important to note, however, that this forum for consultation relied mostly on secondary stakeholders (external organisations) and on the leadership cadre of the National Police. There was less real grass roots participation in this exercise than in the Consejo Consultivo.

d) Links from the National Police to Civil Society

In addition to the Consejo Consultivo de Género, and the consultative workshops on modernisation plans, the National Police have fostered links to organisations of civil society involved in the development of a national response to issues relating to gender equality. National exercises with joint Police and CSO participation include the development of the national plan against violence, the revision of the legal code dealing with children, and the national initiative to improve personal security (*seguridad ciudadana*). Each of these has an important gender equality dimension. CSO staff note the National Police have been supportive of efforts to identify gender equality needs and responses in the development of these plans. This involvement of the National Police is not a direct result of the intervention, but it does represent an openness to another form of key stakeholder participation. As in b) above, this mechanism represents mainly level 3 or consultative participation and mainly involves secondary stakeholders in the form of intermediary organisations representing women's interests.

Support to Democratic Development on the Atlantic Coast

Discussions with Sida staff, the program co-ordinator and intervention staff and reviews of intervention documents, including the report of Sida Evaluation 00/19 indicate that the RAAN-ASDI-RAAS program has followed a "participative" strategy in that it has worked openly and directly with elected members of regional and municipal councils and with candidates to those bodies. The intervention has also worked with administrative bodies including the Municipal Technical Units (MTUs) at municipal levels and the regional governments (which are formally subject to control by the Regional Councils).

As reported in Sida Evaluation 00/19, one of the achievements of the RAAN-ASDI-RAAS intervention has been the implementation of a participatory methodology for micro-level planning of the small public works supported at municipal level. This micro-planning methodology was also reported during the evaluation as contributing to a high level of women's participation in community level public works, in part because women were well represented in each Unidad Técnica Ejecutora (UTE).

Similarly, the socio-economic development component of the second phase of RAAN-ASDI-RAAS which goes under the title INDEL (Iniciativas de Desarrollo Local) has adopted the micro-level planning model used for PRODEL's infrastructure component and has targeted 50% participation by women. Early reports indicate that this level of participation is being achieved.

Finally, it is worth noting that at the time of the evaluation team's work in Nicaragua (March 2001), a second round of participatory planning workshops to be carried out in RAAN and RAAS for the third phase of this programme were in the planning stages.

In order to address the participation of women as key stakeholders in democratic development on the Atlantic Coast, the evaluation team members concentrated on the historical development of women's participation in governance and any links from the program to this development.

Historically, women have had an important role in leadership and in local governance structures (especially in the Northern Autonomous Region) on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua. Women, for example, were crucial in the organisation of the peace process in the region. Unfortunately, over the past round of elections, women's representation has declined on such bodies as the Regional Councils (partly as a result of the increasing power and presence of national political parties). Those women who have been successful in securing seats on regional and local bodies also report that their capacity to represent gender equality issues is severely limited by central (i.e. Managua) party control.

Finally, women do participate in the program as recipients and beneficiaries of technical assistance to the Municipal Technical Units (UTMs) where they receive training in accounting, bookkeeping, computer use, etc.

On balance, however, it cannot be said that stakeholder participation in the RAAN-ASDI-RAAS program has extended to direct participation by women in the development and implementation of a response to gender inequalities in regional and local government. As pointed out in Sida Evaluation 00/19, this is a natural consequence of the absence of a gender equality focus or strategy in the first two stages of the intervention.

On the other hand, the public works and local economic development components of the program have used participatory planning techniques (as reported by the recent evaluation) and have identified target levels for women's participation.

In summary, and speaking strictly from a gender equality perspective, under the municipal technical units (UTMs) component of RAAN/ASDI/RAAS women have participated at a level 4 (participation for material incentives) in that they have received employment and technical training. Under the INDEL sub-component of the program, women (and men) beneficiaries are reported to be participating at a level 5 (functional participation) in that they are identifying local public works project priorities in a participatory way using a micro-planning model.

PRODEL

Although more than 50% of the clients of PRODEL's credit components are women, there is little evidence that participation by women and men in the process of designing and implementing the intervention has been used as a means of achieving gender equality goals. For example, while participants in the urban infrastructure component of PRODEL do have access to a micro-planning mechanism, there is no evidence that potential clients to the housing and enterprise components of the program have had an influence on the development of selection procedures or on credit approval criteria. Without attention to client selection and loan approval criteria from a gender equality perspective, there is a risk that high participation rates for women will not be sustainable in the future.

Similarly, while participation rates for women as clients of the credit components of the program are high, the current registration system does not provide means of monitoring whether the person who signs for the loan is necessarily the one who actually benefits from it.

On the other hand, the infrastructure component of PRODEL is well endowed with a mechanism for direct consultation with participants. Women beneficiaries and children (girls and boys) are specifically included in the "comisiones de barrios". This is a direct opportunity for citizen participation allowing them to play a meaningful role in decision making.

That dialogue which does occur with the beneficiaries of micro-credit for household improvement and small enterprises operates mainly on an individual basis. However ACODEP, within its management services, invites clients once a year for focus group discussion relating to adjustments to services, credit policies and development of new products. This practice could be further enhanced to create a platform for further dialogue and participation between the project, the financial institution and the beneficiaries.

Dialogue with stakeholders and representatives of civil society could be strengthened during the preparation of a third phase of the program, especially with regard to the credit components. This could facilitate a debate on gender issues from a local perspective with results incorporated at design level. Participation could also be more closely linked to gender equality by drawing on the expertise of Nicaraguan NGOs with experience in the use of mi-

cro-finance as a means for achieving women's economic empowerment and in general with engaging in further dialogue with NGOs.

In summary, the participation of women (and men) primary stakeholders in PRODEL is quite different depending on which element is being analysed (infrastructure or micro-credit). Participation by primary stakeholders in the micro-credit component of the program may best be characterised as level four participation (participation for material incentives) with some elements of level three (consultation) in that each client (male or female) is interviewed to determine eligibility for credit but within a fixed format for eligibility. There is little or no group consultation which might give rise to a level five (functional) participation for primary stakeholders in the credit component of PRODEL.

On the other hand the infrastructure component of PRODEL does involve women and youth in decision making processes regarding local public works in their barrios and may be classified as a level 5 (functional) participation in that it allows women and youth to take part in groups aimed at meeting pre-determined project objectives.

PROSILAIS

Municipal Level

In the PROSILAIS *system*, the Municipal Health Committee is the forum for broad citizen participation in health issues. The committee includes representation from public institutions, civil society organisations and the network of community health volunteers. Once a year the director of SILAIS or Municipal Health Centre presents the annual municipal health plan to the committee. This annual operational plan has a normative framework pre-defined by the Ministry of Health (MINSA). Interviews indicate that the depth and quality of discussion of the draft operational health plans varies considerably from one SILAIS to another. The Director of Health uses the annual meeting of the committee as an opportunity to ask for support to health activities in each community and to give public recognition the work of volunteers. In that sense, the Municipal Health Committees can be seen as both a consultative mechanism and an essential management tool for the Directors of the SILAIS.

The degree and nature of participation varied among the municipalities visited by the evaluation team. In Estelí, there was an active involvement of civil society organisations and the committee has increased from 12 to 20 persons. In other places, the participation is limited to the formal annual meeting on the operational health plan. Some civil society organisations are active in the training of health volunteers and have also trained health staff on violence and gender. In one community, the committee was involved in the discussion of the proposal for the 3rd phase of PROSILAIS.

While PROSILASIS clearly has avenues for citizen participation in operational planning (including planning of the next phase of the program) at the municipal level, representatives of some organisations complain that the health sector’s authorities have a very instrumental notion of citizens and community participation. (“We are just being used”).

Health Post and Community level:

The network of community health volunteers (brigadistas, trained traditional midwives and malaria volunteers) is widespread and active in service delivery. The nature of volunteer participation is to provide support to health activities. Volunteers deliver some health services directly to the population of the community and refer patients to the health post or centre.

Strengths and opportunities:

The health system is open to society and maintains positive links to civil society organisations in some places. There is also a wide interest and capacity for civil society in Nicaragua to work in the areas of health, violence, gender and masculinities. The health system could/should take more advantage of the opportunities these organisations present in such areas as the analysis of gender relations in every-day practices and beliefs of families and in their perceptions of health problems.

UNICEF and PAHO also have the local capacity to promote activities in promotion of gender equality in most of the SILAIS involved in PROSILASIS. Finally, the Women’s Network Against Sexual and Inter Family Violence is very strong and proactive in advocacy and has a national (as well as local) organisational presence.

Figure 6.1: Stakeholder Map for PROSILASIS		
Stakeholder map: Health Actors at local level: Department or Municipality		
Governmental Institutions:	Community Network of Health Volunteers	Civil Society Organisations (women’s or mixed, gender, health or other focus)
SILASIS: Director and technical team of SILAIS Director and staff of municipal health centre Ministry of Education (present at department and municipal level) Nacional Police	Brigadistas (health promoters) Trained traditional midwives Volunteers of Malaria Owners of Casa Base	AMNLAE (National and local) IXCHEN (National and Esteli) FUNDEMUNI (Ocotal) Acción Ya (Esteli) Network against Sexual and Inter Family Violence (National and Esteli) INPRHU (National and Somoto) Movimiento Comunal (National and local)
The municipal health committee: Includes all these actors if they are working in the community in question.		
Central Governmental Institutions: (with indirect influence at local level) Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of the Family, Ministry of Government		

In summary, of all the interventions examined, PROSILSAIS has the most complex and well developed system for citizen consultation and involvement in planning and priority setting at least at the municipal and local levels. At the municipal level it can be said that key secondary stakeholders take part in a level 6 (interactive) type of participation in that they are involved in the development, review and endorsement of the annual plan for the region. This participation includes women stakeholders in the form of SILAIS staff and of brigadistas, community health workers and volunteers. It is not clear from the evaluation interviews whether their representation in these forums has allowed women to better identify how the SILAIS can better promote gender equality or whether the focus has been strictly operational.

At the community level, participation by health volunteers seems to have been mainly at a level five (functional participation in groups) in that they form a network of key health workers active in service delivery.

6.2 Analysis: Stakeholder Participation and Gender Equality

In summary, each of the four interventions examined included mechanisms, structures and processes for some form of stakeholder consultation and stakeholder involvement in program planning and direction. In some of the interventions (PRODEL, RAAN-ASDI-RAAS)¹⁴ these processes were limited and did not encompass some major components of the intervention program. They are often “instrumental’ in the sense that they serve to provide inputs for program managers to make adjustments to the interventions rather than representing direct involvement by primary stakeholders in program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

It is important to note the Police Academy intervention and PROSILSAIS both provide some examples of the use of consultative mechanisms to develop or guide initiatives relating to gender equality. PRODEL has included a fairly strong mechanism for primary stakeholder participation in the infrastructure component but has limited opportunities for participation beyond level four (material incentives) in the credit component of the program. In PROSILSAIS participatory consultation is often used for operational planning but can be linked to gender issues such as family violence. In the case of the Police Academy and National Police intervention, participatory and consultative mechanisms have a diagnostic and strategy planning function and are directly linked to gender equality.

¹⁴ As noted above, participatory planning methods through workshops with key stakeholders are being used in the preparation of the third phase of RAAN/ASDI/RAAS although it was not clear at the time of the team’s evaluation mission to Nicaragua how much these processes would influence the gender equality content of this intervention.

Referring to the seven-point scale and the inter-relation of stakeholder participation and gender equality, it is perhaps useful to summarise the evaluation team's findings on participation in the form of a table:

Intervention	Participatory Mechanism	Stakeholders Participating	Level of Participation	Link to Gender Equality
Police Academy	Consultative Counsel	Women primary and secondary	3 (Consultative) 6 (Interactive)	Direct link to gender goals
Police Academy	Workshops on 5 Year Plan	Women and men secondary	3 (Consultation)	Direct link to gender in some elements of 5 year plan
Police Academy	Consultations with Civil Society	Secondary stakeholders	3 (Consultation)	Links to issues of violence
RAAN/ASDI/RAAS	Municipal Technical Units	Women primary stakeholders	4 (Material Incentives)	Women beneficiaries of technical training
RAAN/ASDI/RAAS	INDEL (Local Development)	Women and men primary stakeholders	5 (Functional)	Women involved (with men) in designation of public works
PRODEL	Micro-Credit	Women and men primary stakeholders	4 (Material Incentives)	Consultation as clients- technical aspects of credit
PRODEL	Infrastructure	Women and men primary stakeholders	5 (Functional)	Women involved (with men) in designation of public works
PROSILAIS	Municipal Level	Women and men secondary stakeholders	6 (Interactive)	Establishing annual operational plans
PROSILAIS	Community Level	Women and men secondary and primary stakeholders	5 (Functional)	Network of volunteers and health workers with potential to emphasise gender changes

It is worth noting that the forms of participation outlined above were verified by the evaluation team members from a number of different sources of evidence. In order to be included in the above table participatory mechanisms were either:

- observed directly during the team's visits to intervention sites and activities;
- described to the team by independent groups of secondary stakeholders;

- described to the team by more than one group of primary stakeholders interviewed (along with their participation in the mechanism); or
- described in project documents and verified by one or more groups of secondary stakeholders and/or participants.

Conclusions: Participation and Gender Equality

- The picture painted by these four interventions with respect to stakeholder participation as it relates to gender equality and women (and youth) participation can be described as positive with a potential for further development. The participatory mechanisms developed and implemented for each intervention have at least some degree of relevance for addressing issues of gender equality. In the case of the Police Academy and PROSILAIS, (and to a lesser extent perhaps, the infrastructure component of PRODEL) the evaluation team was able to identify instances where the participatory mechanisms had been used by women stakeholders to identify and pursue objectives and interests directly related to gender equality. This may have occurred in RAAN/ASDI/RAAS as well but the evaluation team's limited time in the Atlantic Region did not allow for a full examination of the Technical Units and INDEL components of the project.

In all the interventions there is a clear potential for stakeholder participation to serve as a medium for strengthening the gender equality focus of the interventions in later phases.

Chapter 7

Changes and Other Effects in Gender Equality

This section addresses the Nicaragua evaluation team's findings regarding the key question of what has changed in relation to gender equality either as a direct result of the four interventions examined or with some identifiable contribution to that change from the interventions examined. The section looks at gender equality changes under two different headings:

- a) *Qualitative and quantitative changes* in gender equality (changes in gender relations) which can be associated in some degree with the interventions reviewed;
- b) Changes relating to women's *practical gender needs and strategic gender interests*. This represents a re-classification of the gender changes identified in a) above into the key categories identified in the Terms of Reference and the Inception Report;

In addition to examining identifiable changes in gender relations which can be associated with the four interventions, the evaluation team members examined two categories of intervention *effects* which can be seen as laying the foundation or setting out pre-conditions for future changes in gender relations. These are concerned with:

- a) the *empowerment of women* as a result of intervention related activities; and,
- b) challenges to *male roles and definitions of masculinities* or efforts to re-examine and re-define male roles and masculinities which may result from the activities or a given intervention.

7.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Gender Changes in the Four Interventions

Table 7.1 below lists the most important quantitative and qualitative gender equality changes identified by the evaluation team in relation to each of the four interventions. Where changes have been quantified data has been gathered from reports, evaluations and interviews with the project authority or is summarised from participant workshops.

Qualitative data is as reported by key stakeholders (including primary stakeholders) and verified through observation, other interviews and documents.

It is important to note that each of the changes identified has been attributed by key informants to either the intervention itself or to the intervention working in combination with other initiatives and organisations.

Support to the Police Academy	Democratic Development on the Atlantic Coast¹⁵	PRODEL	PROSILAIS
<p>Quantitative Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in female police officers from 18% in 1998 to 23% in 2000 - Increase in % of women officers in charge from 11% in 1998 to 18% in 2000. - Increase in % of female officers in charge of operational units (i.e. Traffic, narcotics, criminal investigation) from 8% in 1998 to 11% in 2000. - Year 2000 police academy entry class increased to 40% women. <p>Qualitative Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensitisation and training of some male chiefs of police to gender equality within the force. - Specific and targeted improvements in practical conditions of life for female police trainees (infrastructure, food, medical services) - Better informed women police officers regarding their rights (more able to take action). - Self-reported empowerment and improvements in self-esteem for women police trainees. - Identification of need to address male roles and masculinities - Challenge to traditional male and female roles in the culture of the National Police. 	<p>Quantitative Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - high participation rate of women in small-scale public works - Participation of 50% women and 50% men in local socio-economic development component - High participation rate of women in municipal technical units (more than 50%) <p>Qualitative Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - women participants in municipal technical units benefit from technical assistance 	<p>Quantitative Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achievement of target of more than 50% of clients/beneficiaries of the large housing and enterprise credit components of PRODEL as women <p>Qualitative Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvements in living conditions reported by men and women - Improvements in economic security (sometimes at subsistence level only) - Self-reported increase in self-confidence and self-esteem for women and men. - Reported improvements in family harmony (possible lessening of stress and violence?) 	<p>Quantitative/Qualitative Changes¹⁶</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some increase in the number of female personnel in management positions (especially sub-directors of SILAIS and municipal health directors) - Improved access to free contraceptives improved information on family planning available to women - Training of male and female youth (in youth groups) on sexual education, family planning, STDs, gender relations. - Reported improvements in male partner acceptance of contraceptive use (despite the absence of a direct mechanism for reaching adult men) - Recognition of inter-family violence as a public health issue (implicitly including sexual violence and abuse of girl children) - A reported, incipient increase in men's roles as fathers - Reported increase in willingness on the part of male health staff to work in teams and respect women colleagues (a changing attitude to female professionals).

¹⁵ It is important to note that the gender equality results reported for the Atlantic Coast Project relate to only two of the eight component objectives of the program (municipal public works and socio-economic development).

¹⁶ The findings in PRODEL and PROSILAIS are based on expressions (self-reported) by selected stakeholders and the methodology used does not provide a basis for estimating statistical validity across the entire program.

Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative Gender Change

It is important to stress that women are present, as a distinctive class or group of project beneficiaries in each of the four interventions and are identified as such by implementing stakeholders and by project documents (although their presence and visibility is limited in scope in the case of RAAN-ASDI-RAAS). For example, women are present as the direct target group in the Police Academy Project, as credit facility users in PRODEL, as health volunteers and workers (and as clients of health services) in PROSILAIS and as members of Municipal Technical Users (MTUs) in the Atlantic Coast intervention. As formal and recognised program clients, women benefit from the services and resources provided in all four interventions.

It takes a closer examination, however, to see how the interventions may have had an effect on *gender equality*.

As already discussed, an effect on gender equality implies a change in the rate of women's participation to redress inequalities and/or changes in gender relations. Clearly, some of the changes noted above such as the changes in the participation rate of women in positions of management responsibility in the National Police represent gender equality improvements. Others such as a high female participation rate in PRODEL credit programs or significant female participation in the Municipal Technical Units supported by RAAN-ASDI-RAAS would not represent a gender equality change if these were traditional roles for women in the North and South Atlantic Autonomous Regions.

A key question for all the different types of gender equality change described in this section is the identification of those factors most apparently influencing the type and level of gender equality change observed by the evaluation team. These factors are discussed at the end of the section.

7.2 Practical and Strategic Gender Changes

In examining the gender equality changes associated with these four interventions, it seems that the factor distinguishing practical from strategic changes is how the changes affect relations with men and whether they challenge in some way, the pre-existing power relationship between women and men.

With these definitions in hand, table 7.2 below categorises the gender equality changes already noted under three groupings: practical gender changes, strategic gender changes and changes which can be grouped as both.

Table 7.2 Practical and Strategic Gender Changes in Nicaragua

Support to the Police Academy	Democratic Development on the Atlantic Coast	PRODEL	PROSILAIS
<p>Practical Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvements in practical conditions of life for female police trainees (infrastructure, food, medical services) - Self-reported empowerment and improvements in self-esteem for women police trainees. <p>Strategic Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensitisation and training of some male chiefs of police to gender equality within the force. - Better informed women police officers regarding their rights (more able to take action). - Identification of need to address male roles and masculinities - Challenge to traditional male and female roles in the culture of the National Police. - Budgeted gender equality components in the five year modernisation plan <p>Changes which cross the practical/strategic dichotomy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in female police officers from 18% in 1998 to 23% in 2000 - Increase in % of officers in charge from 11% in 1998 to 18% in 2000. - Increase in % of female officers in charge of operational units (i.e. Traffic, narcotics, criminal investigation) from 8% in 1998 to 11% in 2000. -Year 2000 police academy entry class increased to 40% women 	<p>Practical Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - high participation rate of women in small-scale public works - Participation of 50% women and 50% men in local socio-economic development component - High participation rate of women in municipal technical units (more than 50%) - women participants in municipal technical units benefit from technical assistance 	<p>Practical Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvements in living conditions reported by men and women - Improvements in economic security (sometimes at subsistence level only) - Self-reported increase in self-confidence and self-esteem for women. - Reported improvements in family harmony (possible lessening of stress and violence?) 	<p>Practical Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved access to free contraceptivesimproved information on family planning available to women - Training of male and female youth (in youth groups) on sexual education, family planning, STDs, gender relations. <p>Strategic Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reported improvements in male partner acceptance of contraceptive use (despite the absence of a direct mechanism for reaching adult men) - Recognition of inter-family violence as a public health issue (implicitly including sexual violence and abuse of girl children) - A reported, incipient increase in men's roles as fathers - Reported increase in willingness on the part of male health staff to work in teams and respect women colleagues (a changing attitude to female professionals). <p>Changes which cross the practical/strategic dichotomy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some increase in the number of female personnel in management positions (especially sub-directors of SILAIS and municipal health directors)

Analysis: Practical and Strategic Gender Changes

Table 7.2 illustrates some interesting patterns relating to each of the interventions and their associated practical and strategic changes in gender equality.

In the case of *Support to the Police Academy and National Police* there is a fairly clear division in that the practical changes all related to improved living conditions for female police officers including improved dormitories (space, bedding, lighting, privacy, etc.), new kitchen with healthy food, access to medical services and counselling etc. All these practical needs of women cadets (which did have a gender dimension relating to personal security and health needs) contributed in turn to their sense of group identity and their personal and group sense of empowerment.

The strategic changes listed have to do primarily with the consequences of efforts to improve the quality of police training and the career development experiences of women police officers. That is, they deal with improving the information base accessible to women officers so that they can secure their rights (and have access to support in doing so). These changes impact on the roles of male officers by forcing them to both respond to the need for gender equality and to re-examine their own roles.

Those changes which have been classified as crossing the divide between practical and strategic gender changes are all the quantitative measures of the increased presence and performance of female cadets and officers in the national police. These are practical changes in the sense that they represent concrete evidence of the success of efforts to meet the practical gender needs of women cadets and officers. They are strategic gender changes in two ways. In the first instance, they represent a relative increase in women's presence and prestige in the National Police Force and a corresponding decline in the predominance of men. In the second instance, this very shift in representation produces resistance and backlash and which highlights the need to address men's roles and responsibilities for supporting gender equality even to the extent of questioning male roles and masculinities.

In the case of the program for *Democratic Development on the Atlantic Coast and PRODEL*, the changes identified have all been categorised as changes in practical gender needs in that they meet the needs of specific women for access to employment and services. There is no evidence that these changes represent a shift in representation or a new set of roles for women and men. As noted in the evaluation of RAAN-ASDI-RAAS, the high female participation rate in the Municipal Technical Units (and subsequent benefit for women from technical training) is not a matter of design but a reflection of traditional employment roles for some women in the region.

Similarly in PRODEL, there is no doubt that access to credit for enterprise development is critically important to the women who have benefited from the program. There is no indication, however, that the program tried to secure women increased access to different types of economic activity relative to men (or that it succeeded inadvertently).

In the case of both interventions it is clear that avenues do exist to pursue strategic gender changes in future phases. The Atlantic Coast program for example can deal directly with questions of women's representation, their ability to have their voices heard, and their roles in critical decision-making bodies in the region. Similarly, PRODEL can begin to examine the different roles of women and men within client households to see how credit decisions are made and how the resources and benefits are allocated.

Finally, *PROSILAIS* has resulted in changes of both a practical and strategic nature (although the evaluation team cannot say how wide-spread these changes may be). The strategic changes for *PROSILAIS* have mainly to do with; a) changes in women's capacity to make decisions on family planning and childbirth; b) related changes in men's role in decision making and child care; c) recognition of inter-family violence as a public health problem; and, d) some efforts to improve the relative presence and authority of women team members in the public health system.

Conclusions: Practical and Strategic Gender Changes

- Two of the four interventions examined produced what the evaluation team assessed as gender changes in all three categories (practical, strategic, and crossing the divide between practical and strategic).
- Two projects produced only practical changes since they focused on providing services to women in their accepted gender roles.
- Once again, the two interventions which show evidence of contributing to both practical and strategic gender changes are also those two (the National Police Academy and *PROSILAIS*) with the most recognisable elements of a mainstreaming strategy as assessed in section 4.2 above.

7.3 Women's Empowerment Effects of the Four Interventions

Sections 7.1 and 7.2 above have identified and categorised those apparent changes in gender equality (changes in relations between women and men) which can be attributed to or closely associated with the four interventions. This sub-section, along with 7.4 below, examines the link between the four interventions and two effects which can be seen as contributing factors in gender equality changes: women's empowerment and re-examination of male roles and masculinities.

Empowerment of women is an interesting gender equality change since it is both an end in itself for the benefits it brings to women in re-dressing their former state of *ids*-empowerment and a catalyst for further gender change.

Support to the Police Academy	Democratic Development on the Atlantic Coast	PRODEL	PROSILAIS
<p>Positive Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved knowledge among women police cadets of their rights (e.g. freedom from harassment and abuse) - Access of women police trainees to support of senior officers - Reported gains in personal self-esteem of women police cadets - Stronger group identification of women police cadets - Some acceptance of women cadet's empowerment by male cadets - Some structures (such as the consultative council on gender) to support women trainees after graduation <p>Obstacles/Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reported lack of support for women cadets after training - Resistance/backlash by some instructors and by male officers (including chiefs of police) following training 	<p>Positive Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women participants in technical units report empowerment and improved self-esteem because of technical training. Personal empowerment sustained by technical capacity and participation in economic development. <p>Obstacles/Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not clear how strong or present is the sense of empowerment of women as a "group or cadre" which can work together to achieve chance. 	<p>Positive Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-reported improvements in self esteem for women as a result of being able to participate in a loan program and repay debts. <p>Obstacles/Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The gains in self-esteem are personal and important but do not result from either an understanding of their rights or access to mechanisms to secure them. 	<p>Positive Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to information and services in family planning is contributing to greater women's empowerment in terms of influence on decisions regarding family planning (i.e. when to have children and how many). This is being achieved in part through reported changes in men's attitudes to family planning and women's right to make decisions. <p>Obstacles/Limitations</p> <p>The reported changes in men's attitudes to family planning (and women's capacity to make their own decisions) are fairly limited in scope and coverage at this time. The changes in women's assertion of their right to choose family planning are limited to individual women and have not yet contributed to a group understanding or assertion of rights.</p>

Analysis: Women's Empowerment in the Four Interventions

In reviewing table 7.3, it seems clear that the women's empowerment results of the RAAN-ASDI-RAAS and PRODEL initiatives have been, for the most part, limited to personal forms of empowerment and have resulted mainly from access to a service such as improved credit or technical training which had not been designed to redress gender inequalities or to sustain an individual or collective sense of women's rights in relation to men. In that sense, women's empowerment in these two interventions is almost accidental (but no less meaningful) and unlikely to be sustained beyond their experience with the specific intervention.

In the words of the *Inception Report*, women in these two interventions report a sense of empowerment based on something done *to them* (provision of training or credit services). On the other hand, it is also true that their empowerment and improved sense of self-esteem comes from their accomplishment in successfully completing the technical training or in re-paying debts and accessing further credit.

In the case of PROSILAIS, women's empowerment effects relate more closely to changes in their relationship with men. The combination of access, information and knowledge seems to have allowed some women to gain more control over key family planning decisions and to secure a higher level of acceptance from their partners. The limits to this form of empowerment seem to be that it is still personal in scope and that it may be limited to a relatively small number of women.

The women police cadets in the project to support the Academia Policia seem to have experienced more different dimensions recognisable as women's empowerment. They have been provided with improved physical security, have learned their rights, and have developed a group sense (communicated clearly to the evaluation team) that their brigade of young women trainees is as capable and professional as the men trainees they work with. They have also benefited from a strong woman captain and from support to the idea of gender equality from some of the other senior officers at the academy. At the same time, some of the male trainees interviewed seem to have developed a better understanding of the rights of their female counterparts

The key limitation on the observed empowerment of female trainees at the Police Academy concerns its sustainability. What will happen to these newly empowered women police officers as they are assigned to police departments all across the country where they may encounter the traditional prejudices, harassment, and macho attitudes which women police officers face daily. It is essential that the initiatives of the National Police to address gender equality among serving officers (as opposed to trainees) and to address the inevitable backlash of some male officers should prove very effective. If they are not effective, the empowerment effects of the improvements at the Police Academy will be short lived (and is some ways perhaps bitterly disappointing).

Conclusions : Women's Empowerment

- In all four of the interventions reviewed women and/or observers and stakeholders reported positive changes in self-esteem and empowerment.
- For the Atlantic Coast and PRODEL projects women reported empowerment mainly in the form of personal gains in skills or resources. They did not report a change in their sense of empowerment as a group in relation to counterpart groups or categories of males participating in the program.
- This sense of group empowerment was reported for both the PROSILAIS and Police Academy project, especially as women describe their sense of empowerment relating to others within the institutions or service delivery mechanisms in which they participate.
- A risk associated with the empowerment effect in the Police Academy and PROSILAIS projects concerns the sustainability of this empowerment over time, especially in the Police Academy intervention, if the reforms to gender relations in the wider police force should falter or produce a strong backlash or resistance.

7.4 Male Roles and Masculinities

Of the four interventions studied in Nicaragua, two (the Support to the Police Academy and PROSILAIS) showed evidence of either raising a challenge to accepted male roles or contributing in some small way to the social definition of masculinities. Interestingly, this link between gender equality, male roles and masculinities was not really a design feature of either intervention. Rather, the interventions, because they address the relative position of women and men in the hierarchy and operations of the health system and the police, provoked a reaction placing male roles in question. In addition, each of these two interventions in some way confronted an aspect of the culturally accepted definition of masculinity such as the use of violence with sufficient evidence and attention to suggest at least some re-examination of that cultural acceptance.

In the *Support to the Police Academy and National Police* intervention for example, the setting of targets for women's participation levels as trainees, and as police officers at basic, intermediate and superior levels in the National Police Force is a direct challenge to the machista working culture of the police. Especially important is the stated goal of improving women's representation in position "en cargo" or in charge of key operational units in such areas as traffic, anti-narcotics and criminal investigation.

Predictably, perhaps, these efforts to increased women's participation in the police force at all levels and in all roles have produced resistance and reaction from some male officers, especially some chiefs of police. In turn, reaction and resistance from some male police officers has alerted some in the National Police, especially because of the consultative council on gender, to the need to address male roles in the organisational culture of the force.

The predictable interplay of women's empowerment and negative reaction has led many male and female officers (and some at very high level in the National Police) to recognise that male officers have to be brought more fully into the process of gender equality and that this may involve exploration of their traditional male roles and the social definition of masculinities.

The question of male roles and masculinities in the context of policing is not just a matter of reaction to internal gender equality change. Because the intervention includes, in the medium term plan, efforts to improve national police treatment of inter-family violence and to ensure more equal treatment of women in society by the police, the question of male roles and masculinities is linked directly to violence against women in the wider cultural context of Nicaragua.

“One of the greatest challenges we face in changing the organizational culture of the National Police so we can better achieve gender equality is the machista culture of Nicaraguan society. Police officers live in that society every day and we cannot expect a few hours in a training course to overcome that influence. Conditions are improving within the National Police but we don’t underestimate the seriousness of the problem. Police officers and their families experience the same problems of violence against women and children as the rest of society”.

A male sub-commissioner of the National Police.

There will clearly be a need in any future phases of the intervention (especially if Sweden supports some elements of the medium term plan) to ensure that gender equality efforts are linked to the need to continue to change the organisational culture of the National Police and to address the question of male roles and masculinities. In fact, it seems clear in retrospect that this issue must come up in any effort to promote gender within security forces like the Nicaraguan National Police. Since security forces in any country enjoy a monopoly on the socially legitimate use of lethal force, it seems natural that more equal participation by women in such a force would directly confront any cultural norm that links men to violence and violence to a definition of masculinity.

PROSILAIS has found its way into the national debate on male roles and masculinities mainly through the issue of men’s roles in reproduction and childcare. By emphasising women’s reproductive health needs and their right to access to family planning and to decision making on births and birth spacing, *PROSILIAS* has found itself involved in behaviour changes which call into question men’s traditional rights and roles in these decisions. Of equal importance *PROSILAIS* has, in some instances, started to focus on male roles in childcare and in responsibility for children’s health.

Finally, *PROSILAIS*, through the Ministry of Health’s (MINSA) recognition that inter-family violence, including sexual violence against women and abuse of children, is a public health problem in Nicaragua, finds itself directly engaged in questioning cultural norms regarding male roles and the social definition of masculinities.

It is also worth noting that there is an ongoing public debate in Nicaragua regarding the link between “machista” aspects of the national culture and violence against women and children. This debate is being promoted not only by women’s interest organisations but by a men’s movement which concentrates on organising men to take action against male violence against women and on the re-definition of masculinities in Nicaragua.

7.5 Analysis: Gender Equality Changes

This section has argued that some types of gender equality changes have been identified in relation to each of the four interventions examined.

In order of significance, intensity and durability of the gender equality changes observed, the Support to the Police Academy and National Police program has clearly seen the largest number and the most significant changes. This was foreseeable in that the intervention was the only one that specifically targeted a major cultural and organisational change in gender equality within an institution. Further, the Police Academy intervention was complementary to structural changes and initiatives already under way within the police force and to support from other donors and NGOs. The key challenge for this intervention will be to follow through so that gains made are not lost but are extended throughout the National Police.

In the case of PROSILAIS, significant practical and strategic gender changes have been identified in reproductive health and family planning choices and in improved access to services for women. It is not clear how widespread these changes may be or to what extent they will be extended in future.

In the case of PRODEL and the Atlantic Coast interventions, observed changes for individual women participants came about through access to services and resources. In a sense, since they do not imply a *change* in either the rate of women's participation or in their roles, one might question whether they represent gender equality changes at all.

It is clear, however, that only PROSILAIS and the Police Academy interventions successfully extended gender equality changes into the area of women's strategic gender interests. This seems to be a consequence of their explicit recognition of gender equality goals (and in the case of the Police Academy, targets for change in gender equality).

Finally, the Police Academy and PROSILAIS projects have also had more significant impacts on women's empowerment and on the recognition of necessary re-examination of male roles and masculinities in their prospective institutions. Once again, it is important to draw some link between these two interventions and their associated effects and the relatively higher level of mainstreaming (and of participation) noted for each of them when compared to PRODEL and to RAAN/ASDI/RAAS.

Conclusions: Factors Promoting Gender Equality Change

- It is not surprising, perhaps, that the two interventions with *the most significant level of mainstreaming* (the National Police Academy and PROSILAIS) also provide evidence of the most significant associated gender equality changes observed by the evaluation team members and by external stakeholders.
- The linking of gender equality in service delivery and in internal institutional arrangements to an important and immediate institutional imperative such as modernisation and professionalisation for the National Police or improved effectiveness in health services for PROSILAIS helps to build an internal constituency for gender change and thus influences results;

- Formal or informal structures such as the consultative counsel on gender in the Police Academy project (formal) or the informal networks of women and men health professionals with an interest in gender in PROSILAIS can serve as both a monitoring mechanism and a source of internal advocacy in support of gender equality change;
- A key indicator of agency ownership of a gender equality mandate or goal is also, at the same time, one of the key factors in enabling and sustaining gender equality change at the institutional level: designated leadership for gender equality goals at the most prestigious levels of the organisation; and,
- Interventions which establish explicit and quantitative goals in gender change, such as the goals in the National Police to reach higher levels of women's representation in key managerial and operational functions historically almost exclusive to men have an advantage in the promotion of more strategic gender change since their associated change in traditional male and female roles and institutional share of power is very visible.

Chapter 8

Lessons Learned

This section reviews the analysis and conclusions reported in the main body of the report and attempts to draw some lessons-learned from the experience of the Nicaragua country case study. It does not seek to repeat the conclusions presented throughout the report but to extrapolate from them the implications for continuing and future Sida development co-operation. In addition, the lessons learned presented in this section should be applicable beyond the boundaries of the Nicaragua program.

The lessons-learned in this section are organised in parallel with the structure of the report. The evaluation team considered a structure which clearly differentiated between lessons applicable within the context of the Nicaragua program of development co-operation and those which could be applied at a wider level. Team members agreed, however, that the lessons learned each could be seen to have both a Nicaragua-specific and a wider dimension. One possible exception concerns issues relating to resources and resource allocation. These will need to be addressed at an institutional level within Sida as a whole.

8.1 Country Strategy and Dialogue

1. In preparing a country or regional strategy document, it is essential that the gender analysis component of the country context be explicitly included (with sufficient space) in the appropriate section of the strategy document. Further, it should be linked to activities and interventions described under different priority areas and not only to gender equality as a separate priority.
2. In the transition from a country-specific to a regional Sida strategy it is important that gender analysis and gender equality content is developed for each country in the region. The transition to a regional strategy also means that country program plans become critical in the development and description of gender equality goals for the strategy and for interventions.
3. Sida's historical record of strong and public support to gender equality in any country represents an important organisational asset, especially in relation to policy dialogue. This asset can be sustained and renewed over time. Indeed, civil society organisations involved in supporting gender equality tend to place considerable importance on the continued public presence and leadership of Sida as a representative of international donor sentiment regarding gender equality.

4. Sida seems to lack a structured and systematic approach to determining which should be the key messages conveyed in dialogue with partners concerning the policy content of specific interventions, especially with regard to cross cutting priorities such as gender equality. Without such an approach the extent and quality of dialogue on gender equality tends to vary according to the personal interest and capacity of the officers (and international consultants) involved.

8.2 Mainstreaming

5. There is a need for greater recognition of the essential role of systematic and structured gender analysis in the design, development and evaluation of Sida supported bilateral interventions if the strategy of mainstreaming is to prove effective as a means of achieving the goals established in the Action Programme.
6. There are still important institutional obstacles to the effective implementation of a mainstreaming strategy at Sida (many are common to most bilateral development agencies). These include apparent lack of available gender equality expertise during the design phase of interventions; perceptions that the gender focal point bears most responsibility for addressing gender equality; differences in personal interest among Sida officers; insufficient questioning of some “technical” factors which at first appear to inhibit the gender equality potential of some interventions; under-use of design tools in gender equality; and lack of attention to gender equality issues in intervention monitoring and evaluation.
7. It is difficult for Sida alone to advocate for and ensure the presence of meaningful gender equality goals. In those cases where the counterpart agency has started its own process of identifying and achieving gender equality goals, Sida’s support can be much more effective. This benefit of the counterpart agency’s receptiveness is magnified if other international sources of support are also addressing gender equality.
8. Where Sida has a long history as the key partner providing support to a major initiative, and even to an institution, there is a clear opportunity for the agency to introduce and to sustain a strong dialogue on gender equality which should, in turn, contribute to mainstreaming.
9. There are often opportunities to link gender equality objectives from one intervention to another as one means of mainstreaming. In Nicaragua for example, three of the four interventions studied involve agencies already working together in some region of the country on issues which relate to gender equality (support to the National Police, Democratic Development on the Atlantic Coast and PROSILAIS). Oddly, none of the interventions provided direct support to this interaction. Staff at the embassy acknowledged in discussions that this would be a fruitful area to pursue for strengthening the gender equality impacts of the different interventions.

10. The understanding of gender equality is not uniform over the life of an intervention or even among the staff at different levels of an intervention at any point in time. Definitions and understandings of gender equality may develop and improve during the life of a program. With this in mind, program managers need to be open to a gradual focusing and improvement in gender equality goals during any given phase of a program. They need not necessarily wait for the four yearly transition from one phase of an intervention to the next to refine and improve gender equality goals. This, of course, would imply an ongoing investment by Sida in training and mobilisation for field and headquarters officers so that they are equipped to take advantage of opportunities promoting gender equality during the life of a given intervention.

8.3 Poverty Reduction

11. The issue of poverty reduction is often inter-linked with the question of how best to address gender inequalities. The interventions in Nicaragua provide examples of how efforts to address gender inequalities could be linked to strategies to reduce poverty. Examples include improved access to gender strategic health services for women, better access by women to effective protection from violence and improved access by women to fair treatment by the justice system. At the same time there is no automatic link between measures to address gender inequality and efforts to reduce poverty. It will require an explicit analysis of how gender inequality relates to poverty if attempts to address one are to assist in mitigating the other. For example, knowledge that the National Police force provides one (admittedly difficult) road out of poverty for some Nicaraguans, heightens the urgency that young and poor Nicaraguan women be provided a reasonable chance of taking that road.

8.4 Changes in Gender Equality

12. Where interventions have contributed to a group sense of women's empowerment through improved knowledge, access to redress for rights infractions, support to women by senior institutional officers, etc., this empowerment has provoked some resistance and has necessitated bringing men into the loop of attention to gender inequality. Of equal importance, empowerment may be restricted to part of an institution or community and can prove short-lived when changes are not rolled out through the entire organisational culture. Empowerment of women will thus require extended work throughout institutions to avoid reversals.
13. Effective programs to address gender inequality and to promote women's empowerment will, sooner or later, require direct attention to male roles and to socially determined definitions of masculinities. In Nicaragua, at least, there is an existing national debate on this issue. At the same time,

violence by men against women and children is a key entry point for the discussion of male roles and masculinities and represents one possible path for dialogue on gender inequality and its redress.

14. The topic of intrafamilial violence and violence against women remains very controversial in Nicaraguan society. If it is to be used as a valid entry point for discussion of masculinities, great care must be taken in the design of initiatives in this area.
15. The more specific and complete the definition of gender equality used in the evolution of a specific intervention, the more likely it is that the intervention will be designed and implemented to contribute to strategic gender changes. This places an even greater importance on the use of gender analysis and of mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving gender equality, despite the apparent institutional obstacles.
16. Besides the strength and clarity of gender equality goals and the extent of gender mainstreaming, there are other factors which influence the different types of gender change associated with Sida supported interventions. The most important of these include:
 - The linking of gender equality in service delivery and in internal institutional arrangements to an important and immediate institutional goal other than gender equality;
 - Formal or informal structures within programmes and institutions to serve as both a monitoring mechanism and a source of internal advocacy in support of gender equality change;
 - Designated and visible leadership for gender equality goals at the most prestigious levels of the implementing organisation; and,
 - The presence of explicit and quantitative goals in gender change, which have an advantage in the promotion of more strategic gender change since they highlight the visibility of proposed changes in traditional male and female roles and of a different sharing of power within the institution concerned.
17. In the period since 1996, civil society in Nicaragua (and some of the institutions supported by Sida) has begun a re-examination of traditional male roles and masculinities and a nascent national dialogue on the need to re-define masculinities in a more positive way. Sida gender interventions in the future will need to consider how they can creatively contribute to this dialogue in Nicaragua and in other countries.

Chapter 9

Concepts in Gender Equality

The Terms of Reference for the Evaluation call on the evaluation teams in each of the three countries to address the question of the relevance and clarity of key concepts in gender equality, and to suggest ways of interpreting the concepts which can make them more flexible, more open to use outside the cadre of gender specialists, and more concrete. This section attempts to provide some observations on the relevance, concreteness and clarity of the concepts as encountered and applied during the evaluation mission to Nicaragua.

The most essential question on concepts concerns the way each is used by the members of different stakeholder groups in Nicaragua. Table 9.1 below attempts to illustrate some of the key concepts and their meaning to different stakeholder groups.

Key Concept	Key Stakeholder Group	Apparent Meaning or Interpretative Terminology	Illustrative Quote
Gender Equality	Secondary stakeholders involved in program technical support or delivery	A gender focus. Meaning that the program addresses women specific needs and/or relations between men and women.	"Some agencies think that providing services to women as mothers represents a focus on gender. They make no attempt to understand relations between men and women."
Gender Equality	Secondary stakeholders involved in programs in ethnic communities.	Equal rights between men and women.	"We find it difficult to use terms such as gender equality in ethnic communities where women find the notion somewhat ridiculous – as if there were no physical differences. We are more successful in having women identify obvious inequalities of treatment".
Women's Empowerment	Primary stakeholders	Self-esteem and self-worth – in comparison to men and as a group.	"We are as strong and smart as the male police cadets and can do anything they can do in training. We train with them and we rely on each other".
Women's Empowerment	Secondary stakeholders	Knowledge of their rights as women and some means to back that knowledge up with action.	"The women cadets here are now more aware of their right to freedom from abuse and sexual harassment. They also know their captain and commanders will back them up and that the male officers are aware of their (women's) rights".

Key Concept	Key Stakeholder Group	Apparent Meaning or Interpretative Terminology	Illustrative Quote
Participation	Secondary stakeholders	Participation by women as a quantitative goal	"Women have been among the most prominent beneficiaries of training in the program".
Participation	Secondary stakeholders	Participation by women and men in priority setting and resource allocation	"the local public works component allows women and men in the communities to take part in micro-level planning of priorities"
Practical gender needs and strategic gender interests	Primary and secondary stakeholders		Generally not used. Very few examples of the use of this concept or term were encountered by the team.
Male roles and masculinities	Secondary stakeholders	Traditional male roles within institutions	"reaching goals for women in senior and operational positions will continue to challenge male roles within the National Police and will produce resistance if male officers are not brought into the process. As a result we are seeking male officers for the consultative council on gender.
Male roles and masculinities	Secondary stakeholders	Social endorsement of violence by males	"machista culture at a national level contributes to violence against women and children not only in society as a whole but within institutions like ours".

Gender Equality

At the level of secondary stakeholders (women's rights organisations, counterpart agencies of government, project staff, academics, etc.) the term gender equality is in fairly common use in Nicaragua. Often the term gender focus is used to deal with the question of whether or not a project or program includes a goal of improving gender equality.

The problem with the term gender focus is that it can be used to cover a wide range of goals relating to women and men. These goals may range from providing some attention to specific women beneficiaries at one end of the spectrum, to direct activities aimed at changing longstanding cultural norms of gender roles and relations at the other. It is important that the term gender focus not be used as a shorthand for gender equality because it introduces a more elastic and, ultimately, less concrete concept.

Gender equality itself is also used as a fairly elastic term and is often understood in terms of women centred activities aimed at redressing past imbalances. While there is a developing understanding among many stakeholders that gender equality implies a re-dressing of unequal relations between men and women this is by no means the universal meaning attached to the term in Nicaragua.

As counterparts deal with primary stakeholders at community level, especially when dealing with ethnic minorities, they find the term gender equality lacks meaning and does not resonate with their constituency. Indeed, as the quote in table 6.1 illustrates, women and men in ethnic communities on the Atlantic Coast sometimes react to the term gender equality as a kind of absurdity as if it implied that there are no physical differences between men and women. It seems that primary stakeholders are often more likely to understand and respond to the idea of *inequality* between men and women. Inequalities between men and women can usually be identified relatively easily at the community level and can be seen fairly readily to be unfair. Carefully handled so as to avoid simply generating conflict, the exercise of identifying inequalities and unfairness in relations between men and women seems to be an essential beginning point for addressing gender equality in many communities.

Women's Empowerment

The increased knowledge, self-worth and self-esteem reported by some women participants (and described as empowerment by secondary stakeholders) seems to be linked to and sustained by concrete action and accomplishments as a group. Indeed, this group dimension seems to be one of the most critical aspects of how the concept of empowerment was used by stakeholders in Nicaragua.

Stakeholder Participation

There is a considerable use of the concept of participatory methods in the interventions examined in Nicaragua, usually in reference to two different dimensions of participation. One common form of participation was consultative interaction with civil society organisations, academics, researchers, government officers, counterpart agency staff and other intermediaries to discuss key issues in gender inequality and, sometimes to incorporate them in project design. This was the main form of stakeholder participation evident in the Police Academy intervention. The second form of participation involved primary stakeholders (program beneficiaries and clients) in a mechanism for micro-planning of decisions on urban infrastructure or public works.

However, the key ingredient in stakeholder participation from a gender equality perspective illustrated by the interventions in Nicaragua seems to be the necessity to take explicit account of gender differences if it participation is to be effective in addressing inequalities. The Police Academy project, through its consultative council on gender and its consultative workshops to discuss the medium term plan for modernisation of the National Police, implemented participatory mechanisms aimed directly at describing and redressing gender inequalities.

The concept of stakeholder participation and gender equality can be made more concrete by ensuring that participatory methods are specifically targeted at identifying inequalities between men and women and identifying solu-

tions. Forms of participation which do not include a focus on gender equality are likely either to have no effect at all or to confirm existing unequal concepts of women's and men's roles and responsibilities.

Strategic and Practical Changes in Gender Equality

The distinction between practical and strategic needs and interests proved reasonably useful as a tool for evaluation team members in analysing the extent and depth of gender equality results associated with each intervention. It also became clear that strategic changes in gender equality were not likely to happen without explicit gender equality goals. On the other hand there is very little evidence that the distinction between practical gender needs and strategic gender interests receives much use by key stakeholders in Nicaragua and, because of that, it is difficult to use the Nicaragua case study to provide any evidence of the inherent clarity and utility of the conceptual framework..

Male Roles and Masculinities

As illustrated in table 9.1, the concept of male roles and masculinities was used in two quite distinct ways in Nicaragua. In the first instance, stakeholders focused on the male roles component of the concept. They pointed out that measures to advance women's interests and roles within institutions often challenged accepted male roles (for example having women in charge of functional police areas such as traffic or criminal investigations required officers to take orders from women superiors) or that meeting women's needs in health and family care would require men to take on "feminine" roles in child care.

The question of masculinities and the need for their re-definition most often arose in the context of negative aspects of socially defined "masculinities" including the use of violence. In Nicaragua this was most often raised in relation to men's use of violence against women and children but it was also used to refer to the appalling use of violence by men against other men.

Finally, while the issue of violence against women is often directly linked to the question of male roles and masculinities, this represents a paradox. On the one hand, there is evidence that the public is ready to accept the proposition that violence against women is somehow related to cultural definitions of masculinities and that this link represents the clearest argument that re-definition is necessary. On the other, there may be a problem in beginning a discussion of male roles and masculinities from such a negative perspective.

Nonetheless, one of the clearest lessons learned in Nicaragua seems to be that the question of re-defining male roles and masculinities is a legitimate social concern and that it is linked directly gender equality.

Evaluation of Sida's Support to Development Cooperation for Promotion of Gender Equality Country Report – Nicaragua

Annex 1

Application of the Planned Methodologies in the Nicaragua Case Study

The readers and users of the report must be the ultimate authority as to the effectiveness of the methodologies used and the quality of the analysis contained in the report. From the perspective of the study team, however, the following observations can be made on the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies and on the results of their application by the team¹:

In general terms, the mix of methods used has worked well and has provided a strong basis of evidence for the findings and conclusions presented in the Nicaragua report. The *aspects of the methodology which seem to have worked particularly well* include:

a) *The Document Review and Pre-Preparation of the Study Object Grids*

The fact that the team had the opportunity before-hand to review a wide range of documents (supplemented by documents gathered in the field) and to match the content of those documents with issues and methods through the study object grids saved a great deal of time in the field and allowed discussions and interviews to be structured and to the point. As should be expected, some of the documents reviewed were dated and somewhat inaccurate and some of the conclusions and assumptions made by the team members in summarizing the data from the documents had to be corrected in the field with more up-to-date and sometimes more accurate information. In addition, as noted below, some of the participatory evaluation methods planned in the study object grids had to be modified considerably in practice.

b) *The mixture of structured interviews with stakeholders involved in project planning, execution and follow-up supplemented by direct contact with participants/beneficiaries.*

The team's experience illustrated the necessity of combining interviews with Sida staff, counterpart agency staff, project workers (both paid and voluntary), non-governmental organizations, academics etc. on the one hand, with

¹ For a more complete description of the Nicaragua country case study team's experience in applying the evaluation methodologies see the separate document: *Note on the Application of Planned Methodologies: Evaluation of Gender Equality in Sida Supported Development Cooperation – Nicaragua Country Case Study – March 18 to April 6, 2001.*

direct contact with women and men benefiting from the program (or not benefiting as the case may be) on the other. As discussed below, the relative weighting given to these activities in terms of time and effort is a difficult balancing act. It may be useful to change this balance slightly in the two remaining field missions so that less time is spent in key informant interviews and more time in direct contact with beneficiaries.

c) Combining teams of international and national consultants

The combination of three international consultants with three Nicaraguan consultants allowed for a strong mix of inputs on the country and regional contexts of the interventions examined and allowed each sub-team working in different parts of the country to have a strong national consultant presence. This aspect of the methodology should continue to strengthen the work in South Africa and Bangladesh.

d) De-Briefing on an Intervention Basis

Originally, the methodology planned by the team called for a single large de-briefing workshop with key stakeholders from all four interventions to take place near the end of the mission. Due to the logistical problems this would have presented for the embassy and for the team (finding suitable space, coordinating invitations, etc.) the decision was taken to host a separate 1.5 hour de-briefing and discussion with counterparts for each intervention. This proved to be an excellent choice because it allowed for the development and delivery of more detailed results to each intervention. This in turn allowed for discussion not only of the evaluation results, but of strategies and concrete actions to advance gender equality in each of the interventions. The Nicaragua team strongly recommends the use of this approach in the remaining field evaluations.

Some of the *more difficult aspects of the methodology* were as follows:

a) Problems in carrying out pre-arranged interviews, workshops, and interaction with beneficiaries outside the capital.

For the work done by different team members in meeting key stakeholders based in Managua and working with counterpart agencies, NGOs, academics, women's leadership organizations, etc. – interviews and meetings generally went ahead as pre-planned before the team's arrival and were able to cover the full spectrum of issues.

Outside Managua however, (for PROSILAIS and PRODEL in Esteli, Somoto, and Ocatal and for RAAN/ASDI/RAAS on the Atlantic Coast) the pre-planning that was done by the national consultants in conjunction with the project coordinators fairly often had to be adjusted and re-adjusted as the teams went about their work in the field. Sometimes, as in the case of the work on the Atlantic Coast, unforeseen factors such as the regional baseball tournament, meant that key stakeholder groups such as the local mayors were all out of town for the week. In other cases, the administrative capacity of the project coordinating offices appeared to be overwhelmed by the need

to set up interviews and workshops. In all cases, however, the teams were able to work with the interventions and to adjust the program so that essential contacts and interviews were carried out.

b) Limited Interaction with Key Officers at Sida

Because of the choice of four interventions and the need to cover the evolution of the Country Strategy and the issue of dialogue, there was a clear need for the team members to meet with key Sida staff on a number of occasions and we were able to do so. However, the very heavy workload of the staff and the intensity of the field mission made this interaction a bit hurried and at times more succinct than perhaps it should have been. On the whole the team was able to meet with the Sida staff as needed but it is important that the South Africa and Bangladesh field mission teams allow for a number of fairly detailed meetings with key staff at the embassy.

c) Problems with the Focus on Four Interventions

By choosing four interventions in health, urban development and democratic development, the methodology used raised the issue of what is happening in the promotion of gender equality outside those four interventions. This made it necessary for the team to address dialogue as a tool for promoting gender equality as well as the overall Country Strategy. This was foreseen at the planning workshop in Stockholm – but what was not foreseen was the time and effort the team would need to invest in understanding the evolution of the country strategy and in assessing the quality and extent of dialogue on gender equality. In retrospect, it might have been useful to include one gender-specific intervention, such as the gender equality project now delivered through FORUMSYD, to see how gender-specific programs may interact with sector based interventions in the promotion of gender equality.

d) Problems in Geographic Coverage and Breadth of Data

Because three of the four interventions chosen had a very wide geographic coverage and interacted with large populations of beneficiaries and participants, the team was not able to conduct surveys or interview statistically significant numbers of participants. Thus, the very focused interviews carried out which did identify important practical changes for women and men participants (and indeed some strategic changes) do not provide a strong basis for generalizing results across the full population effected by the interventions. The data gathered is much more than anecdotal but it represents a small selected (as opposed to random) sample of experience.

Summary: Overall Effectiveness of the Methodologies Used

In summary, however, the team can re-iterate that the methodologies worked reasonably well and did provide a strong basis for subsequent analysis and the development of findings and conclusions. Indeed the process of de-briefing

did not produce a negative reaction in terms of the evidence under-pinning each of the team findings and there was a general acceptance among stakeholders that the preliminary conclusions presented were justified (with, of course, some necessary adjustments).

Annex 2

Country Context

1. Population, Regional Diversity and Poverty

Nicaragua is the largest of the 6 small countries of Central America. In the last national population census of 1995 the total population registered was 4,139,486 inhabitants, with 49.43% males and 50.57% females, predominantly young, being 54.9% under 15 years of age. Most of the population as well as the economic and social infrastructure is concentrated along the Pacific Coast. In contrast, the Atlantic Region is sparsely populated and very isolated, geographically, socially and politically from the rest of the country. In addition, the ethnic and cultural context of the Atlantic Coast, with a significant population whose first language is either English (Afro-Caribbean) or Amerindian, is very different from the predominant Spanish speaking, mixed ethnicity (mestizo) population of the western half of the country.

With the establishment of the Autonomous Regions of the Atlantic Coast in the 1980s, the Law of Autonomy (Law 28) allowed for more self-determination and for respect of the multicultural traditions and governing bodies of the regions. While the law was passed and provides a legal basis for autonomy, the regulations which should specify the faculties of the local governing bodies as well as the economic and political interrelation with the central government were delayed and still have not been enacted. Thus the full realization of the autonomy foreseen in the law has encountered opposition from central governments.

According to the poverty profile compiled using World Bank methodology (the consumption index) 47.9% of Nicaragua's population are poor, of which 17.3% are extremely poor.² Other recent studies using combined methods of measuring poverty indicate that $\frac{3}{4}$ or more of the total population are poor. Using the 1993 and 1998 Standard of Living Measurement Surveys as references (SLMS) the PRSP presents significant regional differences in the incidence, intensity and evolution of poverty. Poverty and extreme poverty are predominantly rural, but rural population experienced a decline in incidence of poverty during the period while in urban population poverty increased.

² Interim Strengthened Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Government of Nicaragua, July 24, 2000. This is considered the last official version of the Strategy. It is being consulted by both government and civil society through the national coordinating body of NGOs.

2. National Commitments to Equal Rights of Women and Men

Nicaragua has formally adopted or endorsed most of the international legislation that refers to the equal rights of women and men. It has also endorsed the Action Plans derived from the UN world conferences held during the 1990s. However, there are still serious omissions, in national legislation, specific regulations and in legal procedures relevant to those commitments. Moreover, analysts and researchers point out that Nicaraguan women experience a permanent violation of their rights because the material and ideological barriers to living a dignified life persist. Indeed, many argue that barriers to the achievement of gender equality are being reinforced by movements to close the political system and by the strong ideological link between the governing political party and the conservative hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Nicaragua.

Some of the international treaties and conventions relating to gender equality are already part of the National Constitution; others have the status of ordinary law, while still others are considered only moral commitments. Table 1 below presents a summary of the main international norms on equal rights of women and men applicable in Nicaragua.

STATUS IN NATIONAL LEGISLATION	INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENT
Constitution	Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948
	The American Declaration of Man's Rights and Duties, 1948
	The International Treaty on Civil and Political Rights, 1966
	The American Convention of Human Rights, 1969
	The International Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1969
	The Additional Protocol to the American Convention Regarding Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1988
	The International Convention of the Rights of Children, 1990
Ordinary Law	The Convention on the Nationality of the Married Woman, 1933
	Convention on the Nationality of the Married Woman, 1957
	Convention on the Political Rights of the Woman, 1952
	Inter-American Convention on the Concession of the Political Rights of the Woman, 1984
	Inter-American Convention on the Concession of the Civil Rights of the Woman. Declarations on the Protection of the Woman and the Child in States of Emergency or Armed Conflict, 1974
International Convention	ILO Agreements (Numbers 3, 4, 41, 89, 45, 100, 102, 103, 111, 156) regarding equal rights for women on labor conditions, labor opportunities and treatment, salary rights, and protection of maternity, included in the National Labor Code.
	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW, 1979
	American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women, or Convention of Belem do Par�, 1995
Moral Commitments	Declaration and Action Program of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna 1993
	International Conference of Population and Development, Cairo, 1994 (Nicaragua signed reservations to this Declaration, regarding sexual and reproductive rights)
	Declaration and Action Program of the World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen, 1995
	Action Plan of the IV World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995
	International Conference of Population and Development – Cairo + 5, 1999. (Nicaragua ratified the same reservations of 1994)
	International Conference on World Action Program on Women – Beijing + 5, 2000

In summary, despite legitimate questions and concerns raised by analysts and by women's organizations regarding current trends in national policy toward gender equality, the legislative and legal framework (including international commitments) is in place in Nicaragua to support action on gender equality by government and by civil society. As noted below, recent trends in the development of the national machinery for pursuing gender equality along with recent statements and initiatives originating with the cabinet and central decision making bodies in the national government have created a difficult situation for many organizations and individuals working in support of gender equality.

3. Economic Policy, Poverty and Gender issues

3.1 Structural Adjustment and Macroeconomic Policy

Key macroeconomic policies in Nicaragua in the last decade have responded to the conditions of an economic structural adjustment program and focused on the restriction of public spending, stricter monetary policy (interest rates), freezing of state salaries, and liberalization of trade, capital and labour. These policies have produced drastic changes in the labour market including a widening of the informal sector, higher female participation rates – especially in the informal trading sector – and increased vulnerability of the employed labour force, including women.

The participation of women in the active labour force has increased from 29% in 1970 to 34% in 1990, 42% in 1996, and 41% in 1999.³ Although measured unemployment rates have declined to 10%, women's share in under employment is increasing. The sectors of commerce and services continue to grow and represent the largest source of urban and female employment. Women report their salaries are lower than men in similar jobs in a range from 30 to 200%.⁴

Researchers have identified a masculine bias in economic policies in a number of recent studies. This bias is usually documented in terms of the disproportionate negative impact of economic policy on women. For example:

- Cuts in public services have transferred an increasing burden of unpaid service to women, particularly in primary health, and pre school education;
- State reform programs have meant greater unemployment for women. Women's share in public service employment declined from 41% in 1992 to 12% in 1996. At the same time, women have less access to the best jobs in the small private sector because employers see maternity and women's responsibilities within the family as factors reducing their contribution to profits;
- Banking system reforms have meant increasing exclusion for women because of stricter security requirements for loans which many cannot meet;
- Economic sectors where women have traditionally had a large presence, such as textiles and food processing have been among those most negatively effected by the opening of Nicaraguan markets to international trade competition;
- Establishment of local outlets of large transnational retail and service chains has led to the elimination of many small privately owned outlets where women's presence as workers and owners was quite high; and,

³ FIDEG's surveys and studies on gender and the labor market.

⁴ FIDEG's surveys and GTZ supported study on public employment.

- the reduction of the formal sector and reliance on the informal sector for growth have combined to force many women to accept activities and jobs under deteriorated labour conditions and for very low wages.

The most visible new sources of employment in Nicaragua are located in the “free trade zones” or *zonas francas*. The businesses in these zones are mainly involved in manufacturing of clothing for exports and employ mostly young women. These enterprises are frequently cited for violations of international and national labour norms including ILO conventions. Labour conditions in the *zonas francas* have given rise to organized opposition and considerable conflict resolution work on the part of labour unions and a women’s movement called “Movimiento María Elena Cuadra”.

A full assessment of the medium and long-term effects of structural economic adjustment and liberalized trade is far beyond the scope of this study. On the other hand, local researchers have identified with some clarity the disproportionate share which women have had to bear of the negative impacts of these changes (along with their comparative lack of access to any new opportunities rising from the policies). As the government of Nicaragua embarks on efforts to develop and implement a national plan to combat poverty the issue of the gender equality impacts of national economic policy (including poverty policies) argues for a much closer analysis of the conceptual linkages between gender equality and poverty reduction.

3.2 The Poverty Reduction Strategy Program (PRSP) and the HIPC

At the present in Nicaragua, the national debate on policies to reduce poverty is focused mainly on the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Program as one of the conditions for Nicaraguan entry into the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. It is worthwhile examining this initiative as a key aspect of the context for gender equality in Nicaragua.

The current government has been responsible for negotiating the acceptance of Nicaragua into the “Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative” (HIPC) proposed by the G-Seven countries as a mechanism to reduce the external debt burden of poorer countries. To date, the main conditions established for entry by Nicaragua into HIPC have been continuation of an Enhanced Structural Adjustment Program (ESAF) and implementation of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Program with the assistance of the IMF, WB, and IDB. In December 2000, Nicaragua was accepted at a “decision point” of the HIPC with the approval of a draft preliminary version of the PRSP. The PRSP is subject to further formulation and consultations, including consultations with civil society.

The PRSP has ten goals including six which are international commitments of successive governments. The PRSP specifically targets children, youth and mothers. In the health sector, the strategy will focus on a) increased coverage and quality of services to women, children, and adolescents, b) behavioural changes at the household level, and c) the modernization of the sector, partly

by decentralizing and increasing the participation of private sector providers.⁵

The Technical Secretariat of the Presidency (SETEC), the Central Bank of Nicaragua, and the Ministry of Finance lead the inter-institutional coordination of the PRSP. With UNDP support, the Government has initiated a National Program for the Analysis and Formulation of Public Policy that will systematize participatory mechanisms and analyze information and decision-making processes regarding the PRSP.

Since 2000, the participation of the civil society in the PRSP has been formally channelled through the National Economic and Social Planning Council (CONPES), a counselling body functioning with delegates from the private enterprise, universities, NGOs, unions, and parties. The governors of the two Atlantic regions – RAAN and RAAS are also integrated into CONPES.⁶ The CCER (Coordinadora Civil para la Emergencia y la Reconstrucción) a national body of approximately 300 NGOs and social movements created after the experience of hurricane Mitch has played an active role in CONPES, bringing up critical inputs from sectoral and thematic consultations on the PRSP.

The national coordination of the Nicaraguan women's movement submitted a written request to have a seat in CONPES. Although there was never a formal answer to the request, the place was not granted on the grounds that women were already represented through the CCER delegate. As a result of this and other decisions, women have a rather marginal representation on CONPES with only two women out of approximately 45 regular members.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Program and Gender Equality

In the assessment of the poverty situation, the present version of PRSP makes a reference to “gender inequality” illustrated by the gender income gap, problems of early maternity, and women's exposure to risks arising from prostitution and to sexual and physical abuse. Accordingly, some of the proposed actions are focused on sexual and reproductive services to reduce fertility and to change damaging family behaviour. Indeed, of the ten key goals of the PRSP, three relate directly to women in their maternal roles and to women's reproductive health needs:

- reducing by 2/3 the infant mortality rate and mortality of children under 5 years;
- reducing maternal mortality rates by 3/4

⁵ (point 114, pg. 34 of the July 24, 2000 PRSP official document)

⁶ As noted in the sections below dealing with Sida's support to democratic development on the Atlantic Coast there is a strong sense among residents and NGOs that the regions have been excluded from the PRSP processes.

- ensuring access to reproductive services to all interested people of appropriate age. To make this possible by 2003 the government will increase to 75% the access to family planning methods among women with partners in the 15–19 age group, and to 82% for those with partners in the 20–24 age group.

Critical analysts have questioned the specification of the targets for family planning goals as women with partners since it seems to be part of a larger government effort to re-direct commitments to women's equality into a more narrow commitment to dealing with women's needs only within families (and traditional families at that).

In addition, women's organizations have commented that the PRSP presents, in general, a very weak perspective on gender relations. Specifically, they point out:

- lack of a critical analysis of the differential gender effect of the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility;
- no attempt to address the need for coherent inter institutional strategies and programs offering both more and better social services to poor men and women;
- the absence of concrete measures to ensure equal access of women to the critically important economic resources like credit, land and technical assistance;
- limited evidence that the reality of early age sexual practices, and the high proportion of adolescent mothers and fathers will be faced with adequate non moralistic information and educational programs;⁷
- confusion over the current level of key target indicators with different values cited from different sources (an example of this is maternal mortality⁸);
- a strategy for implementation of the PRSP safety net interventions which relies heavily on women's involvement in the identification of need and the distribution of benefits. Apparently men's participation is not seen as an important desired "change in family behaviour";
- the absence of a reference to the importance of opening and strengthening participatory mechanisms to allow women's effective advocacy of their rights and needs and their inclusion in the decision making processes, despite the emphasis the PRSP places on improvements in governance.

⁷ The 1998 National Survey on Demography and Health (ENDESA 98) indicates that 22% of adolescents girls under 20 years old were already mothers, and 34% of rural adolescents were mothers or expecting a baby. 25% of adolescent boys were already fathers at 19 years old.

⁸ The PRSP document refers to 139 over 100,000 born alive as the base line figure in 2000 to be reduced to 125/100,000 in 2005 and to 107 in 2015, while the Ministry of Health reports 106/100,000 for 1998 in the Integrated Attention Information System.

In summary, the PRSP does not appear to deal with gender differences in vulnerability to poverty or in the actual experience of poverty as felt by men and women although it does include some goals of critical importance to practical gender needs of women in their reproductive roles.

4. Other Issues in Gender Equality

4.1 Inter family and Sexual Violence

Since 1993, government and civil society organizations have carried out large-scale awareness campaigns to sensitize public opinion on domestic violence. In 1998, the Police reported 30% of registered crimes against persons were crimes of sexual and inter family violence. The same year a national survey indicated that 29% of women living with a partner had been physically or sexually abused by them. An IDB study estimates that this type of violence reduces women's income in Nicaragua (and national income) by USD 29.5 million (1.6% of the 1996 GNP). The negative effect on income would be much higher if estimates included expenses in health, police and legal services, and other long-term effects.

Nicaraguan governments have taken a number of steps to address the problem of inter family and sexual violence. They include:

- The Specialized Police Units (Comisarías de la Mujer y la Niñez) created in 1993 and expanded since to 18 cities around the country. Special attention is provided to victims of violence in these Police Stations and a system of reference has been organized with the collaboration of Women's Alternative Services – legal, psychological and health- and the Local Public Health Units;
- Registration and improvement of crime statistics on the problem of inter-family and sexual violence to allow for the development of improved action plans;
- Law 230 passed in 1996 and identifying as crimes with serious legal sanctions behaviour that was formerly considered a “private affair”;
- The Code of Children and Adolescent approved in 1998 establishing sanctions for violence against children and assigning concrete responsibilities to public institutions regarding children's rights;
- Approval in March 2001 of the National Plan Against Inter family Violence (after several years of inter institutional discussions and coordination);
- Creation in 1992 of the National Women's Network Against Inter family and Sexual Violence, which is now the most active and influential mechanism of the Nicaraguan women movement. There are local affiliates of this network in all of the major cities of Nicaragua participating in the Comisarías and supporting the National Plan. The 230 Law was, in part, a direct result of an initiative of the network;

- Recognition by the Ministry of Health (MINSA) that inter family and sexual violence in Nicaragua represents a major public health concern.

In summary, inter family and sexual violence in Nicaragua represents one of the most dramatic, widely recognized and deeply damaging manifestations of inequality between men and women. It is recognized as a critical challenge by state and civil society and represents a rallying point for those who campaign for gender equality and women's rights.

4.2 Population Policy and Reproductive and Sexual Rights

The government of Violeta Chamorro formally approved a National Population Policy in 1996, and a National Population Commission constituted by 18 government institutions was installed to implement the policy with the support and technical assistance of the United Nations Population Fund. The Population Policy includes ambitious goals in enhancing the coverage of basic education and health services and decreasing maternal mortality⁹ and adolescent pregnancy as important means to decrease the population living under poverty. The current government recognized this population policy, but the National Population Commission remains inoperative.

The Ministry of Health (MINSA) and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (MECD) are the main institutions involved in the implementation of the Population Policy. MINSA addresses population health through the "Integrated Health Attention to Women, Adolescents and Children", an institutional policy and model of primary health that has changed considerably since 1994 when it was first designed. While considerable emphasis was placed, originally, on recognizing intra family and sexual violence as a health problem, recent policies emphasize concern for including services to men to reduce discrimination against them (as opposed to including men in efforts to resolve problems of violence).

Interestingly, this program includes an adolescent sub program that is actively promoting the dissemination of information on reproductive health in the Local Health Systems (SILAIS) through youth clubs and community health activities. Some of these activities are facing control and suspicion from officials of the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education has had a very active role in the design (which began in 1993 with the pre-Cairo discussions with organizations representing women's rights) and implementation of the population policy through "education in moral values" and their "sexual education program". In addition, the Nicaraguan official delegation to the ICPD Action Plan in Cairo and in the Cairo + 5 Conference raised strong objections to wording regarding sexual and reproductive rights and adolescents rights to sexual information and education.

⁹ In maternal mortality the goal was to reduce it to half from where it was in 1990 to 2000, which meant to approximately 80/100,000, and to half again in 2015. This goal has not been reached and is now included in the goals of the PRSP with a different figure.

The former Minister of Education and high public education officials who were also directing the Ministry of the Family from its constitution in 1998 until mid 2000 are viewed by representatives of women's rights organizations (and by many observers and analysts) as supporting a conservative religious agenda in keeping with the international position of the Vatican. Educational materials and textbooks are criticized for transmitting a sexist and traditional conception of unequal relations between women and men. Finally, the educational national authorities have been very active disseminating in the public secondary schools their sexual education based on abstinence and self control while attempting to forbid (with limited success in some areas) any information on sexuality, health, contraceptives, and STD/HIV, that is offered by the alternative health centres organized by the national women's movement and even by health workers coming from MINSA. The Population Commission in the National Assembly has sometimes expressed some discomfort with the type of representation sent by the Executive to international conferences where issues relating to reproductive health are debated.

4.3 Therapeutic Abortion

Given the conservative climate in key organizations of the central government (as for example in the Ministry of Education), many public pronouncements and stated policies are contradictory and tend to undercut the commitments the Government of Nicaragua has made to gender equality as a goal. Indeed there is considerable contradiction between the policies and practices of different Ministries of the government with a consequent contribution to controversy and to the bitterness of the debate on many issues.

An illustration of this is provided by the heated and difficult national debate on therapeutic abortion. The present penal code is more than a hundred years old and provides for the possibility of legal therapeutic abortion under very specific health conditions that must be certified by a medical commission. After relatively long consultations with civil society, a new penal code has been under discussion in the National Assembly since last year. The last draft of the proposed code includes an article rendering all forms of therapeutic abortion illegal (apparently in response to actively lobbying by "pro life" groups). In reaction, women's national networks have drafted and lobbied for an alternative text proposing to go beyond the existing provisions for legal therapeutic abortion to enhance the access of women to public health resources for that purpose. For various political reasons, the final approval of the new penal code has been recently blocked in the National Assembly.

4.4 Gender Equality and Efforts to Reduce Participation in the Political System

Nicaraguan media and periodic opinion surveys report perceptions among large segments of the population that democratization processes are being reversed by means of arbitrary measures taken by the present government

that have greatly limited participatory mechanisms. One of the most difficult measures for women's organizations was the so called "pact" or agreement between the party in government and the main opposition party, the FSLN, allowing legislation which effectively eliminates smaller parties from participating in national elections slated for November of this year.

Municipal elections were held across Nicaragua in November 2000. 43% of the population of voting age did not vote, marking the highest level of abstention in the past 20 years. Abstention rates rose as high as 66% in the Northern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN) and 55% in the South (RAAS). The level of abstention from voting in RAAN was the highest of any region in Nicaragua and illustrates to some extent the public's rejection of the crowding out of smaller parties.

One of the stronger regional parties in the Northern Autonomous Region is named YATAMA. It has a strong presence among the Amerindian population of the coastal region and has representation on the Regional Council but was not approved – as a party meeting technical requirements – to contest the regional elections. This was one of the consequences of the more restrictive legislation rising from the "pact". It seems very likely that the rejection of YATAMA was a major contributing factor to the very low voter turnout for municipal elections in RAAN. National elections will take place in November 2001 and opinion polls in February and March indicate that voter alienation and distrust of the main political parties may contribute to a continued decrease in voter turnout.

From the perspective of women's representation, in a total of 151 municipalities 15 women were elected mayors and 28 were elected vice-mayors. Twelve of the 15 women mayors came from the party in government and 3 from the FSLN.

In the 1996 elections (six types of elections took place at one time) the number of women mayors corresponded to 13% of the total, this proportion has now declined to 9.9%. In the previous electoral period there were two women mayors in important cities, Granada and Ocotal. In contrast all women mayors now serve small municipalities of less than 30,000 inhabitants, some of them classified as in "extreme poverty" in the poverty map.

The relative closure of the political system so that it is now dominated by a small group of larger, well financed political parties (Liberal, conservative and FSLN) has important consequences for those organizations pressing for gender equality and supporting women's equal rights. A key example has been the resistance of the larger parties (with the exception of the FSLN) to the idea of ensuring a minimum number (or quota) of women candidates for municipal, regional and national elections. While in the 94–96 pre electoral period women were fighting for quotas within parties and were organizing to present municipal candidates outside the larger party mechanisms (which the former electoral law provided for), smaller parties themselves are now struggling to survive and have a right to take part in elections.

This trend to a party political system dominated by two or three large parties of the center right and center left is seen by many analysts and observers (especially by representatives of women's rights organizations such as the members of the Network Against Violence) as a serious threat to progress in support of gender equality. It replaces a strategy of openness (associated with the previous government) and reduces the space for small parties and organizations of civil society. This threat is made more serious by the perception that the party currently in power has a strong interest in promoting policies under a "pro-family" rhetoric in order to actively undermine commitments and progress toward gender equality.

4.5 National Machinery for Promoting Gender Equality

In understanding the current context for the promotion of gender equality in Nicaragua it is important to recognize that the Nicaraguan Women's Institute (INIM) has long represented a strong source of research and advocacy for women's equality in Nicaragua. One of the strong features of INIM has been its autonomy from other Ministries of the national government and its ability to conduct research and take public positions other Ministries may have found uncomfortable.

Following the State Reform Program initiated during the former government, the National Assembly passed (1998) the Law 290 on the Organization of the State, with the objectives of allocating clear public functions and rationalizing resources through the reduction of ministries and autonomous public institutes. According to local women's advocates, the strong alliance between key figures in the governing party and members of the Catholic Church hierarchy in Nicaragua (and strong pressure from the Vatican) made the autonomy of INIM politically unacceptable. As a result the law for the reorganization and reduction of the state bureaucracy was used to weaken the international commitment (Nairobi-1980) to install specific national mechanisms or machinery to address discrimination and the lack of equal rights and opportunity that women have historically experienced in Nicaragua.

More specifically, the Nicaraguan Women's Institute (INIM) ceased to be autonomous and became a Directorate of the newly created Ministry of the Family (MIFAMILIA). This Ministry is seen by many as part of an effort to dilute the progress made by INIM in advocacy and to weaken actions favourable to gender equality. The creation of the Ministry of the Family was preceded by a year of public debate and strong lobbying in the National Assembly. The main actors in the debate were the different groups of the national women's movement and representatives of fundamentalist Catholic groups who held high government positions and were simultaneously leading the "Pro Life" activities in the country.

After the Beijing + 5 Conference there have been changes in the leadership of both the Ministry of the Family and INIM which seem to favour a return to a relatively autonomous functioning INIM and a withdrawal of the new

Ministry from strong ideological confrontations with women's groups (and with donors) on issues like the prohibition of the term "gender" in official documents. Similarly, the MIFAMILIA seems to have reduced – to some degree – its violent opposition to the promotion of sexual and reproductive rights. Among the reasons cited for these changes are:

- the general recognition of INIM as an effective channel for international cooperation supporting gender equality and the risk of losing this cooperation;
- the fact that there are different positions regarding women and gender inequalities within the government; and
- not the least, the need to open up during the last period of the government's administration as a way to prepare for new elections.

In addition to this somewhat positive re-alignment of the ideological and policy orientation of MIFAMILIA and re-assertion by INIM of a more autonomous point of view, there have been a number of organizational and policy developments at the national level which present opportunities for a more active promotion of gender equality.

These include:

- a) the reactivation, in early 2001, of the National Commission of the Rural Woman created under the former government;
- b) approval by the President, also in early 2001, of the National Anti Inter family Violence Plan. Both mechanisms, chaired by INIM, are joint efforts between state institutions and civil society organizations, particularly women's organizations, to advance in gender equality;
- c) the election of an Ombudsman in 1999 and the nomination of an Obudswoman in 2000. These are new official mechanisms supported by national legislation and opening possibilities for the advocacy and protection of the population rights, and in particular women's rights. In March 2001 an Ombudsman for Indigenous Populations was also nominated as provided by the 1996 Ombudsman law.
- d) The recreation in 2000 of a National Commission Against Maternal Mortality. The Commission was originally created in 1992 through a Minister's resolution. Its main objectives were the promotion of joint efforts to develop policies, strategies and actions to diminish maternal morbidity and mortality in Nicaragua. The commission became part of the National Health Council, but was suspended from this consultative body in January 1997 by the current government. A new commission with similar purposes was created a year ago with formal representation from the national network for women's health. In March 2001 the commission was reactivated with the celebration of a national forum on the prevention of maternal mortality.

5. Summary

As outlined in detail in the sections above, gender equality remains a challenging goal in the Nicaraguan context. On one hand, there is clear evidence of the burden of inequality which women face in terms of differences in income and the experience of poverty, in negative health outcomes, victimization due to inter family and sexual violence and physical abuse; and in underrepresentation and poor access to political decision making. For the most part these costs of inequality are recognized in Nicaragua by civil society and (to some extent) by government.

It is also clear however, that there have been inconsistencies and weaknesses in the response of the national government to the goal of gender equality. Serious challenges to local groups working for the promotion of gender equality and for international cooperation to promote gender equality include the absorption of INIM into the Ministry of the Family; recent statements and policies put forward by senior cabinet Ministers in areas such as teaching of sexual rights; the apparent close alliance between some government Ministers and the conservative elements of the Catholic Church; the conservative stance of the Government of Nicaragua at recent international conferences relating to gender equality; and the relative closure of the party political system.

In contrast to the more open approach of the previous government, the current stance means that local and international agencies promoting gender equality are now “swimming upstream” to a large extent and limits the opportunity for overt dialogue and advocacy.

On the other hand, as noted above, there are recent signs of a political re-examination of at least the intensity of opposition to many gender equality measures and goals. Of equal importance, there remain opportunities to work with a number of agencies and departments of the Government of Nicaragua where the question of gender equality remains open to discussion and where initiatives, especially at regional and local levels to promote gender equality are welcome. As pointed out to the team by Sida officers and others in Managua, at program and project level there is considerable interest in addressing the goal of gender equality. Indeed many of the conclusions and findings presented below reflect this strong sense that gender equality as a goal is very much “on the table” in Nicaragua and that opportunities can be found to work with government agencies and with civil society organizations.

It is important not to discount the difficulty, at present, for a bilateral donor to conduct an open and meaningful dialogue with the Government of Nicaragua at highest levels on the problems and possibilities of gender equality. On the other hand, there are channels and partners within and outside the GON providing effective avenues for promoting gender equality.

Annex 3

Persons Interviewed

Swedish embassy – Managua

Torsten Wetterblad	Secretary, International Cooperation
Anders Rönquist	Social Sector Programs Officer and Gender Focal Point
Sara Martinez Bergström	Second Secretary, International Cooperation

Academia de policia y policia nacional

Violeta Delgado	Secretaria Ejecutiva de la Red de Mujeres contra la Violencia
Angela Rosa Acevedo	Coordinadora de la Comisión Jurídica de la Red
Juanita Jiménez	Coordinadora del Proyecto Comisarías dentro de la Red
Daniel Baldizón	Coordinador Proyecto Academia de Policía IIDH (Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos)
Franco Montealegre	Jefe Nacional de la Policía
Juanita Burghie	Asistente de Despacho Jefe Nacional Policía. Ex Directora Estación de Policía Distrito 4 (Mercado Oriental)
Eva Sacasa	Inspectora General Policía Nacional
Violeta Otero	Asesora de Género GTZ Consultora para el tema de Género en diagnóstico Policía
Emilio Rodríguez	Academia de Policía
Marvin Zeledón Romero	Cadete
Edgar Antonio Sánchez	Cadete
Yesenia Herrera Flores	Cadete
Mirna Lezama	Responsable Estudiantes mujeres en Academia de Policía
Francisco Bautista	Jefe Nacional de Operaciones criminales PN. Ex director Academia

Darma Lila Carrasquilla	Consultora Save the Children/Suecia Programa de apoyo a la Policía en temas de niñez
Asistentes a Devolución preliminar de resultados	
Eva Sacasa G.	Inspectora General PN; Coordinadora Comisión de Género PN
Emilio Rodríguez	Academia de Policía
Cecilia Taleno	Jefa Nacional de Comisarías

Bluefields – RAAN/ASDI/RAAS

Rendell Hebert	Vice Presidente Concejo Regional Autónomo RAAS
Brenda Mayorga	Delegada Regional Ministerio de Gobernación
Moisés Arana	Alcalde Bluefields
Jan Karremans	Director Internacional Proyecto PRODECOFORT (Holanda)
Noreen White	Directora Nacional PRODECOFORT
Bernardine Dixon	URRACAN Estudios de Género
Lestel Fernández	MINSA – PROSILAIS
Ileana Gómez	Diputada Suplente FSLN
Lindsell Casanova	Gobierno Regional RAAS. Secretario de Asuntos municipales y comunitarios
Lotty Cunningham	Grupo Jurídico Internacional Directora Sede Bilwi
Claudia Wilson	Concejo Regional Autónomo Coordinadora Comisión de la Mujer y la Niñez
Doleen Miller	CEDEHCA RAAS. (Centro de derechos Humanos Costa Atlántica)
Deborah Grandisson	CEDEHCA RAAS
Johnny Hodgson	Ayuda en Acción (España-UK) Coordinador de Proyectos en RAAS. Ex Secretario de la Comisión Nacional de Autonomía
Faran Dometz	Rector BICU (Bluefields Indian and Caribbean University; Pastor relevante de la Iglesia Morava; Ex Concejal Concejo Regional; Fundador del Partido

Puerto cabeza – RAAN/ASDI/RAAS

Betty Rigby	Directora FADCANIC – RAAN (Fundación de apoyo al desarrollo de la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua)
Alberto González	Concejo Regional Autónomo. 2º. Secretario
Rufina Centeno	Concejo Regional Autónomo. 1ª. Vice Presidenta; Secretaria de Comisión de Recursos Naturales y Secretaria de Comisión Mujer y Niñez
Alejo Teófilo	Concejo Regional Autónomo Comisión Asuntos comunitarios
Albert St Claire	Vice Rector URRACAN (Universidad Regional de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Atlántica)
Sandra Davis	Coordinadora Estudios de Género IEPA – URRACAN (Instituto de Estudios y Promoción de la Autonomía)
Jorge Canales	Coordinador Programa RAAN - ASDI
Julieta Gradiz	Administradora Programa RAAN-ASDI
Alba Rivera de Vallejos	Coordinadora de Gobierno Concejo Regional Autónomo (“Gobernadora”)
Jorge Matamoros	Director IDSIM (Instituto de Desarrollo Social de la Iglesia Morava)
Matilde Lindo	Coordinadora del Movimiento de Mujeres Nidia White
Deborah Bush	Comisión de lucha contra el Sida. Clínica Bilwi
Josefa Sanders	Programa de la Mujer IDSIM
Celia Müller	Coordinadora regional Colectivo “Las Gaviotas”
Yuri Zapata	Docente de Historia de la Costa Atlántica URRACAN
Alejandro Brooks	CEDEHCA (Centro de derechos humanos de la Costa Atlántica)
Abelino Cox	Secretario de Educación y Cultura Gobierno Regional Autónomo
Alda Hooker	Directora Clínica Bilwi. Asesora Comisión de Salud Concejos Regionales Autónomos; Ex Concejal y ex Vice Presidenta de Concejo Regional RAAN

Managua RAAN/ASDI/RAAS

Hennington Hodgson Coordinador del Programa RAAN-RAAS-ASDI

Dorotea Wilson Coordinadora de la Iniciativa Voces Caribeñas.
Ex diputada por la RAAN

Managua PROSILAIS

Dra. Soto – Coordinadora del PROSILAIS

Anders Rönquist, Sara Martínez, Karen Mettel, de ASDI, Coralia Chowi, Asistente de Sara Martínez

Jannette Chavarria – Responsable de la Asistencia Técnica de UNICEF al PROSILAIS

Violeta Barreto – DG de Recursos Humanos, Docencia e Investigación

Silvia Navaez – Responsable de la Unidad Técnica Mujer Salud y Desarrollo de la OPS

Enrique Morales – Jefe del Departamento de Estadísticas del MINSA

Rynaldo Aguilar – PAHO Technical Advisor of PROSILAIS

Jaime Espinoza – independent consultant who made a PROSILAIS Review, 01/2001, focusing on Decentralization

Managua PRODEL

Luis Alberto López – Coordinador de PRODEL

Irene Vance – Consultora de ASDI en PRODEL

Fresia Salmerón – Gerente de Fondo de Desarrollo Local (microfinanciera de NITLAPAN) en Chinandega

Patricia Padilla – Gerente de ADIM, microfinanciera con misión de empoderamiento de la mujer y coordinadora del grupo de microfinancieras que se proponen el uso del crédito como medio de empoderamiento de la mujer.

PRODEL / PROSILAIS
ESTELI – SOMOTO – OCOTAL
23.03.01- 30.03.01

ESTELI

PROSILAIS

Director of SILAIS: Mr José María Briones

Group discussion at the Centro de Salud: 20 participants

Ms Castillo – Dortor
Ms Vilchez – Voluntary health worker
Ms Rodrigez – Voluntary health worker
Mr Blaulos – Education Rep.
Ms Arroliga – Voluntary health worker
Ms Yadico – Voluntary health worker
Ms Moncada – Midwife
Ms Perrotta – Midwife
Ms Rocha – Voluntary health worker
Mr Rodriguez – Doctor
Mr Monzales – canadian Red cross
Mr Alunguia – principal Administrator
Mr Ortega – Administrator
Mr Briones – Director of SILAIS
Ms Urbina – Casa Mujeres- Women ‘s NGO
Ms Sanzas – AMNLAE Esteli
Mr Morando – Police Officer Esteli
Mr Ruiz – Journalist – Head of the local network against violence,
Head of the group on Masculinities
Ms Fornos – Director of IXCHEN – Women’s NGO
Mr Corvales – Municipal Director of Health
Mr Pino – Director of Municipal Services – Municipality of Esteli

Puerto de Salud – El Coyolito

Group discussion: 10 Participants including female and male Voluntary health workers, Doctors, nurses and midwives

Casa base de la Pita

Interview with owner

Saturday 24 March

Visit Barrio Fonseca

Interview with Ms Lanzas and male voluntary health workers to explore the incorporation of masculinities in training course for voluntary health worker.

Interview with Ms Fornos Director of IXCHEN and Mr Castillo,
Head of Masculinities group.

Group discussion with 17 Adolescents trained by IXCHEN on sexual and
reproductive health from all the neighbouring villages.

Sayda Sanar, Jueydi Gonzales, Jacqueline Centeno, Miriam Gonzales, Yessen-
nia Davila, mania del Rosario, Oscar Ramón, Miriam, Antonia, Dania
Walkiria, Martha Moreno, Maria Banarides, Emma Galeano, Amarico Gu-
tierrez, Luis Iglesias, José Ruiz, José

SOMOTO

Monday 26 March

PROSILAIS

Interview with Focal Point PROSILAIS Dr Montes Flores visit of Centro de
Salud SOMOTO

PRODEL

Interview with Mr Torrez UTE

Interviews with beneficiaries of household credits and infrastructure compo-
nent

Interview with Ismael Rodriguez manager of ACODEP

PROSILAIS

Group discussion with adolescents and Lic. Utières

Tuesday 27 March

PROSILAIS

Group discussion with midwives and voluntary health workers, 5 participants.

PRODEL

Interview with UTE and ATV

Focus group discussion with 8 Beneficiaries of household credits

OCOTAL

Wednesday 28 March

PRODEL

Interview with ATV Mr Julian- UTE Ms Perrot

PROSILAIS

Interview with member of the community network

PRODEL

Focus group discussion SWOT analysis with beneficiaries of household credits 7 participants: MFlores, Ms Tercero, Ms Molina, Mr Albarado, Ms Lopez, Mr Rodrigez, Mr Ponce

Focus group discussion SWOT analysis with beneficiaries of micro-credits 8 participants: Ms Bautista, Mr Cesar, Ms Martinez, Ms Campbell, Mr Castellana, Ms Iredez, Ms Jaquino

Thursday 29 March

PRODEL

Interview with ACODEP manager, Mr Torrez

PROSILAIS

Interview with Director of Silais, Dr Roa Trana,

Group discussion with Centro de Salud and Puerto de Salud of Dipilto Lic. Maria Zapata, Focal Point Prosilais, Ms Ontero, Doctor, Ms Zeledon, Nurse.

Interview with owner of Casa Base of Dilpito

13:00 Group discussion with adolescents network PROSILAIS

15:00 Interview with the technical team of SILAIS OCOTAL

Friday 30 March

ESTELI

PRODEL

Interviews with beneficiaries of micro-credits and household credits

Interview with ACODEP Manager, Ms Edwards

Interviews with beneficiaries of micro-credits

Annex 4

Bibliography

Bibliography

General

Sonia Agurto Vilchez, 'Análisis de la Situación Actual de la Población Nicaragüense: Análisis de Género', SIDA.

'Estrategia reforzada de Reducción de la Pobreza', Borrador, pp 1–37.

'Matriz de Acciones de Política: Estrategia Reforzada para la Reducción de la Pobreza', Anexo V, pp 97–126.

'Plan Nacional para la prevención de la violencia intrafamiliar y sexual', Comisión Nacional de Lucha contra la Violencia hacia la Mujer; Niña y Adolescencia, Nicaragua 2001–2006.

Julie Catterson and Monica Brodén, 'Results Analysis of Sida's Strategies for Central America and Nicaragua, 1996–2000', SIDA, September 2000.

'State of the Region: A Report Sustainable Human Development in Central America', SIDA, 1999 First Report, pp 3–62.

'Trabajo Sueco por la Igualdad de Género', Agencia Sueca para el Desarrollo Internacional, pp 2–27.

'Estrategia para la Cooperación Sueca Con Nicaragua, 1998–2000' Sida, 1997.

'Agreement Between the Government of Sweden and the Government of Nicaragua on Development Cooperation –1996–1997'.

'Estrategia para la Cooperación De Suecia con América Central y El Caribe, 2001–2005', Sida, February 2001.

PRODEL

Irene Vance, Jorge Vargas, 'Final Report of External Evaluation of the Local Development Programme (PRODEL) in Nicaragua', May 1996, pp 1–82.

'Informe Final: Primera Fase del Programa de Desarrollo Local (PRODEL)', Instituto Nicaragüense de Fomento Municipal, Managua, Abril de 1998.

Irene Vance, Jorge Vargas, 'Local Development Programme in Nicaragua', PRODEL, SIDA Evaluation 96/47.

'Programa de Desarrollo Local: Plan Operativo del 2000', Instituto Nicaragüense de Fomento Municipal, 27 de Abril del 2000.

'Programa de Desarrollo Local (PRODEL)', Instituto Nicaragüense de Fomento Municipal', Managua, Septiembre de 1997.

'Program de Desarrollo Local (PRODEL)', Instituto Nacaragüense de Fomento Municipal, Managua, Septiembre de 1997.

'Programas Sociales, Pobreza y Participación Ciudadana: Asamblea de Gobernadores', Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID).

PROSILAIS

Marta Medina, Ulf Färnsveden, Roberto Belmar, 'Apoyo de Asdi al Sector: Salud de Nicaragua', Sida Evaluation 99/11.

'Interim Final Report: PROSILAIS in Nicaragua (Phase II)', Pan American Health Organization World Health Organization, January 2000.

'Monitoring of Sida's Health Sector Support to Nicaragua', Stockholm Group for Development Studies, pp 1–16.

Dr. Roberto Belmar, 'Mision de Monitoreo Prosilais III', pp 1–15.

'PROSILAIS: Support to Local Integrated Health Care Systems in Chinandega Esteli, Leon, Madriz, Nueva Segovia and the Raas', Unicef – Nicaragua.

'Proyecto de Desarrollo de los Silais de Chinandega, Esteli, Leon, Madriz, Nueva Segovia y Raas: Prosilais', Republica de Nicaragua, pp 2–38.

'Proyecto III Fase: Julio 2000–Junio 2003', Republica de Nicaragua Ministerio de Salud, Mayo 2000, pp 1–58.

'Proyecto Prosilais: 1 Semestre Año 2000', ASDI-MINSA-OPS/OMS-UNICEF, pp 2–9.

'Reunión Annual de PROSILAIS entre Nicaragua y Suecia: 27–30 enero 1997', Minutas de Acuerdo.

'Terms of Reference: for Consulting Services for Appraisal of Sida's Support to the Health Sector in Nicaragua', PROSILAIS III, 2000–2002.

National Police Academy

'Edicion II Aniversario: Febrero 2001', Visión Policial, pp 2–31.

'Estudio Sobre la Academia de la Policía de Nicaragua'

'Informe Anual de Actividades: Enero–Diciembre de 1998', ASDI-IIDH-POLICIA NACIONAL, Managua, abril de 1998.

‘Informe de Actividades: Enero-Diciembre de 1999’, ASDI-IIDH-POLICIA NACIONAL, Managua, mayo 2000.

‘Managua, 26 de Octubre del 2000’, IIDH.

‘Memoria: Presentacion del Modulo Derechos Humanos de la Niñes y la Adolescencia’, Policia Nacional y Radda Barnen de Suecia.

‘Modelo Educativo de la Policia Nacional de Nicaragua’, Policia Nacional Academia, Managua 15 de marzo del 2000.

‘Programa de Modernizacion y Desarrollo de la Policia Nacional de Nicaragua para el Fortalecimiento de la Seguridad Ciudadana’, Republica de Nicaragua, Octubre del 2000.

‘Proyecto de Cooperacion Sueca a la Academia de la Policia Nacional de la Republica de Nicaragua’, Policia Nacional Academia de Policia, Junio de 1997.

‘Proyecto de Cooperacion Sueca a la Academia de la Policia Nacional de la Republica de Nicaragua’, Policia Nacional Academia de Policia, Junio de 1997, pp 1–45.

‘Respondiendo a Necesidades de Seguridad Ciudadana de Mujeres y Hombres’, Políticas Públicas Género Cuadernos.

‘San José, 26 de agosto de 1998: 005-N’, IIDH, pp 1–20.

RAAN/ASDI/RAAS

‘Agreement on Institutional Support to the Autonomous South Atlantic Region (RAAN) 1997–2000’.

Elizabeth Lewin, Christian Ahlund, Regina Quintana, ‘Access to Justice in Rural Nicaragua: An independent evaluation of the impact of Local Court Houses’, Sida Evaluation 99/9.

‘Desarrollo Democrático en la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua’, Noviembre de 1996.

‘Diseño de un Plan Indicativo de Acción para el Fortalecimiento de los Consejos y Administraciones Regionales de la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua’, IIDH/CAPEL, Febrero, 1996.

‘El modelo de salud de la Región: Autónoma del Atlántico Norte’, Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaragüense.

‘Evaluación de la Cooperación de Suecia a Nicaragua en el area Democracia y Derechos Humanos (1997–2000)’, INFORME, 28 de Noviembre de 2000.

‘Informe del Equipo Externo de Monitoreo y Asesoría: Enero de 1999’, Programa de Apoyo Institucional a las Regiones Autónomas, pp 2–22.

‘Informe del Equipo Externo de Monitoreo y Asesoría: Julio-Agosto de 1999’, Programa de Apoyo Institucional a las Regiones Autónomas, pp 3–19.

Miguel González Pérez, ‘Informe Especial sobre: Desarrollo Institucional en la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua 1996–1998’, Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua, Noviembre de 1998.

‘Minutas de Acuerdo y Ayuda Memoria de la Misión Conjunta ASDI-BID: A la Costa Atlántica’, 4 al 9 de febrero de 2001.

‘Mujeres de la RAAN Construyendo el porvenir’, la Boletina, Noviembre 2000.

Nadine Jubb, Dionys Law, ‘Que sabemos sobre mujeres, género y etnia en la Costa Caribe de Nicaragua’, CIIR, CEDEHCA, Octubre 2000.

‘Specific Agreement Between the Government of Sweden and the Government of Nicaragua on Institutional Support to the Autonomous Regions of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua 1997–2000’, pp 1–5.

‘Specific Agreement Between the Government of Sweden and the Government of Nicaragua on Institutional Support to the Autonomous Regions of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua 1997–2000’, DEC: DESO 358/97.

Hans Petter Buvollen, Mario Rosales Ortega, Leticia Velásquez Zapeta, ‘Strengthening Democracy on the Atlantic Coast in Nicaragua’, Sida Evaluation 00/19.

Annex 5

Study Object Grids: Nicaragua

ANALYTICAL FRAME WORK I - Nicaragua: PROSILAIS

		Intervention Level		
Study Objects	Specific questions	Geographical or institutional concentration of evaluation	Key informants, focus group participants, etc.	Methods and tools
<p>WHAT?</p> <p>Gender Equality goal reflected in intervention design and implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstacles and missed opportunities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How health needs of women and men were incorporated into design of SILAIS health services packages, especially sexual and reproductive health and rights? • How needs of women and men health workers and volunteers were incorporated into design? • Participatory health assessments at local level include women and men as specific groups identifying needs? 	<p>Managua (MINSA/OPS/UNICEF and Sida)</p> <p>In Esteli, Nueva Segovia and RAAS at four key levels of SILAIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Departmental SILAIS offices; - Municipal Health Centres; - Puertos de Salud; Casas Base 	<p>MINSA PROSILAIS</p> <p>MINSa integrated health services for women</p> <p>PAHO PROSILAIS</p> <p>PAHO integrated health services for women;</p> <p>UNICEF PROSILAIS staff</p> <p>Sida advisor</p> <p>SILAIS directors at department level</p> <p>Atencion integrate a la mujer at SILAIS offices</p> <p>Advisory councils of SILAIS</p> <p>Infermeras</p> <p>Paid auxiliary health workers</p> <p>Volunteer health leaders</p>	<p>Review evaluations and monitoring documents as well as health needs assessment reports</p> <p>Key informant interviews with Sida advisor, with MINSa/PAHO/UNICEF SILAIS, atencion integrate a la mujer and gender staff and with advisory councils and directors of SILAIS</p> <p>Participatory workshops with paid and voluntary women and men (most will be women) health workers.</p>
<p>Poverty reduction – links/synergies/ conflicts with Gender Equality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sida and Nicaragua poverty strategies and interventions include health? • Sex desegregated data on health outcomes gathered in PROSILAIS? • SILAIS policies and service packages consider economic impact of user fees, differential effect on women and men? • Health outcomes as element in poverty as felt by women and men? 	<p>Swedish Embassy in Managua</p> <p>MINSa/PAHO/UNICEF offices</p> <p>All four levels of SILAIS structures</p> <p>Non-SILAIS health levels such as hospitals</p>	<p>As above but with special emphasis on four levels of SILAIS health administration in Esteli, Nueva Segovia and RAAS</p>	<p>Review of poverty strategy documents</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Workshops with health workers and volunteers.</p>

		Intervention Level		
Study Objects	Specific questions	Geographical or institutional concentration of evaluation	Key informants, focus group participants, etc.	Methods and tools
HOW? Stakeholder Participation (Including Dialogue with Sida)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature of participation by women and men health workers and health volunteers in planning at the SILAIS level? Different ways women and men have participated in decisions on service content and delivery? Role of advisory councils to SILAIS Sida/MINSA/PAHO/UNICEF dialogue on gender equality aspects of SILAIS systems? 	To be addressed at both the headquarters of Sida, MINSA, UNICEF, PAHO and at Departmental level in Esteli, Nueva Segovia and RAAS. Each SILAIS to be observed at departmental, municipal health center, health post and basic health leader levels	As above but with special attention to paid and volunteer health workers and to assessing Sida/MINSA dialogue	As above plus focus groups with women and men health service providers at local levels (volunteer and paid); Special focus on Sida dialogue with MINSA and other donors and multilateral organizations to determine which are focusing on gender and how.
Mainstreaming strategy – degree <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zero evidence? Pro Forma? Analytical? Design Integration? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation? Evaluation and Monitoring Links to Other Gender Equality Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See first item under what above: Gender equality goal reflected in intervention design and implementation? Special focus on design elements aiming at reproductive health and sexual health and women's rights? Women specific health interventions and health status issues monitored at national and SILAIS levels? Evaluation and monitoring of economic impacts of SILAIS service policies regarding essential drugs and cost recovery as they impact women and men? 	To be addressed at both the headquarters of Sida, MINSA, UNICEF, PAHO and at Departmental level in Esteli, Nueva Segovia and RAAS. Each SILAIS to be observed at departmental, municipal health center, health post and basic health leader levels	MINSA PROSILAIS MINSA integrated health services for women PAHO PROSILAIS PAHO integrated health services for women; UNICEF PROSILAIS staff Sida advisor SILAIS directors at department level Atención integrada a la mujer at SILAIS offices	Key informant interviews and reviews of SILAIS monitoring and evaluation reports.

	Intervention Level			
	Study Objects	Specific questions	Geographical or institutional concentration of evaluation	Key informants, focus group participants, etc.
WHICH CHANGES?	<p>Effects of intervention on Gender Equality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical gender needs/strategic gender interests and changes • Men and Male Roles • Effects of intervention on women's empowerment • Intended/unintended/missed opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects and impacts of SILAIS and their services on quality of service and access to health services for women and men? • Effects and impacts of SILAIS and their services on sexual and reproductive health for women and men (including HIV/AIDS)? • Effects on responsibility for family planning/ health and different roles of women and men in promoting health within and outside the family? • Changes in the roles and power of men and women paid and volunteer health workers under the SILAIS system? • Opportunities for addressing gender equality through the SILAIS system which may have been missed to date? 	<p>To be addressed at both the headquarter of Sida, MINSa, UNICEF, PAHO and at Departmental level in Estelí, Nueva Segovia and RAAS. Each SILAIS to be observed at departmental, municipal health center, health post and basic health leader levels</p>	<p>Full range of key informants as detailed above, namely: MINSa PROSILAIS, MINSa integrated health services for women, PAHO PROSILAIS, PAHO integrated health services for women, UNICEF PROSILAIS staff Sida advisor SILAIS directors at department level Atención integrate a la mujer at SILAIS offices Advisory councils of SILAIS Infermeras Paid auxiliary health workers Volunteer health leaders</p>
				<p>Methods and tools</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews at all institutional levels noted; Reviews of SILAIS monitoring and evaluation reports; Participatory with paid and volunteer health workers in the SILAIS system.</p>

ANALYTICAL FRAME WORK I
Nicaragua: PRODEL

		Intervention Level		
Study Objects	Specific questions	Geographical or institutional concentration of evaluation	Key informants, focus group participants, etc.	Methods and tools
<p>WHAT?</p> <p>Gender Equality goal reflected in intervention design and implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstacles and missed opportunities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender analysis in design of four components? Different needs of women and men considered in design of: infrastructure, housing and credit components? • Women participation in institutional support activities designed in? • Sex desegregated data on women and men's use of credit? • Infrastructure investments chosen in light of gender differences in needs? Other group differences (children, youth) considered? 	<p>Managua- INIFOM Technical Support Team (PEU) for PRODEL</p> <p>Credit Granting NGOs</p> <p>Municipalities of Esteli, Ocotal and Somoto provide best coverage of all four components and both phases of PRODEL</p> <p>Association of Mayors</p> <p>In Communities- PRODEL units in each municipality, mayors municipal commissions, NITLAPLAN and ACODEPA</p> <p>Women's organizations in each city</p> <p>Women and men participating in the four components of the project</p>	<p>Sida program officer; INIFOM PEU for PRODEL</p> <p>Mayors</p> <p>Municipal Commission Members</p> <p>Local NITLAPLAN and ACODEPA staff</p> <p>Municipal level PEUs</p> <p>Women and men participating in the four components of the project.</p>	<p>Review of design documents, annual reports and evaluations;</p> <p>Interviews with selected Sida HQ staff;</p> <p>Key informant interviews with Sida (Managua), INIFOM, ACODEPA, NITLAPLAN, etc.</p> <p>Participatory workshops with women and men from four components</p>
<p>Poverty reduction – links/ synergies/ conflicts with Gender Equality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty definitions and measurements used in design and monitoring of PRODEL? • Sex differences in poverty indicators used in PRODEL? • Perceived conflicts and synergies in poverty and gender equality goals? • Men's and women's roles in poverty reduction considered? 	<p>Sida Managua</p> <p>INIFOM PEU Managua</p> <p>NGOs</p> <p>Municipal Commissions Esteli, Ocotal, Somoto</p> <p>Women's organizations in Esteli, Ocotal, Somoto</p> <p>Program operations at community level</p> <p>Women and men participants in all four components</p>	<p>Sida program officer; INIFOM PEU for PRODEL</p> <p>Mayors</p> <p>Municipal Commission Members</p> <p>Local NITLAPLAN and ACODEPA staff</p> <p>Municipal level PEUs</p> <p>Women and men participating in the four components of the project.</p>	<p>Key Informant Interviews</p> <p>Review of poverty data used in monitoring</p> <p>PRODEL</p> <p>Participatory workshops with men and women participants in urban and micro-finance credit.</p>

		Intervention Level		
Study Objects	Specific questions	Geographical or institutional concentration of evaluation	Key informants, focus group participants, etc.	Methods and tools
HOW? Stakeholder Participation (Including Dialogue with Sida) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstacles and missed opportunities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women participate as one identified group in infrastructure micro-planning model (others include youth, aged men and women)? • Women recognised as stakeholder group and participation in planning/management of housing component? • Women participate as key stakeholder group in phases of credit component? • Women's and men's participation in institutional support component? • Sida dialogue with INIFOM on participation and on women and men's needs and interests in urban programming? 	INIFOM Managua and in communities (PEUs and Tech support units) Credit granting NGOs in Managua and communities; Observed PRODEL operations in Esteli, Ocotal and Somoto;	Sida program officer; INIFOM PEU for PRODEL Mayors Municipal Commission Members Local NITLAPLAN and ACODEPA staff Municipal level PEUs Women and men participating in the four components of the project	Key informant interviews Review of design documents, monitoring reports, minutes of consultative meetings with Sida. Participatory workshops with women and men participants/beneficiaries in each community/
Mainstreaming strategy – degree <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero evidence? • Pro Forma? • Analytical? • Design Integration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation? • Evaluation and Monitoring Links to Other Gender Equality Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See first item under what above: Gender equality goal reflected in intervention design and implementation? • Targets for women and men participation rates established and monitored? • Sex desegregated data used in monitoring and evaluation of infrastructure and credit components? • Attempts made to assess impact of housing and credit components on women's and men's perception of poverty and income? 	Swedish embassy in Managua Managua- INIFOM Technical Support Team (PEU) for PRODEL Credit Granting NGOs In Communities- PRODEL units in each municipality, mayors municipal commissions, NITLAPLAN and ACODEPA Women's organizations in each city Women and men participating in the four components of the project	Sida program officer; INIFOM PEU for PRODEL Women's organizations Mayors Municipal Commission Members Local NITLAPLAN and ACODEPA staff Municipal level PEUs Women and men participating in the four components of the project	Key informant interviews Review of design documents, monitoring reports, minutes of consultative meetings with Sida. Participatory workshops with women and men participants/beneficiaries in each community/

		Intervention Level		
Study Objects	Specific questions	Geographical or institutional concentration of evaluation	Key informants, focus group participants, etc.	Methods and tools
WHICH CHANGES? Effects of intervention on Gender Equality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical gender needs/strategic gender interests and changes • Men and male roles • Effects of intervention on women's empowerment • Intended/unintended/missed opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure investments respond to women's practical/strategic needs? • Women's access to credit and to improved housing (including ownership) increased? • Effect of credit component on productive/reproductive roles of women? • Improved living conditions for women and men (and women heads of households?) • Improvements in women's efficiency and productivity within traditional gender roles versus changing roles, especially for credit component? • Effect on equality of decision making within families? • Effect on male roles within the family/challenges to traditional male roles? 	<p>This issue will be best addressed at the municipal level where the effects of PRODEL programming on women and men (as well as on children and youth) will be most apparent.</p> <p>Municipalities chosen are Esteli, Ocotal, and Somoto.</p>	<p>PRODEL municipal level staff Municipal staff of ACODEPA and NITLAPLAN Women and men project participants and beneficiaries Local women's NGOs at community level Other agencies providing credit</p>	<p>Review of monitoring and evaluation reports which may contain sex-disaggregated data Key informant interviews with PRODEL, ACODEPA, NITLAPLAN, Women's organizations in the three communities; Participatory workshops with women and men participants/beneficiaries.</p>

ANALYTICAL FRAME WORK I
Nicaragua: Assistance to the National Police Academy

		Intervention Level			
	Study Objects	Specific questions	Geographical or institutional concentration of evaluation	Key informants, focus group participants, etc.	Methods and tools
WHAT?	<p>Gender Equality goal reflected in intervention design and implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstacles and missed opportunities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-political studies included gender and policing? • Logistics component as goal to promote women trainees? • In-service police management component includes gender modules? • Training for new cadets includes module on gender? • Planning component and draft medium term policing strategy include gender issues? Meaningful/high quality analysis? 	<p>National Police Academy (NPA) in Managua</p> <p>National Police Commission</p> <p>Swedish Embassy</p> <p>IIDH (Instituto Inter-americano de Derechos Humanos) Managua</p>	<p>Grupo de Gerencia (National Police, IIDH, Police Academy)</p> <p>National Police Gender Commission</p> <p>In-service women trainees (and men trainees)</p> <p>Trainee police cadets</p>	<p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Reviews of curriculum and facilities</p> <p>Participatory group meetings with trainees and in-service officers of the national police.</p>
	<p>Poverty reduction – links/synergies/conflicts with Gender Equality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues in policing and the poor, especially poor street children examined in training? Differences in response of male and female officers? 	<p>NPA Managua,</p> <p>IIDH Managua</p> <p>Embassy</p>	<p>Sida staff</p> <p>NPA staff</p> <p>IIDH project consultant</p> <p>Trainees</p>	<p>Key Informant Interviews</p> <p>Focus group discussions with trainees</p>

		Intervention Level		
Study Objects	Specific questions	Geographical or institutional concentration of evaluation	Key informants, focus group participants, etc.	Methods and tools
HOW? Stakeholder Participation (Including Dialogue with Sida) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstacles and missed opportunities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation by women and men in – infrastructure design, curriculum development, instruction, management. • Sida/NPA/National Police dialogue on policing and gender equality? • Links to GTZ supported project on special units to combat family/sexual violence? 	NPA IIDH Embassy	Sida staff IIDH project consultant NPA staff GTZ staff and consultants involved in family violence policing initiative	Key Informant Interviews Review of project design and monitoring documents
Mainstreaming strategy – degree <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero evidence? • Pro Forma? • Analytical? • Design Integration? • Implementation? • Evaluation and Monitoring Links to Other Gender Equality Initiatives in Policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See first item under what above: Gender equality goal reflected in intervention design and implementation? • Targets for women trainee participation assessed and achieved? • Gender aspects of management plan and strategy monitored and/or evaluated? 	Sida Managua National Police NPA Managua IIDH Managua	Sida staff IIDH project consultant NPA staff GTZ staff and consultants involved in family violence policing initiative	Key Informant Interviews

		Intervention Level			
Study Objects		Specific questions	Geographical or institutional concentration of evaluation	Key informants, focus group participants, etc.	Methods and tools
WHICH CHANGES?	Effects of intervention on Gender Equality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical gender needs/strategic gender interests and changes • Men and Male Roles • Effects of intervention on women's empowerment • Intended/unintended and missed opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved participation in training by women? • Improvements in career path for women police officers? • Changes in attitude of male officers to female officers and to policing of violence against women? • More effective handling of family violence, rape and other crimes against women by policy? • Cross linkages to GTZ supported project on violence against women? 	Sida Managua National Police NPA Managua IIDH Managua	Sida staff IIDH project consultant NPA staff GTZ staff and consultants involved in family violence policing initiative in-service trainees	Key informant interviews Reviews of curriculum and facilities Participatory group meetings with trainees and in-service officers of the national police.

ANALYTICAL FRAME WORK I
Nicaragua: Democratic Development: Support to Regional and Local Authorities in RAAN and RAAS

		Intervention Level			
	Study Objects	Specific questions	Geographical or institutional concentration of evaluation	Key informants, focus group participants, etc.	Methods and tools
WHAT?	<p>Gender Equality goal reflected in intervention design and implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstacles and missed opportunities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary interviews and document reviews indicate gender goals not integrated in early phases of program design – Team will check with key stakeholders as to reasons and identify obstacles to inclusion of gender equality goals in early phases. • Did preliminary needs analysis include gender analysis or identify different needs of men and women in democratic institutions and structures? • Have women-specific or gender equality components been included in discussions for new phases or implemented on an ad-hoc basis? • What has been Sida's role in dialogue on gender equality with key partners (see below) 	<p>Swedish embassy Program coordination main office in Managua RAAN/RAAS offices in Managua Regional Councils in RAAN/RAAS Municipal Councils (phase 2)</p>	<p>Sida program advisor Program co-ordinator at program office in Managua Regional and municipal councilors Representatives of women's organizations at national and local level who may articulate gender equality needs and interests relating to democratic structures in RAAN/RAAS</p>	<p>Review of program documents including program design documents for phases one and two and of evaluation and monitoring material. Key informant interviews with those inside and outside the program who can provide a history of its development and evolution. This project does not provide scope for addressing men and women beneficiaries except through political intermediaries so evaluation will focus on key informant interviews</p>

	Study Objects	Intervention Level			Methods and tools
		Specific questions	Geographical or institutional concentration of evaluation	Key informants, focus group participants, etc.	
	Poverty reduction – links/synergies/ conflicts with Gender Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links established between democratic institutions and legal structures and efforts to address poverty in RAAN/RAAS? RAAN/RAAS poverty programming acknowledges gender differences? 	As above	As above	Key informant interviews and review of RAAN/RAAS poverty reduction strategies and Sida involvement.
HOW?	Stakeholder Participation (Including Dialogue with Sida)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How was participation handled throughout the design and implementation of the program? Who participated in the design and implementation of phase one and two? How did Sida handle the delicate question of dialogue on democracy, autonomy and decentralization? Were there opportunities to introduce gender equality to the dialogue? How were decisions made as to which key policies would be the focus of Sida dialogue with partners? What are the key cleavages or groupings of interests which made introduction of gender goals problematic? 	As an exercise in democratic devolution and autonomy (as well as capacity building) it may best be examined by looking at Sida/partner dialogue primarily in Managua and participation primarily within RAAN/RAAS	Sida program advisor Program co-ordinator at program office in Managua Regional and municipal councilors Representatives of women's organizations at national and local level Local political party representatives and trade unions	Key Informant Interviews in Managua and in RAAN/RAAS Review of evaluations and program design documents

		Intervention Level		
Study Objects	Specific questions	Geographical or institutional concentration of evaluation	Key informants, focus group participants, etc.	Methods and tools
<p>Mainstreaming strategy – degree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero evidence? • Pro Forma? • Analytical? • Design <p>Integration?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation? • Evaluation and Monitoring <p>Links to Other Gender Equality Initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See first item under what above: Gender equality goal reflected in intervention design and implementation? • To what extent can gender equality be mainstreamed into proposed future phases of the project? What particular opportunities are available? • What analytical material is available which addresses gender equality in the democratic structures of the autonomous regions? • What participatory processes are possible in developing later phases? 	<p>Mainstreaming of gender equality in early phases of this project seems to have been difficult due to institutional and political factors which meant that other policy issues took priority. As a result the team should concentrate on understanding institutional/cultural/political factors and tradeoffs</p>	<p>Sida program advisor Program co-ordinator at program office in Managua Regional and municipal councilors Women's organizations Political parties trade unions</p>	<p>Key Informant Interviews in Managua and in RAAV/RAAS Review of evaluations and program design documents</p>

		Intervention Level		
Study Objects	Specific questions	Geographical or institutional concentration of evaluation	Key informants, focus group participants, etc.	Methods and tools
WHICH CHANGES? Effects of intervention on Gender Equality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical gender needs/strategic gender interests and changes • Men and Male Roles • Effects of intervention on women's empowerment • Intended/unintended/missed opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What analysis of gender equality needs and issues in democratic development has been done for RAAIV/RAAS – by whom? • What roles do women and men play in the regional and local authorities in RAAIV/RAAS? • Have women's organizations identified special needs for women relating to the structure and function of regional and local authorities? • What key groupings define political and democratic differences and interests in RAAIV and RAAS? Is gender one of them? • What secondary material is available on gender equality situation in RAAIV and RAAS? <p>Does it link gender equality to governance structures and legal frameworks.</p>	<p>For this issue the concentration will need to be on the democratic structures created or supported in RAAIV/RAAS namely regional and municipal councils and the ways in which they identify and deal with gender equality goals and issues</p>	<p>Sida program advisor Program co-ordinator at program office in Managua Regional and municipal councilors Women's organizations Political parties trade unions</p>	<p>Key informant interviews with the program support office as well as with regional and local councilors (men and women). Key informant interviews with national and local women's organizations operational in RAAIV and RAAS and, Reviews of secondary material on the gender equality situation in RAAIV and RAAS.</p>

Annex 6

Terms of Reference: Evaluation of Sida's support to development cooperation for the promotion of Gender Equality

1. Background

Equality between women and men is now firmly placed on the inter-national agenda after the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The *Beijing Platform for Action* adopted at the Conference clearly recognises that gender equality and women's empowerment are essential for addressing the central development concerns of poverty and insecurity and for achieving sustainable, people-centred development. This recognition is also reflected in development policies of bilateral donors and international agencies as well as of partner countries in the south.

In May 1996 the Swedish Parliament established the *promotion of equality between women and men in partner countries* as a goal for development cooperation between Sweden and partner countries. The focus on equality between women and men is based on two important premises: firstly that equality is a matter of human rights; and secondly that equality is a precondition for effective and sustainable people-centred development.

Gender equality may be defined as *equal rights, opportunities and obligations* of women and men and an increased potential for both women and men to *influence, participate in and benefit from* development processes.¹⁰ Through this definition, stakeholder participation is given a central role in all efforts to promote gender equality. Consequently, it will also play an important role in the evaluation outlined below.

¹⁰ Sida's Action Programme for promoting equality between women and men in partner countries, Sida, April 1997

In June 1996, the Swedish government established guidelines for promoting gender equality in Swedish international development cooperation. These guidelines form the basis for Sida's Action Programme for promoting gender equality, which was adopted in April 1997. The Action Programme comprises a policy, an experience analysis and an action plan. It covers a five year period, 1997–2001. The Action Programme *emphasizes the importance of understanding and affecting the structural causes of gender inequalities*, particularly those related to economic decision-making and economic independence; representation in political decision-making and management; and human rights.

The Action Programme focuses on a '*mainstreaming*' strategy for working towards the gender equality goal. This strategy aims to situate gender equality issues at the centre of broad policy decisions, institutional structures and resource allocations about

development goals and processes. Mainstreaming implies that attention to the conditions and relative situations of different categories of women and men, boys and girls should pervade all development policies, strategies and interventions.¹¹ Analyses of their respective roles, responsibilities, access to and control over resources and decision-making processes, needs and potentials, was clearly established in the Platform for Action as the first important step in a mainstreaming approach. The evaluation outlined below will assess whether some kind of systematic *gender analysis*¹² has been done and has been allowed to influence the intervention, either initially during design or later during implementation and follow-up. Has a mainstreaming strategy formed part of the factors that influence results with regard to the promotion of gender equality¹³? What other factors may be distinguished as important for results?

Mainstreamed interventions are to be combined with *dialogue and consultations* between Sweden and partner countries. In, for example, the country strategy process¹⁴ and in annual negotiations on specific sector programmes, equality between women and men should be taken up as an integral part of discussions on national development. The dialogue should be utilized to come to agreement on the appropriate goals, targets and indicators of progress for promoting equality between women and men at national level in Sida's country strategy process and within the context of individual projects and programmes.

¹¹ All personnel working with development cooperation are expected to have the basic competence to promote equality between women and men in relation to whatever issues they are working on and to recognize when there is a need for expert competence.

¹² Gender analysis: Please see Action Programme page 6 and Making a difference – gender equality in bilateral development cooperation, Sida, December 1998, pages 45–47.

¹³ Selection criteria for interventions to be assessed in the evaluation, please see page 5 in this ToR.

¹⁴ The Country Strategy is the most important instrument governing Sweden's development cooperation with a country. Normally, a new country strategy process for each country is started every third year. The background material for a strategy is a Country Analysis and a Result Analysis. The country strategy is operationalized in a Country Plan that outlines the activities that Sweden will be involved in during the entire strategy period. Please see Sida at Work Sida's methods for development cooperation for more information on the country strategy process, Sida, 1998, pages 31–40.

2. Reasons for the evaluation

Sida has previously commissioned studies that assess how and to what extent gender equality and poverty issues are treated in country strategy documents and evaluation reports.¹⁵ The value added from this evaluation is that it goes beyond analyzing documents and reports to assess, as far as possible, the changes with regard to gender equality that interventions may have contributed to. As Sida's Action Programme for promoting gender equality will be revised during 2001, it is important to gain more knowledge about the results and lessons of the efforts to promote gender equality in development cooperation.

3. Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is:

- To assess how Sida's mainstreaming strategy is reflected in the country strategy process, i.e.
 - to assess the quality of the gender analysis in the country strategy process;
 - to assess if and how gender equality is promoted in the dialogue with the partner country during the process.
- To assess the strategic and/or practical changes with regard to the promotion of gender equality¹⁶ that interventions supported by Sida have contributed or may contribute to.
- To provide an input to a deeper understanding of the concrete meaning of the following concepts in interventions supported by Sida: gender equality, empowerment of women, stakeholder participation, strategic and practical changes with regard to gender equality and mainstreaming.

Users of the lessons learned in the evaluation outlined here are Sida staff in Stockholm and in the countries involved. Lessons learned will also be of in-

¹⁵ Sida Studies in Evaluation 97/2: Poverty Reduction and Gender Equality – An assessment of Sida's country reports and evaluations in 1995–96, Eva Tobisson and Stefan de Vylder. Sida Studies in Evaluation 98/3: Evaluating Gender Equality – Policy and Practice – An assessment of Sida's evaluations in 1997–1998, Lennart Peck. En Studie av jämställdhet i tio av Sidas landanalyser och landstrategier, Jessica Pellerud, 2000

¹⁶ Strategic changes with regard to gender equality relates to strategic gender interests/needs. They imply changes in economic, political and/or legal structures or frameworks at local and/or national levels so that equality between the sexes is promoted. Changes of this kind challenge the prevailing power relations between females and males.

Practical changes with regard to gender equality relates to practical gender interests/needs. They are reflected in the reduction of gender disparities in basic subsistence and service provisioning e.g. in health status and access to health care, levels of education and access to information, access to food and livelihood security, etc. Practical interests/needs do not *directly* challenge the prevailing distribution of labour. They are experienced by women and men within their traditionally accepted roles in society. Based on definitions in Striking a balance – On women and men in development cooperation, Sida, 1999, page 11.

terest to other stakeholders in partner countries. The evaluation process should be designed so that both Sida staff and stakeholders in partner countries receive feedback on evaluation results.

4. Methods

4.1 Case studies

Case studies will be undertaken at country and intervention level. The Consultants are not specifically requested to make any linkages between these two levels.

At the country level, the Swedish support to three countries are selected as case studies, South Africa, Nicaragua and Bangladesh. These cases are to provide information about how Sida's mainstreaming strategy is reflected in analyses and dialogue during the country strategy process. The cases are selected for the following reasons:

- they represent different regions where Sida is active as a donor;
- the countries have adopted the Beijing Platform for Action;
- the countries have ratified the CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Bangladesh with reservations);
- a country strategy process has been started and completed after June 1996;
- gender equality issues are included in the goals and direction of the Country Strategy;
- gender equality objectives are included in the agreements on development cooperation.

At the intervention level, Sida has selected a four interventions in South Africa and Nicaragua respectively. These are listed in Annex 1. Selection criteria are listed below.

Interventions that meet one or both of the following criteria:

- where gender equality has been 'mainstreamed' either initially during design or later during implementation;
- that may have contributed to practical or strategic changes with regard to gender equality (an alternative where 'mainstreamed interventions' has not been a possible selection criteria);

Interventions that meet all three of the following criteria:

- with potential to provide lessons for Sida's support to promote gender equality;
- where a new agreement has been signed after June 1996;
- representing 3–4 sectors where Sida is involved as a donor.

As concerns Bangladesh, the Embassy of Sweden is carrying out a study looking at how the gender equality perspective has been guiding when planning interventions during 1997–2000. The Consultants are to use this study for the selection of 1–2 interventions to assess. The Consultants are to apply the selection criteria above that is applicable. Sida is to approve of the selections made.

Within the framework of the interventions selected, the Consultants are to identify interesting study objects and elaborate on these choices in their inception report.

4.2 Stakeholder participation

Concepts such as gender equality and women's empowerment are broadly defined (please see annex 2) in Sida's Action Programme. These concepts may have been understood and implemented in various ways in different contexts. Furthermore, progress towards equality and empowerment may be realized at two main levels, at the level of the individual and in a wider sense at structural levels involving change for categories of individuals or groups. Consequently, stakeholder participation is crucial for the realization of this evaluation.

Stakeholder participation is to take the form of active consultation with female and male stakeholder groups within the partner countries, such as beneficiaries, project implementors, ministry officials etc. and stakeholder groups within Sida and the various Swedish Embassies. It is important to combine methods such as focus group discussions with individual interviews and to crosscheck analyses with stakeholders.

4.3 Gender disaggregated data

Needless to say, all information in the evaluation report should be gender disaggregated.

5. The assignment

This section of the Terms of Reference will consist of three different parts following the 'Purpose and scope' of the evaluation.

5.1 How Sida's mainstreaming strategy is reflected in the country strategy process

The Consultants are to analyse the country strategy process documentation and interview stakeholders.

5.1.1 *The quality of the gender analysis in the country strategy process*

- Has a gender analysis preceded or been integrated into the background material for the Country Strategy (Country Analysis and Result Analysis)?

Does the Country Strategy document itself reflect such analysis with respect to gender? In other words, is the Country Strategy ‘mainstreamed’?

- Does the gender analysis take into consideration and reflect the following issues The quality of the gender analysis in the country strategy process
 - the strategic and practical interests/needs prioritized by the national government;
 - the strategic and practical interests/needs prioritized by major NGOs and/or other civil society institutions;
 - constraints and problems in addressing these interests/needs;
 - ways to address these constraints and problems;
 - participation by women and men, girls and boys in addressing these interests/needs;
 - other important factors in the local context?
- To what extent are the gender equality priority areas in the Country Strategy guided by the priority areas raised in Sida’s Action Programme; and the priority areas raised in Sida’s Special Handbooks for mainstreaming gender perspectives into different sectors? Specifically, do the gender equality priority areas in the Country Strategy reflect the emphasis on strategic gender interests in the Action Programme? Does the analysis in the Country Strategy reflect the gender equality approach in the Action Programme or does it reflect a ‘Women in Development approach’¹⁷?
- Is it possible to see any links/synergies and/or conflicts in the country strategy process between the gender equality goal and the other goals of Swedish development cooperation, particularly the overall goal of poverty reduction?¹⁸

5.1.2 Dialogue during the country strategy process

- How were negotiations with the partner country conducted with regard to gender equality? Was there a dialogue between the governments on issues of gender equality? What issues were raised in the dialogue?

5.1.3 How are gender analyses and dialogue reflected in key documents and agreements?

- Do the Country Plan and the Agreement on development cooperation between Sweden and the partner country in question reflect the gender equality concerns expressed in the Country Analysis and Country Strategy? Do the Country Plan and Agreement reflect the gender equality issues raised in the dialogue between the two governments? Are there ob-

¹⁷ Please see page 24–25 from *Evaluating Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment – A DAC Review of Agency Experiences 1993–1998*, Prudence Woodford-Berger, 1999

¹⁸ The overall goal of Swedish international development cooperation is poverty reduction. To provide guidance for Sweden’s contributions to the reduction of poverty, the Swedish Parliament has laid down six goals for Swedish international development cooperation: economic growth; economic and social equality; economic and political independence; democratic development; environmental care; and gender equality.

jectives and/or indicators for what to achieve when it comes to gender equality? That is, is the content in the Country Plan and the Agreement on development cooperation between Sweden and the partner country in question ‘mainstreamed’?

5.2 Strategic and practical changes with regard to the promotion of gender equality

The Consultants analyses are to be based on interviews with stakeholders and analysis of country and project documentation. Given the difficulties in measuring and assessing strategic and practical changes with regard to gender equality, it is crucial that the Consultants work in an analytical way and in the evaluation report discuss challenges regarding methods that will arise. The Consultants are to have close contacts with Sida during this part of the evaluation assignment.

5.2.1 Stakeholder analysis for the evaluation

In order to define what stakeholder groups that are to be consulted during the evaluation, the consultants are to carry out a stakeholder analysis. The Consultants are first to establish what primary and secondary stakeholder groups that have been identified in the project documentation for each intervention and their composition as regards sex and other key factors. With this as a point of departure, the Consultants are to further elaborate this stakeholder analysis, if deemed necessary.

5.2.2 Objectives and indicators of progress towards gender equality in interventions

The concept of gender equality tends to be loaded with values and take different meanings in different contexts and even for different individuals. Further, promoting gender equality involves promoting a process of change and change may be elusive to capture in indicators. Consequently, the objectives and indicators of gender equality in interventions need to be context specific. The first step in identifying context specific objectives and indicators is to establish what objectives and indicators that are defined in project documentation. Secondly, the Consultants are to select and interview representatives of primary and secondary stakeholders in the intervention. If there are strong diverging opinions among stakeholders during the interviews on objectives/indicators these should be accounted for and form part of the analysis of strategic and practical changes with regard to gender equality. The second step, interviewing stakeholders, will become even more important if the objectives/indicators in project documentation are not specific enough to use when carrying out the evaluation.

5.2.3 Strategic and practical changes with regard to the promotion of gender equality

- The Consultants are to assess the strategic and/or practical changes with regard to the promotion of gender equality that the interventions selected

for this evaluation have contributed or may contribute to. If practical changes are identified, the Consultants are to discuss whether these may lead to strategic changes. What activities have been performed within the framework of the intervention? What are their immediate intended or unintended effects with regard to gender equality? What are their immediate positive and negative effects on gender equality? If there has been immediate effects on gender equality, what may be said today about whether the effects may be lasting?

- A complex interplay of various factors influence the degree to which gender equality is promoted in interventions: factors in the *societal context* and in the *sector* of the intervention (e.g. health) together with factors that have to do with the *implementation and organisation* of the intervention and the roles of various *female and male stakeholders* in this implementation and organisation. These last two factors are specifically important to assess. The Consultants are to discuss what may have caused or may contribute to promoting effects on gender equality. What factors have been of importance for promoting gender equality and/or impeding the promotion of gender equality? Why?
- What has been the role of different stakeholder groups in influencing the promotion of gender equality? Have they played an active or passive role? Specifically, what has Sida's role been in influencing gender equality in the interventions? Has Sida raised the gender equality issue in discussions with cooperating partners? Has Sida played an active or passive role?
- What analysis of the gender equality aspects of the intervention is carried out in Sida's Assessment Memorandum? When assessing the quality of the gender analysis consider the same issues as in section 5.1.1. Is it possible to say anything about the relationship between the quality of the gender analysis in the Memorandum and how gender equality issues are integrated in the intervention?
- Is it possible to see any links/synergies and/or conflicts in the intervention between the gender equality goal and the other goals of Swedish development cooperation, particularly the overall goal of poverty reduction?
- In the case of Bangladesh, an intervention selected for this evaluation *may* be a Sector Programme Support (please see Annex 1). Should this be the case, the Consultants are to assess *Sida's* position and role when it comes to mainstreaming gender equality in the design process for the Programme – potentials, problems and lessons. The Consultants are *not* to assess results of the Programme.

5.2.4 Understanding concepts

The consultants are to discuss the concrete meaning of the following concepts in the selected interventions: gender equality, empowerment of women, stakeholder participation, strategic and practical gender equality effects and mainstreaming. How the concepts are understood and implemented by prima-

ry stakeholders may serve as an input towards a deeper understanding of the concrete meaning these concepts may take in Sida supported interventions.

5.3 Conclusions and lessons for development cooperation

The Consultants are to discuss lessons for Sida and for partners involved in the interventions on how to strengthen support to promoting gender equality, i.e. lessons about:

- how to strengthen the gender analysis and dialogue in the country strategy process and in interventions;
- factors that have been of importance in influencing change towards gender equality, what has worked well/not so well and why;
- problems and possibilities when using measures/indicators of progress towards gender equality;
- the concrete meaning of the following concepts in interventions supported by Sida: gender equality, empowerment of women, stakeholder participation, strategic and practical gender equality effects and mainstreaming;
- implications for the interventions assessed on how to improve their work for promoting gender equality;
- implications for the revision of Sida's Action Programme for the promotion of gender equality.

6 Competence

The evaluation is to be carried out by a team with advanced knowledge of and experience in:

- gender analysis
- anthropology or similar human or behavioural social science;
- participatory evaluation methods in field situations;
- local context in Bangladesh, South Africa and Nicaragua (probably links with local consultants)
- gender equality issues in the following sectors: education, health, democratic governance, urban development.

The team leader is to have documented experience in the management of evaluations.

At least one team member must speak Spanish and one team member must have the ability to read Swedish.

7 Work plan

The study is envisaged to require an estimated 90–100 person weeks.

The tentative time schedule for the study is:

August/September 2000	Tender invitation
December/January 2001	Inception report (discussions with Sida), including analysis of country and project documentation for the selection of “study objects” – please see ToR 8. Reporting
January/May 2001	Field work (+seminars in partner countries)
May/June 2001	Draft country reports (+seminars at Sida)
August 2001	First draft synthesis report (+seminars at Sida)
September/October 2001	Final reports

8 Reporting

The Consultants are to submit the following reports to Sida:

1. An *inception report* commenting and interpreting the Terms of Reference and providing details of approach and methods for data collection and analyses. Country and project documentation are also to be analysed in order to identify interesting study objects within the framework of the interventions selected for this evaluation. The inception report shall include a work plan specifying how and when the work is to be performed.
2. Three *draft ‘country reports’* summarizing for each country the findings both on the country strategy process and the interventions selected as case studies, as specified in the ToR 5.3 Conclusions and lessons for development cooperation.
3. A *draft synthesis report* in English summarizing the findings, as specified in the ToR 5.3 Conclusions and lessons for development cooperation. Format and outline of the report shall be agreed upon between the Consultants and Sida. The report shall be kept rather short (60–80 pages excluding annexes). More detailed discussions are to be left to annexes.
4. Within three weeks after receiving Sida’s comments on the draft report, a *final version* in two copies and on diskette shall be submitted to Sida. When the report has been approved by Sida it should be *translated into Spanish*, so that it is available both in English and Spanish. Subject to decision by Sida, the report will be published and distributed as a publication within the Sida Evaluations series. The evaluation report shall be written in Word 6.0 for Windows (or in a compatible format) and should be presented in a way that enables publication without further editing.

The evaluation assignment also includes the production of a Newsletter summary following the guidelines in *Sida Evaluations Newsletter – Guidelines for Evaluation Managers and Consultants* (Annex 3) and also the completion of *Sida Evaluations Data Work Sheet* (Annex 4). The separate summary and a completed Data Work Sheet shall be submitted to Sida along with the final report.

Consultation and dissemination of emerging findings and lessons will be important throughout the study (please see ToR 7. Work Plan) and the Consultants are to include a budget for this in their tender. However, dissemination activities following the publication of the evaluation report will be covered by a separate budget and contract between the Consultants and Sida. A decision on dissemination activities will be taken at a later stage in the evaluation process.

Annex 1: List of interventions selected as case studies

Nicaragua

Urban development, Prodel – Program for local development
Health sector, Prosilais – Integrated local health systems
Democratic governance – Academia de Policia
Democratic governance – Atlantic Coast, Regional and local authorities

South Africa

Urban development, CUP – Comprehensive Urban Plan, Kimberley
Urban development, TPL – Trees Paving & Lighting, Kimberley
Democratic governance, Local authorities, Northern Cape Province
Democratic governance, StatsSA – Statistics Sweden

Bangladesh

The Embassy of Sweden in Bangladesh is carrying out a study looking at how the gender equality perspective has been guiding when planning interventions during 1997–2000. The Consultants are to use this study for the selection of 1–2 interventions to assess. Sida is to approve of the selections made.

Within the framework of the interventions above the Consultants are to identify interesting study objects and elaborate on these choices in their inception report.

Annex 2: Broad definitions

Gender equality: Equal rights, opportunities and obligations of women and men and an increased potential for both women and men to influence, participate in and benefit from development processes¹⁹.

Empowerment of women: Women gaining increased power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, and increased access to and control over resources.²⁰

Stakeholder participation: A process whereby those with rights and/or interests play an active role in decision-making and in the consequent activities which affect them²¹. From any stakeholder's perspective there are a number of possibilities for participation. One stakeholder may inform other stakeholders, consult them or actually be in partnership (equal powers of decision-making) with one or more of the other stakeholders.

Sida has initiated a project to develop guidelines for the organization on participatory methods. It is expected that a definition and discussion on stakeholder participation will be available during September/October 2000.

Strategic changes with regard to gender equality relates to strategic gender interests/needs. They imply changes in economic, political and/or legal structures or frameworks at local and/or national levels so that equality between the sexes is promoted. Changes of this kind challenge the prevailing power relations between females and males.

Practical changes with regard to gender equality relates to practical gender interests/needs. They are reflected in the reduction of gender disparities in basic subsistence and service provisioning e.g. in health status and access to health care, levels of education and access to information, access to food and livelihood security, etc.

Practical interests/needs do not *directly* challenge the prevailing distribution of labour. They are experienced by women and men within their traditionally accepted roles in society.²²

The strategy for working towards the goals and achieving the effects mentioned above is *mainstreaming*. The first important step in a mainstreaming approach is an analysis of the situation of women and men, boys and girls, i.e. analysis of the roles, responsibilities, access to and control over resources and decision-making processes, needs and potentials of women and men, boys and girls (gender analysis).

¹⁹ Sida's Action Programme for promoting equality between women and men in partner countries, Sida, April 1997.

²⁰ Sida's Action Programme

²¹ Stakeholder Participation and Analysis, ODA, 1995

²² Based on definitions in *Striking a balance – On women and men in development cooperation*, Sida, 1999, page 11.

Recent Sida Evaluations

- 01/29 Sida's Support to the Land Reform Related Activities in Poland. Mark Doucette, Sue Nichols, Peter Bloch
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/30 Sida's Support to the Land Reform Related Activities in Lithuania. Mark Doucette, Sue Nichols, Peter Bloch
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/31 Sida's Support to the Land Reform Related Activities in Latvia. Mark Doucette, Sue Nichols, Peter Bloch
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/32 Review of PAHO's project. Towards an Integrated Model of Care for Family Violence in Central America. Final Report. Mary Ellsberg, Carme Clavel Arcas.
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 01/33 Sistematización del Proyecto de OPS. Hacia un modelo integral de atención para la violencia intrafamiliar en Centroamérica. Mary Ellsberg, Carme Clavel Arcas.
Departamento de Democracia y Condiciones Sociales.
- 01/34 Of Trees and People ...: An Evaluation of the Vietnam-Sweden Forestry Cooperation Programme and the Mountain Rural Development Programme in the Northern Uplands 1991-2000. Claes Lindahl, Kirsten Andersen, Kjell Öström, Adam Florde, Eivind Kofod, Steffen Johnsen.
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 01/35 Acting in Partnership. Evaluation of FRAMA (Fund for Agricultural Rehabilitation after MITCH) Ministry of agriculture and Forestry (MAGFOR) – Sida project Nicaragua. Bengt Kjeller, Raquel López.
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 01/36 Sociedad de Cooperación. Evaluación de FRAMA (Fondo de Rehabilitación para la Agricultura después del huracán MITCH) Ministerio de Agricultura y Forestal (MAGFOR) – Asdi en Nicaragua. Bengt Kjeller, Raquel López.
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 01/37 Report on the Hoanib River Catchment Study Project Evaluation. Final Report. Harmut Krugman
Department for Africa
- 01/38 Sida's Support to the land Reform Related Activities in Estonia. Mark Doucette, Sue Nichols, Peter Bloch
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 01/39 Legal Services to the Poor People in Zimbabwe. Haroub Othman, Dorille von Riesen
Department for Africa

Sida Evaluations may be ordered from:
Infocenter, Sida
S-105 25 Stockholm
Phone: +46 (0)8 795 23 44
Fax: +46 (0)8 760 58 95
info@sida.sc

A complete backlog of earlier evaluation reports may be ordered from:
Sida, UTV, S-105 25 Stockholm
Phone: +46 (0)8 698 5163
Fax: +46 (0)8 698 5610
Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>