



Institute for
Development Impact

Case Study Report – Forum on Education and Human Development of the Initiative for Nicaragua (FEDH-IPN)

NICARAGUA

Undertaken As Part Of An Independent
Evaluation of the Civil Society Education Fund
(CSEF) Programme
for the Global Campaign For Education

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CLADE	Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education
CSEF	Civil Society Education Fund
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
EFA	Education For All
FEDH-IPN	The Forum on Education and Human Development of the Initiative for Nicaragua
FMA	Financial Management Agency
FSLN	Sandinista National Liberation Front
GCE	Global Campaign For Education
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GON	Government of Nicaragua
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science, and Culture Organisation

1 Executive Summary

As part of the external evaluation of the Civil Society Education Fund programme 2013-2015 requested by the Global Campaign for Education, the Institute for Development Impact (I4DI) conducted seven country case studies. The evaluation aimed to contribute to GCE's ability to respond to challenges and objectives by identifying the emerging impact of the CSEF programme, provide evidence of the effectiveness of its design and implementation model, and derive learning from implemented processes and structures to influence and strengthen future programming.

The Nicaragua Case Study was conducted by field visit with the Forum on Education and Human Development of the Initiative for Nicaragua (FEDH-IPN) from July 14 to July 17, 2015. The I4DI consultant conducted individual interviews and focus group discussions with coalition members, Board members, the Secretariat's core team, legislative and executive representatives of the Government of Nicaragua (GON), and local government officials. As part of this field inquiry, the consultant conducted field visits to coalition members in three small municipalities: Camoapa, La Trinidad, and Matagalpa.

The findings of the case study underline FEDH-IPN's strength as a respected and leading voice for civil society in the education sector. FEDH-IPN has developed a strategy that focuses on local actions, grassroots mobilisation, and policy monitoring. The study concludes by presenting the lessons learned and challenges for the future of the coalition, centered on evidence-based advocacy, member mobilisation, governance, and sustainability.

2 Education In Nicaragua

In the past 15-years the state of education in Nicaragua has been affected by unique challenges in Nicaragua's socio-political environment. The parliamentary, municipal and presidential elections of the FSLN since 2006 have cemented far-reaching political directions, which have been adverse to open criticism by civil society. Two pillars of President Ortega and the Sandinista government underline this political framework: the reinstatement of autonomy at the municipal level and, the adoption of direct democracy principles. This has broadly meant greater decentralization of decisions and autonomy to municipalities, coupled with a strong marginalization of civil society voices.

According to USAID's Country Strategy 2013-2017, "Nicaragua faces significant development challenges as a result of democratic backsliding, persistent poverty, and growing insecurity. The international community viewed the 2008 municipal elections, the 2011 Presidential elections, and more recently the 2012 municipal elections as flawed, which in part led to half of all bilateral donors to depart or reduce the scope or scale of their programs."¹

The social and political environment is greatly polarised, leaving civil society organisations (CSOs) in an ever-shrinking independent and neutral public space. There is also a lack of transparency in the sector; official data are difficult to obtain, and CSOs are rarely invited to participate in policy consultations. The Civil Society Index implemented by the Nicaraguan Network for Democracy and Development in 2011, revealed that 26 percent of 141 CSOs surveyed experienced government restrictions.²

Since the Dakar World Education Forum and the commitment to Education For All, efforts have been made by the government to de-privatize education and strengthen access to education services. However, recent data on education is unavailable. Last available data³ for Nicaragua date back to 2010. Civil society organisations were not permitted access to education data, nor were they invited to participate in sector consultations at the national-level.

"In 2011, the GON unveiled a new Education Sector Strategic Plan. The plan targets universal access to basic education, with a focus on increasing 6 and 9 grade enrollment rates, improving learning outcomes, and improving education management."⁴ In line with its local autonomy policies, the education strategy includes intercultural and bilingual education for the Pacific coast regions. The challenges in education include:

- Limited access – not enough schools.
- Low teacher pay and educational resources
- Multi-grade teaching that compromises quality

¹ USAID Nicaragua, Country Development Strategy 2013-2017, p. 3

² USAID Nicaragua, Country Development Strategy 2013-2017, p. 8

³ World Development Indicators 2015

⁴ USAID Nicaragua, Country Development Strategy 2013-2017, p. 5

- Overcrowded classes – especially in urban areas
- Lack of statistics information – to gauge progress.

3 Background To Foro de Educación y Desarrollo Humano de la Iniciativa por Nicaragua (FEDH-IPN)

The Forum on Education and Human Development of the Initiative for Nicaragua (FEDH –IPN) is a civil society network joined by a vision, mission, principles and commitments for education and human development in Nicaragua.

The Forum was founded in 1996, and emanated from civil society and academia concerns over the state of education in Nicaragua. In 2007, FEDH-IPN's most notable founder, Professor Miguel de Castilla Urbina, was appointed Minister of Education. Since 2010, he has been Special Advisor to the President for Education and Director of the UNESCO Office in Nicaragua.

In the first phase of its existence (1996-2011) the coalition grew. Membership increased and the coalition benefitted from its relationship with Professor Castilla Urbina. The opportunities to engage the government on education matters were apparent. Since the last presidential elections, there has been a stark reduction in dialogue with civil society, and an atrophy of civil society. Like most organisations, FEDH-IPN has been affected by this political environment.

3.1 FEDH-IPN Vision

FEDH-IPN was recognized as a legitimate expression of civil society, committed to the improvement and transformation of national education and the development of opportunities for participation and influence at the local, municipal, national and international levels.

3.2 FEDH-IPN Mission

FEDH -IPN defined its mission as promoting opportunities and facilitating the development of opportunities to reflect, discuss, propose and influence the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs, projects and actions that contribute to the construction, development and transformation of Nicaraguan education with equity, quality and relevance.

3.3 Coalition objectives and Coalition Member Priorities

The coalition consisted of 13 members with legal status. Some of these members were noted to be part of nationwide networks with operations at the municipal level. In addition, the coalition provides 25 spaces of consultation to groups at the local municipalities level ('Mesas Educativas'). As many of these do not hold legal status, they are formally represented by FEDH-IPN. Member organisations⁵ represented a broad cross-section of the education sector, including teacher's unions, child right's organisations, community-based organisations (CBOs) and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Member priorities have focused on:

- Civil society participation in agenda setting at the local level for quality education as a right;

⁵ Annex 2 contains a complete list of members.

- Capacity strengthening for a stronger understanding of education topics;
- Education Sector Financing;
- Inclusive education;
- Intercultural and Bilingual Education
- Early Childhood Education.

4 Findings

The analysis and findings of the case study have been structured against the standard evaluation criteria adopted by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). These criteria were used to detail the evaluation questions during inception and also to structure the evaluation report. The criteria are defined as follows:

- Relevance.
- Effectiveness.
- Efficiency.
- Sustainability.
- Impact.

4.1 Relevance

Relevance is defined as, '[t]he extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor.'⁶ The evaluation team's assessment of programme relevance was based on the analysis of the national and local context, the challenges for strengthening policy making and civil society participation in the educational sector and the needs and priorities of various stakeholders (e.g. CSOs, capacity building, etc.).

The current Sandinista government of President Ortega prioritised a brand of direct democracy, which viewed intermediaries between government and citizens as unnecessary, and often times a front to political opposition. Since the departure of many international donors from Nicaragua in 2012, and the extremely politicized environment, a large number of civil society organisations have ceased to exist.

“CSEF allowed us to be in the provinces and rural areas. It is fair to say that CSEF has contributed to the survival of the coalition. We were just breathing without being able to act.”

Fieldwork respondent.

The support provided by the CSEF Programme was therefore highly relevant to a continued presence and contribution of CSOs in the public space to debate education in Nicaragua. During the evaluation most stakeholders acknowledged the CSEF programme as the coalition's lifeline for continued advocacy on the right to quality education for all in Nicaragua.

4.1.1 Strategy Of Engagement With Government

Professor de Castilla Urbina, a founder of FEDH IPN in 1997, and a former Minister of Education, was at the time of the evaluation the Education Advisor to the President of Nicaragua and UNESCO Representative. The coalition's continued connection with him was instrumental in the little engagement FEDH IPN was able to have with the government.

Authorities interviewed during the evaluation process underscored the assertion that “the coalition works within the general direction of where the government wants to

⁶ OECD DAC Criteria For Evaluating Development Assistance - <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>.

go,” and that the coalition, and civil society in general, “should increase their acknowledgement of the positive reforms implemented by the government and move away from protest advocacy.”

The support provided by the CSEF Programme was particularly relevant to the Nicaraguan context where the government was quite adverse to criticism and provided very little opportunity for engagement and openness to participation in policy formulation by civil society.

The access that the coalition maintained, through the personal relationship of an advisory member of government, provided a form of covert dialogue between government institutions and the coalition at the national level. For example, initiatives and policy developments from the government have been noted to react to sustained advocacy efforts on the part of the coalition (e.g. Early Childhood Education policy). This ‘dialogue’ underlines the relevance of the CSEF Programme.

4.1.2 Synergies With Member Priorities and Mobilisation

In the current political environment, the CSEF Programme provided incentives for a democratic partnership of the coalition with its members. The Secretariat found meaningful engagement at the municipality level. Meanwhile members were provided a national forum and access to a network that would have been otherwise out of reach.

Members’ priorities were reported to be fully taken into consideration with the coalition providing support to the realisation of activities. With the exception of the theme for the Global Education Week, advocacy campaigns largely respond to local preoccupations or priorities identified during the annual General Assembly of the coalition. Both Secretariat and member respondents underlined the very participatory nature of the coordination and mobilisation work provided by the coalition. Opportunities for stakeholder inputs were varied, and during meetings, exchange of ideas were encouraged and valued, and decisions taken collectively.

“When we mobilise people they respond and they come. People are hungry for this exchange. The space we create is very important.”

Fieldwork respondent

4.1.3 Communication

The coalition has 14 members, most being located at the municipal level. The coalition’s communication strategy targeted a year round monitoring of education policy development. At the national level, there were good relationship with some press outlets, and the media was invited to all coalition events. Interested media were largely seen to broadcast the information of the coalition. When the government was interviewed on an issue, the coalition was then interviewed to present an alternate point of view.

Unfortunately, due to the polarisation of the public sphere, media either does not cover education issues or does so in a partisan manner. Opinion pieces have disappeared from the written press, and there were no large in-depth bipartisan coverage of education developments seen in the media. The coalition threaded a fine line ensuring that it remained seen as neutral.

Despite this, coalition members interviewed indicated that the coalition proactively disseminated information to members and the public through radio, television and the Internet. Communication was noted to be fluid and members reported being regularly informed of coalition news.

The coalition was able to develop good working relationships with community radios at the municipal level. These stations were seen to have the widest outreach and provided in-depth coverage of advocacy campaigns and other coalition members' initiatives. A public space for alternative reporting of education issues, as well as citizens' participation and engagement through call-ins, was well established.

“We think we have a social responsibility to diffuse information.”

Community radio manager, guest of a respondent

4.1.4 Networking, Learning and good practices

The Secretariat was seen by most respondents to contribute to learning and networking opportunities. The Secretariat systematically shared information and education material provided by the CSEF Programme's Global Secretariat. Activity planning with members provided training sessions and identified learning needs at the municipal level.

Networking opportunities were focused around specific advocacy campaigns that were being coordinated. To strengthen the sense of belonging to a nationwide network there could be an increased opportunities for networking amongst members throughout the year. Improved networking channels would increase the opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, coordinated actions, and maximisation of resources. This need for additional networking was also important because many community level members were unable to attend the meetings of the coalition's thematic committees, which take place four times a year in Managua.

The coalition demonstrated a commitment to quality interventions. With the assistance of the Programme's Regional Secretariat, the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE), they sought inputs from the Dominican Republic national coalition on how to implement an effective campaign targeting government budgetary commitments. This type of peer-to-peer learning between coalitions that was facilitated by the Regional Secretariat was regarded as highly effective.

4.1.5 Gender Equality

The coalition's Secretariat was managed with a loose gender sensitive lens. Opportunities for responsibilities and professional development were allocated with both efficiency and equity in mind. The coalition was able to comply in its reporting on gender data requested within the CSEF Programme technical report.

Programmatically, the coalition was a key organiser of the 2011-2012 Campaign for Girls, advocating for girls' education.

It is fair to conclude that, although present in decision-making, gender mainstreaming and gender programming was not an ongoing priority.

4.2 Effectiveness

The OECD DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance defines effectiveness as, ‘A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives.’⁷ Using the programme’s Theory of Change (logical framework/ results framework) the evaluation team analysed to what extent the results obtained from the implementation of activities have contributed to the attainment of the planned objectives.

The general objective of the coalition was to promote the coordinated participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies, programmes, projects and actions that contribute to comprehensive and integrated development of national education.

4.2.1 Policy monitoring and Decentralised engagement

Opportunities for engagement with government were limited. While most respondents indicated that the coalition has influenced the government agenda by inserting pressure to consider education as a human right, the results speak differently. Civil society organisations were not invited to the National Forum on Education that was convened to contribute to the planning of the 2016-2020 National Education Plan, and neither was civil society, including the coalition, invited to comment on the Country Proposal submitted to GPE.

On the other hand, representatives of the Education Ministry participated in the Global Week for Education, and as one respondent indicated “this year’s campaign was a real success.”

Due to some coalition members being openly aligned with the political opposition, there was an added layer of complexity and tension that strained relations between the coalition and the government. Despite the diverse composition of its membership, and the complex nature of the coalition’s engagement with the government, the coalition has maintained a neutrality that was recognized and appreciated, both in government circles, and throughout the Nicaraguan social fabric.

If there is an international consensus that civil society must participate in the proposal from countries, then there must be a mechanism put in place.

Fieldwork respondent

Overall however, the political context was such that the coalition had focused its interventions at the local level. The relationship developed at the municipality level with city and government officials was much stronger and conducive to community mobilisation, shared learning, and member capacity building. Respondents indicated that the coalition was quite effective in engaging at the local level and working with local authorities and civil society to develop and implement a stronger education agenda.

4.2.2 Credibility and mobilisation

The coalition continued to capitalise on the technical expertise of its founders. As one respondent stated, “The coalition has credibility because the founders are very

⁷ OECD DAC Criteria For Evaluating Development Assistance - <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>.

serious and respected people.” The current Coordinator was also very well respected in the education and human rights sector.

“Through all these years the coalition has been at the forefront of the issues that affect the education system.”

Fieldwork respondent

Although the nature of the relationship with the Secretariat was collaborative and participatory, at the community level, members clearly indicated that the coalition worked through them and that they were the conduits to initiatives, not the Secretariat. In that sense, a much more participatory process took place at the community level. This included local Community Based Organisations (CBOs), such as the “Movimiento Communal”, a grassroots advocacy organisation present in most localities, and the “Mesas Educativas”. Rapport and engagement of the Secretariat at the local level were reported to be more effective and advisory, serving as a conduit to engagement with education and city authorities.

The ability of the coalition’s Secretariat to engage at the community level ironically reinforced its credibility towards the government with regards to civil society. Working through its grassroots members gave the coalition the credibility that their priorities were not in Managua. Similarly, membership in a national coalition provided credibility to members for being associated with the Global Week for Education and the Global Campaign for Education, a coordinating body of international reach.

“We represent the stakeholders’ needs because we work directly with the people.”

Fieldwork respondent

Grassroots mobilisation and buy-in was also developed through replication of workshops that took place at the national level. Coalition members indicated that the Secretariat was very effective at engaging members in this regard. It allowed them to continue engaging in analysis and reflection of education topics, and provided a neutral space for citizenry to dialogue.

Lastly, as member of an international network, the coalition benefited domestically from the credibility and respect the CSEF Programme and GCE provide, both vis-à-vis civil society and state institutions.

4.2.3 Coalition priorities, activities, outcomes

The coalition’s general CSEF Programme objective was “to strengthen the advocacy capacity of FEDH-IPN, focusing on the fulfillment of the human right to education and on placing the issue of education in the political platform of municipal governments within the framework of the municipal elections of 2012.”

The coalition’s specific objectives were:

- To strengthen the organisation and institutional development FEDH-IPN, to ensure their efficient operation, and the achievement of its mission, objectives and strategies.
- To promote the strengthening of the capacities and competencies of FEDH - IPN, its members and civil society to provide quality and consistency in educational issues.

- To promote coordination of efforts and joint research process, debate and proposals around priority themes and issues related to national education, and compliance with the agreements and commitments to national and international development.
- To influence the definition, development and evaluation of educational policies at the national, municipal and local level.

Field inquiry suggests that, to a large extent, FEDH-IPN was reaching its general objective. It has focused on engaging with the government at the municipality level where it has found receptive interlocutors.

The coalition has prioritized policy monitoring and advocacy. Advocacy campaigns, to the exception of the Global Week for Education, respond to coalition member priorities. FEDH-IPN also supported the policy monitoring capacity of its members, providing targeted training on specific themes related to education rights.

The coalition engaged its members with information dissemination and learning opportunities. Before traveling to attend the World Education Forum in Seoul, the coalition's coordinator organised an event to discuss the achievements since the 2000 Dakar Forum, and upon return organised another event to present the resolutions of the Forum for 2015-2030.

The coalition coordinated the Global Week for Education, which was the main campaign organised in a given year. To effectively mobilise its members and partner organisations, the coalition provided education sessions on specific education topics.

FEDH-IPN also monitored education policy reform and implementation. It provided regular commentary through the media, and set up a system of "education alerts" ("alertas educativas"), which collect information provided by the Mesas Educativas and warns of, and highlights issues in the education sector as they arise.

Some important activities implemented by FEDH-IPN, in line with their stated objectives, included:

- National Advocacy Campaign towards 7% of GDP towards education.
- National Advocacy Campaign on Early Childhood Education, World Education Week, 2012.
- National Advocacy Campaign on School Retention, 2013.
- National Campaign for the Support of Quality Educators, World Education Week, 2013.
- Camoapa Campaign towards Inclusive Education.

The coalition modestly engaged in research activities. It did so through its "Education Observatory", which provided a synthesis of developments in the sector on an annual basis. It has also produced, for instance, an assessment of intercultural education in the Pacific regions in 2011-2012.

4.3 Efficiency

The OECD DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance defines efficiency as, 'Efficiency measures the outputs -- qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the

inputs.⁸ Efficiency was analysed in terms of how well the programme was organised for delivering its work with regard to managerial and budget efficiency. The evaluation team analysed efficiency based on the assessment of outputs/ activities in relation to programme inputs and planned timelines.

The assessment provided some analysis of systems (development, performance management, financial management) within the coalition and between the coalition and regional organisations, and how they contributed to the on-going development of coalition effectiveness.

4.3.1 Coalition Development Systems

The coalition relied on CLADE for technical support and development assistance. Secretariat personnel indicated that the support of the regional secretariat was valued and efficient, notably recognising the fluid communication.

In the current political context, the coalition's development was keenly dependent upon the CSEF Programme, both financially and politically.

Some frustration was shared by stakeholders regarding the lack of acknowledgement of the FEDH-IPN by visiting GPE delegations. These missions seemed unaware of the organisation to whom GPE was providing financing. In addition, GPE-LAC (World Bank Nicaragua) "did not even know that the coalition existed". Stakeholders felt that it was a missed opportunity for these missions to act as a mediator between the government and civil society and support transparency in the proposal that the government sent to GPE.

In an environment where autonomous civil society was marginalized, not acknowledging a GPE-funded institution was counter-productive to the investment in CSOs.

Some concerns were also shared about the role of UNESCO as a supervising entity. It was noted that UNESCO was accountable to the governments that formed its membership, and as such neutrality of the organisation was a preoccupation.

At the municipality level, the coalition planned to continue collaboration with member organisations and engagement with local authorities. It will be important to strengthen networking opportunities and systemise feedback to local members to ensure continued buy-in and participation.

Stronger regional support would be necessary to develop capacity in research-based advocacy and strategic planning. Evidence-based advocacy would provide the coalition with a stronger and more neutral ground to engage with the government. At the moment, the coalition's positions were open for manipulation by the government and a polarised press. Moving away from broad-based campaigns to targeted contributions backed by research and domestically produced data, would be instrumental for the coalition's growth and development.

⁸ OECD DAC Criteria For Evaluating Development Assistance - <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>.

4.3.2 Financial Management Systems

There was a staff position dedicated to financial and administrative management, as well as a Board position, “the Fiscalisador,” to oversee the finances of the organisation.

Financial management systems seemed well established and the coalition had a good working relationship with Action Aid, the regional Financial Management Agency (FMA). Financial reporting requirements were well understood and in compliance. The coalition administrator also provided reconciliation oversight between activities and expenses, ensuring that both technical and financial reports matched.

The coalition was financially dependent upon the CSEF Programme and felt that various disbursement delays had affected Phase II of the Programme. The coalition also noted a thirty percent decrease in CSEF Programme funding, from approximately US\$ 90,000 in 2012, to approximately US\$ 60,000 in 2015.

4.3.3 Performance Management Systems

The coalition conducted monthly monitoring meetings and followed each activity and campaign with a debriefing. However, M&E was reported as the weak point of the coalition. Although deemed cumbersome and at times redundant, M&E requirements provided learning tools to better plan for future activities, and helped the coalition systematise its work.

The coalition would benefit from continued assistance from CLADE in institutionalising the M&E framework, and in creating stronger processes for data collection and management (processing data from inquiries, electronic filing of documents, etc.)

4.4 Sustainability

The OECD DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance defined sustainability as being ‘concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn.’⁹ The evaluation team reviewed sustainability factors in terms of programme design, process, implementation and national context.

The assessment provided comment on sustainability factors for the coalition, and addressed the key questions confronting FEDH-IPN as it works to establish its longer-term sustainability.

FEDH-IPN was created before the start of the CSEF Programme and enjoys sector-wide recognition, including by the government, albeit indirectly. The coalition was seen as a reference within civil society, with organisations continuously seeking to become members.

The CSEF Programme was created at a crucial time in Nicaragua when the political framework had made

“The work of the coalition has been very strong. The population has acquired this understanding of the right to education.”

Fieldwork respondent

⁹ OECD DAC Criteria For Evaluating Development Assistance - <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>.

it hard for independent CSOs to operate. International donors have significantly reduced, if not cancelled, the contributions to local organisations. As a result, the available pool of fundraising opportunities was greatly reduced, making the coalition's dependence on the CSEF Programme that much more acute. The coalition engaged informally in resource development by nurturing contacts for future funding.

Respondents indicated that more work was needed and there were hopes for a larger 2016-2018 CSEF Programme. As was the case for other Case Studies, the national coordinator appeared to be extremely dedicated to the mission and vision of the coalition and its work, but corollary overstretched and overworked. Continuity in leadership would be important to maintain results overtime.

4.5 Impact

The OECD DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance defined impact as, 'The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.'¹⁰ The evaluation team examined to what extent the programme increased local capacities in a way that contributes to their better access and participation as measured by increased skills, abilities and knowledge. When assessing the programme's impact, the evaluation team considered the longer-term benefits intended in the CSEF design, some of which may have not been fully realized yet.

All respondents agreed that the coalition had been instrumental in creating a neutral space for public dialogue on education and in exerting pressure on the government in specific areas such as education financing, early childhood education, and inclusive education.

The credibility of the coalition as a respected reference in the education sector was also a positive impact of the Programme.

There was doubt however whether impact could be sustained without on-going monitoring of sector development, and opening of dialogue and engagement channels with the GON, which currently precludes any sense of social accountability.

¹⁰ OECD DAC Criteria For Evaluating Development Assistance - <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>.

5 Conclusions And Lessons Learned

The findings of this case study, detailed above, provide a strong basis for the drawing of certain conclusions about future directions for FEDH-IPN, and the issues the coalition will face in addressing the priorities of the education sector. As discussed, the issues are related to:

- Evidence-based advocacy
- Member mobilisation
- Governance and systems
- Growth and sustainability

Further discussion of each of these areas is provided below.

5.1 Evidence-based advocacy

The coalition has focused its actions on policy monitoring and advocacy campaign, and has developed great credibility and respect. However, in the politicised context of Nicaragua, and to further contribute to free, quality education for all, strategies to better engage in evidence-based advocacy should be developed and subsequently implemented. These efforts should be subject to a communication strategy that would underline the contribution of the coalition as an independent contributor to the education sector. In that regard, the coalition should benefit from technical assistance from the Programme's Regional Secretariat.

Strengthening the capacity of the coalition in conducted evidence-based advocacy will also contribute to a wider base of competencies, potentially attracting new institutional partners.

5.2 Member mobilisation

All respondents approved of the work of the coalition in mobilising and coordinating efforts. An important challenge for the coalition is to sustain its action and impact at the municipality level, while also fostering a more structured, year-round communication and learning framework for its members. This should include peer-to-peer learning, sharing of agendas, observations, and best practices.

5.3 Governance and systems

The coalition's governance includes elements, which are not optimised. For instance, the coalition has put in place thematic committees focusing on basic education, inclusive education, rural education, and intercultural education. These committees cover recurring basic themes in education, and meet four times a year in Managua. Many of the members are unable to attend due to time and budgetary constraints. If it is deemed that the contribution of the committees is valuable, which was not verified during field inquiry, the coalition should explore means to improve the access and contribution of these committees.

FEDH-IPN is truly a Forum, in the sense that its participants hold varying legal statuses, from national NGOs, to associations, and individuals. The CSEF Programme and the coalition should explore means to account for the wide array of

participating groups. The coalition reports 13 members, when in actuality it works with approximately 40 different entities.

Finally, the coalition would benefit from developing simple data management processes, which would help capture programming information electronically.

5.4 Growth and sustainability

In the current political environment and the stark decline of international donors in Nicaragua it would be unrealistic to expect the coalition to make significant in-roads in developing a strong and diversified donor-base. At the moment, the coalition is fully dependent on the CSEF Programme.

Having made great strides in community mobilisation, and advocacy campaigns, the coalition would benefit from a strategic planning exercise that looks to refine and strengthen its theory of change for the future as well as its governance structure so it can better respond to the systemic and contextual challenges of the education system. The coalition should also continue to cultivate its current access to the government and to offer engagement with the relevant governmental institutions.

6 Annexes

6.1 List Of Interviewees

Following is a list of those people interviewed for the evaluation during the field visit to Nicaragua from 13-16 July, 2015.

No	Nombre	Organización	Día de Entrevista
01	Miguel De Castilla Urbina	Ministro Asesor en asuntos de Educación (UNESCO)	Lunes 9:30 AM
02	Jorge Mendoza Vásquez	Foro de Educacion y Desarrollo Humano	Lunes 11:00 AM
03	Ruth Danelia Fletes Fonseca Mario Fulvio Espinoza	Junta Directiva FEDHIPN	Lunes 2:00 PM
04	Arlen Maria Mendoza Edgar Palacios Ortiz	Equipo Técnico FEDHIPN	Lunes 3:30 PM
05	Karla Perez Mauricio Castillo Federico Rostran Briceyda Traña Douglas Amanda Flores Guevara	EDUCO MCN Asociación de Scout de Nicaragua	Martes 8:00 PM Martes 10:00am Martes 11:00 AM
06	Carlos Emilio Lopez	Diputado FSLN, Asamblea Nacional	Martes 1:00 PM
07	Irma Quintanilla Franco Mario Fulvio Espinoza Teatino Santana Yelsin Espinoza Magda Garcia	Mesa Nacional de Riesgo Revista el País Azul Radio Sandino Canal 12 Radio 580 Grupo Focal Medios de comunicación	Martes 3:00 PM
08	Jocsan Moreno Ceferina Fuentes	Concejal La Trinidad, Estelí MCN, La Trinidad, Estelí	Miércoles 10-12 AM

09	Henry Sanchez Castro	ANIDE, Matagalpa	Miércoles 2:00 PM
10	Rosalina Robleto Francisco Salazar	Mesa Educativa Camoapa	Jueves 10-12 AM
11	Zochil Colomer Sánchez	Foro de Educación y Desarrollo Humano	Jueves 3:00 PM

6.2 FEDH-IPN

6.2.1 Secretariat

	First Name	LAST NAME	Position (FT: Full-time, PT: Part-time)
01	Jorge	Mendoza Vásquez	Executive Director - FT
02	Zochil	Colomer Sánchez	Administrator - FT
03	Arlen Maria	Mendoza	Technical Officer - PT
04	Edgar	Palacios Ortiz	Technical Officer - PT
05	Jorge	Crespo Solorzano	Office manager (support staff) - FT
06	Karen	Norori Cantillano	Office maintenance assistant (support staff) - FT

6.2.2 Executive Board

No	Name	Position	Organisation
01	Julián Ramón Guevara	Presidente	ONG Internacional
02	Elba Kathy Rivera	Vicepresidente	Mesa Educativa Nueva Guinea
03	Ruth Danelia Fletes	Secretaria	SUSAETAS
04	Marina Delgado Carranza	Tesorera	Unan Managua
05	Odilí Robles Río	Fiscal	Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos
06	Mario Fulvio Espinoza	Vocal	Persona Natural

6.2.3 Member Organisations

1. Movimiento Comunal Nicaragüense (MCN)
2. Centro de Educación y Capacitación Integral Hermana Maura Clarke (CECIM)
3. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua(UNAN Managua)
4. INTERVIDA-EDUCO
5. Asociación de Padres de Familia Doris María Morales Tijerino
6. Asociación Scout de Nicaragua
7. Asociación Nicaragüense Para el Desarrollo Sostenible
8. Visión Inclusiva
9. Fundación Escúchame
10. Asociación de Padres de Familia con hijos con Discapacidad, Los Pipitos
11. Movimiento Juvenil Siglo XXI
12. Plan Internacional
13. Fundación 21 Síndrome de Down
14. Mesas Educativas

6.3 Additional documentation consulted

- Understanding Populism and Political Participation: The Case of Nicaragua, Woodrow Wilson Center Update on the Americas, Number 4, June 2009
- USAID Nicaragua, Country Development Strategy 2013-2017