



Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua
pre-departure guide



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letter from the fsd staff

Congratulations again on your choice to work abroad on sustainable development projects in conjunction with the Foundation for Sustainable Development and Northwestern University's Global Engagement Summer Institute. For many of you this experience will be an event that sparks a lifelong interest in development. For others, it will be a chance to gain insight to other cultures that can only be obtained through direct experience. For all of you it will be a chance to make a lasting impact on people and communities in your host country and an opportunity that will make a lasting impression in your life.

There are many challenges that await you. It is likely that the most difficult obstacles you face will not be the ones that put your technical skills or knowledge to the test. More often it will be the difficulty of gaining the cultural competencies necessary to do successful work in a community. It will be learning to see the problems facing a region from the eyes of a community member rather than through the eyes of an outsider. Try and remember throughout your experience that the information about culture, community and language you learn should guide your work as much as your other knowledge.

It is important to remember that during your program you will represent both yourself, Northwestern University and FSD in your community. Many people in the region that you will work in have had very little experience with people from outside their country. As such they will develop opinions of you and the work of FSD through their interactions with you or what they hear about you. We ask that you take your visibility into consideration when you make decisions about your actions in your host country.

It is the intention of FSD to provide you with a broad support network to best position you for success, but at the end of the day, it is your effort that will most influence the success of your experience with FSD. You will need to take initiative and put yourself in situations that stretch your comfort levels. You will have to work within cultural contexts that can cause extreme frustration. Many other challenges await. At the same time you face these challenges you also have an incredible set of opportunities. Go into the experience with the willingness to listen and learn. You will find that through this willingness you will increase your ability to give to your community.

This guide has been developed to help make clear what FSD expects of our interns and volunteers and what you can expect of us. We look at your internship or volunteer program as a partnership. It is our hope and belief that clear expectations are the foundation for a solid working relationship. Please read this guide thoroughly as it contains information that is crucial to the success of your experience and our partnership.

Above all, be aware that you should feel comfortable contacting FSD in the San Francisco office if you need additional support or questions answered.

Good luck!

fsd's mission, values and vision

At the center of the internship experience are the core values, vision, and mission that make FSD the organization that it is. We ask that our interns understand and remember these tenets of FSD throughout their time abroad, in order to make their internships meaningful experiences for both you and the communities in which you serve.

Vision

To enhance our partners' abilities to support sustainable community-based development work that is participatory and shaped by community-defined opportunities and needs.

Core Values

Transparency

Accountability

Participation

Community

Responsiveness

Sustainability



FSD's Mission

FSD supports the efforts of grassroots development organizations in the developing world that are working to better their communities, environments, and the economic opportunities around them. We believe economic development begins with community development and is only sustainable if it comes from and is supported by the members of these communities. Also, through our programs, we aim to raise international awareness of the economic challenges in developing countries and support cross-cultural communities in finding more effective solutions to development issues.

web of support

FSD is a key partner in your experience. Below are the three main players on FSD's team, with a description of exactly how they will support you.

San Francisco Office: Headquarters

- **Program Arrangements:** FSD San Francisco communicates and confirms your program location, host organization and host family with our international Site Team. The San Francisco staff collaborates with GESI faculty and staff on the program curriculum and participants in the pre-departure seminar and final summit in Chicago.
- **Pre-Departure Materials:** We provide support materials prior to your departure. This includes information about host organization and country-specific pre-departure packets,.
- **Emergencies:** In the case of emergency, at home or abroad, FSD San Francisco is available at all times to support you and your family, and to ensure your safety, security, and well-being.
- **Re-Integration Support:** Upon your return, the San Francisco Office will connect you to a network of other alumni and offer opportunities and incentives to share your experience with others.

FSD San Francisco International Programs Staff

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San Francisco Office:

415-283-4873

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415-828-8414

Site Team Abroad

a. Program Director: Resident Expert and Advisor - Your Program Director is a development professional from your host country and has extensive community contacts and local knowledge. They manage and develop FSD's relationship with our Host Organizations in addition to fulfilling the following roles:

- **Local Expert:** to your host country and community, current events, local culture and customs, food, language.
- **Placement Counselor:** Your Program Director mediates your relationship with your host organization and host family. They will check in with you, your host organization, and family and do everything within their power to ensure that you and your host are comfortable with the match.
- **Project Advisor and Guardian:** Your Program Director will draw upon their extensive community development experience to help you design and implement a successful project. In addition, your Program Director will hold you and your host organization accountable for reporting on your project and the funds used to complete it. After you leave, your Program Director will continue to follow up on your project.
- **In-Country Emergency Contact:** If you fall ill, are robbed, or find yourself in any other type of emergency, the Program Director is available to support you and to move forward with securing medical attention for you, seeking legal support, and otherwise ensuring your safety, security, comfort, and well being.

b. Program Coordinators: Resident Expert and Cultural Liaison - Your Program Coordinator provides the necessary support to you, FSD's host families and our partner organizations.

- **Bridge:** Your PC is there to bridge the communication gaps that often times open up between different cultures and languages.
- **Culture Shock Lifeline:** Your PC has experience dealing with culture shock, and can help you to move through it as smoothly as possible – she is there to listen to your frustrations, to help you work through challenges, indulge you in some comforts from home, and to offer some perspective and guidance.
- **Project Development Advisor:** As you plan, implement, and develop a project, your PCs will offer feedback and advice on how to carry out a successful and sustainable development project.
- **Local Expert and Cultural Bridge:** Your PC is a key resource for understanding your host country and community, current events, local culture and customs, food, language. He is there to bridge the communication gaps that frequently arise between different cultures and languages.
- **Placement Advisor:** Your PCs help mediate your relationship with your host organization and host family. They will check in with you, your host organization, and family and do everything within their power to ensure that you and your host are comfortable with the match.

Ciudad Sandino Site Team

Maria de Jesus Zepeda

Program Director
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Jimmy Waters

Program Coordinator
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fsd ciudad sandino site team

Saludos fraternos y bienvenidos a la tierra de lagos y volcanes!

Program Director: Maria de Jesus Zepeda



Maria is a licensed social worker and psychologist. She has been the country director in Nicaragua since 1998. She maintains contact with the Department of Social Work in the Hospital Ciudad Sandino, where she worked for many years as the staff psychologist. One of her focus areas is to raise awareness and prevent domestic violence. She also develops projects in the area of public health and community health, holding workshops in the community of Ciudad Sandino for people such as health educators, midwives, and volunteers that work with projects to prevent diarrhea and malaria. With FSD she is developing projects involving the training in the prevention and attention to domestic violence to health workers in Ciudad Sandino. With the help of FSD volunteers, she is working to help organizations improve the quality of life in Nicaragua.

Program Coordinator: Jimmy Waters



Jimmy's interest in sustainable development stems from his time as an FSD intern in Nicaragua during the summer of 2007, where, while interning with El Ministerio de La Familia, he implemented a youth development program and a soccer league in a local elementary school. He pursued his interest in sustainable development further by working as a community development intern for the Rural Family Development Association of Peru in 2009. Shortly thereafter in the summer of 2009, he decided to tackle development from the corporate sector, working in New Delhi, India, as a social business consultant for Mirabilis Advisory, a strategic economic development firm. Jimmy, a Morehead-Cain Scholar, graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2010 with double majors in economics and statistics. He is very excited to have the opportunity to return to Nicaragua with FSD as a Program Coordinator.

nicaragua: location overview

Fast Facts:



- **Area:** 129,494 sq. km. (roughly the size of Greece or New York state)
- **Population:** around 5.9 million. 1 in 5 of live in and around Managua, the capital
- **Ethnic groups:** mestizo 70%, white 17%, black 9%, indigenous 5%
- **Languages:** Spanish 97.5%, Miskito 2%
- **Religion:** Roman Catholic 58.5%, Evangelical 21.6%, none 15.7%, other 4.2%
- **Literacy rate:** 67.5%
- **GDP (per capita):** \$2,800 (2009)
- **Inflation:** 4% per year
- **Poverty rate:** 48% below poverty line (defined by the United Nations and World Bank as earning \$1 US per day)
- **Exports:** coffee, beef, shrimp, lobster, tobacco, cigars, sugar, gold, peanuts
- **Imports:** consumer goods, machinery and equipment, raw materials, petroleum products

Past and Present Development Issues:

After three centuries of Spanish colonial rule, another century of despotic presidencies, and three decades of the Somoza family dictatorship, the Sandinista revolution in 1979 sought to create an egalitarian society and distribute land, political power and economic resources to Nicaragua's vast majority of impoverished citizens. However, years of war and struggle against a guerrilla insurgency, policy missteps, natural disasters and the debilitating United States' trade embargo all discouraged economic development and political stability. The early gains of the Sandinistas (notably, 5% GDP jumps in 1980 and 1981 and a national literacy campaign that reduced the illiteracy rate from 50% to 23% of the total population and more than tripled college enrollment) were negated by ten years of precipitous decline.

Images of children without legs or arms due to landmines, women wielding guns with infants strapped to their backs, and bleeding soldiers on both sides of the conflict were broadcast to the world when news of the U.S.'s role in Nicaragua's guerrilla war broke in 1986. Termed the "Iran-Contra Affair" because millions of dollars in profits from a CIA operation in clandestine weapons sales to Iran were used to fund the insurgent "contras" against the Nicaraguan government, the scandal prompted deep questions and criticism regarding US foreign policy (Bryne & Kornbluh, 1990).

61,000 Nicaraguans died during the war, a loss of 2 percent of its population. "To put this figure into perspective, the equivalent loss of 2 percent of the U.S. population would be 4.5 million people, or more than 75 times the U.S. death toll in the Vietnam War" (Walker 1991: 8 in Metoyer 1999:3).

Government infrastructure suffered as well. The programs and services the Sandinistas had sought to improve fell by the wayside as the conflict continued:

“By the end of 1985, 10% of the population had lost access to health facilities, 170 adult teachers had been killed, and 503 school, and 800 adult education centres had closed because of the threat of attack ... By the end of 1987, 128 of 600 health facilities had been destroyed” (WFP 1995).

In 1990, the Sandinistas lost power when conservative Violeta Chamorro was elected to the presidency, the trade embargo was lifted and the contra war ended (Chomsky 1990). The 1990s were politically fractious and literally fraught with earthquakes. In 1992, the 14 parties united under Chamorro as the National Opposition Union (Unión Nacional Opositora - UNO) broke off and split into smaller factions. That same year, an earthquake left 16,000 people homeless. In 1996, Arnaldo Aleman was elected president; he was subsequently convicted of fraud (absconding with \$100 million) in 2002, and sentenced to 20 years in prison. In between, Hurricane Mitch struck in 1998, killing 3,000 and leaving hundreds of thousands in makeshift refugee camps – many of whom still eke out a living in what were supposed to be temporary tent shelters.

On November 5, 2006, Nicaragua elected Daniel Ortega, the Sandinista candidate and former president. Four other parties took part in a heated race, disputing contentious topics that included free trade, abortion, and Nicaragua’s role in the Latin American political scene.

Nicaraguan politics remains extremely contentious, as the two main blocks of voters (the Sandinistas and the liberals) fight for positions of power. Nicaragua has also fallen victim to political corruption in the past years, with the most well-known case being in 1998, when former President Arnaldo Alemán embezzled over \$100 million in international aid that was supposed to be directed to victims of Hurricane Mitch. Corruption runs fluidly throughout the branches of the Nicaraguan government, and it is well-known, as daily national newspapers such as La Prensa and El Nuevo Diario publicize every case of mis-used public funds or constitutional violation extraordinarily well.

Ortega began his term in January 2007, and faces a staggering number and scope of development issues:

- **Economy:** second-poorest in the Western Hemisphere, after Haiti. Economy based mainly on agricultural exports, and dependent on coffee, sugar, beef and seafood exports, along with some manufacturing (CIA Factbook, 2006); Nicaragua’s minimum wage of \$120 per month continues to present challenges for those that must eat, pay electric and water bills, send their children to school, etc.
- **Health:** malaria and tuberculosis cases continue to increase (WHO, 2006) and one out of three children suffers from chronic malnutrition (UNICEF, 2006). 46% of the population does not have access to sanitation services (Nicaraguan Water Supply & Sewerage Systems Company, 2004); Malaria is rare in the departments of Managua and Masaya. Dengue fever, also transmitted by mosquitoes, continues to have a strong presence throughout Nicaragua.
- **Environment:** large-scale commercial and slash-and-burn agriculture have decimated Nicaragua’s forests and left the land vulnerable to landslides and droughts (NNEC, 2006); additionally, the lack of trash cans and the presence of illegal trash dumps (30 in Ciudad Sandino alone) continue to present environmental and public health problems for Nicaragua
- **Human Rights:** approximately 76,000 landmines (left over from the Contra war) continue to kill and maim hundreds, particularly children (UNICEF, 2006) Domestic violence continues to be a problem, and indigenous people’s access and rights to land are a constant issue (CENIDH, 2005).
- **Women’s Rights:** family violence (55,000 reported cases) and sexual violence are two of the main issues, yet are routinely un-reported and unresolved due to social stigma and legal inaction. Wage discrimination and sexual harassment also persist. (US State Dept. 2006)

- **Youth and Education:** only 29% of children complete primary schooling, and an abysmally low 5% of disabled children receive appropriate support (UNICEF, 2006)
- **Community Development:** nearly 48% of Nicaraguans live below the poverty line (Political Social and Economic Report, 2005); poverty also results in child labor, which affects more than 167,000 children and adolescents (UNICEF, 2006)

These challenges comprise seven out of the eight focus areas of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – aspirations to improve the quality of life in poor communities around the world. The MDGs include providing primary education for all children, fighting for women's empowerment and gender equality, cutting the high percentages of child and maternal death rates, and fighting infectious diseases such as AIDS, malaria and dengue fever.

FSD is committed to supporting the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and empowering communities to develop and mobilize resources and assets for Nicaragua's future. Through supporting grassroots development organizations that are working in these areas, FSD spreads both the interns' and the donor funds' influence on multiple issues: from helping form women's microfinance cooperatives in Masaya to training youth health educators in Ciudad Sandino.



Intern Alex Nading's project to raise awareness about Lake Managua's contaminated fish, Hospital Ciudad Sandino, summer 2006

Site Descriptions:

Ciudad Sandino

- *Mostly urban with some rural areas*
- *Population: 130,000*
- *Distance: 40 minutes from Managua (by bus)*
- *FSD host organizations: 13*

Designated an official city several years ago, Ciudad Sandino was previously part of greater Managua. It is divided into eleven urban zones and two rural areas. The center is Plaza Ciudad Sandino, an open field lined with bus stops, local businesses and a large high school. Over the past three years, the municipal government has taken big steps to developing the plaza, and the plaza now hosts several restaurants, as well as a small stadium. Other ongoing projects include sewer reconstruction and street paving. There can occasionally be power outages.



Street in Zone 2, Ciudad Sandino

The city's population density has increased dramatically over the years – particularly with tens of thousands of refugees arriving after the earthquake of 1972 and Hurricane Mitch of 1998. Many families still live in makeshift housing and lack access to safe water and latrines.

Residents use a variety of transportation methods, including several bus routes, horse-drawn carriages, taxis and taxi-motorcycles ('motitos'). A taxi ride anywhere in the city will cost about 10 córdobas, or roughly \$0.45.

Internet cafes and small family stores ('pulperias') are everywhere, however for evening entertainment interns usually visit Managua; there aren't dance clubs or movie theaters within the city. There are a handful of nice restaurants and a few fast food restaurants in the city, including a Tip Top Chicken Restaurant, perhaps the most popular fast food restaurant in Nicaragua that serves fried chicken, French fries, etc. Additionally, internet cafes make it particularly easy to call the USA, with calls costing roughly 10 US cents per minute. Using internet in one of the cafes will cost around 12 córdobas per hour.

The Program Director, María de Jesus Zepeda, was born and grew up in Ciudad Sandino and maintains contacts with the wide variety of host organizations there. She is a great resource for any type of information about the community.

Masaya:

- *Mostly urban with some rural areas*
- *Population: 140,000*
- *Distance: 40 minutes from Managua (by bus)*
- *FSD host organizations: 11*

Masaya is known for its rich cultural heritage and artisan work. Craftspeople specialize in hammocks, woodwork, leather goods and ceramics, and traditional marimba dance and



'Siete Esquinas' (Seven corners) neighbourhood, Masaya

music are celebrated in parades and festivals, especially between August and December. Like most big cities, internet cafes and tiny family businesses make up the urban landscape, together with a central park, two markets, and several dance clubs.

Masayans will tell you that it is *'tranquila,'* a fairly quiet and peaceful city that is easy to walk around. While poverty is certainly apparent, the city also has an emerging middle class. The majority of FSD host organizations are located in Masaya and Ciudad Sandino, and the Program Coordinator lives in Masaya.



High schoolers at Instituto Juan Jose Rodriguez, Jinotepe

Masaya also has a nice waterfront area that overlooks La Laguna de Masaya and the Masaya Volcano. It is an area perfect for jogging or just strolling along and watching the volcano and overlooking the lagoon.

Masaya is also conveniently located about 30 minutes away from La Laguna de Apoyo, which Nicaraguans will say is the finest lagoon in Nicaragua. It's tucked away location with silent blue water make it ideal for a weekend or day-trip to experience the Nicaraguan outdoors and go swimming.

To travel to Ciudad Sandino (where the FSD Nicaragua office is located) from Masaya, one must take a mini-bus to the University of Central America (about 40 minutes), followed by a public bus (route number 210) from the University of Central America to Ciudad Sandino (35 minutes). Masaya is also a launching pad for many other cities in Nicaragua, such as Granada, Rivas, Jinotepe, Esteli, Matagalpa, etc.)

Jinotepe

- *Population:* 50,000
- *Distance:* 1 hour from Managua (by bus)
- *FSD host organizations:* 7

This is the capital city in the state of Carazo. With approximately 50,000 residents, Jinotepe is considered a sleepy, slow-paced town. Located in the hills, it has considerable agricultural production, namely coffee and sugar cane. As with the rest of Nicaragua, young people often hang out in the central park and go dancing on the weekends. FSD host organizations include a health center, childcare center, elementary school, high school and women's rights organization, among others

Jinotepe, while a sleepy city, is fairly urban compared to the cities and areas that surround it. Interns at the health clinic often find themselves going out to the "campo" on vaccination campaigns or performing work on health education. It is a good city for those that would like both the urban and rural experience of Nicaragua. Jinotepe is well connected to the rest of Nicaragua by bus. One can travel from Jinotepe to the FSD office in Ciudad Sandino by taking a minibus from Jinotepe to the University of Central America, followed by a public bus (route number 210) from the University of Central America to Ciudad Sandino.

Jinotepe is a pleasant city in which to live, with a quiet city market, several restaurants (fast food and traditional food), public parks, and good sidewalks for exploring the streets.

Estelí

- *Urban*
- *Population:* 71,000

- *Distance:* 3 hours from Managua (by bus)
- *FSD host organizations:* 2

Estelí is the second largest city in the north of Nicaragua, located 150 kilometers from the capital, Managua. Not only is it surrounded by nature reserves, lagoons and waterfalls but it is also blessed with a cooler temperature than the southern parts of the country. Located on the Pan American highway, this northern city is an important stop for many travelers and those looking to enjoy some of Estelí's famous leather, tobacco and cuisine. FSD organizations include a women's cooperative for environmental health and a natural medicine organization.

The women's cooperative, Las Mujeres Ambientalistas, operate a business out of using old paper, recycling it, and turning it into new paper. They then sell their creative paper products to tourists that pass through. More recently, with the help of an FSD Service Learning Trip from Stanford in the summer of 2010, Las Mujeres Ambientalistas began a new project, cultivating natural medicine plants and then using the plants to make marketable natural medicines for the common cold, diarrhea, headaches, etc. They are partnering with ISNAYA, the other host organization in Esteli that specializes in the development of natural medicine, to successfully execute the project. Las Mujeres Ambientalistas is located in Barrio Boris Vega, one of the poorest barrios of Esteli.

ISNAYA, the other FSD host organization, is a cooperative that owns both a "finca" (farm) and a natural medicine laboratory. They market their natural medicines (teas, cough syrups, etc) all over Nicaragua. Their products can be found in Managua and Masaya, among other cities. Plus, their medicines are known to be very effective.

Esteli is a pleasant city in which to live. It has nice roads, a beautiful Cathedral and central park, nice restaurants and internet cafes, access to some of Nicaragua's most beautiful nature reserves, close proximity to the rest of Central America (Honduras is about 1.5 hours away by bus), as well as one of the best nightclubs in all of Central America, CigarZone, recently established in 2010 that has the atmosphere of any top-class American or European Night club.

To travel to the FSD office in Ciudad Sandino from Esteli, it is best to take a bus direct to Managua's Mayoreo terminal, and from there a taxi must be taken to the University of Central America, where a public bus (route number 210) can be taken to Ciudad Sandino. There are also direct daily express buses that travel between Masaya and Esteli.

Chagüitillo:

- *Rural*
- *Population:* 2,500
- *Distance:* 3 hours from Managua (by bus)
- *FSD host organizations:* 1

Also a very small town, Chagüitillo's FSD affiliate *Asociación para el Desarrollo de Chaguitillo* (ADCH) operates a variety of initiatives: a preschool, high school, community farm and Pre-Columbian museum. The town is famous for its ancient petroglyphs and is striving to protect them. Residents are very friendly and family-oriented; it is possible to get to know the whole town in a short period.

Recent interns in Chaguitillo have constructed a system of trash cans for the city, along with a community plan for emptying those trash cans, and others have worked with local engineers to develop a water filter for a community clothes-washing station, so that soapy water is effectively filtered before entering a local river.

safety and security

FSD will do our utmost to provide a safe environment and provide a support system to you throughout your experience. To ensure a safe and successful experience for everyone involved we depend upon the following:

- **our site team:** to assess our (FSD's) ability to ensure that your environment is safe and secure.
- **our local community networks:** to serve as a barometer of the local political, social, and economic climate.
- **you:** to adhere to instructions and tips regarding your safety and security, and to act prudently.

a. fsd's responsibilities

- **Ensure a safe and secure host community.**

Our host organizations and programs are run by FSD staff and trusted colleagues who live locally and often have years of experience with FSD. While the political climate varies by location and timing, we feel that our extensive local networks of host families and partner organizations provide us with a good barometer of the climate in relation to the safety of foreign volunteers. We would never place you in a highly dangerous location.

FSD monitors the political, economic, and social climate in each of our host communities. In the event that FSD determines it cannot ensure your safety or security in a given location, we will either place you with another FSD program in the region, or offer a refund for the program.

- **Inform you about safety and security in your host community.**

Through literature and resources disbursed to you prior to your arrival, and presentations during your program orientation, we equip you with the information and tools to be aware of the realities of your host community, to avoid situations that would put you at risk, and to manage uncomfortable or risky situations in the event that they arise.

- **Direct you to a preferred medical facility in the case of an emergency**

During orientation, your Program Director and Program Coordinator will identify a preferred medical facility in your host community.

- **Support you logistically and emotionally through any medical or emergency situation.**

FSD will support you in addressing your needs during any medical or emergency situation, whether it is securing medical attention and medications, filing a police report, or re-scheduling your flight.

- **Contact your emergency contacts in the case of a major emergency.**

FSD will only contact your emergency contacts upon request or in the case of a major emergency when you are not able to contact them.

b. your responsibilities

- **Inform yourself.**

Research the history and current events of your host country and community prior to your arrival. Talk to your Site Team and host family about safety in your host community and follow their tips.

- **Register your living/traveling abroad status with the US Department of State**

FSD highly recommends that all program participants register with the US Department of State prior to embarking on their journey. More information can be obtained on <http://travel.state.gov/>.

- **Minimize risk:**

- Secure all recommended vaccinations, and take precautions to remain safe and healthy.
- Avoid volatile or risky events, locations, and situations.

- Carry as little money and valuables as possible.
 - Hold your bag close to you or in front of you, and never leave it unattended.
 - Travel with someone you know at all times, and avoid being out alone after dark.
 - Know where you are going, or at least look like you know where you are going. If you are unsure, ask someone for directions. If you need to pull out a map, do so somewhere sheltered and discreet.
 - Avoid dressing in a manner that gives an appearance of wealth
- **Be aware of your surroundings:**
 - Observe your environment with great care and attention, and adapt your behavior accordingly.
- **Be prepared - Carry with you:**
 - A copy of your Proof of Insurance card - you will need the card as proof of insurance in case of an emergency.
 - Any pertinent prescriptions
 - A card that lists all of your local and emergency contact numbers and addresses. We suggest that you keep this card apart from your wallet.
- Keep apart:**
- Keep emergency contact information, and any other important documents, in your email account.
 - Keep a copy of your passport and credit cards apart from your wallet and passport.
- **Notify FSD.**
In the unlikely, but always possible, event that you are mugged, are involved in an accident, fall seriously ill, or run into any other type of "incident" please notify your Site Team immediately. The Site Team will help you to resolve the situation to the best of their ability.

nicaragua: visa and health preparations

visas

As an FSD Participant, it is your full responsibility for securing the appropriate visa and ensuring the full legality of your stay in the host country during the Program. To do so requires consultation of resources above and beyond the information provided by FSD.

Resources:

US State Department: Information for U.S. travelers to Nicaragua.

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_985.html

Nicaragua Embassy in the U.S.

1627 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Washington, DC, U.S.

Phone: (+1-202) 939-6570, 939-6543, 939-6544, 939-6573

U.S. Embassy in Nicaragua

Km 4 1/2 Carretera Sur
Managua, Nicaragua

Phone: 011-(505)-268-0123

Web: <http://managua.usembassy.gov>

Email: ConsularManagua@state.gov

FSD Recommendation:

Please note: the recommendation provided here is subject to change at any time. Please check with the Nicaraguan and US Embassies for the most updated information.

U.S. citizens traveling to Nicaragua can get a tourist visa upon arrival for US \$10.00. A 90-day tourist visa (consisting of a stamp in your passport with the number "90" handwritten) may be secured initially and renewed during your stay for up to three months. Stays can be extended for up to three months for US \$10.00 per month; there is a US \$1.50/day fine for overstaying your allotted period. *Please make sure that you receive the 90-day visa before leaving the airport!*

If your internship is longer than 6 months you will need to leave the country for three days in order to renew your visa. Upon your return to Nicaragua, you will go through the same process of receiving a 90-day stamp, and then renewing again after three months. Most interns staying longer than 6 months find it convenient to travel to Costa Rica or another country in Central America (all are accessible by bus) in order to renew their visas.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, please contact the Nicaraguan consulate in your home country to be sure you have the most accurate information about entering Nicaragua.

health preparation and FAQ

As an FSD Participant, it is your full responsibility to identify and take all necessary health precautions prior to, during, and following the Program. Please start your health preparations early, as some vaccinations must be taken as far as 8 weeks or more before departure. Providing detailed medical advice is beyond the expertise of FSD so it is very important to consult the resources below as well as medical professionals such as your doctor or local travel health clinic.

Resources

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

Recorded information about health risks and precautions for international travelers:
1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747)

Traveler's Health for Mexico and Central America:

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/camerica.htm>

Malaria Hotline: 404-332-4555.

FSD Recommendations:

- **Tell the FSD staff in Nicaragua before your arrival if you have any health concerns or illnesses.** Everything from bee and food allergies to diabetes and epilepsy are important for the site team staff to know about so that we can help protect your health.
- **Bring anti-malarial medication and mosquito repellent:** In addition to any recommended vaccines, please be sure to secure a supply of anti-malarial medication for your trip. Note that there are several different types of anti-malarial medications available. Please see your doctor to choose a medication that will work in your host country and with your medical history. For those who will be in Nicaragua for an extended period of time, anti-malarial pills may be purchased in-country. Please note, however, that most anti-malarial medication must be taken before entry into the country and there is greater risk of purchasing expired or placebo medications in Nicaragua. Also be aware that anti-malarial medications are not 100% effective and there are often other very serious diseases which can be contracted through mosquitoes so it is very important to protect yourself against mosquito bites.
- **Make sure you are up-to-date on your vaccinations.** Please speak with your doctor to check that you have the necessary vaccinations, all of which are listed by region on the CDC website.
- **Familiarize yourself with the symptoms of the most common illnesses** contracted by travelers, and the appropriate treatment.
- **Bring medicines and supplies for preventing and treating common illnesses** (diarrhea, dehydration, sunburn, food poisoning). Consult your doctor about the best antibiotic and anti-diarrheal to bring with you. *Please note that these medicines are also usually available in Nicaragua at health centers and pharmacies.*
- **Bring a water bottle** (recommended brands are stainless-steel or Nalgene) to ensure that you remain hydrated at all times.

What happens if I get sick?

For serious illness that may occur during the trip, there are public and private clinics and hospitals available within 10 minutes of all of the host cities in Nicaragua. If you should become sick and need to see a doctor, please alert your supervisor, your host family and the FSD Site Team immediately.

A newly established hospital in Nicaragua, Hospital Vivian Pellas, is the most modern in Nicaragua and can provide a wide variety of health services and surgeries. Many Americans choose to come to Nicaragua for Health Tourism purposes - for the sole reason that the Hospital Vivian Pellas can provide equal quality services as a US hospital but at a fraction of the cost. For typical issues such as a fever, a local health clinic has sufficient resources, but Hospital Vivian Pellas is a good resource in the unlikely case of an emergency.

What are some common health concerns?

Diarrhea: It is very common to get diarrhea while your stomach adjusts to different food. Diarrhea can be caused by viruses, bacteria or parasites found in food and water.

Dehydration: You should always drink more liquid than you lose, as the greatest danger with diarrhea is dehydration. Oral Rehydration Salts, distributed by the World Health Organization and found in most stores and pharmacies in Nicaragua, are also available free at every health center. Called "suero oral," these packets are a good way of both preventing and treating diarrhea.

Mosquitos: Called "zancudos" in Nicaragua, mosquitos here can carry malaria and dengue fever so it's best to protect yourself as much as possible:

- wear clothing that covers the body (particularly after dark when mosquitoes are most active)
- use effective mosquito repellent (if you're in a high risk area, it may be a good idea to wash repellent into your clothes before you wear them)
- always sleep under a mosquito net.

Infections and parasites: Infections can result in diarrhea and/or vomiting, fever or liver damage (for Hepatitis). If you are concerned that you have a parasite, let the FSD coordinators know so they can help you get a feces test immediately. You should also seek medical help if you have frequent stomach cramps, excessive perspiration, bloody stools or weakness.

- Carry toilet paper and antibiotic hand sanitizer around with you; public bathrooms are not readily available and hardly any bathrooms have toilet paper or soap
- Don't touch the animals! Dogs and cats may have fleas and many have skin infections.
- Drink purified water and avoid street food. See the *Food and Water* section, below, for ways to prevent food and water-born diarrhea infections.

... And please remember: while most everyone gets diarrhea and a few headaches or stomachaches, it is very rare for interns to get seriously ill in Nicaragua. If you keep a positive attitude, drink plenty of water and get enough sleep, you'll be just fine.

nicaragua: weather and packing FAQ

What kind of luggage should I bring?

Don't overdo it—pack lightly so you can travel more easily and store your bag in small places. Think in terms of a backpack, duffel bag, or moderate-sized suitcase and a daypack.

What should I bring in my carry-on luggage?

We recommend that you carry all valuables (money, credit card, passport, identification, immunization booklet, insurance card, etc.) and a complete set of clothes (change of shirt, pants/skirt, underwear) in your carry-on luggage in case your checked bag is temporarily lost or delayed.

What kinds of weather should I expect?

Nicaragua's climate varies according to altitude. It will almost always be hot during the day, but sometimes temperatures may drop to "pleasantly cool" in the evening. During the rainy season you should expect heavy rains and mud.

The Pacific lowlands are always extremely hot, but the air is fresh and the countryside green during the rainy season (May to November). During the dry season (December to April), it can get fairly dusty as winds sweep through the dirt roads.

The Caribbean coast is hot and wet; it can rain heavily even during the brief dry season. The mountains of the north are much cooler than the lowlands.¹ For example, the three smaller sites to the north (Jinotepe, San Ramon and Chaguitillo) have cooler temperatures than Masaya and Ciudad Sandino; you may have to wear long sleeves or even a sweater at night.

What documents should I bring?

- passport
- vaccination booklet (does not need to be official, but at the least write out a list of your shots and dates that you had them)
- insurance card
- list of FSD contacts in Nicaragua (phone numbers for your PD, PC, host family and host organization supervisor)

Please bring 2 photocopies of each of these documents. During the program, keep the originals and one copy safe in your suitcase and keep the other copy on your person at all times.

How are clothes washed?

Families will wash all of your clothes. Some interns choose to wash personal clothing items separately. Washing machines will not be available- your clothes will be hand-washed and line-dried. Please note that because clothes are washed and dried outside they will probably endure some wear and tear. Because the climate is generally dry, you can often wash clothes out and dry them overnight. You will wash your personal items by first soaking them in powdered detergent and then washing them by hand, using detergent soap.

What type of clothes should I pack?

Keep in mind that darker colors are easier to keep clean, and consider what kind of work you will be doing: for example, if you'll be working in a rural area, it is likely you'll need to wear sneakers for going out to the *campo*, whereas an urban school or microfinance organization will require dress shoes or nice sandals. Lightweight clothes that will breathe in the heat are highly recommended.



¹ <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/central-america/nicaragua/essential?a=weather>

A pair of boots is convenient for the rainy season, as walking through lots of water and mud is the norm. Some boots can be water-proofed using waterproofers that are commonly found at outdoor gear stores such as REI.

Keep in mind that shorts are generally not worn outside the house in Nicaragua and most certainly not to work. Therefore, while Nicaragua may be a warm climate, it is important to pack long pants, as long pants are both more culturally appropriate than shorts, and they will help protect you from mosquitoes.

What should I wear?

To avoid uncomfortable stereotypes and feel safe (this is especially important for women), dress somewhat conservatively; politically-oriented T-shirts, skimpy tank-tops and mini-skirts are not appropriate for work.

At work

Bring neat, presentable clothes for your work at the host organization. Jeans are also appropriate, but you may find them hot at some sites, especially Ciudad Sandino. Nice outfits may also double for night-time occasions, since Nicaraguans dress up for dancing and the numerous festivals that occur throughout the year.

For women, skirts (knee-length or longer), light cotton pants and tops appropriate for an office-setting. For men, light cotton dress pants and dress shirts (short sleeved) are appropriate. For both genders, comfortable, sturdy, closed-toe shoes are appropriate for work. Women may wear nice sandals if they prefer.

At home

Shorts and rubber flip-flops, for both genders, are inappropriate for work – they're usually worn at home or for informal activities such as sports or going to the corner store. Please bring a pair of modest pyjamas to sleep in.

Recommended Packing Lists

clothes:

- underwear
- sturdy cotton socks
- light jacket (waterproof is helpful) and/or sweater
- umbrella
- 1-2 long-sleeved warmer shirts/tops
- 2-3 pairs of pants for work
- 1-2 pairs of casual pants/capris for home and travel
- 1-2 pairs of shorts (for around the house and sports)
- 3-4 skirts, knee-length or longer, for women (optional, but very common to wear skirts)
- 4-5 shirts to wear to work
- 2-3 more casual shirts to wear on the weekend, traveling, around the house, etc.
- at least one nice outfit for special occasions: e.g. church, going dancing, festivals, special functions at the host organization.
- pair of comfortable, sturdy shoes: perhaps running/basketball/baseball/soccer shoes
- sandals: "nice" sandals can be worn everywhere; flip flops are usually worn around the house.
- bathing suit
- modest sleepwear
- sun hat (baseball caps for guys are the norm)
- a pair of boots is helpful for hiking trips, hiking a volcano, walking through muddy streets, etc.

health and hygiene:

- malaria pills
- sunscreen
- strong insect repellent with DEET

- aspirin and/or non-aspirin pain reliever
- antibiotics for travelers' diarrhea
- any medications you use in their original containers and a copy of your prescriptions
- a supply of hand wipes and anti-bacterial hand lotion such as Purel
- vitamins (especially for those with special health or dietary needs)
- personal hygiene: soap, shampoo, toothpaste, tampons, saline solution, etc. All of these items are available in Nicaragua, however tampons and saline solution can be difficult to find.
- mosquito net (can also be purchased in-country)
- sunglasses, glasses (extra pair if you have a prescription or contacts), copy of your prescription, saline solution

practical supplies:

- water bottle (stainless steel or Nalgene recommended)
- travel alarm clock (with extra batteries)
- quick-drying towel or two smaller towels
- medium-sized backpack for day trips and weekend trips
- flashlight
- re-chargeable batteries and battery charger (batteries are fairly expensive in Nicaragua)
- lock for luggage
- camera and extra film or memory cards, cord for uploading photos
- money belt (waist is more secure than around the neck)
- army knife
- notebooks, pens, paper

documents and money:

- airline ticket
- passport
- vaccination booklet,
- insurance Card
- ATM card
- Visa or Mastercard
- photocopies of all documents
- cash (\$100 in cash will last a long way here; you can always get more from ATMs)

sentimental valuables:

- novels, reading materials (books in Spanish are hard to find, no books are available in English)
- pictures of your family, friends, school, neighborhood, work
- small gifts for your host family

What items will be especially difficult to get in Nicaragua?

- batteries (fairly expensive)
- tampons (one brand is found at pharmacies but is not widely available)
- film
- books in English

How should I approach photography?

You should always ask permission before you take someone's photo. People may ask you to send copies or to give them a tip ("*propina*" in Latin American countries) for taking their photo. Please oblige them by keeping track of addresses to send copies to and/or giving a small tip. It is prohibited to take photos of military or security zones.

Should I bring my iPod?

iPods are very rare here. Please do not walk around listening to your iPod; they automatically advertise your wealth and set you apart. Keeping it at home and listening to it with your family is perfectly fine.

Should I bring my laptop?

Personal computers and especially laptops are not common in Nicaragua. Access to computers at your host organization is likely to be limited, and it is unusual for a family to have a computer in the home.

The advantage of bringing a laptop is the ability to work on documents at home without paying for internet/computer time. You can then save your work to a USB drive and email/print it at a "ciber" (internet café). If you do decide to bring your laptop, please take the necessary precautions! It should be in your carry-on bag to take on the plane and you should keep it at your host family's home. Please understand that taking a laptop entails the risk that it could be lost, stolen or damaged - FSD is not responsible in these scenarios.

Instead of a laptop (or in addition) it is a good idea to invest in a USB drive (called "*memoria*") here. You can get low volume USB drives in the U.S. for \$20 or up to several Gigs for more money. These are an excellent way to cart around your documents: email, print or fax them from a *ciber*.

Should I bring donations?

Donations are welcome, but totally optional. If you choose to bring donations, please think about the practicality, sustainability, and durability of those items. Email your Site Team to find out the best types of donations to bring with you and the most appropriate way to go about donating them.

What kind of gifts should I bring for my host family?

Small gifts for your host family could include a calendar of your home town or state, multi-colored pens, books, chocolates/candies, inexpensive solar calculators or solar watches (not requiring batteries), inexpensive jewelry, toys, stickers or school supplies for the children, etc. Some typical US food products that aren't usually available in Nicaragua include peanut-butter, energy bars, and packaged meals and mixes. Making your family a "stirfry-in-a-box" or pancakes is always a great welcome. In general, you can expect 2-4 adults and 2-4 children (infants to adolescents) per family; check the information sent by the Program Coordinator for details. You are also likely to interact with neighbors and coworkers to whom you'll want to give gifts. It is possible to purchase small gifts in Nicaragua too, but regional gifts are special. Use your imagination!

nicaragua: food and water FAQ

Can I drink the tap water? Where can I get safe water?

NO. Do not drink the tap water. For safety, please only drink bottled water or water that has been boiled.



Your host family will always have purified water available for you. When visiting other families or communities; bring your own bottled water with you at all times, and when in doubt, drink a bottled beverage. Bottled water is also available in any “pulperia” or “venta” (small family stores). The 1 cordoba bags of “purified” water on the street are not in fact purified. It is best to stick to the bottled water.

What is typical food?

The main staples of the Nicaraguan diet are beans and rice, commonly fried together and known as “gallo pinto.” Both crops are harvested here in the country, and serve as the daily meal for all Nicaraguans. It is likely you will eat *gallo pinto* at least once a day, accompanied by meat or vegetables. Other principal foods include plantains, yucca, tortillas, tamales, salty cheese, eggs, *refrescos* (juices of fruit, grains, or seeds), and coffee. The food tends to be greasy and salty; salads are a rarity, but fresh fruit is everywhere.

What do most people drink?

Many host families will make juice from fresh fruit. Soda, or “gaseosa,” is considered a treat and not standard in most Nicaraguan homes. If milk is in the home, it is usually in powdered form, or is fresh and un-pasteurized, although delicious regular milk from companies such as Eskimo and Parmalat is easily available in grocery stores and family-owned pulperias. Coffee is almost always instant, although fresh coffee may be purchased from local producers. Beer and rum are the alcoholic drinks of choice.

How vegetarian-friendly is the local cuisine?

Meat is a big part of Nicaraguan culture and celebrations. However, families can always accommodate a vegetarian diet. Please be specific as to your preferences (i.e. whether you eat chicken but no red meat, or no animals, no dairy whatsoever) and let the FSD staff know beforehand so they can alert the family. Fresh fruit, such as papaya, mango, pineapple, oranges, mandarins, and bananas – as well as “exotic” items such as *jocote*, *momones*, *pitahaya* and *melocoton* – are delicious and readily available.

What foods should I avoid?

- Avoid uncooked food and street vendors that have not been recommended by FSD Site Team.
- Do not eat fruits or vegetables that have been washed with water unless they are peeled or the water was treated beforehand.
- Do not eat pork to avoid the risk of acquiring schistosomiasis.
- Eat lightly upon arrival and stay away from milk and cheese that has not been pasteurized.

Can I eat fresh fruit from street stands, and trees?

In Nicaragua you are likely to encounter an abundance of fresh fruit. As a rule, if you can peel it, you can eat it! Avoid peeled fruit served on the street unless you watch the vendor peel it.

How should I express my preferences, or turn down unsafe food that is offered to me?

In many places food is an important form of hospitality and it is cultural practice to offer food and drink as a welcoming, friendly gesture. Never put yourself at risk, but please be diplomatic in expressing your needs. Take care not to offend your hosts with negative comments or facial expressions. Your host family will be notified of what you can and cannot eat or drink, but you should also be sure to tell your family what your preferences are. Politely ask your family for food to be less greasy or salty, to put salt on the side, to mention that you like fruits and vegetables, or to be given more or less food.

Are there any US-style restaurants?

In Managua, all major US fast food restaurants are available including TGIFridays, Subway, Pizza Hut, and Dunkin' Donuts. Hamburger, hot dog and pizza places are available in all FSD cities.

nicaragua: communications

What is the best way for friends and family at home to reach me?

Email is probably the most reliable way to be in touch with your friends and family at home. You can also call your friends and family easily from internet cafés, or try using a free computer-to-computer dialing system such as Skype.

It is perfectly fine for others to leave messages for you with your host family, but never make any long distance calls from the phone of your host family or that of your employer (if you use a calling card and ask permission from your family this could be OK). Please be conscious not to use the phone too much as local calls are even more expensive than international ones.

Realize that phone communication is often interrupted by bad weather, local technicalities or overloaded circuits, and sometimes lines are cut in the middle of a call. Please ensure that your friends and families are aware of this with the understanding that it is best not to schedule international calls at exact times.

In case of an emergency, your family can call the FSD Site Team and leave a message for you. Please remember that the Program Director and host families generally do not speak English. You may call the Program Coordinator any time or use the US Emergency Cell Phone.

Is there access to internet and email?

There are tons of internet cafes (called *cibers*). Many are open late, and most all have the capacity to call home to the US very cheaply. Internet cafes are accessible in all host cities, although in Chaguitillo there is only one ciber. Access costs a little less than \$0.60 per hour.

Is there wireless internet available?

A relatively new phenomenon in Nicaragua is the presence of wireless internet modems (the size of any USB drive) offered by major cell phone companies that are plugged into a USB port on any computer. All major phone companies, including Claro, Movistar, and a new Russian company that entered Nicaragua in 2010 called Yota, all offer internet USB modems that can be plugged into a computer anywhere (although signal is greatest in cities) and receive wireless internet. The prepaid wireless internet service cost is typically 10 córdobas per hour and 50 córdobas for 12 hours at 3G or 4G speed. This is cheaper than cybers. Fortunately, the cost of wireless internet is rapidly decreasing due to the entrance of Yota into the Nicaraguan market. If you are going to be doing a lot of independent research and are located in a city, then purchasing a wireless USB internet modem (about \$35-\$40) may be beneficial, as it will allow you to access the internet from your home. However, signal has typically not been strong in Ciudad Sandino or Chaguitillo, but is very strong in Masaya, Esteli, and Jinotepe.

How do I call the US?

To call the U.S., dial 011, the area code, then the 7-digit number. There are direct numbers to call AT&T and Sprint to make calling card or collect calls to the US. If you are making a call from a private phone, dial (02) 116 or your calling card company to make a collect or calling card call. It's about 1 córdoba/minute to call the US, and ironically 4 córdobas/minute to call anywhere in Nicaragua.

International Information: (02)-114
Collect Calls – International: (02)116
AT&T: 164

Sprint: 161

How do I make a call within Nicaragua?

You can call anywhere in Nicaragua simply by dialing the 8 digit number. There are no area codes in the country. You can make local or national calls for 4 córdobas (US\$0.25) from any internet café. Cell phone numbers always begin with 8, and land lines always begin with the number 2.

Local Information: 112
Collect Calls - National: (02)110

Are cell phones available?

Cell phones that don't require a pre-paid plan can be purchased in any city; you can purchase a card and recharge the phone at your convenience. Calls to and from cell phones can be expensive (5-9 córdobas/minute, US\$0.20-\$0.50), but promotions by cell phone companies are constant. Often, a company will have promotions such as "Triple Your Phone Balance Today," in which if you buy \$5 worth of cell phone minutes, they will give you \$10 worth of cell phone minutes free. The promotions help to lower the cost of cell phone service dramatically, although it can still be expensive.

We recommend that you purchase a "Movistar" phone, as opposed to a "Claro" phone because they provide better promotions, and all FSD staff use Movistar. Calling from a Movistar to a Claro or vice versa is almost 2 times more expensive than calling between the same phone company. Do not buy your phone at the airport because they are overpriced - FSD will provide a cell phone if you do not want to purchase your own. You will be required to pay a security deposit for the return of the phone at the end of your program.

nicaragua: money

Monetary Unit:
Córdoba

Exchange Rate:
The current exchange rate is approximately 21.75
Córdobas to the US Dollar, but check it again before you
leave: <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>

How much cash should I bring with me?

You should plan on bringing about US\$200 in cash when you arrive, an ATM card, and a credit card for emergencies. You can exchange money at the airport if necessary, but it is best to wait until you meet up with the site team. Airport exchange rates are unfavorable, and the site team will give you time during orientation to exchange currencies.

How much money should I plan on spending in country?

FSD covers all of your necessary expenses, including room and board, in-country transportation, trip expenses (if applicable), orientation and debriefing sessions, etc. You may want additional money, however, for entertainment, snacks, books, gifts, newspapers, weekend excursions, additional transportation and health emergencies. You should budget for about US\$3/day and about \$50 for a weekend trip. Bring more if you plan to go out often or buy gifts.

Never carry a large sum of cash or your passport on public transportation; if you must, please do so with caution. Bring only what you need for the day and use a nondescript bag to carry books or papers.

How can I get cash?

ATM machines are recommended because they are accessible, secure, and get a good rate of exchange. ATMs are available in the following locations:

- Ciudad Sandino: in a local bank and in the nearby suburb of Linda Vista, 15 minutes away.
- Masaya: there are 3 ATMS at banks and more in gas stations.
- Jinotepe: the Texaco gas station has the most convenient ATM.
- Chaguitillo: an ATM is available in Sebaco, a bigger town 10-15 minutes away
- Estelí: All major banks have branches in Estelí where money can be withdrawn.

Traveler's checks are not recommended: they do not get a good exchange rate (cash is much better) and are not widely accepted. Do not exchange money with street dealers; banks are much more secure.

Are credit cards accepted?

Credit cards are only accepted in very expensive shops and restaurants – usually only in Managua or in gas stations. Bring VISA or MASTERCARD since they are the most widely accepted.

What is the local attitude towards bargaining?

Bargaining is part of the culture and expected at local markets.

transportation

You should be able to walk to most areas in your host community. For trips or to get across town in the bigger sites, the most common modes of transportation are the following:

Flight Information: FAQs

Is international airfare and travel to the program site included in the program fee?

The GESI and FSD Program fee does not include the cost of international airfare nor in-country airfare to the program site. GESI will organize group tickets for which the student will be financially responsible.

The Program fee does cover transportation to and from the airport. The program fee also covers any other group transportation required for group activities (with other FSD interns and staff).

Will I be picked up at the airport?

On the start date of the program, a **group pickup time** at the airport will be arranged for participants.

FSD arranges a group pickup for the entire group's convenience and safety as well as for financial reasons. When the entire group arrives at the same time, we can efficiently collect you and your luggage and travel directly to the orientation site. In addition, it is costly and inefficient to make multiple trips to the airport or wait for someone's late arrival, particularly in locations such as Uganda and Kenya where the program site is hours away from the airport and travel is only possible during daylight hours.

How will I find FSD when I arrive at the airport for the group pickup?

The representative from FSD will be waiting for you at the greeting area of the airport upon your arrival. They will have a sign with the letters "FSD" on it. Photos of your Program Coordinator and Director may be viewed on the FSD website on each country's page. They will escort you to your lodgings (either a hostel or your host family) for orientation.

What if my flight is cancelled or delayed?

If you will not arrive at the date and time that you have sent us, due to delay, cancellation, or illness, please take the following steps:

Email AND call your Program Director and/or Program Coordinator to let them know that you will not arrive at the scheduled date and time, and supply them with the updated date and time of your arrival. Your Program Director and Program Coordinator's telephone numbers and email addresses are listed on the "Site Team Contact Information" sheet.

If you cannot contact your Program Director or Program Coordinator, call the US Emergency Cell Phone and we will assist you in relaying your updated arrival information to your FSD Site Team.

How will I get back to the airport for departure?

FSD will provide you with transportation to the airport for your group departure.

In Country Transportation

buses

Coverage: There are many buses within each community and ones that go to the various cities in Nicaragua.

Payment: You pay fare on the bus. Except for city routes within Managua, money is not collected until after the bus has been on the road for about 20 minutes.

Safety: It is easy to get robbed on a bus so be vigilant about your possessions. However, appearing nervous about your possessions makes you a target so try to be calm and composed. Don't travel with more money than you'll need and only carry a copy of your passport – never the real thing, unless you are making longer trips or traveling to the Atlantic Coast. Past FSD interns have reported being asked for their real passport when traveling to the Atlantic Coast, as the Nicaraguan military has some checkpoints throughout the Atlantic Coast to control drug smuggling, and soldiers will often say that a photocopy is not sufficient.

Know where you are going: Always know where you are going and the name of the stop before you get on the bus. If you are going to an unfamiliar location in Managua or Ciudad Sandino at night, go with a friend and take a taxi instead of a bus. If you are not sure where to get off, the *cobradores* (money collectors) can usually help you.

taxis

Coverage: There are taxis everywhere. Vehicles include horse carriages, motorcycle taxis, and cars.

Payment: Most taxi rides are under a dollar unless you are going long distances, and taxis in Managua can often be about \$1.50-\$2.00. Ask how much the fare will be before you get in the taxi. In all the sites there is a fixed fare for travel within the city limits, which may double in the evening hours.

Safety: Check a few things before boarding taxis:

1. notice who the other passengers are, if any – don't get in a taxi with sketchy characters!
2. make sure that the taxi driver's "cedula" (ID card) is posted in large print on the windshield
3. make sure the taxi has a red and white license plate



Is it safe to go out at night?

It is safer not to walk around at night after 8 p.m. If you must go somewhere, do not go alone. Consult with your host family about safety information specific to your neighborhood. Plan ahead and be cautious.

Nicaragua is one of the safest Central American countries and, if you exercise caution, it is unlikely you will run into any trouble. Crossing the street means dodging bicycles, cars, taxis, and buses that won't stop for you and walking around town includes avoiding potholes, sometimes very deep, in sidewalks and streets.

family homestay

The families are very excited to meet you! We know from feedback evaluations that the host family experience is always one of the highlights of living in Nicaragua. You will learn a great deal about Nicaragua through the people who live there, so cultivate a habit of listening and observing, rather than merely hearing and seeing.

A typical FSD host family in Nicaragua

The communities in Nicaragua where FSD works are small and virtually everyone knows each other. Cousins, brothers, and sisters live close by and interact on a daily basis. Nicaraguan families are typically large. It is very common to have three and four generations living under one roof which creates lively yet, at times, crowded households. Many homes also have pets.



Intern Melissa Wojnaroski with her family,
Fall 2006

Nicaraguan home-stays provide comfortable rooms, some of which have their own private bathroom. There is no air conditioning and the heat of the tropics can be frustrating at times. Most house roofs are made of zinc metal which contributes to the heat when indoors. Fans and refrigerated homemade fresh fruit juices help keep you cool. The communities in the north are somewhat colder. All homes have electricity and running water although these services are interrupted frequently. Consequently, it is common to shower with buckets of water.

What will my host family provide?

Your family is required to provide you with a private room, access to a bathroom and shower, three meals a day, purified water, a fan and weekly hand-washing of your clothes. Toiletries and a towel are not provided; you must bring your own.

What are the living accommodations like?

Living accommodations are basic by U.S. standards. Water and electricity often aren't available for short periods of time. Ants, mosquitoes, geckos, and occasionally spiders, scorpions, and small rodents can creep into the house! Your family can help prevent these unfortunate visitors, so let them know if you see something! Keeping your room clean and storing food in its place will make a big difference. You will become accustomed to a fair amount of night sound, including traffic, animals, rattling of zinc roofs in the wind and rain, and loud music. Ear-plugs can help.

Will a mosquito net be provided?

A mosquito net will not be provided in most cases. These are readily available in the local market if you would like to purchase one upon arrival.

How are families structured in Nicaragua?

Many Nicaraguan families consist of parents, grown children, and grandchildren in the same home. Children in Nicaragua, like children anywhere, can be both adorable and annoying, but try to maintain your patience with them in order to integrate smoothly into the household. Sometimes young children will be afraid of you for the first few weeks because you are a stranger and you look and act differently than the people they're used to. Please don't take this personally and be patient—they'll warm up to you with time.

Do I need to help out with chores?

We ask families to treat you as another member of the family, which means you will pick up after yourself, keep your area neat, and help out with the cooking and cleaning as appropriate.

Is it safe to bring and store valuables at my host family's house?

There is no need to bring many valuables. We require that you keep items of value locked in your luggage at all times. This is extremely important because friends and relatives are often in and out of the house.

However, there have been incidents when a student thought something was stolen only to find that s/he had misplaced it. This kind of "scandal" is hard on the host family who take great care to protect you and your things. If something unusual of this nature does happen, please speak with your host family and/or the FSD Site Team immediately.

What are standard meal times?

Meal times are similar to U.S. times, but don't be surprised if the family serves you before or after their meal. Many Nicaraguans watch the news or "telenovelas" (soap operas) on T.V. during lunch and dinner.

How should I tell my family that I'd like less food, or different kinds of food?

Don't be shy about asking your family for particular foods or the amount of food you want to eat. You should tell your family what you do and do not like to eat. Vegetarian food is always available.

How much time should I spend with my host family? What should we talk about?

You will likely spend a lot of time in the evening and weekends hanging out with your family members. They are your best and primary link to Nicaraguan culture, so feel free to ask questions!!! The first questions someone will usually ask you if you have a boyfriend or girlfriend or if you have kids – this is a standard conversation starter, so go ahead and ask them questions also. Be sensitive to the feelings of others and embrace the different viewpoints, lifestyles, experiences and company your family provides. Host families are eager to get to know you and learn about your American life so be ready to talk about your interests, culture, family and plans. Pictures and stories from home are always entertaining ...

How often should I check in with my family?

You are entrusted in the family's care and just like your own family, and they will worry about you if you don't check in. Please advise your family in advance if you do not plan to be home for a meal. Likewise, be sure to notify your family in advance of any weekend excursions you take other than those in the scheduled program.

Can I have visitors come over to the house?

Please advise your family before you invite anyone to the house, especially someone of the opposite sex. Overnight guests are **NOT** appropriate and are unacceptable during the program. Protect your family's safety and privacy. Do not give out their home number. Remember: Even though you will be treated as part of the family, you are still a guest in their home and must be respectful of their rules.

Will I receive my own set of keys?

You should receive your own set of keys to the house so that you are free to come and go as needed.

How do people spend their free time?

Families in all FSD cities may sit in front of the house and chat with friends until bedtime or watch their telenovelas, but young people often head to plazas or parks to meet up with friends and escape their parents!

Can I go out at night?

Yes. If you do make plans to go out at night, please advise your family of your transportation, who will be accompanying you, your return time, and arrangements for getting home and into the house. Exercise good judgment: As anywhere, it is best to go out with family members, co-workers or friends that you meet. Simply being an American makes you more of a target for theft, harassment, etc. You should never be out alone at night past 8 p.m.

How should I handle requests for money?

FSD program fees subsidize all of your room and board expenses so there is no need for you to discuss money with your family. They should not ask you to borrow money and if this happens, tell them it is against your program rules to lend money. Always let your Site Team know about the incident.

What types of gifts are appropriate to bring for my host family?

We suggest that you bring small and modest gifts for your host family as a token of goodwill and gratitude for their hospitality. For ideas, please see some suggestions on the packing list above.

personal account: an intern's view on Nicaragua

Paul Cook, Intern

Within walking distance of the center of Chagüitillo, Nicaragua, is a beautiful ravine with a trickling stream, a plethora of wildlife, and intriguing petroglyphs. Unfortunately, the ravine is also extremely contaminated. Both local residents and residents from a nearby town bath and launder their clothes in the natural wells formed by the stream. Cows from the local farms not only drink the contaminated water, but the subsequent feces they leave behind make the ravine un-usable.



I worked closely with the Asociación para el Desarrollo de Chagüitillo (ADCH), or the Association for the Development of Chagüitillo, and with the Chagüitillo community to preserve the petroglyphs and the water from the stream by helping to construct a water trough at the entrance to the ravine which simultaneously prevents the cows from entering the ravine and provides them with clean water. A control box was also constructed to facilitate the distribution of water and allow for future expansion of the project.

When I arrived in Nicaragua and met my host family, I tried helping prepare dinner my first night there. After insisting for several minutes, they let me take plates to the table. That was it. The next night I asked again and they insisted that I sit down and start eating. I would ask to help or say that they didn't need to do something for me and they would insist and do it anyway. Perhaps out of a great desire to make sure their guest was happy or they were genuinely full of kindness; whatever their motivation, my host family made certain they were doing all they could to make my stay with them comfortable.

I also worked with ADCH's small organic farm. Growing fruits and vegetables to make and sell jellies and spreads, the farm of ADCH employs 10-25 people. The farm also supports the community through donating 15% of proceeds to the local preschool, supporting university studies, and promoting ecotourism. However, all of the crops withered and the community supporting activities ended when the neighboring farm supplying ADCH with irrigation water was sold and its new owners refused to continue selling its water. The farm's manager wants to develop a model farm which will be used to demonstrate and educate the economic and environmental benefits of solar power, low-volume irrigation systems, and organic farming to other local producers. As a second project, I began investigating the resources and support needed to install a proper well, powered with solar panels, on the farm's property. An efficient irrigation system for the farm was developed by the engineers at Durman Esquibel and the bureaucratic process to perforate the well has begun; the project still needs financial support before it can continue with the construction of its well and irrigation system though.

Vicente, the farm's manager, thinks everything is possible if enough brain power is applied. He has a vision of a future Nicaragua that most would describe as implausible, but he convinced me over a few sessions of cigarettes and coffee that he could change the world if he had the support. Believing deeply in the power of communal cooperation, Vicente convincingly speaks of socialism in a personalized, but global way. With personal action on a micro level, he explains, we can change anything.

race, sexuality, and gender

How you interact with others (and they with you) will initially have a lot to do with preconceptions. You'll feel more comfortable once the inevitable "getting to know you" period is over, but keep some cultural norms in mind:

Race and Ethnicity

In Nicaragua, you may not encounter the same level and/or kind of awareness and sensitivity surrounding race relations and conceptualizations of heritage as you may be accustomed to finding in the U.S. If you have features associated with an Asian heritage, kids and adults may shout out, call or greet you as "Chino/a" or "Japones/a." If you have dark skin or features associated with an African heritage, people may refer to you as "Negro/a," or "Moreno/a." If you have fair skin, people may refer to you as "Gringo/a" or "Chele/a". If you have features associated with a Middle Eastern heritage, you may be referred to as "Arabe". If you have features associated with an Indian or South Asian heritage, you may be referred to as "Hindu." In most cases, these names are not necessarily derogatory terms; many people use them simply because your skin color or features are unusual or intriguing within that context. In some cases, it may be valuable to engage the people you meet in a conversation about the specificity of your heritage

Sexuality

Sexual orientation or preference is not a topic that is openly discussed in Nicaragua. In Masaya it is not unusual to see two men holding hands or dressed up as drag queens, however it is less *tranquilo* in other areas and discrimination here is inevitable. Please realize that any affiliation or experiences you have at home (especially in the LGBT community) may not be regarded with the same understanding or sensitivity. Please do your best to take this into consideration when discussing such issues with your host family or other members of the community.

Gender

Expect to get a lot of unwanted attention. If you are a woman, men will whistle and talk to you in the street. Do not be surprised if men often try to start conversations with you on the street, on the bus, waiting in line, or shopping. Use your common sense. The best thing to do is to ignore them. Do not give out your phone number to people you don't know. You can explain that you are living in someone else's house and are not allowed to receive calls or visitors.



Mural depicting the mixture of indigenous and Spanish heritage (*Güegüense*)

common cultural practices and beliefs

Time and Punctuality

The concept of "being on time" is definitely different. You will find that people consistently arrive late to meetings; when someone wishes to specify punctuality, they may note that the get-together is "*hora inglesa*" (british time). Thus, when someone shows up an hour later than planned for a workshop, [which will happen] or your bus never comes [which will happen], you can choose to get frustrated and infuriated with the bus, the person, or the culture OR you can accept the situation as an opportunity to learn about how things work in your host community. In spite of local concepts about punctuality, FSD interns will be expected to be on time (by North American standards) to work, group meetings and any other host organization-related appointments. This will reflect well on the intern's reputation as a dependable and sincere volunteer. The pace of life is also significantly slower than what you are probably used to in the U.S., particularly in the small town of Chagüitillo. Friends and neighbors are used to dropping by each other's houses simply to chat, with no set plan or activities.

Privacy: "alone time" vs. "abuelitas"

Your room can always serve as your home base for getting some time to yourself, but in general Nicaraguans are used to being around others all day: in the evening, family and friends hang out in rocking chairs ("*abuelitas*") on the front porch or in front of the television. Feel free to tell your family that you need some space and they will respect that wish.

Greetings and goodbyes

When walking down the street, strangers or friends commonly say "*adios*" (goodbye) to each other instead of "*hola*". It is appropriate to say this to everyone, but women should note that saying it to male stranger is seen as flirting. Similarly, young men often draw out the word "*adios*" as a form of catcalling women.

Non-verbal gestures and body language

- Nicaraguans kiss one another once on the cheek when being introduced and upon seeing family and friends. For formal introductions, grasp the person's right hand while also kissing their cheek. To get one another's attention, people make a "*tst-tst*" sound with their tongue
- To refer to someone or something in conversation, point your lips toward the indicated person or thing
- In stead of saying "come here" you can look at someone and tilt your head in their direction.
- For emphasis in conversation (very good or very bad), people shake their fingers in a snapping sound
- Women often walk together hand-in-hand or arm-in-arm; if men do this they are assumed to be gay
- Babies are communally loved and cared for: feel free to make faces at them and compliment their parents
- If somebody flexes their facial skin so as to almost wink at you after you've told them something, it means that they don't understand what you are saying and that you need to explain it again.

Romantic Relationships

Nicaragua's population is very young -- nearly half are under 20 years old -- and romantic relationships begin early. A third of young women have had their first baby before they turn twenty, but may not necessarily stay with the father. There is definitely a prevalence of "*machismo*" among men, however both men and women are aware of it and joke (or complain) about its emotional consequences in relationships. Acceptance of age differences in Nicaragua is much different than in a country such as the USA. An age difference of 5 years is not considered big at all, and in some cases, an age difference of 10 years is not considered abnormal.

Animals and pets

Many Nicaraguans have at least one dog, cat or bird, however the concept of pets ("*mascotas*") is very different: they are usually not seen as life companions, rather as utilitarian animals. For example, cats can get rid of pests such as cockroaches and rats, whereas dogs are almost always kept chained up in order to

guard the house and ward off potential intruders. Skeletal street dogs are everywhere -- don't touch them. Some FSD host families also have pet parrots, which add a good-humored dynamic to the family.

Religion

While the majority of Nicaragua is Catholic, a growing percentage of the population is converting to a variety of Christian denominations (commonly referred to as "*evangelismo*"). Churches are often started in peoples' homes, with the owner of the house being the pastor. In Ciudad Sandino, small churches spring up everywhere. You will hear the music in the streets.

language guide

forms of address:

- **Vos:** Nicaraguans use "vos" instead of "tu" when speaking directly to a friend, a child, or within other casual relationships. The conjugation of verbs changes with this form. In general, verbs maintain the structure of the infinitive but have an added accented "és" or "ás" at the end. For example: "Y vos, que pensás de Presidente Obama?" – "And you, what do you think about President Obama?" By listening to the way your family and co-workers speak, you will pick up this different verb form fairly quickly and easily.
- **Usted:** always use "usted" with adults -- including co-workers and host-parents -- unless they tell you otherwise. To address adults in general, use the prefix *Don* or *Doña* (Sr. and Sra. are not used here).
- **Other titles:** Most of the supervisors are addressed as "*Licenciado/a (last name)*", meaning they have a university degree. Health professionals are addressed as "*Doctor/a*" or "*Enfermera*", and teachers are addressed as "*professor/a*".

vocabulary at work:

Before arriving in Nicaragua, familiarize yourself with the vocabulary you'll need at work. Bringing a dictionary with you is vital, but a specific list that addresses terms specific to your organization (health, microfinance, education, etc) can help a lot. To review vocabulary, you can Google the relevant words in Spanish (*salud, microfinanzas, educación, desarrollo sostenible, etc.*).

language resources:

- **Practice:** Speaking a language is the best way to learn, so don't be afraid to practice your Spanish with as many people as possible. Your best resource in learning the local language will be your host family and co-workers at your host organization. Depending on your language ability, this may be extremely frustrating at times. Relax and remember that the key to learning (or improving your skills in) a language is the ability to laugh at yourself.
- **Dictionaries and Phrase Books:** These can be expensive and difficult to find once you are in-country, so you might want to purchase one before you leave. Oxford and Collins produce good pocket ones.
- **On-line:**
 - Nicaraguan edition of Google: www.google.com.ni
 - Spanish resources from the U of Oregon: <http://babel.uoregon.edu/yamada/guides/spanish.html>
 - Languages in Nicaragua: http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=NI
- **Tutoring:** If you are interested in tutoring upon arrival, let your Site Team know. They will help you to set up sessions with a tutor, at your own expense. Sessions usually cost \$5 US/ hour.
- **Language Schools:** Please note that FSD is not affiliated with any language schools in Nicaragua; the schools listed below are for reference only. Feel free to consult your contact at FSD for a Nicaragua language programs reference sheet for more detail.
 - *Nicaragua Spanish Schools:* <http://pages.prodigy.net/nss-pmc/#intro> - is a cooperative consortium of 10 independent Spanish language schools located throughout the country. You must first contact NSS in order to get the school's individual contact information.
 - *Hijos del Maiz:* <http://www.hijosdelmaiz.net/> - located in rural Largentillo in north-east Nicaragua, this is a Spanish school with a focus on small farming communities. Students can live with host families and participate as volunteers in projects with *campesinos*.
 - *Proyecto Ecologico:* <http://www.gaianicaragua.org/school.html> - set on the banks of a volcanic crater lake near Masaya called Laguna de Apoyo, the school's teachers are local residents who incorporate ecotourism activities and active conversation into their classes.

Glossary:

Names and greetings/phrases:

adios: in Nicaragua, *adios* is a greeting instead of a goodbye. It is polite to say *adios* as you pass people on the street

chavala / chavalo: young woman / young man. If referring to a child, one may say *chavalito* or *chavalita*

chefe / chela: pale skinned man / woman (not meant in a derogatory sense, this is often used between Nicaraguans as a friendly greeting)

don / doña: Mr. and Mrs....most adults can either be referred to as *don / doña* or *licenciado / licenciada*

mae: a greeting used for "dude" or "buddy," often used between male friends

moreno / morena: dark skinned man / woman

mujer / varón: man / woman

nica: nickname for a Nicaraguan person

vos: this is the informal "you" that Nicaraguans use instead of "tu". For children and friends, *vos* is appropriate – for everyone else - including all adults until they tell you otherwise - use *usted*.

licenciado / licenciada: although its literal meaning is licensed, it means that person has graduated from college.

Dale Pues: A phrase meaning "Ok" "I agree" or "Let's do that."

Va Pues: A phrase meaning "Ok then"

Gringo/a: A title given specifically to people from the USA. The phrase is of indigenous origin.

Qué onda?: A greeting phrase meaning "What's going on?" or "What's up?"

Que barbaridad!: a phrase that is said when something odd happens. For example, if you see a 2-year-old kid driving a car, you could say "Que barbaridad!"

Food and drink:

agua purificada: purified water. You will always have purified water available at home and at group meetings

arroz de la jardinero: a delicious mixture of rice, beans, chicken, and vegetables, similar to stir-fry

avena: oatmeal. Usually fixed as a cold drink with water and sugar for breakfast or a late night snack

baho: root vegetable and meat stew with potatoes, yucca, taro root (*quequisque*), beef, and carrots

calala: orange-like fruit

carita: popsickle

chayote: a popular squash vegetable

chiltoma: bell pepper

cuajada: a rich, creamy type of cheese used on tortillas or gallo pinto. It is sometimes visually difficult to tell the difference between regular "queso" and cuajada, but the taste difference is evident.

frescos: short for "refrescos", *frescos* refers to a wide variety of natural juices made from fruits and/or seeds. Some examples include: naranja, pitahaya, linaza, cebada, granadilla, tamarindo, avena, semilla de jicaro, chilla, and pozol. Frescos are sold everywhere in small plastic bags with ice - and cost 4 to 5 córdobas, or about 30 cents

gallo pinto: beans and rice (*frijoles y arroz*) – the most typical Nicaraguan dish. Many people eat *gallo pinto* for both breakfast and dinner; lunch is usually a bit larger and more varied

gaseosa: soda – is also often sold in small plastic bags (since glass bottles are expensive)

helado: ice-cream

hielo: ice

huevos: eggs (scrambled eggs are referred to as *huevos perdidos* – literally, lost eggs)

nacatamales: Nicaraguan specialty – a tamale with chile, tomatoes, potatoes, pork, rice and bell pepper

pitahaya: delicious purple-red fruit

Pinolio: a cacao-like traditional drink that is very thick, flavorful, and sometimes hard to swallow

pollo: chicken

puerco: pork (sometimes also referred to as simply "cerdo")

pulperia: small family-owned general store – often operated out of a family’s house, and usually specializing in some product or service (fruit juices, phone cards, sewing, hardware repair, etc.)

quequisque: taro root

queso: cheese

res: beef

sopa: soup. Bean soup (*sopa de frijoles*) is particularly wonderful

verduras: vegetables

yucca: root vegetable similar to potatoes

Development:

agua potable: potable (drinkable) water

amenaza: threat

apoyar: to support

campaña: campaign

campo: rural area

campesino / campesina: rural villager

capacitación: educational workshop

charla: a brief or casual talk, which can also be informal or impromptu workshops

comunidad: community

contaminación: pollution

cooperativa: cooperative

derechos: rights

desarrollo: development

ecoturismo: ecotourism - tourism focused on environmental conservation

empleo / desempleo: employment / unemployment

empoderamiento: empowerment

empresa: business

feria: a community fair or carnival

genero: gender

gente humilde: literally, humble people – referring to poor people

infraestructura: infrastructure

investigación: research

justicia / injusticia: justice / injustice

letrina: latrine

medio ambiente: environment

microfinanza: microfinance

ONG (Organización No-Gubernamental): nongovernmental organization –short form for saying nonprofit

oportunidad: opportunity

población: population

proceso: process

realizar: to carry out

recursos: resources

sostenible: sustainable

ventaja: advantage

viviendas: housing

zona franca: free trade zone (physical zones where multinational corporations owned in the USA, Spain, Italy, Panama, Honduras, Taiwan, China, and Japan can import raw materials tax-free and export finished goods tax-free, offering stable employment to 76,000 Nicaraguans)

Health:

cancer cervico / cancer mama: cervical cancer / breast cancer

brigadista de salud: outreach health worker

dengue: dengue fever

desnutrición: malnutrition

doctor / enfermera: / brigadista: doctor / nurse

embarazo: pregnancy

Enfermedades crónicas (hipertensión, arterial, diabetes, artritis, epilepsia) – chronic illnesses (hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, epilepsy)

epidemiología: epidemiology

infecciones respiratorias: respiratory infections

infecciones de transmisión sexual (ITS) – sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

lactancia materna: breast-feeding

medicamento: medicine

MINSA: Ministerio de Salud (national Nicaraguan health program)

paciente: patient

papnicolau: papsmear (a common exam offered in most women's health organizations)

parásitos: parasites

partera: midwife

planificación familiar – family planning

riesgo: risk

vacuna: vaccination

VIH / SIDA: HIV/AIDS

violencia intrafamiliar: domestic violence

zancudo: mosquito

Youth:

alumno / estudiante: student

bachata: a style of slow music and side-step dance

carrera: career – also referred to as an academic major

cuaderno: notebook

deseos: wishes

habilidades: abilities

metas: goals

reggaeton: the most popular music and dance for Nicaraguan youth, originally from Puerto Rico

tuani: cool

links, contacts & recommended reading

Travel/Entertainment/Culture

- Berman, Joshua & Wood, Randy. [Moon Living Abroad in Nicaragua](#). Avalon Travel Publishing, 1st edition, 2006.
- Rushdie, Salman. [The Jaguar Smile: A Nicaraguan Journey](#). Picador, New York, NY., 1st edition 1987, Picador edition 2003.
- Randall, Margaret. [Risking a Somersault in the Air: Conversations with Nicaraguan Writers](#). Solidarity Publications, San Francisco, CA. 1984.

History

- General overview, from ESPANICA: <http://www.nodo50.org/espanica/historica.html>
- Nicaragua: The Making of U.S. Policy, 1978-1990: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/publications/nicaragua/nicaragua.html>
- NOW with Bill Moyers - Echoes of War: <http://www.pbs.org/now/politics/nicaragua.html>
- Brentlinger, John. The Best of What We Are: Reflections on the Nicaraguan Revolution
- Belli, Gioconda. [El Pais Bajo mi Piel: Memorias de Amor y Guerra](#). Plaza y Janes Editores, S.A., Barcelona, Spain, 2001.

Race and Gender

- Lancaster, Roger N. [Life is Hard: Machismo, Danger, and the Intimacy of Power in Nicaragua \(A Centennial Book\)](#). University of California Press, 1992.
- Randall, Margaret. [Sandino's Daughters: Testimonies of Nicaraguan Women in Struggle](#).
- Babb, Florence E. [After Revolution: Mapping gender and cultural politics in neoliberal Nicaragua](#). Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001.
- Pineda, Baron L. [Shipwrecked Identities: Navigating Race on Nicaragua's Mosquito Coast](#). Rutgers University Press, 2006.
- Movimiento de Mujeres Marian Elena Cuadra (MEC): <http://www.mec.org.ni/>
- Puntos de Encuentro: <http://www.puntos.org.ni/default.php>
- Wisconsin Coordinating Council on Nicaragua (WCCN): <http://www.wccnica.org/women.html>

Health

- Werner, David; Thuman, Carol & Maxwell, Jane. [Where There is No Doctor](#), Hesperian Foundation; Rev Sub edition, 1992.
- Ministerio de Salud de Nicaragua: <http://www.minsa.gob.ni/>
- World Health Organization (in Nicaragua): <http://www.who.int/countries/nic/en/>
- Centro de Servicios Educativos en Salud y Medio Ambiente: <http://www.cesesma.org/>

Micro-finance and Micro-enterprise

- Asociación Nicaragüense de Instituciones de Micrafinanzas (ASOMIF): www.asomif.org
- Pro Mujer Nicaragua: <http://www.promujer.org/nicaragua.html>
- Cooperativa Maquiladora Mujeres de Nueva Vida: <http://www.fairtradezone.jhc-cdca.org/>
- Planet Finance: <http://www.planetfinance.org/EN/index.php>
- CGAP: <http://www.cgap.org/portal/site/cgap/>

Youth and Education

- Centro de Servicios Educativos en Salud y Medio Ambiente: <http://www.cesesma.org/>
- Federación Coordinadora Nicaragüense de ONG's que trabajan con la Niñez y la Adolescencia (CODENI): <http://www.codeni.org.ni/>

Environment

- Ministerio del Ambiente/Recursos Naturales de Nicaragua (MARENA): <http://www.marena.gob.ni/>
- El Porvenir: <http://www.elporvenir.org/>
- Grupo Fénix: <http://www.grupofenix.org/>

Human Rights

- Enriquez, Laura J. [Agrarian Reform and Class Consciousness in Nicaragua](#). Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1997.
- Gould, Jeffrey L. [To Lead As Equals: Rural Protest and Political Consciousness in Chinandega, Nicaragua](#). NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.
- Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos (CENIDH) - <http://www.cenidh.org/>
- Amnesty Internacional (Nicaragua): <http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/nicaragua/>
- NicaNet: <http://www.nicaraguanet.org/>
- Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign: <http://www.nicaraguasc.org.uk/>
- Quixote Center – Quest for Peace: <http://quest.quixote.org/>
- Coordinadora Civil: www.ccer.org.ni
- Hendrix, Stephen. [The New Nicaragua: Lessons in Democracy, Development, and Nation-building for the United States](#).