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Politics and Education: The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Teresa Squires Osborne for the Master of Science
in Political Science presented October 12, 1990.

Title: Politics and Education: The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade.

APPROVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:

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The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade of 1980, carried out in the aftermath of a long and destructive revolution, was able, in five months time, to decrease the nation's illiteracy rate from 50 percent to 13 percent. The newly formed Nicaraguan government, recognizing the political nature of education, viewed its Literacy Crusade as a major step in the development of a "new", post-revolutionary Nicaragua.

As a means of comparison, two other literacy campaigns are also examined: the Cuban campaign of 1961, and the UNESCO-sponsored Experimental World Literacy Programme, in place from 1965-1973.

The Cuban campaign served as a precursor to the Nicaraguan effort. It, too, occurred after a revolution, with education also viewed as a key to the consolidation of a new

government. Likewise, the effort in Cuba depended upon an intense and massive effort by the public, to participate as students, teachers, or both. In less than one year, the illiteracy rate in Cuba decreased from 26 percent to 4 percent, with 700,000 Cubans achieving minimal literacy. In addition, the campaign was simply the first step in a series of educational changes. Follow-up campaigns, as well as increased emphasis on formal schooling, has continued in Cuba.

The UNESCO effort proved to be much less successful. The EWLP was to include intensive and selective literacy projects in eleven designated nations. The literacy projects were based upon work-oriented definitions of literacy, and were, for the most part, planned and administered by international experts. The lack of involvement by national leaders or educators proved to be a great hinderance, especially since many of the nations were interested in mass literacy programs, not selective literacy projects. At the conclusion of the EWLP, thirty-two million dollars had been spent, but only 120,000 adults had been classified as new literates. UNESCO's own assessment of the EWLP pointed to a number of problems in organization, personnel, methods and materials that contributed to this lack of success.

The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade was able to take the best parts of both of these previous efforts, and achieve some remarkable successes. The mass involvement of the people, and the commitment of time and resources at the national level made the Nicaraguan effort a national priority. While experts from other nations and international agencies participated in the Crusade, it was a decidedly Nicaraguan effort. Unlike the EWLP, the idea of literacy in both Nicaraguan and Cuba was tied to an overall change in the structures and attitudes of society; literacy was to be integrated into the people's lives, not to just be a way to improve job skills. For Nicaragua, the Literacy Crusade decreased the illiteracy rate, created 400,000 new literates, and led to follow-up efforts meant to further develop the educational and social process.

From the comparison of these literacy efforts, three factors stand out as keys to successful increases in literacy in developing nations. Education must first be seen as part of an overall development strategy, created by and for a particular nation. A literacy campaign must also involve a majority of citizens in some way, especially those with no previous access to education. Finally, to enact these goals of overall development and mass participation, a literacy campaign must have support from all levels of government, who must be willing to sacrifice other goals in order to achieve long-term change.

POLITICS AND EDUCATION:
THE NICARAGUAN LITERACY CRUSADE

by
TERESA SQUIRES OSBORNE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Within weeks of the conclusion of the Nicaraguan revolution in 1979, the newly formed Sandinista government began plans for one of its first efforts at domestic policy planning and implementation: a literacy campaign. Given the problems of government after a civil war, as well as the difficult economic straits the nation was left in, many questioned the feasibility of such an undertaking. Yet at the conclusion of the Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade, the illiteracy rate of the nation had dropped from 50 percent to 13 percent in five months time. The enormous effort and dedication by the government and people of Nicaragua contributed to this effort and success.

The newly formed government of Nicaragua early on recognized the important and political nature of education. Whether in the developed or developing world, education is viewed as such an important aspect of a society that governments want to be involved in it at many levels.¹ Educational programs require the allocation of great human and material resources, resulting in difficult decision-making for national leaders and planners. Furthermore, decisions about educational systems involve dealing with virtually all levels of society, which makes change difficult. As a World Bank report stated, "since educational issues raise profound political questions, it is no wonder that few countries have successfully implemented major educational reforms."²

1. Edgar Faure, et al., Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow (Paris: UNESCO, 1972), p. 16.

2. John Simmons, The Education Dilemma: Policy issues for Developing Countries in the 1980's (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980), p. 1.

For developing nations, educational decisions have enormous political impacts. For newly independent nations, the language and schools of the former colonizer may prove to be an assault on nationalist feelings. Likewise, new governments may see a need to enact policies quickly to demonstrate their control over domestic issues. Often times the school system, with its wide reach in the society, becomes one of the first attempts at deciding domestic policy. And especially for developing nations, education has been viewed as "the" answer for problems ranging from inequality to ethnic conflicts to discrimination to economics.³ Furthermore, in establishing the legitimacy of a government, education may be seen as a "crucial mechanism for the the extension of state authority."⁴

But for developing nations, part of the dilemma is the lack of financial resources, not just for education, but for most other programs as well. Where money comes from, and what influence it has on planning, may determine educational policies. Yet the case in Nicaragua points to at least one situation where the lack of adequate financing did not prevent a successful educational program from being enacted.

Education programs and projects have been a major part of most development plans. Whether as part of an endogenous planning program, or within an externally-planned program, education has been seen as a necessary part of any attempts toward economic, political, or social development. Yet many of these education plans have failed to meet the expectations of experts and planners.

Literacy campaigns have been one of the many forms of educational planning used in these attempts. Literacy campaigns, with a focus on adult illiteracy, have become an

3. John C. Bock, "Education and Development: A Conflict of Meaning," Comparative Education, ed. Philip G. Altbach, Robert F. Arnove, and Gail P. Kelly (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1982), p. 82.

4. Bock, p. 78.

increasingly common approach to begin educational reform in the developing world. By examining three different literacy programs-- the Cuban campaign of 1961, the UNESCO-sponsored Experimental World Literacy Programme of 1965-1973, and the Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade of 1980--it may be possible to reach some conclusions as to the characteristics of campaigns in the developing world.

EDUCATION, COLONIALISM AND DEPENDENCY

The problems of education in the developing world, and the use of literacy campaigns to respond to these problems, must be examined within the historic context of education in the Third World. From the 1960's into the 1980's, governments of the developed and developing world were increasing school enrollments and educational expenditures, a sign of the increasingly important role education was taking. (Tables I and II) But the assumed improvements in the problems of illiteracy, inequality, and poverty did not follow from these increased expenditures. The assumption that greater educational spending would lead directly to greater over-all development was not being borne out. Even as literacy percentages were rising, (Table III) the absolute number of illiterates were also rising. UNESCO estimates placed the total number of illiterates at 569 million in 1970, 625 million in 1980, and a projection of over 680 million for 1990.⁵

5. Philip H. Coombs, The World Crisis in Education: The View From the Eighties (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 268.

TABLE I

GROWTH OF ENROLLMENTS BY LEVELS AND REGIONS, 1960-1980

REGION	LEVEL OF EDUCATION	NUMBER ENROLLED			% INCREASE, 1960-1980
		<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	
Developed	Primary	124,077	137,711	124,454	1
	Secondary	46,429	70,519	80,574	72
	Higher	9,599	21,105	29,719	214
	TOTAL	180,105	229,335	235,747	31
Developing	Primary	121,982	203,343	291,968	142
	Secondary	21,788	51,034	96,611	358
	Higher	2,625	7,037	16,763	523
	TOTAL	146,395	263,483	405,342	181

--Does not include People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Namibia.

--Adjusted for country differences in the length and official age span of elementary schooling.

Source: UNESCO, Trends and Projections of Enrollment, 1960-2000 (as assessed in 1982), (Paris: UNESCO, Division of Statistics on Education, Office of Statistics, March 1983), pp. 60-62, cited in Coombs, The World Crisis in Education, p. 99.

TABLE II

ESTIMATED PUBLIC EXPENDITURES ON EDUCATION,
IN BILLIONS OF U.S. DOLLARS

<u>Region</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>
World	158	330	618	681
Developed countries	146	289	525	585
Developing countries	12	4	93	96

--Does not include the People's Republic of China, Democratic Kampuchea, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Mongolia, and Vietnam.

Source: UNESCO, Public Expenditures on Education in the World, Regional and Country Trends, (Paris: UNESCO, Division of Statistics on Education, Office of Statistics, October 1982), cited in Coombs, The World Crisis in Education, p. 167.

TABLE III
GROWTH IN THE PERCENTAGE OF LITERATES
(AGE 15 AND OLDER), 1970-1990

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>
World Total	67.5	71.1	74.3
Developing countries	43.2	52.3	60.9
Developed countries	97.5	98.2	98.5

Source: UNESCO, Estimates and Projections of Illiteracy, (Paris: UNESCO, Division of Statistics on Education, Office of Statistics, September 1978), Table 4, p. 111, cited in Coombs, The World Crisis in Education, p. 267.

Some saw part of the problem as imperialism through the educational system and aid. In this view, educational systems had not been created to bring equality of opportunity, but to help fulfill the goals of imperialism; "The imperial powers attempted, through schooling, to train the colonized for roles that suited the colonizer."⁶ And even as nations gained independence, they were left with the structure, curriculum, texts, teachers, and even the language of the colonial power.⁷ The problems of being a newly independent country often meant that the structures and institutions already in place had to be kept and used, because the emerging nations did not have the time or resources to re-create an educational system.

Linked to the idea of colonialism is the notion of dependency. Dependency is the situation where developing nations are tied, through economics, politics, and history, to the developed nations.⁸ Given this high level of involvement, it seems certain that education,

6. Martin Carnoy, Education as Cultural Imperialism (New York: David McKay & Company, 1974), p. 3.

7. Ibid; James S. Coleman, ed., Education and Political Development (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 35-50.

8. André Gunder Frank, "The Development of Underdevelopment," The Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment, ed. Charles K. Wilber, (New York: Random House, 1973), pp. 94-104; Theotônio dos Santos, "The Structure of

and especially educational planning, would also become part of the dependency cycle. For the developing nations, it often meant having to choose between "breaking loose" from the developed power, and possibly losing all aid, or sticking with the dominant nation and having to comply with their wishes.⁹

In addition, dominant nations tend to see the aid programs for the Third World in terms of their own interests. Educational aid becomes another way to maximize the benefits for donor nations, by influencing the economic balance and work force requirements of the dependent nation.¹⁰ Finally, like aid connected with colonialism, aid with the strings of dependency may be seen as better than no aid at all for planners and politicians in the Third World. "Many projects that may seem of marginal use are accepted because they entail no cost to the recipient country. The unanticipated consequences of some aid projects are seldom considered."¹¹

Yet another problem for education in the developing world is that of funding from external agencies. For many developing countries, a major portion of educational funds comes from outside sources.¹² The concerns of a developing nation, in trying to gain back control of educational planning, often comes into conflict with the various plans and criteria

Dependence," The Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment, pp. 109-118.

9. Hans N. Weiler, "Educational Planning and Social Change: A Critical Review of Concepts and Practices", Comparative Education, ed. Philip Altbach, Robert F. Arnove, Gail P. Kelly, (New York: MacMillian Publishing Company, Inc., 1982), p. 116.

10. Thomas J. LaBelle, Nonformal Education in Latin America and the Caribbean: Stability, Reform, or Revolution?, (New York: Praeger Publishing, 1986), p. 79.

11. Philip G. Altbach, "Servitude of the Mind? Education, Dependency and Neocolonialism" Comparative Education, p. 481.

12. Ibid, p. 117.

established by the outside agencies, including the World Bank and UNESCO. As one analyst stated:

[I]nternational banks and other financing agencies appear to be the real actors in educational planning in developing countries, and it proves difficult to convince such agencies of what the country itself consider to be its needs.¹³

Educational assistance programs may even be responsible for contributing to educational problems, especially in educational planning.¹⁴ For example, McGinn, Schiefelbein and Warwick describe how World Bank sponsored educational projects tend to focus on cost effectiveness as a major criteria in assessing educational objectives. Furthermore, the "rationalist" planning approach used by both the World Bank and USAID does not take into account the social, political, or historical issues of the nations involved.¹⁵ In these cases, the educational planning being attempted by developing nations themselves may be pushed aside in favor of the money that can be offered by external agencies. So even as developing nations attempt to gain control of the educational systems and curriculums within their nations, the structure of colonialism, dependency and funding from external agencies limits what decision-making can be done.

By the mid-1970's, the problems inherent in trying to duplicate the styles and forms of education from developed nations in the developing world became apparent. Primarily, colonial models of education were beginning to be seen as both inappropriate and

13. Ibid.

14. Noel McGinn, Ernesto Schiefelbein, Donald Warwick, "Educational Planning as Political Process: Two Case Studies from Latin America", Comparative Education Review 23, no. 2 (June 1979), pp. 218-239; Joanne Nagel and Conrad W. Snyder, Jr., "International Funding of Educational Development: External Agendas and Internal Adaptations--The Case of Liberia", Comparative Education Review 33, no. 1 (February 1989), pp. 3-20; Cheryl Payer, The World Bank: A Critical Analysis, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1982).

15. McGinn, Schiefelbein and Warwick, pp. 218-220.

unworkable structures for the Third World.¹⁶ Even items like the layout of school buildings, classrooms, and school furniture seemed to cause difficulties in attempts at schooling.¹⁷

THREE CASE STUDIES

An examination of the Cuban, Nicaraguan, and EWLP literacy efforts provides three different examples of the planning, organization, and implementation of a literacy campaign. The EWLP effort followed the traditional, project literacy approach, based on a definition of functional literacy, that had become a UNESCO trademark. The campaigns in Cuba and Nicaragua both followed revolutions, and approached literacy as country-wide efforts, addressing both the social and political relations of literacy.

All three literacy examples proceeded from the assumption that education and development are closely linked. Literacy, and its tie to social, economic and political development, was accepted in all three cases, even though each campaign gave greater emphasis to particular types of development.

16. Edgar Faure, "Preamble", Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow, (Paris: UNESCO, 1972), pp. xix-xx; Matthew Zachariah, "Comparative Educators and International Development Policy", Comparative Education Review 23, no. 3 (October 1979).

17. Ronald Dore, "The Future of Formal Education in Developing Countries", The Education Dilemma, pp. 71-74.

CHAPTER II

THE CUBAN LITERACY CAMPAIGN AND THE EXPERIMENTAL WORLD LITERACY PROGRAMME

EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Education And Political Development

Education is viewed as influencing political development in a myriad of ways. David Abernathy provides, in The Political Dilemma of Popular Education, a framework for discussing the relationship between the two. In examining broad categories, political development can be viewed as referring to the qualities of capacity, equality, and integration.¹⁸

Capacity refers to the ability of a government of achieve its goals. Especially in developing nations, with a history of colonial or dependent relations, it may be extremely difficult to address these issues. Whether the objectives of a government can be fulfilled depends on a number of factors: communication with the populace, the efficiency of its institutions, the adaptability of leadership to the changes and demands in the nation itself.¹⁹

Education plays a great role in helping the government fulfill these "preconditions" for capacity. On a very basic level, a more literate population may create a situation where the government can easily communicate with the people. But the concept of political socialization may do the most for increasing the capacity of the government.

18. David B. Abernathy, The Political Dilemma of Popular Education: An African Case, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 7.

19. Ibid.

Political socialization refers to "that process by which individuals acquire attitudes and feelings toward the political system and toward their role in it."²⁰ Education, and in particular formal schooling, provides a process whereby individuals, from a young age, are socialized into the expected behaviors and attitudes. While there are other factors--family, peers, religion--that influence political socialization, a five-nation comparative study by Almond and Verba placed education in a priority position, and reached the conclusion that,

Educational attainment appears to have the most important demographic effect on political attitudes...[none of the other variables] compares with the educational variable in the extent to which it seems to determine political attitudes. The uneducated man or the man with limited education is a different political actor from the man who has achieved a higher level of education.²¹

For developing nations, especially, it appears that education plays a heavy role in political socialization. In rural areas, the family appears to play the greater role in socialization, and in such situations, the socialization is focused more on participation with local authorities than national ones.²² So for the government of a developing nation, in order to create linkages of communication with the population, the system of education may be the most effective way to do so.

Furthermore, education provides a way to train citizens for "particular political attitudes and behavioral dispositions through the injection of a specific political content into the educational curriculum."²³ While some continue to stress that education be a "neutral " process, most are accepting the notion that state-sponsored education cannot be made neutral; "no nation or state, whatever its political orientation, will put the bulk of its

20. Coleman, p. 18.

21. Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 379.

22. Coleman, p. 21.

23. Ibid, p. 23.

citizenry through a system which does not legitimize its own social and political ethics, and hence its very survival."²⁴

Finally, the increased capacity of a state will usually require an expanding bureaucracy, which will depend upon an educational system to produce the personnel to fill the new positions.²⁵ But beyond providing the necessary skills, expanded schooling also is "part of a wider process of institution building that must occur if capacity is to be maintained over time."²⁶

Equality continues to be seen as a desirable goal for nations, even though certain inequalities appear to be inevitable.²⁷ Part of equality involves providing certain services, or basic needs, to an entire population. Education has come to be seen as one of these services that all people are entitled to, whether they be urban or rural, rich or poor. And with greater diversity within the school system, and greater exposure for all members of society, the opportunities for political, social or economic mobility are seen as increasing. So in order to increase equality, schooling becomes an important aspect in political involvement and recruitment. Educated citizens are more likely to participate, and participate effectively, in politics.²⁸ Likewise, universal schooling is seen as providing opportunities to achieve political leadership on individual merit, not simply ascriptive characteristics. And there appears to be a strong relationship between education and

24. Theodore MacDonald, Making a New People: Education in Revolutionary Cuba, (Vancouver, B.C.: New Star Books, 1985), p. 25.

25. Abernathy, p. 7.

26. Ibid, p. 8.

27. Ibid.

28. Almond and Verba, p. 382; Abernathy, p. 9.

political leadership.²⁹ Moreover, for developing nations, increasing school enrollment and literacy rates may be seen as evidence of growing equality with the developed world.³⁰

Finally, an integrated polity may be defined as one that "holds together, having reduced to a manageable level the differences separating groups of people from each other and the tensions that threaten to break the society apart."³¹ For many developing nations, there is poor integration between the elite and the masses, as well as "gaps" between various ethnic, religious, or language groupings.³² By providing education to the masses, rather than restricting it to the few, the gap may be bridged, allowing for greater integration. Likewise, the integration of the various local populations, through similar schooling, may help in the creation of a national political consciousness, by exposing a majority of the citizenry to the same national symbols, ideas and goals. The act of breaking down local or regional loyalties, and replacing them with national ones, may most effectively be done within the schools.³³ While political socialization may instill similar attitudes among the population, education may serve further as political integration by providing a "national outlook" for students, and helping to reduce the tensions between the various ethnic, religious, racial, or linguistic groups.³⁴

29. Ingemar Fagerlind and Lawrence J. Saha, Education and National Development: A Comparative Perspective (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1983), p. 123.

30. Abernathy, p. 8.

31. Ibid.

32. Abernathy, p. 8; Coleman, p. 30.

33. Fagerlind and Saha, p. 126; Abernathy, p. 9.

34. Abernathy, p. 9.

Economic Development And Education

Education for the purpose of economic development has, from early on, been viewed as a goal for the Third World. As Robert McNamara of the World Bank stated, the organization began funding educational programs in 1962 with the aim of helping "developing countries reform and expand their educational systems in such a way that the latter may contribute more fully to economic development."³⁵ In light of that, formal education was seen as a prerequisite for economic growth.³⁶ The feeling that expanded education was to be "the prime requisite not only for economic development, but also for the badge of modernity...allowing for full acceptance in the modern world community", ³⁷ pushed developing nations to increase the quantity of educational programs and enrollment levels. While there does not appear to be a causal relationship between education and development, they are intertwined. The World Bank World Development Report 1980, in a study of eighty-three developing countries, showed that:

in the ten countries that had the highest growth rate of real per capita GNP between 1960 and 1977, the literacy level in 1960 average 16 percent higher than it did for other countries at the same income level.³⁸

For many national and international planners, such measures as GNP and literacy levels demonstrate the linkage between education and economic development.

35. Robert McNamara, Education: Sector Working Paper, (New York: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1974), p. i.

36. Coleman, p. 3; William J. Platt, "Conflicts in Educational Planning", Education and Political Development ed. James S. Coleman, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 567-568; Beatrice Avalos, "Neocolonialism and Education in Latin America," Education in the Third World, ed. Keith Watson, (London: Croom Helm, 1982), p. 148.

37. Coleman, p. 39.

38. World Bank, World Development Report 1980, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) cited in Warren C. Baum and Stokes M. Tolbert, Investing in Development: Lessons of World Bank Experience, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 120.

The role of education in economic development was to fulfill many objectives-- provide new skills and training, higher standards of living, and socialization into new attitudes-- in order to achieve further development.

Training provided by the educational system was to provide a boost to economic development by teaching new skills and/or developing old ones. In particular, the schools would provide the knowledge and skills necessary for a modern economy.³⁹ By helping to develop new skills, that previously may have had to be learned through foreign personnel, a nation would have a greater manpower pool and help diminish the bonds of dependency.⁴⁰ In addition, since industry would depend upon new technology to advance, it would be necessary to have a steady workforce that was able to meet these new demands. But in the modern economic climate, it would be necessary to be able to quickly learn these new skills, and not wait for on-the-job training. So formal instruction was to play an "important role in transmitting the necessary expertise quickly and efficiently."⁴¹

Furthermore, education was seen as the route to higher standards of living, which would result in even greater economic advances. A class of "highly skilled individuals would surely stimulate economic growth and employment."⁴² Since education would provide "upward mobility" for the poor, they would have greater income, and changing

39. Mark Blaug, Economics of Education: Selected Readings, (New York: Penguin Books, 1968); Frederick Harbison and Charles A. Meyers, Education, Manpower and Economic Growth: Strategies in Human Resources Development, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964); Theodore W. Schultz, "Investment in Human Capital," in Power and Ideology in Education, pp. 313-324.

40. Abernathy, p. 6.

41. Ibid.

42. Remi Clignet, "Education and Employment after Independence," The Education Dilemma, p. 165.

consumer demands that would lead to increased production would further develop the economy.⁴³

Finally, education was seen as the way to socialize the population into the "attitudes" of economic development. Especially, socializing individuals toward "achievement motivation"⁴⁴ would assist in the entrepreneurial spirit viewed as necessary for economic development. The growth of aspirations, and desire for new goods and services, would contribute to economic output.⁴⁵

The importance of education to development, both political and economic, can be seen in the increased emphasis on formal schooling beginning in the early 1960's. In both the developed and developing world, at all levels of education, 1960-1980 saw great jumps in the absolute numbers of students enrolled in schools. In the developing nations, primary, secondary and higher education all saw increased enrollments of over 100 percent. (Table I) In addition, the amount of money spent on education, even adjusted for inflation, has risen dramatically. UNESCO estimates just for the 1970-79 time period show expenditures in the developing nations going from 12.4 billion dollars in 1970 to 65.6 billion in 1979.⁴⁶ These increases in enrollment and expenditures have come from many sources: international agencies, foreign aid, and from the budgets of developing countries themselves. The increasing amounts spent, and the involvement of international agencies like UNESCO and the World Bank, point to the perception of education as a critical factor in development.

43. Daniel A. Morales-Gómez, "Seeking new paradigms to plan education for development the role of educational research," *Prospects* 19, no. 2 (1989), p. 194.

44. Clignet, p. 165.

45. Abernathy, p. 6.

46. Coombs, p. 167.

But there has also been a different attitude about the development. Early on, political and economic development were seen as separate goals, calling for independent planning. Yet the complexity of development, and of education's role in development, has forced a re-evaluation of the process and the theory behind it. In particular, the view that education will provide only the desired developments, and that it is an independent variable, relatively unaffected by the economic, political, or social environment has proved to be a simplification of the issue.⁴⁷

Formal And Nonformal Education

Formal education--with students beginning in the first grade at a pre-determined age, and moving up through the university--had traditionally been seen as the method for increasing the educational, and therefore developmental, capacities of nations. For that reason, much early emphasis in educational development had been on the expansion of the formal education systems, systems that were often holdovers from colonial time. As expanding formal educational programs failed to meet the expectations of planners, the idea of nonformal education, as a separate method of education for development, gained favor.

Nonformal education can best be summarized by this definition:

Any organized, systematic, educational activity, carried on outside the framework of the formal system, to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children."⁴⁸

For the developing world, nonformal education is often begun through adult literacy campaigns. While international agencies like UNESCO did move to support nonformal

47. Abernathy, p. 17.

48. Philip H. Coombs and Manzoor Ahmed, Attacking Rural Poverty: How Nonformal Education Can Help, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 8.

educational activities, it more often became the government of the developing nation that had to create and organize their own programs.

Since educational planning in the developing world has been heavily influenced by these ideas of development, the projects and programs created become a reflection of the theories espoused. Since formal education did not seem to meet the development theories and goals, by the mid-1960's the idea of non-formal, adult education gained prominence. In particular, literacy campaigns became a focus for educational planning. The campaigns in Cuba, beginning in 1961, and the Experimental World Literacy Programme, beginning in 1967, provide two different perspectives on both the planning and implementation of literacy campaigns.

THE CUBAN LITERACY CAMPAIGN

The Literacy Campaign in Cuba proved to be one of the first domestic policies enacted after the success of the Cuban Revolution on January 1, 1959. Under the leadership of Fidel Castro, the new government put education, along with land reform and health care, at the top of the agenda. These priorities were viewed as the most serious challenges to the new nation, and the issues that had to be addressed first.⁴⁹ Even before the official literacy campaign began, education had a place in the new regime. Within weeks of the revolution, a literacy campaign for soldiers was established, and by March of 1959 the National Commission of Literacy and Fundamental Education was created and began the first literacy centers.⁵⁰ Castro further demonstrated the Cuban desire and

49. Jonathan Kozol, Children of the Revolution, (New York: Delacorte Press, 1978), p. 5.

50. Bhola, p. 93.

intention for a literacy campaign by announcing it to the United Nations General Assembly on September 26, 1960:

In the coming year our people intend to fight the great battle of illiteracy, with the ambitious goal of teaching every single inhabitant of the country to read and write in one year, and with that end in mind, organizations of teachers, students and workers, that is, the entire people, are now preparing themselves for an intensive campaign. Cuba will be the first country in America which, after a few months, will be able to say it does not have one person who remains illiterate.⁵¹

Prior to the revolution, education in Cuba had followed the same pattern as much of the developing world, with the formal schooling system established by the colonial powers still in place. There was limited access even to primary schooling, with poorly trained teachers, limited curriculum and materials. In 1953, over 50 percent of the primary age students in rural areas were not in school, and 20 percent of the urban area students.⁵² For those who did make it to secondary and university education, the emphasis was on learning to pass the examinations, and concentration on fields of high income and prestige: medicine, law and commerce, rather than the needed areas of technology and science.⁵³ "Lawyers and arts graduates abounded, while agriculture went short of advisers and researchers."⁵⁴ The problems with the educational system did not come from lack of funds; in the years before the revolution, up to one-quarter of the national budget dealt with expenditures for education.⁵⁵ But administrative costs ate up much of the funding. During the 1955-56 school year, 20 percent of the educational budget for Cuba went to pay

51. Quoted in Fidel Castro Speaks, ed. Martin Kenner and James Petras, (New York: Grove Press, Inc. 1969), pp. 23-24.

52. Richard Jolly, "Education", Cuba: The Economic and Social Revolution, ed. Dudley Seers, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), p. 170.

53. MacDonald, pp. 37-42.

54. Jolly, p. 165.

55. MacDonald, pp. 42-43.

for the central administration.⁵⁶ The system was also ripe with corruption, with the pocketing of funds, with teachers hiring surrogates-- untrained, lowly paid substitutes-- to take over classes while they holidayed.⁵⁷ At the time of the revolution, the illiteracy rate in the cities was 12.6 percent, while in the rural areas, it rose to 41.7 percent.⁵⁸ The 1953 census had placed the number of adult illiterates at 1,032,849 out of a population of just over four million.⁵⁹ So for Castro and the new government of Cuba, the educational system was one glaring example of the corruption and inequality of life under the previous regime.

Objectives Of The Literacy Campaign

With the Literacy Campaign, the government hoped to enact several changes in the Cuban population: social, technical, and political. For social change, it was necessary to change some of the structures and traditions of Cuban society. Illiteracy was viewed as a characteristic that reinforced class differences, and especially the urban-rural gap. Since it had always been the cities, and the wealthy in those cities, who had had access to and benefited from education, the lack of it in the countryside contributed to a widening gap. In addition, the notion of equality by providing literacy training to all social classes also extended to all ages and to both men and women. This "liberation of women" through literacy ran headlong into the Latin American culture of "machismo". So to teach reading and writing equally to all parts of the Cuban society required a major change in the attitudes

56. Jolly, p. 173.

57. Ibid.

58. Abel Prieto Morales, "The Literacy Campaign in Cuba", Harvard Educational Review 51, no. 1 (February 1981), p. 32.

59. Jonathan Kozol, "A New Look at the Literacy Campaign in Cuba", Harvard Educational Review 48, no. 3 (August 1978), p. 343.

of the population.⁶⁰ Literacy was to be part of a "restructuring" of Cuban society; "the achievement of basic literacy was treated only as a first step to a wider, and more fulfilling social integration."⁶¹

The Literacy Campaign was also viewed by its proponents as the way for Cuba to begin to take control of its own industrial, technological, and economic needs. At the time of the revolution, most Cubans being trained at the universities were not involved in such pursuits, and the majority of technology was being imported from the West, most notably the United States. If Cuba was to be free of foreign domination, it was going to need to be able to create its own technology, and hence its own means of production. The Literacy Campaign was to be the first step in this process.⁶²

Most importantly, the Literacy Campaign was to be the key to creating political change in Cuba, in particular the consolidation of the revolution. The Campaign was to be the first massive public policy effort by the government. Therefore, it was necessary for the mass of the people to feel the affects of the policy, and to feel a part of the "new" Cuba.⁶³ As Dr. Raúl Ferrer, one of the leaders of the literacy campaign described in an interview with Jonathan Kozol, "The original objective was political awareness--plus minimal competence for productive needs."⁶⁴

60. Bhola, p. 93.

61. MacDonald, p. 87.

62. Ibid, p. 19.

63. Bhola, p. 91.

64. Kozol, Children of the Revolution, p. 89.

Organization Of The Cuban Literacy Campaign

A large part of the early organization and development of the campaign involved careful planning and research. To begin, a census effort, to identify the number and locations of the illiterate population was put into place. Thousands of volunteers came forth to assist. The census resulted in the direct identification of 929,297 illiterates, and prepared those individuals for the campaign to follow.⁶⁵

Before the campaign began, a specific government post was created as well, the National Literacy Commission, which was to incorporate "all existing revolutionary organizations"⁶⁶ in the effort to make literacy a mass effort by the population. The Commission worked with a national coordinating body within the Ministry of Education, and met at least every fifteen days for the duration of the campaign, in order to follow closely the actions of the effort. This commitment to constant involvement at the national level proved to be extremely important at various points in the campaign, especially when it appeared to be failing.

Literacy Teachers. Because of the great number of illiterates identified by the census, the greatest issues to be dealt with in the campaign were supplying sufficient trained manpower to teach, and the logistics of coordinating such an effort. In order for the campaign to reach the masses and teach them in the time table set by Castro, it was felt that, at most, the student-teacher ratio could be 4:1, with a 2:1 ratio preferable.⁶⁷ Especially in dealing with the campesinos (peasants), who had generally had no access to any previous schooling, it was felt that intensive individual instruction would have to be used. While 35,000 school teachers had volunteered, it was not going to be enough. So the call went

65. Bhola, p. 97

66. Ibid, p. 94.

67. Kozol, Children of the Revolution, p. 5.

out for student volunteers to form the brigadistas, the literacy workers. A total of 100,000 volunteers came forth. Statistics compiled by the Literacy Commission at the end of 1961 identified 40 percent of these volunteers as being from 10-14 years of age, and most of the rest of them under 30.⁶⁸ Kozol has described this rush to volunteer as "ethical exhilaration"; that these students wanted to share in the adventure, the excitement of the revolution, and felt the need to "not let Fidel down" since his proclamation in the U.N.⁶⁹ In addition, in order to mobilize the population to participate, the secondary schools in Cuba closed early, in April of 1961, to free up students in the sixth grade and up to become literacy teachers. Certainly from the standpoint of getting more teachers, the school closure was important, but it also provided a psychological boost to the effort, for "literacy became the nation's business."⁷⁰ It demonstrated the importance of this goal to the people, and also strengthened the position of the Castro government. The fact that the parents of Cuba did not actively oppose the school closures, nor the idea of their children becoming literacy instructors, gave even more support to the cause. Eventually, factory workers were also called to volunteer, and by the end of the campaign a total of almost a quarter million citizens had been mobilized as literacy instructors.

Training. With the first 100, 000 brigadistas (student volunteers), the literacy training began in mid-April at Varadero. It was an intensive training, lasting only seven to ten days. The volunteers first received training in the actual teaching of reading. There were two booklets created for the campaign: the teacher's manual, *Alfabeticemos*, ("We teach reading") and the learner's primer, *Venceremos*, ("we shall conquer"). Both were

68. Ibid, p. 6.

69. Ibid, p. 7.

70. Bhola, p. 96.

prepared by the Literacy Commission, with several concepts in mind. First, the primer was based upon "active" words, associated with peasant life, and discovered by research with peasant communities. The belief was that the materials had to reflect the realities of peasant life, in order to be pertinent to the peasants population. The primer contained fifteen lessons, each building upon the ideas and vocabulary of the previous one. In addition, the lessons were to be introduced by pictures of familiar scenes, as a way to promote discussion and questioning before leading into the lesson.⁷¹ Volunteers received instruction in the use of the texts and in the methods for teaching reading and writing through the use of dialogue and discussion. In particular, the attitude of the teachers towards the students was addressed in these instructions, "never forget that the work of learning how to read and write is realized and achieved in common."⁷²

As important as teaching methodology for the brigadistas was instruction in rural lifestyle. Since the majority of the volunteers were from urban areas, most had not ever seen the life of a peasant. The volunteers, some as young as ten or eleven, would be heading into distant, unfamiliar areas and lifestyles. For example, the volunteers were supplied with hammocks, because most of the peasants they would be instructing would not have the luxury of an extra bed that could be given to the brigadista. They were also given versions of the "Coleman lantern" to be used in nonelectrified areas for those campesinos who would need to be instructed in the evening. They were also instructed in farming skills, for the teachers were expected to help the families in every aspect of daily work, even in the fields. The issue of "the city to the country" was stressed throughout the training. The government viewed the isolation of the peasants, along with the inability of the urban sector to relate to the problems of the countryside, as a factor that had weakened

71. Kozol, Children of the Revolution, p. 7; MacDonald, pp. 65-66.

72. Kozol, Children of the Revolution, pp. 13-14.

Cuba.⁷³ So a major goal for the literacy volunteers was to bridge that gap. As one of the Cuban educators, Mier Febles, summarized this view:

The goal of the campaign was always greater than to teach poor people how to read. The dream was to enable those two portions of the population who had been most instrumental in the process of the revolution from the first to find a common bond, a common spirit, and a common goal. The peasants discovered the word. The student discovered the poor. Together, they all discovered their own patria.⁷⁴

Along with learning the lifestyle of the rural areas, the brigadistas were given brief training in the psychology of teaching adults, again so as not to offend the students.⁷⁵ Early on, the realization that the literacy training could not be achieved in the same way that a six-year old in primary school would be taught was a key part of the training. In addition, the brigadistas went through training in physical fitness, survival skills, basic first aid, and hiking and orienteering.⁷⁶

The importance of the Literacy Campaign and the training of the brigadistas can be seen in the reactions to other events occurring in Cuba at the time. At the beginning of the training at Varadero, the Bay of Pigs invasion took place. Even with this direct military threat to the still-new government, the training halted for less than seventy-two hours, then continued. Some instructors at Varadero left to help deal with the invasion, but most remained. Even in a time of crisis, the Literacy Campaign was not to be abandoned.

Promotion of Campaign. Besides the teaching force, another important component of the campaign was promotion and publicity. The charisma of Fidel Castro, and the idealism of the revolution helped to provide a basis for future activities. Radio, television,

73. Kozol, "A New Look at Cuba," p. 348.

74. Kozol, Children of the Revolution, p. 22.

75. MacDonald, p. 65.

76. MacDonald, pp. 65-67.

billboards, and advertising were all used to promote the campaign and its slogans. Posters appeared throughout Cuba with slogans including, "Each one teach one", "If you can read, teach someone else how to. If you cannot read, learn how," and "Every home a school".⁷⁷ Since some U.S. firms still remained in Cuba, a few of them even became involved, most notably Coca Cola. One Coca Cola billboard even stated, "Even in the year of Education/Citizens still need the Pause that Refreshes!".⁷⁸

Part of the promotion of the campaign also involved the use of military metaphors and terminology, that helped to impart a sense of urgency and excitement. In addition, having just completed a revolution, the "military spirit" remained. The formation of brigades, the uniforms of the volunteers, the training to "attack and conquer" illiteracy, contributed to the military tone.⁷⁹

Administration. Such a massive undertaking also required effective administration and support services. Early on, a component of the campaign was weekly meetings between the brigadistas and their advisers. In large part, this was to deal with problems that the volunteers might be facing in working with the peasants and with the materials. But it also became a way for the progress of the effort to be measured, by constant feedback from the field all the way up to the Literacy Commission. Furthermore, because the campaign involved so much of the population, and so many agencies within the government, it had to be a top government priority in terms of coordination of efforts. While doctors were sent out to help with the medical problems the brigadistas might face in the countryside, they soon found that the peasants had a great many health problems. In particular, the volunteers found many peasants with such poor eyesight that they could not

77. Ibid, p. 64.

78. Ibid.

79. Kozol, Children of the Revolution, pp. 43-45.

be taught to read because they could not see. Quickly a program for vision testing for peasants was enacted, and resulted in 177,000 peasants being fitted for glasses.⁸⁰ Because there were not enough trained opticians in the countryside to deal with this overwhelming demand, the government had to take several major steps to deal with the problem. What doctors and opticians remained in Cuba had to first be equipped and sent into the countryside. Then crash courses in optical training were put into place to help deal with the demand.⁸¹ Again, the government demonstrated the importance of the literacy campaign by taking action, quickly, as necessary for the success of the program.

The Campaign Begins

At the end of April, 1961, the first wave of brigadistas were sent out--now numbering 95,777-- and by June 500,000 Cubans were in the process of studying with the volunteers. The instruction involved three tests to serve as benchmarks for the students, teachers, and the administration of the campaign. Students were given "initial", "intermediate" and "final" tests, to help monitor not only the progress of the students, but the process of instruction. But by late August, only 119,000 had successfully completed the literacy course, and passed the final test, well behind the numbers that were expected.⁸² In order to fulfill Castro's goal of literacy by the end of the year, the government took several drastic measures to bolster the campaign.

First, more volunteers to be trained as literacy teachers were called for, this time from the factories. This new brigade, named *Patria o Muerte*, was created, and 21,000 workers came forth.⁸³

80. MacDonald, p. 70.

81. Ibid.

82. Kozol, Children of the Revolution, p. 46; MacDonald, p. 72.

83. Kozol, Children of the Revolution, p. 46; MacDonald, p. 71.

In addition, the government requested that mass organizations, such as the Cuban Federation of Women and the Committees for the defense of the Revolution, help in the recruitment of teachers and in the formation of Literacy Committees in neighborhoods to locate any further illiterates who had not come forward previously. The Literacy Committees often assisted their own neighbors in learning to read, and came to be known as "People's Teachers."⁸⁴

Finally, the government gave the Municipal Education Councils--the local school boards-- greater power to supervise literacy workers in their areas. At the same time, the government called a National Congress to assess the problems, and see if they could be solved in time. Yet in August, 800,000 illiterates still remained.⁸⁵ So in September, even more extreme measures were enacted.

The start of school was postponed from September until January, and the approximately 10,000 teachers that had not yet volunteered were "drafted" into the literacy campaign as instructors. "Acceleration Camps" were created to offer intensive remedial programs for slower students, and they were expected to leave work for a few days to engage in "academic labour" instead. "Study coaches", those experienced literacy workers who had been particularly successful, were brought in to assist the younger brigadistas and work in areas of resistance. And the People's Teachers, after working with their neighbors, were encouraged to then go out into the countryside to help in the effort. The results of these extreme efforts were great increases in the literacy figures. While completion figures for October had reached 354,000, by December they were at 700,000.⁸⁶

84. Ibid.

85. Kozol, Children of the Revolution, p. 46.

86. Kozol, Children of the Revolution, pp. 47-48; MacDonald, pp. 71-72.

While the successful completion of the fifteen lessons in the primer was to be the test of literacy, the final test was for the newly literate citizen to write a letter to Fidel Castro describing what it was like to now know how to read and write. As reported by Kozol, hundreds of thousands of such letters are on file in the Literacy Museum in Cuba.⁸⁷

The final statistics for the Literacy Campaign, reported on December 22, 1961 were 707,212 people having achieved literacy, with 271,995 remaining illiterate, a total of 3.9 percent illiterates in the total population of Cuba.⁸⁸ On the same day, Castro spoke to the Cuban people, stating:

[There is] no moment more solemn and exciting, no instance of greater joy, no minute of [more] legitimate pride and glory, than that in which four and a half centuries of ignorance have been demolished.⁸⁹

Follow-Up Efforts

Immediately after the conclusion of the campaign, the efforts for follow-up work in literacy continued. The Cuban government had itself claimed that the passing of the literacy course only brought an individual up to a first grade reading level, and so continuation of literacy programs was essential.⁹⁰ The government began publication of El Placer de Leer, ("The Pleasure of Reading"), a magazine written at a level that those who passed the literacy campaign could read. The magazine was given out free as an incentive to continue the practice of literacy skills. The first follow-up campaign, *Seguimiento*, was an

87. Kozol, Children of the Revolution, p. 51.

88. Official report of the Campaign, read by the Minister of Education Armando Hart on 22 December 1961, cited by Abel Prieto Morales, "The Literacy Campaign in Cuba", p. 38.

89. Revolutionary Works, (Havana: National Press of Cuba, 1961), cited by Morales, p. 38.

90. Jolly, p. 205.

expansion of skills for those who had passed the initial literacy program. This follow-up campaign included lessons in arithmetic, more complex reading and writing, social studies, and personal hygiene. Eventually, of the over 700,000 who passed in the initial literacy campaign, 500,000 became involved in Seguimiento.⁹¹ Next came the *Batalla para el Seis* (Fight for the Sixth Grade), a program that expanded even further on the efforts of the *Seguimiento*. By 1968, one-half million adults had passed the grade 6 qualification under the *Batalla para el Seis*.⁹² So while the initial drive to achieve literacy was successful, the continued efforts have allowed those gains to be maintained. In 1985, the illiteracy rate still remained at 2 percent.

The Success Of The Cuban Literacy Campaign

To some, the literacy campaign was seen as the "most successful item in the first four years of the Revolution."⁹³ The reasons for the success of such a campaign, in a underdeveloped nation and without large amounts of aid from foreign nations or international agencies, are numerous. Many have pointed out the factors in Cuba's favor as the campaign began: a fairly small illiteracy rate when compared to other underdeveloped nations, a small area, a single language spoken by the vast majority of the population.⁹⁴ In addition, the goals set to measure a successful campaign were low; the skills learned by completing the fifteen lessons were at about the first grade level.⁹⁵ But these do not take

91. Kozol, Children of the Revolution, p. 56; MacDonald, p. 88.

92. MacDonald, p. 90.

93. Jolly, p. 205.

94. Bhola, p. 91.

95. Ibid.

away from the massive effort necessary to achieve even this low level of literacy. Many other factors played a part as well.

For one, the effort on the part of the government was to fulfill a sincerely desired goal. In light of this, the government, and apparently the people, were willing to sacrifice other goals to achieve literacy. The resources of time, money, and personnel had to be used on a national and a local level for success, for it had to be an important goal from top to bottom in Cuban society. The campaign was, in both word and action, a national priority, and remained a national priority even after the initial campaign was successful. The immediate and continued efforts at follow-up campaigns and educational efforts demonstrates that the Literacy Campaign was not a "one-time" shot; it was a sincere effort to enact change.

Closely related to the idea of national priorities is the need to take chances in order to achieve success. Especially in following a revolution, the new government had to demonstrate a commitment to the people and to change. While most cautious thinkers would have declared a literacy campaign in less than a year's time as impossible, the goal of literacy, and the political gains to be made, were so great that the challenge was taken. Dr. Ana Lorenzetto, who conducted an evaluation of the Cuban effort for UNESCO, described the political nature of the campaign, and its urgent nature:

It is possible that the illiterate could wait three years....The revolution could not....It is possible that, in three years, the....campesino could have learned how to read and write by means of ...radio, television and technical...procedures...[b]ut...he would not have gained a political consciousness.⁹⁶

Likewise, when the campaign appeared to be failing early on, rather than cancelling the rest of the effort, changes were made to try and salvage what had already been done.

96. Dr. Anna Lorenzetto, Methods and Means Utilized in Cuba to Eliminate Illiteracy, (Havana: Cuban National Commission for Unesco, 1965), pp. 72-73, cited in Kozol, "A New Look at Cuba", p. 362.

When those efforts were not enough, even more drastic steps were taken. Without the feeling of the Literacy Campaign as a national focus and priority, and without the feeling that a risk could be taken, the campaign would have folded before ever reaching its goals.

The methodology and manner of instruction contributed to the success of the campaign as well. By creating materials with familiar themes, with emphasis on discussion and analysis of ideas, the students were going through the process of learning to deal with the world; not simply read words on a page. The emphasis on "pupil identification of his own dignity and relationship to a society which valued him"⁹⁷ gave literacy a value to each student. In addition, the campaign provided flexibility for the brigadistas, with the help of advisers, to make individual determinations of student needs. Some instructions remained with single families from May-December, while others were able to complete the work with a group in a few months and then move on.⁹⁸

Furthermore, the campaign was created for and enacted with all Cubans in mind. For success, it required the active participation of a vast majority of the population. Because the majority of the population were made to feel they were necessary, and they could do something for the effort, they responded. Part of the revolutionary spirit was to involve the people on all levels, and make them all feel as part of the historic effort:

all children with a sixth-grade education can teach illiterates (although they cannot teach physics), any housewife who can count and write a simple sentence can be a census-taker, and any peasant who understands why it is a Revolutionary duty to become literate can help in recruiting his compañeros for the campaigns.⁹⁹

97. MacDonald, p. 87.

98. Kozol, "A New Look at Cuba," p. 349.

99. Richard R. Fagen, The Transformation of Political Culture in Cuba, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969), pp. 66-67.

Finally, the deliberate effort to bring the people of the country and the city together, to work toward a common goal, allowed for a "political and moral transformation for large numbers of young people"¹⁰⁰ who participated in the campaign effort.

UNESCO AND THE EXPERIMENTAL WORLD LITERACY PROGRAMME

In the early 1960's, discussion about an international attempt to eradicate illiteracy began in UNESCO. At the World Conference of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy in Teheran in 1965, the groundwork was laid for the Experimental World Literacy Programme, meant to be a "selective, intensive, experimental" effort to deal with education in the developing world.¹⁰¹ The project officially began in 1967, and some programs lasted until 1973, with a total of thirty-two million dollars spent.

The notion of a world literacy campaign, to last over a decade, was the initial impetus behind the project. But major funding agencies--including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank--were unwilling to provide funding for such a massive, long-term project.¹⁰² In response, UNESCO put forth a proposal for a more modest effort with the EWLP. While the immediate goal of the EWLP was to halt the worsening problem of illiteracy, it was also to be the beginning of a world-wide effort. The EWLP was the first step toward the "eventual World Campaign for the Eradication of Mass Illiteracy."¹⁰³

100. Kozol, Children of the Revolution, p. 28.

101. UNESCO, The Experimental World Literacy Programme: A Critical Assessment, (Paris: UNESCO Press/UNDP, 1976), p. 17.

102. Coombs, pp. 272-273.

103. Report of the Secretary General on the World Campaign for Universal Literacy, New York: United Nations, 1964, (A/5830).

Once UNESCO had accepted a more limited focus, the UNDP agreed to finance the effort, but with two conditions attached. First, the experiment was to demonstrate whether literacy training, along with occupational training, would increase productivity of workers within the program.¹⁰⁴ The assumption was that increase in individual productivity would result in national economic development. Secondly, the programme was to be "objectively and rigorously evaluated."¹⁰⁵ So from the beginning, the focus of the EWLP was on the process of planning and implementing a program for economic development, not necessarily for educational development. The main objectives for EWLP became to "test and demonstrate the economic and social returns of literacy, and to investigate the existing and possible links between literacy training and development."¹⁰⁶

In light of this, the definition of literacy created to guide the program also included the purpose of economic development. While previous definitions of literacy had looked for the ability to read and write¹⁰⁷, EWLP operated under a definition of functional literacy, which included "work-oriented" literacy as well. Functional literacy was defined at the Teheran Conference as being "linked to a vocational training programme and encouraging the rapid growth of the individuals productivity." ¹⁰⁸

104. Coombs, p. 273.

105. Ibid.

106. EWLP, p. 9.

107. In 1958, the UNESCO "Recommendation Concerning the International Standardization of Educational Statistics" defined an illiterate as a person "who cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life." From Records of the General Conference, Tenth Session, Paris, 1958, Resolutions, (Paris: UNESCO, 1959) p. 93, cited in Andrei Lestage, Literacy and Illiteracy, (Paris: UNESCO, 1982), p. 5.

108. World Conference of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy, Tehran 8-19 September, 1965. Final report, UNESCO, Paris, 1965, cited in Ali Hamadache and Daniel Martin, Theory and Practice of Literacy Work, (Paris: UNESCO/CODE, 1986), p. 30.

Once funding had been secured, the EWLP focused on literacy projects in eleven nations: Algeria, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Iran, Madagascar, Mali, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and the United Republic of Tanzania. In some cases, the EWLP simply allowed for expansions of previously begun literacy programs, while other called for the creation of new or experimental programs.¹⁰⁹ All projects required supervision and evaluation by the EWLP. The basic model was that projects and materials were to be created by the international staff, and then put into place under the auspices of the national governments, and with the assistance of national educators. Eventually, projects connected with the EWLP involved over one million adults.

From the beginning, the EWLP was beset by problems of coordination, organization, and planning.¹¹⁰ Shifts in administrative responsibilities, high drop out rates, disagreements between UNESCO and national officials, and language and material problems contributed to the difficulties.¹¹¹ The official assessment of EWLP, published jointly by UNESCO and UNDP, pointed out that:

the overall performance and accomplishments of the EWLP had fallen far short of UNESCO's expectations and that the failures were traceable in no small measure to the limited vision, misconceptions, and false assumptions of the central planners and directors of the EWLP.¹¹²

Projects under EWLP did achieve some goals, and according to UNESCO standards lead to 120,000 new adult literates. Certainly, the program increased international

109. Some examples of national projects under the EWLP include: Ecuador-training of national personnel in functional literacy techniques; Ethiopia-assistance to government in a work-oriented, adult literacy program, linked with rural development. Teaching of basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills in an agricultural context; Sudan- literacy training of 6,000 police officers.

110. Coombs, p. 273.

111. EWLP, pp. 131-157.

112. Coombs, p. 273.

awareness of literacy, and raised a number of questions and concerns for national and international planners.¹¹³ Some nations, like Tanzania and Ethiopia, were able to continue with national literacy programmes, built upon some of the projects begun under EWLP. The programme also generated debate over the concept of functional illiteracy, its relation to development, and the consequences of such development. But, for some analysts, the EWLP was seen as an expensive failure.¹¹⁴

Problems Under EWLP

As UNESCO's own report, The Experimental World Literacy Programme: A Critical Assessment, described, part of the problem was in the program's conceptualization of functional literacy. The dominant perception, that economic growth was a major force in development, and that underdeveloped nations were so because of an underdeveloped and unskilled population, led directly to the belief that installation of literacy projects would educate, and then develop, the people. And the assumption by the planners of EWLP was that the nations themselves lacked the ability to create these educational programs, or they would have already done so.¹¹⁵ So for literacy goals to be achieved, a universal model of education, a literacy "product" was created, to be "marketed" to those nations who wanted development. But the "product" was:

too standardized, a kind of lowest common denominator pegged to the level of the least ambitious participating authorities (national and international)

113. David W. Kahler, "As Educators We Are Artists and Politicians: A Look at Mass Literacy Campaigns in the Service of Political Processes", (Amherst: Center for International Education, 1978), cited in Valerie Miller, Between Struggle and Hope: The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), p. 7.

114. David Harman, review of "The Experimental World Literacy Program: A Critical Assessment", Harvard Educational Review 47, no. 3, (August 1977), pp. 444-447.

115. Coombs, p. 274.

and insufficiently differentiated to take into account the orientation and potential of more ambitious aid.¹¹⁶

As with many developing countries, with varying sources of aid, it appears that certain countries accepted the aid under EWLP, even if it did not meet their national objectives, because prospects of any other international aid were so slim:¹¹⁷

Certain countries wanted national literacy campaigns and seem to have 'bought' the EWLP 'product' in part because they were not aware of all its implication, and in part because they saw no prospect for obtaining international aid in any other way. Predictably, national and international EWLP staffs of these countries' projects tended to work at crosspurposes--one cause of the severe problems encountered there.¹¹⁸

Furthermore, this totally economic view of literacy did not take into account the structural and historical inequities in the economic systems of the Third World. The simplistic view that literacy would lead to economic development and growth did not consider the different situations of colonialism and dependency that many of these nations continued to operate under.

Likewise, the idea of functional literacy that was used addressed development solely as a technical problem, without consideration of social or political changes and influences. Because of this narrow definition of literacy as a set of technical problems, technical solutions--trying new techniques, new manuals--were applied. But literacy is not a purely technical problem. As the EWLP evaluation stated:

a crucial lesson of EWLP seems, then, to be the need to avoid viewing or designing literacy as an overwhelmingly technical solution to problems that are only partly technical.¹¹⁹

116. EWLP, p. 125.

117. *Ibid.*

118. *Ibid.*

119. EWLP, p. 5.

Connected to the notion of technical solutions was the belief that by simply employing the correct pedagogical "technique" literacy could be achieved. "The architects of the EWLP plans had assumed that the main reason many previous literacy programs had gone poorly was that they lacked appropriate methods of instruction."¹²⁰ But this view failed to take into account social, psychological and cultural changes and differences, and the links between literacy and over-all development:

A broad, multidimensional approach to both development and literacy is required. Indeed, it would seem that literacy programmes can only be fully functional--and development contexts can only be fully conducive to literacy--if they accord importance to social, cultural and political change as well as economic growth.

In addition, because literacy was seen as a series of projects, few follow-up plans were made. The assumption was that once individuals had been "provided" with literacy, it would continue to be used. So some of the literacy gains made were then quickly lost, because of lack of continued literacy efforts.

Furthermore, the selective nature of the EWLP led to disagreements between UNESCO and national leaders. The selection of target areas and small populations to receive the various projects ran counter to the mass literacy efforts desired by nations such as Algeria, Guinea, Madagascar, Sudan, and Tanzania.¹²¹

Interestingly, while UNESCO had sponsored an evaluation of the Cuban Literacy Campaign that was highly favorable,¹²² the lessons from the Cuban effort were not applied to the EWLP. For the eleven countries participating, they were given projects to be applied to specific geographic or population groups within the country, not a national program. For the most part, the materials used in the projects were not created in the nations where

120. Coombs, p. 276.

121. EWLP, p. 126; Miller, p. 9.

122. Lorenzetto, cited in Kozol, "A New Look at Cuba".

they were used, but from the international staff of the programme or traditional suppliers. And while the program was to promote work-oriented literacy, it tended to focus on potential work, not the actual work of the people. Furthermore, literacy instruction was often separate from the vocational aspects, so while both were being addressed, they were not done so in the integrated manner hoped for. As one reviewer discussed, "most of the EWLP projects seemed incapable of pedagogically merging literacy and work activities."¹²³ These issues, combined with organizational problems, led to many projects being created, and few people being served. For example, a two-year project in Algeria, designed to serve 100,000 had participation by only 1,400 people.¹²⁴

One of the biggest problems for EWLP was that the realities of enacting a large-scale program in a variety of Third World nations proved to be more complex than anticipated.

As the EWLP Assessment stated:

The degree of complexity encountered was quite unexpected at the programme's outset and daunted a good many participants, instructors and administrators, not to mention analysts and evaluations. The complexity was all the greater since the present generation of specialists in industrialized countries--who were expected to provide much of the expertise for designing, implementing and assessing EWLP--simply does not have not have personal experience of literacy as a chronic national problem.¹²⁵

The "Recommendations Of The Expert Team On Evaluation Of Experimental Literacy Projects"

The assessment from UNESCO's own report of the EWLP, as well as analyses from independent sources provided new assumptions and considerations for literacy programs in the developing world. Even the changing definition of literacy and its goals, created by UNESCO, reflected the lessons from the EWLP. The Declaration of

123. Harman, p. 445.

124. Kozol, Children of the Revolution, pp. 72-73.

125. EWLP, p. 11.

Persepolis, from the International Symposium for Literacy, 3-8 September 1975 stated, in part:

literacy [is] not just the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of man and to his full development...literacy creates the conditions for the acquisition of a critical consciousness of the contradictions of society in which man lives and of its aims....Literacy is not an end in itself. It is a fundamental human right.¹²⁶

The "Recommendations of the Expert Team on Evaluation of Experimental Literacy Projects" provided in 1975 guidelines for literacy programmes, based upon the experiences of the EWLP. Their most important point was the need to tie literacy not just to economic goals, but to political, social and cultural ones as well,

Limiting literacy to narrowly [defined] economic aims implies the risk of diminishing considerably the importance of this task and of preventing the mobilization of hearts and minds without which no sustained development is possible.

Organization and Planning. Much of the evaluation of the EWLP has focused on policy and planning of literacy efforts. Literacy must first be linked to changes in other areas, including economic and social reforms and technological research. Likewise, literacy must be seen as a long-term process, that does not end when the official literacy campaign ends. Especially in promoting continued efforts at literacy programmes and formal schooling, a nation can truly make literacy a national priority. Furthermore, the Recommendation calls for decentralized planning, in order to reflect regional differences and to involve a large portion of the population.¹²⁷

Methods and Materials. In terms of methods and materials, literacy work should take into account the needs and interests of the population, and be "closely linked to the concrete

126. Declaration of Persepolis, International Symposium for Literacy, Persepolis, 3-8 September, 1975, in Theory and Practice of Literacy Work, pp. 128-131.

127. Recommendations of the Expert Team on Evaluation of Experimental Literacy Projects, 3rd session, Paris, 15-18 July 1975, in The Experimental World Literacy Programme: A Critical Assessment, pp. 191-195.

problems of individuals and groups."¹²⁸ Instruction should be in local dialects, and methods should reflect curriculum appropriate to the age and occupations of participants. In particular, the needs and psychology of teaching literacy to adults must be addressed. Literacy must be presented in the context of the learner's world. Likewise, provisions must be made to provide materials for the continued use of those who have gained literacy skills, if such materials are not already available. This may be one the key components in continued literacy.¹²⁹

Personnel. To supply personnel for literacy efforts, "all existing human resources and not only professional teachers"¹³⁰ need to be mobilized. Intensive training, on particular follow-up activities, needs to be a prime consideration. In addition, due to the decentralized nature of administration, the instructors and learners should take a great deal of responsibility for the programme, with as little external intervention as possible.

International Co-operation. As the EWLP assessment concluded:

Neither literacy nor development as a whole can be willed into existence by international agencies that are inter- (but not supra-) governmental. Such agencies probably go awry if they try to replace the muscle of national governments.¹³¹

The problems of international efforts to deal with illiteracy prompted many recommendations from the UNESCO team. As many experts have noted, "each country must find its own solution to its own problems."¹³² The Recommendation Team stated, "development can only be autonomous and sustained if the countries concerned rely first

128. Ibid.

129. Coombs, p. 276.

130. Expert Recommendations, p. 193.

131. EWLP, p. 190.

132. Hamadache, p. 21.

and foremost on themselves."¹³³ External aid cannot be the driving force behind an effort, but rather should be provided in conjunction with a nation's program.

Likewise, international assistance should support the "production of national materials for literacy rather than favour the consumption of imported goods."¹³⁴ Along the same line, international experts should not become permanent fixtures in a nation's literacy efforts, but only short-term consultants. As one UNESCO document described, "foreign assistance must be subordinate to endogenous development, in which literacy work itself should take root, deriving strength from it and, in return, contributing to it."¹³⁵

Targets and Goals. A major problem in the international scope of literacy training has been setting unrealistic goals that are poorly described. In 1981, a UNESCO-sponsored conference of Latin American/Caribbean ministers of education, set a goal of providing "'all children of Latin America and the Caribbean [with] a minimum of eight to ten years of general education' by 2000."¹³⁶ While an admirable goal, the process for carrying out such a feat was not developed. If targets are going to be set, they need to provide the guidelines for determining if the goal has been reached, and a plan for carrying out the program.

National Commitment. There must be a commitment of time, resources, and priorities from all reaches of a government. The case of the EWLP, where some nations had distinctly different beliefs about the value of the UNESCO programs, demonstrates these difficulties. Literacy must be part of a general development plan, and must be part of the official process of government. Likewise, the need for a semi-autonomous structure,

133. Expert Recommendations, p. 194.

134. Ibid, p. 195.

135. Lestage, p. 29.

136. Coombs, p. 278.

balancing and supporting the interests of all different sectors of society, will require a portion of confidence and commitment by the government powers.¹³⁷

While the Experimental World Literacy Programme did not fulfill its goals entirely, it did provide an opportunity for experts to assess the actions of a literacy effort, and to begin to formulate plans to implement future literacy campaigns.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

While difficult to quantify, the link between education and economic and political development is still accepted. But the evolution of thought has required that all forms of development be considered together with the influence of education; they cannot be seen as separate variables, for they all interact. Since the early 1960's the major form of educational planning for development has been the literacy campaign.

Two different literacy campaigns were examined. The Cuban Campaign in 1961 was generally accepted as successful. It decreased the illiteracy rate from 26 percent to 4 percent in one year's time, and was the first of a continual series of educational programs in Cuba. In addition, the campaign was an effort to consolidate the new government that had come out of the Cuban revolution, and was an attempt to pull the people of Cuba into participation in the "new" Cuba. The Literacy Campaign was one of the first public policies enacted, and was accomplished almost entirely within Cuba and with Cubans.

By contrast, the Experimental World Literacy Programme of UNESCO, in place from 1967-1973, and costing twenty-three million dollars, was seen as an unsuccessful international effort. Even though it involved eleven countries and had the prestige and financing of the UNDP, it resulted in less total number of literates than the efforts in Cuba.

137. Hamadache, p. 24.

Problems in planning, organization, and the setting of objectives for the EWLP hindered the campaign, but an evaluation published in 1976 provided a great many insights into how not to run a literacy programme, and provided a number of recommendations for future literacy plans.

CHAPTER III

THE NICARAGUAN LITERACY CRUSADE

In July of 1979, a political coalition, under the military leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (*Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* - FSLN) succeeded in overthrowing the Nicaraguan dictator, Anastasio Somoza Debayle. It marked the end of a forty-three year Somoza family dictatorial dynasty, and was the result of eighteen years of guerrilla warfare and a year and a half of civil war.¹³⁸

Within weeks of the victory, the FSLN-led government began a literacy campaign as one of the first public policies of the new government. The Nicaraguan National Literacy Campaign of 1980 had the advantage of being able to draw on the information, mistakes, and knowledge from both the Cuban and the UNESCO experiences. In post-revolution Nicaragua, education, and primarily the Literacy Campaign, became the primary policy in an effort to enact both social change and development.¹³⁹

EDUCATION PRIOR TO THE REVOLUTION

Under the Somoza dictatorship, mass education suffered from the dual problems of underdevelopment and dependency. Education, within the context of development, was most geared toward benefit for the elite. Education for the majority of Nicaraguans was

138. John A. Booth, The End and the Beginning: The Nicaraguan Revolution, 2d ed., (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), p. 1.

139. Robert F. Arnove, Education and Revolution in Nicaragua, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986), p. 1.

seen as not only unnecessary for the economic policies in place, but also inadvisable for the political situation. Under the Somoza regime:

development had been narrowly focused on modernizing the economy's agricultural export sector for the benefit of a small privileged minority. The promotion of universal literacy or adult education was irrelevant and potentially threatening.¹⁴⁰

Since the export agriculture sector needed only a large pool of unskilled workers, there was no economic advantage to educating the work force. Likewise, the desire to maintain political and social control was so strong that the possibility of public education that might "promote the creation of critical, inquiring citizens"¹⁴¹ was not seriously considered.

Education Underdevelopment

While the 1974 Nicaraguan Constitution had "declared free and compulsory primary education as a state obligation"¹⁴², by the time of the Revolution, it was not a reality. In 1979, over half of the population remained illiterate, with up to 75 percent illiteracy in rural areas. Of those entering school, only 22 percent completed the 6th grade, (34 percent in urban areas, 6 percent in rural) and only 15 percent were attending secondary school.¹⁴³

The rural areas especially suffered inadequate education in the pre-1979 period:

Large numbers of pupils never received any instructional materials, and many classrooms were observed that contained up to 90 children, one under-educated teacher, 20 textbooks, one blackboard, and no writing materials to speak of. This in spite of the fact that the U.S. government had donated enough money to provide a textbook for every primary child in all of Central America. Due to the lack of materials, insufficient financial support, and inadequate training, most teachers soon reverted to the

140. Fernando Cardenal and Valerie Miller, "Nicaragua 1980: The Battle of the ABCs", Harvard Educational Review 51, no. 1 (February 1981), p. 4.

141. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 3.

142. Ibid.

143. Ibid.

traditional lecture-memorization-examination routine, even at the first-grade level.¹⁴⁴

In addition, the education available was, in many cases, both inadequate and unable to meet the needs of a population hoping for development. While 45 percent of the population was involved in agriculture, and the income of the nation was based in agriculture, less than 1 percent of students were engaged in agricultural studies.¹⁴⁵ Under Somoza, extensive public education was available for the urban elites, yet for the majority of citizens, not even basic literacy was provided.¹⁴⁶

Education, before the revolution, had been "shaped and distorted to serve the special interests of the ruling Somoza family and external funders."¹⁴⁷ In particular, under Somoza, "education was seen as a tool to train a technical cadre to run the family enterprises and state bureaucracies, with the emphasis generally in that order."¹⁴⁸

Education and Dependency

In a 1974 interview, Anastasio Somoza Debayle said "Nicaragua is not a Third World Country but a country economically, politically, and militarily dependent on the United States."¹⁴⁹ As might be expected, with such intimate ties to the U.S., Nicaragua also was

144. Richard J. Kraft, "Nicaragua: Educational Opportunity under Pre-and Post-Revolutionary Condition," Politics and Education: Cases from Eleven Nations, ed. R. Murray Thomas (New York: Pergamon Press, 1983), p. 91.

145. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 4.

146. Ibid.

147. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 5.

148. Kraft, p. 85.

149. Cited in Eduardo del Ro, Nicaragua for Beginners, (New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, 1984), p. 95.

dependent for major parts of their educational system, including curriculum, texts, teacher training and educational planning.¹⁵⁰

USAID was an active participant in the production of textbooks and in educational planning in Nicaragua. While the texts were often of high quality, they also "were heavily biased in content and images toward foreign notions of what was appropriate for Nicaraguan children to learn", and were often far above the comprehension level of most Nicaraguan teachers.¹⁵¹ From 1963 to 1972, USAID provided over \$1 million to Nicaragua for educational and manpower planning and development.¹⁵² But as Robert Arnove points out, the school system created from this was to meet the "manpower needs" of the economy, "shaped in great part by Nicaragua's dependency on the United States for markets and capital."¹⁵³

By the time of the success of the Revolution in 1979, Nicaragua's educational system was involving only a small portion of the population, was being determined by the personal economic interests of the Somoza clan, and was heavily influenced by U.S. perceptions of what Nicaragua needed. Literacy campaigns that had been in place under Somoza had been covers for "counter insurgency " operations, with teachers acting as spies and reporting peasants who were not supportive of the Somoza regime.¹⁵⁴ So the idea of a

150. Richard D. Van Scotter, Richard J. Kraft, John D. Haas, Foundations of Education: Social Perspectives (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1979), pp. 358-359, p. 361.

151. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 6.

152. Ibid.

153. Ibid.

154. Cardenal and Miller, p. 4.

"Literacy Campaign" held a negative meaning for much of the rural population. Trying to overcome this perception of literacy as counter insurgency was another great problem for the Crusade. Given these educational difficulties, the 1980 Literacy Campaigns faced great obstacles. In addition, the Campaign was to take place in the aftermath of a revolution that had cost over 40,000 lives, left 100,000 wounded, 40,000 children orphaned, and 200,000 families homeless.¹⁵⁵ In addition to the cost of fighting and the loss of industry during the war, when Somoza fled the country in July of 1979, he left just over \$3 million in the central bank, and a deficit of \$1.6 billion.¹⁵⁶ The new government was left with an enormous challenge, and chose to begin the task of re-building the nation through educational policies.

Development, Education and the Revolution

After the Revolution, a new perception of development and education came into play. Development was to mean freedom, based upon mass participation and liberation.¹⁵⁷ For this to be achieved, the new government felt it would be necessary to work toward the redistribution of wealth and power, the re-creation of society in order to meet the needs of the majority of the population, and the expansion of opportunities for involvement in the society.¹⁵⁸

155. Fact Sheet of the Center for International Policy, "The Impact of Civil War in Nicaragua," (Center for international Policy, Washington, D.C., mimeographed, n.d.), cited in Armove, Education and Revolution, p. 1.

156. Ibid.

157. Cardenal and Miller, p. 5.

158. Ibid.

Education, and particularly mass education and adult education, were to be the keys to creating this liberated society. As Fernando Cardenal and Valerie Miller, members of the organization team for the Literacy Campaign, described in 1981:

We believe that in order to create a new nation we must begin with an education that liberates people....A liberating education nurtures empathy, a commitment to community, and a sense of self worth and dignity....Education for liberation means people working together to gain an understanding of and control over society's economic, political, and social forces in order to guarantee their full participation in the creation of the new nation.. Literacy and permanent programs of adult learning are fundamental to these goals.¹⁵⁹

Education had been a part of FSLN strategy years before the successful revolution. Augusto Sandino, the namesake of the FSLN who had fought the first of the Somozas, had in the 1927-33 insurrection against U.S. Marine occupation, advocated literacy training for his officers.¹⁶⁰ The importance of education as part of the revolutionary spirit was included in "The Historic Program of the FSLN", the political program proposed in 1969, that called for "a massive campaign to immediately wipe out 'illiteracy.'"¹⁶¹ And, in 1978, the FSLN issued a twenty-five point program for Somoza opponents to rally around, which included education under Point 14; "The Frente Sandinista will dedicate itself from the very start to fight against illiteracy so that all Nicaraguans may learn how to read and write."¹⁶² So the immediate focus of the new government on a literacy campaign was not

159. Cardenal and Miller, p. 6.

160. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 7; Deborah Barndt, "Popular Education," Nicaragua: The First Five Years, ed. Thomas W. Walker, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1985), pp. 320-321.

161. Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), "The Historic Program of the FSLN," Sandinistas Speak, ed. Tomás Borge, (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1982) .

162. "Documents: Why the FSLN Struggles in Unity with the People," Latin American Perspectives 20, (Winter 1970), p. 108.

an "afterthought of the war of liberation"¹⁶³; rather it was a strategic effort that was part of the historic progress of the revolution.

PLANNING OF THE CRUSADE

Objectives of the Literacy Crusade

The National Literacy Crusade (*Cruzada Nacional de Alfabetización--CNA*) began its organization in August of 1979, barely two weeks after the end of the revolution. Given the devastation as a result of civil war, the idea of a literacy campaign so soon seemed to many outsiders an unrealistic project.¹⁶⁴ Yet the historical role of education in the struggle gave a basis for an immediate literacy effort. Furthermore, many saw the high illiteracy rates as another legacy of the era of Somoza, a legacy that needed to be eliminated.¹⁶⁵ In addition, the new government wanted to provide programs that would immediately benefit the poor, those who had suffered the most under the Somoza policies, as well as prove that it could effectively organize and implement a national policy.¹⁶⁶

There were many objectives in the planning of the Crusade. The most obvious was the elimination of illiteracy. By reducing the illiteracy rate to 10-15 percent, by establishing a nationwide system of adult education, and by expanding primary schools through the country, it was believed that permanent educational change would occur.¹⁶⁷ But the planners also believed that a more literate population would lead to other benefits, and that

163. Barndt, p. 323.

164. Ibid.

165. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 17.

166. Valerie Miller, Between Struggle and Hope: The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), p. 22.

167. Cardenal and Miller, p. 6.

the act of the Crusade itself would assist in the organization and development of the people and the nation.

Through the Literacy Crusade, the new government wanted to demonstrate a commitment to the people of Nicaragua who had worked and fought to overthrow Somoza. Especially, the Crusade was to help the people feel a part of the new government, to assist in the formation of a new Nicaragua:

Extending education to the vast majority of the people represented symbolically and substantively a conferral of the rights of citizenship. The literacy campaign constituted a fundamental mechanism for integrating the country--rural and urban populations, the middle and lower classes--and for mobilizing the population around a new set of national goals.¹⁶⁸

Because the revolution had not been fought for the leadership of one political group, but against the brutality and repression of the Somoza regime, it was necessary to begin to form a national political consciousness, to bring together the disparate groups and factions of Nicaraguan society. An immediate literacy effort could help fulfill such a goal. The Sandinista leadership hoped that the Crusade would help to "win over" Nicaraguans to their new vision of society, and legitimize their leadership.¹⁶⁹

The Crusade was also to assist in the "transformation" of Nicaraguan society. Political participation had been virtually impossible for the mass of Nicaraguan society under Somoza. A major goal of the Crusade was to increase political awareness, teach critical analysis of politics, and create political and social consciousness and responsibility.¹⁷⁰ In order for this to occur, opportunities for citizen participation needed

168. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 18.

169. Robert F. Arnove, "The Nicaraguan National Literacy Crusade of 1980," Comparative Education Review 25, no. 2 (June 1981), p. 246.

170. Cardenal and Miller, p. 6.

to be created, and because the Crusade would require enormous numbers of volunteers, the Crusade could help "train" Nicaraguans in popular participation.¹⁷¹

In addition, the people of Nicaragua, especially the youth, needed something to help in the transition from the trauma of war to the act of rebuilding the nation. For young people, the Crusade "would provide them with the concrete means to channel their energies positively into building the new nation and into developing a commitment to the poor."¹⁷²

The Literacy Crusade was also conceived of as a way to deal with the development problems of Nicaragua. The Sandinista leadership "believed that effective national development depended upon an educated populace."¹⁷³ Reading and writing were seen as necessary prerequisites to the technical training that would be necessary for the economic development model to follow.¹⁷⁴ It was hoped that the Crusade would also promote participation in and understanding of the development process.¹⁷⁵

Finally, "the government and the revolutionary leadership pledged to honor the memory of those killed by working to transform the system of inequities that had been inherited from the dictator."¹⁷⁶ The Literacy Crusade was seen as a "moral commitment" to pay tribute to those who died in the struggle, by helping in the recreation of a Nicaraguan society. In deed, the Crusade was named in honor of those who had fallen--"the National Literacy Crusade: Heroes and Martyrs of the Liberation of Nicaragua."¹⁷⁷

171. Miller, p. 22.

172. Ibid, p. 23.

173. Ibid, p. 22.

174. Barndt, p. 323.

175. Cardenal and Miller, p. 6.

176. Miller, p. 24.

177. Ibid.

The Nature of the Campaign

From the beginning, the Literacy Crusade was a political movement. As the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, stated in October 1989, the CNA "is not a pedagogical happening with political implications, but rather, it is a political happening with pedagogical implications."¹⁷⁸ In order for the desired mass participation to occur, it was necessary to give the poor the skills necessary for active participation in the political process, and to then encourage that participation. Part of this philosophy of political purposes of education came from the understanding that no education can be neutral--that all education is political.¹⁷⁹ Education under Somoza served as an example of non-neutral, political education, for the system established was one to perpetuate the strength and control of Somoza over Nicaragua. To the Sandinista leadership, it was logical to now use education to continue to break the legacies of the dictator.

Furthermore, in the midst of a society undergoing rapid transformation, desiring to change its political structure, the type of education created will help determine the new structure. When attempting to "overcome inequities and establish, in their place, relations of equality"¹⁸⁰, education assists in expanding the bases of power to include the majority of the population, not simply the elites. So, according to Father Cardenal, since all education is political, it is left up to politicians and educators to determine what type of education, and what type of view will be supported:

one that maintains people alienated, submissive to a system of inequity and injustice, or one that serves to liberate them, to set free their creativity, their energies, and their intelligence in order to build a society based on participation and equity....We have never denied that our education was political....It was political because in the process, peasants began to

178. Grigsby, p. 66.

179. Miller, p. 26.

180. Ibid, p. 27.

conquer their own freedom and students began to win theirs--a freedom that begins with knowing and understanding your own reality and history and continues freely through a process of committing yourself to transforming that world, to choosing your future.¹⁸¹

But it was more the methodology than the content of the campaign that was seen as political. The Nicaraguan model was based upon the work of Paulo Freire, and involved the idea of conscientization. According to Freire, in order to transform a society of inequality to one of equality, it was necessary to change the power structures of the society. As part of this, it was necessary to go through the process of conscientization, the expansion of "people's capacity for social analysis, political action, and commitment to the common good."¹⁸² As Freire defined it, conscientization was:

the process in which men, not as recipients but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform their reality.¹⁸³

For this, education would need to involve all aspects of the people's lives, and would require critical discussion and analysis:

Freire considered literacy to be not just the reading of words or the repeating of information. For him, it was a conscious act of liberation--reading the world in order to transform it.¹⁸⁴

The Freirean theories also opposed the "banking" model of education, in where teachers held the information to be "deposited" into the students. The use of the "dialogue" and generative theme words, eliciting emotional responses within the students, were key to

181. Fernando Cardenal, Sandinista Youth Association, interview by Valerie Miller, in Miller, p. 28.

182. Miller, p. 9.

183. Paulo Freire, Cultural Action for Freedom, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Educational Review, 1970), p. 51.

184. Ibid.

the use of Freire's methods in Nicaragua. Perhaps most importantly, literacy and the formation of a critical consciousness was to occur at the same time. According to Freire:

One must not think, however, that learning to read and write precedes "conscientization," or vice-versa. Conscientization occurs simultaneously with the literacy or post-literacy process. It must be so. In our educational method, the word is not something static or disconnected from men's existential experience, but a dimension of their thought-language about the world.¹⁸⁵

The Nicaraguan Crusade chose to follow this model, so the campaign would involve not just an expansion of an already existing system, but the formulation and training for an entirely new methodology.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CRUSADE

To begin the organization of the Crusade, the FSLN created a National Literacy Commission to supervise the campaign. As part of the desire for mass participation, the Commission included eighteen organizations that had contributed to the revolution, ranging from teachers' associations to various Ministries within the new government.¹⁸⁶ While such an organization provided opportunities for input from many factions of society, it also was too large to deal with the daily issues of the Crusade, so an executive body, the National Coordinating Commission, was created, and Father Fernando Cardenal was named as coordinator.¹⁸⁷

Because of the massive nature of the campaign, it would require the involvement of virtually every Nicaraguan, as teacher, student or volunteer. So the organization and

185. Paulo Freire, "The Adult Literacy Process as Cultural Action for Freedom", Harvard Educational Review 40, no. 2 (May 1970), p. 222.

186. John T. Deiner, "The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade," The Journal of Reading 25, no. 2 (November 1981), p. 119.

187. Ibid.

planning of the campaign required complete and intensive efforts at all levels. The first steps for the Commission involved research into other attempts at literacy campaigns, and the gathering together of literacy experts from around the world. The Commission analyzed the literacy efforts of Cuba, Guinea Bissau, Brazil, Tanzania, and various UNESCO programs. Literacy experts from UNESCO, the Organization of American States, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, France, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, the United States, and Uruguay lent their services and/or participated as part of the educational support personnel during the Crusade.¹⁸⁸ Yet the foreign advisers were not allowed to bring their own agendas or national concerns into the planning process. Those foreigners who "tried to impose preconceived plans or ideas on the staff usually lost their credibility and eventually left either on their own accord or as a result of an official request."¹⁸⁹ By the end of the campaign, literacy experts from Argentina, Cuba, and Canada had been asked to leave.¹⁹⁰

Crusade Preparations

The National Census. The experience of other nations showed that the first large task would be the identification of both illiterates and of those willing to teach the illiterates, so a national census was planned. Usually census efforts take years, and cost millions. UNESCO, "offered to help with technicians and money, but the Sandinistas couldn't wait: This was a people's war."¹⁹¹ So the trial run at mass organization and implementation would take place with the census.

188. Deiner, p. 119; Miller, p. 215.

189. Miller, p. 216.

190. Ibid.

191. Hirshon, p. 10.

The national census was conducted by volunteers, who were trained in intensive workshops. The census was to "record the name, location, occupation, and level of literacy of all Nicaraguans over 10 years old" as well as identify those who were willing to take literacy classes, and those able and willing to teach.¹⁹² The census was completed within two weeks, after surveying 1,434,738 people; then 2,500 volunteers were trained to tabulate the results by hand, due to the lack of computer capacity in Nicaragua.¹⁹³ The census revealed an illiteracy rate of over 50 percent, with over 90 percent in some rural areas.¹⁹⁴ The census also indicated that "for every three illiterates, one literate person was available to teach."¹⁹⁵

Financing. It was estimated that \$20 million (200 million cordobas) would be needed for the Crusade. Given the weak financial state Nicaragua had been left in by Somoza, the Nicaraguan government was not going to be able to offer much assistance. International aid became the source of much of the financing. "Crusade staff members met with representatives from all embassies located in Managua, and then official delegations were sent to Europe, the United States, Canada, and Mexico."¹⁹⁶ Religious and international agencies, ranging from the World Council of Churches to the OAS and UNESCO provided money as well as advisers.¹⁹⁷

192. Deiner, p. 119.

193. Miller, p. 58.

194. Barndt, p. 326.

195. Miller, p. 58.

196. Miller, p. 61.

197. Deiner, p. 122.

Within Nicaragua itself, efforts were in place to also raise money. Citizens could purchase patriotic literacy bonds.¹⁹⁸ Community groups organized fund-raising events, and many workers offered a day's wages for each month of the campaign.¹⁹⁹ All together, 120 million córdobas were raised, enough to cover the majority of the costs, after further "streamlining" of the budget.²⁰⁰

Methodology and Materials. Before training of literacy teachers could begin, it was necessary to formulate the methods and materials to be used in the campaign. The focus of the teaching method was Freire's conscientization, which was apparent in the dialogue nature of the lessons created. Lessons were to begin with the presentation of photos to stimulate discussion, leading into the specific words and syllables for the lesson.²⁰¹ The lessons were based upon twenty-three generative themes, taken from the experiences of the peasants and the Revolution. The first of the words around which the theme was centered was, appropriately, *revolución*. According to the Freiren concept, the best way to educate adult learners, and to work toward political consciousness, was through the use of these familiar, and often emotional words.

The literacy primer The Dawn of the People, was to be the primary text for the students. Freire's method of developing generative themes meant that the teacher and students together would decide the key words and phrases, so that all text materials would be created after actual student-teacher interaction began. Yet this method would also require teachers of great skill and training, and would require primers to be created locally. Since the majority of teachers would be young people, and because the campaign was to

198. Miller, p. 61.

199. Barndt, p. 326; Miller, p. 61.

200. Miller, p. 62.

201. Hirshon, p. 50. See Appendix A for the entire ten-step lesson formula.

begin within a few months, it was necessary to create a national, rather than local, primer. So the themes for the primer also needed to be national in scope, "both because of the massive nature of the campaign and because of its importance in establishing a common knowledge base about the government's reconstruction and development plan."²⁰² The national themes provided a basic knowledge of Nicaraguan history, life, and new social plans, so that most Nicaraguans would have the same background to assist in the nation-building that would be necessary. Once the themes had been decided, "theme sentences" for each lesson were also created, with each lesson involving new and more complex words.²⁰³

The materials created by the Literacy Commission for use in the field included The Dawn of the People, an arithmetic workbook, and a teacher's manual. The primer, with its generative themes, was to allow "new literates to discuss, read, and write, for the first time, the history of the Revolution, the social programs of the new government, and the civil defense necessary to defend them."²⁰⁴ The math text, to be introduced after the seventh lesson of the primer, used economic and agricultural issues as part of the instruction. The manual, later supplemented by pamphlets and mimeographs, was to assist the new teachers in lesson preparation and the dialogue method.²⁰⁵

The dialogue method proved to be a difficult skill for many of the young teachers to grasp. Since they had not been taught in such a way, for many it went against their natural concepts of "teaching."²⁰⁶ The dialogue was to begin with a discussion of the photo

202. Miller, p. 75.

203. Miller, pp. 76-77. See Appendix B for list of Theme Sentences.

204. Barndt, p. 326.

205. Miller, p. 219.

206. Hirshon, p. 104.

heading each lesson of the primer. A five-part question guide was created to guide the dialogue, and contained these elements: 1) Description of the Photograph; 2) Analysis of photograph; 3) Relationship of situation portrayed in photo to real life of the literacy student; 4) Search for solutions; and 5) Group commitment to transformation.²⁰⁷

In order to keep records on the progress of the campaign and the individual students, three tests were created to be administered during the campaign. The initial test was to "determine the actual skill level of each participant, beginning with simple exercise--drawing a straight line."²⁰⁸ This exercise was included to make sure everyone taking the test would have some sense of accomplishment, and would be encouraged to continue in the campaign. The test also included the ability to write one's name, reading and writing exercises, and a comprehension exercise.²⁰⁹ Those who could pass all portions were considered literate, those who could read and write a few words were classified as semi-literate, and those who could not read or write beyond their own name were illiterate.

The second test, the intermediate test, was given "to assess learner progress and diagnose individual study needs."²¹⁰ Those skills that the exam showed had not yet been mastered by the student were to be reviewed and practiced. The final exam was to be the test of literacy at the conclusion of the campaign. The tests were administered by the literacy volunteers under the supervision of the technical advisor and local witnesses:

To be considered literate, participants had to write their name, read aloud a short text, answer three questions based on the reading, write a sentence dictated to them, and write a short composition. They were expected to be able to read with comprehension, pronouncing words as a whole and not as

207. Miller, p. 88.

208. Cardenal and Miller, p. 14.

209. Ibid.

210. Cardenal and Miller, p. 15.

a series of isolated syllables. They were to write legibly, leaving appropriate spaces between words, and to spell phonetically.²¹¹

To ensure the quality and effectiveness of materials and methods, pilot projects were initiated in December 1979 and January 1980, and numerous changes were adopted before the final models were arrived at.²¹²

Implementation

From the beginning, the government and the Literacy Commission had set immediate, intermediate, and long-range goals. The efforts for research, material preparation, and pilot programs had all had specific goals and time frames for completion. Along the way, planners had not been afraid to re-evaluate and re-assess decisions made, once new information or results were available. Furthermore, there had been consistent coordination and supervision at all levels of the campaign.²¹³ The time was approaching to train and mobilize the volunteers that would be necessary to achieve the literacy goals that had been defined.

The Rural Campaign

One of the first planning decisions had been that two different strategies would be needed for the rural and urban areas, in part because of the different lifestyles, but also because of the massive illiteracy of the countryside.

The backbone of the rural campaign was to be the Popular Literacy Army (EPA) made up of the brigadistas, the literacy teachers. The brigadistas were secondary and

211. Ibid.

212. Barndt, p. 327; Miller, pp. 79-81.

213. Katerina Grigsby, "Strategies of Mobilization: Participation of Volunteers in Literacy and Post-Literacy Programmes: The case of Nicaragua," Issues in Planning and Implementing National Literacy Programmes, ed. G. Carron and A. Bordia, (Paris: UNESCO-International Institute for Educational Planning, 1985), pp. 70-71.

university students who had volunteered to serve as literacy teachers, and numbered over 60,000.²¹⁴ The EPA was created as an autonomous structure, with the responsibility to oversee the "administration, morale, and discipline of the rural volunteer corps."²¹⁵ One of the first challenges to the EPA was in assuring Nicaraguan parents that their sons and daughters would be safe in the rural areas. So as part of their recruitment program, the EPA organized parents' meetings, seminars for new recruits, physical training programs, and social events such as concerts and dances.²¹⁶

While the conscientization of the peasants was the goal of the literacy program, the use of the brigadistas was also an effort at their conscientization, too. The majority of the brigadistas were from urban areas, and had had little exposure to the life of the campesino. Certainly, most had never lived in a distant rural village, nor worked on the land. So the brigadistas, besides teaching writing, reading, and political awareness, were also to learn how the other half of Nicaragua lived. The brigadistas were to live and work with peasant families, as well as teach them. This was an attempt by the Crusade to integrate the urban youth of Nicaragua into the rural lifestyle, so they could understand and appreciate the difficulties of campesino life.²¹⁷ The Crusade was to be a two-way street of learning. As Carlos Carrión, FSLN representative to the Literacy Crusade stated to the brigadistas;

You will be a catalyst of the teaching-learning process. Your literacy students will be people who think, create and express their ideas. Together, you will form a team of mutual learning and human development. ²¹⁸

214. Ibid, p. 73.

215. Miller, p. 63.

216. Ibid, p. 64.

217. Grigsby, p. 74.

218. Hirshon, p. 13.

This integration of the urban teachers and the rural students proved to be one of the most successful aspects of the Crusade:

None could imagine the deep human bonds that would develop as urban teenagers learned how to milk a cow and make tortillas, lived in a makeshift hut with peasants and experienced their poverty, 'learned to read their book'.²¹⁹

The Crusade helped to establish numerous ties between the urban and rural elements of Nicaragua, and contributed to a greater understanding between these two segments of society.

Furthermore, while the entire Crusade had taken on the use of military terminology and metaphor, it was in the rural campaign that it was most prevalent. The literacy hymn contained these lines: "Let's go brigadistas, literacy guerrilleros, your literacy primer is the machete, eradicate with one blow ignorance and wrong."²²⁰ In the rural areas, the campaign was very much still a war. Brigadistas were attacked, raped, and killed. While the pencils were symbols of the Crusade, they were also used as "weapons of war":

counter-revolutionaries who attacked literacy workers as agents of the transformations occurring in the country actually drove pencils through the cheeks of some of the 'brigadistas' whom they had killed.²²¹

Again, because the Crusade was viewed as an obligation by the people to those who had suffered in the revolution, the military terms were natural. The Crusade hoped to maintain the idea of sacrifice and discipline that had characterized the revolution, and to provide deeper meaning to the Nicaraguans. As Father Cardenal described in September of 1980:

219. Barndt, p. 328.

220. Grigsby, p. 73.

221. Robert F. Arno and Harvey Graff, National Literacy Campaigns: Historical and Comparative Perspectives, (New York: Plenum Press, 1987), p. 15.

In no way was the use of military terminology designed to glorify war or violence....the choice of military metaphors was designed to help young volunteers integrate the memories of the past, transforming terms related to the war into positive associations with teaching and sharing. Military terminology also helped the brigadistas see the crusade as a vital part of the nation's continuing liberation struggle.²²²

The Urban Campaign

The urban campaign, because it received less attention and had a looser structure, proved to be weaker than the rural campaign.²²³ The main force were the Popular Literacy Workers (AP), which numbered approximately 26, 000.²²⁴ This group was composed of housewives, working students, international volunteers, and interested citizens, those who participated in the campaign while continuing with their own jobs and/or schooling. Since the Crusade was not an all-encompassing event, as it was for the brigadistas, the AP forces tended to have less of a commitment, less of a sense of belonging to the Crusade.²²⁵ Other urban groups were formed as well, often to deal with specific groups or areas. For example, the Central Sandinista Union of Workers (CST) was formed to teach factory workers, in the workplace, the skills of literacy and numeracy.²²⁶

Training of Volunteers

One of the major problems was how to effectively train the thousands of volunteers in preparation for the March 24, 1980 start of the campaign. A "multiplier model" was

222. Father Cardenal, interview with Valerie Miller, cited in Miller, p. 25.

223. Miller, p. 68.

224. Grigsby, p. 75.

225. Miller, p. 68.

226. Grigsby, p. 75.

created, in which one group would be taught to train the next group, continuing through four stages of training.

The "Group of 80", made up primarily of teachers, became the first group trained in an intensive two-week course. They, in turn, trained a group of 600, who then trained 12,000, continuing until the final goal of 180,000 trained literacy teachers was met.²²⁷ While the quality of the training certainly diminished as the stages of the multiplier model went by, it also appeared to be the only solution to the challenge of rapid training and implementation. The model, because of its success in reaching and training large numbers of people for the Crusade, also became a model for training in other social projects, especially health, after the campaign.²²⁸

The training process also proved to be an effective learning experience for those involved in the campaign. The decentralized, participatory nature of the training echoed the process that was to be followed in the field. The training laid the foundation for the campaign by providing opportunities for creativity, cooperation, and teamwork, characteristics the campaign hoped to accentuate.²²⁹

Mass Organizations, Mass Participation

As Arnove described:

Only with mass mobilization, with everyone studying, would it have been possible to find adults willing to face the painful, public embarrassment of attempting to write their names on a blackboard. Only with the universal participation of people of all ages would it have been possible for adults over 60 years of age to learn from youngsters 12 and 13 years of age.²³⁰

227. Barndt, p. 327; Deiner, p. 121; Miller, p. 107.

228. Barndt, p. 327.

229. Miller, p. 222.

230. Arnove, "The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade," p. 248.

There needed to be a feeling of involvement, and of urgency, for all Nicaraguans regarding the campaign. Posters, billboards, and the radio provided information and encouragement for participation. One of the more common slogans was "Every home a classroom/Every table a school desk/Every Nicaraguan a teacher!"²³¹

Although it was not officially required to become a brigadista to work as a volunteer teacher, the mobilization effort was able to garner a great number of people to participate. Of the 717,000 Nicaraguans who were literate and at least ten years of age, over 225,000 volunteered for the Crusade.²³²

As important as the involvement of individuals in the campaign was the participation of mass organizations. It had been mass organizations and popular participation that had been instrumental in the success of the revolution²³³, and they also proved crucial to the literacy campaign. Since a major part of the revolution had been fought primarily in urban areas, Nicaraguans had formed organizations in factories and neighborhoods to help supply the revolutionary forces, distribute weapons and set up communication networks.²³⁴ By the time of the Literacy Crusade, many of these mass organizations were highly developed groups, and shifted their efforts to the campaign. For example:

The Sandinista Workers Confederation assumed responsibility for literacy-related activities in the factories, the Association of Rural Workers for the rural areas, the Sandinista Defense Committees for urban neighborhoods, and the Sandinista Youth for the participation of high school and university students in the People's Literacy Army.²³⁵

231. Ibid.

232. Arnove, "The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade," p. 249.

233. Gary Ruchwarger, People in Power: Forging a Grassroots Democracy in Nicaragua, (Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, Inc., 1987), p. 2.

234. Arnove, "The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade," p. 250.

235. Arnove, "The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade," p. 251.

The Crusade Begins

The planning of the Crusade had led to the determination of a five-month campaign as an ideal time frame. Because Spanish is a relatively phonetic language, it would be easier for illiterate people who already spoke the language to learn to read and write. A variety of educational experts had advised that this would mean that basic skills could be acquired in four months. Because of logistical problems, and the probability of slower learners, one month was added to the estimate.²³⁶

In addition, the economic needs of the nation had already been hindered by the war, and the pace of development was seen as very much dependent on the speed with which the educational system could produce qualified and educated citizens. According to the government, a rapid literacy effort could contribute to rapid economic development. In addition, the schools had already been closed during much of the war, and officials did not want to keep them closed for much longer:

They believed that shutting down for more than five months in order to allow students to teach in the literacy campaign for a longer time would be irresponsible in light of the economic needs of the nation.²³⁷

Finally, once the duration of the Crusade had been decided, it was determined that March would have to be the beginning point, because of the harvests. For much of rural Nicaragua, March through September is the only time of the year they remain in their home villages, because many would migrate to the cotton fields or coffee plantations during the rest of the year.²³⁸

236. Miller, p. 46.

237. Ibid.

238. Ibid.

In many ways, the fixed target dates for the beginning and conclusion of the campaign served as a positive force. It motivated participants to labor extra hours and days to reach the pre-established goals:

Although it is true that certain program aspects were weakened by the inexorable time pressures, without the firm target date, the campaign would probably have had to have been postponed until the following year and precious momentum and commitment would have been lost.²³⁹

The Crusade was launched with a Managua rally attended by 70,000 people in mid-March. As the brigadistas headed to the rural areas, structures were already in place to make sure the Crusade was effective. Within the communities, weekly workshops were held for the brigadistas to evaluate the progress of students and prepare for upcoming lessons. The national campaign also continued to be evaluated:

Literacy commissions in 16 departmental capitals involved citizens' groups, workers' associations, and public institutions in an ongoing monitoring of the process....two national planning and evaluation congresses were held in June and September. Over 100,000 people were involved in preliminary meetings leading up to the congresses, which involved over 1,000 people; achievements and weaknesses of the Crusade were assessed and suggestions for improvements made.²⁴⁰

Logistics

For such a massive undertaking, a complex administrative structure and support system was necessary. With tens of thousands of volunteers, and the need to supply and transport them all at the same time, the problems of transportation, communication, and supplies were enormous. In addition, volunteers had to be housed, fed, clothed, and kept secure from the frequent attacks from ex-National Guardsmen crossing in from Honduras.

239. Miller, p. 217.

240. Barndt, p. 328.

The long civil war and the years of government corruption had resulted in a vastly underdeveloped infrastructure.²⁴¹ There were not nearly enough facilities for transporting teachers, brigadistas, or supplies. In order to deal with this, the Crusade worked with the Ministry of Transportation to locate and engage all available means of transport, even down to oxcarts and canoes.²⁴² In addition, both the mobilization and demobilization of the forces were coordinated to take place gradually, in an attempt to spread out what transportation there was.

Furthermore, communication systems, primarily in rural areas, were weak or nonexistent. Personal contact was often the only way to get to rural areas and announce changes or deliver supplies. Materials were in short supply, because the war had destroyed many industries and depleted what supplies remained. The machinery and materials necessary to produce uniforms, boots, and the literacy books had to be imported, and industries reorganized to go into immediate production.²⁴³ International aid came forth, but still required transportation to the areas of most need. In addition, the war had interrupted much of the agricultural production, so even food had to be imported.

Materials and equipment, when they did arrive, were not always sufficient, or even what had been ordered. The hammocks for the brigadistas arrived, but were too short for most volunteers.²⁴⁴ Boots arrived late, and in incorrect sizes, so in some cases, became

241. Cardenal and Miller, p. 12.

242. Ibid.

243. Cardenal and Miller, p. 9.

244. Miller, p. 168.

useful for barter, rather than for use by the brigadistas.²⁴⁵ Likewise, shortages of lanterns, pencils and notebooks were common.²⁴⁶

The immensity of health problems in the countryside also proved to be an unforeseen problem. Brigadistas were given first aid kits to last five months, and they were often used up in two weeks.²⁴⁷ The brigadistas also were trained in malaria diagnosis and control, yet found a great many other health problems that they could not deal with. A great many of the older campesinos had eyesight problems so severe they could not be taught to read. While eyeglasses were ordered, they were delayed, which put many students at a great disadvantage.²⁴⁸ In response to the many health problems, the Crusade created mobile health teams, made up of 700 university medical students, to travel to the rural areas to assist the peasants.

The Final Offensive

While the first anniversary of the revolution, July 19, 1980, dawned with over 100,000 having passed the final literacy test, a final push was initiated to guarantee the maximum number of literates before the August 23 conclusion of the campaign. The offensive was to accelerate learning, without sacrificing quality, so it called for great efforts from the national staff, the volunteers, and the students.

Representatives from the national team spread across the regions to promote and help in the implementation of the accelerated effort. For the brigadistas, all efforts in the last month were to be centered in the literacy efforts, and field or community work was

245. Hirshon, p. 169.

246. Miller, pp. 168-169.

247. Cardenal and Miller, p. 12.

248. Cardenal and Miller, p. 11.

suspended. "Classtime was augmented by two hours, Sunday sessions were added, and individual tutorial study was provided."²⁴⁹ Those brigadistas whose students had passed the test were sent to help in other areas, and those who were newly literate assisted those still trying to complete the lessons. Throughout this accelerated phase, the national and regional divisions continued to stress keeping literacy and testing standards high, and not to simply pass students through.²⁵⁰

The Campaign Concludes

On August 23, 1980, 200,000 Nicaraguans gathered again in Managua to celebrate the victorious campaign. More than half a million people, as students and teachers, had taken part in the Crusade:

According to official statistics, some 406,000 literacy students demonstrated their mastery of elementary reading and writing skills by passing a five-part final examination. From an effective rate of 40 percent, illiteracy was reduced to some 13 percent.²⁵¹

In early September, another National Congress was held, to try and evaluate the Crusade and enact the follow-up effort, and provide a forum for other nations to see the results, problems, and successes of the Nicaraguan effort. As well as members of the National Committee, brigadistas and literacy students participated as delegates. A peasant, Juan José Mercado, gave a concluding speech that summarized the triumphs of the literacy effort, as well as the attitude toward the brigadistas and the revolution:

The fact that I am here today is due to the strength of the revolution, the revolution that is every where with us, teaching all that it can....Thank you. I wish you happiness as does the revolution. May you never tire of teaching us. Don't get tired and don't stop because now I am responsible for teaching fourteen *compañeros* in the follow-up program. With the little

249. Miller, p. 187.

250. Ibid, p. 188.

251. Ibid, p. 198.

bit that I have learned, I'm teaching the others who still don't know how to read and write very well. We want to learn many things.²⁵²

Follow-Up Efforts

From the early planning of the Literacy Crusade, the post-Crusade programs were under consideration. The planners recognized that every literacy campaign must:

guarantee continuity so as to take advantage of the operative and organized network set up for the literacy campaign, to take advantage of the educational status of the people and to avoid as far as possible the retrogression of learning.²⁵³

While the Crusade had provided an educational foundation, efforts to maintain and expand learning had to be enacted until the permanent system of adult education could be established, and for those who had not been able to complete the primer by August, their initial progress needed to be supplemented.²⁵⁴ The over-all strategy for the Popular Basic Education Program that was to follow was to rely on the use of mass organizations and non-professionals, to keep programs both decentralized and inexpensive.²⁵⁵

Immediately following the conclusion of the Crusade in August, preparations began for a campaign in the indigenous languages of the Atlantic Coast region of Nicaragua--English, Miskito, and Sumo.²⁵⁶ According to the 1979 census, 75 percent of the population of this area was illiterate. Some of the population had participated in the Spanish-language Crusade, reducing the illiteracy rate to 30 percent. But there remained a portion of this population that preferred to learn their indigenous language.²⁵⁷ So the

252. Tape of speech, cited in Miller, pp. 195-196.

253. Grigsby, p. 77.

254. Miller, p. 196.

255. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 58.

256. Ibid, pp. 25-26.

257. Ibid, p. 26.

indigenous campaign took place from October 1980 to March 1981, reducing the illiteracy in this region to 22 percent,²⁵⁸ and contributing to attempts at the integration of the Atlantic Coast region with the rest of Nicaragua.²⁵⁹

Another concern after the Crusade was what would happen to the literacy rates in the countryside once the brigadistas left. So the *Maestro Popular* program was initiated, where the best literacy students would take up the functions that the literacy teachers left behind. Like the use of the multiplier model, the *Maestro Popular* helped to use what resources were available to carry out the necessary functions.²⁶⁰

Furthermore, the *Sostenimiento*, (sustainment) was the national program to continue literacy training for those who had not achieved literacy at the end of the Crusade. Under the *Sostenimiento*, 80,000 Nicaraguans continued with their literacy training.²⁶¹ There was also the creation of Popular Education Collectives (CEP), community units to participate in literacy efforts, and the *Promotor Popular*, a community member with higher levels of schooling who could serve as an adviser and supporter for the community and the CEP. By mid-1984, the CEP's had brought adult education to 195,000 Nicaraguans.²⁶²

258. Ibid.

259. Philip A. Dennis, "The Costeños and the Revolution in Nicaragua", Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs 23, no. 3 (August 1981), p. 295.

260. Grigsby, p. 79.

261. Ibid.

262. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 49.

CRUSADE ACHIEVEMENTS

The Literacy Crusade was marked as a success by both the Nicaraguans and the outside world, on a variety of levels. A more literate population, a greater integration between regions and social classes, and steps towards a transformation of political culture were viewed as achievements.

According to the official statistics of the Literacy Commission, the Crusade had lowered the illiteracy rate from over 50 percent to 13 percent in less than five months. There has been some dispute over the 13 percent, because it is based upon the government's decision to classify 130,000 individuals as unteachable or learning impaired-individuals who because of blindness, illness, age or institutionalization were unable to participate in the campaign.²⁶³ But even with this taken into account, the illiteracy rate was 23 percent, still less than half of the pre-Crusade rate, and still a remarkable reduction for such a short campaign in such difficult circumstances.²⁶⁴ From March until August, 406,056 Nicaraguans had learned to read and write. The indigenous campaign added another 12, 664 literates, and the immediate follow-up efforts addressed the 46,000 semi-literates that had not quite finished the primer by the August deadline.

The success of the Nicaraguan effort was further recognized when UNESCO unanimously awarded Nicaragua the 1980 Krupskaya Prize for Literacy.²⁶⁵ The UNESCO jury, in its citation, took note of the magnitude of the project, the number of volunteers involved, the number of new illiterates, the plans for ongoing efforts after the Crusade²⁶⁶, and "the fact that the Nicaraguan government had given priority to general

263. Ibid, p. 27.

264. Ibid, p. 28.

265. Deiner, p.122.

266. Ibid.

literacy as a fundamental component of the process of national reconstruction."²⁶⁷ In addition:

The citation closed by saying that the Literacy Campaign 'offered an enduring testament to the nobility of the human spirit through the exemplary devotion to duty of its volunteer teachers, more than fifty of whom have given their lives in the service of the compatriots.'²⁶⁸

The integration and involvement of the various factions of Nicaraguan life was another of the key objectives of the Literacy Crusade. The new urban-rural interactions proved to be an important step in this process. By sending the urban brigadistas into the countryside, the Crusade was hoping to "engender mutual respect and understanding as well as more egalitarian social relations."²⁶⁹ From the campaign, many rural citizens became more assertive, more involved in political activities. After the campaign, rural involvement increased in workers associations and farming cooperatives, and peasants came to serve as the majority of the instructors in the adult education collectives.²⁷⁰ Likewise, rural villages came to demand and expect greater government involvement in the expansion of national services and consumer products.

For the urban brigadistas and their families, the experiences in the countryside proved to also be valuable. One result of the work in rural areas was renewed interest in the traditional culture of Nicaragua--songs, dances, poetry.²⁷¹ The volunteers also came to

267. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 28.

268. UNESCO, Nadezhda K. Krupskaya Prize, International Reading Association Literacy Award and Noma Prize 1980, Pamphlet prepared by UNESCO for the ceremonies on International Literacy Day, September 8, 1980, in Paris, cited in Deiner, p. 122.

269. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 32.

270. Ibid.

271. Miller, p. 199.

understand and appreciate the lives of the campesinos. As one mother of three brigadistas stated:

The literacy crusade taught us two things. One, what our own children are capable of doing and of becoming. Two, what our country is like and how gentle and how poor our people are in the countryside.²⁷²

The campaign helped to break the historic isolation of rural Nicaragua, and provided new skills to the peasants, as well as the political and economic opportunities to use these new skills. Many stories of participants and observers point to the increased awareness of the countryside, new understanding about the problems of poverty, and development of interest in social and political participation.²⁷³

Likewise, the presence of the brigadistas and their supplies led to improvements in the communities of the peasants. According to a CNA bulletin, the brigadistas helped to:

build 2,862 latrines, 75 wells, 96 schools, 34 roads, 50 bridges, 37 health centers, and had participated in the planting and harvesting of thousands of acres of various fruits and vegetables.²⁷⁴

Furthermore, the campaign attempted to develop the integration of the Atlantic Coast with the rest of Nicaragua. The campaign in indigenous languages put forth a special effort to train indigenous personnel--over three-fourths of the teachers came from the region--and revised materials to reflect the realities of the Atlantic Coast.²⁷⁵ In addition, the initial campaign in the area had increased the area's familiarity with Spanish, as well as providing the increased health services that came with the brigadistas.

272. Mabel Somarriba interview by Valerie Miller, cited in Miller, p. 202.

273. Deiner, pp. 122-123; Miller, pp. 198-199.

274. Bulletin no. 13 of La Cruzada en Marcha, (Managua: CNA/Ministry of Education, July 1980), p. 7, cited in Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 42.

275. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 36.

Probably the most important goal of the Crusade was to help initiate the transformation of Nicaraguan social and political culture. Through efforts at mass participation, the breaking of social barriers, and the encouragement of mass organizations, the literacy campaign helped to push forward a "new" Nicaragua.

The mass participation of the literacy campaign was important for the peasants to become part of society, but also involved two other previously under-represented groups: youth and women. For the young of Nicaragua, the Crusade was to be a way to raise the consciousness and commitment of individuals. While a majority of the combatants against Somoza were under twenty-five years of age,²⁷⁶ there were still many youth who had not participated in the revolution, so the campaign gave them a way to participate in reconstruction. While 25,000 young people had been involved as revolutionaries, 65,000 participated in the Crusade. "Their participation in the campaign changed their status from marginal to being engaged in national life."²⁷⁷ After the campaign, many brigadistas continued involvement in Sandinista Youth Organization and as volunteer laborers. In 1983, 20,000 student participated in the volunteer production brigades to help with coffee and bean harvests.²⁷⁸

A study of youth involvement in the Crusade by Flora, McFadden, and Warner showed that participation in the campaign did have an effect on such individuals. From a survey of over 1,000 high school students, plus in-depth interviews, they concluded that:

the crusade strengthened the revolutionary commitment and participation of those who were literacy teachers, regardless of their level of participation in

276. Hirshon, p. 75.

277. Armove, Education and Revolution, p. 29.

278. Ibid, p. 30.

the insurrection. The literacy workers will be--or already are--the leaders of the new Nicaragua.²⁷⁹

While they found that a small percentage (13 percent) of students viewed the crusade as decreasing their support for the revolution, the study found that the Literacy Crusade experience still tended to strengthen the revolutionary attitudes and activities of brigadistas, no matter what their social class.²⁸⁰

The Crusade also had an impact on the role of women in Nicaraguan society. The majority of the illiterates in Nicaragua had been women; the Crusade allowed almost 200,000 women to complete the literacy program.²⁸¹ And while women had participated and fought in the final year of the revolution, the literacy campaign provided the first governmental and national effort where they played an equal role. During the CNA, 60 percent of the teachers were women, and in the follow-up adult education projects comprised 46 percent of students and personnel.²⁸² Due to the number of female brigadistas, the national women's association (AMNLAE) had played a crucial role in supporting and organizing the Crusade.²⁸³ After the Crusade, then, AMNLAE continued to be instrumental in prompting legislation and policies for women.²⁸⁴

In addition, the Literacy Crusade helped to increase mass participation and to strengthen existing organizations. Groups from unions to political committees had

279. Jan L. Flora, John McFadden and Ruth Warner, "The Growth of Class Struggle: The Impact of the Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade on the Political Consciousness of Young Literacy Workers," Latin American Perspectives 10, no. 1, (Winter 1983), p. 49.

280. Flora, McFadden, Warner, p. 53, pp. 58-59.

281. Ruchwarger, p. 199.

282. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 33.

283. Ruchwarger, p. 111.

284. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 34.

participated in the campaign, or had been organized for the Crusade. This opportunity for direct involvement in government programs provided valuable practice in planning and implementation of programs.²⁸⁵

The Crusade also contributed to the development of mass organizations. Such organization came to be seen as valid and effective vehicles of popular participation, and became critical to the recruitment of volunteers for development projects in the economically weakened nation.²⁸⁶ The Rural Workers' Association (ATC) doubled its membership from 1979-1980, in large part because the CNA had helped in the recruitment of members.²⁸⁷ The National Educators' Association (ANDEN) also gained in prestige and power as a result of its role in training and teaching in the campaign; "[a]s with students and women, the CNA provided the first major opportunity for teachers to become involved on a massive scale in revolutionary activities."²⁸⁸

The growth and development of the mass organizations led to their consideration as part of the greater government as well. Several organizations achieved formal representation on the Council of State in the years after the Crusade, including ANDEN, ATC, AMNLAE, the Sandinista Worker's Confederation (CST), and the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS).

While the campaign was also to assist in the transformation of society, it furthermore was to be part of the "new" development of Nicaragua, that included participation and redistribution and consolidation of wealth and power in the nation. Besides providing basic skills to much of the population, the literacy volunteers also helped in the

285. Ibid, pp. 21-22; Miller, p. 200.

286. Ibid.

287. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 35.

288. Ibid, p. 35.

establishment of a nationwide malaria control program, as well as other development projects.²⁸⁹ They also gathered data for future development programs--on agriculture, on local legends and history, on rural diseases.²⁹⁰

The mass participation in the Crusade also demonstrated the developmental view of the new government, one that wanted to depend on the people, not on outsiders:

the national literacy crusade further demonstrated the philosophy of the Sandinista regime that when people want a basic service they can provide it to themselves through their communal efforts.²⁹¹

The CNA showed that an effective policy could be enacted by the enormous effort to plan and involve the population. The campaign helped "affirm the belief in people and challenge the elitist, technocratic orientation of some planners."²⁹²

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade proved to be an extraordinary model of a successful literacy effort. Even with the underdevelopment left by Somoza, and years of civil war, the new government, with the participation of the people, was able to reduce illiteracy from 50% to 13% in five month's time.

In particular, the research and planning procedures the CNA used were important. They realized the need to examine the experiences of other nations, but to also apply the specific problems and traditions of Nicaragua. From the beginning, the methodology was focused not on simply learning to read the words in a primer, but learning to read and think, a process that would hopefully lead to more lasting literacy. And the Crusade, by

289. Ibid, p. 30.

290. Miller, pp. 199-200.

291. Arnove, Education and Revolution, p. 39.

292. Miller, p. 208.

involving the majority of Nicaraguans, either as census volunteers, teachers, or students, ensured that those participants would feel they were a participant in the "new" Nicaragua.

The Crusade further assured its success by not being satisfied with original plans, and thus willing and able to adjust the Crusade as changes arose. For instance, in the planning of the original lesson steps, several concepts were collapsed into the same lessons, and two steps, comprehension and word creation, were dropped. When, in the middle of the campaign, field reports showed students were weak in these areas, exercises in these two areas were quickly distributed to correct the deficiency.²⁹³ Furthermore, the realization that literacy would not be achieved with a single campaign, but through a series of campaigns and changes in the educational system, demonstrated a sincerity to reach the goal of an educated population, and the foresight to see how that would be achieved.

Finally, the efforts at integration of the various factions of Nicaraguan life, as well as mass participation by organizations and individuals, helped to bring about the success of the Crusade, and the Crusade, in turn, helped to strengthen the development of these efforts.

293. Miller, p. 221.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

These three literacy efforts--in Cuba, through the EWLP, and in Nicaragua-- provide comparisons, contrasts, and lessons for future literacy planners. While the Cuban and Nicaraguan campaigns shared some common features, their particular historical situations led to differences. The EWLP, while begun with high hopes, was not a very successful literacy effort, but was a valuable source of information on the planning and implementation of literacy campaigns. Interestingly, in the time since the Cuban campaign, the UNESCO definition of literacy has itself changed, following the successes and failures of these various efforts.

PLANNING AND OBJECTIVES

The Cuban and Nicaraguan campaigns had very similar objectives, that went well beyond the act of teaching their populations to read. In both Cuba and Nicaragua, the campaigns were to assist in the elimination of illiteracy in order to develop their weakened economies, but also were seen as a means of political development and change. Literacy would especially be crucial in teaching citizens the skills of participation and analysis, skills they had not been able to use under the long-term dictators that had preceded their revolutions. Especially in the case of Nicaragua, where the literacy campaign was seen as a "reward" for the bloody, long, but successful revolution, the campaign was to transform the structure of the society.

The EWLP, on the other hand, was created by and held tightly to the economic and technical definition of "functional literacy". The UNESCO projects did not take into account social or political problems, or even interests, in creating the literacy projects.

The training of literacy workers was quite different in all three cases. In Cuba, the training of the brigadistas involved all of them, at one time, in one location. The seven-day training period was to be a total immersion in the literacy, and revolutionary, process.²⁹⁴ The Nicaraguan multiplier model allowed volunteers to remain in their homes, and simply come to the various training sessions, often held in neighborhood schools, and sometimes attended by parents as well. Likewise, the Nicaraguan model depended on each new group of trainees to teach the next group. The EWLP involved different training within each nation, based upon the type of project to be enacted, and often concentrated on the literacy materials and instruction in the models of teaching created at the UNESCO offices.

The targets created also made for two different types of campaign. The EWLP targets were often unclear or undetermined. What would qualify as "literate" depended on the teachers, the materials, or various tests. In both Nicaragua and Cuba, specific tests, created before the campaigns began, were to be the measure of literacy. While in both Nicaragua and Cuba they knew that the literacy levels being reached were quite low, they were reachable targets, that were to be further developed by follow-up campaigns. On the other hand, the EWLP was hindered by a lack of clearly defined targets, and by the fact that no follow-up efforts had been discussed or prepared for implementation.

The initial leadership and structure of the literacy campaigns also show great differences between the Cuban-Nicaraguan experience and the EWLP. The efforts in Cuba and Nicaragua took place on the heels of revolution, with a new and different government

294. Lenor Blum, "The Literacy Campaign: Nicaragua Style," Caribbean Review 10, no. 1, p. 19.

in place. New agencies and ministries had to be created, and were done so in the image of the respective revolutions, not in the pre-revolution manner. Because they were not trying to work within old systems and with entrenched bureaucracies, their literacy campaigns were able to try new approaches, and be flexible in responding to problems. By coming out of a revolutionary experience, Cuba and Nicaragua were able to create new and different structures for all areas of government, not just education. Likewise, the need to consolidate the revolutionary government, and promote the revolutionary spirit, influenced the structures to be created.

The EWLP faced an entirely different set of problems. It had attempted to work within established government structures, and with entrenched elite groups, and so had often run into conflicts within the nations. For some nations, the EWLP projects were not even welcomed but were seen as necessary in order to gain any future aid from UNESCO and UNDP.

The type of literacy campaigns enacted were also quite different. The EWLP was to be a series of selective literacy projects within designated nations. The projects were generally the result of international models, created by the UNESCO staff, and put into the nations with little input from national educators or leaders. As selective projects, only small designated groups were provided with the literacy training. Part of the problem for the EWLP, as pointed out in its own assessment, was its own frequent selection of an "impoverished elite" for project participation.²⁹⁵ This "elite" was viewed as needing only a short educational "push" in order to achieve modernity, which often meant that the majority of the population, that was judged to be no where near modernity, was left out.²⁹⁶

295. The Experimental World Literacy Programme: A Critical Assessment, p. 162.

296. Ibid.

Furthermore, because these projects were to be short-term efforts, for small portions of the population, they primarily depended on trained teachers, some from the nations themselves and some from international agencies, to do the actual literacy training. So the literacy projects also tended to use traditional teaching methods, classrooms, and materials. One of the problems for the projects was in the translation of reading materials. While the work-oriented materials tended to be more oriented towards the interests of the individual nations, the materials to teach reading often came from the same source, and were then translated as closely as possible into the national languages, which were not always the languages used by the learners. For one set of materials:

original drafting was done in Russian, then translated into English, then from English into the major national language for distribution to learners who did not speak that language (much less English or Russian).²⁹⁷

The organization of literacy efforts in Cuba, Nicaragua, and through the EWLP pointed to the differences between literacy programs and literacy projects. The program approach involves a long-term effort to change and expand educational efforts on a mass scale. The idea of a literacy campaign becomes, at least in the case of Cuba and Nicaraguan, the first step in the entire education program. In addition, the program, like the campaign, is a mass effort, not geared to specific groups in society, but geared to involve many, if not most, of the people. The campaign focuses on very specific literacy goals, as part of the program effort to change all aspects of education, formal and nonformal. The project approach, on the other hand, involves narrowly defined segments of the population for participation, with narrowly defined goals. In the case of the EWLP, this meant concentration on adults only, in regional or societal groups, with intensive efforts just for those participants.

297. Arthur Gillette, "The Experimental World Literacy Program," National Literacy Campaigns: Historical and Comparative Perspectives, ed. Robert F. Arno, Harvey J. Graff, (New York: Plenum Press, 1987), pp. 211-212.

The literacy efforts in Cuba and Nicaragua were distinctly different in that they were massive efforts to involve as many members of their society as possible, including children, teenagers, and adults. These mass campaigns, to bring literacy to as many people as possible, also required that a great many non-teachers had to be trained and mobilized to help with the literacy efforts, and that the traditional schools had to even be shut down for a while to free people for participation. In addition, the mass effort was to help reduce the social gaps in the societies, and was not to be focused on elites, or the creation of new elites.

In both Nicaragua and Cuba, the campaigns were to be total efforts, involving virtually all segments of society, not just students and teachers. The campaign, especially in Nicaragua, was part of an entire development effort. Educational reform was a long-term goal, with the Literacy campaign as simply the first step in the effort. This idea of a literacy program was quite different from the EWLP notion of a literacy project. The project approach, as enacted under the EWLP, had only selective efforts and goals, without mass mobilization, without active support and participation by local and national governments, and without long-term goals and projects being discussed.

At least in the manner used in the EWLP, the project approach proved to be an ineffective method for establishing literacy programs in these developing countries. The selective nature, by not allowing all of the society to be involved, tended to reduce the importance of education in the public eye. Likewise, by not being a national focus or concern, the literacy projects put into place were not as much a part of the public life and consciousness, in the manner they had been in Cuba and Nicaragua.

Furthermore, in both Cuba and Nicaragua, the literacy campaigns were designed, implemented, and run within the nations. The Cuban campaign relied almost solely on Cuban educators and revolutionaries for its organization, with a few foreign advisers. The Nicaraguan campaign had a great many more international agencies and foreigners

involved, but all were under the direction of the Nicaraguan staff and leadership. Likewise, both campaigns had created their own literacy materials, using the recent revolutions as the basis for many of the primer themes.

PROBLEMS

All three literacy efforts faced great problems in trying to fulfill their goals and objectives. Financing was one of the first obstacles for all. Cuba was probably the least affected by financial woes, primarily because the revolution had not been as destructive to the nation as was the situation in Nicaragua. For Nicaragua, it was necessary to go to international agencies and foreign governments to get funding, as well as to try and raise money within the country. For the EWLP, funding came forth, but did so with strings attached by the UNDP and World Bank. Because the World Bank and the UNDP put specific requirements and limitations on the EWLP in its early stages, the structure of the project was effected by these demands.

Outside intervention also became a problem for the efforts in Cuba and Nicaragua. In Cuba, the campaign itself was interrupted by the U.S.-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion, as well as counter-revolutionaries attacking literacy workers. For Nicaragua, the counter-revolutionaries were a great concern. Hundreds of literacy personnel were harassed, and nine were assassinated.²⁹⁸ In the years after the Crusade, the Nicaraguan effort was hampered by the on-going war with the U.S.-sponsored contras. By 1985, with 25 percent of the national budget going into defense, fewer resources could continue to be allocated to education.²⁹⁹ Especially in northern Nicaragua, teachers and adult educators

298. Cardenal and Miller, p. 10.

299. Barndt, p. 342.

became targets of counterrevolutionaries, so classes often had to continue meeting clandestinely, with students burying books between classes.³⁰⁰

For the EWLP, the greatest problem may have been its own definition of literacy and what its program would achieve. By sticking with an economic definition, by believing that their projects, without follow-up efforts, would lead to national literacy efforts, and by using international models, rather than local models, for teaching, the program seemed doomed to failure. The definition of "functional literacy" that the EWLP was based on did not allow for social or political realities to be taken into account in creating and implementing the projects. Likewise, the creation of curriculum and materials by international experts, rather than with the input of local educators, meant that some efforts did not match local expectations or interests. Finally, the lack of follow-up efforts, or realization that they may be as important as the literacy project itself, did not encourage long-term changes in literacy rates.

While those in the EWLP had had much experience in organizing literacy efforts, the Cuban and Nicaraguan leadership had not. This inexperience led to delays and difficulties, but also may have been a factor in the flexibility of planning and implementing the programs. For the Cuban campaign, implementation problems forced organizers to enact drastic measures during the effort to bring about the desired results. Perhaps because of the experience in Cuba, Nicaraguan planners were able to set up a program that needed only some fine-tuning once it was in place.

CAMPAIGN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The EWLP had planned to involve over one million adults, from eleven nations, in selected literacy efforts. After the eight years (1965-1973) that the EWLP was in place,

300. Ibid.

just over 120,000 adults had been classified as new literates. Of the eleven nations, only one, Tanzania, took the EWLP projects and directly expanded them into national literacy efforts. (Ethiopia, after a "revolutionary hiatus", did continue some of the projects from the EWLP.³⁰¹) In part, this points to the EWLP's lack of national involvement and lack of understanding of the political and social realities of the countries involved, since only one viewed the effort as worth continuing. Several nations in the years after began to enact educational changes; yet only Tanzania chose to follow the EWLP efforts.

So for the millions of dollars spent, and hundreds of international experts involved, the number of new literates was fairly dismal. Likewise, with one exception, the EWLP did not lead to any participant nations enacting their own massive literacy campaigns, as had been expected. So for the proponents of the EWLP, the greatest accomplishment may have been the very public discussions about the successes and failures of the program, and the resulting guidelines, recommendations, and changing definitions of literacy that came out of the discussions.

The Cuban campaign was, in less than one years' time, able to involve over 900,000 illiterates and help just over 700,000 achieve minimal literacy. Beyond the new literacy, the campaign in Cuba also managed to consolidate the revolutionary leadership by involving an enormous number of people in a massive public policy effort. The reduction of the illiteracy rate from 26 percent to 4 percent is still considered a remarkable achievement. When the initial campaign ended, immediate follow-up efforts helped to continue the literacy process. In the years since the campaign, education has remained a top priority to the Cuban government, and still maintains one of the lowest illiteracy rates in the world.

301. Gillette, p. 203.

In addition to literacy efforts, Cuba has also pushed for increased development of formal schooling as part of the over-all educational effort. From 1959 to 1969 the total primary school enrollment more than doubled, from 717,000 to over 1,560,000.³⁰² Secondary enrollment showed the same massive increase, rising from 63,000 in 1958-59 to 177,000 in 1967-68.³⁰³ Adult enrollment increases have been a further legacy of the literacy campaign. For 1958-59, adult enrollment figures were 27,000, rising to 425,000 in 1967-68.³⁰⁴

Educational expenditures also increased rapidly after the revolution, and continue to rise. The state education budget increased from 77 million pesos in 1958 to 280 million in 1969 to over 800 million by 1975.³⁰⁵ In 1981, the illiteracy rate for those 10-49 years of age stood at 2 percent.³⁰⁶

For Nicaragua, the achievements of the literacy campaign appear even more remarkable, given the massive destruction caused by the revolution and the almost total lack of economic resources. The illiteracy rate was reduced from over 50 percent to 13 percent in five months time. Along the way, the campaign involved over half a million Nicaraguans in one way or another, and had resulted in over 400,000 new literates. Like in Cuba, immediate follow-up efforts helped to continue the literacy efforts, and to expand the formal education system as well.

302. Samuel Bowles, "Cuban Educational and the Revolutionary Ideology," Harvard Educational Review 41, no. 4 (November 1971), p. 484.

303. Nelson P. Valdes, "The Radical Transformation of Cuban Education," Cuba in Revolution, ed. Rolando E. Bonachea and Nelson P. Valdes, (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1972), p. 434.

304. Valdes, p. 430.

305. Valdes, p. 439; UNESCO Statistical Digest, 1987, (Paris: Unesco, 1987), p. 116.

306. UNESCO Statistical Digest, 1987, p. 116.

At all levels, educational enrollments have increased in Nicaragua. Primary school figures went from 341,533 in 1975 to 561,551 in 1985.³⁰⁷ Secondary enrollment almost doubled, from 80,202 in 1975 to 151,303 in 1985.³⁰⁸ In addition, university enrollment figures have increased, from just over 18,000 in 1975 to 29,000 in 1985, and with an increase in the number of students in science and technical fields, up to 50 percent.³⁰⁹ By 1983, over 1 million Nicaraguans, almost half of the population, were studying in some form of educational program, quadruple the number in 1978.³¹⁰ Likewise, educational expenditures have also increased. While in 1975, 258 million cordobas were spent, by 1985, the figure had gone up to 6,408 million.³¹¹

CONCLUSIONS AND THE CHANGING VIEW OF LITERACY

The three literacy efforts examined have certainly contributed to the knowledge and understanding of educational planning in developing nations. In part, these experiences have led to changing definitions of literacy at the international level. As the 1975 Declaration of Persepolis stated, "literacy [is] not just the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of man and to his full development."³¹² In 1982, the "Udaipur Declaration on International Strategy for Literacy Promotion" stated in part:

307. UNESCO Statistical Digest, 1987, p. 136.

308. Ibid.

309. Ibid.

310. Barndt, p. 330.

311. Statistical Yearbook, 1988, (Paris: UNESCO, 1988), pp. 4-11.

312. Declaration of Persepolis, International Symposium for Literacy, Persepolis, 3-8 September, 1975, in Theory and Practice of Literacy Work, p. 128.

A literacy campaign must be seen as a necessary part of a national strategy for overcoming poverty and injustice....A literacy campaign is a potent and vivid symbol of a nation's struggle for development and commitment to a just society....Literacy campaigns succeed and realize their liberating and development potential when there are avenue for popular participation in all phases....Renewed dedication and effort at the national, regional and international level is required to overcome the intolerable situation in which hundreds of millions of people find themselves. The planetary dimensions and the unjust social and human implication of illiteracy challenge the conscience of the world.³¹³

The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade has contributed to this changing view of literacy. The Cuban effort, while making great strides in literacy, was ignored in part because of the political posturing of Cuba, and in part because of the isolation of the effort. But Nicaragua, by beginning with the Cuban model, inviting the participation of foreign advisers and international agencies and groups, had a much more visible effort. By examining the lessons of the EWLP, and especially the Recommendations issued from it, the Nicaraguan campaign was able to avoid the pitfalls of other literacy efforts.

The 1975 "Recommendations of the Expert Team" that came out of the EWLP experience provided many valuable insights that the Nicaraguan Crusade was able to use in the planning of their efforts. The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade began with one of the strongest recommendations from the EWLP, that literacy efforts must be national priorities. The almost total involvement by the Nicaraguan citizens in the Crusade, as well as government commitment to the effort, demonstrate this. Likewise, the use of locally prepared materials, and the mobilization of all human resources, not just trained teachers, contributed to the success of the effort. In addition, the creation of reasonable and measurable targets for measuring literacy, rather than unreachable goals, contributed to the Nicaraguan Crusade. Nicaragua further followed the lessons of the EWLP, in using external aid to support its own programs, rather than allowing external aid to determine

313. "Udaipur Declaration on International Strategy for Literacy Promotion", Udaipur, India, 4-11 January, 1982, in Campaigning for Literacy, pp. 201-203.

what programs would be enacted. In particular, the use of aid from non-governmental agencies, and the willingness to turn down money and advisers that carried their own agendas, allowed the Crusade to be maintained under national control. Most importantly, Nicaragua followed the EWLP recommendation that "each country must find its own solution to its own problems."³¹⁴ While Nicaragua did begin with the same type of structures used in Cuba, its Literacy Crusade was a different process, based upon the history and the people of Nicaragua. It was not a carbon-copy of the Cuban or the EWLP campaigns, but a distinctly different effort.

The experiences of these campaigns point to three factors that seem to be necessary for a campaign to improve literacy in a developing country. Education, and literacy efforts, must be seen as part of an overall development strategy, intertwined with political, social and economic goals and problems. No longer can it be assumed that literacy will naturally lead to development, nor that literacy can be geared to direct economic gains. Likewise, it must be an internally created program, not a holdover from the days of colonialism or dependency. Secondly, a literacy campaign must involve the majority of people, as teachers, students, and/or volunteers. At the least, the campaign must be perceived as national effort, and must push to involve people at all levels. Finally, as part of development strategy and as a mass effort, a literacy campaign must have the support of all levels of government in the developing nation. This must be support that is willing to sacrifice other goals and resources in order to achieve the goals of literacy, and to be able to continue with programs for education. Literacy cannot be seen as a one-time project, or a simple political campaign promise. It must have realistic, sincere, and long-term support at the highest levels.

314. Hamadache, p. 21.

So the final question may be, how to achieve this in other developing nations? The example of Cuba and Nicaragua seems to show that a revolution may be one way to change the structures of society to the point that such a massive effort could be enacted. Yet because revolutions result in violent and disorienting changes for nations, revolutions for literacy may not be the most advisable course. Rather, for the developing world, the example of Nicaragua may show that education is not so much a question of finance, but a social and political problem. The Nicaraguan Crusade demonstrates that even a poor country can achieve literacy in a short period of time, as part of larger educational and developmental goals, if the political will and social involvement is present or created. In particular, developing nations may need to look to Nicaragua to learn how to deal with the issues of foreign assistance and funding for education, the creation of a national commitment to education and literacy, and the belief that nations themselves can solve their own educational problems.

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APPENDIX A

TEN-STEP LESSON FORMULA, NICARAGUAN LITERACY CRUSADE

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TEN-STEP LESSON FORMULA, NICARAGUAN LITERACY CRUSADE

1. Presentation of an evocative photo from the primer to stimulate dialogue within the class, leading to the conclusion expressed by the short sentence that followed;
2. Focus on the key word culled from this opening phrase;
3. The separation of this word into syllables, and the selection of one specific syllable as the lesson's objective;
4. The presentation of the consonant sound of this syllable together with the five possible vowel combinations (for example, *la le li lo lu*);
5. The copying and later writing of these syllables, with small and capital letters;
6. The formation of new words by combining the new syllables with others learned in previous lessons;
7. The presentation of all possible variations of these syllables--for example, inverted (*al el ol ul*) or with an ending consonant sound (*las les lis los lus*);
8. The reading of words and sentences that contain the known syllables;
9. A dictation to test the student's mastery;
10. The *muestra*, or demonstration--a phrase or motto to be copied in the student's best handwriting.

From: Sheryl L. Hirshon, And Also Teach Them to Read, (Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1983), p. 50.

APPENDIX B

THEME SENTENCES FOR PRIMER LESSONS, NICARAGUAN LITERACY CRUSADE

APPENDIX B

THEME SENTENCES FOR PRIMER LESSONS, NICARAGUAN
LITERACY CRUSADE

<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Theme Sentence</u>
1	Sandino, leader of the revolution.
2	Carlos Fonseca said, "Sandino lives."
3	The FSLN led the people to liberation.
4	The guerrillas overcame the genocidal National Guard.
5	The masses rose up in an insurrection made by the people.
6	The Sandinista defense committees defend the revolution.
7	To spend little, save much, and produce a lot--that is making the revolution.
8	The revolutionary workers' associations propel production forward and keep vigil over the process.
9	People, army, unity: They are the guarantee of victory.
10	The agrarian reform guarantees that the harvest goes to the people.
11	With organization, work, and discipline, we will be able to rebuild the land of Sandino.
12	1980, the year of the war against illiteracy.
13	The pillage of imperialism is over: Nicaragua's natural resources are ours.
14	The nationalization of Somoza's businesses helps us recover our wealth and strengthen our economy.
15	Work is a right and a responsibility of every person in the land.

- 16 The revolutionary government expands and creates health centers for the people.
- 17 With the participation of everyone, we will have healthy recreation for our children.
- 18 We are forming work brigades to construct and improve our housing.
- 19 Women have always been exploited. The revolution makes possible their liberation.
- 20 The revolution opens up a road system to the Atlantic Coast. The Kurinwas is a navigable river.
- 21 Our democracy is the power of people belonging to organizations and participating.
- 22 There is freedom of religion for all those churches that support and defend the interests of the people.
- 23 The Sandinista revolution extends the bond of friendship to all peoples.

From: Valerie Miller, Between Struggle and Hope: The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), pp. 76-77.