

The Status of Women in Nicaragua

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Overview

Overarching Thesis: Nicaragua *appears* to be rapidly closing the gender gap. Yet for education, healthcare, economic opportunities, political representation, and legal rights we question how truly *equal* women are to men.

Interviewing Professor Lisa Baldez

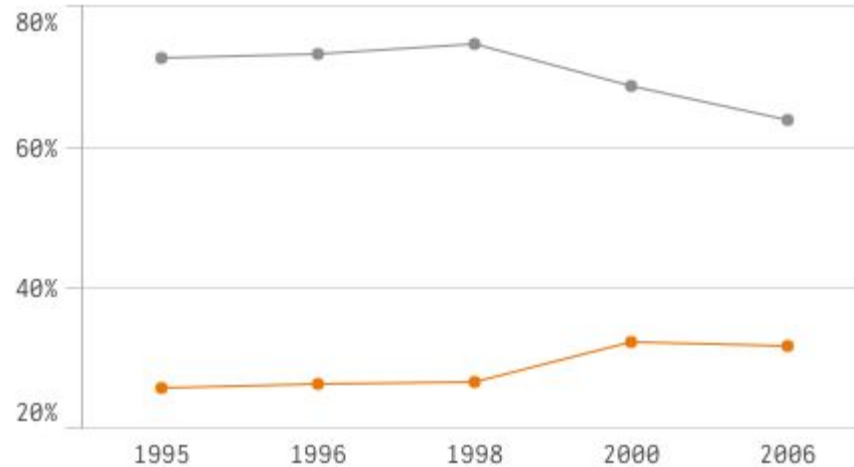
- Chair of the Latin American, Latino, and Caribbean Studies (LALACS) Program
- Director of the Dartmouth Center for the Advancement of Learning (DCAL)
- Focus: **Women's rights** and individual countries intersect with the broader political landscape
- **CEDAW**: Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- Nicaragua's last CEDAW report was in 2007



Nicaragua CEDAW Report Highlights



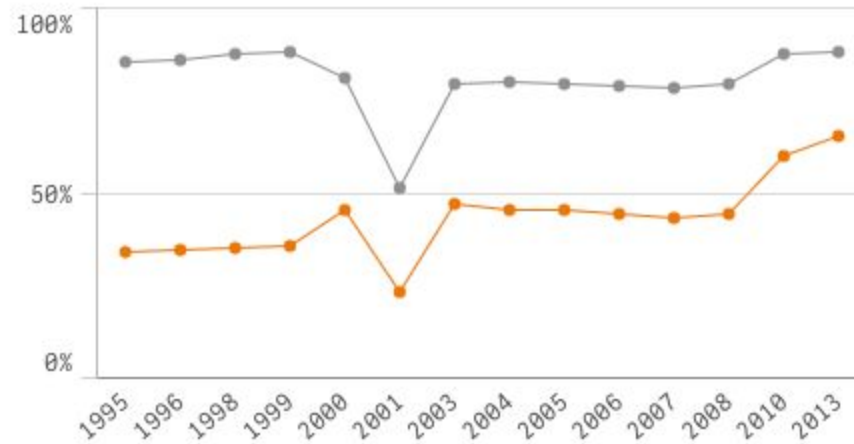
Labour force participation rate for persons aged 15-24, by sex



Nicaragua CEDAW Report Highlights



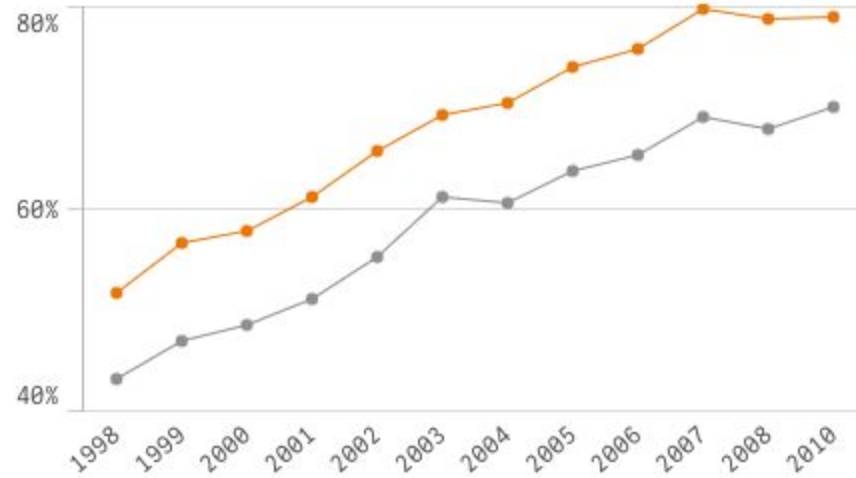
Labour force participation rate for persons aged 15+, by sex



Nicaragua CEDAW Report Highlights



Gross enrolment ratio in secondary education, by sex

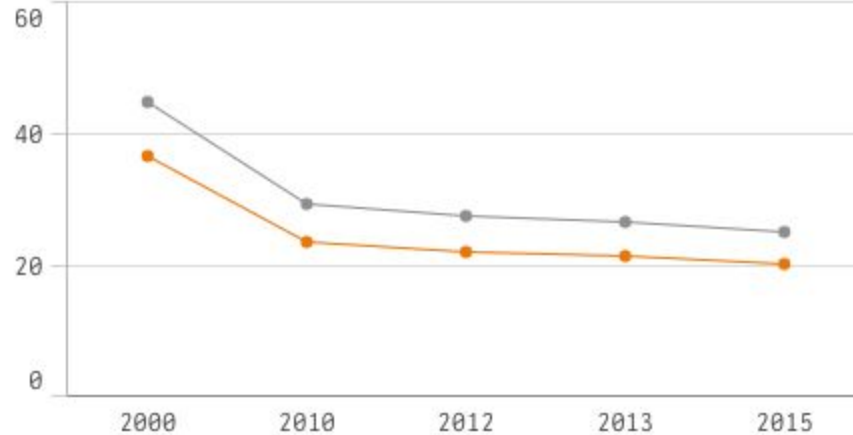


Nicaragua CEDAW Report Highlights



Under-five mortality rate, by sex

(Maternal deaths per 100,000 live births)

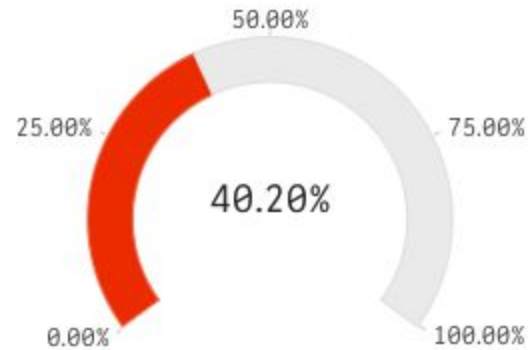


Nicaragua CEDAW Report Highlights



Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

2013

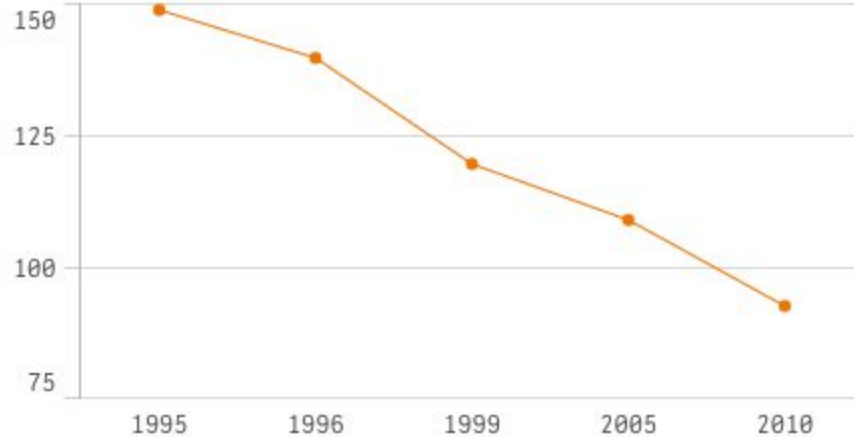


Nicaragua CEDAW Report Highlights



Adolescent birth rate

(Births per 1000 women aged 15-19)



UN Response to Nicaragua 2007 CEDAW Report

- Nicaraguan Institute for Women = under-resourced and dependent on international financing
- “Persistence of stereotypes concerning the roles of women in the family and in society”
- “Limited availability of data and the related difficulty in assessing progress in girls’ and women’s education
- High drop-out rate of girls in primary and secondary education
- “Data on domestic violence isn’t disaggregated by sex and ethnicity, nor are data on violence in general”
- No information provided on the trafficking of women and girls
- Not enough information on women’s participation in political/public life
- Worker’s rights for women specifically need to improve
- Nicaragua needs to raise the minimum legal age of marriage for girls/boys and handle discriminatory marriage/family relations

Education

Overview: In terms of gender equality, more Nicaraguan women than men obtain an education. However, the absolute percentages of education attainment for females and males in Nicaragua is low.

Nicaragua's Education System

- **Primary Education:** school from February to November, free and compulsory, facilities unavailable to those living in tribes in remote areas where it's customary to work from a young age, only 30% make it through grade 6
- **Secondary Education:** luxury which poor Nicaraguans can almost never access, even those who complete this education can only go to local universities because the world doesn't accept this education
- **Vocational Education:** largely in the hands of private colleges, 2 to 3 year courses
- **Tertiary Education:** 4-5 year licenciado, also a 2-year maestria



Women's Education Statistics

- Note: These numbers were published in 2010 and reflect the changes from 1997 to 2008
- A 2015 deadline was set by the world's leaders in 2000 for achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals
- Yet no new numbers have been released since the 2008 figures
- Between 1997 and 2008,
 - Secondary education coverage rose from 29.9% to 48.1% of girls
 - Secondary education coverage rose from 24.8% to 42.9% of boys
- The rate of Nicaraguan girls enrolled in secondary education is well below other developing countries, such as the Philippines, Kenya and Belize
- Only 18% of Nicaraguan women attend university or other types of tertiary education, and 17% don't know how to read or write

Nicaragua World Economic Forum Report

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	1	1.000	0.946		
Literacy rate	1	1.00	0.89	83	82
Enrolment in primary education.....	1	1.00	0.93	92	91
Enrolment in secondary education.....	1	1.00	0.64	49	42
Enrolment in tertiary education.....	1	1.00	0.92	18	16

BUT gender imbalance is even more marked in actual attendance: there are 2 girls to 1 boy at the primary school level, 3:1 in secondary school and over 4:1 in university

YET women still experience low wages, limited promotion opportunities, and a limited role in decision-making. In 2009, women earned 76% of what men earned. 10% wage gap in formal sector and 30% wage gap in informal market. Women hold only 20% of managerial/executive positions

Healthcare

Overview: The overall health of women is greatly affected by maternal health. By nature, this creates great disparities in the general health of men and women.

Gender-based Health Issues

- Maternal mortality
- Cervical cancer
- Adolescent fertility rate
- Gender-based violence



<http://www.minsa.gob.ni/index.php/institucion/mision-y-vision>

Maternal Mortality and Adolescent Fertility

Maternal Mortality

- Remains high even though has lowered
- 55% of women in rural areas give birth at home
- Adolescents account for approximately 1/3 of maternal deaths



Adolescent fertility rate

- Nicaragua has one of the highest adolescent fertility rates in the world
- Approximately half give birth before age of 20

Maternal mortality graph

Year	Maternal mortality ratio (MMR) ^a	Maternal deaths	AIDS-related indirect maternal deaths	Live births ^b	Proportion of maternal deaths among deaths of female reproductive age (PM %)
	Per 100 000 live births (lb)	Numbers	Numbers	Thousands	
1990	173 [142-210]	260	0	149	17.8
1995	212 [181-245]	300	0	143	17.6
2000	202 [174-234]	270	0	135	15.4
2005	190 [166-220]	250	0	131	12.5
2010	166 [141-196]	210	0	127	10.5
2015	150 [115-196]	180	0	121	8.5

^a MMR and PM are calculated for women 15-49 years.

^b Live birth data are from World Population Prospects: the 2015 Revision. New York, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat; 2015.

Cervical Cancer and Gender Violence

Cervical cancer

- Cervical cancer is the most common fatal malignancy in women
- Prevalence of 13.9 cases per 100,000 women in 2002

Gender-based violence is a significant health problem for women

- 27% reporting physical abuse at some time in their lives
- 13% reporting at least one instance of sexual abuse



Access to Healthcare



- Approximately 35 to 40 percent of Nicaraguans lack direct access to the public health system
- The percent of utilization for males and females are roughly the same
 - Female
 - Ordinary consultation: 48.44%
 - Emergency consultation: 3.81%
 - No consultation: 47.75%
 - Male:
 - Ordinary consultation: 43.15%
 - Emergency consultation: 3.90%
 - No consultation: 52.96%
- Only 3.7% of Nicaraguans seek preventive health care
 - Males are 6.2% less likely to seek preventive health care

Economic Opportunities

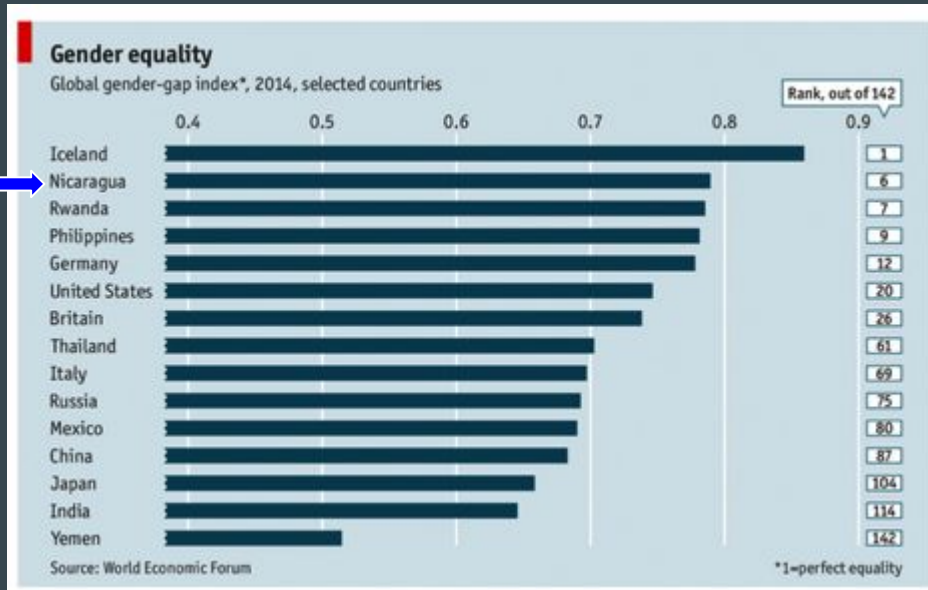
Overview: It appears on the surface that Nicaragua offers equal economic opportunity, but how can this be true if the underlying social norms keep women at home?

Women's economic opportunities

- Economy is largely agricultural based
- Women are largely in charge of labor intensive tasks for maintain households
 - Carrying water
 - Collecting fuel wood
 - Caring for children
 - Producing agriculture
 - Working in the market
- Lack of government legislation that addresses gender inequality



On closing the gender-gap



- Nicaragua scored about a 0.78 on a gender-gap index, which indicates near perfect equality (sixth in the world)
- So although their roles are different men and women still have the same economic opportunities
 - How can this be if women are required to stay at the home all day?

Political Representation

Overview: Women are more represented in politics in Nicaragua than many “developed” countries. But representation does not mean political power.

By the numbers

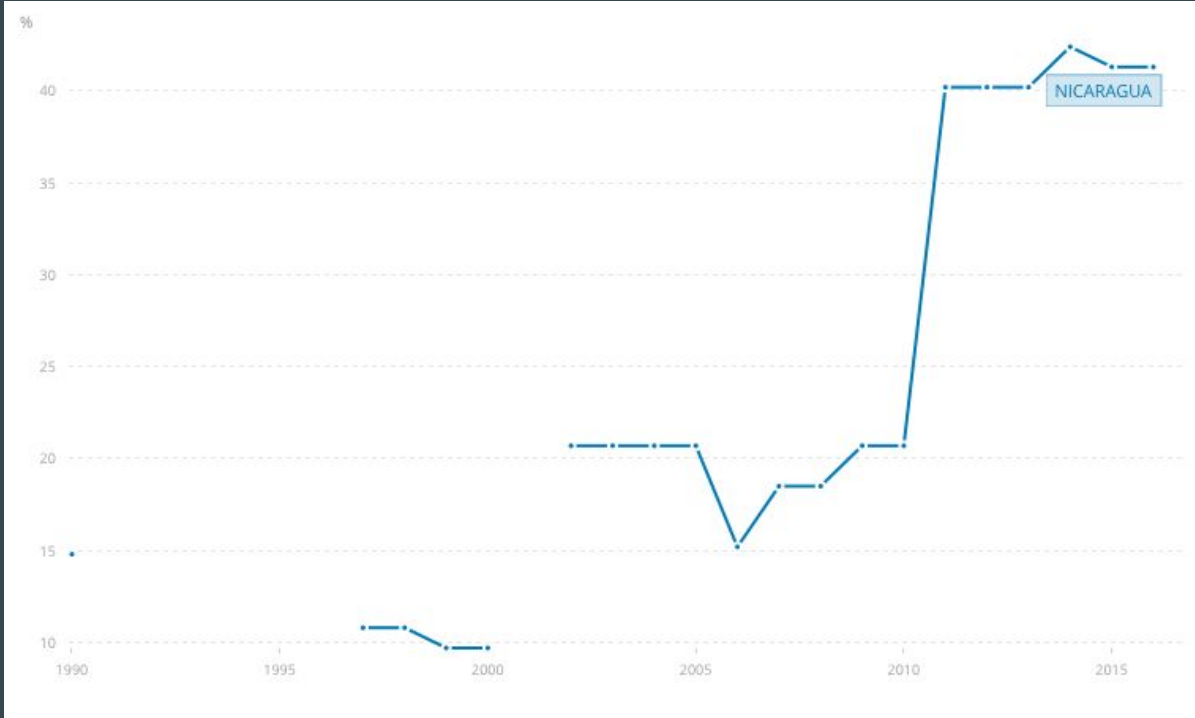
- National Assembly 40% women
- United States Congress 19.4% women
- In 2011 proportion of women improved from the 18.5% elected in 2006 to 40% (gained over 20 seats)
- In 2011 more than 50% of the Sandinista seats were won by women
- National quotas for women
 - Political or coalition party candidates must be 50% women and 50% men
 - Sandinistas (FSLN) voluntary quota of 30% of its seats must be women
 - Liberal and Constitutionalist Party (PLC) 40% quota



Women in Parliament - Regional Averages

	Single House or lower House	Upper House or Senate
Americas	27.7%	27.0%
Europe - OSCE member countries including Nordic countries	25.8%	25.1%
Europe - OSCE member countries excluding Nordic countries	24.3%	25.1%
Sub-Saharan Africa	23.2%	22.0%

Nicaragua - Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliament (World Bank)



By the numbers

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Rosario Murillo

- Long term partner of Sandinista leader and President Daniel Ortega
- Held unofficial power for a long time
- Vice-presidential running mate of Ortega - legitimizing/recognizing work she's already been doing (soft power)
- Nicaraguan constitution prohibits only blood relatives from running together? Or people related "by affinity" too? Family dynasty?
- Zoilamérica Murillo - outcast daughter of Rosario Murillo - has accused Ortega of sexual abuse



Symbol of Equality?

"We don't doubt that [the vice presidential candidate] had to be a woman, and who better than the partner who has already been tested with work and proved to be very efficient and disciplined?"

- Daniel Ortega

Legal Rights

Overview: Traditional family values prioritized women's rights.

Abortion: Total Ban

- 2006 political coalition between Catholic Church and Sandinistas
- Abortion legal in at least some circumstances in 97% of countries
- Young, poor, rural women suffer the most
- “All pregnant children were raped” - Catholics for the Right to Choose
- Delays in obstetric emergency care, fear of seeking treatment for pregnancies
- What about Zika? Government says “remain calm”



“The effect [of the ban] has been in the medical personnel. ... There have been situations that should have been treated [but] out of fear they haven’t been treated fast. ... For example, in one hospital we have a patient with an ectopic pregnancy, it was ruptured, there was nothing to do [to save the fetus] but [the patient] was not treated. ... It’s like an excuse. ... The doctors don’t want to put themselves on the line. ... We have received complaints.”

-- Dr. Jorge Orochena, Director for Quality Control, Health Ministry.

Law 779 - Violence Against Women

- 2012 Comprehensive Law against Violence against Women (Law 779) banned mediation in cases of violence against women
- Criticized for breaking up families - gives women route to leave violent partners
- 2013 amendment - State attorney can recommend mediation when man accused of crimes with a penalty of less than 5 years (e.g. threat, assault, bodily harm)
- Family values over women's rights

In making these reforms the government has taken a retrogressive step, sending a dangerous message that some forms of violence against women are acceptable in Nicaragua and that abusers can escape accountability by entering into a process of mediation with their victim. - Amnesty International

Plan for Nicaragua

Overview: This is what Morgan and Katie plan on doing during their time in Nicaragua in order to gain a better understand of gender equality.

Gathering information from Nicaraguans

While in Nicaragua: We want to interview women and ask them open-ended questions to see if the policies/statistics/issues that we've presented are actually prevalent in the Autonomous Region of Nicaragua, particularly the more rural areas. Our main question is "To what extent does Nicaragua's record in the international arena reflect the daily lives and status of women in Siuna?"

- If a women were to be physically or emotionally abused by her spouse, are there any options?
- What do women use for contraception here?
- If a girl wanted to go to school, is there anything stopping her?
- What were the expectations that your family and your community had of you when you were growing up?
- What rights do you feel you have as woman?
- How does the government represent you as a woman?

Ending Quote

“Without gender equity in a society, comprehensive development is not possible” - Pablo Mandeville, UNDP representative and resident coordinator of U.N. agencies in Nicaragua

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