

COVER

Project title: Strengthening institutional capacities for successful integration of children with disabilities in the education system

Implementing partner: UNICEF Nicaragua

Main implementing counterpart: Ministry of Education Nicaragua

Implementing period: 4 years, 2020 to 2024

Amount: 1,200,000 USD

Project funding: India Fund (1.000.000 US\$) and UNICEF Nicaragua (200.000 USD)

Executive Summary:

In line with the national priorities, based on the experience and lessons learned from previous cooperation and the added value UNICEF can provide to the country, the program will prioritize inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools. The programmatic priorities are aligned with the strategic priorities of the National Human Development Programme 2018–2021 and the national sectoral plans. The project also responds to the Goal Areas of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 and to the Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021; and will contribute to national efforts related to the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. This project purpose is that at least 15 schools that serve preschool, primary and/or secondary education levels, strategically located, convert themselves into “prototypes of inclusive schools”, meeting basic standards to ensure conditions for children with and without disabilities to learn together. To do so, UNICEF will work with the Ministry of Education as well as with children, their families and communities, to ensure that children with disabilities, especially those in conditions of exclusion can have access to inclusive and equitable education services.

Signatures



Paulo Sassarao

Oficial a Cargo – UNICEF Nicaragua

I. Background and rationale

Nicaragua is a middle-income country that has achieved significant economic and social progress in recent years, particularly with regards to boys, girls and adolescents. An estimated 13% of the country's population of 6.3 million is under 5 years-old and 8.5% ranges between 6 and 9 years-old. Progress attained in economic and social policy was reflected in a reduction of monetary poverty from 42.5% in 2009 to 24.9% in 2016, with extreme poverty falling from 14.6% to 6.9%. However, disparities persist. In rural areas, the poverty level accounted for 50.1% and extreme poverty for 16.3%, compared to 14.8% and 2.4%, respectively, in urban areas.

In relation to education, significant progress has been achieved in the last five years on primary and secondary education in Nicaragua in terms of guaranteeing free access and expanding coverage. Between 2010 and 2016, the gross average enrollment rate in the second stage of early education (four to six year-old children) rose from 54.5% to 65.1%. For primary education, the gross enrollment rate went beyond 100% (children of all ages, including children older than the expected age for the level), and the secondary education rate increased from 67.9% to 76.5%. Strengthening the quality of education however, remains a challenge for the education system, as it implies undertaking additional improvements to school infrastructure, providing training for teachers, updating teaching material, expanding and strengthening existing flexible modalities of education (e.g., community early education and distance education for primary and secondary levels in rural areas); and enhancing families' participation in their children's education.

While there is no up-to-date information for Nicaragua, it is estimated worldwide that approximately 50% of children with disabilities have no access to education. Taking into consideration this information gap, a pre-assessment of the Schools involved in the project has been implemented by the Ministry of Education. Furthermore, the project contemplates an important component related to data collection and systematization. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that, in the next months, UNICEF and the Government of Nicaragua will carry out the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) which will provide valuable information in relation with the situation of children with disabilities.

In Nicaragua, efforts have been made to ensure that children with disabilities enter regular education programs. To this end, teachers are being trained, physical accessibility in schools is being addressed, inclusive materials are being developed and schools are increasingly being recognized as inclusive schools where children with disabilities can attend classes along with other children. For example, within the framework of a joint effort between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education (MINED) and through an investment of 50,000 US dollars, ten video books were developed between 2019 and 2020 to share key Nicaraguan literary works with boys and girls with disabilities and without disabilities under an inclusive approach. Within formal school setting, these teaching materials have reached 3,200 students with disabilities enrolled in inclusive or special schools, and at least 5,000 students without disabilities who share educational spaces with children with disabilities. Furthermore, the video books are potentially accessible to all students (1,800,000 in the basic education system) on the web. It is worth mentioning that continuity has been given to these efforts five new video books are planned to be produced this year.

However, there is a long way to go to ensure a 100% inclusion. Indeed, despite the efforts and progress made, there are still gaps linked to multiple aspects involving inclusive education processes. With regards to infrastructure, girls and boys with disabilities face difficulties to access and use school spaces which lack all necessary accommodations. On the other hand, there are very few teaching materials that support

inclusion processes for students with disabilities in educational settings. The production of methodological aids based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is still in its early stages. UDL¹ is an educational framework recognizing that all children learn differently and benefit from differentiated learning techniques in the classroom. UDL seeks to accommodate individual learning differences and styles by developing and making use of flexible learning environments. Such approaches particularly accommodate children with different types of disabilities and facilitate their inclusion in the classroom. Moving away from the 'one-size-fits-all' approach to learning improves learning outcomes for all children, whether or not they have disabilities, and improves students' motivation to learn.

In direct relation to inclusive learning processes, a technology access gap in classrooms (equipment and infrastructure) and its mastering by teaching staffs (technical skills) has been identified with the purpose of implementing specialized tools that contribute to an inclusive education. Beyond their mastery of technology applied to inclusive methodologies, teaching and support staff in schools continue lacking the technical skills for comprehensive care involving girls and boys with disabilities in inclusive educational settings. However, factors limiting inclusive school environments development are not only due to service supply related gaps but to families and communities' perspectives as well. In this sense, it is important to note that society in general can further improve its perception of an inclusive education where children with and without disabilities can share and learn together.

To address these different factors that influence the development of inclusive learning spaces, this project proposes defining and implementing basic standards aimed at boys and girls with and without disabilities to share educational processes in an inclusive environment in 15 inclusive school prototypes.

II. Expected results

In line with national priorities, based on experience and lessons learned from prior cooperation and added value that UNICEF can provide the country with, the program will prioritize the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools. Programmatic priorities are aligned with strategic priorities from the National Program for Human Development 2018-2021 and national sectoral plans. The program also responds to UNICEF's Strategic Plan Goal Areas, 2018–2021 and the Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021. It will contribute to national efforts related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all) and 2030 Agenda.

In this context, the results detailed below, are expected to be attained, therefore contributing in the medium and long term, for society in general and families in particular to be actively involved in the promotion of inclusive learning spaces, where boys and girls with and without disabilities, their families and the educational community can mutually relate, learn, share and benefit from the experiences generated by inclusive schools.

General Objective/Effect/Outcome:

In 2024, 15 schools providing pre-school, primary and/or secondary education services in 15 different departments of the country, become "inclusive school prototypes", meeting the basic standards that guarantee conditions for children with and without disabilities to learn together.

¹ More information on UDL is available in the following website:
<https://www.accessibletextbooksforall.org/universal-design-learning>

Specific Objectives/Products/Outputs

1. In 2024, **15** schools have physical infrastructure that allow accessibility and use of basic spaces for girls and boys with disabilities.
2. In 2024, **14,457** boys, girls and adolescents with and without disabilities (7,139 girls and 7,318 boys of whom 321 are boys and girls with an identified disability) participating in 15 inclusive school prototypes, use Universal Design for Learning (UDL) based on teaching materials that allows them to share and socialize among themselves, focusing particularly on reading, writing, mathematics and English as a second language, as well as in arts and culture.
3. In 2024, **14,457** boys, girls and adolescents with and without disabilities (7,139 girls and 7,318 boys of whom 321 are boys and girls with an identified disability) participating in 15 inclusive schools prototypes, optimize the use of technology to improve their learning processes in an inclusive environment through the support of teachers with skills to develop relevant strategies.
4. In 2024, **399** teachers and **103** support staff members from the 15 inclusive school prototypes, have the necessary skills to develop environments that guarantee the quality of inclusive education
5. In 2024, **24,852** members of the educational communities (14,457 girls, boys and adolescents, 502 school staff members and 9,893 family members) for 15 inclusive school prototypes, foster efforts in an integrated and proactive manner to promote quality inclusive education.

III. Target audience

As already mentioned, the project focuses on 15 model schools that define the main target audience and other users for the activities that will be implemented. In this regard, it is important to underline the criteria used to identify the 15 schools forming part of this initiative.

First, despite the additional challenges of operational nature that this may imply, it was decided to work in 15 different departments under a universality approach, almost reaching a nationwide coverage. Furthermore, in each department a school with a **strategic location** has been selected, relying on the prospect that its achievements and advances can, in some way, be transmitted to other school institutions in the area, and thus generating a multiplying effect of the project's repercussion. Except for one Department, the schools selected are located in the capital city as these cities concentrate 57,6% of the entire population in Nicaragua². This will allow for the project to reach out more people with the inclusive education actions.

In addition, efforts were made to identify schools with demonstrated preliminary efforts and advances through the development of **inclusive education practices**, in order to enhance investments already accomplished and to work with committed human resources who possess basic knowledge and skills. In this connection, inclusive school prototypes selected for this project already have a certain level of **accessibility** for people with physical-motor disabilities. While it is essential that teachers have at least minimal prior experience in facilitating inclusive learning processes, the **level of commitment** shown by teachers and managers was also considered to select the model centers involved in this project. Another important criterion was the **existence of coordination** with municipal and departmental educational

² "Nicaragua in figures", Nicaraguan Central Bank, 2017, https://www.bcn.gob.ni/publicaciones/periodicidad/anual/nicaragua_cifras/nicaragua_cifras.pdf

authorities and their proactivity in promoting inclusive education, so that initiatives implemented under this project receive the necessary institutional support.

As mentioned in the analysis of factors limiting the development of inclusive education, community-wide involvement is key. In this regard, one of the criteria for selecting schools included in this proposal is the **interest and participation of families** to support inclusive education processes. A fact taken also into account was the existence of an **accompaniment** to educational inclusion **program** at the municipal level.

All these elements allowed the identification of 15 schools located in the following departments and whose specific characteristics are listed in Annex 1 – Preliminary characterization of schools: Autonomous Region of the South Caribbean Coast (RACCS), Autonomous Region of the North Caribbean Coast (RACCN), Boaco, Chinandega, Estelí, Granada, Jinotega, Chontales, León, Managua, Matagalpa, Nueva Segovia, Rivas, Rio San Juan and Madriz.

Considering the characteristics and size of these 15 educational school prototypes, as well as the breadth of the communities where their activities are carried out, the target audience identified for the project will be constituted by the following groups:

- **321** children with physical-motor and cognitive disabilities
- **14,136** children without disabilities who share inclusive learning spaces
- **502** teachers and school support staff
- **24,852** community family members who are part of the 15 schools selected

IV. Strategies

1) Improving infrastructure and equipment for accessibility

Based on standards that will be defined and a detailed diagnostic of the physical conditions of each school facility, emphasis will be placed on the adequacy of toilets and water fountains as the main contribution of this project in terms of infrastructure. Access to appropriate personal hygiene facilities for all students will constitute a priority.

Access to different classrooms and spaces will be guaranteed through the installation of ramps or adaptation of doors, when necessary. It is important to note that not only motor disabilities, but also visual and hearing impairment will be considered. Accordingly, it is proposed that at the entrance of each school there be a Braille map of its spaces. Another foreseen adaptation is the installation of light signals so that deaf boys and girls can identify the need to evacuate the premises in case of emergency, e.g., an earthquake.

Based on this experience and lessons learned, the project will contribute to enhance the existing school infrastructure protocols that the Ministry of Education is implementing, and which are used for schools' infrastructure improvements. Through this update of the Ministry of Education school infrastructure protocols, the project will have a lasting impact by ensuring that existing and future school facilities across the country follow these protocols, and progressively meet minimum standards for the inclusion of boys and girls with disabilities.

2) Adequacy of teaching materials

The project aims to produce textbooks and other necessary teaching materials within the Universal Design for Learning format, so that boys and girls, regardless of their disabilities, physical-motor, visual, auditive or intellectual, have access to the same content and knowledge as children without disabilities, which is an essential element to generate inclusive learning spaces.

The project will focus its efforts on subjects and levels key to the development of students' knowledge and skills: reading, writing and mathematics in first and second grades of primary education, as well as learning English as a second language at all levels. Teaching materials will also be developed to support learning processes in the areas of art and culture, which are cross-cutting at the three educational levels (pre-school, primary and secondary), and which represent an excellent opportunity to build dynamics of integration and inclusive learning. It is worth stressing that the elaboration of all these teaching materials, withdrawn from the current curricula, will be UDL-based.

This effort to adjust teaching materials will be carried out in various stages throughout the four-year implementation period. During the first year, identification and implementation of existing materials in the country will take place. These materials are currently used in special education schools, integrated classrooms and centers that have already made advances on inclusive education. As needed, these teaching materials may be adapted to the context for use by students with and without disabilities. The initial phase of the project aims to also develop UDL-based materials for the areas of art and culture and start the elaboration of content for other subjects (reading, writing, mathematics and English). This will allow schools to have UDL teaching materials for reading-writing learning in the second year of the project, aimed at first and second grades of primary education. During the project's third year, the

implementation of UDL resources to learn English as a second language will begin, and in the final phase (fourth year), UDL-based content for first and second grade mathematics will be fully developed.

Beyond these different stages of UDL teaching material development that allow to plan efforts in this project's area, strong connections and synergies will be established among them. It is therefore foreseen that as from the first year, some of the 15 inclusive school prototypes according to their advances and opportunities, will be able to start using the first developed resources.

It is expected that, once produced, the UDL teaching materials can be reproduced and used in all schools in the country, benefiting a larger community and generating a long-term impact.

3) Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Within the framework of this project, the use of technology must be addressed from the standpoint of its contribution to reinforce the impact of other strategies. Another important element to take into consideration is that ICT tools' investment can represent very high costs and therefore it is essential to prioritize elements that enclose the greatest added value to the project. In this regard, the following criteria were established to define on which aspects to focus investment pertinent to the use of ICTs:

- Technology accessibility for boys, girls and adolescents with and without disabilities;
- Technological tools that allow interaction with the learning space;
- Technological instruments aimed, at least initially, at improving learning processes in more prevalent disabilities such as intellectual, visual and hearing impairments;
- Accessible and effective technologies for teachers.

Based on these criteria, the acquisition of laptops and tablets, external DVD drives, external backup drives and software has been prioritized.

Equipping schools with these resources also involves taking additional measures for their safeguard. In addition, the Ministry of Education will make available the institution's own technical human resources to ensure its deployment, follow-up and monitoring for proper use and maintenance. This technical staff will be decisive in the successful use of technology at its maximum capacity for purposes of inclusive education.

Resources acquired under this project will be complemented with other elements through the creation and strengthening of partnerships with cooperation agencies and private sector stakeholders. For example, agreements and possible new programs in force during the four-year period of the project, will be leveraged to improve the 15 schools' digital connectivity, providing them with technological equipment not included in the current proposal.

4) Capacity building for teachers and school support staff

Concerning this strategic area, it is worth mentioning that there is an array of levels vis-a-vis teacher training and certification. It has been assessed that in the 15 schools, subject of the project, approximately **250** teachers hold a degree in primary education (higher technical level) and 149 a university degree in different pedagogic modalities and basic subjects taught at the secondary level. As shown in the gap analysis, it is key that capacity-building processes also include the significant number of support personnel that take on secretarial, school administration, concierge and security tasks, among others. In order to

consider the varied needs for human resources capacity building encompassing the 15 schools, work will be carried out within three different training formats.

First, for teachers at the levels prioritized at this stage (pre-school and primary) a university training offer will be developed and organized in a series of diploma programs which together will enable their graduates to pursue a master's degree. This effort will be conducted in coordination with the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua (UNAN) and, within the platform's framework, led by the National Education Council (MINED, the National Institute for Technology – INATEC, and the National Council for Universities - CNU). A continuous training offer will be developed for teaching staff at all levels (pre-school, primary and secondary) which may encompass specific inclusive education elements through regular meetings, online courses or the facilitation of other available resources. Finally, work will be conducted on a specialized technical training process targeting school support staff according to the roles and responsibilities they respond to at their school center.

In order to design the contents of these different training processes as relevantly as possible, a detailed diagnostic will be carried out to establish the areas where schools' human resources require greater support for capacity strengthening on inclusive education. Beyond the inputs resulting from this diagnosis, based on MINED and UNICEF experiences on inclusive school promotion, training processes will concentrate on four core axes:

- Inclusive education and attention to diversity;
- Attention to boys and girls with disabilities or alterations in early childhood development;
- Implementation of pedagogical methodologies for boys, girls and adolescents with disabilities and disorders;
- Use of technology applied to inclusive schools.

To maximize the process for capacity installation in the 15 inclusive school prototypes, work will be undertaken with teachers to raise awareness on their role within the project framework, where their dedication, discipline, commitment, and permanence in the educational center will contribute to strengthen planned actions, and achieve the expected impact for the project.

5) Communication for social and behavioral change

As detailed in the gap analysis, an inclusive education development strategy cannot be only circumscribed to improving the service offer but must be articulated to significant efforts aimed at raising family awareness on the importance of boys, girls and adolescents with and without disabilities to be able to share the same learning spaces.

Based on inputs resulting from a detailed diagnostic related to communities surrounding the 15 inclusive schools prototypes, a communication strategy for social and behavioral change to raise awareness among families and community will be designed and developed on the importance of inclusive education and its suitability to broaden the learning experience of all children. The strategy will emphasize behavioral changes to promote the inclusion of boys and girls with disabilities in all aspects related to social life. It will take into account central aspects present in community dynamics that were already highlighted in the communities' characterization associated to the 15 schools involved in the project: families' socio-economic situation, diversity among community actors, media, inter alia. In this sense, the significant proportion of households where the woman is head of the family can be highlighted. The role of churches

in community dynamics and the significant role of community leaders in communication processes was also identified. Having a grass-root base, reaching approximately 24,852 families from the communities surrounding the 15 inclusive school prototypes, this strategy will also have a national impact, using the media (social networks, television, radio) which allows reaching wider audiences.

V. Risks and mitigation mechanisms

Risks	Mitigation mechanisms
The health situation generated by COVID-19 pandemic makes it difficult to organize face-to-face activities.	Prioritize in the project’s initial phase activities that do not require human agglomeration: infrastructure adaptation, online training, methodological material adaptation, among others.
Children with disabilities and their families are victims of discrimination by students without disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Teachers’ capacity building strategies integrate group management related modules from an inclusion and tolerance perspective. – The communication strategy for social and behavioral change emphasizes bullying prevention and tolerance.
Turnover of trained personnel limits the impact of capacity building strategies and efforts sustainability.	The Ministry of Education has an established regulatory framework for the institution personnel to abide by where workers are guaranteed job stability. MINED implements strategies to raise awareness among teachers involved in the 15 inclusive school prototypes on their role, dedication, discipline, commitment, and permanence in the educational center for the development of actions envisaged in the project’s framework.

VI. Assumptions

For this project to achieve results, certain pre-existing conditions must remain, and other factors should keep evolving.

First, the 15 inclusive education prototypes will develop project's strategies in a comprehensive manner if the necessary institutional support is maintained and if there is still a strong interest on the part of the Ministry of Education to develop inclusive education policies, counting on and allocating complementary resources to investments carried out by this project. The communication strategy for social and behavioral change will have a further impact if there is openness from families and communities’ spaces to take on and incorporate in their behavior, actions to promote inclusive education. Lastly, the efforts made under the project will be optimized if UNICEF continues to manage a high convening power in order to garner partnerships that keep mobilizing key actors for the development of inclusive education.

VII. Contribution to the SDGs, the National Education Plan and the National Program for Human Development

This project will have a specific contribution to the objectives of national and global agendas, particularly goals related to the inclusion of people with disabilities.

It represents an opportunity to accelerate the scope of the different results proposed by the National Plan of Education 2017-2021³. The comprehensiveness of this proposal enables the different domains of the national agenda to contribute in the field of education: quality education, coverage based on equity and human growth and institutional strengthening. In this sense, the contributions related to training for teachers, student-centered teaching material designs and focused on learning may be stressed, as well as the importance of families' and communities' prominence, within the framework for the advancement of values.

Likewise, this contribution to the National Plan of Education will have an impact on the scope of the objectives set by the National Program for Human Development 2018-2021. In this context, it is worth noting the contribution the project will have in "ensuring a culture based on respect, protection and attention to the fundamental rights of people with disabilities, facilitating their social, educational and labor inclusion, under conditions of equity"⁴.

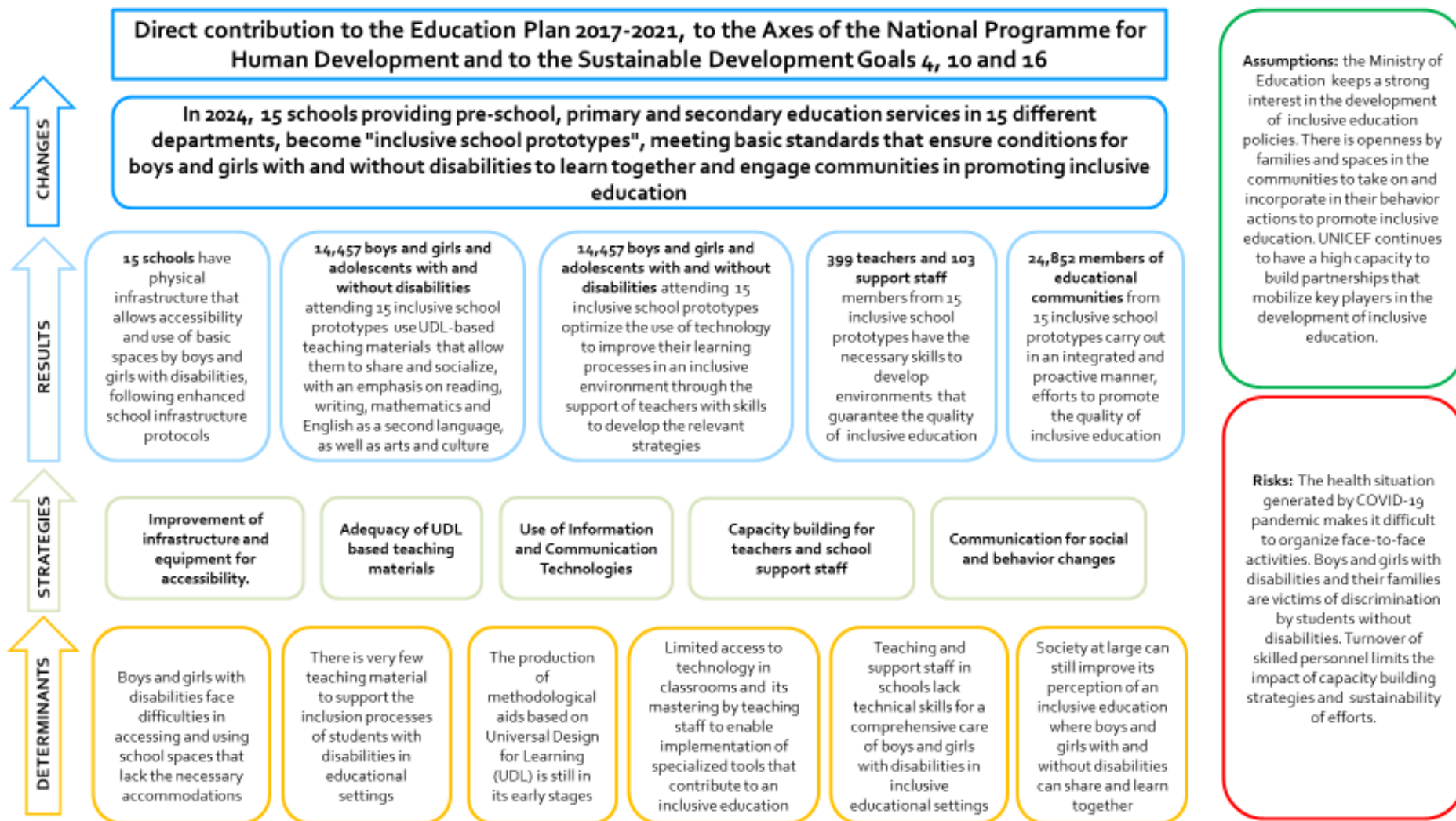
In addition to participating in the fulfilment of objectives of important national agendas, this project aims to further contribute to the advancement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Specifically, the implemented strategies relate with the following goals for the 2030 Agenda:

- 4.5 Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.
- 4a. Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.
- 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.
- 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

³ Education Plan 2017-2021, https://www.unicef.org/nicaragua/sites/unicef.org.nicaragua/files/2019-06/Plan%20de%20Educacion%202017_2021.pdf

⁴ Axes for the National Programme for Human Development 2018-2021: <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/sites/default/files/plan/files/Nicaragua.EJES%20DEL%20PROGRAMA%20NACIONAL%20DE%20DESARROLLO%20HUMANO.pdf>

VIII. Theory of Change



IX. Monitoring and reporting

Specific goals	Indicators	Goals	Verification mechanism	Disaggregations	Frequency of information-gathering
In 2024, 15 schools have physical infrastructure that allow accessibility and use of all educational spaces by boys and girls with disabilities.	Number of schools that meet MINED accessibility standards	15	MINED-UNICEF joint field visits	Geographical	Annual Report
	Number of boys, girls and adolescents with disabilities attending schools with accessible infrastructure	321	Administrative records and field visits	Age, gender and type of disability	Annual Report
In 2024, 14,457 boys, girls and adolescents with and without disabilities (7,139 girls and 7,318 boys, of which 321 are boys and girls with an identified disability) attending the 15 inclusive school prototypes, use teaching materials based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) that allow them to share and socialize, with particular emphasis on reading, writing, mathematics and English as a second language, as well as arts and culture.	Number of available educational materials based on UDL	at least one per subject	MINED-UNICEF joint field visits	By subject	Annual Report
	Number of boys, girls and adolescents with and without disabilities using teaching material based on UDL	14,457	Administrative records and field visits. Survey	Age, gender and disability	Annual Report. Mid-term and final survey
	Number of boys, girls and adolescents with disabilities who have improved their school performance	321	Administrative records. Learning assessment	Age, gender and type of disability	Annual Report
In 2024, 14,457 boys, girls and adolescents with and without disabilities (7,139 girls and 7,318 boys, 321 of whom are boys and girls with an identified disability) attending the 15 inclusive school prototypes, optimize the use of technology to improve their learning processes in an inclusive environment supported by teachers with the skills to develop relevant strategies.	Number of boys, girls, adolescents accessing technological resources that promote inclusion to improve learning processes	14,457	Administrative records and field visits. Survey	Age, gender and disability	Annual Report. Mid-term and final survey
	Number of teachers using technology resources to improve inclusive learning processes	399	Administrative records and field visits. Survey	Age and gender	Annual Report. Mid-term and final survey
In 2024, 399 teachers and 103 support staff members from the 15 inclusive school prototypes have skills to develop environments that ensure the quality of inclusive education.	Number of teachers trained and certified in inclusive education	399	Lists of attendance to training spaces. Survey	Age and gender	Annual Report. Mid-term and final survey
	Number of teachers applying their knowledge and skills to develop inclusive education spaces	399	Administrative records and field visits. Survey	Age and gender	Annual Report. Mid-term and final survey
	Number of support staff trained in inclusion	103	Attendance lists to training spaces. Survey	Age and gender	Annual Report. Mid-term and final survey
In 2024, 24,852 members of educational communities from the 15 inclusive school prototypes foster efforts in a comprehensive and proactive manner to promote a quality inclusive education.	Number of parents and guardians with knowledge on inclusive education model.	18,795	Study of knowledge, attitudes and practices on families. Survey	Age and gender	Twice during the project: once after two years and once at termination
	Number of family members who have improved their knowledge, attitude and practice levels in inclusive education	24,852	Study on knowledge, attitudes and practices. Survey	Age and gender	Twice during the project: once after two years and once at termination
	Number of people reached with communicative messages aimed at improving inclusion and avoiding discrimination	24,852	Media outreach reports	Age and gender	Annual Report

UNICEF, jointly with the Ministry of Education, will make available its institutional staff structure and programmatic management tools to monitor the project's implementation.

Monitoring will also be done by nominated Indian representatives from the Indian Embassy in Nicaragua or Indian Embassy that is concurrently accredited to Nicaragua (Reference: India-UN Fund guidelines)

UNICEF Nicaragua has in place an internal operation that ensures a permanent programming monitoring. Its program team, formed by the Deputy Representative, Programmes Specialists and Officers, holds weekly meetings to monitor the progress of planned program activities and make decisions on their performance and removal of potential obstacles. In addition, every six months the team makes assessments and issues reports on the progress of the country programme, involving implementing partners throughout the process. Furthermore, computerized programmatic management tools provide a real-time knowledge on the administrative and performance of indicators and objectives. All this is oriented to decision-making under a results-based management approach.

Specifically, for this project, a project board will be set up, consisting of UNICEF Specialists, Ministry of Education technical Staff and nominated Indian representatives from the Indian Embassy in Nicaragua or Indian Embassy that is concurrently accredited to Nicaragua. This Committee will give thorough follow up to the intervention and meet on a bi-monthly basis and ad hoc meetings will be called when needed. The meetings will be geared towards improving programming effectiveness and efficiency, as well as ensuring the inclusion of cross-cutting approaches and their orientation towards sustainability and scalability of actions. UNICEF will issue financial and narrative reports every quarter with an emphasis on results. Additionally, brief monthly progress updates will be prepared by UNICEF and shared with UNOSSC every month.

Monitoring will involve field accompaniment and regular UNICEF-Ministry of Education joint visits to assess progress and remove obstacles. Towards this goal a field visits plan will be designed and implemented.

The project monitoring system encompasses an indicator matrix with specific indicators for each intervention area. Part of these indicators aims at measuring scope and accomplishments, while some of them are designed to assess institutional changes, as well as changes within the family, communities and children with disabilities, with a vocation for sustainability.

An evaluation will be conducted at the end of the intervention aimed at assessing the ability to produce the expected changes and to collect lessons of interest vis-à-vis the scalability of installed dynamics, both at the institutional and family level. The results of this exercise will be shared with both Indian Representatives and the UNOSSC.

Some specific monitoring tools, to be used by the intervention, are given below:

- Institutional monitoring (MINED) on the performance of educational centers subject to the project, from the perspective of permanence and school promotion, teachers' training and performance and the efficiency and effectiveness of school infrastructure.
- Surveys addressed to different protagonists from the 15 selected schools: directors, trained teachers, parents, caregivers, students and locals. This measurement will be carried out twice: the first one at mid-term and the second upon the project's completion.

- Follow-up on implementation and on results arising from the C4D communication strategy, with periodic annual surveys.

X. Partnerships

The implementation of this project is based on a partnership between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education. To optimize its scope and impact, partnerships with other key actors in terms of inclusive education, will be sought.

First of all, within the framework of the Indian Fund, the Honorary Consulate and/or Indian Embassy representatives will be informed of the progresses of the project, invited in the main visibility events and part of the project board.

In the area of infrastructure improvement, articulation with the National Electric Transmission Company (ENATREL) will guarantee the quality of electrical system adaptations of the 15 inclusive school prototypes, when necessary. This aspect is particularly important as it relates to the acquisition and use of technological equipment provided for under this project. In this area of ICT implementation enhancement on inclusive learning processes, as emphasized in the corresponding section, the required investments are quite high. To complement the efforts made in the project, partnership opportunities with cooperation agencies and private sector companies will be explored. In this regard, the promotion of inclusive education within the framework of a partnership with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education represents an appealing platform to these actors.

Another area of intervention, in which the project's efforts with other partners will be complemented, is the strategy aimed at producing UDL based teaching materials. Following the successful experience on the production of inclusive video books by the Ministry of Education with UNICEF support, the different organizations representing people with disabilities in Nicaragua will be involved in content design, such as, the National Association for the Deaf in Nicaragua. These partnerships will not be limited to the teaching material development area, but efforts will be made to extend to a consultative role throughout the project implementation to ensure the representation and participation of people with disabilities in inclusive public policy-making processes tailored to their needs.

With regards to human resource training, the project could be supported by inter-agency coordination platforms that are already ongoing. Specifically, the training processes will be articulated with the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, Managua (UNAN-Managua), INATEC and the National Council for Universities (CNU) within the framework of the National Council for Education. This will ensure the quality and certification of skills development for teachers and support staff comprising the 15 inclusive education prototypes.

As detailed in the section related to communication strategy for social and behavioral change, the involvement of the whole educational community will be key to achieving expected results. For that matter, the Ministry of Education is counting on a platform to ensure the active participation of families, such as the Counsels for Educational Communities. Additionally, incentives are being sought for the articulation with other important community actors: mayor's office, government institutions, churches, etc.

XI. Sustainability

While sustainability has to do with a medium and long-term perspective, it is essential to incorporate this component from the inception of the proposal design. In this case, it is important to emphasize that the Ministry of Education has been involved since the project's initial stages. Specifically depending on the strategies, directors and technical staff from different divisions have participated to ensure the adequacy of planned activities in accordance with local realities, needs and resources pertinent to the education system. This active participation of the Ministry of Education will decisively contribute to align the results of the project with the priorities of the Ministry, those stated in the Education Plan. This will allow for greater ownership and institutionalization of the project's efforts that can be extended to other schools, upon completion of the four-year initiative. In this respect, the definition of standards and creation of protocols will allow the establishment of guidelines for the development of inclusive education in Nicaragua in the medium and long term, within the framework of good practices identified through the implementation of this proposal.

XII. Knowledge management and visibility

Continuing with the detailed description on sustainability, a knowledge management strategy will be developed to document the different processes implemented within the project's framework. Knowledge management will have purposes of systematization with a learning perspective and improvement on the one hand, and on the other, external communication objectives and dissemination to the public on the project's progress.

For the purpose of documenting with a learning and replication perspective at a larger scale, protocols and guides reflecting the completed stages for the achievement of results will be developed, particularly in matters related to infrastructure adaptation, development of UDL-based teaching material, and use of technology to improve inclusive learning spaces. Once the project has been completed, this will allow the implementation of these strategies at other school centers in Nicaragua, with a perspective of universal access to inclusive education. In addition to these protocols and guides, a systematization of the whole project will be carried out to gain a global view of the integral approach required by the development of inclusive education. This activity can be implemented as from the third year of the project. Another key element to understand and subsequently replicate and improve on the strategies developed in this project, is to identify those factors that allow a generation of changes on families' knowledge, attitudes and practices. To that end, a KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices) study will be conducted two years after the project's implementation. In addition to documenting the project's progress, this will allow analyzing and improving communication strategies for social and behavioral changes. As previously mentioned, on the final stage of the project, during the fourth year of implementation, an assessment will be carried out with a formative (to learn from the process) and a summative (to evaluate results) approach.

Additionally, contents will be developed to enable the communication of the project's progress to different audiences. Life stories will be prepared to place children and adolescents in the center stage of the narrative, enabling the public to identify the project's impact on educational processes and family lives. These life stories can be disseminated through UNICEF's and the Ministry of Education's communication channels as well as through the country's media. In order to have presence in different communication spaces, videos will be produced to present the project's progress and achievements. All these external communication components will be very useful to highlight India Fund's contribution.

All the abovementioned knowledge products developed under the project will be shared with UNOSSC for further dissemination.

All efforts would be made to acknowledge the contribution from the Government of India on appropriate occasions. For any major national event organized by the project arrangements would be made to ensure the participation of the Embassy of India in the country at the highest level as possible. The Embassy would be kept regularly informed on the progress of the project. Support of India would be mentioned in all publicity materials related to the project. Government of India logo, India-UN Development Partnership Fund Logo, UNOSSC logo will be included where relevant.

XIII. Schedule

Main activities	First year	Second year	Third year	Fourth year
Project launching event with the participation of UNICEF, the Ministry of Education and India Fund	X			
Improving school infrastructure to facilitate access to children with disabilities	X	X		
Material production based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	X	X	X	X
Provision of internet connectivity, computers and audiovisual equipment	X	X	X	
Capacity building by developing a master's degree program	X	X		
Capacity building by developing a diploma program			X	X
Design and implementation of a communication strategy for social change and behaviors	X	X	X	X
Joint monitoring visits UNICEF-Ministry of Education	X	X	X	X
Preparation and dissemination of life stories and other content for external communication on the project's progress	X	X	X	X
Undertaking a study on knowledge, attitudes and practices of the educational community on inclusive education		X		X
Collecting administrative information to update project's monitoring framework indicators	X	X	X	X
Production of guides and protocols that systemize strategies implemented with a perspective of replication and universalization		X	X	X
Carrying out a systematization of the strategies implemented			X	
Conducting a formative and summative external evaluation for the project				X
Closing event and presentation of project's results with the participation of UNICEF, the Ministry of Education and India Fund				X

XIV. Detailed budget

	Concept	Implementation responsible	AMOUNT (US\$) PER YEAR								Total India Fund	Total UNICEF
			Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4			
			India Fund contribution	UNICEF contribution	India Fund contribution	UNICEF contribution	India Fund contribution	UNICEF contribution	India Fund contribution	UNICEF contribution		
1	Improving school infrastructure to facilitate access to children with disabilities	MINED	130,000.00		130,000.00						260,000.00	
1.1	Rehabilitation and adaptation of 5 hygiene facilities (\$61,469.00) and construction of 31 access ramps (\$23,531.00) in 5 Schools from the Pacific Region: Granada, Rivas, Managua, Nagarote y Chinandega.		85,000.00								85,000.00	
1.2	Rehabilitation of 3 hygiene facilities (\$37,000.00) and construction of 11 access ramps (\$8,000.00) in 3 Schools from the Central Region: Acoyapa, Boaco y Estelí.		45,000.00								45,000.00	
1.3	Rehabilitation of 5 hygiene facilities (\$69,216.00) and construction of 30 access ramps (\$25,784.00) in 5 Schools from the Central Region: San Carlos, Jinotega, Matagalpa, Somoto y Ocotal.				95,000.00						95,000.00	
1.4	Rehabilitation of 2 hygiene facilities (\$28,125.00) and construction of 8 access				35,000.00						35,000.00	

	ramps (\$6,875.00) in 2 Schools of the Caribbean Region: Bilwi y Bluefields.											
2	Production of learning materials based on Universal Design Model	UNICEF	43,000.00		52,333.30		52,333.30		52,333.40		200,000.00	
2.1	Audiovisual production to create learning videos didácticos on strategies to develop education in 12 thematic areas		29,555.60		18,073.10		18,073.10		18,073.20		83,775.00	
2.2	Identification of the curricular contents to be developed through educational softwares and applications on: Language and Literature, Mathematics, English, and Workshops on Art and Culture		3,518.40		3,518.50		3,518.50		3,518.50		14,073.90	
2.3	Validation of the inclusive educational softwares and applications on the following subject matters: Language and Literature, Mathematics, English, and Workshops on Art and Culture		9,926.00		9,506.30		9,506.30		9,506.30		38,444.90	
2.4	Reproduction of 10 educations softwares or applications for inclusively teaching Language and Literature, Mathematics, English, and Workshops on Art and Culture (USB y DVD)				1,383.10		1,383.10		1,383.10		4,149.30	
2.5	Production of videos books in nicaraguan sign language on Language and Literature for				19,277.40		19,277.40		19,277.40		57,832.20	

	1st and 2nd grades of primary education											
2.6	Reproduction of videos books in nicaraguan sign language on Language and Literature for 1st and 2nd grades of primary education (DVD/RW)				574.90		574.90		574.90		1,724.70	
3	Provision of internet connectivity, computers and audiovisual equipment for 15 schools	UNICEF	61,000.00		29,000.00		47,358.68				137,358.68	
3.1	15 technology kits (1 per School) that include: 1 laptop; 2 tablets; 1 smart TV; 1 4 TB hard disk; 1 metal cabinet to safely store the equipments (averaga cost per kit: \$4,066.00).		61,000.00								61,000.00	
3.2	Provision of 150 tablets for the students of the 15 schools				29,000.00						29,000.00	
3.3	Provision of 44 laptops for students of the 15 schools						47,358.68				47,358.68	
4	Teacher training	MINED y UNICEF	30,000.00		20,000.00		20,000.00		20,000.00		90,000.00	
4.1	Tuition, fees and academic titles for the 22 participants of the Master's course	UNICEF	28,381.10		20,000.00		6,618.90				55,000.00	
4.2	Tuition, fees and academic titles for the 100 participants of the University Diploma	UNICEF					2,550.00		7,650.00		10,200.00	
4.3	Learning docuements for the Master's course (16 per	MINED	1,618.90				804.80		2,414.30		4,838.00	

	participant) and University Diploma(7 per participant)											
4.4	Logistical costs to mobilize and guarantee the participation of 375 mothers, fathers and tutors (25 per School) in the training sessions	MINED					7,123.00		7,123.40		14,246.40	
4.5	Learning documents for the training sessions (2 pamphlets per participant)	MINED					881.00		881.00		1,762.00	
4.6	Learning materials for the training sessions (white bond paper, permanent markers, tape, multicolor bond paper, erasers, acrylic markers, notebooks and others)	MINED					2,022.30		1,931.30		3,953.60	
5	Specialized human resources (psychologists, doctors, IT specialists and others)	MINED	25,000.00		25,000.00		25,000.00		25,000.00		100,000.00	
5.1	Technical assistance in psychology		8,500.00		8,500.00		8,500.00		8,500.00		34,000.00	
5.2	Technical assistance in the medical area		9,000.00		9,000.00		9,000.00		9,000.00		36,000.00	
5.3	Technical assistance in IT		7,500.00		7,500.00		7,500.00		7,500.00		30,000.00	
6	Design and implementation of strategy for family and community awareness and education on social inclusion (Contribution of UNICEF)	UNICEF		80,000.00		23,500.00		38,000.00		58,500.00		200,000.00
6.1	Development of the baseline on the protagonists'			15,000.00								15,000.00

	knowledge, attitudes and practices											
6.2	Designing of the strategy for family and community awareness and education on social inclusion			20,000.00				20,000.00				40,000.00
6.3	Designing and production of the communication materials of the strategy for social and behaviour changes			35,000.00						35,000.00		70,000.00
6.4	Procurement of spaces in medias to spread the contents of the strategy for social and behaviour changes			10,000.00		10,000.00		10,000.00		10,000.00		40,000.00
6.5	Monitoring of the protagonists' knowledge, attitudes and practices on social inclusion					13,500.00		8,000.00		13,500.00		35,000.00
7	Knowledge management and visibility	UNICEF	7,500.00		10,500.00		14,500.00		27,500.00		60,000.00	
7.1	Launching event		5,000.00								5,000.00	
7.2	Technical assistance to produce videos on the progresses and achievements of the project				8,000.00				8,000.00		16,000.00	
7.3	Technical assistance to carry out a systematization of the project						12,000.00				12,000.00	
7.4	Technical assistance to prepare the protocols and guidances based on the project experience on infrastructure improvement, production of UDL learning materials and the								12,000.00		12,000.00	

	implementation of technology to improve inclusive education spaces											
7.5	Logistical costs to implement field visits to produce 8 life stories (2 per year)		2,500.00		2,500.00		2,500.00		2,500.00		10,000.00	
7.6	Closing event to present the achievements of the project								5,000.00		5,000.00	
8	Monitoring and Evaluation	UNICEF	1,500.00		15,500.00		1,500.00		41,500.00		60,000.00	
8.1	30 field visits to monitor the progresses of the project (2 per School)		1,500.00		1,500.00		1,500.00		1,500.00		6,000.00	
8.2	Technical assistance to implement a study on knowledge, attitudes and practices				14,000.00						14,000.00	
8.3	Technical assistance to carry out the evaluation of the project								40,000.00		40,000.00	
	TOTAL Programmable		298,000.00	80,000.00	282,333.30	23,500.00	160,691.98	38,000.00	166,333.40	58,500.00	907,358.68	200,000.00
9	UNICEF General Management Services (7%)	UNOSSC	20,860.00	N/A	19,763.33	N/A	11,248.44	N/A	11,643.34	N/A	63,515.11	N/A
10	UNOSC General Management Services(3%)	UNICEF	9,565.80	N/A	9,062.90	N/A	5,158.21	N/A	5,339.30	N/A	29,126.21	N/A
	TOTAL General		328,425.80	80,000.00	311,159.53	23,500.00	177,098.63	38,000.00	183,316.04	58,500.00	1,000,000.00	200,000.00

XV. Control and management mechanisms

The project will be implemented within the cooperation framework between UNICEF and the Ministry of Education. The activities will be part of the Annual Work Plans (AWP) signed by both Institutions and will consist of two implementation modalities: (i) by the Ministry of Education based on disbursements received from UNICEF and (ii) by direct execution of UNICEF. Funds disbursed by UNICEF to the Ministry of Education will be subject to UNICEF Harmonized Approach for Cash Transfers (HACT) regulations, including mechanisms for monitoring and quality assurance in the use of funds: programmatic visits and spot checks, among others inter alia. It should be noted that within the HACT framework, the Ministry of Education has been identified as a low-risk partner in the latest last external assessment conducted in accordance with UNICEF procedures. Activities directly implemented by UNICEF will be governed by the organization's financial and administrative rules that ensure transparency and quality in the use of resources.

As mentioned in the monitoring section, a project board will be set up, consisting of UNICEF Specialists, Ministry of Education technical Staff and nominated Indian representatives from the Indian Embassy in Nicaragua or Indian Embassy that is concurrently accredited to Nicaragua.

XVI. Legal framework

This project will be implemented under UNICEF Nicaragua Cooperation Program (2019-2023) which in turn is part of the Cooperation Agreement signed between UNICEF and the Government of Nicaragua.