

SOCIAL VOLUNTEERISM IN NICARAGUA

NICARAGUA IS EXPLORING ways to develop and integrate volunteerism into an overall framework to encourage civic and social participation. Towards this end, an initiative has been put in place to establish the foundation for developing what amounts to a national volunteer program through the promotion of “social volunteerism.” Over the last couple of years, the promotion of volunteerism has gained increased momentum throughout Latin America, particularly in the context of a development paradigm that is contingent on a more dynamic and participatory civil society. In Nicaragua, as in other developing countries, the developmental emphasis inherent in “social” volunteerism (as opposed to simply volunteerism) implies a conscious effort to harness the potential of volunteerism towards national development.

While informal volunteerism pervades Nicaraguan culture and social norms, formal volunteer opportunities have generally been less common and unevenly spread over the national territory. Recently however, the Initiative Group, composed of ten volunteer organizations that include the UN Volunteers¹ program and the Youth Secretariat (SEJUVE in Spanish), spearheaded a proposal for national legislation on volunteerism. In May of 2004, the Law of Social Volunteerism was submitted to the Nicaraguan National Assembly. The law seeks to establish a National Commission on Volunteerism as well as provide mechanisms for the promotion of volunteerism through a national clearinghouse of volunteer opportunities. It also offers incentives and protections to volunteers, as well as to non-profit organizations in the private and public sector. Notably, the law is part of broader set of legislation to promote youth engagement and participation in the social, economic, and human development of the country. Thus, as is the case with many similar recent measures, the Law of Social Volunteerism seems to be directed particularly towards youth.

Winner of the 2005 Philanthropy and Community Service Paper Contest, sponsored by the RGK Center for Philanthropy and Community Service at The University of Texas at Austin.

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In light of this law, my objective is to evaluate the state of volunteerism in Nicaragua and to discuss the implications of volunteerism as a strategy for both youth engagement and economic development. I begin with a sketch of the Nicaraguan reality, one that is marked by high levels of poverty and an increasing dependence on the international development community (IGOs, NGOs, and bilateral aid). Recent statistics show that 45.8 percent of the Nicaraguans live in poverty and 15.1 percent live in extreme poverty. Moreover, as is characteristic of developing countries today, a disproportionate percentage of the population is decidedly young. It is no surprise then that the international development community has shown great interest in volunteerism, particularly the UN Development Program (UNDP) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). At the same time, however, the context of poverty poses some challenges insofar as resource constraints may limit the availability of opportunities as well as the ability of various sectors of civil society to engage in volunteer work.

I follow with a historical perspective of volunteerism in Nicaragua, with a particular emphasis on solidarity, and how solidarity continues to inform current attitudes around volunteerism. I note that as the notion of volunteerism has changed over the last three decades, this notion has become imbued with perceptions of broad-based development, as opposed to "charity." This praxis seems to also reflect the current development paradigm of promoting civil society participation. Given that the law specifically distinguishes between formal and informal volunteerism, I also examine the division between these two forms, as well as factors affecting these two kinds of volunteer practices.

Finally, I look at and evaluate the main propositions in the Law of Social Volunteerism. In particular, I focus on the role of the UNV in promoting and developing volunteer opportunities, as well as give some perspective on the state's emphasis on youth engagement. I conclude with a few observations on the scope and breadth of this initiative and some thoughts on the impact of the law on Nicaraguan society.

NICARAGUA AT A GLANCE

Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America, extending across a territory of 129,494 km² with a total population of 5,482,340 (2003 est.).² From this total, approximately 42 percent of the population is under 14 years of age, and another 42 percent makes up the 19 to 39 age cohort. Over the last

couple of years, socio-demographic indicators have improved overall, but still remain high in relative terms (see Table 1). The country's health profile, like most developing countries today, exhibits a mix of traditional maladies, with increasing incidence of chronic diseases more characteristic of developed countries, such as diabetes and hypertension.

Adolescent pregnancy is a major concern; about 28 percent of all childbirths are to teenage mothers. In terms of education, the literacy rate in 2002 was 76.7 percent, which is a substantial improvement over the past years, and is near the average for developing countries.³ More alarmingly, however, a recent report revealed that about 35 percent of the population between 3 and 18 years of age is outside the school system.⁴ In the 1990s, the state pursued decentralization policies in both health and education which have significantly increased the burden on Nicaraguan families.

Nicaragua is the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. This is not surprising, given that the country spent the entire decade of the 1980s mired in the "Contra War," largely underwritten by Cold War interests. The war sought to put an end to the Marxist-style Sandinista regime that had come to power in 1979. Peace and democracy came in 1990, but the economy was left in shambles and the country was deeply in debt. The transition from socialism and a mixed economy to a liberal democracy and economic liberalization has been punctuated with political and economic challenges that are often exacerbated by the country's vulnerability to natural disasters such as Hurricane Mitch. In addition, a series of bank failures, a fall in commodity prices, and rampant corruption at the highest levels of government have precipitated a governance crisis that remains largely unresolved.

Today, economic development is characterized by agro-exports and the promotion of foreign di-

Table 1
Sociodemographic Indicators in Nicaragua

Years	1990-95	2000-2005
Fertility Rate	4.82	3.82
Mortality Rate	6.34	5.16
Life Expectancy	66.05	69.48

Source: Inec, Indicadores Demográficos Por Quinquenio. Período. 1990 – 2005.

Population	Population Growth (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
5,482,340	2.4	58.2	41.8

Source: MINSAL, PAHO, WB, INEC.

rect investment opportunities, particularly in the free trade zones (maquiladoras). Combined unemployment and underemployment rates, however, oscillate between 22 and 40 percent according to some estimates. Some progress has been made in the IMF's Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC) with Nicaragua reaching its completion point in 2004, with greater resources freed up for poverty-reduction programs. Notwithstanding, a recent World Bank poverty assessment study concluded that while overall poverty had decreased, over 25 percent of the population in the rural area lives on less than a dollar a day, and principal indicators in health and education have stagnated.⁵ As Nicaragua grapples with looming uncertainty, the country remains heavily dependent on foreign aid, and increasingly, on a proliferation of development NGOs.

*NGOs, DEVELOPMENT,
AND CIVIL SOCIETY*

Development NGOs are placing great stock in the effective engagement of civil society as an imperative of the development process. Civil society can mediate between the retraction of the state and the excesses of the market. This mirrors the perspective that "empowerment through citizen action can play a principal role in helping to overcome Latin America's current problems."⁶

The Law of Social Volunteerism implicitly encourages developmental volunteerism—that is, volunteerism for the promotion of the economic development of the country. It seems evident that the international development community is targeting the potential benefits that volunteerism can contribute to the often-daunting task of meeting the needs of economic, social, and human development. Yet, given the economic situation and the fact that most NGOs in Nicaragua seem permanently pressed for resources, some caution is needed. In this context, volunteerism can conveniently be taken up as a cost-savings measure, or worse, encourage further retrenchment of the state area of social services. It seems, however, that the most important aspect of volunteerism is for people to gain consciousness of the problems facing the country, and to become engaged and committed in its future—in other words, for people to feel like they have a stake in the development process too.

VOLUNTEERISM IN PERSPECTIVE

The propensity for Nicaraguans to volunteer is shaped by cultural norms related to helping behavior, particularly around kinship relationships. It is this notion of solidarity that has become the underpinning concept for volunteerism—both formal and informal—in Nicaragua. Solidarity is defined in the dictionary as "complete unity, as of opinion or feeling."⁷ The sense of solidarity, however, embraces more than just opinion and feeling; it calls for action in order to be meaningful.

Nicaragua's strong sense of solidarity has evolved from historical processes and lived experiences of injustice, oppression, and war. Solidarity action took root in the experience of oppression under the Somoza regime and was further strengthened by the Catholic Church's teaching of liberation theology. Liberation theology is based on notions of empowerment of the poor and oppressed. It recognizes the responsibility of the Church towards active engagement in social justice, what is known as the "preferential option for the poor." The roots of many leftist solidarity movements in Latin America can be traced back to

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the emergence of liberation theology in the 1960s. In Nicaragua, the Catholic Church not only embraced liberation theology; it became the basis for the Church leaders' alliance with the revolutionary movement, striking down the preconceived notion that Marxism and Christianity were incompatible.⁸

The common struggle against the 40-year-old dictatorship culminated in the broad-based, cross-class coalition that brought the Sandinistas to power. Throughout the 1980s, the Sandinista state sought to realize its socialist utopia where solidarity was to be a guiding principle for society. In Sandinista Nicaragua, the institutionalization of "volunteer" activities by the state, as in many other communist countries, took away much of the voluntary character of the activities for many people. In several respects, a good majority of people who had fought for freedom from the oppressive Somoza regime believed in and enthusiastically embraced the volunteer activities sponsored by the state under the rubric of solidarity. At the same time, however, a war was being fought and solidarity was also seen as critical for the defense of the revolution.⁹

"Volunteer" activities under the Sandinistas were carefully coordinated, propagandistic, and managed affairs meant to instill the civic values of the solidarity (with the revolution), boost morale, and provide desperately needed manpower. There were literacy campaigns, coffee-picking campaigns, and community organization committees (a sort of neighborhood watch), among others.

Solidarity under the Sandinistas came to be indelibly linked with national service and to a great extent was associated with the Sandinista revolutionary state. Nevertheless, it also remained an ingrained characteristic of social responsibility. Today it is clear that the concept is being renovated in the *voluntariado social* as a national service ethic¹⁰ and as an avenue for a more participatory civil society. This much is clear where the proposed Law of Social Volunteerism defines volunteer work as having "an altruistic and solidary character."¹¹

Most of today's youth did not experience firsthand the volunteerism of the Sandinista years, though many are inspired by the unique solidarity fervor that characterized that era. Perhaps one can say that the primary motivation behind solidarity action in those years were the principles of injustice and the common struggle in the face of war, but today solidarity is being clearly associated with development, and specifically with a national development that will lead to the eradication of poverty and the creation of greater economic opportunities for an improved quality of life for all citizens.

VOLUNTEER PRACTICES: AN APPRAISAL

INFORMAL VOLUNTEER WORK

In Nicaragua, the line between formal and informal volunteerism is not clearly defined, particularly in the absence of formal volunteerism programs and management practices such as those that we see in countries like the U.S. and Canada. In general terms, informal volunteerism refers to "helping" behavior. Helping behavior in Nicaragua may be, in many respects, more perceptible than in developed countries, and is grounded in cultural and sometimes religious norms, of *ayuda al projimo*, or helping your neighbor, which are also part of solidarity.

Today, however, there is increasing concern that social bonds that uphold helping behavior are being eroded due to the economic situation and the increasing burden of social responsibility being thrown on families as the state moves away from the delivery service, particularly social services. From the 1980s to the 1990s, the Nicaraguan state went from espousing socialism and universal access to health care, education, and other welfare services to embracing the precepts of neo-liberalism, which has resulted in decentralization and privatization and to differentiated or targeted access to previously universal basic services.

Wilson and Musick point out that "how much people help informally . . . depends more on their ability to meet the demand."¹² The economic situation has contributed to the disintegration of the family, particularly in rural areas, where men and young boys will migrate to Honduras or Costa Rica to look for wage work. In many cases this accelerates abandonment as the families left behind must fend for themselves, often forcing other members of the household to look for

work. Alternatively, however, such situations may increase support within kin networks. It is common, for instance, for grandmothers or other relatives to raise children of parents who have migrated to the cities or abroad in search for work. Alternatively, for parents in the cities, there may be more access to non-kin networks, perhaps sponsored by NGOs. However, as people become concerned over their own survival, competition for jobs or for a recipient spot in an NGO project helps to degenerate community cohesion; it creates, instead, jealousy and ill-will.

Other factors affecting helping behavior is the competition fueled by party politics and different religious institutions' quest to win souls. For the poor, these organizations often constitute access to basic resources: food, medicine, perhaps a roof for your house. The motive for volunteerism within these organizations becomes inscribed in clientelistic relationships. Wolley notes that in the absence of a welfare state, "more fragmented family units tend to create strong non-family institutions."¹³

Helping behavior is more likely to be exhibited within families or communities, rather than towards

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strangers. Yet increasingly, poor families and communities have come to rely (as beneficiaries but also as engaged participants) on non-kin networks, especially NGOs, as they are seen as more transparent and impartial than political parties or religious institutions. However, these forms of institutional "helping," even if they fall outside a specific volunteer program, arguably fall within what is considered formal volunteer work.

FORMAL VOLUNTEER WORK

Formal volunteer work is differentiated from informal helping by being set within an institutional structure. In Nicaragua, formal voluntary activity occurs in secular, religious, political, and non-governmental organizations (development NGOs). Secular organizations may encompass, for instance, membership associations, professional associations, service associations, and grassroots organizations. Organizations such as the Red Cross and the *Benemérito Cuerpo de Bomberos* (volunteer firefighters) rely almost entirely on volunteers. There are also organizations, like Operation Smile, that use volunteers to help organize the screening and selection process of eligible patients, and there are service organizations like the Rotary and Lions' Clubs. Volunteerism is also common within the educational system, but it is not a state-mandated requirement for graduation as has become customary in other countries. Universities, in particular, are engaged in promoting volunteer opportunities for students to do internships and field work. Development NGOs are also organizations where much volunteerism is taking place; to a lesser extent, volunteerism exists within the state, particularly in local government.

Volunteerism within religious organizations is typically circumscribed in church or pastoral ministries, though there are also many faith-based organizations and foundations that engage volunteers. These volunteers may work in direct service delivery, but they also help maintain the organization administratively and through fund-raising activities. In the last two decades, an increasing diversity of faiths have taken root in Nicaragua, many promoting volunteerism through faith-based NGOs:

By 1990 more than 100 non-Roman Catholic faiths had adherents in Nicaragua, of which the largest were the Moravian Church, the Baptist Convention of Nicaragua, and the Assemblies of God. Other denominations included the Church of God, the Church of the Nazarene, the Episcopal Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mor-

mons), Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Seventh Day Adventists.¹⁴

The study particularly highlighted the growing role of Pentecostalism among the poor as it provides critical support and a disciplining structure that helps to ground poor families as they navigate an increasingly uncertain environment.¹⁵ Additionally, there are many international faith-based organizations coming to Nicaragua and engaging in direct service delivery representing Quaker, Jehovah's Witness, Lutheran, Evangelical Christian, Baptist, and Mennonite organizations, to name a few.¹⁶

Voluntary activity in the political arena is, perhaps, less considered to be volunteer work because we don't generally associate politics with altruism. Note that in this context politics refers to political party activity. Nevertheless, if we take the stance that volunteer work is, as Wilson and Musick describe, essentially a productive activity, irrespective of motive, then politics becomes an expansive arena for volunteer work.¹⁷ In Nicaragua, volunteers not only help during electoral campaigns, but they also serve as event organizers and fundraisers, community liaisons and lobbyists, and oftentimes engage in the provision of goods and services. Yet as noted above, religion and politics can also create disincentives for helping behavior.

It is notable that in recent years institutional volunteerism, even within religious institutions, is beginning to be framed in terms of development,¹⁸ as opposed to charity work, for instance. Development is certainly a more empowering and less paternalistic way to conceptualize the activities of voluntary organizations, notwithstanding that the line between charity and development, in practice, is often blurred. While the Law of Social Volunteerism hopes to promote volunteerism within the NGO sector, there is an interesting paradox in what constitutes volunteerism, and this raises some important questions of developmental volunteerism.

Most development NGOs in Nicaragua are U.S.- or Europe-based organizations that do not tend to provide structured volunteer opportunities for Nicaraguans within the organization, though many have programs for international students seeking to gain experience in the field.¹⁹ A few recruit students in relevant areas such as social work who may be looking to do their practicum, though the United Nations Volunteer programme (UNV) does provide opportunities for nationals to work in development at home or abroad. Nevertheless, these organizations do require significant volunteer work from beneficiaries as a community *contraparte*, or counter-

part. It is voluntary activity per se, but at the same time, it is part of the conditions for participation in the project or program. This is reflective of the community-led development model. Beneficiaries' time, skills, and input often are not recognized or valued as volunteer work per se, and the contributions and sacrifices often go above and beyond what is required. One argument is that beneficiaries are working to improve their own lives; they are not doing a service *for others*. Nevertheless, that does not take into account the fact that most development projects today are almost entirely community-based and therefore designed to benefit the community as a whole. Recognizing and valuing the volunteerism of the poor is indeed a challenge not just for the developing countries.

Formal volunteerism whether in an NGO or other social organization may still not necessarily be recognized as *voluntariado*. It is probably the case that most volunteer opportunities and practices do not adhere to programmatic or coordinating structures called for by volunteer management techniques. Nonetheless, with the proposed Law of Social Volunteerism, the state is moving towards providing a framework for the recognition and promotion of volunteerism, both formal and informal types.

THE LAW OF SOCIAL VOLUNTEERISM

The impetus for the Law of Social Volunteerism emerged following the declaration of the UN's International Year of Volunteers in 2001. In 2002, a group was formed composed of ten voluntary organizations including the UNV Program and the SEJUVE. The Initiative Group sought to establish the legal basis for the promotion of volunteer activities with a special emphasis on youth. In fact, the proposed legislation is part of a broader set of long-range policies targeting youth development. These policies include the Law on the Promotion of Integral Youth Development, the National Policy on Integral Youth Development, and the Political Plan for Youth Action.²⁰

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

In 2001 the government passed Law No. 392 on the Promotion of Integral Youth Development in an effort to recognize and acknowledge the growing demographics of "youth"—according to the law, someone between 18 and 30 years of age. The law reflects a concern for the future prospects of Nicaraguan youth for economic, social, and human development. In this sense, the law lays out policy

strategies with respect to youth on employment and entrepreneurship; education, health, recreation, culture, and sports (the social policies); and the participation and exercise of political rights, with the creation of spaces for youth engagement. The SEJUVE was established in 2002, under the Office of the President, to promote and advocate for youth involvement and issues important to youth in the state, particularly at the national and local levels, and in society at large.²¹

The SEJUVE, in conjunction with the UNV program, has been instrumental in providing support for the elaboration of the proposed Law of Volunteerism and the popular consultation forums that took place across the nation with voluntary organizations, local governments, and other sectors of civil society. Another important partner in this initiative has been the SVU program, which also began in 2002. Known as the University Volunteer Service (SVU in Spanish), this initiative brings together seven major universities across the country where students and alumni may apply for volunteer work in public and private non-profit organizations, such as NGOs and local governments.²² This program on student volunteerism was created in partnership with support from the UNV and UNDP.

SVU provides a matching service in which both the student and the organization have to qualify and apply. For both parties, there are minimum eligibility requirements. A framework of agreement—in which participating organizations must provide program training and a stipend, for instance—between the universities and organizations assures the program's viability. Currently the UNV program helps to place volunteers in different UN agency projects.²³ Other organizations where SVU volunteers have been placed include the World Food Program, IADB, and state and local government institutions.

The developmental focus is strong in the SVU program, as evidenced by the types of organizations involved (see Table 2). In an interview, the SVU Program Coordinator observed that the program was conceived as "an alliance of multi-disciplin-

Table 2
SVU—Participating Universities

UNAN	National Autonomous Nicaraguan University
UNAN-León	UNAN Campus in León
URACCAN	University of the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua
UNI	National Engineering University
UCA	Central American University
EIAG Rivas	International School of Agriculture and Cattle-Ranching

ary groups working in the promotion of development."²⁴ In some ways, the framework is not unlike the AmeriCorps program in the U.S., though on a smaller scale.

Other opportunities for volunteerism available for youth include Opción Nicaragua, an NGO run exclusively by youth. This organization runs a National Internship Program that is in part supported by the IADB and the SEJUVE.²⁵

The emphasis on connecting youth volunteerism and national development is not particular to Nicaragua but is a running theme throughout Latin America. Manzanilla Guerra writes that "the inclusion of youth in the volunteer movement should be a fundamental strategy to help build an organized and effective society in the region."²⁶ In Nicaragua, volunteerism among youths appeals to their aspirations for mobility and provides alternatives to youth gangs and other delinquent activities. The high incidence of teenage pregnancy and the number of youth outside the school system suggest an urgency to animate youth volunteerism. Moreover, given their demographics and their increasing political influence (16 is the voting age), it is not surprising that youth engagement has become central to volunteer initiatives.

A MODEL FOR NATIONAL VOLUNTEERISM

The Law of Social Volunteerism presents many characteristics from the SVU model in setting a framework for a national volunteer program. Notably, the law makes a clear distinction of transcending what is "purely charity," or *lo asistencial*, to broaden the scope of volunteerism. The law essentially lays out the roles and responsibilities of each party, including instructions on volunteer incentives, tracking, and certification. Importantly, the law guarantees access to state health facilities but also requires that organizations guarantee coverage in case of illness, accidents, or death during the volunteer period. The law essentially sets the rights and responsibilities for volunteers and for recruiting organizations. For instance, there is a specific clause prohibiting the use of volunteers to substitute for employment. It also distinguishes between formal versus informal volunteer work. Formal volunteerism corresponds

to work within an organization that has legal personhood, whereas informal volunteer work refers to work in entities that do not, such as neighborhood committees. The caveat, however, is that many organizations that should have legal status do not; but in any case, it is not clear what effect, if any, this differentiation makes.

Other measures in the law include the establishment of an official Day of the Volunteer (December 5th), a National Volunteer Network, a National Volunteer Registry, and a National Commission on Volunteerism. It is interesting to note that the membership of the National Commission on Vol-

unteerism corresponds roughly to the member organizations of the Initiative Group. Most of these are clearly associated with volunteerism at a national level, such as the Red Cross. It is not clear, however, why at least one seat was not left open for other organizations outside the Initiative Group that might want to become, or grow to become, involved in the promotion of volunteerism.

In some respects the law seems ambitious, and given the different coordinating mechanisms, there is a strong potential for over-bureaucratization. There are also many questions as to how it is going to be implemented and more importantly, how (and how well) is it going to be funded? The question of where the resources will come from is significant, if the initiative is to succeed. For instance, many established organizations and government agencies that want volunteers still may not be able to provide the minimum requirements of insurance or a stipend. These are the kinds of questions the Commission will have to grapple with.

The Law of Social Volunteerism is, by any measure, a ground-breaking piece of legislation that, it is hoped, will provide facilities for Nicaraguans from all walks of life to become meaningfully engaged. At the same time, it will also raise consciousness among public and private organizations as to the benefits and value of sponsoring volunteers by improving the quality or outreach of their services, creating over time the structures and coordination necessary to run a high-quality volunteer program.

An important point for developing countries like Nicaragua is that a national model must emerge that takes into account present reality, so that volunteer opportunities are made available to all who wish to give of their time.

CONCLUSION

It is notable that the Initiative Group is composed of only a handful of the hundreds of civil society organizations in Nicaragua. Conspicuously absent from this group are social movement organizations, religious and educational institutions, and the business sector. The business sector, represented by the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP in Spanish), might be a potential source of volunteers as well as good-will funding, given that the law restricts recruiting organizations to the non-profit sector. Social movement organizations engage in much informal volunteer work and religious institutions certainly do as well. In this respect, it is not quite obvious that this initiative has broad-based support or participation from different sectors of civil society.

The Law of Social Volunteerism was presented to the Nicaraguan National Assembly by President Bolaños in May of 2004. It has recently come out of committee with a favorable recommendation, and it is expected to be passed by the National Assembly in the 2005 spring legislative trimester. Unfortunately, no studies have been made on volunteerism or volunteer practices in Nicaragua that evaluate how the Law of Social Volunteerism will affect Nicaraguan society. It is not clear how the law will affect informal volunteers in particular, though at least it goes some length towards recognizing them. I should also clarify that the law is not explicitly directed towards youth, nor is it designated as such anywhere in the text, though promotion has been targeted towards youth. Indeed, it is to be hoped that any national volunteerism program will go beyond this target audience and come to embrace and enable volunteerism for all ages.

To a great extent, volunteer work as conceived by this law is still uncharted territory. Some scholars suggest that it is hard for volunteerism to take root in developing countries due to ingrained cultural norms.²⁷ As I have noted, Nicaraguans have a strong propensity for and history of volunteerism, if not necessarily by the standards of the developed world. An important point for developing countries like Nicaragua is that a national model must emerge that takes into account present reality, so that volunteer opportunities are made available to all who wish to give of their time. How the law is implemented remains to be seen, but for now the Law of Social Volunteerism represents an important first step towards solidarity around national development goals that will hopefully serve to unite, and not divide, Nicaraguan society.

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NOTES

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7. *Webster's New World*. Wiley Publishing, 4th ed., 2002.
8. Nicaragua's revolutionary government included a Maryknoll priest and a Jesuit priest (coincidentally both brothers) who were also eminent leaders of liberation theology during this period.
9. However, as time went on and life became increasingly difficult under the U.S. embargo, solidarity activities became more coerced.
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