



Photo by Christopher Pike

Education in Nicaragua has seen a series of politically charged improvement campaigns that have done little to realistically better the situation of the country's youth. Current policy makers pride themselves on free and mandatory schooling for both primary and high school students. Unfortunately, in practice, the majority of children complete only primary school, and education is far from being free. These problems are so prevalent that a poor family of six is forced to spend half of their yearly income in order to send all of their children to school. This has obvious effects on drop-out rates, so that in any given year, less than half of Nicaraguan children complete their grade levels. School infrastructure in Nicaragua is also faced with many problems. Only the most basic subjects are typically taught; there are not enough funds to provide money for sports equipment, musical instruments, science and computer technology, or other supplementary education programs.

At the community level, some parents, teachers, and nongovernmental organizations are pushing for positive changes. FSD partners with such organizations so that interns assist in nearly every aspect of the Nicaraguan school system: teaching, tutoring, lesson planning, organizing extracurricular activities, and initiating creative projects – from painting a mural for a pre-school to implementing workshops in organic farming for high-school students. By widening the creative scope of schools' curriculum or providing opportunities for re-entry, students are able to acquire vocational and academic skills that greatly enhance their chance of avoiding poverty.

#### Internship/Volunteer opportunities in youth and education in Nicaragua include:

- Teach and tutor English, reading, science, vocational skills, photography, painting, music, crafts, math, computer skills, choir, environmental education, sports, and other subjects for marginalized preschool, primary, middle, and/or high school students.
- Help young boys suffering from extreme poverty and abusive social networks by teaching recreational activities, farming skills, and tutoring individual students in primary subjects.
- Offer special education workshops to pre-school and primary school children who are deaf or suffer from developmental disabilities.
- Support the experiential training of adolescents in subjects such as leadership, personal growth, drug use prevention, sexuality, health, environment, non-violence, artisanry, civic participation, and rights issues.
- Contribute to the rehabilitation of at-risk youth who are faced with negative familial and societal pressures, addiction, and violence. These children are removed from the streets and given a structured social environment, proper nutrition, education, counseling, and vocational training.
- Continue an FSD project that teaches parents of school-age children about the ill-effects of child abuse and the use of force to discipline their children.

For more opportunities in youth and education in Nicaragua, visit our website or contact us directly.