

# A Story of Compassion

## USDA Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

### Project Concern International, Nicaragua

San Diego, California

Under the Global Food for Education program in Nicaragua, Project Concern International (PCI) provided a large school feeding program, a clean water and school sanitation program, along with workshops to families on various subjects found to be important through parent surveys. The workshop program began with Human Relations and Communication Workshops provided to 356 parents. The importance of education in personal development was addressed, as well as in the development of the country, and of education as a right, upon identifying the perceived problems of the Education field. The cycle of poverty and its relation with education were analyzed, as well as the laws that intervene in education and the role we play in it's achievement. In each of the workshops, the participants established personal and social commitments. The following comments were collected from participants:

“Dialogue is good for reaching family harmony”; “It helped us become less shy”; “It helped us think about how we really are”; “We learned to respect our children”; “We now know about the laws and their importance”; “We learned values”.  
“That which I learn in my mind, nobody is going to change.” (Mr. Agustin Fuentes, Emmanuel Mongalo School)

Another set of workshops involved 464 parents and focused on Human Rights and the Children and Adolescents Act. The following are quotes from parents who participated in these workshops.

“The law (protecting children’s rights) is like a vitamin to help better educate the children.” (Tomas Diaz)

“To know that the child has a problem, and not that the child is the problem.” (Jose Gutierrez, Parent, El Cacao)

Parents, who had not supported their children’s education in the past were very appreciative of PCI’s work in educating them about the importance of school in their children’s and their family’s future. Parents thanked PCI and FAS/USDA for the program and felt that it had made a big improvement in their family life.

### How the Initiative is Helping

The Faith Based and Community Initiative is working to connect organizations like PCI to FAS programs like the Global Food for Education Program. Under the program, PCI was provided 70 tons of soybeans, 230 tons of corn, 190 tons of wheat and 1900 tons of soybean oil by the Foreign Agricultural Service. PCI used the commodities to feed 20,000 school children, fund workshops for parents of the local school students and provide clean water and latrines to all schools in the Parcelas school district.

### About the Organization

With over 44 years of experience, Project Concern International is a leading international health organization that



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saves the lives of children and families around the world by preventing disease and providing access to clean water and nutritious food. PCI reaches over three million people a year with programs in Bolivia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nicaragua, United States, and Zambia.

Because of PCI's extremely successful 2001 GFE program, they were awarded funds to continue the feeding and education programs in 2002 and 2003 in Nicaragua.

In places where access to health care is severely limited, PCI believes that the best way to protect the health of children, mothers, and families is to show parents, community volunteers, and local governments how to prevent illness and disease. PCI employs an integrated approach to its work by focusing on the following main intervention areas: maternal and child health, disease prevention, food security, water and sanitation, relief and recovery. PCI is recognized for its sound, community-based programs, ensuring a high degree of private and public sector participation. With more than 20 years of experience managing U.S. Government grants, PCI has carried out wonderful programs on behalf of the American people.



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