



**pueblito**

*creating a foundation for life through  
child & youth development*

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## BACKGROUND

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### **Primary Colours Esteli, Nicaragua**

**Primary Colours** aims to facilitate the transition from preschool to first grade so as to ensure success in early primary and improve, in the long run, primary school completion rates in Nicaragua. This is important because while 53% of Nicaragua's population is under 18 years of age and while initial Grade 1 enrolment rates stand at 80%, only about 29% complete primary school. On average, the majority of individuals who make up the poorest sectors of society only obtain three years of formal schooling. In short, **Primary Colours** will ensure that public primary education in Nicaragua is meeting the psychological, emotional, social development and academic needs of young Nicaraguans.

Over the course of 3 years, starting in 2009, this project will train 98 Grade 1 and 2 teachers and 29 school counselors from 12 public primary schools in the city of Esteli in northern Nicaragua in an innovative, arts-based approach to the primary school classroom that has been developed and tested by our local counterpart, FUNARTE. The teachers and counselors will attend 5 training sessions each year and will receive additional in-classroom accompaniment as they learn to apply their new skills.

In total, 8350 Grade 1 and 2 students will benefit directly from this project. Indirect beneficiaries include an additional 4,690 students from other schools and the 223 Grade 3 to 6 teachers in the same 12 primary schools.

Given that much of a child's education is received in the home, this project will also work with 360 parents in order to educate them on how to ensure the psychological, emotional and social development of their children through the use of art in the home and community. In addition, this project includes an awareness building component that includes public art exhibitions and mural painting activities for the students, municipal conferences and festivals.

The tangible benefits of this project are:

- A stimulating learning environment that will ensure a smooth transition for children from preschool to the early primary setting;
- Strengthened creativity and critical thinking and improved self-esteem and self-worth among the children;
- Improved professional skills of primary school teachers and school counselors;
- Parents who are directly involved in a constructive manner in their child's education.

## **Counterpart organization - FUNARTE**

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**FUNARTE**, or the *Foundation for Creative Children's Art (Fundación de apoyo al arte creador infantil)*, is a registered, non-governmental, non-profit, Nicaraguan organization, founded in 1989.

Since its inception, FUNARTE has promoted constructive social change through art. FUNARTE uses art not only to advocate on behalf of children but more importantly to improve their quality of life and give them a voice in society. FUNARTE organizes and leads multiple activities that involve disadvantaged children, their parents, their teachers, community leaders and members of local government. Beyond an active mural program for almost 1000 children and youth annually located in the cities of Estelí and Managua, FUNARTE also works closely with the community preschool system, local primary schools, teachers colleges and the Nicaraguan Ministry of Education to improve the quality of public education.

FUNARTE has developed an innovative, arts-based approach to the classroom that positions creativity as the basis for social and intellectual development and demonstrates how creativity and art can be incorporated into education even in impoverished settings.

FUNARTE's work is sanctioned (but not financially supported) by the Nicaraguan Ministry of Education. The Nicaraguan Ministry of Education has taken FUNARTE's pedagogical proposal to all eight national teachers colleges and pre-service teachers are now being trained in art and creativity for the classroom. FUNARTE aims to effect significant improvements to the national curriculum by furthering the reach of their proposal.

## **FUNARTE – Pueblito Canada Partnership**

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**Pueblito Canada** and **FUNARTE** have been partners since 2002 working together to improve the quality of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Nicaragua by training rural community preschool teachers in the north of Nicaragua in FUNARTE's arts-based approach to the classroom. Two successful projects – *¡ArtWorks!* and *¡ArtWorks2!* - contributed to the training of over 500 community preschool teachers and cause remarkable advances in the quality of ECE in Nicaragua.

**Primary Colours** builds on the success of these previous initiatives.

***Pueblito Canada** would like to thank the **Canadian International Development Agency** for their financial support for this project.*