

## Obstacle Government

Education and Ecology - too important as to leave them with politicians

By the founders of Nicaragua's organic agriculture

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### Summary

With Nicaragua as an example it will be shown, how GOVERNMENT is an obstacle to organic agriculture, environmental protection and to quality education as a condition for nature's protection, food security and climate mitigation. Extension to allied governments, who foster the wrong and irresponsible course of the country's governments are mentioned.

Vivid examples show how civil society initiatives pick up the reins, and just start to do the revolutionary changes.

### Background

Like their colleagues in many other countries Nicaraguan political leaders are "big mouth", when it comes to environment, organic agriculture, climate change mitigation etc. They even name themselves Defenders of Mother Earth, but in reality they pollute, they promote open pit mining, oil-palm plantations, mono culture, agrochemical imports go up each year, most destructive agro-activities get supreme support, GMOs are not effectively controlled, farmers assistance concentrates on short time money making, no efforts for a profound change of the course are visible. Water, soil and forest destruction continue, existing laws are not applied, corruption rules. Organic agriculture is seen as a niche thing for poor peasants, not as a solution to 70% of all problems of the country.

Many people agree that lack of education on all levels is one of the reasons for this disaster; that only a radical change in the school system could bring up new, critical, responsible, creative, autonomous leaders, but the governments efforts in education are as deficient as in agro-economy and environment, partially because of lack of interest, of ignorance and also in certain constellations even by intention.

German Watch and others name Central America one of the most vulnerable regions because of climate change, so immediate profound changes must be done, but can't – with an obstacle as big and powerful as a government with its allies, the "private sector", many foreign cooperation and so called development assistance and an uneducated population, victim of all the mentioned actors.

### Ecology, agriculture

So the environmentalists as well as the organically working farmers got a lot of bad or frustrating experience ... What to do in a situation, which needs on one hand urgent solutions, but on the other hand shows very slow progress – and often none at all; we hear from the experts that Nicaragua will have no forest at all in 20, 17, 15 years, or: that Nicaragua will be extremely hit by global warming, but the "authorities", all levels of government, certain agriculture and cattle rancher associations, foreign cooperation etc. don't react seriously.

Our actual conclusion is that it is and will be necessary to become a lot more self-acting, try even more self help, make use of possibilities and chances on your own. One must make oneself independent of programmes, projects of far away based NGOs, of dominating external cooperation with – very often – a hidden agenda, and in first place of GOVERNMENT. Yes, lobbying is and will be necessary, pressure and influence to force "them" do something at least (like we did in Nicaragua, bringing the law on ecological agriculture into parliament, where it was approved and then mainly forgotten). But the activity on grass root level, creating identity around topics and their practical expression is a lot more important for success and durability. Civil society is the only "sector", which can be considered a motor, a base for the necessary changes; trusting that the political class will do it, are hopeless and even worse: it paralyzes one's own activity and impetus.

The organic sector as the most important one in an agricultural country must grow and get strong and stabilized by its own efforts and support from entities inside and outside the country, which do not have other hidden priorities. The existing structure must concentrate on this and not invest energy and time and money in empty show events of the government. Moreover they must educate and sensitize civil society, consumers, the food business and try everything to make solid alliances with supporters in other countries. Just do organic agriculture, just build up the own transport and processing infrastructure, just go to the markets, just do alliances with universities and schools and professionals and their organizations, the independent media etc.

We show illustrated examples from all over the place and do some statistical analysis on the hypothesis.

### **Education**

Education is another field of action, where of course the permanent demand to governments was to improve it, to widen it, to deepen it etc. But it goes on to be deficient, gets worst results in American comparisons and does by far not do what it should. The budget for the Ministry of Education is far away from the minimum necessity of 7% of GDP, promised since many decades and never met! Serious economists calculate this year's at 2,8% – actually it is every year a bit worse. Official numbers moreover cannot be trusted and make use of many tricks.

Even more reason to be worried is the lack of quality education in its genuine sense, not meant as filling the brain with as much as you can and of most sophisticated technology, but educating young people, which are able to ANALYZE, which become conscious, autonomous, independent and critical minds and socially and environmentally responsible citizens.

The necessary change of production contents and direction, the change of attitude which sees the land not as today's people's property, but something borrowed from the future generations, is in first place the big challenge for education. Also in this field trusting the authorities does not lead to what it should. Civil society is challenged again.

We show a lot of practical work being done in civil society and how quality education and ecological agriculture are the perfect marriage to save nature, agricultural production, rural society, water, soil and biodiversity.

Our own school tries the alternative: emJAC - escuela montessori Jan Amos Comenius, founded in 2001. The methodology contains elements of in first place Maria and Mario Montessori, then of Paulo Freire, Célestin Freinet, of Jan Amos Comenius and others; this school allows to develop these young people's potential as described above. Quality, diversity, culture ... and above all ECOLOGY is a transversal topic in all classes, from math to art class, from English and religion to sports ...

The mentioned ideal marriage expresses itself in the close practical cooperation of this school with our ecological farmers school, La Esperanzita.

### **Core messages and conclusions**

Politicians, governments do not succeed to resolve the urgent planetary problems; they are driven by forces, which do not recognize nature and life a priority, nor welfare of the masses.

We must do lobby and execute pressure - but in first place civil society, farmers, intellectuals, rural and urban families, professionals must do the necessary change themselves.

Education as the main need and main condition for an effective and profound and conscious change of the deadly course must be prioritized everywhere, by teachers, parents, pupils, students. Education and ecology are way too important as to leave them with the politicians.