



S.W.O.T. Analysis

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

The SWOT analysis is a tool designed to engage the community leaders in a reflexive study of their community. A group exercise, this investigation allows people to systematically review the existing circumstances within the community (strengths and weaknesses) and the possible changes that may come to the town from outside sources (opportunities and threats).

Strengths

- The town is located on the beach which allows fisherman easy access to the ocean and attracts tourists
- The Arenas Bay and Aqua Spa & Resort development projects have collaborated with the town to provide 4th, 5th & 6th grade teachers
- Existence of a new potable water system (as of 3/3/07)
- The fishing cooperative "*Cooperativa de Servicios Múltiples Pie de Gigante*" has been legally incorporated
- The local "*Comité de Desarrollo Comarca*" (Local Development Committee) exists and is willing to work for the benefit of the town
- There are three new police officers (before August 2007 there was no permanent police presence)
- There are good young baseball players and surfers (two important sports in Nicaragua)
- Existence of a public elementary school (kindergarten through 6th grade)

Weaknesses

- Lack of public transportation in and out of Gigante (mainly between Gigante and the department capital, Rivas)
- Financial and political abandonment by the Tola Mayor's Office
- The main "highway" from Tola to Gigante is not paved and in terrible condition due to annual heavy rains
- There are too few secondary school students for Gigante to qualify for a separate secondary school; therefore the students must travel to surrounding towns. They face several challenges to continue their studies: high costs (matriculation, transportation), travel, and in some cases lack of parental support.
- Lack of agricultural production due to arid, salty soil
- Little to no history of community unity and lack of community organization
- Lack of natural disaster preparedness plan, evacuation route, or contingency plan
- Lack of access to medical services (There is no rural health center in Gigante. The closest one is

approximately 15 kilometers away via washed out dirt roads)

- The potable water system does not provide service to all homes in town
- Lack of vision on the part of the locals to take advantage of growing tourism

Opportunities

- Existence of several foreign developers and businesspeople (Arenas Bay, Aqua Spa & Resort, Hotel Brio, Giants Foot Surf, Dale Dagger Surf Tours, Restaurant Pie de Gigante) that wish to collaborate with the townspeople on development projects
- The fishermen have formed a new cooperative: "*Cooperativa de Servicios Múltiples Pie de Gigante*" that will theoretically spread earnings and generate growth in the fishing industry
- Two beachfront restaurants, *La Gaviota* and *El Mirador*, may grow and create jobs
- The new Aqua Resort & Spa could create jobs and provide skilled labor training (massage, cosmetology, hairdressing, etc.)
- Project Wave of Optimism has a strong presence in the community and seeks to strengthen and train the CDC (Local Development Committee) and form a transportation cooperative to provide bus service from Gigante to Rivas
- The possible construction of a new, clean town dump complete with recycling plant and organic fertilizer production. This project would be executed by the CDC and financially supported by Aqua Resort & Spa, and *Pueblo Limpio*, among others.
- The town is located very close to very good waves that surfers from all over the world frequent

Threats

- Squatters that take people's land
- Some people who rent land on the coast do not possess legal documents or contracts as evidence and could be moved off of this land
- Natural disasters, especially tsunamis, hurricanes, mudslides, volcanic explosions, and floods
- Construction of the new housing developments (which include plans for a marina) could destroy parts of the environment, including the river estuary that houses diverse wildlife
- Political fighting between the government (local and national) and businesspeople based on party affiliation slows tourism and community development
- Drug traffickers use Gigante Bay as a safe point to move drugs

