



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Nicaragua Country Brief July 2020



Operational Context

Since April 2018, Nicaragua has been experiencing an economic decline due to a socio-political and economic crisis, which continues to place it as one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Undernourishment has improved, yet the prevalence of chronic undernutrition is 17 percent, and rates are higher in Madriz (30 per cent), Jinotega, and Nueva Segovia (28 percent). Additionally, obesity and overweight are on the rise.

Nicaragua is vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters, ranking 21st in the World Risk Report (United Nations University, 2019). Food insecurity is closely related to poverty, frequent natural disasters and the effects of climate change.

Agriculture accounts for 17 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is the primary source of livelihoods for 90 percent of the rural population, including women and men farmers. However, women farmers face more significant challenges than men to access agricultural markets due to the persistence of structural gender inequality in terms of participation in agricultural activities, land ownership and access to agricultural resources in rural areas.

WFP supports the Government's Zero Hunger efforts by strengthening national social protection programmes, fostering disaster risk reduction and food security of smallholder farmers.

WFP has been present in Nicaragua since 1971.



Population: **6.08 million**

2018 Human Development Index: **124 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **17% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

USD 68.4 m total requirements

183,803 people assisted in July 2020



Operational Updates

- **COVID19:** As of July, the Government has reported 3,902 cases, including 123 deceased people. WFP has continued working arduously to ensure the continuation of operations, increasing protection measures. Hygiene and protection kits have been given to beneficiaries. In-person activities have adjusted and are being addressed to safeguard beneficiaries' health and well-being while responding to their food security needs.
- The Ministry of Education continues requiring in-person attendance, as schools remain open. Thus, WFP continued delivering school meals, benefiting over 183,450 pre-and primary children, 51% female. School feeding is the primary social safety net in the country; besides fostering development, in critical situations, this programme is crucial so the population affected by shocks can cope. To continue with the safe delivery of food rations, WFP also started the process to acquire hygiene kits for all the schools assisted. Despite preventive measures, parents are abstaining from sending their children to classes due to fear of COVID-19. WFP also continued coordination with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education to start the construction of wells and water tanks to promote care during and after the pandemic. As a baseline survey exercise is approaching, WFP designed a biosecurity protocol, including the use of personal protection equipment in line with WHO/PAHO guidelines.
- During July, WFP Nicaragua continued to support men and women farmers' organizations. WFP prioritized essential activities and supported the adoption of COVID-19 preventive measures to contain the risks of the pandemic. WFP's assistance focused on supplying agricultural inputs, providing technical support centred on strengthening post-harvest capacities, improving food handling and safety measures, and learning about price setting and market analysis.

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WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
68.4 m	34.3 m	3.6 million

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: People in targeted areas who are living in poverty or vulnerable to food insecurity have access to adequate nutritious food all year round by 2023.

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:

- Provide nutritious school meals to school boys and girls in targeted areas, complementing the national programme, and strengthen national nutrition and gender-sensitive social protection programmes that promote food security.

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 4: Populations affected by shocks have access to adequate and nutritious food during and after an emergency

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide food assistance to populations affected by shocks.

Strategic Result 4: Sustainable Food Systems

Strategic Outcome 2: Vulnerable communities and smallholder farmers in targeted areas benefit from sustainable food systems and have strengthened capacities to cope with shocks, climate change and natural hazards by 2023.

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:

- Provide government institutions with technical assistance in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation to reduce the vulnerability to food insecurity of populations prone to disasters.
- Provide technical assistance to smallholder farmers to increase their resilience, improve their livelihoods and reduce their vulnerability to adverse climate events.

Strategic Result 5: Capacity Strengthening

Strategic Outcome 3: National institutions have improved capacities to advance gender equality and women's empowerment and to incorporate gender-transformative approaches into programmes, contributing to the achievement of zero hunger by 2023

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Provide technical assistance to the Government in designing and implementing gender-transformative interventions for promoting gender equality and food security and nutrition.

Disaster Risk Monitoring

- In July, WFP Nicaragua continued monitoring and mapping the evolution of climatic and geological disaster threats. Through multi-hazard maps and other early warning systems, Nicaragua has become more equipped to anticipate, respond to and withstand the impacts of natural hazards, which affect agricultural productivity and food insecurity. WFP Country Office in Nicaragua is cooperating with

colleagues in Dominican Republic to share lessons learnt on multi-hazard mapping.

- This month, WFP also provided Nicaragua's National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigations and Response with technical support in the design of a methodology to evaluate national emergency preparedness and response capabilities. The methodology will be essential in identifying National Disaster Operation Centres strengths, weaknesses and areas to improve.

Gender

- WFP is implementing a Women's Economic Empowerment strategy in rural areas, promoting the creation of female farmers groups who support each other in the process. They receive tailored assistance, including agricultural inputs and training in basic accounting, financial education, gender and production, amongst other topics. In July WFP collected primary data to assess the impact of Empowerment Groups on women farmers. The results of this process are still being processed.
- WFP also signed an agreement with the Ministry of Women aimed at transforming gender relations and decreasing gender-based violence in private and public spaces. WFP plans to assist with the national campaign "Women for life", training public workers to analyse how public policies and programmes affect men and women differently and helping to design an online educational platform on gender equality.

Challenges

- Securing resources to strengthen national institutions capacities to respond to crises is essential. Yet, WFP preparedness and crisis response activities in Nicaragua have been systematically underfunded. **WFP is in urgent need of USD 3.3 million** to support these activities, which include assisting populations affected by shocks in the Dry Corridor. WFP estimates that, due to last years' rainfall deficit, over 75,400 people need immediate food assistance and additional livelihood support. The pandemic is likely to exacerbate further the fragile situation making it urgent to assist these populations. A prompt and adequate response has the potential to reduce human, economic and societal consequences of emergencies.

Donors

Canada, European Union, Government of Nicaragua, Luxembourg, Private Donors, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia and Switzerland.