



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Nicaragua Country Brief August 2020



## Operational Context

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 some regions, up to a 30 percent. Additionally, obesity and overweight are on the rise.

Nicaragua is vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters, ranking 21st in the World Risk Report (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 and is the primary source of livelihoods for 90 percent of the rural population. Women farmers face higher challenges 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**

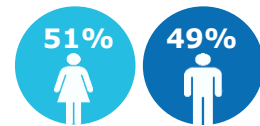
Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

## In Numbers

**USD 68.4 m** total requirements

**184,450 people assisted**  
August 2020



## Operational Updates

- In August, tropical storms and heavy rains hit the Northern Atlantic Caribbean Coast Region (RACCN), causing flooding and ruining harvests, which are communities' primary food source. WFP activated the rapid mapping service and is supporting the Government of Nicaragua in the implementation of a rapid emergency assessment to evaluate the impact of the event among the affected population.
- WFP provided Nicaragua's National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response (SINAPRED) with technical support to assess the capacities of their Disaster Operation units at the municipal level. This included support in the design and implementation of innovative visualization tools for risk mapping. This tool will enable informed decision-making to improve early warning systems.

### COVID-19 response

- As of August, the Government has reported 4,668 cases, including 141 deceased people. WFP has increased protection measures to ensure operational continuity and safeguard beneficiaries' health and well-being while responding to their food security needs.
- As schools remain open, WFP continues supporting the implementation of the national school feeding programme, by delivering school meals to over 183,450 pre-and primary children in some of the poorest and most remote areas of the country, with limited infrastructure, rampant poverty, and high prevalence of indigenous communities.
- During August, WFP Nicaragua continued to assist farmers organizations in the adoption of COVID-19 preventive measures to contain the risks of the pandemic. Besides, it continued remote training on crop cultivation, post-harvest handling, entrepreneurial skills, gender equality and climate-resilient agriculture. Based on identified needs, WFP supplied agricultural inputs and tools including water purification filters and storage tanks that smallholder farmers can use to minimize the impact of climate shocks.

## Country Strategic Plan (2019–2023)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
\$ 68.4 million	\$ 46.4 million	\$4.7 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.

## Donors

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

## Gender

- As part of the partnership with SINAPRED, WFP assisted forming the Inter-Institutional Commission for Integrated Risk Management with a Gender Perspective, including 11 national institutions, aiming to create a space to coordinate and promote a gender-based approach to disaster prevention, mitigation, response and livelihood recovery. It also supported initiatives for capacity strengthening for local women that work with disaster risk reduction authorities, to increase crisis response’s efficacy and sustainability.

## Monitoring

- During August, WFP carried out its annual monitoring activities with smallholder farmers and schools, collecting data to evaluate progress towards results (outcome indicators). This extensive annual exercise allows WFP to measure indicators against previous years and baseline values. Given the current context and the risks associated with the pandemic, this year the monitoring activities were adjusted to prevent exposure, in line with WFP’s protection policy. Therefore, WFP conducted remote monitoring via phone surveys and only collected data in person at a reduced sample of schools that did not have the conditions to participate in the remote exercise. The results of the monitoring activities are currently being processed and will feed annual reports

## Challenges

- WFP is preparing for the next school feeding food distribution, which will cover needs through the end of the year. It has been delayed, as parents abstained from sending their children to classes due to the pandemic. The drop in attendance led to a decrease in the consumption of school meals and thus schools’ capacity to handle and store food is strained. WFP continues to monitor remotely the management and consumption of school meals as well as school attendance, while working with the Ministry of Education to adjust the volume and timing of the next distribution.

## Impact of Limited Funding

- 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 4.7 million** to support these activities and assist over 75,000 people affected by structural issues, entrenched poverty, recurrent droughts in the Dry Corridor. Besides, the pandemic is likely to further exacerbate the fragile situation.