



WFP Nicaragua Country Brief

April 2018

Operational Context

Whilst Nicaragua has achieved sustained economic growth and human development in recent years, it continues to be a food deficit country (FAO 2016) and one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Undernourishment has improved, yet the prevalence of chronic undernutrition is 17 per cent and rates are higher in Madriz (30 per cent), Jinotega, and Nueva Segovia (28 per cent). Additionally, obesity and overweight are on the rise.

Nicaragua is vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters, ranking fourth in the Long-Term World Climate Risk Index (Germanwatch, 2016). Food insecurity is closely related to poverty, recurrent natural disasters and the effects of climate change.

Agriculture accounts for 17 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is the main source of livelihoods for 90 per cent of the population, including women and men farmers. However, women farmers face greater challenges than men to access to agricultural markets due to the persistence of a gender gap in rural areas.

WFP supports the Government's Zero Hunger efforts by strengthening social safety nets, fostering disaster risk reduction and food security of smallholder farmers. WFP has been present in Nicaragua since 1971



Population: **6.08 million**

2016 Human Development Index: **124 out of 188**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

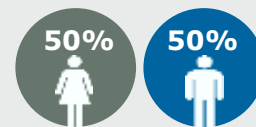
Main Photo

Credit: WFP/Sabrina Quezada
Caption: School girl eating her school meal in a rural school in the department of Jinotega

In Numbers

USD X m six months (May - October 2018) net funding requirements

164,200 people assisted in April 2018



Operational Updates

- Since mid-April, Nicaragua has been experiencing social, economic, and political turmoil, prompted by protests against a proposal to reform the social security system. In less than a week's time, the protest escalated turning into a more comprehensive national civil society movement, driven by students, demanding social justice and political change. According to the Nicaraguan Centre of Human Rights (Cenidh), this has resulted in at least 43 fatalities, although human rights groups indicate that the figure could exceed 60. The economic consequences are already being felt, as daily business and tourism have been disrupted. This may impact the life of Nicaraguan families, particularly those of low incomes and vulnerable to food insecurity. WFP is committed to supporting the Nicaraguan people so that they continue to have uninterrupted access to nutritious food.
- In April, WFP and the Ministry of Education supported 164,200 pre and primary schoolchildren with school meals, delivered every day in some of the most remote and poorest communities in the Northern Autonomous Caribbean Coast (RACCN) and Jinotega. For some of these boys and girls, this is the only nutritious meal that they receive during the day. The meals guarantee access to food, whilst incentivizing school attendance. At these times of civil unrest, the programme serves as a key safety net to support those in need.
- In April, WFP purchased 109 mt of maize from an assisted Farmer Organization (FO), for distribution under the School Meal Programme in Jinotega. WFP purchases all of its maize and beans requirements from smallholder farmers, associated in FOs, to improve their incomes and food security and generate linkages between the local economy and the largest social protection programme in Nicaragua. To meet WFP's demand for high quality produce, farmers receive technical assistance, training, and inputs throughout the year.

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WFP Country Strategy		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Confirmed Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (2018)		
10.2	3.82m	4.53 m
Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food		
Strategic Outcome 1: Pre and primary schoolchildren and persons living with HIV have access to adequate food and nutrition during 2018 <i>Focus area: Root Causes</i>		
6.42 m	1.75m	4 m
Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food		
Strategic Outcome 4: Shock affected populations have access to adequate and nutritious food after an emergency <i>Focus area: Crises Response</i>		
0.72 m	0.59 m	0.34 m
Strategic Result 2: End Malnutrition		
Strategic Outcome 2: Nutritionally vulnerable groups in the targeted areas meet their nutritional needs during 2018 <i>Focus area: Root Causes</i>		
0.25 m	. m	0.19 m
Strategic Result 3: Smallholder Farmer Productivity		
Strategic Outcome 3: Smallholder farmers in targeted departments increase their food security and access to markets all year round <i>Focus area: Resilience</i>		
0.96 m	0.88 m	. m
Strategic Result 5: Capacity Strengthening		
Strategic Outcome 5: National institutions and programmes are strengthened to prevent and respond to shocks during 2018 <i>Focus area: Resilience</i>		
0.21 m	0.21 m	. m

WFP Country Activities

SO 1	Provide school meals to pre and primary school children in targeted municipalities to incentivise access to the NSMP and increase access to food Provide food assistance to HIV patients
SO 2	Provide food assistance to PLW/G and children aged 6-36 months to prevent malnutrition.
SO 3	Provide assistance to smallholder farmers to enhance access to formal markets, generating linkages with national social safety nets and empowering women.
SO 4	Scale-up school meals for schoolchildren in shock-affected areas Provide food assistance to shock-affected populations.
SO 5	Provide technical assistance to the government in disaster risk management, supporting national programmes

- With the aim of fostering climate resilience and preserving ecosystems in communities with depleted natural resources, WFP supported smallholder farmers to use water harvesting and reforestation techniques. These actions sought to promote the sustainable use of natural resources and recover eroded soil and water basins in the Dry Corridor, allowing smallholder farmers to better cope with climate variability. Additionally, WFP conducted two workshops on nutrition and how to adopt a balanced diet. A total of 60 farmers participated, including 58 per cent women, improving their knowledge of food security and healthy eating habits.

Monitoring

- With the next school meal distribution coming up in May, WFP's monitoring team is preparing for post distribution monitoring and follow up on process indicators.

Challenges

- In order to provide much needed support to 164,200 school children through the School Meal Programme through the end of the year, WFP is urgently seeking USD 1.7 million for the next six months. The funds are needed to cover food requirements including maize, beans, and Super Cereal. In the absence of funds, rations will be cut by up to 65 per cent as of July, affecting children's access to food.
- Despite resource mobilization efforts, the Mother and Child Health activities has been severely underfunded since the beginning of the County Programme. Failing to provide assistance negatively impacts the status of nutritionally vulnerable groups. WFP is seeking USD 284,700 to cover current needs. HIV activities have also been discontinued due to lack of funding; USD 40,900 are needed to support 1,600 patients.

Fostering Emergency Preparedness through stronger information

Given Nicaragua's high exposure to weather extremes and climatic conditions, ensuring that the population is ready to respond to shocks is key to safeguarding lives and promoting food security. Therefore, WFP is working alongside its government partner, the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation, and Attention (SINAPRED), providing technical assistance to foster emergency preparedness and response. As part of these efforts, WFP and SINAPRED launched a video explaining how to access information services and online tools to monitor adverse climatic events. With the information regularly shared online, Nicaraguan families will be able to plan and take early preparedness actions to reduce their vulnerability to shocks.

Donors

Canada, European Union, Japan, Nicaragua, Private Donors, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, and Switzerland.