



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Nicaragua Country Brief December 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 at 17 percent and rates are higher in Matriz (30 percent), Jinotega, and Nueva Segovia (28 percent). Additionally, obesity and overweight are on the rise.

Nicaragua is vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters, ranking sixth in the Long-Term World Climate Risk Index (Germanwatch, 2019). Food insecurity relates closely to poverty, recurrent natural disasters, and the effects of climate change.

Agriculture accounts for 17 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is the main source of livelihoods for 80 percent of the rural population, including vulnerable women and men farmers, who struggle to place their production in formal markets. Women farmers face greater challenges than men do due to the persistent 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**

2017 Human Development Index: **124 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

In Numbers

US\$ 3.1 m six months (December 2018 - May 2019) net funding requirements

Operational Updates

- WFP continued to strengthen the capacities of its assisted farmers associated in farmer organizations (FOs) to promote resilience-building, enhance their commercialization skills, productivity and to improve their food security status. WFP and its partner, the Nicaraguan Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA), advanced efforts to introduce more resilient seed varieties in the Dry Corridor. These require less water and can therefore better adapt to the impacts of the frequent dry spells. At the same time, women farmers received training and support in myriad areas such as post-harvest management.
- A lack of dietary diversity and poor nutritional habits have been identified as a widespread issue amongst female and male farmers. Hence, WFP provided training on good nutritional habits to promote dietary diversity and nutrition awareness among WFP assisted FO members.
- In December, WFP initiated the building of kitchens and storage rooms in nine schools in the department of Jinotega, contributing to the Government-led school feeding programme. These infrastructure projects will bring much needed support to the schools and their communities, generating safe and hygienic environments for food preparation and consumption. School Feeding is the largest national social protection programme in Nicaragua. WFP supports its implementation, reaching over 165,000 pre- and primary schoolchildren with daily school meals. The school feeding programme guarantees uninterrupted access to nutritious food and at the same time provides incentives for children to stay in school. At times of economic hardship, the programme alleviates the food burden and economic pressures at home, preventing low-income households from adopting negative coping strategies, such as removing children from school.

Monitoring

- With the end of the year approaching, during December WFP completed its monitoring activities for all activities implemented in 2018, following up on output and outcome indicators to evaluate progress and results against baseline and the previous year's values. This will inform the annual country report and the planning process for 2019, allowing the Country Office to reflect on performance and make adjustments where needed.

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**Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan
(2018)**

| Total Requirement (in USD) | Allocated Contributions (in USD) | Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 66.8 m | 24.4 m | 3.1 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

Focus area: Root Causes

Activities:

- Provide school meals to pre- and primary school children in targeted municipalities to incentivise access to the national school meals programme and increase access to food
- Provide food assistance to HIV patients

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 4: Shock affected populations have access to adequate and nutritious food after an emergency

Focus area: Crises Response

Activities:

- Scale-up school meals for schoolchildren in shock-affected areas
- Provide food assistance to shock-affected populations.

Strategic Result 2: End Malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 2: Nutritionally vulnerable groups in the targeted areas meet their nutritional needs during 2018

Focus area: Root Causes

Activities:

- Provide food assistance to PLW/G and children aged 6-36 months to prevent malnutrition.

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

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:

- Provide technical assistance to smallholder farmers to enhance access to formal markets, generating linkages with national social safety nets and empowering women.

Strategic Result 5: Capacity Strengthening

Strategic Outcome 5: National institutions and programmes are strengthened to prevent and respond to shocks during 2018

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:

- Provide technical assistance to the government in disaster risk management, supporting national programmes

- WFP is strongly committed to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Nicaragua, as this is key to achieve zero hunger. As part of these efforts, WFP continued to strengthen the internal capacities of its staff on these matters. To do so, WFP held a workshop with all its male staff on gender identity and the concept of transformative masculinities, seeking to deconstruct pre-conditions with regards to the role of women and men and to challenge hegemonic masculinities. These spaces for analysis and self-assessment aim to ensure that WFP's staff is well-prepared to effectively respond to the needs of women, men, boys and girls, incorporating a gender lens into the planning, implementation, and monitoring of activities.

Challenges

- As the school year is due to start in February, WFP is strongly advocating for support towards the school feeding programme. As of now, the programme is facing significant funding constraints, representing XX% of the yearly requirements. If funds are not secured, critical pipeline breaks can be expected as of April 2019, posing a great risk to school children's access to nutritious food. For some, the received food basket at school is their only daily meal. WFP is seeking US\$ 3 million to meet the programme's yearly requirements.
- Mother and Child Health activities have been severely underfunded since the beginning of the Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan in 2018. WFP is advocating with the donor community and partners to raise awareness on the importance of nutrition activities in Nicaragua as we approach the next programmatic cycle (2019-2023).

Promoting Women Empowerment in Rural Nicaragua

With the aim of bridging the gender gap in rural areas of the country, WFP is implementing a Women Economic Empowerment Strategy to assist smallholder farmers, providing women with a boost of technical assistance and inputs, while promoting gender awareness. To achieve this, WFP placed a strong emphasis on strengthening the capacities of targeted women farmers in commercialization, basic accounting, expenditure plans, and crop management throughout the month of December, as these areas were identified as key to promote their linkages to formal markets. WFP has been implementing activities with women farmers since 2016 and have been conducive to steady improvement in gender indicators. Women have increased their decision-making power and their sales of maize and beans to WFP.

Donors

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