



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Nicaragua Country Brief January 2019



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 Madriz (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

USD 2.8 million six months net funding requirements

Operational Updates

- As the new school year starts in February, food distributions initiated at the end of January. In partnership with the Ministry of Education, WFP will reach around 165,000 pre- and primary school children with daily school meals in some of the most remote and poorest communities in the Northern Autonomous Caribbean Coast (RACCN) and Jinotega. School feeding is the largest national social protection programme, providing much needed support to vulnerable children with constant access to nutritious food as well as an incentive for school attendance and retention. At times of economic hardship, the programme alleviates the food burden and economic pressure for families while preventing them from adopting negative coping strategies such as reducing the quantity and quality of their meals or removing children from school.
- WFP also continued to generate linkages between the school feeding programme and local food production by sourcing part of the food requirements from smallholder farmers. In January, WFP procured 18 mt of beans from a farmer organization, linking 35 smallholder farmers (42 percent women) to a formal market and generating higher incomes. The procurement followed a competitive tender process, whereby competition between farmer organizations increased. The programme not only provides schools and student with nutritious food, but also generates income for small holder farmer households and thus, brings about opportunities for the local rural economy.
- WFP is strongly committed to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Nicaragua. Therefore, WFP is implementing a Women Economic Empowerment Strategy, providing women smallholder farmers with technical assistance and inputs and promoting gender awareness. As part of these efforts, WFP conducted a training session on marketing in January. The training allowed women participants to improve their skills and learn how to leverage their resources to access formal markets.
- To strengthen national capacities in risk management and emergency preparedness, WFP provided technical assistance to improve information management systems, connecting field-level information with the national, government-led systems. This is part of a long-term strategy to build an information platform, which can be used by different Government institutions to inform emergency responses in the event of a shock. With this information, decision-makers will be able to reach those in need more efficiently and timely.

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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) |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 82.6m | 24.4 m | 2.8m |

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 also supported the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response (SINAPRED) in the development of a communication strategy which seeks to generate awareness and a culture of preparedness in addition to sensitising disaster-prone populations to potential risks. To do so, WFP participated in an inter-agency workshop, together with the International Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and government institutions. During the workshop, the scope for an assessment was established to identify communication channels, messaging and information requirements of different target groups. The assessment will incorporate gender and food security analyses. WFP also continued to strengthen the capacities of SINAPRED and other government institutions on social behaviour change communication, an approach that will guide SINAPRED's communication strategy. The strategy will be developed and institutionalized throughout 2019 as part of the national risk management programmes.

Challenges

- As the school year is starting in February, WFP is strongly advocating for financial support for the school feeding programme. Currently, the programme is facing significant funding constraints. If funds are not secured, critical funding gaps can be expected as of April 2019, posing a great risk to school children's access to nutritious food. For many, the meal they receive at school is their only daily meal. WFP is seeking USD 2 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 the next programmatic cycle (2019-2023) approaches.

Donors

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

Monitoring

Throughout January 2019, WFP has processed its 2018 monitoring data to evaluate progress and results against baseline and 2017 values. This will inform the Annual Country Report and the planning process for 2019, allowing the Country Office to reflect upon performance and make adjustments where needed. At the outset of 2019, WFP has started assessing its supported farmer organizations.