



# WFP Nicaragua Country Brief April 2020

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



## 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 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is the primary source of livelihoods for 90 per cent 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 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**

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

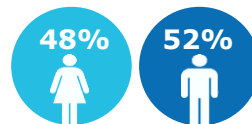
Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

## In Numbers

**USD 68.4 m** total requirements

**182,135** people assisted in September 2019



## Operational Updates

- COVID19:** Nicaragua was one of the last countries in the region to report COVID19 positive cases, with the first one announced on 18 March 2020. To date, the Ministry of Health has only confirmed 16 cases. The Government's measures are focusing on following up on the contacts of affected people, monitoring visitors coming into the country, and information campaigns to share COVID19 messages. However, as of now, Nicaragua has not adopted confinement or emergency measures in response to the pandemic. Given the significant risks that the global crisis poses, WFP has been working to ensure the continuation of operations and keep supporting the people of Nicaragua in the context of COVID19. The Country Office has also been engaging with partners and donors to adjust ongoing activities and project to the current context, introducing protection measures and modifications to the implementation to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the beneficiaries, while responding to their food security needs.
- As schools remained open during April, WFP supported the implementation of school feeding in some of the most remote and impoverished communities in the Northern Autonomous Caribbean Coast (RACCN) and Jinotega. To do so, WFP assisted the Ministry of Education (PINE/MINED) in the introduction of rigorous biosecurity protocols along the entire supply chain, from the warehouse to the schools, following the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO/PAHO). This included measures, such as gradual food delivery, use of personal protection equipment, and hygiene protocols. WFP provided key supplies to better equip the warehouse, including water containers, disinfecting carpets, alcohol, hygiene items, and protection equipment. Additionally, WFP oversaw the delivery process at the warehouse to ensure the effective implementation of the protocols. This resulted in the safe delivery of the second distribution of the year, which will bring daily meals to over 182,000 pre- and primary school children through August. As a key social protection programme, school feeding provides much-needed support at a time of economic decline, guaranteeing uninterrupted access to nutritious food and alleviating the economic and food burden at home.

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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)
<b>68.4 million</b>	<b>25.2 million</b>	<b>5.7 million</b>

### 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.

- In order to avoid the interruption of this important programme if schools close, WFP is also supporting the Ministry of Education (MINED) to prepare for a shift towards the take-home-rations modality. This could require tripling the ration, thus significantly increasing the funding requirements. WFP also stands ready to provide technical assistance to the Ministry to introduce the shift at the national level. To complement these efforts, WFP and UNICEF will support MINED's plan to adjust the education system to the context of the pandemic, enhancing its capacities to deliver education at a distance and reinforcing the hygiene conditions at schools.

- Similarly, WFP is supporting the Government of Nicaragua in the design of a pandemic response, as part of its preparedness efforts. An inter-disciplinary group has been formed, comprised of national institutions, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and WFP. The group operates under the leadership and coordination of the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response (SINAPRED). The aim is to be ready to respond if the situation worsens and results in restrictions in movements, closure of schools, and economic deterioration. The proposal focuses on assistance to the most vulnerable, including populations in the Dry Corridor, through adapted national social protection programmes.

- During April, WFP also continued to support women and men farmers, associated in farmer organizations, prioritizing the most essential activities of the productive cycle to adapt to the context of COVID19. The aim is to ensure their sustained access to food and to improve their economic resilience, as the country experiences the impacts of an economic recession. During April, the activities focused on developing production plans, strengthening post-harvest capacities, improving food handling and safety measures, and leveraging their demand to lower costs of agricultural inputs. WFP also provided technological support to improve the organizations' electronic accounting systems, security conditions, and training modules. Importantly, WFP is also supporting the adoption of COVID19 plans and preventive measures in the farmer organizations to contain the risks of the pandemic. This includes enhancing the hygiene conditions, avoiding gatherings of more than 10 people, and disseminating information on prevention.

## Challenges

- WFP's school feeding activities are facing significant funding constraints and risking pipeline breaks as of August. A total of USD 1.1 million is urgently needed to be able to continue to daily meals to 182,000 children through the end of the year. In the absence of additional funding, WFP would need to reduce its food basket, negatively impacting children's access to food.
- WFP Nicaragua is seeking to prepare for possible increases in food needs due to the combined impacts of the economic recession and COVID19. Some of these people had also been significantly impacted by rainfall deficit in the Dry Corridor in 2019. WFP estimates that over 75,400 need support and is seeking to preposition food stocks to provide life-saving. WFP will also deliver livelihood support in the recovery phase. A total of USD 4.3 million are urgently required.

## Donors

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