



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Nicaragua Country Brief May 2020



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 percent), 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 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is the primary source of livelihoods for 90 percent 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**

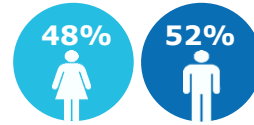
Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

In Numbers

USD 68.4 m total requirements

182,135 people assisted in May 2020



Operational Updates

- **COVID19:** during May, the pandemic's impact advanced quickly, as the country entered into the community transmission phase, with the number of confirmed cases jumping from 25 to 254 in one week. As of now, the Government has reported 1,464 cases, including 55 deceased people. WFP has been working to ensure the continuation of operations in the context of COVID19, adjusting ongoing activities to the current context. This included introducing protection measures and modifications to safeguard the beneficiaries' health and well-being while responding to their food security needs.
- As schools remained open, WFP supported the implementation of school feeding in some of the most remote and impoverished communities in the Northern Atlantic Caribbean Coast and Jinotega. To do so, WFP assisted the Ministry of Education in implementing biosecurity protocols along the entire supply chain, from the warehouse to the schools, following the recommendations of the World Health Organization. This included gradual food delivery, use of personal protection equipment, and hygiene protocols. WFP monitored the food distribution 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, bringing 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, guaranteeing uninterrupted access to nutritious food and alleviating the economic and food burden at home.
- Similarly, WFP is supporting the Government of Nicaragua in the design of a response to the pandemic, as part of its preparedness efforts. An inter-disciplinary group was formed, under the leadership of the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response, comprised of national institutions, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and WFP. The aim is to be ready to respond in the event of restrictions in movements, closure of schools, and economic deterioration. The proposal is still being finalized and focuses on assisting the most vulnerable, including populations in the Dry Corridor, through adapted national social protection programmes.

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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)
68.4 m	29.5 m	5.4 m

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.

Disaster Risk Monitoring

- As the Hurricane season started in May, WFP has already activated its monitoring system to follow the evolution of the situation, in line with its Emergency Preparedness and Response Protocol. The forecasts already indicate that the season will have above-normal activity in the Atlantic Ocean. While an average season produces an average of 12 names storms, out of which 6 become a hurricane, the 2020 season is expected to produce between 13 and 19 named storms, out of which up to 10 could become hurricanes.

- During May, WFP also continued to support women and men farmers, associated in farmer organizations, prioritizing the essential activities to protect their food security and economic resilience in the context of COVID19. The activities focused on promoting food production, as the agricultural cycle (2020/2021) started in May with the first planting season of the year. WFP is also supporting the adoption of COVID-19 preventive measures in the farmer organizations to contain the risks of the pandemic. This includes enhancing the hygiene conditions, providing hygiene kits, avoiding gatherings of people, and providing technical advice and guidance on prevention.

Gender

- As part of its efforts to advance gender equality for zero hunger, WFP is conducting a study that will review the actions implemented with smallholder farmers to promote women empowerment since 2017. This support was provided under the Women Economic Empowerment Strategy, designed and implemented by WFP in rural areas of the country with the aim of bridging the gender gap that prevails in these communities. The strategy included providing targeted assistance (inputs, training, credit) to women farmers and promoting gender awareness through training with farmer organizations and their members, including women and men. With the study, WFP aims to review these past years of implementation to derive lessons learned and generate evidence that will be instrumental in informing future action, helping us continue to work towards a Nicaragua with zero hunger and gender equality.

Challenges

- WFP's school feeding activities are facing significant funding constraints and risking pipeline breaks as of August. A total of USD 1.3 million is urgently needed to continue to daily meals to 182,000 children through the end of the year. Without 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 the 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.

Donors

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