



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Nicaragua

Country Brief

December 2023



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Operational Context

After being struck by multiple crises, Nicaragua continues to be one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Undernourishment has improved, yet the prevalence of chronic undernutrition is 14 percent, with some regions reaching rates of up to 30 percent. Additionally, obesity and malnutrition are on the rise.

Nicaragua is vulnerable to recurrent natural hazards, ranking 21st in the World Risk Report (2022). Food insecurity is closely related to poverty, frequent natural hazards, and the effects of climate change.

Nicaragua is also mostly rural (41% of the total population), and rural communities is where the highest number of poor people live. The latest estimates indicate that 63% of rural people are poor and around 27% are extremely poor.

Agriculture accounts for 20 percent of the Gross Domestic Product and is the primary source of livelihoods for 90 percent of the rural population. Paradoxically, although smallholder farmers face the highest levels of food insecurity in the country, they produce 90 percent of the basic food staples consumed locally and 56 percent of the agricultural exports. In addition, women farmers face additional challenges to access agricultural markets due to the persistence of structural gender inequality in terms of participation in agricultural activities, land ownership, and access to and control of farming resources.

WFP supports the Government's Zero Hunger efforts by strengthening national social protection programmes, fostering emergency preparedness actions and food security the most vulnerable communities of the Dry Corridor of Nicaragua. WFP has been present in the country since



Population: **6.7 million**

2022 Human Development Index: **126 out of 191**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **31% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

USD 15.3 m six months (January 2024 – June 2024) net funding requirements, representing 62% of total requirements

Operational Updates

- In December, WFP organized a workshop with the Ministry of Education on the implementation of the 2023 Annual Operation Plan 2023, which was successfully evaluated despite the challenges faced. Also, a second workshop focused on strengthening the implementation of the Ministry gender policy in the national school feeding programme.
- WFP completed the rehabilitation of three schools (522 children) in the Pacific Region before the start of the academic year (29 January).
- December 2023 marked the conclusion of WFP's response to Hurricane Julia. Early recovery efforts were carried out in 2023, including providing cash transfers for families who lost their livelihoods and repairing damaged school infrastructure. As part of the closure of the early recovery plan, WFP held an after-action review meeting with the Ministry of Education and WeWorld GVC (WFP's field implementation partner) to carry out a final lesson learned exercise.

Monitoring

- In December, WFP continued to collect and process data to inform operational decision-making. This includes data used for evaluative purposes, corporate reporting, and evidence-building. An evaluation of WFP's capacity-building activities is underway. Its results, expected by February 2024, will inform WFP's 2024-2029 Country Strategic Plan to ensure its programmes are achieving their objectives and contributing to national development goals.

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WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2024)		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
132.1 m	121.8 m	15.3 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 2024.

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:

- Provide nutritious school meals to schoolboys 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 2024.

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 2024.

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.

Strategic Result 8: Sharing of knowledge, expertise and tech

Strategic Outcome 5: Humanitarian and government partners have access to reliable services during crises.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide on demand supply chain services to humanitarian and government partners.
- Provide supply chain services to government partners on a free-to-user basis to support emergency responses.

Challenges

- El Niño phenomenon has impacted the 2023-2024 agricultural cycles. The 2023 production of beans in the “primera” and “postrera”, two of the three annual agricultural cycles, was 13 percent lower than production in the same cycles in 2022. This impacted the price of beans, the main source of protein in the Nicaraguan diet, which increased by 22 percent between 2022 and 2023.

Impact of Limited Funding

- WFP has a USD 5.5 million funding gap to be able to continue its school feeding activities in 2024. Without this funding, WFP will not be able to provide warm meals to 182,000 children in the Dry Corridor of Nicaragua, one of the most vulnerable and food insecure areas in the country. Interruptions in school feeding, the main social protection programme in Nicaragua, could begin as soon as April 2024. In addition to hindering children’s access to food, this could also impact school attendance and retention, as school meals are a strong motivation for children, who often travel long distances, to attend school.
- WFP also has a funding gap of USD 7.4 million to be able to carry out its emergency response to the effects of El Niño in the Dry Corridor of Nicaragua. New funding will enable WFP to assist 120,000 food insecure children by providing an extra plate of food during lean season, which usually starts in May. Without this extra meal, these children might go entire days without eating more than 40 percent of their daily needed calories. Also, new funds will allow WFP help subsistence and smallholder farmers who lost their livelihoods as a consequence of El Niño. These farmers are already in a vulnerable situation as they are only able to afford one-third of the basic food baskets with their disposable resources. Paradoxically, however, they produce 90 percent of the total staple grain production in the country and are responsible for 56 percent of the Nicaraguan agricultural exports.

Donors

Canada, European Union, Germany, Japan, Republic of Korea (the), Luxembourg, Nicaragua, private donors, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, and Switzerland.

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