



World Food Programme

SAVING
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WFP Nicaragua Country Brief January 2024



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 percent of the total population), and rural communities is where the highest number of poor people live. The latest estimates indicate that 63 percent of rural people are poor and around 27 percent 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 1971.



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 13.5 m six months (February 2024 – July 2024) net funding requirements, representing 80 percent of total requirements

Operational Updates

- In coordination with the Ministry of Education's Integral School Feeding Programme, WFP delivered 1,268 mt of food to support 176,500 schoolboys and girls in 47 municipalities located in the Dry Corridor. The food distributed in 2,400 schools provides daily meals to children over the first 60 days of the school year.
- WFP also continued working on rehabilitating the infrastructure of three schools that host 520 students from some of the communities living in the most vulnerable conditions on the Pacific Coast of Nicaragua. These rehabilitation works are expected to be concluded by March 2024, providing schoolchildren with improved conditions for their education.

Monitoring

- In January, WFP continued to engage in data collection and processing to inform operational decision making. This included data used for evaluative purposes, corporate reporting, and evidence-building.

Challenges

- El Niño phenomenon has exacerbated an already fragile situation in the Dry Corridor of Nicaragua. This region is home to 37 percent of the Nicaraguan rural population and according to national estimates, around 60 percent of them live in conditions of extreme poverty. With El Niño and other crisis that have recently affected the country, food security among these extremely vulnerable populations is threatened. This creates additional pressures to continue WFP work in a context of limited funding.

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Country Strategic Plan (2019-2024)		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
151.7 m	121.8 m	13.5 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.

Impact of Limited Funding

- WFP has a USD 2.2 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 6.6 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 enable WFP to preposition a small contingency stock required for the new Hurricane Season, which starts in June.

Donors

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