



USAID | NICARAGUA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

COUNTRY PROFILE



The Araya family has worked with USAID to grow non-traditional crops such as okra for export with support from USAID. The family participated in a trade fair in New Orleans and established a direct market link with a Miami-based vegetable wholesaler. USAID provided the family with market assistance and financing for the construction of a small packing facility.

OVERVIEW

Despite progress in Nicaragua's macroeconomic performance over the past decade, the nation faces tremendous challenges regarding poverty and inequity. As the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere (after Haiti), almost half of the population lives below the poverty line, inhibiting their ability to meet basic needs. Within this context, USAID's current development program provides assistance to expand economic growth and trade opportunities, to increase access to quality health and education services, and to promote responsible, transparent governance.



PROGRAMS

GOVERNING JUSTLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY

USAID helps strengthen democracy by supporting justice and electoral reforms, increased government transparency, improved municipal governance, free and fair elections, and civil society participation and oversight. USAID programs promote voter education, citizen participation, and get-out-the-vote campaigns. With USAID support for a voter call center and webpage, Nicaraguan voters could check their registration and find out where their polling center was located. A small grants program has provided assistance to 33 civil society organizations and media outlets for 35 projects that promoted democratic citizen participation in the November 2008 municipal elections. USAID also has provided training to 3,281 justice sector officials, lawyers, and civil society leaders in the new modern Criminal Code, which incorporates international standards for terrorism, money laundering, drug-trafficking, and trafficking-in-persons crimes. USAID programs also have helped expand access to justice to 11 civil society organizations, through a justice facilitator program that established 20 community-based mediation centers and the training of justice facilitators that provide free legal services. More than 13,000 Nicaraguans have used the centers and 7,500 property disputes, family problems, and other legal matters have been resolved.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

USAID is helping Nicaragua take advantage of the opportunities offered through the Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) through the development of a competitive, market-oriented economy. USAID provides technical assistance for better management and production methods, access to new technology and infrastructure, and training in marketing skills. USAID assistance during the last year helped over 18,400 Nicaraguan producers to increase their sales in local, regional,

NICARAGUA SNAPSHOT

Date of independence: 1821
Population: 5.891 million
GDP (PPP): \$16.83 billion
GDP per capita (PPP): \$2,900

Source: CIA, *The World Factbook*

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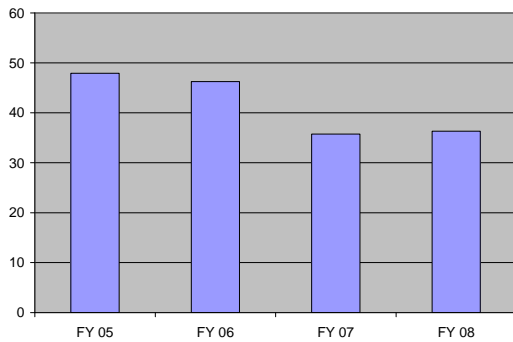


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NICARAGUA

COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

**USAID Assistance Nicaragua
(Dollars in Millions)**



and international markets. In 2008, USAID-assisted producers had sales totaling \$34.4 million and over 15,400 new jobs were generated.

USAID supports a public-private alliance for sustainable forestry, agriculture, and tourism. The alliance is providing assistance for income-generating activities through green market links and ecotourism, which offer new economic opportunities under CAFTA-DR. In 2008, over 1,500 coffee farms and 2,308 hectares of cocoa farms were certified. In addition, 3,500 hectares of forest land affected by Hurricane Felix were certified under the Forest Stewardship Council's Controlled Wood Standard. USAID environmental programs trained 1,577 people in natural resources management and conservation.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE – HEALTH AND EDUCATION

As a major international donor in health, USAID has contributed to reducing maternal and infant mortality rates, reducing fertility rates, and increasing HIV/AIDS counseling and testing. In 2008, HIV/AIDS prevention activities reached over 121,800 individuals. USAID trained 1,089 professional staff in family planning management and nearly 11,900 people received information on family planning. A community health program provides 410,000 people in 70 of the poorest municipalities with maternity care, child growth monitoring, vaccinations, family planning, and nutrition and hygiene activities. USAID programs provide support to 16 of 17 departmental public hospitals through training for medical personnel in standard procedures, clinical guidelines, and quality control.

Under USAID's primary education program, a child-centered model school network has been established in 2,747 schools--almost one-third of the primary school system--benefiting nearly 486,000 students. USAID also developed multi-grade materials for indigenous schools in the two autonomous Caribbean regions. The program is contributing to higher academic achievement and enrollment and completion rates.

From 1991-2008, USAID's Cooperative Association of States for Scholarships Program provided 927 scholarships for Nicaraguan professionals to study in U.S. higher education institutions.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

In 2008, USAID disaster relief assistance helped families in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region recover from Hurricane Felix, helped farmers affected by floods in the north to replant, and provided new roofs for families affected by Tropical Storm Alma.

USAID's Food Aid Program has helped improve the standard of living of 347,000 people. The P.L. 480 Title II program has promoted production and marketing of high-value crops to increase incomes and improve health and nutrition of poor rural households. The program has also built potable water systems and latrines, upgraded roads in remote areas, and sponsored complementary feeding, maternal health, and child survival activities in selected high-risk communities.

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