

Oxfam in Nicaragua

- Oxfam has worked in Nicaragua since 1963
- Oxfam works there on development programmes, emergency relief, and campaigns



The situation

Nicaragua has 5.4 million inhabitants. 2.4 million live below the poverty line, including 800,000 people who live in extreme poverty. Only 30% of all the country's population has access to drinking water, and 82% have no latrines. Only 50% of children finish elementary education – which in turn is associated with lack of food, as 33% of children show chronic malnutrition.

The dry tropical zone is the area most vulnerable to climate change and famine. 64% of poor people are located in rural areas and in two autonomous regions (north and south), where ethnic and cultural diversity, and the wealth of the territory's resources, cannot overcome inequality and exclusion to become a potential for development.

In numbers*...

85,000
total people helped



Photo: Pablo Tosco/Intermon Oxfam

How Oxfam is helping

We have a long history of working with indigenous and afro-descendant populations

In the last ten years we've expanded to work in the West and the Pacific area of the country, in the dry tropical zone, an area with high food and nutritional insecurity.

Left: Oxfam provides support to Nicaraguan farmers like Vicenta Martínez Manzanares to help develop their skills and sell their produce in national and international markets.

Helping small growers

We're working to help small growers – male and female – in vulnerable rural areas, to improve their livelihoods and food security conditions, and to adapt so they can manage risks locally. We also work to collaborate in making inter-ethnic relations fairer, so that women can actively participate in the best links of the value chains and lead in economic decisions while successfully engaging the market.

Our organic cashew project (implemented by CIPRES and Oxfam, with EU funds) has sought to improve the conditions of hundreds of grower families in León and Chinandega, in the Western region of the country, through production, transformation and marketing of organic cashew (Indian cashew) seeds.

Successes include reforestation, production diversification, and construction of two agro-industrial plants to transform and market cashews, and increase the income of 840 families. Many of these families are led by women.

"This project has helped us have a different life. We received training, attended workshops, received squash, cassava, and tomato seeds. They told us how to plant them and what could be planted. Now we do not have to purchase many things and what we receive from the cashew harvest we use to purchase corn or whatever we need to eat," said Matilde Tercero Correo, project beneficiary.



Ana Maria Sanchez collects chayote from her farm. Ana received a loan from Oxfam partner INPRHU to help her invest in growing and selling more produce.

Photo: Pablo Tesco/Intermon

We're contributing to an effective, democratic State that develops public policies to reduce poverty and inequality. We promote new leaderships and agendas, including youth and women groups, as change agents favouring public-private dialogue and the construction of a national project. It's crucial to strengthen internal democracy in organisations, renew leadership, and build consensus agendas with other social stakeholders, while changing citizens' beliefs and behaviour, allowing

them to recognise the causes of ethnic and gender exclusion and become responsible citizens committed to social and economic change.

In 2009 and 2010, Oxfam collaborated with the "Pink Panthers" Feminist Association – a group of young women and men enthusiastic about finding and creating new spaces where people can share, debate and build ideas that will have a creative and dynamic impact on society.



A young boy stands by a post to keep watch on rising water levels during a flood.

Photo: David Vinueles

Emergencies and reducing the risk of disasters

An earthquake in 1972, hurricane Mitch in 1998, and hurricane Félix in 2007 are just three examples of times Oxfam helped mitigate the suffering of people affected by the natural disasters Nicaragua constantly experiences. Disasters include hurricanes, landslides, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions.

Oxfam includes adaptation and disaster risk reduction components in all its programmes, especially in the most vulnerable areas of the Caribbean and Western region, enabling communities to deal with disasters, mitigate their effects and get on with their lives as soon as possible. During emergencies, Oxfam

also works at the territorial and local levels, along with public authorities, social organisations and communities, to ensure emergency relief is effective.

Oxfam (with Christian Medical Action, Humboldt Centre, and indigenous territorial governments) implemented an early warning system in several communities in the Bocay and Coco neighbouring areas in Waspan municipality, in the north west region of Nicaragua. This system allows us to measure precipitation and the variation in river measurements in real time. It also helps co-ordinate communication with the population and authorities in case of risks.