



Diaspora engagement mapping

NICARAGUA

Facts & figures

Political rights



Dual citizenship¹



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad²



Remittances



Remittances as a share of GDP: **26.15%**
Remittances inflow (USD million): **4,662**

Voting from abroad

At embassies/consulates



Data disclaimer

As diaspora definitions vary widely, we have chosen to use comparable data on emigration as a proxy. This does not include all who consider themselves diaspora and is not necessarily aligned with national definitions of diaspora. Emigration data comes from UNDESA (2024) and remittances from the World Bank (2023).

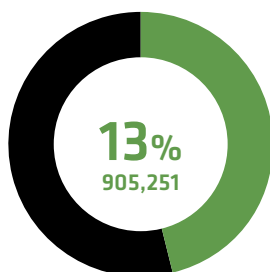
Emigration



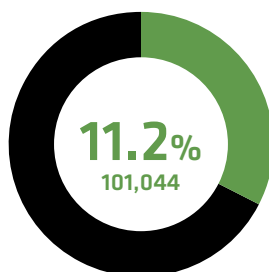
% of emigrants in total population



% of which in the EU



♂ 46.7%
♀ 53.3%



♂ 32.5%
♀ 67.5%

Top countries of destination



Costa Rica	423,401
United States of America	295,024
Spain	98,452
Panama	23,672
Mexico	18,139

¹ "Constitución Política de la República de Nicaragua", 1987. <https://www.asamblea.gob.ni/assets/constitucion.pdf> Article 20 provides that Nicaraguan citizenship will not be lost if another citizenship is acquired. Accessed June 2020

² See: "Ley Electoral. Ley No. 331", 2012. <http://legislacion.asamblea.gob.ni/normaweb.nsf/3133c0d121ea3897062568a1005e0f89/8abab-8f0a5a0cfd306257a830079bc60?OpenDocument> Article 122 provides the vote of Nicaraguans abroad, but it has never been exercised. (Accessed June 2020).

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2011** ● **General Law on Migration and Aliens (*Ley General de Migración y Extranjería*; Ley No. 761)** The main purpose of the law is to implement Nicaragua's migration policy. It also refers to consular services for Nicaraguans living abroad. Additionally, it creates the National Council on Migration and Aliens, (Consejo Nacional de Migración y Extranjería), which is officially responsible for designing actions and programmes to promote engagement between Nicaragua and its citizens abroad. However, the law is not yet operational.³
- 2017** ● **Guidelines of the Human Development Programme (*Ejes del Programa Nacional de Desarrollo Humano*) 2018-2021** very briefly addresses migration issues, with references to regulation of migratory flows, ensuring efficient services for migratory documents and procedures and the protection of the rights of Nicaraguans abroad.⁴

» Trends

In general, the Nicaraguan government does not engage with its diaspora. Although the 2021 electoral law grants Nicaraguans abroad the right to vote, due to political bias, despite the thousands of Nicaraguans abroad, the current government has not enabled voting from abroad. It also makes very little effort to engage with the diaspora economically, despite the significant economic impact of its remittances. Another example of the lack of interest from the government towards its diaspora was shown during the COVID-19 crisis when the Nicaraguan government kept its border closed, not allowing its citizens living abroad to return, until neighboring countries pressured the Nicaraguan government to let them in.⁵

The Nicaraguan diaspora can be divided in two groups, the first one includes those who emigrated between the early 1970s to the late 1990s, mostly victims of the civil war and natural disasters.⁶ The second group is formed by migrants linked to the social and political crisis of 2018, mainly composed of people who supported protests against Daniel Ortega.⁷ The current government has been unwilling to collaborate with the diaspora and has taken out explicit mentions of the role they could play in the new National Plan to Combat Poverty and for Human Development 2022-2026.⁸

The Nicaraguan diaspora is engaged in political activities focused on improving education and social and economic conditions for Nicaraguans and in advocating for freedom, justice and democracy in Nicaragua.⁹ The work of organisations such as the Nicaraguan Freedom Coalition (NFC),¹⁰ the Anti-Corruption Party in Nicaragua (PANA)¹¹ and the Diaspora Global Nicaragüense (DIASGLONIC),¹² are examples of the diaspora active participation on political issues. Part of the diaspora has also promoted actions against Ortega's government, including

3 "Ley General de Migración y Extranjería", 2011. <http://legislacion.asamblea.gob.ni/Normaweb.nsf/fb812b-d5a06244ba062568a30051ce81/5c50ce4ad5bcb20406257905006c3242?OpenDocument> Accessed June 2020.

4 "Ejes del Programa Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2018-2021", 2017. <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/sites/default/files/plan/files/Nicaragua.EJES%20DEL%20PROGRAMA%20NACIONAL%20DE%20DESARROLLO%20HUMANO.pdf> Accessed June 2020.

5 <https://confidencial.com.ni/la-fobia-contra-los-migrantes-que-retornan/>

6 Orozco, Manuel. "The Nicaraguan diaspora: trends and opportunities for diaspora engagement in skills transfers and development", 2008. The Inter-American Dialogue. http://archive.thedialogue.org/PublicationFiles/The%20Nicaragua%20case_M%20Orozco%20REV.pdf Accessed June 2020.

7 "Migración forzada de nicaragüenses a Costa Rica", 2019. Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) <http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/informes/pdfs/MigracionForzada-Nicaragua-CostaRica.pdf> Accessed June 2020.

8 [https://www.pndh.gob.ni/documentos/pnlc-dh/PNCL-DH_2022-2026\(19Jul21\).pdf](https://www.pndh.gob.ni/documentos/pnlc-dh/PNCL-DH_2022-2026(19Jul21).pdf)

9 "Díaspóra nicaragüense insta a la creación urgente de una Gran Coalición Azul y Blanco", 2019. La Prensa. <https://www.laprensa.com.ni/2019/09/30/politica/2595652-diaspora-nicaraguense-insta-a-la-creacion-urgente-de-una-gran-coalicion-azul-y-blanco> Accessed June 2020.

10 "Nicaragua Freedom Coalition anuncia campana para recoger fondos destinados a refugiados en Costa Rica", 2020. 100% Noticias. <https://100noticias.com.ni/nacionales/101257-nicaragua-freedom-coalition-campana-ayuda/> Accessed June 2020.

11 "La díaspóra nicaragüense crea un partido de centro derecha para el cambio", 2019. Agencia EFE. <https://www.efe.com/efe/usa/politica/la-diaspora-nicaraguense-crea-un-partido-de-centro-derecha-para-el-cambio/50000105-3932833> Accessed June 2020.

12 "Propuesta electoral para la construcción de una Nicaragua mejor para todos", 2019. Díaspóra Global Nicaragüense (DIASGLONIC). <http://diasglonic.com/diaspora-global-nicaraguense/reforma-electoral-diasglonic-pmu/> Accessed June 2020.

stopping remittances, and activating solidarity networks.¹³ The diaspora has also asked for sanctions from the European Union for human rights violations.¹⁴

Exile groups and the Nicaraguan diaspora took advantage of a speech by the Foreign Minister of the Ortega-Murillo regime, Denis Moncada Colindres, at the 78th General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) in New York, to protest the generalized deterioration of human rights in Nicaragua.¹⁵

In 2024, remittances to Nicaragua continued to play a crucial role in sustaining the national economy, reaching approximately US\$3.83 billion in the first nine months alone—an 11.5% increase from the same period in 2023. The United States remained the primary source, accounting for over 83% of these funds, followed by Costa Rica and Spain. Remittances represented around 27% of Nicaragua's GDP, underscoring their significance amid ongoing political and economic instability.



Achievements

Achievements in the field of diaspora engagement in Nicaragua relate explicitly to policy interventions from international stakeholders, like IOM, the private sector, the diaspora or other organizations.

Obstacles



- **Informal organisations:** Most Nicaraguan diaspora organisations are social media groups doing locally based-activism without an obvious view to long-term development.¹⁶
- **Inability to vote:** The vote of Nicaraguans abroad is a right established in article 122 of the Electoral Law (Ley Electoral No. 331); however, it has never been applied due to a lack of political will.¹⁷
- **Social and political crisis:** One of the main causes of Nicaraguan migration is the social and political crisis that began in 2018.¹⁸ As the Nicaraguan diaspora is quite engaged with the opposition, there is no government outreach or intention to reach out to its nationals abroad for fear that they will be critical of the government.

13 "Convocan a un paro de remesas como protesta en contra del gobierno de Daniel Ortega", 2018. 100% Noticias. <https://100noticias.com.ni/nacionales/94685-paro-remesas-nicaragua-daniel-ortega/> Accessed June 2020.

14 "Nicas en España protestan contra Ortega y demandan sanciones", 2019. Despacho 505. <https://www.despacho505.com/nicaraguen-ses-en-espana-protestan-contra-ortega/> Accessed June 2020.

15 <https://www.expedientepublico.org/diaspora-de-nicaragua-pide-en-naciones-unidas-no-olvidar-represion-de-los-ortega/>
<https://www.expedientepublico.org/diaspora-de-nicaragua-pide-en-naciones-unidas-no-olvidar-represion-de-los-ortega/>

16 "Nicaragua's diaspora activists bear a 'double burden'", 2018. Global Voices. <https://globalvoices.org/2018/08/27/nicaraguas-diaspora-activists-bear-a-double-burden/> Accessed June 2020.

17 Álvarez, Leonor. "¿Por qué los nicaragüenses no pueden votar en el exterior?", 2016. <https://www.laprensa.com.ni/2016/11/01/politica/2126678-nicaraguenses-voto-exterior> Accessed June 2020.

18 "Migración en el contexto de crisis sociopolítica y violación de los Derechos Humanos en Nicaragua. Desde los casos de Managua y Chinandega", 2019. Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes. http://www.uca.edu.ni/4/images/SJM/2019/Publicaciones/INFORME_FINAL_CRISIS2018.pdf Accessed June 2020.

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ProNicaragua Investment Promotion Agency 2002

Created by the government, this agency delivers guidance with contacts and advice for those who are seeking to invest in Nicaragua. Although not specifically targeting the diaspora, this is an option for the diaspora to invest or start a new business in their country.¹⁹ In 2018, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) reached USD 1,06 billion and was centered mainly on industry, finances, telecom, business & services, and energy.²⁰

Financial inclusion for remittance recipients 2014

In partnership with the International Organization for Migration and a consortium of foundations, Central America and Mexico Alliance for Migration (CAMMINA), a financial inclusion project for remittance recipients was developed with the private bank BANPRO. The purpose was to increase rates of savings for Nicaraguans receiving remittances. This project aimed to enhance financial literacy and practices, as well as provide information on financial products. More than 10,000 clients were beneficiaries and savings through the scheme totalled US\$ 960,000.²¹

19 Sharma, Krishnan, et al., 2011. Realizing the development potential of diasporas. United Nations University Press.

20 "A Dynamic Economy". ProNicaragua. <http://pronicaragua.gob.ni/en/nicaragua-2/6-economy/> Accessed August 2020.

21 Orozco, Manuel. "Asesoría e inclusión financiera en Banco Banpro" (Consulting and financial inclusion in Banco Banpro), 2017. The Inter-American Dialogue.

Annex:

List of Actors

Explore the institutionalisation of diaspora engagement worldwide via the [typology of 430+ institutions](#)

Diaspora related institutions

- **At regional level**

Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) 1975

SELA's main goal is to create a system of consultation and coordination for the region to adopt common positions and strategies on economic issues, including remittances and development as an important economic policy topic.

- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in charge of foreign policy and diplomatic and consular services.

- At sub-ministerial level

Dirección General de Migración y Extranjería

Assigned to the Ministry of Government, this office controls and registers migratory movements of nationals and foreigners and provides information on legal and health conditions of irregular migrants.

- At local level / civil society

Red Nicaragüense de la Sociedad Civil para las Migraciones 2002

Red provides a space for civil society organisations that promote and defend the human rights of migrants and their relatives to interact.

Servicio Jesuita de Migrantes 2009

This organization promotes and defend the rights of the migrant population and their families.

Diaspora organisations in Europe

Asociación Nicaragüita 2018 Spain

Integration activities

The association aims to gather Nicaraguans living in Euskadi and its surroundings to help with residence and legal information for newcomers and give advice on courses and employment opportunities.

SOS Nicaragua-Europa 2018 Spain

Integration activities Development activities

The organisation is made up of Nicaraguans living in Europe who support the demands of the Nicaraguan people. It aims to contribute to the return of democracy, justice, and freedom in Nicaragua.

Read more about diaspora organisations
in “[Starting guide: What is a diaspora
organisation](#)”



Written by: **Dr Manuel Orozco**
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