Country Profile on Disability
Republic of Nicaragua

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Abbreviations

ANSNIC	Asociación Nacional de Sordos de Nicaragua	National Nicaraguan Association of the Deaf
ASB	Confederación de Obreros y Samaritanos	Workers' Samaritan Federation of Germany
CBM	Christian Blind Mission	
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	
FECONORI	Federación Nicaragüense de Asociaciones de Personas con Discapacidad	Federation of Associations of Persons with Disabilities of Nicaragua
FEMUCADI	Federación de Mujeres con Capacidades Diferentes	Federation of Women with Disabilities
FOAL	Fundación ONCE para la Solidaridad con Personas Ciegas de América Latina	ONCE Foundation for Solidarity with Blind People in Latin America
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	
ILO	International Labour Organization	
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency	
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization	
OCNMT	Organización de Ciegos de Nicaragua Maricela Toledo	Nicaraguan Association of the Blind "Maricela Toledo"
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities	
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization	
RIADIS	Red Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Personas con Discapacidad y sus Familias	Latin American Network of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and their Families
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals	
SINAPRED	Sistema Nacional para la Prevención, Mitigación y Atención de Desastres	National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund	
UMO-JN	Universidad de Medicina Oriental Japón – Nicaragua	Japan–Nicaragua University of Oriental Medicine
WHO	World Health Organization	

1. Basic Profile

1-1. Basic Indicators[1]

Gross Domestic Product[2] per capita	USD 2,847.5	2024

Government Expenditures by Sector

Healthcare (% of GDP)	8.95 %	2022
Education (% of GDP)	2.9 %	2023
Social protection (% of GDP)[3]	0.8 %	2023

Population

Total population	6,916,140	2024
Male (% of total population)	49.2 %	
Female (% of total population)	50.8 %	
Urban population (% of total population)	59.3 %	
Rural population (% of total population)	40.7 %	
Life expectancy at birth (total)	74.9 years	2023
Male	72.3 years	
Female	77.4 years	

Health

Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population)	17.3 %	2022
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	10.3	2023

Education

Education System[4]		
Primary Education	6 years	
Compulsory education	9 years	
Literacy rate (% of ages 15 and above)	87.3 %	2014
Adult male	86.9 %	
Adult female	88.1 %	

[1] Based on World Bank (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator (Accessed: 8 January 2026)).

[2] Gross Domestic Product (hereinafter referred to as "GDP")

[3] Excluding healthcare. Based on ILO (2024) World Social Protection Report, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/WSPR_2024_EN_WEB_1.pdf (Accessed: 17 January 2026)

[4] The education system in Nicaragua consists of primary school (six years), lower secondary school (three years), upper secondary school (two years) and university education (four years). Children start school at the age of six. Based on the website of the Ministry of Education of Nicaragua (https://www.mined.gob.ni/ (Accessed: 8 January 2026)).

School enrolment		
Primary (% gross) (total)	109.5 %	2023
Male	111.0 %	
Female	108.0 %	
Secondary (% gross) (total)	70.2 %	2023
Male	69.7 %	
Female	70.7 %	
Tertiary (% gross) (total)	30.4 %	2023
Male	25.2 %	
Female	35.7 %	

Employment

Unemployment (total)	4.6 %	2024
Male (% of male labour force)	4.5 %	
Female (% of female labour force)	4.7 %	

1-2. Definition of Disability and Indicators on Disability

1-2-1. Definition of Disability[5]

In the Republic of Nicaragua (hereinafter referred to as "Nicaragua"), the definitions of disability and persons with disabilities are set forth in Article 3 of Law No. 763, "Ley de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad" (2011, re-enacted in 2022[6]).

Disability: It is the result of the interaction between a person with impairments and a disabling environment. Disability is framed by the latent and perpetual barriers implanted by society, which make it impossible for persons with disabilities to access social life actively, passively, directly, or indirectly on an equal basis with other human beings. Therefore, disability is not something that resides in the person as a result of an impairment.

Persons with disabilities: These are persons who have long-term physical, mental, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

[5] Based on Asamblea Nacional de la República de Nicaragua (n.d.) *Legislación de Nicaragua. Texto Consolidado, Ley N°. 763, Ley de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad.* (http://legislacion.asamblea.gob.ni/__062569d000710dd9.nsf/09cf45d6fc8938680625726500599 11e/ceb4c872243fa8310625886e006c6f18 (Accessed: 8 April 2026))

[6] A consolidated version (Consolidada), reflecting all amendments made since the enactment of the law in 2011, was approved in September 2021 and republished in April 2022.

1-2-2. Indicators on Disability[7]

In Nicaragua, a community health system has been established to identify and register persons with disabilities through the "All with Voice (Todos con Voz)" Program of the Ministry of Health. The number of persons with disabilities registered under this program is shown below. However, these figures are based on administrative registration and depend, to some extent, on voluntary registration; therefore, there may be persons with disabilities who remain unregistered.

In the past, a large-scale survey covering 179,138 households nationwide was conducted in 2009, and a nationally and departmentally representative sample survey was conducted in 2003. However, the development of statistics indicating the number and proportion of persons with disabilities in recent years remains insufficient.

Number of Persons with Disabilities[8]	177,101	2.7 % of total population	2021

Table 1 Breakdown of Persons with Disabilities by Type of Disability (2021)

Type of disability	Number of persons with disabilities (%)
Physical/motor (Físico-motora)	72,249 (41%)
Intellectual (Intelectual)	40,939 (23%)
Visual (Visual)	21,350 (12%)
Hearing (Auditiva)	15,518 (9%)
Mental/psychosocial (Psicosocial)	8,616 (5%)
Internal organ (Visceral)	4,008 (2%)
Multiple (Múltiple)	14,421 (8%)

Source: RIADIS & CBM (2022)

[7] Based on Red Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Personas con Discapacidad y sus Familias (hereinafter referred to as "RIADIS") & Christian Blind Mission (hereinafter referred to as "CBM")(2022) *Informe Nicaragua*, as well as the government reports submitted under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as the "CRPD")—namely, the *Initial Report submitted by Nicaragua under Article 35 of the Convention, due in 2009*, the *Second Periodic Report submitted by Nicaragua under Article 35 of the Convention, due in 2013*, and the *Third Periodic Report submitted by Nicaragua under Article 35 of the Convention, due in 2017* (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2020; hereinafter collectively referred to as the "State Party's Reports")—

[8] Based on RIADIS & CBM (2022). Data disaggregated by sex, region and age are not available. According to the State Party's Reports, however, the number of persons with disabilities in 2018 was 138,698, of whom 51% were male and 49% were female. By age group, persons aged 60 years and over accounted for the largest proportion (45%), followed by those aged 40–59 years (25%), 30–39 years (10%), 20–29 years (9%), 5–14 years (6%), 14–19 years (4%), and 1–4 years (1%).

2. Administration and Policy on Disability

2-1. Administration on Disability[9]

In Nicaragua, multiple ministries are responsible for disability-related measures, and policies and programs are implemented in the fields of education, health, labour, social protection, and other areas according to their respective policy mandates.

<Central government>

Entities responsible for disability issues

Table 2 Entities Responsible for Disability Issues in Nicaragua

No.	Name	Overview
1	Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud)	・Operates the "Todos con Voz" Program, which conducts the identification and registration of persons with disabilities and issues disability identification cards (carnets). ・Promotes the Family and Community Health Model (Modelo de Salud Familiar y Comunitario), a community-based health-care model that includes home visits for persons with disabilities, rehabilitation, early intervention, and the provision of assistive devices such as wheelchairs and white canes.
2	Ministry of Labour (Ministerio del Trabajo)	・Monitors compliance with the 2 % employment quota for persons with disabilities applicable to enterprises with 50 or more employees through labour inspections conducted by labour inspectors. ・Oversees the Public Employment Service (Servicio Público de Empleo), which provides job registration, vocational assessment and job matching services for persons with disabilities.
3	Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación)	・Provides education to children with disabilities in mainstream schools, special schools and schoolrooms in hospitals. ・Provides an Early Education Programme for children up to 3 years of age who have developmental issues (alteraciones en su desarrollo) or are at high risk of developing them. ・Promotes inclusive education and special education through the deployment of specialized personnel, the development of educational materials and the capacity-building of education stakeholders.
4	Ministry of Family, Adolescence and Childhood (Ministerio de la	・Implements the "Amor para los más chiquitos" program, which promotes the early detection and prevention of developmental disorders and disabilities among children aged 0–6 years through home visits and provides parents with child-rearing guidance.

[9] Based on the State Party's Reports and Comité sobre los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad (2024) *Observaciones finales sobre los informes periódicos inicial a tercero combinados de Nicaragua.*（hereinafter referred to as "Concluding Observations")

	Familia, Adolescencia y Niñez)	・Operates "Special Protection Centres (Centros de Protección Especial)" that provide care for persons with disabilities who are unable to receive care and support from their families.
5	Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure (Ministerio de Transporte e Infraestructura)	・Provides guidance to and monitors municipalities on the application of technical accessibility standards for public buildings and urban environments. ・Works to improve the accessibility of transportation, including by making bus terminals accessible and introducing buses equipped with ramps

Source: Prepared by the study team based on the State Party's Reports (2019)

<Status of Coordination Mechanism>

Law N°. 763 "Ley de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad" provides for the establishment of the National Council for the Promotion and Application of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Consejo Nacional de Promoción y Aplicación de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad), which is responsible for formulating disability-related policies and coordinating among ministries, as well as a Secretariat (Secretaría) responsible for its operational work. However, according to RIADIS and CBM (2022), these bodies have not been formally established or become operational. In its Concluding Observations addressed to the Government of Nicaragua (2024), the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, noting the absence of a national coordination mechanism, also called on the government to: (i) establish a government body, with an advisory council composed of persons with disabilities, to implement, follow up and evaluate the CRPD; (ii) establish an independent monitoring mechanism that ensures the close involvement of persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "OPDs"); and (iii) designate focal points for follow-up to the CRPD.

<Local government>[10]

Law N°. 763 "Ley de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad" requires each municipal council (Consejo Municipal) and autonomous regional council to appoint a public official responsible specifically for disability issues, namely a Disability Secretary (Secretario de Discapacidad). It also provides for the establishment, in each municipality and autonomous region[11], of Regional and Municipal Committees for the Promotion and Application of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Comités Regionales y Municipales de Promoción y Aplicación de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad), as official bodies responsible

[10] Based on Asamblea Nacional de la República de Nicaragua (n.d.) and the State Party's Reports.
[11] Nicaragua has 15 departments and two autonomous regions (regiones autónomas), namely the North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region and the South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region.

for planning, formulating and coordinating disability-related policies.

In addition, according to the State Party's Reports (2019), a Regional Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities (Secretaría Regional de las Personas con Discapacidad) has been established in the autonomous regions, where support and coordination are carried out independently.

2-2. Laws and Policies on Disability[12]

The Constitution of Nicaragua provides, in article 56, that "the State shall give special attention in all its programs to persons with disabilities, the families of persons who fell in combat and war victims in general," and, in article 62, that "the State shall endeavour to establish programs for the benefit of persons with disabilities for their physical, psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation and for their employment[13]" Since ratifying the CRPD, the Government of Nicaragua has worked to develop the disability-related legal framework, including through the enactment of Law No. 763. Representative disability-related laws are listed below.

Title	Law N°. 763 "Ley de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad"
Year of enactment	2011 (consolidated version approved in 2021 and republished in 2022)
Overview	A law that serves as the basis of the legal framework for persons with disabilities. It covers a wide range of rights of persons with disabilities, including education, participation in the labour market, health, the guarantee of legal capacity, political participation, social security, housing, and access to sports and culture.

Title	Decree No. 11/2014 "Reglamento a la Ley de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad"
Year of enactment	2014
Overview	Overview It stipulates that regional governments and municipal authorities must review and adjust their own regulations within 12 months to enable the effective application of the provisions set out in the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its implementing regulations.

Other major laws related to the rights of persons with disabilities include the following.

Title	Law N°. 423 "Ley General de Salud"
Year of enactment	2002
Overview	Overview Guarantees the free provision of public health services,

[12] Based on the State Party's Reports and RIADIS & CBM (2022).

[13] The Constitution uses the outdated term "discapacitados" to refer to persons with disabilities.

	rehabilitation and informed consent for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. It also requires the removal of physical barriers, including the installation of ramps at health-care facilities.

Title	Law N°. 582 "Ley General de Educación"
Year of enactment	2006
Overview	Overview Defines inclusive education as "a process in which schools or alternative education services accept persons with disabilities and groups that are socially excluded, marginalized and in vulnerable situations, particularly such persons in rural areas, without distinction on the basis of ethnicity, religion, sex or any other grounds of discrimination, thereby contributing to the elimination of poverty, exclusion and inequality." It also provides that persons with disabilities who experience difficulties in regular learning are covered by special education.

Title	Law N°. 185 "Código del Trabajo"
Year of enactment	1996
Overview	Provides that persons with disabilities have the right to obtain employment, and that the State shall grant tax, credit and other facilities to enterprises operated by persons with disabilities and to enterprises that promote the employment of persons with disabilities.

Title	Law N°. 677 "Ley Especial para el Fomento de la Construcción de Vivienda y de Acceso a la Vivienda de Interés Social"
Year of enactment	2009
Overview	Requires that at least 5 % of housing under social housing programmes be preferentially allocated to persons with disabilities.

Title	Law N°. 641 "Código Penal"
Year of enactment	2007
Overview	Defines discrimination on the basis of disability as an aggravating circumstance. It also treats the victim's disability as an aggravating circumstance in crimes such as exploitation by forcing children or persons with disabilities to beg, trafficking in persons and sexual abuse.

Title	Law N°. 675 "Ley del Lenguaje de Señas Nicaragüense"
Year of enactment	2009
Overview	Officially recognizes Nicaraguan Sign Language as the language of persons with hearing impairments and guarantees their right to communicate and express themselves freely.

2-3. Measures on Disability[14]

1) Healthcare

Article 59 of the Constitution guarantees the equal right of all persons to health. In addition, Act No. 423, the General Act on Health (2002), guarantees vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, access to free public health services, rehabilitation services and informed consent in hospitals and health centers, and requires the removal of physical barriers through measures such as the installation of access ramps in health facilities.

Act No. 763 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities establishes the following rights and State obligations in the field of health care.

- The right of persons with disabilities to receive, on a priority basis, specialized and compassionate medical care appropriate to their type of disability.
- The right of patients to give informed consent to medical treatment after receiving adequate information.
- The obligation of the Ministry of Health is to provide care related to sexual and reproductive health and to prevent, detect and respond to domestic and sexual violence.
- The prohibition of discriminatory refusal of coverage in health and life insurance on the grounds of disability.
- The obligation of the government is to ensure the continuous provision of assistive devices and regularly replaced supplies used by persons with disabilities in their daily lives.

Through the "Todos con Voz" Programme, the Ministry of Health identifies and registers persons with disabilities throughout the country. Medical teams conduct home visits twice a year, or four times a year in severe cases involving serious health conditions, poverty or the absence of family support, to provide health care and rehabilitation services. The Programme also distributes assistive devices, including wheelchairs and white canes, free of charge. In addition, through the "Amor para los más chiquitos" Programme, the Ministry conducts home visits for children aged 0–6 years to screen for developmental delays and signs of disability and to provide parents with guidance on child-rearing practices.

Early stimulation rooms (salas de estimulación temprana) and physiotherapy units have been established in health centers throughout the municipalities, where rehabilitation services are provided. In addition, through the Maternity Houses (Casas Maternas), care is provided to pregnant women in order to prevent perinatal complications and the occurrence of disabilities.

Although these legal systems and policies are in progress, the Committee on the Rights of

[14] Based on the State Party's Reports, the Concluding Observations, and the text of the *Ley de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad* (Asamblea Nacional de la República de Nicaragua, n.d.).

Persons with Disabilities, in its Concluding Observations (2024), raised the following concerns and recommendations in relation to the health-care sector:

- The certification of disability conducted through the "Todos con Voz" programme is based solely on medical criteria applied by the Ministry of Health. Certification should be carried out not only by physicians but by a multidisciplinary team of professionals (*equipo multidisciplinario*), and criteria based on the human rights model of disability should be applied.
- Supports such as rehabilitation services and measures to improve mobility focus almost exclusively on persons with physical disabilities, while responses to intellectual or psychosocial disabilities (*discapacidad intelectual o psicosocial*) remain insufficient. Such support should be extended to all disabilities other than physical disabilities as well.
- Reasonable accommodation in health-care facilities, including sign language interpretation, braille and easy-read formats, as well as appropriate training for physicians on how to respond to persons with disabilities, should be fully ensured.
- Cases in which women with disabilities were subjected to forced sterilization without their consent should be investigated, restorative justice measures (*justicia restaurativa*) should be provided to victims, and those responsible should be punished.
- The causes of the high maternal mortality rate should be investigated and addressed, and preventive measures should be established, including training for rural and Indigenous midwives.
- In rural and remote areas, insufficient training of health-care personnel, the lack of communication support such as sign language, and poor physical accessibility persist. In addition, because services are concentrated in urban areas, the budget should be increased and coverage expanded nationwide, particularly to rural areas.

2) Education

Education was made free of charge in 2007, and the government has been promoting efforts to include children with disabilities in education. Law N°. 763 "Ley de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad" sets out measures to improve the quality of education for children with disabilities, including the provision of appropriate programmes, teaching materials and equipment in special schools; training for all teachers under the Ministry of Education on the education of children with disabilities; and the right of parents of children with disabilities to enrol their children in the educational institution closest to their home.

Under this legal framework, education for children with disabilities is provided through two approaches: inclusive education in all mainstream schools, and special education in special schools, mainly for children with severe disabilities. In 2018, a total of 10,101 children with

disabilities received education: 7,033 in mainstream schools, including preschool, primary, secondary, teacher training, and youth and adult education, and 3,068 in 25 special schools. In addition, schoolrooms have been established in eight major hospitals across the country to guarantee education for children who require long-term hospitalization.

The Educational Resource Centre for the Blind (El Centro de Recursos Educativos para Ciegos), under the Ministry of Education, adapts, provides and reproduces teaching materials in Braille. In addition, the Educational Resource Centres for Respect of Diversity (Centros de Recursos Educativos para Atender a la Diversidad) in each department have an Academic Advisory Unit (La Unidad de Orientación Educativa), composed of a team of approximately 120 teachers[15] with expertise in psychology, sign language, Braille and other areas. These teacher teams visit mainstream schools attended by students with special educational needs and provide technical and methodological support to classroom teachers, support for curricular accommodations, sign language interpretation, and psychoeducational assessments of students. Sign language interpreters have also begun to be assigned to support students with hearing impairments at the secondary level.

To strengthen teachers' capacities, the Ministry of Education has introduced, in the third year of teacher training colleges nationwide, a module on teaching methods for pupils with special educational needs, which all newly trained teachers are required to take. In addition, more than 30,000 in-service teachers have received training on practical strategies for inclusive education, Nicaraguan Sign Language, teaching methods for children with visual impairments, and early childhood education strategies.

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in its Concluding Observations (2024), raised the following concerns and recommendations in relation to the field of education:

- There is no national plan on inclusive education; consequently, the measures being implemented are not carried out systematically, and reasonable accommodation is not adequately taken into account. A national action plan should be developed, with specific objectives, timelines, human resources and a sufficient budget, to ensure the provision of support and reasonable accommodation at all levels of education.
- Approximately 40 % of children with disabilities are not receiving education. In particular, for students with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities *(estudiantes con discapacidad intelectual y/o psicosocial*), special education is prioritized, and an appropriate transition to mainstream education has not been achieved. Efforts should be strengthened to put an end to special education in segregated settings.

[15] The first and second the State Party's Reports state that there were 130 persons, while the third State Party's Report states that there were 114 persons.

- Barriers remain in relation to the accessibility of the physical environment of schools, as well as access to information and communication. There is also a shortage of teachers and specialized staff proficient in braille and sign language. Full accessibility of educational facilities should be ensured, and the use of alternative and augmentative modes and systems of communication should be guaranteed.
- A digital divide exists between rural and urban areas, which also affects students with disabilities. In addition, there is insufficient information on training and teacher education for schoolteachers in rural and Indigenous communities. Digital tools should be provided, with a particular focus on these areas, and continuous training, including in teacher training programmes, should be provided to all teachers.

3) Gender

Article 48 of the Constitution provides for the absolute equality of men and women. The government ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (hereinafter referred to as "CEDAW") in 1981. In addition, Act No. 779, the Comprehensive Act against Violence against Women (Ley integral contra la violencia hacia las mujeres) (2012), prohibits violence and discrimination against women, including women with disabilities. Additionally, Act No. 648, the Equal Rights and Opportunities Act (Ley de igualdad de derechos y oportunidades) (2008), introduced a quota system requiring a 50 % gender balance among public officials, while the Amended Act No. 40, the Municipalities Act (Ley No. 786, Reforma y Adición a la Ley No. 40, Ley de Municipios) (2012), introduced the same 50 % gender quota for candidates for mayor, deputy mayor and municipal councillor.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs is responsible for promoting lines of action and policies on gender among government institutions and autonomous entities so that women can participate in all areas of economic, social, cultural and political development. According to the State Party's Reports, as a result of this legal framework and these initiatives, Nicaragua has made significant progress in gender equality: in a 2015 survey by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, it was ranked as the country with the highest proportion of women ministers in the world, and in the 2018 World Economic Forum, it was among the top five countries in the world in terms of progress in narrowing the gender gap.

The government provides empowerment measures and social programmes for women. As a measure specifically targeting women with disabilities, career counselling workshops have been held. In addition, several organizations of women with disabilities carry out activities specifically focused on women with disabilities.

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in its Concluding Observations (2024), raised the following concerns and recommendations in relation to the field of gender:

- There are few cross-cutting measures in gender-related laws and policies to promote and protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities, and there is no legislation to prevent indirect discrimination or multiple discrimination. The human rights model of disability should be incorporated into gender equality policies, while a gender perspective should also be incorporated into disability policies.
- There is insufficient information on women and girls with disabilities who have benefited from social programmes. Disaggregated data should be created to identify the number of beneficiaries of each programme.
- Law N°. 779 "Ley integral contra la violencia hacia las mujeres" contains no provisions concerning women with disabilities. In addition, amid the frequent occurrence of femicide, trafficking in persons, and sexual violence and threats against women in detention facilities, it remains unclear how many of the victims are women and girls with disabilities. The Law should be amended to include provisions on women with disabilities and the crime of trafficking in persons, to introduce more severe penalties, and to remove the requirement of mediation in cases of violence and prioritize criminal prosecution.
- Information has been received that women with hearing impairments on the Caribbean Coast were subjected to forced sterilization without their consent. Other issues of concern include the fact that abortion is illegal and that victims of sexual violence also face restrictions on access to abortion; the high maternal mortality rate among women with disabilities; the prevalence of adolescent pregnancies, including among girls under the age of 15; and the lack of sexuality education. Investigations should be conducted into forced sterilization, restorative justice measures should be provided to victims, and appropriate penalties should be imposed. In addition, access to safe abortion should be permitted in cases of sexual violence, the causes of maternal mortality should be investigated, and measures should be taken to prevent adolescent pregnancy.
- To promote the political participation of women with disabilities, their participation in political parties should be actively promoted so that they may be nominated as candidates, and the reasonable accommodation they require should be guaranteed.

4) Vocational Training and Employment

Law N°. 185 "Código del Trabajo" (1996) provides that persons with disabilities have the right to obtain employment, and that the State shall grant tax deductions, credit and other facilities to enterprises established by persons with disabilities and to enterprises that promote the employment of persons with disabilities. In addition, Law N°. 763 "Ley de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad" requires public institutions and private enterprises with 50 or more employees to employ persons with disabilities in a proportion of

at least 2 % of their total workforce, and enterprises with 10 or more but fewer than 50 employees to employ at least one person with a disability. The Law also prohibits discrimination on the grounds of disability in recruitment, administration and internal promotion processes, and provides that promotion, advancement, reassignment and termination of employment must be determined on the basis of the person's abilities and performance, rather than the presence or absence of a disability. The regulations implementing the Law ("Reglamento a la Ley de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad") classify violations of these provisions as very serious violations (infracción muy grave), punishable by a fine imposed on the legal representative of the juridical person equivalent to 13 to 18 months of the minimum wage, as well as an unpaid suspension of one to three months for the person responsible for the violation[16].

The National Institute of Technology (Instituto Nacional Tecnológico) is responsible for technical education and vocational training. Between 2011 and 2013, it provided technical training to 3,142 persons with disabilities, including 1,060 men and 2,082 women, in areas such as cooking, carpentry, handicrafts and computer repair. It also provided training to 1,211 persons with visual impairments, including 646 men and 565 women, in areas such as telephone reception, small business management, computing, textiles and massage, and provided workplace adaptation training to 106 persons.

The Ministry of Labour monitors compliance with the statutory employment quota and labour conditions through workplace inspections conducted by labour inspectors, and also conducts awareness-raising seminars for private enterprises. The Ministry's website also provides an employment referral service for persons with disabilities. Under this procedure: (i) the employer adjusts the workplace environment and working conditions and provides reasonable accommodation; (ii) the employer submits job vacancy information to the Ministry of Labour; and (iii) the Ministry of Labour's Public Employment Service (Servicio público de empleo) searches its database for candidates, informs jobseekers of the vacancy, and, if the person concerned agrees, refers the candidate to the enterprise. Through this process, persons with disabilities seeking employment are matched with enterprises.

The State Party's Reports state that, by 2019, these efforts had enabled 6,133 persons with disabilities to enter the labour market, of whom 34 % were women.

In its Concluding Observations (2024), the Committee raised the following concerns and recommendations in relation to vocational training and employment:

[16] Based on Asamblea Nacional de la República de Nicaragua (n.d.) *Reglamento a la Ley de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad.* http://legislacion.asamblea.gob.ni/normaweb.nsf/9e314815a08d4a6206257265005d21f9/01e03ddd8eab551f06257c9e007899f3#:~:text=El%20presente%20Reglamento%20tiene%20por%20objeto%20establecer%20los,del%2001%20y%2002%20de%20Agosto%20del%202011. (Accessed: 3 April 2026)

- Despite the efforts made by the government, general unemployment persists in society as a whole and particularly affects persons with disabilities. This situation is further exacerbated by the lack of vocational training, the lack of accessible transportation, limited access to financing from banking institutions, discriminatory attitudes in the workplace, and the failure to implement the mandates set out in the Labour Code (Código del Trabajo) and related legislation.
- An action plan for the labour inclusion of persons with disabilities should be developed; the participation of persons with disabilities in technical training programmes of the National Technological Institute and in entrepreneurship programmes of the Ministry of the Family, Community, Cooperative and Associative Economy should be promoted; information should be collected on persons with disabilities in regular employment and their needs for reasonable accommodation; and supervision and strict compliance with the relevant laws should be strengthened.

5) Social Security, Social Service for Persons with Disabilities

Law N°. 763 "Ley de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad" provides that persons with disabilities have the right to live in the community under conditions equal to those of others, and guarantees their right to access an adequate standard of living, social support, housing and social security. In particular, it establishes as State obligations the provision of protective measures and special support for persons with severe disabilities who live in extreme poverty, as well as protective measures and special programmes for persons with disabilities who have been abandoned or are in situations of destitution. In addition, Law N°. 677 "Ley Especial para el Fomento de la Construcción de Vivienda y de Acceso a la Vivienda de Interés Social" (2009) and its regulations provide that persons with disabilities shall be given priority under social housing programmes in order to facilitate their access to their own housing. They also stipulate that at least 5 % of the housing units registered under such programmes shall be allocated to persons with disabilities.

On the basis of these laws and relevant legislation in the field of social security, the Nicaraguan Social Security Institute (Instituto Nicaragüense de Seguridad Social) provides economic benefits, in the form of pensions, to persons certified as having a permanent partial or total disability resulting from loss of earning capacity. In addition, pensioners receiving old-age, disability or permanent total disability pensions who are in a physical condition requiring the continuous assistance of another person are granted an assistance allowance equivalent to 20 % of their basic pension.

Other forms of support include the provision of food packages (Paquete Alimenticio) to persons with disabilities in critical situations, as well as the free distribution of assistive devices

through the Nicaraguan Social Security Institute and the "Todos con Voz" Programme. Additionally, children and adults with disabilities who have been abandoned by their families or who are unable to receive family support are protected and cared for by 15 Special Protection Centres (Centros de Protección Especial) across the country.

In its Concluding Observations (2024), the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities raised the following concerns and recommendations in relation to social security and disability welfare:

- The vast majority of persons with disabilities of working age do not have access to social security, as they have not been able to secure formal employment that would enable them to make contributions and retire with a pension commensurate with their salary. In addition, regular support in areas such as health, housing improvements and food is provided only to persons with disabilities classified by the government as having "severe" disabilities, who account for only 10 % of all persons with disabilities. Mechanisms should be established to enable persons with disabilities to access social security through decent employment, and a scheme and budget should be put in place to provide support to all persons with disabilities.
- It remains unclear whether the minimum 5 % allocation of housing under social housing programmes is actually being provided to persons with disabilities in an accessible manner that meets their needs. Such housing should be made accessible in accordance with the needs of persons with disabilities who receive it.

6) Transportation and Urban Development (including accessible urban planning)

Law N°. 763 "Ley de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad" provides that all newly constructed public and private buildings intended for public use must be designed to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities, including by providing visual, auditory and tactile signage within the buildings. It also provides that existing buildings shall be made accessible to persons with disabilities on a gradual basis.

The Law further provides that municipal authorities and the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure are responsible for removing obstacles from roads and public-use areas, installing visual, auditory and tactile signage, and improving access to means of transportation. It also requires drivers of means of transport that provide services to persons with disabilities, such as buses and taxis, to treat persons with disabilities with dignity and humanity and to provide assistance when they board and alight.

The Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure has established physical accessibility standards under the Nicaraguan Mandatory Technical Regulation on Accessibility to the Physical Environment No. 12 011-13 (Norma Técnica Obligatoria Nicaragüense "Accesibilidad al

Medio Físico" 12 011-13) (hereinafter referred to as "NTON 12 011-13") (2013), and disseminates information and provides guidance to municipalities on their obligation to apply this standard. In addition, pursuant to instructions from the President, OPDs conduct audits and inspections of all public institutions at the national and departmental levels and issue recommendations for improvement where deficiencies are identified.

In accordance with these laws and regulations, the State Party's Reports (2019) state that progress has been made in public spaces through the installation of ramps, sidewalks, accessible toilets, signage and other accessibility features, and that new construction and renovation works incorporating physical accessibility for persons with disabilities have also advanced.

In its Concluding Observations (2024), the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities raised the following concerns and recommendations in relation to transportation and urban development:

- There is a lack of sufficient resource allocation, monitoring and sanctions for non-compliance with the accessibility standard, NTON 12 011-13. In coordination with organizations of persons with disabilities, national legislation should be developed on physical accessibility, including short- and medium-term goals, a budget, mechanisms for monitoring implementation, and effective sanctions for non-compliance, and the effective implementation of NTON 12 011-13 should be ensured.
- Physical accessibility in transportation remains limited in both urban and rural areas. In coordination with organizations of persons with disabilities, immediate measures should be taken to improve accessibility in transportation.
- Many of the measures to improve the mobility of persons with disabilities focus on persons with physical disabilities. Such measures should therefore be extended to all types of disabilities, including persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities (personas con discapacidad intelectual y/o psicosocial).

7) Information Accessibility

Law N°. 763 "Ley de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad" provides that public and private institutions are obliged to present information and services offered to the public in formats accessible to all persons with disabilities. Specifically, it requires public and private television stations to include either an inset screen with a sign language interpreter or written information in information programmes; the government to promote access to alternative communication, such as sign language and Braille, as well as to information and communications technologies; and public libraries and private libraries open to the public to provide support services relating to information accessibility for persons with disabilities. Law

N°. 675 "Ley del Lenguaje de Señas Nicaragüenses" (2009) officially recognizes Nicaraguan Sign Language as the language of persons with hearing impairments and guarantees their right to communicate in the social environment.

Under this legal framework, the government has taken measures to improve the accessibility of public information, media and infrastructure. These include introducing sign language interpretation for presidential broadcasts and the National Assembly's television channel, Asamblea TV; installing free Wi-Fi in public spaces; establishing inquiry and information systems in all government institutions; and providing computers in the libraries of ministries and autonomous institutions to enable access to government documents. In education and vocational training, the government has also promoted computer classes using screen-reading software for persons with visual impairments, the provision of educational materials in Braille, audio and raised-line formats, and the installation of learning-support hardware and software in special schools.

In its Concluding Observations (2024), the Committee raised the following concerns and recommendations in relation to information accessibility:

- The accessibility standard, NTON 12 011-13, does not include measures concerning the accessibility of information and communication. Provisions on access to communication and information should be added, including through the use of information technology tools.
- Information accessibility in transportation remains limited in both urban and rural areas. In close coordination with OPDs, immediate measures should be taken to improve accessibility in transportation.
- Persons with hearing impairments still do not have sufficient access to information. Immediate measures should be taken to improve access to multimedia content, captioning, sign language interpretation and other forms of accessible communication.
- Persons with disabilities face barriers in accessing public information and communication media, such as television programmes and websites. Accessibility of information in public information and communication media, including television, radio and websites, should be guaranteed.
- Sufficient funds should be allocated for the development, promotion and use of accessible communication formats, such as braille, interpreting for deafblind persons, sign language, easy-read formats (formatos de lectura fácil), plain language, audio description, video transcription, captioning, and tactile, alternative and augmentative means of communication, and accessibility of all public information should be ensured for persons with different types of disabilities.
- Although the Sign Language Law exists, there is no registry of sign language interpreters,

and training for sign language interpreters and the provision of sign language interpretation services remain insufficient. A registry of sign language interpreters should be established, and the training and availability of qualified sign language interpreters should be guaranteed.

8) Disaster risk management

Nicaragua experiences river flooding after heavy rainfall and is also exposed to the risk of natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis and hurricanes[17]. The State Party's Reports (2019) state that Nicaragua is among the 15 countries in the world most at risk of natural disasters. Law N°. 337 "Law Establishing the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response (Ley Creadora del Sistema Nacional para la Prevención, Mitigación y Atención de Desastres)」(2000[18]), provides for the establishment of an inter-ministerial national system to reduce risks related to natural and human-made disasters through prevention, mitigation and response: the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response (Sistema Nacional para la Prevención, Mitigación y Atención de Desastres, hereinafter referred to as "SINAPRED"). In addition, Law N°. 763 "Ley de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad" provides that, among information offered to the public by public and private institutions, information relating to emergencies shall be made accessible to persons with disabilities as a matter of priority. The Law also provides that the State shall ensure the safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters.

As part of disaster risk reduction efforts for persons with disabilities, SINAPRED, with the cooperation of OPDs and organizations of older persons, prepared two disaster risk reduction guides: the Guide on the Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Departmental, Municipal and Community Response Plans (Guía de participación de las Personas con Discapacidad en los planes de respuestas departamental, municipal y comunitario) and the Guide for Preparing Family Response Plans for Emergency Situations, with an Inclusive Approach (Guía para elaboración de planes familiares de respuesta ante situación de emergencias (con enfoque incluyente)). These guides set out measures and guidance on responding to and supporting persons with disabilities according to the type of disability.

The government also conducts four nationwide multi-hazard response drills each year, in which the participation of persons with disabilities is promoted. In addition, in cooperation with the National Association of the Deaf of Nicaragua (Asociación Nacional de Sordos de

[17] Based on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (2024) *Medical Situation in the World: Nicaragua* (https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/toko/medi/cs_ame/nicaragu.html (Accessed: 20 April 2026).
[18] Approved in March 2000 and promulgated in April of 2000. A consolidated version incorporating subsequent amendments was approved in November 2019.

Nicaragua), sign language courses are provided for first-response institutions, including the fire service, the White Cross[19], the police, civil defense, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Family, Adolescents and Children.

In its Concluding Observations (2024), the Committee raised the following concerns and recommendations in relation to disaster risk management:

- There is a lack of measures to ensure that all public information, including information in emergencies, is available in accessible methods and formats. All persons with disabilities and their families should be able to receive the necessary information in accessible formats and through appropriate devices.
- The two disaster risk reduction guides should be reviewed and should include information on accessible information, meeting points, emergency shelters, safe and accessible evacuation routes, and shelters that are accessible and staffed by trained personnel.
- There is insufficient information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on persons with disabilities, the support provided to them, and the use of the two disaster risk reduction guides. Research and statistics on these matters should be produced.

[19] https://nicaraguainvestiga.com/politica/121692-ley-creacion-cruz-blanca-bienes-curz-roja-nicaraguense/ (Accessed: 20 August 2026)

3. International Treaties and International Cooperation

3-1. Status of Implementation Following the Ratification of the CRPD[20]

The Government of Nicaragua signed the CRPD in 2008, and ratified in 2010. The State Party's Report was due on January 7, 2009, but was submitted to and received by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on May 8, 2019. The Committee issued its List of Issues on April 1, 2022, and the Concluding Observations were adopted on March 22, 2024. No Reply to the List of Issues was submitted by the government, and no parallel reports were submitted by civil society organizations.

3-2. Status of Implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty[21]

Nicaragua acceded to the Marrakesh Treaty on January 16, 2020, and the Treaty entered into force for Nicaragua on April 16, 2020.

According to a monitoring report published in February 2026, libraries in Nicaragua may exercise the rights provided under the Marrakesh Treaty for both books and audiobooks without paying remuneration. They are also not required to check whether the work is commercially available on the market. However, there are no explicit provisions concerning cross-border uses. In addition, it remains unclear whether registration requirements or additional record-keeping obligations exist, and whether the exception can be applied to persons with dyslexia. In addition, persons with disabilities other than visual impairments are not explicitly included within the scope of beneficiaries.

3-3. Initiatives on Disability Issues within SDG-related Policies[22]

In relation to SDG-related policies, Nicaragua's first Voluntary National Review (2021) reports the following initiatives and achievements as contributions to specific SDGs:

- **Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being):** Through the "Todos con Voz" program, 126,316 persons with disabilities were identified. In addition, by 2020, 358,370 comprehensive care services (atenciones integrales) had been provided to older persons and persons with disabilities.
- **Goal 4 (Quality Education):** Support for children with disabilities was strengthened, and Special Education Cabinets (Gabinetes de Educación Especial) were organized with the participation of schools, families, persons with disabilities, and other stakeholders. A

[20] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (n.d.) *Treaty Body Database: Countries.* https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx（Accessed: 23 March 2026）

[21] International Federation of Library Association and Institutions (2026) *Marrakesh Treaty Implementation February 2026 Update.*

[22] Gobierno de Reconciliación y Unidad Nacional (2021) *Primer Informe Nacional Voluntario: Avances en el cumplimiento de los ODS, alineados con la Agenda 2030.*及び United Nations Statistics Division（n.d.）SDG Indicators Data Portal: Country Profiles. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/countryprofiles/(Accessed: 3 April 2026)

system was also established to identify the educational needs of students and connect them to early education programs. In addition, improvements have been made to facilities and teaching materials in special schools. In 2020, 3,431 children with disabilities received education in 25 special schools and 51 integrated classrooms (Aulas Integradas), with a retention rate of 91.5%. In addition, the development of legislation in the education sector and accession to the Marrakesh Treaty also promoted the rights of persons with disabilities in relation to Goal 4.

- **Goal 5 (Gender Equality)**: Initiatives were promoted to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in social life in areas such as education, health care, employment, and entrepreneurship. As an initiative specifically targeting women with disabilities, support was provided to 2,092 women entrepreneurs with disabilities to sell their products through participation in events and gatherings.

In addition, the UN Statistics Division's SDG Indicators Database publishes the following data related to disability in Nicaragua:

- Proportion of persons with severe disabilities receiving disability cash benefits: 18.3% (2021), a slight decrease from 19.4% in 2019.
- Proportion of primary schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities: 0.0% (2022).

3-4. Ratification of and Initiatives regarding Other International Treaties related to Disabilities and Development[23]

The status of Nicaragua's ratification of international treaties related to disability and development is as follows:

- October 1981: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- October 1990: Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter referred to as the "CRC")

In its Concluding Observations (2024), the CEDAW Committee expressed concerns and made recommendations regarding the protection of the human rights of women with disabilities, including the following:

- **Protection of women with psychosocial disabilities:** The Committee recommended ensuring that women with psychosocial disabilities are not confined to psychiatric

[23] Based on Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2024) *Concluding observations on the combined seventh to tenth periodic reports of Nicaragua.* and Committee on the Rights of the Child (2010) *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 44 of the Convention Concluding observations: Nicaragua.*

institutions and that no medical interventions are performed on them without their free, prior and informed consent. It also expressed concern about stigmatization, deprivation of legal capacity and institutionalization of women with psychosocial disabilities.

- **Access to justice:** The Committee recommended developing accessible physical environments, information and proceedings to improve access to justice for women and girls with disabilities.
- **Participation in decision-making and policymaking:** The Committee recommended that the national machinery for the advancement of women ensure regular consultations with organizations representing women with disabilities. It also recommended including women with disabilities in temporary special measures, such as statutory quotas, to ensure their equal representation at decision-making levels.
- **Protection from gender-based violence and trafficking:** The Committee recommended ensuring that support services for victims of gender-based violence, including adequately funded shelters, psychosocial counselling and rehabilitation services, are accessible to women and girls with disabilities. It also expressed concern about the heightened risk of trafficking of women and girls with disabilities for purposes of sexual and labour exploitation, including in begging rings, artisanal mines, drug production and transport of illegal drugs.
- **Access to health care:** The Committee noted that insufficient coverage of health services and medicine shortages have a particularly serious impact on women with disabilities, and recommended increasing budgetary allocations to ensure access to affordable health-care services and medicines.
- **Access to digital technology and employment:** The Committee noted that the digital gap between rural and urban areas in education programmes particularly affects women with disabilities, and recommended strengthening programmes to increase access to digital technology in rural areas that are inclusive of women and girls with disabilities. It also recommended including women with disabilities in targeted measures to promote professional reinsertion and formal employment.

In its Concluding Observations (2010), the Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concerns and made recommendations regarding the protection of the human rights of children with disabilities, including the following:

- **Elimination of discrimination and social awareness-raising:** The Committee noted that children with disabilities continue to face discrimination and prejudice in practice, particularly those living in rural and remote areas and those with intersecting identities, including Indigenous and Afro-descendant children. It urged the State Party to place high

priority on the public agenda to prevent and eradicate discrimination, including through the media and education. It also recommended developing family support mechanisms and awareness-raising activities for families and communities to enable children with disabilities to exercise their rights.

- **Promotion of inclusive education:** While welcoming the principle of inclusive education contained in the Education Law, which had resulted in doubling school enrolment of children with disabilities, the Committee recommended that the State Party ensure that the education system is fully equipped to implement the policy of inclusive education by providing appropriate financial and technical resources, and ensure that all children with disabilities have access to education.
- **Improvement of prevention, early intervention and rehabilitation:** The Committee expressed concern that a high proportion of children with disabilities did not have access to public health services and that early intervention and rehabilitation services remained weak. It recommended building the capacity of health and social services to prevent, detect and provide care to children with disabilities.
- **Family support:** The Committee recommended providing economic and social assistance programmes for families caring for children with disabilities.

Nicaragua has not ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159).

3-5. International Cooperation on Disability[24]

• The Government of Japan[25]

<Grant Aid>

- Project for the Improvement of Sidewalks in the Urban Area of Puerto Cabezas Municipality (Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects) (FY2024)

<Training Programmes>

- Knowledge Co-Creation Program: "Strengthening the Practice of Inclusive Education"
- Knowledge Co-Creation Program: "Social Participation of Persons with Disabilities through a Community-Based Inclusive Approach"
- Knowledge Co-Creation Program: "Capacity Development of Leaders with Disabilities for the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities"
- Third-Country Training Programme: "Improvement of National Support for the

[24] Project names are listed exactly as they appear in the original text. However, this does not apply in cases where there is no English name or the English name is unknown.

[25] Based on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan website (https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/data/zyoukyou.html, accessed April 22, 2026) and an interview with the JICA Nicaragua Office conducted on 21 March 2026.

Empowerment and Independent Living of Persons with Disabilities" (implementing country: Costa Rica))

<JICA Volunteer>

- Dispatch of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers in the field of support for persons with disabilities (occupational categories: support for children and persons with disabilities; occupational therapist)

<Follow-up Cooperation>

- Follow-up cooperation for "Independent Living of Persons with Disabilities in Central America and the Caribbean" (FY2024): support for the organization of independent living workshops throughout Nicaragua by a training participant, the representative of FEMUCADI[26].
- Follow-up cooperation for a senior volunteer in acupuncture, moxibustion and massage (FY2025–2026): support for the nationwide expansion of a training programme for visually impaired shiatsu massage therapists, which was launched with the efforts of a Senior JICA Volunteer (totally blind, occupational category: acupuncture, moxibustion and massage) dispatched to the Japan–Nicaragua University of Oriental Medicine (Universidad de Medicina Oriental Japón–Nicaragua: UMO-JN).

• Other donors

<International organization>

United Nations Children's Fund (Fondos de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia, hereinafter referred to as "UNICEF")[27]

- Implemented the Community-Based Inclusive Development Programme (2019), which supported home-based rehabilitation care for children with disabilities caused by congenital Zika syndrome, whose number increased sharply following the 2016 Zika outbreak.
- Implemented the "Proyecto para fomentar inclusión exitosa de niños y niñas con discapacidad" (2021–2023), funded by UNICEF and the Government of India, to support the strengthening of the inclusive education system of the Ministry of Education.

Pan American Health Organization (Organización Panamericana de la Salud: OPS) and World Health Organization (Organización Mundial de la Salud: OMS)[28]

Donated equipment and supplies with the aim of strengthening hospital preparedness and

[26] Federación de Mujeres con Capacidades Diferentes (hereinafter referred to as "FEMUCADI")

[27] UNICEF (2019) *Challenging disability with love and family and community solidarity*. https://www.unicef.org/nicaragua/historias/challenging-disability-love-and-family-and-community-solidarity and UNICEF (2021) *UNICEF y MINED presentan proyecto para fomentar inclusión exitosa de niños y niñas con discapacidad*. https://www.unicef.org/nicaragua/historias/unicef-y-mined-presentan-proyecto-para-fomentar-inclusi%C3%B3n-exitosa-de-ni%C3%B1os-y-ni%C3%B1as-con (Accessed: 7 May 2026)

[28] Organización Panamericana de la Salud（2023）*Ministerio de Salud cuenta con unidades hospitalarias inclusivas y resilientes para una atención integral a las personas con discapacidad.* https://www.paho.org/es/noticias/5-12-2023-ministerio-salud-cuenta-con-unidades-hospitalarias-inclusivas-resilientes-para (Accessed: 7 May 2026)

response in emergencies and disasters, with a focus on persons with disabilities (2023).

<Bilateral Aid>[29]

Government of Cuba

Dispatched Cuban doctors to Nicaragua and supported the launch of the "Todos con Voz" Programme.

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (Agencia Suiza para el Desarrollo y la Cooperación)

Funded the project on "Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Disaster Risk Management" in Central America.

<International NGO>[30]

CBM Internacional

- Has worked in Nicaragua for more than 30 years and, together with OPDs and other partners, has supported early intervention, play therapy, vocational education for young people and other activities.
- Provided financial support to OPDs.

ONCE Foundation for Solidarity with Blind Persons in Latin America (Fundación ONCE para la Solidaridad con Personas Ciegas de América Latina: FOAL)

- Implemented the "Ágora" Programme together with the National Technological Institute, the Ministry of Family, Community, Cooperative and Associative Economy, and organizations of persons with disabilities, supporting the labour inclusion of persons with visual impairments and the establishment of microbusinesses.
- Provided financial support to OPDs.

Workers' Samaritan Federation of Germany (Confederación de Obreros y Samaritanos: ASB) and AWO International

- Together with the civil society organization Los Pipitos, developed the "Guía para Concientizar y Capacitar comunidades en la Inclusión de las Personas con Discapacidad en la Gestión Integral del Riesgo de Desastres" (Guide for Raising Awareness and Training Communities on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management).
- Provided financial support to OPDs.

Metanoia Missions International and Free Wheelchair Mission

[29] Based on the State Party's Reports and RIADIS & CBM (2022)
[30] *Ibid.*

- Donate approximately 10 containers each year, equivalent to around 5,000 wheelchairs and valued at approximately USD 695,000, and provide distribution and user training for persons with physical and motor impairments.

In addition, organizations such as World Vision International, the American Nicaraguan Foundation, MoveAbility and Mayflower Medical Outreach have provided support, including donations of assistive devices and training, in cooperation with the "Todos con Voz" Programme. Other organizations, including the Swedish Association of Persons with Deafblindness (Asociación Sueca de Personas con Sordoceguera), Liliane Fonds, RIADIS, Save the Children and Habitat for Humanity, have provided financial support to OPDs.

4. Disability-related Organizations and Activities[31]

4-1. Organizations of Persons with Disabilities

Name of Organization	Overview
Federation of Associations of Persons with Disabilities of Nicaragua (Federación Nicaragüense de Asociaciones de Personas con Discapacidad (hereinafter referred to as "FECONORI")) https://feconori.org/	Established in 1994, this federation of organizations of persons with disabilities in Nicaragua promotes stronger coordination among its member organizations and advocates for the human rights of persons with disabilities as a non-governmental, non-profit, non-partisan, and non-religious organization. It has 12 branches throughout Nicaragua and 23 member organizations.
Federation of Women with Disabilities (Federación de Mujeres con Capacidades Diferentes: FEMUCADI) https://femucadinicaragua.wixsite.com/index	Established in 1997 as the *National Council of Women with Disabilities* (*Consejo Nacional de Mujeres Discapacitadas*), the organization was renamed FEMUCADI in 2002. It works to promote the rights of women with disabilities and consists of 18 member organizations and one group of women with disabilities.
Nicaraguan Association of the Blind "Maricela Toledo" (Organización de Ciegos de Nicaragua Maricela Toledo (hereinafter referred to as "OCNMT")) https://ocnmt.org/	Established in 1981, this organization of persons with visual impairments has offices in 13 departments across Nicaragua and approximately 1,500 members. Its mission is to promote the rights and social participation of persons with visual impairments, support their participation in livelihood activities, and improve their living conditions. It is a member of the World Blind Union.
National Nicaraguan Association of the Deaf (Asociación Nacional de Sordos de Nicaragua: ANSNIC) https://www.facebook.com/ansnic260486/	With a history of approximately 40 years, this organization of persons with hearing impairments seeks to ensure that the rights of all persons with hearing impairments to communication, education, health, and employment are respected and that they can enjoy better living conditions.

4-2. Disability Support Organizations

Name of Organization	Overview
Nicaraguan Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities "Los Pipitos" (Asociación de Padres de Familia con Hijos con Discapacidad "Los Pipitos")	Established in 1987, this support organization of parents and family members of persons with disabilities is committed to empowering families to advocate for social change, so that persons with disabilities can achieve a better quality of life in inclusive communities. It has a presence in all

[31] Based on the organizations' websites (listed in the table). (Accessed: 29 April 2026)

https://lospipitos.org/	departments of the country. In 2017, it supported more than 12,000 families through 38 *Learning for* Life Centers (Centros de Aprendizaje para la Vida) established across the departments.

5. Barriers and Needs Faced by Persons with Disabilities

Barriers and needs faced by persons with disabilities in each sector are described based on a survey conducted with the participation of 21 OPDs, 265 persons with disabilities, and 272 family members and supporters (RIADIS & CBM, 2022), as well as an online interview with an OPD conducted for this study. The online interview was conducted on May 6, 2026, with Mr. David Bismarck López Ordoñez, President of FECONORI and President of OCNMT.

5-1. Barriers to and Needs regarding Healthcare Services

RIADIS & CBM (2022) identifies the following as the main barriers faced by persons with disabilities in accessing health-care services:

- **Negative attitudes and prejudice among health-care personnel:** Many persons with disabilities use public health-care services, particularly those provided by the Ministry of Health. However, among health-care personnel, a medical and rehabilitation-based view of disability still persists, rather than the social and human rights models of disability. There are also cases in which health-care personnel show negative attitudes and prejudice toward women with disabilities, particularly women who wish to become pregnant or form a family.
- **Insufficient gynecological services:** There is a lack of inclusive sexual and reproductive health-care responses that include women with disabilities. In rural areas, gynecological services themselves are limited, or persons with disabilities and their families are not connected to such services.
- **Information and communication barriers:** There is a lack of available and accessible information, materials and means of communication for persons with disabilities in health facilities. Following the enactment of the Sign Language Law (Ley del Lenguaje de Señas Nicaragüense), the communication environment for persons with hearing impairments in health facilities has improved to some extent. However, professional Nicaraguan Sign Language interpreters are not assigned in all departments, and it remains difficult to receive the necessary support, particularly in rural areas. As a result, family members, friends or OPDs often serve as interpreters or explainers instead of persons with disabilities themselves, making it difficult for them to seek medical care independently. In addition, only 16% of respondents stated that accessible information and materials in health institutions were available “to some extent” or “sufficiently.”
- **Physical accessibility barriers inside and outside health facilities:** Regarding facilities inside and outside health institutions, some testimonies indicate that physical accessibility has improved in urban public health-care services compared with the past. However, approximately half of the survey respondents stated that such facilities were

"hardly available" or "not available at all." In public health facilities, there is a shortage of examination tables adapted for the gynecological care of women with disabilities, and they may be required to bring one or two assistants for routine examinations. For persons with visual impairments and persons with hearing impairments, Braille signage, tactile paving and routes that guide white cane users remain insufficient, making it difficult for them to move around and orient themselves inside health facilities.

According to the interview with FECONORI / OCNMT, the following needs were identified: expanding the training of medical and health personnel; improving the retention rate of trained professionals; expanding the provision of specialized care in remote areas; ensuring the rapid supply and expansion of assistive devices used by persons with disabilities in daily life; and improving the physical accessibility of health centers and hospitals, as well as transportation to health facilities.

5-2. Barriers to and Needs regarding Education

RIADIS & CBM (2022) identifies the following as the main barriers faced by persons with disabilities in accessing education:

- **Exclusion from enrolment and continued schooling:** While educational opportunities for persons with disabilities have expanded to some extent in urban areas, there have been cases in which persons with intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities and deaf blindness were denied admission by schools on the grounds that there were no teachers prepared to support them. In rural areas and autonomous regions, religious and cultural prejudice, as well as negative perceptions among families, also hinder continued schooling.
- **Prejudice among teachers and classmates:** Prejudice and low expectations regarding the capacities of persons with disabilities remain in educational settings. Persons with visual impairments, physical disabilities and hearing impairments reported experiences of bullying by classmates and of teachers questioning their ability to pursue higher education or professional careers.
- **Information and communication barriers:** Although some improvements have been observed in recent years, particularly in universities, accessible information, teaching materials and means of communication needed by persons with visual impairments, intellectual disabilities and deaf blindness remain insufficient. Many persons with disabilities continue their studies with support from family members or acquaintances. For persons with hearing impairments, there has been progress, including cases in which Nicaraguan Sign Language interpretation is provided at universities; however, the availability and working conditions of interpreters remain insufficient. In fact, only 22%

of respondents stated that teaching materials in educational institutions were accessible "to some extent" or "sufficiently."

- **Lack of reasonable accommodation:** Among those who required some form of reasonable accommodation at school, only 29% reported that they had received such support.
- **Physical accessibility barriers inside and outside educational institutions:** Between 50% and 60% of respondents considered that there were few or no physical accommodations inside and outside educational institutions. In particular, stairs, classrooms located on upper floors, inaccessible corridors and toilets, and a lack of signage make school attendance difficult for persons with physical disabilities. These challenges are found not only in mainstream schools but also in special schools, and are even more serious in rural areas and autonomous regions.

In the interview with FECONORI / OCNMT, the following needs were also identified: improving the physical accessibility of schools; providing training on inclusive education for teachers in mainstream schools; increasing the number of Nicaraguan Sign Language interpreters in schools; and providing teaching materials, educational resources, assistive devices, and reasonable accommodations through appropriate budgetary measures. In addition, the need for continuous awareness-raising activities was emphasized, as social stigma may lead families not to prioritize the schooling of children with disabilities, which constitutes a barrier to their education.

5-3. Barriers to and Needs regarding Employment

RIADIS & CBM (2022) identifies the following as the main barriers faced by persons with disabilities in employment:

- **Discrimination and prejudice at the recruitment stage:** Employers and co-workers have negative preconceptions about the productivity and work performance of persons with disabilities. Cases were reported in which persons with disabilities were not hired because of their disability, even when they had the necessary knowledge and experience. According to the survey, 23% of persons with disabilities who had sought employment in the past 12 months were denied a job. The reasons given were disability itself (35%), lack of experience or preparation (35%), age (15%) and other reasons (15%).
- **Unequal employment opportunities by type of disability:** Employment opportunities vary by type of disability. In particular, persons with multiple disabilities, intellectual disabilities and deaf blindness reported the most limited employment options. By contrast, although employment is also difficult for persons with visual impairments, physical impairments and hearing impairments, some have been able to access and

perform paid work. Companies also tend to give preference to persons with less apparent disabilities, such as low vision or mild hearing loss, over persons who are blind or deaf.

- **Lack of reasonable accommodation and accessibility in the workplace:** Among 113 persons who required reasonable accommodation in the workplace, only 9% reported having received such support, indicating a significant lack of reasonable accommodation. Specific gaps include the accessibility of materials and information, improvement of the physical environment, adjustment of working hours and mobility support. Given the inaccessibility of public transportation, adapted mobility support for commuting should also be considered.
- **Limited formal employment opportunities and concentration in self-employment and informal work:** Formal employment opportunities for persons with disabilities are limited in both the public and private sectors. As a result, many persons with disabilities are compelled to engage in informal work, self-employment and microbusinesses.
- **Weak income security and difficulties in achieving economic independence:** Barriers to employment also hinder income security and economic independence. According to the survey, 42% of 233 respondents had no income. Among the 134 respondents who had income, 24% stated that they could not freely dispose of it or needed permission from others to use it.
- **Insufficient implementation of the legal framework:** Although a statutory employment quota for persons with disabilities has been established for public institutions and private companies of a certain size, many organizations do not comply with it. The effectiveness of the system remains weak, and ensuring enforcement of the law is a key challenge.

In the interview with FECONORI / OCNMT, the following needs were also identified: conducting strict monitoring to ensure compliance with the legally mandated employment quota and equal working conditions; providing technical and vocational training aligned with labour market needs; and promoting awareness-raising activities and the provision of reasonable accommodations to eliminate prejudice against persons with disabilities in the workplace. In particular, as employment of persons with disabilities has not been sufficiently promoted in rural areas, persons with disabilities living in such areas are often forced to migrate to urban areas for work. Therefore, measures are needed to expand employment support services to rural areas.

5-4. Barriers to and Needs regarding Transportation

RIADIS & CBM (2022) identifies the following as the main barriers related to mobility faced by persons with disabilities:

- **Lack of physical accessibility in public transportation:** Among persons with disabilities who responded to the survey, 70% considered public transportation to be insufficient, and 86% stated that public transportation did not have the adjustments needed by persons with disabilities, such as ramps, sufficient space, signage and priority seating. Interviews also indicated that public transportation is physically difficult to use nationwide, and that wheelchair users are often unable to enter. As a result, persons with disabilities may be forced to give up going out when they do not have access to private transportation or are not accompanied by another person.
- **Insufficient response by transport personnel:** Among persons with disabilities who responded to the survey, 92% felt that public transport personnel had not been trained to support persons with disabilities. Interviews pointed out cases in which drivers refused to allow persons with disabilities to board, and cases in which ramps on vehicles equipped with boarding ramps were used to load luggage rather than to support boarding and alighting by persons with disabilities.
- **Regional disparities in autonomous regions and rural areas:** In autonomous regions, even public transportation is not accessible in terms of cost, space inside vehicles and boarding and alighting assistance. In rural areas, poorly maintained roads and pathways prevent public transportation from reaching areas close to people's homes, making it difficult for persons with disabilities even to reach boarding points.
- **Lack of mobility and evacuation support during disasters:** There is insufficient training for support persons to safely move and transport persons with disabilities during emergencies. Inappropriate assistance may lead to injuries or the worsening of disabilities.
- **Insufficient implementation of laws and standards:** Implementation of the Norma Técnica Obligatoria Nicaragüense "Accesibilidad al Medio Físico" 12 006-04 (NTON 12 006-04)[32], which provides accessibility guidelines, remains limited. There is a significant gap between legal guarantees in the transport sector and their actual implementation.

In the interview with FECONORI / OCNMT, the following needs were identified: removing barriers in urban environments, sidewalks, roads, public transportation, and public and private buildings; installing ramps, wide and level pathways, appropriate signage, elevators, wide entrances, and accessible toilets; and improving the accessibility of boarding and alighting areas for public transportation. In particular, as physical accessibility challenges are more serious in rural areas and areas far from urban centers, inter-institutional and cross-sectoral coordination, as well as continuous training and awareness-raising activities,

[32] It is the accessibility standard that preceded NTON 12 011-13 (2013) and was developed in 2004.

are needed to promote the implementation of existing accessibility-related laws and regulations.

5-5. Barriers to and Needs regarding Information Access

RIADIS & CBM (2022) identifies the following as the main barriers related to information provision for persons with disabilities:

- **Lack of accessible information and means of communication:** Accessible information and means of communication are not sufficiently provided for persons with disabilities in areas such as education, health, employment, transportation and telecommunications. Among survey respondents, 45% stated that sign language interpretation was "rarely or never" provided in official government communications and events, while 52% stated the same with regard to subtitles. Although some improvements have been observed in the capital, the lack of information accessibility is more serious in rural areas and autonomous regions.
- **Insufficient knowledge and training among staff:** Institutions in the education and health sectors do not have a sufficient number of staff trained to support persons with disabilities. At present, when appropriate information accessibility is not ensured for persons with disabilities, family members, friends, OPDs and staff of international organizations often provide practical support, indicating that public services themselves do not sufficiently ensure information accessibility.

According to the interview with FECONORI / OCNMT, although the legal framework for ensuring information accessibility is being developed, several challenges were identified. These include the lack of Braille labelling on medicines and products necessary for daily life; the shortage of Nicaraguan Sign Language interpretation, except for events hosted by the Office of the President and news programs on the parliamentary channel; and the insufficient development of functions and applications on information platforms of public and private institutions that would enable users with disabilities to access information independently. Therefore, public and private institutions, as well as providers of technology and information services, need to fully understand information accessibility requirements according to different types of disabilities and promote improved access to information in collaboration with persons with disabilities.

5-6. Barriers and Needs regarding Gender

RIADIS & CBM (2022) identifies the following as the main barriers related to disability and gender:

- **Discrimination and prejudice against women with disabilities:** Women with

disabilities face gender-based discrimination in addition to disability-based discrimination. The report includes a case in which a woman with a disability was told by her family that she had no right to have a partner. This indicates that norms and prejudice within families, communities and society may restrict their choices regarding education, marriage and life planning. In employment, in addition to discrimination at the recruitment stage, sexual harassment in the workplace was also reported. Among persons with disabilities who reported having experienced discrimination on the basis of disability in the past five years, the proportion was 34% for men and 22% for women, with the proportion lower among women. This may suggest that women, in particular, have limited knowledge of human rights and discrimination, or that discrimination has become normalized, making it difficult for them to recognize discriminatory experiences as discrimination.

- **Insufficient gender mainstreaming in policies and systems:** Although the government refers in its international reports to efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities, policies that address the intersection of disability and gender are not sufficiently recognized by many persons with disabilities and other stakeholders.

According to the interview with FECONORI / OCNMT, the following needs were identified: promoting efforts to eliminate discriminatory attitudes toward women with disabilities and male-dominant attitudes (machismo), in coordination with relevant institutions working on gender issues; and continuing awareness-raising activities to eliminate fixed gender roles and prejudice that persist within households. In addition, women with disabilities face constraints on their economic independence due to limited access to education and employment. Their sexual and reproductive rights may also not be sufficiently recognized, and their autonomy may be restricted. Therefore, continuous empowerment support is needed so that women with disabilities can understand their rights and the legal procedures available when they experience violence, and so that they can strengthen their self-esteem.

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