

MATERNITY WAITING HOMES FOR THE CARE OF PREGNANT WOMEN IN NICARAGUA

Nicaragua is one of the countries that implements in the frame of its Local Health Systems (SILAIS) the Maternity Waiting Homes for the care of pregnant women coming from remote rural areas and with a pregnancy of high obstetric risk.

In 2018 there are 178 Maternity Homes that operate in all Departments, making Nicaragua a point of reference in the adoption of this simple and effective solution to help reduce maternal and newborn mortality.

A presentation of the functions of these health facilities is available on the website of the [Pan American Health Organization \(PAHO/WHO\)](#) Office in Nicaragua.

"The *Casa Materna* is a low complexity facility where women coming from areas of difficult access are housed, moving ahead of time from their homes to wait for the childbirth. Within this Maternity Waiting Home women are assisted with food, shelter, pregnancy monitoring, personal and environmental hygiene, breastfeeding and family planning counselling, and new-born care among others. Located very close to the Primary Hospital, it will allow pregnant women to receive a qualified medical control from before their childbirth date and to be transferred to the hospital obstetric facilities at the start of the childbirth labour. In this waiting home women are supported by families, relatives, voluntaries and community health workers, in coordination with the local medical staff, with the goal of ensuring a safe motherhood."

The Maternal Homes are promoted by the Ministry of Health of Nicaragua within the strategies for maternal and child care. Data of the Ministry of Health referred that more than 70% of maternal deaths occurred in rural areas, where the population is distributed in hundreds of small villages, sometimes located at more than two hours in off-road vehicle from the main city where is the Hospital. In 1984, the first Maternity waiting homes were run and, thanks to their effectiveness, the number has grown over the years with the collaboration of many actors.

In terms of management the maternity waiting homes are built, managed and supported through a coordination system made by the Ministry of Health, municipal and departmental governments and services, women organisations, NGOs, private sector and international cooperation entities.

In particular, the hostel function that includes house management, food, productive and social activities, is undertaken with the support of local governments and the participating organizations, through committees or management agreements that ensure the maintenance of the structure and allocate the resources provided.



The Ministry of Health, through its decentralised services (local hospitals and health centres) technically sustains the Maternity waiting homes providing regular monitoring of pregnancy, the necessary medicines, the transfer to the hospital for the childbirth, the postpartum and new-born care. The health sector ensures the training for the personnel who assist the pregnant women and the activities of health education, nutrition and childcare. Maternal Waiting Homes also carry out initiatives to face specific problems of the territories, such as malaria, nutritional problems, high rates of teenage pregnancy.



The traditional midwives play a crucial role for their trusting relationships with women they attend in the communities, either to orient women with at-risk pregnancy towards the maternity waiting homes, and directly contributing in training and health initiatives of the structures.



Hosted women participate in the homes daily management. Depending on the human, technical and financial resources made available by the participating organisations, many different social and productive activities are developed in the maternity waiting homes such as sewing classes, gardens where to grow nutritional plants and plants used in traditional medicine.



The [World Health Organization](#) underlines that maternal mortality due to preventable causes related with the pregnancy and the childbirth are still very high, particularly in rural areas and in the poorest communities. The WHO has been recommending for many years [the maternity waiting homes](#) as one intervention to improve maternal and newborn health. In particular, the Sustainable Development Goals aim to reduce the world maternal mortality to less than 70 per 100,000 new-borns between 2016 and 2030.

Considering the multiple factors influencing the high maternal mortality rate, its reduction becomes a global issue that requires alliances between the health care services and other territorial important actors. The Maternal Waiting Homes represent a simple mechanism, with great effectiveness and easy to be replicated, to facilitate access of pregnant women in the health care services where to get the appropriate care before, during and after the childbirth, also ensuring the care to the new-born.



At the same time with their joint management the Maternal Waiting Homes are an example of a solution actively involving all local actors: health services, department and municipal governments, decentralised public institutions and services, women organizations, universities, territorial NGOs in a challenge assumed in a concerted decision.



In Nicaragua the Maternal Waiting Homes receive financial and technical support from various international organisations among which PAHO/WHO, UNICEF, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, from international NGOs and bilateral cooperation programmes.

To know more

[MINSA Nicaragua Casas Maternas strategy](#)

[Articles in MINSA website](#)



[Articles in MINSA website](#)

[Articles in MINSA website](#)

[Publication in UNAN Nicaragua](#)

[Casa Materna PAHO/WHO Nicaragua](#)

[Article in UNICEF Nicaragua website](#)

[Publication in siteresources.worldbank.org](#)

[Article in laprensa.com.ni](#)

[Article in la voz del sandinismo.com](#)

[Article in tn8.tv](#)

[Article in el19digital.com](#)

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[Article in canal4.com.ni](#)

[Article in saludmesoamerica2015.org](#)

[Article in pronica.org](#)

[casamaterna.org website](#)

[Article in michelleule.com](#)

[Publication 1996 WHO](#)

[Maternity waiting homes in PAHO Foundation website](#)

[Maternity Health Task Force website](#)

[Maternity waiting homes in Timor Leste](#)

[Maternity Homes in Guatemala](#)

