



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Nicaragua

Country Brief

Oct 2024



Local smallholder farmers participating in training sessions @WFP/Nicaragua

Operational Context

Nicaragua, the largest country in Central America, remains one of the poorest in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its economy relies on light manufacturing, services, and agriculture, which accounts for 8% of GDP. Despite recent growth, multiple crises and global challenges highlight the vulnerability of its food systems.

Nicaragua's economy and social outcomes are highly susceptible to external shocks and natural hazards due to its dependence on climate-sensitive sectors. Ranked 20th in the 2024 World Risk Index, recurrent extreme climate events significantly contribute to food insecurity, with 19.6% of the population undernourished, making it the fourth highest in the region (2024, SOFI).

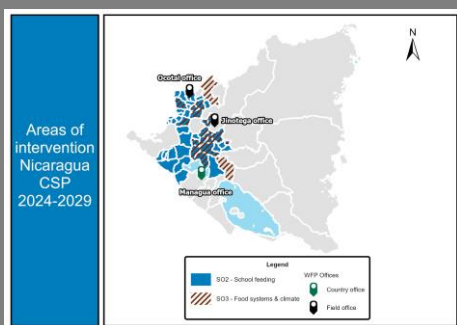
According to the latest national census, 40% of the population lives in rural areas, with about half in poverty and 16.3% in extreme poverty. Agriculture is the main livelihood for 73% of the rural population. Smallholder farmers, who produce 79% of basic food staples, face high levels of food insecurity. Gender inequality further hinders women farmers' access to markets.

High informal employment leaves poor households with unstable incomes, struggling to access food. In the Dry Corridor, climate variability severely affects family farming, leading to agricultural losses and undermining food security. Additionally, high food prices and global economic pressures increase agricultural input costs, threatening local food systems. Many vulnerable households resort to negative food-related coping strategies and remove their children from schools.

WFP supports the Government in achieving Zero Hunger in vulnerable Dry Corridor communities of Nicaragua by enhancing nutrition-sensitive social protection programmes. WFP has been present in the country since 1971.

To learn more about Nicaragua's context, you can visit here: [Nicaragua Country Context](#).

*2024 State of Food and Nutrition Security report



Population: **6.9 million**

2023/4 Human Development Index: **130 out of 193**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition (Stunting): **14.9% of children less than 5 years old**

In Numbers*



1.4 million people are facing undernourishment (SOFI, 2024)



1,312.45 mt of food distributed for school feeding



USD 4.3 million six-months (November 2024 - April 2025) net funding requirements



189,700 people assisted in October 2024



*Preliminary figures

Operational Updates

Emergency Preparedness and Response

- As the country nears the end of the hurricane season, WFP is closely monitoring the potential formation of late-season climate events. In preparation, WFP has secured a small contingency food stock to quickly support the government's response in potentially impacted areas, in case required.
- WFP is collaborating with smallholder farmers' organizations on a hydrological and early warning study that will establish thresholds and triggers for droughts and floods in 37 municipalities of the Dry Corridor. This study will assist farmers in identifying anticipatory actions and guiding them to reduce the risk of climate-related shocks and protect food systems.
- Additionally, WFP has successfully secured funding to support response efforts for potential climate shocks. These contributions will be crucial for providing a second school meal to schoolchildren in the Dry Corridor during the lean season, complementing their regular mid-morning breakfast.

School Feeding

- WFP has rehabilitated and provided new 11 school kitchen-storage modules in the Dry Corridor in the municipalities of Somoto, Totogalpa, Yalagüina and Palacagüina. This intervention has improved the conditions for preparing school meals, significantly enhancing hygiene and food safety. Eating areas have also been installed, allowing 1,192 children to enjoy their meals in a safer and more comfortable environment.

Local Food Systems

- WFP is exploring the introduction of innovative digital business solutions for smallholder farmers who traditionally face limited access to modern technology. Farm2Go, is a digital platform developed by WFP that links smallholder farmers to local buyers and shares agricultural best practices. This digital marketplace enables real-time, remote interactions between farmers and local buyers to view products, make offers, create demand, and manage agricultural services covering the process from end-to-end.

WFP Country Strategic Plan

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2024)		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
80.9 M	29.7 M	4.3 M

Strategic Result 1: People are better able to meet their urgent food and nutrition needs

Strategic Outcome 1: Populations affected by or exposed to crises in Nicaragua meet their food, nutrition and other urgent essential needs in an inclusive way during shocks, stressors and protracted crises, and benefit from the strengthening of capacities and systems for integrated disaster risk management by 2029.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide humanitarian assistance to people affected by or exposed to crises and provide technical support to strengthen the capacities of disaster risk management actors and response systems, using an approach that takes account of nutrition, protection, gender and interculturality issues.

Strategic Result 2: People have better nutrition, health and education outcomes

Strategic Outcome 2: Girls, boys and adolescents in schools and their families in priority areas of Nicaragua benefit from a strengthened social protection system, including a comprehensive school feeding programme with fresh, nutritious and locally produced food that will positively contribute to their nutrition, health and education outcomes by 2029.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Provide nutritious meals to girls, boys and adolescents through the national school feeding programme, contributing to the strengthening of national social protection programmes using approaches that take account of gender, protection, nutrition, interculturality and climate resilience.

Strategic Result 3: People have improved and sustainable livelihoods

Strategic Outcome 3: Smallholders and key food systems actors in prioritized areas of Nicaragua, especially women, are resilient with sustainable and climate adaptive capacities that improve their access to healthy diets and markets, particularly institutional market of home-grown school feeding by 2029.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Strengthen adaptive capacities and develop solutions and models for smallholders, other key food system actors and institutions to enhance climate resilience, food security and nutrition; and improve their access to markets in an equitable and equal manner.
- Provide technical assistance to smallholder farmers to increase their resilience, improve their livelihoods and reduce their vulnerability to adverse climate events.

Strategic Result 5: Humanitarian and development actors are more efficient and effective

Strategic Outcome 4: National institutions and United Nations entities receive operational support services from WFP in an effective, efficient and reliable manner in Nicaragua, enabling them to assist people affected by or exposed to crises until 2029.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide services required by national institutions and United Nations entities to facilitate timely assistance for people affected by or exposed to crises.

Local Food Systems (Cont.)

- Further, sub-offices are currently undergoing training sessions on the Farm2Go platform, and 10 smallholder farmers' organizations are participating in this exploratory phase. This digital tool has demonstrated in other countries how digital market access can empower farmers secure better prices for their produce.

Gender and Nutrition

- WFP initiated a series of "train-the-trainer" sessions with 10 smallholder farmers' organizations members on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN). The training covered topics such as good practices in healthy eating, malnutrition, food safety, and the importance of community gardens for nutrition. These sessions are part of two interventions designed to build the resilience of vulnerable households in the Dry Corridor and local food systems. Farmers' organization members will later train smallholder beneficiary groups.

Monitoring

- As part of the launch of the Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) aligned with the new CSP, WFP conducted an informative session with 24 technicians from smallholder farmers' organizations, training them on incident reporting procedures and available feedback channels. The CFM will complement WFP's monitoring systems by helping identify best practices and areas for improvement.
- WFP is monitoring the beneficiary registration process for a project aimed at improving food security and resilience in small producers across Nueva Segovia, Madriz, Jinotega, and Estelí. The project focuses on strengthening bean and coffee production systems, enhancing market access, and developing the capacities of smallholder farmers' organizations.

Challenges

- Securing funding for the upcoming initiatives for the new Country Strategic Plan remains critical for WFP. This challenge is further exacerbated by a global context marked by limited resources and competing priorities.
- Heavy rainfall from a recent tropical storm has disrupted activity planning and rural road access. Additionally, increased humidity and excess water are affecting beans and other food production, leading to the appearance of fungus. These further stresses smallholder farmers' agricultural forecasts and adaptability. WFP is actively monitoring the situation and adjusting to prevent any risks for beneficiaries and staff.

Impact of Limited Funding

- WFP urgently requires **USD 4.3 million** to be able to respond to the needs of the **upcoming six-months**. Failure to secure more resources would mean that WFP will be unable to provide school meals to over 93,600 children, impacting their food security and retention to school.

Donors

Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, USAID, European Commission, Canada, Switzerland, Nicaragua, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and private donors.

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