



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Nicaragua

Country Brief

May 2025



A women farmer is building her resilience to climate and economic shocks @WFP/Nicaragua

Operational Context

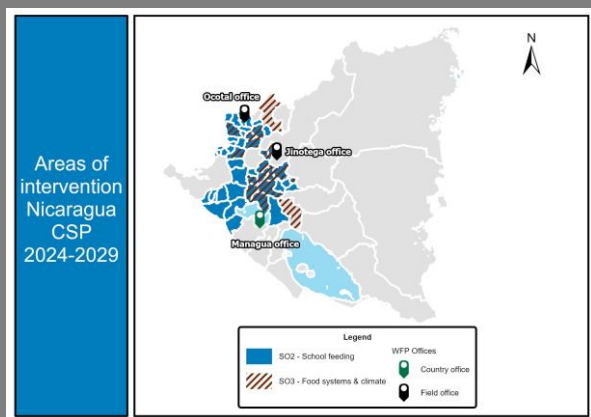
Nicaragua, the largest country in Central America, remains one of the poorest in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its economy relies on light manufacturing, services, and agriculture. Despite recent growth, multiple crises and global challenges highlight the vulnerability of its food systems.

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.

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.



Population: **6.9 million**

2023/4 Human Development Index:
130 out of 193

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition (Stunting): **7.8% of children less than 5 years old***

*Nicaragua Nutritional Census 2023

In Numbers*



976.65 mt of food distributed for school feeding between May and July



972.45 mt of food was procured from smallholder farmers for school feeding



USD 2.9 million 6-months (June - December 2025) net funding requirements



181,547 people assisted in May 2025

*Preliminary figures



Operational Updates

2024 Annual Country Reports

- WFP Nicaragua has released its 2024 Annual Country Reports (ACRs) providing a comprehensive overview of progress and priorities across our country operations. Last year marked a transition from the 2019–2024 Country Strategic Plan (CSP) to the newly launched 2024–2029 CSP. To reflect this, two separate ACR editions are available, highlighting achievements from each phase of the year. Copies were sent by email to all partners and stakeholders in Nicaragua.

To explore our 2024 results in detail, please visit the following links:

- CSP 2019–2024, January–June 2024 [WEB](#) | [PDF](#)
- CSP 2024–2029, July–December 2024 [WEB](#) | [PDF](#)

Emergency Preparedness and Response

- As the 2025 Atlantic hurricane season begins, NOAA forecasts a 60% likelihood of an above-normal season, with up to 19 named storms, including 5 major hurricanes. In coordination with its regional office, WFP has already activated its emergency preparedness plan to protect lives and ensure timely access to food if requested by the Government of Nicaragua. WFP is preparing to support approx. 4,000 families with 10-days of in-kind food assistance and reinforce the school feeding programme for 40 days as a shock-responsive social protection measure using pre-positioned food stocks. Currently, 542 MT of food are stored in WFP's warehouse, with an additional 115 MT in process.

School Feeding

- To further strengthen school feeding programme, WFP is also collaborating with MINED to rehabilitate 6 school kitchens and 2 educational centers located in the vulnerable region of the Dry Corridor. Early assessments and preparatory activities have been completed to identify specific needs and the procurement of services providers is underway. Adequate school facilities and access to nutritious meals are essential to improve children's health, educational performance, and their long-term development.

WFP Country Strategic Plan

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2024)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	6 Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
80.9 M	29 M	2.9 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

- WFP is enhancing the sustainability of livelihoods and economic resilience among smallholder farmers by strengthening bean and coffee production through their organizations. A total of 307.3 MT of beans were produced, benefiting over 441 farmers—exceeding the target by 20%. Coffee production reached 406.9 MT, surpassing the goal by 200% and supporting more than 193 farmers. This intervention also facilitates the integration of agricultural production, particularly beans, into the school feeding programme. Revolving funds mechanism established by the farmers' organizations also help strengthen resilience during planting and harvesting seasons by providing timely access to essential resources.
- WFP supported the establishment of family vegetable gardens by providing 221 small-scale irrigation systems and protective equipment, while also enhancing the capacities of 1,265 individuals on sustainable farming practices. WFP, in collaboration with smallholder farmer organizations, is now preparing to assist an additional 500 families in setting up vegetable gardens.

Nutrition and Gender

- WFP mainstreamed **nutrition-sensitive approaches** across its interventions by integrating **Social and Behavior Change (SBC)** strategies into two key initiatives including the establishment of family vegetable gardens and the strengthening of smallholder farmer organizations. As part of this effort, 476 individuals—78% of them women—enhanced their capacities in **food and nutrition security (FNS)**. Additionally, a set of targeted messages was developed to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, as part of the Communication Strategy Plan designed to foster behaviour change among project participants.

Funding is Needed

- WFP **urgently** requires **USD 2.9 million** to be able to respond to the needs of the **upcoming 6-months (June – December 2025)**. **Securing funds for the school feeding programme remains critical for WFP.** Without additional resources, WFP would have to suspend deliveries in some of the schools covering the last trimester of the school year, putting at risk 180,000 children's access to food and education at this critical time. It would also prevent efforts to strengthen local food systems, further impacting those most vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity.

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.

Contact info: Vanessa Aragon (vanessa.aragon@wfp.org)

Country Director: Giorgia Testolin

Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Nicaragua