



World Food Programme

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WFP Nicaragua

Country Brief

August 2025



A Woman Farmer Cultivates Her Path to Food Security @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.

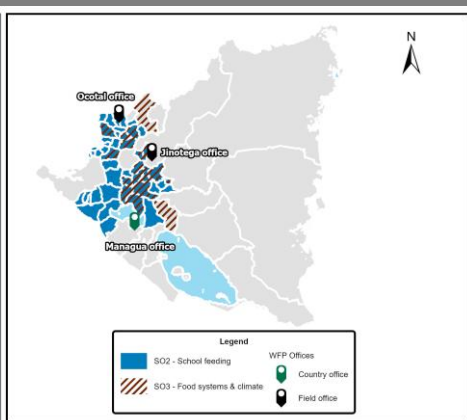
Nicaragua's economy and social outcomes are highly susceptible to external shocks and natural hazards due to its dependence on climate-sensitive sectors. Ranked 20th in the 2024 World Risk Index, recurrent extreme climate events significantly contribute to food insecurity.

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.

Areas of
intervention
Nicaragua
CSP
2024-2029



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*



827.83 mt of food distributed for school feeding between August and November



56 percent of food procured from smallholder farmers for school meals



USD 4.8 million 6-months (Sept 2025 - Feb 2026) net funding requirements



178,727 people assisted in August 2025



*Preliminary figures

Operational Updates

School Feeding

- Despite some constraints and a challenging funding environment, WFP in support of the national School Feeding Programme **completed the third and final distribution of the year**, delivering **827.83 MT of beans and rice and vegetable oil**. Notably, 56 percent of staple grains (460.10 MT) were sourced from smallholder farmers, generating over USD 957,300 income and benefiting the local economy. Thanks to these efforts and in coordination with the Ministry of Education, **180,000 schoolchildren** across **42 municipalities in 8 Dry Corridor departments** will continue to receive daily hot school meals through the end of the school year in November.
- The staple grain production national target for 2024-2025 has declined notably due to insufficient rainfall, resulting in reduced market availability and higher prices for maize and rice. As a result, WFP was unable to procure maize for the third distribution cycle under the National Feeding Programme, affecting planned procurement for school feeding support.
- In partnership with MINED and with the support of the donor community, WFP is rehabilitating 6 school kitchens in the Dry Corridor and 2 educational centers in Managua and Masaya. With construction underway, this will guarantee safe and dignified learning spaces and kitchens, providing sustained access to nutritious meals, improving children's health, learning outcomes, and long-term development.

Local Food Systems

- To empower smallholder farmers for a sustainable future, WFP continued to build the capacities of **1,800 smallholder farmers, 57 percent women**, in agroecological practices, organic pest management, and nutrition, while also promoting gender awareness. These skills are helping build inclusive and climate-resilient livelihoods.
- WFP is strengthening the food security and economic resilience of smallholder farmers by connecting them to markets. These efforts ensure stable demand, fair prices, and contribute to national food security through the School Meal Programme. This month, a WFP supported farmers' organization supplied **20.45 metric tons of beans** for the national programme. At the same time, the same cooperative successfully exported **347.77 metric tons of gold-grade coffee**, certified by Organic, Fair Trade, and Rainforest Alliance, boosting farmers' incomes and reinforcing the long-term sustainability of rural livelihoods.

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	4.8 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.)

- Climate conditions have been particularly challenging this year, as the dry season lasted longer than usual, potentially impacting key crops like beans and corn. Agricultural authorities are advising farmers to delay planting until soil moisture levels are optimal.
- One way to address adverse climate evolving risks is by empowering farmers with timely climate information. As part of WFP's efforts to enhance the resilience of food systems, official climate bulletins have been shared with supported smallholder farmers' organizations. This proactive approach helps farmers better prepare for and reduce the impacts of climate shocks.
- To strengthen food security for vulnerable rural households, WFP supported the establishment of home gardens as an immediate food source during lean periods. A total of 502 families received agricultural inputs to support the cultivation and self-consumption of fast-growing vegetables such as cucumber, squash (pipián in Spanish), radish, bell pepper, and onion. Complementing this, 750 multimedia messages (text, audio, video, and images) were disseminated to promote nutritional education and healthier eating habits across households.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

- WFP continued close monitoring of the 2025 hurricane season. **Rainfall is expected to remain below normal during the upcoming quarter.** The El Niño–Southern Oscillation remains in a neutral phase, with neither El Niño nor La Niña conditions present. Forecasts indicate a hurricane season slightly above average in the Atlantic and near average in the Pacific, with potential indirect impacts from **at least three tropical cyclones in the Caribbean and one in the Pacific.**

Nutrition and Gender

- WFP and partners advanced nutrition education, gender equality and protection efforts by presenting and promoting healthier eating habits, gender strategies, and building the capacity of over 1,800 producers on nutrition and protection topics, integrating cross-cutting priorities into new projects, and supporting inter-agency initiatives to strengthen safeguards against sexual exploitation and abuse.

Resources are Required

- WFP **urgently** requires **USD 4.8 million** to be able to respond to the needs of the **upcoming 6-months (September 2025 – February 2026)**. **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 early next year, putting at risk 144,000 children's access to food and education. 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, USG, European Commission, Canada, Nicaragua, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and private donors.

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