



World Food Programme

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WFP Nicaragua

Country Brief

October 2025



A Woman Farmer empowering her community through bean cultivation @WFP/Nicaragua

Operational Context

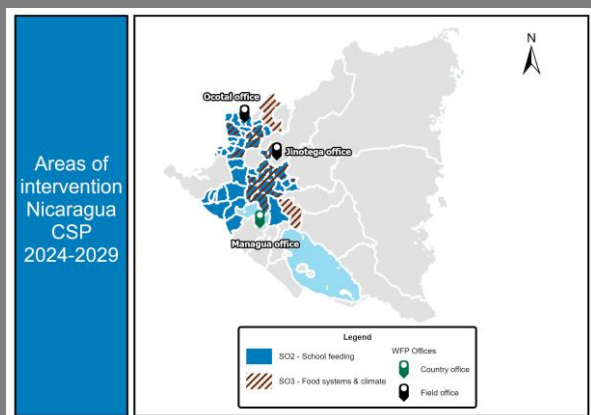
Nicaragua, the largest country in Central America, remains one of the poorest in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its economy relies on light manufacturing, services, and agriculture. Despite recent growth, multiple crises and global challenges highlight the vulnerability of its food systems.

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*



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



USD 5 million 6-months (Nov - Apr 2026) net funding requirements



181,252 people assisted in October 2025



*Preliminary figures

Operational Updates

School Feeding

- WFP is working closely with the Ministry of Education to ensure the timely launch of the first distribution cycle of 2026 under the National School Feeding Programme. This effort will provide nutritious meals to 144,000 schoolchildren across the Dry Corridor, a region highly vulnerable to food insecurity. Securing this distribution has been a priority for WFP, even under a **challenging year in funding**, maize and rice shortages and prices struggling to stabilize. To meet the planned schedule, **procurement must be finalized by early December**, ensuring that schools receive food on time when classes resume next year.
- The Ministry of Education (MINED) and WFP are **improving school infrastructure for better nutrition**. In collaboration with MINED, WFP has completed the rehabilitation of six school kitchens in the Dry Corridor, enhancing safety, functionality and with an environmental lens. These upgrades are a critical step toward strengthening the National School Feeding Programme, guaranteeing sustained access to nutritious meals that improve health, learning outcomes and long-term development. Integral rehabilitation work is ongoing in two additional educational centers in Managua and Masaya, with completion expected by December.

Local Food Systems

- School feeding programs are a key driver of inclusive local food systems.** To strengthen these linkages, WFP supported the bean value chain through seven training sessions on integrated pest management, benefiting 183 producers and promoting sustainable practices in bean cultivation.
- By the end of the month, **82.5 MT of beans** were collected from 241 producers (37 percent women), reflecting progress in productivity and gender inclusion.
- The collected beans are **awaiting purchase by WFP** and are also projected for commercialization with other buyers, reinforcing competitiveness and economic sustainability within the value chain and stimulating local economies.

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	29.6 M	5 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.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

- The **El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO)** phenomenon remained in neutral conditions, with stability projected through the end of 2025. In Nicaragua, October recorded a rainfall pattern typical of the peak season, with significant accumulations and locally intense events, but no direct impact from hurricanes. October brought typical peak-season rains with localized intense events but no hurricane impact. Despite a yearly rainfall deficit and low cyclonic activity, impacts were mostly localized and manageable. Thanks to government inter-institutional coordination between the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), Nicaraguan Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA), and National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Attention (SINAPRED), key risks were mitigated and ensured agricultural continuity.
- At the same time, WFP reinforced its emergency preparedness capacity, maintaining constant risk monitoring and implementing advanced measures for rapid response in the event of a crisis. As part of this readiness, WFP secured a food stock sufficient to assist 4,000 families during the initial hours of a potential emergency, protecting populations most affected by climate shocks.
- WFP continued supporting the 2025 postrera cycle, sharing agro-climatic bulletins and analyses from AGROMET to farmer organizations for distribution to members, helping reduce production risks and strengthen livelihoods in vulnerable areas.

Nutrition and Gender

- A WFP-supported women farmers' organization showcased surplus produce from its home vegetable garden initiative at a local fair, displaying native seeds, fresh vegetables, and handicrafts. The event highlighted the critical contribution of rural women to the economic and social development of their communities and their leading role in local food systems.
- As part of its Zero Tolerance Policy, WFP joined a workshop with other UN agencies to raise awareness on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEAH). The session targeted agencies staff.

Resources are Needed

- WFP **urgently** requires **USD 5 million** to be able to respond to the needs of the **upcoming 6-months (November 2025 – April 2026)**. **Securing funds for the school feeding programme is critical** to close the 2026 funding gap and prevent jeopardizing 144,000 children's access to food and education. Without additional resources, deliveries would be suspended in some schools, and efforts to strengthen local food systems would stall, further impacting those most vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity.

Donors

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

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