



# Vitafood Meals for the Hungry

— Nicaragua —



Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

JOHN 6:35



## We are a Catholic ministry

that mobilizes the global Catholic Church to transform the poor and their communities materially and spiritually for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Rather than create new institutions to distribute aid, we support existing ministries and churches already serving the poor. In addition to being the most cost-effective way of helping the poor, empowering these ministries allows us to support the Church's spiritual mission and its important position of leadership in poor communities.

We consider every gift we receive as a precious resource from God. We direct every donation to its intended project, provide honest and accurate reports to our donors, and keep overhead costs to an industry low. We handle funds with utmost integrity and hold our ministry partners in the field to the same high standards by asking them to document costs and the impact of their outreach.

We invite you to join with us as we seek to transform the lives of the poor materially and spiritually — ways that please the Father and glorify him in Heaven and on earth.



# Project Synopsis

## Description

This project will send nutrient-rich Vitafood meals to feed thousands of hungry schoolchildren, pregnant women and nursing mothers at 450 feeding centers run by a local ministry partner called Rainbow Network.

## Purpose

To prevent malnutrition, incentivize child education and exemplify Christ's love.

## Location

The feeding centers will serve 166 communities throughout the Central American country of Nicaragua.

## Cost

Our goal is to send about 1.6 million meals to Nicaragua at a cost of \$90,000. *Every dollar sends 18 meals!*

## Highlights

- Cross Catholic Outreach has been given access to millions of nutrient-rich meals — we just need the funds to ship them to feed the hungry!
- These fortified rice meals, called Vitafood, are loaded with vitamins and minerals and are specifically designed to reverse the effects of malnutrition in children.
- The meals are sealed in airtight packets to maximize shelf life and fit as many as possible in shipping containers.
- Your generous gift will send Vitafood meals to Rainbow Network, a Cross Catholic Outreach ministry partner working to improve health, education, housing and economic development for Nicaragua's poorest families.
- These meals will go to 450 feeding centers that also offer tutoring for students and incentivize children to stay in school.
- Please give today to end the hunger pangs of Christ's poor and fan the flames of hope in Nicaragua!



*You can satisfy the hunger of poor Nicaraguan children at Rainbow Network's feeding centers.*



## The Need



*Without adequate food, many Nicaraguan children drop out of school and are trapped in the cycle of poverty.*

Worse still, they are sometimes pulled out of school altogether to help support their struggling families. Caught in this cycle of trading future opportunities for daily meals, these children see no way out — but you can give them hope!

In partnership with Cross Catholic Outreach, you can satisfy the hunger of Nicaraguan children and families and help them achieve a brighter future.

From the comfort of a paved road, one might pass and not even notice the poverty Cross Catholic Outreach is trying to address. To see it, you'll need to venture off the Pan-American Highway and drive down one of its branching dirt paths. There, you'll encounter this “hidden” Nicaraguan poverty.

During the dry season, you could mistake the small farming villages you'll pass as towns highlighted in old films depicting the poverty of the Dust Bowl years in America's past. Unfortunately, this is a poverty less escapable than ours — and one that continues to plague generation after generation.

Even during the rainy periods, the poverty endures. In those seasons, children with muddy feet and faces can be seen outside crude shacks, attracting mosquitoes and disease. And whatever the time of year, one problem persists — there is never enough to eat.

Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in Latin America, and this status reveals itself in the proliferation of subsistence farmers who struggle to feed their families. Many children are underfed — some dangerously malnourished — leading to stunting, lethargy, a weakened immune system and a general failure to thrive.

When children reach school age, this lack of food means skipping breakfast, arriving for class on an empty stomach, and then after hours of studying math and grammar, maybe having nothing for lunch either. Hungry children struggle to concentrate in school and often fall behind.

### Nicaragua at a Glance

- Nicaragua is one of the **poorest** countries in Latin America.
- Nearly **3 in 10** Nicaraguans live in poverty, while more than **8%** survive on less than \$1.25 a day.
- **17%** of children under age 5 suffer from chronic malnutrition.
- About **4.6%** of children under age 5 are underweight.



## Ministry Description

### The Response: Vitafood

To combat Nicaraguan hunger, Cross Catholic Outreach has a simple but effective plan: Vitafood.

This fortified rice product, specifically designed to reverse the effects of child malnutrition, can be packed in large shipping containers and cost-effectively sent to Catholic schools, orphanages and other local partners serving the poorest of the poor. A single container can make a big impact, keeping crucial feeding programs running or providing immediate relief when disasters strike.

Vitafood is an extremely flexible resource. It comes in several different varieties and can be prepared with additional spices or ingredients to suit local tastes. No matter how it is prepared, its nutritional value remains the same, providing the optimal balance of vitamins, minerals, protein, fiber, fat and carbohydrates that a child's hungry body needs. This tried-and-tested formula is suitable for more than just severely malnourished children. These meals are also important to the health and physical well-being of children and adults who are healthy but at risk of becoming malnourished.

What's more, because Vitafood meals are donated to us by respected faith-based organizations, we only need to cover the cost to ship the meals to the hungry. This means that **for every dollar you give, about 18 nutritious meals can be sent to Nicaragua.**

### What is Vitafood?

- Vitafood is a fortified rice product loaded with vitamins and minerals and scientifically designed to meet the needs of malnourished children.
- Because the Vitafood meals are donated to us, we only need to cover the cost to ship them to the hungry.

*Your generosity will help make that happen!*



### How do the Meals Get into the Hands of People Who Need Them?

Vitafood is packed into 40-foot containers, placed on a cargo ship and sent to international ports. Once the shipment arrives at its destination, our staff relies on a global network of trusted partners to get these products into the hands of priests, nuns, Catholic schools and orphanages who pass them on to needy families in impoverished communities.



## Our Nicaraguan Partner

Cross Catholic Outreach's Vitafood shipments are greatly needed by a dynamic ministry partner in Nicaragua called Rainbow Network.

Rainbow Network was founded in 1995 by Keith and Karen Jaspers under the conviction that everyone in Christ's Church is called to meet the needs of the poor. The Lord led the Jaspers to rural Nicaragua where they planted several community feeding centers.

The mission of Rainbow Network is simple: to share the love of God by bringing his people together to meet urgent needs. Today, Rainbow specializes in organizing communities, joining staff members with local volunteers to maintain hundreds of feeding centers in the villages. These feeding centers provide lunches to schools in the community, encouraging children to continue their education.

"The feeding program is crucial to our efforts here in Nicaragua," says Megan Munzlinger, Rainbow's development director. "With these daily nutritious meals — which Cross donors help provide — these children get the energy they need to focus on their studies, which brings them one step closer to earning a high school diploma and working their way out of poverty."

In addition to supplying daily school lunches to children, Rainbow Network feeds pregnant and nursing mothers whose babies face the medical risks of severe malnutrition. Rainbow also works with medical and dental clinics to provide basic care for these communities, monitoring the progress of children as they grow healthier and stronger.

Beyond meeting these practical needs, Rainbow Network also uses Cross funding to minister to the spiritual hunger of these communities. As part of their everyday schoolwork, the children are taught Bible stories — some of them learning about Jesus for the very first time. By God's mercy, many children want to grow in the faith as a result. Some have also shared what they've learned with parents and family members, causing local parishes to see a surge in attendance!

The Holy Spirit is powerfully at work in these communities, satisfying the hunger of both body and soul. But there is so much work left to be done! Cross Catholic Outreach needs your help to supply these feeding centers with nutrient-rich Vitafood meals so that thousands of hungry children and mothers can be served in Christ's name. Get involved today!



*Schoolchildren are nourished in both body and mind at Rainbow Network's feeding centers.*



*With your support, more than a million meals will reach the hungry!*

## Help Now!

Cross Catholic Outreach is eager to satisfy the hunger of Nicaragua's poorest children and families, and millions of meals are available for distribution. We just need the funds to ship them.

### *That's where you come in!*

Your generous gift will send nutrient-rich Vitafood to our friends in Nicaragua so that economically disadvantaged schoolchildren and mothers can get relief from hunger. These meals are an important part of our ministry partner's efforts to work alongside struggling communities for poverty relief and long-term transformation, fueled by the desire to love like Jesus.

The need for intervention in Nicaragua is great, but God's mercy is greater — and the Spirit of Christ compels each one of us to carry that mercy to the vulnerable. **Please help us reach our \$90,000 goal so that an incredible 1.6 million meals can be sent to the children and families who need them most.**

Please — be an answer to prayer! Provide food for the hungry in Christ's name!

**Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor.**

PROVERBS 22:9

### **Our Promise to You!**

Donations from this campaign will be used to cover any expenditures for this project incurred through June 30, 2021, the close of our ministry's fiscal year. In the event that more funds are raised than needed to fully fund the project, the excess funds, if any, will be used to meet the most urgent needs of the ministry.

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