



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

School Meals

in Latin America and the Caribbean

School meals programmes are essential for improving the well-being of school-aged children, promoting education, and directly contributing to comprehensive and sustainable development. Along with other social protection initiatives, they ensure that children and adolescents have access to better food and nutrition, directly supporting their wellbeing and that of their families and communities.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, more than **80 million children receive school meals daily**, supported by an estimated regional investment of **US \$7.6 billion** dollars.

School meals programmes are among the most important social programs in the region, and can contribute to the development of human capital and local economies. Therefore, it is vital to ensure their sustainability through solid institutions, stable budgets, and multisectoral support.

WFP's work on school meals

With over 60 years of experience in school feeding, WFP complements government efforts by strengthening national school feeding programs through **11 country offices and a multi-country office** in the Caribbean.

WFP supports governments with their school feeding programs through technical assistance and direct implementation as needed, including a wide range of interventions: support in health and nutrition, rehabilitation of school infrastructure, provision of food, including the purchase of fresh local produce from smallholder farmer associations, and the generation of evidence to strengthen public policies.



WFP reaches over **3 million children** directly in the region

WFP advocates for programmes to **address malnutrition in all its forms**, by promoting better diets and improving school food environments, and for school meals to be institutionally **resilient and able to respond** in times of crisis.



More than **80 million children** receive school meals in the region.



Governments fund about **99% of school meals**, with an estimated investment of **US \$7.6 billion**.



Inequalities remain: the investment in school meals can be as low as **US \$10 per year per child**, whereas in high-income countries it is estimated at **US \$293**.



At least **15 countries** in the region purchase food locally, at least in part.



Increasingly, countries are taking an **intercultural approach** to school meals that actively supports Indigenous Peoples' food systems.



HAITI

In 2023, in collaboration with the government and partners, WFP injected **US\$8.4 million** into the local economy by purchasing local products for its various programs and their school meals.

In 2024-2025 school year, WFP plans to provide school meals to nearly 500,000 students, 70% of which will be made entirely with ingredients grown from local farmers.



WFP/Antonie Vallas

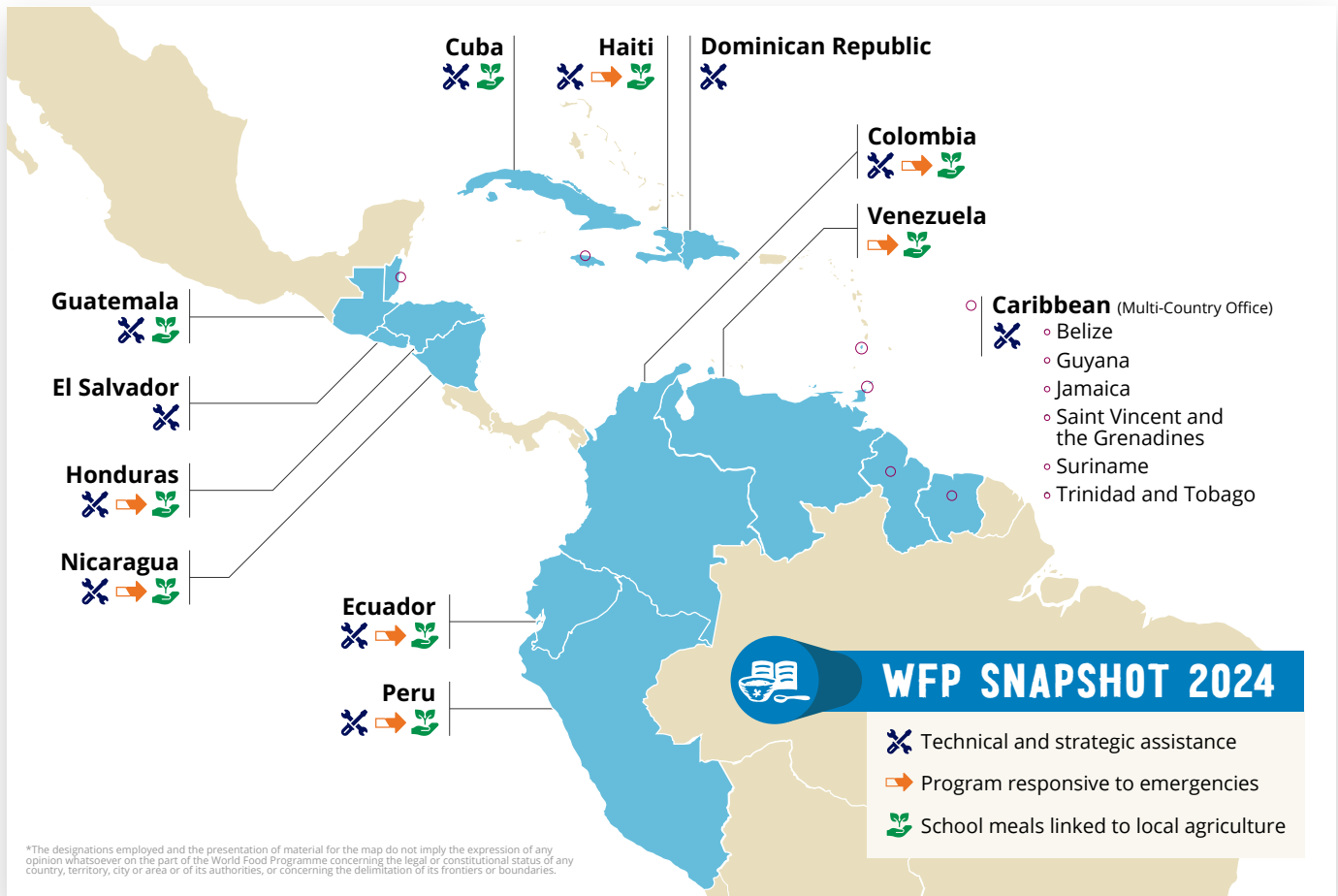
COLOMBIA

WFP, in partnership with the government of the department of La Guajira, implements the school feeding program in the department, reaching around **80,000 children daily**, including migrant population, through the provision of food.

WFP also provides technical support to the national and local government with actions aimed at strengthening the program.



WFP/Colombia



HONDURAS

The National School Feeding Program (PNAE in Spanish) has ensured a daily nutritionally balanced fresh food ration for over 20 years, strengthening the local economy by purchasing from small producers.

The PNAE is accessible to over **1.2 million children** in government run preschools and schools.



WFP/Helene Postel

ECUADOR

Last year, WFP, in coordination with the Government, started an intervention that links school meals to family farming in rural areas with high poverty rates.

This year, WFP plans to increase from **1,000 to 30,000 school children** in 16 locations nationwide.



WFP/Alcaldía de Manabí