



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP EVALUATION

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

Key insights from Evaluations of WFP School Feeding Programmes in the Middle East, North Africa and Eastern Europe (MENAEE) region (2022-2025)

CONTEXT

In 2022, the World Food Programme made school meals its flagship area of work, which meant increased investment and support to governments in a comprehensive way. "[A Chance for every Schoolchild - WFP School Feeding Strategy 2020 – 2030](#)" outlines WFP's vision of working with governments and partners to jointly ensure that all primary schoolchildren have access to good quality meals in schools, accompanied by a broader integrated package of health and nutrition services. The benefits of school feeding are central to the vision articulated in the [WFP Strategic Plan 2022–2025](#), which positions school feeding as a core component of a lifecycle approach to social protection. An estimated 466 million children around the world received school meals through government-led programmes in 2024, reflecting the global recognition of school feeding being an important social protection measure.

School feeding is a strategic priority for WFP's Middle East, North Africa, and Eastern Europe (MENAEE) region. WFP leverages school feeding as a platform to advance broader organizational priorities such as supporting food systems transformation, social protection and climate action and strengthening responses to shocks and emergencies, as outlined in the [WFP School Feeding Strategy 2020-2030](#) and the [WFP School Meals Policy](#).

KEY MESSAGES FROM WFP EVALUATIONS

The following **7 key insights** are for consideration in future school feeding programming.

1. WFP school feeding programmes are generally well aligned with national priorities, beneficiary needs, and broader UN collaboration frameworks, with evidence pointing toward strong coordination with governments and UN partners as a key enabler of relevant and effective delivery. School feeding programmes' relevance to beneficiary needs, both related to nutrition and education, is strongly confirmed by evidence, and some examples show that community feedback is used to adapt programmatic orientations. School feeding programmes only occasionally integrate within other areas of work, and more likely with social protection support, or in the context of home-grown school feeding models, although often these linkages are not emphasized in programme designs.

2. School feeding programmes in the MENAEE region show clear value in helping children and families cope with shocks and emergencies by maintaining an important buffer against food insecurity, particularly in crisis and conflict settings, with WFP showing strong adaptability in rapidly shifting contexts. When schools provide meals or fortified snacks, families are better able to withstand shocks and maintain children's nutrition, with fortified snacks serving as a lifeline in high food insecurity settings, such as Syria and Yemen. WFP has also demonstrated flexibility by adapting delivery modalities when schools are disrupted, such as during the COVID-19 crisis or redirecting food to orphanages in Egypt, to ensure vulnerable children continued receiving support. However, effectiveness is uneven; while support often helps sustain

access to food and protection for vulnerable children, targeting challenges and persistent barriers, such as insecurity, displacement, poverty, and child labour, limit WFP's ability to consistently reach the most at-risk groups and to improve enrolment in high-conflict contexts.

3. WFP school feeding programmes are most consistently effective in protecting children's access to food and helping sustain attendance and retention, particularly in fragile and crisis-affected contexts where they act as an important buffer against disruption. However, evidence of broader effects—such as on nutrition and wellbeing—is more mixed: while some evaluations report positive changes, these findings are often anecdotal with limited quantitative evidence across countries.

4. WFP is effective in strengthening national ownership of school feeding programmes through sustained support to government systems, policies, infrastructure and implementation capacity, helping countries assume greater responsibility and laying foundations for longer-term sustainability. Effectiveness appears strongest where support combined institutional capacity strengthening with practical, incentive-based models, such as cost-saving or income-generating approaches that increased the feasibility and attractiveness of national ownership. However, evaluations show that these efforts are at an early stage, and governments continue to rely on WFP for core technical and operational functions.

5. Innovation is a consistent enabler of efficiency across country offices, but cost-efficiency gains are uneven. Across the MENAEE region, WFP uses fortification, redesigned delivery/procurement models, and digital tools to improve operational efficiency and

strengthen health and nutrition outcomes. Some models have delivered major savings through process optimization and partner collaboration, while others have stayed costly due to short cycles, limited cost analysis, and inefficient modalities. Efficiency strategies also involve trade-offs—geographic concentration and reliance on governments/intermediaries can ease delivery and improve access but may reduce reach to remote/high-need groups and weaken autonomy and vulnerability-based targeting.

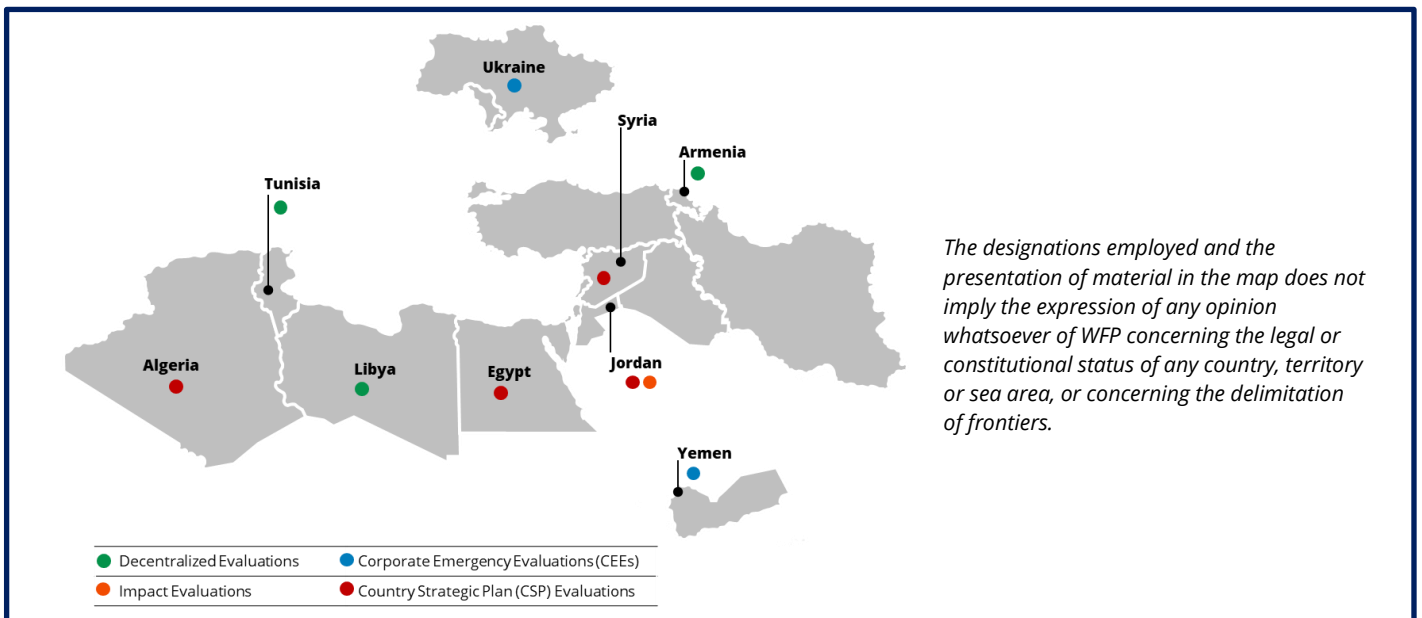
6. Effective school feeding programming depends heavily on strong, strategic partnerships and flexible collaboration mechanisms. WFP's effectiveness is enabled by its ability to build and adapt partnerships across governments, local actors and international stakeholders. Overall, the evidence suggests that partnerships are a key enabler of policy influence, coordination, and operational reach, and helped advance local implementation capacity and cross-country learning. Yet when partnerships remain transactional, this has adverse effects on WFP's autonomy or partners' ownership and weakened results. Moreover, partnership effectiveness is highly dependent on funding predictability and other external factors.

7. Progress toward nationally owned and sustainable school feeding programmes is strongest where WFP co-designs with government and local partners early and builds the systems needed for gradual handover. Sustainability remains constrained when national capacity, data systems, financing, and market conditions are too weak to absorb key functions without continued external support.

BREADTH OF EVIDENCE

This summary of evaluation evidence brings together findings from 10 WFP-commissioned evaluations, covering 9 countries in the MENAEE region, published between 2022-2025 and rated 'satisfactory' or above by WFP's external post-hoc quality assessment. This summary followed the approach set out in WFP's Technical Note on Summaries of Evaluation Evidence, namely:

- Familiarization with the full evaluation universe and drafting of a framing note with preliminary lines of inquiry;
- Refining lines of inquiry through consultations with regional technical experts;
- Systematic coding of evaluation reports using NVivo, reflecting key areas of interest identified at the framing stage, while continuously refining the framing note; and
- Analyzing NVivo output, drafting and refining findings through consultations with regional technical experts.



ANNEX – EVALUATIONS CONSULTED

1. [Evaluation of Algeria WFP Interim Country Strategic Plan 2019-2022](#)
2. [Evaluation of School Feeding Modalities Applied in Armenia 2018-2023](#)
3. [Evaluation of Egypt WFP Country Strategic Plan 2018-2023](#)
4. [Evaluation of Jordan WFP Country Strategic Plan 2020-2022](#)
5. [Impact Evaluation of the School Meal Programme in Jordan](#)
6. [Evaluation of WFP's Livelihoods and School Feeding Activities in Libya 2019-2024](#)
7. [Evaluation of Syrian Arab Republic WFP Transitional and Interim Country Strategic Plans 2018-2025](#)
8. [Capacity Strengthening to Smallholder Farmers and National School Meals Programme in Tunisia from 2022 to 2024](#)
9. [Corporate Emergency Evaluation of WFP's Response in Ukraine](#)
10. [Corporate Emergency Evaluation of WFP's Response in Yemen 2019-2024](#)