



# School Meals



World Food Programme



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## WFP's Approach

WFP is working towards a world where school meals are universal. School meals are an effective safety net, helping to ensure every child has access to education, health and nutrition. In the fight against hunger, school meals are a sound investment in the future of the next generation and a key element in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) of ending hunger by 2030.

Children from vulnerable families are often pulled out of school when more work is needed at home. A daily school meal is a strong incentive for families to consistently send their children to school. Just US\$0.25 will give a child a school meal every day, while US\$50 can feed a child for an entire school year.

WFP is now supporting countries in setting up and maintaining sustainable government-owned programmes. WFP engages in school meals policy dialogue, provides technical assistance and supports knowledge exchange between countries.

To ensure that programmes are cost-effective and context-specific, WFP's school meals are built on solid analysis, considering the efficiency of different implementation models – including providing vouchers or cash – and the best ways of reaching the children who will benefit.

## What are WFP School Meals?

**In-school meals** Children are provided with breakfast, lunch or both while in school. Meals can be prepared at the school, in the community or can be delivered from centralized kitchens.

Some programmes provide complete meals, others provide fortified, high-energy biscuits or nutritious snacks, such as date bars.

**Take-home rations** Families receive food rations on the condition that their children attend school regularly. In-school meals, combined with take-home rations, help keep girls in school and reduce drop-out rates.

**Local agriculture** Linking small-scale farmers to school meals programmes helps support rural economies, making programmes more sustainable. Such home-grown school meals programmes are underway in more than 25 countries where WFP is present, and this number is growing quickly. In these countries, WFP works with farmers to increase their capacity.

**Partnerships** Building partnerships with governments, private sector partners, UN agencies, NGOs, and academia is important to achieve effective school meals. One such partner is the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) which, through the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, recently



announced generous five-year funding for Côte d'Ivoire and Rwanda beginning in 2015. Ongoing McGovern-Dole funded projects are active in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Lao PDR, Liberia, Malawi and Nepal.

In Rwanda, for example, the funds will allow WFP to provide daily hot meals to support both the education and health of children. USDA's contribution will also help WFP build on the Rwandan government's efforts to develop and sustain the home-grown school meals programme. WFP will partner with World Vision and the ministries of education and agriculture to enhance the learning environment, build the capacity of school staff and communities, and increase the use of locally produced food, particularly from smallholder farmers, as WFP works towards handing over the programme to national ownership.

## Why School Meals?

School meals programmes are beneficial in many ways and may be tailored to address specific contextual needs.

**Safety Nets** School meals can help families support their children's education while protecting their food security. They help break the inter-generational cycle of hunger and poverty that affects the world's most vulnerable areas by helping children become healthy and productive adults.

School meals programmes use innovative approaches to identify and reach children who are especially in need, such as those affected by HIV/AIDS, orphans, disabled children and former child soldiers.

School meals also help keep children in school during emergencies or protracted crises, restoring a sense of stability and ensuring a generation does not miss out on education.

WFP has scaled up school meals programmes in more than 38 countries in response to armed conflict, natural disasters, food and financial crises.

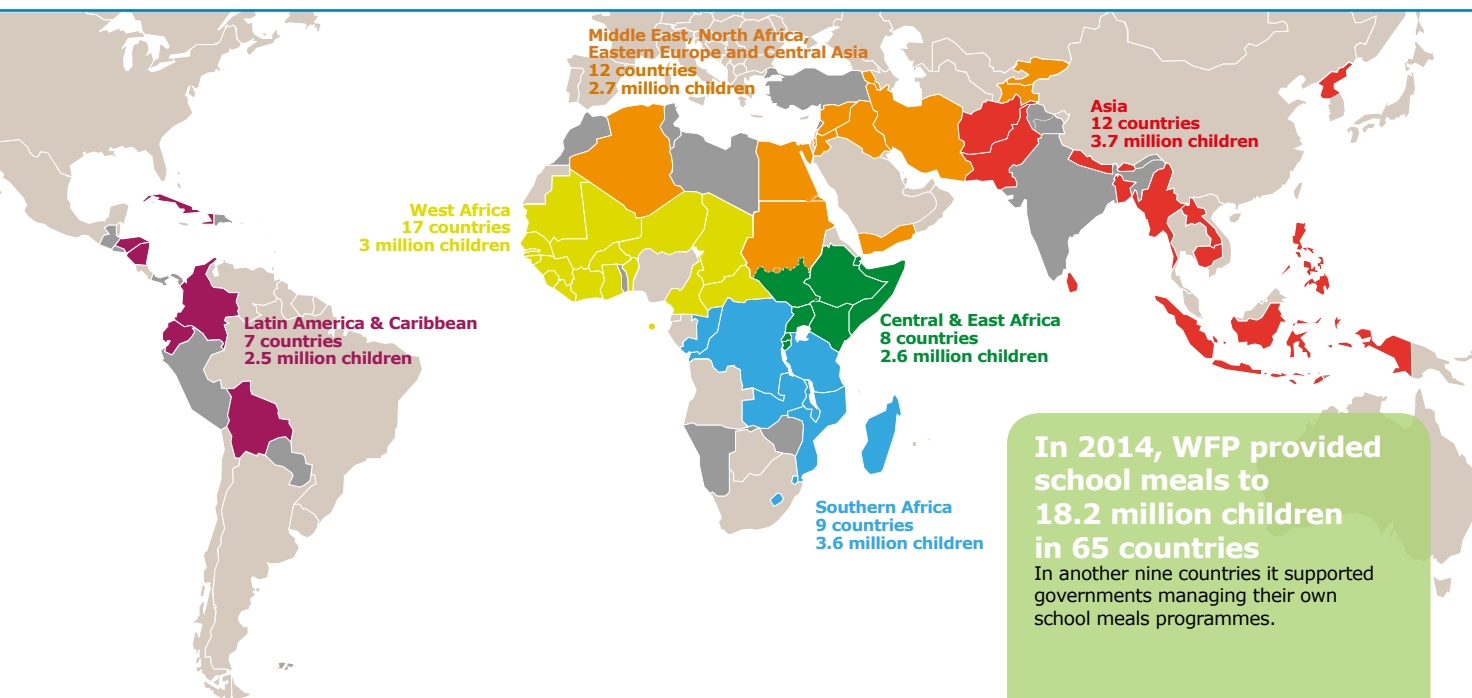
**Education** A daily school meal allows children to focus on their studies rather than their stomachs and helps increase enrolment and attendance, decrease drop-out rates and improve cognitive abilities. Where there is a gender gap in key education-related areas, programmes may be tailored to target specific groups of children.

**Nutrition** In poor countries, school meals are often the only regular and nutritious meal a child receives. Without them, hunger and micronutrient deficiencies can cause irreversible damage to their growing bodies. When school meals are combined with deworming and micronutrient fortification, the effects of that investment are multiplied. This is especially so when they are tailored to specific nutritional needs, such as those for adolescent girls or children affected by HIV/AIDS.

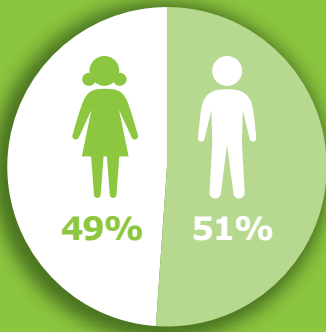
In 2014, WFP provided school meals to just over 18 million children in 65 countries and technical assistance in another nine.

## WFP-Government Cooperation

Honduras provides an excellent example of strong government ownership of school meals, with national government trust funds providing financing for school meals and working in cooperation with WFP. This has made Honduras one of the largest WFP school meals activities in the world, assisting over one million children. The programme also supports efforts to encourage economic development, by providing a market for local producers while improving the diet of school children with culturally appropriate ingredients.



## Gender Balance



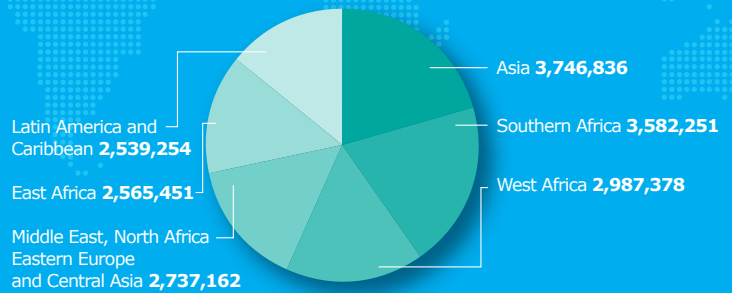
Children fed **18.2 million\***

Pre-school children fed **1.3 million**

Children receiving take-home rations **1.3 million**

\*Includes 1.2 million school children benefitting from a WFP-managed trust fund in Honduras

## Children assisted by region



**27 countries** have home grown school meals programmes, linking school meals to local agriculture Armenia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, Lao PDR, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Tanzania and Zambia.



**75,500 schools** received WFP assistance in 2014



**219,217 children** benefited from cash and vouchers transfers Cambodia, Ghana and Kenya

## Top donors to school meals activities in 2014 included:

Australia  
Canada  
European Commission  
Germany  
Private Donors  
Russian Federation  
United States

2014 data

In 2014, in 65 countries...



**314,297 metric tons** of food distributed



**US\$318.2 million** spent on school meals programmes



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For more information:  
[wfp.org/school-meals](http://wfp.org/school-meals)