

School Meal Programs in Latin America & the Caribbean

Based on the results of the 2024 Global Survey of School Meal Programs ©

The **Global Survey of School Meal Programs ©** aims to strengthen the work of the global school meal network by developing a comprehensive description of all the core aspects of large-scale school meal programs around the world.

The **Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF)** is committed to helping governments build national programs that provide nutritious, locally-sourced meals for all children.

School Meals in Latin American & the Caribbean at a Glance



66.5 million children were fed by school meals. **68%** of primary school-age children were fed and **30%** of secondary school-age children were fed.



53% of countries had a national school feeding policy.



\$5.5 billion USD was allocated to school meal programs. **79%** of countries had a national budget line item dedicated to school feeding.



100% of countries purchased at least some food from domestic sources.

School Meal Programs in Action

- In **Dominica**, schools adopted a "Grow What We Eat & Eat What We Grow" approach, maintaining backyard gardens. The produce grown in these gardens was used in student meals and sold to the community to generate funds for the school.
- **Uruguay** developed school lunch and cup-of-milk recipe books to enhance school meal options.
- **Brazil** mandated that at least 30% of school meal funds be spent on family farming, emphasizing the inclusion of women in food procurement and the establishment of a school food council for oversight.

Ensuring Healthy Diets & Food Systems

85% of programs had an **objective to meet nutritional and/or health goals**. On average, school meal programs in Latin America and the Caribbean served foods from **8.9 healthy food categories**, compared to the **global average of 6.8 healthy food categories**.

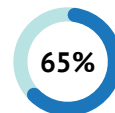
Program Approaches to Prevent or Mitigate Overweight/Obesity



of programs incorporated food and nutrition education



of programs incorporated health education

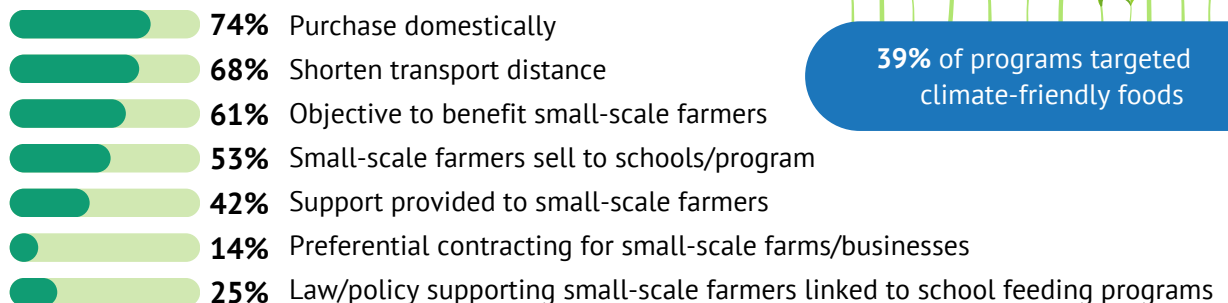


of programs had nutritional requirements for food baskets

Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) Indicators

HGSF enhances food diversity and strengthens local food systems.

45% of programs in Latin America and the Caribbean **exhibited 4 or more HGSF indicators**, compared to the **global average of 47%**.



%= Share of programs



39% of programs targeted climate-friendly foods