



Beyond Oil

Education for Growth, Inclusion
and Human Flourishing in
Venezuela



DAVID ROCKEFELLER CENTER
FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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Foundation



When Schools Must Heal: Addressing Nutrition and Well - being of Students



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2:15- 3:00
Moderated by Valentina Rincon



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GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF EDUCATION

When schools must heal: Addressing nutrition and well-being of students

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May 12, 2026

Agenda

1. What children need to thrive: SEL and nutrition



1. What we know about what works:
Adapting and scaling during a crisis

1. What to do next: A process, not a product

1. What children need to thrive: SEL and nutrition



Safe, accessible, and dignified environments for learning and play



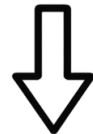
“What surrounds us, shapes us” - Harvard Center on the Developing Child

Supporting children's developing brains and other biological systems.

3 million children are irregularly attending school. Enrollment collapsed from **85% to 60%** in one school year

75% of schools have broken or non-functional sanitary facilities

78% of the population lives in income poverty, with a median income \$237/month





Responsive interactions with caring adults

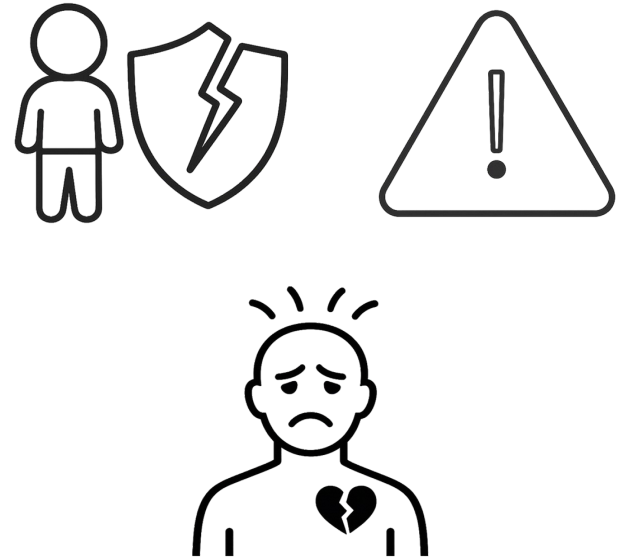
"Every child needs at least one adult who is irrationally crazy about him or her" — Urie Bronfenbrenner

Bi-directional, serve-and-return relationships are a foundation for more complex abilities later in life

86K+ child rights violations documented in a single year

Bullying increased **225%**

90% of communities report collective emotional distress in Venezuela





Rich learning environments that support cognitive engagement and regulate stress

“Environment is the third teacher” – Loris Malaguzzi

Emotional, social, and cognitive skills, and learning what matters and is meaningful

~1 million left-behind children, the human face of the Social-emotional Learning (SEL) crisis

No disaggregated data on SEL outcomes

SEL is present on paper, but is not monitored with a standardized system





Consistent nourishment as a prerequisite

“No man can be wise on an empty stomach” – George Eliot

Fostering higher attendance, concentration, participation, and academic performance





Consistent nourishment as a prerequisite

“No man can be wise on an empty stomach” – George Eliot

Fostering higher attendance, concentration, participation, and academic performance

The School Feeding Program (PAE) is Venezuela's public policy that provides daily meals to students in public schools to ensure their nutrition and continued school attendance.





Consistent nourishment as a prerequisite

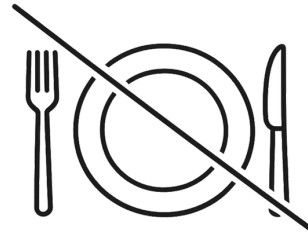
“No man can be wise on an empty stomach” – George Eliot

Fostering higher attendance, concentration, participation, and academic performance

63% of children do not receive the PAE

64% of enrolled children receive PAE with irregular supply

75% of enrolled children receive PAE with inadequate quantity or quality



2. What we know about what works: Adapting and scaling during a crisis





Adapting and Scaling During a Crisis

A National Rollout of SEL Kernels

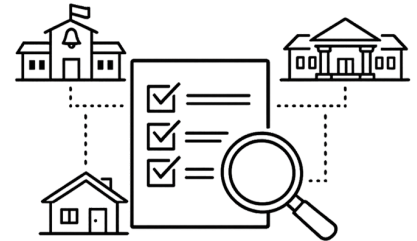
**Landscape Research
on Priority Social and
Emotional Skills**



**Collaborative Co-
Design Process for
Cultural Resonance
and Coherence**



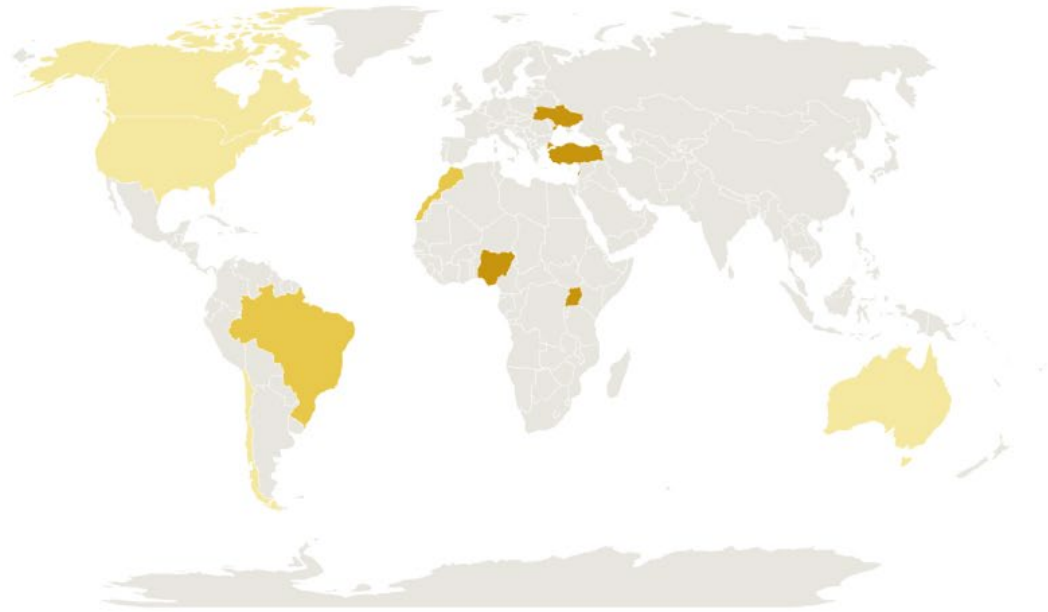
**Monitoring the
Implementation of
Materials in Diverse
Settings**





Adapting and Scaling During a Crisis

Implementation of SEL Kernels



- SEL Kernels implementation in contexts comparable to Venezuela
- SEL Kernels implementation in contexts similar in some aspects to Venezuela
- SEL Kernels implementation in contexts not considered similar to Venezuela

Adapting and scaling during a crisis

Nutritional and feeding programs

BR **Brazil:** PNAE

30% sourced from local farmers by law.
450,000 family farmers benefited.
80% municipalities reached.

Lessons:

Local procurement transforms supply policy into shared institutional ownership: when farmers depend on the program, the program becomes self-reinforcing.

CL **Chile:** JUNAEB

Calories alone had zero effect on test scores or attendance. Nutritional composition drove outcomes.

Lessons:

Quality cannot be sacrificed to urgency. Covering more children with worse food is not reform.

PE **Peru:** Qali Warma

Community co-management improved enrollment, attendance, and dietary quality (Lavado & Barrón, 2019).

Lessons:

Community organizations already do this work. Formalize and resource them; don't replace them.

What Needs to Be in Place For School Feeding Programs' Functionality



Financing

Supply chain

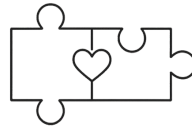


Infrastructure

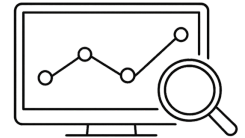


Community
capacity

Health integration



Monitoring



3. What to do next: A process, not a product



Establishing a process, not a product

Effective Feeding Programs and Nutritional Efforts Implementation in Venezuela

Protect the budget in
law

Set nutritional
standards before
restoring coverage

Formalize what
already exists

Monitor and evaluate
of delivery quality, not
just coverage

Local procurement:
Connect producers to
schools

Rely on regional
standing collaborations
in LAC (Schools Meals
Coalition).



Establishing a process, not a product

Integrity-centered, effective SEL implementation in Venezuela



Low Cost



Flexible



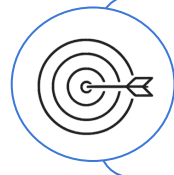
Supporting of high-quality relationships



Strategy Based



Developmentally appropriate



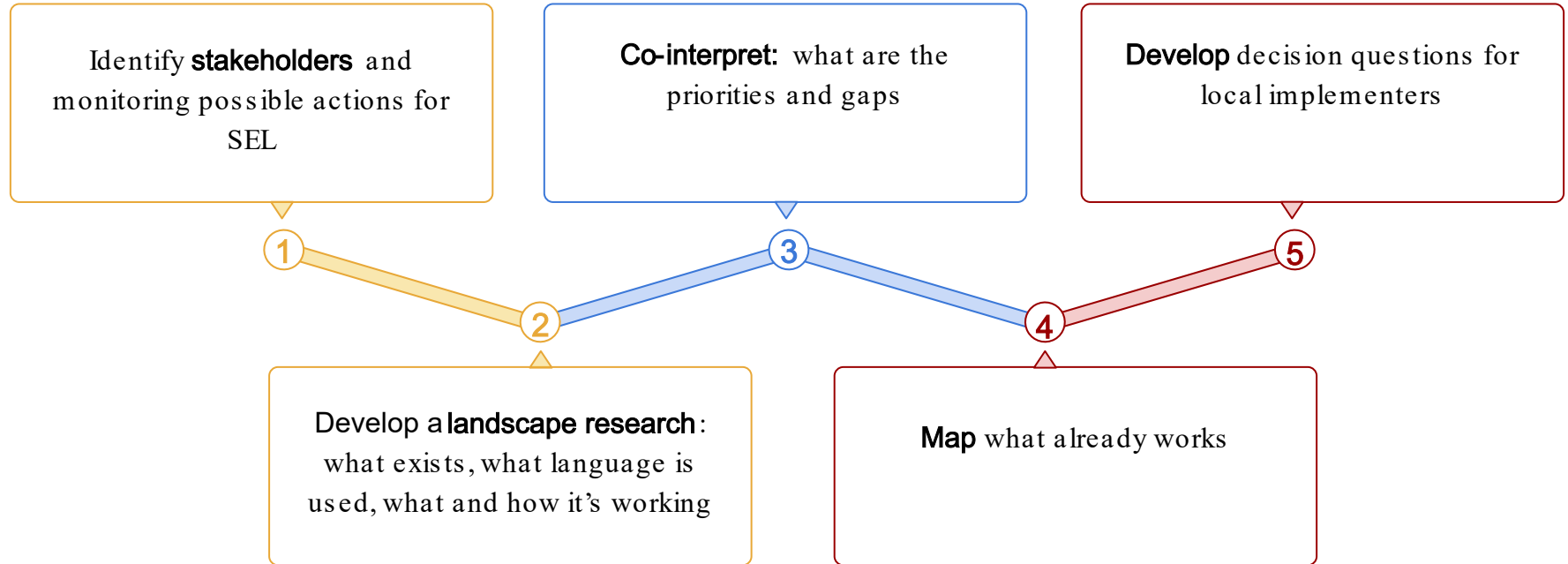
Relevant



Engaging



Recommendations for Nutrition and SEL Effective Program Implementation in Venezuela





Education Lab
for **Latin America**

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¡Gracias! Thank you!

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