



SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

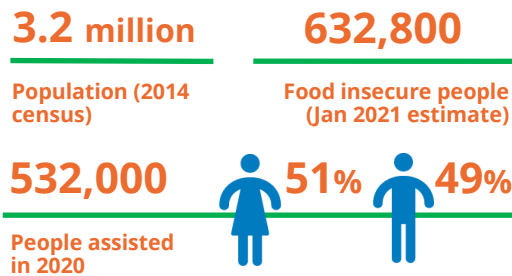
Rakhine Operational Brief

WFP Myanmar

OVERVIEW

With a population of 3.2 million people, Rakhine State is located in the western part of Myanmar. Rakhine is the second poorest state after Chin State, and continues to experience a humanitarian crisis. Chronic poverty and high vulnerability to shocks, including recurrent natural disasters, are widespread throughout the State. Malnutrition and food insecurity remain a significant concern, particularly for Rohingya¹ communities and other displaced populations. Agricultural production is constrained by inadequate access to land, credit and post-harvest storage facilities. Underdeveloped markets, limited infrastructure and movement restrictions prevent many rural households from accessing food and livelihoods opportunities.

WFP has been one of the few main humanitarian organizations providing life-saving food assistance in Rakhine for several decades. Its first operation in Myanmar started in 1978 in Maungdaw District, following the return of 200,000 refugees from Bangladesh. In 1994, WFP returned to Rakhine with the establishment of an office in Maungdaw to assist with the repatriation of 250,000 people.



Since 2012, following several waves of inter-communal violence, more than 140,000 people have been internally displaced from their homes and currently reside in camps in central Rakhine or are hosted by other communities in northern Rakhine. Following the 25 August 2017 security incidents, over 700,000 people, mainly Rohingya, fled to Bangladesh. After a three-month hiatus, WFP managed to resume food distributions in central Rakhine in September 2017 and in northern Rakhine in November the same year, and since then has had continuous access for monthly distributions and other activities. Following an escalation in armed conflict between the Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) and Arakan Army, a Rakhine ethnic armed group, in late 2019, WFP extended its support to an additional 36,000 displaced and affected people.

WFP continues to provide life-saving emergency relief food assistance to communities in both northern and central Rakhine State, envisioning a transition to resilience-building, including through complementary nutrition interventions. Following a military takeover on 1 February 2021, WFP has succeeded in maintaining its support in Rakhine State, in particular life-saving relief assistance. WFP is prepared to extend its assistance to address new needs as the situation evolves.

[1] In accordance with the United Nations' position, the term Rohingya is used in this document in recognition of the right of people to self-identify.

BENEFICIARIES IN 2020

| | | |
|--|---------------------------|---------|
| | Relief | 318,600 |
| | Community Assets Creation | 74,700 |
| | School Feeding | 68,000 |
| | Support to HIV/TB Clients | 2,900 |
| | Nutrition | 67,600 |

EMERGENCY RELIEF ASSISTANCE

WFP's life-saving food assistance targets highly food insecure and vulnerable communities of various ethnic groups in Rakhine providing them monthly relief food rations of rice, pulses, oil and salt, or the equivalent in cash. This includes internally displaced people living in camps as well as other food insecure populations in central and northern Rakhine. Since late 2018, WFP has expanded cash assistance across central Rakhine in locations with functioning markets. Assistance in northern Rakhine is exclusively in-kind as local markets are less viable. In the wake of the February 2021 military takeover, maintaining life-saving food assistance to pre-existing vulnerable populations in Rakhine has been WFP's highest priority, while also responding to new humanitarian needs.

NUTRITION

The prevention and treatment of malnutrition are paramount in preventing child mortality, morbidity and/or long-term effects left by malnutrition on early child development. In Rakhine, due to high wasting prevalence, WFP implements the Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme (BSFP) and Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme (TSFP) through the distribution of specialized nutritious food to pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and children under the age of five in combination with nutrition education.

SCHOOL FEEDING

WFP started its school feeding programme in northern Rakhine in 1996 with the objective of promoting enrollment and retention rates of girls and boys in primary schools. Following a successful pilot run of the cooked school meals in Kyauktaw and Ponnagyun townships of central Rakhine in 2018, WFP has taken steps to transition from High Energy Biscuits (HEB) to cooked meals. WFP has been integrating the school feeding programme with its community asset creation activity since 2018, helping establish kitchens and nutrition gardens in schools, enabling fresh produce for more nutritious school meals. During school closures due to COVID-19 and the military takeover, WFP provides take-home rations of HEBs to school-age children working together with communities, while continuing to take a "Do-No-Harm approach".



COMMUNITY ASSET CREATION

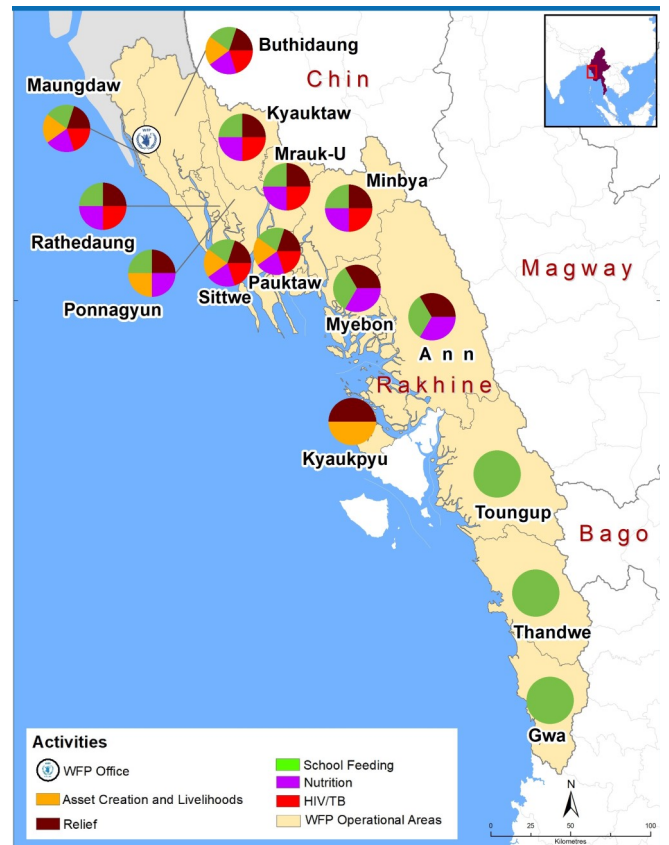
WFP started its asset creation programme in Maungdaw District in 1997/98 and central Rakhine in 2015 to help the most food insecure and vulnerable populations through (re-) establishment of community assets such as dams, roads, farmland and water facilities. The programme creates employment opportunities for community members while the assets contribute to the resilience and overall food security of communities. WFP provides in-kind food and/or cash assistance to incentivize community participation.

SUPPORT TO PLHIV/TB PATIENTS

People living with HIV and TB need more calories and nutrients in their diet in order to strengthen their immune system. In Rakhine, WFP provides food and nutrition assistance to people living with HIV and TB patients who are undergoing anti-retroviral therapy (ART) and directly observed treatment (DOTs).

PROCUREMENT

With the aim to make its activities benefit both beneficiaries and the local economy, WFP systematically seeks to purchase its food locally in Myanmar. WFP looks at options to source food as close as possible to where distributions take place. Following the August 2017 security incidents, procurement previously planned and done in Rakhine was shifted to the Yangon area. In 2018, WFP resumed procurement from local suppliers in Rakhine State, amounting to 50% of the total tonnage of rice procured locally in 2020, with a value of over US\$ 5.3 million.



WFP Activities & Operational Areas in Rakhine State in 2021

Photo 1: Through WFP asset creation program, community members build dyke to prevent seawater from entering their paddy fields in a rural village in central Rakhine ©WFP/Htet Oo Linn

Photo 2: Young girl from Rohingya community in central Rakhine enjoys fortified blended food provided by WFP ©WFP/Htet Oo Linn