School Feeding
WFP Myanmar

Going to School in Myanmar

Education is one of the core values in Myanmar society. However, many socio-economic factors continue to impede equitable access to various forms of education for a large portion of the population. Poverty is a major barrier to children's access to basic education, especially in rural areas. According to the National Education Strategic Plan 2016-2021, only 80.5 percent of children completed primary education in the 2014-2015 academic year. Net primary school completion rates are 79 percent among the wealthiest and only 31 percent among the poorest households.

The Case for School Feeding

Supplementing schoolchildren's daily nutritional intake increases school enrolment and learning achievements, as well as attendance, graduation, and retention rates, ensuring that more children start and finish their primary education. The availability of a meal at school encourages parents to send their children to school rather than keeping them at home to work.

Schools are also an ideal platform to reach children at important stages in the lifecycle. Interventions at schools can be integrated with health messages and health promotion, and can be used to improve the daily dietary diversity of nutritionally vulnerable groups, especially in places where nutritious food is unaffordable or not readily available.

WFP's Strategic Review of Food and Nutrition in Myanmar recommends the expansion of school feeding programmes with the local sourcing of food and the inclusion of nutrition education in the school curriculum, complemented by activities such as school gardening. It notes that school-based nutrition education is an effective means of informing households about healthy food.

WFP need-based budget 2018-2022
US$ 60 million

School Feeding Programme in 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Energy Biscuits</td>
<td>3871</td>
<td>310,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Meals</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4,102</td>
<td>332,000</td>
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</tbody>
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Partnerships

Government Partners
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health and Sports
- Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation
- Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement
Beginning in 1996, WFP provided schoolchildren with monthly take-home rations of rice. In 2012, WFP shifted to a more child-centred approach using on-site feeding with HEB while piloting school meals in Magway Region, Kachin State and Wa Self-Administered Division in 2017.

**HEBs to School Meals**

In line with national strategies, including the National Social Protection Strategic Plan, Multi-sectoral National Plan of Action on Nutrition (MS-NPAN) and National Comprehensive School Health Strategic Plan, WFP is gradually shifting from HEBs to school meals, reflecting a more nutrition sensitive approach and encouraging better community participation and initiative among parents.

WFP's School Feeding Programme aims not only to increase enrollment and attendance rates and to reduce drop-out rates, but also to minimise malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. The programme couples the HEBs/school meals with education on health and hygiene practices, teaching children as well as teachers, parents and cooks about the importance of hand washing, sanitation and nutrition sensitive education.

School meals also bind students, parents and teachers together to cooperate for the education of the community. School meal management committees, composed of parents, teachers and local elders, are active in collaborating and coming up with creative solutions in managing the meal preparation activities. The committees are very active in investing their time, contributing meal ingredients and managing school gardens which provide fresh produce for school meals. WFP supports the establishment of school gardens and school kitchens through its community asset creation and livelihood programme, which provides food or cash for community members participating in the construction. Evaluation by WFP shows that communities prefer school meals to HEBs and favour local procurement of commodities.

**Transitioning to the Nationally-Owned School Feeding Programme**

WFP coordinates closely with the Government ministries and local authorities in the implementation of the School Feeding Programme. The implementation is designed with technical assistance from WFP, following WFP’s global standards and policy for school feeding programmes and aligning with national policy and priorities. These include the National Education Strategic Plan (2016-2021), as well as the National Social Protection Strategic Plan.

In 2017, WFP supported the Ministry of Education in conducting Systems Approach for Better Educational Results (SABER) for school feeding. SABER is a tool developed by WFP and the World Bank that focuses on assessing the principles and procedures of school feeding programmes, which allows governments to measure its progress against clearly defined goals and standards.

The SABER assessment indicates that Myanmar’s school feeding programme is in an emerging status as evaluated in the areas of policy framework, financial and institutional capacity and community participation. Building on this, Myanmar has achieved further advancements such as the inclusion of school feeding in the national plan of action on nutrition and the establishment of a multi-sectoral technical coordination group that will implement home-grown school feeding under the national system and develop national-level guidelines for the school feeding programme.

In order to support the Government in realizing Myanmar’s first ever nationally-owned school feeding programme, WFP also provides the necessary support in strengthening the capacity of relevant government officials. In March 2017, WFP organized a study tour to WFP’s Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil to enhance the officials’ knowledge on the development of multi-sector and sustainable school feeding models.

**The Road Ahead**

The ultimate goal of WFP’s School Feeding Strategic Plan is to support Government leadership in coordinating all school feeding actors in Myanmar. WFP aims to advance Myanmar’s school feeding into a well-established programme fully owned by the Government. While the Government increases its capacity and investment to achieve this, WFP and the Government plan to continue collaborating and expanding the school feeding programme to reach one million school children by 2021.

WFP will continue the shift to school meals wherever feasible, encouraging locally sourced cooked meals in line with the long-term vision of the Government. WFP is also exploring innovative solutions such as cash-based transfers for school meal preparation to maximize operational effectiveness.

**Operational Areas in 2019**

![Map of Myanmar showing operational areas in 2019]

**Photo:** Happy schoolchildren at lunch time in Wa Self-Administered Division, northern Shan State