

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES



NAGA Self-Administered Zone WFP Myanmar

Context

Situated along the borderline with India, Naga Self-Administered Zone (SAZ) is a hilly region in northwestern Myanmar's Sagaing Region, consisting of three townships; Lahe Township, Leshi Township, and Nanyun Township.

Characterized by remoteness and isolation, high rates of poverty, malnutrition and food insecurity hamper the development of this picturesque region where ethnic Naga people continue to preserve their indigenous way of life.

According to a 2018 report by HARP and MIMU titled *Vulnerability In Myanmar*, townships in Naga SAZ are "extreme outliers in terms of development needs and exposure to conflict", making them some of the most vulnerable townships in Myanmar. Naga SAZ is also one of the regions in Myanmar that receives the least external aid and has one of the lowest numbers of civil society organizations.

The region is highly prone to natural disasters and diseases, such as malaria, that are easily preventable. A measles outbreak in 2016 caused the death of over 40 children across Naga SAZ. Despite these challenges, very few studies and assessments on needs and opportunities have been conducted in the region. The availability of comprehensive data and information on the region would help all actors in coordinating, planning and implementing effective responses for all the people of Naga SAZ.

WFP Response

WFP's approach in response to the needs of Naga SAZ is through a nexus of humanitarian assistance and development activities.

Since 2017, WFP has been focusing on fighting malnutrition, while at the same time promoting education through its school feeding programme. WFP's asset creation and livelihoods programme develops community-owned assets, such as roads, terrace land and home gardens, to build resilience and provide livelihoods for the people of Naga SAZ. WFP's Naga operations are implemented by locally recruited staff members, overseen by the area office in Pakokku City, Magwe Region.



BENEFICIARIES IN 2018

Nutrition

980 children under two & pregnant and lactating mothers
30 villages

School Feeding

10,200 students
166 schools

Asset Creation and Livelihoods

10,900 people benefitted
43 projects
including construction and renovation of latrines, motorbike roads and canals; terrace land development and nutrition-sensitive home gardening



PARTNERSHIP

Government Partners

- Sagaing Region Government
- Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health and Sports

Cooperating Partner





School Feeding

Supplementing schoolchildren's daily nutritional intake increases school enrolment and learning achievements. To this end, WFP provides fortified high energy biscuits (HEBs) to schoolchildren in Lahe and Leshi townships. In the 2018-2019 school year, HEBs were provided three days a week with plans in place to increase to five days a week, when feasible. WFP's school feeding programme has extended to all schools in Leshi Township with plans to achieve full coverage in Lahe Township and to start implementation in Nanyun Township. WFP has been assisting nearby Hkamhti Township with school feeding since 2017.

WFP complements the provision of HEBs 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.

WFP also has plans to introduce cooked school meals in place of HEBs in Naga region to encourage dietary diversity using local supplies for meal ingredients.

Community Asset Creation and Livelihoods

WFP's asset creation and livelihoods programme supports the creation of community-owned assets and promotes the conservation of resources while allowing beneficiaries to receive temporary employment and food assistance.

Throughout project implementation, WFP provides food rations to the project participants in compensation of their daily work on the projects. Currently, WFP is implementing projects such as the construction and renovation of latrines, motorbike roads and canals, as well as terrace land development and nutrition-sensitive home gardening in Lahe Township. WFP is also seeking opportunities to expand this assistance to other townships.

Nutrition

WFP has been implementing stunting prevention activities in Lahe township since 2018. WFP provides blended fortified food to children under two and pregnant and lactating women improving their nutrition intake. The stunting prevention activity also implements cooking demonstrations and health education on good practices in WASH and infant and young child feeding.

WFP plans to scale up its stunting prevention program in Lahe and expand to Leshi and Nanyun townships. WFP also plans to roll out moderate acute malnutrition treatment programmes and prevention of wasting in all three townships, depending on the availability of competent implementing partners.

Photo page 1: Naga children approach WFP car in Lahe Township
Photo page 2: People of Naga region

Challenges

Accessibility remains the principle challenge in Naga SAZ for all actors. The majority of villages in rural areas are only accessible by seasonal footpaths and motorbike roads. Mobile and internet access is available on a very limited scale, only covering areas near city centers.

The existence of various local dialects creates language barriers between Naga people and Burmese-language speakers, and the different Naga dialects are mostly not mutually intelligible. WFP breaks down these language barriers by working closely with village elders, local authorities and NGOs with a rich understanding of the local context.

Funding availability for initiatives in the region has been modest despite significant needs. WFP is raising support from partners for both the continuation and expansion of its humanitarian and development assistance in Naga region.

