



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Myanmar Country Brief January 2020



Photo: Schoolchildren gather fresh produce as part of a WFP-supported school meals programme in Shan State
© WFP / Sai Nyunt Maung

Operational Context

Myanmar continues to present a complex and dynamic operating context where ongoing socio-economic and political challenges, including conflict, displacement, widespread poverty and food insecurity, hinder development efforts. An estimated 24.8 percent of its 54 million population live near or below the poverty line. Many struggle with inadequate physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, with women, girls, persons with disabilities and minorities affected most.

Malnutrition is a major challenge, and wasting rates prevail at 6.5 percent nationally. Likewise, Myanmar is one of the world's 20 high tuberculosis (TB) burden countries. It is also among the 35 countries accounting for 90 percent of new HIV infections globally. Ethnic conflict exacerbates an already fragile situation. Over 1 million people have been displaced from their places of origin since June 2011. With restrictions on movement and limited access to livelihoods, many conflict-affected people urgently need food assistance.

WFP implemented its first operation in Myanmar in 1978 in northern Rakhine and established its first office in 1994. Given the protracted humanitarian crisis in Rakhine, high rates of malnutrition country wide, and high susceptibility to natural hazards, WFP remains committed to improving coordination with its national and international partners and developing innovative solutions to meet acute needs across the country.



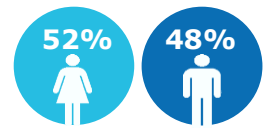
Population: **54.1 million**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

2019 Human Development Index: **145 out of 189**

Chronic malnutrition: **29% of children aged 6-59 months**

In Numbers



648,500 people assisted in January 2020

3,630 mt of food distributed

US\$1.6 m cash-based transfers

US\$25.9 m six months (February - July 2020) net funding requirements

Operational Updates

- **Rakhine:** Armed clashes between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army, a Rakhine ethnic armed group, continued into January and showed no signs of abating after steadily intensifying for more than one year. WFP responded to new population displacements caused by conflict, reaching 12,450 newly displaced people across Rakhine.

In northern Rakhine, WFP assisted 115,300 conflict-affected people in January with emergency food and nutrition assistance, including 2,760 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and 17,130 children aged 6-59 months, from 161 Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu villages in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships.

In central Rakhine, WFP provided 129,200 food-insecure people with food and cash assistance, in addition to the 26,500 children aged 6-59 months and 5,300 PLW who received fortified blended food. Following successful pilots in select locations in late 2019, WFP further expanded full cash rations in two internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, where markets are accessible and beneficiaries were willing to receive only cash. However, WFP could not assist hundreds of beneficiaries in Minbya Township due to an unstable security situation.

- **Kachin:** WFP assisted 44,700 displaced people with cash-based transfers. WFP is in the process of transitioning from cash in envelopes to electronic cash-based transfers for all beneficiaries in Kachin by the end of 2020. Through several cooking demonstrations, WFP provided 7,500 people with fortified blended food and demonstrated how to prepare nutritious meals, on top of the regular monthly nutrition assistance provided for 1,080 children aged 6-23 months and 1,640 PLW.
- **Shan:** Despite skirmishes between the Myanmar military and ethnic armed groups reported during the month, WFP distributed food and cash to 7,050 people displaced across northern Shan State. WFP's nutrition assistance benefited 240 PLWs.
- **Southeast:** WFP supported 3,370 people to create sustainable livelihood assets with cash incentives for 12 projects in Kayah State. The completed projects include the construction of water ponds, irrigation canals and rainwater collection tanks, the renovation of dams and roads, as well as the development of terrace land. The projects not only provided job opportunities for vulnerable communities, but also bolstered their resilience to climate shocks.

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	February - July 2020 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
425.3 m	127.2 m	25.9 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected people in food-insecure areas meet their food and nutrition needs all year round.

Activities:

- **Activity 1:** Provide unconditional food transfers and/or cash-based transfers (CBTs) to populations affected by crisis.

Strategic Outcome 2: Vulnerable people in states and regions with high food insecurity and/or malnutrition have access to food all year round.

Activities:

- **Activity 2:** Provide technical advice, policy support and training for the Government to improve delivery of national social protection and emergency preparedness programmes and food systems.
- **Activity 3:** Implement a comprehensive social school feeding programme in targeted schools in support of the national programme.
- **Activity 4:** Provide conditional food or cash-based assistance in support of the creation and rehabilitation of assets, combined with nutrition messaging for targeted populations.

Strategic Result 2: End malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: Children under 5 in Myanmar have improved nutrition in line with national targets by 2022.

Activities:

- **Activity 6:** Provide implementation support, research-based advice and technical assistance on national policies and action plans for the Government and partners.
- **Activity 7:** Implement preventive nutrition interventions for adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and girls, and children under the age of two, and roll out community infant and young child feeding programmes, CBTs for mothers of young children, and social behaviour change communication SBCC.
- **Activity 8:** Provide specialized nutritious foods for the treatment and management of acute malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls, and children under the age of five.
- **Activity 9:** Provide unconditional food and/or cash-based assistance combined with nutrition messaging and counselling for people living with HIV and TB patients.

Donors & Funding Sources to WFP Myanmar Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)*

Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Germany, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Livelihoods and Food Security Fund, Luxembourg, Myanmar Humanitarian Fund, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Private Donors (including Japan Association for WFP), Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, Republic of Turkey, United Kingdom, United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund, United States of America.

*Listed in alphabetical order.

Operational Updates continued

- **Magway Region:** Together with various government counterparts, WFP outlined the next steps in a workshop for the implementation of the integrated, nutrition-sensitive school garden and school meal programme in Myaing, Pakokku and Yesagy townships under the Multi-sectoral National Plan of Action for Nutrition (MS-NPAN). WFP strives to draw upon the best practices and experiences derived from the pilot school garden initiatives, in order to further scale up the integrated school garden model in other areas.

Challenges

- Due to changes in the government approval process, WFP was not able to move food as planned for around 7,000 conflict-affected persons in Kokang Self-Administered Zone of northern Shan State. WFP is following up with the concerned authorities to resolve the issue.

New national strategy on school meals sows seeds for a brighter future

Schools are an ideal platform to effect change in the community, especially in Myanmar where food security and livelihoods are fragile. With the vision of improving the nutritional status of schoolchildren and enabling them to reach their full potential, WFP provided technical assistance to the Government of Myanmar on developing the national school feeding strategy.

The multi-stakeholder workshop, held in January in Nay Pyi Taw, focused on the expansion of the school meals programme. The shift from the provision of nutritious snacks to cooked meals reflects a more nutrition-sensitive approach and encourages active participation from schoolchildren, parents, teachers and their communities. It is a vital step to provide a crucial safety net under the MS-NPAN.

Currently, WFP is finalizing the strategy and aims to launch it in March. Meanwhile, WFP supports the establishment of school gardens and school kitchens through its asset creation and livelihood programme. By engaging in the preparation of school meals and the nurturing of school gardens, schoolchildren and their communities can learn basic agricultural skills to grow a variety of nutritious food while also learning about the importance of nutrition.



Photo: WFP Deputy Country Director delivering a speech at the School Feeding workshop in Nay Pyi Taw.
© WFP/Photo Library