



WFP Liberia

Country Brief

March 2020

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Operational Context

Liberia suffered violent conflicts spanning from 1979 to 2003. As a result, national gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 90 percent between 1987 and 1995, one of the biggest economic collapses ever recorded in the world (Liberia PRS 2008). The Ebola Virus Disease outbreak (2014 to 2015) caused significant socio-economic disruptions. The World Bank estimates the outbreak could have cost Liberia as much as USD 234 million or 12 percent of its GDP.

Approximately 1 in 5 households in Liberia is food insecure, while 2 in 5 are marginally food secure (42 percent), and therefore quite vulnerable to falling into food insecurity as a result of a shock or hazard. Malnutrition of children aged 6-59 months is a persistent problem with 35.5 percent stunted, 4.8 percent thin for their weight (global acute malnutrition)- Food Security and Nutrition Survey (CFSNS) 2018.

Poverty affects more women than men as women in some instances tend to endure lower income earnings. Fifty-three percent of women compared to 74 percent of men are involved in gainful employment. Nationally, while over 68 percent of Liberians work in the informal sector, 80 to 85 percent of the population are unemployed, with women accounting for 94 percent (Central Bank of Liberia 2017).

The Government launched the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity & Development (PAPD) in 2018, as part of a national development plan to make Liberia middle-income country by 2030, aligning to the SDGs target. In July 2019, WFP realigned its focus to a four- and half-year Country Strategic Plan, using a multifaceted Home-Grown School Feeding programme as a platform for linking agriculture, nutrition and education through an integrated approach to achieving the 2030 agenda. The aim is to support the Government of Liberia in its efforts to Improve food and nutrition security in vulnerable communities through resilience building and crises response activities that will promote production of nutritious foods; Increase farmers' income and enhance resilience to shocks; also promote access to basic education and human capital development. The CSP also focus on capacity strengthening of institutions at both national and local levels. WFP has been present in Liberia since 1968.



Population: **5 million**
(UNFPA 2019)

2018 Human Development Index: **176 out of 189**

Income Level: **Low**

Chronic malnutrition: **36% of children between 6-59 months**

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Main photo

Credit: WFP Liberia/John Monibah

Caption: Storage facility erected by WFP for the Government of Liberia.

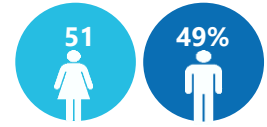
In Numbers

335 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$ 6 m six months (March-August 2020) net funding requirements

80,600 people assisted

in March 2020



Operational Updates

- School Feeding:**

In continuation of WFP support to the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Education for the provision of school feeding in Liberia, WFP distributed 153 mt of food to 75,000 schoolchildren (35,507 girls and 39,322 boys). Additionally, 1,718 mt were prepositioned in Nimba and Maryland Counties for distribution to students and their parents as take-home rations during school closure resulting amid COVID-19 pandemic.

- Crisis response:**

On 16 March the Government of Liberia confirmed the first case of the Coronavirus (COVID -19). WFP activated its Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to ensure continuation of its life-saving and life-changing programmes. This meant that a limited number of staff under the banner of Critical Management team (CMT) were allow to continue working from the office while the rest work from home. Under this arrangement many meetings and conferences were via video conferencing. From the beginning may staff face challenges coping as they were not use to this way of working. On 20 March, the Government, through the Ministry of Health and National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) set up an emergency coordination mechanism under the Incidents Management System (IMS). In this regard, WFP is leading emergency telecommunications and logistics efforts to ensure all parties can be connected at different decision-making and supply chains are not disrupted. For instance, WFP completed the installation of a video conferencing system at the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL), providing quality internet services that linked NPHIL with the Liberia Institute of Biomedical Research (LIBR) in Marshall, Margibi County where COVID-19 tests took place, for easy transfer of test results to NPHIL. WFP also completed construction of one mobile storage unit for the safe keeping of COVID-19 supplies. In addition, WFP assisted the Government of Liberia in receiving a consignment of anti-COVID 19 supplies comprising personal protective equipment, chemicals and other materials at the Roberts International Airport in Margibi County.

Liberia Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

2020 Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
13 m	1.6 m	5.7 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Food-insecure populations, including school-aged children in targeted areas, have access to adequate and nutritious food, including food produced locally, by 2030.

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activity:

- Provide an integrated, inclusive and gender-transformative school feeding package to food and nutritionally vulnerable school children including take-home rations of adolescent girls in a way that relies on and stimulates local production (home-grown school feeding).

Strategic Outcome 2: Crisis-affected populations in targeted areas are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises

Focus area: Crises Response

Activity:

- Provide an integrated emergency food and nutrition assistance package to vulnerable households affected by disasters and/or other disruptions.

Strategic Result 5: Capacity Strengthening

Strategic Outcome 3: National and sub-national institutions have strengthened capacities to design and manage food security and nutrition, social protection, emergency preparedness and response, and disaster risk management systems by 2030

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activity:

- Provide capacity strengthening support to the Government and its partners to strengthen national coordination mechanisms, information management and monitoring systems for food security and nutrition, and disaster risk management

Challenges

Together with the severe funding deficit limiting WFP’s ability to deliver on the strategic outcomes of the Country Strategic Plan (CSP), the outbreak of COVID-19 may pose more constraints on the implementation of the already limited activities underway. USD 5.7 million is the six-month net funding requirements for April to September 2020. As a result of funding deficit, WFP may not be able to fully implement all the activities envisioned within the CSP. As a coping mechanism, WFP is applying measures such as changes to transfer modalities of some of its activities. The Country Office is considering further engagements with development partners and a budget revision in the coming month.

Stakeholders Collaboration and Coordination:

Since the announcement on 16 March by the Government of Liberia of the first confirmed Coronavirus (COVID -19) case, WFP has been actively engaging within the different fora established, sharing food security and logistics expertise with the wider humanitarian and development community to inform decision-making as to how to better prepare, respond and recover from this pandemic. Along with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), a joint proposal is being developed based on each agency mandate and comparative advantage in support of Government of Liberia’s fight against the COVID -19. Among others, WFP will support on food security, social protection, supply chain, emergency telecommunications and country capacity strengthening efforts.

Rapid Food Security Assessment

The Rapid Food Security Assessment was suspended due to restriction of movement imposed by the Government. However, WFP is still encouraged to collect reduced market functionality index (MFI) data via mobile. In addition, WFP is planning to conduct a food security monitoring with households via mVAM.

WFP and the Government of Liberia initiated the planning of a Rapid Food Security Assessment. The assessment is meant to provide an updated understanding of the food security situation at the household level and assess the current market situation in Liberia. It also focuses on assessing issues of market access, availability and stability using an innovative WFP’s tool - the Market Functionality Index. The Market Functionality Index rates markets on eight dimensions-availability, price, resilience, competition, infrastructure, service, quality, access and protection. It also captures impact of recent shocks. Training for 56 field data collectors (including 32 percent women) identified by government partners was conducted. The data collection is pending approval of the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) to allow for movement of staff.

Donors

UN Peacebuilding Fund, Private Donors