



WFP Myanmar Country Brief June 2020

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Photo: WFP staff consults with the community while undertaking a feasibility assessment on livelihood project in Thanlyin, Yangon peri-urban areas. ©WFP/Htet Oo Linn

Operational Context

Despite making important socio-economic strides in recent years, Myanmar is faced with a multitude of challenges, including armed conflict, displacement, widespread poverty and food insecurity and more recently the COVID-19 pandemic, which hinder ongoing 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, and persons with disabilities and minorities particularly affected.

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.

Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic presents particular risks in humanitarian settings in Myanmar, where internally displaced persons in overcrowded camps and communities in conflict-affected areas are at higher risk in the event of local-level outbreaks. Moreover, COVID-19 is likely to have a significant impact on livelihoods and further adverse socio-economic consequences on poor communities across Myanmar.

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 countrywide, 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.

Read the [Annual Country Report 2019](#) to learn more about key WFP activities and results in Myanmar during 2019.



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

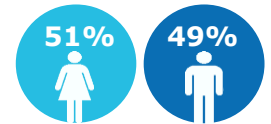
In Numbers

409,200 people assisted in June 2020

1,543 mt of food distributed in June 2020

US\$ 2.7 million in cash-based transfers made in June 2020

US\$ 35.22 million in net funding requirements for all operations over next six months (July - December 2020)



Operational Updates

- Response to COVID-19:** Since April, WFP has provided short-term **food and nutrition assistance** to 36,000 returning migrants for a 21-day period while they are in government-managed quarantine sites in 8 of 14 states and regions, as requested by the authorities. WFP delivered one-time cash assistance (US\$ 5.70 per student) in lieu of school meals in June to 20,300 school children during school closures due to COVID-19. As for **common services support**, since 10 May, WFP has operated eight aid flights linking Yangon and Kuala Lumpur, bringing in medical and hygiene supplies and providing access to humanitarian and development workers. (Please refer to [COVID-19 Situation Report #7](#) for further details).

- Rakhine and Chin:** With the approval of the Government at union and state levels, WFP is in the process of arranging the delivery of food assistance to cover monsoon season needs in conflict-affected Samee, Paletwa and Meeza towns in southern Chin State. Challenges include the unpredictable security context, and the road conditions due to heavy rains.

Across Rakhine State, despite a volatile security situation due to ongoing clashes between the Myanmar military and an ethnic armed group the Arakan Army, WFP reached 27,000 newly-displaced people with emergency food assistance in June. In central Rakhine, WFP provided 134,800 food-insecure people with food and cash assistance, including 29,600 children aged 6-59 months and 5,200 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) with fortified blended food.

- Kachin and Shan:** In Kachin, in June WFP assisted 36,300 displaced people with cash-based transfers, and provided fortified blended food to 1,230 children aged 6-23 months and 2,030 PLW. In northern Shan, WFP's monthly relief assistance reached 10,600 people with food/cash, whereas its nutrition assistance reached 2,830 children aged 6-23 months and 1,500 PLW.

- Community Engagement Mechanism:** In June, WFP launched a countrywide Community Engagement Mechanism (CEM), which replaces the Complaints and Feedback Mechanism. The CEM aims to establish timely and effective accountability to affected populations, where WFP and its partners and beneficiaries can more actively engage together through verbal and written channels. The CEM has also been rolled out in quarantine centres, which enables beneficiaries to have remote contact with WFP.

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Jul – Dec 2020 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
425.3 m	159.0 m	35.22 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 (CBT) 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 CBT 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, CBT 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 CBT 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 (LIFT), 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)

- **Yangon peri-urban areas:** In line with the resilience building activities under the UN Myanmar socio-economic response to COVID-19, WFP is planning to implement a pilot asset creation and livelihoods project to support low-income households. Additional similar projects will be considered on upcoming feasibility assessments and new evidence of vulnerability caused by the impact of COVID-19.

Monitoring

- The WFP Market Monitor for June indicated a stable average price of the four major food commodities in Myanmar, as some COVID-19-related restrictions were eased. Most of the monitored markets are functioning normally, apart from conflict-affected Paletwa Township in Chin State. WFP will continue to closely monitor market trends.

Challenges

- WFP requires US\$ 19.97 million¹ to continue providing life-saving food assistance without interruption to over 300,000 conflict-affected internally displaced persons and other vulnerable people across Myanmar until the end of 2020.
- The food assistance pipeline for relief operations is expected to start breaking in August for cash, and in October for food if no fresh funding is received. This is critical for WFP to sustain the current relief distributions, which have been revised to two- to three-month rations at once as a COVID-19 mitigation measure. The two-month food procurement lead time, could mean further delays of distributions.

WFP food assistance on the front line

Since mid-March, more than 100,000 Myanmar migrant workers have crossed the border gates to return home from neighbouring countries. To complement the Government's COVID-19 response, WFP has been assisting tens of thousands of returning migrants with nutritious cooked meals and fruits since April.

Kayin State is the primary entry point for migrant workers returning from Thailand. "Thanks to WFP's support to the Kayin State Government, we are providing nutritious food and drinking water from the moment the returning migrants set foot in Myanmar and throughout their quarantine stay," said U Bo Bo Wai Maung, the Kayin State Minister for Social Affairs.



Photo: Nutritious meal boxes and fruits provided for returning migrants upon their arrival at Myawaddy border gate. ©WFP/Aung Bo Bo

(1) Includes outstanding loans amounting to US\$ 6.39 million from WFP's Immediate Response Account (IRA) to be repaid.