



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Liberia

Country Brief

April-July 2020



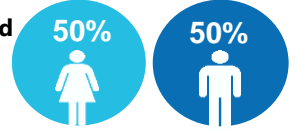
In Numbers

4,144 mt of food assistance distributed

USD 6.6 m six months (Aug 20 - Jan 2021) net funding requirements

Up to 105,016 people assisted

Between April and July 2020



Operational Updates

Country Strategic Plan (CSP)'s Budget Revision

The COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March further compounded increased vulnerabilities that the country has been experiencing since late 2019, including price depreciation and fuel shortages. To strategically assist the Government of Liberia in responding to the crisis, WFP conducted a budget revision of CSP in April 2019 to better respond to the increasing needs faced by the Liberian people. This Budget Revision (BR01) included a scale up of food assistance to vulnerable households affected by COVID-19 under strategic outcome 2, together with increased support to humanitarian and development partners to have access to common services (strategic outcome 4). The budget revision outlines an increase in the number of beneficiaries of the CSP from 175,000 to 2,240,000 (increase of 2,065,000) to support the Government of Liberia's fight against COVID-19 through food distribution to vulnerable households and institutions, which cumulated in an overall increase in cost from USD 50.1 million to USD 89.2 million over the original approved budget of the entire CSP (2019-2023). This represents a significant increase in portfolio, which will require stronger partnerships, coordination and collaboration for quality programme delivery. To ensure that the requisite capacity is in place to support the implementation of the proposed activities, WFP finalized the vetting and selection of experienced cooperating partners to include local and international NGOs.

School Feeding

In April 2020, WFP provided 1,691 mt of food to 92,392 schoolchildren (45,000 girls; 47,392 boys) and their families as take-home rations amid school closures. In June 2020, WFP, along with the Ministry of Education and communities, distributed 927 mt of food to 97,146 public and community primary schoolchildren (48,376 girls; 48,770 boys) as take-home rations. Following the announcement of 12th graders' classes beginning on 29 June 2020 to sit the West African Senior Secondary Certification Examination, WFP is working closely with the Ministry of Education and partners to prepare for a safe reopening of schools in September 2020.

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. 30 percent of children aged 6-59 months are stunted, and 10 percent are severely stunted. Boys are more likely to be stunted (32 percent) than girls (28 percent). Children residing in urban areas are less likely to be stunted than those living in rural areas (25 percent and 35 percent, respectively). 11 percent of Liberian children are underweight, with 3 percent classified as severely underweight. (Liberia Demographic and Health Survey 2019-20). Liberia ranks 176 of 189 on the 2019 Human Development Index and the population in multidimensional poverty is 62.9 percent. (HDR 2019). Poverty affects more women than men as women in some instances tend to endure lower income earnings. The Government launched the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity & Development (PAPD) in 2018, as part of a national development plan to make Liberia a middle-income country by 2030, aligning to the SDGs target. In July 2019, WFP realigned its focus to its Country Strategic Plan, linking agriculture, nutrition and education through an integrated approach to achieving the 2030 agenda. The CSP also focuses on capacity strengthening of institutions at both national and local levels. In the first half of 2020, a budget revision to the CSP was finalized introducing a Service Delivery strategic outcome with focus on providing common services including logistics and supply chain related services to humanitarian actors the Country Office. In response to COVID-19 emergency in Liberia, WFP is supporting the Government response through the implementation of the COVID-19 Household Food Support Programme which aims to provide one-month emergency food assistance to 2.5 million people. The country office is also in partnership with sister UN agencies to implement a UN Joint Programme on Rural Women Economic Empowerment (RWEE), and two joint programmes under the Liberia Multi-Partners Trust Fund (LMPTF) and the Peacebuilding Fund.



Population: **5 million**
(UNFPA 2020)

Income Level: **Low**

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

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

Contact info: John Monibah (john.monibah@wfp.org)

Country Director: Karla Hershey

Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Liberia

Main photo Credit: WFP Liberia/Kabeh Enders

Caption: WFP & Government of Liberia food distribution to welfare institutions under the COVID-19 Household Food Support Programme (COHFSP)

Liberia Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

2020 Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
49.3 m	31.1 m*	6.6 m**

*inclusive of funding for the Government-led COHFSP.
**exclusive of Liberia's HRP requirements.

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: Countries Strengthened Capacities

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

Strategic Result 8: Enhance Global Partnerships

Strategic Outcome 4: Humanitarian and development partners have access to common services throughout the year

Focus area: Crises Response

Activity:

- Provide supply chain and ICT services to humanitarian and development partners

COVID-19 Household Food Support Programme

With the first case of COVID-19 recorded in Liberia in mid-March 2020, President George Weah, in a nationwide proclamation, announced a state of emergency on 8 April 2020 to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The Legislature, in a joint session on 17 April 2020, concurred with the President and mandated WFP to implement the COVID-19 Household Food Support Programme (COHFSP) with an overall budget of USD 30 million to help contain the spread of the virus. Overseen by the National Steering Committee set up by President Weah, the COHFSP will support up to 2.5 million vulnerable and food insecure people nation-wide, including COVID-19 affected households and institutional beneficiaries (healthcare workers, frontline emergency workers, and at risk groups such as people with disabilities, orphans, the elderly, disadvantaged youth and homeless persons).

As part of the COHFSP, in May 2020, WFP supported a total of 3,644 vulnerable people (1,338 women; 2,306 men) in 10 welfare institutions in Montserrado and Margibi Counties. In June 2020, WFP and partners provided a total of 140 mt of food (rice, beans and vegetable oil) to 6,801 vulnerable people (4,052 women; 2,749 men) living in COVID-19 affected communities and welfare institutions in Montserrado and Margibi counties. By end of July 2020, WFP assisted 107,785 vulnerable COVID-19-affected people (52,645 women; 55,140 men) with 1,391 mt of food (rice, bean and oil).

Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)

In the May 2020 update of OCHA's Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP), Liberia was included amidst its vulnerability and response capacity, presenting an overall requirement of USD 57 million to address the immediate health and non-health needs of the most vulnerable people until December 2020 to preserve the ability of the most vulnerable and affected people to meet the additional food consumption and other basic needs caused by the pandemic (Strategic Objective-1), whilst securing the continuity of the supply chain for essential commodities and services (Strategic Objective-2). Out of the overall requirements, WFP needs USD 15 million to provide vulnerable people and at-risk and services to humanitarian and development partners to assist crisis-affected populations (Logistics).

Challenges

WFP continues to experience severe funding gaps for the implementation of activities under its Country Strategy Plan, thereby limiting WFP's ability to address the immediate humanitarian needs, as well as contribute to socio-economic recovery efforts. WFP urgently needs an additional USD 6.69 million to be able to provide school meals in the next six months under the CSP. This six-month funding deficit is coupled with a USD 15 million to carry out life-saving assistance envisaged under the Liberia's HRP.

Challenges

WFP continues to experience severe funding gaps for the implementation of activities under its Country Strategy Plan, thereby limiting WFP's ability to address the immediate humanitarian needs, as well as contribute to socio-economic recovery efforts. WFP urgently needs an additional USD 6.69 million to be able to provide school meals in the next six months under the CSP. This six-month funding deficit is coupled with a USD 15 million to carry out life-saving assistance envisaged under the Liberia's HRP.

Stakeholders Collaboration & Coordination

Nutrition/REACH

In May 2020, Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger (REACH), hosted by WFP, in collaboration with the UN Network for Scaling Up Nutrition and the Ministry of Health completed the development of COVID-19 nutrition messages focusing on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) in consideration of the health and safety protocols recommended by the Ministry of Health. These messages are being aired by ECOWAS and local radios to raise awareness on preventive measures to stop the spread of the virus. In parallel, REACH initiated a study to gauge the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on nutrition outcomes in the country. The final report, expected by the end of August 2020, will inform national response for nutrition programming to respond to the pandemic.

Support to national efforts amidst COVID-19

WFP continues to be actively engaged in Government of Liberia-led fight against the COVID-19 through stakeholders' consultations, multi-sectoral emergency response and presidential task teams. WFP remained engaged with the Liberia National Response Plan's coordination mechanisms, sharing food security, nutrition, logistics and other Supply Chain-related expertise with the wider humanitarian and development community to inform decision-making on how to better prepare, respond and recover from this pandemic. WFP is participating in food security, social protection, supply chain, emergency telecommunications and country capacity strengthening efforts. Through its COVID-19 Relief Item Tracking Application (RITA) tool, WFP seconded a staff to the General Service Agency to support the tracking and reporting of the COVID Non-Food Items (NFIs). This is to help real-time tracking and reporting of all NFIs made available and received during the response.

Assessments

Since the suspension of the Rapid Food Security Assessment planned due to restriction of movement imposed by the Government, WFP conducted a series of food security related assessments such as a remote household food security monitoring via mVAM and reduced market functionality index (MFI) data collection via mobile.

Field data collection for the MFI covered 57 markets and 835 traders' interviews in all 15 counties of Liberia. The data analysis process is ongoing. In parallel, WFP is supporting the Government on price data monitoring. The assessment results will inform decision-making to respond to increased food and nutrition security concerns in Liberia.

Donors

[Canada](#), [Liberia](#), [UN Peacebuilding Fund](#), [Private Donors](#)