



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Liberia Country Brief August – September 2020



Operational Context

The Ebola Virus Disease outbreak (2014-2015) compounded pre-existing socio-economic vulnerabilities (national gross domestic product (GDP) had fallen by 90 percent between 1987 and 1995 following violent conflicts which started in 1979). The World Bank estimates the Ebola outbreak could have cost Liberia as much as USD 234 million or 12 percent of its GDP. Food insecurity is widespread, with an estimated 1.8 million people moderately or severely food insecure. Moreover, 62.9 percent of the population is in multidimensional poverty (with women more affected), thirty percent of children aged 6-59 months are stunted, and 10 percent are severely stunted.

Liberia is currently facing a series of endogenous shocks, further exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19, largely driven by currency depreciation amidst declining external assistance, weak domestic revenue generation, limited expenditure adjustments, and accommodative monetary policy stance (IMF, Dec 2019).

The Government launched the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development in 2018, as part of a national development plan to make Liberia a middle-income country by 2030, aligning to the Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) targets. In July 2019, WFP realigned its focus to its Country Strategic Plan (CSP), linking agriculture, nutrition and education through an integrated approach. The CSP also focuses on capacity strengthening of institutions at both national and local levels. In 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.



Population: **5 million**

2019 Human Development Index: **176 out of 189**

Income Level: **Low**

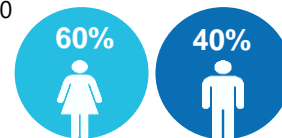
Chronic malnutrition: **30% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

2,195 mt of food assistance distributed in August and September 2020

USD 5 m six months (October 2020 - March 2021) net funding requirement

174,034 people assisted in August and September 2020



Operational Updates

- WFP is supporting the national COVID-19 emergency response through the implementation of the COVID-19 Household Food Support Programme (COHFSP). In August and September 2020, under the COHFSP, WFP provided 2,195 mt of assorted food to 174,034 beneficiaries (104,392 women and 69,642 men), including vulnerable populations, frontline workers, and people living with disabilities in Montserrado county.
- The COHFSP experienced delays in August and September amidst seasonal flooding that hampered the pace of the enumeration process. To speed up registration and improve data quality, the COHFSP steering committee engaged the National Food Assistance Agency to support the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services and undertook simultaneous enumerations of beneficiaries in the five southeast counties of Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Maryland, River Gee and Sinoe.
- Following the [announcement](#) by the Government of Liberia on the reopening of schools in August 2020, the Ministry of Education requested WFP and other school feeding partners to plan for the resumption of school feeding activities throughout the country. This requires WFP to mobilize funding to resume the provision of school meals for children in grade 6 and continue providing take-home rations for those students participating in government-driven tutorials via radio, TV and Internet. The mobilization of resources will further enable the country office to be ready to provide school meals when schools reopen for face-to-face classes for the remaining students (grades 1 to 5) in November 2020.
- In the wake of the upcoming presidential elections in the neighbouring countries of Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea, WFP is currently defining a contingency planning and starting preparedness actions in response to possible displacements into Lofa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Maryland counties.

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Main photo Credit: WFP Liberia/Kabeh Enders

Caption: WFP, Government and partners launch of the 'Stronger With Breastmilk Only' multi-year campaign in Monrovia

Liberia Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

2020 Total Requirement (in USD)	2020 Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
49.4 m	38.1 m	5 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: Crisis 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: Crisis Response

Activity:

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

- The country office is also in partnership with sister UN agencies planning 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.

Challenges

- WFP Liberia continues to experience severe funding shortfalls for the implementation of activities under its Country Strategic Plan (CSP 2019-2023), thereby limiting WFP’s ability to address the immediate humanitarian needs, as well as contribute to socio-economic recovery efforts in

Liberia amidst COVID-19. WFP urgently needs an additional USD 5 million to be able to provide life-saving food assistance and school feeding support during the next six months (October 2020 to March 2021). Only half of the planned number of school children will receive take-home rations in the last quarter of 2020. Without additional resources, the assistance to around 90,000 schoolchildren in Nimba and Maryland counties will stop.

Stakeholders Coordination

- On 19 August 2020, the Government of Liberia, the United Nations and civil society organizations jointly launched the ‘Stronger With Breastmilk Only’ multi-year campaign in Monrovia under the theme “No Water: Stronger With Breastmilk Only” to ensure that mothers get the support they need to give their babies the best start in life. World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated every year in August to encourage mothers to breastfeed their children and improve children’s health and nutrition around the world. It commemorates the Innocenti Declaration signed in August 1990 to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

Assessments

- A recent Market Functionality Index assessment carried out by WFP in collaboration with the Government, analysed nine dimensions of 57 markets across Liberia, i.e. assortment, availability, price, resilience, competition, infrastructure, service, food quality, access and protection. Ninety percent of the dimensions scored “below average” (a value of 3.16 out of 10), and only two dimensions (competition and accessibility) were considered “good”. In the context of COVID-19, and based on these findings, provision of in-kind food was highlighted to be the preferred transfer modality, especially in Gbarpolu, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru and Sinoe counties. The targeted food assistance will help mitigate the effects of the decreased access to viable markets and strengthen community’s acceptance of the necessary public health measures. Together with market price increases, availability of rice (the national staple) is of concern in the southeast counties.
- In August and September 2020, WFP undertook mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (mVAM) surveys, and a countrywide food security assessment. Both assessments will provide updated data on the food security situation throughout the country to inform and coordinate food security efforts amidst COVID-19. Following consultation and validation by the Government of Liberia, their results are expected to be released in October 2020.

Donors

Donors to WFP Liberia in 2020 include Canada, the Government of Liberia, Private Donors and the US. Additional support has been provided by the UN Peacebuilding Fund.