



SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Armenia Country Brief October 2020



In Numbers

55,189 people assisted in October 2020

0 USD cash-based transfers made

0 MT of food assistance distributed

Operational Context

The WFP Armenia Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for 2019-2024, focuses on programme implementation with innovative interventions and delivery modalities in the areas of nutrition, social protection, food value chains, and disaster risk reduction. These activities continue contributing to the efforts to end hunger and achieve food security and improved nutrition by 2030. To ensure sustainable and equitable impact, WFP programmes are inclusive and gender-transformative to empower women in key areas, ensure education for all, have a climate-sensitive design and improve the sustainable management of natural resources. In order to respond to COVID-19, an emergency budget revision was approved, allowing WFP Armenia to support the procurement of emergency personal protective equipment and medical equipment for the health response, as well as providing food assistance to vulnerable populations affected by the health and socio-economic consequences of the pandemic. On 27th September, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan across the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh escalated and while several truces have been negotiated, the shelling continues, and thousands of people are living below ground in Nagorno-Karabakh or are spontaneously arriving to Armenia. Due to the conflict, the Government of Armenia adopted martial law with temporary restrictions on rights and freedoms.

The first COVID-19 case was registered 1st March and the Government imposed a State of Emergency mid-March which lasted till mid-September. Most public health preventive measures remain in place. The daily number of COVID-19 infected are peaking, in particular on 22nd October when Armenian health authorities reported 2474 new cases, the highest number of daily cases since the outbreak began in March. As of October 31, the number of COVID-19 cases in Armenia reached 92,254 with 1,363 deaths.

WFP has been in Armenia since 1993, initially to provide emergency support, however from 2000 it focuses on enabling, supporting and strengthening an environment for the government to provide solutions for increased food and nutrition security. Armenia is an upper-middle income, landlocked, net food-importer country vulnerable to external shocks. Since its independence in 1991, the border closure with neighbouring Turkey and Azerbaijan has constrained the country's economic development. According to the latest National Statistical Service data, the poverty rate reached 23.5 percent in 2018, while keeping most of the public health preventive measures in place.

Population: 2.97 million

Income Level: Upper middle

2019 Human Development Index: 0.76
(81 out of 189 countries)

Chronic malnutrition: 9% of children
between 0-59 months

Operational Updates

- The significant increase in COVID-19 infections and the conflict related to Nagorno Karabakh continued to impact WFP's operations and operational planning throughout October. The country office received surge capacity support from HQ and Cairo Regional Bureau to prepare for an emergency operation accommodating the needs of food insecure households due to COVID-19 and conflict.
- In October WFP continued packing and preparing the Take Home Rations (THR) provision to primary school children and kitchen helpers for four WFP supported provinces – Lori, Kotayk, Armavir and Gegharkunik. THRs are implemented as an alternative modality to school feeding, considering that schools have been closed in response to increasing number of COVID-19 cases. WFP and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS) agreed to distribute THR to around 100,000 primary school children across Armenia. Food distributions will be done in November and will be enough for three months period.
- WFP, the Social and Industrial Foodservice Institute of Russia (SIFI) and Sustainable School Feeding Foundation (SSFF) conducted the annual needs assessment for renovation of school kitchens and cafeterias in Kotayk region. The mission visited 90 schools of Kotayk region to understand needs and requirements for renovations to prepare schools for the handover of the programme to the Government.
- WFP is working with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) to launch food assistance to 44,000 food insecure people affected by the pandemic in the regions of Yerevan (22,782) and Kotayk (21,218). The process of identification, verification, and registration of beneficiaries is ongoing with the MLSA. The food assistance will be provided in late November and early December 2020 thanks to WFP corporate internal funding advances.

Contact info: Bella Baghdasaryan (bella.baghdasaryan@wfp.org)

Representative and Country Director: Jelena Milosevic

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

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024 (CSP) (July 2019 - June 2024)

Total Requirements (in USD)		Allocated Contributions (in USD)
32.1 m		22 m
2020 Requirements in USD	2021 Requirements in USD	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (Nov 2020-April 2021)
10.3 m	6 m	0 m*

*The overall NFR for regular activities is zero since the un-programmed contributions are available to cover these requirements. Meanwhile requirements for new activities which were added as Crisis Response, are covered through WFP advance (IRR) for value of US\$1.5 m.

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Vulnerable populations in Armenia, including schoolchildren, have access to adequate and nutritious food year round

Focus area: Root Causes

Activity 1:

- Strengthen and complement the national school feeding programme to facilitate handover to the Government

Strategic outcome 4: Vulnerable populations in Armenia have access to basic needs and livelihoods during and in the aftermath of a crisis.

Focus area: Crisis Response

Activity 4:

- Support to Government and partners to identify and provide food assistance to vulnerable populations.

Strategic Result 5: Countries have strengthened capacity to implement SDGs

Strategic Outcome 2: National policies, programmes and systems are strengthened to improve food security and nutrition among targeted groups by 2024

Focus area: Root Causes

Activity 2:

- Provide technical support to national institutions to generate an evidence-base and inform policies, strategies and systems to address food insecurity and malnutrition in Armenia.

Strategic Result 8: Sharing of knowledge, expertise and technology, strengthen global partnership support to country efforts to achieve the SDGs

Strategic Outcome 3: Vulnerable populations benefit from improved capacities of national entities and partners to prevent and respond to emergencies

Focus area: Crisis Response

Activity 3:

- Provide on-demand service provision to the Government and other partners.

- Through the establishment of food value chains in Berd Community of Tavush Province, WFP is supporting the availability of nutritionally diversified food in Armenia. In October, despite the challenging situation, 30 farmers participating in this project were able to complete their harvest of 123 MT of crops. To support farmers with sales of their produce, WFP has hired technical experts in branding, and business management to package and market the harvest.
- WFP and its technical partner Agrarian University of Armenia supported 61 farmers to sow 96.8 hectares of land with seeds from WFP. The anticipated yield of this crop in Summer 2021 is 362.1 MT. The Agrarian University will continue to train the participating farmers in agricultural techniques to maximise their yield.
- In October, WFP Armenia continues to promote a nutritional and sustainable "School Feeding Programme" in Arpi lake area by increasing community generated investment in school feeding activities. Solar stations have been established in five schools and electricity generated from these solar panels will in

future provide 55 students with school meals that are prepared using this solar power. In parallel, three local milk processing farms have been supported with infrastructure investments worth US\$39,000. In October WFP's partner SIFI progressed with formally linking these local businesses to the school feeding project, particularly through setting up systems for financial investments.

- WFP Armenia is continuing to promote healthy nutrition and lifestyle among the Armenian population. In October, WFP provided a Nutrition Presentation to the Food Security and Nutrition Technical working group to educate participants on the basic principles and guidelines related to "Nutrition Needs during Emergencies". In Charentsavan, WFP gave a lecture about "Healthy Eating for Children" to inform parents with children from grade 1 to 4 about a healthy balanced diet for their kids.
- Amidst the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict WFP Armenia is leveraging on its existing programmes and continues to strengthen the food security of the most vulnerable people currently in Armenia - local population and spontaneous arrivals, and is preparing to scale up its food assistance portfolio.

Monitoring

- In October, WFP worked on Food Value Chain projects monitoring strategy and planning development. M&E activities for Whole Grain Wheat project have been finalized.
- WFP has continued supporting the capacity strengthening of the National Statistical Service (NSS) with particular focus on data management for the Integrated Living Conditions Survey (ILCS) 2019.
- M&E unit continued to develop monitoring tools focusing on various distributions, such as: Shock Responsive School Feeding and food allocations for the most vulnerable people affected by COVID-19.

Donors

The Republic of Armenia, Russian Federation, United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, WFP 2030 corporate funds, RA Ministry of Health, Fruitful Armenia Fund, Armenia General Benevolent Union (AGBU), Izmirlian Foundation, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, UN SDG Fund, My step Foundation, Saint Sarkis Charity, Mr. Eduardo Eurnekian companies, Embassy of the United Kingdom to Armenia.