



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Armenia Country Brief November 2020

In Numbers

WFP
SAYS
NO to
GENDER
BASED
VIOLENCE

66,189 people assisted in November 2020

0 USD cash-based transfers made

212,299 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, leading to considerable people movements into Armenia. Due to the conflict, the Government of Armenia adopted martial law with temporary restrictions on rights and freedoms. On 10 November, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia signed a Tripartite Statement that halted all hostilities among parties involved in the conflict.

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. As of 30 November, the number of COVID-19 cases in Armenia reached 135,967 with 2,111 deaths.

WFP has been in Armenia since 1993, initially to provide emergency support. Since 2000, WFP has shifted to development assistance and under the CSP 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 26.4 percent in 2019.

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 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted the livelihood and food security of the most vulnerable in Armenia. In November, WFP advanced and closely engaged with the government of Armenia to design a food assistance response following a needs-based approach. WFP assistance, expected to be launched in December 2020, will support for six months 130,000 food insecure people, including 70,000 Armenian host community members and 60,000 spontaneous arrivals from Nagorno-Karabakh. WFP's assistance will be delivered through cash based transfers. Rapid Food Security Assessments (RFSA) have been launched to capture the magnitude of needs and validate estimates that will inform the evidence-based targeting of WFP's upcoming assistance in December. WFP Armenia is also scaling up staffing capacity and establishing agreements with the Government for cash-based assistance.
- In leading the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group, WFP coordinated the design and development of food basket for spontaneous arrivals from Nagorno Karabakh (NK) with the recommended food basket intended for use by partners and working group members organizing their food response.
- Since the conflict flared up in the region WFP, per Government invitation and on a needs basis, provided support to 11,000 spontaneous arrivals in the regions of Syunik and Vayots Dzor with in-kind distributions in November.
- Besides the upcoming food assistance response assisting people facing food insecurity due to COVID-19, WFP continued distributing Take Home Rations (THR) to primary school children and kitchen helpers of four WFP supported provinces – Lori, Kotayk, Armavir and Gegharkunik. In November WFP provided assistance to 25,000 people with 408 MT of food commodities.

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

| Total Requirements (in USD) | Allocated Contributions (in USD) |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 32 m | 22 m |
| 2021 Requirements (in USD) | Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (Jan-June 2021) |
| 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.

- THR are implemented as an alternative method to school feeding since schools have been closed in response to increasing number of COVID-19 cases and onsite provision of school meals temporarily suspended by the Government.
- Currently the allocation plan for the COVID-19 food assistance response has been devised and expanded. WFP made noticeable progress for food assistance distributions ahead of the launch of the activities. WFP and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA) continued to address the operational challenges of capacity at the delivery points

to secure storage, handling the goods and distribution to beneficiaries.

- As part of WFP's Nutrition education programme in Armenia, WFP conducted nutrition Trainings of Trainers for six Cooperating Partners (CPs) engaged in the school agriculture projects. The aim of the training is to provide participants with needed knowledge and guidance to train parents, school cooks, and principals on nutrition-related topics. The CP's will conduct nutrition training in the field in December 2020, and the WFP's Nutrition team will continue to offer support to ensure the highest possible quality of training.
- For part of its existing food value chain projects, WFP conducted in November a two-day business training for cooperative members from Berd community, Tavush, with the Agrarian University of Armenia. This training equips the cooperative with key business skills to manage their business operations. Alongside this, WFP hired a PR company to develop the branding and marketing of supported nutritious products produced by the cooperative to create new market opportunities/or to enter the market. WFP will continue these investments in December to support the cooperative to identify points of sale for large orders of product.

Monitoring

- In November WFP implemented a post-distribution monitoring (PDM) of the Shock Responsive School Feeding project, conducted in partnership with the Armenian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The project consisted in the delivery of a one-time cash-based transfer (CBT) to assist vulnerable families, whose children have not received meals in the framework of the regular School Feeding Programme, because of the COVID-19 lockdown and closure of schools in spring 2020. The goal of the PDM was to verify whether families received the CBT and its findings will be used as lessons-learned to plan a new Food Assistance programme.
- WFP has been preparing tools and concept for the upcoming Rapid Food Security Assessment for the subsequent planning of new Food Assistance Programme. The programme is implemented jointly with the MLSA and will provide food and cash-based transfers to the spontaneous arrivals and host populations country-wide.

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.