



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Armenia Country Brief May 2021

Operational Context

In Armenia, WFP supports the Government and partners in their efforts to eradicate food insecurity and malnutrition in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to implement the Government of Armenia's Development agenda. Together with government line ministries and partners, WFP is contributing to the development of human capital, the improvement of health and the promotion of sustainable economic growth that benefits the whole population.

Through the adoption of its five-year Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for 2019-2024, WFP Armenia's interventions focus on shock-responsive social protection activities and policy development; enhancing food systems; developing evidence-based studies and policies on food security and nutrition; strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction and Response instruments and capacities; enhancing and fully nationalising the School Feeding programme and, as needed delivering emergency food assistance and supply chain service provision.

Following the adoption of its CSP in 2019, WFP undertook two Budget Revision in 2020 and 2021 to respond to growing emergency food security needs in Armenia brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in the adjoining region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

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, while WFP's nationwide assessments conducted in November-December 2020 point to 19% of households being food insecure.

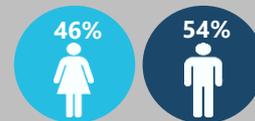
Population: **2.97 million**

Income Level: **Upper middle**

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

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

In Numbers



73,483 people assisted in May 2021

US\$417,088 cash-based transfers made

440 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$1.5 m six months (June – November 2021) net funding requirements

Operational Updates

- In May 13,034 vulnerable women and children spontaneous arrivals from the adjoining region of Nagorno-Karabakh currently residing in Armenia were assisted with cash transfers.
- Around 54,000 schoolchildren in WFP supported schools in 4 provinces received take-home rations to ensure the families benefit from a well-balanced diet while school canteens are closed.
- The value chain project in Tegh is ongoing: 15 female farmers planted 8 types of high value seedlings in 650 sqm of land in Tegh community, a border community in Syunik. Alongside seedlings, the farmers received trainings to optimize the harvest. 84 individuals from the farmers' households will benefit from the first harvest in September 2021, and WFP is supporting participating farmers with marketing and sales to increase their profit margins.
- In cooperation with the Social and Industrial Foodservice Institute (SIFI) and School Feeding and Child Welfare Agency (SFCWA), WFP organized a coordination meeting with development partners in Lori province to mobilize WFP local and international partners to join forces to improve learning conditions for 124 schools in the province. The objective of the meeting was to raise awareness on the School Feeding Programme and generate funds for schools' infrastructural rehabilitation. Many local business representatives couldn't attend the coordination meeting even though they expressed interest in supporting schools. Therefore, WFP, SIFI and SFCWA will follow up on their possible contribution and will reach out to all participants to facilitate the possible provision of financial support and distribute the materials presented during the meeting.
- Infrastructure need assessment of schools in Armavir provinces has been launched in partnership with SIFI.
- WFP and the Republican Union of Employers of Armenia hosted a conference at the end of May to present findings of a collaborative assessment on resilience to shocks of the Armenian market for food and essential non-food items during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the findings are:
 - During autumn 2020, when COVID-19 pandemic became more severe in Armenia alongside the conflict in the adjoining region of Nagorno Karabakh, almost all product groups prices increased compared to summer 2020.
 - During COVID-19 and conflict, product availability in the market was not affected and the short supply chain remained mostly intact.

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WFP Country Strategy

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

Total Requirements (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)
41 m	26 m
2021 Requirements (in US\$)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$) (June–November 2021)
14 m	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.

- In Armenia, most shops selling food and essential non-food items are small with limited stock capacity due to lack of proper cold storage facilities.

- A “refresher” training on local procurement procedures and food safety was conducted for headmasters of 38 schools in Vayots Dzor province to enhance their readiness for the implementation of the national School Feeding Programme.
- To support Government’s capacity strengthening, WFP seconded a data expert to Armstat (Armenian National Statistical committee) to augment the analytical capacity of the

Armstat staff. As the agreed secondment ends in May 2021, WFP completed the handover.

- WFP Armenia, in cooperation with a UN expert working group has been providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Education, Sciences, Culture and Sports (MoESCS) in developing healthy lifestyle curricula (HLC) in the framework of the state curricula reform. In May 2021, an HLC curricula was developed based on previously approved core ideas and subjects. WFP was responsible for the development of the nutrition one.

Monitoring and Assessments

- The M&E unit continued maintaining the beneficiary feedback mechanism, registering and summarizing phone calls and emails, and sharing the results with the respective units. As the beneficiaries were notified via SMS about the new cash-based transfer (CBT) programme that started on 30 April, the number of calls with various enquiries to the hotline increased significantly. Three additional staff members were hired to assist with the enquiries and the implementation of the post-distribution monitoring (PDM). Since the start of the cash-based assistance programme, a total of 1,736 phone calls were registered, in 78 percent of the cases the issue was solved, and 18 percent of the cases needs to be followed up. In the majority of the cases (95 percent) overall feedback of the assistance provided was positive.
- The third nationwide Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (FSVA) was conducted in April–May 2021. The draft report has been finalized and it is now under review. It is expected to be released around mid-June after the endorsement from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.
- The second round of food security monitoring (mVAM) was initiated among spontaneous arrivals residing in Armenia.

Donors

Armenia General Benevolent Union (AGBU), British Embassy Yerevan, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Mr. Eduardo Eurnekian companies, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Government of Flanders, Government of France, Fruitful Armenia Fund, Izmirlian Foundation, My step Foundation, Russian Federation, The Republic of Armenia, The Republic of Armenia Ministry of Health, Saint Sarkis Charity, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, UN SDG Fund

Photo Caption: WFP Armenia on a field visit to a community centre hosting displaced population from NK in Gegharkunik. February 2021” (Photo: Aimé Saba)