



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Armenia Country Brief July 2021

In Numbers



32,784 people assisted in July 2021

US\$4,896 cash-based transfers made

554 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$1.5 m six months (August 2021 – January 2022) net funding requirements

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 Revisions 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 percent of households being food insecure.

Population: **2.97 million**

Income Level: **Upper middle**

2020 Human Development Index: **0.77 (81 out of 89 countries)**

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

Operational Updates

- In July, WFP reached 31,733 vulnerable people registered in the state family support system in Shirak region, with a full ration for one month, consisting of the following 8 food items: buckwheat, wheat grain, pasta, rice, lentils, dried beans, vegetable oil and dried fruit. The food distributions were extended toward the end of July. Food distribution started on 21 June, with the aim to support the most vulnerable food insecure families through home delivery to alleviate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.
- WFP has been collaborating closely with the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia to align Syunik region programmes' goals and objectives with the priorities of the Government. In July, a team including WFP's Armenia Country Director and the Advisor to the Prime Minister undertook a scoping mission in the region to explore the possibility to implement small scale projects to increase the resilience of communities affected by conflict/COVID-19, as well as to build a better understanding of possible involvement in larger-scale food value chain initiatives. As a result of this mission, WFP has begun to develop a project concept note that can be shared with donors for fund mobilization.
- In August 2020, WFP commissioned to the Republican Union of Employers of Armenia (RUEA) three food systems assessments to understand the impact of COVID-19 and seasonal variations on market functionality and supply chain mechanisms in Armenia. This collaboration was finalized in July 2021. As a result, WFP gained better knowledge on what are the gaps and vulnerabilities of Armenia's food supply system to inform both policy and programmatic development. The assessments will guide the discussion with the Ministry of Education on future collaboration with WFP.
- WFP is preparing schools of the Lori region to shift from in-kind to cash-based transfers (CBT) School Feeding starting from September 2021. To facilitate the modality change, training for 148 headmasters on local procurement and food safety regulations were conducted. Additionally, 72 schools of the Lori region received construction materials and have started renovation works.
- WFP in cooperation with the School Feeding and Child Welfare Agency (SFCW) organised a series of capacity strengthening events through coaching sessions and technical consultation on procurement for headmasters of 24 schools and representatives of local authorities of Gegharkunik region.

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Photo Caption: In kind food home delivery to food insecure local population in Shirak region. (Photo by: Zaruhi Ohanjanyan)

**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\$) (Aug 2021- Jan 2022)
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.

- WFP finalized the development of menus to cover a two-week timeframe for the schools enrolled in the School Feeding Programme. This shift from the one-week menu was done to align with Government requirements.

Monitoring and Assessments

- Market price and food basket cost analysis revealed that the fluctuation of exchange rate between June 2020 and June 2021 was 6.6 percent; among 3 food baskets, the School Feeding one faced the largest increase rate since April 2020. An increase in the market value for basic food basket commodities was also observed. The higher increase was witnessed in the School Feeding basket because the price of wheat flour, which forms

about 70 percent of the whole basket weight, increased by 12 percent during the period from April 2020 to May 2021.

- The final report of the third food security and vulnerability assessment (FSVA 3) which was conducted in April-May 2021 has been prepared and will be released in mid-August. The results of FSVA 3 show that 21.4 percent of the population in Armenia is food insecure. The proportion of people with acceptable food consumption slightly increased (from 90.2 percent to 92.1 percent) as well as the proportion of households not adopting any coping strategies. The adoption of livelihood coping strategies decreased in FSVA 3, similar to the dynamics witnessed in the previous assessment, and the household income deteriorated. The results of FSVA 3 indicate that only 45 percent of children of 6-23 months met the minimum acceptable diet.
- The second round of data collection of the nationwide Food Security monitoring system (mVAM) to track the food security situation of displaced persons across the country is ongoing. The data collection was done in all regions of Armenia including Shirak region, as a follow-up for the in-kind food distribution among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. A separate mVAM study is planned among food insecure population in Shirak region for which the questionnaire has been already designed and the data collection will start in early August.
- The Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) unit has successfully maintained the hotline for beneficiary feedback throughout July. Since 22 June, when the in-kind food distribution in Shirak region (province) started till 26 July, around 1,630 phone calls related to it were registered. In 99 percent of the cases, the callers' feedback was positive.
- The M&E unit conducted Post Distribution Monitoring of the food assistance to 44,000 vulnerable populations affected by the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in Yerevan and Kotayk. Overall, 220 beneficiaries were interviewed. The beneficiaries were satisfied with the food received, and the majority of respondents expressed their gratitude for the assistance.
- WFP jointly with Social and Industrial Food Service System (SIFI) and SFCW Agency finalised the evaluation criteria for the ongoing mini-garden competition, a project that was launched to raise awareness about the School Feeding Programme in Armenia as well as to promote school gardens at a national level.

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