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 food systems; developing evidence-responsive social protection activities and policy development; 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 one Budget Revision in 2020 and two Budget Revisions in 2021. The first two Budget Revisions aimed at responding to growing food insecurity in Armenia brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and the hostilities/fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The third Budget Revision approved in November 2021, added capacity strengthening as an emergency response tool to support displaced and food insecure populations living in new border provinces (marzes) through skills and resilience building activities.

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 27 percent in 2020, while WFP’s nationwide assessments conducted in April 2021 point to 21.4 percent of households being food insecure.

In Numbers
- 39,461 people assisted in December 2021
- US$25,675 cash-based transfers made
- 320 mt of food assistance distributed
- US$1.5 m in six months (January 2022 – June 2022) net funding requirements

Operational Updates
To support the most vulnerable and food insecure displaced families from Nagorno Karabakh, WFP distributed in-kind commodities to 5,770 displaced people (1,224 families): 2,400 beneficiaries in Ararat, 2,500 beneficiaries in Kotayk, 800 beneficiaries in Gegharkunik and 70 beneficiaries in Yerevan (in December, WFP also dispatched food for Syunik, which will be distributed in the beginning of January 2022).

In December, WFP provided in-kind assistance to the schools in Armavir (69 schools) and Kotayk (86 schools) provinces to cook hot meals for 26,568 children. WFP supported 89 schools in Lori province with cash transfers for the schools to cook hot meals for 6,212 children. Additionally, in December 612 kitchen helpers and cooks working in Armavir and Kotayk schools and 299 kitchen helpers and cooks working in Lori schools received 80 tons of in-kind assistance. In 2022 the national government will take over the school feeding programmes in schools in Armavir and Kotayk provinces currently supported by WFP - the other eight provinces are already now under the National School Feeding programme. WFP will continue to technically support these schools.

With the guidance and support of WFP, the Government of Armenia joined the School Meals Global Coalition, an international coalition of countries promoting school feeding with the goal to ensure every child can access a healthy meal every day in school by 2030. With this initiative WFP and the Government of Armenia will have an opportunity to showcase best practices and lessons learnt tailored to national and local context, as well as work collaboratively with various stakeholders across the sectors at regional, national, and subnational levels.

In the reporting period, a comprehensive research has been commissioned by WFP to provide the Government with best available research and contextual evidence serving as a basis for identification of urban school feeding modality for Yerevan-based schools. Based on the consolidated outcomes of the research, a project proposal for expanding the urban school feeding in Yerevan will be developed and presented to the stakeholders for final decision making and fund raising.

At the end of 2021 WFP started an extensive assessment to evaluate the feasibility of scaling up a Food Value Chain programme in Syunik in 2022. 7,572 beneficiaries in 10 villages are planned to be reached in the first half of 2022 with climate sensitive investments to increase agricultural production and improve food processing therefore enhancing livelihoods of the population of Syunik.

Photo Caption: Christmas party in Teghut school with whole grain bread baked in school and vegetables grown in the school greenhouse (photo by Vahan Arakelyan)

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Representative and Country Director: Jelena Milosevic
In December, Jelena Milosevic, WFP Representative and Country Director in Armenia, and the Deputy Minister of Economy of the Republic of Armenia, Arman Khojoyan visited several communities in Lori and Tavush provinces to observe the innovative agricultural practices implemented in the schools supported by WFP. The officials visited modern greenhouses where traditional, high-value crops are being grown and schoolchildren are actively involved in the works carried out in the greenhouses.

Recognizing the importance of the private sector organizations’ involvement in creating food value chains and the overall food security, WFP Representative and Country Director in Armenia, visited the cow cattle breeding farm of the “Yeremyan Projects” located in Vayots Dzor province. WFP Country Director and General Director of the “Yeremyan Projects”, discussed the approach “from seed to table” as an important concept to ensure food security, as well as cooperation opportunities and perspectives between WFP and the company.

**Monitoring and Assessments**

In December, the Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (FSVA) 3 was published. FSVA3 was carried out in all regions of Armenia and took place from February through April 2021 to track the food security situation in the country, following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the hostilities/fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

WFP conducted monitoring of the in-kind distribution (done in December) to people displaced from Nagorno Karabakh currently residing in Ararat and Kotayk provinces, as well as cash transfer provision done in June to 11,469 beneficiaries displaced as a result of the hostilities. Results of both monitoring activities revealed that the majority of beneficiaries were fully satisfied with the distribution process which was well organized.

**External WFP audit**

WFP Armenia Country Office was among one of the eight WFP country offices to go through an external audit in the second half of 2021. The external audit took place in Armenia from 29 November to 10 December 2021.

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