The Kyrgyz Republic is a landlocked, mountainous country with a territory of 199,000 square kilometres. Two-thirds of its multi-ethnic population live in rural areas. Poverty increased from 20 percent in 2019 to 33 percent in 2021, with an additional 10 percent at risk of poverty. This highlights the need for nutrition sensitive and shock-responsive social protection to the rising needs.

The global food crisis is exacerbating existing stresses following the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, which had already eroded the resilience of the most vulnerable households. In August 2022, inflation remained high at 15.6 percent compared with August 2021, one of the highest in Central Asia. According to WFP’s food security assessment (August 2022), 21 percent of households, or more than 1.3 million people, are food insecure and around a fifth of households are not consuming an adequate diet.

The Kyrgyz economy is highly dependent on remittances, which made up 31 percent of the country’s economy in 2020. Remittances are an important contributor to reducing the national poverty rate: without remittances, poverty would have reached 43 percent and extreme poverty would have reached 17 percent in 2021. The country’s high dependency on imported basic foods (30 percent for wheat, 84 percent for vegetable oil and 37 percent for sugar) continues to negatively affect the most vulnerable households for which food makes up 65 percent of their expenses.

While the prevalence of stunting, wasting and underweight has fallen among children and adolescents, overweight and obesity have increased. These conditions are often the result of poor and non-diverse diets due to the unaffordability of nutritious foods and limited knowledge on nutrition and healthy diets. There is a need to scale up nutrition education, targeting especially children and adolescents, given growing concerns around the prevalence of diet-related non-communicable diseases.

In mid-September 2022, an armed conflict on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border resulted in casualties and damage to infrastructure, as well as 142,000 internally displaced people. At the moment, the political situation in the country remains to be stable but tense.

**Operational Updates**

**Emergency response**

- WFP, in coordination with the Ministry of Emergency Situations, and Disaster Response and Coordination Unit (DRCU) partners, provided a rapid response to the internally displaced people (IDPs) affected by the Kyrgyz-Tajik border clashes in mid-September. WFP provided 230 mt of mixed food commodities to cover the needs of 20,000 IDPs for a month. WFP, together with DRCU partners, led a Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team (REACT) multi-sectoral assessment. As the lead of the Food Security and Logistics Sectors, WFP is coordinating closely with the Government, UN Country Team and humanitarian partners. A Humanitarian Response Plan will be issued soon to scale up the life-saving support to IDPs, returnees and host communities in the affected areas.

**School meals and healthy diets**

- WFP, together with the Ministry of Education and Science, the Social and Industrial Foodservice Institute and other civil society partners, supported 49 schools to replace a menu consisting of a bun and tea with hot, diverse and healthy meals that satisfy children’s energy and nutrients needs as per the Ministry of Health standards. WFP and partners organized trainings for school cooks and provided modern kitchen equipment and fortified wheat flour to the schools that rehabilitated canteens and kitchens with support from local authorities. Starting from September 2022, these schools are providing healthy dishes consisting of soups, porridges, fresh bakery, salads and vitamin-rich drinks to primary schoolchildren in a safe environment. This contributed to the Government’s efforts to roll out the Optimized School Meals Programme (OSMP) across the country and increase the number of schools that serve high-quality hot meals to primary schoolchildren.

- In September, a number of WFP-assisted schools participated in exchange visits to explore successful experiences on the OSMP organization and management. During the visits, school representatives shared OSMP’s best practices including school menu development; school gardens/ farms management; monitoring of quality, safety and efficiency of school meals organization, among others. This provided a platform to exchange knowledge to improve school meals and replicate good practices.

**In Numbers**

- **483.4 mt** of food assistance distributed
- **US$ 90,091** cash-based transfers made

**Operational Updates**

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**Contact info:** WFP.Kyrgyz Republic Country Director: Kojiro Nakai

Further information: [https://www.wfp.org/countries/kyrgyz-republic](https://www.wfp.org/countries/kyrgyz-republic)
Focus area: Optimizing School Meals

Activities:
- Provide school meals to primary school-aged children and strengthen the capacity of government institutions and schools to implement school meals
- Provide short-term food assistance to vulnerable populations, including schoolchildren and people in social institutions, to meet their basic food needs during and in the aftermath of emergencies

Focus area: Emergency Support and Early Recovery

Activities:
- Provide emergency food assistance to shock-affected vulnerable populations

Support to smallholders
- In the third quarter of 2022, WFP supported 30,000 vulnerable people through various community asset creation projects. These included (i) 33 km of water pipes rehabilitated, enabling access to clean drinking water for 12 rural communities; (ii) 39 km of irrigation canals rehabilitated, improving irrigation of 2,978 hectares of land, reducing water loss and improving productivity; (iii) 458 fruit trees planted and 34 public facilities renovated. Furthermore, over 589 vulnerable families participated in human capital building projects to acquire important livelihoods skills, including fish-farming, bio-fertilizer production, and plumbing.

Capacity strengthening of national institutions
- WFP held a meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and other partners to present a new methodology and information system for monitoring the availability of food products. During the meeting, participants discussed the nationwide roll-out of the methodology, capacity building of district-level agricultural departments and other aspects related to digitalization of food security and nutrition systems. The methodology will allow the MoA to receive up-to-date information on the availability of food products across districts, which is a critical means to monitor the food security situation. The methodology is expected to be approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in late 2022.

Social protection
- WFP supported the digitalization of the “Social Passport” – a database of low-income families and people with disabilities, which is part of the national automated information system “Sanarip Aimak” developed by the Government to increase the efficiency of public services. WFP supported the development of the regulatory framework, organized training for district- and local-level counterparts, and provided equipment to facilitate data entry. The information system was adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers in September. The digitalized Social Passport will facilitate access to comprehensive data on vulnerable populations, which will significantly reduce data processing time and improve data security and targeting of low-income families.

Partnerships
- WFP, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China agreed to expand triangular cooperation to empower smallholder farmers in the Kyrgyz Republic through the introduction of innovative agriculture management technologies. The initiative will include: (i) assessments of the capacities of the stakeholders to integrate innovative solutions with support from Chinese academic community; (ii) cost-benefit analyses of the proposed innovative methods; and (iii) knowledge sharing among smallholders and state bodies on the methods. The initiative aims to enable smallholders to apply efficient and climate resilient practices to increase agricultural productivity and incomes.