



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
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WFP Armenia Country Brief February 2024

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 the Government, WFP contributes to human capital development, health promotion and sustainable economic growth to benefit the Armenian population.

Armenia is an upper-middle-income, landlocked, net food-importing 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 24.8 percent in 2022, while WFP's fifth Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment conducted in January 2023 revealed that 30 percent of households are food insecure.

Through the adoption of its Country Strategic Plan (2019-2025), WFP's interventions in Armenia support the strengthening of a shock-responsive social protection system; sustainable food systems and value chains; provision of evidence and analysis to support evidence-based policy and decision-making; strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction, preparedness and response capacities; enhancing and fully nationalising the School Feeding programme and, as needed, delivering emergency food assistance and supply chain service provision.

Following a massive influx of 101,848 refugees (as of 1 November 2023) who fled through the Lachin Corridor, WFP activated an emergency food assistance response to refugees in need. The support is provided upon the Government of Armenia's request and in coordination with the authorities to address the urgent needs of refugees.

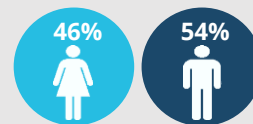
Population: **2.97 million**

2021 Human Development Index:
0.759 (85 out of 89 countries)

Income Level: **Upper middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **9% of children
between 6-59 months**

In Numbers



61,210 people assisted
in February 2024

244 mt food distributed

USD 52,000 cash-based transfers made

USD 13.8 m six months (March – August 2024) net
funding requirements

Emergency Response

- In February, WFP continued **in-kind food assistance** to 60,076 refugees to address food needs during the winter season. WFP's food assistance covered eight out of 10 provinces in Armenia.
- In late February, WFP made its **first emergency cash transfer to 1,019 refugees** (175 households) in Syunik and Ararat provinces, using the food card – bankcards uploaded with cash to purchase food. WFP plans to reach a total of 23,000 refugees with cash transfers via food cards until April 2024.

Cash assistance will be provided to refugees residing in Ararat, Kotayk, Syunik, Vayots Dzor, Gegharkunik, Lori, and Shirak provinces.

- In February, WFP initiated **psycho-social support to refugees** through child-friendly spaces, group and individual sessions for adults in Gegharkunik, Syunik, Ararat, Shirak, and Lori.

In the reporting period, 115 refugees have been reached for psycho-social support in Lori, Shirak and Syunik provinces.

Operational Updates

- WFP continues to contribute to the national school feeding programme by scaling up its "Transformative School Feeding" interventions in Syunik Province.

WFP is investing in school-based agricultural activities aiming to enhance educational opportunities and generate additional income to ensure the financial sustainability of schools to continuously provide nutritious hot meals.

In February, WFP completed school selection processes in Syunik, and identified five schools that will receive climate-smart agricultural facilities including greenhouses, intensive orchards, and berry gardens, along with the installation of solar stations.

The activity will benefit 1,200 school children and staff.

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2025)

Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)
84 m	44 m
2024 Requirements (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (March-August 2024)
14 m	13.8 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

Activities:

- 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

Activities:

- 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

Activities:

- 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.
- Strengthen national food systems in Armenia, supporting actors along the food value chain.
- Provide support to national institutions to strengthen the national social protection system.

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

Activities:

- Provide on-demand service provision to the Government and other partners.

Monitoring and Assessments

- WFP's February Market Price Bulletin recorded 5.8 percent decrease in food price inflation and 0.9 percent decrease in the Consumer Price Index in January 2024 compared to January 2023. Tavush, Kotayk, and Lori provinces had the most decreases. The highest reductions included "oils and fats" (21 percent), "vegetables" (11.6 percent) and "bread and

cereals" (8.8 percent).

- To overcome barriers for socio-economic integration of refugees and host communities, and to identify existing opportunities to develop context-specific activities for livelihood support, WFP conducted a "Barrier Analysis". The analysis covered Kotayk, Ararat, Gegharkunik, Lori, and Syunik provinces, where most refugees live. Findings revealed that refugees face significant barriers related to legal status, social integration and human capital, access to services, as well as employment opportunities and economic integration. The analysis will inform future programming on refugee integration support.
- WFP launched the sixth nationwide Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment in Armenia. The study will assess food security levels among the local and refugee populations, considering security concerns, refugee influx and winterization expenditures. Data collection is ongoing among 4,217 households, including 1,058 refugee households, covering all ten provinces of Armenia and the capital, Yerevan.

Positive behavioral change observed among schoolchildren who received milk

- In February, the closing ceremony of the "Milk in School" project took place, which was launched in January 2023 through joint efforts of WFP and the milk-producing company "Yeremyan Projects" to address calcium deficiencies among children and promote behavioral change. Through this intervention, over 300 school children in two schools received milk every morning and participated in co-creation events and awareness-raising sessions with teachers and parents. The results of WFP's endline assessment revealed a positive shift in children's attitudes toward milk, surpassing the baseline study and outperforming the control group. Healthy habits were observed with an increase in regular milk consumption among children who were previously indifferent, and 33 percent of parents stated that children who were not drinking milk at all started drinking milk at school.



Donors

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