



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Armenia Country Brief March 2024



In Numbers



82,200 people assisted
in March 2024

370 mt food distributed

USD 1,600,000 cash-based transfers made

USD 4.7 m six months (April – September 2024) 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 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**

Operational Updates

- In March, WFP provided family food parcels to 60,076 refugees. This assistance was a continuation of support provided to beneficiaries in February, to meet increased food needs during winter and early spring period. Parcels were distributed in the beginning and at the end of March, covering refugee food needs for the March and April period. Food assistance was implemented in close cooperation with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure and covered eight out of ten provinces in Armenia.
- During the reporting period, WFP also scaled up its food assistance using the food card (bank cards with cash restricted for purchasing food) and made cash transfers to 21,315 refugees in Ararat, Gegharkunik, Lori, Shirak, Syunik, Kotayk, and Vayots Dzor provinces. WFP's cash assistance aims to address the immediate food needs of vulnerable refugee households and improve their food security. As part of the food card distribution, WFP conducted awareness-raising sessions for beneficiaries to inform them on how to use the food cards and plan their economy. WFP's cash assistance will be completed in April.
- WFP, in cooperation with World Vision, continued to provide psycho-social support to refugees. This support included psychological first aid, child-friendly spaces, positive parenting and recreational activities through group and individual sessions for adults and children in Ararat, Gegharkunik, Lori, Shirak and Syunik provinces. In March, 888 refugees, both adults and children received psycho-social support as part of the cash assistance programme.
- WFP supports the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in developing an integrated, human-centred, and Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) system. In March, WFP launched a series of discussions with relevant bodies aimed at unpacking and mapping out needs assessment requirements, beneficiary targeting and registration standards, cash transfer mechanisms, and monitoring needs to enable a shock-responsive social protection system.

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Photo Caption: Bakery in Tsaghkunk (Gegharkunik province) started to bake wholegrain bread and other products to sell and provide schools as part of the school feeding.
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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) (April-September 2024)
14	4.7 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.

- To promote the consumption of wholegrain products as a nutritious dietary choice, WFP is supporting the development of the wholegrain value chain in Gegharkunik province. Six bakeries located in Sevan, Gavar, Martuni, Vardenis, and Chambarak communities have received essential baking equipment and 20 kWt solar stations to help reduce their operational expenses. Starting in March, these

bakeries commenced the production of wholegrain bread and other wholegrain products. As part of the school feeding program, a total of 118 schools in the province began providing wholegrain bread to 14,025 schoolchildren. To support knowledge and information transfer, organize trainings and events on making wholegrain bread and other products, and considering the previous success of establishing a Training Resource Center in Tavush province in 2022, WFP also supported the establishment of another Training Resource Center in Martuni city of Gegharkunik province. The center has received baking equipment and a 40 kWt solar station and will start its operation in May.

- In March, WFP, in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Ministry of Economy of Armenia, signed a tripartite cooperation framework. Within the framework, WFP will provide technical assistance to the Ministry for implementation and institutionalization of WFP's piloted value chain development models, namely the "Revolving Fund" model. This initiative aims to strengthen community capacities, enhance their energy independence, and create a source of economic regeneration. WFP will provide technical assistance for the upcoming three years.

Monitoring and Assessments

- WFP's March Market Price Bulletin highlights that food price inflation decreased by 7.4 percent in February 2024, and the Consumer Price Index decreased by 1.7 percent compared to February 2023. The highest food price decreases were in Tavush, Kotayk, and Lori provinces. The highest price reductions were on vegetables (19.3 percent) oils and fats (18.9 percent), and bread and cereals (8.8 percent) food categories.
- In March, WFP initiated a Nutrition Barrier Analysis to identify key barriers and enablers affecting the ability of beneficiaries who receive Food Cards (WFP's cash assistance modality). The analysis aims to help beneficiaries make healthy nutritional choices and efficiently manage their food budgets, including grocery shopping, food preparation and consumption. The results of analysis will inform the development of targeted Social Behavior Change (SBC) interventions, incorporating co-creation activities aimed at improving nutrition and health status, as well as enhancing financial planning skills for food purchase.

Donors

Armenia General Benevolent Union, UK, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Japan, EMERCOM, ECHO, European Union, Fruitful Armenia Fund, Government of Flanders, France, Izmirlian Foundation, Mr. Eduardo Eurnekian companies, My step Foundation, Russian Federation, Saint Sarkis Charity, Swiss agency for Development and Cooperation, South-South Opportunity Fund, Armenia, UN funds, USA.