WFP Myanmar
Mid-Project Update · July 2014
Foreword

In 2013, WFP launched a new three-year Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO 200299). This provided a good opportunity to review and realign activities with national priorities in a period characterized by an unprecedented, rapid and multifaceted transition in Myanmar. As an overarching goal of WFP in Myanmar for the implementation period of 2013-2015, WFP has aimed to contribute to more equitable development across the country and support national reconciliation efforts by reducing poverty, food insecurity and undernutrition and increasing resilience among the most vulnerable communities.

Since the current project is already half way through, this publication aims to provide a brief and vivid overview of five operational (relief, nutrition, support to HIV/TB clients, school feeding and assets creation) and three thematic (VAM, Supply Chain Management and Emergency Preparedness & Response) activities of WFP in Myanmar, featuring major highlights from January 2013 through June 2014.

Photo: WFP/ Kyaw Zaw Tun
**Facts & Figures:**

- **US$95.7 million** mobilized (47 percent) against total needs

- **10 field offices** covering all food insecure areas of the country

- **28** cooperating, **15 funding and 7 UN partners**

- A leading humanitarian logistics hub with **38** trained logisticians, **18,000+** mt warehouse capacity in **12** locations, **72** commercial transporters, **42** vehicles & **24** speedboats

- Strengthened **partnership** with the Government through enhanced collaboration with the Ministries of Border Affairs; Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development; and Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

- WFP has distributed **75,000 mt** of food reaching **1.3 million** vulnerable people across Myanmar

- Local purchase of **69,000 mt** of food, equivalent to **US$51 million** contribution to local economy

- Accomplished unprecedented food security and poverty survey in Ayeryarwaddy, Bago, Chin, Kachin, Magway, Sagaing, Shan and Yangon to support the National Rural Development Strategy

- WFP - the only international humanitarian organization delivering **100 percent** life-saving food assistance every month to conflict-affected populations in Rakhine
Relief

Because of ongoing conflicts and continuously volatile situation in Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan States, relief assistance to some 350,000 displaced and other conflict-affected people, deprived of livelihood opportunities, has comprised the bulk of WFP activities since the start of the current operation in January 2013.

In response to the 2012 outbreak of intercommunal violence in Rakhine, causing mass displacement of people, WFP has been able to provide food rations to more than 135,000 IDPs each month since 2013. In March 2014, WFP premises in the Rakhine capital of Sittwe were attacked by an armed mob, sustaining substantial damages. Despite limited operational capacity, WFP managed to deliver 100 percent of its planned distributions with support from the Government and cooperating partners.

In Kachin and northern Shan, facing ongoing conflict between the Government and the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), WFP has been assisting between 32,000 and 70,000 IDPs each month. While WFP has regular access to the government-controlled areas, food assistance to IDPs in the KIO-administered areas has been limited to times when humanitarian cross-line missions are granted access.

In northern Rakhine, which has one of the highest poverty and malnutrition rates, WFP has been providing assistance to the most food insecure and vulnerable households in 630 villages, including the Rakhine, who returned from Bangladesh. Overall, some 70,000 women, men and children have benefited from WFP’s protracted relief since January 2013.
Nutrition activities have been one of WFP’s top priorities in Myanmar, which has the third highest malnutrition rates in southeast Asia and where almost half of the children are stunted (being too short for their age). Throughout the reporting period, WFP has implemented blanket supplementary feeding targeting the most food insecure 9,500 pregnant and nursing women and 41,000 children under 5 and infants under 2 in northern Rakhine, northern Shan and Magway.

In northern Rakhine, northern Shan and Magway, where a lot of children suffer from wasting (failure to gain weight), WFP has provided food assistance to children under 5 and pregnant and nursing mothers both as treatment of and a preventative measure against wasting. In those parts of Magway and northern Shan, where malnutrition was of a more chronic nature, WFP has also engaged in fighting chronic malnutrition or stunting.

Concomitantly, in order to achieve greater awareness and impact, WFP, through its partners, has been providing mother and child care education to pregnant and nursing mothers.

A WFP monthly ration of wheat soya blend (WSB) - a nutritious cereal, prepared from fresh wheat grain and soya beans, sugar, dry skimmed milk, and oil fortified with various vitamins & elements - helps prevent wasting and keeps this Rakhine infant happy and healthy throughout his childhood.

Photo: WFP/Darko Petrovic
Support to HIV/TB clients

Based on increasing evidence regarding the relationship between HIV/TB and malnutrition and food insecurity as well as the success of previous years’ interventions, WFP has continued providing nutritional support (food-by-prescription) to people living with HIV/TB.

WFP has been providing targeted supplementary feeding to some 9,000 HIV/AIDS clients on ART and 3,000 TB clients on DOTS treatment in Yangon and Magway Regions as well as in Kachin, Shan and northern Rakhine.

Thanks to WFP’s nutritional support, the adherence to ART therapy is remarkably high in Myanmar (up from 92 percent in December 2012 to 97 percent in December 2013) and has even attracted people living with HIV/AIDS from neighbouring China. In 2013, WFP’s nutritional support to TB patients underwent a five percent increase in TB treatment success rate.

This 42 year old is a widower and father of four. As a migrant worker in the China-Myanmar border area, he became drug addicted. In 2012, he found out he was HIV positive, when seeing a doctor to treat a persistent sickness. He started ART treatment five months later at a clinic run by MSF. Due to his sickness, he was unable to work at that time and therefore gained no income to sustain his family. The ART treatment and WFP’s nutritional support, consisting of WFP monthly food basket, were milestones towards La Maw’s recovery.

“WFP’s food assistance has been of great benefit to me during this difficult period of my life,” says La Maw. “I particularly like the blended food. Now I feel healthy again and am able to work, something that seemed impossible before starting the treatment.”

The consent of the client depicted on this photo has been obtained prior to publishing.

Photo: AHRN/Aung Naing
School Feeding

Since the start of the current operation in January 2013, WFP has successfully extended its school feeding to more than 1,700 primary schools and 92 pre-schools in Chin, northern Rakhine, Magway and Shan. As a consequence, the number of pre-school and primary school children assisted almost doubled, reaching 209,000 girls and boys by June 2014. School feeding contributed to maintaining gender balance, while enrolment and attendance rates in WFP-assisted schools and pre-schools have increased by five percent.

Based on a successful pilot project run in 2012, WFP quadrupled in-school feeding of nutritious high-energy biscuits (HEB). The biscuits, fortified with various vitamins and minerals, have increased micronutrient intake and dietary diversity of some 58,000 schoolchildren. In rural and remote areas with particularly high food insecurity, WFP has distributed monthly rice take-home rations, helping build safety net mechanism at the household level for 174,000 schoolchildren and their 696,000 family members.

Schoolchildren in Magway queuing for WFP take-home rice ration after having attended at least 90 percent of their monthly classes.

Photo: WFP/Ayuka Ibe
Since 2013, more than 47,000 women and men from marginal and vulnerable population groups have participated in WFP’s asset creation programmes and as a compensation received food or cash assistance for themselves and their families. The programmes helped (re-)build community assets and livelihoods in areas with limited working opportunities, poor infrastructure and high vulnerability to shocks in Chin, Shan and northern Rakhine States as well as Magway Region.

Assets have been created in a participatory manner, with strong ownership shown by the participating communities in the needs assessment, prioritization, project design and implementation.

Infrastructure, land and water development proved to be top priority areas for asset creation programmes in Myanmar. Since January 2013, WFP assets creation activities have supported the construction/renovation of 3 community centres, 6 retaining walls, 15 dykes and weirs, 21 rain water collection tanks, 27 schools, 28 dams, 38 gravity flow water supply systems, 46 fish ponds, 72 drinking water ponds, 1,429 energy saving stoves and 1,765 latrines. The construction and maintenance of more than 1,000 km of roads and three bridges resulted in improved access to markets, livelihood activities as well as health, education and other services for the participating communities. Soil and water conservation measures such as terracing of 3,135 ha of land and the construction of more than 300 km of irrigation canals and embankments served agricultural cultivation and environmental protection at the same time.

Throughout the reporting period 31 different types of projects have been completed under Assets Creation programme, benefiting some 340,000 people in 1,063 villages across Myanmar.

There are currently at least 44 different types of ongoing WFP-assisted projects aimed at communities’ assets creation.
In many areas of Myanmar, WFP through its VAM unit has long been the most reliable and regular source of food security and vulnerability information in the country.

In 2013-2014, the VAM unit, with funding from Livelihoods and Food Security Trust (LIFT) fund and in partnership with the Ministry of Fisheries, Livestock and Rural Development, has launched full-scale food security and poverty survey across the country. Following the initial success in the Dry Zone, the assessments have been extended to Ayeryarwaddy, Bago, Chin, Kachin, Sagaing, Shan and Yangon. The objective of the survey is to inform on food security levels and poverty patterns at regional level. The findings will be primarily used by the government to support the design of poverty alleviation strategies and programmes. It will also be greatly beneficial for WFP and all other food security stakeholders for the development of the food security atlas and other activities. The scope of the survey, in particular, its geographical reach, remains unprecedented.

WFP’s financial contribution to the surveys has so far amounted to US$850,000. Additional US$500,000 is required to complete the survey in the remaining five states and regions of Myanmar.
Supply Chain Management

WFP Supply Chain Management unit oversees Logistics and Procurement in Myanmar. As a leading organization for humanitarian logistics operation globally, WFP in Myanmar maintains a team of 38 experienced logisticians equipped with 12 warehouses, 10 Compas stations for food tracking, 42 vehicles, 24 speedboats and collaborating with 72 commercial transporters, 13 customs clearance and freight agents, and 2 licensed pest control companies, providing logistics solutions for the its activities in the country. Moreover, throughout the current operation, WFP, in coordination with local and international development partners, has been managing the logistics of humanitarian cross-line missions delivering food assistance to IDPs in KIO administered areas of Kachin.

WFP procurement team in Myanmar is responsible for food and goods purchase both from local and international markets to meet the operational requirement in the country. Since 2013, more than 95 percent of food - rice, chickpeas, iodized salt and rice-soya blended cereal - have been purchased locally, while only remaining vegetable oil, high energy biscuits and wheat-soya blended cereal are imported due to lack of local competitive production. Under the current operation, WFP has so far distributed 75,000 mt of food out which 61,000 mt has been locally procured, contributing US$51 million to the national economy and encouraging local agricultural production. Myanmar is among top 15 suppliers of rice for WFP operations globally.
Emergency Preparedness & Response

Emergency preparedness is the most effective way to prevent and mitigate the effects of disasters. According to corporate and country-specific strategies, WFP aims at strengthening communities’ resilience to shocks and national support systems.

Since 2013, WFP has enhanced its collaboration with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement so as to enhance national preparedness systems in view of frequent natural disasters. Together with the Ministry and based on decades of experience, WFP has started developing Standard Operating Procedures for emergency responses to cyclones, floods, earthquakes and other natural disasters. These protocols can help reduce valuable response time and save lives when an emergency hits. The collaboration between the Ministry and WFP aims at facilitating response to fast onset emergencies e.g. through approval for importation of logistical equipment and organization of logistics capacity assessment.

In June 2014, WFP opened its 10th field office in Mawlamyine, Mon State. Although the new office will aim to assist the most vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas in Mon, Kayin and Tanintharyi, its strategic location is also instrumental for WFP capacity building efforts with the local Government for cyclone emergency and disaster preparedness, response and fast recovery. It will also allow WFP to quickly deploy its emergency assistance to the entire southeast region, where floods and cyclones regularly hit the coastal region especially in the monsoon season, augmenting WFP’s coastal presence already in Maungdaw, Sittwe and Yangon.
Resources

WFP’s current operation in Myanmar is made possible thanks to timely support from the governments of Australia, Canada, Denmark, European Union, France, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Switzerland, United States as well as Japan Association for WFP, Unilever, United Nations Central Emergency Fund and Yum! Brands Asia. Against operational needs of US$204.5 million for 2013-2015, WFP has mobilised US$95.7 million so far.

Every cent counts because WFP - the world’s largest humanitarian organization - operates entirely on voluntary contributions from governments, private sector, international funds, NGOs, and individuals.
Cooperating and UN partners

WFP operations in Myanmar have been implemented in coordination with 7 UN agencies, and through valued partnerships with IOM and 27 national and international NGOs. WFP’s cooperating partners do not only carry out food distributions but also educate the beneficiaries applying behavior change communication.