



School Feeding

WFP Myanmar

Context and Response: In rural areas of Myanmar, less than half of all children complete primary school. High dropout rates in primary school remain a serious concern, especially in remote areas. In 1996, WFP launched school feeding in Northern Rakhine State, which has some of the lowest education and food security indicators in Myanmar. Ever since, WFP has expanded its school feeding programme, which now runs in **Chin, Northern Rakhine, Northern and Southern Shan, and Magway.**

Under the current three-year Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation, launched in January 2013, WFP school feeding covers early childhood development (ECD) centres and primary schools in two separate modalities: i) in-school feeding with a daily food snack of fortified high energy biscuits (HEBs), and ii) take home family rations of rice in severely food-insecure areas, with at least 90 percent attendance. The fortified food snack diversifies the diet and increases **micronutrient intake**, containing a premix of various vitamins and minerals, which helps tackle important deficiencies that are common among children of primary school age, such as lack of Vitamin A or C, weakening the immune system, or iodine, affecting the ability to learn. HEB also contributes to iron and folate content in adolescent girls, helping ensure that they are better prepared for reproductive age. The take-home rice ration helps build a **safety net mechanism** against food insecurity at the household level with families more likely to meet their minimum consumption needs and thus encouraged to keep sending their children to school, especially girls from certain ethnic communities. In consequence, school feeding improves nutritional status, enhances cognitive abilities and encourages participation, resulting in increased enrolment, attendance and retention.

Investment case: The investment case is a modeling tool that quantifies the value created for each dollar invested in school feeding, building on available evidence from benefits such as education, health and income transfer, which is the value of the school feeding ration at local market prices. Drawing on this model, WFP and The Boston Consulting Group joint global research (imminent publication) estimates a substantial monetary return on investment – for every **US\$1** at least **US\$3** is gained through a variety of economic measurements.

SCHOOL FEEDING YEARLY INDICATORS AS OF JUNE 2014

SCHOOLCHILDREN*	BENEFICIARIES**	COVERAGE
232 thousand	928 thousand	1,829 schools
NEEDS (US\$)	FOOD (MT)	SHORTFALL (US\$)
15 million	15 thousand	7.3 million

Objectives

- Increase school enrolment, attendance and retention rates
- Address short-term hunger and improve micronutrient status
- Build a safety net mechanism at the household level
- Maintain gender balance

Activities

- **In-school feeding**, of 58,000 children, who receive a daily snack of 75g fortified HEB in school
- **Take-home rations** of 10 kg rice monthly to 174,000 schoolchildren as well as to their 696,000 family members

Effects

- Immediate relief through increased household income
- Increased lifetime earning from increased productivity, reduced morbidity, and prolonged life expectancy

* 116,000 boys and 116,000 girls attending school

** Schoolchildren and their family members

For example, positive returns on education are such that a higher attendance rate increases a child's **productivity**, which in turn should lead to **higher earnings** later in life. The benefit from increased time spent in school multiplies with higher concentration during that period. One additional year of primary schooling can lead to five percent higher earnings in the future. The returns from casual chain i.e. from school feeding to educational attainment to higher future wages make up nearly half of the total return. For adolescent girls, investing in their education transforms lives and subsequently breaks the intergenerational cycle of poverty, becoming a powerful investment for development. Better nourished and educated women marry later, while their children are healthier and better educated.

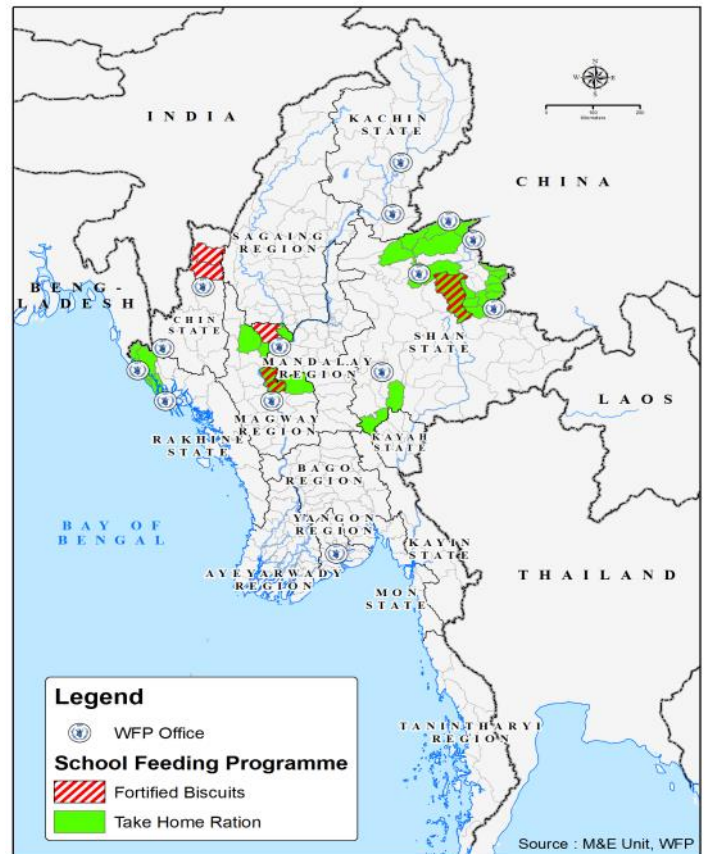
In Myanmar, with US\$65, it is possible to feed a child in school for the entire academic year (eight months) - that is **only 28 cents per day.**

School feeding and local agricultural production: In November 2013, WFP Executive Board endorsed a new school feeding policy*, focusing on a more long-term, sustainable approach to school feeding, which would fit into a broader corporate **shift from food aid to food assistance**. Among several priorities, the new policy, highlights the link with local procurement. In this respect, rice for take-home rations is **100 percent procured locally** in Myanmar. Such a synergy generates additional benefits for both schoolchildren and the local economy, ensuring sustainability of school feeding and community ownership. This way, WFP Myanmar provides a local response to local needs, thus having a positive impact on local economies. In 2013, WFP Myanmar purchased 14,000 metric tons of rice for school feeding programme, contributing US\$7 million to local economy.

Partnership and coordination: As a **global leader in school feeding** and in line with its new policy, WFP is committed to working with partners to share knowledge in order to better support the Myanmar government in implementing sustainable national programmes. Educational development is a major government policy goal, and thus WFP Myanmar coordinates with the **Ministry of Education** and partners with **UNICEF** on school feeding, with a view to improving children's access to and retention in primary schools. WFP implements school feeding through further valued partnerships with **eight local** and **six international NGOs****, which carry out food distribution. WFP school feeding activities in Myanmar are made possible thanks to the timely contributions from the Governments of **Australia, Canada and Japan, as well as Yum! Brands Asia**.

The way forward: In July 2012, WFP Myanmar piloted the HEB snack modality, introducing a more **child-centered approach** in school feeding. In 2013, WFP provided daily snacks to 44,000 schoolchildren. In-school feeding is expected to increase further over the next two years, targeting at least **58,000** and **112,000** schoolchildren in 2014 and 2015 respectively.

Only less than eight percent of schoolchildren are covered by WFP school feeding in Myanmar. There are intentions to engage more deeply with the Ministry of Education and the partners so as to expand much more widely the coverage of the programme in the country.



* WFP Revised School Feeding Policy

<http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/eb/wfpdoc062769.pdf>

**All Country Agency for Rural Development (ACRD), Community Association for Rural Development (CARD), Health Poverty Action (HPA), Koruna Myanmar Social Services (KMSS), Myanmar Heart Development Organisation (MHDO), Network Activities Group (NAG), Noble Compassionate Volunteers (NCV), Renewable Energy Association Myanmar (REAM), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA), Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement (OISCA), Partners Asia (PARTNERS), Terre des Hommes, Italia (TdH-IT), and World Vision.



Photos: WFP/Ayuka Ibe



Yum! Brands Asia mission in Myanmar