



Nutrition

WFP Myanmar



2016 NUTRITION PROGRAMME IN NUMBERS

 145,000	 USD 4.5 million	 4,150 MT
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Context: Despite recent progress, undernutrition rates in Myanmar continue to be among the highest of the region. According to the MICS 2009-2010 more than one third of all the children under five (35 percent) are undernourished and too short for their age¹. Micronutrient deficiencies are also common in Myanmar, further adding to the burden of malnutrition. Young children and pregnant and lactating women (PLW) are at particular risk of malnutrition due to the increased nutritional requirements to support the pregnancy, exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life, and rapid child growth. Causes of malnutrition are multifaceted including inadequate dietary intake, high morbidity, household food insecurity, inadequate care and feeding practices, poor water and sanitation and health care access. The pace of progress has been uneven and the country is facing significant challenges: Myanmar is off course to meet the World Health Assembly targets for wasting, anemia and stunting².

Response: Reducing undernutrition and eliminating food insecurity have been WFP's priorities. The causes of undernutrition and food insecurity are complex and interconnected and rooted in the underlying contexts of poverty, women's status, cultural and political organisation and environmental degradation. WFP Myanmar, therefore, adopts nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions and contributes to the development of a high level mechanism for multi-sectoral nutrition governance. WFP implements nutrition activities in Chin, Kachin, Magway, northern Shan and Rakhine, targeting to reach 145,000 PLW and young children with more than 4,100 tons of blended food in 2016. WFP's nutrition activities in Myanmar focus on three key areas: i) treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM); ii) prevention of acute malnutrition (wasting); and iii) prevention of stunting. PLW receive a monthly ration of Super Cereal to support their own good nutrition and that of their child during the first 1,000 days. For children, WFP Myanmar provides a monthly ration of Super Cereal Plus - Wheat Soya Blend (WSB), which is manufactured from fresh wheat grain and soya beans blended with sugar, dried skimmed milk and oil, and fortified with various micronutrients. It meets the daily recommended nutritional intake (RNI) for essential nutrients required for growth and energy for physical activity, supporting good health and cognitive development.

Children 6 to 59 months are targeted by the flood response intervention. To complement the food support, WFP Myanmar promotes appropriate feeding for infants and young children through counselling and behavioral change communication activities. WFP also provides technical assistance to the Government to strengthen the national health system and the policy framework for nutrition.

UN Network for Nutrition and Food Security:

The UN Network was established to strengthen UN coherence on nutrition and currently consists of FAO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. In 2016, WFP Resident Representative and Country Director, Dom Scalpelli, is chair of the UN Network for Nutrition and Food Security.

The UN Network is supported by a neutral International and National Facilitator under **REACH (Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Under Nutrition)**, which is funded by Canada DFATD. The UN Network, with support of REACH, is able to support Government efforts to scale up food and nutrition actions.

In Myanmar, WFP, in partnership with the Government and UN agencies, is actively supporting the development of a new prioritized multi-sectoral Myanmar Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Security (2016-2025), as response to the Zero Hunger Challenge. The **Zero Hunger Challenge** outlines a vision for a world in which no child is stunted, each person has access to adequate, nutrition food, where food systems are sustainable, smallholder productivity and income increase and no food is wasted. WFP Executive Director, Ertharin Cousin, has taken on this challenge, signaling that WFP will share in this goal commitment.

The UN Network is also part of **SUN (Scaling Up Nutrition)** and engages at country level with the other SUN networks such as the Government Network, the Donor Network, and the Civil Society Alliance. The SUN movement was officially launched in Myanmar in February 2014, bringing together government officials from 14 ministries as well as representatives from the United Nations and civil society. SUN members jointly identify priorities, actors and responsibilities as well as timelines for nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions.

As the UN host of REACH, and a firm support and integral part of the UN Network for Nutrition and Food Security, WFP actively engages at the country level within the SUN movement.

¹ [Myanmar Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey](#)

² [Global Nutrition Report 2015](#)

³ [Lancet series on Maternal and Child Nutrition](#)

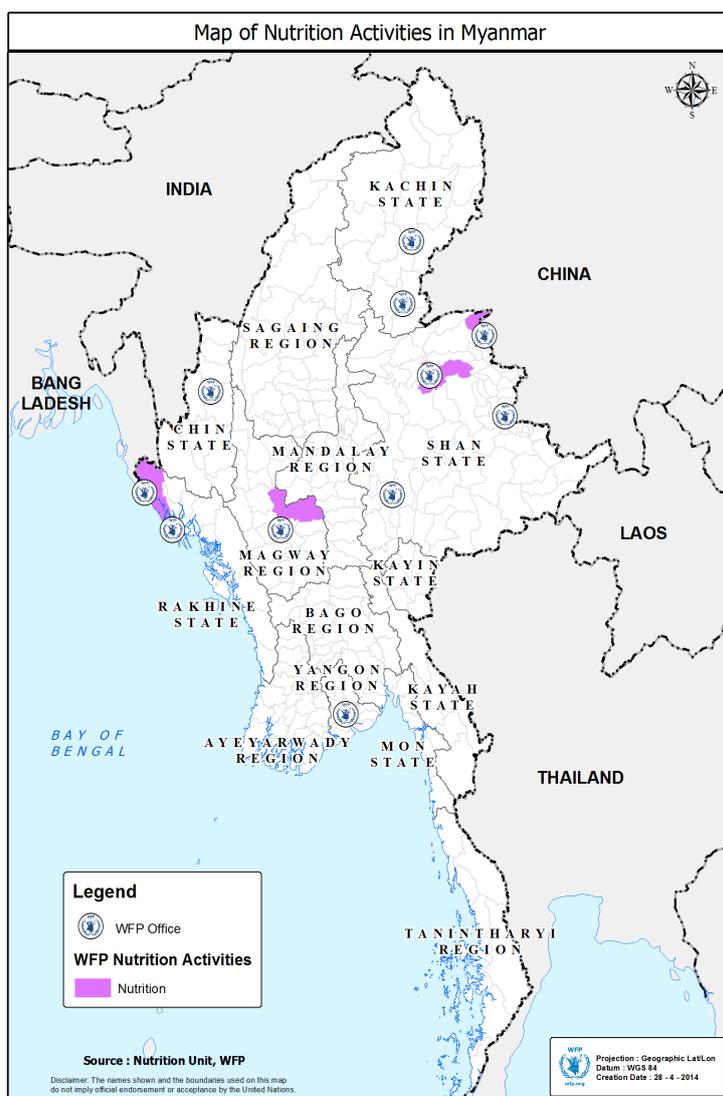
⁴ [IFPRI. Global Nutrition Report. Myanmar Country Profile 2014.](#)



Investment Case: Nutrition is one of the major foundations of development. Existing evidence shows that reduced malnutrition rate and improved nutrition status among PLW and children may have substantial returns on poverty reduction, health, productivity, and gender equality. Malnutrition and poverty form a cyclical relationship passing from mother to child. Investing in nutrition breaks the intergenerational cycle of poverty for life. In Myanmar, undernutrition is one of the major causes of childhood illness and mortality. Recent research³ indicates that within the 1,000-day window for prevention of stunting, the first 270 days from conception to birth are exceptionally critical. In food insecure settings, providing food support to women, particularly during the last trimester and first six months of lactation, is an effective strategy for preventing undernutrition. Nutrition is also essential for improved educational outcomes. Well-nourished children perform better in school and are more likely to complete higher education. It increases their future productivity, which leads to as much as 46 percent higher earnings, contributing to the economic growth of the country. It is estimated that investing in nutrition can increase a country's gross domestic product (GDP) by at least 3 percent annually. Undernutrition costs developing countries, including Myanmar, billions in lost revenue through reduced productivity. For adolescent girls, good nutrition and education eventually advance their status as women - they marry later and have smaller family sizes with lower dependency ratios and less frequent pregnancies. So, investing in nutrition is not only the right but also smart thing to do. Studies show that even in very poor countries with pragmatic assumptions, US\$1 spent reducing chronic malnutrition has at least US\$16 payoff⁴.

Partnerships: As the world's largest humanitarian agency and a prominent actor in development, WFP has long played an important role in multi-stakeholder efforts to overcome malnutrition. Based on its mandate, WFP's mission is to work with partners to fight undernutrition by ensuring physical and economic access to a nutritious and age - appropriate diet for those who lack it, and to support households and communities in utilizing food adequately. WFP ensures access to the right food, at the right place, at the right time. To deliver on this mission in Myanmar, WFP partners with the Government in the prevention and treatment of undernutrition through a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder platform. Nutrition activities are implemented through further valued partnerships with five **local** and seven **international NGOs*** which carry out food distribution and provide nutrition education to communities through behavior change communication. These activities in Myanmar are made possible due to timely and flexible contributions from the Governments of Japan and Switzerland, as well as ECHO. Myanmar has put nutrition at the heart of the political agenda and various partners are now joining forces to scale up national nutrition plans and interventions. In 2013, the country joined the Scaling up Nutrition Movement. In 2014 the national Zero Hunger Challenge was launched, and in 2015 the REACH (Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and undernutrition) facilitation support was established.

The Way Forward: WFP Myanmar will continue to invest in cooperation with UN agencies, government, civil society, and private donors, to advocate for nutrition as well as to effectively plan and track progress and resources. Apart from regular nutrition activities, WFP will continue flood response activities in Rakhine, Chin and Sagaing in 2016. WFP Myanmar also plans to upscale technical support to its field offices and implementing partners to improve nutrition education, particularly for maternal, infant and young child feeding. Furthermore, WFP Myanmar hopes to pilot conditional cash based transfers to improve nutrition in urban settings.



*Action for Green Earth (AGE), Ar Yone Oo (AYO), Karuna Myanmar Social Services (KMSS), Myanmar Health Assistant Association (MHAA), Myanmar Heart Development Association (MHDO), Action Contre la Famme (ACF), Consortium of Dutch NGO's (CDN), Progetto Continenti (PC), World Vision (WV).