**Myanmar Cash Working Group**

**Weekly Update #22 (13 - 19 March 2021)**

| **Myanmar Situation Updates**  |
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| The banking and cash situation has remained about the same for a few weeks now with most bank branches in Myanmar closed and partners having difficulty accessing physical cash, particularly larger quantities above the Central Bank of Myanmar withdrawal limits. Many partners successfully use online banking services, especially for intra-bank transfers. ATMs remain the easiest way to receive physical cash in the country, however, there are withdrawal limits and there are some reports of ATMs running out of cash or not working due to internet disruptions. Food and NFI suppliers are increasingly asking partners to pay in physical cash rather than bank transfers or check, and this is likely to continue. Many partners are now using mobile money to assist beneficiaries or pay staff and volunteers, as it remains one of the most feasible ways for delivering cash. However, the recent mobile internet shutoff has led to some disruptions and some are agents facing liquidity issues. Despite the obstacles, mobile money operators, such as Ooredoo M-Pitesan and Wave Money, have been flexible in supporting partners' ability to deliver humanitarian assistance to beneficiaries. Market prices have risen slightly with most significant increases for imported vegetable oil. Overall the situation remains challenging and is having a significant impact on cash-based programs and operations more generally. As the situation remains fluid and contextual feel free to reach out to the CWG for support or information relevant to your specific programs.In the News:* WFP issued a [press release](https://www.wfp.org/news/rising-food-and-fuel-prices-looming-threat-poorest-and-most-vulnerable-myanmar-warns-wfp) warning of a growing hunger threat in Myanmar, in the meantime, the price of fuel and fertilizer continue increasing. Rising food and fuel prices are a looming threat to the poorest and most vulnerable in the country.
* KBZ bank staff was invited to state whether or not they are willing to come to work. If they turn down the offer, they will get 3 days of paid leave; after this, days not worked will be deducted from their salaries.
* On Thursday, 18th March, reportedly some bank branches opened across the country, including in Yangon. Crowds and long queues of clients have been reported in front of several of them.
* CRPH made a statement calling oil and gas companies to stop making payments to the SAC (including taxes). According to the statement, the CRPH sent emails to oil and gas companies on 5 March instructing them to stop payment by 9 March. The CRPH stated that the companies which do not follow this instruction will be required to make all those payments again when the CRPH assumes office.
* The military junta took control of assets totaling $3.81 million and 375 million kyats in Open Society Foundation bank accounts at four private banks—Kanbawza Bank (KBZ), Ayeyarwady Bank (AYA), SMED and Co-operative Bank (CB), according to MRTV. State media announced on Monday that authorities had accused the organisation's local branch of directing funds to the civil disobedience campaign opposing military rule in the country. Arrest warrants had been issued for another 11 Open Society employees.
* The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has announced that it will put on hold funding for Myanmar government development projects following the military regime’s Feb. 1 coup. Total financial assistance to the country across sovereign and non-sovereign operations- in terms of lending obligations, disbursements, pending grants and load- amounts to an estimated US 11 billion. Currently the ADB is providing USD 3698.89 million for 35 active development projects. Project Data Sheets (PDS) show that USD 527.27 million was transferred to Myanmar before the 1 February coup, the remaining USD 3,171.62 million disbursement is now suspended. Myanmar is reliant on the ADB for significant funding of infrastructure, but can no longer expect the transfer of an anticipated $3,171.62 million worth of ADB loans.
* Unrest and sanctions are reducing Myanmar’s imports of gasoline and other oil products, energy analysts FGE and Vortexa said on Thursday, according to a Reuters report. Loadings of oil products bound to Myanmar have fallen to about 180,000 tonnes for the second half of March, according to oil analytics and ship tracking firm Vortexa, compared to nearly 600,000 tonnes for all of January.
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| **Recently published:** **Articles/Blogs/Research/Guidance/Discussion threads/Policy briefs** |
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| **In Myanmar:****Publication:** * WFP is doing nationwide market monitoring and updating their new [dashboard](https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/views/MarketMonitoringDashboard/MainSummary?:isGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&:embed=y).
* Mercy Corps is also doing market monitoring and other market related snapshots for Rakhine. You can find all the reports on [MIMU](http://themimu.info/rakhine-market-analysis-unit).
* Malster International released a Market [Assessment for March 2021](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jlBPSq2Tre_vLo8P8tof7rnKcmmmYMLV/view?usp=sharing). For Hlaing Bwe Market, it was conducted market assessment through phone calling. For Na Bu and Kyone Doe Market, conducted in-person. The only price of cooking oil has increased as restricted transportation by Thailand at the moment.
* Mercy Corps MAU released a Monthly Price report for February 2021. This monthly report summarizes median prices for goods based on data from three vendors per product per market. February data were gathered on February 27 in Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, Minbya, Mrauk U Pauktaw, Ponnagyun, Rathedaung, and Sittwe Townships. Prices for November through January are also provided for comparison. The full report is attached and also available on [MIMU](https://themimu.info/rakhine-market-analysis-unit).
* UNHCR published the several **Early Warning Reports** for [Kachin](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dFS507GFrZYUQC_8FA7EPQb50gdofnIz/view?usp=sharing), [Rakhine](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VEsOQG194pQa6O9JZZsjJHoqOUSoBJpR/view?usp=sharing) and [South Eastern part of Myanmar](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1U19_yvPP91_C9i3nbbCrSonvxZRlV-PQ/view?usp=sharing). The reports highlight operational context, early warning system and key findings for respective regions.
* Logistic sector coordination meeting was held on 5 March via online. You can read the [Logistic sector meeting note](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VY6unGuZIAndiSDiXGCXjZApeZhXvsoH/view?usp=sharing) online.

WFP shared its snapshot on [Supply Chain Update](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nc_IhAZuE-yHuIYFcLc_E0tbJqRnvMwu/view?usp=sharing) for the period between 1-15 March 2021. The report highlights that most logistics companies such as custom clearing, forwarding agents and transporters are still joining the Civil Disobedience Movement-CDM and the remaining few container truckers demand exorbitant prices while no competitors in the market. One of the most challenging parts remains payment transactions between buyers and suppliers that almost paralyzed their operation.Blog:* LIFT posted [Myanmar's Livelihood and Food Security are under threat](https://www.lift-fund.org/en/news/myanmar%E2%80%99s-rural-livelihoods-and-food-security-are-under-threat) on 10 March. The post highlights the ongoing political crisis is straining the rural economy of Myanmar through multiple disruptions. Also, expect that Myanmar could suffer a stark increase in vulnerability due to dramatic reductions in economic activities, employment and remittances.

**In General****Publication:*** The IRC’s recent research on how standard MPCA programmes contribute to health outcomes among extremely vulnerable populations in Pakistan and Cameroon can be found at this [link](https://airbel.rescue.org/studies/generating-evidence-for-the-use-of-cash-relief-for-health-outcomes/). The results of the study point to a number of recommendations for cash and health actors aiming to design cash transfer programmes to enable households to access the required care and/or to avoid negative coping strategies due to a high-cost burden of healthcare.
* The Markets in Crisis discussion group has put together a very helpful compendium of frequently asked questions covering market analysis in both emergency and non-emergency settings. You can access the document: [here](http://www.endchildhoodpoverty.org/).
* WFP’s annual [State of School Feeding Worldwide](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000123923/download/?_ga=2.256464456.2139682854.1614965798-1379093499.1571162562) report has been released. The report highlights how, over the past decade, countries have massively stepped up their financial and policy commitments to school feeding programmes, and how these efforts have translated into more children receiving meals in school than ever before. But it also identifies the challenges which lie ahead. Even before the pandemic, WFP estimated that 73 million vulnerable children do not have access to the school meals they need to realize their potential. The report provides up-to-date data and a global policy outlook to inform and support governments, to enhance national strategies and programmes, and to promote global learning so vulnerable and hungry children have a chance to go to school.
* WFP has also published a note which provides twelve key lessons to help enhance the positive effects of cash-based programmes, and to reduce any risks which might impede effectiveness. It also identifies six main effects of cash transfer programmes implemented by WFP. You can access the note: [here](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000124601/download/?_ga=2.208394066.1753486122.1615559289-1146668516.1610740093).
* SPACE has recently released a number of new publications: One focuses on: [Inclusive Information Systems for Social Protection: Intentionally Integrating Gender and Disability](https://socialprotection.org/discover/publications/space-inclusive-information-systems-social-protection-intentionally) and the second on: [How Targeting Mechanisms Can Identify People With Disabilities for Inclusion in Social Protection Programmes](https://socialprotection.org/discover/publications/space-how-targeting-mechanisms-can-identify-people-disabilities-inclusion). A third publication - [COVID-19 and the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) and Conditional Cash Transfers for Education (CCTE) programmes](https://www.calpnetwork.org/publication/covid-19-and-the-emergency-social-safety-net-essn-and-conditional-cash-transfers-for-education-ccte-programmes/) - assesses the impact of COVID-19 on the principal cash vehicles active in Turkey: (ESSN) and CCTE programmes, both funded by the EU through the EUR 6 billion Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRiT) programme and managed by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and UNICEF respectively.
* IPC-IG highlights the use of mobile payments for emergency cash transfers during the pandemic. You can find it: [here](https://ipcig.org/sites/default/files/pub/en/OP465_Mobile_payment_and_application_systems_for_COVID_19.pdf).
* ACAPS’ report on [Post-COVID-19 scenarios](https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/slides/files/20200307_acaps_post-covid-19_scenarios.pdf) looks back at the COVID-19 response including by humanitarian actors and the use of cash, as well as government scale up of social protection systems.

**Blogs:** * Writing for the World Bank, Mari Elka Pangetsu highlights the importance of social protection measures and cash transfers in a blog on: [Economic inclusion programs: A springboard out of extreme poverty](https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/economic-inclusion-programs-springboard-out-extreme-poverty#?cid=SHR_BlogSiteShare_EN_EXT)
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| **Webinars and Events** |
| **Recent webinars and events:*** You can watch the livestreaming of the webinar hosted by CaLP, the ICT4D Conference and the Grand Bargain Cash and Risk sub-workstream on data collection risks and how to mitigate them: [here](https://www.calpnetwork.org/event/data-simplified-protection-amplified-an-essential-conversation-for-cva-practitioners/). The webinar coincided with the publication of CaLP's "Data Responsibility Toolkit: A Guide for CVA Practitioners", which builds on and updates previous guidance to account for GDPR and the very rapidly evolving data ecosystem (the link for this is below under Publications).
* Two recent Digital Dilemmas Debates held by the ICRC looked at: “Digitalized Assistance and Data Protection – A Commissioner’s perspective” at which the newly appointed Data Commissioner for Kenya, Ms Immaculate Kassait, discussed the role of state authorities in securing the protection of humanitarian and social protection data, and on the possible synergies between these different actors to foster the protection of vulnerable populations' data. You can find the recording [here](https://www.icrc.org/en/digitharium/digital-dilemmas-dialogue-2-2). The second debate considered ”Balancing Visibility and Vulnerability in Humanitarian Assistance and Social Protection Programmes.” – you can find the recording: [here](https://www.icrc.org/en/digitharium/digital-dilemmas-debate-2).

**Upcoming webinars and events:*** CaLP is hosting a nascent CVA and Environment Community of Practice (CoP)bringing together practitioners and organisations that are willing to discuss this topic, sharing related research initiatives and current experiences that will bring some light into this exciting theme. The CVA and Environment CoP is meeting for the second time next 25th of march from 3.00 to 4.30 pm (CET time). If you want to know more about this CoP, the meeting details and/or how to engage, please contact jose.jodar@calpnetwork.org.
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| **Resources and Trainings** |
| * [Socialprotection.org](https://socialprotection.org/) continues to host a space on [social protection responses to #COVID19](https://socialprotection.org/connect/communities/social-protection-responses-covid-19-task-force) which provides access to a series of events, newsletters, mappings etc. In addition, the website hosts a number of online communities including one specifically focused on [social protection in crisis contexts](https://socialprotection.org/connect/communities/social-protection-crisis-contexts). Here, as one of the community resources, you can find a page dedicated to th[e Grand Bargain cash workstream sub-group on linking HCT and SP](https://www.calpnetwork.org/themes/cva-and-covid-19-resources-guidance-events-and-questions/) which will give you links to this newsletter and more.
* CaLP has a dedicated space on [CVA and COVID-19: resources, guidance, events and questions](https://www.calpnetwork.org/themes/cva-and-covid-19-resources-guidance-events-and-questions/) and [CaLP-produced guidance on CVA considerations for COVID](https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CaLP-summary-guidance-version-5-16-April-2020_.pdf). (including a section specific to SP/HCTs).
* The Cash Hub (hosted by the British Red Cross) has developed a number of tip sheets on delivering CVA and advocating for the use of CVA in response to COVID-19. Whilst targeted towards Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, the resources can be adapted to the needs and approaches of other organisations. They can be found [here](https://cash-hub.org/resources/cash-and-covid-19) in English and Spanish.
* The Cash Hub platform also provides quarterly updates which provide a useful consolidation of CVA-related topics. Subscribe by clicking on this [link](https://r1.dotmailer-surveys.com/4952l7ad-074f9u4b).
* A multi-country cash transfer research initiative – the Transfer Project – provides a quick-access round-up of COVID-19 related resources [click here](https://transfer.cpc.unc.edu/cash-transfers-covid-19/?utm_source=Transfer+Project+Newsletter&utm_campaign=df0f757bb9-)

**Resources:** * CCD has a page on [Social Protection and Humanitarian Cash](https://www.collaborativecash.org/social-protection-working-group) which includes country case studies and guidance.
* **Foundational webinars**: The [first webinar](https://socialprotection.org/linking-cash-and-voucher-assistance-and-social-protection-demystifying-entry-points-humanitarians) from GB cash sub group series to demystify the concept of linking social protection and HCT; good introduction and primer to the topic. Second: How can SP Systems respond to the COVID 19 crisis? sets the scene on how SP systems can respond and the challenges governments are facing; [recording here](https://socialprotection.org/how-can-social-protection-systems-respond-covid-19-crisis). And thirdly, [Lessons learned and Opportunities: Linking SP systems to humanitarian cash in a pandemic](https://socialprotection.org/discover/blog/lessons-learned-and-opportunities-linking-social-protection-systems-humanitarian-cash). Includes examples within the context of COVID for measures to link SP/HCT.
* Click the link to access [Ugo Gentilini’s Weekly Social Protection Links newsletter.](https://www.ugogentilini.net/) Packed with valuable information, focusing on social protection developments and action across the globe but also referencing humanitarian action where relevant, the newsletter is a helpful resource for practitioners and policymakers alike.
* **CaLP’s Global Capacity Building Team** have some great video playlists on CaLP’s YouTube channel, combining new training videos, with previous webinars and shorter sound bites! Topics include:
* Gender & CVA
* Monitoring CVA
* Multipurpose Cash (MPC)
* COVID-19 & CVA
* Data Responsibility & CVA
* Preparedness & Organisational Capacity Building for CVA
* Market Based Programming
* Improving our work on Minimum Expenditure Baskets
* Cash Coordination

Take a look [here](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtu6QnuH68z3thAeFt8o5Og/playlists).  |
| **We welcome your feedback. It is important to allow us to tailor the newsletter to your needs and to make decisions on what is useful.** |