| **MYANMAR CASH WORKING GROUP**  **Biweekly Update #33 ( 19 June - 2 July 2021)** |
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| **Myanmar Situation Updates** |
| **Situation Update**  Myanmar’s currency has fallen nearly 20 percent against the U.S. dollar since the coup, from 1,350 at the end of January to the current price of 1,620 at commercial. As a result, people commonly exchange their kyat for gold or U.S. dollars as a hedge against the depreciating currency.  For many NGOs, international inward remittances continue to be prone to delays and challenges. It was reported that some organizations trying to receive international inward transfers via CB bank had been delayed since March.  In early May, banks permitted the opening of "special accounts" subject to no limit on withdrawals, with certain conditions. The public has been offered these new accounts with better interest rates and unlimited withdrawal limits. However, such efforts are seen with scepticism by consumers, as most commercial banks are still struggling with the lack of cash, making account holders reluctant to deposit.  KBZ Bank allows customers to withdraw up to 200,000 MMK in cash from ATMs per week. But since cash withdrawal is only possible at a limited number of ATMs, depositors flock to them from early morning, immediately forming lines of more than 100 people. Same for AYA, with withdrawal limits of 300,000 MMK from ATMs. For AYA, the registration to get a token to withdraw at the banks is getting more difficult. According to the bank, the downtown bank branches are fully booked until 7 July 2021. To secure cash above the withdrawal limits, agents' fees in Yangon for AYA, KBZ and CB seem to be around 7% (sometimes 5%), but field level is still 9-10%.  Implementing CVA activities continues to be a challenge; however, many continue, albeit with higher operating costs. In addition, many partners continue to use cash-in-envelope. Securing enough cash for these distributions is primarily done through various foreign currency exchange mechanisms, which helps overcome some of the MMK withdrawal caps for some organisations.    Voucher programs are increasingly being explored to deliver CVA because there is no need for physical cash exchange between beneficiaries and vendors. Some vendors are unwilling to accept bank transfers as reimbursement. However, many suppliers, particularly those in urban/peri-urban areas, accept bank transfers for payments, which should be looked into further for voucher and in-kind assistance programs by partners. Payments to voucher vendors or other suppliers via bank accounts outside of Myanmar are another option to explore.  M-Pitesan continues to support partners implementing mobile money, albeit with relatively high service fees. True Money is also an option being looked into by some partners.  Market prices continue to be closely monitored. While slightly increasing, the prices for most food and basic need NFIs seem to be relatively stable across much of Myanmar. Prices for cooking oil and rice have seen the most significant price increases, particularly considering the cumulative price increases over the past six months. June market price data should be released in the next week or two.  **Key Resources:**   * [Myanmar CVA 4W](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xnQ8pFbqxr45WE4tXFFAKg3522Qyv8eR7cbpS8lm1Bw/edit#gid=1230035561)s is available online and the dashboard can be found [here](https://datastudio.google.com/u/0/reporting/1ab3123c-1589-42c7-bcbe-29bae99a0281/page/IAE6B/edit). * Myanmar CWG May meeting minute is available on [mimu](https://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Mtg_Minutes_CWG_May2021.pdf). * [Atuutuu Trustlines Community Currency Presentation slides](https://drive.google.com/file/d/135n-69cNKA5sFTCXU0YDZr6mnE7O_p4j/view?usp=sharing) are available here. Atuutuu e-vouchers are designed to circulate as a medium of exchange between beneficiaries, vendors and suppliers. Agencies interested in partnership should reach out to Loring Harkness (loring.harkness@gmail.com) and Miranda Phua ([miranda.phua@gmail.com](mailto:miranda.phua@gmail.com)) directly. * MFI presentation slides from Vision Fund Myanmar (VFM) and World Vision are available [here](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DZlj5mZX_4k63IDnsDDNxxOJhK6HueBK/view?usp=sharing). * Mercy Corps Myanmar publishes the **Market Price Report Dashboard -** The dashboard is [live on MIMU](https://themimu.info/market-analysis-unit) and [standalone here](http://mau-mpr-dashboard-beta.herokuapp.com/). * WFP also has a nationwide market monitoring [dashboard](https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/views/MarketMonitoringDashboard/MainSummary?:isGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&:embed=y) and recently released the detailed [April Market Price Update Report.](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rVmCpYfwelyERGT0I9g9NMPsYakOpWJJ/view?usp=sharing)  A comprehensive financial service provider mapping and [Emergency Cash Transfer Programme Tools for Humanitarian Actors](https://themimu.info/fsp-mapping) site are available on the MIMU website.[Myanmar-Emergency-Cash Assistance-Dashboard](https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/views/MyanmarEmergencyCashAssistanceInformation/OverallPage) together with FSP dataset and CTP SOPs can be found on the page. |

| **Recently published:** **Articles/Blogs/Research/Guidance/Discussion threads/Policy briefs** |
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| **In Myanmar:**  **Publication:**   * WFP Myanmar Situation Report #2 for June 2021 is available [online](https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/wfp-myanmar-situation-report-2-june-2021). In this report, WFP’s latest market monitoring in May showed a continued increase in the price of fuel cooking oil (11 percent), pulses (5 percent) and rice (2 percent) compared to April. Fuel prices have nearly doubled across Myanmar compared to the first week of February. * FAO and WFP have done an assessment report entitled: [Agricultural livelihoods and food security in the context of COVID-19](https://drive.google.com/file/d/10m7l4p9qVtT1uznWsgMtnqm_uYk3J1jJ/view?usp=sharing). This report shares the results of a joint analysis by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) on the agri-food system in Myanmar based on an assessment conducted from August to October 2020. * WFP has released the [Myanmar Market Price Update (May 2021)](https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-market-price-update-may-2021). The report highlights that compared to pre-crisis (January 2021), average prices of mixed oil and cooking oil have increased by 38% while rice has increased by 9% overall. Also, compared to the first week of February, the average percent increase was 42% across all townships and fuel types. * UNICEF has published its report on [Rapid Needs Assessment in Kayin](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WF7_6ergPfMTLqGGT-3DIUniRmH2jk31/view?usp=sharing). The report highlights that the families have had to eat fewer food or cut down on healthy food, more than one quarter of families do not have income, and people are suffering from depression and anxiety, including children. * Mercy Corps' Market Analysis Unit has published **Kayah: Retailers' Perspectives (June 2021).** This included ten retailers of various products in Loikaw as well as one rice retailer each in Loikaw and Demoso Townships (Kayah State) and Pekon Township (Shan State). In the report, transportation costs have risen as much as 50% in recent weeks, and retailers say food and medicines from central Myanmar are often prevented from passing checkpoints; Cash and credit systems remain dysfunctional. The full report can be found [here](https://mercycorps.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8fb7875546a431ae7abdde05e&id=5d30b37656&e=aa9b314360) and is also available on the [MAU Website](https://mercycorps.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8fb7875546a431ae7abdde05e&id=506d5b3c5e&e=aa9b314360). * Mercy Corps’ Market Analysis Unit has published another report of **Rakhine: Crab Traders' Perspectives (June 2021).** Mercy Corps’ Market Analysis Unit (MAU) conducted phone interviews with mud crab traders across Rakhine State. Questions focused on measuring the impact of recent events on business conditions from March to June, as compared to the same time last year. Data are primarily based on KIIs with 12 traders from Rathedaung, Myebon, Sittwe and Pauktaw Townships in Rakhine State. Key highlights are:Primary challenge is the Myanmar-China border closure, Political events since February 2021 have also greatly impacted trade in crab; and All respondents are concerned with the potential of escalating political turmoil. *The full report can be found* [*here*](https://mercycorps.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8fb7875546a431ae7abdde05e&id=693c7b6632&e=aa9b314360) *and is also available on the* [*MAU Website*](https://mercycorps.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8fb7875546a431ae7abdde05e&id=61f351933e&e=aa9b314360)*.*   **In General**  **Publication and Research:**   * A [new report](https://www.mercycorps.org/research/what-we-know-about-energy-gender-and-gbv-emergencies) from Mercy Corps and the Women's Refugee Commission explores the intersection of gender, markets and energy access. The report found a striking number of parallels in practice between cash/markets and energy access, including: the challenges and opportunities of working outside a cluster system, similar to cash, the enabling characteristics of energy to support a wide range of multi-sectoral objectives and outcomes, striking differences (and consequences) of energy access, control and needs for males and females, both within and outside the home, the imperative to leverage market systems to most effectively and sustainably increase energy access for displaced and host communities. * On 22 June 2021, the publication of Development Initiative's [Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2021](https://devinit.org/resources/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2021/), with its analysis of humanitarian crises, needs and funding in 2020. Amongst the wealth of data contained in the report, you can find the 2020 CVA volume calculations, based on data collected by Development Initiatives and CaLP. You can find this first analysis of the data in full [here](https://devinit.org/resources/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2021/chapter-4-funding-effectiveness-and-efficiency/) (section 4.7), showing that the volume of CVA has increased again, with the 2020 total more than triple the volume counted in 2015. * Ninety five organisations have sent a letter to the outgoing and the incoming Emergency Relief Coordinator to move the issue of cash coordination forward. You can find the letter [here](https://www.calpnetwork.org/news/95-organisations-sign-letter-calling-for-strengthened-cash-coordination/). The letter pushes for effective coordination in order to maximize the potential and impact of humanitarian cash on crisis-affected populations. The signatories are seeking an agreement that provides accountable, predictable coordination of humanitarian cash, including how it relates to response analysis, within the broader humanitarian coordination architecture.   **News/Media/Op Eds:**   * The New Humanitarian reports on the Grand Bargain 2.0, sharing an interview with the [Grand Bargain’s new Eminent Person Jan Egeland](https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/interview/2021/6/17/grand-bargains-new-eminent-person-jan-egeland?utm_source=The+New+Humanitarian&utm_campaign=b50b440c2e-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_06_17_2021_DAILY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d842d98289-b50b440c2e-15734853). Talking about the progress made in the last five years, Egeland highlights the increased use of cash assistance stating “Today, cash assistance empowers people to make their own choices. So there's one example of something that has moved fast.” * The Thomsons Reuters Foundation reports that [Lebanese banks swallow at least $250m in U.N. aid](https://news.trust.org/item/20210617094247-a5d9z/) with the purchasing power of refugees and poor communities receiving humanitarian cash assistance in Lebanon having been severely reduced as a result.   **Blogs and Podcasts:**   * Writing for the New Humanitarian, Jessica Alexander looks back at the origins of the Grand Bargain commitments and the circumstances driving a rethink to the ways aid was financed. Read Part 1 [here](https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2021/6/10/Grand-Bargain-international-aid-commitments-localisation?utm_source=The+New+Humanitarian&utm_campaign=1ce4205034-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_06_11_GRAND_BARGAIN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d842d98289-1ce4205034-15734853). Part 2 [(here)](https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2021/6/11/Grand-Bargain-international-aid-sector-part-2?utm_source=The+New+Humanitarian&utm_campaign=1ce4205034-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_06_11_GRAND_BARGAIN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d842d98289-1ce4205034-15734853), explores what has prevented progress in some of the key priority areas – localisation, agile funding, and the participation of affected communities. She also looks ahead at the main challenges the Grand Bargain 2.0 must now address. * Anastasia de Santos and Camille Parker discuss USAID’s work in relation to [Cash Transfers and Economic Resilience](https://www.marketlinks.org/blogs/cash-transfers-and-economic-resilience) highlighting interventions in a number of countries including Brazil, Colombia and Togo. * Lars Peter Nissen (ACAPS) hosted a recent podcast discussion on cash coordination at which four guests discussed why cash coordination is so difficult and what to do about it. You can listen to the podcast here - [Trumanitarian | The weekly humanitarian podcast](https://www.google.com/url?sa=D&q=https://trumanitarian.org/&ust=1625228160000000&usg=AOvVaw3Kz2kTK_06_9xHv7TsAVIE&hl=en&source=gmail) |
| **Webinars and Events** |
| **Recent Webinars and Events:**   * For those of you who missed the Cash and Voucher Assistance for Clearance, Land Release, and Survivor Assistance NDM-UN24 Side Event you can find the recording [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uewIsP10EYA). |
| **Survey, Resources and Trainings** |
| * Save the Children, Plan International and the Women's Refugee Commission are developing a training package on Child Protection & Cash and Voucher Assistance that will be available online and in person formats. To ensure the training package is tailored to gaps and needs at the field-level, a survey is conducting which is live now through May 2nd which specifically targets country-level child protection and CVA practitioners. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes and is available in English, French, and Spanish [here](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=V20wlrdexE2lvSKg5cwKq0pXD-qPIMNFp0nlFpyXQJBUNlAwQjNCOTUwMlk4WUNJTlVWS1FDUDVLNi4u). Further questions about the online survey, get in touch with Hannah Thompson on: Hannah.rachel.thompson@gmail.com * 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).   **Resources:**   * 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** has 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). * CaLP has updated a number of its tools for training facilitators including for the “Linking CVA and Social Protection” course. You can find the materials [here](https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=603). |
| **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.** |