| **MYANMAR CASH WORKING GROUP**  **Biweekly Update #34 ( 3 - 30 July 2021)** |
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| **Myanmar Situation Updates** |
| **Situation Update**  Since early July, the challenges with the banking sector have been overshadowed by the record-breaking numbers of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths. However, for the most part, the challenges with the banks, including cash liquidity, are still the same. Unsurprisingly, it is reported that many bank staff have contracted COVID-19, limiting the ability for many branches to open, particularly field bank branches. Banks are also reportedly having difficulties moving hard cash to the field locations, and in some cases, these operations are suspended.  Cash withdrawal limits imposed by banks are still in place. In most cases, organizations can withdraw around 5 million MMK and individuals 500,000 MMK from savings accounts per week. Using mobile money at affordable rates continues to be a problem. The additional service fees charged by mobile money agents to cash out is 6-15%, depending on the company and location. Agent fee commissions to perform money swaps from the leading banks is around 7% in Yangon, field-level higher around 10%. It is interesting to note that many suppliers are being asked to be paid via Kpay, which still works in many locations.  The official exchange rate has held steady around 1650 MMK to 1 USD. Given the Government has extended office closures up to 8 August, we would expect the FX rate to remain stable again this week.  Boycotts have affected military-owned [or controlled conglomerates](https://theconversation.com/taking-care-of-business-the-coup-in-myanmar-is-partly-about-protecting-the-economic-interests-of-the-military-elite-154727) across various industries, facilitated by a smartphone app (e.g. Way Way Nay) that helps consumers avoid military-linked businesses.  The July round of market price monitoring from WFP and Mercy Corps should be released in the next week or two. Partners can find the most up-to-date market prices and reports at the links under the “key resources” section.  **Key Resources:**   * Myanmar Cash Working Group monthly meeting for July was organized on 8 July. The key presentation materials are here: [CVA situation update](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HKKYFQA-n74gjhus8_LUnYKz7jilLzaM/view?usp=sharing), [June Market update from WFP](https://drive.google.com/file/d/18d03OR7WoYYt5hmnJmdZv4Q1-KcyrpuC/view?usp=sharing), [Cash-based programming and protection](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1B0X5CgCZXSCDVABVyExJ0aqBfdc2Q7GI/view?usp=sharing). * [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 July meeting minute is available on [mimu](https://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Mtg_Minutes_CWG_Jul2021.pdf). * 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. **In the news:**   * According to the [World bank](https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/07/23/myanmar-economy-expected-to-contract-by-18-percent-in-fy2021-report), Myanmar's economy is expected to contract around 18% in FY 2021 due to political turmoil and third wave of Covid. * Norwegian telecoms operator [Telenor announced the sale](https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Myanmar-Crisis/Telenor-quits-Myanmar-as-regime-pressures-telco-operators) of its mobile operations in Myanmar to M1 Group, a Lebanese company, for $105millions |

| **Recently published:** **Articles/Blogs/Research/Guidance/Discussion threads/Policy briefs** |
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| **In Myanmar:**  **Publication:**   * IFPRI has released [Myanmar's poverty and food insecurity crisis: Support to agriculture and food assistance is urgently needed to preserve a foundation for recovery](https://www.ifpri.org/publication/myanmars-poverty-and-food-insecurity-crisis-support-agriculture-and-food-assistance). According to the report by the end of the current financial year, the average poverty gap (expenditure shortfall) is predicted to have increased from 26 percent in 2015 to between 34 and 40 percent for individuals living in poor households. * IFPRI has released the reports of [Monitoring the agri-food system in Myanmar: Mechanization service providers – June 2021 survey round](https://www.ifpri.org/publication/monitoring-agri-food-system-myanmar-agricultural-input-retailers-%E2%80%93-june-2021-survey) as well as [Monitoring the agri-food system in Myanmar: Agricultural input retailers – June 2021 survey round](https://www.ifpri.org/publication/monitoring-agri-food-system-myanmar-mechanization-service-providers-%E2%80%93-june-2021-survey).   **Blogs, podcasts, and discussions:**   * FAO Myanmar writes about [A race to avoid increasing food insecurity](http://www.fao.org/myanmar/news/detail-events/en/c/1415514/). Millions of people in Myanmar are expected to become hungry over the coming six months. In the wake of political and financial instability, an increasing number of people are facing uncertainty as job losses continue, food prices increase, and its currency depreciates. In the post, FAO suggested that anticipatory action is at the heart of the new way of working that humanitarian and development organizations need to adopt if they want to effectively protect lives and livelihoods from any number of hazards, either climate or human induced.   **In General**  **Publication and Research:**   * The presentation slides Minimum Expenditure Basket webinar by Regional Cash Working Group is available online. Here are: [Myanmar MEB process](https://drive.google.com/file/d/16jFERDw5GpOKK3rMOLB6amS7nASVGOAT/view?usp=sharing); [Afghanistan MEB](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lJkgqlJyF5rBmYIAlS-SgUnMZGqhuZPN/view?usp=sharing); and [RCWG MEB slide](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zxbmNkX7NqPLVcQSZpfypqLgTQpG9F5q/view?usp=sharing). * Development Initiative's [Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2021](https://devinit.org/resources/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2021/), has been published. It contains an analysis of humanitarian crises, needs and funding in 2020. The publication includes an analysis of the 2020 CVA volume calculations, based on data collected by Development Initiatives and CaLP. * Using the example of Bangladesh, World Vision has produced a note on [linking humanitarian cash transfers to social protection through social accountability](https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/Pathway%20to%20Link%20Humanitarian%20CSSP%20%282%29_0.pdf). In the study, World Vision highlights how humanitarian cash was leveraged to raise awareness about social protection entitlements among women and ethnic minority groups. * [Plan International’s Commitment for Cash and Voucher Assistance](https://www.calpnetwork.org/publication/plan-internationals-commitment-for-cash-and-voucher-assistance/) is available online. This paper explains Plan International’s approach to deal with Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) to benefit the country offices and national offices in raising funds for the cause and building collaborative relationships with peer agencies. * [Cash and Voucher Assistance in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic Lessons Learned from a CARE Multi-Country Program](https://www.calpnetwork.org/publication/cash-and-voucher-assistance-in-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic-lessons-learned-from-a-care-multi-country-program/) is available in CaLP library.   **Guidances and Tools:**   * [Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) Programming-A Step-by-Step Guideline](https://www.calpnetwork.org/publication/cash-and-voucher-assistance-cva-programming-a-step-by-step-guideline-2/) is available in CaLP library. This guideline serves as a knowledge management tool, and provides guidance and recommendations for management of CVA initiatives, relevant for all staff engaged in design, implementation, M&E, and overall CVA decision-making. Please contact Aftab Alam (aftab.alam@plan-international.org) for additional information. CARE implemented a multi-country program with the aim of reducing the negative impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations, especially women and girls, using complementary and multimodal approaches, including the provision of cash and voucher assistance (CVA).   **Blogs, podcasts, and discussions:**   * Throughout June and July, the Social Protection Podcast is hosting a special series in partnership with ODI and GIZ. Across six episodes, guest host Francesca Bastagli, Director of the Equity and Social Policy programme and Principal Research Fellow at ODI, will moderate conversations around the guiding question: “Covid-19: a turning point for social protection?”. The latest episode explores social protection implementation and delivery: [National cash transfer responses to Covid-19: operational lessons](https://socialprotection.org/learn/podcasts/odi-series-ep-2-national-cash-transfer-responses-covid-19-operational-lessons?utm_content=buffer4b32e&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer). The guests on this podcast were Christy Lowe, Research Officer - Equity and Social Policy Programme, ODI and Madhumitha Hebbar, MAINTAINS project Lead Researcher, Independent Consultant |
| **Webinars and Events** |
| **Recent Webinars and Events:**   * The presentation from the recent event held by the Global Nutrition Cluster which aimed to raise awareness of CVA guidance to support designing CVA programmes to contribute to nutrition outcomes with a focus on the GNC Guidance note of the use of CVA in emergencies and the launch of a new CVA Working Group to promote knowledge sharing with regional and country networks can be found: [here](https://www.nutritioncluster.net/node/27746).   **Upcoming Webinars and Events:**   * CaLP has announced **\*\*CaLP Online - Core CVA Skills for Programme Staff.\*\***  Visit [here](https://bit.ly/3hV3pzk) for more information. This is the most comprehensive online CVA training you’re likely to find on the market today and **it’s completely free**. |
| **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.** |