**Myanmar Cash Working Group**

**Weekly Update #21 (7 - 12 March 2021)**

| **Myanmar Situation Updates**  |
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| The situation remains similar to last week with most bank branches in Myanmar closed and access to physical cash, particularly larger quantities, remaining a challenge. Most bank staff are not working, creating a large backlog of transactions requiring clearance. Therefore, bank transfers, international and domestic, are inconsistent and prone to delays. Though online banking services continue and are effective 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. Mobile money continues to work throughout the country and remains the one of the most feasible ways for delivering physical cash. 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:* On March 11st, KBZ bank internally announced that some of the branches will open as instructed from Central Bank.
* Citizens urged not to purchase Chinese products anymore. Traders in the border town of Muse in northern Shan state said there now are nearly no fruit imports from China.
* Anti-coup activists have been shunning products, such as Myanmar Beer, Andaman Gold Beer, Mandalay Rum, MyTel mobile phone service, and Ruby cigarettes, made by domestic military-related industries since February.
* Diesel prices continue to rise significantly, now reaching 913.30 Kyat per liter on 08-Mar-2021. [link](https://www.globalpetrolprices.com/Burma-Myanmar/diesel_prices/)
* Google and Rakuten-owned messaging app Viber said on Wednesday they were reviewing recent advertisements run by a Myanmar military-backed telecommunications firm following the Feb. 1 coup. News [here](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-politics-google-idUSKBN2B20WD).
* The Singapore Exchange issued a list of queries to developer Emerging Towns & Cities (ETC) over its project in Myanmar after a rights group criticised the company for doing business with the military. [News here.](https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/sgx-queries-developer-etc-over-myanmar-project)
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| **Recently published:** **Articles/Blogs/Research/Guidance/Discussion threads/Policy briefs** |
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| **In Myanmar:****Publication:** * WFP Myanmar shared the [Market Price Update covering February 2021](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JPCAqTuDnTrIwmAjNY4diESCDnYq_6w6/view?usp=sharing). In this report, the effects of the current political situation are being reflected in the retail prices. While the most significant price increases so far have been observed in northern Rakhine where the average retail price of cooking oil has increased by 27% from January to February, similar trends have been observed in other states and regions.
* Mercy Corps MAU released a snapshot on [Rakhine State Transport Providers.](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JLbRXQFkmYwrWzp7N-sXrUzY-cZkz7A2/view?usp=sharing) They surveyed 25 shipping providers serving humanitarian and commercial clients in Yangon and elsewhere. Key findings include rising fuel cost and limited access to cash remains the biggest challenges. Prices are up 20-50% for interstate shipping and 10-25% in Sittwe. Demand is down 50% for interstate provides and 10-40% for Sittwe providers. They alsp expect that March and April could see even higher prices and reduced supply for interstate shipping.

**In General****Publication:*** The publication for [Cash and Voucher Assistance for Protection: Taking stock of cash and voucher assistance to achieve protection outcomes in the protection sector in humanitarian settings](https://www.calpnetwork.org/publication/cash-and-voucher-assistance-for-protection-taking-stock-of-cash-and-voucher-assistance-to-achieve-protection-outcomes-in-the-protection-sector-in-humanitarian-settings/), Global Protection Cluster Task Team on Cash for Protection is available in CaLP library. This paper will be updated annually to reflect the current state of evidence and to elevate evidence gaps. The current paper addresses cash and voucher assistance for child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) outcomes; future versions will reflect evidence on CVA for housing, land, and property (HLP) and mine action outcomes.

CaLP published three very exciting publications, which together will help you to significantly improve data responsibility in your CVA work: **Data Responsibility Toolkit: A Guide for CVA Practitioners, Case study: Data responsibility and digital remote targeting during COVID-19 and Case study: responsible data sharing with governments**. Download all of the publications [here](https://bit.ly/2PGZvyi). * [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/), by Simon Little, Calum McLean, and Elayn Sammon has been published. FCDO Turkey commissioned SPACE to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the principal cash vehicles active in Turkey: Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) and Conditional Cash Transfers for Education (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.

**Media, News Articles and Op Eds:** * “[The case against cash](https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/2021/2/22/the-case-against-humanitarian-cash?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=social)” which suggested that “now might be a good time for the aid industry to collectively pause to consider what our role should be”.

**Blogs:** * ICRC published a blog this week “[Cashless cash: financial inclusion or surveillance humanitarianism](https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2021/03/02/cashless-cash/)?” continuing this conversation and asking some questions about the use of digital payments, looking through the lens of principled humanitarian action and do no harm. The blog highlights the huge benefits of (digital) cash, and some of the “dark side of digital solutions” both with CVA and more broadly.
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| **Webinars and Events** |
| **Recent webinars and events:*** IFPRI Myanmar has organised the event on March 4th about **The State of Myanmar Agri-Food system in February 2021**. The result of qualitative study informed the disruption, trade and challenges of Agri-Food system. The presentation slides can be found [here](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JKNwZup6N-6zDGBkzlMwrh188qsKHI0T/view?usp=sharing).
* ICRC’s [DigitHarium](https://www.icrc.org/en/digitharium) series which has monthly conversations about digital dilemmas in the humanitarian sector (not just CVA!). An event on ***04 March*** is focusing on Balancing Visibility and Vulnerability in Humanitarian Assistance and Social Protection Programmes ([Digital Dilemmas Debate #2](https://www.icrc.org/en/digitharium/digital-dilemmas-debate-2))
* CaLP, the ICT4D Conference and the Grand Bargain Cash and Risk sub-workstream’s event on ***11 March***, on data responsibility: “[Data simplified. Protection amplified. An essential conversation for CVA practitioners](https://www.calpnetwork.org/event/data-simplified-protection-amplified-an-essential-conversation-for-cva-practitioners/).”

**Upcoming webinars and events:*** Sphere’s newly released e-learning course “Sphere in Practice” supports anyone who wishes to learn about humanitarian standards in an interactive and engaging way. The [**massive open online course (MOOC)**](https://spherestandards.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=391ca4128b20851769396eb78&id=f645163a94&e=a86e469cb7) includes assignments, moderated discussion forums and interactive webinars. Being part of the MOOC will help you exchange with fellow students, discuss with expert practitioners, expand your network and make the most of your learning experience. The first edition of the MOOC will take place between 21 March and 3 May 2021. [Learn more and sign up](https://spherestandards.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=391ca4128b20851769396eb78&id=4ceaaa4737&e=a86e469cb7)
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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.** |