**Myanmar Cash Working Group**

**Weekly Update #25 (3 - 9 April 2021)**

| **Myanmar Situation Updates**  |
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| Partners continue to experience delays and difficulties accessing physical cash in Myanmar. While bank branches seem to be opening more, there are long queues and many individuals and organizations are not able to withdraw cash from the branches. With Thingyan coming up this week, most people will not be able to withdraw until after the holiday. While the withdrawal limits for organizations continues to be 20 million MMK per week, some banks have instituted their own limits reportedly down to 10 million MMK per week. As reported previously, the UN received an exemption for the withdrawal limits, however it is still uncertain how this exemption will be applied when dealing with individual banks. There is an ongoing effort from the RCO to get a withdrawal exemption for INGOs as well. ATMs remain one of the easiest ways to receive physical cash in the country, however, the withdrawal limits are now down 2-3 Lakh per day depending on the bank. The weekly withdrawal limits of 2 million MMK per week for individuals still remains. There are also some reports of ATMs and banks not having enough physical cash or not working due to internet disruptions. Some organizations are also successfully using foreign currency exchanges as a way to access MMK in larger quantities.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, there are withdrawal limits, 3 Lakh per day and 2 million MMK per week. The mobile internet shutoff, including mobile wifi, has led to additional disruptions and difficulties for agents. Some agents are reportedly facing liquidity issues. Despite the obstacles, mobile money operators, such as Ooredoo M-Pitesan, have been flexible in supporting partners' ability to deliver humanitarian assistance to beneficiaries. They also have put a solution in place in the wake of mobile data unavailability. And can operate the mobile money app even without mobile internet. According to WFP the average retail price of rice and cooking oil continue an upward trend. Since January the retail price of rice has increased 5% across the country, with higher increases in Central Rakhine (7%), Chin (8%) and Kachin (11%). One of the main drivers of the increase in prices is difficulties with transport and increasing lead times. In urban areas, from February to March a 7% increase in rice and 4% increase in cooking oil was recorded in the peri-urban Yangon. In Mandalay, there was a 6% increase in the retail price of cooking 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.Key Resources:* [Excel file of the cash based intervention data of 2020](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xnQ8pFbqxr45WE4tXFFAKg3522Qyv8eR7cbpS8lm1Bw/edit#gid=1230035561) for Myanmar Cash Working Group 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).
* Mercy Corp Myanmar publishes the **Market Price Report Dashboard -** The dashboard is [live at MIMU](http://themimu.info/rakhine-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 released this week the [March Market Price Update Report](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D5JYIowBBl-HzWhTBx2VuswnJWeE4sAO/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 MIMU website. [Myanmar-Emergency-CashAssistance-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 [Irrawaddy News](https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/yangon-bank-customers-detained-myanmars-military-regime.html), Military and state-run television channels announced that FOUR KBZ customers were detained at a branch of the KBZ bank in Yangon’s Kamayut Township on March 16. Media for the military regime said that they were arrested after they “forcibly enter” the bank on Pyi Road around 11:30 AM, 16 March, “to condemn the bank’s resumption of operations.” And recently they were sentenced to 3 years in prison.
* Cash withdrawal limits 3 lakhs per day for AYA ATM, 2 Lakhs per day for KBZ and 5 Lakhs per day for CB ATM withdrawal. Meanwhile, the bank branches allow withdrawal of 5 lakhs per account per day.
* [US Sanctions pose huge risks for Myanmar businesses](https://www.irrawaddy.com/opinion/guest-column/us-sanctions-pose-huge-risks-myanmar-businesses.html?fbclid=IwAR0PXkhYkt7dkDyGJVtCpHM9rbYBjx5NdkGRDqcxs0AH_JwuOnN-7S_WOJU); Sanctions enforcement has undoubtedly become a priority for the US government. With the situation in Myanmar grabbing global headlines, transactions involving sanctioned Myanmar individuals and entities will almost certainly now receive extra scrutiny.
* According to DMG media, [Wave Money agents in Arakan State are facing cash shortages](https://www.dmediag.com/news/2781-wave-money-ag); Residents from some townships in Arakan State travel to the state capital Sittwe to withdraw money from a Wave Money agent, but many are facing inconveniences due to cash flow delays and lack of internet access.
* According to DMG media, [Fish and prawn prices in Kyaukphyu Township, Arakan State, have fallen by more than 50%](https://www.dmediag.com/news/2782-prawn-kpu) following the Tatmadaw’s seizure of power on February 1, seafood traders say.
* [Petronas has revealed that its subsidiary, PC Myanmar (Hong Kong) Limited, has declared force majeure on its Yetagun field](https://www.spglobal.com/platts/en/market-insights/latest-news/natural-gas/040521-petronas-declares-force-majeure-at-yetagun-offshore-gas-field-in-myanmar); Petronas said in a statement late April 2 that its upstream subsidiary, PC Myanmar (Hong Kong) Limited, had declared force majeure on its Yetagun field in Myanmar on April 1 due to the depletion of gas production, and temporarily ceased production at the field until further notice.
* French oil and gas group Total said it would not stop producing gas on its Yadana fields in Myanmar as long as operations remained safe ([Bangkok Post](https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/2094695/total-says-abandoning-myanmar-gas-field-would-hurt-workers-cities))
* [The US on Thursday sanctioned a Myanmar state-owned gem company](https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/us-sanctions-myanmars-state-owned-gem-company/2202634) in response to the junta's ongoing violent repression of anti-coup demonstrators. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said sanctions are being implemented "as military leaders participate in an ongoing gems emporium in Nay Pyi Taw, under the auspices of Myanma Gems Enterprise."
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| **Recently published:** **Articles/Blogs/Research/Guidance/Discussion threads/Policy briefs** |
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| **In Myanmar:****Publication:** [Brief information about new displacement in Shwegu NGCA](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dW0eu69SyTeUMRq_Pnww5o6wXMFKgVne/view?usp=sharing) has been released. All the information contained in the report is obtained from KBC Bhamo. IFPRI Myanmar has published “**Monitoring the agri-food system in Myanmar: Agricultural commodity traders - March 2021 survey round”.** The research aims to understand how Myanmar’s crop marketing system has been affected by political instability, telephone interviews were conducted in March with 108 agricultural commodity traders. The policy paper can be found [here](https://ebrary.ifpri.org/digital/collection/p15738coll2/id/134332).**Blog:*** LIFT released a [statement](https://www.lift-fund.org/en/stories/livelihoods-and-food-security-fund-lift-alarmed-worsening-humanitarian-situation-yangon) about the the worsening humanitarian situation in Yangon. The statement says following the military takeover, many NGOs and CSOs have paused or limited their activities, meanwhile disruptions in the banking sector have resulted in a liquidity crisis for organizations’ operations and the intermittent communication connectivity - telephone and internet - has hindered the remote management of activities. In future, LIFT and partners are mobilizing to provide humanitarian support, including food assistance and cash transfers to workers experiencing a loss of livelihood in Yangon.

**In General****Publication:*** [**CVA and health: Case studies from Jordan, Burkina Faso and Bangladesh**](https://www.calpnetwork.org/cva-and-health-case-studies-from-jordan-burkina-faso-and-bangladesh/) is available in CaLP library. How can Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) support the goal of improved health outcomes in conditions of extreme poverty and vulnerability? These three case studies present findings from Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Jordan. All three programmes used cash and vouchers to improve access to and utilization of health services, either by reducing direct and indirect financial barriers, and/or by incentivizing the use of free preventive services.

**Blogs:** * Writing for Ground Truth Solutions, Max Seilern and Hannah Miles ask: [CVA, plus information: what happens when cash recipients are kept in the loop?](https://www.calpnetwork.org/blog/cva-plus-information-recipients-kept-in-loop/?utm_source=Social%20media&utm_medium=LinkedIn&utm_campaign=GTS%20blog) Based on feedback from Somalia and Nigeria, the blog reveals the positive impacts of being more open about cash programming with cash recipients.
* Linda Raftree’s recent blog tells us about the recently updated toolkit on [Data Responsibility in Cash and Voucher Assistance.](https://www.calpnetwork.org/blog/data-responsibility-in-cash-assistance-toolkit-2021/) CaLP has supported the updating of the toolkit and the blog also provides links to two case studies on data responsibility and data sharing with governments.
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| **Webinars and Events** |
| **Upcoming webinars and events:*** The USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance and USAID Advancing Nutrition are hosting an upcoming [webinar](https://www.calpnetwork.org/event/usaid-bureau-for-humanitarian-assistance-modality-decision-tool-nutrition-addendum/) on the new Modality Decision Tool Nutrition Addendum. The Addendum will enable implementing partners to apply a nutrition lens to the selection of appropriate modalities (cash, vouchers or in-kind) when designing interventions for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance sub-sector.
* The [**FIND Symposium**](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/find-symposium-refugee-integration-in-jordan-kenya-mexico-and-uganda-tickets-145308470547), “Finance in Displacement: Refugee Integration in Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, and Uganda.” will take place on April 20 and 21, 2021 and will feature key insights drawn from research conducted in 2019 by Katholischen Universität Eichstätt – Ingolstadt (KU), Tufts University, and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). The Symposium is supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Open Society Foundations (OSF). [Please RSVP here](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/find-symposium-refugee-integration-in-jordan-kenya-mexico-and-uganda-tickets-145308470547). For more information on the speakers and program, please visit [website](http://sites.tufts.edu/journeysproject/find-symposium/).
* A new case study "Adapting humanitarian CVA in times of Covid-19 – experiences and learning from Jordan" will be organized by CaLP on Monday, 12 April, 12:00PM Amman time/ 9AM GMT. To learn more and register, please follow the [link](https://www.calpnetwork.org/event/adapting-humanitarian-cash-assistance-in-times-of-covid-19-experiences-and-learning-from-jordan/)
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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). * 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).
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| **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.** |