**Myanmar Cash Working Group**

**Weekly Update #23 (20 - 26 March 2021)**

| **Myanmar Situation Updates** |
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| Some bank branches across Myanmar have opened, given that announcement that banks would be fined based on a percent of closed branches. This has improved the ability for partners to conduct certain actions that require in-person banking, which is particularly useful for partners that do not have an ibanking account setup. Partners continue to have difficulty accessing physical cash, particularly larger quantities above the Central Bank of Myanmar withdrawal limits. Although there are positive indications that an exemption given to UN agencies and their implementing partners will help alleviate some of these issues over time. Many partners successfully use internet banking services, especially for intra-bank transfers. ATMs remain one of the easiest ways to receive physical cash in the country, however, there are withdrawal limits and there are some reports of ATMs not having 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, 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.  Market prices of fuel and other staple foods have generally increased over the past 2 months. Updated market price data from WFP and other partners should come out in the next 1-2 weeks.  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:   * In Myanmar, "an economic collapse caused by widespread strikes, potentially amplified by a threat of foreign investors exiting, would create challenges for" the junta, even if it is willing to destroy the economy to maintain power. ([The Wall Street Journal](https://www.wsj.com/articles/for-foreign-businesses-in-myanmar-coup-creates-unworkable-situation-11616324404)) * The Central Bank of Myanmar released the standard fine fees banks will have to pay: small banks will have to pay 2 to 6 million MMK per week depending on the proportion of branches closed across the country; medium-sized banks will have to pay 5 to 15 million and large banks 10 to 30 million. * On 25th March at 15:00 hrs, 100 representatives of City Mart, Orange, Sein Gay Har and others supermarket groups were called to Yangon City Hall, reportedly to discuss why their shops remained closed. They had to spend the night at the City Hall and their whereabouts remained unknown until the morning. They were released around noon. * Myanmar's anti-coup general strike: "The effect of millions of people refusing to do their jobs has been dramatic....Up to 90 percent of national government activity has ceased, according to officials from four ministries." [New York Time](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/19/world/asia/myanmar-workers-strike.html?referringSource=articleShare)s * An international consortium has suspended a $1.5 billion hydropower dam project in Myanmar in response to last month’s military coup, consortium member Electricite de France, a French utility, said Sunday. [Frontier Myanmar](https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/frances-edf-says-myanmar-dam-project-halted-over-coup/) * A group of six professors in social science at the University of Oslo in Norway has nominated **the Civil Disobedience Movement of Myanmar for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2022**. * Myanmar’s economy is expected to contract by 10 per cent this year, World Bank forecasts released on Friday (Mar 26) showed, as the country is convulsed by nationwide protests, strikes and sanctions following a military coup on Feb 1. The forecast is a sharp reversal from the World Bank’s previous economic update in October, when it predicted that Myanmar’s economy would grow by 5.9 per cent, one of the strongest rates of expansion in the region. [CNA](https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/world-bank-myanmar-economy-to-contract-amid-turmoil-14495354) * CRPH issued a statement urging private companies not to participate in the Gems and Jewelry Fair 2021. It also reads that the companies who join will be blacklisted by the CRPH. * EU also imposed sanction on 11 persons “*responsible for the military coup staged in Myanmar/Burma*”. Ten of them are the most high-ranking generals from the Tatmadaw, including Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing, the Commander-in-Chief. U Thein Soe, the new chair of the Union Election Commission was also sanctioned “*for his role in cancelling the result of the 2020 elections*”. * Around 70 owners of shopping centers, malls, and various stores were summoned by the Yangon region military commander to an army office in Yangon’s Mayangone township on Thursday where they were threatened with imprisonment if they supported anti-coup activities. [Myanmar Now](https://www.myanmar-now.org/en/news/junta-threatens-business-owners-with-imprisonment-for-cooperating-with-resistance-movement) |

| **Recently published:** **Articles/Blogs/Research/Guidance/Discussion threads/Policy briefs** |
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| **In Myanmar:**  **Publication:**   * UNHCR published the several **Early Warning Reports** for [Kachin](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aowRKEabHwKEcrmuI_IJr7lSFq1U80IT/view?usp=sharing), [Rakhine](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nVVpkqUSM9Vwxs6niVRv6y7FKxLtGRv1/view?usp=sharing) and [South Eastern part of Myanmar](https://drive.google.com/file/d/10EL9WVPDyLe1-5L_5ic4s-j0uFiRel4T/view?usp=sharing). The reports highlight operational context, early warning system and key findings for respective regions.  UNDP has released RAPID SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF COVID-19 ON RURAL COMMUNITIES IN RAKHINE. This report provides a situational overview of socio-economic trends as well as perceptions and support needs of the rural population in Rakhine based on their own perspectives. Link [here](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T4P5e6588MRDEtvsS2QCblN2E6FIHRZM/view?usp=sharing)  * UNHCR Kachin office has released the Shelter/ NFI/ CCCM Cluster Analysis report in Kachin and NSS for the month of February 2021 which is [available](https://drive.google.com/file/d/18QHsWivbUiGrUkj-rxiu02uOJSR3TFot/view?usp=sharing). As of 28 Feb 2021, the total number of IDPs displaced reached **104,583 (20,171 HHs) hosted in 168** different locations within Kachin and Northern Shan States.The total shelter intervention (New shelter/Renovation/Care and Maintenance**) planned for 2021 is 1,726 covering around 23%** of the total shelter need. **Please note that most of the shelter intervention planned for 2021 are suspended due to current situation.**:   **In General**  **Publication:**   * Cash Learning Partnership Working Group on Cash Transfers, with support from DanChurchAid and DANIDA commissioned the development of a guidance and tools to standardise the process of designing, implementing and monitoring Group Cash Transfer (GCT) programmes as well as a report and tip sheet to address the opportunities and constraints towards the uptake of GCTs. [Guidance and Tools](https://www.calpnetwork.org/publication/group-cash-transfers-guidance-and-tools/), [the report](https://www.calpnetwork.org/publication/leveraging-the-potential-for-group-cash-transfers-a-complementary-report-to-the-group-cash-transfer-guidance-and-tools-pilot-version/) and [tip sheet](https://www.calpnetwork.org/publication/tip-sheet-engaging-beyond-cva-and-gct-communities-of-practice-supporting-the-uptake-and-scaling-of-group-cash-transfers-gcts/) are available online.   **Blogs:**   * Writing for the CaLP, Hannah Miles, and Max Seilern highlights the feedback from CVA recipients in [Nigeria](https://groundtruthsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GTS-Cash_Barometer_Nigeria_Nov2020.pdf) and [Somalia](https://groundtruthsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/GTS_Somalia_Report_2021.pdf), collected in September 2020 in a blog on: [CVA, plus information: what happens when cash recipients are kept in the loop?](https://bit.ly/3liabza) * Also, writing for CaLP, Linda Raftree author of CaLP’s ‘Data Responsibility Toolkit for CVA Practitioners’, tells us about this new publication and what it means for people working in the field of cash and voucher assistance (CVA). [Data Responsibility in Cash and Voucher Assistance – a toolkit for 2021](https://www.calpnetwork.org/blog/data-responsibility-in-cash-assistance-toolkit-2021/) |
| **Webinars and Events** |
| **Recent webinars and events:**   * On September 2020, the Cash Learning Partnership Working Group on Cash Transfers, with support from DanChurchAid and DANIDA commissioned the development of a guidance and tools to standardise the process of designing, implementing and monitoring Group Cash Transfer (GCT) programmes as well as a report and tip sheet to address the opportunities and constraints towards the uptake of GCTs. Key Aid Consulting took on this challenge and used a mixed method approach that utilized a structured desk review, Key Informant interviews, an online survey and gathered expert consensus to complete the final outputs in February 2021.Upon finalization of the work, two consecutive webinars were held on March 10 and March 11. Webinar recording of [March 10](https://keyaidconsulting.owncloud.online/s/ig61TfYY2gecWSW) and [March 11](https://keyaidconsulting.owncloud.online/s/ZZOsZcKXmypvoqh) can be found here.   **Upcoming webinars and events:**   * **Market Monitoring, Analysis and Response Kit (MARKit) 2ND edition: Practical applications of MARKit for decision-making is organized by CaLP on Wednesday, 31 March 2021. Please,** [**Click here to access the link and to add it to your calendar**](https://www.emma-toolkit.org/event/webinar-practical-applications-markit-decision-making). After an in-depth revision process, MARKit is now in its second edition! MARKit is a project-level market monitoring toolkit, aimed to help practitioners monitor program quality and make decisions if market conditions change.  [**Webinar: CVA for Health Outcomes: Learnings from Jordan, Burkina Faso and Bangladesh**](https://bit.ly/3vCGFch) will be on 30 March 2021. If you are interested in using CVA for improved health outcomes, then please do register for the webinar.  * The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action organized the [Webinar: Introduction to Cash and Voucher Assistance and Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit](https://www.calpnetwork.org/event/webinar-introduction-to-cva-and-child-protection-me-toolkit/) on 30 March 2021. The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action is pleased to invite you to the launch of the Cash and Voucher Assistance and Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit. This interactive webinar will introduce participants to the tools, include a case study on use of the tools and allow time for discussion. * CVA training courses 10 courses available in English, some of which are in French, Spanish and Arabic. Recently, the content of the ‘Linking Social Protection and CVA’ course, as well as the ‘Market Assessment Tools Training’ training materials were updated. Last year the ‘CVA – The Fundamentals’ course for remote delivery was also available. You will find all of these in the ‘Facilitators’ Space - <https://kayaconnect.org/course/view.php?id=603> |
| **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.** |