



WFP DPR Korea Country Brief May 2019

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Operational Context

Food insecurity and malnutrition in DPR Korea are chronic and widespread, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable women and children. An estimated 10.1 million people – more than 40 percent of the population – face food shortages after the worst harvest in 10 years in 2018. Low mechanization, limited arable land, lack of quality inputs and fertilizers hamper agriculture productivity. Recurrent natural disasters, which affect the country every year, also have a major impact on agricultural production and food security.

Despite improvements in national rates of chronic malnutrition, there are clear and marked disparities between rural and urban areas, with five provinces having above-average stunting rates, some as high as 32 percent.

WFP has been present in DPR Korea since 1995, providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable women and children, and working to build resilience to climate hazards.



Population: **25 million**

Life expectancy: **71.6 years**

Income Level: **Low**

Chronic malnutrition: **19 % of children between 6-59 months (MICS 2017)**

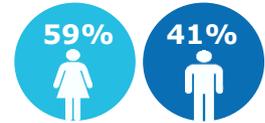
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In Numbers

US\$ 20 million June – November 2019
Net Funding Requirements

2,676 mt of food distributed in May 2019

611,521 people assisted
in May 2019



Operational Updates

In May, WFP assisted 611,521 people across DPR Korea, distributing 1,616 mt of fortified foods under the nutrition programme, and 1,060 mt of maize under the Food Assistance for Asset programme. That includes nutrition assistance for 6,316 children in boarding school, 325,000 children in nurseries, 101,100 children in kindergartens, 2,972 children in paediatric wards/hospitals, 114,513 pregnant and breastfeeding women and, 8,034 Tuberculosis (TB) patients. WFP's nutritional support is focused on areas of the country where food and nutrition security are fragile and reaches 60 counties across nine provinces every month.

Food assistance was provided to 53,590 Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) beneficiaries in response to the dry spell through small-scale activities to assist the farming communities with water catchments, and micro irrigation canals.

In May 2019, in close coordination with the World Health Organisation and the Government, WFP began providing fortified cereals and biscuits to drug-resistant and drug-sensitive TB patients, in North & South Hamgyong, Kangwon and Ryanggang, through provincial and county hospitals, as well as to TB outpatients.

In May, WFP recommenced nutrition assistance to about 100,000 children in kindergartens in North Hamgyong, Kangwon, South Hangwae, North Pyongan and Ryanggang, which had been suspended since November 2017 due to funding shortfalls.

In May, a Swedish delegation visited WFP-supported fortified food production factories in South Pyongan province, as well as a WFP-supported nursery, paediatric ward and households. Sweden is a regular donor to WFP in DPRK.

Operational plans are currently being updated following the May 2019 rapid food security assessment (details overleaf), and WFP is focusing its efforts on assisting more people in more places, while maintaining its focus on children and pregnant and breastfeeding women – those most vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition.

Photo Caption: WFP-supported nursery in DPRK. WFP/Colin Kampschoer

WFP Country Strategy

Interim Country Strategic Plan (2019-2021)

Total Requirements for 2019 (in US\$)	Confirmed funding (in US\$) including carry-over from 2018	June – November Net Funding Requirements (in US\$)
53.7 m	29.8 m	20 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Children under 7, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, and tuberculosis patients in targeted counties have stabilized or improved nutrition, particularly micronutrient status, by 2025.
Focus area: *Nutrition*

Activities: Provide nutrition assistance to children under 7, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls (PLWG) and TB patients, and strengthen the capacity of local food processors

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: People vulnerable to disasters and food insecurity in targeted counties are able to meet their food and nutrition needs during and after shocks and stresses by 2021.
Focus area: *Resilience Building*

Activities: Provide conditional gender-responsive resilience-building support for disaster-prone communities in WFP-targeted areas.

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 3: Crisis-affected people have access to food all year.
Focus area: *Crisis Response*

Activities: Provide emergency in-kind food assistance to crisis-affected people in the event of humanitarian crises.

Operational Overview

WFP's humanitarian operations in DPR Korea target food- and nutrition-insecure communities every month with nutritional assistance and livelihood support across nine provinces. WFP's work focuses on some of the most vulnerable children under 5, as well as pregnant and breastfeeding women in areas outside the capital where food and nutrition security is fragile.

WFP's nutrition programme assists vulnerable women and children with fortified cereal and biscuits with micronutrients, fats and proteins crucial for healthy growth. This assistance is channelled through public institutions such as nurseries, kindergartens, hospitals, paediatric wards and boarding schools. Fortified food is produced at 11 WFP-supported factories.

DPR Korea is vulnerable to natural disasters, such as drought, heatwaves and flooding, which affect agricultural production and livelihoods. WFP's food-assistance-for-assets (FFA) strategy works to mitigate the impact of natural disasters, rehabilitate productive rural assets and strengthen food security for rural vulnerable communities.

Donors

WFP's resource partners in DPR Korea include Canada, France, Liechtenstein, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

Challenges

- Disruption to banking channels limits access to cash for operations. To mitigate this, WFP minimizes the amount of in-country expenditure and procures all required food/non-food commodities internationally.
- Unintended impacts of sanctions include the breakdown of supply chains and delays in the transportation of vital goods to country. They have also hampered the production and distribution of fortified foods. Lead times for international procurement and shipping can last many months, with ship owners reluctant to send vessels to DPR Korea because of lengthy cargo inspections, fines and risk of being embargoed from other ports.
- The new partnership with the Central Bureau of Statistics has assisted in facilitating access to data on vulnerability and humanitarian needs. This partnership was particularly appreciated in the recent May assessment. However, the operating environment remains challenging and there is work to be done in this regard.

Monitoring

- Monitoring missions continued throughout May, visiting FFA sites and nutrition programme sites. During monitoring visits, international field monitors meet with local officials, institution staff and beneficiaries, including households. In addition, WFP has access to the supported institutions such as nurseries, boarding schools, hospitals, and to the food production factories.

Assessments

- The [joint FAO/WFP rapid Food Security Assessment was published in early May](#), showing that after the worst harvest in ten years, 10.1 million people face food shortages. Climate hazards including floods, droughts and a heatwave were compounded by a lack of farming inputs including fuel, fertilizer and spare parts for agricultural machinery, amid a fragile agricultural system with limited production capacity.
- The report expressed concern for food consumption, with families found to be cutting meals, eating less, and prioritising children over adults to cope amid food shortages. Concern was also raised for dietary diversity, which is vital to good nutrition, with many households surviving on diets of rice or maize and kimchi, with few vegetables or protein – diets that are poor in key nutrients for good nutrition and growth.