



Maternal & Child Cash Transfer (MCCT) programme in Myanmar

Malnutrition in Myanmar

In Myanmar, 29 per cent of children under the age of five are stunted, a key indicator of undernutrition (2015-16 Myanmar Demographic and Health Survey). The frequency of stunting is significantly higher in certain poorer areas, such as Chin and Rakhine States.

Government's strong commitment and origins of MCCT

In 2014, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MSWRR) drew up the first-ever National Social Protection Strategic Plan (NSPSP), supported by a range of agencies. An ambitious vision was set out for building a comprehensive social protection programme that would over time achieve national coverage. Managed by the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), the programme was set up to target pregnant women, children, and vulnerable, underserved populations, such as the elderly and people with disabilities. **Support for pregnant women and children up to two years old is a major priority and this led to the development of the Maternal and Child Cash Transfer (MCCT) programme.**

The MCCT programme aims to prevent stunting in children by combining two approaches: monthly cash allowances for pregnant women and mothers of children up to two years of age, and Social and Behavioural Change (SBC) activities. The SBC activities aim to improve nutrition and hygiene, as well as encouraging positive health-seeking behaviours, supported by the Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS) and local health professionals. The cash allowances provided to mothers are intended to be spent on additional, nutritious food for mothers and children, and on the use of health services, but long-term success of the programme is based on change in key behaviours related to nutrition.



Livelihoods and Food Security Fund



Managed by  UNOPS



Achievements and critical success factors

- Compelling evidence on the damaging effects of poor nutrition on mothers and children, and clear recommendations on how this should be addressed, have been well established
- An ambitious Government strategy was created where mother and child nutrition was a major flagship. This was matched with strong leadership and high-level endorsement by senior DSW staff, as well as the Union Minister to drive the programme forward and establish the right conditions and securing resources.
- The MS-NPAN (Multi-Sectoral National Plan of Action for Nutrition) endorsed in 2018 is the national framework for addressing poor nutrition in Myanmar, with concerted efforts and joint leadership from the MoHS, MSWRR, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, and the Ministry of Education. The DSW-led MCCT and MoHS nutrition programmes are included within this framework.
- Multiple actors have pushed for this agenda jointly, with donors, the UN and implementing NGOs helping DSW develop and cost out the national social protection strategy, providing timely and flexible funding, pilot experience, and technical support.
- The relative speed at which significant project initiatives have been taken up has helped stimulate policy change and take the programme to scale.

