

Livelihood Food Security Lift II

This working paper synthesizes findings from four large household and community surveys in Myanmar, each covering a major agro-ecological zone, to evaluate inter-regional variations in the composition of agriculture, livelihoods, and the rural economy, and prospects for production and income growth.

Agricultural equipment retailers (ER) in Myanmar were originally interviewed by telephone in late May 2020 to determine how their businesses were being affected by COVID-19 related restrictions. The results of that survey were published in Myanmar Strategy Support Program Policy Note 09. To trace the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their economic activities, a second phone survey of ERs was done in late June 2020. This Policy Note reports on the results of this second survey.

Despite significant poverty reduction over the past decade, undernutrition in Myanmar remains widespread. Food prices play an important role in influencing diets and nutrition outcomes, especially for poorer households. In this study, we use national household food expenditure data to assess dietary patterns and estimate regional costs of nutritious diets in Myanmar relative to a recommended diet derived from food-based dietary guidelines. We estimate these costs following the cost of a recommended diet method (CoRD), which is based on minimum food group prices. We also develop and demonstrate an extension of this method using food group prices that reflect typical food consumption preferences (CoRD-FP). We assess the affordability of the recommended diet by comparing observed household food expenditure to the CoRD and the CoRD-FP. In 2015, 52 percent of the Myanmar population lived in households with food expenditure below the CoRD-FP, compared to 70 percent in 2010. Even the CoRD, which measures the lowest possible cost of meeting the recommended diet, exceeded household food expenditure for 32 and 24 percent of the population in 2010 and 2015, respectively. Low affordability is driven by high costs of animal-source foods and vegetables, which account for half the CoRD-FP. A majority of households over-consume staples and under-consume micronutrient-dense food groups. This imbalance is driven in part by the high caloric price of nutrient-dense foods relative to rice. The inability of more than half of households in Myanmar to afford a recommended diet at existing food expenditure levels suggests the need for policies that reduce the prices of micronutrient-dense foods, ideally through pro-poor improvements in agricultural productivity and marketing.

Poultry farmers in Myanmar were originally interviewed by telephone in early and late June 2020 to determine how their businesses were being affected by COVID-19 related restrictions. The results of those surveys were published in Myanmar Strategy Support Program Policy Notes 11 and 13, respectively. To trace the continuing impact of the

COVID-19 pandemic on their economic activities, a third phone survey of poultry farmers was done in early July 2020. The third survey included 247 poultry farmers (177 broiler and 70 layer farms) in the Yangon peri-urban area (Ayeyarwady, Bago, and Yangon regions) who had been interviewed for the second round of the survey. The same survey questionnaire was used. This Policy Note reports on the results of the third survey round.

Myanmar had one of the lowest confirmed COVID-19 caseloads in the world in mid-2020 and was one of the few developing countries not projected to go into economic recession. However, macroeconomic projections are likely to be a poor guide to individual and household welfare in a fast-moving crisis that has involved disruption to an unusually wide range of sectors and livelihoods. To explore the impacts of COVID-19 disruptions on household poverty and coping strategies, as well as maternal food insecurity experiences, this study used a telephone survey conducted in June and July 2020 covering 2,017 mothers of nutritionally vulnerable young children in urban Yangon and rural villages of Myanmar's Dry Zone. Stratifying results by location, livelihoods, and asset-levels, and using retrospective questions on pre-COVID-19 incomes and various COVID-19 impacts, we find that the vast majority of households have been adversely affected from loss of income and employment. Over three-quarters cite income/job losses as the main impact of COVID-19 – median incomes declined by one third and \$1.90/day income-based poverty rose by around 27 percentage points between January and June 2020. Falling into poverty was most strongly associated with loss of employment (including migrant employment), but also with recent childbirth. The poor commonly coped with income losses through taking loans/credit, while better-off households drew down on savings and reduced non-food expenditures. Self-reported food insecurity experiences were much more common in the urban sample than in the rural sample, even though income-based and asset-based poverty were more prevalent in rural areas. In urban areas, around one quarter of respondents were worried about food quantities and quality, and around 10 percent stated that there were times when they had run out of food or gone hungry. Respondents who stated that their household had lost income or experienced food supply problems due to COVID-19 were more likely to report a variety of different food insecurity experiences. These results raise the concern that the welfare impacts of the COVID-19 crisis are much more serious and widespread than macroeconomic projections would suggest. Loss of employment and casual labor are major drivers of increasing poverty. Consequently, economic recovery strategies must emphasize job creation to revitalize damaged livelihoods. However, a strengthened social protection strategy should also be a critical component of economic recovery to prevent adversely affected households from falling into poverty traps and to avert the worst forms of food insecurity and malnutrition, particularly among households with pregnant women and young children. The recent second wave of COVID-19 infections in Myanmar from mid-August onwards makes the expansion of social protection even more

imperative.

The global food system is characterized by large numbers of people experiencing food insecurity and hunger on the one hand, and vast amounts of food waste and overconsumption on the other. This book brings together experiences from different countries addressing the challenges associated with food security. Seen through various disciplinary lenses the different cases included are countries at various stages of food security, with diverse stories of success as well as failures in their efforts. China, Brazil and India, as well as less developed countries in Africa and Asia, such as Malawi, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Myanmar, Bangladesh and the Philippines. The authors pay special attention to the environmental and socio-economic challenges in the respective chapters and how they contribute to food insecurity. Each of the case studies identifies and analyzes which factors or drivers (environmental, economic, policy, technology, markets) have been the most powerful shapers of the food system and their future impact. The case studies identify interventions at regional, national and local level that contribute positively to food security, highlighting solutions that are effective and easy to implement for all levels of decision makers, from farmers to policy makers. Overall, the book provides insights in order to foster a greater understanding of the issues surrounding food security and support progress towards the goal of a sustainable food system for all.

The project aim was to sustainably improve the livelihoods and food security of communities and the poor and vulnerable in six townships in the Central Dry Zone (CDZ) of Myanmar through improving livestock health, productivity, and marketing. The project is highly relevant as livestock are critical to people's livelihoods in the area. It was evaluated as being efficiently delivered with very significant benefits being provided in developing livestock policies with good sustainability and identifying effective new technologies to promote livestock production in the CDZ. Of note, project efficiency was evaluated as being high with an adaptive approach taken as priorities changed and opportunities developed, and with strong government support providing considerable staff and other resources. At the time of the evaluation, the impact of the project remains limited as little extension work has been undertaken to improve livestock production practices and many of the policies being developed are yet to be finalized. However, the project has laid down a strong basis for the improvement in livestock policies and improved production practices and Government has taken strong ownership of these. The impact of the project will be enhanced over time as policies are consolidated and further extension of the new technologies undertaken.

It is feared that the COVID-19 pandemic will lead to widespread increases in global poverty and food insecurity and that these negative impacts will concentrate on the most vulnerable segments of the population (Swinnen and McDermott 2020). Although Myanmar, with one of the lowest COVID-19 infection rates in the world, has been spared the worst direct

impacts of the disease, its economy remains highly vulnerable to the economic fallout of the contagion. A major contributor to increased food insecurity in Myanmar is the reduction of income among vulnerable populations (Diao et al. 2020), partly due to significant declines in remittances in the country (Diao and Wang 2020). In addition, disruptions to food marketing systems and changes in farm and consumer prices could also turn out to be major drivers of food insecurity. Changes in food markets – including supply of commodities and transport - and food and agricultural prices are an obvious concern to policy makers, given the importance of agricultural prices for the income of farmers and food prices for the purchasing power of consumers.

The purpose of this policy brief is to provide national and state-level policymakers, private sector investors, civil society and donors with an analysis of the rural economy of Mon State and pathways to improved prosperity for its population. The analysis is based on a representative survey (the Mon State Rural Household Survey 2015) of 1680 rural households, which comprise 73% of Mon State's 2 million residents, and extensive interviews with farmers, traders, processors, local leaders and government officials. This Working Paper takes comprehensive stock of the impacts of the first two waves of COVID-19 (in Q2 and Q4 2020) on the microfinance sector in Myanmar. We discuss potential impact pathways, review policy responses to the crisis, and present new quantitative analysis based on a set of surveys with respondents throughout the agricultural value chain. Additionally, we briefly review impacts since the military takeover on February 1, 2021. Overall, various disruptions to the microfinance sector, particularly during peak periods of COVID-19, significantly reduced overall lending from April 2020, onward. These disruptions, along with disruptions to external financing, led to greater informal borrowing, likely greater indebtedness, and lower food security. However, policy responses and financing accommodations to microfinance institutions (MFIs) in Q2 and Q3 2020 cushioned the sector against widespread insolvency. The events since the military takeover are creating new challenges, exacerbating the aforementioned impacts, and raising new risks of MFI insolvency and broader crises around food security, indebtedness, and poverty. Considering these findings, stakeholder recommendations underscore the importance of easing the movement of international and domestic goods. Efforts should be focused on meeting the MFIs' need for loanable funds through mechanisms such as exchange rate hedging, credit guarantees, and loan enhancement, while continuing to encourage flexibility around existing financing. When the time comes for a full recovery, there should be a focus on facilitating additional financial injections so that MFIs can more effectively restart lending operations.

Mechanization service providers (MSPs) in Myanmar were originally interviewed by telephone in summer 2020, fall 2020, and June 2021, covering mostly combine-harvester service providers (CHSPs) and tractor service providers (TSPs), to determine how their businesses were being affected by COVID-19 related restrictions and political instability. The results of those surveys were published in Myanmar Strategy Support Program Policy Notes 07, 12, 17, 39, 43 and 59 respectively. To trace the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the current political and social conditions on their economic activities, a seventh

only Myanmar's economy, but also the livelihoods of Myanmar households. This Working Paper assesses such impacts at the household level using a microsimulation model based on the Myanmar Poverty and Living Conditions Survey (MPLCS) conducted in 2015.

Key findings ? Ninety-two percent of urban communities and 90 percent of rural communities experienced a decline in income of at least 20 percent compared to a year before due to lower income from both non-farm employment and crop farming. ? Compared to data collected in 2020 survey rounds, we see a shift towards reduction in food expenditures and selling agricultural and non-agricultural assets in 2021. Fifty-four percent of communities reduced food expenditure to cope with declining income in September 2021, compared to 17 percent in September 2020. ? Twenty-seven percent of communities experienced closed banks and 12 percent of communities reported cash shortage at their local ATMs.

This study assesses the welfare impacts of COVID-19 on households in Myanmar by combining recent high-frequency telephone survey evidence for two specific rural and urban geographies with national-level survey-based simulations designed to assess ex-ante impacts on poverty with differing amounts of targeted cash transfers. The first source of evidence – the COVID-19 Rural and Urban Food Security Survey (C19- RUFSS) – consists of four rounds of monthly data collected from a sample of over 2,000 households, all with young children or pregnant mothers, divided evenly between urban and peri-urban Yangon and the rural Dry Zone. This survey sheds light on household incomes prior to COVID-19 (January 2020), incomes and food security status soon after the first COVID-19 wave (June 2020), the gradual economic recovery thereafter (July and August 2020), and the start of the second COVID-19 wave in September and October 2020. This survey gives timely and high-quality evidence on the recent welfare impacts of COVID-19 for two important geographies and for households that are nutritionally highly vulnerable to shocks due to the presence of very young children or pregnant mothers. However, the relatively narrow geographic and demographic focus of this telephone survey and the need for forecasting the poverty impacts of COVID-19 into 2021 prompt us to explore simulation-based evidence derived by applying parameter shocks to household models developed from nationally representative household survey data collected prior to COVID-19, the 2015 Myanmar Poverty and Living Conditions Survey (MPLCS). By realistically simulating the kinds of disruptions imposed on Myanmar's economy by both international forces, e.g., lower agricultural exports and workers' remittances, and domestic COVID-19 prevention measures, e.g., stay-at-home orders and temporary business closures, we not only can predict the impacts of COVID-19 on household poverty at the rural, urban, and national levels, but also can assess the further benefits to household welfare of social protection in the form of monthly household cash transfers of different magnitudes. Combined, these two sources of evidence yield insights on both the on-the-ground impacts of COVID-19 in recent months and the potential poverty reduction impacts of social protection measures in the coming year. We conclude the study with a discussion of the policy implications of these findings.

Mechanization service providers (MSP) in Myanmar were originally interviewed by telephone in May, June, July, and November 2020, covering mostly combine-harvester SPs (CHSP) and tractor SPs (TSP), to determine how their businesses were being

affected by COVID-19 related restrictions. The results of those surveys were published in Myanmar Strategy Support Program Policy Notes 07, 12, 17, and 39, respectively. To trace the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their economic activities, a fifth phone survey of MSPs was done in mid-December 2020, administered mostly to SPs in harvesting activities. This Note reports on the results of the fifth survey, as well as on some trends from the earlier surveys.

Between April and October 2020, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Michigan State University (MSU), with support from the United States Agency of International Development (USAID) and the Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT), have undertaken analyses of secondary data combined with regular telephone surveys of actors at all stages of Myanmar's agri-food system in order to better understand the impacts of COVID-19 on the system. These analyses show that the volume of agribusiness has slowed considerably in Myanmar since COVID-19 restrictions were put in place. There is lower demand from farmers for agricultural inputs and mechanization services and lower volumes of produce traded, especially exports to neighboring countries whose borders are closed. All actors in the agri-food system are facing liquidity constraints and experiencing increased difficulties in both borrowing and recovering loans.

Data visualization has emerged as a serious scholarly topic, and a wide range of tools have recently been developed at an accelerated pace to aid in this research area. Examining different ways of analyzing big data can result in increased efficiency for many corporations and organizations. *Data Visualization and Statistical Literacy for Open and Big Data* highlights methodological developments in the way that data analytics is both learned and taught. Featuring extensive coverage on emerging relevant topics such as data complexity, statistics education, and curriculum development, this publication is geared toward teachers, academicians, students, engineers, professionals, and researchers that are interested in expanding their knowledge of data examination and analysis.

Agricultural equipment retailers (ERs) play an essential role in meeting the demand for a diverse set of machines and equipment at affordable prices that are needed for the heterogeneous agricultural production environments in Myanmar. ERs can be particularly sensitive to bottlenecks in trade flows and internal logistical disruptions that affect their inventory management. Given their close linkages with mechanization service providers, the financial and supply challenges that ERs face can have repercussions on the provision of mechanization services as well. The COVID-19 pandemic in Myanmar and the policy responses to it have affected key aspects of the business operations of ERs. Measures to support equipment retailers and to ensure the access of buyers to their equipment and services should be guided by an understanding of the situation on the ground. This policy note uses qualitative findings from a rapid phone survey of ERs across Myanmar.

In the ten years since this Gower Handbook was first published, Programme Management has been transformed to become the vehicle of choice for realising the objectives of large scale, complicated, business, government and social investment. The Second Edition of this Gower Handbook is a completely new text; designed as a definitive guide to the current state of Programme Management. To that end the text offers foundation theory and knowledge around key issues such as, managing programme

contracts, people and know-how, complexity and uncertainty, benefits and success measures, as well as every stage of the programme life cycle. The main central section of the book provides theory, tools, advice and examples of practical application from an industry context and covers sectors including construction, energy, aerospace and defence, IT, automotive and the public sector. The Handbook also includes a section with chapters on assessing and improving programme competences and developing maturity. Discrete chapters relate programme management to the international baselines and standards. Collectively, the Gower Handbook of Programme Management is most comprehensive guide to the subject that you can buy.

The social and economic systems of any country are influenced by a range of factors including income and education. As such, it is vital to examine how these factors are creating opportunities to improve both the economy and the lives of people within these countries. Socio-Economic Development: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications provides a critical look at the process of social and economic transformation based on environmental and cultural factors including income, skills development, employment, and education. Highlighting a range of topics such as economics, social change, and e-governance, this multi-volume book is designed for policymakers, practitioners, city-development planners, academicians, government officials, and graduate-level students interested in emerging perspectives on socio-economic development.

The purpose of this report is to provide information and analysis to government, civil society, and donors interested in improving the well-being of the rural population of Mon State. Specifically, the report analyzes the different sources of income for rural households, as well as their socioeconomic characteristics, with a view to identifying potential pathways to improving incomes, especially for poor households, and stimulating inclusive rural growth. The overall picture that emerges is one of an economy heavily dependent on services for local employment and on international migration for income. Like a two-legged stool, such an economy is potentially unstable in the face of external shocks. Diversification of the Mon State economy, including diversification and increased productivity within the agricultural sector, will lessen the relative dependence on external migration remittances and result in more resilient growth in the future

Six rounds of the Rural-Urban Food Security Survey (RUFSS) conducted in 2020 demonstrated the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on poverty and food insecurity among approximately 2,000 households with pregnant women or young children in urban Yangon and the rural Dry Zone. In this Research Note, we present results from a follow-up round conducted in May 2021.

In the Dry Zone of Myanmar, improved access to water is widely acknowledged as being vital for livelihood enhancement and the general well-being of around 10 million people, most of whom depend on agriculture. Thus, expanding the sustainable use of groundwater is of great importance for socioeconomic development. According to this study, opportunities for accessing groundwater are generally good, and development of the resource has steadily increased over the years. However, there still appears to be good prospects for expanding groundwater use for irrigation, with a

view to increasing agricultural production. Provision of affordable mechanical technologies for drilling wells and support with credit facilities to purchase small-capacity motorized pumps for irrigation could improve food security and livelihoods, where there is potential to expand groundwater use. Replenishable groundwater resources of the Dry Zone are likely to be less than previously thought. Thus, it is important to find the right balance between increasing development of the resource for enhanced irrigation, while also protecting its existing beneficial use for communities and the environment. Rural out-migration to both domestic and international destinations counts among the key phenomena that defined a decade of transformation in Myanmar from the 2011 economic reforms until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. We analyze data from four surveys conducted in different areas of rural Myanmar from 2015 to 2018, along with relevant literature, to highlight trends in migration and its contributions to economic growth and rural development. Studied areas include Mon State, as well as parts of the Ayeyarwady Delta, the Central Dry Zone, and Shan State. Mechanization service providers in Myanmar were originally interviewed by telephone in May 2020 and again in June 2020 to determine how their businesses were being affected by COVID-19 related restrictions. The results of those surveys were published in Myanmar Strategy Support Program Policy Notes 07 and 12, respectively. To trace the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their economic activities, a third phone survey of mechanization service providers was done in early-July 2020. This Note reports on the results of the third survey, as well as some trends since the first and the second surveys.

The purpose of this report is to provide national- and state-level policymakers, private-sector investors, civil society, and donors with an analysis of the rural economy of Mon State and pathways to improved prosperity for its population. The analysis is based on a representative survey of rural households, which make up 73 percent of Mon State's 2 million residents, and extensive interviews with farmers, traders, processors, local leaders, and government officials. Whereas some parts of the Mon State economy are quite dynamic, such as construction, others are stagnant and far from reaching their full potential. Furthermore, the dynamic sectors are heavily dependent on remittances from migrants to neighboring countries. The current pattern of donor investment is heavily focused on necessary infrastructure and energy investments, but with only very limited support to productive sectors, especially agriculture and fisheries. Major investments in education, both formal and vocational training, are also necessary to support the growth of a modern economy. The analysis in this report identifies options for more balanced growth, leading to a vibrant economy in which returning migrants can invest and find employment.

The purpose of this report is to provide information and analysis to government, civil society, and donors interested in improving the well-being of the rural population of Mon State, Myanmar. Specifically, the report analyzes the different

sources of income for rural households, as well as their socioeconomic characteristics, with a view to helping identify constraints on growth and potential pathways to improving incomes. The overall picture that emerges is one of a struggling agricultural sector and an economy heavily dependent on services for local employment and on international migration for income. The analysis is based on a sample of 1,632 rural households, designed to be representative of rural households in Mon State as a whole. The survey included a household questionnaire and a community survey, and gathered information on demographics, all economic aspects of the household, and access to infrastructure and services at the community level.

This report shares the results of a joint analysis by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) on the agri-food system in Myanmar based on an assessment conducted from August to October 2020. The analysis was part of a broader initiative to contribute to data collection and analysis linked to COVID-19, informing evidence-based programming in selected countries. Its objective was to assess the effects of COVID-19 on Myanmar's agri-food system, which includes livestock and fishing, food supplies, livelihoods and the food security of rural people at the national level. Information is collected from primary sources of the production process: producer households, traders or marketers, inputs suppliers, extension officers and key informants. The first round of data collection has been completed, with Rounds II and III taking place in 2021. This assessment covered 75 townships in eight states and regions: Mon, Chin, Kachin, Kayin, Rakhine, Sagaing, Shan and Yangon; data were collected between mid-August to mid-October 2020, complemented by a survey of input vendors. This report was made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of FAO and WFP, and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a global economic crisis from which very few countries will be spared. As a result of few COVID-19 cases, a relatively short-lived lockdown, and economic momentum prior to COVID-19, Myanmar is one of the few developing countries that the World Bank (2020) forecasts will not go into recession in 2020 – a very modest expansion of just 0.87 percent is forecast. A Social Accounting Matrix multiplier analysis by IFPRI projected a 0.50 percent expansion under a fast economic recovery scenario, but a 2.00 percent contraction under a slow economic recovery scenario (Diao et al., 2020). The IFPRI study projects massive declines in GDP across a range of sectors during lockdown periods, including large increases in unemployment (5 million during the lockdown period) and declines in household income of 20 to 30 percent for April to June, albeit with fast recovery thereafter.

This note discusses the significant risks facing microfinance institutions (MFI) in Myanmar in the wake of the COVID-19 health and economic

crisis and the implications for poverty and food insecurity of a serious negative shock to the MFI sector. The note is based on a desk review of the early policy responses in Myanmar, of best practices identified by international and local experts, and online discussions with leaders of MFIs operating in Myanmar. The objective is to make policymakers aware of the crucial role MFIs play in a wide range of economic activities in Myanmar, including food production, processing, trade, and marketing. A serious disruption to the MFI sector has the potential to:

- Exacerbate food insecurity through damaging economic resilience in the short-to-medium term,
- Lower agricultural output in the critical upcoming monsoon production season, and
- Harm the potential for microfinance to contribute to economic recovery.

This book presents a socio-economic and livelihood analysis of agriculturally-dependent communities of Mizoram, the eastern extension of the Himalaya, using the sustainable livelihood approach. Such an approach to poverty reduction is inevitable, particularly, in areas where livelihoods depend largely on biomass-based agriculture and livestock production. Mizoram possesses abundant natural resources – land, water and forest – but those resources are largely unused. The region suffers from chronic poverty and malnutrition, and climate change has further influenced livelihood patterns. This work studies all the aspects of natural potentials and livelihood status in Mizoram. It also discusses the major driving forces that influence livelihood patterns. Based on a detailed analysis of empirical data, several policy measures are suggested to cope with chronic poverty and malnutrition. The book is therefore highly useful for all stakeholders; students, researchers, academicians, policy makers and politicians involved in rural/community development.

National poverty rates in Myanmar have risen dramatically due to economic disruption following the February 1, 2021 military take-over of government. Depending on assumptions about the scale of the economic impacts, household poverty rates are predicted to have risen to between 40 and 50 percent in 2021, compared to 32 percent in 2015 and just under 25 percent in 2017. Between 849,000 and 1.87 million new households are thus living in poverty in 2021 in addition to the estimated 2.86 million households already in poverty in 2015. The poverty impacts of these disruptions are significant not only in the sharp increases in the total number of households in poverty, but also in the substantial deepening of poverty for households that were already poor. By the end of the current financial year, the average poverty gap (expenditure shortfall) is predicted to have increased from 26 percent in 2015 to between 34 and 40 percent for individuals living in poor households.

Improving water management in Myanmar's dry zone for food security, livelihoods and health
International Water Management Institute (IWMI)
Evaluation of "Improving farmer livelihoods in the dry zone through improved livestock health, productivity and marketing"
Project code: UNJP/MYA/022/OPS
Food & Agriculture Org.

This book provides a comprehensive overview of key aspects of food insecurity, including definitional and conceptual issues, information systems and data sources, indicators, and policies. The aim is to equip readers with a sound understanding of the subject that will assist in the recognition of food insecurity and the design of suitable responses. The early chapters discuss the evolution and limitations of the concept and provide a set of conceptual frameworks for the analysis of food security. Systems used to collect data and their evolution over time are then explained, and the most commonly adopted indicators for monitoring food security are presented. Approaches to food security are then thoroughly reviewed decade by decade. Specific attention is paid to the food insecurity challenge in the new millennium, focusing particularly on recent food crises and institutional and policy-related consequences. Finally, the specific terminology of food aid and assistance is examined, with discussion of the instruments recently adopted in the food aid system. This book will be an informative and stimulating resource for both students and professionals.

Many governments imposed stringent lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic as a public health measure to suppress the spread of the disease. With consumer incomes already depressed, the potential impacts of these measures on urban food prices are of particular concern. This working paper examines the changes in Myanmar's urban food prices during lockdown using detailed food price data collected from a panel of phone surveys conducted in August and September 2020 of 431 family-owned retail shops in Myanmar's two largest cities, Yangon and Mandalay. We find that the supply side of Myanmar's food retail sector was largely resilient to the shocks and lockdowns throughout the first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Estimates from a fixed effects difference-in-differences model reveal that food prices were 3 percent higher in townships under lockdown compared to those not under lockdown, a statistically significant but modest effect. Lockdowns had smaller effects on prices for highly processed food items sourced directly from companies, but larger effects on prices for raw or lightly processed commodities sourced through wholesale markets, which comprise a larger share of urban consumer's diets. Retailer margins did not change significantly under lockdown restrictions, suggesting no evidence of price gouging. Overall, our findings of a modest impact of the lockdown on urban food prices underscore the importance of keeping the food supply chain—including wholesale markets and retail shops—functioning as completely and as safely as possible during times of crisis, as was mostly the case early in the crisis for the two cities in this study.

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