



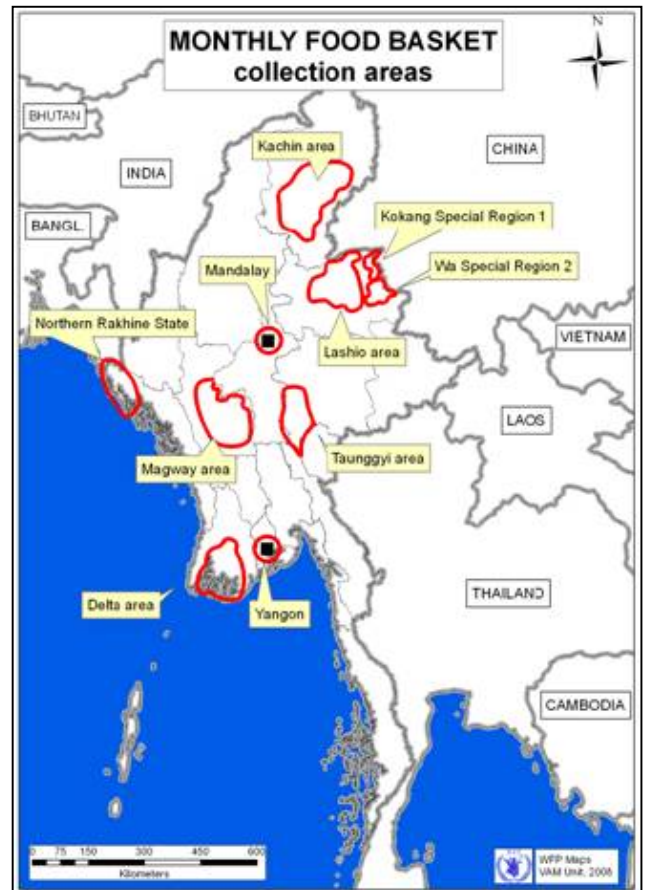
AUGUST-DECEMBER 2008: HOUSEHOLD FOOD BASKET BULLETIN

This report describes the ability of poor and vulnerable households in selected areas in Myanmar to meet their basic food needs¹, based on information up to December 2008. The report is produced by the Vulnerability Analysis & Mapping (VAM) Unit at WFP Yangon.

Data was collected with the help cooperating partners, including ADRA, World Vision, WHH, REAM, CARE, KMSS, OISCA, Shalom foundation, and field staff from ten WFP sub-offices plus two field offices.

Highlights August to December 2008

- Poor food access in Rakhine State is a cause for serious concern. Although rice prices decreased; fewer job opportunities and larger average HH size meant that the gap between income and expenditure grew.
- In NRS it is estimated that current average wages and rice prices require that an average of 1.4 earners per household must work 6 days/week to earn the minimum necessary income for purchasing food.
- In the Agway area (of Dry Zone) female-headed HH reported spending 100% of their income on food, but later in the year both genders were able to save
- The price of rice in Kokang increased in August but plateaued in September and October. After the harvest, because of an increase in supply, prices decreased.



Methodology and illustrations:

Market data on household access to rice is collected on a monthly basis in WFP's current operational areas: Northern Rakhine State; Dry Zone-Magway; Northern Shan State: Lashio Areas, Kokang Special Region, Wa Special Region; Southern Shan State: Taunggyi Areas; Kachin State; Delta Areas; Yangon; Mandalay (as specified on above map). The information collected includes rice prices, daily wages, and employment opportunities. The included charts demonstrate the amount of Kyats required weekly for a household to meet its basic rice needs.

Assumption: Households relying on casual wages for income do not have significant access to self-production

The lines in attached charts denote the following:

BLUE: current minimum standard (male)

Turquoise: current minimum standard (Female) (the average weekly income of a poor household), derived from the formula: **[number of earners] x [no. of days of employment] x [daily unskilled wages]**

RED: basic survival threshold (the minimum expenditure per household per week to survive, only rice), derived from the formula: **[0.5 kg cheap rice price] x [number of persons per household] x [seven days per week]**

These calculations take into account "compulsory collateral expenditures" in urban areas (weekly):

Simple dwelling: 1,600K in Yangon, Mandalay, 1,000K in Lashio.

Charcoal: 3,500K in Yangon, 2,500K in Mandalay, 1,500K in Lashio

Assumption: Rice accounts for 70% of daily food needs.



NORTHERN RAKHINE STATE (NRS), August - December 2008

The food security situation is extremely poor with deteriorating situations in Maungdaw since March 2008 and Buthidaung and Rathidaung since January 2008.

The highest price for rice in Maungdaw and Buthidaung from Jun/July was 470 Kyats/kg and 420 kyats per kg in Rathidaung. Rice prices decreased from August-November and in December, but lack of access at the HH level resulted in larger numbers of food insecure HHs.

Employment opportunity decreased from 4.2 days/week in July to 3.4 days/ week between August-December. This decrease in employment (with respect to days per week employed) adversely impacted food access at the HH level.

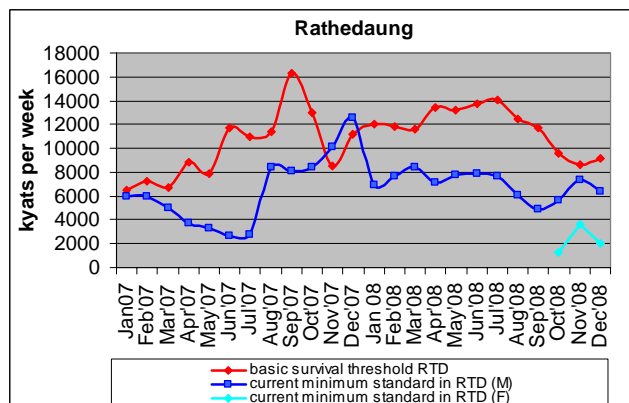
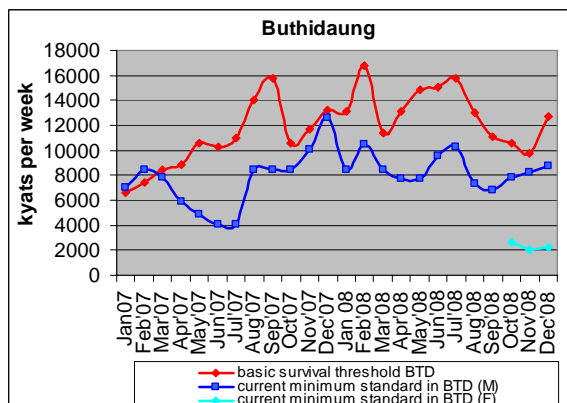
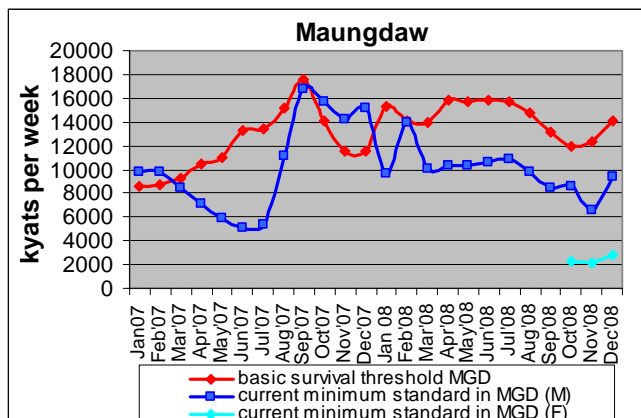
For males in Maungdaw, the average wage was 1860 kyats/day and for females 540 kyats/ day. In Buthidaung, males earn an average of 1600 kyats/day and females earn 500 kyats/day. In Rathidaung, males earn 1337 kyats/day and females earn 620 kyats/day.

The unofficial exchange rate is approximately 1200 kyat = \$1USD. Wages are also reflective of inequality among men and women, linked, in part, to religious practices.

Current average wages and rice prices require that an average of 1.4 earners per household must work 6 days/week to earn the minimum necessary income for purchasing food.



Average household size = 6.7

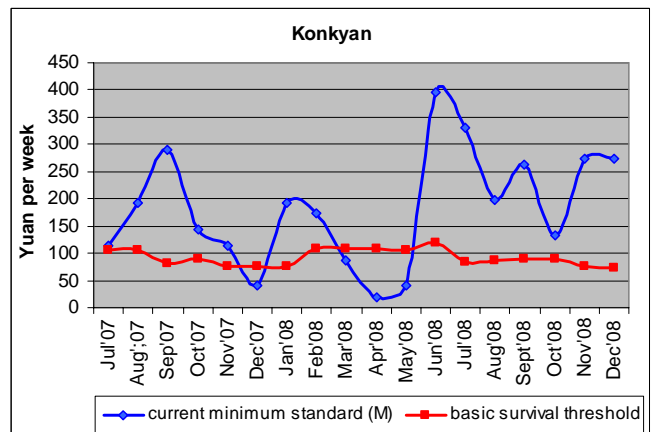
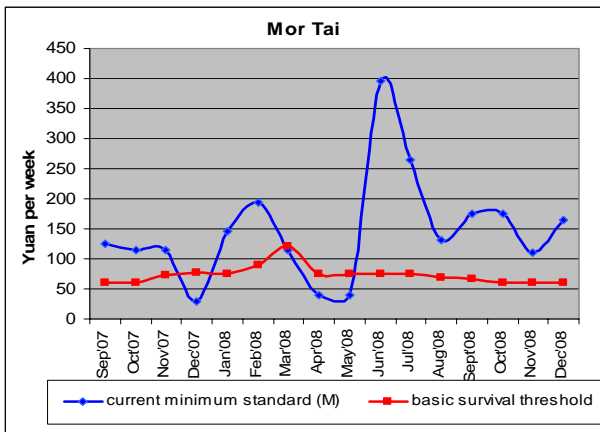
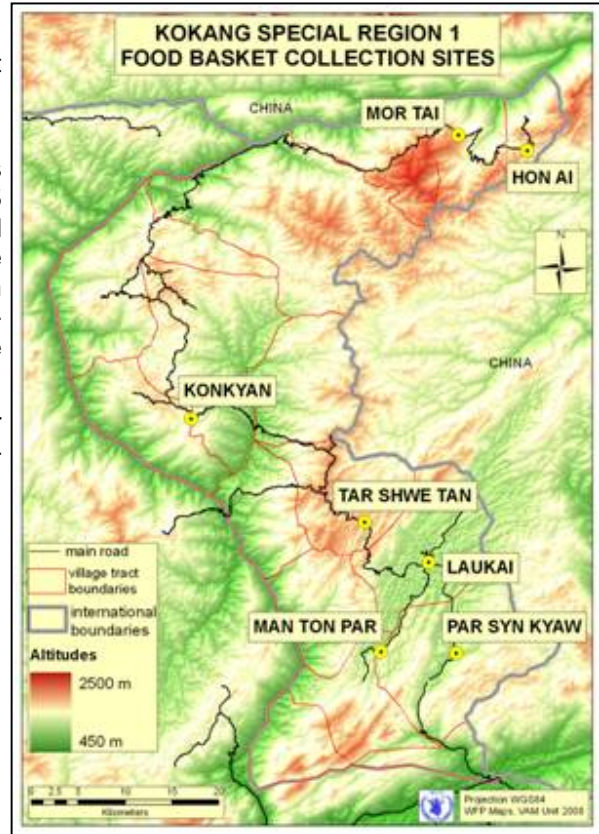


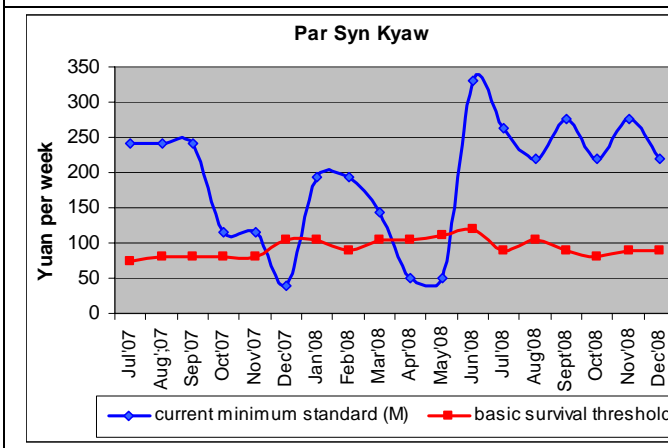
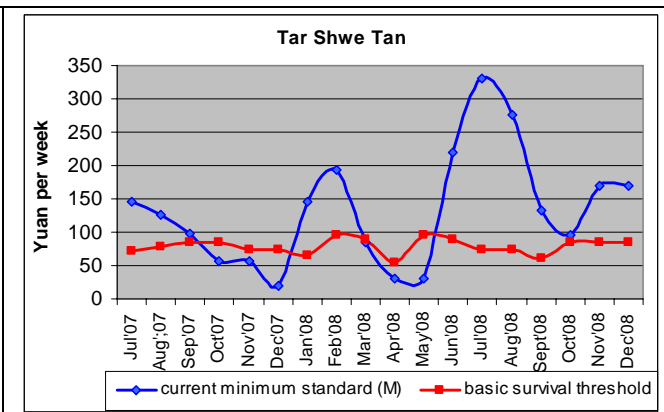
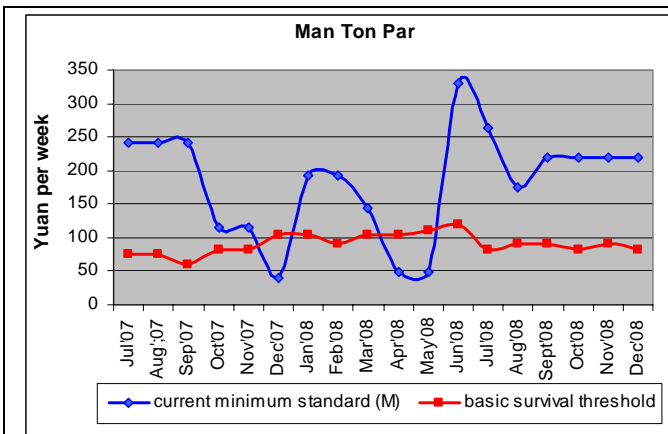
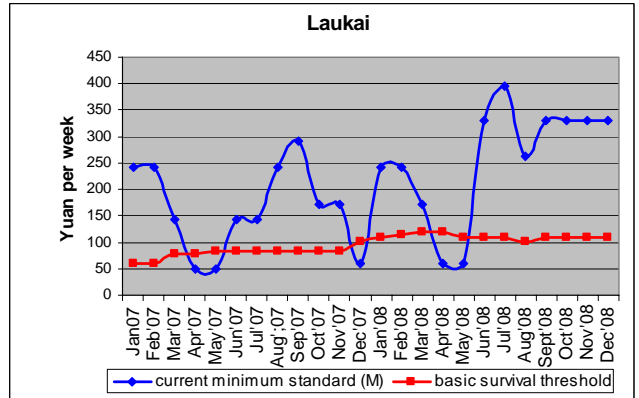
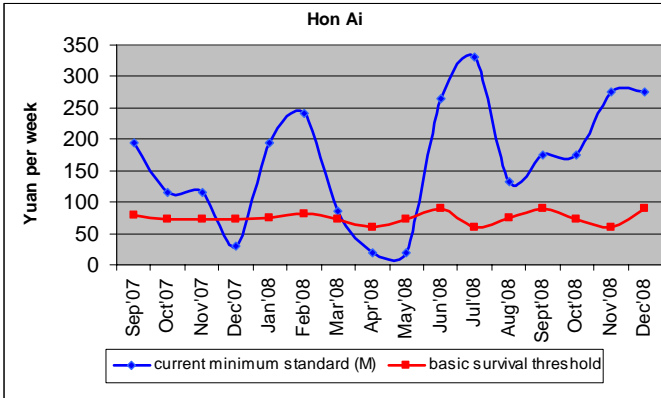
Northern Shan State: Kokang special region as of August-December 2008

The price of rice in Kokang increased in August but plateaued in September and October. After the harvest, because of an increase in supply, prices decreased.

Wages for casual laborers are stable and job opportunities are on the rise. The average days employed rose to 4.5 days/week, due to labor demands for maize cultivation and lowland rice cultivation during June and July; sugarcane planting in August and September, tea planting from March to October and paddy harvesting from October-December. Furthermore individuals may be crossing the border to work in China.

It was seen that the most difficult time with respect to labor demands was March-May, and the best time being June-July.





Northern Shan State: WA special region as of August-December 2008

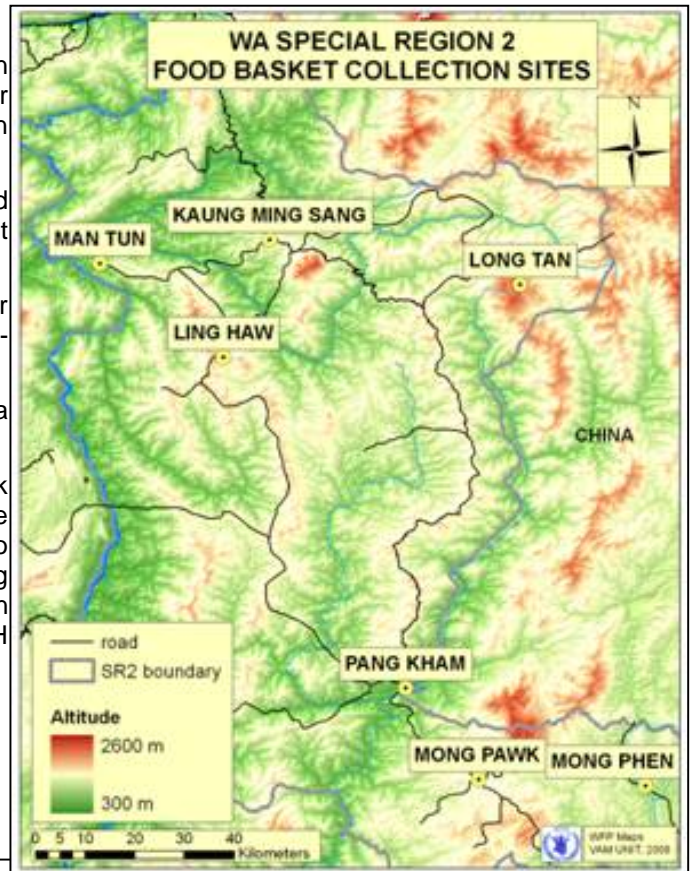
Between August and September, the price of rice in the Wa Special Region was stable. Because of a poor harvest there was an approximate reduction of 30% in yields as compared to the previous year.

Job availability was high during October and November, the time of the harvest. Average employment opportunities averaged 4.5 days/week.

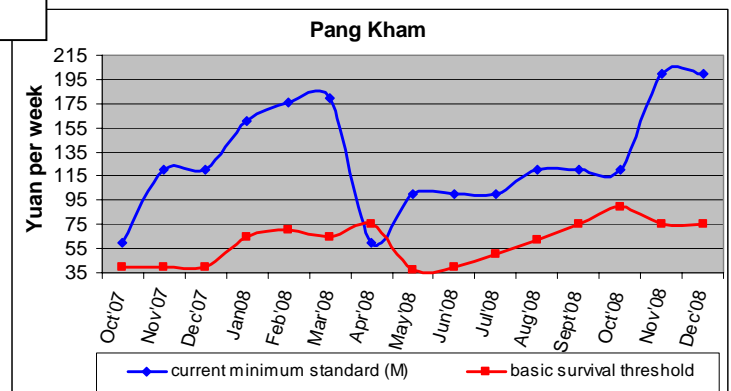
Difficult periods, when minimum standard is lower than the basic survival threshold, are from February-April, linked to seasonal outputs.

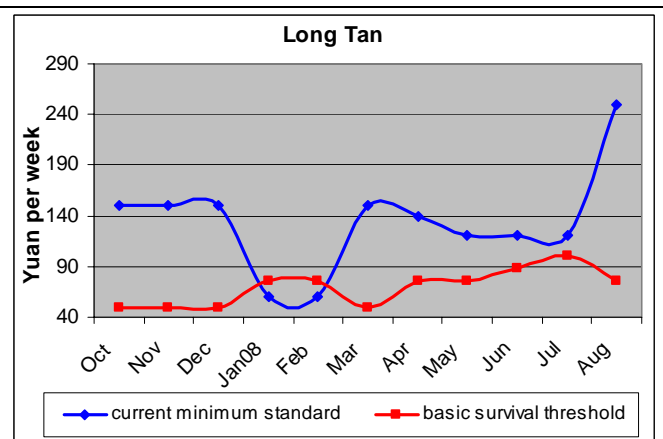
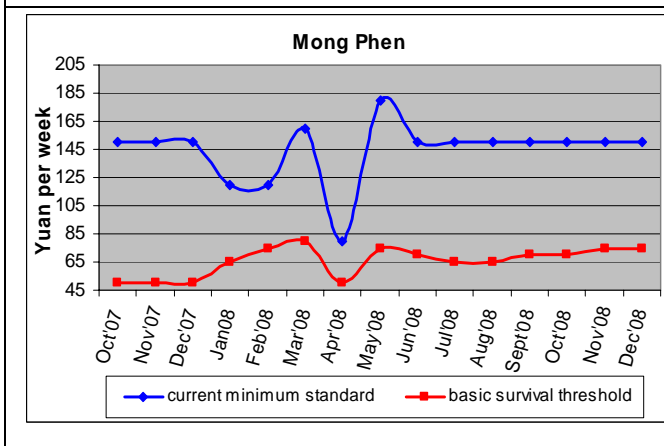
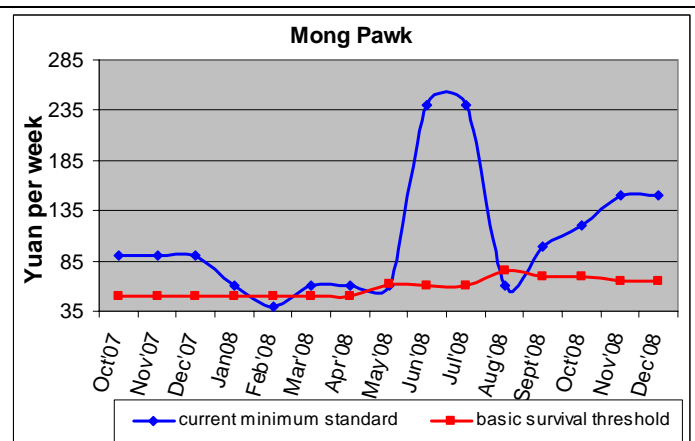
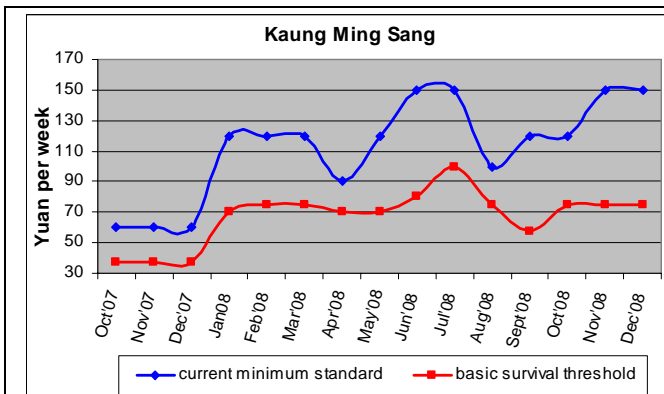
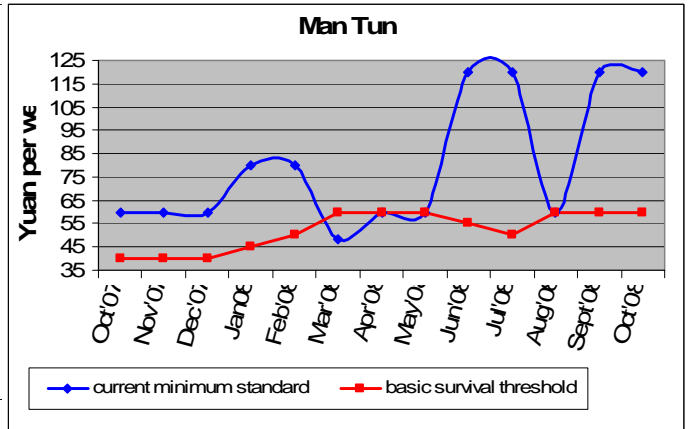
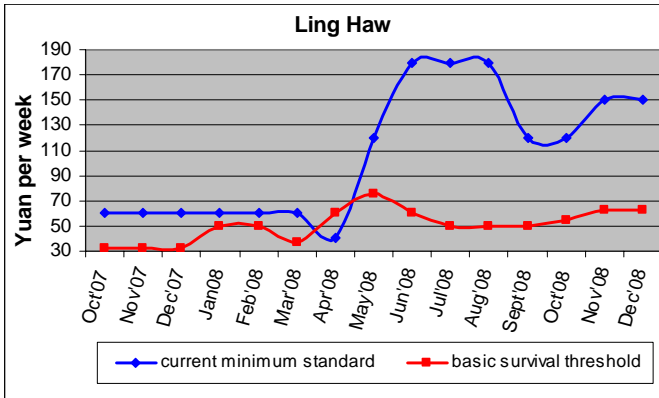
The price of fuel increased in July but maintained a steady rate from August to December.

HH are able to save the most and face the least risk during June and July; the time of high employment in the fields. During the harvest, work availability continues to be high but tapers off towards the lean season. During this time, trends in the graph indicate a decrease in income which correlates to more food insecurity at the HH level.



Average household of 5, including 2 earners





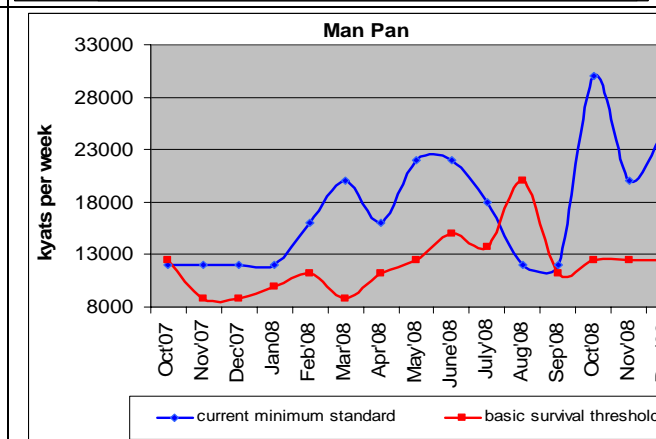
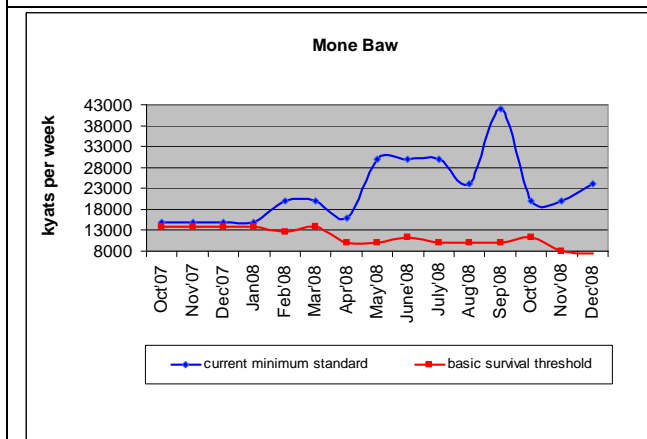
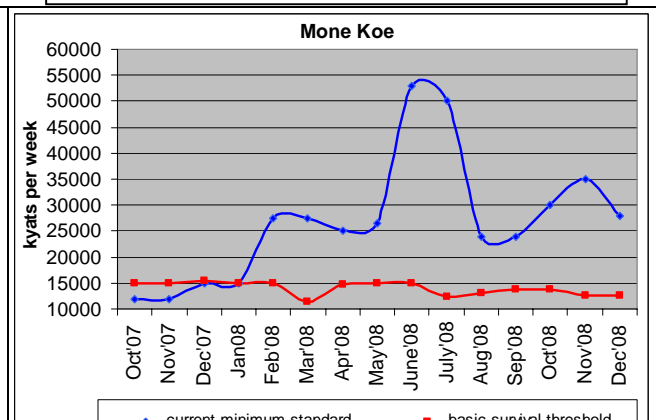
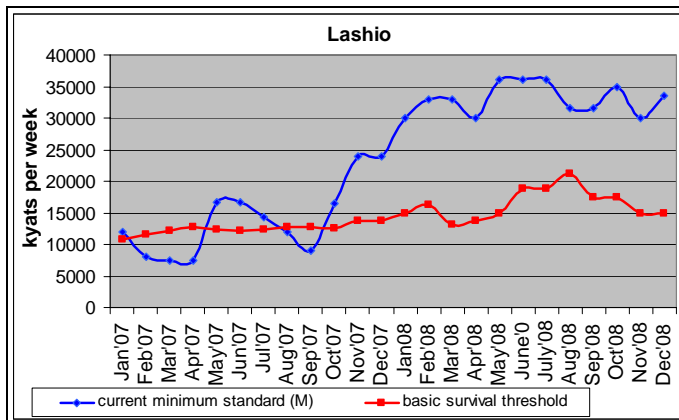
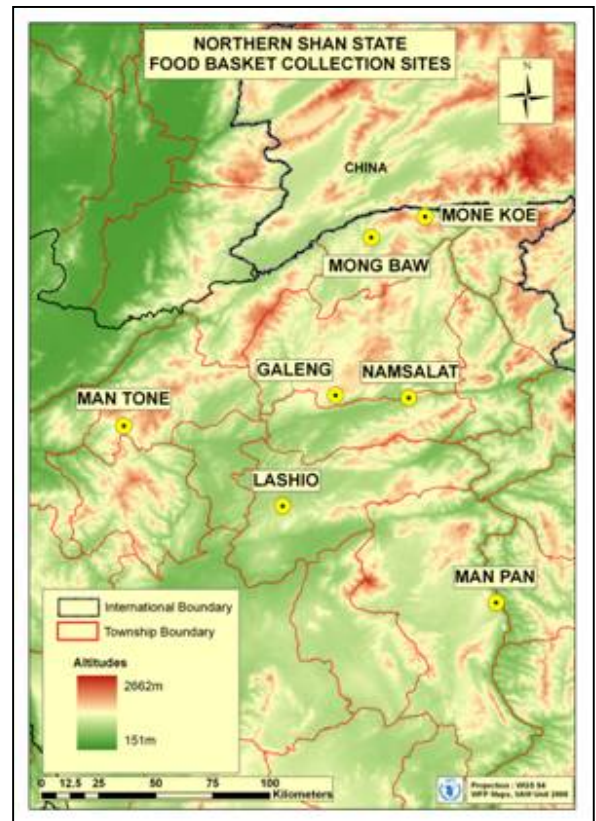
NORTHERN SHAN STATE: LASHIO AREA as of August- December 2008

Stable wages and relatively reliable employment opportunities (6-7 days/week) enable HH (with two earners) in Lashio to generate sufficient income for food procurement.

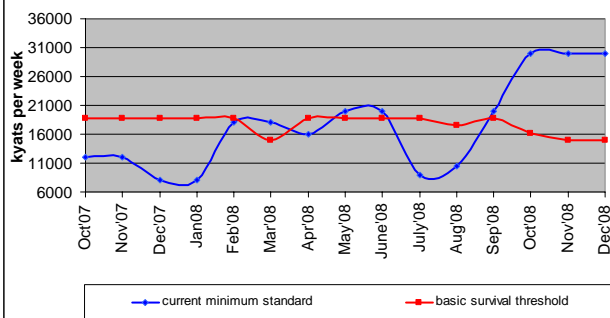
Poor HH in Man Tone and Man Pan were below the poverty line in August because of fewer employment options (down from four to three days) and a drop in the wages (2,500K to 1,500K per day). Man Tone, the worst-off area, showed a positive trend from October to December, despite the consistent high prices of rice. Poor HHs in Man Pan and Man Ton only managed enough for their food expenditures in September.

The Mong Baw area had the highest savings rate in September because work was available 7 days/week at 3000 kyats/day. In other areas, employment is available 4-5 days/week at 2000- 3000 kyats/day.

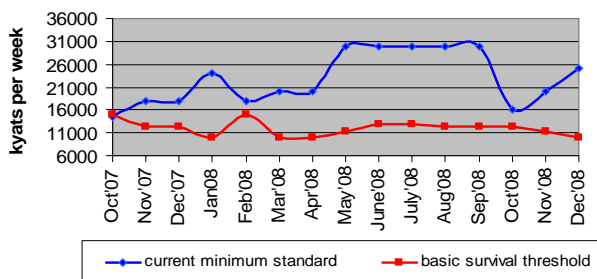
Average household of 5, including 2 earners



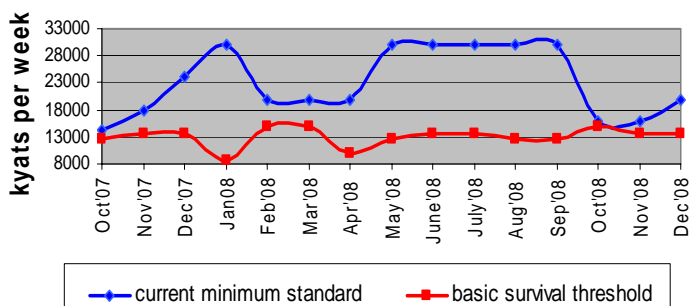
Man Tone



Galeng



Namsalat



Southern Shan State: TAUNGGYI AREA as of August-December 2008

Due to decreases in rice prices and an increase in employment opportunities (5 days/week, on average), the overall economic situation in Taunggyi improved from June-July and August-December.

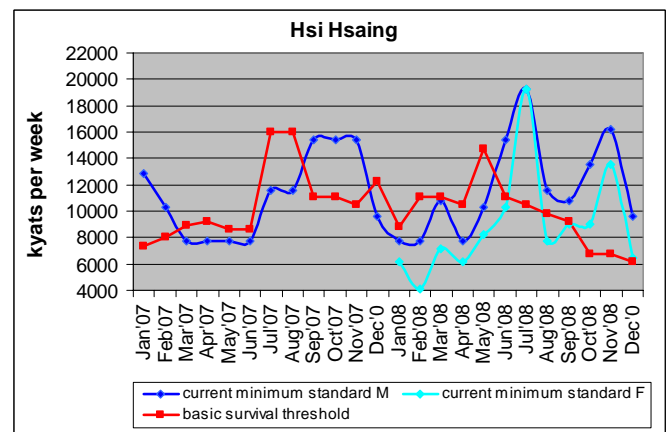
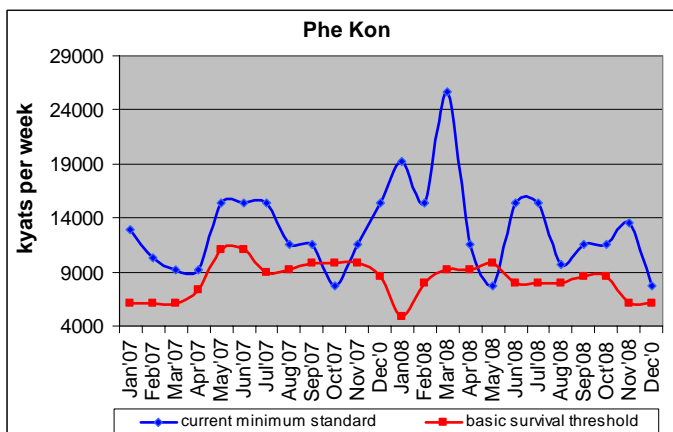
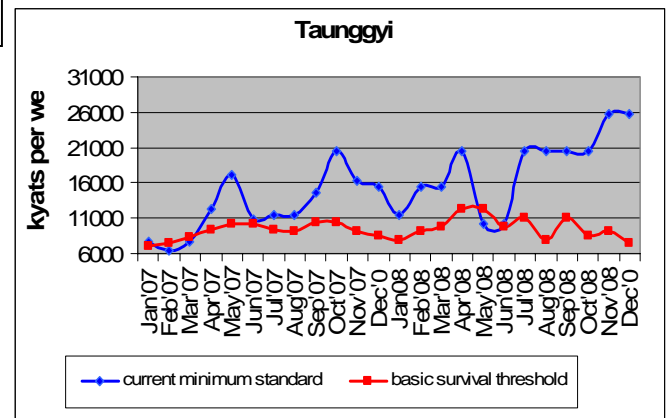
However Hsi Hsaing depicted (despite reduction in food prices) a shortage of employment opportunities (3-3.5 days/week) and decreased savings levels. For female-headed, poor households vulnerability was more severe, with HHs reporting that they lived below the poverty line many months each year.

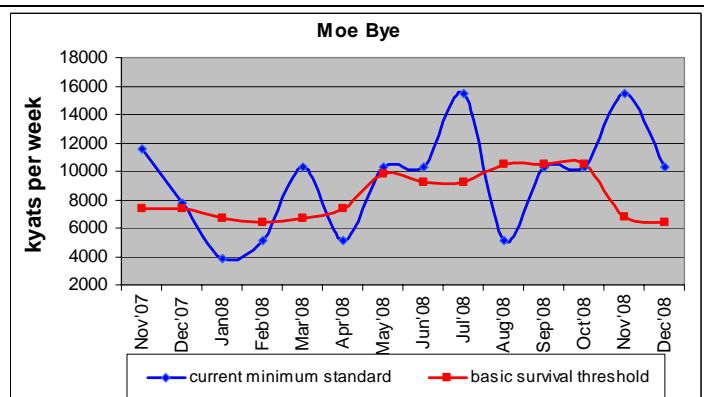
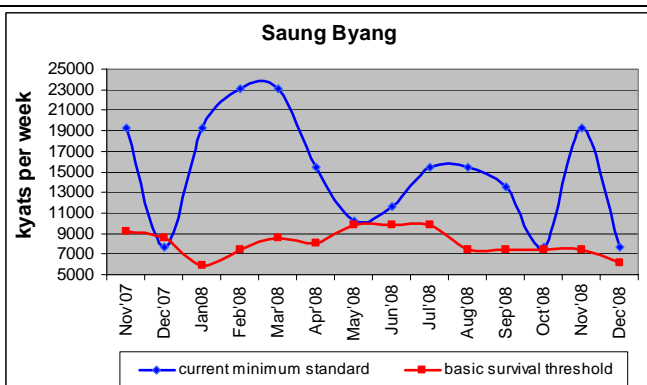
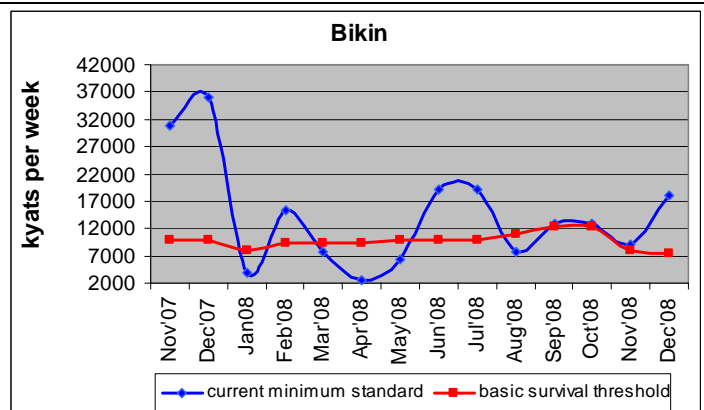
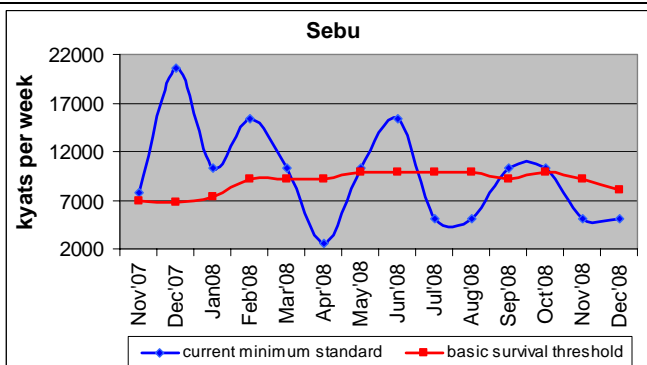
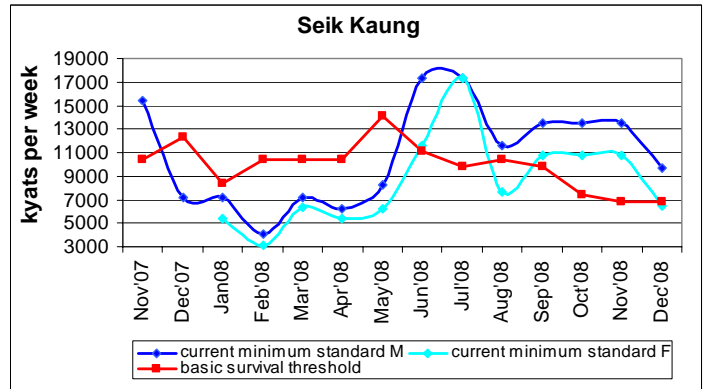
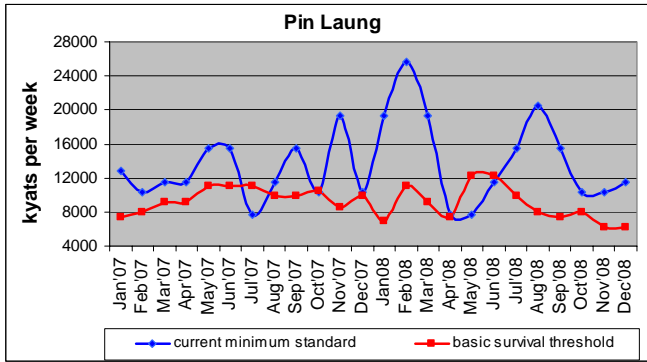
In Sebu, HHs are able to save in September and October but in August, November and December fall below the basic survival threshold.

HHs in Bikin, Sebu and Moe Bye are the most vulnerable, facing difficulty for up to 8-9 months a year.



Average household of 4.92, including 2.57 earners





DRY-ZONE: AGWAY AREA as of August- December 2008

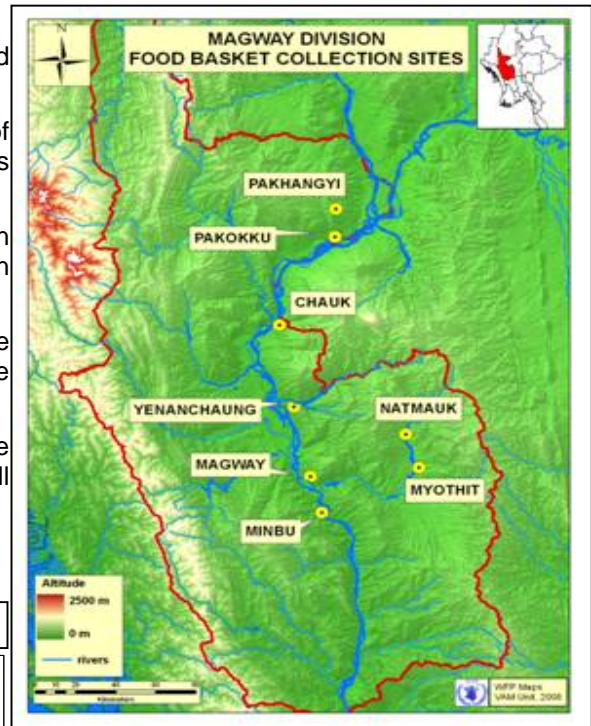
During this period, employment opportunities increased and rice prices decreased.

In August, female-headed HH reported spending 100% of their income on food, but later in the year both genders were able to save.

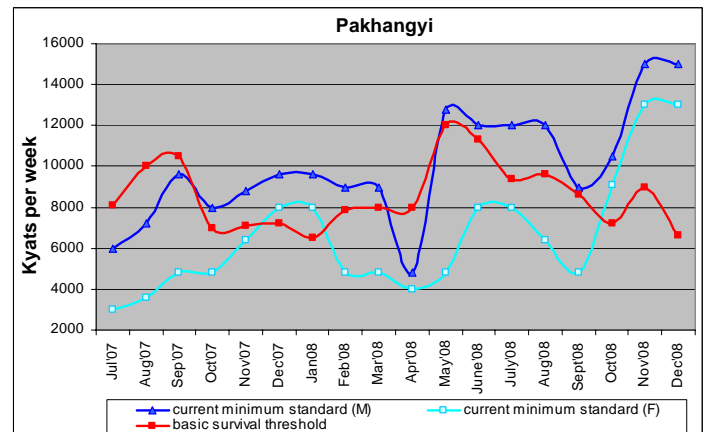
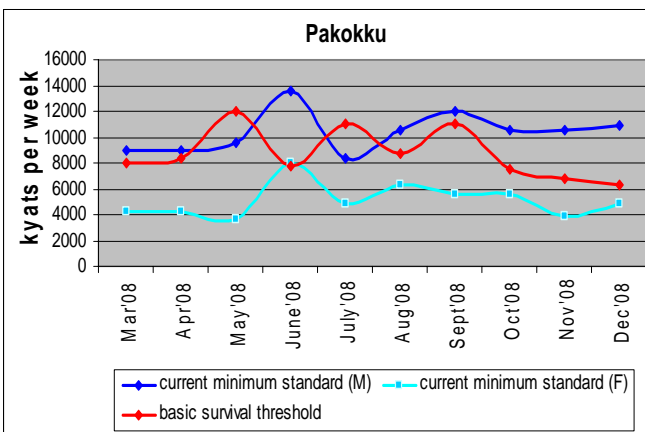
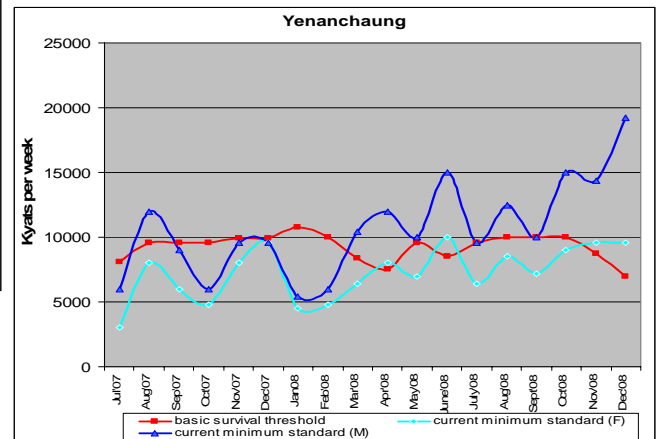
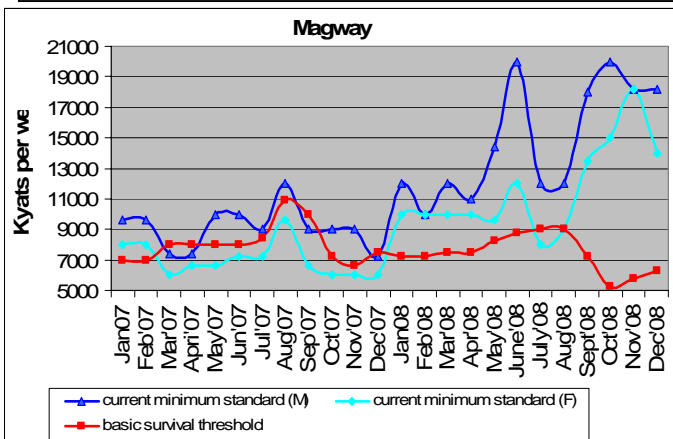
Male-headed HHs accumulated savings in August, and in the period October-December because of an increase in employment opportunities and a decrease in rice prices.

Female-headed, poor HHs in Yenanchaung are quite vulnerable because they are under the food poverty line throughout the year.

In Pakokku and Pakhangyi, female-headed HHs are vulnerable because they live under the food poverty line all year.



Average household 5. including 2 earners



Kachin State: Special Region I and II areas as of August-December 2008

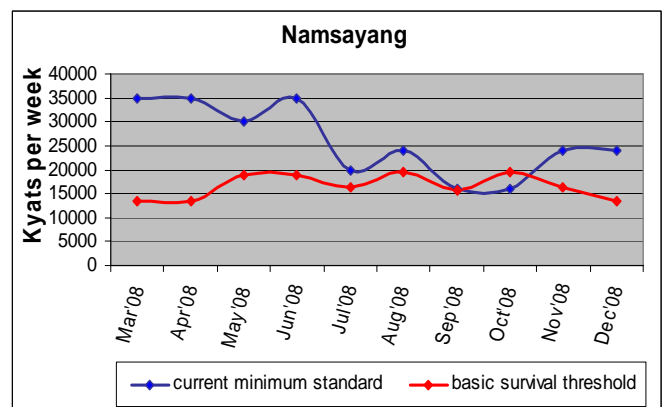
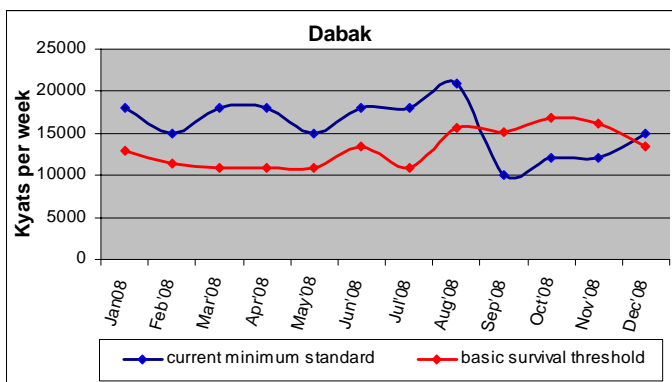
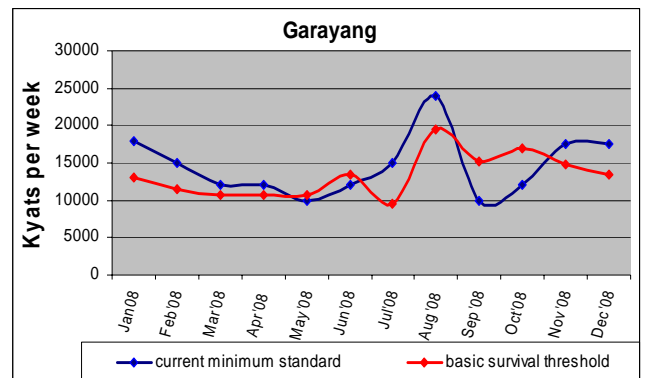
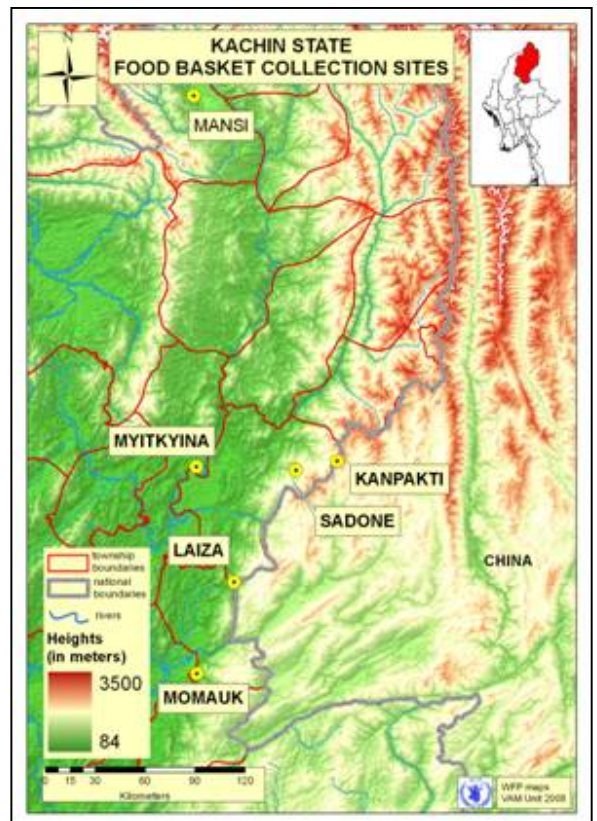
Rice prices increased in August, then decreased after harvest and employment opportunities are stable. However, the prices are still higher than the period May-July. On the Wai Moe area, rice prices are stable year round.

The time for highest wage rate in Special Region 2 is August (2-3 days a week). Wages in Namsanyan increased by 20 percent from 5000 kyats/day to 6000 kyats/day; in Dabakyan prices increased by 17 percent from 3000 kyats/day to 3500 kyats/day and in Garayan they increased by 60 percent from 2500 to 4000 kyats/day. But, savings during this period are insignificant.

The trend for basic survival thresholds and current minimum standards in Dabakyang and Namsanyan are similar. The most difficult time is September-November. In Garayan, the most difficult time of year is May/June and September-November.

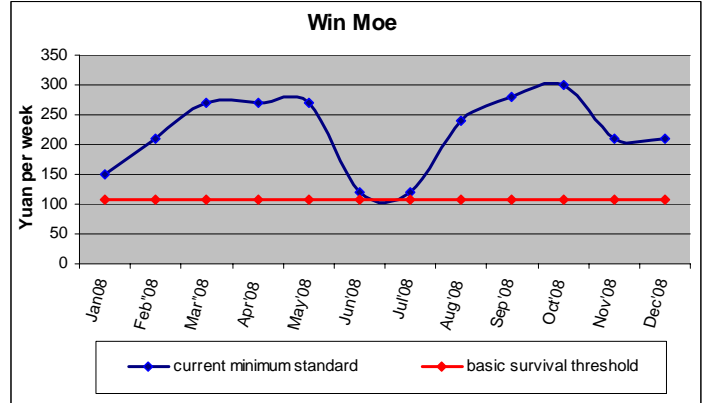
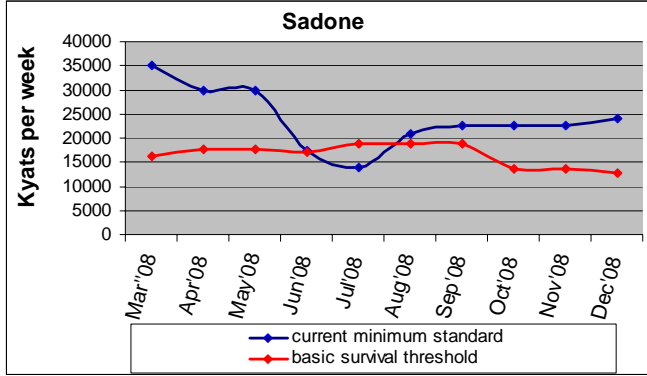
Wai Moe (where the Chinese Yuan is the generally accepted currency), October has the highest saving of the whole year and reached 192 Yuan/week because of jobs available on average up to 5 days/week.

The most difficult period for the Special region is June and July, linked to seasonal variation in food and job availability.

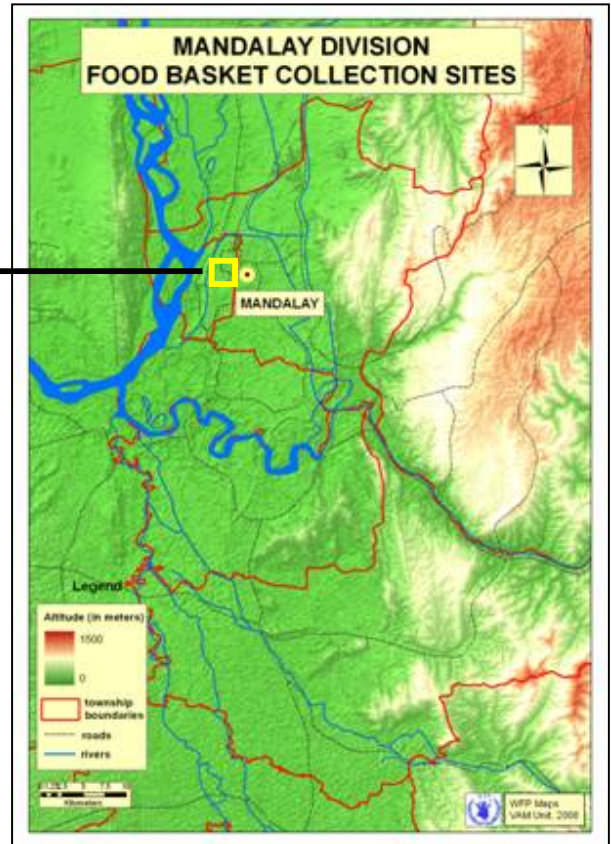


Average household of 5.4, including 2





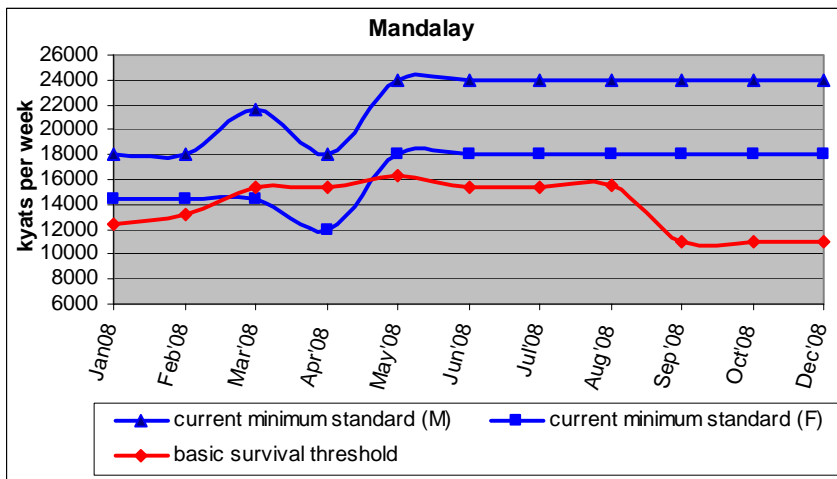
MANDALAY, as of August-December 2008



Rice price trends in Mandalay and Yangon are similar. They spiked in May and normalized in June and decreased after the harvest.

Wages remain at a high level, from 2,000 Kyats/day for males and 1500 kyat/day for females. Employment opportunities are stable, averaging 6 days/week. Male-headed HHs had higher rates of saving and a better living situation for the whole year. Female-headed HHs live under the poverty line in March and April.

Note: No data available for November.

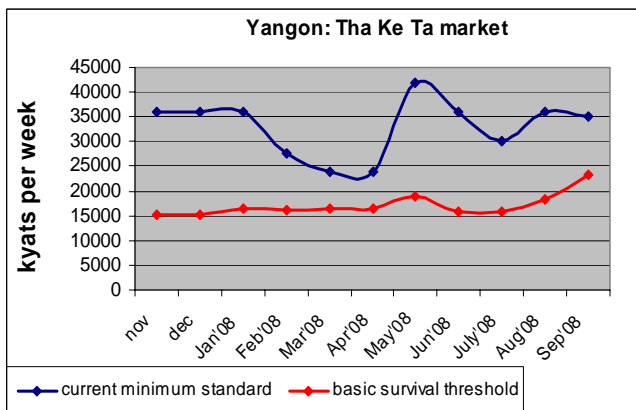
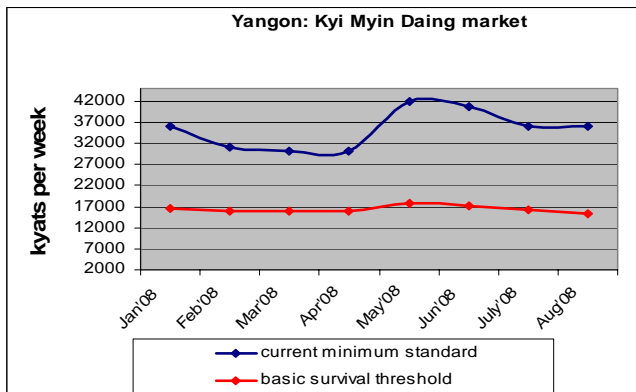


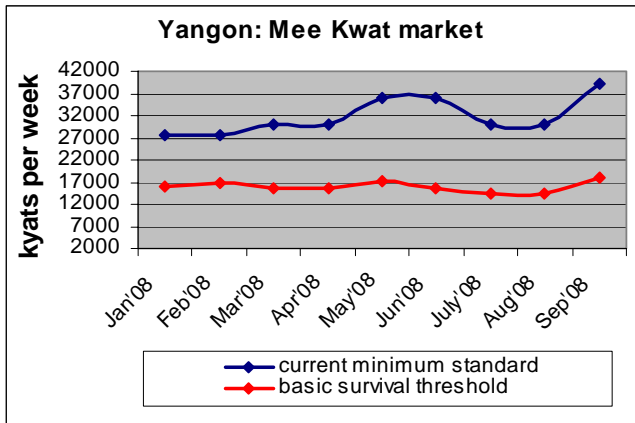
YANGON AREA as of August-September 2008

Rice prices peaked in May and decreased gradually until after the harvest. The percentage of monthly expenditures on food is 23- 37 percent. When compared to other areas, these percentages are low.

Note: no data available for October and November in Yangon area.

Average household of 5.4, incl. 2 earners





DELTA AREA of October-December 2008

In Phyapon, rice prices decreased and employment opportunities averaged 3-4 days/week with rates of 1500 – 2500 kyats/day (male) and 700-1000 kyats/day (women) per day. Male-headed HHs have higher savings rates.

In Kyeik Latt, rice prices decreased and employment rates averaged 4-5 days/week at 1200 – 2000 kyats/day (male) and 700-1300 kyats/day (female). Among male-headed poor HHs, living conditions were comparatively better. However it is noted that Female-headed HHs barely managed to source sufficient income.

In Dedaye, rice prices decreased in October and November, and increased in December from 200 to 250 kyats/kg. Despite this, households were significantly better than other areas in terms of savings generation in December due to high availability of jobs (6 days/week, 3000 kyats/day (male) and 2000 kyats/day (female)).

In Mawgyune, the availability of employment was highest in December - 3-5 days/week at 2500 kyats/day (male) and 2000 kyats/day (female). Male households saved more during these periods.

In Bogalay and Myin Ka Kone, rice prices increased in December. Employment opportunities also increased from 3 to 4-6 days. However, wages decreased from 2500 to 1500 kyats/day (male) and 1500 to 1300 kyats/day (women).

In Set San, Poe Oo San and Kyein Chaung Gyi, male-headed HHs saved at significant levels. Female-headed HHs in Set San and Poe Oo San experienced food poverty in October but improved their savings in November and December. Kyein Chaung Gyi's female-headed HHs were under food poverty in October and November, but saved some money during December. Average employment availability was 3-4 days/week and average wages were 1500-2000 kyats/day (male) and 1000-1500 kyats/day (female).

Note: Data not available for Kadonkani in November and December.

