



Two Minutes on Social Protection

Working with national social protection systems to end hunger globally

WFP is committed to helping governments reduce the number of undernourished people from 815 million to zero by 2030. This is only possible through systemic approaches, including by strengthening and working through social protection systems.

What is social protection

Social protection consists of policies and programmes designed to **protect people from shocks and stresses throughout their lives**. It can include safety nets, social insurance schemes, labour market regulations or facilitated access to essential services. Usually they target poor, marginalized or vulnerable groups. Social protection is government-owned, and components vary from country to country.

Social protection is a primary strategy for governments to **make progress towards multiple, correlating sustainable development goals (SDGs)**, as it can help reduce poverty (SDG1), end hunger and malnutrition (SDG2), promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth (SDG8) and reduce inequality (SDG10).

What are safety nets

Safety nets or social transfers are **typical components of a social protection system**. They consist of predictable and reliable transfers of food, cash, vouchers or goods to vulnerable groups, such as people living in poverty or food insecurity, in areas affected by disaster, or with a disability.

WFP has a long tradition of implementing and supporting safety nets such as school meals programmes and food assistance for assets (FFA) schemes.

Why WFP engages in social protection

By engaging in social protection, WFP and partners have **the potential to generate long-term improvements in food and nutrition security at scale**. WFP is committed to helping countries meet their targets of reducing the number of undernourished people from 815 million to zero by 2030. This can only be achieved through a systemic approach, including by working through, and strengthening, national social protection systems.

The social protection system can also be used to respond to humanitarian crises. When possible, WFP increasingly tries to **channel humanitarian assistance through existing, government-led safety nets**, often in the form of cash-based transfers.

WFP also works with governments to build such emergency response capacities into the national social protection system.



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How WFP supports social protection

WFP supports, or works through, national social protection systems in different ways, according to country-specific needs and opportunities.

Implement safety nets

WFP advises on and directly implements many safety nets, building government capacity and modelling approaches that can be scaled-up and integrated within the national social protection.

For example, in collaboration with the Turkish Government and the Turkish Red Crescent, WFP set up an *Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN)* that can protect up to one million of the most vulnerable refugees hosted in Turkey from destitution. They are provided with a top-up bank card that helps them cover basic needs, including food, health and housing.

Make social protection shock-responsive

WFP reinforces governments' ability to reach and respond to populations affected by crises and shocks.

In Ecuador, for instance, WFP supported the government's humanitarian response to the 2016 earthquake by scaling up and complementing government-led, cash-based safety nets. By doing so, it also strengthened the shock-responsive capacity of the national social protection system.

In other countries, WFP helps governments build social protection systems that are resilient to shocks.

For example in Malawi, WFP is supporting the development of phase II of the *Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSPII)*, which is set to provide households with integrated risk management strategies to cover predictable food gaps during the lean season, and coordinate effectively with emergency humanitarian assistance when an extreme, non-cyclical shock occurs.

Make social protection sensitive to food and nutrition security

When designed appropriately, social protection schemes can deliver food security and nutrition results at scale.

For instance, WFP supported the government of the Dominican Republic to make the cash-based safety net *Progresando con Solidaridad* more nutrition-sensitive. This led to a 50 percent reduction of anaemia amongst children aged 6-59 months.

Strengthen national social protection delivery systems

WFP's experience in delivering food and cash in difficult contexts means the organization is well positioned to help governments build or strengthen their delivery infrastructure and processes.

In Somalia, for instance, WFP is working with the government and partners to help build the national social protection system, not only by supporting the development of the social protection policy, but also by establishing the infrastructure of the social protection system, including a digital platform for the registration and management of beneficiaries of different safety nets.

Maximize sustainability, efficiency and local economic impact of safety nets

WFP works to optimize the supply chains of safety nets, whether they are WFP-led or government-led, and seeks to increase the local economic impact of the safety nets.

For example, the government of Namibia took full charge of the national school meals programme in 1996, but to date WFP continues to provide technical assistance to improve the monitoring of the programme and the local procurement of food from smallholder farmers.

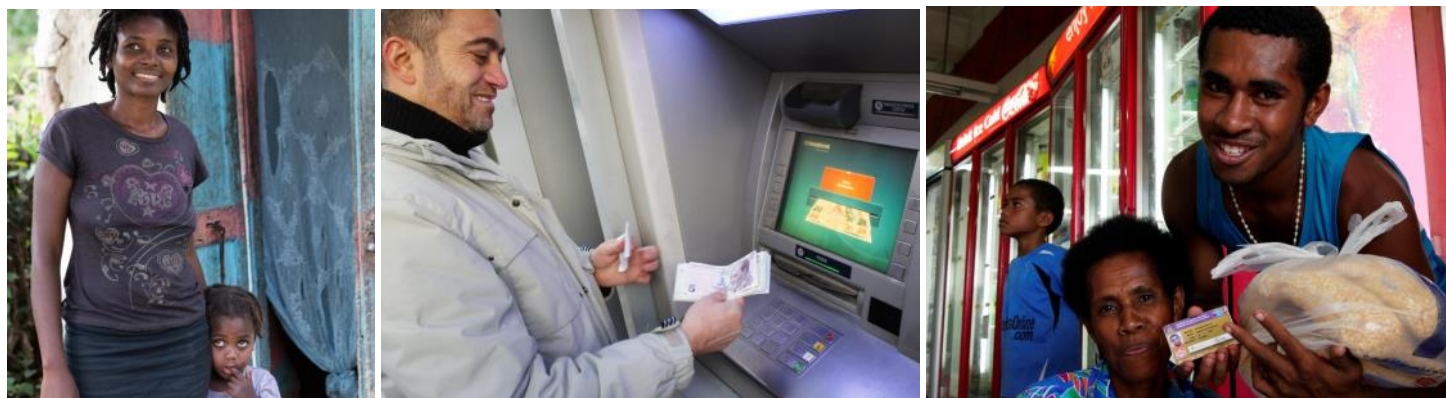


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