WFP's Work in Enabling Social Protection in Colombia

Highlights of the World Food Programme's
Contributions to Social Protection in a New Normal

March 2021

WFP

**World Food
Programme**

Extending Social Protection to Venezuelan Migrants and Other Affected Groups in Colombia

That migrants have been amongst the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic is evident when turning attention to the Venezuelan migrants across Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, whose food security has significantly deteriorated since the start of the pandemic.

A lasting solution to halting the increase in poverty and hunger for migrants and other vulnerable groups is to strengthen the inclusiveness of national systems by incorporating these populations into social protection programmes. With the support of WFP, this is exactly what the Government of Colombia started to do in 2020.

Already during the early days of the COVID crisis, the Government of Colombia and WFP joined efforts in designing and launching an innovative shock-responsive social protection pilot programme in Arauca, one of the departments bordering Venezuela, with a high concentration of migrants.

This programme was specifically aimed at complementing and expanding the capacity of the existing national social protection system so as to ensure that more Venezuelan migrants and Colombian host communities living in extreme and moderate poverty in the border region of Arauca could be included as beneficiaries of the national social protection system.

Through the pilot programme, which was jointly designed by WFP, the Colombian social protection leading agency 'Prosperidad Social', the National Disaster Management Authority and the National High-Level Mechanism to coordinate the response to the migration crisis, WFP managed to rapidly reach over 46,000 new beneficiaries through cash assistance. In addition, WFP provided in-kind food baskets to 25,000 people for whom cash was not a feasible or appropriate solution, such as indigenous communities or irregular migrants.

For targeting, the intervention piggybacked on the national database SISBEN, which is a registry of potential beneficiaries of social protection programmes. To ensure full coherence with national standards, the value of transfers was aligned with the government's emergency cash transfer programmes.

Effective and close collaboration with national and local institutions allowed WFP to reach all targeted beneficiaries with assistance that ensured their food and nutrition security during the difficult crisis period escalated by COVID-19. Seen in perspective, the Arauca shock-responsive social protection pilot programme provides an excellent example of an effective model of collaborative, coordinated and inclusive social protection response – a model that can be integrated more permanently into the existing social protection system. Likewise, the Arauca experience allowed for the opening of new lines of collaboration on strategic, operational and technical challenges affecting the system.

At the time of writing, WFP and the Government of Colombia are documenting the experience and identifying lessons that will help inform future social protection responses, with a view to making national systems stronger, more inclusive and more responsive in the face of shocks.

Emerging field practices on COVID-19 in refugee contexts

WFP and the Government of Colombia jointly presented lessons learned from the shock-responsive social protection intervention in the border region of Arauca, as part of a socialprotection.org-hosted webinar on emerging field practices about COVID-19 in refugee contexts.

A recording and all the materials from the event are available here:

Click or scan

socialprotection.org

Photo Credits: WFP/Lorena Peña, WFP/Antoine Vallas.

To know more about WFP's work in enabling social protection around the globe check the full publication and infographic:

WFP's Work in Enabling Social Protection Around the Globe

Highlights of the World Food Programme's Contributions to Social Protection in a New Normal   **February 2021**

World Food Programme
Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70,
00148 Rome, Italy | T +39 06 65131
socialprotection@wfp.org