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# WFP's Work in Enabling Social Protection in the Dominican Republic

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

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## Safeguarding Food Security and Nutrition in Times of Crisis in the Dominican Republic

WFP is a long-term strategic partner for the Dominican Republic government in strengthening the nutritional impact of social protection.

When the government in 2009 introduced a reform to its social protection sector, WFP provided strategic guidance for the incorporation of a nutrition component into the national flagship social protection programme 'Progresando con Solidaridad' (PROSOLI). The nutrition component included promoting the growth of children from 6 to 59 months of age in beneficiary households, through the provision of specialized nutritious foods, micronutrient powders, and preventive care through primary care clinics.

In 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic was expected to cause an increase in food insecurity from 1 percent to 10 percent of the population, the continued delivery of specialized nutritious foods became one of the government's key strategies to ensure the food and nutrition security of existing social protection beneficiaries and those who had seen their income decrease during the pandemic.

The strategy deployed by the government was two-tracked: the amount of nutritious foods received by existing PROSOLI beneficiaries was increased, while new beneficiaries were simultaneously included in the programme. However, as lockdowns and social distancing measures impacted people's access to primary health clinics, where beneficiaries went to access specialized nutritious foods, the government and WFP had to quickly identify a way to continue the programme's nutrition component outside the health clinics.

The solution was the introduction of a new mechanism for distributing the specialized nutritious foods directly to households through civil society organizations. The innovative approach ensured that more than 105,000 nutritionally vulnerable people, including children under five, elderly, pregnant and lactating women, and people living with HIV, received fortified complementary foods and micronutrient powders to enable them to maintain a good nutritional status during the lockdown.



## ENHANCING THE FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITIONAL IMPACT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION



Beyond implementation support to PROSOLI, WFP engaged in various evidence generation initiatives to strengthen national decision-making processes. These assessments included the Market Functionality Index, Cost of the Double Burden of Malnutrition and a Fill the Nutrient Gap analysis (FNG). Results generated by these analyses encouraged policy dialogue across sectors, and helped policymakers focus on concrete recommendations and design solutions that optimized resources available, which proved vital for the effective immediate COVID-19 response.

The FNG analysis, for example, informed the most nutritious and affordable combinations of locally available foods that can be purchased with cash transfers provided under the new 'Quédate en Casa' programme, which provides temporary assistance to poor and vulnerable households affected by

the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 and the existing 'Comer es Primero' program.

Findings further supported the government's articulation of a communication strategy aimed at promoting nutritionally smart purchases among beneficiaries through radio and social media. Meanwhile, the Market Functionality Index helped the government assess the situation and health of local markets and, together with WFP, design and implement solutions to address supply shortages, for example by expanding the social protection system's network of affiliated retailers and linking smallholder farmers and producers to these retailers.

The evidence generated will continue to help in the medium and longer term COVID response to address food security and nutrition challenges.



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

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