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# WFP's Work in Enabling Social Protection in Madagascar

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

March 2021

## A Synergetic Social Protection Response in Madagascar

The distribution of cash assistance under the new 'Tosika Fameno' social assistance initiative began just a month after the Government of Madagascar had declared the need for a temporary urban safety net to support vulnerable households that had been affected by the COVID-19 containment measures.

The record-breaking speed with which this safety net was put in place is only more impressive considering that this was the first time Madagascar implemented a social protection programme in an urban environment.

The rapid response was made possible thanks to the sustained collective efforts over the past two years to strengthen the shock-responsiveness of Madagascar's social protection system. In 2018, the Prime Minister, with technical support from WFP, convened partners to explore the relevance of the national social protection system to shock response and develop a roadmap for harmonizing the work of various stakeholders including government bodies, UN agencies, International Financial Institutions and NGOs.

The roadmap stood its ground when the Ministry of Population, in collaboration with WFP, UNICEF, the World Bank, and the Intervention Fund for Development (FID), successfully expanded the national social protection system in response to the 2019 drought in Southern Madagascar, which pushed more than 750,000 people into crisis levels of food insecurity.

The social protection drought response generated significant results in terms of adequacy, timeliness and cost-effectiveness, and was regarded by all the partners as a success. WFP has since continued to build on these lessons learned and support the Government to institutionalize shock-responsive components into the national social protection system through operating procedures and cooperation agreements between government agencies.

As a result, Madagascar's response to COVID-19 stands out as an example of successful coordination and collaboration of national and international actors. Less than a week after the government



## SHOCK-RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION



declared a need for the urban safety net, the national Cash Working Group, with technical support from WFP, UNICEF and the World Bank, was able to present a unified social protection intervention strategy, jointly validated by the government and its partners, in support of the implementation of the Tosika Fameno programme.

The Cash Working Group's unified intervention strategy paved the way for strong inter-agency collaboration through joint targeting and registration using the government's platform, harmonized delivery of cash-based transfers, and joint communication and monitoring of the assistance. WFP, being one of the most experienced agencies in cash-based programming in Madagascar, provided technical support to the entire process, which was built on in-depth vulnerability assessment of the capital carried out prior to the crisis by WFP and the National Office of Risk and Disaster Management.

Throughout the response, the partners have convened on a weekly basis in the Cash Working

Group, the Communication Sub-Working Group and the Donor Group to enable joint identification of challenges and gaps in the response and effectively plan and coordinate activities. To date, the collective efforts have reached about 335,000 vulnerable urban households, out of which WFP has delivered assistance to a total of 103,000 households.

The COVID-19 social protection response has contributed to the overall strengthening of the system in two main ways. Firstly, by laying the grounds for a potential future permanent extension of the social protection system to urban areas. And secondly, by continuing to enhance the relevance of the social protection system to shocks, so that the Malagasy Government and its partners are able to act faster and better to future emergencies.

At the time of writing, the Government, WFP and partners are exploring ways to replicate the Tosika Fameno programme in response to the drought induced food security crisis in the south of Madagascar, which has caused many people to migrate from their villages to urban centres along the coast.



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

### **World Food Programme**

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70,  
00148 Rome, Italy | T +39 06 65131  
[\*\*socialprotection@wfp.org\*\*](mailto:socialprotection@wfp.org)