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WFP Eastern Africa

Social Protection

Regional outlook and 2020 Achievements

June 2021

Strengthening National Social protection Systems beyond COVID-19

WFP in the region is increasingly prioritising its work in support of national social protection systems, in recognition of their potential to deliver SDG 2 results at scale, and as a practical means of delivering across the humanitarian and development nexus. There is also increasing recognition of the importance of strong social protection systems to develop more resilient societies. WFP's work in support of social protection systems throughout 2020 is a strong example of the ways in which work to strengthen and support national social protection systems can be pushed forward not just in contexts of stability, but through contextual complexities and in times of shock in conjunction with emergency support.

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 drew a spotlight on social protection, and the significant gaps in coverage and support for many people across East Africa. This spotlight saw renewed interest and support to strengthening social protection systems, and the importance of their role in shock response. It also provided a case of significant learning for WFP and our national government partners. Among these lessons is the importance of, and challenge for WFP not only to support national governments in the scale up and expansion of social protection, but ensuring that existing programmes and support is maintained and sustained, even though large-scale shocks. Sustaining and adapting support are both critical to the continued effectiveness of social protection in the challenging and changed circumstances of a pandemic or other large-scale covariate shock¹.

Over the course of 2020, in response to the unique circumstances and demands of COVID-19, WFP strengthened its engagement with and support to national governments across the region, as well as development partners and other UN agencies. This led to strengthening, expanding, or adapting existing national

systems and programmes; the introduction of new safety nets, particularly for vulnerable populations in urban areas; enhanced support to governments in targeting and monitoring; and enhanced capacity for national institutions to design and implement effective national social protection systems that respond to existing and emerging shocks.

WFP also focused on expanding the knowledge and evidence base for social protection in the region by launching the social protection Learning Facility, a partnership between WFP, the University of Wolverhampton, and IDS. The Learning Facility provided WFP teams with on-demand access to world-renowned social protection experts, enabling teams to pivot and adapt with the support of this expertise quickly and through evidence-based decision making. This partnership with academia combined real-time evaluation of WFP's activities with technical assistance to WFP staff who were navigating difficult trade-offs as they sought to support governments to flex social protection in the region. It also ensured that the lessons learned through this experience were captured and could be shared externally.

Social protection achievements in 2020

Strengthening National Systems

In Kenya, WFP coordinated UN support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to strengthen the social protection sector and expand transfers in response to COVID-19. In addition, due to the surge in demand for utilization of the existing social protection system by non-state actors, WFP accelerated the enhancement of the Single Registry to enable humanitarian actors to link their support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

In Uganda, WFP positioned itself as a strategic supporter to the Government within the refugee response operation and a key enabler for social protection programming. Specifically, WFP refined the Child-Sensitive Social Protection Programme to deliver a detailed multi-year work plan on social protection system strengthening. In West Nile refugee district, WFP provided cash assistance to vulnerable households. WFP also launched a multi-year project in Karamoja to enhance the Government's capacity to reduce, anticipate and rapidly respond to effects of shocks and sustain climate-resilient development.

WFP Uganda also provided support to improve the Government's beneficiary information and assistance management (BIAM) systems, making considerable progress in integrating the Karamoja Social Registry (KSR) with the National Single Registry (NSR) to allow for exchange of individual intervention data.

In Somalia, WFP and partners supported the national social protection agenda through providing technical advice and operational support. Specifically, WFP Somalia operationally supported the national rural Shock Responsive Safety Net for Human Capital Project (SNHCP) in 21 districts across Somalia targeting 1.2 million people. In addition, WFP in collaboration with Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) implemented a Shock Responsive Safety Net for Locust Response Project (SNLRP) to deliver emergency cash transfers to 100,000 households (or 600,000 individuals) affected by locusts, providing a vertical and horizontal expansion of the national safety net project, SNHCP as shock response.

In Djibouti, WFP provided technical advice to support Ministère des Affaires Sociales et des Solidarités (MASS) to develop and implement the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework's pillar. The support targeted long-term resident refugees in Djibouti eligible for inclusion in national safety nets.

In Burundi, WFP, together with World Bank and UNICEF, supported the Burundian Ministry of Solidarity to identify and target vulnerable populations, including expanding a social registry.

Scale up of social protection systems in Urban areas

In Kenya, WFP implemented an urban response intervention in Nairobi and Mombasa working in collaboration with the national and sub-national Governments and respective line ministries. The response targeted 282,000 people and 96,000 people respectively in informal settlements in Nairobi and Mombasa with cash-based transfers (CBT). The programme was designed to primarily reach households that did not currently receive long-term social protection benefits (horizontal expansion of safety nets) beyond existing beneficiaries but targeted by the Government and with verification against the Single Registry. WFP also supported the Ministry of Education to provide alternative take-home rations to school children.

In Ethiopia, WFP jointly with the Federal Urban Job Creation, supported the Government in undertaking a vertical expansion of the Urban Productive Safety Net Project (UPSNP) to reach the most vulnerable in 11 cities in Ethiopia. WFP also provided food assistance to 220,000 COVID-19-related returning migrants at points of entry and mandatory quarantine centres and COVID-19 infected people in treatment centres.

In Djibouti, WFP supported the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity (MASS) to roll out their national social protection system - Programme National Solidarité Famille (PNSF) that benefitted 3,990 households through monthly cash-based transfer (CBT). WFP provided restricted-use vouchers to 6,000 urban households and food to 2,595 rural households affected by the COVID-19 related crisis.

In South Sudan, WFP extended the duration of support to 77,600 people under the Urban Safety Nets Project in Juba and shifted the distribution modality from cash to in-kind food, due to increase in food or limited food availability in markets due to COVID-19. WFP also provided one-month of in-kind food assistance to 36,700 vulnerable urban residents who had been registered in SCOPE- a beneficiary management system.

In Somalia, WFP provided operational support for the urban safety net (USN) in Mogadishu, reaching 125,000 people with predictable quarterly CBTs to cushion them against shocks. In addition, the institutional capacity of the Banadir Regional Administration was strengthened through technical advice, in the use of WFP's beneficiary and transfer management platform, as well as in vulnerability assessments, gender and protection to implement the USN, targeting 1,000 households in the Banadir region.





Nutrition Sensitive Social protection

WFP rolled out integrated management of acute malnutrition (IMAM) programme in **Nairobi** informal settlements. This targeted moderately malnourished children aged 6-59 months, pregnant and lactating women/girls (PLW/Gs), elderly persons and people living with HIV and AIDS (PLHIV). A total of 11,574 people, including 1,845 PLW/Gs, and 1,216 elderly beneficiaries, were admitted to acute malnutrition treatment programmes, with 77 percent children and 82 percent PLW/Gs fully recovering from malnutrition.

In Uganda, WFP collaborated with Uganda government and implemented a vertical expansion and shadow alignment of WFP Maternal Child Health and Nutrition programme, and two government social protection programmes. Under this hybrid model, WFP provided a top-up transfer to over 56,000 pregnant and lactating mothers and children under two years - both in refugee camps and hosting communities.

Given the increased vulnerabilities for people living with HIV (PLHIV), WFP provided food assistance to over 95,000 vulnerable households in, Djibouti Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, and South Sudan.

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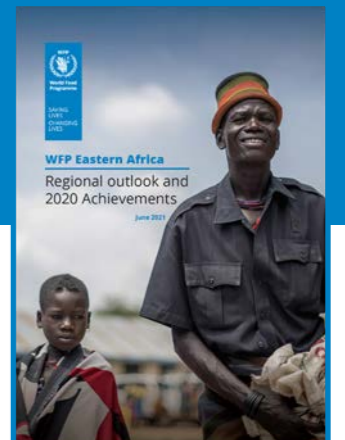
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Endnotes

1 Beyond COVID-19: Lessons for social protection from WFP's work in East Africa in 2020



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