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WFP Burundi: Social Protection Strategy Development

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1. Introduction

The Social Protection Learning Facility (SPLF) was established in May 2020 to provide both technical assistance and real-time learning for WFP staff working on social protection in the eastern and central Africa region. In this context, SPLF was commissioned to support the WFP country office in Burundi to conduct a review that will result in strategic recommendations to guide WFP's future engagement with the social protection sector in Burundi. As per the Terms of Reference (ToRs), the review aims to contribute to:

- ❖ Identifying WFP's entry points and priorities to support the social protection sector in Burundi
- ❖ Defining WFP Burundi's positioning and added value within the social protection space in Burundi, especially vis-a-vis UNICEF and the World Bank
- ❖ Supporting and strengthening the country office's advocacy and donor engagement efforts.

WFP globally is developing its corporate social protection strategy, with a 2018 guide highlighting the centrality of social protection for all of WFP's work. WFP's Regional Bureau in Nairobi (RBN) has identified regional priorities and is currently assisting country offices in the region to strengthen their approaches, including through the SPLF.

This review was conducted by two consultants working remotely (because of the COVID situation) over the period of February/March 2021. Activities consisted of a review of documentation and consultation with key stakeholders involved in social protection in Burundi from government, partner organisations and implementing agencies, as well as WFP (at both country and regional level). A total of 26 stakeholders were consulted from WFP (Burundi country office and RBN); government (SEP/CNPS); development actors and partners (World Bank, AfDB, UNICEF, Concern Worldwide, World Vision International) and technical assistance (IPC-IG). Lists of references and stakeholders are presented in annexes 1 and 2.

It should be noted at the outset that a number of important parallel processes were underway in Burundi at the time of the consultancy. These include a review of implementation of the current national social protection strategy and preparation for the development of a new one (ongoing); a social protection programme mapping exercise supported by the Social Protection partner group (results were not available for this review); a social registry feasibility study (recommendations were being discussed for validation and further decision-making at the time of the consultancy); WFP's own ongoing strategic planning processes around development of its new Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP); and World Bank planning for the extension of its capacity strengthening and social safety net project Merankabandi (in conceptual phase). While all these processes serve as important entry points for strengthening WFP engagement around social protection, they also represented a moving target for this review, which limited the extent to which they could be taken as a springboard to chart the way forward.

This report is structured as follows. **Chapter 2** maps the national social protection setting in Burundi, highlighting the overall poverty and vulnerability context, and outlining key national social protection policies, structures, partnerships and programmes and priorities moving forward. **Chapter 3** reviews WFP's approach to social protection, programmes and partnerships in Burundi, and presents some perceptions on WFP as a social protection agency by insiders and others. **Chapter 4** offers options for the way forward for WFP's engagement in social protection in Burundi, including supporting several

components of the national social protection system (the new National Social Protection Strategy, the scaled-up national social safety net programme (Merankabandi), the proposed single social registry), repositioning WFP as a leader among development partners in the social protection policy space, and strengthening WFP's technical expertise to achieve these objectives. **Chapter 5** concludes.

2. Mapping the social protection sector in Burundi

2.1 Context of poverty, vulnerability, and multiple shocks

Burundi is characterised by widespread poverty and both chronic and cyclical vulnerabilities, including vulnerability to socio-political and environmental shocks. Household survey data (ECVMB 2013/14) show that nearly two thirds of the population (64.9%) lived under the national poverty line in 2014, with half of the non-poor vulnerable to falling into poverty.¹ The World Bank (2019) estimates even higher levels of poverty at 73% according to the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per day, nearly double the average for sub-Saharan Africa and for low-income countries.

Burundi is one of the most food insecure countries in the world, according to the Global Hunger Index of 2020. According to April 2019 IPC results, 15% of the population were facing emergency and crisis levels of food insecurity (phases 3 and 4) with 263,000 people in emergency (phase 4). The Joint Approach to Nutrition and Food Security Assessment (JANFSA) carried out in December 2018 revealed that 44.8 % of the population were food insecure, with 9.7 % in severe food insecurity, and with variations by locality. Demographic pressure arising from high population growth rates of 3% annually (with average fertility rates of around 5.4) contribute to a structural problem of growing scarcity of land in a country where 90% of the population is rural (World Bank 2015; population/net Burundi/). This is compounded by new influxes of returnees from Tanzania and refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which contribute to competition and disputes over scarce natural resources (WFP 2020c).

Burundi suffers from all forms of malnutrition across different age groups. It has one of the highest stunting rates at 52.2% (ENSNMB 2020), meaning that half of all children under five are chronically undernourished. According to the 2019 Fill the Nutrient Gap study (FNG), availability of and access to nutritious food remains a major challenge for adequate nutritional intake, with more than 67% of the population unable to afford nutritious food on the market (WFP 2019d). Anaemia is a major problem, affecting with 61% of children under 5, 39% of adolescent girls, and 40% of women according to the latest Demographic and Health Survey (EDSB III 2016/17).

Lack of access to basic services contributes to low levels of human capital that in turn fuel the transmission of poverty and food insecurity across generations, with significant disparities by gender, region and urban/rural locality. Only 60% of the rural population has access to safe drinking water, for example, compared to 80% in urban areas. And while net school enrolment at primary level is 86%, dropouts are high and primary completion is only 57%, with girls more likely than boys to drop out as they progress along the educational cycle. Women are therefore less educated than men (République du Burundi, 2020a). The FNG study highlights the impacts of gender inequalities on the nutritional status of women and children noting, among other things, the prevalence of patriarchal cultural norms, lack of female autonomy and decision-making power in the household and limited access to sexual and reproductive health care (WFP 2019d). While women furnish the majority of agricultural

¹ A new integrated household condition of living survey is currently underway, with results expected in 2021 (République du Burundi 2020a).

work and are largely responsible for the nutrition of their families, they lack inheritance rights to land as well as authority over their production, contributing significantly to gender-based vulnerability.

Overall vulnerability in Burundi is intensified by continuous adverse shocks, both natural and socio-political. The country hosts a significant caseload of refugees (over 87,000 refugees and asylum seekers in 2019) along with increasing inflows of Burundian returnees (143,000 projected in 2021) and high levels of internal displacement due to floods and droughts (over 30,000 IDPs in 2019) (UNHCR 2021a and b). Burundi is ranked 169 out of 181 countries on the index of resilience to natural disasters and climate change (Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative).

A recent survey (IOM 2020) indicates that most internal displacement in Burundi (some 80%) is due to natural disasters, particularly torrential rains and flooding coupled with landslides causing destruction of housing and infrastructure; drought is a secondary cause natural disaster-induced displacement. The remaining 20% of displacement is due to other reasons. Most of the internally displaced (some two thirds) would seek to return to their localities of origin if conditions permit, while a third seek to integrate locally, though percentages vary according to availability of land and employment possibilities in the localities of displacement.

A national strategy for reduction of risks of catastrophes (SNRRC) was adopted in 2018 and a multi-sectoral platform has been established to coordinate efforts around food and nutrition security. In order to strengthen community resilience to disasters, the government has pledged to develop a national multi-risk early warning mechanism; to establish a national centre for emergency operations and a national fund for disaster risk reduction; and to integrate disaster risk reduction in training programmes and in Communal Community Development Plans (PCDC) (République du Burundi 2019).

2.2 National policy environment, priorities and governance structures

The Government of Burundi has made significant efforts over the past decade to strengthen the national policy environment for social protection, to identify key national priorities, and to establish institutional structures and for coordination of the sector (see Box 1).

Box 1. Key milestones in the development of the social protection sector in Burundi

| | |
|------|--|
| 2011 | Adoption of a National Social Protection Policy (PNPS) |
| 2012 | Establishment of a National Commission for Social Protection (CNPS) made up of 11 Ministries |
| 2013 | Establishment of a Technical Committee for the CNPS |
| 2014 | Establishment of a Permanent Secretariat (SEP) for the CNPS, hosted in the Ministry of Gender and Social Affairs |
| 2015 | Establishment of provincial structures for the CNPS Development of a National Social Protection Strategy (SNPS) for implementation of the policy Initiation of a Social Protection Support Fund (FAPS) to mobilise funds to finance the SNPS |
| 2018 | Identification of social protection as a key priority under pillar 2 of human capital development in the National Development Plan (PND) 2018-2027 |
| 2020 | Adoption of the National Social Protection Code |
| 2020 | Establishment of a Social Registry Steering Committee |

2.2.1 Key policies and priorities

National Social Protection Policy (PNPS)

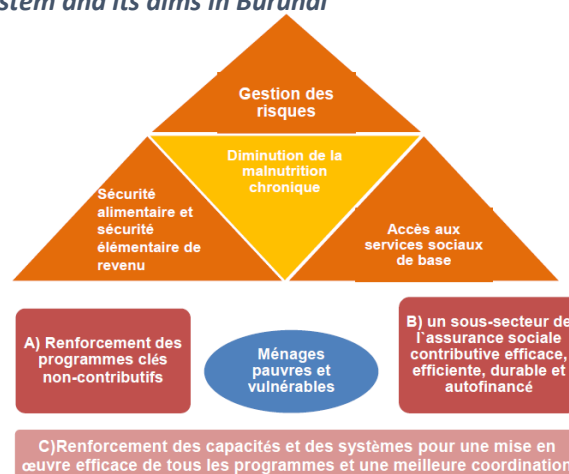
The PNPS (République de Burundi 2011) recognises the low level of access to social protection and aims to improve this, through 1) reinforcement of the technical, organisational and operational capacities of social protection coordinating structures, including development of a solidarity fund; 2) reinforcement of solidarity economy mechanisms to boost the contributory potential of the population; 3) progressive extension of social protection coverage to all, with a focus on the rural and informal sectors; 4) reinforcement of mechanisms for the prevention of social risks; and 5) reinforcement of existing social protection governance structures, including the legal and regulatory framework, management norms and indicators and monitoring and evaluation

National Social Protection Strategy (SNPS)

The SNPS (République du Burundi 2015) adopts the 'PPPT' framework for social protection according to its inter-related protective, preventive, promotive, and transformative functions (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2004) and draws as well on concepts of the social protection floor and a two-dimensional approach to both vertical and horizontal expansion (ILO 2012). The SNPS identifies the following priorities for social protection in Burundi: 1) increase access to basic social services in health, water and sanitation and education; 2) ensure food and basic income security both for those who can permanently exit from poverty and for those who will remain vulnerable their whole lives; 3) strengthen natural and social risk management in order to reinforce the resilience of vulnerable populations and enable them to avoid negative coping measures; and 4) contribute to the reduction of chronic malnutrition in children (a cross-cutting priority).

The strategy divides its focus between contributory and non-contributory systems, with the following action points for the latter: 1) develop new cash transfer programmes (with appropriate geographical and household targeting methods, particular attention to households with young children, and accompanying measures aimed at human capital development); 2) establish and implement a guiding framework for public works; 3) develop and pilot new types of labour-intensive public works programmes focused on social services and their maintenance; and 4) strengthen the access of the poorest and destitute to health care within the framework of universal health coverage.

Figure 1. Conceptualisation of the social protection system and its aims in Burundi



Source. National Social Protection Strategy, Burundi

The strategy calls for better harmonisation and efficiency of programmes financed by partners and NGOs as well as a reinforcement of the social protection system (normative frameworks, institutional structures, capacities and procedures) as well as development of targeting/categorization, a monitoring and evaluation framework, a single registry, and strategies for capacity building and communication. Implementation of the strategy is currently under review, with a new one to be developed in alignment with the NDP and ongoing developments in the sector.

National Development Plan (PND 2018-2027)

The PND (République du Burundi 2018) identifies human capital development as one of its main priorities (Pillar 2) and aims to improve the social protection sector especially the socio-economic living conditions of vulnerable people and populations affected by different shocks, so as to strengthen community resilience. To this end, social protection programs would strengthen and scale up of basic social safety nets to reduce households' structural vulnerabilities and promote livelihoods through (i) implementation of public cash transfer programmes; (ii) design and strengthening of public works programmes using high labour force intensity; (iii) strengthening social and solidarity economy organisations; and (iv) strengthening the social insurance sector.

National Social Protection Code

The Code (République du Burundi 2020b) sets out the fundamental principles for social protection in Burundi, clarifies concepts and definitions, and elaborates on the institutional, governance and financial framework. It defines social protection as:² *'a set of public or private measures aimed at reducing poverty and economic and social vulnerabilities'* and highlights its contribution to *'ensuring for the population a minimum income security, facilitating access to basic social services, and helping households better manage the risks to which they are exposed.'*

The Code provides for the establishment of a social registry for the identification and management of social protection programme beneficiaries. It delegates the regulatory functions for social protection to the SEP/CNPS while awaiting creation of a specific regulatory authority. And it notes that *'Financing of non-contributory social protection is assured by the State through the Social Protection Support Fund and all other sources of financing in the framework of cooperation and partnerships.'*

The Code recognises social protection as a right, which the government has the duty to uphold, stating that:

- ❖ *'Everyone has the right to social protection, to the satisfaction of economic rights and to the free development of their responsibilities thanks to the national effort and international cooperation'.*
- ❖ *'Everyone has the right to a standard of living sufficient to ensure their own health and well-being as well as that of their family, in particular through decent food, clothing and lodging'.*
- ❖ *'They have the right to security in case of illness, incapacitation, old age, or in other cases of loss of livelihood (subsistence) due to circumstances beyond their control'.*

It highlights the fact that the right to social assistance is enshrined in the Constitution and that *'the state has responsibility for social assistance for vulnerable households or persons in situations of essential and special needs (food, health care, clothing, personal and domestic necessities and costs of decent housing). Depending on different categories, special needs fall under essential needs for leading a normal life.'* It stipulates that the state and its decentralised services must provide social assistance *'without discrimination, exclusion or preference based on nationality, ethnic identity, sex, age, handicap, religion, social origin or political convictions of the person or household which has a right to it.'* However, it specifies that: *'A person has a right to social assistance if 1) they are in need, in conformity with article 199 of this code; 2) they are Burundian citizens and fulfil all requirements prescribed by the competent authority; 3) they are resident aliens fulfilling the conditions prescribed by the competent authority.'*³ It further notes that *'Social assistance is conditional on the availability*

² Throughout this report, citations from sources in French are based on the authors' own translation.

³ It will be important in this regard to clarify the eligibility of refugees for social protection service provision and programme participation.

of resources in conformity with the law’ and that ‘Social assistance stops depending on the level of vulnerability, of the type of programme, and of the availability of funds.’

Social protection in the Multi-Sectoral Food Security and Nutrition Strategic Plan 2019-2023 (PSMSAN II)

The PSMSAN, second generation, highlights the importance of social protection measures for food and nutritional security and dedicates a strategic pillar to nutrition-sensitive social protection. Its overall aims are to increase agriculture production two-fold; reduce chronic malnutrition in children by 10 percent; and ensure social protection for 50 percent of vulnerable populations, good nutrition practices for at least 80 percent of households, and food and nutrition security for 100 percent of people affected by emergencies and natural disasters. Sectoral policies such as the Nutrition Strategic Plan (2019-2023) addressing global malnutrition and micronutrient supplementation and the National Social Protection Strategy underpin the multidimensional approach to achieve sustainable outcomes, the core goal being the reduction of stunting.

2.2.2 National governance and coordinating structures

Ministry of Social Affairs, Human Rights and Gender (MDPHASG)

The MDPHASG has the mandate for social protection/social assistance, with a specific Directorate for Social Assistance and National Solidarity. The ministry is responsible for coordinating the 11 ministries involved in social protection and has oversight authority over the Project Management Unit (PIU) established for implementation of the national social safety net/Merankabandi programme. It works on its different activities through Centres for Family and Community Development (CDFCs) at provincial level.

Capacity remains weak, however: according to a recent social protection budget analysis (UNICEF 2019) the Ministry accounts for only 10% of overall government social protection expenditures (compared, for example, to 44.5% for Ministry of Health; 20.1% for Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock; and 19.7% for the Ministry of Education and Technical and Professional Training), which is largely insufficient to support its coordinating role and its other programmes for socio-economic integration of disaster-affected people; socio-economic insertion of former street youth; the national forum for children and women; physical rehabilitation and socio-professional reinsertion of people with disabilities; medical assistance for vulnerable groups and the like.

National Social Protection Commission (CNPS)

The CNPS established in 2012, functions as a coordinating body presided over by the president, with representatives from 11 ministries and committees at provincial and communal levels (since 2015). Its major objective is the promotion and regulation of programmes in the National Social Protection Strategy.

Permanent Executive Secretariat (SEP)

The SEP, operational since 2014, serves to support implementation and monitoring of programmes and systems of social protection, working in coordination with ***provincial and communal structures*** since 2015. Both WFP and UNICEF have MOUs of support with SEP, which is also supported by the World Bank as part of the systems-strengthening thrusts of the Merankabandi programme.

Technical Committee and Thematic Groups of the CNPS

The **Technical committee of the CNPS** includes as members representatives of the presidency, vice presidency, health, interior, finance, youth, agriculture as well as faith leaders, associations, mutuals and unions/employers. The presidency is assumed by the Ministry for Social protection (Social Affairs), with UNICEF identified as lead of technical and financial partners. There are also a number of **thematic groups**, including on social assistance and cash transfers.

2.3 Partners and partnership platforms

A plethora of actors are involved in social protection in Burundi through multiple sectors and at various levels, underscoring the need for strong structures of coordination, communication and partnership platforms to help structure approaches and create positive synergies in support of national priorities.

2.3.1 UN system

UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2019-2023)

The current UNDAF (SNU 2019) includes a specific strategic result (#3) around social protection: *‘By 2023, more women, young people and vulnerable groups are integrated socio-economically and politically and use social protection services.’* This is aligned with strategic axes ‘Social protection’ and ‘Decent Work and Youth’ of the PND, and contributes to SDGs 5 (gender equality) and 8 (decent work and economic growth). The specific result 3.1 is that *‘Women and young people have greater access to social protection services and mechanisms’*, with indicators including the proportion of communes that have integrated social protection in the communal development plans (PCDC) and the number of households that benefit from transfers. WFP is identified as a key actor under this result area along with UNICEF, FAO, UNHCR, and IOM. There is also a strategic result (#4) for community resilience: *‘By 2023, national and decentralised authorities adopt and apply mechanisms for the prevention and management of crises and risks of catastrophe. ...and for climate change mitigation and’ adaptation*, with a specific result that *‘National and decentralised authorities have strengthened technical competencies for a better management of risks and disasters’* for which WFP is also identified as a key actor.

The UN system is also supporting the COVID-19 socioeconomic response plan, with WFP and UNICEF co-leads on pillar 2, social protection (information furnished by WFP). This is in line with the integrated framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 elaborated by the United Nations at global level (UN 2020). The UN’s support to the national response had three intervention areas: inclusive and integrated crisis management and multi-sectoral response; strengthening health systems; and socio-economic impact and recovery. The latter covers six specific interventions:

- ❖ Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable households in Burundi
- ❖ Identification of the most vulnerable groups through socio-economic analysis to include the precarity of economic and social situations
- ❖ Socio-Economic Impact Analysis of COVID-19 and recovery roadmap
- ❖ Support to national institutions as well as the preparation of a post-crisis recovery strategy
- ❖ SDG financing for national institutional strengthening and SDG acceleration
- ❖ Support to mitigate gender impacts of the pandemic (UNDP 2020).

Bridging the humanitarian/development divide

An integrated Humanitarian Country Team Protection Strategy for Burundi (HCT 2019) aims to address three levels of need: immediate response to man-made and natural disasters and emergencies; reparative actions on acute vulnerabilities, in particular through the promotion of durable solutions; and a protective environment, including the identification of actions building resilience and assisting communities in ensuring the self-protection during when confronted with disasters. The 2019 Joint Refugee Return and Reintegration Plan (UNHCR 2021a) is an integrated inter-agency response plan with both humanitarian and development-oriented components. In 2019, UN agencies mobilized around the resilience agenda through efforts to: (i) map vulnerabilities, shocks and capacities in Burundi using data on more than 50 SDG indicators to identify the provinces with greater vulnerabilities; (ii) map investments of agencies per province; and (iii) agree on a set of 'collaborative' outcomes for the resilience agenda. The RC and the UN team were successful in bringing key donors and partners on board for this agenda as well for implementation starting in 2020 (UNICEF 2019a).

Burundi is a signatory to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), and as such it has committed to the Global Refugee Compact, which asserts that refugees should be included in local communities and should benefit from national services, which includes social protection. Agencies led by WFP, UNHCR and OCHA are working to support the National Solidarity Ministry and the Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender in delivering these rights to refugees hosted by Burundi. The next phase of World Bank supported Merankabandi, includes as one of its objectives operationalising the integration of refugees and host communities into the national social protection system.

Social protection in the joint UN agenda on food and nutritional security

As part of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) and Renewed Efforts against Child Hunger (REACH) initiatives in Burundi, WFP and other UN agencies participate in the Multi-Sectoral Platform on Food and Nutrition Security, with UNICEF as lead agency for the UN network for nutrition. Through the development of a joint UN agenda, agency partners seek to support the government's PSMSAN and strengthen multi-sectoral approaches to food and nutritional security, including through the development and scaling-up of nutrition-sensitive social protection interventions. While UNICEF is seen to have explicit expertise on social protection, comparative advantages identified for WFP within this joint agenda are its expertise and experience in support of the school lunch programme with government; its partnership with the private sector around food fortification; its provision of nutritional supplements to pregnant women and adolescents; its work with government on the prevention of chronic malnutrition and treatment of moderate malnutrition; and its provision of food assistance in schools, refugee camps and to vulnerable people generally (SUN Burundi 2019).

UNICEF

UNICEF supports the Government's efforts to reduce multidimensional child poverty and to create a solid evidence base for decision-making related to child rights. Its multi-sectoral country programme (2019-2023) focuses on health and nutrition, education, child protection, WASH, adolescent empowerment and resilience, and social policy and advocacy. Its social policy and advocacy strategy has three key thrusts around 1) child poverty (evidence, indicators and integration into national development plans); 2) public finance for children (budget analyses, public expenditure reviews (PERs), public expenditure tracking surveys (PETS), value for money analyses and investment cases along with technical assistance, training and systems-strengthening); and 3) social protection (strengthening the design, delivery and scale-up of social protection interventions for the most vulnerable children and their families). The planned output of the programme is that *'The social protection system is strengthened with reinforced national capacity and more equitable, child-*

sensitive, efficient, fiscally sustainable and shock-responsive social protection instruments' (UNICEF 2018b).

Box 2. Rationale and focus of UNICEF's support for social protection in Burundi

If UNICEF supports and guides evidence-based development and application of child-sensitive, equitable and shock-responsive core social protection instruments (*through policy dialogue, partner engagement and assessment of results*), remains an active member of the social protection working group to influence the design of child-focused social protection programmes that include behaviour change components and take into account gender inequalities and other vulnerabilities (*through evidence generation, advocacy and C4D*) and encourages capacity development at national and decentralized levels (*through capacity development and South-South cooperation*), then the Burundian social protection system will be strengthened to support vulnerable children.

Given its own limited financial resources, the Country Office is unable to finance large-scale cash transfer projects, but it will continue advocating for the design of child-focused, equitable programmes (e.g., a single registry) and the integration of child-sensitive complementary measures into cash transfer programmes supported by other partners (e.g., the World Bank). Critical actions in the current country programme aim therefore to i) reinforce the national social protection system; ii) encourage financing for social protection; iii) support implementation of child-focused cash transfer programmes; iv) building shock-responsive social protection systems, working closely with the Emergency Management Team.

Source: UNICEF 2018b, Social Policy and Advocacy Strategy Note 2019-2023

As sector lead of the social protection working group of technical and financial partners from 2011 to 2016, UNICEF accompanied the efforts to put in place the necessary structures for an effective social protection system. Among other things, UNICEF has supported (with the WB) a social safety net review (2014/15); conducted a social protection budget analysis (2019a); and – jointly with WFP – is supporting the IPC social registry feasibility study and capacity development (ongoing). It also partners with the World Bank (formalised in 2019) on the Merankabandi project (quality assurance for the complementary, 'cash plus' nutrition and C4D component; and monitoring and evaluation tools to track progress and learn from the programme). It maintains a strategic partnership with SEP/CNPS and is a key partner for the Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender. UNICEF is also the lead for WASH in humanitarian and development settings and co-lead for communication and community engagement. It works in particular on strengthening community resilience and response (UNICEF 2018a, 2019b and stakeholders).

2.3.2 World Bank

The World Bank is a key actor in the social protection sector in Burundi, working – among other things – on sector analytics (including joint work with UNICEF on the 2014 social safety net assessment); strategy development (support for development of the 2015 SNPS and lead in current work on development of the new strategy); and initiation of the Merankabandi social safety net programme along with significant support for systems strengthening (see below). It will increasingly be involved in sector coordination through its new role (since January 2021) as lead of the Social Protection Partners Working Group.

2.3.3 NGOs, civil society and faith-based organisations

Concern Worldwide

Concern Worldwide is one of the leading international NGOs active in the social protection sector in Burundi, both as an implementing agency of the ground-breaking Terintambwe project since 2013 (see section 2.4 below) and engaging in the policy process. Social protection has been a core focus of

Concern Burundi's work for many years. Concern Worldwide was a co-lead with WFP of the Social Protection Partners' Group in Burundi for 3 years, from 2017 to 2020 and remains co-lead in 2021 with the World Bank. Concern is also a member of the Cash Working Group in Burundi, which WFP heads, with government (SEP) involved and with OCHA as secretariat (see section 2.3.4 below).

Concern Worldwide is piloting a post-disaster 'early recovery' project, with funding from UNICEF. In areas where people have been displaced by floods Concern works through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) to provide business skills training and asset transfers as a group to implement a business plan. One learning objective is to contribute to the evidence base on shock-responsive social protection in Burundi.

World Vision International (WVI)

WVI is an implementing partner for different aspects of two WFP projects – resilience and school feeding. The resilience project aims to contribute to the reduction of food and nutritional insecurity in two provinces – Gitega and Karusi. The project offers two types of transfers: conditional on creation of community assets (for household with active labour); and unconditional (for households with persons with disability, chronic illness, orphan heads of household older persons over 70). WVI additionally provides sensitisation sessions (around environmental risks, reproductive health) during registration, distribution, and monitoring (both on-site and post-distribution). Together with WFP sub-offices, they collaborate with the provincial social protection commission and keep them informed of the project.

WVI's role in implementation of the school feeding programme is one of coordination and technical support for capacity development of school management committees and parents' associations as well as for the development of school clubs for sensitisation around hygiene, nutrition, reproductive health. They may also in future be asked to support capacity development of local producers. Within their wider programme in Burundi, WVI also intervenes in emergency response.

Burundi Red Cross (BRC)

The Burundi Red Cross is considered one of the leading humanitarian agencies in Burundi, with a country-wide presence (at national, provincial, communal and colline level) and a network of some 450,000 volunteers, including a pool of specialised National Disaster Response Team volunteers trained in first aid, emergency needs assessments, SPHERE standards, WASH and camp management. The BRC has served as the implementing partner of many UN agencies, including WFP (IFRC 2016).

Burundi has also been one of four pilot countries included in a capacity strengthening partnership between the International Federation of Red Cross and WFP which aims to help position national Red Cross societies as increasingly robust institutions to lead national emergency responses alongside government. In Burundi, capacity building has focused on cash-based assistance; supply chain management; community-based early warning systems; and in-kind food assistance for emergency preparedness and response (WFP/Croix Rouge du Burundi/IFRC 2017; and WFP 2018b).⁴

Faith-Based Organisations

The Catholic Church is a key actor on social initiatives in Burundi, operating in particular through Caritas Burundi and its network (8 a diocesan level and 200 at parish level). It partners with many agencies and organisations – including WFP - on support for poor and vulnerable individuals and

⁴ The consultants were not able to speak with Red Cross for any further information on its current activities.

communities, with its decentralised structure contributing to its strengths at local level. Among the themes of the projects it commonly engages on are the following: social and economic reintegration of returnees; farm income diversification; refugee reception and relief; nutrition; health, including HIV and AIDS; and assistance to orphans, older people, and people living with disabilities. In March of 2021, Caritas Burundi organised a conference-debate on social protection involving its partners in the field as well the CNPS, expressing its commitment to social protection as a means of reducing poverty, extending charity, and fulfilling the human rights of disadvantaged groups. (<http://www.caritas-burundi.org/>; <https://www.caritas.org/where-caritas-work/africa/burundi/>)

2.3.4 Partnership platforms

Social Protection Partners' Group (GPPS)

Terms of reference for the Social Protection Partners' Group (copy in draft form dated 2018) speak of a reactivation of this group due to i) the persistence of financial barriers to access to services by the most vulnerable; ii) opportunities arising from the national social transfer programme (Merankabandi), which started operations in 2018; iii) the growing presence of social protection as a theme in programmes seeking to expand access to social services and reinforce resilience; and iv) the cross-cutting nature of social protection which calls for efforts at collaboration. It is considered an important group, particularly as there is so much new on the horizon. The group serves as a platform for:

- ❖ Promoting consultation and information exchange among partners
- ❖ Facilitating coordination of activities implemented by partners with the view towards harmonization in order to avoid duplication and dispersal of effort (including coordination with the Cash Working Group)
- ❖ Rationalizing and improving effectiveness of support provided to national partners
- ❖ Facilitating technical assistance to the government for the development of a national strategy for implementation of the national social protection policy
- ❖ Producing information and succinct notes on questions relative to social protection
- ❖ Conducting mappings of social protection partners with the aim of seeking partnership and synergies
- ❖ Leading studies and research on social protection in Burundi to inform advocacy and social, economic and political dialogue
- ❖ Organising annual reviews and communicating on annual planned financial contributions of partners to the sector.

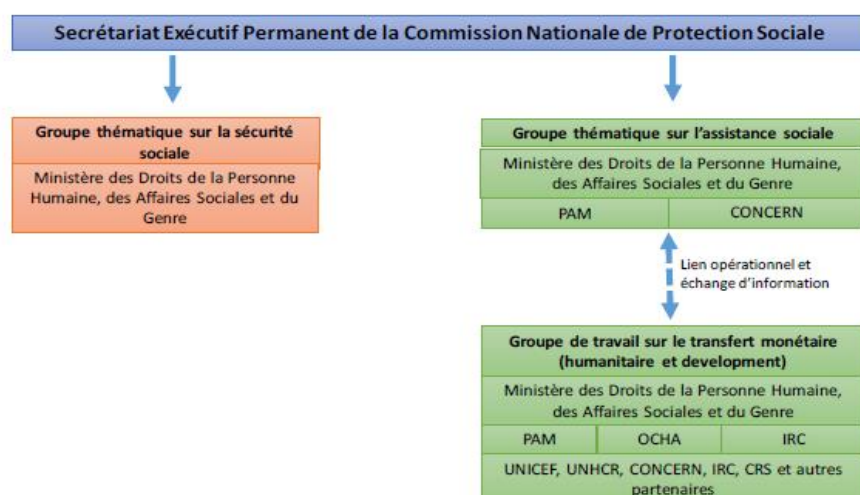
The Group draws its members from development partners, mainly World Bank, UN agencies (UNICEF and WFP) and NGOs (particularly Concern Worldwide who are involved because of their knowledge and on the ground experience of social protection in Burundi over many years.) There is no direct government involvement in the group, but according to the TORs, representatives of technical ministries who are already members of the Technical Committee of the CNPS can participate in meetings. Stakeholders note that the group aims to provide some kind of accountability to the Ministry of Social Affairs through annual workplans, with the longer-term vision for government to assume this role. WFP and Concern Worldwide were co-leads of the Group for three years, from 2017 to 2020 (prior to this, UNICEF was the lead agency). As head, WFP participated in the national general assemblies on social protection and was appreciated for things like the 'coffee corners' that they organised around social protection. In January 2021 leadership of the Group was passed to the World Bank, with Concern Worldwide remaining as co-leader. Through leadership in the group the World

Bank hopes to strengthen their outreach to and communication with partners and enhance proactivity in seeking synergies.

Cash Working Group

A Cash Working group (CWG/GTTM) operates as a sub-group of the Social Assistance Theme Group of the National Social Protection Commission, with the SEP/CNPS presiding, according to the organigram below.

Figure 2. Cash Working Group Organigram



Source: GTTM (2018) Termes de Référence: Groupe de travail sur le transfert monétaire au Burundi

According to the terms of reference (GTTM 2018) the group aims to be an inclusive platform for humanitarian and development actors, financial institutions, mobile telephone companies, national and international NGOs, UN, WB and SEP/CNPS, with focal points from each sector that employs the cash transfer modality. Specific objectives include: creating a favourable institutional framework for quality cash transfers; developing a cash transfer communication and knowledge-sharing strategy in order to provide pertinent information to concerned populations, key stakeholders and the general public; assessing the risks associated with cash transfers and developing risk mitigation strategies. Members of the group alternate as facilitators, with WFP currently leading; OCHA serves as secretariat. Donors can participate in meetings as observers.

Among the key actions identified in the group's TORs: mapping cash transfer actors; training and capacity development of key actors; exchange of experiences and good practices; developing common standards, approaches and minimum conditions for cash transfers; collaboration with government institution for scaling up cash transfers; linking emergency and development transfers; identifying innovations; strengthening inter-sectoral links around planning and implementation; providing key transfer actors with relevant tools and knowledge; identifying studies and evaluations; conducting action-research around cash transfers; sharing knowledge and experiences on collection and analysis of information. The following website serves as a repository of information for the group: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/burundi/cash-transfert>

2.4 Programmes and projects

Numerous projects and programmes in Burundi can either be classified as social protection or have social protection components or characteristics. Due to limited government financial and technical capacity, however, many of these activities are financed and managed by development partners and implemented by international and local NGOs. As a result, they are fragmented, mostly sub-national in scale, and do not yet constitute a coherent and comprehensive social protection system. This section first provides an overview of these activities then examines four of the largest social protection interventions in more detail.

2.4.1 Overview

A wide variety of social protection initiatives are currently underway by different partners,⁵ including: social transfers; free health and education measures; school feeding, health mutuals, health insurance, labour intensive public works; food vouchers; income generating activities; studies and analyses (TDR donor support group). The 2014 (WB/UNICEF) assessment of social safety nets classified the major in-kind programmes as: i) assistance for refugees, returnees, IDPs, ex-combatants and host communities; ii) food assistance to highly vulnerable residents of social institutions (orphans, street children, old people and people with disabilities; iii) supplementation programmes for children under 5 with acute malnutrition and malnourished pregnant and lactating women + HIV patients. A variety of labour-intensive public works programmes also characterise the landscape.

The SNPS (2015) classifies social protection programmes as either non-contributory (social assistance) or contributory (social insurance) and makes further distinctions between ‘key’ programmes (conceptualised as falling within the sector of social protection itself), and ‘complementary’ programmes (that have cross-cutting social protection elements, aspects or functions but lie more fully within other sectors). Table 1 outlines the types and characteristics of the key contributory and non-contributory programmes in Burundi, as presented in the SNPS.

Table 1. Typology and Overview of Social Protection Programmes in Burundi (SNPS 2015)

| Category/type | Characteristics |
|--|--|
| Non-contributory (Social Assistance) | |
| Social transfers | In cash and in kind, including food and nutritional assistance; asset transfers and distribution agricultural inputs |
| High intensity public works programmes | Some 80 public works programmes enumerated in 2014 according cash for short-term work to around 102,000 people, financed by different partners |
| Measures promoting universal health coverage | Free health care for pregnant women, children under five and other priority services; free health care for the destitute and reduced health care through the medical assistance card (CAM) system (with weaknesses in the functioning of these two programmes) |
| Measures promoting access to education | Abolition of primary school fees (since 2005/6); secondary school fee exemption for some poor students (though little information available on this); school feeding programme; distribution of school kits |
| Programmes for specific vulnerable groups | Various forms of support and assistance for people with disabilities, child protection, older people, people living with HIV/SIDA; the Batwa (indigenous population) |
| Contributory (Social Insurance) | |

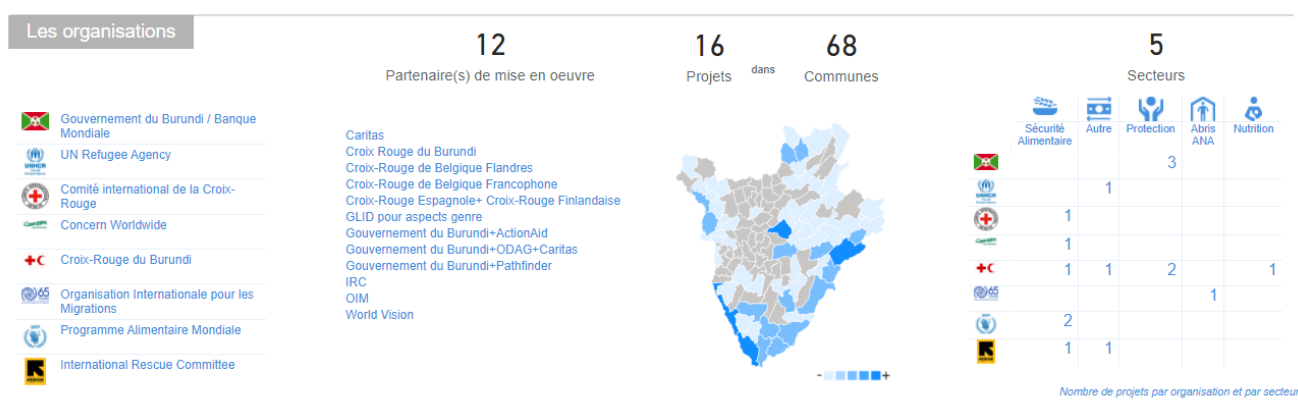
⁵ Results of the programme mapping currently underway by the SP partners’ group were not available at the time of this consultation.

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Pensions | For old age and professional risks in public and private formal sectors, but with very low coverage |
| Health insurance | Public sector system and various forms within private sector including health mutuals, again with low coverage |

According to a recent review (UNICEF 2019), the proportion of the state budget devoted to social protection rose to 10.9% (2019/20) from 9.6% (2018/19) and social protection currently accounts for 2.73% of GDP. In terms of national budget allocations, the following are identified as the most important national social protection programmes and initiatives in Burundi: free health services (19.3%); prevention and care for vulnerable groups (people living with HIV, GBV survivors) (18.3%); university scholarships and other educational subsidies (16%); and agricultural subsidies (seeds, fertilisers) (13.5%). Smaller allocations are for medical insurance cards (CAM) (8.6%); other assistance for vulnerable groups, including humanitarian assistance (7.5%); subsidised medicines and vaccines (6%), and the school lunch programme (2.4%).

Increasingly, there has been a turn towards cash transfers as a modality of assistance in Burundi. A 2017 study on the feasibility of cash transfers (OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP 2017) identified a number of actors who have used cash transfers or cash vouchers in Burundi. These include: WFP, UNHCR, FAO, UNDP, Concern Worldwide, International Rescue Committee (IRC), WVI, Oxfam Novib, GVC, Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Caritas Burundi and the Burundian Red Cross. A more recent inventory (OCHA 2020) identified 12 implementing partners working on and/or planning 16 projects involving cash transfers in 68 communities and 5 sectors (food security, protection, shelter, nutrition, and other) (*see graphic*). Together they provide a total of \$967 K/month as regular transfers per household (transferred either daily, weekly or monthly) and \$674 K as single, one-time humanitarian transfers. Some 228 K beneficiaries are targeted (including vulnerable local populations (159K); refugees (50K), returnees (17K), and IDPs (2K). Transfers are both conditional and unconditional. Modalities of delivery include mobile money, bank transfer, cash in envelope and other forms.

Figure 3. Mapping of cash transfers in Burundi



Source: OCHA (2020) *Transferts monétaires au Burundi (3W Groupe de Travail Transferts Monétaires)*

2.4.2 Merankabandi

The World Bank-supported social safety net project, Merankabandi (US\$ 40m), was launched as a pilot in 2017, becoming operational in 2018. The Project objectives were to provide regular cash transfers to extremely poor and vulnerable households with children under 12 in selected areas, while strengthening the delivery mechanisms for the development of a basic social safety net system. Merankabandi was thus seen as a vehicle for systems-building. It has been successfully implemented

in 16 communes of 4 provinces of Burundi (Gitega, Karusi, Kirundo and Ruyigi). It has benefited over 56,000 households (more than the 40,000 initially targeted) with cash transfers and accompanying measures on human capital development implemented by NGOs (Action Aid, Pathfinder, Caritas) supported by UNICEF. It has also established the basis for a national social protection system through the development of core delivery systems including a targeting system (PMT plus community verification), a phone-based payment platform, an M&E system, a grievance redress mechanism and a management information system to support project activities and reporting. The Project has in addition developed the embryo of the country's social registry through the harmonized data collection of socio-economic data from poor households. It is managed by a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) within the Ministry of Social Affairs, with salaries supported by the project but staff reporting to the Ministry and the CNPS (which is itself supported through the project) (WB 2016 2020a and 2020b).

Plans are now underway to scale up the project through an additional grant of USD 200 million (USD 180 million for national beneficiaries and 20 million for refugees). Phase II of the proposed project would continue supporting Government with the development of a national safety net system that can address structural vulnerabilities as well as promote livelihoods and economic opportunities and respond to shocks such as the Covid-19 crisis and others. It would among other things support operationalisation of the forthcoming National Social Protection Strategy 2021-2025. The cash transfer component (to be scaled up from 4 to all 18 provinces of the country) aims to provide an anchor for an effective safety net system to help strengthen the resilience of the poor while promoting access to productive and job opportunities. Some 250,000 beneficiary households would be selected through a combination of targeting mechanisms: geographic selection of the poorest communes based on poverty maps; random selection of collines within the communes; registry of all households in the colline followed by a PMT and verification process, with quotas established by colline). Beneficiary households would receive FBU 30,000/month (+/-USD15) for 30 months, support for productive inclusion and employment, behavioural change activities for human capital investment (in collaboration with UNICEF) (WB 2020a and b).

The proposed Project would also support strengthening of social protection coordination (focusing on the CNPS Technical Committee and its thematic groups, on social assistance and cash transfers and on the Permanent Executive Secretariat (SEP)); operationalisation of the forthcoming Social Protection Strategy 2021-2025, including integration of refugees and host communities into national social protection systems, and establishment of a social registry. The programme would continue to be implemented by a Programme Implementation Unit (PIU), under the authority of the Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender (MDPHASG) and coordinating with the SEP/CNPS in coordination with provincial and communal deconcentrated structures of the SEP/CNPS and the MDPHASG. A Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC) will be included in the proposed project to allow rapid scale up in response to an emergency (WB 2020a and b).

2.4.3 School feeding

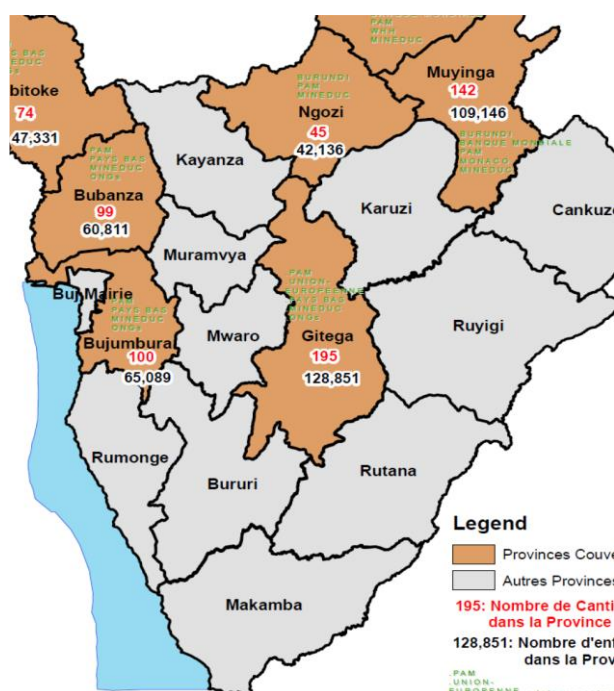
School feeding is one of the largest safety net programmes in Burundi. The government has identified school feeding as a national priority, because it delivers both food security and education benefits for vulnerable children, with the potential to stimulate local economies, provide a nutritious meal and contribute to improving child nutrition status, as well as raising school enrolment and primary completion rates.

WFP has supported school feeding in Burundi since 2003, which has also been financed by the Dutch and the European Union, and implemented by World Vision, Welthungerhilfe and other international and local NGOs. In 2008, the government created a budget line for school feeding of US\$1.5–2 million

a year, but this only covered 7.3% of programme costs in 2011, and a similar percentage in 2016. Home-grown school feeding (HGSF) started in Burundi in 2013, supported by a WFP Purchase for Progress project (2013-2017). About 30% of food procured for school meals is purchased locally from farmers' cooperatives and producer associations. HGSF adds another benefit to school feeding – rural economic development – and another group of beneficiaries – smallholder farmers and their families through improved income sources, as well as demand creation for nutritious foods which can also be consumed by families, contributing to the goal for healthy diets for individuals and households.

Coverage is not universal. In 2016 school feeding reached 15% of primary school children in Burundi. In 2017 there were 455,739 beneficiaries in 703 schools, and in 2018 there were 614,475 beneficiaries in 820 schools in 7 provinces (see Figure 4). Geographic targeting is used to identify food insecure areas and schools with low enrolment rates, to reach children from poor and food insecure families.

Figure 4. School feeding programme in Burundi, October 2018



Source: WFP 2019 school feeding evaluation

An Intersectoral Committee on School Feeding was established in 2015, followed by a National Directorate for School Feeding in the Ministry of Education in 2016. The National School Feeding Policy (PNAS) was approved in 2017. The programme is managed by the National School Lunch Department of the Ministry of Education. WFP's Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil provided technical support for developing the Implementation Strategy for the PNAS. WFP also facilitated government delegations to the Africa Day of School Feeding meeting and the Global Child Nutrition Forum.

In 2019 WFP Burundi faced a funding gap of 37% and pipeline breaks which, together with limited food availability on local markets, left WFP unable to procure all the food it needed for the school feeding programme. Learners received 16 days of school meals instead of 20 per month, and the number of learners receiving school meals fell by 14%, from 620,000 to 533,000.

Children receive a nutritious hot meal of cereals and pulses, with vegetables, mushrooms and fruit, sometimes supplemented by milk purchased from local small farmers. The meal provides one-third of recommended daily calories (610 kcal), and the necessary animal protein from milk and fish.

A number of complementary essential interventions were introduced to maximise the nutritional impacts of the school feeding programme, including school gardens, fuel-efficient stoves in assisted schools, social and behaviour change communication with learners on nutrition and hygiene, and the introduction of fortified maize flour and locally produced milk into the food basket in Gitega. An evaluation in 2017–18 found that school gardens have “a positive impact on nutritional variety and value of meals served in the school lunch programme” (WFP Burundi 2019c: xii). In 2019 WFP supported the installation of household kitchen gardens that reached 41,200 beneficiaries, 20,834 (51%) being women (WFP 2019a).

In 2014, an assessment of social safety nets in Burundi made three important recommendations that have not yet been implemented. First, school feeding needs to scale-up towards **universal coverage**, instead of being geographically concentrated. The government is in favour of such expansion, as one strategy to raise primary school enrolment and completion rates. Second, **local procurement** needs to increase from 30% towards 100%. This shift is endorsed by the National Social Protection Strategy (SNPS) of 2015. Thirdly, financing and implementation of the programme needs to be handed over to **national institutions**. This third process is already underway. HGSF is being steadily integrated into the national social protection system. WFP supported the development of the national school feeding policy and implementation plan, and is currently building “a database of small producers to be integrated in the national social protection single registry” (WFP Burundi 2021d).⁶ WFP is also exploring giving cash-based transfers to schools, to give them control over procurement of food commodities for school meals.

More generally, it should be noted that school feeding has a positive image in Burundi, and is clearly considered as part of the social protection systems, unlike in many other countries. School feeding is seen by the Government of Burundi as important not only for food security but also for building the human capital of the nation, as an investment in children’s education and nutrition. Through the home-grown modality, school feeding is recognised as contributing to rural development and poverty reduction, with farmers and their families benefiting as well as schoolchildren. WFP should continue promoting school feeding as an investment in human capital and economic development.

2.4.4 Terintambwe Graduation model programme

Concern Worldwide launched Terintambwe, a graduation model pilot project, in Burundi in 2013, with funding from Irish Aid. As a pilot project, beneficiary numbers were relatively small: just 2,000 families in two districts: Cibitoke and Kirundo. Based on BRAC’s graduation model in Bangladesh, participating households received a package of support including cash transfers for 12 months, access to savings facilities for financial inclusion, productive assets and training in business skills to promote self-reliant livelihoods, and personal coaching including social behaviour change communication (SBCC) on topics such as nutrition and hygiene.

Phase I of Terintambwe was evaluated as very successful, with positive outcomes in many indicators of household wellbeing, including multidimensional poverty and food security. From baseline to endline, compared to a control group of non-participants, Terintambwe participants recorded higher average consumption of meals per day (both adults and children), higher dietary diversity scores (for households and for children), and lower months of hunger in the previous 12 months, all to statistically significant levels (Devereux et al. 2015, 2019).

⁶ On the proposed Single Social Registry, see section 2.5.2 below.

Phase II runs from 2017 to 2022. It has more focus on nutrition and social cohesion. Asset transfers are made to VSLA groups, which are encouraged to create business activities and investments that have a nutrition added value. VSLA groups also receive coaching and nutrition SBCC. Concern also distributes nutrition support to pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and children under two years old. Concern also establishes care groups – community volunteers who follow up with neighbours to implement good hygiene, sanitation and nutrition.

Participants have increased to 8,000. However, this project runs independently of other social protection programmes, it is not coordinated with other government and donor activities, and it is not recognised under the National Social Protection Strategy.

The government visited the Terintambwe project in Cibitoke and Kirundo many times to learn lessons. The project is generally acknowledged to have informed the design of Merankabandi, although Merankabandi is more limited in its design and does not share most characteristics of a graduation model programme. Notably, Merankabandi does not include the coaching component, which is widely acknowledged as crucial for the success of graduation model programmes.

2.4.5 Reinforcement of Community Resilience Programme

This programme, implemented by World Vision International with funding and support by WFP, has been underway since 2017, with the global objective to sustainably enhance the resilience of the rural Burundian population and specific objectives to improve food security, nutrition and protection of households through sustainable reinforcement of livelihoods. At the outset, households received a transfer of 44,000 FBu six times a year and benefit from the creation and rehabilitation of assets and reinforcement of income generation activities and agricultural techniques. At the end of 2020 the programme was in its second phase during which 90% of beneficiaries receive the monthly conditional transfer of 44,000 FBu [FFA or 3A] while 10% – the most vulnerable who cannot work – receive the same amount as unconditional transfer (IPC-IG 2020a).

2.5 Operational systems

2.5.1 Targeting

Targeting is an important issue in social protection programming in Burundi, not just because of the technical challenge of defining, identifying and registering the ‘correct’ beneficiaries, but also because different agencies with different mandates favour different targeting criteria and mechanisms. The World Bank targets poor households, using proxy means tests (PMT) plus community validation for Merankabandi; UNICEF targets vulnerable children; WFP targets most vulnerable households in highly food insecure areas (provinces, communes, collines); Concern Worldwide targets (near-)landless households, using community-based targeting. Reconciling these divergent eligibility criteria and approaches is challenging, especially as Burundi moves towards common platforms such as a national social registry (as discussed below).

WFP uses **geographical targeting** to identify food insecure areas within Burundi, using the Integrated Phased Classification (IPC) system as well as the prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM>10%). Integrated context analysis (ICA) is conducted to identify areas prone to natural disasters. A second level is **categorical targeting**: WFP prioritises individuals and households classified as vulnerable, such as child-headed households, people living with disabilities, landless households, ethnic minorities, internally displaced people (IDPs), returnees and refugees. WFP is also committed to gender equality, so gender considerations are mainstreamed into all its programming, including targeting (WFP nd).

Table 2. Targeting criteria for WFP food assistance

| Unconditional assistance | Conditional assistance (e.g. food or cash for work) | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Vulnerable households that have not farmed during the growing season (returnees/expelled, IDPs, households hosting IDPs) 2) Access to land: Farming families without land or with under 25 acres 3) Malnutrition: Households with a malnourished child under 5 (moderate or severe malnutrition detected at the health centre) 4) Very poor or destitute households without productive assets: absence of livestock, agricultural material, without a sure source of revenue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical strength of the beneficiary to undertake the identified activity • No child labour (<18) • Adapt work conditions for specific groups at risk (protection) • Principle of do no harm (e.g. taking account of local market conditions to set wage rate) • Formula for inclusion of vulnerable people without strength for work (e.g. light work or stronger members working in place of the incapacitated) | | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5) Households living exclusively by daily labour and in perpetual movement seeking work abroad (Migration: this criterion must be taken into consideration with the others) 6) School drop-outs following food insecurity 7) Vulnerable women and child-headed households – generally with a weak dependency ratio 8) Vulnerable households with inactive members (people with disabilities, chronic illness, etc.) 9) Households headed by an older person (70+) without family support | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #d3d3d3;">Alternative vulnerable categories</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are chronically ill, living with disability, or without external assistance • People over 50 years old caring for children aged 0-13 without external assistance • Orphan heads of household aged 14-18 without external assistance • Widows/widowers with children aged 0-13 without external assistance • Vulnerable households who have taken in children aged 0-13 • Single person without land or external resources </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Alternative vulnerable categories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are chronically ill, living with disability, or without external assistance • People over 50 years old caring for children aged 0-13 without external assistance • Orphan heads of household aged 14-18 without external assistance • Widows/widowers with children aged 0-13 without external assistance • Vulnerable households who have taken in children aged 0-13 • Single person without land or external resources |
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Source: WFP (nd) Targeting criteria for WFP food assistance

2.5.2 Single Social registry

There is consensus among the Government of Burundi and its development partners, including WFP, that a Single Social Registry (RSU) is needed as one component of a well-functioning national social protection system.⁷ This must be prioritised, not only to harmonise the targeting of programme beneficiaries, but also to improve coordination among actors in the sector (both government and non-government), and to promote cross-sectoral coordination (e.g. with emergency relief interventions, which must be included under the leadership of the National Platform for Disasters and Catastrophes). In the 2018-20 ICSP, WFP set out its intention to “introduce its corporate digital beneficiary and transfer management platform, SCOPE, and transfer the technology to the Government to facilitate management of the national social protection programme through a single registry that is likely to be supported by World Bank funding” (WFP 2018a).⁸

⁷ The proposed RSU for Burundi combines the features of a social registry and a single registry. A **social registry** is a unified database that provides household-level information for identifying eligible beneficiaries of poverty-targeted social protection programmes. A **single registry** is a database that links the management information systems (MIS) of individual social protection programmes (Chirchir and Farooq 2016).

⁸ The draft 2022-24 ICSP does not mention this intention, and it is not clear whether WFP could or should “transfer” the SCOPE platform to the Government of Burundi. For one thing, a national social registry needs to collect a great deal of socio-economic data that SCOPE does not collect. More appropriate would be to link the SCOPE database to the national single social registry.

In 2020 WFP and UNICEF agreed to work together on the process of initiating a single social registry in Burundi. They jointly hired IPC from Brazil to conduct a feasibility study. A committee was formed at national level under MDPHASG to steer the study. WFP and World Bank are on the committee, also other development partners, NGOs, and government officials. IPC consulted with stakeholders from donor agencies and government ministries to identify feasible options for Burundi. IPC submitted their first report in November 2020 (IPC-IG 2020a), and their draft final report in February 2021 (IPC-IG 2021). A technical review of the study was scheduled for early March 2021, followed by an official validation of the proposed approach. By end 2021 the first steps will be implemented under the National Safety Net Programme, which will be extended to the rest of the population. However, a national unified single social registry for all social protection programmes in Burundi is expected to take up to 5 years to achieve, because of several challenges and obstacles, including the following.

1. Lack of unique ID data: A major problem is the lack of a well-functioning ID system in Burundi. The national ID system only records year of birth; everyone is assumed to be born on 1 January. Some individual/s have more than one ID number. Each social protection programme has its own identifier: there is no standard format, and very little personal data is collected. Typically data is only collected for the head of household and a household member who could replace that person, so full data for all household members is missing.
2. Multiple databases: At least two databases exist that could form the basis of a national registry. The World Bank has 160,000 households in their Merankabandi database. This is considered by IPC to be the best database in Burundi, with strong unique identifiers, but they only register two people per household. IPC recommends choosing the Merankabandi database to start with, and building a national registry from there. WFP has registered 88,543 households with SCOPE since 2015, they all have a SCOPE card with a unique identifier. This is one of the most important and accurate databases in Burundi. There are questions about interoperability between the two databases, because Merankabandi uses PMT for targeting, while WFP uses indicators of food insecurity and vulnerability.⁹ Data collection should be useful for all programmes. Agreement will be needed on common registration fields that will populate the national registry, and it is important to ensure that only unique records are uploaded to the national registry. Having a single registry does not mean that beneficiary targeting criteria must be the same. But a harmonised questionnaire for the social registry database is necessary, if it is a comprehensive registry.

WFP is supporting registration of farmers into a platform called UMVA (www.umva.org) that has been developed by AUXFIN (www.auxfin.com), a social enterprise, with financial support from the Netherlands government. After producer cooperatives and vulnerable households have been identified by WFP, UMVA registers them. By end 2020, UMVA had updated data for 200,000 households and was verifying 200,000 additional households. Information collected from farmers includes name, national identify card number, size of fields, GPS coordinates and type of crop produced. Schools also have access to modules on the UMVA platform that allow them to monitor crop production and availability in their collines and to place orders online.

3. Data protection: WFP puts a lot of emphasis on data protection, but Burundi only has guidelines from the National Council of Statistics on this, they don't have robust legal data protection. The government needs to be supported to set up a legal framework to make the registry function. This is essential, because the absence of a legal data protection framework affects WFP's decision-making and limits its ability to enter agreements on data-sharing with the government.

⁹ Blockchain technology may offer possibilities to use different databases, if properly designed.

4. Government ownership: Databases that are under consideration to form the basis of a national single social registry are owned by the World Bank and WFP. The government needs to become more involved in Merankabandi, including hosting the database, to strengthen its ownership of the single social registry.

2.5.3 Payment systems

Electronic payment systems have been successfully used in Burundi at least since 2013, when Concern Worldwide distributed mobile phones to participants of the Terintambwe project and contracted the mobile phone company Econet Leo as the service provider (IPC-IG 2020a). Participants received an SMS to notify them when their monthly cash transfers were paid into their Post Office accounts. At first there were some practical challenges. Many participants could not read the text messages, given high levels of illiteracy in rural Burundi. Network coverage is erratic and patchy in rural areas, and there is no electricity supply and often no generators to charge the phones in the rural communities. Finally, operating the phones cost money, both to charge them and to buy airtime or data, which effectively reduced the net value of the cash transfers by these costs (Devereux et al 2015). However, solutions were found to these problems, and the mobile phones were perceived by most participants as a useful secondary benefit of their participation in Terintambwe. Many used their phone to conduct their business, for example, to make orders with suppliers, to set up meetings with traders or to enquire about market supplies and prices (Devereux et al 2015).

When Merankabandi was designed in 2016, the World Bank drew on the positive experience of Concern Worldwide with Terintambwe (World Bank 2016), but it went further and implemented a mobile money system. Participants each receive a sim card for Ecocash transfers (IPC-IG 2020a), and payments are made electronically, using a mobile phone-based system (World Bank 2020a).

WFP uses SCOPE, its beneficiary management platform, to register and pay its project participants. Although it was designed to support WFP's cash-based transfers, it can also be used for voucher-based and in-kind payments (WFP Global 2014). SCOPE is being used for several WFP-supported activities in Burundi, including the Reinforcement of Community Resilience Programme.

As noted above, WFP is using another electronic payment system for smallholder farmers who are registered for the Home-Grown School Feeding programme. UMVA forms groups of 50 farmers and gives each 'G50' group an ipad (*tablette*) and internet access, with a link to a transaction account at a microfinance institution that delivers electronic payments and access to financial and social services.

2.6. Gaps, priorities and opportunities

2.6.1 Gaps

Burundi's social protection landscape has been characterised as fragmented, poorly coordinated and underfunded, contributing to limited and inconsistent coverage. Taking into account Burundi's history of repeated crises, safety nets have been traditionally designed to respond to short-term humanitarian and post-conflict needs. Furthermore, humanitarian assistance, which represents the largest share of non-contributory social protection expenditures, is mainly externally financed. According to a recent analysis, the government invests only USD2 per person in non-contributory social protection and only a fifth of Burundians have health insurance (SNU 2019).

A 2014 assessment of safety nets (WB/UNICEF) confirmed that due to insufficient coordination between different actors, the landscape of social safety nets remained fragmented and lacked

coherence, hampering efficiency in reaching target groups and thus limiting coverage. Targeting criteria and methods vary from programme to programme. Moreover, there are few evaluations available to determine impact or to assess sustainability.

The institutionalisation of the National Commission for Social Protection and accompanying measures are first steps towards the harmonisation of the sector, but national resources to finance investments in the system are low, experience is limited and capacities are low, including for information management (UNICEF 2018b).

2.6.2 Priorities and opportunities

Both government and partners have highlighted the increasing priority being placed on social protection in Burundi. The current national development plan (PNA) includes social protection as a priority, and in the government's 2020 review of progress towards achievement of the SDGs (République du Burundi 2020), plans include accelerating implementation of the SNPS; wider dissemination of the PNPS; finalisation of the Social Protection Code and elaboration of texts of application; initiation of the process for establishment of the social registry; continued pursuit of universal health coverage processes; heightened support for mutual associations and savings and loans groups; and expansion of the school feeding programme in response to low primary completion rates (57% in 2019). Forward-looking recommendations from the December 2020 national assembly of the CNPs further priorities actions (see Box 3).

Box 3. Forward-looking recommendations from the 6th national assembly of the CNPS (2020)

- Popularise/disseminate the Social Protection Code and the Work Code
- Pursue and accelerate the two main work streams for social protection: the social registry (RSU) and universal health coverage (CSU)
- Scale up the social safety net support project Merankabandi
- Update the National Social Protection Strategy and align with the National Development Plan 2018-27
- Establish a strategy to operationalise the results of the innovative financing of social protection study
- Revitalise and bring together cooperatives and other associative movements with health mutual
- Elaborate and validate by-laws for the two Codes (Social protection and Work)
- Develop a strategy to operationalise the results of the actuarial study (INSS); and finalise the actuarial study currently underway (ONPR) and implement the results
- Operationalise the communication strategy for the integration of social protection dimensions in messages from the administrations to the population
- Exploit and operationalise the result of a pilot study of the classification of population undertaken in the commune of Gashoho
- Accelerate the process of ratification of the additional protocol to the African Charter on Human Rights

Source: Réunion des PTF du secteur de la protection sociale Burundi, PPT, 25 janvier 2021, Bujumbura

Development partners in Burundi are strengthening coordination and establishing priorities for their support to the social protection sector (see Table 3).

Table 3. Social Protection Partners Group Work Plan for 2021

| Axes | Activities | Time frame |
|--|---|--|
| Reinforcement of the mobilisation of social protection partners | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment of online repertory of pertinent documentation on social protection 2. Regular meetings with presentation of key social protection themes/subjects 3. Information exchange on programmes underway and approaches used 4. Joint field trips and exchange workshops on good practices | <p>Continuous</p> <p>Every 6 weeks</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>At least once each year</p> |
| Reinforcement of capacities | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Dissemination of training opportunities arising from regional and global networks and groups (socialprotection.org; Calp, etc. 6. Sharing of analytical tools, evaluations, studies, reports so as to encourage exchange of experiences and good practices | <p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p> |
| Reinforcement of research and documentation of good practices | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Regular follow-up on studies underway (social registry feasibility study; SP intervention mapping; review of national SP strategy; obligatory health insurance 8. Regular collection of information on planned studies, to facilitate coordination/collaboration and avoid duplication 9. Contribution to different stages of studies (TORs, sharing of data, review of drafts) 10. Dissemination of results of studies and evaluations | <p>Updates at each GPPS meeting</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>As needed</p> <p>Continuous</p> |
| Accompaniment of SEP/CNPS in the implementation of the National Social Protection Policy | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Support for the organization of coffee corners on decisions/orientations of government 12. Support for semestrial reviews of the SP sector 13. Support for the organization of the General Assembly of the National SP Commission 14. Implication of SEP/CNPS in GPPS meetings 15. Support for the workplan of SEP/CNPS 16. Reinforcement of capacity of SEP/CNPS (national and provincial level) | <p>As needed</p> <p>Once per semester</p> <p>Once a year</p> <p>As needed</p> <p>According to needs and means of partners</p> <p>To identify themes and needs with SEP</p> |

Source: GPPS (2021) Plan de travail annuel du groupe des PTF du secteur de la protection sociale (GPPS)

Table 4 summarises some of the main gaps and challenges, as well as positive developments and opportunities, in the social protection sector in Burundi as of early 2021.

Table 4. Gaps and opportunities in the social protection sector in Burundi

| Gaps | Opportunities |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmentation of efforts and limited coverage • Weak government capacity (technical, institutional, financial) • Weak coordination among partners • Lack of consensus on targeting criteria and approaches • Gulf between humanitarian assistance and development programming | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened national policy, legislative framework, and institutional coordination • Social protection codified as a right in Burundi • Social protection identified as a priority in the PNA • Social protection a strategic result area within UNDAF • Current review underway for planned updating of the national social protection strategy, with stakeholder consultation • Renewed visibility – in the wake of COVID – and appreciation for social protection as an intervention to strengthen resilience |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government priority commitment to establishing a social registry, with preliminary steps underway (feasibility study) • Planned expansion of Merankanbandi programme, including productive inclusion, integration of refugees, shock-responsiveness and a focus on system-strengthening • Moves to integrate emergency relief and development within the resilience agenda |
|--|--|

3. WFP and social protection in Burundi

WFP is already a major actor and stakeholder in social protection in Burundi, and has many important contributions to make going forward, given its food security and nutrition focus, not least because Burundi is at the top of the Global Hunger chart. As one development partner remarked: “WFP’s comparative advantage is that their mandate includes both emergencies and development, and their core activities include food security and nutrition which are critical issues for Burundi. These are natural entry points for WFP engagement on social protection in Burundi.”

3.1. WFP’s approach

This section first places WFP’s work in Burundi within the context of WFP’s global (HQ) and regional (RBN) thinking on social protection, before focusing on the Burundi Country Office (CO) level.

3.1.1. WFP’s global approach to social protection

WFP is in the process of finalising its corporate Social Protection Strategy. Since that document has not yet been adopted, the most relevant guide to WFP thinking at global level is a document called: ‘WFP and Social Protection: Options for Framing WFP Assistance to National Social Protection in Country Strategic Plans’ (WFP Global 2018). One of the ‘overarching messages’ highlights the centrality of social protection for all of WFP’s work. “Supporting social protection with a food security lens is a key part of WFP’s strategy for helping countries to achieve significant, measurable impact on Zero Hunger targets and meeting humanitarian needs in a more sustainable way.”

The document identifies WFP’s comparative advantage as leveraging social protection to achieve food security and nutrition objectives. WFP support in this regard is provided both to **programmes** – the objectives being to “protect access to food and nutrition, improve resilience and reduce reliance on humanitarian response” – and to **systems** – for more efficient delivery.

Crucially, WFP acknowledges that social protection is ‘government-owned’, and this informs all five of its service offerings, which cover assessments, direct implementation, and technical support.

- i. **Implementation of safety nets:** Advising on and/or directly implementing safety nets that provide access to food, augmenting government capacity and modelling approaches that can be scaled up and integrated in national social protection. Services and tools include: school meals programmes; public works programmes; and nutrition-specific programmes.
- ii. **Making social protection food security- and nutrition-sensitive:** Using social protection to deliver food security and nutrition results at scale, including through generation of evidence for advocacy and design purposes. Services and tools include: Fill the Nutrient Gap; and food security analysis and mapping (VAM).

- iii. **Strengthening shock-responsiveness of national programmes:** Reinforcing countries' ability to reach and respond to those affected by crisis and shocks (ex post) and adapt social protection to build resilience to shocks (ex ante). Services and tools include: design support; capacity strengthening; south-south cooperation; insurance-based social protection; early warning and emergency preparedness.
- iv. **Strengthening national social protection delivery systems:** Building or strengthening core implementation processes and efficient systems, e.g., for identity, registration, payment, information management, M&E. Services and tools include: digital social protection delivery systems; identity systems; cash-based transfers; and multipurpose cash grants.
- v. **Maximizing sustainability, efficiency and local economic impact of national safety nets:** Optimizing supply chains and localizing economic impact. Services and tools include: value chains; supply chain assessment; and cost-effectiveness analysis (WFP Global 2018).

3.1.2. WFP's regional approach to social protection

WFP's regional approach to social protection is captured in the RBN Programme Priorities paper 'Social Protection in Brief' (WFP RBN 2019). This document motivates WFP's work in social protection as enabling WFP "to deliver across the humanitarian-development nexus". Despite high levels of acute and chronic food insecurity, HIV and AIDS prevalence, displaced and refugee populations, and rising vulnerability to climate shocks and climate change, less than 10% of the regional population were covered by social safety nets in 2018. WFP's regional offer identified four social protection focus areas. These focus areas are linked by the idea that social protection can contribute to challenges that typically provoke humanitarian responses (as highlighted in parentheses below.)

- ❖ Enhancing national crisis response through social protection mechanisms (e.g. using cash-based safety nets as an emergency shock-response mechanism).
- ❖ Social protection systems for the displaced (e.g. fostering the inclusion of long-term IDPs and refugees into national social protection systems, following CRRF principles). It is essential to integrate these populations into the registries in Burundi, and ensure there is data sharing with UNHCR and IOM.
- ❖ Nutrition and HIV sensitive social protection (e.g. targeting nutritionally vulnerable and HIV and AIDS affected people with tailored social assistance).
- ❖ The role of social protection in adaptation, resilience and livelihoods (e.g. building resilience to climate-related shocks through livelihood diversification, insurance, and risk management).

These focus areas address: the challenge of **inadequate coverage** of social protection in the East Africa region; WFP's mandate to support **nutrition-sensitive** national social protection systems; the trend towards **shock-responsive** social protection; WFP's dual **humanitarian and development** mandate, the need to strengthen social protection in **fragile and conflict-affected** contexts; emerging thinking on incorporating **IDPs and refugees** in social protection programming; and social protection's role in supporting **adaptation and resilience**.

WFP RBN identified four cross-cutting priority actions in the 'Social Protection in Brief' document.

1. Internal capacity building: invest in staff skills; offer tailored social protection training.
2. Safety nets programming: improve food and nutrition outcomes from cash-based transfers; improve the understanding of school feeding as a safety net.

3. Deepen understanding of emerging issues and opportunities: registration, targeting and payment systems; partner dialogue on social protection and displacement; shock-responsive and disability inclusiveness mapping.
4. Strengthen key regional partnerships on social protection: with the World Bank, UNICEF, ILO, UNHCR, DFID (now FCDO) and ECHO (WFP RBN 2019).

3.1.3. WFP's Burundi interim country strategic plan (2018–2020)

WFP Burundi's most recent ICSP ran from April 2018 to December 2020 (WFP 2018a). The focus was to address hunger and food insecurity, in support of Burundi's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper II and other government policies and objectives. Specifically, the ICSP aimed to achieve 5 strategic outcomes:

- ❖ **Strategic outcome 1:** Crisis-affected populations, including refugees in camps, internally displaced persons and returnees in targeted areas are able to meet their basic food needs all year round. (Crisis response focus:¹⁰ WFP activities included food and cash-based assistance and strengthened emergency preparedness.)
- ❖ **Strategic outcome 2:** Food-insecure households in targeted areas have safe access to adequate and nutritious food all year round. (Resilience building focus: WFP activities included food and cash-based assistance, productive asset creation, school meals, and support to a national home-grown school meals policy.)
- ❖ **Strategic outcome 3:** Children aged 6–59 months, adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women and girls in the targeted provinces and communes have improved nutrition status all year round. (Resilience building focus: WFP delivered specialised nutritious foods, social and behaviour change communication (SBCC), and support to the national food fortification policy.)
- ❖ **Strategic outcome 4:** Food-insecure smallholders and communities in targeted areas have enhanced livelihoods that better support food security and nutrition needs by 2020. (Root causes focus: WFP supported smallholder farmers with improved post-harvest management and access to markets, notably through local procurement for home grown school meals.)
- ❖ **Strategic outcome 5:** Government, humanitarian and development partners have access to effective supply chain management and logistics all year round. (Resilience building focus: WFP provided support in logistics and information technology to UN agencies, government, and NGOs.)

According to WFP Burundi's 2019 Annual Report, some activities were limited by funding constraints. For example, under SO1, assistance to refugees was 73% funded in 2019, "insufficient to cover the food requirements of refugees who exclusively rely on humanitarian assistance" (WFP 2019a). Under SO2, school feeding was 68% funded and there were some pipeline breaks, so WFP reduced its cereals provided for three months. Under SO3, stunting prevention was 72% funded, so WFP activities were restricted to one province. Under SO4, support to smallholders received only 9% of contributions needed. WFP reallocated resources from elsewhere, but the number of farmers supported had to be reduced by 34% (WFP 2019a).

3.1.4. WFP's Burundi interim country strategic plan (2022–2024)¹¹

The forthcoming ICSP for WFP Burundi will run from January 2022 to December 2024. The draft ICSP aims to "allow WFP to position itself on the strengthening of adaptive gender and nutrition-sensitive,

¹⁰ WFP has three focus areas: crisis response, resilience, and root causes (WFP Global 2018).

¹¹ This ICSP has not yet been finalised. This section is based on a preliminary 'line of sight' summary matrix (WFP 2021c) and a 0 draft of the ICSP (WFP 2021d).

and shock-responsive protective and productive social safety nets addressing peoples' vulnerabilities to food and nutrition insecurity." It seeks an integrated approach, enhancing both crisis response and resilience building to achieve more sustainable results, and it aims to support investments in human capital through improved productive safety nets in nutrition and education through the adoption of a life cycle approach.

The 5 strategic outcomes are similar to those for the 2018-2020 ICSP, but with some significant amendments.

- ❖ **Strategic outcome 1:** Shock-affected populations in targeted areas (internally displaced people, food insecure populations and returnees) and refugees in camps can meet their basic food and nutrition needs all year round.
- ❖ **Strategic outcome 2:** Children aged 6–59 months, adolescent girls, and pregnant and lactating women in the targeted provinces have improved nutritional status all year round.
- ❖ **Strategic outcome 3:** Food value chain actors, food-insecure smallholder farmers, and vulnerable populations benefit from more climate-resilient and inclusive nutritious food systems by 2024.
- ❖ **Strategic outcome 4:** Government institutions, the private sector, the Red Cross and NGOs benefit from capacity strengthening in the areas of early warning and emergency preparedness systems, social protection programme design and implementation, and supply chain management through 2024.
- ❖ **Strategic outcome 5:** Government, humanitarian and development partners have access to effective supply chain management and logistics all year round.

In SO1, "Crisis-affected populations" has changed to "Shock-affected populations", implying increased attention to shock-responsive programming. SO2 has moved up from SO3, reflecting a higher priority to gender equality. SO3 covers most of WFP's operational activities in social protection in Burundi. It includes the key phrase "more climate-resilient and inclusive nutritious food systems", and foresees support for productive safety nets including seasonal safety nets linked to asset creation and support for government scale-up of the home-grown school feeding programme as a "major human capital protection safety net". SO4 pays specific attention to capacity strengthening of government institutions in several areas, including social protection programme design and implementation, with a longer-term vision of "achieving sustainable and adaptive social protection systems", which is essential if social protection in Burundi is to become 100% nationally owned.

Social protection could be articulated more explicitly as a cross-cutting priority in the ICSP. WFP should work with partners to lead or support the development and adoption of a clear and agreed conceptual framework, identifying the contributions of different programmes to social protection in Burundi.¹²

3.2. Programmes

All of WFP's programming activities and support in Burundi can be classified as either humanitarian relief or some form of social protection. Some activities, such as those that aim to build resilience, or efforts to integrate IDPs and returnees into livelihood programmes, have elements of both, reflecting a growing convergence between humanitarian and developmental programming, in Burundi and

¹² See Devereux (2020) for an example, applying the 'transformative social protection' framework to WFP's work in Ethiopia.

elsewhere. WFP support to the national school feeding programme has already been discussed (see 2.4.3 above), so this section introduces other relevant activities.

3.2.1. WFP-supported resilience projects

- ❖ **Community and household resilience project.** Two provinces, Karusi and Gitega, were selected on the basis of their poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition and vulnerability profiles, including through IPC. There is also donor interest in those locations. The aim is to build resilience at both household and community levels, by addressing the causes and effects of common hazards. Resilience-building activities include watersheds for erosion control, afforestation, composters for soil fertility restoration, and kitchen gardens (WFP 2019a). This project is implemented by World Vision as operational partner and covers 5,000 households. It runs from 2018 to 2021.
- ❖ **Rural community resilience for food and nutrition security project.** An EU-funded consortium, implemented by FAO as lead agency, with UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP. Aims to reach over 10,000 households, which are identified, engaged in FFA activities and monitored by FAO, working through a set of contracted NGOs. Activities include labour-intensive public works (construction of roads in lean season); farmer field approach; agricultural storage; and working with women. WFP uses its CBT experience to pay the individuals or households who work on these activities.

3.2.2. Emergency cash transfers

- ❖ **Food assistance to refugees:** Provision of cash (through EcoBank) to refugees in 5 camps in 3 provinces, for purchase of fresh food (fruit, vegetables) which are not included in the food ration distributed by WFP (covering 1,900 kcal = 90% of 2,100 kcal requirements), with complementary distribution of CSB+ to households with children under 5 when stocks permit (this complementary distribution is on hold since April 2020 due to lack of funds). In 2020, WFP distributed 4 months of cash. The main donor is USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs (BHA). USAID and Germany also support the food distributions which are provided year-round. The government authority is the National Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless people (ONPRA)
- ❖ **Assistance to returnees and IDPs**
 - **Returnees:** This involves organised repatriation of Burundian refugees, mainly from Tanzania, but also more recently from Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya and DRC (120-300 returnees per month). The returnees are greeted on arrival by UNHCR in transit camps that have been established: WFP – through its implementing partner Caritas – provides a hot meal on arrival, stay and departure (with the period of stay extended to 5 days because of COVID) and a 3 months 'food packet' of complete rations of 15 kg per month (based on 360 grams/person/month grain; 120 grams/ person/ month legumes; 25 grams/person/month oil; and 5 grams/ person/ month salt). WFP has not yet turned to cash transfers for returnees, but they would like to do so as food transfers are often wasted and shared with host communities, or present security risks. HCR already provides a one-time cash grant of 140 Burundian francs per adult and 70 Burundian francs per child, and WFP would like to join HCR on this. They are now seeking a financial service provider partnership – most likely EcoCash – and plan to begin in April 2021. But the equivalent in cash for the food parcel has not yet been estimated. The donor for this activity is Germany. Activities are overseen by the Ministry of the Interior and ONPRA.
 - **IDPs and flood/drought and disaster-affected populations and COVID-19 socio-economic response:** WFP supports internally displaced people (IDPs) and local populations who are affected by natural/climate shocks and in a situation of acute food insecurity. Actions are coordinated by OCHA, with IOM providing non-food items and WFP (along with others) providing food assistance (rations) for 3 out of 12 months. Causes of displacement vary by

geographic location, with localities in the north (Kirundo) particularly affected by drought and others (Gitega) by floods. WFP – through the Burundian Red Cross and local authorities – provides targeted general food distributions. WFP also provides assistance to populations affected by COVID-19 as part of the socio-economic response plan.

Box 4. WFP and cash transfers in Burundi

WFP internal cash transfer working group: A multi-functional team; its role is to decide modality selection and develop SOP. Periodic or monthly meetings involve finance, supply chain, programme and protection. Last meeting, in January, discussed going forward with assessment of mobile company and shared a consolidated CBT plan for each activity. They have both annual and monthly work plans.

Main activities in CBT for WFP: 1) refugee assistance (collaborating with HCR, with WFP providing mixed modality in-kind and cash: 5,000 Burundi francs (mixed modality) per month); 2) COVID socio-economic response (WFP provides cash transfers as part of the socio-economic response); 3) resilience (joint project with FAO for asset creation): 88,000 Burundi francs per person for two months (last year 5,000 beneficiaries were targeted by FAO and registered in SCOPE). Plan to introduce CBT for returnees and school feeding (a cash feasibility assessment was conducted in January) – at present WFP pays cooperatives who supply produce; in future the plan is to provide money to schools for purchase from cooperatives or from local markets, as part of the handover process. WFP provides technical assistance to the cooperatives as well. The government makes a contribution towards this programme's costs.

Delivery mechanism: Cash is delivered manually in envelopes, in collaboration with EcoBank that delivers through a distribution point in the refugee camps; there are also distribution points for asset creation. In 2018, vouchers had been used. The plan is to introduce mobile money, contracting with a mobile money company. Also for school feeding, the plan is to use a transfer mechanism through a micro-finance account. There are only two big mobile companies in Burundi and limited ATMs, so limited options for delivery mechanisms. Manual delivery takes a long time and beneficiaries have to queue – also it is dangerous to transport money to distribution sites. So WFP is hoping to change to mobile money in the near future.

Source: SPLF consultations, March 2021

3.2.3. WFP support to nutrition programming

Given the existence of all forms of malnutrition, especially the very high prevalence of chronic and acute malnutrition and anaemia in Burundi, WFP prioritises efforts to address the underlying drivers of this challenge, and is supporting interventions to do so in a range of ways, from technical analysis to design, M&E, to strengthening government capacities to direct interventions (see Box 5).

Box 5. WFP support to nutrition programming in Burundi

Burundi has made extraordinary progress in putting in place important building blocks for its fight against malnutrition, with the support of WFP and other stakeholders. WFP provided technical and financial support for the finalisation of a multi-sectoral food and nutrition strategy, set-up of an inter-ministerial Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) platform, the development of the Sectoral Strategic Plan for Nutrition, the Multi-sectoral Strategic Plan for Food Security and Nutrition and the revision of the National Protocol for Management of Acute Malnutrition.

As part of a strong financial and technical stakeholder group, WFP has actively supported the Government to provide multi-sectoral approaches to address chronic malnutrition, supporting advocacy efforts by the Government, and co-hosted a side event at the World Bank Spring meeting in April 2019.

Together with the Government, WFP implemented a Fill the Nutrient Gap analysis and a Joint Approach to Nutrition and Food Security Assessment, key evidence for policies and strategies formulation, and future programming. WFP supported the private sector, collectively working with the Government, to officially

launch the SUN Business Network by mobilising businesses to invest in sustainable actions to reduce malnutrition. In 2019, support consisted in the provision of technical expertise guidance and facilitation to set up the SBN.

WFP works to make all its programmes nutrition-sensitive including, among other things, through integration of social and behavioural change communication (SBCC) across its programmes. Under strategic outcome 3 of the interim CSP 2018-2020, WFP supports interventions to ensure that children aged 6-59 months, adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women and girls in targeted provinces and communes have improved nutrition status all year round. Interventions include support for the Government in the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) as well as the prevention of chronic malnutrition (through distribution of specialised nutritious food (SNF) to children aged 6-23 months and pregnant and lactating women complemented by SBCC and promotion infant and young child feeding (IYCF) through the Care Group model. WFP has intensified efforts to promote food fortification to improve diets and distributes micronutrient powders to tackle micronutrient deficiencies.

Sources: WFP (2018a) Burundi Interim Country Strategic Plan 2018-2020; WFP (2019a) Burundi annual country report 2019; WFP key informant interviews

3.3. Partnerships

WFP Burundi works with a wide range of actors, in the Government of Burundi, with development partners such as the World Bank (at country and regional levels), and international and local NGOs.

WFP has partnerships with several Government of Burundi entities, including SEP (social protection), the Ministry of Education (school feeding) and Ministry of Agriculture (small farmer development). In 2020, WFP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with SEP (WFP/SEP/CNPS 2020), with WFP providing technical and financial support towards the SEP/CSPS action plan for 2020-2021 (see Box 6Box 6).

Box 6. WFP – SEP Memorandum of Understanding, 2020-21

Preamble:

To achieve the strategic goals and objectives of WFP as well as the priority actions of SEP, WFP contributes to the development and reinforcement of national capacities in Burundi to reduce hunger, strengthen national systems of prevention, preparation and response to catastrophes, support national rehabilitation actions after catastrophes through provision of technical assistance and knowledge transfers, drawing on systems already in place. Both parties recognise the importance and value of cooperating to establish an effective collaboration mechanism and aim to reinforce their relations through this MOU of support to SEP to help it carry out its missions of promotion, coordination and regulation of systems and programmes of social protection.

Strategic activities include:

1. Reinforce coordination mechanisms of social protection programmes, mobilise actors to participate in social protection activities, and review the social protection sector.
2. Reinforce institutional capacities of SEP/CNPS: provide material and equipment such as computers, printers, photocopiers, and vehicles.
3. Establishment of a single social registry in Burundi: commission a feasibility study; train members of the social registry technical working group and the steering committee.
4. Popularisation of the new social protection code: translate from French to Kirundi and inform the public of the contents of the code.

Source: WFP/SEP/CNPS (2020)

At the regional level, UNICEF and the World Bank are critical operational and knowledge partners for WFP on social protection. WFP's Digital Team also has strong links with the World Bank on technical aspects of social protection mechanisms, such as social registries. WFP's regional Cash-Based Transfers (CBT) team directly supports CO CBT partnership priorities, and also coordinates closely with UNHCR and UNICEF at regional level. The regional CBT team also co-chairs a regional external Cash Working Group with the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) and CARE.

WFP's Regional Bureau Nairobi provides backstopping support on social protection to the Burundi Country Office.

Within Burundi, WFP works with international NGOs including Concern Worldwide, World Vision and the Red Cross, which assist in delivering programmes that WFP supports.

Concern Worldwide is the implementing partner for WFP's nutrition and resilience project. Concern delivers a package of activities and support, mainly through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), including coaching, asset transfers and business planning.

World Vision is involved in implementing the school feeding programme, providing technical support for capacity development of School Feeding Management Committees as well as the development of school clubs for sensitisation around hygiene, nutrition, and reproductive health.

The **Burundian Red Cross** works with WFP in its humanitarian interventions, by delivering general food distributions to IDPs and populations affected by flood or drought. WFP and the Red Cross are also working on a new shock-responsive social assistance programme, by mapping areas where people face disasters and supporting about 1,600 households with transfers to rebuild their livelihoods. Together with the Finnish, British and Belgian Red Cross Flanders societies, WFP is supporting the Burundi Red Cross (BRC) to become a leader in providing humanitarian cash transfers to victims of frequent climate emergencies, like intensive flooding. By the end of the initiative, BRC will be able to distribute cash to victims within 72-hours. Supporting the organisational development of national societies like the BRC is a new area of work for WFP, and this initiative will serve as a role model for the future (ECDPM website).

3.4. Stakeholder and insider perceptions of WFP

During the consultation meetings, stakeholders were asked for their perspectives on WFP's added value to social protection in Burundi, and WFP's potential to contribute to the ongoing efforts to strengthen the national social protection system. Many – both within WFP and among government and partners – pointed out that WFP was already a key actor in the sector (*'In reality, all of WFP's programmes have a link to social protection.'*), noting among other things its previous leadership of the social protection partners' working group, its support for the national school feeding programme, and its current partnership with SEP, as well as implementation of its own projects and activities.

❖ *'Since 2017, WFP has accompanied the government in reinforcing capacities and moving the agenda forward. As head of the social protection development partners working group, WFP participated in the national general assemblies on social protection and was appreciated for things like the 'coffee corners' that they organised around social protection. There is an MOU between WFP and SEP that outlines the collaboration around social protection.'*¹³

¹³ Since consent was not asked to attribute quotes to individuals, sources of these statements are not given.

- ❖ *‘WFP is an active member of the social protection partners working group and is providing capacity building to the National Commission on Social Protection and work on social registry. WFP also works on development of contingency plans for COVID and flood victims, and is active in support of returnees.’*

However, some development partners suggested that WFP’s internal capacity and staffing would need to be strengthened in moving forward, particularly for engagement at the policy level; that a clearer articulation of WFP’s programming vis-à-vis the social protection agenda would be important for greater conceptual clarity, coherence and visibility; and that continuing efforts to integrate into and support development of national systems would be critical.

- ❖ *‘The key question for WFP is, will they reinforce their human capacity? They need not just programme people but policy people.’*
- ❖ *‘Operationally, WFP is strong on cash, but they need to link more into the system, within a medium- and long-term vision of accompanying government and building into the social floor commitments.’*
- ❖ *‘WFP strengths are mostly on the technical side – cash programmes and tools and analysis; market assessment; vulnerability. They could contribute more on this. We have a lot to learn from WFP here. It is a big programme and there would be lots of good lessons. They need to bring out the evidence and lessons learned more, and they need to bring more focus into system strengthening.’*

Importantly, WFP staff themselves acknowledge the issues raised by other social protection actors in Burundi, as revealed by the following statements from RBN and the Burundi Country Office.

- ❖ *‘Just because we haven’t been visible in the social protection space doesn’t mean we haven’t been there. But a reframing would be important to allow WFP to more easily talk and engage with others.’*
- ❖ *‘WFP has to date been largely outside of the government plans and narratives on social protection, but we are now trying to draw this together more clearly.’*
- ❖ *‘There is not really a global vision within WFP. It is ‘protection’ that is a cross-cutting result in the country programme – not ‘social protection’.*
- ❖ *‘More and more – globally – there is an importance given to the development of social protection systems. But WFP has a tendency to work on a project basis.’*
- ❖ *‘WFP needs a clearer articulation of the place of their own safety net programmes under the asset creation umbrella. Also important would be the positioning WFP’s other programmes so that they are speaking with one another.’*
- ❖ *‘WFP is operating the biggest social safety net in the country – the school feeding programme – but with little knowledge or awareness that it is social protection, so there is a problem of positioning with government and World Bank and other partners. We ourselves do not sell ourselves as social protection. We need to start internalising this.’*

4. Recommendations

This section identifies several ways forward for WFP’s engagement with social protection in Burundi. As noted earlier, everything WFP is doing in Burundi is either humanitarian relief or social protection, and these two ‘sectors’ are converging rapidly, (e.g. integrating refugees and returnees into social protection programming), largely due to activities and initiatives that are led or supported by WFP.

However, social protection in Burundi remains fragmented and inadequately coordinated. Many processes are underway that WFP is supporting, which will address these challenges and ultimately build a comprehensive, well-functioning and government-owned national social protection system.

This section identifies intervention areas where WFP can strengthen its support to the Government of Burundi in building the national social protection system. It also identifies changes that WFP needs to make to consolidate its position as one of the leading social protection agencies in Burundi.

4.1. Strengthening the Government of Burundi's national social protection system

As we have seen in earlier sections, much is currently happening around social protection in Burundi, making this an exciting time to reinforce WFP's engagement around national processes and priorities, and to seize opportunities that are arising. Many of these were highlighted in discussions with both WFP and key stakeholders, including the SEP, whose recommendations for WFP going forward are captured in **Error! Reference source not found.** The rest of this section identifies some of the main opportunities and potential roles for WFP as it increasingly aligns around national priorities and systems strengthening, drawing on its comparative strengths and experience.

Box 7. Government recommendations for WFP engagement on social protection going forward

- Align all programmes with the National Development Plan and government priorities: agencies do not have to give up their own mandate, but simply to align with the priorities of government
- Continue to engage with larger processes of social protection coordination and national capacity development, dynamisation of structures and systems, and awareness-raising
- Support the design and implementation of the social registry (both technical and financial assistance)
- Contribute to the review of the national social protection strategy and the development of the new strategy (not least to ensure that priority issues of concern for WFP are included)
- Reinforce and expand the school feeding programme to schools that need it
- Pursue measures to reinforce agriculture, such as support for local production rather than imports
- Reinforce the emphasis on food and nutrition with, for example, transfers that focus on helping rural households to meet their food and nutrition needs
- Pay particular attention to response to vulnerabilities arising from catastrophes and emergencies

Source: SPLF consultations, March 2021

Recommendations for three specific areas of WFP engagement are discussed next: the national social protection strategy process; the national social safety net programme; and the single social registry.

4.1.1. National social protection strategy review, development, and implementation

WFP's engagement in the current review of the National Social Protection Strategy (PNPS) and formulation of the new strategy moving forward provides an opportunity to support the Government of Burundi achieve its objectives, while integrating WFP's thematic and strategic priorities into the national social protection agenda, as well as supporting implementation of the next PNPS. Specifically, this should include the following.

- i) Identify **food and nutrition-sensitive social protection** approaches and interventions that enable linkages to cash or in-kind transfers and target specific vulnerabilities across the life-cycle, using social protection platforms (see Box 8 below for more details).
- ii) Create stronger linkages between **food security, nutrition, agriculture, and social protection**, at both the policy and programming levels.

- ii) Advocate for the development and reinforcement of national capacity to prevent and respond to natural disasters as an integral part of a **shock-responsive social protection system**, building on models that are developing rapidly within the region and elsewhere.
- iii) Promote, together with partners, **stronger linkages between humanitarian responses and development interventions**, through a resilience agenda that should feature strongly within the new national social protection strategy.
- iv) Position the **homegrown school feeding model** as a key national social safety net, supporting both the nutritional and educational needs of children (as a high-return investment in human capital formation) while generating productive income for small farmers.
- v) Support **productive inclusion elements** within an overall productive safety net model, building on cash-for-assets interventions and the graduation model piloted by Concern Worldwide.
- vi) Identify and support implementation, in collaboration with other partners, **gender transformative interventions** around girls' education (including adolescent girls and young women at tertiary level); maternal nutrition (to prevent low birthweight and stunting); and women's economic empowerment (through various kinds of livelihood support).
- vii) Pilot **integrated approaches at local level** – in line with decentralisation processes – in partnership with regional and communal committees established for implementation of the PNPS; local NGOs, associations and faith-based organisations already associated with WFP; and other partners working at local level such as UNICEF, which supports family and community development centres (CDFC).
- viii) Support **capacity development** in social protection, by offering technical support from WFP RBN, sponsoring government staff for social protection training courses (e.g. ILO/ITC, EPRI), and organising study visits in the region or beyond (e.g. to learn from Kenya's single registry).

Box 8. How WFP can champion nutrition sensitive social protection in Burundi

Nutrition-sensitive social protection uses various instruments to reduce vulnerability to the complex set of underlying drivers of chronic malnutrition and food insecurity. For example, WFP Burundi can and should:

- support the analysis of social protection designs by incorporating nutrition considerations
- identify entry points for nutrition – at minimum following the Do No Harm principle
- integrate with the life-cycle approach, by specific targeting of nutritionally vulnerable groups
- regularly review the nutritional value and content of all social transfers, both cash and in-kind
- work in various ways to ensure the uptake and consumption of nutritious foods, including fortified foods, vegetables, fruits, animal source foods
- advocate to avoid or limit the provision and uptake of unhealthy (high fat, high sugar, high salt) foods and beverages.

Stakeholder suggestions for WFP engagement reflect many of the priority themes highlighted above, taking into consideration its comparative advantages and experiences, including an emphasis on food and nutrition-sensitive social protection and shock-responsive social protection (Box 9).

Box 9. Stakeholder and insider suggestions on two thematic focus areas for WFP

Food and nutrition-sensitive social protection

- 'Emphasis on food and nutrition-sensitive social protection is important as Burundi is consistently at the bottom of the list on these indicators and WFP of course has expertise on this.'

- ‘WFP’s comparative advantage is that their mandate includes both humanitarian assistance and development and their thematic focus is on food security and nutrition [which] are extremely important in Burundi and natural entry points into SP.’
- ‘Beyond Merankabandi, what is missing is the link to a more comprehensive set of social services for nutrition, health, education, etc., in which WFP work in school feeding would be important – making sure these services are available in terms of a comprehensive package.’

Shock-responsive social protection, refugees and IDPs

- ‘Shock-responsive social protection and crisis response would draw on WFP’s dual humanitarian and development mandate.’
- ‘Social protection for the displaced arises from both the national context and increased emphasis on global thinking since 2015 regarding integration of refugees into national social protection systems.’
- ‘Drawing humanitarian work into social protection would be an interesting angle, and WFP is well positioned for this.’
- ‘Social protection as a means of response to displacement would be important.’
- ‘Forecast-based financing, targeting communities affected by climate shocks such as flood or drought.’ This is one area WFP wants to focus on because Burundi faces some sort of shock each year – floods, drought, landslides, etc. which add on to existing vulnerabilities. ‘Government wants to see if it is possible to work with WFP around this shock-responsive social protection.’
- ‘One of WFP’s comparative advantage in Burundi is in humanitarian assistance and early recovery, so there would be a role for WFP in shock-responsiveness to floods, droughts, COVID and so on, so as not to jeopardise longer term gains of social protection work.’

Source: SPLF consultations, March 2021

4.1.2. Support to the national social safety net programme

The planned expansion of the Merankabandi safety net programme offers potential for WFP technical and operational engagement, and has been highlighted by both the World Bank and the government, as well as other key stakeholders, as potential areas for WFP collaboration. This could take two forms: at the technical level, offering WFP expertise to designing and implementing the scale-up, and at the operational level, piloting a productive inclusion component to Merankabandi.

Technical assistance: designing and implementing the scale-up of Merankabandi

WFP could provide technical assistance to many design aspects of Merankabandi, drawing especially on WFP’s expertise around cash delivery systems (linked to AF component 1). Options include:

- i. piloting **innovative models** for beneficiary identification and registration, payments and M&E
- ii. drawing on a combination of methodologies and tools such as RAM, FNG, and MEB for more effective **targeting** (geographical, individual, and choice of modality)
- iii. determining the appropriate **transfer amounts** and ensuring they are nutrition-sensitive
- iv. proposing and testing modalities for the **integration of refugees** and host communities into Merankabandi, as is envisaged in the programme design
- v. designing shock-responsive mechanisms for rapid scale up of the programme in response to future **emergencies**
- vi. taking on a **quality assurance** role, by monitoring the scale-up as it is implemented
- vii. generating and synthesising **evidence** through impact evaluations and commissioned studies
- viii. using findings from evidence generation activities for **advocacy** and for **course correction**.

Operational assistance: piloting a productive inclusion project linked to Merankabandi

WFP could sign an MOU with the government to run a pilot ‘productive inclusion’ project, linked to Merankabandi and based on Concern Worldwide’s graduation model programme, Terintambwe. The main purpose would be to test this modality, which has proved to be successful at a local level, as Merankabandi scales up towards national coverage, and to demonstrate how it could be designed and delivered cost-effectively to achieve sustainable poverty reduction impacts at national level. Lessons can be learned from WFP’s experience with asset creation and resilience projects, in Burundi and elsewhere (and is linked to AF component 2).

The government acknowledges the value and potential benefits of graduation model programming, for reducing household poverty and strengthening community resilience, and it is interested in putting such a programme in place. A clear and compelling narrative about graduation or productive inclusion projects needs to be developed, based on sound design and rigorous evaluations. In the medium-run, this pilot will generate evidence and contribute to the government’s thinking on productive safety nets and inclusion. Noting that Merankabandi is implemented by the World Bank, this activity is fully aligned with the World Bank’s preference for productive inclusion as a modality for poverty reduction.

4.1.3. Support the establishment of a single social registry

Establishment of a national single social registry is a key priority for the social protection sector in Burundi. WFP is already centrally engaged, having commissioned (together with UNICEF) a feasibility study that was completed in early 2021. WFP’s involvement going forward could include the following.

- i. Ensuring that targeting criteria used for the identification of households included in the social registry include **nutrition and food insecurity as key indicators** (derived through national surveys that WFP already supports as well as additional VAM inputs). As one WFP stakeholder put it: “WFP’s contributions to a national social registry would help ensure that vulnerability criteria linked to food security and nutrition would be included. Having such a social registry already established would also bring time-saving and efficiency gains to WFP.”
- ii. Commissioning an **interoperability study**, to assess whether matching algorithms could be applied to merge critical components of the World Bank (Merankabandi), WFP (SCOPE) and other beneficiary registration and management databases in Burundi. Blockchain technology might be needed to integrate data from different databases in a harmonised and secure way.
- iii. Establishing a **legal framework on data protocol** issues, for data protection and personal privacy considerations. As one stakeholder explained: “WFP should try to shape the legislation around data protection in the social registry. WFP has very strong measures for data protection – they are the only ones who have strict protocol provisions for data sharing – which is good for their programmes and could inform the protocols for national systems.”
- iv. Supporting **learning through study tours** to observe and learn from other single registries and social registries. Within the region, one candidate is Kenya’s single registry – an integrated beneficiary registry that is now evolving into a social registry, and is further advanced than Burundi in this process.

4.1.4. Reinvigorate partnership platforms

WFP’s participation in social protection partnership platforms, including membership in the Social Protection Partners’ Group and leadership in the Cash Working Group, is an essential element in its

engagement on social protection, and should be reinforced and enhanced around current processes of strategy development and systems strengthening.

-Social Protection Partners Group (GPPS)

1. After the ongoing mapping of social protection activities in Burundi is completed, WFP should advocate for the GPPS to identify how each activity contributes to the national social protection system, organised around life-cycle cohorts: the first 1,000 days, the next 7,000 days (school-age children, adolescents especially girls), working-age adults and older persons, with persons with disability (PWD) as a cross-cutting category.
2. Once the gaps are identified, WFP (through the GPPS) should drive a process of engagement with the government, along with other key partners (notably the World Bank and UNICEF), about how to fill these gaps, improve coordination, and build the necessary systems and platforms to achieve comprehensive coverage of all vulnerable groups in Burundi.
3. WFP has the technical capacity to provide inputs to this discussion, specifically the Fill the Nutrient Gap (FNG) tool. A FNG analysis should be done soon.
4. Within the GPPS, WFP must remain a vocal advocate of the key themes it is promoting and should seize opportunities for technical exchange, lesson learning and collaboration around specific interventions.

Cash Working Group

5. Within the Cash Working Group, WFP's technical leadership and operational experience in delivering cash transfers is widely acknowledged, and this should be leveraged by WFP to offer further support to building national cash transfer systems, as well as to strengthen sub-national capacity for cash-based programme implementation.

WFP MoU with SEP/CNPS

6. WFP's MOU on social protection with SEP/CNPS should be renewed and updated as a strategically important bilateral partnership platform with government, that should continue to reflect joint priorities of WFP and the government for national and sub-national systems strengthening.
7. Unlike other development partners, WFP has sub-offices in Burundi that allows engagement with government at all levels, from national to local. Although social protection is thought of as a centralised government function, WFP should advocate and lead on geographic decentralisation, drawing on WFP's sub-offices as a base for local capacity-development, support to social protection programmes, and monitoring of activities on the ground.

Productive Inclusion and Resilience Working Group?

8. If WFP decides to strengthen its engagement around productive inclusion, as suggested above, it should establish and lead a new working group on productive inclusion and resilience, drawing together key actors from partners and government to work together, to develop appropriate models and collaborate on implementation and lesson learning.

4.2. Repositioning WFP as a social protection leader

Social protection is increasingly important in WFP operations, globally, regionally, and at country level. One lesson for WFP, in Burundi and elsewhere, is to reframe its activities to highlight the contributions

WFP already makes to social protection. One way of doing this is to **focus attention on the objectives, rather than the instruments**. For instance, school feeding and public works are two instruments widely supported by WFP, including in Burundi, but they are often seen as stand-alone activities, often associated with old-style food aid and overlooked as components of forward-looking social protection systems. These perceptions need to be challenged.

1. Reframe school feeding as a core component of a **nutrition-sensitive social protection system**, by delivering nutritious meals and nutrition education (food security) to learners from food insecure families. Additional benefits include enhanced education access for children (human capital formation), employment as cooks and food handlers to poor adults (poverty reduction) who are mainly women (gender empowerment), and income-earning opportunities for low-income farmers through the HGSF initiative (agriculture stimulation).
2. Redesign public works or food-for-assets projects as **nutrition-sensitive asset creation or resilience-building programmes** (e.g. gardens, fruit trees, fishponds, construction of pit latrines, rehabilitation of health centres). Again, WFP is already supporting such programmes in Burundi. To raise WFP's profile and reputation as a leading social protection actor, WFP should change its internal language around these activities, and reframe the way it presents them to government and other partners.

Given the growing emphasis within WFP at all levels on social protection as a cross-cutting priority, and the importance placed on national system-strengthening, WFP Burundi should aim to:

- a) highlight its thematic priorities of food security and nutrition in social protection programming (e.g. through agenda-setting contributions to the new national social protection strategy);
- b) articulate more clearly how WFP's programmatic and capacity-building activities contribute to this agenda, through conceptual clarity, evidence-based advocacy, and documentation;
- c) strengthen collaboration around social protection system-building with relevant national actors such as SEP/CNPS (through an extension of its MOU, detailing ongoing support and highlighting future priorities);
- d) continue to take a lead role in consultative partnerships and policy forums such as the Cash Working Group (GTTM) and the Social Protection Partners Group (GPPS).

4.3. Strengthening WFP capacities

4.3.1. Technical expertise

WFP is recognised worldwide for its expertise in **operational** and logistical issues – food distribution, supply chain management, vulnerability analysis and mapping, registration and payment systems – especially in humanitarian contexts but also in social protection. Increasingly, WFP also provides **technical** support, one example in Burundi being its support to the single social registry. However, WFP has yet to establish its reputation as a **policy** advisor on social protection to governments.

Engaging in social protection policy debates, alongside established development partners like UNICEF and the World Bank, requires investing in expertise to raise WFP's credibility. This is feasible at the level of Regional Bureaus and in countries where WFP has a large operational budget. It is less possible in contexts where humanitarian programming dominates, and in small countries where WFP has a limited budget with less flexibility to recruit or place specialist policy advisors.

For both these reasons, WFP has limited social protection capacity in Burundi. Before the appointment of a Social Protection Consultant to the Burundi Country Office, WFP had no dedicated person for social protection in Burundi. This could be because Burundi is a relatively small country office, and a large proportion of WFP Burundi's budget goes to humanitarian relief – food assistance to refugees, returnees, IDPs and people affected by disasters like droughts and floods. But as social protection scales up in Burundi and converges increasingly with humanitarian programming, so the need for more in-country expertise at both the technical and (especially) the policy level escalates.

1. WFP should offer **technical support** in areas such as enabling linkages to achieve a set of objectives as well as knowledge generation through monitoring and evaluation (M&E), thematic studies and surveys. This will provide information for course correction, lessons about innovative models and interventions, such as shock-responsive programmes that integrate emergency assistance and social protection, to inform evidence-based policy adoption.
2. To strengthen WFP's in-house capacity to engage fully in **policy discussions** on social protection in Burundi, three steps need to be taken by the Country Office (CO) as a matter of urgency:
 - i. Recruit new staff with specialist social protection expertise.
 - ii Strengthen internal capacity of the Country Office, by sensitising all staff about the linkages between WFP's work in Burundi and social protection; and upgrading the expertise of key personnel with social protection training.
 - iii Draw on technical advice and guidance, as needed, from social protection expertise at the regional bureau (RBN), which supports 9 countries in the East Africa region.

4.3.2. Financial resources

Apart from human capacity (technical expertise), WFP also needs adequate financial resources to make a major contribution to social protection in Burundi. Although social protection is ultimately the responsibility of the government, in the short- to medium-term substantial financial support will be needed from development partners. But WFP is not a donor agency; it is an operational agency that raises money for all its operations from other international agencies and donor governments.

There is a fundamental difference between humanitarian relief financing and social protection financing. WFP has decades of successful experience in mobilising resources for emergencies from the international community. Humanitarian appeals are time-bound and budgeted. But social protection programmes (such as social pensions or disability grants) are permanent, regular – they are paid monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly – and indefinite. They require predictable long-term funding, which is incompatible with WFP's traditional approach to resource mobilisation.

- To become a reliable social protection partner in Burundi, **WFP needs to find a way of mobilising predictable funding flows for predictable transfers**. The cost of not having long-term programme budget lines is revealed when cashflow constraints or underfunded appeals force WFP to cut back on operations, as happened with school feeding and support to smallholders in Burundi in 2019.
- By positioning itself as an agency that is supporting the government's objectives and activities in social protection, WFP should be well placed to secure resources from **existing and future sources of social protection funding** in Burundi. One example (discussed in 4.1.2 above) is the range of technical and operational assistance that WFP can offer to the scale-up of Merankabandi.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, we note that WFP is already an important partner to the Government of Burundi and other international agencies in a range of social protection activities. With this in mind, we suggest the following priorities for WFP Burundi, in terms of offering future support.

1. Take the lead in advocating for and delivering three focus areas in **building Burundi's national social protection system**:
 - a. mainstream **nutrition-sensitive** goals and modalities throughout all social protection activities in Burundi;
 - b. build **shock-responsive** capacity into the national social protection system, including strengthening household and community **resilience**;
 - c. **harmonise humanitarian and developmental interventions**, by accelerating the move to common platforms and modalities and integrating all beneficiaries (including IDPs, refugees and returnees) into the same WFP-supported programmes.
2. Invest in **generating evidence and learning lessons** from WFP-supported activities in Burundi, especially when innovative design features and new platforms are introduced, and ensure the uptake of these ideas and innovations through more focused **evidence-based advocacy**.
3. **Strengthen WFP's in-country capacities** in social protection so that WFP can participate fully in the sector, delivering not only operational and technical support across the full range of activities and programmes but also engaging with the government and other international agencies in social protection policy formulation and strategic discussions.

Annexes

Annex 1. List of stakeholders consulted

| Name | Organisation/Agency | Title |
|---|--|--|
| WFP Country Office Burundi (8 people) | | |
| Claude Kakule | WFP Burundi | Deputy Country Director |
| Giulia Parzani | | SP Consultant |
| Richard Sewaya | | Asset Creation (currently WFP Uganda, will join Burundi soon) |
| Donatien Ndayikeza | | School Feeding |
| Niamkeezoua Kodjo | | Nutrition Manager |
| Eric Barikanga, | | Emergency CT |
| Moyabi Sylla | | VAM |
| Eugene Niyungeko | | |
| WFP Regional Office Nairobi (4 people) | | |
| Ross Smith | WFP RBN | Senior Reg. Programme Advisor |
| Rosie Bright | | Regional SP advisor |
| Danielle Trotter | | Regional SP support |
| Susanna Sandstrom | | Regional Programme Officer and CBT Specialist |
| International agencies and NGOs (9 people) | | |
| Nathalie Meyer | UNICEF | Chief of Social Policy |
| Paul Maire Petroch | | Social Protection Specialist |
| Eric Zapatero Larrío | World Bank | Senior SP specialist and TTL, Merankabandi |
| Jackie Manisabwe | | SP Specialist |
| Maud Biton | Concern Worldwide | Country Director, Burundi and Rwanda |
| Theophile Bujeje | | SP Coordinator |
| Jean Claude Nsabimana | AfDB | Social Protection Specialist |
| Georgette Ndayisaba | World Vision | Coordinator WFP project (Food& Cash Assistance Manager) |
| Jeanne d'Arc | | Reports Coordinator |
| Government (1 person) | | |
| Arcade Nimubona | CNPS (National Social Protection Commission) | Permanent Executive Secretary (SEP) |
| External Consultancy Group (4 people) | | |
| Krista Alvarenga | IPC-IG | Social registry feasibility study jointly commissioned by WFP and UNICEF |
| Joao Pedro Dytz | | |
| Fabio Veras | | |
| Anais Vibranovski | | |

Note: The SPLF team was not able to consult with the WFP CO Head of Programme; WFP RBN Asset Creation Coordinator; OCHA; Ministries of Social Affairs and Education (school feeding); or Red Cross Burundi

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Annex 3. Acronyms and abbreviations

| | |
|----------|---|
| 3A | Food for Assets / Assistance Alimentaire pour la Création d'Actifs |
| AfDB | African Development Bank |
| BHA | Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs |
| BRAC | Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee |
| BRC | Burundian Red Cross |
| C4D | Communication for Development |
| CaLP | Cash Learning Partnership |
| CAM | Medical Assistance Card / Carte d'Assistance Medicale |
| CBT | Cash-Based Transfers |
| CDFC | Centre for Family and Community Development |
| CERC | Contingent Emergency Response Component |
| CNPS | National Social Protection Commission / Commission Nationale de Protection Sociale |
| CRS | Catholic Relief Services |
| CSB+ | Corn-Soy Blend plus |
| CSU | Universal Health Coverage |
| CWF/GTTM | Cash Working Group / Groupe de Travail Transferts Monétaires |
| ECVMB | Enquête sur la Condition des Vie des Ménages au Burundi |
| ECHO | European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations |
| EDSB III | Enquête Démographique et de Santé au Burundi |
| ENSNMB | Enquête Nationale sur la Situation Nutritionnelle et la Mortalité Basée sur la méthodologie SMART |
| EU | European Union |
| FAO | Food and Agricultural Organisation |
| FBF | Forecast-Based Financing |
| FBU | Burundian Franc |
| FCDO | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office |
| FNG | Fill the Nutrient Gap |
| GAM | Global Acute Malnutrition |
| GPPS | Social Protection Partners Group / Groupe de Partenaires pour la Protection Sociale |
| GPS | Global Positioning System |
| GVC | Gruppo di Volontariato Civile |
| HCT | Humanitarian Country Team |
| HGSF | Home Grown School Feeding |
| ICA | Integrated Context Analysis |
| ICSP | Interim Country Strategic Plan |
| IDP | Internally Displaced Person |
| ILO | International Labour Organisation |
| IOM | International Office for Migration |
| IPC | Integrated Phased Classification |
| IRC | International Rescue Committee |
| IYCF | Infant and Young Child Feeding |
| JANFSA | Joint Approach to Nutrition and Food Security Assessment |
| LWF | Lutheran World Federation |
| IPG-IG | International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth |
| MAM | moderate acute malnutrition |

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|------------|--|
| MDPHASG | Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| OCHA | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| PAD | Project Appraisal Document |
| PPPT | Protection, Prevention, Promotion and Transformation |
| PSMASAN II | Plan stratégique multisectoriel de sécurité alimentaire et nutrition 2ème génération |
| PCDC | Communal Community Development Plan / Plan Communal de Développement Communautaire |
| PER | Programme Expenditure Review |
| PETS | Programme Expenditure Tracking Survey |
| PMT | Proxy Means Test |
| PNA | National Development Plan / Plan National de Développement |
| PNAS | National School Feeding Policy / Politique Nationale d'Alimentation Scolaire |
| PNPS | National Social Protection Policy / Politique Nationale de Protection Sociale |
| PTF | Technical and Financial Partners |
| RBN | Regional Bureau Nairobi |
| REACH | Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger |
| RSU | Unique Social Register / Registre Social Unique |
| SBCC | Social and Behavioural Change Communication |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goal |
| SEP | Permanent Executive Secretary / Secrétaire Exécutif Permanent |
| SNF | Specialised and Nutritious Foods |
| SNPS | National Social Protection Strategy / Stratégie Nationale de Protection Sociale |
| SNRRC | National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction / Stratégie Nationale de Réduction des Risques de Catastrophe |
| SNU | United Nations System / Système des Nations Unies |
| SO | Strategic Outcome |
| SP | Social Protection |
| SPLF | Social Protection Learning Facility |
| SUN | Scaling Up Nutrition |
| TORs | Terms of Reference |
| UMVA | Universal Method of Value Access |
| UNDAF | United Nations Development Assistance Framework |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNHCR | United Nations Refugee Agency |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| VAM | Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping |
| VSLA | Village Savings and Loan Association |
| WASH | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene |
| WB | World Bank |
| WFP | World Food Programme |
| WVI | World Vision International |