



World Food Programme

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REGIONAL BUREAU FOR **EASTERN AFRICA**

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# Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations

2021 Regional Achievements & Outlook

**MAY 2022**



## Regional Overview

WFP's approach to protection is informed by the *Inter-Agency Standing Committee's statement on the Centrality of Protection*, which includes the imperative that protection of all persons affected and at risk must inform humanitarian decision-making and response, including engagement with parties to conflict. In addition to a necessary focus on humanitarian settings, we work in the region to ensure that protection integration is central to both lifesaving and life-changing activities in all settings, striving to 'leave no one behind'.<sup>1</sup>

The COs apply the relevant principles across a range of functions within WFP to ensure that our assistance is safe, appropriate and received in a dignified manner. Our efforts in taking a people-centred approach to the way we conduct our operations represents good programming as it increases the quality of the work and the likelihood of positive and sustainable outcomes. Working to ensure we implement protection-sensitive programmes that are accountable to affected populations forms the groundwork for achieving long-term development outcomes and reduces the risk of unintended negative consequences of our efforts.

At the regional bureau level, technical advice and support was consistently provided to inform strategic direction and enhance operational functions, facilitating the application of the principles in practice. A regional workshop on protection and accountability was held in Nairobi for all staff directly engaged in this work in the region in October 2021. Two field missions were conducted to COs to support operationalization of the applicable standards directly, once travel restrictions eased in the fourth quarter of the year. Briefings were provided to COs on request on topics of relevance, including in relation to application of the new protection policy, the Community Feedback

Mechanisms (CFM) annual review, disability inclusion, and community engagement planning for programme transitions. Support was provided to teams to address protection risk identification and mitigation in conflict contexts. Monthly meetings were facilitated to share challenges, achievements and support requests. Guidance was provided for the development and finalization of operational documents including action plans, SoPs, strategies including CSPs, evaluations, focus group discussions (FGD) formats and other tools. Technical notes were drafted for internal learning on topics of concern including access. Presentations on protection and accountability were delivered at a range of regional and CO level workshops to ensure integration across the range of functional areas. WFP engaged with the Regional GBV Working Group, the regional Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) taskforce and supported the establishment of the Regional Protection Working Group.

2021 was a challenging year with COVID-related restrictions, conflict events<sup>2</sup> and emerging droughts and other climate linked crises creating and exacerbating protection risks in many countries of operation. Protection clusters are active in five countries in the region<sup>3</sup>, and all reported concerning trends, ranging from GBV, to child protection issues, targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure, housing land and property rights infringements, exclusion of specific groups, increases in crisis coping mechanisms, violence and displacement.<sup>4</sup> Displacement and migration increased dramatically throughout the region.<sup>5</sup> In such contexts it is crucial that we are aware of these risks, understand and mitigate them to the extent possible through our approach to activity design, implementation and monitoring.

## Regional Achievements

Our teams worked throughout the programme cycle to apply the four protection mainstreaming principles: Prioritise safety and dignity and avoid causing harm; Meaningful access; Accountability; and Participation and empowerment.

### Do no harm

Do no harm includes efforts to prevent and minimise as much as possible any unintended negative effects of our intervention, which could increase people's vulnerability to both physical and psychosocial risks. Eight countries in the region reported very high levels of satisfaction in terms of safety and dignity experienced while accessing food assistance, with over 85 percent of those consulted responding positively. Particular attention was paid to distance from distribution sites, unhindered access, and prioritisation of people with specific needs. In **Sudan**, 90 percent of respondents in receipt of general food assistance said WFP's assistance was dignified and 98 percent of the respondents confirmed unhindered access to assistance. In **Burundi**, 100 percent of beneficiaries surveyed during the food security outcome monitoring (FSOM) in December 2021 indicated that they received assistance without any safety challenges, and the majority declared being treated with dignity during distributions. As part of responsive programming in **Ethiopia**, WFP developed response plans including frequently asked questions and answers, sensitizing the community on vulnerability, utilizing community crowd controllers, strengthening community dialogues and integrating corporate protection indicators during beneficiary monitoring. The end-of-year survey revealed 88 percent of beneficiaries had unhindered access to WFP services. In **South Sudan** monitoring data indicated that 98 percent of beneficiaries across all modalities received assistance without any safety challenges. Results from corporate indicators on safe and dignified access to assistance in Markazi camp, **Djibouti** also had overwhelming positive results; 99 percent of the families consulted believed their dignity was upheld.

### Meaningful access

The principle of meaningful access involves arranging for people's access to assistance in proportion to need and without any barriers, including discrimination. Efforts were made throughout our operations to ensure we paid special attention to individuals and groups who may face challenges accessing assistance. A key focus of our collective efforts in 2021 was identifying and addressing barriers to access. In **South Sudan**, WFP streamlined disability and inclusion considerations into the main food security assessments and monitoring tools, implementing a recommendation from a disability gap assessment conducted in Wau which involved organisations of persons with disability (OPDs). A disability inclusion action plan was developed in **Kenya** to facilitate the systematic inclusion of persons living with disabilities as beneficiaries and as stakeholders in operations. The action plan built on previous work incorporating relevant questions in monitoring tools, increasing the collection of disability disaggregated data, and providing sensitization to staff on disability inclusion considerations in their work. Training with staff and other stakeholders on disability inclusion was conducted in **Ethiopia**, especially geared towards those involved in beneficiary targeting. Community engagement sessions were also held in Ethiopia to discuss attitudes and to address the stigma that had been identified as a barrier limiting school attendance of persons with disabilities. WFP in **Somalia** established a partnership with other UN Agencies to conduct the first national survey on disabilities. WFP is working toward the development of mobile money as a cash transfer modality in **Burundi**, to enhance access to assistance for the elderly, people with mobility challenges and people with disability, and to reduce risks of taxation and diversion through increased discretion.

Protection mainstreaming was further promoted through a range of capacity building initiatives, and by active participation and collaboration in inter-agency fora. In relation to the provision of capacity building to ensure a continued protection-sensitive approach, **South Sudan** for example carried out a series of refresher trainings for partners, key Government stakeholders, and Project Management Committees (PMCs), which focused on targeting and streamlining protection issues, reaching 101 participants. In **Rwanda**, WFP conducted a gender and protection training for all staff to raise their awareness on the importance of adhering to protection standards in their daily work. The importance of confidentiality, data protection and privacy were also discussed to respect the 'do no harm' principle. In relation to engagement with other actors, WFP actively contributed to inter-agency fora including GBV and Child Protection sub-sectors where

## Challenges Encountered and Addressed

Part of accountability is ensuring that issues identified through robust community engagement leads to practical adjustments and follow up for satisfaction on outcomes. This is part of two-way communication and closing the feedback loop, for WFP to not only act on inputs provided by the communities but to further ensure the solution implemented was appropriate and is perceived in a positive light by those concerned.

**In Uganda**, unaccompanied minors, the elderly and disabled expressed concern during consultations that the increased use of cash as a modality may subject them to exploitation from their alternates, as a result of the planned scale-up of cash up to 100 percent in selected settlements. These concerns will be addressed by conducting periodic follows ups with Productive Safety Nets households to establish how the alternate system is working and working with other stakeholders to refer and resolve any issues of concern.

To assess protection risks in **Ethiopia**, WFP programme officers conducted protection monitoring and risk mapping supplemented by inter-agency assessments to mainstream protection across its country programs. Dignified access remains an area requiring improvement as only 63 percent of beneficiaries surveyed felt that WFP services were dignified. Complimentary qualitative assessments from refugee camps identified delays in food distribution, insufficient monthly general food ration, and overpriced milling prices as major concerns.

Throughout 2021, WFP made corrective efforts, including food delivery using WFP fleet trucks and deploying convoy leaders to enhance food delivery to beneficiaries.

**In Sudan** there were some challenges connected to ensuring affected populations were aware of WFP's selection criteria, entitlements, and duration of assistance. Only 22 percent of polled beneficiaries at one point were aware of their entitlements. This would appear to be connected to language and communication barriers and to poor literacy rates which caused text-heavy informative posters to be ineffective. To address this issue, WFP plans to strengthen its communication with communities, by identifying key influencers and developing communication materials considering community needs, languages, and preferences. WFP will roll out this strategy in 2022, starting with information sessions for WFP field staff and cooperating partners on the new elements and implementation pathways for the strategy.

## Reflections and Outlook for 2022

In 2022, the Regional Bureau protection & accountability leads will continue to support COs to apply good practice across the range of lifesaving to life-changing activities. Areas of focus will include community engagement in prioritization and programme transitions, ensuring a risk-informed approach to emergency preparedness and response, and engaging with TEC to streamline CFM processes. A number of COs will continue strengthening inclusion, particularly paying attention to disability inclusion and engaging with marginalized groups. Community engagement action plans will be developed, and protection integration action plans and risk registers will be updated. A mapping of the protection landscape, activities, capacities and opportunities will be developed for the region to inform priorities for 2022.

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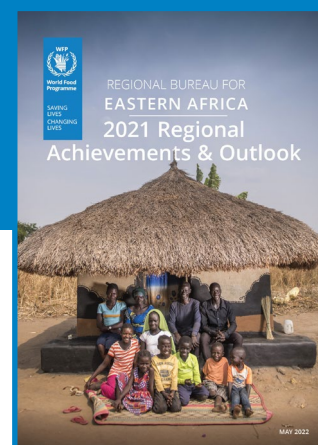
## PHOTO CREDITS

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## ENDNOTES

- 1 This aim is grounded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- 2 [ACLEDDATA](#) indicates a total of 9009 conflict events in the region in 2021, with Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan rating highest. Battles and incidents of violence against civilians were the most frequent event type reported.
- 3 Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan.
- 4 Specifics per country are available in the reports of the field clusters, available at <https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/field-support/field-protection-clusters/>
- 5 In Somalia, for example, 874,000 were displaced, raising the total to 2.9 million. [DTM DATA](#) for December 2021 indicates a total of 9.8 million IDPs and 3.3 million returnees in 6 of the countries, in addition to the 4.9 million refugees.



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