

# INVIGORATING LINKS BETWEEN SOCIAL PROTECTION AND NUTRITION REPORT

22<sup>nd</sup> IUNS-ICN International Congress of Nutrition in Tokyo, Japan  
December 6, 2022 | 9:00-12:00 AM





# Overview

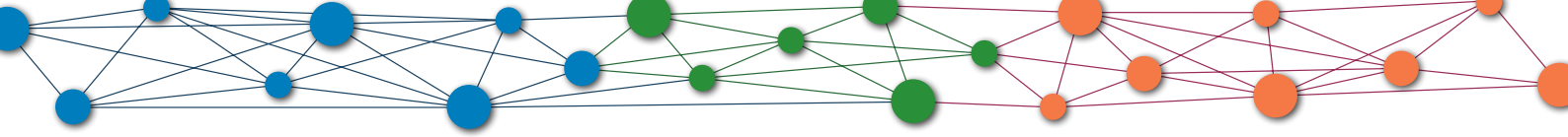
The prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) plateaued between 2014 and 2019 (FAO, 2021). Then, in 2020, the PoU suddenly surged upwards by almost 18 percent after the socioeconomic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. Simultaneously, worldwide obesity has nearly tripled since 1975, creating corresponding increases in non-communicable diseases (NCDs); diabetes, cancers, etc. with heart disease is the leading cause of deaths globally (WHO, 2021). The rise in overweight and obesity leading to NCDs is attributed to the diet transitions coupled with poor food environments; whereby more and more populations are consuming foods low in nutrition quality. These ultra-processed foods contain high saturated fats, sugars and salt.

This public health crisis has coincided with other crises, such as the conflict in Ukraine. Ukraine and Russia provide around one-third of the world's wheat and barley, one-fifth of its maize, and over half of its sunflower oil, while Russia alone exports a fifth of the world's fertilisers and is the world's top natural gas exporter (UN News, 2022; IEA, 2022). The Food Price Index therefore soared since the conflict began and reached its highest level since FAO started recording (FAO, 2022). Around 1.7 billion people now live in economies severely exposed to rising food prices, rising energy prices, and increased fertilizer prices, as well as tightening financial conditions, which means that people are increasingly unable to afford safe, nutritious, and healthy diets (UNCTAD, 2022). The COVID-19 Pandemic added to several factors contributing to the compromised livelihoods, poverty and food insecurity and multiple forms of malnutrition.

Connections between food security, nutrition and social protection programs are increasingly recognized, informed by new data on the cost and affordability of healthy diets. The FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (2022) annual flagship report on [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#) now reports for each country, at national level, the cost per day of the least expensive locally

available foods needed to meet international standards of diet quality as well as its affordability. Furthermore, the Systems Analysis for Nutrition team at WFP has conducted more than 40 'Fill the Nutrient Gap' situation analyses that estimate the cost and affordability of nutritious diets at sub-national level and for different target groups to inform a multi-sectoral dialogue towards integrating nutrition across different platforms ([www.wfp.org/fillthenutrientgap](http://www.wfp.org/fillthenutrientgap)). Those metrics on cost and affordability of healthy, nutritious diets quantify food access in a way that can readily be used to guide a variety of social protection programs on a routine basis as well as in times of crisis. Globally comparable data on the cost and affordability of healthy diets produced for UN system agencies are readily available from the [Food Prices for Nutrition DataBank](#) (World Bank, 2022) and WFP's data viz system, and similar methods are increasingly used within countries to monitor spatial, temporal and demographic variation ([Tufts University, 2022](#)). FAO and AUDA-NEPAD amongst other partners are working with several regions and countries globally on the promotion of the production and consumption of neglected traditional and indigenous foods.

New data introduced by FAO, the World Bank, and Tufts University find that the cost per day of healthy diets is typically between \$3 and \$4 dollars per day at purchasing power parity prices, which is well above the \$1.90/day poverty line commonly used by the World Bank. These costs are also higher than the expenditure levels available for most social protection programs in low- and lower-middle income countries, but the affordability of healthy, nutritious diets provides a very powerful and useful new way of guiding a variety of social protection modalities. Beyond in-kind food transfers, school meals, and agricultural programs, other modalities such as cash and voucher assistance have potential impacts on nutrition outcomes; several studies have demonstrated that such transfers lead to increased expenditures on food (Basagli et al., 2016).



The link between social protection and access to a healthy diet has led many countries to see social protection as a long-term investment toward nutritional outcomes and health, food security and livelihoods of individuals, households, and communities. Additionally, Social Programmes also contribute to children's education, performance and productivity in adulthood, thus offering more and better economic standing. Social protection schemes have increased markedly in prevalence and robustness in the past decades, with an estimated 3,856 social protection and labour measures in place globally as of January 2022 (Gentilini et al., 2022). Emerging and ongoing threats such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the invasion of Ukraine, with their own implications for nutrition, have spurred additional interest in and need for social protection. However, there is an evidence gap around whether social protection programmes reduce multidimensional poverty (Borga & D'Ambrosio, 2021), and about which mechanisms can be efficacious in addressing nutritional vulnerability (Teklewold et al., 2022). Moreover, insights remain limited on approaches to overcome affordability and accessibility constraints, and a lack of comprehensive links to complementary nutrition-specific services and WASH infrastructure persists. Filling this evidence gap and elucidating the synergies between social protection and nutrition systems is critical to break the vicious cycle of malnutrition and poverty. Moreover, for many low to middle income countries, Social Protection policies and programmes remain fragmented, poorly resourced, and weakly implemented and monitored.

Against this background, the USP2030 Working Group on Social Protection and Food Systems Transformation organised a satellite symposium for the 22nd IUNS-ICN International Congress of Nutrition in Tokyo, Japan which focused on the link between social protection, food systems and nutrition. The three-hour satellite session was held on December 6th, 2022, and informed a discussion about how to foster linkages between social protection and food systems to create long-lasting positive changes to the nutritional status of people across the globe.

The session was significant because it was the first and only event on social protection at the International Congress of Nutrition. The session allowed WFP and other Working Group members to speak to audiences previously unexposed to social protection messaging and explain our offer, the value of social protection, and the targets of the Working Group.

The event had several significant achievements: (i) more than sixty attendants participated for the entire three-hour session; (ii) the event brought together a coalition of different attendees and organisers from several sectors; (iii) the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) began discussions to join as a new member of the Working Group; (iv) other organisations expressed interest in joining the Working Group, such as the Gates Foundation; (v) the session ran over by a further 45 minutes due to the energy of discussions; (vi) attendees expressed positive feedback about the bidirectional and interactive working sessions and clinics; and (vii) WFP gathered video footage of the presentations and testimonials from the participants.



# Objectives

The satellite session aimed at capitalising on the nutrition evidence shared in the Conference to inform a discussion around the social protection-foods systems-nutrition evidence gap. This discussion informed (a) how and to what degree social protection can improve nutritional outcomes; (b) how to foster linkages between social protection and food systems; and (c) how to optimise social protection to create long-lasting positive changes to the nutritional status of people across the globe.

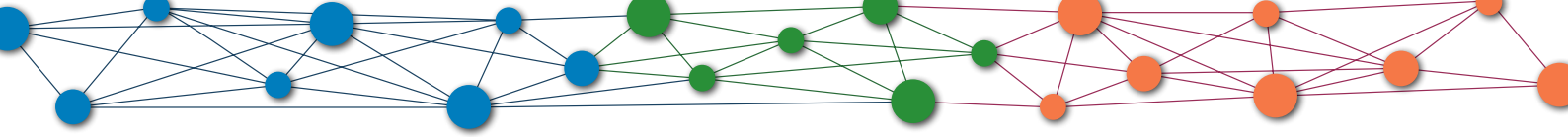
The event collaboratively brought together members of the WG to:

- I. Outline how social protection can support the achievement of nutritional outcomes.
- II. Present think pieces and studies which examine the relationship between social protection, food systems and nutrition.
- III. Address the role of social protection regarding the unaffordability of healthy, nutritious diets and how food systems considerations need to be incorporated when designing programmes to reduce the affordability gap.
- IV. Open a discussion of how nutrition can influence social policy and social protection and enhance achievement of their broad socio-economic development objectives.
- V. Illustrate how poverty, vulnerability, and risk cause poor nutritional outcomes, and how poor nutritional outcomes cause poverty, vulnerability, and risk.
- VI. Enable mind shifts in nutrition and social protection for both sectors to recognise their mutually overlapping priorities.
- VII. Create bridges between social protection and nutrition researchers, policy organisations, and programmatic organisations to provide a platform for multisectoral collaboration, which will inter-alia include education, health, early childhood development, agriculture, trade and the private sector.
- VIII. Assist national governments to build nutrition objectives into their social protection USP2030 roadmaps and provide support for policy transformation and programme design.

# Methodology

The satellite symposium was composed of two blocks. In the first block, keynote speakers presented their thoughts and research evidence on the questions highlighted in the previous section.

In the second block, participants were invited to discuss three topics: (a) Nutrition Through the Life Course: the Importance of Social and Economic Empowerment for Girls' and Women's Nutrition ; (b) Connections Between Social Protection and Health Systems Situated in the Food Environment; and (c) Unaffordability of Healthy Diets. Participants rotated between groups every 15 minutes, thus allowing for greater plurality during each round.



**Table 1. Satellite Symposium Agenda**

Time	What?		Who?		Format	Duration
9:00	Welcome and Introduction to the Symposium	Introduction to the interagency framework on food systems and social protection and rationale for the USP2030 WG.	Lawrence Haddad	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)	Plenary Presentation	10 min
9:10	Setting the Stage	The relevance of social protection for nutrition: an evidence-based analysis of the challenges and opportunities for linking SP and NUT	Prof. Stephen Devereux	Institute of Development Studies (IDS)	Plenary Presentation	15 min
9:30		Review of the SP pathways of impact on nutritional outcomes.	Mandana Arabi	Nutrition International (NI), presenting the joint work developed with International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)	Presentations and Panel Discussion	60 min
			Juan Gonzalo Jaramillo Mejia	The World Food Programme (WFP) presenting the joint work developed with IDS and IFPRI		
			Yuko Okamura	The World Bank (WB)		
10:30	Q&A with the Audience					15 min
10:45	Coffee and Tea Break					15 min
11:00	Breakout Groups Instructions					5 min
11:05	Breakout Sessions	Present evidence and work advanced by different members of the WG and engage with participants to see opportunities and entry points for linking their research on nutrition in favour of social protection policy and programming to yield better food security and nutritional outcomes.	Deborah Ash and Prof. Stephen Devereux	FHI360 and IDS	Group A. Nutrition Through the Life Course: The Importance of Social and Economic Empowerment for Girls' and Women's Nutrition	45 min
			Mandana Arabi and Juan Gonzalo Jaramillo Mejia	NI and WFP	Group B. Connections Between Social Protection and Health Systems Situated in the Food Environment	
				WFP and Tufts University	Group C. Unaffordability of Healthy Diets	
11:45	Recap and Closure					15 min



# The Symposium

The following sections summarize each of the keynote speeches and the discussions carried out in each breakout group.

## **Welcome and Introduction to the Symposium: Lawrence Haddad (GAIN)**

Social protection formally began in the aftermath of the 1994 Mexican Peso Crisis. The Mexican government started thinking about how to prevent temporary losses in income from leading to long-term negative impacts. The government therefore designed interventions that were designed to stop people from falling further into poverty (social insurance), provide a route out of poverty (social assistance), and improve employment (labour market interventions).

However, meta-analyses demonstrate that social protection can have underwhelming results on nutrition. Impacts can be improved when including behaviour change components, targeting infants under two years of age, and increasing the duration of programme exposure.

Many questions about the role between social protection and nutrition remain. For example: (i) Are in-kind transfers better than cash? Fortified food can be a way of affordably getting nutrients to people. (ii) When are conditionalities useful? (iii) Can more be done on the availability of food on the supply side? (iv) Can social protection be the basis of pro-poor growth? (v) How do we scale down responses? (vi) Can social protection build resilience? (vii) How do we fund social protection in the face of uncertainty?

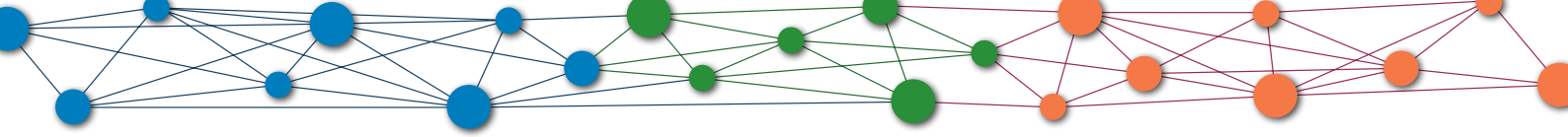
## **Setting the Stage - The Relevance of Social Protection for Nutrition: Prof. Stephen Devereux (IDS)**

Social protection can be defined as the policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability.

Food security can be broken down into access, availability, stability, and utilisation. Access to adequate food is a key element. Access is often measured through indicators such as the number of meals per day, the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale, the food consumption score, and the dietary diversity score. However, most indicators are self-reported.

Nutrition security refers to a state of being adequately nourished. These indicators measure elements such as the prevalence of wasting/stunting/underweight/obesity, Mid-Upper Arm Circumference, and Body Mass Index. In contrast to indicators for food security, indicators are not self-reported and are often measured by health and development professionals.

There is an assumed theory of change that providing transfers will lead to greater food security and being more nourished. Social protection shows some improvements to food security. However, social protection does not always lead to improved access to food as an aspect of food security. For example, not all cash is spent on food. Furthermore, social protection benefits might be used by more than the labelled beneficiary. As transfers are often calibrated to the food security needs of the individual rather than household needs, transfers and their impacts become diluted.



Social protection's isolated impact on nutrition security is further problematised because of the multidimensional nature of nutrition. For example, the UNICEF nutrition diagram demonstrates that education, health, WASH, care, dietary intake, and an improved disease environment are all required for nutrition security. Social Protection Plus approaches are one way of ensuring multi-sectoral social protection methods to improve nutrition. For example, child stunting in Brazil fell from 37% in the mid-1970s to 7% in the 2000s because of social protection programmes, rising incomes, improvements in maternal education, advances in maternal and child health care, and improved WASH services and facilities. Social protection's effect on child nutritional indicators in Bangladesh was also augmented by BCC initiatives (Ahmed et al. 2015). Social protection, therefore, has a critical place in improving nutrition security but cannot achieve totalising transformation in isolation.

Social protection has five key aspects it can bring to multi-sectoral approaches to improving nutrition outcomes. Social protection can (i) deliver nutritious food directly, (ii) smooth food consumption over seasons and during food crises, (iii) include groups that are otherwise excluded, (iv) make nutritious food affordable, and (v) connect people to essential services for good nutrition.

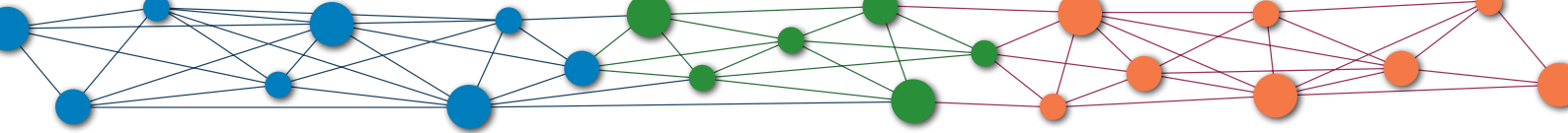
In conclusion, the pathway from social protection to food security is straightforward, but the pathway to nutrition security is more complex. There are two prerequisites for reducing food insecurity: (i) a well-designed and well-functioning social protection system; and (ii) social assistance (or food assistance) benefits must be adequate. Reducing malnutrition is more complex and requires multi-sectoral interventions, one of which is social protection. A multi-sectoral social protection plus approach importantly reduces the expectation that social protection alone can be a silver bullet.

### **Social Assistance Programmes (SAPs) and Programme Impact Pathways (PIPs) for Nutrition: Mandana Arabi (Nutrition International)**

Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) spend 1.5% of GDP on social assistance programmes (SAPs). This figure has tripled since 2000-2016, but there is still a need to determine how social assistance programmes can be leveraged to improve nutrition. The International Food and Policy and Research Institute (IFPRI) and Nutrition International (NI) reviewed the evidence of the effectiveness of Social Assistance Programmes for improving women's and children's diet and nutritional status outcomes.

The research project developed hypothetical programme impact pathways (PIPs) to determine how SAPs can improve nutritional outcomes, examine programmatic design features and impact on intermediary outcomes, and develop a menu of options to inform SAP programme design.

Through the development of PIPs, the report found that SAPs can be used to improve diets among women and children. Cash and in-kind transfers have the potential to reduce child anaemia and stunting, but more evidence is needed. SAPs are more likely to improve intermediary outcomes rather than directly impacting nutritional status outcomes. However, SAPs might have unintended impacts such as overnutrition. The evidence related to the effectiveness of SAPs regarding micronutrition deficiencies and overweight and obesity is lacking. The way forward includes harmonising technical and programmatic guidance to help governments in designing, improving, and optimising the impacts of SAPs on nutrition outcomes using a menu of proven options.



## Improving Social Protection Pathways to Nutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC): Juan Gonzalo Jaramillo Mejia (WFP)

WFP's Regional Bureau of Panama, IFPRI, and IDS investigated the social protection pathways to nutrition in LAC. The study looked at the multi-dimensional nutritional challenge exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the double burden of malnutrition. The study is particularly pertinent given the cost of the double burden of malnutrition, which reached 16.3% in Guatemala.

A rapid evidence review found that social protection had six key positive pathways for improving nutritional outcomes in the region: (i) Improved purchasing power; (ii) Increased household resources; (iii) Increased access to health services; (iv) Increased female bargaining power and empowerment; (v) Increased access to nutrient-dense foods; (vi) Improved nutrition knowledge and cooking skills.

The report then compiled four country case studies from Ecuador, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and Peru. The studies found that systems were mostly weak, rarely able to address overweight and obesity, and needed a multisectoral approach under a coordinating body.

The research group created an operational framework from the rapid evidence review and case studies. This framework had several key steps situated in an intervention space of multisectoral systems: (i) Assessing the different forms of malnutrition across the lifecycle from a food systems perspective; (ii) Identifying the drivers of malnutrition, including intersecting inequalities that lead to injustice, exclusion, and unfairness; (iii) Expanding social protection systems by improving quality, comprehensiveness, responsiveness, coverage, and adequacy; (iv) Enhancing capabilities for delivery and implementation; (v) Layering different combinations of social protection instruments; (vi) Social protection can improve agency, incomes, assets, prices, behaviours, and consumption for different groups to address the vulnerability, meet needs, manage risks, and address inequalities; (vii) Improving targets and measures to measure impact and address underlying outcomes; (viii) Improving assessment, analysis, knowledge management, learning, monitoring, and evaluation.

## Financing Social Protection and Nutrition: Yuko Okamura (World Bank)

Nutrition is a cross-sectoral issue that needs a cross-sectoral approach. Simultaneously, the role of social protection is expanding after the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and global inflation. Social protection has five key offers for a nutrition-sensitive response: (i) Social protection has a cross-sectoral nature which can address the many dimensions of food security and nutrition; (ii) Social protection can enhance human capital development and the production/availability of food; (iii) Social protection's role is expanding under crises; (iv) Social protection has a widening reach. The World Bank has doubled its social portfolio to over \$12 billion, reaching more than 1 billion individuals in 57 countries; (v) Social assistance, especially emergency cash transfers, can be a cost-effective and rapid response.

To improve the positive impacts of social protection, we need to continue investment in adaptive and shock-responsive social protection systems (including delivery systems, social registries to cover the poor and the potential poor, financing, institutions, and data management) and create a system which can go beyond current beneficiaries during shocks.

Social protection also needs accompanying measures to improve its impact on nutrition. Examples of accompanying measures during the early years of the life course include parenting interventions, nutrition interventions, incentives to use services, and behavioural measures. For example, Indonesia's PKH Conditional Cash Transfers is a nutrition-sensitive programme that provides social assistance to poor households. The transfers were accompanied by a revised module on health and nutrition to strengthen key messages and practices regarding the importance of the first 1,000 days of life to prevent stunting.

However, challenges remain: 3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet and global crises continue to contribute to global undernourishment.





# Q&A Session with the Audience

The presentations were accompanied by a lively question-and-answer session. The key points from the discussion are captured below:

## Micronutrient Forum

Question (Q): Has there been any difference in the programme depending on who designs and implements it? E.g., governments versus international organisations.

Answer (A): The government must remain in the driving seat of social protection systems building for sustainability and outreach. Governments have a much larger budget than international organisations. Governments have the mandate to provide these systems. Social protection needs a rights basis.

## Hellen Keller International

Q: The analyses did not report on the size of the benefits. Is that because the information is not available? The size of benefits would affect the impact pathways.

A: There is a lot of evidence that the level of benefits makes a big effect on impact. Other considerations include predictability and duration.

Q: Multi-sectoral coordination is a challenge. What are the challenges in SP coalition building?

A: Coordination is a common problem. Reaching local and territorial governments is also a key issue. However, there is still a need for integrated action.

## Save the Children International

Q: Social protection sounds costly. Is there any study on social protection cost benefits versus other interventions?

A: For every dollar invested in social protection, there is a nine-dollar return on the investment. Social protection systems are affordable - there are 1000 measures in the response to the GFC.

Q: How can you adapt social protection to LICs? Is social protection only relevant to crises?

A: Social protection can start as an emergency response but can become institutionalised. Social protection is not just for humanitarian emergencies but takes place in every place in the world.

## FHI 360

Q: In Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines, 60% of women are in the informal sector. There are efforts to develop social protection for women in the informal sector. For example, improving maternity benefits. However, LMICs do not have the tax base for social assistance which can be earmarked, which makes it difficult for coordination between ministries and women's groups to deliver programmes. Is there any country's experience in coordination costing to help with policy development?

A: There is a lot of literature that looks at decentralisation and improved performance, including the Bank's 2019 State of Social Safety Nets report. Efforts to have a new state of social protection systems next year using ASPIRE analysis. Informality is a big challenge but there is a large need to expand coverage. Argentina is a good example of how to adjust social insurance mechanisms, adding flexibility and reduced premiums to lead to informality.

## WFP

Q: Question on the NI-IFPRI study. Does the type of in-kind transfer matter? Some types of food provided in Pakistan have strong effects on stunting. Also, when we provide specialised nutritious food, will there be an impact on overweight and obesity?

A: Studies on PROGRESA found adverse effects on obesity. Social protection needs to look at contextual nutrition needs and gaps. You need a different social protection package to solve anaemia rather than addressing food shortages.

A: An issue of who implements. Social protection is not only a bunch of projects, it's a system. Social protection is not just for humanitarian emergencies but takes place in every place in the world, and governments have the mandate to provide these systems. Needs a rights basis.

After the question-and-answer section of the event, participants broke out into three interactive sessions to deep dive into specific touchpoints between social protection and nutrition and exchange knowledge.

# Breakout Group 1:

## Nutrition Through the Life Course: The Importance of Social and Economic Empowerment for Girls' and Women's Nutrition

### Discussion Points

- SP has an important role in improving outcomes across the lifecycle.
- Need to apply a gender lens when looking at nutrition through the lifecycle. Women are excluded from the formal economy and are assigned caregiving responsibilities.
- Need to frame these discussions of health, care, and gender equity systems.
- Gender equity is not a footnote for social protection.
- Because of this need to create an enabling environment, FHI 360 is looking to co-create a call to intervention.



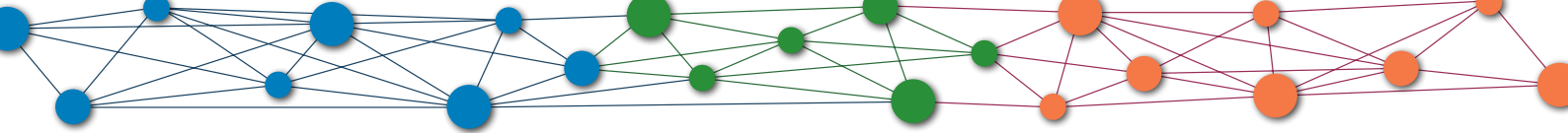
### Participants' Points

#### GIZ

- You can only improve the diet of the child if you improve the diet of the mother.
- There's a gap around anaemia in social protection programming. It is an important consideration as when the mother is anaemic, the child is anaemic.
- Need to have a holistic approach to talking about the child and mother.
- Maybe social protection should look at mental health, which has an impact on breastfeeding and complementary approaches.
- Need to look at affordability, but also awareness raising.
- Need to have a look at the health side, e.g., the quality of healthcare, and obstacles to accessing expensive animal protection and medicine.

#### Save the Children Tanzania

- Need to bring men into a discussion about women.
- Need to look at adolescents, who have different behaviours inside and outside of school.
- Global Health India
- There are several social protection systems and diverse food environments, but no nutrition-sensitive social protection.
- As there are no links between these two elements, there is a need to make policymakers aware of the existing food environments and make policymakers diversify food baskets.



## IDS

- South Africa has the lowest breastfeeding rate, which stems from HIV messaging. These figures show the importance of messaging. Nutrition-sensitive social protection needs good messaging.

## WFP

- Messaging is very 'cookie cutter' at the moment. Need systematic and large-scale delivery of messaging and interventions.

## Government of Canada

- The government is looking at how to evaluate the marketing of unhealthy foods to children and create a tool to assess marketing and nutritional quality.
- Also looking to deliver a school nutritional programme at the national level. Currently, programmes operate at the municipal level but not at the national level.

## Global Nutrition

- EU funded a Big O project.
- Uses smartphone tech and geolocation to map the link between the food environment, physical activity, and meals consumed by children and link it to childhood obesity issues.
- The overall goal was to create a portal for policymakers to use and use large-scale data to influence policymakers.

## IFPRI

- IFPRI has a target that half of the beneficiaries should be women.
- Women are working out of the home more, and there is more of a demand for convenience, eating more processed food.
- Need to see how to improve nutrition where you have in mind that there is income growth.
- With income growth, there is a whole new series of challenges.





# Breakout Group 2:

## Connections Between Social Protection and Health Systems Situated in the Food Environment

### Discussion Points

- People need to meet their food security and nutrition needs in the context of epidemiology. What are people's key insights and experiences?
- Social protection is a demand-side intervention, but oftentimes there are no investments in supply-side interventions. Need to ensure that there are links between supply and demand, and links between social/economic/labour services.
- Structuring social protection systems has three levels:
  - First Floor. The programmatic level to ensure functionality must consider: (a) Who to target; (b) What amount to deliver; (c) How to structure delivery; (d) How to ensure accountability and quality.
  - Second Floor. Engaging with multiple stakeholders and decision-makers to increase legitimacy and acceptability requires: (a) Knowledge and Learning; (b) M&E; (c) Assessments; (d) How to translate it into the operational.
  - Third Floor. The systems architecture level needs: (a) Translating systems into policy legislation; (b) Creating infrastructure and systems, e.g., the social registry systems to identify people; (c) Governance and coordination systems; (d) Financing systems.
- Conversation of multi-sectoral coordination happens upstream. However, not all sectors have to come together for EVERY problem That is why the IFPRI-NI study is important. We need to look at CONTEXT to see which sectors need to be linked together for a problem-driven approach and frame problems around certain indicators and theories of change.
- Barriers to improving nutrition are not just at the household level. We leverage social protection to improve the food environment. Need to look at improving the food environment before making multi-sectoral links. Key research questions are: (a)

Who are the key actors in the food environment; (b) How do we involve them; and (c) What are the key features that we should pilot so that we can deliver the food of the quality we need?

### Participants' Points

#### George Institute for Global Health India

Working on Public Food Procurement System. Want to make this system sustainable, and address climate change, NCDs, and the double burden of malnutrition. Also want to engage with governments from the start.

#### WFP

- There is a concerted effort to improve social protection top-ups in Pakistan. WFP is looking for examples from other regions as to what makes it effective and successful.

#### Nutrition International

- There is a need to strengthen pathways and anticipate surges, otherwise, there will be an increase in demand with no services

#### Save the Children Tanzania

- Q: NCDs are rising. How does SP address the NCDs?
- A: Full-package social protection interventions can include preventative health services which can help reduce the burden of NCDs. However, FSN-sensitive social protection has historically concentrated on undernutrition. Now we need to expand to overnutrition to avoid unwittingly increasing the overweight burden and associated NCDs when addressing undernutrition.



# Breakout Group 3:

## Unaffordability of Healthy Diets

### Discussion Points

- Costs of diets: Healthy diets, based on dietary guidance, can be 20-80% more expensive than nutritionally adequate diets. The percentage difference depends on food environments. Additionally, nutritionally adequate diets are twice as expensive as energy-only diets.
- SP transfers increase expenditure on foods and can help close the gap. However, transfers often never fully close the gap
- Elements to help close the gap: (a) Fortify staples to help meet nutritional needs at lower costs; (b) Diversification food sources and lowering prices; (c) BCC to optimise choices.
- Outcome: Increased dietary quality can lower stunting and the multiple burdens of malnutrition.

### Participants' Points

#### Nutrition International

- Looking at consumption patterns amongst adolescents in India.
- In urban slums, a banana will cost five rupees, in comparison, an unbranded potato chip packed will cost the same and will be bigger and tastier.
- Affordability of unhealthy and healthy.
- These food items have penetrated these areas, they are more available and acceptable.
- Parents are working, easier to give children 10-20 rupees to buy themselves food.

### Bern University

- Looking at the urban food environment in Ghana.
- Poor children don't spend much less/more than better-off children. However better off schools have a better-zoned food environment, better quality food, and access to ASF
- Poorer children spend the same money on biscuits, etc.
- Affordability is important, but also need to look at the food environment, healthy food must be there.
- If you look at prepared healthy food items, then the unaffordability gap increases.
- Need to look at the potential of fine-tuning taxes on specific foods.

### WFP

- Looking at school food environment, drivers of choices.
- Need to advocate for what is sold and targeted towards children, need to complement individual behaviour change with systematic policy around marketing, etc.
- Need to control policy on what is sold and marketed.
- The cost of nutritious diet is high, but the more children are snacking and diverting their income, the more the unaffordability gap increases.

## Global Health India

- Unaffordability estimates need to outline the opportunity cost (e.g., gathering healthy food and preparing it has a huge opportunity cost in comparison to purchasing pre-prepared food).
- Healthy diets might be affordable, but could be less desirable.

## Save the Children Tanzania

- Rural communities have poor knowledge of healthy diets.
- Need to empower them with knowledge.
- Need to go through education policy to see what children are taught.
- We assume that people know what a healthy diet is but not always the case.
- It is seen as desirable to go to fast food restaurants.
- Some areas have plenty of food, but they are selling food items at the market.

## IFPRI

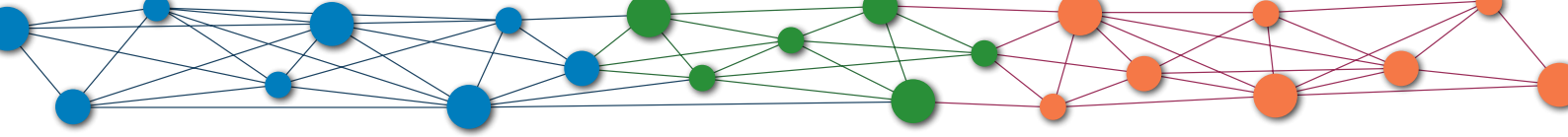
- Q: Governments now have data on the gap, why can't they close it?
- A: The gap is really big. Governments do not have the fiscal space. The gap also varies by sub-national area. However, politically challenging to vary the transfer in different areas.





## Annex I. Registered Participants

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