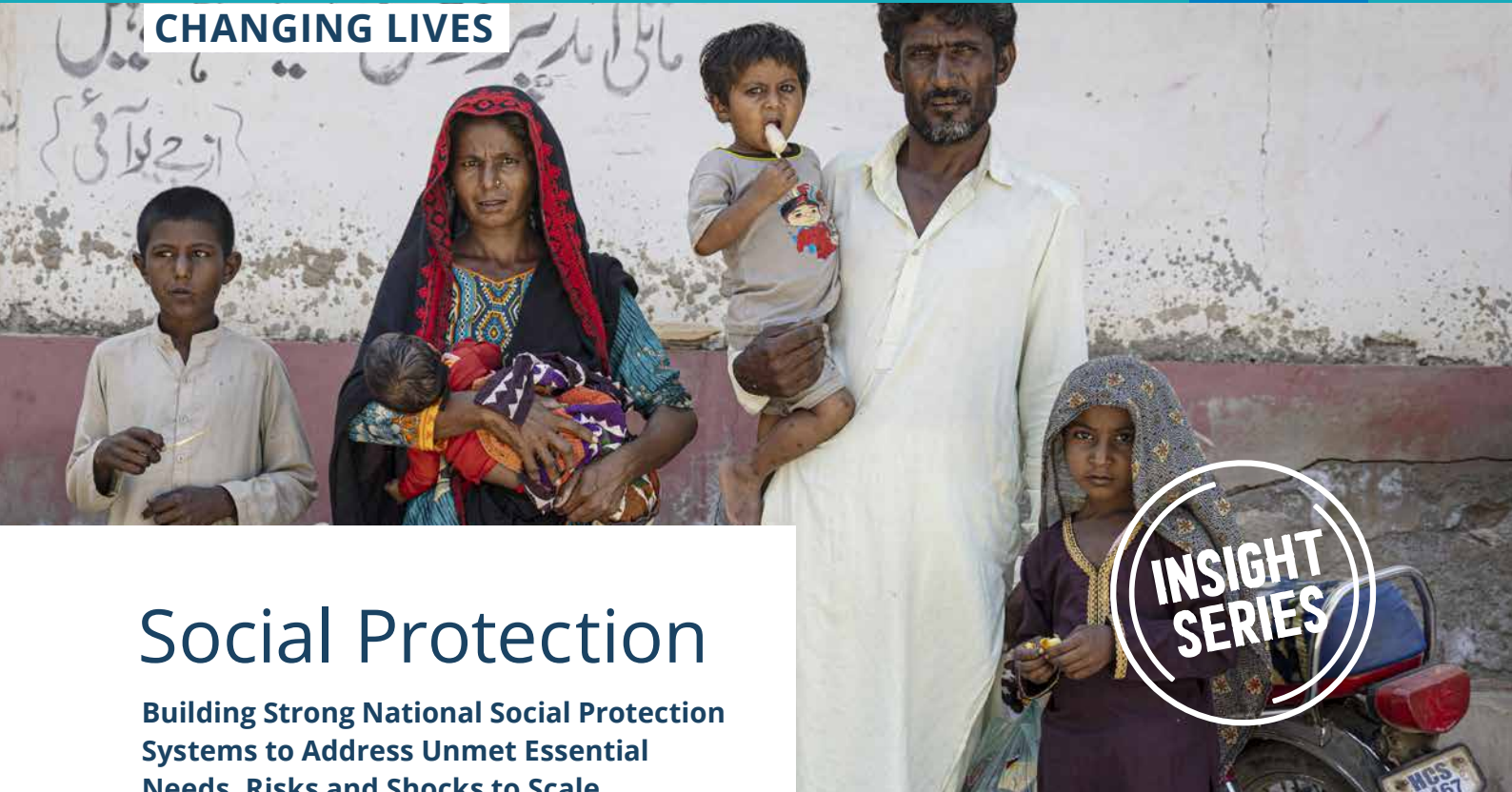


More than **half of the world's population**— as many as **4.1 billion people**— have no access to social protection, leaving them more vulnerable to acute poverty, malnutrition, and shocks. Out of the 842 million people who are hungry, only a small fraction are covered by national social protection.



CHANGING LIVES



Social Protection

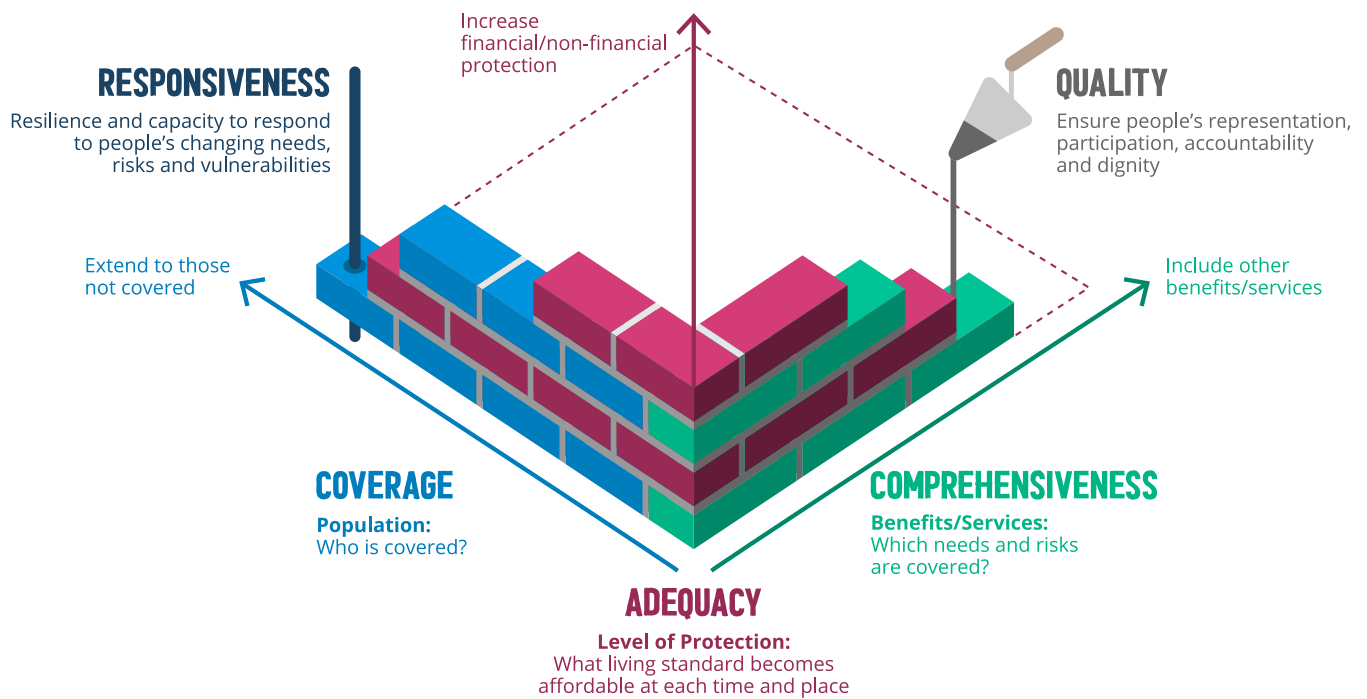
Building Strong National Social Protection Systems to Address Unmet Essential Needs, Risks and Shocks to Scale

THE CHALLENGE

Over the last 20 years, social protection has become widely recognised as a powerful tool for reducing poverty, addressing shocks, and promoting conditions to support human capital development, household level resilience and economic growth. The [ILO World Social Protection Report 2020-2022](#) estimates that more than half of the world's population — as many as 4.1 billion people — have still no access to social protection, leaving them more vulnerable to acute poverty, hunger and malnutrition. It also highlights significant inequalities across and within regions, with coverage rates ranging from 84 per cent in Europe and Central Asia to just 17 per cent in Africa.

These gaps in the coverage, adequacy, and comprehensiveness of social protection systems, particularly in developing countries are due to a lack of sustained and adequate investments. The [ILO](#) report also confirms that countries spend an average of 13 per cent of their GDP on social protection (excluding health), but this figure masks staggering variations — from 16 percent invested by high-income countries to one percent by low-income countries.

Additionally, existing social protection responses do not explicitly address food and nutrition, increasing people's vulnerabilities to acute poverty, asset depletion and the irreparable loss in human capital and lives.



The need for greater investment in social protection has become more urgent now given the current and unprecedented global food crisis, which is expected to peak in 2023 and beyond. WFP has scaled up direct food and nutrition assistance to over 120 million people, but the increasing needs will soon outstrip WFP or any other organization's ability to respond. We can address this challenge by investing catalytic amounts in strengthening national systems, WFP can support governments and help them improve outcomes for millions of hungry and malnourished people whom we do not reach directly.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

WFP provides technical and operational support to governments as they build and strengthen national social protection systems to respond to the existing gaps. Our extensive field presence, operational experience, analytical capabilities as well as our experience in designing and implementing programmes that contribute to food security and nutrition help us to assist these governments and partners to address the complex relationship between poverty, hunger and malnutrition which undermines the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs) as well as the long-term well-being of their citizens.

Specifically, WFP can help to achieve two interrelated and mutually reinforcing objectives:

1 Enhance social protection's food security and nutrition outcomes at scale

Social protection is usually designed as an anti-poverty measure. However, poverty reduction does not guarantee a proportionate reduction in food insecurity – either nationally or in households – and food security does not necessarily translate into better nutrition. Social protection has the potential to make a positive impact by improving food availability, access, utilization and stability over time. Therefore, there is both a need and opportunity to support governments in building strong national systems and driving social protection policies and programmes to put food security and nutrition at their heart.

2 Improve social protection systems and programmes to address risks and shocks at scale

Globally, the frequency, size and duration of disasters and crises are on the rise. [The Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability report](#) indicates that climate change could increase the risks of hunger and malnutrition by up to 20 per cent

by 2050. It could result in crop and livestock failure, directly impacting dietary diversity and reducing overall food consumption, exposing millions of people to long-term detrimental effects as well as increasing the strain on humanitarian systems.

WHY WFP?

The [Global Food Crisis](#) has pushed millions of people into food insecurity. At least 349 million people across 79 countries are facing acute food insecurity and 60 million children are at risk of being acutely malnourished by the end of 2022. Only a small fraction of these hungry people have access to social protection systems and at the same time the capacity of governments to respond to these crises, is becoming more and more stretched.

As a global leader in fighting hunger and malnutrition worldwide, WFP is increasingly being called upon by national governments to help implement or strengthen national social protection systems.

Since the onset of the global food crisis, more than half of WFP's country offices have been

approached by governments asking for support with analysis or technical assistance to develop national early warning systems for food security. [WFP's Social Protection Engagements in 2021](#), as per the analysis of WFP's Annual Country Reports (ACRs) indicate that 83 country offices, supported national governments to deliver on social protection, demonstrating the trust in WFP and its growing capacity to engage in the sector.

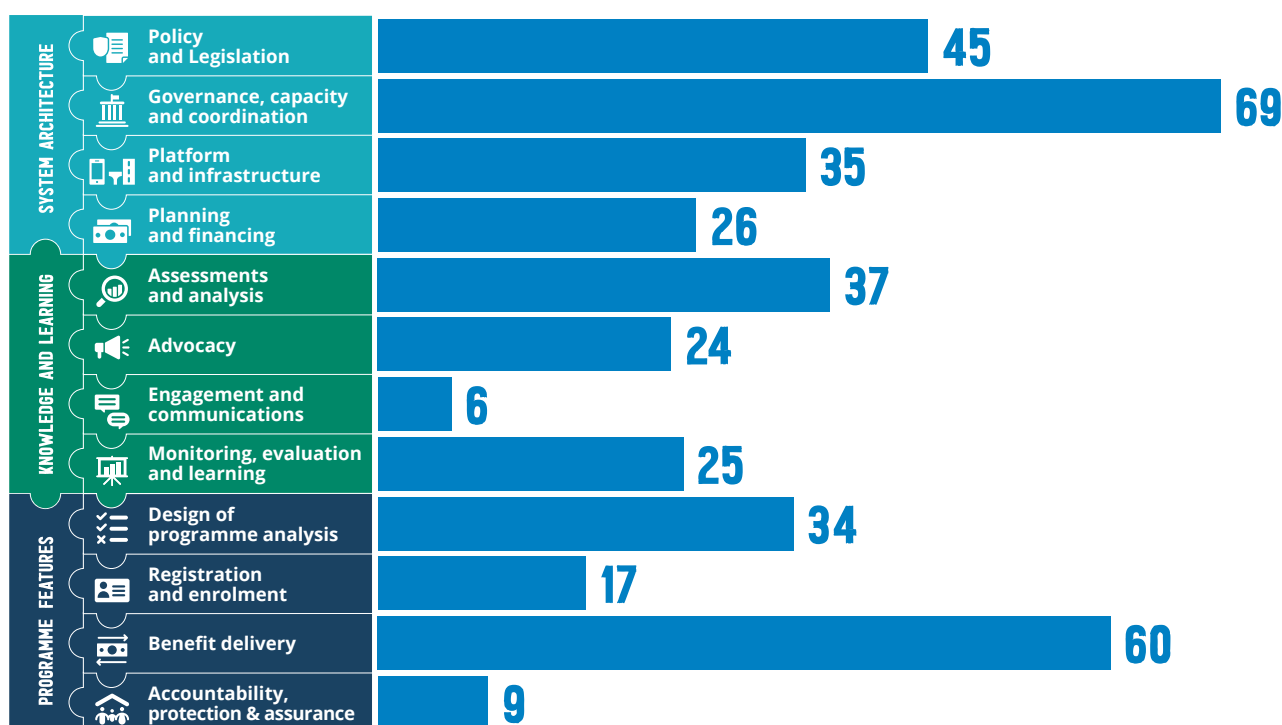
This growing demand and WFP's experience creates opportunities for the agency to influence and steer the social protection agenda.

WFP is uniquely positioned to support in three critical ways:

1 Building and strengthening various components of national social protection systems

Working to improve the national social protection system architecture, WFP can steer the sector as a whole – from influencing the policies and institutional arrangements to advising on governance, and coordination. We can also provide platforms and infrastructures

Number of countries where WFP contributed to each of the 12 building blocks, through technical advice to national actors and/or delivery on their behalf, 2021.



alongside guidance on planning and financing as well as cross-cutting processes of knowledge and learning. WFP can also share our experience in providing support to social protection in contexts where development, humanitarian and/or peace actors are working alongside one another, often in situations of protracted crisis, conflict, and post-conflict settings. This includes a contribution to the development of advocacy strategies and coherent action plans for social protection, for the integration of social protection into plans for emergency preparedness, and for the transition from internationally led interventions to sustainable nationally led social protection systems.

2 Support the quantity and quality of national social protection programming

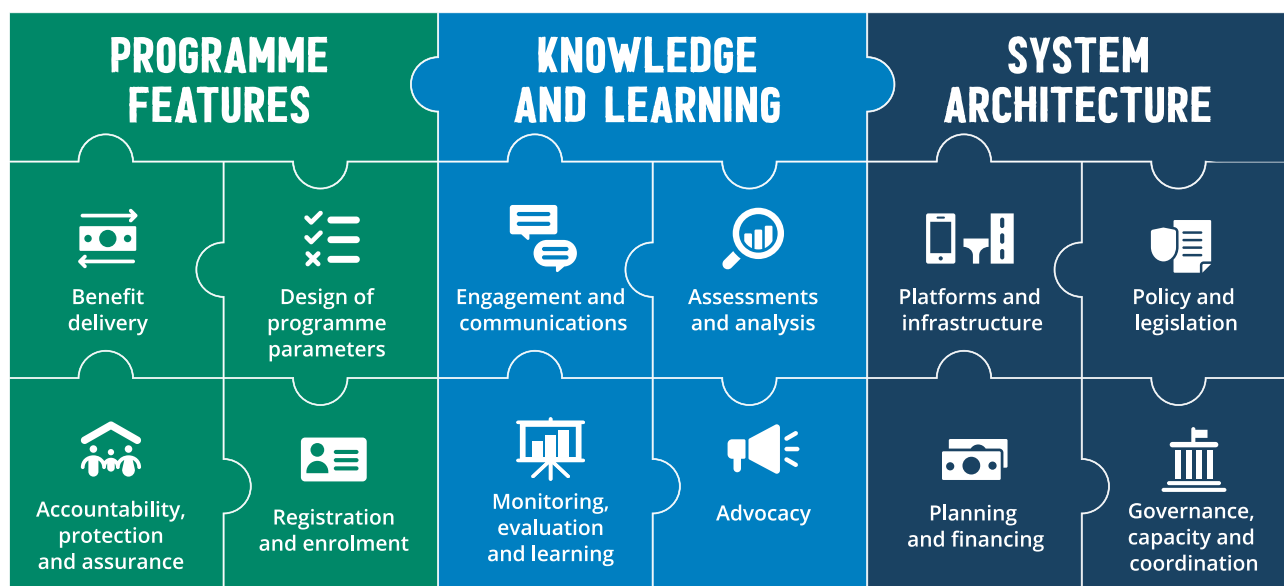
WFP has the expertise to strengthen the capacity of national actors, set programme design parameters, and advise on many aspects of registration and enrolment. Our technical advice and operational support on the design, selection, and roll-out of mechanisms and payment instruments for delivering

benefits to people includes support for cash transfer programmes, food assistance, logistics, and supply chain as well as nutrition, food safety, and food security.

3 Strengthening partnerships and evidence on social protection

In social protection our partnerships for operations, resourcing, knowledge, and advocacy are likely to include our participation in joint programming, providing common platforms and services, engaging in joint advocacy for resourcing and supporting national solutions. Our systematic efforts to produce evidence, exchange knowledge, and support the process of learning helps us to contribute to social protection. Furthermore, WFP's work on engagement and communications with affected populations in social protection is an essential strand for improving programme quality and effectiveness, promoting participation, inclusion and transparency for greater accountability.

Building blocks of a national social protection system



World Food Programme

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70,
00148 Rome, Italy - T +39 06 65131

wfp.org

January 2023