



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



# Scoping Study on Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition and Managing Risks and Shocks in Asia and the Pacific Through Support to Social Protection Systems

Samoa

February 2023

This report was written by Rebecca Holmes with research support from Suzanne Wargo and Daniela Baur. The authors are grateful to WFP staff in Samoa, in particular Emma Conlan, Philippe Martins, Katerina Sefeti and Debbie Gourlay, and the Regional Bureau Bangkok, and to the various staff of the Government of Samoa and development and humanitarian agencies that provided inputs and insights for the scoping study. The analysis presented in this paper is the responsibility of the authors alone. The report is based on evidence review and interviews carried out in early 2022 and so does not comprehensively reflect changes in Samoa's social protection policies and programmes, and the wider environmental and political landscape, that may have taken place later in 2022 or at the start of 2023.

**Suggested citation:** Holmes, R. with S. Wargo and D. Baur. 2023. *Scoping Study on Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition and Managing Risks and Shocks in Asia and the Pacific Through Support to Social Protection Systems: Samoa*. Centre for International Development and Training, Wolverhampton, and World Food Programme, Bangkok.

This report is one of a series covering Cambodia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Samoa. Across the series, the authors are grateful to World Food Programme (WFP) staff from those country offices who made considerable investments to facilitate and guide the work of the research team. In particular, the authors are thankful to:

**Cambodia:** Kurt BURJA and Sovannarith HANG  
**Pakistan:** Peter HOLTSBERG and Tahir NAWAZ  
**Samoa:** Emma CONLAN, Philippe MARTINS, Katerina SEFETI and Debbie GOURLAY  
**Sri Lanka:** Rushini PERERA and Natacha PUGIN

For additional peer review the authors are grateful to WFP staff from Social Protection Unit, headquarters (HQ). The authors extend thanks to staff of the Regional Bureau Bangkok: Daniel Longhurst (WFP), Aphitchaya Nguanbanchong (WFP) and Sara Pavanello (WFP) for their invaluable steer on the project in its early stages and for technical input into the draft; and Soyson Hitapong (WFP) and Anongnard Wongsawat (WFP) for providing programme management support during the process.





## Executive Summary

Samoa is a small island state comprising approximately 200,000 people. Informal and traditional forms of social protection are the most common forms of support to those vulnerable to poverty, social risks, and disasters help in times of need. However, changes in the Samoan economy and society, environmental degradation and high risks to climate- and health-related shocks are increasingly putting pressure on informal and traditional forms of support. Samoan people's well-being is deteriorating, malnutrition rates are increasing, and gender gaps are widening, contributing to high levels of gender-based violence and limited economic opportunities for women and girls.

This study provides an overview of poverty and vulnerability in Samoa with a gender and inclusion lens and discusses the current status of social protection policy, systems and programmes. It also focuses on shock-responsive social protection and the linkages between social protection and advancing zero hunger. The study's overall objective is to support the formulation of the new generation of Country Strategic Plans for the WFP Pacific Multi-Country Office and to provide strategic and programmatic recommendations to WFP to support the direction, policy, programmatic and partnership engagement in support of national social protection systems and goals in Samoa.

### SOCIAL PROTECTION IN SAMOA

The provision of national social protection in Samoa is limited. The main social assistance programme provided by the Government of Samoa is a non-contributory monthly pension to older persons. This was also adapted in response to Covid-19.

However, there is progress towards developing a social protection system in the country. In 2018, the United Nations SDG Fund funded a two-year Joint Programme for Social Protection, led by UNDP. A social protection committee has drafted a national social protection policy (NSPP) currently under discussion with the Samoan Government. This policy sets out various institutional arrangement options for the management and coordination of a long-term inclusive social protection system, as well as the prioritization of social protection programmes to be rolled out in the short term (for example, the disability grant). The policy aims to provide a framework for an inclusive and shock-responsive social protection system for Samoa.

### WFP ROLE IN SAMOA

Samoa is one of 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTS) that WFP covers through its Pacific Multi-Country Office. Whilst to date WFP has not been directly engaged in social protection in Samoa, it has supported the government and partners in strengthening food security and emergency preparedness to disasters.

## MOVING FORWARD: WFP'S ROLE IN SAMOA

Social protection is still nascent in Samoa, but there are important opportunities and entry points for WFP to strategically engage in this sector as it develops, in co-ordination with other development partners. Given that informal and traditional social protection in Samoa remain the dominant forms of support for reducing poverty and social risks and helping in the aftermath of a disaster in the community, any support to the development of formal social protection programmes and systems must support this existing community and solidarity network and not undermine it.

WFP can also build on the intentional gender equitable and inclusive approach which underpins the emerging social protection sector in Samoa, further strengthening future social protection systems and programmes to address gender inequality and exclusion and promote women and girls' empowerment across the life cycle.

The main strategic entry points identified for WFP include:

### System architecture:

- Support national dialogues to focus on the role of social protection in addressing food insecurity and advancing zero hunger, supporting a gender and inclusion approach.
- Contribute to existing coordination mechanisms in Samoa to collaborate and share information on the role of social protection in supporting food security and disaster responses (including anticipatory action).
- Identify areas of support in the development of the MIS in discussion with UNICEF.

### Knowledge and learning:

- Identify areas to support the national Bureau of Statistics to strengthen regular data collection on social protection.
- Support the advocacy agenda on social protection in collaboration with existing stakeholders and take a role in advocacy efforts to support better food and nutrition security, including through the empowerment of women and girls.
- Explore opportunities to support engagement and communication with local authorities and communities in Samoa on social protection.

### Programme features:

- Identify opportunities to support the development of management and beneficiary systems (e.g., in the set-up of the disability grant).
- Support the collection of data, including disaggregated data and analysis on gender and inclusion.
- Provide technical support to strengthen beneficiary communication and feedback mechanisms in emerging social protection programmes, and explore options to strengthen communication around DRM, early warning systems and disaster response.

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive summary</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Abbreviations and Acronyms</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>9</b>
1.1 Background	9
1.2 Rationale and objectives	9
1.3 Structure	10
<b>2. Samoa context</b> .....	<b>11</b>
2.1 Poverty and vulnerability to shocks in Samoa	11
2.2 Food and nutrition insecurity	12
2.3 Gender equality and social inclusion	13
<b>3. Social protection in Samoa: policy priorities and systems</b> .....	<b>14</b>
3.1 National social protection policy priorities	14
3.2 National social protection system architecture	16
3.3 Summary of key challenges in Samoa’s social protection policy and systems	17
<b>4. Social protection in Samoa: Programmes</b> .....	<b>19</b>
4.1 Informal social protection	19
4.2 State-led formal social protection	20
4.2.1 Senior Citizens Benefit Fund (SCBF) .....	20
4.2.2 National Provident Fund (NPF).....	20
4.2.3 Accident compensation schemes.....	20
4.2.4 Labour market.....	21
4.3 Projects under the SDG Joint Programme on Social Protection Strengthening Resilience of Pacific Island States Through Universal Social Protection	21
4.4 Programmes proposed under the Draft National Social Protection Policy (NSPP)	22
4.5 Health and education	23
4.6 Summary of strengths and weaknesses in social protection programming in Samoa	23
<b>5. Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition through support to Social Protection Systems</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>6. Managing Risks and Shocks through support to Social Protection Systems</b> .....	<b>28</b>
6.1 Covid-19 response	28
6.2 Climate and resilience	28
<b>7. Significant actors and governance arrangements</b> .....	<b>30</b>

<b>8 WFP’s role in Social Protection in Samoa</b> .....	<b>33</b>
8.1 System architecture findings and recommendations	34
8.2 Knowledge and learning findings and recommendations	35
8.3 Programme features findings and recommendations	36
<b>References</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<b>Annex 1: COVID-19 response social protection programs</b> .....	<b>41</b>

## Boxes

<b>Box 1: Drivers of food and nutrition insecurity, poverty and vulnerability in Samoa</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Box 2: Development priorities for Samoa</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Box 3: Gaps in data and systems to reach the most vulnerable in Samoa</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Box 4: Priority actions for strengthening the administrative and system capacity of social protection in Samoa</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Box 5: Remittances in Samoa</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Box 6: Overview of the SDG Fund in Samoa</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Box 7: Gaps in social protection in Samoa across the life course</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Box 8: Food security and nutrition policy priorities in Samoa</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Box 9: Priorities identified/proposed in the Government of Samoa, 2021a, Samoa Food Systems Pathways 2030 in relation to social protection</b>	<b>27</b>

## Figures

<b>Figure 1: Map of Samoa</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Figure 2: WFP Twelve building blocks of national social protection systems</b>	<b>33</b>

## Tables

<b>Table 1: Overview of social protection programmes in Samoa</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Table 2: Proposed suite of social protection programmes for Samoa</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Table 3 International agencies supporting supporting social protection in Samoa</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Table 4 Local organizations, independent organizations and the private sector</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Table 5: Recommended WFP actions on social protection in Samoa by building block</b>	<b>37</b>

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

DFAT	Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRSP	Disaster Response Social Protection
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the South Pacific
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KII	Key informant interview
MCO	Multi-Country Office
MCSP	Multi-Country Strategic Plan
MIS	Management Information System
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NOLA	National Advocacy Organisation for Persons with Disabilities in Samoa
NFNP	(Samoa) National Food and Nutrition Policy
NPF	(Samoa) National Provident Fund
NSPP	(Samoa) National Social Protection Policy
SBS	Samoa Bureau of Statistics
SCBF	(Samoa) Senior Citizens Benefit Fund
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the South Pacific
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping



Figure 1: Map of Samoa





# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

**Samoa is a small island state, with just over 200,000 people spread over four main islands.** While a lower-middle-income country, its location, limited scale and vulnerability to external shocks and environmental stresses mean that it faces specific challenges like other small island states. The economy is mainly based on agriculture, fisheries, tourism and service industries. Economic growth – already comparatively low and volatile – has further been affected by the Covid crisis, although remittances have remained steady, contributing 30 percent to GDP.

**Samoa's population faces unique challenges with poverty, food and nutrition insecurity, and rising social risks.** National poverty and vulnerability rates are increasing because of high living costs, lack of access to services and limited decent employment and productive livelihood activities. The triple burden of malnutrition – obesity, micronutrient deficiencies and undernutrition – are significant problems across the population's life cycle, contributing to high rates of non-communicable diseases. Limited agricultural resources, agricultural production of local foods, inadequate food consumption and poor-quality diet all contribute to the high levels of food and nutrition insecurity. Moreover, social risks and inequalities also drive differential levels and experiences of poverty and vulnerability. Unemployment is rising, particularly for women and youth, with women's labour force participation significantly lower than men's, driven by inequalities in the labour market, school drop-out rates among girls in secondary school, and women's time disproportionately spent on care and domestic responsibilities. Women's access to economic resources is often lower than men's, influencing their ability to engage in productive livelihoods. Women and girls also face high levels of domestic violence and high teenage pregnancy rates, which further exacerbate the vicious cycle for young women participating in low-paid, informal work due to limited education, skills and domestic responsibilities.

**Vulnerability to climatic and health crises also exacerbates poverty, food and nutrition insecurity and social risks across the life cycle.** Like other countries in the Pacific, Samoa is highly vulnerable to

cyclones, tsunamis, earthquakes, and dry spells. In 2009 and 2012, the tsunami and Cyclone Evan reaped significant devastation across the Samoan society, devastating lives and livelihoods, damaging homes and crops, with significant economic repercussions at household and national levels. These accumulative shocks further exacerbate soil erosion and access to resources, negatively impacting food and nutrition security over the medium-to-long term.

**The current provision of formal social protection in Samoa is minimal.** Formal social protection favours the elderly and formal-sector workers, with inadequate coverage for the population throughout their lives. Traditional and informal safety nets, including remittances, remain the main mechanisms of supporting people in need, especially in times of crisis. Still, these mechanisms are under increasing strain due to lifestyle changes, urbanisation and pressures of poverty, malnutrition and recurrent crises.

## 1.2 Rationale and objectives

This scoping study is part of a wider project commissioned by WFP's Regional Bureau covering Asia and the Pacific (WFP RBB) to conduct a series of scoping studies and a regional synthesis report on enhancing food security and nutrition and managing risks and shocks and Asia and the Pacific through support to social protection systems.

The study's objective is to support the formulation of the new generation of Country Strategic Plans (CSPs) for selected Country Offices (COs) by conducting four country case studies on social protection in the Asia-Pacific region (Cambodia, Pakistan, Samoa and Sri Lanka)<sup>1</sup>.

The study contributes to a broader WFP goal to better understand the social protection landscape, key actors, policies and initiatives, and opportunities and challenges that can help integrate social protection into the WFP Multi-Country Office Country Strategic Plans (MCSPs). This goal is to help ensure that Country Offices' engagement in social protection is well-defined with clear objectives, outputs and activities, including capacity building actions to support the design and delivery of social protection.

<sup>1</sup> Note this project is also part of a wider multi-country study on scoping social protection in the Pacific region – WFP (2022) Social Protection in The Pacific: A Four Country Review of Social Protection and Vulnerability in Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

More specifically, the study seeks to:

- a) **Enable a deeper understanding of existing national social protection policies, programmes and related instruments** with a focus on food security, nutrition and shocks in Samoa; and the main national and international social protection actors in-country or regionally, their priorities, roles and activities.
- b) **Provide an overview of the challenges and opportunities of social protection in Samoa** to address multi-dimensional vulnerability better; help people better manage risks and shocks; and contribute to zero hunger.
- c) **Provide strategic and programmatic recommendations to WFP Multi-Country Office (MCO)** that can feed into the formulation of the new generation of the CSP to better define and improve their strategic direction, policy, programmatic and partnership engagement in support of national social protection systems and goals.

## 1.3 Structure

The structure of the remainder of the study is as follows. Section 2 overviews the Samoan context, looking at poverty, vulnerability, and shocks. Section 3 discusses national social protection policy priorities, institutions, and systems in Samoa, while Section 4 provides an overview of the current implemented social protection programmes. Section 5 discusses how social protection could advance zero hunger, and Section 6 looks at the country's responses to shocks. Section 7 looks in more detail at the actors operating in the social protection space in Samoa. Section 8 concludes and proposes how WFP could strategically support social protection in Samoa.

## 2. Samoa context

### 2.1 Poverty and vulnerability to shocks in Samoa

**Samoa is a small island state classified by the World Bank as a lower-middle-income country.** It has a population of 201,494 (World Population Review, 2022) spread across four main islands (Savaii, Upolu, Manono and Apolima). 77 percent of the population resides in Upolu (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, 2016). A significant proportion (82.1 percent) of the population lives in rural areas where people are mainly engaged in subsistence activities (World Bank, 2021d). Approximately 47 percent of the population is below the age of 20 (World Bank, 2022).

**The economy is based mainly on agriculture, fisheries, tourism, remittances and service industries.** In 2018, tourism accounted for 30 percent of Samoa's GDP (Khondker, 2021). Agriculture, forestry and fishing contributed to 10.25 percent of GDP in 2020 (World Bank, 2021a), although these have been steadily decreasing compared to 22.08 percent since 1994. Like other countries in the Pacific, Samoa also has a high net outward migration with migrant workers being a significant source of remittances. They majorly contribute to the Samoan economy and informal social protection support. Estimated remittances are reported as between 20–25 percent in 2020, depending on the source<sup>2</sup>. The informal system provides for the livelihoods of 80 percent of the rural population and remains the 'backbone of Samoa's economy' (Government of Samoa, 2021a). Unlike many other countries, remittances did not decline during the Covid-19 crisis between 2020–22.

**However, like other small island and atoll states, Samoa faces challenges due to its remote location, small size (lack of scale) and vulnerability to external shocks and environmental stress.** Economic growth is limited and has been declining, partly due to the economic impact of Covid-19. Like other Pacific Island states dependent on tourism, the Covid crisis negatively impacted the Samoan economy over the last two years. Maritime dependence was also affected by the crisis, as getting goods in and out was difficult. Natural hazards, such as frequent cyclones, are also a major ongoing threat to Samoa's natural marine and agricultural resources, which are declining due to long-term stresses and rapid onset shocks, resulting in devastating impacts on Samoa's communities, their production and productivity. Indeed,

in the last few years, the most impactful natural hazards have been the tsunami in 2009, Cyclone Evan in 2012, and Cyclone Gita in 2012. The World Risk Index ranks Samoa 98 out of 181 countries in terms of vulnerability to disaster (Gorman, 2021), but it is also ranked 30th of countries exposed to three or more hazards (Government of Samoa, 2013) and is expected to lose an average of 1 percent GDP each year because of tropical cyclones and just less than 1 percent annually due to earthquakes and tsunamis (World Bank, 2017a).

**The quality of life in Samoa is also deteriorating.**

Samoa is experiencing increased rates of urbanization and monetization, bringing lifestyle and social changes. The increasingly high costs of living, lack of access to services and limited decent employment opportunities are coupled with increased rates of non-communicable diseases, alcohol abuse, and domestic violence, especially against women and girls (UNDP, 2021a). At the same time, traditional and informal support systems provided by the extended family, community, and churches which have traditionally helped the most vulnerable, are decreasing (Gorman, 2021; ESCAP, 2021).

**Although the proportion of the population living below the international extreme poverty line has remained static at only 1 percent from 2010 to 2020, national poverty rates are much higher at 19 percent (ADB 2021a).** Even those just above the poverty line are vulnerable to increasing economic, climate and health shocks. Khondker (2021) notes that between 40–60 percent of the Samoan population are vulnerable to (multiple) shocks (depending on calculations against poverty lines), highlighting that most Samoans have limited shock absorption capacity. This figure may be an underestimation, as further calculations in Khondker's review of social protection in Samoa indicate that only 12 percent of the Samoan population may be resilient or non-vulnerable to shocks when using measurements of the international poverty line (Khondker, 2021: 8). A recent publication by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the South Pacific (ESCAP) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) of Samoa (2020) reports that data from the 2013/2014 Household Incomes and Expenditures Survey (HIES) shows that those who are the most vulnerable (and likely to experience heightened vulnerability during disasters) were those employed in the informal sector, as well as children, students, people with disability, and retirees.

<sup>2</sup> World Bank (2021e) data report 25.3% of the population received personal remittances in Samoa in 2021.



## 2.2 Food and nutrition insecurity

**Like many other countries in the Pacific region, Samoa suffers from 'the triple burden of malnutrition: obesity, micronutrient deficiencies and undernutrition'** (Government of Samoa, 2021a).

Samoa is on course to meet three global nutrition targets for maternal, infant and young child nutrition (MIYCN) (exclusive breastfeeding, reduction in wasting and prevalence of overweight children) (Global Nutrition Report, 2021). However, serious challenges exist in reducing anaemia among women of reproductive age (aged 15–49), stunting among children and diet-related non-communicable disease targets (e.g., no progress in

reversing the increasing levels of obesity and diabetes). There are also significant gender and lifespan dimensions to malnutrition. For example, women have higher rates of obesity and diabetes than men, and anaemia is high among women of childbearing age (15–49 years) (ibid).

**Several interconnected factors drive poverty, vulnerability and food insecurity.** These include economic constraints, including high unemployment and underemployment, especially amongst women and youth who face specific barriers to participate in the labour force; lack of access to education and other basic services; lack of arable land and availability of agricultural resources; inadequate food consumption and poor-quality diet; and gender inequity (see Box 1 and Section 2.3 below) (Duckworth, 2017).

### BOX 1: DRIVERS OF FOOD AND NUTRITION INSECURITY, POVERTY

The drivers of food and nutrition insecurity, poverty and vulnerability in Samoa are multiple and overlapping. Some of the significant drivers include:

**The lack of arable land and the availability of agricultural resources is a problem in Samoa.** Natural disasters have been a primary source of the problem, combined with longer-term environmental degradation. Estimates suggest, for example, that 82 percent of Samoans live in rural areas (World Bank, 2021d), but in 2018, only 11.5 percent of the land area was arable (World Bank, 2021b). After the 2009 earthquake and tsunami, arable land reduced to 2.8 percent of the country's land area and has been steadily decreasing since then.

**Inadequate food consumption and a poor-quality diet also lead to high malnutrition rates in Samoa.** An increase in the consumption of imported foods contributes to high caloric consumption but not high quality of nutrients. Estimates show that from 1961 to 2007, the surge of imported foods made 900 extra calories available per person per day (Seiden et al., 2012). and dietary fat availability rose at a disproportionately fast rate of 73 percent. However, the caloric intake of traditionally consumed and locally produced food like coconuts, starchy vegetables and fruits rose negligibly. Overconsumption of calories and high-fat foods are linked to chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease, all of which rising in Samoa (Strelow, 2020).

**At the same time, there is inadequate food consumption of certain food types (Government of Samoa, 2021a) leading to nutrition imbalances and a lack of required micronutrients.** The consumption of fruits and vegetables, for example, is low. Most (61 percent) of the home food consumption is purchased, with only 37 percent of the top 30 food items (by share of expenditure) locally produced, suggesting a large consumption of food imports. Prices influence consumption, and lower costs and convenient availability influence preference for modern (most are imported) foods over traditional foods.

**This data shows that education, income and access to healthy foods are interconnected (Strelow, 2020).** The percentage of Samoans living below the food poverty line had dropped from 10.6 percent of the population in 2008 to 4.3 percent in 2014 (Government of Samoa National Statistics Office & UNDP Pacific Centre, 2016), and incidences of extreme hunger and poverty have steadily declined due to heightened caloric availability. However, Samoan financial inequality continues to increase as a result of globalization, which also has nearly eliminated extreme hunger. Samoa imports goods at a much higher rate than they export goods, leading to a lack of cash in the economy and job opportunities for those not directly connected to the global trade market. Those living at or below the food poverty line typically lack formal degrees and belong to the 8.7 percent, of Samoans unemployed. Cultural and historical circumstances have made imported foods more desirable than traditionally consumed foods, regardless of their quality. Wealthy and impoverished Samoans alike have developed an appetite for imported foods. However, the most vulnerable in the population have limited choice in what they consume.

## 2.3 Gender equality and social inclusion

**Gender, disability and age are all strongly interconnected with poverty rates, vulnerability and food and nutrition insecurity in Samoa.** While Samoa is a relatively ethnically homogenous society<sup>3</sup>, and there are laws in place to protect women, children and persons with disability, individuals continue to face discrimination, inequality and risks associated with gender, disability and age across the political, economic and social spheres<sup>4</sup>.

**Women and girls, for example, face heightened social risks, including high rates of teenage pregnancy and violence, leading to further health and nutrition challenges for women and children.**

The adolescent pregnancy rate, for example, is 39 births to adolescent women per 1,000 women, although there are indications that this is decreasing (UN Women, 2022). Young women also have limited access to reproductive health and planning services, including contraceptives, especially in rural areas (UNFPA, 2015, p. 8 in OECD Development Centre, 2019). In 2018, 17.8 percent of women aged 15–49 reported being subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months (UN Women, 2022). However, conservative norms and culture restrict women from accessing justice, and a culture of silence around violence against women has been linked with beliefs that domestic violence is a private matter that should be dealt with in the home (NHRI, 2015, p. 14, OECD Development Centre, 2019).

**Social, cultural and religious norms also result in gender inequalities in the household, which contribute to women's disproportionate time spent on care and domestic work, limiting women's income-generating opportunities.** As in many places, gender role expectations within Samoan households hold that men deal mostly with work outside the house, while women are involved mainly in work within the home. Lack of access to childcare facilities also constrains the ability of young mothers to enter and remain in the labour force, which can lead to high levels of poverty among families with young children (Khondker, 2021).

**Women have fewer opportunities in the labour market and limited access to productive resources and assets.** Unemployment rates are twice as high for women as they are for men (21.3 percent for women compared to 10.3 percent for men), and young women have higher rates of NEET (Not in Employment, Education and Training) than young men (World Bank, 2021c). Social and cultural norms influence the types of job opportunities women can access. The matai title system mediates women's opportunities in political and economic spheres as women are less likely than men to hold a matai title. This lack limits women's opportunities for leadership positions and in parliament since a matai title is a requirement in some posts, contributes to their exclusion from the labour force and limits women to particular types of work, especially in the informal sector. The disparity between men's and women's engagement in agriculture in Samoa results in a significant gender gap in incomes, contributing to family poverty (Duckworth, 2017).

**The 2015 Census highlighted significant inequalities in access to services and livelihoods for persons with disability<sup>5</sup>.** Compared to Samoans with no disabilities, Samoans with disabilities are five times more likely to have never attended school. Approximately 10 percent of Samoans with disabilities have no education compared to only two percent of people without disabilities. Moreover, one in twenty Samoans with disabilities are engaged in paid work compared to one in four people without disabilities (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, Pacific Community, & UNICEF Pacific, 2018). Indeed, 58 percent of people with disabilities are not economically active compared to 17 percent of people without disabilities. There are also gender dimensions, as men with and without disabilities are more likely to have paid employment than women with and without disabilities (Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, Pacific Community, & UNICEF Pacific, 2018).

3 Approximately 96% of Samoa's population is ethnically Samoan (Cia World Factbook, 2011)).

4 Although there are very few legal protections against discrimination for LGBT+ persons in the region. Anti-discrimination protections exist only in relation to employment rights - Samoa has included sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination in employment rights laws (Rodrigues, 2019).

5 According to the Disability Monograph (2018), approximately 7 percent of the Samoan population has some form of disability. Citizens who could be regarded as severely disabled comprise 2 percent of the population. As a result of the rising incidence of non-communicable diseases, however, the prevalence of disability is expected to grow, especially diabetes, leading to amputations, strokes, and visual impairments (WFP, 2022).

# 3. Social protection in Samoa: policy priorities and systems

## 3.1 National social protection policy priorities

**Social protection in Samoa is under evidenced compared to other countries in the region without a strong directive from an overarching social protection policy or system.**

**There are currently limited overarching legislation and policies related to social protection.** Those that are relevant and do exist are:

- the National Provident Fund Act 1972 – covers the Senior Citizens Benefit Fund (SCBF) and the National Provident Fund (NPF);
- the Accident Compensation Act 1989 – covers workers’ compensation (Gorman, 2021); and
- national legislation concerning parental leave – national legislation provides six weeks of maternity leave and five days of paternity leave, but there is no ability to transfer maternity leave to fathers (Addati et al., 2022). Maternity leave cash benefits are a percentage of previous earnings – 66.7 percent funded by employers (employer liability). For fathers, they are 100 percent for the five days funded by employers. However, there is no provision of maternity or paternity leave cash benefits for self-employed workers (Addati et al., 2022).

**Social protection has not historically been a priority in the national strategy for the development of Samoa. However, there are indications that social protection is becoming a more prominent policy feature.** Social protection is mentioned twice in the national *Pathway for the Development of Samoa FY2021/22–FY2025/26* (PDS 2021–25) (Government of Samoa, 2021b). Under the Key Strategic Outcome 1: Improved Social Development, expanding the coverage of affordable and sustainable social protection is stated as a way to help people meet their basic needs and alleviate hardship. Under the Key Strategic Outcome 2: Diversified and Sustainable Economy, the document states that the Government seeks to invest in public goods and services, including social protection, as the economy grows (see Box 2).

**Through its newly launched Samoa 2040 vision (Government of Samoa, 2021c), the Government of Samoa also highlighted the importance of social protection** for improving and ‘maintaining peace, security, and inclusivity’ in Samoa, which are ‘critical for Samoa’s sustainable development aspirations’. The plan focuses on strengthening tourism, agriculture and fishing opportunities, the digital economy and labour mobility, as well as investing in human, physical and social capital. It states the benefits of expanding government-led mechanisms (for example, basic platforms to identify eligible recipients and distribute benefits) to improve the livelihoods and welfare of the poorest and most vulnerable in Samoa, especially in response to disasters. However, despite the brief references to social protection, neither the *Samoa 2040* nor the *PDS 2021–2025* (or the accompanying 14 sector plans) explicitly detail what social protection should look like or how to operationalize social protection systems in Samoa.

**A draft National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) has been developed with UN support but has not yet had government approval.** This draft has been developed through technical assistance from UNDP as part of the Social Protection Joint Programme (see more in Section 4) in consultation with the Social Protection Technical Committee comprising Samoan Government and non-governmental stakeholders (UN Joint SDG Fund, 2021). A consultation was held in June 2021 and at the time interviews were held for this study (March 2022), the draft policy was being presented to Cabinet for discussion. Informants interviewed indicated that several issues still need to be agreed on, including identifying an institutional lead for social protection and political commitment to financing social protection interventions in the long term.

**The draft NSPP recognizes the limitations of the existing approach to social protection and seeks to address these limitations,** as the following excerpt illustrates: *“existing social protection measures in Samoa are ad hoc and fragmented, and are not geared towards addressing life cycle vulnerabilities, especially amongst the poorest and most vulnerable groups, families and individuals. They are not considered as investments towards building human capital, resilience and economic growth. Social protection programmes can mitigate the negative and dramatic impacts of crises or shocks on the local economy,*



## BOX 2: DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES FOR SAMOA

Both the Samoa Development Plan (SDP) 2040, which sets out priorities over the next 20 years and the 5-year strategy for Samoa over 2021–2025 centre around improving people’s resilience and reducing poverty and vulnerability. The development agenda includes expanding employment opportunities, increasing local food production and productivity, improving health and education, increasing climate and disaster resilience and emergency responses.

The *Pathway for the Development of Samoa FY2021/22–FY2025/26* outlines five strategic outcomes for Samoa over this period. They are:

1. Improved Social Development
2. Diversified and Sustainable Economy
3. Security and Trusted Governance
4. Secured Environment and Climate Change
5. Structured Public Works and Infrastructure

The vision for Samoa is to foster social harmony, safety and freedom for all through empowering communities, building resilience and inspiring growth.

Source: *Government of Samoa, 2021b*

*livelihoods and poverty levels*” (Ibid.). The NSPP takes an inclusive approach, including paying attention to gender inequality and disability, and is based on principles including equity, inclusion, empowerment, resilience and strengthening existing community-level support (Ibid.).

**The NSPP proposes a universal life cycle approach to social protection through the development of a social protection floor and includes numerous interventions to be implemented across a phased approach.** The proposed policy draws from Khondker’s (2021) review and proposal for Samoa’s Inclusive Social Protection System (SISP), which consists of interventions across the life cycle in the three components of social protection: developing and strengthening social assistance; developing and strengthening social insurance; development of active labour market measures; as well as complementary measures (these are discussed further in Section 4.4). Underpinning the NSPP is the need for effective and efficient implementation of social protection. Key informant interviews for this study described the proposal of three options for the institutional arrangements for the NSPP, which include:

- assigning components of the social protection framework to existing ministries and strengthening departments/divisions /sections within these (e.g., labour market services to Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour, social welfare to Ministry of Women Children and Social Development, social insurance to Ministry of Finance);
- establishing a Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, bringing the three components together under one Ministry; and

- giving ministries policy roles and creating public agencies to manage benefits and services.

**Some other sectoral policies or documents mention social protection, but there is limited detail of what these linkages mean in practice<sup>6</sup>.**

- The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Development’s Strategic Plan 2021–2026 (Government of Samoa, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, 2021a) mentions *strengthened social protection systems*, but these are not articulated further.
- The National Policy for Persons with Disability 2021–2031 (under the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Development) (Government of Samoa, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, 2021b), notes the following:
  - Strategic outcome 2: Enhanced independent living and economic development of persons with disability, (page 23) item 6: Introduction of a social security and protection systems for persons with disability, prioritizing those who cannot work or are unable to work (at high risk of vulnerability);
  - Strategic outcome 3: Strengthened provisions of support, health services and assistive devices (page 25) item 14: Provide, as part of the social protection system, financial support provisions for parents and caregivers of persons with disabilities, an inclusive social protection system for persons with disabilities. This could be resourced through existing contributory measures (e.g., The Accident Compensation Company and National Provident

<sup>6</sup> Gorman (2021) notes that there are policies for persons with disability, gender equality, child-care, as well as protection systems (but gives no further details).

Fund) and/or non-contributory measures (cash grants from government budget) by ensuring specific budgetary allocation for social protection for persons with disabilities.

- The Government of Samoa (2021a) *Samoa Food Systems Pathway 2030* outlines social protection as a critical action for achieving sustainable food and nutritional security and affordable healthy diets. It suggests to:
  - adopt and implement social protection measures in response to the impact of shocks in food supply and consumption;
  - formalize small scale agriculture, registering subsistent agriculture and fisheries sector and other informal domains of the food systems as part of the formal labour market and social protection systems<sup>7</sup>; and
  - build and strengthen nationally owned and sustainable social protection systems in Samoa in response to shocks and stress as needed, complement and reinforce efforts aimed at addressing resilience through the food systems, and mitigate the negative impacts of shocks on food security and healthy consumption. (Government of Samoa, 2021a).

## 3.2 National social protection system architecture

**Data and management information system architecture is currently weak in Samoa, with no central database or management information system.** However, a specific initiative during Covid-19 included an incentive scheme which provided citizens with

a one-off payment of WST 50 to register for the national ID. At the same time, district offices were also collecting data for the national census and collected additional information, including how people were affected by Covid-19. This data was collected by tablets through an automated survey tool (supported by UNDP). While this data was used in a report, there remains no system or central beneficiary databases for schemes, nor any advanced digital Management Information Systems (MISs) linking local areas with the centre (Key informant interview (KII), Khondker, 2021).

**Developing a centralized MIS, however, is identified as a priority area of future work to reach the most vulnerable populations and build social protection systems** (see also Box 3). There are several initiatives in place:

- **Support for digital data systems and integrated MIS System under the Social Protection Joint Programme.** UNICEF is currently leading this initiative, but delays in approving the NSPP and naming a ministry or agency to take responsibility for leading social protection in the country have stalled progress. UNICEF noted that they have been unable to move forward without a Government ministry or agency to house or run the MIS. They have explored initial options with the National Provident Fund (because the pilot programme on disability will be implemented through them), but the Fund is not a line ministry. The proposed plan is to conduct a feasibility assessment and then develop a functional MIS system, which automates the current paper-based processes, can collect real-time data and include recipients of existing programmes (elderly and the pilot for persons with disability). The aim is to work with mobile apps, link banking systems to advance financial inclusion, and adapt open source to local

### BOX 3: GAPS IN DATA AND SYSTEMS TO REACH THE MOST VULNERABLE IN SAMOA

The Government of Samoa recognises that “there are gaps that need addressing in the identification and mapping of vulnerable populations, including having solid evidence to establish the reach by vulnerable people of the economic, financial and investment support and development assistances, including incentives (small grants, stimulus packages, etc.) that could assist with improving their livelihoods” (Government of Samoa, 2021a: 15).

There is a proposal to develop and implement a Vulnerability Indicator Index to overcome some of the barriers which prevent people from accessing services and programmes. These barriers include a lack of awareness and basic understanding of concepts (of vulnerability assessments/indicators), inability to access and to put through an application and not meeting the criteria for entry into a programme. The Vulnerability Indicator Index is intended to help identify vulnerable groups and individuals, support means testing and prioritize the targeting of assistances to those in need of support (Government of Samoa, 2021a).

<sup>7</sup> To improve their decent work conditions, including the protection of their rights as workers and citizens, and improving their access to opportunities that will enhance their skills base in agricultural industries and food value chain (Government of Samoa, 2021a: 15).

#### **BOX 4: PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND SYSTEM CAPACITY OF SOCIAL PROTECTION IN SAMOA**

In a recent review of social protection in Samoa and proposal to strengthen social protection systems, Khondker (2021, p. 72) identifies the following priorities:

- **Institutional arrangements and coordination:** an institutional arrangement reinforcing and ensuring proper planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of the proposed Inclusive Social Protection System.
- **Staff capacity:** the professionalization of staff so there are trained public servants who are experts in the delivery of social security schemes at both national and local levels.
- **Targeting:** effectiveness in identifying recipients for social security programmes
- **Management Information Systems:** up-grading/installing the MISs so that they underpin the effective and efficient delivery of transfers and promote cross-governmental coordination and monitoring of performance.
- **Delivery systems:** strengthening payment mechanisms to minimize cost and to use the social protection system to promote financial inclusion, in particular among poor and vulnerable families.
- **Accountability mechanisms:** establishing an effective grievance redress so that all citizens have recourse to appeal decisions on selection and can notify the competent authorities about instances of misconduct and failures in the delivery of the promised benefit.

Source: Khondker, 2021, p. 72

needs. It is anticipated that it will take approximately a year to complete the feasibility study and develop and implement the system. Once the system is up and running, the second, longer-term aim is to add new programmes, modules and integrate other MIS for case management and enable linkages to the social registry (childbirth registration, death) (KII).

- **Developing Social Protection Indicator for Samoa under the Strengthening Resilience of Samoa through Social Protection Programme** – this is a joint agreement between the Government of Samoa through the Samoa Bureau of Statistics and UNESCAP aiming to develop social protection indicators and an evidence-based nationally-owned social protection system. Part of this strategy is to improve data collection systems to complement ongoing projects to reduce poverty and vulnerability to socio-economic and climate-related risks<sup>8</sup>.
- **Disability registry/identification of vulnerable population** – currently, there is no national disability registry in Samoa. The Government of Samoa announced the development of a new disability benefit in the 2021 budget (Gorman, 2021), but recent documents and interviews with a KII suggest that a registry or system to identify ‘vulnerable’

populations is needed first (Government of Samoa SDGs Taskforce, 2020).

Khondker (2021) further outlines several priorities to address across the administrative structure, capacity and system infrastructure (Box 4).

### 3.3 Summary of key challenges in Samoa’s social protection policy and systems

**There is currently no overarching policy or legislation on formal social protection in Samoa, leading to a fragmented and ad hoc approach.**

Although there is an NSPP, currently national development frameworks do not situate social protection as a national priority. Nor is there an integrated social protection policy framework to guide social protection or link it to Samoa’s overall development outcomes. This lack of policy means that institutionally, there is no one ‘home’ for social protection. There are currently discussions about which ministry should take responsibility for leading or coordinating social protection, but no one ministry is keen to take the lead (KIIs).

<sup>8</sup> See Samoa Bureau of Statistics and ESCAP, Date unknown.



**Perceptions of poverty and dependency highly influence political commitment to formal social protection.** Key informant interviews highlighted the political perceptions that 'poverty does not exist' in Samoa remain and that no one goes hungry because of the traditional and informal support systems. At the same time, there is concern that social protection will encourage dependency. Consequently, there is an understanding that the political space needs careful navigation, balancing the promotion of social protection to support the people who need it across the life course and promoting social protection to complement and empower people.

**There are limited integrated systems to support coherent social protection in Samoa.** For example, there is no integrated employment registration system, with different agencies operating separate registries.

**Weak data collection and monitoring lead to gaps in evidence-based policymaking.** There is limited evidence on the impacts of programmes and policies, for example, the Covid-stimulus packages. Gender, age, and disability disaggregated social protection data are not routinely collected and analysed. There is no indication that disaggregated data is collected and available for any of the four social protection programmes (Gorman, 2021).

## 4. Social protection in Samoa: Programmes

This section gives an overview of existing social protection in Samoa, focusing on both traditional and informal support systems, as well as formal social protection programmes (see Table 1). As the table and following discussion illustrate, formal social protection programmes in Samoa are limited and mainly focus on the older population.

### 4.1 Informal social protection

**Samoa has traditionally had a strong social support system steeped in history and a culture that revolves around communal caregiving.** Part of the fabric of Samoan society, this valued tradition has provided protection to communities in times of need, such as reducing hunger, facilitating peace amongst communities, and reducing homelessness and social disorders.

A recent study by ESCAP (2021) on the Samoan social support system distinguishes between **traditional** and **informal** social protection. The study, drawn from findings from community focus group workshops, describes three **traditional** social protection mechanisms: the nu'u (village), aiga (family) and tuao'i (neighbour). These

three mechanisms give protection to vulnerable groups, identified as women and youth, persons with disabilities, jobseekers and school dropouts, and individuals and households recovering from disasters (during and after shocks). These traditional mechanisms provide benefits and services described mainly as 'universal, non-discriminatory and independent of the number of resources available to the provider, especially during a natural disaster'. Often, assistance is through cash and in-kind support, such as basic food items, clothing, drinking water, shelter and remittances. This study, and others, suggest that remittances are the main benefit provided, available immediately after disasters. Indeed, remittances remain the backbone of Samoa's economy, helping to support the livelihoods of 80 percent of the rural population (see Box 5) (Government of Samoa, 2021a).

**Informal** support systems are distinct from the traditional mechanisms described above, comprising the church, community-based organizations (CBOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs). They provide similar benefits to their members and broader communities and technical and specialised services (e.g., for survivors of violence) (ESCAP, 2021).

**Table 1: Overview of social protection programmes in Samoa**

Type of social protection	Key actor(s)	Targeted recipients	Type of support	Coverage
<b>Informal / traditional social protection</b>				
<b>Traditional social protection</b>	Village, family, neighbours	Vulnerable community members, disaster-affected community members	Remittances, in-kind contributions	Community
<b>Informal social protection</b>	Church, community and faith-based organizations	Vulnerable community members, disaster-affected community members	Cash and in-kind contributions, technical and specialised services	Community
<b>Non-contributory social assistance</b>				
<b>Senior Citizens Benefit Fund (SCBF)</b>	Administered by the National Provident Fund	Elderly Samoan residents (65 years and above)	WST 160 per month (increased to WST 200 from 2021), free health care and medicines, free travel between islands	10,498 recipients (in 2020)
<b>Contributory social protection</b>				
<b>National Provident Fund</b>	National Provident Fund	Employed persons – benefits accessible on retirement (55 years), unemployed (for 5 years and over 50), and other criteria	Pension (lump sum or pension), access to loans, death benefit	
<b>Accidental compensation scheme</b>	Accident Compensation Corporation	Employed persons – benefits paid out on meeting of criteria		587 recipients (in 2019)
<b>Labour market</b>				
<b>Registration of jobseekers</b>		Jobseekers		

## BOX 5: REMITTANCES IN SAMOA

Remittances play a significant role in supporting households to meet their needs, both in 'normal' times and particularly after a shock. Khondker (2021) reports that the regular and high level of remittances received by Samoan households over the last decade have important effects on households' consumption smoothing as well as meeting other needs of Samoan households. A simulation with the 2014 HIES data showed that the poverty headcount would increase if remittances decreased (ibid.).

Remittances in Samoa are also a critical part of households' crisis response to shocks. As in other countries, remittances in Samoa have been a fast response in disasters. After the tsunami, for example, most of the 90 percent of disaster-affected households receiving international remittances received them within a week. Cash was used for immediate emergency needs, including buying food and clothing or getting health care treatments (Loic et al. 2015). Similarly, in response to Cyclone Evan, remittances supported agricultural production and food security needs (ibid.). Studies show that the higher amount of remittances also remains relatively high for a longer time after a disaster supporting households' emergency and recovery needs. For example, in the aftermath of the tsunami, remittance-receiving households received a higher amount for six to seven months before levels returned to the standard amount (ibid.).

However, household members' ability to work abroad mediates access to remittances as it requires higher levels of education, financial resources and social networks (Loic et al. 2015). Moreover, the costs of sending money via money transfer operators (MTO) are very high in Samoa (Khondker, 2021). The middle and upper-income families, therefore, tend to receive remittances as they have the required skills, resources and social capital, rather than poor households (Taylor et al., 2005; Mazzucato et al., 2008). For those households not receiving remittances, Loic et al., (2015) found that affected households had to utilize savings and resort to negative coping strategies such as reducing food intake.

## 4.2 State-led formal social protection

### 4.2.1 SENIOR CITIZENS BENEFIT FUND (SCBF)<sup>9</sup>

**The SCBF provides universal pensions to elderly Samoan residents aged 65 years and above.**

It provides an unconditional cash transfer (WST 160 per month for life – approximately US 59 per month). Payments are made to the beneficiaries' nominated bank account or through local money transfer agents, including Western Union or the Samoa Post Office. The Government fully funds the scheme and stipulated an increase within the 2021 national budget from WST 160 to WST 200 per month. In 2020, the SCBF had 10,498 recipients (Gorman, 2021).

Beneficiaries are also entitled to free healthcare and medicines provided by the Government and free travel on government-operated ferries between the islands of Upolu and Savaii. Registration requires a birth certificate, passport and bank details. The National Provident Fund board (SNPF) administers the SCBF, and it is fully funded through a compulsory retirement saving scheme, whereby every employee is mandated to pay 9 percent of annual gross income.

### 4.2.2 NATIONAL PROVIDENT FUND (NPF)

**Employed persons must register with the Samoa National Provident Fund to become members by paying contributions<sup>10</sup>.** Members and employers each contribute the equivalent of 9 percent of the employee's income.

Members are eligible for various loans, including vehicle, land, housing, and others. There is also a death benefit of WST 5,000.

People are eligible to withdraw funds upon retirement at 55; being unemployed for five years and over 50; becoming physically or mentally incapacitated; moving overseas; entering theological college; or having a serious medical condition. Upon reaching retirement age, members can withdraw their full contribution or take a pension (Gorman, 2021).

### 4.2.3 ACCIDENT COMPENSATION SCHEMES

The Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) administers the accident compensation scheme. Accident coverage for workers includes occupational diseases; accidents within and outside Samoa; death due to natural cause or illness;

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.npf.ws/scbf> – also referenced in Social Protection in Asia and Pacific inventory of non-contributory UNICEF document.

<sup>10</sup> An individual can also contribute voluntarily even if not in formal employment (KII).



and specified conveyance. For non-workers, the only coverage is for specific conveyance. In 2019, there were 587 beneficiaries/active claims of the scheme (Khondker, 2021).

#### 4.2.4 LABOUR MARKET

A form of labour market service, jobseekers' registration provides limited support in seeking employment. This has been identified as a form of labour market services that requires further expansion (UN Joint SDG Fund, 2021).

### 4.3 Projects under the SDG Joint Programme on Social Protection Strengthening Resilience of Pacific Island States Through Universal Social Protection

**The United Nations Country Team in Samoa started implementing the two-year Joint Programme on Social Protection in July 2020 in partnership with the Governments of Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau** (see Box 6 for more details). It is the only internationally funded programme supporting the development of social protection in Samoa. The programme has faced several challenges in implementation since its inception, including the Covid-19 pandemic and the change in government in Samoa, which included a few months of transition. The latter had knock-on effects, mainly because the programme required government collaboration and partnership to establish the Social Protection Technical Committee and develop a nationally owned draft National Social Protection Policy (NSPP). However, in addition to providing support for the development of the (costed) NSPP in Samoa (discussed in Section 3), other initiatives under the Joint Programme supporting the development of social protection in the country have included the following:

- **Pilot Project for Social Security for persons with a disability** – a component and an outcome activity under the UN Joint Social Protection programme delivered by UNESCO (UN Joint SDG fund, 2020a). The Pilot Project, which as we understand is not yet implemented, aims to design a Social Security Benefit for persons with disabilities in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that will be financially sustainable in the long term by the Government. As per the documentation, the Social Security Benefit aims to ensure that people with disability are provided financial support to access healthcare, transportation or even a

cash benefit like the SCBF. The **objective is to present the Government with a convincing business case to consider** continuing the programme.

- **Support for digital data systems and integrated Management Information System**<sup>46</sup> – currently being led by UNICEF<sup>11</sup>
- **Conducting fiscal analysis of disability social protection**, led by UNESCO (UN, 2020b)
- **Designing scalable labour market services** with specific attention to ensuring access for women, persons living with disability, and young people
- **Developing disaster-risk informed social protection benefits** (UN, 2020b)
- **Commissioning of the following studies:**
  - Review of the social protection system in Samoa (Khondker, 2021)
  - Gender-responsive analysis of social protection in Samoa (draft available March 2022) – a gender analysis of the proposed NSPP and programmes
  - Mobile banking consultancy (November 2021) – gap analysis of Samoa's current banking systems to understand the low levels of mobile banking and to help design and test a universal mobile system for social benefit payments. The analysis also aims to strengthen the populations' financial inclusion in the longer term (UN, 2021b).

#### BOX 6: OVERVIEW OF THE SDG FUND IN SAMOA

The objectives of the SDG Fund Joint Proposal are to 'help build and strengthen inclusive, evidence-based and sustainable social protection systems in Samoa and other Pacific Island States, through the *Strengthening Resilience of Pacific Island States Through Universal Social Protection*' (also called the Social Protection Joint Programme). It has been implemented between July 2020 to 2022 by UNDP, UNESCAP, UNICEF, UNESCO and ILO. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and UN Pacific Strategy 2018-2022 guides the programme, which focuses on four outcome areas: universal, inclusive and equitable social protection systems; social protection floors are efficiently and effectively administered; financial inclusion enables low transaction cost transfers of social protection benefits; and increased resilience through mainstreaming of disability, gender, youth and climate-related contingencies (UNDP, 2021b).

<sup>11</sup> Despite contacting UNICEF, we were unable to interview them for this report.

## 4.4 Programmes proposed under the Draft National Social Protection Policy (NSPP)

**The draft NSPP includes a costed implementation plan and a phased approach to implementing a comprehensive social protection system based on a life-cycle approach.** The plan is largely based on costed interventions suggested in Khondker’s (2021) review of social protection in Samoa.

**The prioritized programmes initially aim to extend social assistance** to reach the following groups identified as vulnerable citizens: children, persons with disability, single mothers, pregnant mothers, elderly, and working age. This aim includes extending the existing SCBF to cover ages 60–64; providing a disability grant; a universal child grant for children aged 0–4; and a

conditional 12-month maternity grant. Also proposed is a Disaster Response Fund, established as a covariate scheme at 0.2 percent of GDP to supplement the regular support provided through social assistance schemes (also see Table 2). Women’s schemes and workfare schemes refer to supporting women in the informal sector through a minimum income guarantee and/or livelihood support. The workfare scheme is a proposed short-term public works programme for informal sector workers on the condition of attending training and actively seeking work.

**Several KIIs have indicated that the Government of Samoa is concerned about the fiscal sustainability of committing to social protection schemes,** which are also still largely seen as a ‘foreign’ concept (KIIs). As such, the focus on specific target vulnerable groups seems necessary for political acceptability. Discussions are currently underway about prioritizing particular group characteristics – such as disability or vulnerability to violence for women – but there are concerns about identifying and reaching such populations (KII).

**Table 2: Proposed suite of social protection programmes for Samoa**

Preparation Phase (2021)	Implementation		
	Phase 1 (2022-23)	Phase 2 (2024-25)	Phase 3 (2026)
	IR @50%	IR @75%	IR @100%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff needs assessment/strengthening/training</li> <li>• Schemes design and manual preparation</li> <li>• Developing tools for beneficiary selection</li> <li>• Developing data collection protocols and sharing</li> <li>• Development of MIS system</li> <li>• Finalization of monitoring indicators by schemes</li> <li>• Designing the Pilot schemes</li> <li>• Mobilization of resources for the SISPS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child grant</li> <li>• Disability grant</li> <li>• Women schemes</li> <li>• Workfare scheme</li> <li>• SCBS</li> <li>• DRSP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child grant</li> <li>• Disability grant</li> <li>• Women schemes</li> <li>• Workfare scheme</li> <li>• SCBS</li> <li>• DRSP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child grant</li> <li>• Disability grant</li> <li>• Women schemes</li> <li>• Workfare scheme</li> <li>• SCBS</li> <li>• DRSP</li> <li>• Extended Child grant</li> </ul>
<b>Cost: 0.3% of GDP</b>	<b>2.2% of GDP</b>	<b>3.1% of GDP</b>	<b>4.1% of GDP</b>

Note: IR refers to the implementation rate. Pilot schemes include: the graduation/livelihood model, and unemployment insurance etc. Resource needed for the pilot schemes will be determined during the preparation phase and subsequently mobilised. Costs of implementation are based on SISPS 2.

Source: Khondker, 2021: 74

## 4.5 Health and education

**The Samoa School Fee Grant Scheme (SSFGS)<sup>12</sup> is the only programme targeting children.** It aims to increase school enrolment and retention. The scheme provides:

- a fee waiver of WST 100 per enrolled student and WST 200 per special education student paid annually directly to the schools. Funds are distributed to government and mission schools and cover full tuition fees for all students enrolled at primary and years 9–11 (secondary school). Funds are to be used for equipment and materials for improved learning and purchase consumables for TVET in secondary schools.
- an annual government grant for all mission schools, private schools, ECE centres and special schools.

Funding and monitoring:

- The scheme is jointly funded with development assistance from the Governments of Australia and New Zealand and through the Government of Samoa's national budget. There were 43,846 beneficiaries under the scheme in 2020 (Khondker, 2021; Gorman, 2021).
- The framework for monitoring the programme at school level involves indicators on costs and outputs (e.g., changes in teaching and learning practices and materials, variations in enrollment and participation levels). At the ministerial level it involves gross and net enrolment, as well as dropout, retention and transition rates.

### **Public health coverage is free ages 15 and below.**

The health sector receives the largest government budget, with only 9 percent of health expenses coming from out-of-pocket household funds (Khondker, 2021). Private health insurance is limited to the Senior Citizens Benefit Fund initiated in 1990 for citizens aged 65 and older, which is coordinated by the Samoa National Provident Fund (ibid.).

## 4.6 Summary of strengths and weaknesses in social protection programming in Samoa

### **Traditional and informal safety nets are under pressure; formal social protection needs to strengthen and not undermine the traditional and informal support system.**

The benefits of the traditional and informal support system in place in the Samoan community include their universal and broad approach to supporting those in need. However, these systems are under increasing pressure with urbanization, changes in lifestyle, individualism and social values, and increasing poverty and vulnerability to disasters. Despite the benefits, traditional and informal mechanisms also have drawbacks that limit their effectiveness, especially in relation to their short-term availability and type of support. For example, women or persons with disability may not receive long-term care or meet all their essential needs throughout their life course (UNESCAP, 2021). Another concern is the discretion of support provided, which depends on the quality of governance at the village level and can lead to bias in assistance towards particular groups (UNESCAP, 2021). A challenge in Samoa will be to strengthen the existing community-level support, including tapping into traditional knowledge and resources to be more resilient to natural disasters, at the same time as strengthening formal social protection mechanisms to complement traditional and informal mechanisms, which also promote strong cultural values and practices to protect the most vulnerable in society (UNESCAP, 2021).

### **Only a small proportion of the Samoan population are covered by formal social protection.**

A recent study found that only 31.2 percent of Samoa's population benefit from formal social protection (Khondker, 2021). However, an estimated 42 percent of the population are vulnerable.

### **Financial commitment to formal social protection remains low.**

Samoa has a lower rate of social protection expenditure compared to other Pacific Islands (2.3 percent of GDP compared to the 6 percent (average) spending in the other Pacific Islands<sup>13</sup>). A concern from the KIIs for this study is the Government's commitment to the sustainability of social protection. Interviews also highlighted increasing government commitment to

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.mesc.gov.ws/education>. This is also referenced in Social Protection in Asia and Pacific inventory of non-contributory UNICEF.

<sup>13</sup> 1.3 percent of expenditure on GDP was noted in Gorman, 2021.

fund community-driven development initiatives. Within the 2021 national budget, the Government of Samoa announced support for community driven development schemes which will allocate funding to the districts and develop governance and management structures at the district and ministry levels (Gorman, 2021).

**Low funding leads to significant gaps in coverage across the population and life course:** pregnant women working in the informal sector, newborns, children, persons with disabilities, the unemployed, and the poor are not supported through social protection (see Box 7) (Gorman, 2021; Khondker, 2021).

**There are currently no gender-responsive social protection initiatives except for maternity leave.**

Social insurance includes maternity leave of 12 weeks at full pay for public sector workers and six weeks for private sector workers (4 weeks of paid leave and 2 weeks of unpaid leave or two-thirds pay over the 6 weeks), highlighting discrepancies between public and private sector social insurance schemes. Women's labour participation rates are lower than men's, with nearly one-third of women and more than half of men participating in the labour force. As such, fewer women benefit from the National Provident Fund (Gorman, 2021). Moreover, while employment programmes are inclusive of women and youth, most are ad hoc, limited in scope and temporary.

A gender analysis of the draft NSPP shows that although important elements are included to address gender equalities, several gaps remain (Villagómez, 2022). These include the limited attention to supporting women's inclusion in the formal labour market (and subsequently, access to social insurance) and lack of attention to addressing gender-specific risks, such as unpaid care responsibilities and violence against women and girls (ibid.).

**There is no national childcare service system or pre-primary education system in Samoa, nor any national provision of a public long-term care service system for older persons** (Addati et al., 2022). Given women's dominant role in caregiving, this presents a significant challenge for their engagement in the economy, especially the informal economy, with a lack of access to social protection provisions, including healthcare, income and food support, and maternity protection (ibid).

Moreover, the provision of broader welfare services is limited (KII).

## **BOX 7: GAPS IN SOCIAL PROTECTION IN SAMOA ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE**

Limited funding and disproportionate allocation of resources have led to gaps in the provision of social protection across particular ages, gender, disability and type of work:

- Social protection is disproportionately allocated to the elderly. Persons over 55 years represent 12 percent of the population but receive 89 percent of total social protection spending. The SCBF does not cover retirees and/or elderly aged 55–64.
- The working age population (15–54) represent 50 percent of the population yet receives 4 percent of total social protection spending.
- School age group (aged 6–14) represent 21 percent of the population but receives only 7 percent of total social protection spending.
- There is no allocation for the 0–5 aged group (17 percent of the population).
- Social protection spending of GDP per capita is 3.3 percent for males and 2 percent for females.
- Only 28.5 percent of mothers with newborns receive a maternity cash benefit.
- There are no social protection schemes for early childhood and pregnant mothers, who constitute at least 17 percent of the population.
- There is currently no social protection expenditure for persons with disability, yet they constitute at least 7 percent of the population (Khondker, 2021).
- Formal contributory schemes have limited coverage for informal workers, although they comprise most of the Samoa working-age population.

Sources: Khondker, 2021; UN Women data, 2022; Gorman, 2021



# 5. Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition through support to Social Protection Systems

This section reflects on how social protection could advance food and nutrition security in Samoa through advancing zero hunger.

**In theory, there are many pathways through which social protection could support improved food and nutrition outcomes in Samoa.** Global evidence demonstrates that social protection can address both demand- and supply-side barriers to improved food security and nutrition through impacting prices, income, expenditure, behaviour, women's empowerment, and livelihood diversification (Alderman, 2015). Social protection interventions that address both economic and social behaviours and practices can lead to increases in knowledge, expenditure and time, which enhance food security, health, and care practices (de Groot et al., 2015; Durr et al., 2020). Samoa faces critical challenges with the triple burden of malnutrition – obesity, micronutrient deficiencies and undernutrition – resulting in worsening health outcomes for the Samoan population, especially for women and children, and social protection can potentially play a specific role in addressing these. More broadly, Samoa also faces challenges to food and nutrition security that will fall outside of social protection's role or objectives but should also be considered to support the enabling environment to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition. Box 8 highlights the main priorities that the country, with support from development partners, is focusing on.

**However, there are several challenges to achieving the potential for social protection to support improved food and nutrition outcomes in practice.**

**The current conceptualization of social protection in the draft NSPP as proposed in Khondker (2021) does not draw explicit linkages to the role of social protection in supporting food and nutrition security.**

The conceptualization of social protection focuses on its role in reducing poverty (and to some extent, vulnerability) rather than improving nutrition. This is similar in many other countries, where the objective of social protection focuses on achieving income poverty reduction and consumption smoothing efforts, with indirect objectives linked to nutrition. Indeed, as mentioned above, social protection initiatives can still achieve improved security outcomes, but unless nutrition is stated explicitly in objectives and subsequent design and implementation features, its potential to improve nutrition is likely to be limited (WFP, 2021; Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, 2018). Therefore, at present, the limited conceptualization and

vision of the role of social protection in Samoa in relation to food and nutrition security, and subsequently limited attention to addressing malnutrition through the design and implementation of proposed programmes (in core and complementary programmes), will limit its effectiveness in achieving change in this domain. An exception is the reference to complementary linkages around livelihoods (Khondker, 2021).

**Part of the reason for the limited attention to food and nutrition security in the development of social protection in Samoa is the disconnect between the NSPP and food security strategies.**

The draft NSPP and supporting documents only make limited reference to food and nutrition security. It notes that social protection can contribute to improved food consumption (particularly important for children), but overall, there is limited discussion on the role of social protection in contributing to different dimensions of food security or agricultural livelihoods. The *Samoa National Food and Nutrition Policy and Plan of Action (2021–26)* documents do not refer to social protection, but the Government's (2021) Food Systems Pathways 2030 does situate social protection as a mechanism to achieve its objectives. When discussing reasons, a KII noted that it depends on who is sitting around the table in policy discussions – illustrating that social protection is not a top policy priority of the Government but rather driven by specific institutions. There is a similar issue regarding social protection's perceived role in building resilience and response to climate. Again, while this is referenced in the proposals for the NSPP, there is limited attention to programme design and implementation features apart from the proposed additional Disaster Response Fund. Social protection is not referenced in the disaster risk management policy and strategy documents of Samoa.

**Existing social protection programmes are limited in scope and coverage, and there are currently no social protection programmes that explicitly focus on advancing food and nutrition security.** Despite the food security challenges in Samoa and specific nutrition-related risks that population groups face across the life course, there are no social protection programmes which aim to address these gaps. For example, there are no school-feeding programmes, nor are there any proposed programme linkages to support nutrition outcomes (for example, provision of supplementary food or nutrients, awareness raising on diets etc.).

## BOX 8: FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION POLICY PRIORITIES IN SAMOA

Two recent policy documents identify the priorities for addressing food and nutrition security in Samoa:

The **Samoa Food Systems Pathways 2030** document (Government of Samoa, 2021a, supported by FAO and WFP) identifies five areas to transform Samoan food systems. Two of these areas (the latter two) suggest a **direct role** for social protection:

- **Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all:** this focuses on increasing the supply and consumption of competitively priced, domestically produced food for the growing populations. This increase will require 'transformation in the food production sector, strengthening the enabling environment for the sustainable development, and improving evidence-based knowledge and understanding of the food systems and its components' (Government of Samoa, 2021: iv).
- **Shift to sustainable consumption patterns:** this focuses on changing consumption patterns, requiring changes in food policy, food environments, civil society actions, private sector offerings, and consumer behaviours. These changes need to be at the regulatory environment level (strengthening food policy and regulatory systems, including the multi-sector approach addressing key issues and development priorities), promoting consumption and availability of local traditional foods, enhancing nutrition education, and promoting healthy consumption patterns in the community (Government of Samoa, 2021: iv).
- **Boost nature-positive production:** improving food systems must go hand in hand with improving food system governance, minimizing food losses and other negative environmental impacts. This priority area requires revitalizing and promoting the use of traditional and indigenous knowledge in sustainable agricultural practices, strengthening extension services, and improving environmental protection policy and regulatory measures, as well as monitoring and evaluating impacts (Government of Samoa, 2021: iv).
- **Advance equitable livelihoods:** priority should be given to the 22 percent of the population below the poverty line and 6 percent of those living in food poverty. There is a need to remove systematic barriers to accessing and benefiting from livelihoods in the food sector. Gender inequality, disability, and age (youth) are some systemic barriers identified. Ensuring that food systems policies reach vulnerable and marginalized groups of the population who are primarily in the informal agricultural sector is important – this includes bringing them into the formal system to become parts of the formal labour market and social protection systems. For effective targeting, there is a need to improve the identification and mapping of vulnerable populations.

Promoting the engagement of vulnerable groups in food systems discussions, promoting women and youth involvement in agriculture and food value chains, and enhancing the role of communities and culture in developing food systems and equitable livelihoods is needed (Government of Samoa, 2021: v).

- **Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress:** this focuses on the close links between building resilience of the local people and building the resilience of food systems to withstand and recover from shocks and stressors. 'Building climate resilient practices and resources for agriculture development is needed, including diversification of agricultural practices and food production systems as an important adaptation measure for improving resilient. The adoption and implementation of effective social protection measures is needed to provide contingent responses and safety nets to the impacts of shocks on food supply and consumption.' (Government of Samoa, 2021a: v).

There are several similarities in the **Samoa National Food and Nutrition Policy (NFNP) and Plan of Action (2021-26)** by the Ministry of Health (Government of Samoa, 2021e) (although social protection is not specifically discussed in this plan).

The vision is for nutritional health in Samoa. The mission is to prevent and reduce malnutrition and food and nutrition-related diseases in Samoa.

The strategic objectives include:

- to foster inter-sectoral governance and leadership for an integrated and multi-sectoral approach to food and nutrition in Samoa;
- to strengthen the policy and regulatory framework for improved food and nutritional health in Samoa;
- to develop further and implement interventions for improved sustainable food and nutritional focus across the communities, and use the life cycle approach for targeted interventions for women, infants and children, and other vulnerable groups;
- to raise societal awareness and understanding of food and nutrition issues and challenges and for community to effect own social and behavioural changes;
- to enhance capacity building in food and nutrition; and
- to strengthen resourcing commitments for food and nutrition development, including requirements for the implementation of the NFNP Plan of Action 2021-2026.

The NFNP also articulates the role of UN agencies: i) support food and nutrition strengthening in Samoa through donor policies, programmes and development assistances, such as financial, technical, assets, etc.; and ii) facilitate timely access to assistances for the effective and efficient implementation of food and nutrition programs and activities that are supported by development partners.

**There is limited coordination across actors working on social protection, food and nutrition security and disaster risk management.** Despite advocating for a sector-wide approach, institutional coordination in Samoa remains a challenge to delivering an integrated approach towards achieving its national priorities and development goals. As a relatively new policy approach, social protection also has these same challenges. While the UN Joint Programme set up a Social Protection Technical Committee consisting of key government ministries, including the Ministry of Health (responsible for the national food security strategy), national and international actors who would typically bring a food and nutrition security lens are not participants (for example, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, FAO, WFP). In addition, these same stakeholders were not included in the consultation of the background documents prepared for the draft NSPP.

### **BOX 9: PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED/ PROPOSED IN THE GOVERNMENT OF SAMOA, 2021A, SAMOA FOOD SYSTEMS PATHWAYS 2030 IN RELATION TO SOCIAL PROTECTION**

Forty percent of the population are considered vulnerable, which is expected to increase. References and priorities identified in this document in relation to social protection include:

- establishing and strengthening social protection floors, schemes, programmes and mechanisms to mitigate the negative impacts of shocks on food security and healthy consumption;
- social protection can reduce families and individuals' chronic vulnerability, severe food insecurity, and exposure to risk;
- targeting the large proportion of the population involved in subsistent agriculture and fisheries, giving priority consideration to the population's most vulnerable and poorest segments;
- with children becoming more vulnerable to the rising malnutrition and noncommunicable disease crisis as the nutritional shift progresses, targeted social protection measures for children (e.g., school feeding programmes based on targeted public food procurement of healthy and nutritional lunches based on locally produced food);
- making a significant shift to healthy diets in the young generations and encouraging the production and consumption of local fresh healthier food;
- build climate-resilient practices and resources for agriculture development;
- strengthen coverage/inclusion of the informal sector in the formal labour market and social protection systems and SP to respond to the impact of shocks in food supply and consumption.

(Government of Samoa, 2021a)

# 6. Managing Risks and Shocks through support to Social Protection Systems

## 6.1 Covid-19 response

**The Government of Samoa introduced several programmes to respond to the economic impacts of Covid-19.** Although there was increased vulnerability of women, children, and persons with disabilities, no specific social protection initiatives were provided to support this group. Instead, most initiatives focused on formal workers in the hospitality sector or the elderly (Gorman, 2021) (see also Annex 1).

The Government adopted an initial stimulus package of USD 24 million in April 2020, and the June 2020/2021 budget included a stimulus package of USD 30 million targeted at individuals and households affected by the pandemic. A significant number of migrant workers were repatriated from Australia and New Zealand, however, the proportion of remittances has not declined, highlighting the role that remittances continue to play in the context of crises in Samoa. (Gorman, 2021)

### Further Covid-19 response initiatives include:

- a one-time WST 300 top-up of the Senior Citizens Benefit Fund, as well as an increase from WST 145 to WST 160 in July 2020 and then to WST 200 in 2021 (Government of Samoa, 2020);
- the 2020 Census and National ID Registration roll out included a one-off conditional cash transfer of WST 50 for people who registered their national ID;
- a utility waiver for water and electricity over six-months and provision of agricultural materials (Gorman, 2021);
- an unemployment subsidy through the Ministry of Finance and the Samoa Chamber of Commerce to distribute compensation for workers whose jobs have been affected by COVID-19;
- NPF members working in the hospitality sector who have lost employment could withdraw 20 percent of net contributions or WST 4,000, whichever is less. Paid sick leave, if needed, was provided for people over 60 years, people with underlying medical conditions, people with caregiving responsibilities, people stranded overseas, and those who are sick with COVID-19 (Gorman, 2021);
- labour market measures such as deferring contributions to the NPF for six months and a short-term paid training scheme for people working in the hospitality sector (Gorman, 2021).

## 6.2 Climate and resilience

**Samoa has made progress in its approach to disaster risk management (DRM) in the last ten years.** In 2007, the Government enacted the *Samoa Disaster and Emergency Management Act*, and recently created and updated the National Disaster Management Plan and enabled the *Samoa National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management 2017–2021*.

**Compared to the response to Covid-19, there is no experience in drawing on social protection programmes to respond to natural disasters or climate risks in Samoa.** There is no mention of social protection in the *Samoa National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management 2017-2021* nor within the *Samoa Climate Change Policy 2020*. A white paper is currently being commissioned around climate change and resilience that will likely affect social protection in the future (KII).

**The proposal for the draft NSPP also does not explicitly link to DRM policies at international, regional or national levels.** The reports prepared for the NSPP (Khondker, 2021; Villagómez, 2022) recognize disasters as a risk occurring at any time across the life course. The reports propose that expanding coverage and values of core social protection provision to a wider population will build households' resilience and reduce the need for ad hoc, reactive, emergency response. They propose establishing a disaster response fund to provide additional and flexible funding to the social protection system in response to a shock. However, there is limited further discussion about the appropriate values needed, type of benefits, specific coverage or coordination with the disaster response sector, which may be needed to enhance the role of social protection in the context of preparedness, resilience-building and shock-response. Still, under the Social Protection Joint Programme, a recent policy brief has been jointly produced by the Samoa Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and ESCAP that outlines the potential benefits of disaster-responsive social protection for Samoa (ESCAP and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE)



of Samoa, 2020). This brief will also be accompanied by a second brief discussing how to operationalize disaster-responsive social protection in Samoa (ibid.)

**In practice, in Samoa, Government agencies and organizations are encouraged to take responsibility for sectoral DRM assessments, policies and activities.**

The National Disaster Council (NDC) is responsible for providing strategic direction and decision making during disaster response. The Prime Minister is the chairperson of the NDC. The Disaster Advisory Committee (DAC) is responsible for developing policies and plans. The DAC consists of representatives from government agencies, CSOs, academia, the private sector and development partners. The Disaster Management Office (DMO) ensures the ongoing coordination, development, implementation and monitoring of DRM programmes and activities (Government of Samoa, 2016). Other actors also provide support, such as the Samoa Red Cross. Village councils and village organizations (or the village disaster and climate committees) are responsible for coordinating disaster mitigation and preparedness programmes and activities at the community level and village response teams for specific risks. The Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development is responsible for supporting, monitoring and liaising with Village Councils and organizations implementing DRM activities and informing the DAC of the village-level activities (Government of Samoa, 2016).

Remittances and traditional and informal social support systems continue to play an important role in helping households to recover in the context of crises.

**Previous humanitarian responses have mainly focused on providing in-kind and food support.**

In response to Cyclone Evan, however, in 2013, the World Bank supported a recovery intervention through e-vouchers, which for the first time used simple mobile phone technology to link mobile wallets with point-of-sale devices in select retailers. After Cyclone Evan, just over 7,000 subsistence farmers or fishers received vouchers to help restore their productive assets and agricultural production. 24 percent of these recipients were female.

Recipients could use the e-vouchers to buy farm or fishing equipment on a pre-defined list. The voucher value was determined after finalizing beneficiary identification and based on a household assessment: moderately affected households received WST 700 (equivalent to around US\$ 300 at the time of the appraisal), and severely affected households received WST 1,200 (US\$ 520 at appraisal) (World Bank, 2017).

E-vouchers were considered appropriate for several reasons, including as a response to government reluctance to distribute cash to affected households as this was perceived as being prone to misuse by the recipients and the high level of mobile phone coverage in Samoa. However, there were also risks, including trying a new delivery modality when fast response to affected households was critical (World Bank, 2017).

The e-voucher project did experience delays in setting up the system due to limited experience in project management and processes related to using e-vouchers. At the same time, government support and the competence of the private sector were factors in the project's implementation (World Bank, 2017).

**Identifying people affected by disasters for targeting shock-responsive social protection and generating information**

about vulnerabilities created by a disaster requires dynamic and timely information. In Samoa, this information is not readily available at the national level due to the timing of current national data collection tools (e.g., Household Incomes and Expenditure Surveys are conducted every ten years). However, the Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS) is conducting an ongoing exercise of household listing and national identification, which provides an opportunity for future identification and information systems development. This exercise, coupled with the 2021 data collection for the census, could be the foundation for a national database of households. This national database could help inform the targeting of future shock-responsive social protection programmes, especially if also linked to geographic locations (ESCAP and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) of Samoa, 2020).

# 7. Significant actors and governance arrangements

**Nationally, no government ministry is responsible for social protection.** Interviews with stakeholders noted that there is a discussion in the country about who should be the lead agency. The Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development is a candidate for the role, and there is some indication that this ministry may lead social protection in the interim period. However, there is also discussion around establishing a new agency to take on the lead and coordinating role as discussed in Section 3.

**Although there is currently no national lead agency, there are several government ministries that are responsible for issues related to social protection.** These include the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour responsible for labour issues; the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development responsible for social welfare; the Ministry of Finance responsible for social insurance; and the National Provident Fund (NPF). The NPF is a state-owned enterprise under the Ministry of Finance, which manages the two social protection initiatives – the Senior Citizens Benefit Fund and the National Provident Fund (Gorman, 2021). The SDG Joint Programme on Social Protection set up a Multi-Country Steering Committee (MCSC) and a Technical Committee (TC) for each country, in collaboration with five UN agencies (UNDP, UNESCAP, UNICEF, UNESCO and ILO).

The TC includes representatives of the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour; Samoa Bureau of Statistics; Ministry of Communications and

Information Technology; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture; Samoa National Provident Fund; Samoa Business Hub; Samoa Umbrella of NGOs; Nuanua ole Alofa; Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Samoa National Youth Council; and Samoa National Tripartite Council<sup>14</sup>.

Beyond the TC, the Social Development Division in the Ministry of Women Community and Social Development is proposed to administer and implement the Samoa Inclusive Social Protection System (Khondker, 2021). Three ministries (women, community and social development; commerce, industry and labour; and agriculture and fisheries) are referenced in the Government of Samoa (2021a) Food Systems Pathway 2030 as the lead agencies for the following activities related to social protection, supported by WFP, IFAD and FAO:

- Strengthening coverage/inclusion of the informal sector in the formal labour market and social protection systems;
- Strengthening social protection measures for improved resilience of the food systems, and to mitigate the negative impacts of shocks on food security and healthy consumption; and
- (in relation to social protection floors, schemes and programmes) targeting the large proportion of the population involved in subsistent agriculture and fisheries'

---

<sup>14</sup> See UNDP (2021a) and also notes with NPF.

**Table 3. International agencies supporting supporting social protection in Samoa**

Agency	Relevance to/activities on social protection
<b>UNDP</b>	Involved in the SDG Joint Programme: UNDP commissioned a review of social protection systems in Samoa (Khondker, 2021).  UNDP has also procured consultants to provide an evidence base on gender-responsive social protection (comprehensive 'Gender Analysis of Social Protection Systems in Samoa', Gap Analysis of the Mobile Banking Systems in Samoa etc (UNDP, 2021a; UNDP, 2021b)).
<b>UNESCO</b>	Involved in the Joint SDG Joint Programme: delivering Pilot Project for Social Security for Persons with Disabilities – a component and outcome activity activity (UN Joint SDG fund, 2020a).
<b>UNICEF</b>	Involved in the SDG Joint Programme: responsible for the development of the MIS. Improving evidence and data collection (Samoa MICS; socio-economic impact assessments of COVID-19); support to child protection policies (UNICEF 2020).
<b>UNESCAP</b>	Involved in the SDG Joint Programme: producing policy briefs on disaster-responsive social protection with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE).
<b>ILO</b>	Involved in the SDG Joint Programme: Decent Work Country Programme focuses on national labour law reform, supporting youth employment and strengthening tripartite capacity.
<b>FAO</b>	Co-authors/support of <i>Food Systems Pathway 2030</i> (Government of Samoa 2021a) which includes social protection.
<b>IFAD</b>	Co-authors/support of <i>Food Systems Pathway 2030</i> (Government of Samoa 2021a) which includes social protection.
<b>WFP</b>	Co-authors/support of <i>Food Systems Pathway 2030</i> (Government of Samoa 2021a) which includes social protection
<b>DFAT</b>	Funding the Partnership for Social Protection in the Pacific region. AUD 18m in value over four years with an option to extend for a further four years, bringing the total value to up to AUD 32m over eight years. The P4SP will help establish and strengthen social protection (social security) systems in Pacific Island Countries. The programme aims to provide responsive and catalytic technical assistance, support analysis for system and program development, facilitate cross country cooperation and learning and fund pilot programmes, where required.
<b>ADB</b>	Data, social protection indicators in the region  Support to social protection in the region through technical assistance (TA) activities; collating vulnerability data in social registries for decision making; policy support on strengthening social protection; and financing social protection services. ADB are strengthening gender and social dimensions across all its interventions (ADB, 2021b).
<b>World Bank</b>	Predominantly focuses on natural disaster management, rural services and infrastructure, and strengthening health systems. <sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> [https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/projects-summary?countrycode\\_exact=WS](https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/projects-summary?countrycode_exact=WS)

**Table 4. Local organizations, independent organizations and the private sector**

Organization	Relevance to / activities on social protection
<p><b>Disability Reference Group (DRG)</b></p>	<p>The DRG is a group of persons with diverse disabilities, gender, age and geographic location with the main task of advocating for inclusivity within SDG Joint Programme (UN Joint SDG fund, 2020c).</p> <p>Chaired by General Manager of Nuanua O Le Alofa (NOLA) (see below)</p> <p>Established through the election of representatives of the disability community by disability service providers and stakeholders. The DRG was tasked with advocating for inclusivity within the Joint Programme and comprises persons solely with diverse disabilities (UN Joint SDG fund, 2020a).</p>
<p><b>Nuanua O Le Alofa (NOLA) (National Advocacy Organization for Persons with Disabilities in Samoa<sup>16</sup>)</b></p>	<p>Member of the Social Protection Technical Committee under the SDG Joint Programme</p> <p>Advisory Body for the implementation of the Pilot Project for Social Security for Persons with Disabilities – a component and outcome activity of the Joint Programme.</p>
<p><b>Civil society and community stakeholders</b></p>	<p>Implementing partner for social protection activities under Food Systems Pathway 2030.</p>
<p><b>Samoa Umbrella of NGOs</b></p>	<p>Member of the Social Protection Technical Committee under the SDG Joint Programme</p>
<p><b>Village governance institutions</b></p>	<p>Implementing partner for social protection activities under Food Systems Pathway 2030.</p>
<p><b>Samoa Business Hub</b></p>	<p>Member of the Social Protection Technical Committee under the SDG Joint Programme</p>
<p><b>Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry</b></p>	<p>Member of the Social Protection Technical Committee under the SDG Joint Programme</p>
<p><b>Samoa National Youth Council</b></p>	<p>Member of the Social Protection Technical Committee under the SDG Joint Programme</p>
<p><b>Samoa National Tripartite Council</b></p>	<p>Member of the Social Protection Technical Committee under the SDG Joint Programme</p>

<sup>16</sup> Engaged in the SDG Joint Programme – representatives from NOLA, SENESE, Aoga Fiamalamalama, Samoa Blind Persons Association, Deaf Association of Samoa and Loto Taumafai Society

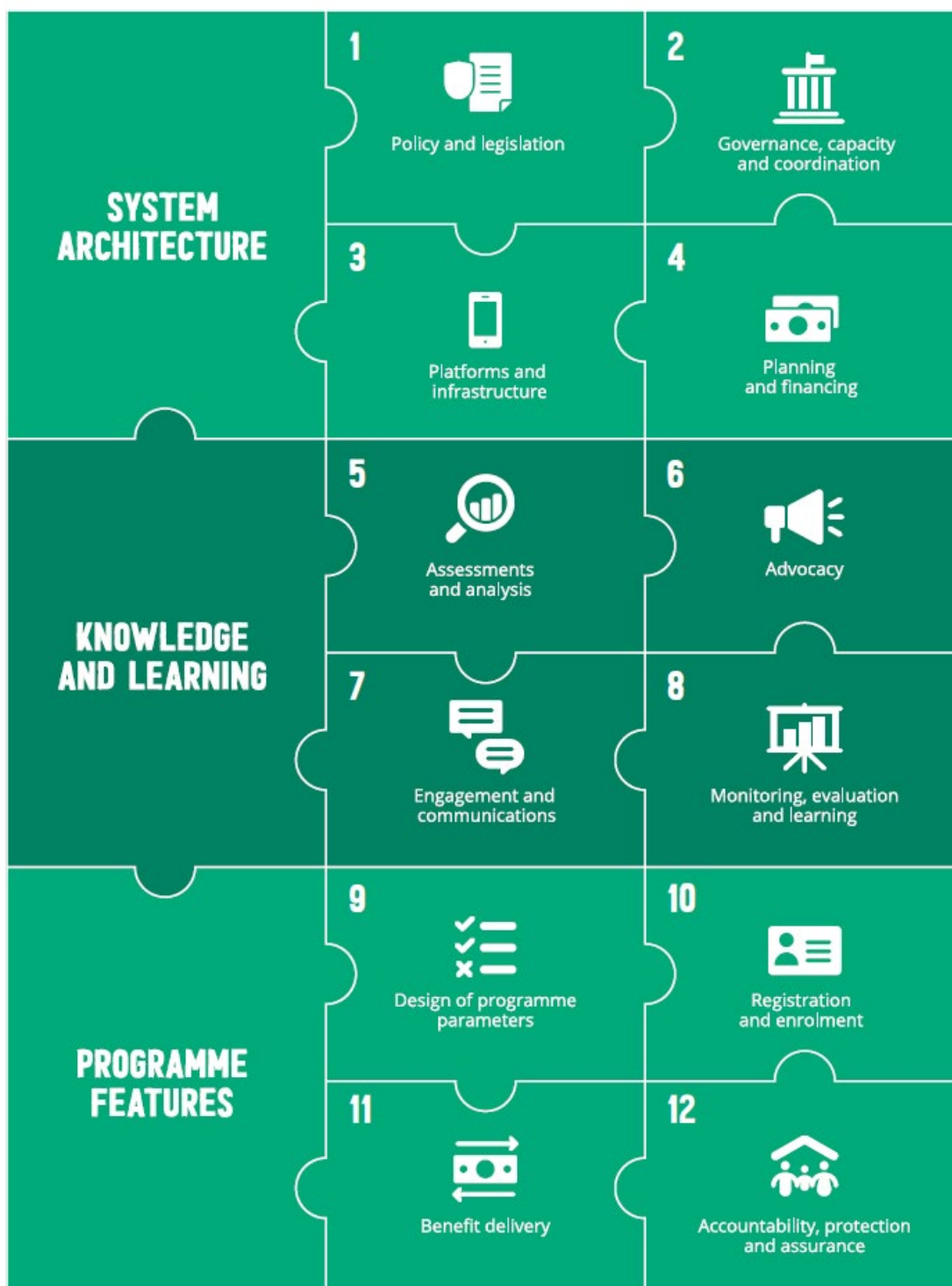


# 8. WFP's role in Social Protection in Samoa

This section reflects on the twelve building blocks of national social protection as outlined in WFP's *Strategy for Support to Social Protection* (WFP, 2021) (see Figure 1). For each building block, a summary of the current situation and WFP's role is provided in Samoa, followed by the identification of areas where WFP could strategically

support the development of social protection in Samoa and recommendations for WFP priorities. Overall, the recommendations lean more heavily towards supporting the system architecture building blocks, as this is the current focus of most current investment and social protection-related initiatives in Samoa.

Figure 2: WFP Twelve building blocks of national social protection systems



Before focusing in on the 12 building blocks two points are important, namely that because social protection is nascent in Samoa, there are not yet actions identified for all 12 blocks and that a number of cross-cutting considerations underpin the recommendations across the building blocks as follows:

First, WFP does not have any staff based in Samoa, and WFP's role in social protection is not well-known amongst the few national actors spoken to for this study. International development partners currently working in Samoa see a potential role for WFP in supporting the emerging social protection policy dialogues at the national level, and specifically strengthening the linkages between social protection, food and nutrition security and shock-response in these dialogues (and supporting an enabling environment for improving food and nutrition security more broadly). However, whilst social protection is nascent in Samoa, it is becoming a crowded space among development partners. WFP must therefore ensure that engagement and support to social protection in Samoa are well-coordinated with other development partners.

Second, informal and traditional forms of social protection in Samoa remain the dominant forms of support for reducing poverty and social risks and helping in the aftermath of a disaster in the community. The development of formal social protection programmes and systems must support this existing community and solidarity network and not undermine it.

Third, social protection policy development in Samoa is intentionally inclusive and has been accompanied by background reports discussing gender equality. WFP's future work must continue to build on this gender equitable and inclusion approach, further strengthening future social protection systems and programmes to address gender inequality and exclusion and promote women and girls' empowerment and resilience across the life cycle.

## 8.1 System architecture findings and recommendations

Regarding **policies and legislation**, the Government of Samoa, with the support of UNDP, has developed a draft national social protection policy (NSPP) which aims to provide an overarching policy and framework for social protection in Samoa. It is the first of its kind, as currently, there is no overarching social protection policy, with social protection programmes currently ad hoc, fragmented and limited in scope and coverage. At the time of this study, the policy is being discussed in cabinet. To date, WFP has not been explicitly involved in the policy process.

However, WFP, in partnership with FAO, has supported the Government in developing the national *Samoa Food Systems Pathway 2030*, which identifies a specific role for social protection in increasing household resilience to climate-related shocks, reducing malnutrition through specific interventions (such as locally-produced school feeding) and strengthening the inclusion of informal workers in the formal labour market and social protection systems. As discussed previously, there is currently a gap between national food and nutrition security strategies explicitly promoting social protection as a tool for achieving better food and nutrition outcomes and the national social protection policy approach, which largely focuses on reducing poverty.

Given these policy gaps, WFP could consider supporting national policy dialogues on social protection in Samoa, including supporting the linkages between social protection, food and nutrition security, and disaster management. Any approach will need to be considerate of the following factors:

- Currently, the role of WFP in supporting social protection is not well-known by actors in the social protection space in Samoa (both Government and UN).
- WFP should seek to support agencies already working with the Government on social protection, such as UNDP, on how they can support these existing processes and policies. KIs for this study indicated that the development of the draft national social protection had been a politically sensitive process, so it is imperative that WFP seeks to join a coordinated approach with existing development partners
- Although various actors still await the approval of the social protection policy, policy discussions and dialogues continue. WFP should continue to emphasise a gender and inclusion approach to social protection in these continuing national dialogues about the social protection policy, and bring a gender and inclusion lens into discussions about social protection implementation once the policy is approved.

For **governance, capacity and coordination**, the institutional structure proposed under the draft NSPP is still under discussion. It is unclear which government ministry will take the lead role in social protection, although the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development is proposed to take on this responsibility. Other options are on the table, including establishing a new ministry or public agencies. Regardless of the decision taken, it is expected that national ministries, departments or agencies will require capacity building in social protection. As a result, the direction that WFP's engagement will face is not yet clear.

Cross-sectoral coordination, between WFP and other stakeholders, is also challenging, with limited formal coordination mechanisms (rather, coordination takes place ad hoc and when deemed necessary) (KIIs). Apart from the Social Protection Technical Committee set up as part of the Joint Programme to support NSPP development, there is no other formal coordinating body in place (such as a social protection working group or similar) for national or development partners.

The implication for WFP is that, in the future, if WFP is to engage at the national and policy level of social protection in Samoa, it will be important to support social protection through a coordinated approach with development partners. There are potentially two avenues WFP could explore:

- Support greater collaboration and information sharing between ministries and agencies (including development partners) working on food and nutrition security in the discussions as the draft NSPP is implemented. Also, provide insights from other countries globally on how to develop shock-responsive social protection from the outset to enhance system capacity and support community resilience. This support could include building on the work by ESCAP with the Government of Samoa on disaster-responsive social protection and also providing recommendations on the types of programming options for shock-responsive social protection (e.g., programme design features in social assistance and social insurance) and the types of systems and delivery features for shock response (e.g., risk financing mechanisms, management information systems etc.).
- Link into ongoing dialogue and support in the Pacific region on social protection. For example, at the regional level, previous south-south learning events on social protection, facilitated by UNICEF, brought persons from the Vanuatu Ministry of Internal Affairs to Fiji and Cook Islands to discuss their relatively more comprehensive and well-developed social protection systems to promote understanding of nationally owned and Pacific-relevant social protection. While little action resulted from this initiative, WFP (2022) recommends exploring the options of further 'exchange visits' to support government staff exposure to the range of existing social protection initiatives in the Pacific context and their potential relevance to their own countries. Such visits could also include linking up with the ongoing DFAT-funded Pacific Partnerships for Social Protection (P4SP) facility. Linking to dialogue and support could be

particularly important for Samoa at the nascent stage of social protection policy, especially given the focus on building on traditional and informal forms of social protection and not undermining them in developing national social protection strategies. These links could also give examples and learning of the types of support which could be provided in the context of climate change to build resilience, anticipatory action (e.g., as in Fiji), and support broader food and nutrition security through the social protection sector in the future.

Regarding **platforms and infrastructure**, the development of the MIS under the Joint Programme on Social Protection is on hold due to the delays approving the NSPP and identifying a ministry/agency to lead the social protection policy. There are opportunities for WFP to liaise with UNICEF, who are leading this work under the Joint Programme, and to identify how WFP can collaborate and support when the work progresses.

## 8.2 Knowledge and learning findings and recommendations

In the case of **assessments and analysis**, despite Samoa being a small island state of 200,000 people and having the well-established Samoa Bureau of Statistics, data on poverty, vulnerability and food and nutrition security remains limited. There is little in-depth analysis and assessments on gender and disability, for example, and limited learning from existing social protection programmes (formal, traditional, and informal) concerning food and nutrition security and disaster response. Lack of research, statistics, and analysis hinders evidence-based policy discussions for a more nutrition-sensitive approach to social protection. The Samoa Bureau of Statistics, in collaboration with UNESCAP, has developed a social protection matrix index for Samoa which includes data collection around food security. However, one of the most significant issues is that data is only collected every five years (KII).

WFP, along with other development partners could work to strengthen regular data collection and sharing on food and nutrition security and vulnerability and aid the disaggregation of statistics and collection and analysis of social protection administrative data and experiences before, during and after crises (including, for example, with non-government partners such as the Samoa Red Cross Society).

Regarding **advocacy**, like other countries in the Pacific, Samoa has a strong traditional and informal community safety net to help families meet their basic needs and support households after a shock. However, as discussed above, these traditional and informal safety nets are under strain. Moreover, the fabric of society is linked with the traditional and informal safety net, and there are significant concerns that 'social protection' is an imported concept which could undermine the community safety net. In addition, there is a fear that formal social protection programmes will drive dependency and laziness.

There is potential for WFP to support the advocacy agenda with government and community stakeholders to build acceptance and understand the benefits of social protection. This support is currently being built through the UN Joint Programme, led by UNDP, with consultations with the Social Protection Steering Committee.

There is also an opportunity for WFP to support advocacy efforts around behaviour, attitudes and practices towards food and nutrition, including supporting gender equality and women and girls' empowerment. A challenge in Samoa concerning food insecurity is diet and lifestyle choices. WFP could work with other development partners and the Government to promote agricultural production of homegrown healthy foods and changes in diet and behaviour. This support might be a broader remit than core social protection but could be considered a broader complementary intervention supporting improved nutrition outcomes.

For **engagement and communications activities**, dependent on WFP's role in social protection in Samoa, any future involvement should seek to support existing engagement and communication around social protection. It will be important to engage continuously with local authorities and communities and to build on traditional and informal systems.

For **monitoring, evaluation and learning**, there is currently a monitoring framework proposed as part of the draft NSPP. The Samoa Bureau of Statistics is the national body working on social protection indicators. There is an opportunity for WFP to support the monitoring of social protection programmes if rolled out as a result of the NSPP. This support could include promoting food and nutrition data collection in programme monitoring, including gender and disability analysis. Options could also be explored through partnerships with the Samoa Bureau of Statistics, civil society organizations and non-state actors to independently and effectively monitor the implementation of the national policy.

## 8.3 Programme features findings and recommendations

For **registration and enrolment**, one of WFP's strengths is in management and beneficiary systems. In other countries, for example, WFP has supported inter-operable digital systems for beneficiary management. UNICEF is currently responsible for supporting the development of the MIS in Samoa, and WFP could support the development of registration and enrolment platforms.

WFP could support the collection and analysis of data at the community level, especially in the context of Samoa's intent to target the most vulnerable people (primarily persons with disability and vulnerable women). A more nuanced understanding of multi-dimensional poverty and food and nutrition insecurity could inform targeting and programme design discussions. Moreover, WFP Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) staff are already providing monthly mVAM data for Samoa, which can be used to inform policy design and planning. For example, Kiribati is using WFP Pacific's mVAM data in the targeting process to introduce a new unemployment benefit, even though the mVAM data format was not designed specifically for this purpose (WFP, 2022).

**Benefit delivery** in Samoa has a cash-based delivery system in place through the SNPF, high rates of remittances received through cash-based providers and a relatively high level of digital and financial inclusion. However, there is interest in exploring the potential for mobile-based transfers. Moreover, with the development of disability (and future) social protection programmes, it will be important to ensure equality in access to banks and mobile payment structures. This shift can also help lay the foundation/preparedness for cash-based assistance in emergencies. Key learning from using e-vouchers in response to Cyclone Evan in 2012, for example, highlighted the need to improve the infrastructure of mobile payments to send out transfers in a timely and efficient way. Experience from the cash-for-work programme in Tonga, for example, demonstrated the importance of a partnership with the local telecommunications provider to ensure timely and payments with relatively low transaction costs (WFP, 2022).

A further point is that the high costs of sending remittances back to Samoa is a challenge in disaster response. WFP could also consider supporting measures that help ensure the smooth flow of private remittances to households following disasters to contribute to resilience building, such as building partnerships and working closely with financial service providers to reduce fees associated with remittances.

**Accountability, protection, and assurance** are all areas where mechanisms will need to be identified and strengthened in order to implement the NSPP policy. WFP has a wealth of programmatic experience in accountability and protection, especially in the context of disasters, which can usefully inform discussions on

implementation in Samoa (e.g., see WFP, 2021, and WFP, 2017). WFP could also consider providing technical support to strengthen beneficiary communications and feedback mechanisms and including a focus on supporting a system to incorporate existing local community-based DRM and early warning system structures and knowledge.

**Table 5: Recommended WFP actions on social protection in Samoa by building block**

<b>Systems Architecture</b>	<b>Policy and legislation</b>	<b>Governance, capacity and coordination</b>
	<p>Consider supporting national policy dialogues on social protection in Samoa, including supporting the linkages between social protection, food and nutrition security, and disaster management, while remaining sensitive of the politically sensitive nature of the policy process and the need to coordinate across a range of actors.</p> <p>Continue to emphasise a gender and inclusion approach to social protection in continuing national dialogues about the social protection policy, and bring a gender and inclusion lens into discussions about social protection implementation once the policy is approved.</p>	<p>Support greater collaboration and information sharing between ministries and agencies working on food and nutrition security in the discussions as the draft NSPP is implemented.</p> <p>Provide insights from other countries globally on how to develop shock-responsive social protection from the outset to enhance system capacity and support community resilience.</p> <p>Provide recommendations on the types of programming options by linking into ongoing dialogue and support in the Pacific region on social protection e.g., through exchange visits.</p>
	<b>Platforms and infrastructure</b>	<b>Planning and finance</b>
	<p>Liaise with UNICEF to identify how WFP can collaborate and support when the Joint Programme work progresses.</p>	
<b>Knowledge and Learning</b>	<b>Assessments and analysis</b>	<b>Advocacy</b>
	<p>Strengthen regular data collection and sharing on food and nutrition security and vulnerability and aid the disaggregation of statistics and collection and analysis of social protection administrative data and experiences before, during and after crises (including with non-government partners such as the Samoa Red Cross Society).</p>	<p>Support the advocacy agenda with government and community stakeholders to build acceptance and understand the benefits of social protection.</p> <p>Support advocacy efforts around behaviour, attitudes and practices towards food and nutrition, including supporting gender equality and women and girls' empowerment.</p> <p>Explore mechanisms to promote agricultural production of homegrown healthy foods and changes in diet and behaviour as complementary actions alongside social protection.</p>
	<b>Engagement and communications</b>	<b>Monitoring, evaluation, and learning</b>
	<p>(Dependent on WFP's role in social protection in Samoa in the future) Support existing engagement and communication around social protection, especially with local authorities and in relation to traditional and informal systems.</p>	<p>Support the monitoring of new / emerging social protection programmes by promoting food and nutrition data collection in programme monitoring, including gender and disability analysis and by partnering with the Samoa Bureau of Statistics, civil society organizations and non-state actors.</p>
<b>Programme Features</b>	<b>Design of programme features</b>	<b>Registration and enrolment</b>
		<p>In addition to current WFP mVAM data collection and analysis, support the collection and analysis of data at the community level to inform targeting via a more nuanced understanding of multi-dimensional poverty and food and nutrition insecurity.</p>
	<b>Benefit delivery</b>	<b>Accountability, protection, and assurance</b>
	<p>Explore identifying measures to ensure the smooth flow of private remittances to households following disasters, such as building partnerships and working closely with financial service providers to reduce remittance fees.</p>	<p>Draw on existing programmatic experience in WFP to inform discussions on accountability and protection, especially in the context of disasters.</p> <p>Provide technical support to strengthen beneficiary communications and feedback mechanisms and including a focus on supporting a system to incorporate existing local community-based DRM and early warning system structures and knowledge.</p>



# References

- Adatti, L., Cattaneo, U. & Pozzan, E.** 2022. *Care at work: Investing in care leave and services for a more gender equal world of work*. International Labour Organization.
- ADB.** 2021a. *Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific*. Accessed at: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22617/FLS210322-3>
- ADB.** 2021b. *Pacific Approach 2021–2025*. Accessed at: <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/712796/pacific-approach-2021-2025.pdf>
- Cia World Factbook.** 2011. *Explore all countries - Samoa*. Accessed 23 February 2022. Accessed at: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/samoa/#people-and-society>
- De Groot, R., Palermo, T., Handa, S., Ragno, L.P., & Peterman, A.** 2015. *Cash Transfers and Child Nutrition: What we know and what we need to know*, Innocenti Working Paper No.2015-07, UNICEF Office of Research, Florence, Italy
- Duckworth, S.** 2017. *The Main Causes Of Poverty In Samoa*. [Blog] The Borgen Project Blog. Accessed 23 February 2022. Accessed at: <https://borgenproject.org/causes-of-poverty-in-samoa>
- Durr, A.** 2020. *Evidence and Guidance Note on the Use of Cash and Voucher Assistance for Nutrition Outcomes in Emergencies - World*. Accessed at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/evidence-and-guidance-note-use-cash-and-voucher-assistance-nutrition-outcomes>
- ESCAP & the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.** 2020. *Disaster-responsive social protection: Policy brief for the Pacific Small Island Developing States*. Accessed at: <https://www.unescap.org/kp/2021/disaster-responsive-social-protection-policy-brief-pacific-small-island-developing-states>
- ESCAP.** 2021. *Informal and traditional social protection in Samoa*. Accessed at: <https://www.unescap.org/kp/2021/informal-and-traditional-social-protection-samoa>
- Global Nutrition Report.** 2021. *The state of global nutrition*. Bristol, UK: Development Initiatives
- Gorman, H.** 2021. *Social Protection Stocktake: Samoa*. Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19 Expert Advice Service (SPACE), DAI Global UK Ltd, United Kingdom.
- Government of Samoa.** 2016. *Samoa National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management 2017–2021*. Accessed at: <https://bsrp.gsd.spc.int/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/samoa-national-action-plan.pdf>
- Government of Samoa.** 2020. *Press Release SNPF Concessionary Assistance – COVID 19*. Accessed at: <https://www.samoagovt.ws/2020/04/press-release-snpf-concessionary-assistance-covid-19/>
- Government of Samoa.** 2021a. *Samoa Food Systems Pathway 2030: Transforming Food Systems for a Resilient and Healthy Samoa Where No One is Left Behind Sustainable Food and Nutritional Security and Affordable Healthy Diets*. Unofficial Version accessed at: [https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Samoa-Food-Systems-Pathway-Report\\_-unofficial.pdf](https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Samoa-Food-Systems-Pathway-Report_-unofficial.pdf)
- Government of Samoa.** 2021b. Ministry of Finance, Economic Policy and Planning Department. *Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2021–2025*. Accessed at: <https://www.mof.gov.ws/services/economic-policy-planning/national-development-plans-for-samoa/>
- Government of Samoa.** 2021c. Ministry of Finance. *Samoa 2040 Transforming Samoa to a higher growth path*. Accessed at: <https://www.mof.gov.ws/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Samoa-2040-Final.pdf>
- Government of Samoa National Statistics Office & UNDP Pacific Centre.** 2016. *Samoa Hardship and Poverty Report Analysis of the 2013/14 Household Income and Expenditure Survey*. Accessed at: [https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/ws/UNDP\\_WS\\_SamoaHardshipAndPovertyReportFINALreduced.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/ws/UNDP_WS_SamoaHardshipAndPovertyReportFINALreduced.pdf)
- Government of Samoa, Ministry of Health.** 2021. *Samoa National Food and Nutrition Policy & Plan of Action 2021–2026*. Apia.
- Government of Samoa, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development.** 2021a. *Government of Samoa, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development Strategic Plan. 2021-2026*. Accessed at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1migwzKijbUw2evCcuwhfZy04kxs66MU7/view>

- Government of Samoa, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development.** 2021b. *National Policy for Persons with Disabilities. 2021-2031*. Accessed at: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aroSZnCu-UZpiLfqEWtkQ84\\_8ekOd5Wd/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aroSZnCu-UZpiLfqEWtkQ84_8ekOd5Wd/view?usp=sharing)
- Government of Samoa SDGs Taskforce.** 2020. *Samoa's Second Voluntary National Review On The Implementation Of The Sustainable Development Goals To Ensure "Improved Quality for All"*. Accessed at: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26429Samoa\\_Samos2ndVNR2020reduced.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26429Samoa_Samos2ndVNR2020reduced.pdf)
- Khondker, B.** 2021. *Review and Development of Social Protection Systems in Samoa*. UNDP.
- Loic L.D., Gaillard J.C. & Friesen W.** 2015. *Remittances and disaster: Policy implications for disaster risk management*. In Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Policy Brief Series. Issue 2. Vol. 1. March 2015.
- Mazzucato V., Van Den Boom B. & Nsowah-Nuamah N.N.N.** 2008. *Remittances in Ghana: Origin, destination and issues of measurement*. In International Migration, 46(1):103–122.
- NHRI.** 2015. *State of Human Rights Report*. Samoa Office of the Ombudsman and the National Human Rights Institution. Accessed at: [https://www.ombudsman.gov.ws/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2015\\_State-of-Human-Rights-Report-General\\_English.pdf](https://www.ombudsman.gov.ws/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2015_State-of-Human-Rights-Report-General_English.pdf)
- OECD Development Centre.** 2019. *Social Institutions and Gender Index Country profile for Samoa*. Paris, France. Accessed at: <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/WS.pdf>
- Rodrigues, C.** 2019. *A Fairer Future: Law reform and advocacy opportunities for women and PIGSOGIESC+ rights in the Commonwealth Pacific*. The Royal Commonwealth Society. Accessed at: [https://pgaction.org/pdf/Opportunities\\_for\\_women\\_and\\_LGBTI\\_rights\\_Pacific.pdf](https://pgaction.org/pdf/Opportunities_for_women_and_LGBTI_rights_Pacific.pdf)
- Sabates-Wheeler, R. & Devereux S.** 2018. *Social Protection and the World Food Programme*. In Institute for Development Studies, WFP Occasional Paper No. 25, January 2018.
- Samoa Bureau of Statistics and ESCAP.** Date unknown. *Project Strategy: Developing Social Protection Indicators For Samoa Under The Strengthening Resilience Of Samoa Through Social Protection Programme*. Accessed at: [https://www.sbs.gov.ws/images/sbs-documents/social/Social\\_ProtectionReport.pdf](https://www.sbs.gov.ws/images/sbs-documents/social/Social_ProtectionReport.pdf)
- Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, Pacific Community, & UNICEF Pacific.** 2018. *Samoa Disability Monograph: An Analysis of the 2016 Population and Housing Census*. Accessed at: [https://www.sbs.gov.ws/digi/2018\\_Samoa\\_Disability\\_Monograph.pdf](https://www.sbs.gov.ws/digi/2018_Samoa_Disability_Monograph.pdf)
- Samoa Bureau of Statistics.** 2016. *Samoa Population and Housing Census 2016*.
- Seiden, A., Hawley, N. L., Schulz, D., Raifman, S., & McGarvey, S. T.** (2012). *Long-term trends in food availability, food prices, and obesity in Samoa*. American journal of human biology: the official journal of the Human Biology Council, 24(3), 286–295. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajhb.22237>
- Strelow, C.** 2020. *Hunger In Samoa: Causes and Effects of Malnutrition*. [Blog] The Borgen Project Blog, Accessed 23 February 2022. Accessed at: <https://borgenproject.org/causes-and-effects-of-hunger-in-samoa/>
- Taylor, J.E.** 2005. *Remittances, inequality and poverty: Evidence from rural Mexico*. Working paper 05-003, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California, Davis.
- UN Joint SDG fund.** 2020a. *Samoa Designs First Disability Focused Social Protection Program* Accessed at: <https://jointsdgfund.org/article/samoa-designs-first-disability-focused-social-protection-program>
- UN Joint SDG Fund.** 2020b. *Strengthening Resilience of Pacific Islands States Through Universal Social Protection*. Accessed at: [https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/WSM/MCO%20Samoa%20-%20Final\\_Approved%20ProDoc\\_Social%20Protection%20.pdf](https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/WSM/MCO%20Samoa%20-%20Final_Approved%20ProDoc_Social%20Protection%20.pdf)
- UN Joint SDG fund.** 2020c. *Suria, excited over effort to develop Social Security Benefit for People with Disability* [news article]. Accessed at: <https://jointsdgfund.org/article/suria-excited-over-effort-develop-social-security-benefit-people-disability>
- UN Joint SDG Fund.** 2021 *Exploring social protection options in Samoa*. Accessed at: <https://samoa.un.org/en/142695-exploring-social-protection-options-samoa>

- UNDP.** 2021a. *Terms of Reference, Consultant – Development Of Gender Responsive Social Protection Systems In Samoa.* Accessed at: [https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view\\_file.cfm?doc\\_id=254646](https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_file.cfm?doc_id=254646)
- UNDP.** 2021b. *Terms of Reference, International Consultant – Gap Analysis of the Mobile Banking Systems in Samoa.* Accessed at: [https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view\\_file.cfm?doc\\_id=275970](https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_file.cfm?doc_id=275970)
- UNFPA.** 2015. *Samoa Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights Needs Assessment.* Accessed at: [https://pacific.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2\\_SamoaSexualandReproductiveHealthRightsNeedsAssessmentReportLRv1.pdf](https://pacific.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2_SamoaSexualandReproductiveHealthRightsNeedsAssessmentReportLRv1.pdf)
- UNICEF.** 2020. *Country Office Annual Report 2020: Pacific Islands.* Accessed at: <https://www.unicef.org/media/101086/file/Pacific-Islands-2020-COAR.pdf>
- UN Women.** 2022. *Country Fact Sheet | UN Women Data Hub.* [online] Accessed 17th February 2022. Accessed at: <https://data.unwomen.org/country/samoa>
- Villagómez, E.** 2022. *Final Report: Gender-Responsive Social Protection System.* Draft. UNDP.
- WFP.** 2017. *Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Engaging Affected People.* Accessed at: <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000013057/download/>
- WFP.** 2021. *Strategy for Support to Social Protection.* Accessed at: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/world-food-programme-strategy-support-social-protection-2021>
- WFP.** 2022. *Social Protection in The Pacific: A Four Country Review of Social Protection and Vulnerability in Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.*
- World Bank.** 2017a. *Pacific Possible: long-term economic opportunities and challenges for Pacific Island Countries* (English). Pacific possible series Accessed at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/168951503668157320/Pacific-Possible-long-term-economic-opportunities-and-challenges-for-Pacific-Island-Countries>
- World Bank.** 2021a. *Agriculture, forestry and fishing, value added (% of GDP) – Samoa.* Accessed 17th February 2022. Accessed at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS?locations=WS>
- World Bank.** 2021b. *Arable land (% of land area) – Samoa.* Accessed 17th February 2022. Accessed at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.ARBL.ZS?locations=WS>
- World Bank.** 2021c. *Labour force participation rate, total (% of population ages 15+) national estimate – Samoa.* Accessed 17th February 2022. Accessed at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.ZS?locations=WS>
- World Bank.** 2021d. *Rural Population (% of total population) – Samoa.* Accessed at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?locations=WS>
- World Bank.** 2021e. *Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) – Samoa.* Accessed 17th February 2022. Accessed at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=WS>
- World Bank.** 2022. *World Development indicators.* Accessed 17th February 2022. Accessed at: <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>
- World Population Review.** 2022. *Samoa Population 2022* (Demographics, Maps, Graphs). Retrieved Oct 14, 2022, from <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/samoa-population>

Key informant interviews (KIIs) held with:

- WFP
- FAO
- UNDP
- IFRC
- UNICEF
- Samoa Red Cross Society
- National Provident Fund
- Samoa Bureau of Statistics

# Annex 1: COVID-19 response social protection programs (2020-2021)

Programme	Description	Rate, frequency, delivery and status of support
<b>Top-up of Senior Citizens Benefit Fund</b>	Support to pensioners in addition to WST 145 monthly payment'	WST 300 paid in May and WST 100 paid in July ' 2020 Monthly benefit increased by WST 15 on permanent basis from July' Payment to bank accounts'
<b>National ID Register one-off payment</b>	Incentive provided to citizens who register for national ID'	WST 50 one-off payment.
<b>Utility waiver</b>	Reduction of utility prices for electricity and water over six months'	-
<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	Ministry of Finance and Samoa Chamber of Commerce provided monetary compensation to workers who have been laid off or are working reduced hours due to COVID-19.	-
<b>Short-term paid training scheme</b>	Samoa Tourism Authority and Australian Pacific Training Coalition provided a four-week training to hospitality workers.	WST 100 provided to cover transport and food expenses for each week of attendance.
<b>Deferral of social security contribution</b>	Six-month moratorium on National Provident Fund contributions.  Eligibility was restricted to those working in the hospitality sector.	-
<b>Early withdrawal of Provident Fund</b>	A dividend payout through the Samoa National Provident Fund.	20% early withdrawal for members working in hospitality.
<b>Provision of agricultural materials</b>	Financial and in-kind support including seeds, livestock supplies, and PPE to maintain food supply in local markets.	USD 400,000 from July 2020-December 2021.

Source: Gorman, 2021: 7

## Photo Credits

Cover Photo: WFP/Name Surname

Page 3: WFP/Name Surname

**World Food Programme**

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

**wfp.org**