



Enhanced access to employment and income opportunities

Transferring food, cash, knowledge and technical assistance to strengthen national safety nets

WFP's vision is that people in the Kyrgyz Republic will have **substantially increased access to national social protection systems** that safeguard and foster their ability to **meet their food security, nutrition and associated essential needs**, and to manage the risks and shocks they face, with ample opportunity to graduate from poverty, contribute to sustainable food systems and social cohesion.

Under the Country Strategic Plan 2023-2027, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), together with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, agreed to enhance its actions to **strengthen the capacity of vulnerable and food insecure people through community assets creation and livelihood skills projects** to help improve their food security and nutrition status.

The activities will also include capacity strengthening of government institutions and systems to improve government-led active labour market programmes and strengthen the protective, preventive and promotive functions of inclusive social protection.

Why is it important?



The Kyrgyz Republic has been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the global cost of living crisis, which led to a **significant increase in poverty rates**. According to WFP's mobile vulnerability surveys, the food price inflation, one of the highest in the Eurasian Economic Union, also impairs access to a nutritious diet, especially for low-income households, and undermines households' resilience as majority of them have no savings and resort to food and asset depletion coping strategies, and more than half remain only marginally food secure.

This has deepened the poverty gap, making the existing poor even more deprived, and at the same time – with a large portion of the population at the brink of poverty.

The Kyrgyz Republic is facing a **triple burden of malnutrition** (micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and non-communicable diseases), with an increased trend in overweight and obesity prevalence both among the adult population as well as in children and adolescents. Food insecurity and malnutrition are often interlinked with poverty and inequality, creating a vicious cycle with each fueling the other. National social protection systems play a central role in safeguarding and fostering the ability of the most vulnerable to meet their essential needs, including food security and nutrition, and to build resilience against shocks and stressors.

Planned activities for 2023-2027

1. WFP will complement the national social safety net, aiming to reach **more than 500,000 food insecure households** through **asset creation and livelihood skills projects**. In exchange for the participation, food/cash assistance will be provided to households to better meet their essential needs.

Food/Cash for Assets

Households receive **one-time assistance for participating in the community projects aimed at restoring essential infrastructure and productive assets** for sustainable livelihoods and food systems transformation. Among them are construction and repair of bridges, irrigation canals, dams, reservoirs, drinking water pipelines, repairing run-off ponds, veterinary treatment facilities, roads that are vital lifelines to markets and to essential facilities such as hospitals, and schools, etc.

Food/Cash for Training

Households receive **one-time assistance for participating in training to obtain livelihood skills and knowledge for increased access to employment and income-generating opportunities**, such as sewing, confectionery, greenhouse farming, fish farming, orchard management, beekeeping, agro-forestry, handicrafts-making, agro-processing, hygiene, and nutrition, and etc.

2. WFP will design the **community development projects** by optimizing government-led active labour market programmes through improved targeting, asset selection and nutrition-sensitive food rations.

3. To leave no one behind, WFP will provide direct support to **vulnerable women and men who have limited or no productive capacities**, such as people with disabilities.

4. Awareness raising on **healthy diet and gender-transformative practices** will be delivered to participants to enhance nutrition and sharing responsibilities in livelihoods and cooking practices.

5. Women and men will participate equally in determining the assets to be constructed and benefit equally from the enhanced livelihoods

6. WFP will provide the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration with technical support to **strengthen social protection systems, digitalize the government registries, improve targeting methodologies** to better reach the most vulnerable women and men of all age groups, enhance the linkage between social and food system strengthening measures, and improve access of the poorest people to nutritious diets.

7. WFP will support the Government's scale-up of new pilots designed to **help households graduate out of poverty**, such as the social contract.

8. WFP will also **generate evidence on the impact of activities on food security and nutrition** and on related food system enhancements.



Achievements

WFP supported **more than 600,000 vulnerable food insecure women and men in all age groups** through community projects in the past 5 years. Project participants and their families received food/cash assistance (**about 20,000 tons of fortified wheat flour and vegetable oil and more than US\$2 million in cash**) to meet basic food needs. The projects resulted in the restoration and construction of drinking water pipelines, irrigational canals and other assets that allowed improved access to drinking water, agricultural productivity and reduced water loss.



32 mini workshops (wool processing, baking, dairy production, juice and jam production, essential oil production, fruit and vegetable drying) in rural communities were launched and supported with the appropriate equipment, marketing and production technology to reduce post-harvest losses and increase the value added of agricultural products.

Under the '**Rural Women Economic Empowerment**' (RWEE) Project (2015-2021) WFP in partnership with FAO, UN Women and IFAD has supported 5,817 women and men through various capacity building activities and 30 women-led self-help groups to launch various income-generation businesses.



WFP supported the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration in piloting the **Social Contract**, an agreement between a low-income family and the Government whereby the **family is provided with a self-employment grant, social services, and training to graduate from poverty**. An additional goal of the initiative is to reduce the burden on the state budget in the long term. Under the pilot, WFP provided 100 poor families with on-the-job training and one-time financial assistance of KGS 100,000 (US\$ 1,160) to purchase necessary assets and start income-generating activities. Following the pilot, WFP provided technical assistance to the Ministry to develop relevant methodologies, instructions, and forms for replication nationwide. In July 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers endorsed the provision of social assistance based on the Social Contract. In total, the Government engaged 12,800 low-income families.

Based on the results of the pilot project, **all families started small businesses** in various areas: the purchase of cattle, poultry farming, greenhouse business, clothing production, baking, production of building materials, auto repair, taxi services, etc. **More than 120 jobs were created**. The average income per family ranged from KGS 6,000 to KGS 33,000. During the first three months of business implementation, the number of families below the poverty line decreased from 100 percent to 70 percent, and the number of government allowance recipients - from 53 percent to 39 percent. The number of families with bank loans decreased from 23.8 percent to 19.4 percent. In connection with the growth of incomes, **the quality of food for families has improved**.



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Monitoring and analysis

WFP provides continuous analytical support to help ensure that WFP and government programmes target the most vulnerable people to lift them out of poverty and improve access to nutritious diets:

- Analysis of poverty, food security and nutrition in the context of COVID-19 and the role of social protection in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2021
- Migration, food security and nutrition in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2021
- Analysis of Impact of Ukraine crisis to food security in Kyrgyz Republic, 2022
- Rapid Landscape Analysis on Flour Fortification, in collaboration with UNICEF, revealed gaps and barriers in the legislation to develop appropriate policies on flour fortification (only 2 percent of the population consume wheat flour fortified at levels that meet national standards), 2022
- National Integrated Micronutrient Anthropometric Survey (NIMAS), jointly with the Ministry of Health, FAO, UNICEF, WHO, US Agency for International Development, and Mercy Corps, conducted the first large-scale study on the nutritional status of children and women and assessed the prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies, undernutrition, and obesity, 2022
- WFP carried out a comprehensive assessment of the national social protection system (based on the World Bank's methodology – Core Diagnostic Instrument), jointly with the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration, World Bank, UNICEF, and International Labour Organization (ILO) to better align the system with international standards and to develop shock-responsive and digital social protection solutions, 2022
- WFP rolls out quarterly remote household surveys to monitor prevalence of food insecurity and household vulnerability across the country, as well as underlying factors
- WFP produces monthly Price Monitoring Bulletins to inform on the most updated market prices for food commodities, fertilizers and fuel
- WFP produced the Fill the Nutrient Gap Analysis to inform on a minimum cost of a nutritious diet for different groups of people and the local drivers affecting its availability, cost, and affordability, 2022
- WFP will work to introduce SHAPES (Shock Assistance Platform for Economic Simulations), a new digital platform to forecast, monitor and measure the impact of shocks (macro-economic, climate-related) on food security of the population. This platform will inform scaling up social protection programmes during shocks and crises and evaluate the impact of assistance provided to households to overcome crises



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