



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

THEMATIC CASE STUDY

Country capacity strengthening to enhance shock-responsiveness of social protection systems

Flexible Systems-Effective Responses?

Regional Evaluation of WFP's contribution to Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean (2015-2022)

WFP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

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INTRODUCTION

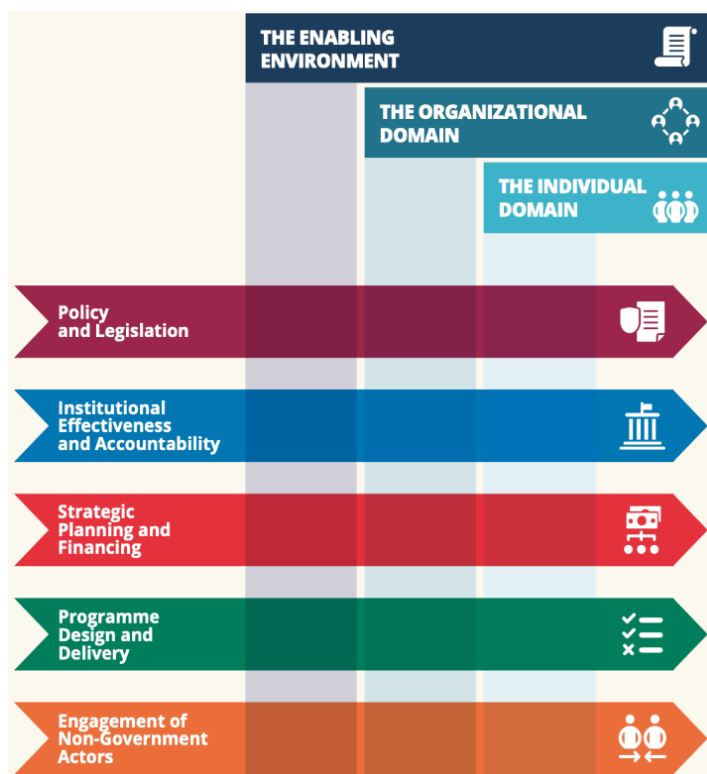
The present case study was conducted as a part of the Regional Evaluation of World Food Programme's (WFP) Contribution to Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). At the onset of the evaluation, the evaluation team identified that country capacity strengthening was a relevant topic to delve into given its importance for making social protection systems more responsive. Building on this insight, the evaluation team analysed data relevant to capacity development collected throughout the evaluation process which included a survey that garnered 104 responses and interviews with 174 internal and external stakeholders across the region.



WFP'S APPROACH TO COUNTRY CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

WFP first initiated its engagement in **Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS)** in 2004, through its Policy on Building Country and Regional Capacities, and has since substantially evolved, with a greater emphasis on different types of approaches to achieve desired outcomes. In 2017, WFP created its Corporate CCS Framework, which recognises the need to **support national systems and transform capacities of individuals, organisations, and societies to reach food insecure people**. The framework, which was updated in 2022, defines CCS as “activities structured around engagement with national and sub-national stakeholder institutions and organizations that contribute to the functioning of systems and support populations with their food security and nutrition-related needs.”¹ It adopts a **holistic and systematic approach** to CCS that seeks to engage multiple actors, including **governments, civil society, and the private sector**.

Figure 1. WFP CCS framework



Source: WFP Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS) Policy Update 2022

As shown in Figure 1, the CCS framework is structured around **five pathways for capacity change**, namely: 1) Policy and Legislation; 2) Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability; 3) Strategic Planning and Financing; 4) Programme Design and Delivery; 5) Engagement of Non-governmental Actors. Within each of these pathways, CCS change can occur within **three different domains that represent different levels in society and are interconnected**. The **'enabling environment'** refers to the rules under which society operates, including laws, policies and behaviours, and which facilitates organisations and individuals to carry out their functions. The **'organisational domain'** includes the policies, structures, systems, strategies, procedures and resources that enables an organisation to operate, while the **'individual domain'** refers to the skills, knowledge and attitudes.

¹ WFP (2022). Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS) Informal consultation on the Policy Update. https://executiveboard.wfp.org/document_download/WFP-0000138969



WFP'S APPROACH TO COUNTRY CAPACITY STRENGTHENING IN **SHOCK-RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION**

CCS is an integral part of the Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) pillar of the Regional Social Protection Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), which seeks to strengthen existing social protection systems to make them more responsive to shocks. The SRSP framework is structured around six main categories for systems preparedness, each of which seeks to strengthen country capacity to respond to shocks as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Modalities of engagement for SRSP

SRSP category for systems preparedness	Description
Institutional capacity	The legislation, policies, and mandates of key disaster management and social protection institutions, as well as the organisational structure that affects services delivery in affected areas.
Coordination	Mechanisms and protocols for coordinating activities before and after an emergency – including the coordination of social protection and other government agencies.
Financing	Strategies and mechanisms for financing disaster risk management activities before and after an emergency, through social protection.
Delivery mechanisms	The mechanisms in place for delivering cash or in-kind assistance to people affected by emergencies.
Targeting	The protocols, processes and criteria for identifying people and families that should receive support through social protection.
Information systems	Social-economic, disaster risk, and vulnerability information to enable decision-making before and after an emergency.

The **SRSP framework identifies nine priority areas** (see Figure 2) that are expected to enable WFP to contribute to **stronger capacities across the six modalities of engagement**. The **priority areas of work suggest *how to engage*, while the modalities suggest *what to work on***. These include priority areas that are external and internal to WFP. Externally, WFP aims to strengthen capacity by generating evidence to identify gaps in country systems, supporting the development of country roadmaps for SRSP, documenting experiences and promoting learning on SRSP, enabling exchanges between countries through South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and promoting increased coordination through partnerships with key actors, such as UN agencies, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and others. Internally, the priority areas also seek to maintain buy-in from WFP management for SRSP and secure resources for different funding streams to sustain this work.

Figure 2. SRSP priority areas of wo



WFP'S CONTRIBUTION TO POSITIONING SRSP THROUGH EVIDENCE- GENERATION AND ADVOCACY

In 2015, the possibility of using social protection programmes to respond to covariant shocks was not widely known nor used by government and development partners in Latin America and the Caribbean. At that time, WFP Philippines conducted a trial in response to typhoon Haiyan using the social protection system and based on this experience, the WFP staff in the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBP) saw an opportunity for governments in LAC to channel response to shocks through their social protection systems. As a first step, WFP partnered with Oxford Policy Management (OPM) to generate evidence on the status of social protection systems in LAC, including opportunities and gaps for making these systems responsive to shocks. Over a span of five years, WFP in collaboration with OPM developed 17 case studies. Eight case studies were undertaken between 2017 and 2018 and the rest took place between 2020 and 2021 and focused on countries' emergency response to COVID-19 using social protection systems.

Figure 3 Regional Symposium on SRSP in the Caribbean, Turks and Caicos Islands, 2019



Stakeholders consulted for the evaluation explained that the OPM country case studies were the first of their kind. Governments and partners were unaware of the concept of channelling emergency assistance through social protection systems at that time and the new evidence generated by WFP on the topic helped them understand how social protection programmes could be used to address the needs of those most affected by shocks. In this sense, **WFP contributed to generating awareness of and demand for SRSP in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, the participatory approach characteristic for the OPM country case studies - which meant involving government**

partners in conceptualization and data collection - contributed to growing national ownership and buy-in for SRSP. WFP used the evidence generated to advocate for the use of social protection systems to respond to shocks through seminars which took place in Peru (2017), in Dominica, the Dominican Republic, and Ecuador (2018), and in Turks and Caicos (2019); the latter is pictured in Figure 3. These events involved both government representatives and partners from the United Nations and (IFIs). The **evidence generated was used to foster dialogue on SRSP at country level.** It was key for informing the development of WFP's strategic support and strengthening partnerships, as it was the case in the Caribbean, where the WFP's multi-country office developed a strategic partnership with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA). In some instances, the case studies also contributed to the development of country roadmaps for SRSP (see below). Numerous partners explained that **WFP had become a pioneer in the field of SRSP**, informing the strategic thinking of other organizations like UNICEF, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in this area.

The evaluation team found that **WFP's evidence generation and advocacy efforts contributed in a significant way to creating an enabling environment for SRSP, setting the stage for subsequent efforts by WFP to strengthen national social protection systems to become more responsive to shocks.**

WFP'S CONTRIBUTION TO CCS ACROSS THE FIVE PATHWAYS TO CHANGE

Considering the six modalities of engagement and key priority areas identified by WFP in the SRSP pillar of its Regional Social Protection Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean (as shown in Table 1), this section assesses WFP's contribution to strengthened country capacities taking into consideration the five pathways for capacity change and the three domains as identified in the WFP CCS Framework.

Policy and legislation

In the domain of **enabling environment**, WFP has contributed to the development of policies and legislation in some countries.

A prime example is Peru, where the National Institute for Civil Defense (INDECI) was the only legally mandated institution to respond in emergencies; WFP's advocacy efforts contributed to the approval of an executive decree in 2018 granting the Ministry for Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS) the necessary mandate to respond to emergencies through social protection systems. In the organisational domain, amid the COVID-19 crisis WFP continued its advocacy efforts for the adoption of legislative norms and regulations favourable to response to shocks through social protection systems. These measures enabled various

Figure 4. Launch of Emergency Bonus in Dominican Republic



social protection programmes operating under MIDIS to adapt their systems and procedures to effectively respond to emergencies. Similarly, in the Dominican Republic, through the Adaptive Social Protection Working Group, WFP advocated and provided technical assistance for the establishment of a presidential decree to institutionalise an Emergency Bonus as part of the programme Supérate² (see Figure 4).

However, in other countries more remains to be done to contribute to policies and legislation that are conducive to channelling response to shock through social protection systems. For example, in Ecuador, WFP contributed to the adoption of presidential decrees for cash transfers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but transfers could only be made for this specific crisis and only to those registered in the national social registry.

² Supérate programme aims at targeted social intervention through the integration of conditional cash transfers, socio-educational support, and linkage with government programmes and services. The programme focuses on providing economic assistance and support to families in situations of vulnerability and extreme poverty in the Dominican Republic.

Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability

For the Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability change pathway, the 2022 update of the CCS framework provides as a potential example of contribution to the **organisational domain** supporting the formalisation and stakeholder recognition of an institutional or committee's mandate. Such contribution was observed in the British Virgin Island, where WFP has supported the institutional strengthening and accountability of the regular social protection system, which then enabled it to support SRSP.

The Caribbean Multi-Country Office (MCO) took advantage of an opportunity to collaborate with the national government in enhancing the standard social protection system, laying the ground before considering shock-responsive enhancements. This engagement involved close collaboration with government social workers throughout the entire social assistance process, from understanding the eligibility criteria and the admissions (intake) procedures to facilitating referrals to complementary services and managing exit processes. This comprehensive engagement provided WFP with in-depth insights into the system's operations, enabling the identification and enhancement of tools and procedures at each stage. Key informants emphasized that without this profound understanding of the regular social protection system, the implementation of shock-responsive measures would be merely superficial. By delving deeply into the operational processes of the standard social protection system in the British Virgin Islands, WFP is better positioned to comprehend and suggest improvements, ensuring a smooth transition from normal operations to response to shocks and reinforcing overall preparedness.



Strategic Planning and Financing

In the Caribbean, WFP has been instrumental in fostering relationships between government stakeholders, particularly in social protection ministries and ministries of finance, focusing on disaster risk financing. The Caribbean MCO strategically utilizes top-ups to Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) macro-insurance policies, encouraging governments to invest part of their premiums in coverage to address the needs of vulnerable households in case of catastrophic loss. WFP's significant contribution to climate change adaptation through various disaster risk financing tools, from macro- to micro-levels, has garnered strong support. Notably, WFP's negotiation of top-ups to CCRIF insurance policies in Dominica, Belize, and Saint Lucia allows for proportional pay-outs in major catastrophes, directly benefiting social protection recipients. Beyond enhancing the viability of the risk insurance system, these measures promote awareness of social protection's role in shock response within ministries of finance, facilitating disaster risk contingency and operational planning across various ministries in the region.

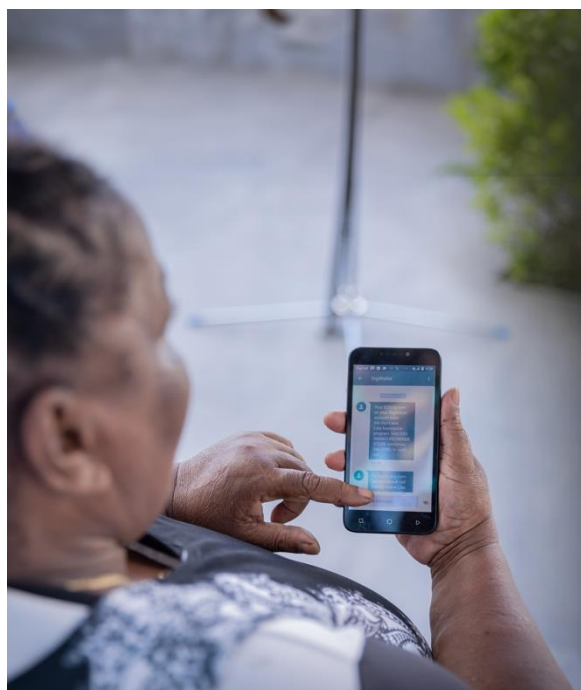
However, beyond WFP's relation with ministries of finance in the Caribbean, the evaluation team found that WFP's advocacy channels with these ministries have been limited and that there is further room to advocate for increased national resources to finance response to shocks through social protection systems. As demonstrated in the full evaluation report, constrained fiscal space for social protection has tended to be a limiting factor for its responsiveness to shocks. Beyond advocating for the importance of SRSP, the evaluation did not find evidence, for instance, of WFP supporting return on investment studies to demonstrate the economic value of investing in SRSP. Stakeholders consulted for this evaluation also explained that the implementation of recommendations from the OPM case studies would have not only required a clear roadmap but also clear budgets to support the implementation of these recommendations. Some stakeholders explained that to propel this type of work, WFP would need to bring in further experts in strategic planning and budgeting as its internal expertise in this regard is limited to a handful of staff.



Programme Design and Delivery

WFP's technical assistance and advocacy have made important contributions to strengthening programme design and delivery for response to shocks through social protection systems, especially within the organisational and individual domains. In the organisational domain, WFP has contributed to strengthening the institutional capacity of a wide range of social protection programmes across countries. Notably, this includes the organisational strengthening of national school feeding programmes to address the food security needs of vulnerable populations affected by shocks.

WFP provided technical assistance to Qali Warma, the National School Feeding Programme in Peru. During the state of emergency in Peru, as schools were on the verge of starting a new academic year with food already purchased in February for the nationwide school meals recipient population, WFP played a pivotal role in advising MIDIS on distributing the food to households. This proactive response was due to the pandemic-induced suspension of classes, preventing potential food spoilage. With WFP's technical support, adjustments were made to ensure the continuity of school feeding during remote learning. WFP provided guidance in adapting regulations and protocols, facilitating the distribution of food to caregivers, a process that began in May 2020. Moreover, WFP offered advice to Qali Warma in designing the food basket composition, significantly contributing to addressing the nutritional needs of the crisis-affected population.



More recently, WFP has taken a proactive approach by working in close collaboration with the Government of Belize. WFP has been actively involved in preparing and refining operational manuals for programmes such as the Belize COVID-19 Cash Transfer, and the Unemployment Relief Programme (Boost). Through continuous technical-level meetings with the Belizean government, WFP is focused on contributing to the enhancement of these programme manuals, with particular attention to concepts like targeting, to ensure they are more adaptable to sudden shocks and include preparedness measures. WFP's ongoing capacity strengthening efforts in Belize have resulted in significantly enhanced response speed. In the case of Hurricane Lisa in 2022, the support to preparedness of social protection entities resulted in the ability to distribute cash to affected population within one month – a time that is significantly shorter compared to other responses where it may take up to six

months to disburse funds.

Similarly, in 2022, WFP entered into a two-year technical assistance agreement with the government of Dominica. This agreement encompasses various components, with a primary focus on strengthening social protection. It includes activities such as the development of a beneficiary management information system and the transition to digital data collection. Additionally, the agreement includes support for livelihoods, food systems, and disaster risk management, with close collaboration with CDEMA.

In the **individual domain**, WFP has strengthened the capacity of government staff to support the design and delivery of social protection programmes that are responsive to shocks. It has done so through

targeted training and skills enhancement to equip individuals in SRSP-related roles as well as through South-South and Triangular Cooperation. An example of this support was training government staff in Colombia to conduct assessments for migrant populations. In Colombia, WFP also drew on national personnel – some of whom had previous experience working with the Government, which proved particularly useful as they understood well government procedures and already had established professional networks. These networks played a crucial role in raising awareness about the importance of including migrants in the System for Identification of Potential Social Programme Beneficiaries (SISBEN in Spanish), ultimately creating a more favourable environment for government actions in this regard.

In the Dominican Republic, WFP enhanced the capabilities of newly appointed government officials through the Adaptive Social Protection Working Group. This initiative was particularly important during a period of governmental transition and the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. WFP in the Dominican Republic proactively offered training to new public employees to ensure the continuation of the work previously undertaken within the Adaptive Social Protection Working Group and to maintain the momentum.

A noteworthy aspect has also been the capacity strengthening efforts at the local government level. In Colombia, WFP collaborated with the Office of the Mayor of Bogotá to create a specific targeting instrument to identify, assess the vulnerability of and register poor Colombians and migrants within social protection programmes, who had been invisible to the information systems due to their lack of a permanent address.

Another modality used by **WFP to strengthen capacities in the individual domain has been South-South and Triangular Cooperation**. For instance, in 2022, personnel from the Social Registry of Ecuador engaged in a virtual South-South cooperation exchange with the government of Colombia to learn about their programme for including individuals in human mobility in the System for Identification of Potential Social Programme Beneficiaries. Currently, the population in human mobility in Ecuador is under-registered and participants of the exchanges expressed that they had learned about the value of integrating such populations in the Social Registry.

However, more remains to be done when it comes to creating an **enabling environment** for SRSP programme design and delivery. The 2022 update for of the CCS framework identifies “fostering commitment to data transparency and sharing to reduce fragmentation of social protection programmes” as a notable example of what contributions to the enabling environment would mean for this outcome pathway. Yet, the evaluation team has discovered that it has proved challenging for ministries to promptly and efficiently share information on beneficiaries to ensure efficient targeting of vulnerable populations affected by covariate shocks. An outstanding example is Peru where, by mandate, the MIDIS has traditionally addressed the needs of poor rural households and, therefore, the Social Registry lacked data on urban and peri-urban population, which has been affected the most by the COVID-19 crisis. When the pandemic rapidly unfolded, the MIDIS lacked data for targeting and therefore decided to handout universal cash transfers, which proved very costly. Going forward, the WFP Country Office in Peru hopes to provide the government with technical assistance to support the inter-operability of databases across ministries to ensure efficient targeting in the event of a shock.



Engagement of Non-governmental Actors

When it comes to the **enabling environment**, WFP has fulfilled an important role as a convener and collaborator with UN agencies, IFIs, and government bodies around SRSP, both at regional and country levels, although there are opportunities to further strengthen these collaborative platforms and institutionalise them. **At regional level, WFP has played an important leadership role in inter-agency working groups.** For example, in 2021 the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) launched four working groups to support the implementation of the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction in LAC, one of which focuses on SRSP and disaster risk finance. WFP was asked to lead this group, which gathers donors, UN agencies, and civil society, because of its thought leadership and thematic expertise in SRSP. The group addresses joint priorities such as disaster risk financing and anticipatory action, shock-responsive social protection within the context of the climate crisis, and the challenges posed by migration. Still, external stakeholders explained that the absence of a formal regional coordination mechanism on SRSP is a limiting factor and that, recognizing WFP as a thought leader in SRSP in LAC, there are opportunities for WFP to further take on this regional convener role.

"The various individuals within WFP are professionals who interact with the agency... they have a knowledge transfer vision, and they seek sustainability to promote government capacity building transformation."

- External stakeholder

At country level, WFP has supported collaboration among non-state and governmental actors in some countries. A key example is the Adaptive Social Protection Working Group in the Dominican Republic, which brings together ministries, UN agencies, and the World Bank. The primary objective of this Working Group is to identify support needs and areas requiring reinforcement within the social protection system so that it is more responsive to shocks. WFP has gained access to a wider range of expertise, resources, and knowledge, significantly enhancing its capacity strengthening efforts by harnessing the strengths and

experiences of various organisations. Notable accomplishments of these collaborative efforts in the Dominican Republic include the development of the Basic Emergency Form (FIBE in Spanish) in partnership with UNICEF, the formulation of the Technical Guide for the Implementation of the Emergency Bonus, and various initiatives aimed at addressing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis. In Saint Lucia, WFP supported the convening of the Country Coordinating Committee, with a focus on SRSP. Nonetheless, in other countries, there is room to ensure more systematic coordination among SRSP partners at country level to ensure greater coherence and minimize the risk of duplicating efforts on SRSP.

Example of Collaboration with the World Bank on SRSP

In Haiti, WFP was contracted by the Government to implement a component of the Social Protection programme, which is financed by the World Bank.

Looking more specifically at collaboration with IFIs, there is evidence that WFP is starting to further engage with organizations like the World Bank and IDB in a handful of countries. Given the insufficient funding for CCS in numerous countries, strengthening collaboration across countries with IFIs could present an opportunity, particularly for addressing issues demanding substantial resources, such as the establishment of a social registry.

In the **organisational domain**, there are examples of important collaboration with **academia and the private sector** in some countries, although engagement with these non-state actors is not yet systematic. In the Caribbean, WFP collaborated with The University of Wolverhampton to produce an e-learning module on SRSP drawing on the *Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean Handbook* published in November 2021. Based on this experience, WFP is considering strengthening capacities related to SRSP within the region by supporting the creation of a degree programme or diploma in SRSP in collaboration with the University of the West Indies. Similarly, engagement with the private sector was evidenced in one country (Ecuador), where WFP established a memorandum of understanding with La Favorita, a supermarket chain, where vulnerable migrants can use food vouchers to purchase food items. In the **individual domain**, WFP strengthened the capacity of cooperating partners in areas such as needs assessment and targeting. This was notably the case in Ecuador, where non-governmental organisations (NGOs) like HIAS, World Vision and Plan International now have the capacity to identify vulnerable populations affected by shocks who are not in the social registry and prioritise the delivery of transfers to them based on clear vulnerability criteria.

ENABLERS AND BARRIERS

Internal Enablers

Leadership and Consistency: WFP's consistent leadership and presence in certain countries have greatly benefited its capacity strengthening efforts. Stability in leadership builds trust with donors, UN partners, and government officials, fostering stronger relationships and confidence in WFP's work. WFP's role as a thought leader in the area of SRSP, namely through its evidence generation and advocacy efforts, was also recognized as a key enabler.

Training and Skills Development of WFP personnel: WFP's commitment to training and skills development has empowered individuals in SRSP-related roles, which has been a key enabler to ensure that its people have the right skills to deliver on SRSP priorities. In 2016, WFP started training its personnel on social protection and SRSP; the survey conducted for this evaluation indicates that more than three quarters (77%) of WFP staff believe they have received adequate training on SRSP.

Human Resources: In some countries, such as Peru and Colombia, WFP has contracted senior national staff with previous experience working with the Government, including ministries of social protection, and with in-depth knowledge of the institutional and legislative framework. This has allowed WFP to advocate for SRSP at the highest political level and to better understand – and therefore contribute to – an enabling environment and institutional capacities for SRSP.

External Enablers

Government Engagement and Ownership: Governments that recognize the importance of SRSP are more likely to collaborate effectively with WFP and seek its support. The participatory approach employed for the elaboration of the OPM case studies was a key factor in promoting government ownership of SRSP.

Coordination: The existence of national-level coordination mechanisms or working groups dedicated to social protection and disaster response can foster collaboration and information exchange among multiple stakeholders, including WFP. These mechanisms played a pivotal role in harmonizing efforts on capacity strengthening and optimising the allocation of resources.

Collaborative Networks: WFP's role as a collaborator with UN agencies, IFIs, government and inter-governmental bodies has been essential. These partnerships have allowed WFP to tap into a wider range of expertise, resources, and knowledge, enhancing its capacity strengthening efforts by harnessing the strengths and experiences of various organization.

Internal Barriers

Rotations and staff turnover: Rotations in senior management and turnover of other key personnel weakened relationships with governmental counterparts and donors, impacting the continuity of capacity development initiatives, especially at the level of enabling environment and at the institutional level.

Lack of Performance Management Framework for SRSP: The absence of a performance management framework, especially for country capacity strengthening within SRSP, has made it difficult to assess WFP's contributions in this domain. This lack of standardised performance measurement impedes the ability to track long-term outcomes and results. This absence also hindered the ability to track the long-term impact of investments made in SRSP and capacity strengthening efforts within this domain. Consequently, the absence of well-defined indicators and a standardised performance measurement framework for WFP's SRSP efforts has resulted in individual countries having to create their own methods to measure progress.

External Barriers

Funding Challenges: Stakeholders expressed a significant concern regarding WFP's potential difficulties in attracting donor funding for capacity strengthening initiatives aimed at reinforcing institutions at the country level, as opposed to humanitarian assistance efforts. Obtaining donor funding is generally easier when addressing immediate emergency response needs compared to longer-term capacity-development initiatives within countries.

Perception of WFP as humanitarian agency: In many countries, WFP is primarily associated with emergency response and food and cash distribution during crises. This perception often overshadows WFP's vital role in fostering long-term capacities. Additionally, the limited awareness of the full scope of WFP's mandate, beyond its traditional humanitarian role, can lead to misunderstandings about the organisation's potential contributions to strengthening government capacities.

“Traditional donors impose many restrictions on supporting these efforts, which limits the availability of resources. For example, the absence of a single registry requires the creation of manuals and strengthened capacities, but there isn't sufficient funding to carry out these activities.”

- WFP staff

Limited channels to advocate for sustainable funding: WFP's country offices have faced limitations in establishing solid channels with ministries of finance to advocate for allocations in social protection and enhancing its responsiveness to shocks.



CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER ENGAGEMENT

In conclusion, WFP has through its capacity strengthening efforts contributed to establishing an enabling environment for strengthening responsiveness of social protection systems in LAC. Before 2015, governments in the region were unaware of the potential to use social protection systems to respond to shocks. WFP staff in the Regional Bureau saw an opportunity to use SRSP, which had been piloted by WFP in the Philippines in response to Typhoon Haiyan, to address the needs of vulnerable populations in the LAC region, who had been affected significantly by co-variate shocks in recent years. WFP's evidence generation efforts in partnership with OPM allowed to identify key gaps and opportunities to make social protection systems in the region more responsive to shocks. Using this evidence, WFP advocated for SRSP through high-level events across the region, which created the demand for SRSP and paved the way to some governments making commitments to use and adapt their social protection systems to respond to shocks. In this process, WFP also gained recognition as a credible actor in the field of social protection, generating confidence among governments and other humanitarian and development actors that it has the required technical expertise to help them strengthen their national social protection systems and make them more responsive to shocks. The Covid-19 pandemic had a catalysing effect on WFP's capacity strengthening efforts as governments saw the necessity to respond quickly to the crisis through their national systems and turned to WFP for practical support as needs arose.

Having a strong understanding of the social protection systems in different countries proved central for WFP to provide tailored support to governments to strengthen the responsiveness to shocks of their social protection systems. Depending on the context, WFP contributed to enabling the legislative environments in some countries where the policy framework was not conducive to the use of social protection systems in emergencies. Similarly, WFP also developed relationships with ministries of finance, especially in the Caribbean, on disaster risk financing. However, in a number of countries opportunities remain for WFP to further influence the policy environment to ensure that Ministries of Social Protection have the required normative framework to respond to shocks. Similarly, there are opportunities for WFP to build stronger relationships with ministries of finance to advocate for budget allocations for social protection programmes and their use in response to shocks. Additionally, helping governments to better understand the long-term benefits of investing in social protection systems, for example through return-on-investment studies, might help overcome funding challenges. Going forward, it will be important for WFP to invest across country offices in national staff with the right skillsets to support national capacity strengthening, including around policy-making and budgeting.

WFP played a key role in fostering collaboration and coordination among actors working in SRSP. At regional level, WFP's leadership of the ECHO thematic Group on Shock-responsive Social Protection and Disaster Risk Finance stands out, while at country level its leadership of the Adaptive Social Protection Working Group in the Dominican Republic is considered good practice. Still, there remains room for enhancing coordination mechanisms, particularly in formalizing regional platforms and ensuring systematic collaboration at the country level. WFP has also made some progress in engaging with IFIs but there are opportunities to further capitalise on these partnerships especially in a context of dwindling traditional donor resources.

Finally, addressing the lack of corporate indicators and developing a standardised performance measurement framework should be a priority. This would facilitate a more comprehensive measurement of WFP's contributions to SRSP, especially at the country level, and enable tracking of long-term outcomes and results. At the same time, better reporting on results will help convince donors and the governments themselves of the value of investing in strengthening the responsiveness to shocks of social protection systems.

Disclaimer

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Decentralized Evaluation

WFP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean