



# Child-Sensitive Social Protection

## Programme in West Nile

Evidence Compendium

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## Acronyms & Abbreviations

- BBS** Bank of Uganda Banking System
- DAC** Development Assistance Committee
- DRDIP** Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project
- ECBT** Emergency Cash-Based Transfer
- ERNUSS** Enhancing Reproductive Health, Nutrition and Social Protection Services
- GoU** Government of Uganda
- IFMS** Integrated Financial Management System
- LIPW** Labour Intensive Public Works
- MDA** Ministries, Departments and Agencies
- M & E** Monitoring & Evaluation
- NSPP** National Social Protection Policy
- OPM** Office of the Prime Minister
- OECD** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- PDM** Parish Development Model
- RMS** Routine Monitoring Survey
- SAGE** Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment
- SBCC** Social Behaviour Change Communication
- UNICEF** United Nations Children's Fund
- WFP** World Food Programme

## Abstract

The Child Sensitive Social Protection Programme conducted several studies and assessments on its activities aimed at guiding planning and evaluating performance against set targets. Of these, 41 reports; 11 on systems strengthening and 30 on NutriCash and its subcomponents were examined, and core findings and recommendations compiled into a compendium of evidence.

The study reports were subjected to thematic analysis guided by pragmatic interpretivism philosophy to interpret findings and evaluate recommendations to produce this summative report. According to the interpretivism theory, social reality may be understood subjectively, and different people interact with and report on phenomena differently. With this therefore, a pragmatic, open-minded objective evaluation of the studies was adopted, and findings and recommendations rationally and coherently assessed. The report is grounded on researched findings as put forward in the studies and involves methodical arrangement and synthesis of the data to identify and decipher patterns and trends in the findings with aim of guiding future programming.

In line with its Global Strategy on Social Protection, WFP leveraging on its technical capacity and commitment continues to collaborate with the Government of Uganda to strengthen the government's systems on matters access to national social protection programs. Under the systems strengthening workstream, a study on the Integrated Financial Management System payment mechanism confirmed that it was possible to execute social protection payments using IFMS connected to the BBS core banking system and E-Cash and that this would enable social protection beneficiaries to directly receive their payments through their bank accounts or mobile money. It recommended that the Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE) financial management system should be integrated to the Integrated Financial Management System (GoU-IFMS) and BBS Connect (Bank of Uganda Banking system) to reduce time taken to credit beneficiaries' accounts, delays in cashing out, while saving GoU a lot of money from reduced transfer costs and beneficiaries' transport costs to pay points while also enhancing security, transparency, and cost-effectiveness and empowering beneficiaries.

On a related note, and in compliance with WFP values of collaboration, commitment and sustainability, the studies confirmed that community engagement, multi-sectoral approach and leveraging on technology and innovation have been pivotal to developing capacity of local governments in Uganda. Evidence from the studies showed that it was imperative to develop skills and knowledge of social protection role players. This was well brought out in the National Social Protection Strategy (2023-2028). The strategy provides guidance and key approaches for local governments to enhance their capacity on social protection in line with WFP's Global Strategy that aims at working with governments to foster their ability to meet their food security, nutrition and associated essential needs and manage the risks and shocks they face. Interestingly, the different studies collated in the compendium showed the need to expand the scope and coverage of social protection, care, and support for Uganda's most vulnerable groups across the life cycle by leveraging on the role played by development partners. In addition to this, and as evidenced by the terms of reference for operationalisation of local government social protection coordination structures, it was recommended that for sustainability purposes, the coordination and management of interdependencies be left to District Technical Planning Committees.

This was collaborated by studies on NutriCash that showed that working through government structures leads to improved capacity building and sustainability. To this end, the compendium of studies recommends Institutionalisation of TRANSFORM at national and sub-national level, incorporation of social protection indicators into national/sub-national assessment tools & operationalization of the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) M&E framework and alignment of the programme to other interventions such as the Parish Development Model (PDM).

On the same note, similar studies on the NutriCash component showed that collaborating with strategic partners helped to bring services closer to beneficiaries, improved coverage, outreach, and quality of service delivery. The same recommended that NutriCash payments should be regularised and disseminated through digital payment mechanisms. Additionally, a Complaint and feedback management mechanism (CBF) for NutriCash beneficiaries should be established and that a village family/community protection committee be formed to resolve family disputes. This was due to the finding that only about half of the women surveyed in the study reported being fully in-charge of decisions on cash in their households, implying that the men still had a significant influence on the utilization of the cash assistance.

In addition to this and based on the finding that the beneficiaries had scanty knowledge of how critical the first 1,000 days are in a child's life, it was recommended that more intense training be conducted on the kinds of food needed for pregnant women and children under two years. On the same note, it was recommended that male engagement activities need to be strengthened to ensure that the purpose of the programme is clearly understood by the spouses for its effective utilization.

Furthermore, the studies examined in this first version of the compendium inform us of the need to establish permanent bank agents within the communities (at least one per sub-county) to enable flexible cash management such as withdrawals by NutriCash beneficiaries. Similarly, an efficient and effective one-stop-shop approach to beneficiary enrolment should be adopted for subsequent enrolments. This approach should ensure zero-timeline between different processes of NutriCash enrolment. It was further recommended that district-based databases be developed for the DRDIP/LIPW and that this should routinely be updated to avoid usage of fraudulent prone hard copy beneficiary lists. To achieve this, it was recommended that coordination with local authorities be improved and local leaders at subcounty level involved in cash distributions.

On Financial literacy, the Financial Literacy Strategy for Uganda, 2019-2024 showed that Financial Literacy involves building of knowledge, skills, and confidence that influence change from current to desired behaviour of individuals. Relatedly, the findings from this and other studies on the same showed that more men own and control a significant share of financial assets than women. This was collaborated by studies on Gender Equality that showed that customary practices superseded civil laws. These recommended that programme implementation integrates gender issues including planning for and embedding activities to mitigate risks that might arise due to programme interventions. In addition to this, the studies recommended that district capacity to plan, implement and monitor gender programmes should be developed as many of the recommended affirmative action provisions are not fully implemented because district structures are still weak. Furthermore, the studies recommended a two-fold educational and gender transformative approach to trigger behaviour change including 50-50 gender representation in all community engagements.

Lastly, on complaint and grievance mechanism, the compendium tells us that there is need to expand the channels for complaints reporting to enhance public participation and good governance. It also shows that social protection is multisectoral and requires engagement of other sector role players, programme linkages and development of core systems for harmonized delivery to achieve its objectives.

In summation, the studies examined recommend that the programme identifies actions to improve the registration for and delivery of NutriCash and its components and methods need to be devised to fast-track implementation including closer collaboration with UNICEF, increased advocacy and establishment of core monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and in doing these, aspects of gender, disability, equality and inclusion need to be considered for realization of transformative Health, Nutrition and Social Protection interventions.



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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1. About the Child-Sensitive Social Protection programme

In 2019, the Government of Uganda, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), started implementing the Sweden-funded Child-Sensitive Social Protection (CSSP) programme, a joint programme aimed at promoting community and household resilience among refugees and host populations in the West Nile subregion. The programme focuses on three objectives: (i) improved economic inclusion of households; (ii) improved child and maternal nutrition; and (iii) improved maternal, neonatal and child health.

To deliver on these objectives, the programme provides direct income support to targeted households, and supports the Government and its partners to make social protection and health systems more efficient, transparent and child- and nutrition-sensitive. The programme also seeks to expand coverage of existing social protection and health programmes by supporting the Government with investments into national systems and structures, including systems for data management, monitoring and evaluation, feedback, and mechanisms for programme coordination.

#### Programme components

The programme has three components:

- 1. Support to social protection systems:** This includes household cash transfers (NutriCash) and support to strengthen national cash-based transfer mechanisms, beneficiary information and assistance management, national feedback and complaints mechanism, action research, and linkages with other programmes (led by WFP).
- 2. Strengthening health systems:** This includes improvements in health management information systems, financing for health, quality of care at community and facility levels, and human resources for health (led by UNICEF).
- 3. Cross-cutting aspects:** This includes strong links with existing programmes, strengthening local retail markets, strengthening national systems for feedback and complaints, and operational research.

The CSSP programme is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Government, and district local governments of the West Nile subregion.

## 1.2. Executive summary

This compendium presents programme learnings and evidence gathered through learning activities, monitoring, evaluation and research, and programme implementation. The purpose of the compendium is to inform programme shifts to expand impact, programme replication and expansion. It focuses on the social protection component of the programme led by WFP.

The compendium is organized into three main parts. Part 1 is an introduction to the document and includes the programme background and learning agenda. It introduces the key programme learning questions that the evidence and learning products in Part 2 seek to respond to. Part 3 makes a conclusion of the whole.

The body of this compendium analysis report (Part 2) focuses on evidence and learning products. It is subdivided into three sections in line with learning themes, namely: (i) programme approach; (ii) systems strengthening; and (iii) nutrition-sensitive programming (NutriCash). Each learning theme summarizes evidence and knowledge products focusing on key findings/learning, recommendations, and implications for programming.

Evidence under the programme approach theme shows that the programme approach of working through government systems and structures is highly relevant, with the potential for capacity strengthening from within. This approach can foster sustainability of interventions by stimulating government ownership and leadership. However, realizing system strengthening across the components of the social protection system is an ambitious undertaking that requires expanded and sustained financing and multisectoral effort in the longer term.

Evidence under the systems strengthening theme underscores the fact that realizing comprehensive social protection requires investment across the social protection building blocks, in line with the Capacity Needs Mapping that underpins capacity-strengthening priorities under the CSSP. Guidance on streamlining interventions and investment is provided by the National Social Protection Strategy, focusing on eight key elements, namely: (i) monitoring and evaluation (M&E); (ii) the legal and policy framework; (iii) selection and identification systems; (iv) administration and technical capacities; (v) coordination; (vi) governance; (vii) management information systems; and (viii) financing mechanisms. While the CSSP is already intervening across the entire breadth of social protection systems strengthening, there is recognition of the need for continuing support to priority areas beyond the CSSP.

Emerging learnings and evidence under nutrition-sensitive programming show the potential that 'cash plus' interventions have for improving food consumption, knowledge of care practices, and women's decision-making power. However, there is insufficient data to sufficiently determine whether similar progress is being achieved on the nutrition front. This data should be available through endline evaluations. Access to pay points and payments remains a significant challenge; although the programme is already rolling out digital interventions, these are not fast enough. It is important to fast-track beneficiary enrolment onto banks and mobile money to enable beneficiaries to access cash assistance conveniently.

### 1.3. Learning Questions

The evidence and learning products profiled in this compendium are in line with the programme learning questions, based on the approved programme learning agenda. The questions are categorized into three major themes:

- Programme approach;
- Systems strengthening; and
- Nutrition-sensitive programming.

**Table 1: Learning themes and questions;**

Learning theme	Key learning questions
<b>Programme approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What lessons are we learning from integrating programmes into existing government structures?</li> <li>• What approaches are effective at sustaining programme impact?</li> <li>• How replicable/scalable is the CSSP approach?</li> </ul>
<b>Systems strengthening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we enhance existing national and sub national government delivery systems, coordination capacity and performance in social protection?</li> <li>• What is the impact of our system-strengthening initiatives on sector coordination, system integration, digitalization, and capacity development at national and local government levels?</li> <li>• What approaches best enable us to realize our system-strengthening objectives?</li> <li>• How is the CSSP shaping the national social protection policy agenda?</li> </ul>
<b>Nutrition-sensitive programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the impact of the combined use of cash transfers and complementary nutrition-sensitive interventions on the prevalence of anaemia and stunting?</li> <li>• What complementary nutrition-sensitive interventions are effective in improving nutrition outcomes?</li> <li>• How effective is the NutriCash approach in improving child health and nutrition?</li> <li>• What are the critical features of social and behaviour communication change (SBCC) that have a positive impact on nutrition?</li> <li>• How best can we promote the adoption of desired nutrition and health behaviours and practices at household level?</li> <li>• What is the role of market development initiatives in enhancing access to nutritious foods in refugee-hosting districts of the West Nile subregion?</li> <li>• What is the impact of the Nutri cash transfers on consumption?</li> <li>• How scalable is the NutriCash approach?</li> </ul>



## 2.0 Body of evidence

### 2.1. Programme approach

#### I. Programme Mid-Term Review

**Authors:** John Rook; Solome Kiribakka Bakeera

**Date:** September 2022

**Type:** Report

**Methodology:** Formative and consultative process using standard review processes utilizing key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

#### Key Findings

The CSSP Mid-Term Review assessed programme relevance/appropriateness and determined that the programme's rationale for supporting child-focused social protection remains valid considering pervasive income poverty and child poverty, with an estimated 42 percent of Ugandans living on less than a dollar. Poverty was exacerbated by the COVID19 pandemic, which reduced incomes. High poverty rates among children are reflected in high rates of acute and chronic under-nutrition and limited access to health services, as well as stunting. The review noted low government investment in non-contributory social protection and a lack of child-focused social protection provision.

The review also determined that the rationale underlying the programme's approach is relevant and noted that WFP is in a strong position (as a United Nations agency) to work within systems and nurture improvements and change. The review recognized WFP's well-established presence, supported by regional and satellite offices and a close working relationship with district local governments.

On working through existing structures, the review concludes this approach remains largely relevant to promote sustainability by improving structures and systems from within. The review notes that working collaboratively with the Government is aimed at fostering ownership and leadership to promote sustainability. Strengthening capacities of structures and systems at district level is relevant due to the decentralized nature of planning and implementation in local government structures. However, capacities at district level, especially in social protection programming, remain low.

#### Recommendations

Programme mid-term review recommended that CSSP defines a more determined and concerted vision, which emphasizes the need to establish a national (if not universal) child-focused cash transfer programme, which will broaden Uganda's lifecycle-based social protection provision. A policy context exists in the form of the National Social Protection Policy, the National Social Protection Policy Plan of Implementation, and the Third National Development Plan, which focuses on human capital development.

## Implications for Programming

WFP through its Self-Reliance Model is expanding coverage of NutriCash in refugee-hosting districts of the West Nile subregion and in Southwestern Uganda. Similarly, through the planned National Uganda Social Action Fund, NutriCash will be expanded by the Government of Uganda to six more subregions. Importantly, the programme has supported the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development to finalize the National Social Protection Strategy, which embraces a lifecycle approach to social protection in line with the National Social Protection Policy. The programme is partnering with the Uganda Parliamentary Forum to advocate for expanded financing to social protection across the lifecycle. This work is expected, to drive political and public support for social protection and to enhance awareness of social protection to address vulnerabilities across the lifecycle.

## II. Capacity Needs Mapping

**Author:** Dominiq De Bonis

**Date:** July 2020

**Type:** Report

**Methodology:** Consultations on several capacity domains in three refugee-hosting districts of the West Nile subregion. The mapping assessed organizational and individual domains in relation to relevant regulatory and policy frameworks, institutional mechanisms for effectiveness and accountability, strategic planning, programme design and delivery, and the engagement and roles of actors.

### Key Findings

The programme, together with key programme stakeholders, conducted a comprehensive Capacity Needs Mapping to assess capacity gaps as well as priorities. The assessment revealed inadequacies in operational budgets and tangible assets to support implementation and that programme design is not fully responsive to nor informed by district-level realities and needs. Additionally, administrative, and organizational functions and operations at the district and subdistrict level were found to be suboptimal. The assessment also found little attention to food security and nutrition in the three social protection programmes and that social protection programmes are largely implemented in isolation of each other.

The assessment noted that these gaps were worsened by inadequacies in technical knowledge and skills across all areas of investigation. Key skills and knowledge gaps identified were in the following areas:

- engagement and horizontal and vertical information flow;
- clarity around roles and responsibilities, accountabilities, and grievance management;
- district-specific knowledge and data to inform and monitor programme implementation; and
- progress on digitalization (with implications for transparency, efficiency, and harmonization).

### Recommendations

The Capacity Needs Mapping highlighted the need for interventions in several areas across programme design, implementation, and monitoring, as well as broader sectoral enhancements. Priority areas identified included: mandate, coordination, and accountability; partnerships; communication; digitization and information management; assets and platforms; programme design and delivery; sustainable financing for social protection; financial management systems; stakeholder implementation capacity; grievance management; integrated management; and research and evidence.

## Implications for Programming

The recommendation of the Capacity Needs Mapping revealed the broad scope of system challenges and underscored the need for interventions across the building blocks of Uganda's social protection system to address gaps at subnational and national levels and deliver sustainable results. The CSSP is intervening through five core streams of work, in line with Capacity Needs Mapping priorities, namely: (i) cash transfer mechanisms; (ii) beneficiary information and assistance management; (iii) feedback system; (iv) operational research; and (v) links with social protection programmes.

Emerging lessons show that delivering system-wide enhancements recommended by the Capacity Needs Mapping requires sustained efforts and financing, government leadership and ownership, as well as multisectoral support and engagement.

## III. Strengthening Uganda's Social Protection System: The Child-Sensitive Social Protection Programme

**Author:** CSSP

**Date:** Updated periodically

**Type:** Programme approach and progress brief

**Methodology:** Desk review of relevant literature included the report of Capacity Needs Mapping, the Country Capacity Strengthening strategy paper for the CSSP, programme annual reports and periodic updates, the study report of the feasibility assessment of government payment mechanisms for possible use in social protection programmes, the draft National Social Protection Strategy, and the Capacity Development Strategy for Social Protection.

### Key Findings

The brief is divided into four sections: (i) introduction; (ii) systems strengthening under the CSSP; (iii) progress of interventions; and (iv) lessons emerging under the CSSP. The brief situates social protection into the broader national social protection framework, including the National Social Protection Policy, as well as the third National Development Plan. The brief notes the increase in vulnerability at 44 percent, and the need for a comprehensive social protection system, with capabilities to respond to shocks and vulnerabilities effectively across the lifecycle.

The section on systems strengthening delves into CSSP's approach to systems strengthening that is needs driven and informed by an extensive Capacity Needs Mapping conducted in 2019/20. The Mapping revealed programmatic and systemic gaps and recommended priority areas at national and subnational levels. To support government to address these gaps, the CSSP intervenes in five core areas, namely: (i) cash transfer mechanisms; (ii) beneficiary information and assistance management systems; (iii) feedback system; (iv) operational research; and (v) links across social protection programmes. Section three provides an update on the progress of these interventions, while the fourth section focuses on emerging lessons, namely:

1. Delivering a holistic capacity-strengthening approach requires sustained effort, can be slow and is resource intensive.
2. Integrating CSSP into government planning promotes ownership, leadership, and accountability.
3. Trust is key for systems strengthening. Establishing and nurturing relationships with the Government and partners is necessary for integration and achieving results at scale.

4. In a nascent social protection system like Uganda's, it is important to recognize and promote the complementary role of non-state actors, including private sector, civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, and academia.

### Implications for Programming

Lessons emerging from programme implementation show the need for a holistic approach to social protection systems strengthening due to the extent of need. Such an approach requires expanded and sustained financing, recognizing that systemic change is often protracted and relies on relationships for ownership and sustainability.

Additionally, the multisectoral nature of social protection calls for a varied response to address vulnerabilities across the lifecycle. System-strengthening interventions should be extended to non-government players, including civil society organizations, private sector, and academia, which complement the Government in bringing services to the most vulnerable.

## IV. Outcome Harvesting

**Authors:** Kaia Ambrose & Zachariah Su

**Date:** December 2023

**Type:** Report

**Methodology:** A formative and consultative process using standard review processes was used. This utilized key informant interviews and focus group discussions that followed a structured approach where 'harvesters' identified, formulated, verified, analyzed, and interpreted 'outcomes' of interventions through 'outcome mapping' and collecting of evidence of what had changed (outcomes) and worked backwards to determine whether and how CSSP interventions contributed to the changes. It involved process design, document review, engaging sources, substantiating, and analyzing feedback.

### Key Findings

The findings highlight that especially within the decentralised context of Uganda, there was evidence that WFP's CSSP work had influenced the implementation of national social protection policy at both national and subnational levels.

There was evidence that WFP had in part contributed to changes in government capacities, as demonstrated through actions and interactions that had influenced their ability to implement social protection programming and policy at all levels of government.

It was also found out that awareness of, and advocacy for, national identification had grown upon realisation that national identification was foundational to social protection.

Furthermore, in a context of decentralisation, it was a finding of the outcome harvest exercise that subnational governments had begun to assume ownership for social protection programming, and had expressed motivation, enthusiasm, knowledge of gaps and broad understanding of social protection. This was demonstrated in their leadership in preparation of District Social Protection Investment Plans.

Over and above this, it was affirmed that ongoing conversation, learning and advocacy were a key ingredient in shifting perceptions about, and effectively implementing social protection capacity strengthening initiatives.

## Recommendations

MoGLSD's decentralisation of the MIS for SAGE and DRDIP, especially in relation to complaints and grievance management and on-demand registration was recommended. Whereas the current Management Information Systems (MIS) and internal systems primarily concentrate on existing beneficiaries, it was clearly brought out that the establishment of a National Social Registry would serve as a comprehensive repository encompassing all potential beneficiaries nationwide.

In addition to this, continuous advocacy, and pressure from "within" government was commended for rejuvenating, redefining, and implementing social protection.

On a similar note, decentralised capacity strengthening was endorsed as an opportunity to cultivate leadership and ownership of social protection and shock-responsive social protection with subnational actors.

Additionally, the collaboration and coordination of multiple actors was commended as an imperative for the development of an effective social protection system, including the flow of information.

It was also recommended that Gender and Equity should be made explicit in a systematic, transformational way across the capacity strengthening activities being an important piece of social protection and shock-responsive social protection.

Relatedly, the report underscored the need for a concerted effort to identify and write up negative outcomes of the programme's activities so as to appreciate lessons from the same and inform future programming.

## Implications for Programming

The National Social Registry aims at centralizing data on vulnerability indicators and providing valuable insights for the targeting and design of upcoming social protection programs. That said, recognizing its potential for centralized data storage on vulnerability indicators of individual beneficiaries could inform the targeting and design of future social protection programs including, managing beneficiary data, identification, information systems and delivery mechanisms.

WFP acknowledges that the process of advancing towards social protection involves reinforcing capacity among diverse actors in varying ways and timelines. Furthermore, WFP recognizes the dynamic nature of its own capacity, which evolves and strengthens alongside the continuous growth and development of its capabilities in the realms of social protection and shock-responsive social projection.

The outcome harvesting exercise also led to the realisation that at a diagnostic level in the case of cash-based transfers, gender-based violence needs to be addressed in future programming particularly since beneficiaries are women (women often don't have phones or bank accounts, money from cash-based transfers is commonly handed over to husbands who make the decision of how it should be spent).

Obtaining from the harvested outcomes, it is imperative for future programming to appreciate that building foundations for social protection is a continuous endeavor encompassing both tangible aspects such as systems and procedures, as well as intangible elements like shifts in attitude, behavior, mental models, and ownership.

To this end, robust evidence bases, strategic planning, and effective advocacy need to be considered, C&G mechanisms improved, and more refined and effective social protection strategies developed.



## 2.2. Systems strengthening

### I. Programme Mid-Term Review

**Authors:** John Rook; Solome Kiribakka Bakeera

**Date:** September 2022

**Type:** Report

**Methodology:** Formative and consultative process using standard review processes utilizing key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

#### Key Findings

The Mid-Term Review revealed that the CSSP system-strengthening interventions address clear and pressing needs, in line with the priorities of the Capacity Needs Mapping – reaffirming the relevance in catalysing the future expansion of social protection provisions. The review noted progress on priority initiatives, including decentralization of the Management Information System; enhancing the National Single Registry; integrating payment delivery mechanisms; harmonizing grievance and complaints mechanisms; strengthening coordination at the district level; and support to the district investment plans for social protection. Similarly, the review highlighted progress in building a solid understanding of the role and benefits of nutrition-sensitive social protection and efforts to enhance social protection knowledge at the district level. However, skills and human resource capacity needs of districts are beyond the mandate and resources of the CSSP.

The review noted the complex and broad scope of challenges in the social protection system and called for longer-term and better-coordinated investments to realize sustainability. It also emphasized that the effectiveness of interventions, as well as their sustainability, partly hinges on factors outside the programme's control, such as strong government ownership or the limitations of a short-term project in fostering changes across the components of the social protection system.

#### Recommendations

1. The mid-term programme review recommends that CSSP Conducts a realistic assessment of the likely end of the system-strengthening interventions under the programme to gauge sustainability readiness.
2. Continue support beyond the current timeframe of the programme to enhance sustainability prospects.
3. Firmly establish the TRANSFORM training approach and ensure accessibility to a wide audience especially at district and subdistrict levels.
4. In collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, identify and establish a recurrent financing structure to enable the sustainable delivery of TRANSFORM training.

#### Implications for Programming

The review emphasizes the need to sustain support to system-strengthening interventions beyond the life of the CSSP to foster sustainability. Most system-strengthening gains under the CSSP, while significant, require continued engagement to be fully institutionalized and decentralized beyond the West Nile subregion.

## II. Draft National Social Protection Strategy

**Author:** Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, MDAs, and Development Partners

**Date:** January 2024

**Type:** National strategy

**Methodology:** Analysis of subsector performance reviews, nationwide consultations with relevant players including ministries, departments and agencies and development partners.

### Key Findings

The National Social Protection Strategy seeks to operationalize the National Social Protection Policy (2015) and the third National Development Plan (2020). The strategy proposes both life cycle and transformative social protection approaches focusing on addressing risks and vulnerabilities as well as livelihood security and empowerment, including social well-being. The strategy is in line with government efforts to address increasing risks and vulnerabilities.

The strategy draws on global and national evidence to present a strong rationale for social protection. It recognizes the protective, preventive, promotive and transformative role of social protection in alleviating multidimensional poverty, increasing household productivity and economic activity, building resilience to shocks, enhancing food security and nutrition, and building and strengthening the social contract.

It promotes a lifecycle approach, with a vision of a society where all individuals are secure and resilient to risks and shocks, and recognizes that, while significant progress has been realized in the provision of social protection, several challenges remain, including gaps in the legal framework, targeting mechanisms, M&E, financing, administration, coordination, and coverage.

To address these gaps, five objectives are proposed:

1. expanding scope and coverage of social protection, care and support for vulnerable groups.
2. strengthening systems and institutional frameworks for delivering social protection.
3. anchoring shock-responsive social protection in Uganda.
4. generating evidence and analysis to support policy, programming, and learning; and
5. strengthening the linkage between social protection and complementary services.

### Recommendations

With a mission of building a social protection system to provide comprehensive social protection, the strategy proposes eight key elements, namely: (i) M&E; (ii) the legal and policy framework; (iii) selection and identification systems; (iv) administration and technical capacities; (v) coordination; (vi) governance; (vii) management information systems; and (viii) financing mechanisms.

### Implications for Programming

The strategy calls for expanded investment in social protection, including support to strengthening the requisite systems. CSSP is already intervening across all the key elements of the strategy. However, a significant number of these interventions are still nascent, and continued support is required to institutionalize and expand them nationally.

Financing of social protection remains a major concern of the strategy. Yet, achieving the ambitions set out in the strategy requires robust and sustained funding. Uganda spends 0.7 percent of its GDP on social protection – one of the lowest figures in the region. Building political and public support for social protection will be vital to unlocking investment in the subsector. The CSSP programme, through a multi-year Field Level Agreement with the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection, is advocating for expanded financing for social protection. These efforts must be expanded and further streamlined to sustain momentum.

### III. Social Protection Capacity Development Strategy for Local Government

**Author:** Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development

**Date:** January 2024

**Type:** National strategy

**Methodology:** Extensive desk review of relevant literature and consultation at national and subnational level, including two field visits.

#### Key Findings

The Social Protection Capacity Development Strategy has an overall objective of developing the capacities of local governments to design, deliver and report on social protection. It stresses that having the required capacities of social protection duty bearers in place is key to the successful delivery of social protection and the realization of the objectives of the National Social Protection Policy and broader socioeconomic outcomes. These capacities are especially important at local government level, where delivery of social protection programmes and services happens.

The strategy builds off the Capacity Needs Mapping and the 2019 Social Protection Sector Review, which emphasize the need to strengthen coordination, governance, and delivery capacities to operationalize the aspirations of the National Social Protection Policy and the National Development Plan. A capacity assessment conducted as part of the strategy development process found significant needs and inadequacies in seven task areas, namely: (i) advocate, communicate and mobilize; (ii) strategize and plan; (iii) coordinate and performance-manage; (iv) design interventions; (v) collect, process, and manage data; (vi) deliver direct income support; and (vii) deliver social care services.

To respond to these needs, the strategy proposes three levels of focus, namely: (i) the enabling environment level (sector coordination, policy, legal, regulatory framework); (ii) organizational (leadership and management, vision and identity, systems and processes, physical assets and logistics); and (iii) individual (skills, knowledge, ambition, drive, numbers).

#### Recommendations

The strategy presents four strategic pathways to tackle the different needs identified across the social protection task areas. The strategic pathways are:

1. develop skills and knowledge of social protection role players, including through setting up a quality-assured system of training and learning, delivering training and curating a knowledge portal for social protection learning and knowledge management.

2. increase resourcing of the Community Based Services Department and community structures, including developing a local government human resource plan, reviewing the structure and resourcing of the Community Based Services Department to align with the National Social Protection Policy, and advocating for an increase in the operational budgets for community-based services and structures.
3. strengthen coordination, communications, planning and performance management, and
4. develop core systems for harmonized delivery.

### Implications for Programming

The strategic pathways combine skills and knowledge transfer with systemic interventions, including restructuring, where needed, to align with delivery needs at local government level. Operationalizing these pathways requires multisectoral effort. The CSSP's support to training and institutionalization of TRANSFORM can be leveraged to stimulate collaboration to this end.

## IV. Feasibility study of government payment mechanisms for possible deployment in social protection programmes

**Author:** Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development

**Date:** December 2022

**Type:** Study report

**Methodology:** National and subnational consultations, desk review of relevant literature.

### Key Findings

The study determined the feasibility of using government-to-person payment systems to deliver social protection assistance in response to recommendation from the programme's Capacity Needs Mapping to integrate the financial management systems of SAGE (Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment) and DRDIP (Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project) with the IFMS (Integrated Financial Management System), BBS Connect (Bank of Uganda Banking System) and E-Cash (Electronic Cash). Implementing this recommendation was expected to address challenges in the current social protection payment systems, including lengthy payment processes, high transaction costs incurred by both the Government and beneficiaries, and difficulties in tracking payments and accountability.

The study found that it is possible to execute social protection payments using IFMS connected to the BBS Connect system and E-Cash. The study proposed two options for deployment. Option 1 using IFMS to deliver social protection payments to beneficiaries who have bank accounts. Option 2 using E-Cash to deliver social protection assistance to beneficiaries who do not possess bank accounts but hold mobile money accounts. The benefits associated with these options include efficiencies due to reduced transaction costs, timeliness of payments and beneficiary convenience (beneficiaries can access their money closer to home and whenever they want to).

The study estimates that, with the IFMS option, the Government would save UGX 1,550,000,000 in transaction costs in the first year of implementation, compared with the current payment system for SAGE. Savings would increase to UGX 1,740,000,000 after the first year of roll-out. In comparison with the current DRDIP payment system, the Government would save UGX 998,104,000 in the first year of implementation, rising to UGX 1,188,104,000 thereafter.

Using the E-Cash option, the Government would save UGX 3,285,000,000 annually in comparison to the current SAGE payment system and UGX 2,107,240,160 compared to the current DRDIP payment system.

## Recommendations

The study recommended a series of readiness requirements prior to deployment of the options, including Memoranda of Understanding among all stakeholders involved, Service Level Agreements with payment service providers to guarantee the quality-of-service delivery, system enhancements to enable interoperability and digitized databases of beneficiary payment data. Digitizing databases requires that beneficiaries have National Identification Numbers. Another key requirement to this shift is training for system users and beneficiaries, to ensure a smooth transition.

## Implications for Programming

With WFP support under the CSSP, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is designing a pilot of the two options in the West Nile subregion. Learnings from this pilot will inform a country-wide roll-out. The CSSP support will be key for deployment preparedness.

## V. Complaint management system review for the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) and Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP)

**Authors:** Development Pathways; Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development

**Date:** March 2023

**Type:** Review report

**Methodology:** Desk review, qualitative methods, gender analysis. Followed the evaluation criteria from the Development Assistance Committee at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC), which cover relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

## Key Findings

The review assessed the degree to which Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) and Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP) complaints and grievance mechanisms adhere to important benchmarks and principles, including independence, accessibility and inclusivity, simplicity, multiple channels, confidentiality, responsiveness, self-reflexivity and continuous improvement, and effectiveness and efficiency.

The review found that, under DRDIP, complaints and grievance handling is provided for in the project booklet and is executed by the Grievance Redress Committee or local government staff in the community-based services department. DRDIP has multiple channels for submission of complaints, including through the website, in person, phone calls and suggestion boxes. OPM-DRDIP signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the Inspectorate of Government to implement the transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption subcomponent of the project, as per the project design. The Inspectorate of Government is tasked with citizen engagement, investigations, and arrest and prosecution of suspects.



#### Specific findings for DRDIP:

- The procedure provided in the handbook is poorly structured and confusing.
- The timeframe is unclear for resolving complaints.
- The policy and legal requirements are unclear and inadequate.
- The categorization of complaints is unclear.
- The guidelines for implementation and awareness creation are not well articulated.

Regarding SAGE, complaints and grievances are provided for in the programme guidelines. The guidelines emphasize that beneficiaries, implementation partners, members of the public and any other concerned individuals have the right to lodge a complaint or grievance. The procedure for raising a complaint or grievance is currently paper based, through a form available at the subcounty and parish level. Individual complaints are consolidated at parish level and shared with the Community Development Officer at subcounty level, who submits a report to the Senior Community Development Officer at the district level, for subsequent submission to the Regional Technical Support Unit.

#### Specific findings for SAGE:

- Complaints and grievances are well categorized but not comprehensive. There are three categories of complaints: (i) programme complaints; (ii) payment complaints; and (iii) complaints relating to corruption and fraud.
- The SAGE programme has no specific complaints and grievance structures and uses existing government structures at district level.
- There is no clear feedback procedure and a very high level of undocumented complaints.
- There is no appeals process.
- The process is highly bureaucratic, and the resolution of complaints takes a long time.
- There is limited accessibility, with a single channel for complaint reporting.

The review noted that, while district staff are at the front line of programme implementation, including for complaints and grievances, they are not well equipped to investigate and resolve issues as they emerge. Additionally, the existing mechanisms have not been effective for certain types of complaints, such as the abuse of office and fraud.

The review provides lessons from South Africa, Kenya and Malawi, which Uganda can use to strengthen complaints and grievance mechanisms, namely:

- Complaints must be grounded in context.
- The process is complex.
- Complaints need to be focused on specific issues, as part of a broader accountability system.
- The mechanism should integrate national and subnational structures and contracted services where necessary.

### **Recommendations**

The SAGE and DRDIP Complaint Management System review recommended harmonization of complaints and grievance mechanisms, including through establishment of standards. Another key recommendation was the digitization of complaints and grievance management mechanisms to enhance efficiency. Both SAGE and DRDIP are urged to simplify guidelines and procedures to increase accessibility and effectiveness.

The need to appropriately resource the structures responsible for complaints and grievances is stressed. This is key to the functionalization of structures. In addition, the review notes the need to strengthen coordination and collaboration, as well as the capacities of the district local government structures in charge of complaints and grievance management.

### **Implications for Programming**

Complaints and grievance mechanisms are pivotal to transparency and accountability in the delivery of social protection. This aligns with the CSSP's aspirations of making social protection programmes more effective, efficient, and equitable.

The review recommendation for harmonization and standardization of complaints and grievance mechanisms re-echoes programme efforts to promote greater coherence of social protection programmes and systems to complement interventions implemented across the social protection system. To effect this recommendation, there is a need for a national strategy to provide overarching guidance for complaints and grievances, including the provision of standards and implementation guidelines.

The CSSP is providing support to the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development towards the development of the strategy. However, the involvement of all key stakeholders in the process is crucial to ensure that the outcome is relevant and has the support necessary for operationalization.

## 2.3. Nutrition-sensitive programming/NutriCash

### I. Emergency Cash-Based Transfer (ECBT) for households with pregnant and lactating women and children under 2 years

**Author:** WFP Analysis Monitoring Evaluations and Learning Unit

**Date:** 2022

**Type:** Geo-poll survey report

**Methodology:** Qualitative and quantitative with samples randomly identified. Three instances of measurement, namely at baseline, before the second round, and one month after the final round.

#### Key Findings

The survey reported overall improvements, ranging from 7 to 23 percent on three core indicators: (i) Food Consumption Score; (ii) Livelihood Coping Strategies Index; and (iii) Reduced Coping Strategies Index.

The survey showed that, among households that received the Emergency Cash-Based Transfer (ECBT), the Food Consumption Score increased by 27 percent from baseline to endline, compared with an increase of 17 percent from baseline to endline for those who did not receive the ECBT. The report noted that, overall, the ECBT helped to reduce the proportion of households with negative coping strategies by 7 percent. Similarly, findings indicated that households that received the ECBT showed a decrease in the Reduced Coping Strategies Index from 15.2 to 14.3 points (a 6 percent improvement), while households without the ECBT reached the same final point but started better off at 11.7 points and their capacity to cope worsened by 2.6 index points or 22 percent.

The report showed an increase in workdays by households that received the ECBT and a strong correlation with increases in the Reduced Coping Strategies Index and in the Food Consumption Score. This improvement increased for every extra day worked. In addition, the report noted that households that received the ECBT showed a 10 percent improvement in their ability to cope with COVID-19 restrictions compared with households without the ECBT.

#### Recommendations

The report recommended designing complementary interventions to enhance market access and deepen ECBT impact, as well as initiatives to sensitize communities on gender-based violence to curb potential negative impacts of the ECBT on gender relations.

#### Implications for Programming

The recommendations were adopted under the NutriCash programme.

## II. NutriCash Routine Monitoring Survey (RMS) Report

**Authors:** WFP; OPM-DRDIP M&E

**Date:** January 2024

**Type:** Report

**Methodology:** Survey of NutriCash cycle 3 beneficiaries that participated in the baseline survey.

### Key Findings

Survey findings show that programme awareness grew from 93.8 percent at baseline to 98.3 percent at the point of the Routine Monitoring Survey (RMS), and that 95 percent of respondents considered the programme selection criteria to be fair, compared with 90.1 percent at baseline. The percentage of respondents that receive information concerning payment in public grew from 55.0 percent to 59.8 percent. Community leaders are the main source of information about payments, at 74.1 percent at RMS compared with 64.0 percent at baseline.

A total of 75 percent of households at RMS reported being able to contact a community leader in case of a grievance, while 34.2 percent and 15.1 percent were able to contact WFP staff and government representatives, respectively. The survey found a significant increase in the percentage of beneficiaries who knew that there were rules to be followed to continue receiving cash, from 20.5 percent at baseline to 41.4 percent at RMS.

There was an increase in the travel time to pay points from 0.4 hours at baseline to 1.5 hours. The average cost of transport also rose from UGX 594 at baseline to UGX 1,095 at RMS. Average waiting time at pay points increased from 0.54 hours at baseline to 1.95 hours at RMS.

According to the routine monitoring survey report, the wife decides on the use of NutriCash cash transfer in 64.7 percent of the households. In 23.0 percent of households, both the husband and the wife jointly decide on the use of the cash transfer, while in 11.0 percent of households, the husbands decide. The RMS showed increased decision making by women alone, from 41.9 percent at baseline to 64.7 percent at RMS. The survey revealed that, for 82.5 percent of respondents, all household members benefit from NutriCash, compared with 62.2 percent at baseline. Only 9.9 percent of households reported that the cash benefited children under 5 years only, compared with 23.9 percent at baseline.

The percentage of beneficiaries that received financial literacy training increased from 18.4 percent at baseline to 60.9 percent at RMS. Financial literacy training sessions are done monthly or quarterly. Monthly training increased from 32.2 percent at baseline to 45.5 percent at endline. The mean number of backyard gardens increased from 0.73 at baseline to 1.60 at RMS. A total of 58.1 percent of households reported using the produce from their backyard gardens for consumption only, while 39.1 percent noted using this produce for both consumption and sales.

### Recommendations

- Inform and sensitize beneficiaries on their impending exit from the programme. Educate programme beneficiaries on how long they can expect to continue receiving payment from the programme helps them to plan for their programme exit.
- There is a need for deliberate effort to engage men to understand the purpose of the programme and encourage them to support their spouses to plan for and put the cash to proper use.

- Continuous sensitization is needed for families around the purpose of the cash. With more households using the money to feed the entire family, it is necessary to deepen the sensitization, to ensure that the money received is only used to feed the beneficiary child.

### Implications for Programming

The shift towards digital payments by the programme is a key step in unlocking digital financial inclusion, as well as making it easier for beneficiaries to access their cash assistance. Despite progress made, the number of beneficiaries that have not yet been connected to digital payment mechanisms remains high. There is a need for concerted efforts to fast-track the roll-out of account opening and mobile money. This will enable beneficiaries to access their cash assistance conveniently and will, in part, shorten travel time to and waiting time at pay points.

## III.COVID-19 Cash Based Transfer (CBT) – Second Cycle Lessons Learned Report

**Author:** CSSP

**Date:** 2021

**Type:** Programme report

**Methodology:** Consultations with key programme stakeholders.

### Key Findings

The report presents lessons across the six core processes implemented during the second cycle of the Emergency Cash Based Transfers in 2021. The report stressed the role of social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) in ensuring that beneficiaries adopt recommended attitudes, practices, and behaviours. Overall, the report highlighted the need for proper planning, including the allocation of sufficient resources for all key processes and underscored the role of community leaders in mobilization and coordination of the activity.

Another key lesson noted was the need for the involvement of health workers in the activity to ease screening concerns, including health-related eligibility complaints.

Furthermore, the report highlighted the need for sensitization on the key documents required under each process. Community facilitators were noted as important resources that could guide beneficiaries on the key documents required and how lost documents could be replaced. The report also underscored the need for adequate training of district local government officials involved in the exercise, as well as the digitization of records to guard against fraud and to boost efficiency.

### Recommendations

The report highlighted the need to collaborate with the National Identification and Registration Authority to assist beneficiaries to register for National Identification Numbers, as part of efforts to enable digitization of records.

Another key recommendation was the continued integration of messaging on gender and protection to mitigate any negative gender-related impacts of the programme.

### Implications for Programming

The recommendations were adopted under the NutriCash programme.



## 3.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, CSSP studies both concluded and ongoing show the need to expand the scope and coverage of social protection, and support for Uganda's most vulnerable groups across the life cycle by leveraging on the role played by development partners and tapping into financing from the informal sector.

With an aim of moving the most vulnerable into self-reliant global citizens, the studies show that WFP in pursuit of its values on commitment, sustainability and resilience needs to continue embedding shock-responsiveness in all key social protection programmes and interventions and shift the burden of non-contributory schemes to contributory.

Furthermore, the studies analysed under the compendium underscore the need to strengthen districts capacity to plan, implement and monitor programme activities and its subcomponents. On this same note, coordination with local authorities and leaders at subcounty level is emphasized. This would enable Government to implement inclusive policies that target inequality, be better prepared for risks and shocks by leveraging collaborative approach to the same, joint planning and avoidance of fragmented programming in fulfilment of WFP's values on humanity and inclusion.

Going forward, and amidst dwindling external funding and challenging political priorities, the program needs to leverage on its current structures and linkages with other organisations in the social protection space to collect feedback and learnings and evaluate its current approach through an impact assessment and optimize its strengths to ensure sustainability and continuity.

In a nutshell, all the studies and reports analogized in the compendium confirm that working through government structures leads to improved programme delivery and sustainability and provides an effective pathway to scale up pilot interventions. With this therefore, institutionalisation of TRANSFORM and rolling out of HACT trainings at national and sub-national levels needs to be considered, social protection indicators incorporated into national/sub-national assessment tools and the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP), and M&E framework operationalized, and the programme aligned to other interventions such as the Parish Development Model (PDM). Furthermore, and as adduced from the compendium, future CSSP programming needs to implement a two-fold educational and gender transformative approach to trigger behaviour change including 50-50 gender representation in all community engagements, decentralize the SAGE and DRDIP MIS, especially in relation to complaints and grievance management and on-demand registration, establish the National Social Registry, continue advocacy, and pressure from "within" government, decentralize capacity strengthening and continuously build both tangible and intangible foundations for social protection.



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