



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

EVALUATION OF WFP'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION 2019-2025

FULL REPORT



SUMMARY REPORT



WFP EVALUATION

WHAT WAS EVALUATED?

The evaluation was conducted to assess the role of WFP's Social Protection Strategy in helping strengthen national social protection systems and programmes, and to review WFP's broader engagement in the social protection sector.

KEY FINDINGS

The evaluation found that the 2021 WFP Strategy for Support to Social Protection was **high quality** and **fit for purpose** at the time – but does not help WFP **focus or prioritize** its support.

WFP ENGAGEMENT CONTRIBUTED TO:

- **More conducive policy environments**, particularly for shock-responsive social protection, school feeding and food fortification
- **Stronger national capacities for data management** – though systems were not always interoperable and data not always sufficiently shared
- **More efficient and transparent national social protection programmes** – though improvements were not always sustainable
- **Improved coverage of national social protection programmes**, though benefits were mostly temporary.

CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED WERE:

- **Financial constraints create significant tradeoffs** between providing enough people (coverage) with sufficient transfers to ensure their well-being (adequacy)
- **WFP has limited control** over the value and frequency of transfers in national social protection programmes
- **Insufficient programme integration and coordination challenges** within WFP and among national institutions constrained effectiveness.

April 2026



WHAT WORKED AND WHY?



Providing technical assistance with a clear vision and pathways towards medium-term goals

WFP's technical assistance to governments was responsive and highly appreciated. But where clear pathways towards medium-term goals were lacking, results were not fully consolidated or sustainable.



Providing on-demand services to governments where coupled with capacity strengthening

Where WFP supported national social protection programmes through procurement and logistics services, this resulted in reduced food costs, faster procurement processes and enhanced transparency through more systematic use of competitive bidding. However, these results have limited prospects for sustainability unless agreements with governments include strategies and resources for capacity strengthening, as well as clear transition plans.



Piloting innovation to inform policy debate and scaling up where there are clear objectives agreed with national counterparts

Pilot projects for social protection were effective when commissioned by governments, or when objectives were clearly defined in advance. Where these conditions were not in place, they did not contribute to policy dialogue and scaling.



Partnering with governments and IFIs where there is flexibility to compromise on ways of working

WFP's engagement with IFIs showed promise for greater sustainability. However, WFP commitment to work through, and strengthen, national social protection systems sometimes may require compromising the quality and speed of short-term outputs, in favour of longer-term sustainable outcomes.



Retaining and strategically deploying talent is a major factor in success

Where WFP has employed long-tenure staff to support social protection work, this stood out as a critical success factor. Similarly, leveraging expertise and political awareness of senior national staff in country offices proved instrumental in building effective partnerships with governments.

WHAT SHOULD WFP DO?

1

Improve strategic focus

- Update WFP's Strategy for Social Protection for improved strategic clarity and focus
- Prioritize support for social protection interventions with clear linkages to improving food security and nutrition
- Prioritize working with or through national social protection programmes
- Use areas of demonstrated WFP's comparative advantage as entry points for wider engagement at system level
- Implement pilots only if requested by or conceived with governments
- Adopt a long-term perspective with adequate transition planning

2

Enhance internal capacities and systems


- Strengthen capacity for political economy analysis to inform choices on modalities and level of engagement
- Conduct an updated census of the social protection workforce to identify critical gaps
- Develop adequate knowledge and soft skills for WFP employees at all levels, leveraging the knowledge, expertise and political awareness of senior national staff
- Strengthen results-based management for support for social protection

3


Strengthen partnerships

- Develop context-specific strategies for building relationships and engaging with governments and international financial institutions
- Prioritize global social protection partnerships with other United Nations entities

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