

Disability Inclusion Key Messages for **SOCIAL PROTECTION**

Summary of Key Points

- ☑ WFP considers social protection to be essential to reach the Zero Hunger goal.
- ☑ In 2020, WFP supported national social protection systems in 78 countries.
- ☑ WFP's social protection strategy sets out measures to mainstream considerations of social, economic and geographical identity in WFP's social protection work.
- ☑ Social protection plays a critical and unique role for persons with disabilities, who face barriers to education, employment, health-care and disability-related services, which increase their exposure and vulnerability and shocks.
- ☑ Obligations set out in the CRPD emphasize that social protection should always contribute to the empowerment, participation and inclusion of all persons with disabilities.
- ☑ Deliberate action is required at all stages of a social protection programme to remove barriers to access by persons with disabilities and to account fully for the extra living costs related to disability.
- ☑ Disability-specific programmes are required to provide the support and benefits required by persons with disabilities that are not met through mainstream programmes.

Key terms and definitions

- ☑ Social protection
 - WFP's Social Protection Strategy cites the following [inter-agency definition](#) which describes social protection as: "a set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion, throughout their life cycle placing a particular emphasis on vulnerable groups. This means ensuring adequate protection for all who need it, including children; people of working age in case of maternity, sickness, work injury or for those without jobs; persons with disability and older persons. This protection can be provided through social insurance, tax-funded social benefits, social assistance services, public works programs and other schemes guaranteeing basic income security and access to essential services"

- ☑ Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler’s Social Protection Framework (see annex A for a diagram)
 - i. Protective measures provide relief from deprivation.
 - ii. Preventive measures seek to avert deprivation.
 - iii. Promotive measures aim to enhance incomes and capabilities.
 - iv. Transformative measures address the causes of social inequities, exclusion and inequalities.

Background

- ☑ In 2012 the International Labour Organisation (ILO) introduced the Social Protection Floor (SPF) initiative. These are sets of basic social security guarantees which should ensure at a minimum that, over the life cycle, all people in need have access to essential health care and basic income security - essential for governments to reduce poverty and hunger. National social protection floors should comprise at least the following four social security guarantees, as defined at the national level;
 - i. Access to essential health care, including maternity care;
 - ii. Basic income security for children, providing access to nutrition, education, care and any other necessary goods and services;
 - iii. Basic income security for persons in active age who are unable to earn sufficient income, in particular in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability;
 - iv. Basic income security for older persons.
- ☑ WFP considers social protection to be essential to reach the Zero Hunger goal. Hundreds of millions of people contend daily with food insecurity and malnutrition, poverty and inequality. These are often linked in complex ways. Furthermore, as the COVID-19 pandemic reveals, all people—whether currently in a vulnerable situation or not—risk welfare declines owing to shocks and stressors. Social protection is a cornerstone of policies that address these issues by redistributing resources and of interventions that help individuals or households to manage risks. It is an accelerator for many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- ☑ Social protection can enhance food security and nutrition through several entry points. Food security has four elements: food availability, access, utilisation and stability over time. Improving food access (by enhancing economic capacities) and stability (smoothing consumption during disruption) is intrinsic to social protection. Food availability and utilisation require special attention within social protection programming. With respect to nutrition, social protection tends to be more effective when nutrition goals are pursued deliberately.

- ☑ Social protection plays a critical and unique role for persons with disabilities, who face multiple barriers such as persistent discrimination in education, employment, health-care and disability-related services. These barriers increase vulnerabilities, exposure to risks and the impact of economic or other shocks, thus preventing individuals from enjoying more favourable conditions. Gender and age-related discrimination intersect with disability and differentiate the situations of children, women, older people and working age people with disabilities.

What is WFP doing in this thematic area?

- ☑ WFP has contributed to social protection for many years. In 2020, WFP supported national social protection systems in 78 countries, especially in response to COVID-19.
- ☑ Social protection is relevant to WFP's mandate in the following three aspects:
 - Needs: Certain needs must be met for people to have a decent life—not just food but a range of essential needs, all of which can affect food security and nutrition—and social protection can help them attain it.
 - Risks: Social protection's risk management function is of primary importance to WFP as it can relieve some negative impacts of shocks and help build resilience
 - Inequalities: The role of social protection in combating inequalities is important, as inequalities result in situations of vulnerability. Opportunity and disadvantage are influenced by social, economic and/or geographical factors (e.g. age, gender, disability or migration status).
- ☑ National social protection systems, with their annual expenditure of trillions of dollars, operate at a scale that is of a magnitude greater than any international humanitarian response. By continuing to invest catalytic amounts in strengthening those national systems, WFP aims to improve outcomes among the several hundred million hungry and malnourished— and those at risk—whom WFP do not reach directly and who may also need support if Zero Hunger is to be achieved.
- ☑ WFP seeks to support all four functions of social protection: protective, preventive, promotive, transformative (as defined in Key terms and Definitions) as each offers a different route to enable people to meet their needs and manage risks, and to address inequalities. A combination of programmes across all four functions are required within a single social protection system.
- ☑ WFP's Social Protection Strategy outlines two priorities:
 1. Support to social protection programmes which have food security or nutrition either as a primary objective or as a significant secondary objective; or aim to reduce multi-dimensional poverty in context where food insecurity and malnutrition are major concerns.

2. Support to improving the coverage, comprehensiveness, adequacy and quality of social protection for resilience-building and shock-response
- ☑ To implement the priorities, WFP provides the following three modes of support and with corresponding outputs:
1. Support nationally led systems and programmes.
 - WFP generates and communicates analysis and evidence on national social protection issues, or supports national actors to do so
 - WFP provides support to the development and reform of national social protection system architecture
 - WFP provides support to the design and delivery of national social protection programmes
 - WFP facilitates the shared space between humanitarian, development and peace actors on social protection issues in protracted crisis / conflict contexts
 - WFP contributes to national efficient and effective partnerships to advance social protection goals
 2. Provide complementary actions in WFP's own programming.
 - WFP's programmes use high quality methods / designs / technologies that serve as models or building blocks for national social protection programmes
 - WFP uses element(s) of an existing national social protection system in the design and/or delivery of its own programmes
 3. Contribute to global social protection goals
 - WFP develops regional and global partnerships to advance social protection goals
 - WFP generates and communicates analysis and evidence on social protection regionally and globally
- ☑ The strategy sets out the following measures to mainstream considerations of social, economic and geographical identity in WFP's social protection work:
- Support national actors and their partners to conduct vulnerability analyses to identify how different attributes affect people's needs and preferences in a given context.
 - Assist the design and implementation of social protection programmes adapted to people's needs and capacities.
 - Undertake reforms to elements of the enabling environment for the social protection system (such as legal frameworks) to recognise, accommodate and/or address certain factors of vulnerability
 - Offer an opportunity for participation and a voice in programme design and implementation by stakeholders, including those at community level who expect to be included or excluded

- Identify impediments that people face when accessing services, be these policy or legal barriers, discrimination, behaviours and norms or practicalities such as limited time
- Design and implement social protection programmes adapted to people's needs and capacities, that may be tailored not only to respond to the existence of intersecting forms of deprivation and inequality but even to take a more transformative approach, contributing to reducing them.

Key Considerations for Inclusion

- ☑ "The inclusion of persons with disabilities in social protection systems is not only a human rights issue, but also a crucial investment for development that States cannot afford to miss," (UN General Assembly, 2015, V., 87, p. 24)
- ☑ Social protection is critical for supporting the resilience and participation of persons with disabilities because they, and their families, face significant challenges in terms of income security and greater costs to secure the essential goods and services they need.
- ☑ The COVID-19 pandemic has led to economic pressures for many households, which disproportionately affects people with disabilities, as they are more reliant on the informal sector (particularly women with disabilities) and their households have fewer members to offset income losses. Additionally, many of the health and social services that people with disabilities require (e.g. rehabilitation, assistive devices, care for chronic conditions, psychiatry, medications, personal assistance) have been disrupted due to COVID-19.
- ☑ Ensuring access to social protection mechanisms for people with disabilities has proven challenging for several reasons including:
 - Their relative invisibility in the population because of prevailing social norms and resulting stigma and discrimination
 - The complexity of disability – disabilities may be visible or hidden, can impact on cognitive as well as physical functioning, onset can be at birth, or during childhood, working age years or old age etc. People with similar impairment or functional difficulties will also experience disability in different ways depending on the level of accessibility, support, and the inclusiveness of their respective communities, workplace, or countries
 - Disability assessments for disability-targeted programs are resource intensive and exclude many people with disabilities
 - Means-testing and proxy-means testing underestimates poverty amongst people with disabilities.
 - Application processes and delivery mechanisms are often inaccessible, time-consuming and expensive for people with disabilities.

- A perception that there is an inevitable link between disability and inability to work and as such not worthy of investment
- Limited financing for institutional architecture including technical capacity to undertake assessment and to provide specific support
- Limited global evidence of tried, tested and operational inclusion mechanisms
- ☑ The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) obliges states to ensure persons with disabilities have equal access, without discrimination, to all social protection schemes and programmes, including humanitarian assistance. These obligations emphasize that social protection should always contribute to the empowerment, participation and inclusion of all persons with disabilities. This protection requires the following policy shifts:
 - Adopting an enabling approach that recognizes the capacities of all persons with disabilities and addresses the barriers they face in the labour market rather than requiring them to be certified as 'unable to work' to access basic subsistence support;
 - Providing sufficient support for people with disabilities to live in the community rather segregating them in institutions;
 - Designing eligibility thresholds and benefit levels based on an understanding of disability-related costs rather a one-size-fits-all approach.
- ☑ A comprehensive and inclusive social protection system should ensure that persons with disabilities have access to programmes that:
 - Ensure income security that enables access to necessary goods and services;
 - Ensure coverage of disability-related costs and facilitate access to the required support, including services and assistive devices
 - Ensure effective access to health care, including disability-related medical care and rehabilitation, as well as HIV services;
 - Improve access to services across the life cycle, such as child care, education, vocational training,
 - Support with employment and livelihood generation, including return to work programmes; and
 - Take into account the diversity of this population group, both in terms of type of disability and other factors such as age, gender and ethnicity.
- ☑ A comprehensive social protection system should make use of all instruments available, including both contributory schemes and tax-financed schemes, benefits in cash and in kind, tax exemptions and nutrition programmes. Ideally these would be allied to inclusive labour market policies as well as anti-discrimination and equality laws.
- ☑ Disability-related costs are diverse, and their type and extent depend on a person's functional difficulties; health conditions and support needs; the level

of accessibility and inclusiveness of their environment; a person's level of participation. For social protection systems to effectively support persons with disabilities, they must account for this diversity, measure those costs and provide adequate responses. (This [discussion paper](#) provides further guidance on this topic.) Persons with disabilities and their families face:

- Direct costs. These are the extra expenditures required due to having a disability. They include increased spending on regular goods (such as food) and services as well as the purchase of disability specific devices and services.
- Indirect costs. This includes lower levels of earnings for people with disabilities because of limited access to education and barriers to gain and retain employment, as well as the opportunity costs of foregone income for family members giving up school and/or work opportunities to provide support.

☑ A twin-track approach is required to respond to the diversity situations and needs of persons with disabilities. This means that:

- i. All social protection programmes should be designed, implemented and monitored in a way that ensures the inclusion of persons with disabilities, with particular attention to removing barriers and fully accounting for the extra costs of disability. For example:
 - Food stamps or food distribution with measures to ensure access for persons with disabilities
 - Universal Health Coverage including costs of rehabilitation and assistive devices
 - Public works programmes with adaptation facilitating participation of persons with disabilities
 - Household cash assistance with disability-adjusted eligibility threshold or benefit value
- ii. Adequate disability-specific programmes should be developed to provide the support and benefits required by persons with disabilities that are not met through mainstream programmes. For example:
 - Specific programmes to meet individual nutrition requirements or to provide assistive technologies (see for example [WHO Priority Assistive Products List](#)) to enable livelihoods;
 - Public works programmes that consider care giving and personal assistance as eligible jobs under the programme which can complement manual labour jobs;
 - Free or subsidised non-medical home care to support independent living and enable livelihoods;
 - Disability allowance or care giver allowance for families of persons with disabilities.

☑ Inclusive targeting mechanisms for all programmes should work progressively towards ensuring:

- Adequate mechanisms for outreach to ensure people with disabilities have all the information about a programme including the benefits and entry requirements. Partnering with organisations of persons with disabilities can expedite this process.
- The identification and registration of households with members with disabilities who could be eligible for benefits. The inclusion of disability specific questions in population based censuses and surveys as well as individual assessment for granting official disability status will ensure people with disabilities are counted and included in social registries facilitating access to services now and in the future.
- Assessment of individual disability-related needs. Every individual will have different support needs determined by a range of factors, including specific functional impairment, barriers in the environment and changes throughout the lifecycle. It is important to make the distinction between the assessment of economic needs related to basic income security – food, shelter, clothing, basic health care etc. and assessment of specific disability related needs for example, personal support for independent living, specialised health care, assistive devices and technology, and transport as these will necessitate different types of assistance.

Key Recommendations for WFP for disability inclusion in this thematic area for WFP

☑ Design

- Conduct dedicated analysis of the situation of persons with disabilities and the coverage of existing social protection programmes. Consult with organisations of persons with disabilities and pay specific attention to the participation of women with disabilities and other under-represented constituencies, such as persons with intellectual disabilities.
- Design benefit packages to meet the specific requirements of people with disabilities in all their diversity and not using a one-size-fits-all approach (e.g. higher benefit levels to cover both extra costs and high levels of poverty; disability- specific benefits such as access to disability-related health and social services; temporary employment schemes with alternatives to manual labour; unemployment insurance covering the informal sector).
- Support the inclusion of OPDs and government institutions with responsibility for disability in regular governance and coordination mechanisms for social protection programs at all levels (national and sub-national). Support OPDs to build their capacity to engage in a meaningful way in these mechanisms.
- Consult OPDs to ensure that the views of persons with disabilities are taken into account in the development of both disability-specific and mainstream social protection policies and programmes. Particular attention should be paid the meaningful involvement of women with disabilities and disability

constituencies who may experience a heightened risk of exclusion (e.g. persons with psychosocial disabilities or intellectual disabilities, persons with deaf-blindness and persons with disabilities from rural or remote areas) are meaningfully involved.

- Design programmes which are sensitive to the contextual attitudinal, physical and institutional barriers which restrict people with disabilities participation in social protection including those created in certain countries by legal provisions which prevent some persons with disabilities from exercising full legal capacity (for example, preventing them from signing contracts or opening bank accounts) and build-in suitable accommodations.
- Do not make receipt of social protection benefits conditional on the acceptance of unwanted interventions or particular residential arrangements which restrict the independence of persons with disabilities.
- Design programmes which prevent institutionalisation by providing sufficient support and access to services in the community. Wherever possible support should be provided to the family to avoid separation.

☒ Outreach, information and sensitisation

- Conduct outreach and awareness raising to ensure persons with disabilities know about social protection programmes and how to access them. These efforts should explicitly encourage the participation of persons with all types of disabilities, including those more likely to face discrimination on multiple grounds, owing to other characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation and region of residence. Outreach can be made more effective through the involvement of organisations of persons with disabilities.
- Make information about existing schemes and support available in accessible formats such as automated voice message, Braille, easy-to-read and sign language so that all persons with disabilities are able to access the necessary information, seek support and interact with social protection systems without assistance.
- Systematically build capacity and monitor performance of all staff involved in the administration and delivery of social protection programmes with respect to the rights of persons with disabilities and the provisions in their programmes guaranteeing inclusion. This should include disability awareness training to combat stigma and stereotypes as well as training in the provision of reasonable accommodation.

☒ Assessment, targeting, registration and eligibility

- For initial identification and registration, in-depth outreach should be coupled with non-technical screenings, such as the Washington Group Short of Questions.
- Take care if using disability assessment to determine eligibility. Any disability assessment should consider attitudinal and environmental barriers to services and support requirements in addition to impairment and activities limitations.

To assess disability for eligibility purposes in low resource settings train community informants rather than relying on medical personnel.

- Account for disability-related costs when setting eligibility thresholds for means-tested social protection programmes. Collect data on these costs in economic needs assessments to avoid over-estimating the welfare of households of persons with disabilities.
- Remove barriers restricting persons with disabilities from fulfilling any conditionalities associated with received benefits, for example, relating to education or health. Conditionalities should not be applied if barriers remain.
- Respect standards of confidentiality and privacy when determining eligibility for and delivery of benefits to avoid, for example, obliging individual to disclose publicly their disability status to obtain support.

☑ Delivery

- Make relevant facilities, venues and mobile platforms accessible for people with different impairments, including through screen-reader compatibility, provision of transportation and reasonable accommodation where needed (e.g. home-based delivery)
- Provide any benefits aimed at supporting persons with disabilities directly to the individual rather than their family, except in clearly defined circumstances (e.g. children, people with severe intellectual/cognitive impairments, where requested by the recipient).
- Decouple income support and disability-related support to enable persons with disabilities who engage in paid employment to continue to receive necessary benefits, in cash and in kind, to cover disability-related costs, including those associated with participation in paid employment.

☑ Monitoring and evaluation

- Ensure disability is made explicit in reviews of social protection programs. Include an explicit question in the Terms of Reference for reviews, along the lines of "Were people with disability included in and able to benefit from this program? How? To what extent?"
- Collect sex, age and disability disaggregated data during monitoring and evaluation of social protection programmes to determine coverage and to improve policy and practice. The Washington Group Short Set of Questions is recommended for collected disability-disaggregated data. For children with disabilities, the recommended tool is the UNICEF-WG Survey Module on Child Functioning and Disability.
- Directly consult persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in the monitoring and evaluation of social protection programmes. Feedback and complaints mechanisms should be designed in consultation as well.

Annex A – A conceptual framework for social protection (Devereux & Sabates Wheeler)

