



# Strengthening Social Protection



World Food Programme

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## Strategic Areas of Support

WFP works closely with the Government to design and implement social protection interventions that have a positive impact on the food and nutrition security of vulnerable groups, including during shocks.

### Strategic Area 1: Government Capacity

**Facilitator/convenor:** For instance in 2018, WFP with the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF and GIZ supported the Government to develop the Malawi National Social Support Programme II, designed to respond to people's food and income needs with links to the emergency sector.

### Strategic Area 2: Diagnostics and Design

**Operational know-how and last mile delivery:** In 2020, WFP and ILO supported the Government to design a targeting approach for the COVID-19 cash intervention (CUCI) to address heightened income and food insecurity for the urban poor.

This included a rigorous verification exercise leveraging satellite imagery to assess the eligibility of the targeted 'hotspots' for this new urban programming context.

### Strategic Area 3: System and Processes

**Multisectoral Expertise:** In 2020, WFP supported the Government to develop an application for its emerging social registry to support with targeting food insecure households.

### Strategic Area 4: Implementation Capacity

In addition to providing technical support, WFP provides implementation capacity to Government to increase the coverage of social assistance in Malawi. WFP works with the Government during the Lean Season Response to pilot new design for the social protection system to address adequacy of transfer and coverage of food insecure populations.

The Ministry has also advanced shock-sensitive social protection, providing the linkages between humanitarian response and social protection. For example, in areas where food insecurity cash top ups are provided to Government's Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) beneficiaries (vertical expansion-VE) and registration of non-SCTP food insecure households (horizontal expansion-HE) to benefit under the lean season response. The UN role (WFP-UNICEF-ILO) has been key in providing this technical assistance.



## Shock Sensitive Social Protection

Shock Sensitive Social Protection (SSSP) in Malawi represents the coming together of social protection, disaster risk reduction, and emergency assistance, to meet seasonal needs, prepare for and respond to shocks together with the humanitarian sector, and support recovery and the return to regular programming.

### How To Do Things Differently

Instead of setting up a national humanitarian system to reach households in crises each year alongside a developing social protection system, SSSP aims to build on an existing core system. For example:

#### Before the shock

- 1) Improve coordination across sectors to clarify the possible role(s) of social protection for addressing covariate shocks;
- 2) Expand routine assistance based on risks and vulnerabilities (i.e. increase coverage in shock-prone districts etc)
- 3) Redesign programmes to help reduce exposure to risk (i.e. a watershed management approach to public works);
- 4) Undertake system preparedness work.

#### During the shock

- 1) Assess the impact of the shock on the functioning of the social protection system to ensure continuity of services;
- 2) Provide more to social protection beneficiaries affected by shocks (vertical expansion);
- 3) Temporarily expand the coverage of assistance through the social protection system (horizontal expansion/ piggybacking);
- 4) Establish a new emergency intervention delivered through the social protection system.

#### After the Shock

- 1) Provide additional support to social protection beneficiaries (i.e. adjust the coverage/adequacy) to fast track recovery;
- 2) Transition the temporary caseload onto long-term routine social protection (i.e. ensure continued protection by expanding regular coverage).

## Breaking the Cycle of Hunger—the Lean Season

Malawi has responded every year to emergency food needs. Whilst the priority should continue to be increasing the coverage and adequacy of social protection system, during this period it is likely Malawi will continue to register annual food insecurity needs.

Given the cyclical nature of the needs there is an opportunity to be innovative with the response design: providing unconditional support for the structural poor, with conditionalities for households with labour capacity, along with linkages to key services, to not only meet but also reduce future need through tapping into productive potential of the food insecure populations.

### Social Protection during extraordinary shocks

In times of unprecedented need, the social protection system could be leveraged to support with the design and delivery of emergency interventions. Forecasts can also be used to scale-up interventions for early action to protect households ahead of the shock.



*Rose is not a beneficiary of the Regular Social Cash Transfer programme but during the 2019/2020 lean season response, she has received a total of MK 115,000 (USD 145) over the 5 months response period as part of the Horizontal Expansion of the Social Protection System. She was targeted using the Unified Beneficiary Registry and received an ATM Card from the Government's Financial Service Provider.*



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