



©NOOR for FAO/Benedicte Kurzen

ENHANCING REGIONAL CAPACITIES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT NUTRITION-SENSITIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME TO REDUCE FOOD INSECURITY AND MALNUTRITION

April 2021

SDGs:



Countries: Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Senegal and Zambia

Project Codes: TCP/INT/3701

FAO Contribution: USD 500 000

Duration: 2 April 2018 – 31 March 2021

Contact Info: Alejandro Grinspun (Budget Holder)

Alejandro.Grinspun@fao.org

Implementing Partners

Ministries of Social Protection (MoSP [or equivalent]),
Ministries of Agriculture (MoAs).

Beneficiaries

Government institutions that work on social protection and Food Security and Nutrition (FSN), particularly in the relevant departments and units directly in charge of the analysis, design and implementation of the considered social protection and FSN policies and programmes in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Senegal and Zambia.

Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

Armenia – CPF Priority 3: Food and nutrition security and poverty reduction: this CPF Priority Area aims at strengthening policy and legal frameworks and social protection systems to eradicate hunger, food insecurity, malnutrition and rural poverty.

Kyrgyzstan – CPF Priority 1: Coherent and gender-sensitive agricultural, food security and nutrition, social protection and rural development policies and programmes.

Senegal – CPF Priority 3: Building resilience by strengthening the system of prevention and management of food and nutrition crises. Output 6.3: Food security and nutrition are strengthened.

Zambia – CPF Output 3.2: Strengthened human resource and organizational capacities in the food security and nutrition domain. Milestone: By 2019, six key staff in the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL), Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare (MCDSW) have strengthened capacities to contribute to influencing policy, programming and institutional change to strengthen coherence between social protection, agriculture and food security.



BACKGROUND

Despite important progress made in the fight against poverty and hunger, significant challenges remain. Progress on reducing the incidence of hunger differs from region to region and country to country. The four target countries of this project, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Senegal and Zambia, are among those that continue to face persistent poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition. In response, they have been experimenting with approaches that seek to link social protection to a variety of sectors, such as agriculture, health and sanitation, with the aim to improve the livelihoods of the poorest and reduce hunger.

Social protection programmes have proved to be a critical factor in tackling hunger, however, there are important knowledge gaps regarding the operational options of linking them with broader agriculture and Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) interventions, and the results these linkages can achieve. As social protection has rapidly expanded in the past two decades, these linkages are yet to be further understood and debated. Generating, systematizing and disseminating concrete country knowledge on this approach to nutrition-sensitive social protection is therefore an important contribution to national governments and other stakeholders across regions.

Against this background, the governments of the above-mentioned four target countries requested that FAO support them to design and implement improved nutrition-sensitive social protection interventions, and to assist them in moving towards more integrated approaches to tackle FSN and reduce poverty.

IMPACT

The project contributed significantly to increasing productive and income-generating capacities of poor rural households in the four target countries, through the inputs and training provided, as well as building their resilience. In addition, the introduction of new crops and livestock to diversify production and diets, and training provided on preparing new types of foods, coupled with increased agricultural production, contributed to enhanced household food security and nutrition. In Armenia, the results suggested that the beneficiaries of the project were also able to better cope with COVID-19, in terms of dietary diversity.



ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The project supported the implementation and assessment of nutrition-sensitive social protection (NSSP) pilots in the four target countries. In addition, technical assistance was provided to national and local stakeholders in the implementation and assessment of the Cash+ approach, which combines cash transfers with productive and FSN assistance to support rural poor households. Key training and awareness-raising activities, together with the distribution of inputs, were organized for beneficiaries on nutrition-sensitive agriculture, which provided them with important techniques, practices and access to services, leading to improved and diversified production.

In Armenia, the Cash+ pilot, funded by the Government Cooperative Programme (GCP) project GCP/GLO/674/RUS, “Developing Capacity for Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Selected Countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia”, provided selected recipients of the national Family Benefit (FB) scheme with productive support in the form of livestock, high-value crops and training and awareness-raising activities. A rapid assessment of the pilot was carried out to assess the impacts of the pilot and showed promising results in terms of FSN, as well as improved mechanisms for dealing with COVID-19.

In Kyrgyzstan, the Government and FAO collaborated to pilot test an approach linking social protection benefits with nutrition-sensitive agricultural support, which was geared towards sustainable and climate-smart practices (funded by the GCP project GCP/GLO/674/RUS, as in Armenia), to boost food production, generate income opportunities and improve food security and nutrition. The rapid assessment concluded that the intervention was successful in improving the quality of diets and food security, and that crop production and income from farm sales increased among pilot participants.



In Senegal, the design of the Cash+ pilot benefited from the close engagement of the government entities responsible for social protection, nutrition, extension services, agriculture and livestock; and coherence was fostered between social protection and agriculture to improve the food security and nutrition of the country’s vulnerable population. This resulted in the launch of an innovative pilot in 2018, led by the General Delegation for Social protection and National Solidarity (*Délégation Générale à la Protection Sociale et à la Solidarité Nationale* [DGPSN]), which strengthened and built coordination capacity at both national and local levels. A committee of local stakeholders was set up under the Governor leadership, which identified the different types of interventions to complement the national cash transfer programme, including two support packages comprising agricultural inputs, poultry farming, market gardening, and training in nutrition and hygiene for 300 beneficiaries. In Zambia, the project supported the Government in assessing a multisectoral Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) programme, which was implemented in combination with a conservation agricultural support programme. A qualitative assessment was carried out, and the results were integrated with a quantitative impact evaluation and a microsimulation of social protection and agricultural interventions of the HGSF and Conservation Agriculture Scaling Up (CASU) programmes, to provide a comprehensive analysis and insights, highlighting both the achievements and the challenges of combining these interventions in a coherent manner.

The project concluded with the development of a compendium (which is in the process of being finalized), bringing together different project experiences on linking social protection, nutrition and agriculture. These were then shared with policy-makers through a webinar, and the major lessons learned were systematized.

IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

In general, most of the activities were implemented on time; however, delays occurred in finalizing certain parts of these, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the dissemination of results and validation workshops.

All activities were implemented within the planned budget, including an additional assessment to feed into the policy processes of Zambia, as well as a translation of the FSN Interregional Social Protection Assessment tool, to support further work on nutrition-sensitive social protection.

All activities were implemented within the planned budget, including an additional assessment to feed into the policy processes of Zambia, as well as a translation of the FSN Interregional Social Protection Assessment tool, to support further work on nutrition-sensitive social protection.

With regard to risk management, the spread of COVID-19 was one of the major disruptions that occurred during the project cycle. The project attempted to find ways around it by switching to online forms of dialogues. However, the pandemic also affected the time and priorities of the participating stakeholders and resulting access for the project. In Armenia, this was aggravated by the recent (September–November 2020) hostilities that erupted in and around Artsakh, as a result of which it was not possible to present in an official forum the results of the assessment of the pilot. The Government of Armenia considered the Cash+ approach as an effective way of coping with poverty; furthermore, the Cash+ results served as a basis for the Government to launch a similar programme in November 2019, targeting 1 000 vulnerable rural families. The risks were reported from country level to FAO headquarters through regular meetings with FAO country colleagues. These resulted in adjusting the time frame of the project, to allow for greater flexibility and time to deliver the interventions.

FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

Overall, country offices will continue working with government stakeholders to support them in the way forward, integrating the lessons learned and supporting the scale-up of the approach within national frameworks.

In Kyrgyzstan, the Ministry of Labor and Social Development (MoLSD) requested that FAO help the Government to develop the general social contract programme design, based on the Cash+ approach, for a scale-up of the approach.

In Senegal, the results of the pilot programme implemented in the country will be shared widely, and will be used to inform policies and to support the Government to mobilize resources for its scale-up. In this context, a rapid assessment is planned for the third quarter of 2021 to capture the results of the pilot.

At the time of the finalization of the Zambia report, the Government of Zambia intended to assume full responsibility for the HGSP programme, taking over from the World Food Programme (WFP). Lessons from the qualitative study were expected to feed into the government programme during this transition.

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

The Cash+ approach was shared with national counterparts, which were involved throughout the process, building capacities and knowledge during its implementation. The lessons learned from the assessment of the pilots point to several areas that need greater support to be able to adopt and implement at scale these types of programmes. A few of the main findings included: i) the need for greater resources and capacities at local level to provide agricultural inputs and training; ii) more linkages with agencies leading nutrition agenda at country level; and iii) the adaptation of agricultural interventions to ensure access to the most vulnerable rural households. Including these in national policy frameworks can support the different national stakeholders. This was achieved in Kyrgyzstan through the Food Security and Nutrition Programme 2019–2023. Another recent development concerns the draft Labour and Social Protection Development programme, where the MoLSD sees the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) as a co-implementer of the social contract programme, based on the Cash+ approach in rural areas. In the other countries, such policy frameworks are still missing to bring together these different sectors. Dialogue at national level, such as in Senegal, supports the move towards more integrated work and outcomes.

Given that the approach taken by the project was to build on the existing national programmes and structures, the process itself supported the capacity building and strengthening of local and national structures. In Senegal, the main national actors were leading the piloting from the national to the local level. National actors are eager to now extract the results and insert feedback into the national dialogue, to explore how to move forward with the approach. In Kyrgyzstan, the approach has been embedded in its Food Security and Nutrition Programme, mentioned above. In Armenia, the social protection sector has shown greater interest in the potential of social protection in supporting resilience to shocks, and the Cash+ results served as a basis for the Government of Armenia to launch a similar programme in November 2019, targeting 1 000 vulnerable rural families, as mentioned above.

The project worked directly with national governmental partners and local government in each country. From initial consultation to implementation and assessments, all steps were closely developed through partnerships with both levels of governments.



The project focused on supporting national dialogue processes by generating evidence and lessons learned. This feedback loop aimed at providing information to support the uptake by governments of similar approaches, i.e. scaling up integrated approaches to diversifying production and diets. However, moving away from silos in existing organization structures is a long-term goal. The project built on providing a demonstration effect through the joint implementation of pilots, to obtain greater experience in developing these types of integrated approaches to combat hunger and reduce poverty, and provide evidence to government efforts to adopt such approaches. This needs to be followed up by continued in-country advocacy and technical assistance. In Kyrgyzstan, local authorities showed their appreciation by continuing to provide support to the beneficiary households beyond the project. However, greater financial commitments are still needed, and advocacy with national stakeholders to channel the resources required. FAO has been able to gather Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism (FMM) funds to continue the support in Kyrgyzstan. In Senegal, the process built on ongoing assistance provided by FAO in bringing together social protection and agricultural actors at national level.

2. Gender equality

The project designed various packages to try to fit the needs and constraints of the different households and their members. Households that were more labour-constrained were provided with the option of less intense activities (in terms of both time and work). The rapid assessments aimed to capture some outcomes specifically for women in the households, including on working time use and nutritious food intake, as well as decision-making within households. The project identified design and implementation areas where greater gender mainstreaming and responsive approaches could be added to improve outcomes. These lessons are key to supporting the improved FSN outcome of women and children in poor rural households.

The assessments showed that women's dietary outcomes had improved both in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, in terms of more frequent consumption of nutritious food items, addressing deficiencies in local diets. Household income-generation activities were strengthened in activities that are often women's domain in households, such as home gardening and taking care of small livestock. However, the evidence did not show that there were major changes in intrahousehold decision-making.

3. Environmental sustainability

The project sought to support environmentally friendly agricultural practices, such as in Kyrgyzstan, where climate-smart agricultural practices were implemented. The packages were designed to ensure that they were suitable for local agro-ecological conditions, and, where possible, did not aggravate existing environmental problems.

The Zambia qualitative study evidenced the multiple benefits from improved conservation agricultural practices, increasing and diversifying production through sustainable farming systems, and boosting farmers' incomes.

4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

Social protection is a human right. The project worked to promote this concept in the participating countries by highlighting the importance and potential of social protection, especially for rural poor, who often do not have access to it. It is also linked to the right to food, as these households tend to only have access to food of poor quality, owing to low incomes. Diversifying production supported households' access to protein and vegetables, which they did not have prior to the project.

The project also improved the productive capacities of rural poor households, where often very few employment opportunities exist. Supporting these households with training and access to services (veterinary services, extension workers, etc.) built their productive capacities and generated income. The project sought to build beneficiaries' agency by providing support and integrated services along the pathway out of poverty and food insecurity.





5. Technological sustainability

The capacities of beneficiaries in the four target countries were enhanced as a result of the inputs and training provided by the project, enabling them to increase their production. The training was developed through local service providers, and involved national stakeholders and local representatives, to ensure that they all benefited from the capacity building provided by the project. For example, in Senegal the training was done by decentralized technical services (government) to ensure that it was adapted to the context, as well as for sustainability.

In Kyrgyzstan, local authorities were able to continue to support the rural poor without assistance for an additional season.

Spaces for dialogue were created to foster cross-sectoral planning at both local and national levels. Through these elements, namely capacity building and training, transfer of knowledge, and spaces created, the project facilitated the continued use of the approaches adopted.

It is hoped that with the evidence generated, further advocacy can be done at the national level to garner greater political will and financial resources to continue work through integrated approaches.

6. Economic sustainability

Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism (FMM) resources were mobilized to replicate the Cash+ pilot in Kyrgyzstan. However, the process to ensure economic sustainability is a long-term goal. Greater advocacy will be needed to support the Ministries in question, to ensure that the Ministries of Finance prioritize these types of integrated interventions, which reach the most vulnerable households.

DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ **Appaix, O. & Rysbekova, J.** 2019. Internal report of the Process assessment. 95 pp.
- ❑ **Mbeugué, T & Watt, A.** 2019. *Évaluation de la diversité alimentaire des ménages, des femmes en âge de procréer et des enfants 6-23 mois.* 23 pp.
- ❑ **Nesbitt-Ahmed, Z. & Pozarny, P.** 2021. Qualitative research on impacts of the Zambia Home Grown School Feeding and Conservation Agriculture Scale Up Programmes. FAO, Rome. 79 pp.
- ❑ **Levina, K. & Ocampo, A.** 2021. Cash+ Pilot Programme in Kyrgyzstan: Improving Food Security, Boosting Productivity and Diversifying Livelihoods. Policy Brief. 5 pp.
- ❑ **Kangasniemi, M., Pace, N., Vasile, M., Owens, J., Ocampo, A., & Levina, K.** 2021. Rapid Assessment and Microsimulation of Impacts of a Cash+ Pilot Intervention in the Kyrgyz Republic. 98 pp.
- ❑ **Kangasniemi, M., Owens, J., Staffieri, I., Pace, N., Karapetyan, S. & Bhalla, G.** 2021. Rapid Assessment and Microsimulation of Impacts of a Cash+ Pilot Intervention in Armenia. 62 pp.
- ❑ **Mwansakilwa, C.** 2021. Issues and Opportunities for Making Agriculture Programs More Pro-Poor in Zambia. 150 pp.
- ❑ **Prifti, E.** 2021. Strengthening coherence between social protection and productive interventions. The case of Zambia. FAO, Rome. 48 pp.
- ❑ **International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG).** 2020. Linking social protection, agriculture, food security & nutrition: diversifying production and diets (webinar). <https://socialprotection.org/linking-social-protection-agriculture-and-food-security-and-nutrition-diversifying-production-and>
- ❑ **Kangasniemi, M. & Owens, J.** 2020. <https://socialprotection.org/>. Linking social protection, agriculture, food security & nutrition: diversifying production and diets (online): <https://socialprotection.org/es/discover/blog/linking-social-protection-agriculture-and-food-security-and-nutrition-diversifying>.
- ❑ **Bulungu, A.L.S, FAO.** Linking social protection, food security and nutrition for the promotion of healthy diets; A review of five country experiences and lessons learned ([formerly called Compendium] currently being finalized).



ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	The proposed project will contribute to the reduction of food insecurity and malnutrition of the poor and vulnerable populations in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Central Asia	
Outcome	Governments and relevant stakeholders design and implement improved nutrition-sensitive social protection interventions	
	Indicator	Number of improved nutrition-sensitive social protection interventions under implementation.
	Baseline	0
	End Target	Four
	Comments and follow-up action to be taken	<p>The project supported the implementation and assessment of NSSP pilots in the four target countries. Technical support was provided to national and local stakeholders in the implementation and assessment of the Cash+ approach. The assessments of the pilots pointed to the potential of these approaches for rural poor households.</p> <p><u>Armenia</u> The project focused on assessing the Cash+ pilot to provide evidence to the Government on the approach. The pilot provided selected recipients of the national FB scheme with productive support in the form of livestock, high-value crops and training and awareness-raising measures. A rapid assessment of the pilot was carried out to assess the impacts of the pilot and showed promising results in terms of FSN. A follow-up survey indicated improved mechanisms for retaining dietary diversity during COVID-19.</p> <p><u>Kyrgyzstan</u> The Government and FAO collaborated to pilot test an approach linking social protection benefits with agricultural support, to boost food production, generate income opportunities and improve food security and nutrition. The “Productive Social Contract/Cash+” pilot sought to demonstrate that integrated social protection and agricultural interventions can generate sustainable improvements in food security and nutrition of vulnerable rural households, enhance their agricultural productivity, and support their pathways out of poverty. The rapid assessment concluded that the intervention was successful in improving the quality of diets and food security, and that crop production and income from farm sales increased among pilot participants.</p> <p><u>Senegal</u> The project worked closely with the Government, through the DGPSN, to design the Cash+ pilot (known locally as <i>Jal Jeg</i>, which means “empowerment through work”), which linked beneficiaries of the national cash transfer programme, the National Family Allowance Programme (<i>Programme National de Bourses de Sécurité Familiale</i> [PNBSF]), to nutrition-sensitive complementary interventions. The pilot interventions included support to productive activities, nutrition training activities and awareness raising for 300 households in three communes in Diourbel region. As a result, beneficiaries have significantly increased agricultural production, which was largely for household consumption and dietary diversity; this has a positive impact on household food security and nutrition, especially for children.</p> <p><u>Zambia</u> The assessment of the HGSF programme, which is an NSSP intervention, fed into the government implementation of the programme. Overall, the study evidenced that in both the combined HGSF and CASU and the HGSF-alone site interventions, combined with improved marketing opportunities, the increase in production of legumes and resulting increased incomes from the sale of maize (both sites), beans (Luwingu) and cowpeas (Katete), and higher yields and production support from CASU in Katete, has had an important impact on the food and nutrition security of farmers’ households. This has led to an improvement in dietary diversity and food security within households. There has also been an increase in food expenditure in both sites.</p>

Output 1	Cash+ is piloted in Senegal in support to programme dialogue on NSSP		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Cash plus pilot implemented.	One	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	<p>The Senegal pilot benefited from the close engagement of the government entities responsible for social protection, nutrition, extension services, agriculture and livestock.</p> <p>The project helped to promote dialogue and strengthen understanding on the coherence between social protection, agriculture and nutrition through the multistakeholder working group.</p> <p>At the start of the pilot programme, a regional working group was created by gubernatorial decree, comprising representatives of the five key ministries: the DGPSN, the Regional Directorate of Rural Development (<i>Direction Régionale du Développement Rural</i> [DRDR]), the National Agency for Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services (<i>Agence Nationale de Conseil Agricole et Rural</i> [ANCAR]), Regional service for livestock and animal production (SREPA), and the Malnutrition Control Unit (<i>Cellule de Lutte contre la Malnutrition</i> [CLM]), as well as local authorities, including mayors, prefects and subprefects, technical officers, and civil society organizations engaged in food security and nutrition, such as <i>Fédération du Baol</i>. The regional working group, under the Governor leadership, drove the conceptual design, selected the pilot locations and household targeting criteria, designed the intervention, and monitored implementation.</p>		
Activity 1.1	Design and implement pilot activities linking the Senegalese national cash transfer programme (PNBSF) and complementary FSN intervention for selected beneficiaries		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>The project built on the activities of FAO with the Government of Senegal, in fostering coherence between social protection (DGPSN) and agriculture to improve the food security and nutrition of the country's vulnerable population. This resulted in the launch of an innovative pilot in 2018. Through the pilot, coordination capacity was strengthened and built at both national and local levels. A committee of local stakeholders led the process of designing and implementing the activities, including nutrition-sensitive agriculture, nutrition education and watershed management. Under the leadership of national and local stakeholders, the project was able to support the cross-sectoral committee to design and implement a nutrition-sensitive social protection pilot in three communes. Efforts to build capacity among implementers included the training of Farmer Field School (FFS) and community facilitators (<i>relais communautaires</i> in French, sensitizing the community in the implementation of the PNBSF) in nutrition, which was supported with a comprehensive nutrition training guide. Through the committee, the stakeholders identified the different types of interventions to complement the national cash transfer programme (PNBSF), including two support packages comprising agricultural inputs, poultry farming, market gardening (in the two communes where water was suitable), and training (nutrition and hygiene) for 300 beneficiaries.</p>	
Activity 1.2	Share the lessons learned of the pilot with Senegalese government practitioners and relevant stakeholders		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>The pilot was led by government partners through a participatory and inclusive approach throughout the project. This ensured that the whole process supported the capacity building of national stakeholders and ownership. Key project results and progress reports were shared with the Government and local authorities and partners during the project.</p> <p>The Ministry of Community Development, Social and Territorial Equity (<i>Ministère du Développement communautaire, de l'Équité sociale et territoriale</i>) requested that FAO provide support for the development of an integrated national programme based on lessons learned from the interregional project and other successful experiences. An assessment was designed in response to this request, and will be conducted to draw on lessons and support take-up by the Government.</p>	

Output 2	Evidence for design and implementation of NSSP interventions is generated in selected countries		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Assessments conducted.	Three	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	<p>Three of the government NSSP pilots were assessed. The assessments highlighted both strengths in the approach and lessons in its design and implementation.</p> <p>The results available for Kyrgyzstan were very positive, in terms of supporting households to diversify their diets and improve food security (among other things, such as increased empowerment, productive capacity), as well as indicating valuable lessons in terms of implementation. The results were shared with the national stakeholders during a workshop (December 2019).</p> <p>For Armenia, the results were also positive; the households that received the pilot showed different trends in their diets, with the frequency of animal protein-based meals for children and women increasing in the pilot group. The evidence also suggested that the Cash+ beneficiaries experienced some relative improvements in food security. In addition to the first rapid assessment, for which the fieldwork was carried out in December 2019, a follow-up assessment was undertaken in September 2020 to assess beneficiaries' resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. They showed that the beneficiaries had been able to retain better dietary diversity during the shock.</p> <p>In Senegal, a monitoring template was developed to track the situation of the beneficiaries of the Cash+ pilot. This allowed for monitoring to be carried out throughout the implementation of the Senegalese pilot and for the provision of feedback to stakeholders.</p> <p>The results of the qualitative assessment in Zambia, for which the fieldwork took place in April-May 2019, were integrated with a quantitative impact evaluation and a microsimulation of the same programmes (HGSP and CASU), to provide a comprehensive view, highlighting both the achievements and the challenges of the approach. Key findings showed that a main hypothesis of the study, namely the design and implementation of the programmes has generated changes in food and nutrition security (stability/regularity, meal frequency/day, quantity, access, preparation), diet patterns (diversity, range and types of foods consumed, source, etc.), nutrition and diet practices (e.g. diversity), was found to be largely true. In addition, there was also an increase in food expenditure in the sites studied.</p>		

	Assess cash plus pilots in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan	
	Achieved	Yes
Activity 2.1	Comments	<p>The Cash+ pilot in Kyrgyzstan included beneficiaries of the national cash transfer programme, who received complementary nutrition-sensitive agricultural support and nutrition education. The combination of rapid assessment and process evaluation observed improvements in food security and dietary diversity in women, children and the household as a whole. Enhanced dietary diversity included an increase in the consumption of protein (from animal and plant source), vitamin-A-rich foods, and other fruits and vegetables from their own production, and income earned from selling the crops they produced. As much as 65 percent of pilot beneficiary households observed increased frequency in children’s consumption of fruits and vegetables. The pilot also saw improvements in income and productive capacities. The results suggested an improvement of self-assessed poverty, while pilot participants reported they had started producing more, compared with non-participatory periods. However, no changes were observed in intrahousehold dynamics and women’s decision-making.</p> <p>Some main lessons included designing support packages with a more agro-ecological approach and cost-efficiency in mind; and the need to better integrate FSN indicators in a monitoring and evaluation framework, and to ensure stronger interlinkages, including common nutrition-sensitive messaging between programme components, to maximize impacts on FSN outcomes. The results were shared at a workshop with national partners on 22 October 2019, which was attended by more than 70 participants representing national and local level stakeholders, civil society organizations, development partners and academia. As a result, the Cash+ approach was incorporated in the National Sustainable Development Programme 2018-2040, the National Food Security and Nutrition Programme 2019-2023 and the draft Employment and Social Protection Development Programme 2020-2023. The Government also requested that FAO provide technical assistance in rolling out the Cash+ programme on a larger scale.</p> <p>In Kyrgyzstan, FAO is continuing to support the project participants by facilitating their access to the market through training and capacity development.</p> <p>In Armenia, the Cash+ pilot supported rural households of the national FB scheme with the provision of livestock and training, to diversify their diets and income sources. The assessment carried out at the end of 2019/beginning of 2020 indicated that households within the Cash+ programme had improved their diets, and, compared with non-participants, improved agricultural production and sales. The combination of cash and livestock enabled households to counter the harsh agricultural year, which had negative impacts on households. Lessons were drawn regarding the design, in terms of the combination of agricultural inputs, especially the need for support in homestead gardening, given poor rural households’ dependency on this for their consumption needs, as well as the importance of intrahousehold dynamics when designing the programme.</p>
	Carry out a qualitative evaluation on the HGSF in Zambia	
	Achieved	Yes
Activity 2.2	Comments	<p>FAO conducted an evaluation of the HGSF programme, in combination with the CASU programme, in order to gain in-depth understanding of how and why specific impacts transpired as a result of programme interventions. The three main areas of focus for this study included: i) household productive/farming systems, income generation and expenditure decisions in response to programme interventions; ii) food and nutrition security impacts; and iii) design, operational processes and institutional arrangements of HGSF at central and local levels; and how these features led to particular effects on household productive and consumption decisions, including the wider marketing context (e.g. prices, income-generating activities). The aim was to explore the effects of each programme in isolation and in combination with one another, to gain greater insights on impacts regarding implementation processes of the HGSF, and the effects of implementing combined programmes. The results enhanced understanding of successful programme modalities to improve impacts in enhancing rural livelihoods and poverty reduction.</p> <p>Main findings from this research showed that the combined programmes generated changes in farming and crop systems; increased income due to improved yields; and enhanced food security and diet diversity. The study provided evidence that there would have been scope for stronger impacts on incomes and livelihoods through more intentionally combined programmes. The evaluation recommended strengthening the coherence of social protection and agricultural interventions, such as HGSF and CASU. These included notably: i) promoting multisectoral arrangements and planning with regard to programme design and implementation, to enhance the impact of social protection and agricultural intervention benefits for small-scale farmers; and ii) building farmers’ capacity to meet the public food procurement market requirements.</p>

Activity 2.3	Generate evidence on cash plus operations in Senegal		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A monitoring template was developed by the project, permitting continued monitoring and engagement with the Government. The regular monitoring carried out during the implementation of the pilot provided insights on its workings to all stakeholders involved.	
Output 3	Interregional knowledge products and exchanges on integrating social protection and FSN considerations are developed concerning Africa, Latin America, Asia and Caucasus/Central Asia		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Interregional knowledge products and exchanges on integrating social protection and FSN considerations developed.	Two	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	A compendium was developed and a webinar was conducted to share the experiences and lessons learned from the NSSP experiences. The compendium is in the process of being reviewed and finalized by FAO. Once all the feedback has been integrated, it will be edited and submitted for publication.		
Activity 3.1	Launch a webinar series on NSSP		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	FAO conducted a webinar to share the experience of an integrated approach that brought together social protection and nutrition-sensitive agriculture for better food security and nutrition of rural poor households. The webinar presented the experiences from the project and beyond, with the main lessons in relation to implementing similar projects.	
Activity 3.2	Systematize experiences on NSSP		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A compendium of experiences is being finalized through a review carried out by FAO. It systematizes the lessons learned from five FAO-led NSSP Cash+ experiences. The compendium identified five enabling factors to support the coherence and integration of activities across agriculture and social protection, to diversify production and diets. The enabling factors identified were: i) building common understanding through multistakeholder working groups; ii) an intervention package based on formative research; iii) service delivery built on existing platforms; iv) active engagement of local authorities; and v) integration of social protection, agriculture, and nutrition information at the household level.	

Partnerships and Outreach

For more information, please contact: Reporting@fao.org

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla

00153 Rome, Italy