
2014 UBRAF thematic report

Protecting vulnerable households and individuals

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ACHIEVEMENTS

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has put social protection firmly on the global HIV agenda in 2014.

Ensuring that social protection, care and support are understood globally as critical to the HIV response

The Social Protection, Care and Support (SPCS) Working Group, which was co-convened by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank, led to a remarkable year in positioning SPCS in the HIV response. UNICEF, the World Bank and the UNAIDS Secretariat co-led, convened or participated in a series of events around SPCS that raised the profile of social protection in the HIV response and accelerated commitments. These events included:

- The first social and structural drivers meeting in Washington D.C. (co-hosted by World Bank President Dr. Jim Yong Kim and UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé) and the SPCS annual meeting, which brought together the first gathering of researchers and policy-makers to showcase initial findings around social protection and HIV prevention.
- The SPCS research network was launched by UNICEF, the World Bank and UNAIDS at the International AIDS Society (IAS) in 2014.
- The 34th meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board contained a thematic session on addressing the social and economic drivers of HIV through social protection. This resulted in decision points pertaining to SPCS being addressed, including:
 - connecting HIV with the eradication of extreme poverty, inequality and the promotion of human rights;
 - facilitating country-level dialogues and conducting HIV and social protection assessments;
 - scale up of social protection programmes that enhance HIV prevention, treatment, care and support;
 - advancing research in social protection with the active participation of the people and countries most affected by HIV; and
 - building social protection literacy among those who need it.

Separately, Cash transfers were included in the menu of HIV prevention services for young women. USAID and the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) also developed a US\$ 210 million, two-year project to focus on mitigating the specific vulnerabilities affecting young women in 10 eastern and southern African Countries.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) initiated a campaign to raise global awareness about national social protection floors (NSPF). This campaign included providing coverage for people living with HIV in the national Social Protection Policy and Strategy in Ethiopia, advocating for the removal of HIV exclusion in insurance policies in Sri Lanka and

sensitizing more than 2600 workers on HIV and social protection in Kenya.

Building the evidence base for social protection interventions

A strong focus on HIV-sensitive and HIV-specific research within broader social protection strategies and health-sector interventions was a core message during the aforementioned group of discussions. Core activities in this area included:

- The World Bank supported studies investigating how conditional cash transfers can reduce sexually transmitted infections in Lesotho, Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania. The World Bank also supported a Tanzanian study showing how negative shock due to food insecurity led to riskier sexual behaviour; this encouraged further investigation into how social protection programs can reduce this HIV epidemic driver.
- UNICEF and the Transfer Project have carried out impact evaluation of cash transfer programmes in 13 countries. The protective effects of transfers against HIV-related risk behaviours in three countries (Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe) have been validated in qualitative assessments conducted in Ghana, Kenya and Lesotho in partnership with the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI).
- UNICEF and EPRI convened a South–South learning event that disseminated initial findings and shared lessons from qualitative and quantitative research that was conducted as part of UNICEF’s HIV-sensitive social protection: state of evidence 2012 in sub-Saharan Africa study.
- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published a Discussion paper on cash transfers and HIV prevention that:
 - analyses the evidence on cash transfers and HIV prevention;
 - explores key issues, concerns and limitations; and
 - offers strategies for moving forward in terms of policy, programmes and research.
- The World Food Programme (WFP) finalized the publication of an AIDS and behaviour supplement that provides an overview of current evidence on the barriers to HIV and tuberculosis (TB) treatment uptake and retention in care. The publication also demonstrates how social transfers (in-kind, cash or vouchers) can help overcome these barriers.
- The UNAIDS Secretariat, with support from Cosponsors and partners, published the HIV and social protection guidance note. It also organized a number of events at the UNAIDS Secretariat and at international AIDS conferences in Asia-Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa to create awareness of new evidence on HIV and social protection.

- ILO launched Access to and effects of social protection on workers living with HIV and their households: an analytical report, plus four in-depth studies in Guatemala, Indonesia, Rwanda and Ukraine to advocate for improved national social protection system (NSPS) and policy reform to cover HIV.

Strengthening national systems for social protection, care and support

Building strong systems is essential for ensuring that HIV-specific and HIV-sensitive social protection approaches are implemented where it makes sense to do so. Specific systems building activities that occurred in 2014 include:

- The World Bank is using its lending to increase the coverage of successful social protection floors and systems across many sectors in more than 70 countries around the world. These floors and systems aim to reduce social and structural drivers of the HIV epidemic by:
 - strengthening social safety net programs, skills development and employment training for poor and at-risk youth;
 - expanding employment opportunities;
 - supporting and initiating cash transfer programs; and
 - improving nutrition and health services and systems.
- UNICEF supported national governments to expand social protection coverage and develop comprehensive systems in 97 countries. In Africa, UNICEF is supporting the design and implementation of cash transfers in 10 countries, and the formulation of multisectoral social protection strategies, policies and systems in 22 countries. UNICEF also led the documentation of lessons learned and models of how synergies between child protection systems and HIV have resulted in beneficial outcomes for children in Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- UNDP supports more than 53 countries in social protection. In 2014, it helped convene a national consultation on HIV-sensitive social protection in Cambodia that led to people living with HIV being categorized as a “special vulnerable group” in Cambodia’s NSPS.
- WFP is working in eight countries to provide social transfers to households affected by HIV and TB. This has helped compensate for lost income and increased illness-related expenses, and prevented the adoption of negative coping mechanisms.
- Activities of the UNAIDS Secretariat led to Global Fund support in scaling up social protection programs. Social protection for HIV prevention, particularly cash transfers, was included in concept notes to the Global Fund for Kenya, Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.
- The UNAIDS Secretariat advocated for the inclusion of HIV and social protection in

the African Union Ouagadougou +10 Declaration and five-year plan of action.

- A group of 74 countries indicated they were beginning to review or reform their National Strategic Plan framework with ILO technical assistance in costing, extending coverage and devising new benefit schemes. They also would receive assistance with developing policies or strategies to reduce barriers to access for people living with HIV, and they would seek to improve social protection literacy.

MAJOR CHALLENGES AND HOW THESE WERE ADDRESSED

While the AIDS response is becoming more targeted and focused, some interventions—such as those addressing underlying drivers of HIV infection and non-adherence—require working with broader development sectors, including systems for child or social protection.

The vast majority of evidence on social protection and HIV prevention, treatment, care and support is from sub-Saharan Africa, and it focuses on young women and girls. More information is needed on impacts among other groups—including key populations—and in other HIV epidemic contexts and geographical areas, such as the Caribbean and Latin America.

Considering that many of WFP's operations—such as food for assets, school feeding and general food distribution—are not designed specifically for people living with HIV, several factors (such as targeting criteria, stigma and implementation modality) may inadvertently exclude people living with HIV and affected households if programmes are not adequately designed. A better understanding is required of demand-side factors and enabling environments to improve access to these programmes.

There is need for a UNAIDS Secretariat-wide push for HIV and social protection through its inclusion in regional and country biannual work plans, supported by a centrally-resourced HIV and social protection portfolio.

Conditional cash transfers proved effective in reducing HIV prevalence and keeping girls in school, while broader social protection schemes—including building social protection floors—can support the continued success and implementation of such mechanisms. Innovations like cash transfers coupled with care and support—or savings-led microfinance coupled with raising awareness and building understanding of gender norms and how they influence prevention and mitigation—should also be scaled up.

The UNAIDS Investment Framework modelling of 2011 proposed investing 40% in enablers and synergies (15% and 25%, respectively), and 60% in basic programmes in order to effectively enhance the impact of HIV programmes. However, there is continued under-investment in critical enablers and development synergies: it is believed that national HIV programs spend less than 2% of national HIV budgets on such investments.

KEY FUTURE INTERVENTIONS

- The World Bank will continue to build strong social protection systems and NSPFs, and it will support interventions that encourage HIV testing and research on how to best link newly-diagnosed patients to care. The World Bank also will support programs that reduce social and structural drivers of HIV epidemics, including poverty and inequality. Such programs include income transfer programs, social safety net programs, skills development for poor high-risk youth, conditional cash transfer programs, improved nutrition and health services, and childhood education promotion.
- UNICEF will identify and address gaps hindering scale-up of social protection programmes at the national level that contribute to HIV programme goals in prevention, treatment and mitigation. It also will provide technical assistance and strengthen national and sub-national capacities for planning, targeting, implementing, managing and sustaining social protection programmes.
- UNDP will develop operational tools for sensitizing cash transfer programmes to HIV prevention, and it will support countries in integrating HIV-sensitive social protection into Global Fund grant proposals and concept notes under the new funding model. It also will identify strategic engagement options on social protection for HIV and health in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- WFP will review and analyse its ongoing programmes with an HIV-sensitive focus to ensure that they are effectively reaching vulnerable people living with HIV and their families.
- UNAIDS will roll out the HIV and Social Protection Assessment Tool develop a baseline indicator for the cash transfer target in the HIV prevention goal and broker partnerships between the poverty, inequality and HIV movements on the use of social protection to end AIDS, poverty and inequality.
- ILO will provide countries with technical support for NSPF assessment and social protection policy, strategy and system reform (including improving HIV sensitivity within NSPFs).
- The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) will continue to scale up innovative initiatives on complementing cash transfers for young women with care and support and access to microcredits and savings – with gender awareness and training on how gender norms influence HIV prevention and mitigation.

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