



Building Resilience & Ending Vulnerabilities in SIDS

Joint Programme 2022 Annual Progress Report

-

Cover Page

UNCT/MCO: Jamaica

Reporting Period: 1 January - 31 December 2022

JP title: Modernization of the social protection system in Jamaica- in support of adaptable, inclusive shock-responsive social protection services

Stakeholder partner: National Government;

Thematic SDG Areas: Digital transformation;

PUNOs: UNICEF, UN WOMEN, WFP

Total estimated expenditures: US\$ 105,937.8

Total estimated commitments (including expenditures): US\$ 151,756.8

Gender Marker: Gender-sensitive (for example, the JP acknowledged and aimed to address gender to enhance the policy/programme, such as undertaking gender analysis to ensure policies/programmes do no harm)

Resident Coordinator: Sweeney, Vincent (RC a.i.)

Resident Coordinator Email: vincent.sweeney@un.org

Executive Summary

The JP's extensive work with the Government to support the expansion of the Social Protection System (SPS) to improve its response to exogenous shocks commenced subsequent to the official launch in March 2022. The JP has: established a governance structure with cross-sectorial participation; carried out a broad research initiative to understand opportunities and challenges associated with digital payment solutions; digitalized forms for beneficiary intake and registration; trained government practitioners on the creation, management and visualization of beneficiary data for social assistance interventions; examined piloting of new digital payment solutions; and completed research toward improving the information systems used by the SPS.

Governance & Administration: Social Protection is operationalized primarily through the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) and coordinated by multiple divisions and agencies targeting various groups, with policy oversight within the purview of the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ). The scope of JP therefore required a multistakeholder committee to support decision making, and implementation of responses to jointly perceived problems. With technical support from the three PUNO's, the JP Oversight Committee convened three (3) meetings in 2022 and approved resolutions related to institutional arrangements, planned activities and the engagement of technical experts to support implementation. The committee is co-chaired by the MLSS and comprises approximately 12 members with additional personal/organizations co-opted as necessary.

Enhancing digital payment solutions: Work has commenced on the testing of more efficient, effective, and expedited digital payment solutions to promote digital financial inclusion, including opportunities for women's economic empowerment. Efforts focused on understanding user-journeys and experience with digital payments in the country taking into consideration sex, age and other factors. The JP completed a multifaceted research agenda with the MLSS to test new digital payment modalities in support of future scale-up of new or existing programmes. Sessions were convened with stakeholders within the financial sector as part of disseminating and validating beneficiary feedback, as well as exploring short and long-term solutions. These consultations are critical to receive feedback on opportunities to use digital payment solutions to inform the future of the use of digital payments

through social protection systems, and as a path for women's empowerment and financial inclusion. Piloting of shock responsive programming and training in the use of modern assessment tools, especially in emergencies, also commenced. In Q4 of 2022, the JP engaged technical assistance to enhance the overall management and disbursement of cash transfers for persons with disabilities (PwD's), supporting increased collection of benefits through the SPS.

Improving Research and Information systems: The process to engage technical assistance to conduct a gender gap analysis of the policy and legislative frameworks and a livelihoods analysis commenced in 2022. The analysis seeks to understand how livelihoods are affected by shocks, seasonality, and climate change. Similarly, an information system review for the JCPD was completed as part of efforts to improve increased coverage and coordination of interventions.

Annual Progress

Overall JP self-assessment of 2022 progress:

Satisfactory (majority of annual expected results achieved; 1 to 3 months delay in implementation)

Overall progress against 3 key results

The JP continues to improve its governance & administrative procedures to support sustainable institutionalization of the programme results. The Programme is fully aligned with Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Plan and the National Social Protection Policy with many of planned activities likely to accelerate the Government's progress and achievement of targets which were planned over the medium to long term. The JP draws on the mandates, collaborative and comparative advantages and partnerships of UNICEF, WFP and UN Women, other GOJ ministries such as the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management, the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development and the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service. It leverages existing technical expertise and programmes and leans on the capacities of other development partners working in social protection. Meetings have been held with representatives from the World Bank and IDB on areas of cross-sectorial collaboration, including enhancing targeting criteria, and bringing together the collective knowledge and experience of others working towards modernizing Jamaica's social protection system and the operational capacity of the MLSS. It is anticipated that as the other IDP's complete their Cooperation Programme Agreement in 2023 with the GOJ, much of the work under this JP will help to accelerate progress and key reforms, particularly for PwD's. In ensuring systematic involvement of all stakeholders, the JP established an Oversight Steering Committee aligned to Vision 2030 Jamaica Thematic Working Group on Social Protection. The group is co-chaired by the Chief Technical Director for the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and comprises 12 other members. For the reporting period the Steering Committee has hosted quarterly meetings and has developed two sub-committees chaired by personnel from the Resident Coordinators Office, giving primacy to the role of PUNO.

- The JP commenced a collaborative initiative conducting a livelihoods analysis seeking to understand how sources of revenue at the household level are affected by shocks, seasonality, and climate change. Subsequent to the completion of the desk review, the field report and analysis will form part of the JP's thrust to enhance digital payment solutions. In working closely with the PIOJ and the MLSS the report will synthesize major findings and recommendations with the following livelihood strategies at the center of the research: 1) agriculture, 2) fisheries, 3) tourism and 4) commerce (including micro- and small to medium enterprises). The recommendations will also examine preparedness measures that can be leveraged to improve capacities to cope with different shocks, for further discussion with key partners and government entities envisaged. Work has also begun for preparation of standard operating procedures and protocols to expand social assistance programmes to support people affected by shocks.

- Work has commenced to support an expanded research agenda and enhancing information systems. Under the JP a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed with the MLSS toward, inter alia, generating timely data to inform policy related to gender gaps, as well as to examine the responsiveness of the social protection system to both men and women. The JP has been working with the MLSS through its Public Assistance and Labour Relation Divisions to increase integration of social protection programmes into referral pathways for violence against women survivors and victims; and provide protection systems for workers in the paid care economy.

SDG Acceleration progress towards the SDGs, focusing on the main SDG targets

1– No Poverty: The JP has commenced activities toward implementing nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all and achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable, accelerating important steps toward closing gaps in policy and programmes. Among these include:

- o Technical work to assess the effectiveness of current payment modalities for PWD to increase the collection of benefits by families with persons with disability
- o Conducted qualitative research to support the MLSS in examining electronic delivery mechanisms for social protection programme.
- o Conduct an assessment of the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities (JCPD)'s information systems that allows for determining vulnerability and exposure to shocks.
- o Development of System Requirements document to support upgrades to the Management information system of the JCPD.

5 – Gender Equality: The JP has been working with the GoJ to recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the promotion of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies. Among these include

- o Conducting a gender gap analysis of the policy and legislative frameworks of the social protection system to ensure responsiveness of the system to narrowing inequalities between women and men. The JP has been working with the MLSS to support the empowerment of women and girls, while meeting the specific needs of men and boys.
- o Undertake a gender aware beneficiary assessment of the PATH programme to assess and strengthen the responsiveness in the programme's service delivery to both women and men.

10 – Reduced Inequalities: Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality. Among these include

- o The JP will be working to enhance data disaggregation and analysis to fill existing data/information gaps related to gender, disability, poverty

Constraints that were encountered and any adjustments that were made to strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of the JP and the coherence and coordination of UN system support.

Constraints

- The lingering effects of COVID-19 on the operational functions of key stakeholders continue to contribute to significant delays in implementation, specifically with respect to social protection services data, such as targeting and registration, budget expenditure and audit reports to be used to examine policy issues which can inform programmatic improvements.
- Slow response toward adopting policy changes as the country continues to amass reserves to scale up and sustain social protection programmes for the existing and newly identified vulnerable groups.
- Scamming and fraudulent transactions continues to contribute to low usage of bank accounts and or electronic transaction instruments, which further delay the JP push to promote financial inclusion in keeping with the full implementation of the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS).
- Somewhat limited sharing of data among stakeholders contributes to duplication of effort and a paucity of interventions and social support for multiple deprivations.
- Are there any JP issues/constraints that will impact the results. Please share. For example, the target for the number of households to benefit from the project is 25,000-will this be realized by the end of the year? If not-then explain the constraints-be realistic

Lessons Learned

- Many of the proposed changes to the national social protection system requires legislative reforms. For example, Jamaica will need to amend its 1886 Poor Relief Law by fast tracking the National Assistance Bill which is designed to cover many aspects of social assistance to vulnerable groups and ensure that provisions are enshrined in law.
- Issues such as the need to improve financial literacy, lack of formal identification documents, consumer protection, and the rural poor and gender inequality require concurrent attention while seeking to advance social policy around financial inclusion

Next steps, scaling and sustainability [up to half a page]

The following are scheduled for implementation in 2023:

1. Enhancing payment processes which are more efficient, effective and safe and places emphasis on accessibility
 - a. Continue to examine and implement electronic delivery mechanism for SP and test additional payment modalities via disbursement of CBT to beneficiaries.
 - b. Subsequent to the engagement of a consultant, examine current payment modalities and explore alternate payment delivery mechanisms for Pwd's and developing SOP/Protocols to support expansion of benefits in emergencies.

2. Strengthening institutional capacity for evidence-based emergency expansion of social protection programmes
 - a. Subsequent to drafting ToR for technical assistance to enhance targeting criteria, develop an adapted algorithm to proxy household welfare or need during emergencies. The JP will be working on developing an instrument to assess the value of cash transfers adapted to the needs of households/individuals targeted through social protection programmes.
 - b. Review and field work for the gender-sensitive vulnerability poverty and livelihoods analysis.
3. Information systems integration to support an increased coverage and coordination of SP interventions.
 - a. Conduct an assessment of existing information systems that allows for determining vulnerability and exposure to shocks and make operational data useful to facilitate rapid responses during shocks and emergencies.
 - b. Continue to support the utilization of digitalized forms and processes by developing shock responsive targeting and registration tools.
 - c. Provide technical assistance to develop protocols, SoPs, information systems integration for establishing a Social Registry adapted to Jamaica's needs.
 - d. Complete and disseminate of the findings from the gender gap analysis of the policy and legislative frameworks of the social protection system to ensure responsiveness of the system to narrowing inequalities between women and men.
 - e. Undertake a gender aware beneficiary assessment of PATH assessing responsiveness to both women and men and analyse gender-related barriers.

Programmatic Survey

Total number of people benefited from the JP in 2022: 17942

Percentage (%) of women benefited among the total number: 22

Percentage (%) of children & youth (0-24 years of age) benefited among the total number:

Percentage (%) of older persons (age 60 and above) benefited among the total number:

Percentage (%) of persons with disabilities benefited among the total number:

Explain how people benefited from the joint programme.

Through cash transfer initiative in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Direct benefit of cash payments under digital payment pilot initiative. Through the initiative, 8,874 households were reached with assistance geared towards more shock-responsive payment disbursement outside of current Government of Jamaica social assistance programmes

Priority Cross-cutting Issues

Cross-cutting results/issues

This JP serves as a catalyst to advance shock responsive SP, contributing to a more gender responsive and inclusive society, where no one is left behind in the following ways:

- Conducted qualitative research based on a purpose sample of individuals capturing the perceptions of individuals (men, women, and the elderly), as part of testing digital payment modalities. This qualitative research forms part of understanding the attitudes, needs and preferences of persons in accessing digital financial services and products, with a specific focus on how this differs across gender, age and livelihood groups. The Discussions also served as an opportunity to strengthen the existing government capacity in conducting human-centered qualitative research and programme design for its social protection interventions.

- Providing technical assistance to assess gender-related barriers in beneficiaries' interaction with the country's flagship social protection programme to determine the differentials that might exist between women and men. Support is also being provided to conduct a gender gap analysis of the policy and legislative frameworks to assess the responsiveness of the system and narrowing inequalities between women and men. Through the Gender Aware Beneficiary Assessment (GABA) the JP will provide recommendations for strengthening PATH's capacity for gender-responsive service delivery with the results informing policy, legislative and institutional strengthening interventions. The GABA is designed to provide data and information on the gender dimensions of the procedural and operational limitations that beneficiaries experience in accessing the services of the PATH. In 2023 the JP will be working with key stakeholders to draft a strategic plan and results framework to promote gender- responsiveness of the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH).

- Implementing a livelihoods analysis to understand how households are affected by shocks, seasonality, and climate change. The study seeks to consolidate and analyze secondary sources of livelihoods related information and climate risks to support the targeting and designing of shock-responsive social protection initiatives and climate resilience interventions of the government and/or its partners. The results are programmed to complement and inform other technical work designed to examine the distribution and vulnerability to natural hazards and external shocks.

How did the JP apply the Gender Marker

The JP is Gender-sensitive (for example, the JP acknowledged and aimed to address gender to enhance the policy/programme, such as undertaking gender analysis to ensure policies/programmes do no harm). Evidence, data collection and analysis (e.g. gender assessments of programmes; policy briefs, costing for scale-up of social services);

JP address the below cross-cutting issues and principles of leaving no one behind

Human Rights	Persons with disabilities	Youth	Environmental and social standards
No	No	No	No

Key meetings and events organized in 2022

JP steering committee/ programme board meeting	Strategic partners/ donors event	Kick-off meeting
Yes, in 2022	Yes, in 2022	Yes, in 2022

Explanation if you have not held any key meeting/events.

Contribution to enhancing SDG Financing

Drafted a bill, strategy, and/or approved a law increasing the fiscal space for the policy focus	Produced financing, costing, diagnostic and feasibility analyses as a basis to invest or increase spending on the SDGs	Improved efficiency (cost savings) in the management of programmes/schemes	Improved effectiveness (value for money; i.e. social impact of \$1 spent) of spending	Drafted policies/regulatory frameworks or developed tools to incentivize private sector investment on the SDGs	Structured new financial instruments (public, private or blended) to leverage additional funding
No	No	No	No	No	No

How JP contributed to enhancing SDG financing