



OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION STRATEGY FOR LEBANON

TOWARDS A RIGHTS-BASED,
SHOCK-RESPONSIVE
AND SUSTAINABLE SYSTEM

DOCUMENT BRIEF



CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

The National Social Protection Strategy for Lebanon represents the first attempt to translate the commitment of the Lebanese Government to carrying out social reforms into a concrete, integrated and cross-sectoral approach, moving from fragmented silos to a nationally coordinated and inclusive system.

The absence of a comprehensive universal social protection system has undermined socio-economic rights, contributed to widening inequalities, and limited the potential for inclusive human-centered growth and development. Thus, designing a vision for social protection is a pivotal prerequisite for the country's recovery from the multi-layered crises, while addressing matters of social justice.

In January 2019, the Ministry of Social Affairs (in partnership with UNICEF and ILO) convened stakeholders from Government, development partners, civil society, and academia, to initiate Lebanon's first national dialogue on social protection.

In August 2019, a consultative process of collecting data, mapping institutions, programs and instruments of the social protection sector was initiated by the Government of Lebanon, led by the Inter-ministerial Committee on Social Policy, coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs, and facilitated by Beyond Group with the technical support of UNICEF and ILO. The process aimed to define the vision for social protection in Lebanon, outline key priorities for the country, and design a comprehensive system accordingly. It included 14 governmental agencies and 103 non-governmental stakeholders.

The Strategy document was reviewed and edited by the Ministerial and Technical Committee in accordance with Cabinet Decision No. 69/2022, which defined the vision and strategic objectives and the scope of this strategy's coverage of Lebanese citizens (and migrant workers legally residing in Lebanon and their families, where needed) and assigned all matters related to refugees and displaced persons to the international community in cooperation with the Lebanese state and in line with international obligations, while adhering to the Lebanese constitution and complying with decisions made by previous and present governments.



CORE FEATURES

Based on an extensive situational analysis of the social protection sector, and following substantive consensus-building efforts throughout these turbulent times, there has been wide agreement that the Strategy must achieve three core features:



Universality as part of a human rights-based approach to social protection,



Shock-responsiveness to improve the government's capacity to respond to current and emerging crises, and



Financial sustainability to ensure continuity and anchor all initiatives in feasible implementation measures.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Strategic Goal 1

Coverage:

Working to gradually expand coverage and benefits of social protection programs for the Lebanese population in an effort to achieve universal and adequate coverage for all, in a manner consistent with the state's financial capabilities and with a plan for financial sustainability.

Strategic Goal 2

Governance and Institutional Capacity:

Developing the capabilities of institutions responsible for social protection within the Lebanese state and the governance system in a way which enables the state to implement the strategy effectively.

Strategic Goal 3

Funding:

Develop and ensure feasible, fair and sustainable financing mechanisms for social protection to ensure the gradual implementation of the strategy, taking into account the overall financial situation of the country.

Strategic Goal 4

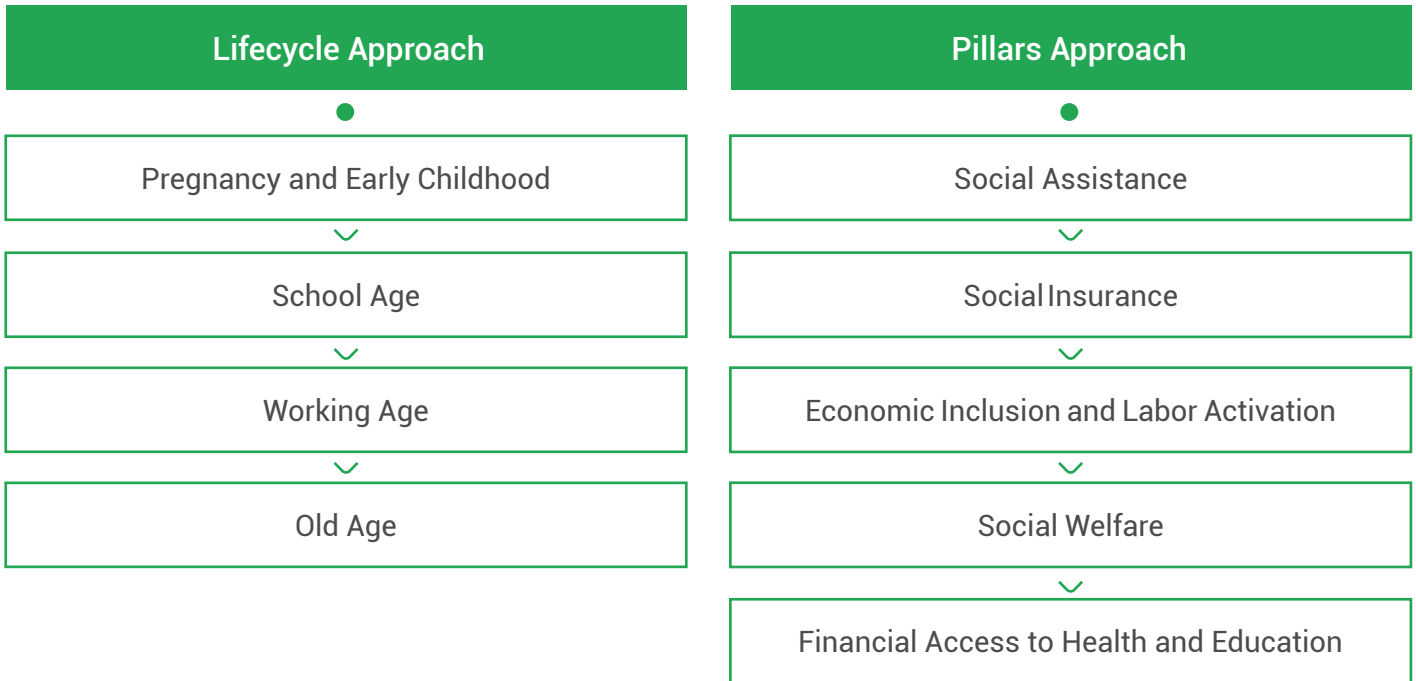
Accountability and Transparency:

Developing information systems within the relevant institutions and unifying them to facilitate access to information related to social protection programs, and establishing a clear structure within the Lebanese Government for accounting and oversight, along with ensuring data privacy.

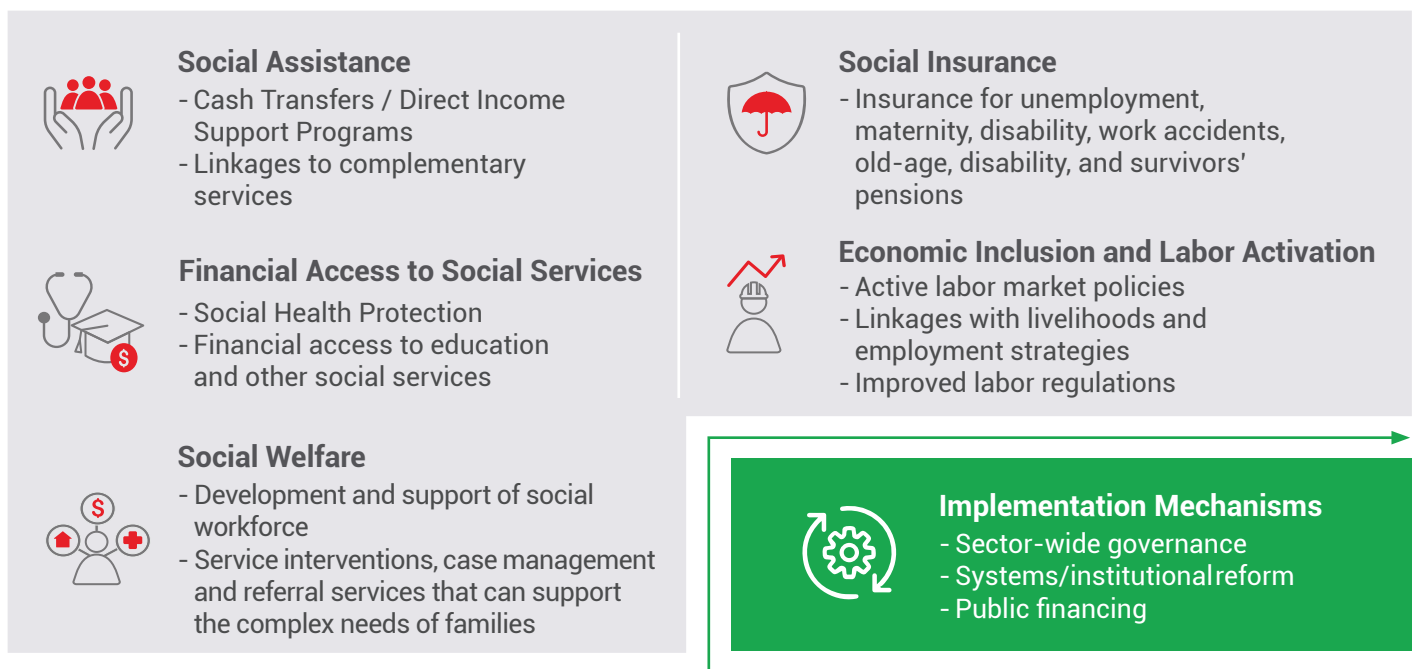
METHODOLOGY & APPROACH

In order to ensure that the components of the proposed social protection framework are integrated and complementary in their functions, a mixed approach was adopted, where both a lifecycle lens and a pillar lens were applied.

The life-cycle lens aims for a more human-centric perspective, where equity and resilience are promoted "from the cradle to the grave", while the pillar lens focuses on the legal and institutional angles, where cohesion and coordination are strengthened across the overall system.



Policy outcomes and priority initiatives were developed using both lenses: A **pillar approach** which looks at the social protection system constituting five agreed pillars, which are **a) Social Assistance, b) Social Insurance, c) Social Welfare, d) Financial Access to Basic Services, and e) Economic Inclusion and Labor Activation**. A lifecycle approach which takes a people-centered look at the social protection system and its ability to **address contingencies faced throughout the human lifecycle during childhood, working age, and old age**.



REFORMS NEEDED

Across all priority interventions which have been developed considering these two lenses, the overarching reforms to the social protection system include:

-  A robust legal and policy framework
-  Integrated contributory and non-contributory social protection schemes
-  Measures for integration and coordination across programs
-  Developed governance, institutional capacity, and administrative infrastructure of governmental entities
-  A mixed financing model that combines budget resources and contributions
-  Disability inclusion and gender mainstreaming have been incorporated across the strategy

DEFINITION

The strategy document defines Social Protection as

“A right to the Lebanese citizen, which the state must secure and guarantee through comprehensive and systematic policies, programs, and mechanisms that enable living in dignity and autonomy in the face of social, economic and livelihood risks throughout the various stages of life.”

VISION

The vision adopted in the strategy represents the proposed direction for the upcoming 10 years:

“A society in which all its citizens enjoy a decent life and is based on a comprehensive system built on human rights and the rights enshrined in the Lebanese Constitution, is financially sustainable and shock responsive, to provide equitable, comprehensive and sustainable social protection throughout the lifecycle.”

NEXT STEP

