Republic of Tunisia
Ministry of Social Affairs

unicef
for every child

DECEMBER 2023

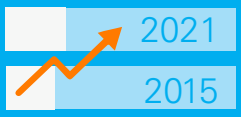
The gradual introduction of a **Universal Child Benefit in Tunisia**



General national monetary poverty stood in 2021 at 17% as compared to **child monetary poverty which stood at 26%** in 2021

Child poverty increased from 21% to 26%

According to the Tunisian National Institute for Statistics (INS).





AMEN Social supports Tunisia's most poor and vulnerable households. It comprises:

PNAFN - Programme National d'Aide aux Familles Nécessiteuses (National support programme for families in need): Households registered under this social protection programme make up the poorest decile of the population.

AMG1–Assistance Médicale Gratuite (Free Medical Assistance Programme): Along with PNAFN, households registered under this social protection programme make up the poorest decile of the population.

AMG2 - Assistance Médicale à Tarif Réduit (Programme for Medical Assistance at Reduced Costs): Households registered under this social protection programme receive access to health care at a reduced cost. They represent the second poorest decile of the population.

The PNAFN and AMG1 schemes include some **323,000 households**



The AMG2 scheme includes approximately **635,000 households**



Managed by **1,500 social workers** dispatched **in 271 local units** across the territory



However, AMEN Social Programme does not protect all households that are poor or vulnerable to risks:

An estimated **21%** of the population in Tunisia, considered as the "**MISSING MIDDLE**", is not registered in either the contributory or the non-contributory social protection system



An estimated **50%** of these households, who often work in the informal sector, are likely to be **as vulnerable as the people under the AMG2 programme**



Child benefit for **children aged 0-5 years old**

In response to the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children from poor and vulnerable families, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Social Affairs to implement specific **monthly cash transfers to children aged 0-5 from families registered in the national social protection AMEN Social programme.**

DECEMBER 2020: Monthly cash transfers (30TND/child) for **CHILDREN 0-5 YEARS OLD** from poor and vulnerable households were introduced for the first time in Tunisia **(UNICEF support from Dec 2020-Jan 2022).**

Evolution of the numbers of beneficiaries:

- June 2020: **40,000 children** 0-5 years old initially registered in the AMEN Social programme
- December 2020: **90,000 children** were reached
- January 2022: **129,000* children** 0-5 years old (this was the last month of support by UNICEF – the programme was then taken over through a World Bank loan – this support will continue until end 2024)
- December 2022: **138,000 children** 0-5 years old
- May 2023: The Ministry of Social Affairs agreed to start including coverage of eligible children from the missing middle
- July 2023: **151,475 children** aged 0-5

Key Results:

- May 2020: decree removing the limit of number of children eligible per household (previously limited up to 3 children per household) and removing the age threshold (the minimum age to receive a child benefit support was over 5 years old)
- In January 2022: Tunisia institutionalized the child benefit for children aged 0-5 in AMEN Social through Presidential Decree-law number 2022-8
- Since February 2022: the government is financing from the national budget the child benefit for children 0-5 years old through a World Bank loan, including support from JICA (from February 2022 to December 2024)
- June 2022: the plan of economic reforms presented by the Prime Minister includes the child benefit as a key pillar, consolidating it in the country's political discourse and development vision

* This very significant increase in the number of under-5 is explained by the fact that households did not register their children in the MAS databases before because there was no programme benefiting these children - as soon as the cash transfer programme was implemented, many households were registering their children for cash transfers

Extension of the child benefit for **children aged 6-18 years old** and extension of the disability allowance

In response to the negative socio-economic impacts of the crisis in Ukraine on the most vulnerable children, UNICEF is currently supporting the Ministry of Social Affairs to extend the child benefit to children aged 6-18 from poor households of the national social protection AMEN Social programme.

Up until the UNICEF support, only children aged 6-18 years old from PNAFN households received 10 TND per child per month under the national social protection programme.

JULY 2022: Introduction of monthly Child Benefit (30TND/child) for **CHILDREN AGED 6-18 YEARS** from poor households (PNAFN and AMG1) for the first time in Tunisia **(UNICEF support from July 2022 – April 2024) and extension of the disability allowance to AMG1**

FEBRUARY 2023: Introduction of monthly Child Benefit (30TND/child) for **CHILDREN 6-18 YEARS OLD** from vulnerable households (AMG2) for the first time in Tunisia **(UNICEF support covering 11 months: February 2023 – Dec 2023) and extension of the disability allowance to AMG2 CWD**

JULY 2023: 409,600 children reached, including 23,317 from the missing middle.

Evolution of the numbers of beneficiaries:

- December 2022: **110,000 children** reached (covering July - December 2022)
- February 2023: **118,000 children** reached, including 3,400 CWD
- February 2023: **372,090 children** (PNAFN, AMG1 and AMG2) including 6,000 CWD (children with disability)
- May 2023: the Ministry of Social Affairs agreed to start including coverage of eligible children from the missing middle
- Dec 2023: **422,000 children** 6-18 reached

UNICEF is advocating with development partners to continue to support the child benefit programme in 2024 to allow a realistic timeframe for the Government of Tunisia to take over financing of the child benefits via the national budget. Funding need: 52 M USD/year for all children 6-18 years old under AMEN Social

BACK-TO-SCHOOL **ALLOWANCE**



310,000 children

aged 6-18 years old received **a one-off 100 TND back-to-school allowance**, doubling the government's back-to-school support for **the 2020-2021 school year**

465,000 children

aged 6-18 years old received **a one-off 100 TND back-to-school allowance,** doubling the government's back-to-school support **for the 2022-2023 school year** in September 2022, **including 46,175 children from the missing middle**

More than 500,000 children

aged 5-18 received **a one-off allowance of 100 DT for the back-to-school period 2023-2024**, doubling government support in September 2023, including 35,000 children from the "missing middle". For the first time, back-to-school support has been extended to 5-year-olds, reaching 29,000 children, to support the generalization of one year of preschool education for every child in Tunisia.

KEY RESULTS:

BACK TO SCHOOL

For the first time in 2022, the back-to-school support transfers were made based on a cross-referencing of the databases of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs

UNICEF and its partners **successfully advocated for this change** which removed an important administrative burden on the social workers

In addition, **this automatic process was also an important relief for the beneficiary households** as they did not need to come in person to the local social protection unit to bring proof of the registration of their children in school

70% of the beneficiary families received the back-to-school allowance during the first week of the school year (September 2022), which is significantly more time efficient if compared to transfers implemented in previous years

The external evaluation of the 2020-2021 back-to-school support shows that it made a significant difference in ensuring that children were kept in school during the school year 2020-2021

0-5 YEARS OLD CHILD BENEFIT

Nutrition:
Some **82%** of beneficiary households stated that the quality of their children's **nutrition had improved** since the start of monthly benefit

Schooling:
The number of beneficiary households with at least one child aged 3–5 **attending pre-school increased from 70%** at the start of the programme **to 86%** at the end of the programme

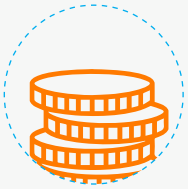
Healthcare:
Access to health services and care **rose from 60% in February 2021 to 74% in October 2021**

Improving caregivers' mental well-being:
At the start of the programme **80%** of parents and guardians reported to live under permanent stress - this **number reduced to 60%** at the end of the programme

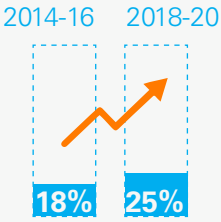
Scheme implementation with the support of social workers:
The evaluation demonstrated that the ownership, management and implementation of the scheme through the national social protection system was a key success factor

KEY FIGURES:

30 TND/child/month
is the recommended amount for a child benefit in Tunisia
(2018 study by the Ministry of Social Affairs and UNICEF).



The percentage of Tunisians experiencing
moderate to severe food insecurity increased from
18% to 25%



In 2021, the Tunisian National Institute of Statistics (INS) **defined the national poverty lines per person per month (TND)** as follows:

Rural
Extreme Poverty: **112**
Proverty:**185**

Urban
Extreme Poverty: **128**
Proverty: **224**

Tunisia
Extreme Poverty: **123**
Proverty: **211**

Only 53% of children from the poorest households compared **to 95% of children**



from the richest households
complete the lower-secondary school

Only 24% of children from the poorest households compared **to 80% of children**



of children from the richest households
complete high school

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