



BRIEF

MINISTRY OF GENDER, CHILDREN,
AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM

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Towards an Adaptive Social Protection System in Liberia

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Introduction

Liberia's social protection system has expanded significantly over the past decade. Today, the system provides critical support to poor and vulnerable households, while also building national capacity to respond to shocks. With over twenty years of experience in adaptive social protection, I present this brief to outline where Liberia stands, the progress made, and the actions required to consolidate and scale up.

Governance and Coordination

At the center of the system is the National Social Protection Steering Committee (NSPSC), chaired by the Minister of Gender, Children, and Social Protection. The NSPSC provides strategic direction, ensures alignment across ministries and agencies, and brings together civil society and development partners. A Secretariat housed at MGCSP coordinates technical work, reporting, and policy harmonization.

The NSPSC is composed of key ministries including Finance and Development Planning, Health, Agriculture, Education, Internal Affairs, and Youth and Sports, along with the Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment, civil society organizations, and donor representatives. This structure ensures that social protection remains multi-sectoral, inclusive, and linked to national development planning.



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Systems and Tools

A central feature of Liberia's system is the Liberia Household Social Registry (LHSR). The registry now contains records for more than 442,000 households, including data from programs under the REALISE Project. It provides a single entry point for identifying and targeting households, reducing duplication and enabling better use of scarce resources. The registry is linked to program Management Information Systems, creating transparency in enrollment, payments, and results.

Programs and Reach

The flagship intervention is the REALISE Project, funded by the World Bank, AFD, and Sida. The project targets 53,650 vulnerable households and informal workers, with interventions tailored to both urban and rural contexts.

- Social Cash Transfers (SCT): Direct income support to 16,000 extremely poor and labor-constrained households.
- Labor-Intensive Public Works (LIPW): Short-term employment for 17,000 individuals in Montserrado and Margibi.
- Small Business Support (SSB): Grants for 4,450 vulnerable informal workers to revive or start businesses.
- Community Livelihood and Agriculture Support (CLAS): Inputs and training for 16,200 households to strengthen food security and resilience.

Together, these interventions reduce poverty, stabilize incomes, and expand opportunities for vulnerable Liberians.



Outcomes and Impact

Evidence shows that these programs have produced tangible results. Cash transfers have reduced food insecurity and helped households keep children in school. Public works have provided immediate income and basic skills. Small business grants have supported women-led enterprises and increased earnings. CLAS participants have improved yields and community resilience. While gaps remain, these results demonstrate the potential of a well-coordinated system.

Strategic Alignment

Liberia's social protection system is aligned to the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development (AAID). Under Strategic Policy 22 and Program 49, the system contributes directly to inclusive social development, gender equality, and support to the most vulnerable. This alignment is urgent given that Liberia ranks 177 of 193 countries on the Human Development Index, with 45 percent of the population multi-dimensionally poor. Expanding social protection is not only a moral imperative but also an economic and social necessity.

The system has already proven its value in responding to shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic and food price crises. As Liberia continues to face climate-related risks and refugee inflows, adaptive mechanisms will be essential.



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The Way Forward

Liberia has built the foundations of a functioning social protection system, but sustainability and scale remain challenges. To consolidate gains and deliver on AAID commitments, the following actions are needed:

- Increase domestic financing to ensure sustainability beyond donor-funded projects.
- Institutionalize the LHSR as the national platform for household targeting.
- Strengthen the NSPSC to reduce fragmentation and improve coordination.
- Expand adaptive mechanisms to respond to shocks and climate risks.
- Finalize a financing roadmap and update the policy framework within the next 12–18 months.

Conclusion

A coherent and well-financed social protection system is central to breaking the cycle of poverty and vulnerability in Liberia. The progress achieved through the LHSR and REALISE shows what is possible. With stronger financing, coordination, and political will, Liberia can build an inclusive system that protects its people, supports resilience, and drives inclusive growth.



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