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UNICEF perspective on family friendly policies and social protection for children

Maryam Onyinoyi Abdu Chief of Social Policy and Social Protection
UNICEF Eastern Caribbean Area Office



| for every child

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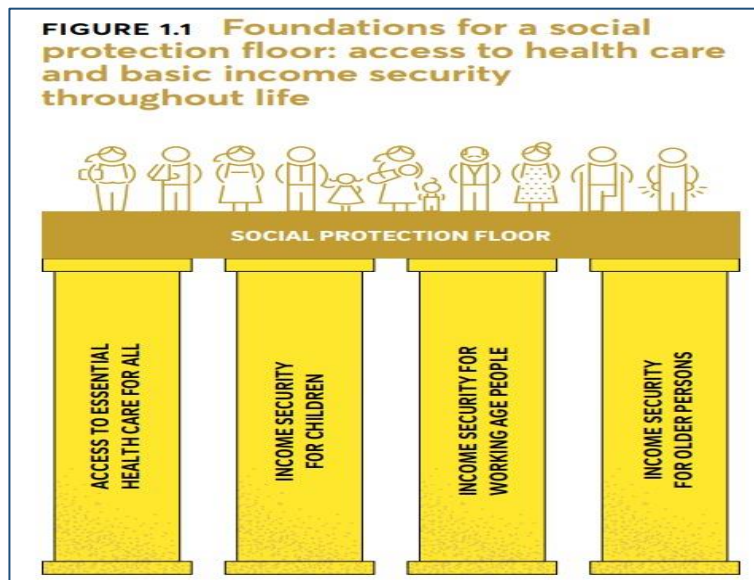
Every child needs care.
Every child has the
right to grow in a safe,
nurturing, caring,
and enabling
environment, regardless
of the
context they live in.



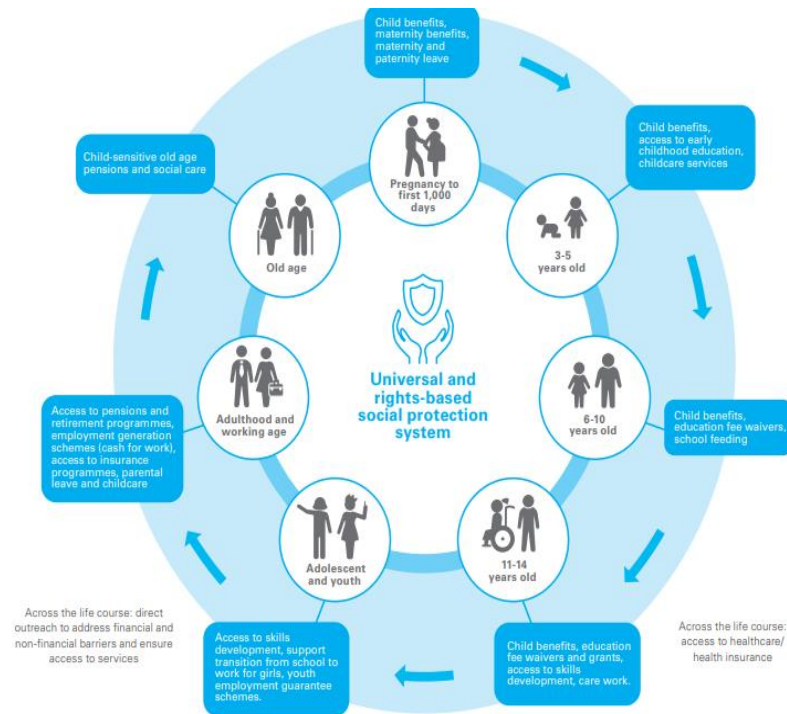
What is social protection?

Social protection is *a human right*.

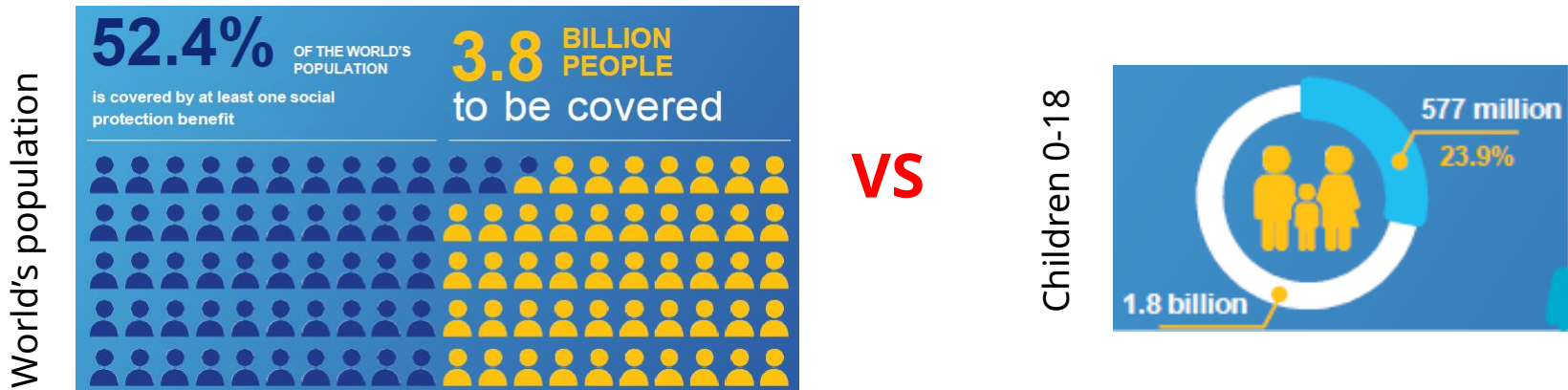
It aims at preventing or protecting all people against **poverty, vulnerability a social exclusion** throughout their life-course, with a particular emphasis toward Most disadvantaged groups



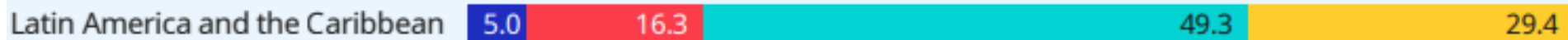
ILO, Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)



Social Protection Coverage for children

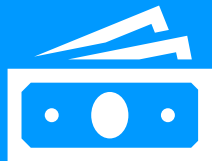


Distribution of social protection expenditure by social protection guarantee, 2023



What are Family Friendly Policies

- Family-friendly policies help parents balance work and family life while supporting their children's growth and well-being.
- They usually offer three key types of support: time (parental leave), money (child benefits), and services (childcare).



Key Family friendly policies

1. **Paid parental leave:** Ensure parents spend more time with children during early stages
2. **Breastfeeding mothers:** Comprehensive early childhood care services at workplace accommodations.
3. **Cash transfers:** Regulations that seek to ensure parents have decent wages and can access a minimum cash allowance based on the needs of each worker and his or her family.(Child Benefit)
4. **Parenting and violence prevention programs:** improved parenting skills and prevention of the use of violence at home (physical punishment)
5. **Flexible working arrangements:** adjustable hours or remote work, empower parents and caregivers to balance their professional and family responsibilities



Complementary Functions

	Family friendly policies	Social Protection Systems
1	Paid parental leave and maternal protection.	Income security during life events (e.g., childbirth, illness and other needs)
2	Breastfeeding support	Health protection and nutrition programs
3	Affordable childcare	Access to services and care subsidies
4	Flexible work arrangements	Labor market inclusion and decent work
5	Child grants and allowances	Cash transfers and social assistance

Together, they form a care-sensitive ecosystem that supports families across life stages and shocks.

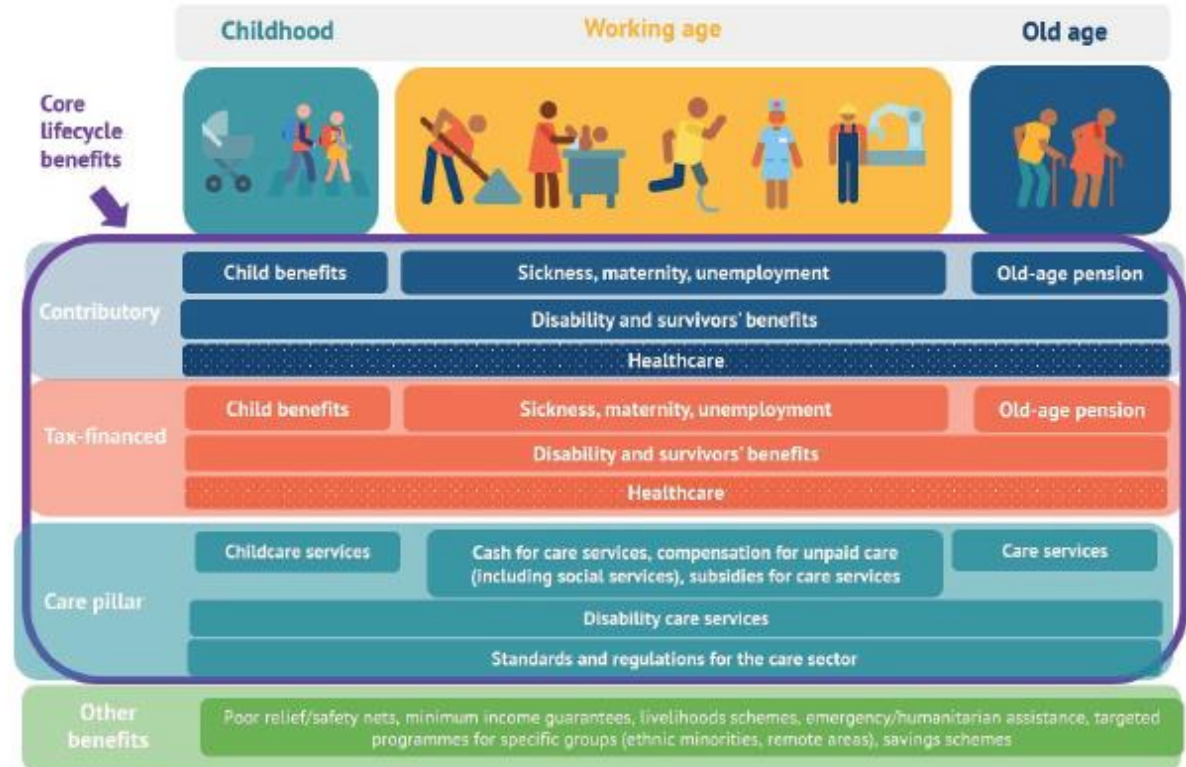
How Can SP and Cash Plus Support Care Systems?

Recognize unpaid care with benefits and allowances.

Redistribute care through accessible childcare, disability, and elder care services.

Reduce unpaid care responsibilities by linking families to affordable, accessible support.

Include persons with disabilities and older persons by combining cash with tailored services.



Examples of family friendly policies and SP

- **In Rwanda**, UNICEF piloted, the establishment of mobile daycares on public works sites and cash transfers for caregivers of children aged 0–14 under the national social protection system Vision 2020 Umurenge Program 2020 (VUP).
- In collaboration with **UNICEF and ILO**, the Government of Bangladesh launched the Mothers@Work (M@W) initiative to promote maternity protection and breastfeeding support in the workplace.
- **Universal child grants in Mongolia and South Africa** for pregnant women and children under 5 years of age.
- UNICEF Thailand prioritizes family-friendly policies—focusing on early childhood care, child benefits, and paid parental leave—while actively engaging the private sector to foster a supportive environment for children and families.



UNICEF's Role



- Technical support to governments
- Evidence generation and policy design.
- Convening multi-sectoral partnerships
- Support government to improve inclusive, gender-responsive systems

Lessons

- Many families struggle to afford childcare, especially when children have disabilities or health issues—so stronger financial support is needed.
- To make policies work well, it's important to build partnerships not just with governments, but also with businesses.
- Giving the right kind of help to workers and workplaces can lead to better practices.
- Research and data play a big role in convincing governments to invest more in early childhood care.
- And instead of just giving money, it's important to connect families to health, education, and other services so they get the full support they need.

Recommendations for Action

Invest in universal childcare and parental leave

Extend coverage to informal workers.

Strengthen data systems and MIS.

Embed family-friendly policies in national development plans.

Engage employers including private sector, CSOs, and local governments



Thank You

