



### *The challenge of providing adequate education, childcare, and nutrition in Coresia*



### **Social protection programmes for children**

The education and child development policies and programmes are overseen by the Ministries of Social Development, Education, Planning, and Finance. All children in Coresia, in theory, have access to free education from kindergarten till the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition, children of formal sector employees, civil servants, and military personnel benefit from specific child support grant programmes. Many children from poor and near poor households drop out from school before the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and child labour remains a problem. The minimum legal working age is set at 15 years of age.

Commendable progress was made by the Government in 2006 when it passed Law No. 528 on “Guaranteeing Free and Compulsory Education to Children”, targeting children up to 14 years of age. Under this Law, all government-run schools were mandated to provide free education to children till the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

The National Law for the Extension of Social Security (No. 293), enacted on 11 August 1995, provides a legal framework to design and implement a system to provide basic social security and welfare to all Coresian workers and their dependants. The Law has been adopted and its implementation started with the design of programmes which aim at providing living expenses, nutrition, tuition fees, medical expenses, and other necessary amenities and facilities to all children.

Existing social protection programmes providing income security to children and access to education, nutrition, and care include:

- **“Childcare and Education (CCE)”**: This programme is linked to the National Social Protection Programme (NSPP), which provides unemployment, disability, sickness, and maternity benefits to all workers in organizations of ten or more employees. The CCE entitles such workers to receive an allowance for their children. The Ministry of Labour supervises the social protection fund and oversees the CCE and the National Social Protection Programme (NSPP). The contributions amount to 3 per cent of the wage by the employee, 3 per cent of the wage by the employer, and 3 per cent of the wage by the Government on a monthly basis. The maximum wage to be considered for calculation of contributions is COD20,000 per month. With this contribution, beneficiaries receive child allowance, unemployment, permanent disability, sickness, and maternity benefits. Under the CCE, all insured people receive an annual allowance of COD5,000 per child in the 0-3 age group and an annual allowance of COD6,600 per child once they start school and until they complete the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The allowance is higher for school-going children to cover costs of tuition, transportation, books, and so on. Each insured person can avail the allowance for up to two children. If both parents are insured, they can together avail the allowance for up to four children. It is estimated that in 2011, 1,870,477 children benefited from the scheme. This covers about 15 per cent of the children in the country.
- **“Civil Servants’ Children Education Programme (CSCEP)”**: All civil servants, police and military personnel (both in service and retired), and war veterans are compulsorily registered under CSCEP and are entitled to a child allowance and subsidized education for their children. The Ministry of Finance supervises the civil servants’ social protection fund and oversees the CSCEP and the Public Servants Social Protection Programme (PSP), which provides sickness, injury, disability, maternity, and death benefits. The two schemes are financed by bipartite contributions of 10 per cent of the salary, of which 5 per cent is paid by public servants and an equal amount by the Government. In 2011, 823,010 children or 6.6 per cent of the total child population benefited from the scheme. Beneficiaries receive an annual allowance of COD5,000 per child in the 0-3 age group and an annual allowance of COD6,600 per child once they start school and until they complete the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The allowance for school-going children is to be used to cover costs of tuition, transportation, books, and so on. In addition, students from 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade receive a 40 per cent subsidy on tuition fees, if they attend private schools, and a similar subsidy on their first level university degree.
- **“Free Education Plan (FEP)”**: The Law No. 528/2006 on “Guaranteeing Free and Compulsory Education to all Children” stipulates that all children, irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, or economic background, are entitled to receive free education starting from kindergarten up till the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Between 2006 and 2009, close to 120 schools were opened in different regions of the country to make FEP available to children from rural and remote areas as well. The Ministry of Education is responsible for administering the FEP and providing the budget to the schools.
- **“Child and Mother Nutrition (CMN)”**: The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), in close partnership with the Ministry of Health, runs an assistance programme to provide a fortified mix of cereals and grains to pregnant women and mothers with children up to 4 years of age. The blended mix is distributed among women and children from poor households who are identified by their national ID card number and the associated

database. This mix aims to provide necessary nutrients and energy. The ingredients are procured from Coresian farmers, mixed in local factories, and distributed in community health care centres. The CMN has been implemented as a pilot programme in a few provinces. The WFP expects that the Government will take over the expansion of the scheme to all provinces.

- **Other schemes:** Apart from these, many schemes that provide scholarships, grants, school meals, books, and other assistance are in operation. However, the bulk of these schemes are run by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and are not sustainable as they depend on temporary sources of funding and volunteers to do the work. They are mostly started and run on an ad-hoc basis. Some schemes are run in certain provinces or regions only and may often leave out poor children in remote areas in need of assistance. Although there is no consolidated information available on the various schemes, a list of some schemes is given below.
  - Education grants for street children in 24 cities; the programme is coordinated by three NGOs active in these cities;
  - Reimbursement of education fees up to 21 years of age for children of teachers working in government-run schools; this programme was started by the Ministry of Education to incentivize people to apply as school teachers;
  - Loans to students from lower socio-economic backgrounds in selected provinces provided by the NGO “Change Through Education”;
  - Distribution of second-hand textbooks and uniforms to children in certain rural areas by local volunteer groups;
  - Monthly allowances to children who are HIV positive or who are living in HIV-affected families provided by the NGO “Miracle Foundation”;
  - Provision of bicycles and a monthly allowance (to compensate for the loss of income) to students previously engaged in child labour activities and who have returned to school; overseen by an NGO which works on humanitarian rights of children;
  - Orphanages in some areas guarantee education and three meals per day to their children;
  - Breakfast is provided by the NGO, “People Against Hunger” to 3–14 year old students in 1,054 schools across the country.

## Growing challenges

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Despite the free education policy, many families continue to not send their children to school. They cite problems such as not being able to afford the associated costs. An interview with Chan Lee who has two children attending a government-run school revealed, *“two of my children are already in school and we have to buy textbooks, notebooks, bags, and school uniforms for them. Now my third child is going to start school and we are worried because we do not know where we will get the money to buy the uniforms and books.”* The Government is contemplating introducing scholarships for poor children in order to cover costs of purchasing study materials and transportation expenses.

Although the FEP is a free education programme, many children and their families have often been asked to make payments by the principals and teachers to admit their children to the schools. This

is especially common in rural and remote areas, where principals and teachers are paid low salaries and schools are not subject to any monitoring or inspection.

Quality of education in Coresia is low in remote and rural areas. There is a lack of capacity at the local level as few good teachers are available in rural regions. Many schools consist only of a few classrooms or sheds and a natural playground. The school buildings are often made of clumsy wooden shelters, which are vulnerable to natural disasters. Schools do not teach any foreign languages or offer courses on information and communication technologies (ICT), which makes it harder for the students to find jobs after graduation.

There is no unified programme benefiting poor children. Rather, there are several ad-hoc and scattered schemes run by different NGOs on a temporary and unsustainable basis. Funding for these schemes is limited and comes from different sources. There is no firm legal framework for any of these schemes. The Government is determined to improve the situation and it endeavours to provide quality education, nutrition, and benefits to all needy and vulnerable children by 2020. The sustainability of the NGO-run schemes could be ensured by bringing them under the scope of a Government policy or programme.

The Child and Mother Nutrition programme is funded by the WFP. Such donor-funded programmes need to be funded by Government revenues in order to have long-term financial sustainability. In addition, the CMN programme is still in the pilot phase in a few provinces only.

It has been observed that some poor families send their children to orphanages as they cannot afford the costs of food and care. Many NGOs have recommended to the Ministry of Education that they consider introducing incentives to go to school, such as providing school-going children with food, allowance, medical facilities, bicycles, or other facilities. This would also help to reduce the burden on overcrowded orphanages.

The provision of midday meals and milk bottles by the NGO “People Against Hunger” has been quite successful. Within three years of its introduction, the programme received contributions from independent donor citizens and spread to 1,054 schools across the country. It also led to large increases in enrolment in schools in which the programme operates. However, the programme does not have financial or institutional support from the Government and depends on voluntary donations.

The Ministry of Education has been in discussion with People Against Hunger to provide a legal framework to the programme and bring it under its purview. The programme would target school-age children (3–14 years of age) who attend kindergarten, primary, and secondary school. It was estimated that the Government could pay a flat rate contribution for each student to the NGO. The NGO would then use the money to procure the food and milk. The distribution would still be carried out by NGO members and volunteers in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education and school staff. With the backing of the Government, it is expected that the programme will become sustainable in the long run.

## Way forward

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As a result of discussions between stakeholders, the UN-GOC SPF team recommended that the Government implement a non-contributory conditional cash transfer scheme for children from poor and near poor households. After due deliberation, it was decided that the Government would introduce an allowance programme of COD3,000 to COD4,000 for the poorest 25 per cent of children or for

all the poor children. The programme would target children in the 0–14 age group and the cash would be paid on a monthly basis. However, children would start receiving the allowance only after they had completed a month of school. If school attendance fell below 85 per cent (except in cases of illness), the allowance would be discontinued from that month onwards. Children in the 0–3 age group would receive the cash benefit unconditionally. The Government is waiting for a cost estimate before making a decision.

## The legal framework

Table 5: Legal framework of social protection programmes for children

Programme	Legal framework
Childcare and Education (CCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law No. 255/1993 on ‘Childcare and allowance for children of workers’</li> <li>• Ministry of Labour Regulation No. 95/1997 on ‘Social welfare for children of workers’</li> </ul>
Civil Servants’ Children Education Programme (CSCEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law No. 237/1992 on ‘Public servants’ child welfare’</li> <li>• Ministry of Finance Regulation No. 74/1994 on ‘Contributions to the childcare fund for civil servants’</li> <li>• Ministry of Finance Regulation No. 81/1994 on ‘Allowances for children of police, military, and veterans’</li> </ul>
Free Education Plan (FEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Law No. 293/1995 for the ‘Extension of Social Security’ and its amendments</li> <li>• Law No. 528/2006 on ‘Guaranteeing Free and Compulsory Education to all Children’</li> </ul>
Child and Mother Nutrition (CMN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Health Announcement dated 13 October 2010 on ‘Providing essential nutrition to mothers with young children’</li> </ul>
Independent Programmes by NGOs and volunteer groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal status is unclear</li> </ul>



### Questions:

Module 8 – Please complete the assessment matrix provided to you on the basis of the case. You are encouraged to discuss the case within your group and refer to the World Café reports while completing the matrix. Please keep in mind that you should address the issue of childcare, education, and nutrition only.

Module 10 – Please translate the recommendations of your group into three scenarios.

Module 11 – Please calculate the cost of implementation of each scenario. Your group is required to propose one scenario to the Government for implementation. Please keep in mind that the cost of implementing the scenario you propose should not exceed the budget allotted to your group in the *Jeopardy* and *Who wants to be a protectionaire?* games. Strengthen your proposition by linking the cost of implementation to economic indicators such as GDP.

Module 14 – Please develop an advocacy campaign to lobby for one or several policy options and gain support for the endorsement and implementation of your recommendations.

## Assumptions for costing (for facilitators to provide to their groups)

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Table 6: Share of formal and informal employment

Share of formal employment	<b>37.7%</b>
Share of informal employment	<b>62.3%</b>

We assume that the share of informal sector children in the total child population is 62.3 per cent and that this percentage remains constant for all years until 2020.

The administrative cost of targeted child social protection schemes is assumed as 15 per cent of the cost of benefits. The administrative cost of universal programmes is lower at 5 per cent of the cost of benefits.

For the midday food and milk scheme targeting children in the 3–14 age group:

- Per head cost of providing midday meals to children is COD15 in 2011. It increases in proportion to inflation every year until 2020.
- Per head cost of providing milk bottles to children is COD8 in 2011. It increases in proportion to inflation every year until 2020.
- It is assumed that children attend school for 210 days per year.
- From 2011 to 2013, while the NGO “People Against Hunger” was operating the scheme, the coverage of the scheme increased from 9 per cent to 27 per cent.