

# Non-contributory social protection through a child and equity lens in Algeria<sup>1</sup>

International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

**Algeria is located in North Africa**, on the Mediterranean coast. In 2016, around 33 per cent of the country's 40.6 million inhabitants were younger than 18 years, and 11.6 per cent were younger than 5. With a Human Development Index of 0.745, Algeria ranks in the 'high human development' category (83<sup>rd</sup> out of 188 countries). In 2011, 5.5 per cent of the population lived below the national poverty line. Poverty levels tended to be higher in urban areas (5.8 per cent) than in rural areas (4.8 per cent).

In 2012, 8.9 per cent of the population under the age of 25 were monetarily poor—defined as living in households with no source of income from employment—while 18 per cent were found to be multidimensionally poor. Multidimensional poverty declined from 22.4 per cent in 2006 to 18 per cent in 2012 among those under 25 years old. However, levels remain particularly high (27.2 per cent) among children under the age of 5.

Total health expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) is higher than the MENA regional average (7.2 per cent vs. 5.3 per cent in 2014), and greater investments in health care are reflected in lower infant mortality rates. Yet socio-economic disparities remain high: infant mortality is almost twice as high among the most vulnerable households (29 per mille) as among the richest ones (16 per mille).

Algeria's social protection system is divided into contributory and non-contributory branches. The latter branch consists of social transfers and welfare services for the most vulnerable segments of the population and specific groups such as students and people with disabilities. Non-contributory schemes also include several education-related programmes such as scholarships and school feeding schemes, as well as employment promotion programmes for young people. Implementing social protection programmes mainly falls under the purview of the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women. The government also subsidises food and energy, the latter accounting for 5.3 per cent of GDP in 2016.

The largest social protection scheme administered by the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women is the *Allocation Forfaitaire de Solidarité* (Solidarity Allowance), an unconditional cash transfer (UCT) programme for the most vulnerable members of society, which benefited 831,452 people in 2016 with a budget of DZD39.1 billion. Target groups include households headed by men without income and over the age of 60, people with disabilities and households headed by women without income. Beneficiary households receive DZD3,000 per month and an additional DZD120 per dependent household member. Benefits can be claimed for a maximum of three persons.

The Ministry also implements several public works programmes, the largest one being the *Dispositif d'Activité d'Insertion Sociale* (DAIS—Intervention for Social Inclusion), aimed at promoting the inclusion of poor and vulnerable populations. The programme offers temporary work opportunities in community development projects. In 2016, over 371,495 people participated in the programme, receiving DZD6,000 per month. In total, DZD25.4 billion

was spent on the programme in 2016. In addition, the *Travaux d'Utilité Publique à Haute Intensité de Main d'Oeuvre* (TUP-HIMO—Labour-Intensive Public Works) offers temporary jobs to maintain and rehabilitate public infrastructure. The programme targets provinces with high unemployment rates and infrastructure deficits. The *Blanche Algérie* (White Algeria) programme also has the twin aims of supporting unemployed people and improving public infrastructure. Combined with the TUP-HIMO, the programme reached 22,206 people per year on average between 2010 and 2015. Since 2002 the Ministry of the Interior and Local Collectives has been disbursing a UCT to individuals who suffered personal injuries during the Movement for National Identity and the Promotion of Citizenship. This scheme is referred to as *Le fond d'indemnisation des victimes des événements ayant accompagné le mouvement pour le parachèvement de l'identité nationale et la promotion de la citoyenneté*. The child-sensitive component of this scheme allows for beneficiaries with children and no other income to receive a cash transfer that is 25 per cent higher than the statutory amount.

People with disabilities and without income can receive up to DZD4,000 per month through the *Programme pour la Protection et Promotion des Personnes Handicapées*. In 2014 the programme benefited 469,000 people. Some programmes specifically target children, such as the *Allocation Spéciale de Scolarité* (Allowance for School Children), which pays DZD3,000 at the beginning of every school year to particularly vulnerable children to ensure school attendance. Three million schoolchildren benefited from the allowance in 2013. This is complemented by the *Bourse Scolaire*, which supports access to education for children at primary, middle and secondary level and those enrolled at a boarding school with tuition fee waivers. The *Bourse Nationale* (National Scholarship Programme) supports access to higher education by disbursing a conditional cash transfer to secondary school graduates of low-income families. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education runs a national school feeding programme (*Cantine Scolaire*), which provided meals to about 3.3 million students in 2013–2014. The poorest and most vulnerable children are also provided with free text books (*Manuel Scolaire*), with 4.4 million children covered each year. Lastly, the government also runs a social housing programme to eradicate slums and enable low-income families to access housing.

Several social protection programmes exist in Algeria, many of which target unemployed people. The Solidarity Allowance and the Allowance for School Children are positive examples of child-sensitive social protection. However, more effort is required to reach the large number of children living in multidimensional poverty, especially those under the age of 5.

#### Note:

1. This One Pager is taken from a comprehensive study developed in partnership between the IPC-IG and UNICEF MENARO. All data are thoroughly referenced in the full report:

Machado, A. C., C. Bilo, R. G. Osorio, and F.V. Soares. 2018. *Overview of Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region through a Child and Equity Lens*. Brasília and Amman: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa: <<https://goo.gl/QfmKwK>>.