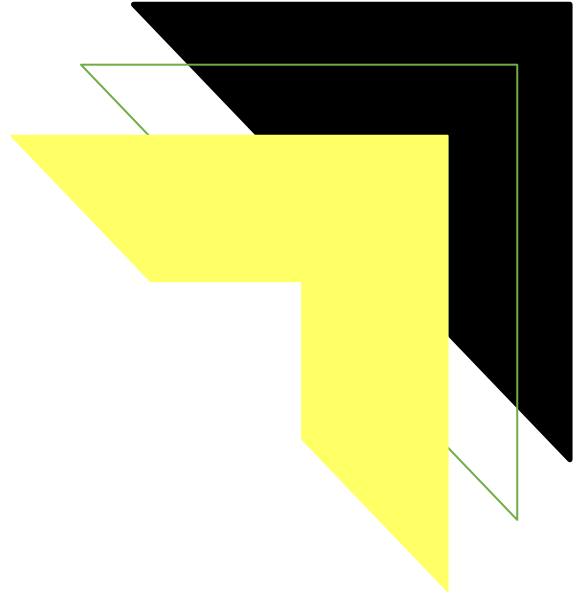




AUDITOR GENERAL'S
DEPARTMENT OF JAMAICA

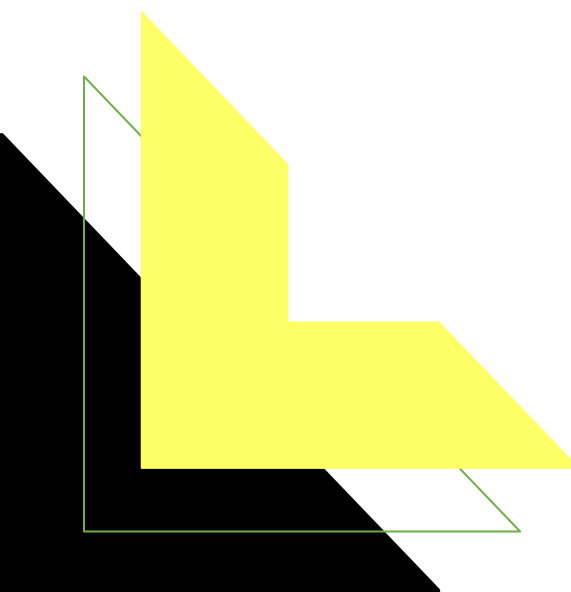


Managing Government's Social Benefit Programmes

A cross-cutting performance audit of the distribution of social benefits to the poor and most vulnerable

Performance Audit Report

2024 December



"A better Country through effective audit scrutiny"

The Auditor General is appointed by the Governor General and is required by the Constitution, Financial Administration and Audit Act, other sundry acts and letters of engagement, to conduct audits at least once per year of the accounts, financial transactions, operations and financial statements of central Government ministries and departments, local Government agencies, statutory bodies and Government companies.

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This report was prepared by the Auditor General's Department of Jamaica for presentation to the House of Representatives.

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AUDITOR GENERAL'S
DEPARTMENT OF JAMAICA

'A better Country through effective audit scrutiny'

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This report contains the findings of our review of the management of social benefit distribution in Jamaica.

Auditor General's Overview

Efforts to reform Jamaica's social safety net was initiated in 2000, with the Social Safety Net Reform Programme (SSNRP) to improve the country's social protection systems, including social welfare distribution. The SSNRP was subsequently endorsed by the World Bank and integrated in key strategic policy documents – Jamaica Vision 2030 National Development Plan (NDP) and Social Protection Strategy. One of the priority sector strategies under Vision 2030, National Outcome No. 3, is for Jamaica to create and sustain an effective, efficient, transparent, and objective system for delivering social assistance services and programmes. During our strategic audit risk assessment process, we evaluated the risks of the Government achieving this desired national outcome, recognizing the importance of ensuring effective social protection. Acknowledging that any shortcomings could have a significant impact on the well-being of citizens and the country on a whole, the management of Government's social benefit programmes was highlighted as an important area of focus. This is a cross-cutting performance audit that examines multiple social benefit programmes administered across various Government ministries and agencies. We sought to identify common issues to provide a holistic understanding of the administration of social benefit distribution. The aim is to evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes' administration, efficiency and gaps in service delivery, identify duplications, and highlight best practices and opportunities for improvements.

The audit identified that there was general failure to implement longstanding reform measures, aimed at creating a more streamlined and effective system of social benefit management. Consequently, the audit found that deficiencies identified decades ago, pertaining to overlap of social benefit programmes and a less-than-optimal structure for benefit distribution, persisted. Operational deficiencies continued in an environment where the administration of social benefit programmes spreads across various Government agencies, with inadequate interagency coordination, impeding the efficient delivery of social benefits to those in need. Considering the issues raised in this report, I urge the relevant government agencies, particularly the Ministry responsible for social security, to spearhead efforts to coordinate with stakeholders in implementing the recommendations. The aim is to effectively address the weaknesses and challenges identified and put the country on a path to achieving the Vision 2030 goal of a robust and effective social assistance system that will improve the well-being of Jamaicans.








I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the management and staff of the ministries of Labour and Social Security, Economic Growth and Job Creation, Local Government and Community Development, selected municipal corporations, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), for the cooperation and assistance provided to the audit team. Thanks to the other stakeholders who provided valuable information and insights, qualitative evidence and feedback through focus group discussions, to enable the delivery of this comprehensive audit report.



Pamela Monroe Ellis, FCCA, FCA

Auditor General

Audit At a glance

Legislative & Policy Framework		Outdated Legislation	➔	The current and only piece of legislation is the Poor Relief Act of 1886.
		Legislative reform agenda did not progress	➔	Efforts to complete the National Assistance Bill to enact legislation to replace the Poor Relief Act of 1886 did not progress.
Programme Administration		Fragmented social benefit distribution system	➔	Social benefits are dispersed across multiple Government entities, with little or no coordination and integration, creating a fragmented system with inefficiencies.
		Disconnected beneficiary databases	➔	Absence of an integrated repository of beneficiaries' data creates duplication in data collection and inability to share information across programmes.
		Slow policy framework implementation	➔	Slow implementation of Vision 2030 NDP priority sector strategies and related key actions to enhance social benefit administration.
		Duplications in social benefit distribution	➔	Six social benefit programmes across four ministries that provide the same type of housing related benefits to vulnerable families and individuals, all with similar objectives.
		Weaknesses in programmes' design and oversight	➔	Weaknesses in the design and management oversight of the Short-Term Poverty Alleviation project and Municipal Social Assistance Programme impeded the optimal delivery of social benefits.

Summary

One of Jamaica's policy goals is to reduce the national poverty prevalence below 10 per cent by 2030. In 2021, PIOJ estimated Jamaica's poverty rate to be 16.7 per cent of the population (12.3 per cent in 2023 as per World Bank). The rate of poverty underscores the importance of effective social protection programmes to achieve Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Plan (NDP) - National Outcome No. 3 - Effective Social Protection. The NDP and Social Protection Strategy recognized that the establishment of a robust social welfare system is vital for ensuring the well-being of citizens. Therefore, it is important for the Government to ensure that social benefits programmes are well-designed and efficiently managed so that the most vulnerable individuals receive the benefits they require as quickly and effectively as possible.

For vulnerable populations to be adequately supported, the administration of social benefits should be managed to optimize efficiency in distribution. We conducted a performance audit of Government social benefit programmes to assess the effectiveness of the programmes' administration in delivering social benefits, considering the Vision 2030 NDP strategy for Jamaica to create and sustain an effective, efficient, transparent, and objective system for delivering social assistance services and programmes. The audit focused on selected non-contributory social benefit programmes, primarily assessing the legislative framework and the administration of social benefit programmes, given the strategic direction of the NDP and the subsequent Social Protection Strategy.

The audit found that efforts to reform social benefit distribution, a key part of the social protection system overhaul, have not progressed. The effectiveness of the Government's social benefit programmes continues to be hindered by a fragmented and inefficient administrative structure, which is largely due to challenges in implementing longstanding reform measures aimed at creating a more streamlined and effective system of social benefit distribution. This has resulted in an environment where operational deficiencies persist, hindering the optimal delivery of social benefits to those in need. The report is structured into three parts and a case study section. Part One introduces the study. Part Two highlights the legislative and policy framework overseeing social benefit programmes, while Part Three assesses the administration of social benefit programmes. The case study section highlights deficiencies identified in the administration of specific social benefit programmes. The summary of the findings is detailed below:



Key Audit Question: Is the delivery of social benefits to the poor and most vulnerable efficiently and effectively managed?

What we found

- 1. Jamaica is yet to establish an overarching legal framework and a unified approach to manage social welfare distribution.** The Social Safety Net Reform Programme (SSNRP), initiated in 2000, required the establishment of a legal framework to govern the management and distribution of all social benefit programmes. This aimed to address a gap identified with the Poor Relief Act of 1886, which is restricted to the management of poor relief benefits at the municipal level. The Vision 2030 NDP identified inadequate legislation as one of the issues that challenged the realization of effective social protection. Consistent with the SSNRP, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) drafted the National Assistance Bill, to replace the Poor Relief Act, which sought to strengthen the legal framework for the administration of social assistance services. However, there has been no progress with the draft bill, despite numerous consultations and discussions. Further, in 2017, the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development (MLGCD) introduced the Human Services Bill, whereby MLGCD would assume responsibility for managing poor relief social assistance. Neither the National Assistance Bill nor the Human Services Bill was passed.
- 2. As part of the reform process, the Government introduced the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH), in 2002, to rationalize the operations of the existing income transfer programmes, eliminate duplications, reduce administrative costs, streamline the use of resources, and increase the effectiveness of programme delivery to the poor.** However, while Food Stamps and Old Age and Incapacity Allowance (OAIA) were merged under PATH, thereby reducing fragmentation and duplications, the Outdoor Poor Relief continued under the Board of Supervision¹. The MLSS in a letter dated April 10, 2003, to the MLGCD, indicated that *“a central objective of the reform process is to increase the efficiency and impact of existing welfare programmes by removing duplications and fragmentation in service delivery, thereby reducing related high administrative costs and increase the value of benefits”*. The letter noted that significant overlaps were identified in the programmes being administered by MLSS and the Poor Relief Department and outlined some interim arrangements to facilitate the merger of PATH and Outdoor Poor Relief Operations, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Finance and Cabinet. However, MLSS, in a letter to the Auditor General dated May 21, 2024, indicated that no merger took place as there was no consensus on the proposed Bill and that its pursuit was discontinued.

¹ Section 9(1) of the Poor Relief Act empowers the Board of Supervision to make rules generally in relation to the administration of poor relief.

3. **We found that the various social programmes had similar objectives and overlapping functions, covering parts or the same areas of interest, with little or no coordination in the distribution of said benefits.** For example, the distribution of housing related benefits started with the poor relief programme, under the MLGCD. The Government subsequently developed the rehabilitation programme under the MLSS and the Social Housing Programme under the MEGJC (formerly the Ministry of Housing)². The poor relief housing and rehabilitation programmes administered by MLGCD and MLSS provide housing rental and home repair grants to individuals. Similarly, the Government introduced the Social Housing Programme (SHP), under the MEGJC and the Municipal Social Assistance Programme (MSAP), under the MLGCD to provide home repair grants like the poor relief housing and rehabilitation programmes, as well as housing units. Home repair grants are also provided through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) under the OPM. Further, in 2019, the Government further introduced the New Social Housing Programme (NSHP), which offers housing units similar to the initial SHP **Appendix 4**). Of note, the SHP and the NSHP are concurrently administered by separate units within the MEGJC.
4. **Social workers play a crucial role in supporting social benefit administration, including assessing individual needs to determine eligibility and benefits.** We were not able to assess social worker to beneficiary ratio for 2023-24, due to the unavailability of data. Notwithstanding, in 2021-22, the MLSS managed 288,278 beneficiaries for its PATH and Rehabilitation programmes with 138 social workers, resulting in a ratio of one social worker to 2,089 beneficiaries. In 2022-23, the poor relief programme had 13,901 beneficiaries which were managed by 90 social workers, yielding a ratio of one social worker to 154 beneficiaries (**Table 18**). These ratios fell outside the range based on international standard of one social worker per 100 beneficiaries³. MEGJC social housing programmes had no assigned social workers.
5. **The adverse impact of the overlap among programmes and the ratio of social worker to beneficiary was exacerbated by the lack of a unified operating system, among the Government entities, to manage the distribution of social benefits.** An effective distribution system requires collaboration among entities to enable a unified and efficient system of social benefit delivery. Such a structure would benefit from a technology driven integrated system. However, the entities administering social benefit programmes maintained separate beneficiary databases, resulting in the lack of integration to facilitate data sharing among the entities. Moreover, from a strategic standpoint, the absence of integration and unified data management limited the potential for evidence-based policy decision and effective strategic development. While MLSS utilized an electronic database software to manage the PATH and Social Pension Programme, it, along with MLGCD and MEGJC, relied on paper-based systems

² Poor Relief Programme 1886, Rehabilitation Programme 1972, Social Housing Programme (date could not be determined).

³ World Bank Articles - Integration and Intermediation: Case Management in SSN Programs and Social Services (Oct 2019)

and Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to manage beneficiaries' data for the other benefit programmes⁴ (**Table 16**). The absence of integration of beneficiary data, not only increased the risk of benefit fraud, but also served to create inefficiency in the use of resources as individuals must navigate multiple entities, providing the same set of information to assess their eligibility, creating duplication in data collection. This limited the ability of the relevant government entities to consolidate and share information to track and monitor beneficiaries across programmes for targeted delivery. We found that only three of the programmes use a common identifier – the Government-issued Taxpayer Registration Number (TRN) to identify beneficiaries.

6. **Deficiencies in the design and management's oversight of the Short-Term Poverty Alleviation (STPA) project and the Municipal Social Assistance Programme (MSAP) impeded the optimal delivery of social benefits to those in need.** The STPA project was established in 2013 by MLSS after receiving approval to operate the project for four months, between December 2013 and March 2014, through a Cabinet Decision No.42/13, dated December 16, 2013. MLSS justified the project due to an increase in the poverty rate, which necessitated short-term intervention to provide immediate assistance in entrepreneurial and compassionate grants to vulnerable groups. However, MLSS continued the administration of the project, for over 10 years without the necessary justification and Cabinet approval. MLSS did not conduct a project review to determine the effectiveness of the STPA project, to justify the project's continuation. The MLSS failed to establish benefit limits and eligibility criteria for beneficiary selection as well as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). We found that whereas some beneficiaries received one-off assistance, others received assistance multiple times. The MLSS disbursed a total of \$726.4 million to 32,399 beneficiaries over the period 2017 to 2024. As shown in **Appendix 6**, there were repeated benefit payments to 20 individuals over the period 2020 to 2024 totalling \$8.9 million. We noted that individuals received payments, over the four years, which totalled between \$300,000 and \$1.5 million. In one of the instances referred above, a beneficiary received three payments of \$500,000 on the same day – the justification for this was not evident. Our concern about this matter, especially as it relates to transparency and authenticity surrounding benefit distribution under the STPA project, was heightened by fact that MLSS made payments to individuals or companies, on beneficiaries' behalf, without the necessary social assessments to validate the needs of the beneficiaries (**Case Study 2**).
7. **Similarly, we could not determine the considerations, that informed the distribution of \$342.5 million for the MSAP across different municipal corporations in 2022-23 and 2023-24. In several instances there was disproportionate allocation between administrative support and actual benefit payments.** For example, the St. Ann Municipal Corporation allocated 74 per cent of the \$15.6 million it received for administrative support, leaving only \$4.1 million (26 per cent) for actual benefit payments. At the four municipal corporations we visited, monthly transfers of \$30,000 were made to various individuals' bank accounts for administrative services, at the request of councillors (**Appendix 8**) whereas a total of \$494.5 million, representing 32 per cent of the \$1.53 billion allocated for MSAP 2017-18 to 2023-24 was utilized for administrative support to councillors. Further, municipal

⁴ PATH – Beneficiary Management Information System BMIS software, Social Pension Programme – Social Pension Management Information System (SPMIS).

corporations did not faithfully submit quarterly progress and expenditure reports to MLGCD to account for the monies allocated for benefit distribution under the various components of MSAP, despite a requirement to do so. Additionally, there was a history of noncompliance in submitting the reports, which prevented the MLGCD from preparing all the annual reports to account for the \$1.53 billion allocated over the period, 2017-18 to 2023-24, and to assess the effectiveness of the programme (**Case Study 3**). MLGCD indicated that it has since taken steps to improve reporting compliance.

What Should be done

- 1. Given that the Short-Term Poverty Alleviation (STPA) project has been operating without appropriate Cabinet approval, it is crucial to conduct a comprehensive review of the project's impact for Cabinet's consideration and decision.** In the event a decision is taken to continue the operation, MLSS must establish guidelines that will determine eligibility criteria, benefit limits and implement Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that outline the processes for beneficiary selection, payment disbursement, reporting and monitoring. This should include protocols for regular reviews and updates to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness. Considering payments disbursed under the project, MLSS should seriously consider the need for social assessments for all potential beneficiaries to validate their needs before assistance is granted. This will enhance the transparency surrounding the assistance provided and ensure that funds reach those who genuinely require support. Further, in light of the costs associated with delivering benefits under the MSAP, the MLGCD should consider placing the responsibility for managing the identification and delivery with the municipal corporations; with the aim of reducing the administrative cost and maximising benefits delivered.
- 2. Given the challenges in finalizing legislative reforms and executing the Vision 2030 National Development Plan's priority sector strategies, the MLSS and other key agencies must enhance their efforts to advance these strategies and actions critical to the social welfare reform agenda.** A crucial first step is to develop and implement a legislative framework to improve the distribution of social benefits to those in need. Additionally, expediting the streamlining of social benefit programmes - a vital aspect of the Social Sector National Reform (SSNR) agenda - is necessary to enhance efficiency in benefit distribution, reduce administrative cost, and ultimately maximize benefits for the intended beneficiaries.
- 3. The Government has already developed a strategy for centralized database of beneficiaries in the NDP and the Social Protection Strategy.** Implementation of this centralized beneficiary database is essential to achieving optimal efficiency and effectiveness in the distribution of social benefits. To address fragmentation and inefficiencies in Jamaica's social benefit distribution system, there should be no further delay in coordinating efforts to develop and implement the proposed centralized database for beneficiary registration. MLSS' proposed development and implementation of an Integrated Social Protection Information System (SPIS), under the US\$20 million project with World Bank in 2024, is an initial first step in the right direction. What is now needed, without any further delay, is an active and effective Whole-of-Government Approach and consensus in seeing to the full implementation of this and the other priority sector strategies relating to social protection.
- 4. There is also an urgent need to ensure that the administration of social benefits distribution is guided by manuals and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that outline procedures for assessment, enrolment, provision of benefits and monitoring and evaluation, supported by measurable performance indicators.** This will enable the assessment of service delivery efficiency and effectiveness, facilitating continuous improvement in programme administration. The development of manuals and SOPs could be guided by the World Bank's social benefit delivery chain.

Part One

Introduction

1.1 Social benefit programmes are a vital component of Government's role in supporting the vulnerable population and promoting social welfare, considering the Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Plan (NDP) goal for effective social protection. Social benefit programmes are crucial for ensuring that citizens have access to necessities and opportunities to improve their socioeconomic conditions. Effective management of these programmes is essential to ensure that resources are used efficiently, and that intended beneficiaries receive the support they need as quickly as possible. The NDP recognises that a well-managed social benefit system not only addresses immediate economic hardships, but also promotes long-term societal well-being by providing opportunities for personal development and sets the foundation for a more inclusive and prosperous future for all members of society. This is consistent with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2030 Agenda.

Jamaica's adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

1.2 The 2030 sustainable development agenda provides a comprehensive framework for global progress, emphasizing the interconnectedness of people, planet, and prosperity both now and in the future. There are 17 SDGs accompanied by specific targets and indicators by which the progress of member countries will be measured (**Figure 1**). Jamaica's adoption of the SDGs, in 2015, reinforced the country's commitment to the goals of Vision 2030 Jamaica NDP with an alignment of close to 100 per cent.

Figure 1 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



Source: United Nations Development Programme

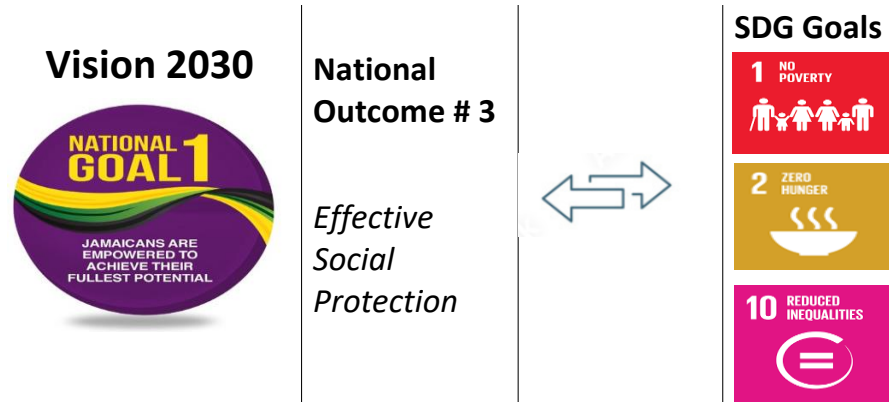
Jamaica's Vision 2030 NDP, Social Protection Strategy sets the framework for social protection

1.3 Vision 2030 NDP, outlines the Government's strategy to achieve sustainable development to transform Jamaica into a premier destination for living, working, raising families, and conducting business. Embedded within this vision is the recognition of social protection as a fundamental pillar of sustainable development, ensuring equitable access to essential services and shielding individuals and communities

from various risks and vulnerabilities. Consequently, social protection initiatives play a pivotal role in the context of Vision 2030 NDP objectives to combat poverty, address inequality, and foster resilience to achieve Goal No. 1, for Jamaicans to be empowered to achieve their fullest potential and National Outcome No. 3 - Effective Social Protection.

1.4 One of the NDP strategies to achieve National Outcome No. 3 is “to create and sustain an effective, efficient, transparent, and objective system for delivering social assistance services and programmes”, particularly in advancing the objectives outlined in SDG Goal 1: No Poverty, Goal 2: Zero Hunger, and Goal 10: Reduced Inequality, by ensuring that essential resources reach those in need (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Vision 2030 NDP – Goal 1, National outcome # 3 and SDG Goals 1,2 &10



Source: Vision 2030 NDP, SDGs

Jamaica’s Social Protection Strategy is aligned with Vision 2030 NDP

1.5 The Jamaica Social Protection Strategy (2014) represents a national, multi-sectoral approach aimed at fostering effective social protection, a significant projected outcome of Vision 2030 NDP. This strategy advocates for a comprehensive, Whole-of-Government Approach towards social protection and outlines priorities for resource allocation and practical interventions to guide the nation towards its social protection objectives.

1.6 Accordingly, a strong foundation is required to guarantee the effective delivery of social assistance, an important component within social protection. Effective social protection requires a minimum level of service delivery to the general population through an established social protection floor, within which would lie the provision of adequate safety nets. Jamaica’s social protection framework integrates the four pillars of social protection - social services, social insurance, social promotion, and social assistance or welfare (Table 1).

Table 1 Four pillars of Social Protection

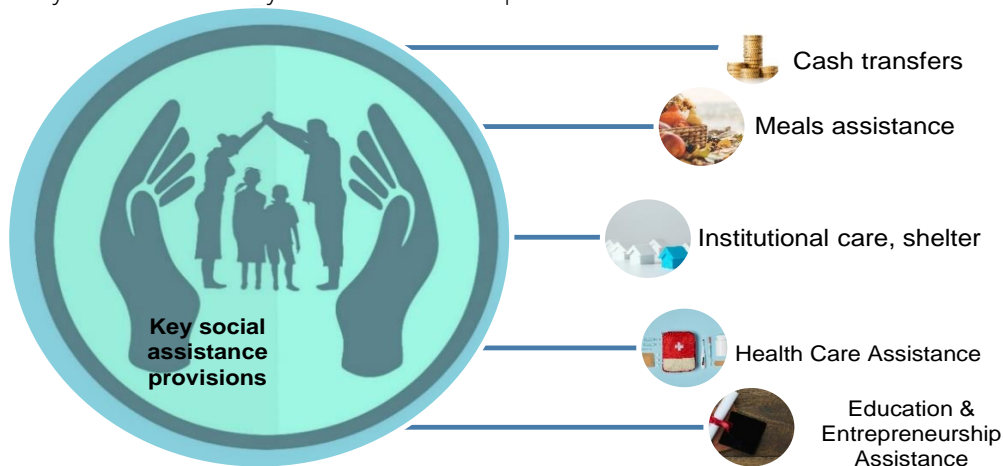
i.	Social services: Services that help vulnerable, disadvantaged, or distressed people or groups.
ii.	Social insurance: Government programs that protect people from financial difficulties.
iii.	Social promotion: An educational practice that promotes students to the next grade level.
iv.	Social assistance (or welfare): Cash or in-kind benefits provided by the state to help people with their economic and social welfare.

Source: United Nations International Labour Organization (ILO)

The GOJ provided funding for non-contributory cash and in-kind social assistance benefits

1.7 Non-contributory social assistance, which is the transfer of cash or kind by Government entities to assist vulnerable individuals is a key component of Jamaica’s social safety net. This is aimed at ensuring all citizens have access to essential services and resources to meet their basic needs and improve their overall well-being. The key non-contributory social assistance provisions under Jamaica’s social safety net are outlined in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3 Key non-contributory social assistance provisions



Source: AuGD research analysis

1.8 The Government of Jamaica finances social benefit distribution through the consolidated fund. **Table 2** outlines the budgetary allocations for seven social benefit programmes from 2018-19 to 2023-24, a total allocation of \$66.7 billion over the six years. The allocations are determined merely by the budget ceilings set by the Ministry of Finance and Public Service (MoFPS), alongside considerations of previous year expenditure and inflation trends. The allocation increased by 51.67 per cent to \$14 billion in 2021-22, over the previous year, thereafter the allocation reduced to \$12.9 billion in 2022-23 and 2023-24. This increase in 2021-22 may be reflective of the Government’s response to increasing needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for support provided through the Programme for Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH).

Table 2 Social Assistance Budget Allocation, 2018-19 to 2023-24

Programmes	2018-19 \$'000	2019-20 \$'000	2020-21 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000	Total \$'000
Poor Relief	348,743	865,468	848,903	1,163,522	1,308,897	1,451,094	5,986,627
Social Housing	55,000	200,202	96,941	45,584	140,000	140,000	677,727
Rehab & STPA	260,488	260,488	324,968	361,268	411,268	700,000	2,318,480
PATH	6,799,488	7,403,858	7,610,158	11,813,650	10,411,755	8,849,503	52,888,412
MSAP	198,585	333,766	274,765	256,427	182,337	160,244	1,406,124
New Social Housing	565,137	944,910	182,504	506,053	482,733	765,753	3,447,090
Total	8,227,441	10,008,692	9,338,239	14,146,504	12,936,990	12,066,594	66,724,460

Source: Estimates of Expenditure 2018-19 to 2023-24 and Client financial data

Audit rationale, scope, and methodology.

1.9 One of Jamaica's policy goals is to reduce the national poverty prevalence below 10 per cent by 2030. However, in 2021, the level of poverty in Jamaica was estimated to be 16.7 per cent of the population, a 5.7 percentage point increase relative to 2019, reflecting the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic⁵. The relatively high rate of poverty underscores the importance of effective social protection programmes to achieve Vision 2030 Jamaica NDP - National Outcome No. 3 - Effective Social Protection.

1.10 The audit does not question Government policy objectives on the distribution of social benefits. The audit aimed to examine the management of Government social benefit programmes to assess the effectiveness of programmes' administration in delivering social assistance (or welfare), considering the Vision 2030 Jamaica NDP strategy to create and sustain an effective, efficient, transparent, and objective system for delivering social benefit programmes. The audit focused on selected non-contributory social benefit programmes, primarily assessing the administration of these programmes by Government entities and local authorities in ensuring the effective distribution of social benefits to those in need. We also considered how the audit will contribute to the wider strategic aim of the Auditor General's Department to promote improvements in the use of public funds through better governance and resource management (Table 3).

Table 3 In scoping the study, we considered how the audit would contribute to the achievement of the Auditor General's Department wider strategic aims by:

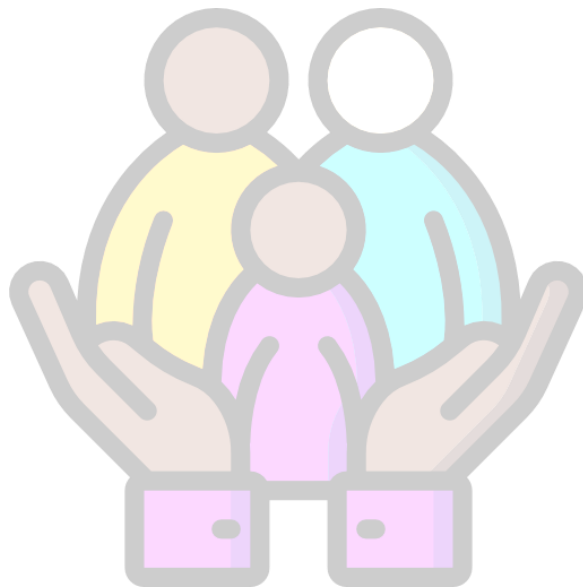
- Assisting the Government of Jamaica with useful recommendations that will aid in improvements in the delivery of public services.
- Targeting coverage of the Auditor General's Department (AuGD) Audit Themes, governance, resource management and accountability to aid in achieving the AuGD's vision of promoting a better Country through effective audit scrutiny of Government operations; and,
- Providing assurance to Parliament and the public on the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of the operations of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

Source: AuGD's Audit Study Plan

⁵ PIOJ Report – Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions 2021








1.11 The findings and recommendations presented in this report are intended to support Government efforts to optimize the management of social benefit programmes, maximize resource utilization and improve outcomes for beneficiaries. By identifying best practices and areas for improvement, this report aims to contribute to the ongoing efforts to reform social benefit programmes to better impact the lives of citizens.

1.12 We planned and conducted our audit in accordance with the Government Auditing Standards, which are applicable to Performance Audit, as well as standards issued by the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI). In this regard, the audit team gained knowledge of the study topic by reviewing internal and external information, conducting interviews with the management and staff of the ministries of Labour and Social Security, Economic Growth and Job Creation, Local Government and Community Development, selected municipal corporations, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) and other stakeholders. The audit team gathered valuable insights and qualitative evidence from key stakeholders through focus group discussions. Additionally, we conducted site visits, walkthroughs, and analytical reviews. We performed risk assessments and developed issue analyses with the questions, which the audit sought to answer to form our opinions and conclusions. We conducted fieldwork, between September 2023 and June 2024, to gather sufficient and appropriate audit evidence on which we based our conclusions.



Part Two

Legislative and Policy Framework

 At A Glance			
Systems and practices	Criteria	Key Findings	Assessment Against Criteria
Comprehensive Legislative Framework	Implementation of a legislative framework to govern the administration of social welfare.	Jamaica does not have an overarching legislation governing the administration of social benefit programmes.	
Robust Policy Framework	A clear policy framework with strategic actions to guide the development of social welfare.	The Government outlined a clear policy for social welfare in the Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Plan (NDP) and the Social Protection Strategy, which are informed by the SSNRP.	
Effective Implementation of Policy Framework	Implementation of key strategies to improve delivery of social benefits.	The agencies tasked with implementing the priority sector strategies outlined in Vision 2030 have not effectively executed the necessary actions to enhance social assistance services.	
 Met the criteria  Criteria partially met; improvement needed  Did not meet the criteria			

Jamaica's social safety net reform was not implemented as planned

2.1 The current and only piece of legislation that governs social assistance is the Poor Relief Act, which was enacted in 1886. This Act, which governs the provision of assistance to the poor and vulnerable, is narrowly focused on the administration of poor relief assistance aimed at minimising the financial burdens and meeting the basic needs of individuals who are considered poor and indigent. Poor relief programmes are administered by the poor relief department in each of the municipal corporations, under the guidance of the Board of Supervision, which falls under the MLGCD⁶. Section 9(1) of the Poor Relief Act empowers the Board of Supervision to make rules generally in relation to the administration of poor relief. Efforts to reform Jamaica's social safety net was initiated in 2000, with the Social Safety Net Reform Programme (SSNRP), which identify duplications and other shortcomings in the distribution of social benefits. The SSNRP revealed overlaps in the social benefit programmes in the poor relief departments, underscoring necessary reform, including strengthening the legislative framework to better serve vulnerable population. As part of the SSNRP, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) drafted the National Assistance Bill to enact legislation aimed at repealing the Poor Relief Act to enhance social welfare delivery.

⁶ The Board is constituted of members appointed by the Minister in keeping with section 4 Poor Relief Act 1886).

2.2 By repealing the Poor Relief Act and transferring responsibilities to the MLSS, the Government aimed to establish a unified benefit programme under the National Assistance Bill, which would provide comprehensive social assistance to vulnerable groups, thereby ensuring that provisions are in law for poverty reduction and social protection focusing on the most vulnerable⁷. The Bill was intended to be a key step within Jamaica's social safety net reform with its primary aim being to establish social benefits within a legal framework, streamlining social programmes and shifting administrative responsibility for the poor from the local municipal corporations to the main Ministry, MLSS⁸. However, the Bill did not become law leaving a significant legislative gap in the country's social welfare programmes. Our review of MLSS strategic plans for the period 2016-17 to 2023-24 revealed that MLSS did not adopt a further strategic approach to the Bill, while acknowledging the slow pace of social security legislative reviews and identifying it as a threat in its risk assessment process. Hence, over 20 years after its initial draft, efforts to complete the National Assistance Bill did not progress. Therefore, Jamaica does not have a comprehensive, overarching legislation governing the administration of social benefit programmes.

2.3 The Office of the Cabinet indicated that whilst the proposal for the legislation and its operations was presented to the Human Resource Committee on July 2, 2008, final consideration on the proposal was deferred to facilitate wider consultation. The National Assistance Bill was identified as a priority legislation by the MLSS and placed on the Legislative Programme for 2002/2003 after it was approved for the issue of drafting instructions. It remained at the stage of "Bill Being Drafted" until 2015/2016, after which it fell off the Programme⁹. A PIOJ Policy Paper indicated that the "previously drafted National Assistance Bill to support the social safety net reforms initiated in 2000, failed to advance in the legislative process, largely because of political differences and challenges to policy coherence and portfolio responsibilities. Of note therefore "[sic]," is the current gap in legislative foundation for social welfare and assistance programmes, in a context in which social development and economic growth are priorities, and where the country has moved away from the mere alleviation of difficult circumstances as its basis for addressing the vulnerable¹⁰".

Delay in repealing the Poor Relief Act hindered the merger of duplicate benefit programmes

2.4 The World Bank Report 2001 indicated the proposed Social Safety Net (SSN) project will support the Government's efforts to transform the SSN into a fiscally sound and more efficient system of social assistance for the poor and vulnerable and seeks to provide better and more cost-effective social assistance to the extreme poor¹¹. As shown in **Table 4**, the Report echoed the aims of the SSNRP to consolidate major income transfer programmes into a unified benefit programme and strengthen institutional capacity to deliver programmes efficiently and effectively. The SSNRP recommended the consolidation of three major income-transfer programmes – Food Stamps, Old Age and Incapacity Allowance (OAIA), and Outdoor Poor Relief – into one programme under a single agency responsible for social security, aligning with international norms and best practices.

⁷ National Assistance Bill - The objective of this bill is to incorporate institutional changes under the Social Safety Net Reform (a Unified Benefits Programme) and repeal the Poor Relief Act of 1886 [GOJ Legislation Programme 2007/2008].

⁸ World Bank Paper August 9, 2001

⁹ Office of the Cabinet letter addressed to the Auditor General dated February 20, 2024

¹⁰ PIOJ – Policy Paper a case for an anchor social protection legislation in Jamaica (March 2024) page 2

¹¹ World Bank Report dated August 9, 2001

Table 4 The project seeks to provide better and more cost-effective social assistance to the extreme poor

- To this end, the project will:
- a) consolidate major income transfer programs into a Unified Benefit Program (UBP) that ensures:
 - i. a meaningful level of benefits,
 - ii. cost-efficient and accessible delivery system,
 - iii. access to benefits linked to desirable behavioral changes for promoting investment in the human capital development of the poor, especially children, and
 - iv. effective targeting of social assistance to special groups; and
 - b) strengthen institutional capacity to
 - i. operate the program effectively and efficiently, and
 - ii. implement overall social safety net reform elements, including a transparent targeting mechanism.

Source: World Bank Paper August 9, 2001

2.5 As part of the reform process, the Government introduced the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH), in 2002, to rationalize the operations of the existing income transfer Programmes, to eliminate duplications, reduce administrative costs, streamline the use of resources, and increase the effectiveness of programme delivery to the poor. However, while Food Stamps and OAIA were merged under PATH, thereby reducing fragmentation and duplication, the Outdoor Poor Relief continued under the Board of Supervision. The MLSS in a letter dated April 10, 2003, to the MLGCD, indicated that “*a central objective of the reform process is to increase the efficiency and impact of existing welfare programmes by removing duplications and fragmentation in service delivery, thereby reducing related high administrative costs and increase the value of benefits*”. The letter noted that significant overlaps were identified in the programmes being administered by MLSS and the Poor Relief Department and outlined some interim arrangements to facilitate the merger of PATH and Outdoor Poor Relief Operations, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Finance and Cabinet. However, MLSS, in a letter to the Auditor General dated May 21, 2024, indicated that no merger took place as there was no consensus on the proposed Bill and that its pursuit was discontinued.

Extract: Letter from MLSS Permanent Secretary, dated May 21, 2024, to the Auditor General. “*The 2003 letter also stated that the interim arrangements outlined would be subjected to the approval of the Ministry of Finance and Cabinet. I am not able to find any documentation that speaks to a Cabinet decision or approval from the Ministry of Finance on this matter. Notwithstanding, as you are aware, while the PATH was used as a vehicle to pay the ‘dole’ no merger took place. The National Assistance Bill that was being developed at the time would have enabled a repeal of the Poor Relief Act and a merger. My recollection is that there was no consensus on the proposed Bill and that its pursuit was discontinued. The Poor Relief Act is still in place*”.

Jamaica policy framework supports strengthening legislation for effective social protection

2.6 The Vision 2030 NDP and the Social Protection Strategy recognised the importance of having adequate laws in place to improve social protection services. In 2009, the Vision 2030 NDP identified inadequate infrastructure and legislation as key obstacles to the effective delivery of social protection and outlined the need for improvement in these areas (**Table 5**). To ensure that scarce resources are used



efficiently, the Vision 2030 NDP indicated that objective criteria for selecting beneficiaries will be maintained, targeting those most in need. Building on the success of PATH and other programmes, the aim is to enshrine the selection mechanism and other aspects of social assistance delivery in new legislation, replacing the outdated Poor Relief Act of 1886¹².

Table 5 Vision 2030 Jamaica NDP: Issues that challenge the realization of effective social protection

1. Inadequate Infrastructure for Delivering Social Welfare Services
2. Inadequate Legislation
3. Low Level of Participation in National Insurance Scheme
4. Inadequate Systems of Targeting the Vulnerable
5. Inadequately Resourced and Managed System of Welfare Delivery
6. Inadequate Development in Rural Areas
7. Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)
8. Poor Communication to the Vulnerable on Available Benefits
9. Need for Greater Personal Responsibility

Source: Vision 2030 Jamaica NDP (Challenges identified - Page 117)

2.7 The Government developed the Jamaica Social Protection Strategy, in 2014, aimed at enhancing the social protection system, including the delivery of social benefits to the poor and most vulnerable. The strategy was developed in response to the country’s commitment to ensure the security of all its residents and citizens and underpins the social protection goals of Vision 2030 NDP. One of the four broad objectives of the strategy is to provide the conceptual underpinning that will guide legislative and policy frameworks, resource mobilization, programming and service delivery, for social protection in the country (Table 6). This is supported by two of the fundamental considerations and requirements of the strategy that ‘social protection is guaranteed for all citizens through an appropriate and dynamic legislative framework’ and ‘effective central and local governance structures, as well as appropriate legislation are in place to guarantee the delivery of social protection’.

Table 6 Objectives of the Jamaica Social Protection Strategy

1. To enhance the prospects for economic and social development of Jamaica through a structured approach to the provision of social protection interventions.
2. To provide the conceptual underpinning that will guide legislative and policy frameworks, resource mobilization, programming and service delivery, for social protection in the country.
3. To unite and orient the efforts of public and private actors and stakeholders in creating responsive programmes and initiatives for social protection, through the various types of interventions.
4. To ensure that vulnerable or disadvantaged population groups or individuals have recourse to a safety net, facilitating access to basic income security and social services.

Source : Jamaica Social Protection Strategy (2014)

¹² **Vision 2030 NDP Social Assistance and Protection of Vulnerable Groups [Page 78].** *“In light of scarce resources, objective means of selecting beneficiaries will be maintained, so that benefits of the social assistance system are targeted to the neediest members of the population. Under Vision 2030 Jamaica, we will build on the achievements of the Programme for Advancement through Health and Education (PATH) and other social assistance programmes. The selection mechanisms and other aspects of social assistance delivery are being enshrined in new legislation to repeal the Poor Relief Law of 1886”.*

2.8 The PIOJ completed a policy paper in March 2024, justifying the reasons for advancing the enactment of an overarching social protection legislation for Jamaica. The paper asserted that such legislation would ensure fundamental social rights, determine eligibility and identification criteria for benefits, establish efficient delivery systems, define administrative structures, allocate resources, and clarify responsibilities. The paper further stated that, *“the previously drafted National Assistance Bill to support the social safety net reforms initiated in 2000, failed to advance in the legislative process, largely because of political differences and challenges to policy coherence and portfolio responsibilities¹³”*. It concluded that *“the reform efforts over the last two decades have been fettered and limited in several instances by an inability to make required decisions and changes. More could have been achieved, particularly in the areas of poverty reduction, social security coverage and human capital investment”*.

2.9 The MLGCD drafted the Human Services Bill (2017) which also sought to repeal the Poor Relief Act. The Human Services Bill aimed to dissolve the Board of Supervision’s oversight responsibility of the poor relief department and transfer the functions to the MLGCD. The Human Services Bill was approved by way of Cabinet Decision No. 34/17 dated September 11, 2017, and drafting instruction issued to the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel. To date, the Bill is yet to be completed. However, this move contradicted existing frameworks - the draft National Assistance Bill, Vision 2030 NDP, and the Social Protection Strategy, all of which align with the SSNRP. Whereas the MLSS’ National Assistance Bill proposes the transfer of responsibility for managing poor relief social assistance, currently managed by the MLGCD’s Board of Supervision, to a division within the MLSS, the Human Service Bill proposed abolishing the Board of Supervision and transferring the functions of the Board to the Ministry with responsibility for local government, MLGCD.

2.10 Jamaica’s Social Protection Strategy stated that *“Significant changes to social protection policies should be instituted with the benefit of consultation and advice from the National Social Protection Committee (NSPC)¹⁴”*. This Committee is the strategic focal point that supports the Social Protection Strategy. The emphasis was on creating the foundation and structure on which to build an effective system to *“facilitate assessment and review of legislative and policy frameworks that support effective social protection and provide recommendations as necessary”*. Our review of minutes of the NSPC’s meetings up to 2017, when the Bill was submitted to Cabinet, found no mention of the Human Services Bill.

Plans to streamline social benefit distribution affected by failure to implement key actions

2.11 The Vision 2030 NDP pinpointed the areas that urgently required strategic intervention within years 1 to 3 of the plan. It emphasized strengthening the system of identification of beneficiaries of assistance programmes, increasing awareness of the availability and eligibility criteria of social assistance programmes, and developing databases of the vulnerable groups and welfare beneficiaries. The Vision 2030 NDP assigned specific tasks to respective Government agencies, with the MLSS taking the lead role. The other agencies are MLGCD along with municipal corporations, Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW), the National Council for Senior Citizens, the Child Development Agency and the PIOJ, demonstrating a Whole-of-Government Approach. These agencies were to coordinate efforts to rollout these crucial first steps in the social welfare reform agenda.

¹³ PIOJ Policy Paper -A case for an anchor social protection legislation in Jamaica, March 2024, page 1

¹⁴ Established by Cabinet in 2014 as the policy oversight committee for the execution of Jamaica Social Protection Strategy.

2.12 Despite the adoption of the Vision 2030 NDP in 2009, the responsible agencies did not faithfully implement the key strategic actions required during the initial period (2009 to 2012). One of the selected sector strategies was the development and strengthening of the database of vulnerable groups and their specific needs. Whereas the vulnerable groups were identified, the specific needs were not. The development of a national register of persons benefiting from social welfare is yet to be achieved (**Table 7**).

Table 7 National Outcome #3, Effective Social Protection – National Strategy 3.3: Create and sustain an effective, efficient, transparent, and objective system for delivering services and programmes.

Selected Sector Strategies	Agencies	Where are we?
Develop and strengthen the database of vulnerable groups, and welfare beneficiaries		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify vulnerable groups and specific needs 	MLSS, MOHE, DLG	Partially achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a national register of persons benefiting from social welfare 	MLSS, MOHE, DLG	Not Yet Achieved
Increase awareness of the availability and eligibility criteria of social assistance programmes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the effectiveness of PATH 	MLSS, MOHE, DLG	On going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake public education and awareness building campaigns through various mass media channels 	MLSS	On going

Note: DLG - Department of Local Government, renamed Ministry of Local Government and Community Development
 Source: Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Plan

2.13 Vision 2030 Jamaica Social Welfare and Vulnerable Groups Sector Plan 2009-2030 identified the vulnerable groups (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4 Vulnerable Groups in Jamaica



Source: Vision 2030 Jamaica Social Welfare and Vulnerable Groups Sector Plan 2009-2030

2.14 As shown in **Table 8**, the Vision 2030 NDP identified systemic challenges in the social benefits administration system and outlined seven priority sector strategies for implementation, to address the challenges to deliver an effective and efficient system of social assistance. The aim was to “create and sustain an effective, efficient, transparent and objective system for delivering services and programmes”.

Table 8 National Outcome #3, Effective Social Protection – National Strategy 3-3: Selected Sector Strategies to create and sustain an effective, efficient, transparent, and objective system for delivering services and programmes

1. Strengthen the system of identification of beneficiaries of assistance programmes
2. Increase awareness of the availability and eligibility criteria of social assistance programmes
3. Develop and strengthen databases of the vulnerable groups and welfare beneficiaries
4. Establish a reliable fund for sustained financing of the requisite range of welfare support programmes
5. Address the unique needs of specific vulnerable groups
6. Strengthen customer service capacity in the delivery of social assistance programmes
7. Provide adequate human resources to administer and deliver social assistance programmes effectively

Source: Vision 2030 Jamaica NDP

Slow progress implementing priority sector strategies and actions to reform social welfare

2.15 The PIOJ utilizes the Medium-Term Socio-Economic Framework (MTF) to track the progress of the Vision 2030 NDP strategies implementation in line with the SDGs. However, the responsible implementing agencies did not realize the targets to achieve the Vision 2030 NDP objectives and desired outcomes. Our analysis of the MTF, for 2009-12, 2012-15, 2015-18, 2018-21, and the related progress reports revealed that the responsible agencies were progressing slowly in completing various priority sector strategy actions relating to effective social protection. As summarized in **Table 9** and detailed in **Appendix 1**, in most instances, the MTF identified MLSS as the lead agency responsible to spearhead the required actions, specifically under National Outcome No. 3 “Effective Social Protection”. To date, only four of the 19 required actions have been achieved, 11 were partially achieved and four were yet to be achieved. Notably, the MTFs did not provide any explanations for these unachieved actions or discussed possible corrective measures to ensure the successful completion of all required actions moving forward.

Table 9 Implementation of Priority Sector Strategy Actions “Effective Social Protection”

Lead agencies responsible for implementation	No. of actions	Implementation progress		
		✓	⚠	⊖
Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS)	16	2	10	4
The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ)	2	2	-	-
National Social Protection Committee (NSPC)	1	-	1	-
Total	19	4	11	4
Achieved Partially Achieved Yet to be Achieved				

Source: PIOJ Medium Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework – 2009-12, 2012-15, 2015-18, 2018-21, vision 2030 Jamaica NDP

Social protection committee efforts impeded by persistent challenges

2.16 At the core of the institutional framework for Social Protection lies the NSPC that has oversight for the social protection landscape in Jamaica, which includes poverty reduction efforts. This vital Committee established at the national level constitutes key stakeholder representatives from ministries, departments and agencies, private financial institutions, and other non-Government entities. The Committee is chaired

by the PIOJ. The NSPC’s primary objective is to foster coordination and synergy among the various social programmes. Mandated by Cabinet in March 2014, the NSPC is entrusted with overseeing policy planning and implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Social Protection Strategy. According to the Committee’s terms of reference, the NSPC is required to convene at least quarterly, document all proceedings, and provide annual reports to Cabinet. Over the period November 2014 to March 2023, the NSPC completed the expected eight annual reports and conducted 31 of the expected 36 quarterly meetings (**Table 10**).

Table 10 Performance of the National Social Protection Committee (NSPC), November 2014 to March 2023

No	Administrative Procedures	Outputs	Expectation	Outcome	Status
1	Provide annual and ad hoc reports, as may be necessary, to Cabinet	Annual Reports	8	8	✓
2	Meet on a quarterly basis, or as required and maintain records and minutes of all meetings and deliberations	Quarterly meetings	36	31	⚠

 Achieved
  Partially Achieved
  Not Achieved

Source: The Terms of Reference of the National Social Protection Committee 2014

2.17 In fulfilling its oversight role, the Committee outlined in its reports, challenges which mirrored the deficiencies identified in Vision 2030 NDP, hindering the effective administration of social benefit programmes (**Table 11**). We found that of the 28 actions identified in the period 2017-18 to 2022-23, only 13 were achieved, three were in progress and 12 were yet to be completed (**Appendix 2**).

Table 11 NSPC identified challenges affecting social protection

1.	The need for better communication and collaboration for resource efficiency
2.	Siloed approaches in critical programs hindering NSPC dialogue and integration
3.	Weak and incompatible monitoring systems within MDAs
4.	The need for a functional registry through a national ID system
5.	Limitations created by the Poor Relief Act of 1886 (with latest amendment being 1973), and stalled efforts to complete the National Assistance Bill (outdated legislation)
6.	A parish or regional-level institutional arrangement needed to ensure that resources and information are accessible to the citizens

Source: NSPC’s meeting minutes and annual reports November 2014 to March 2023

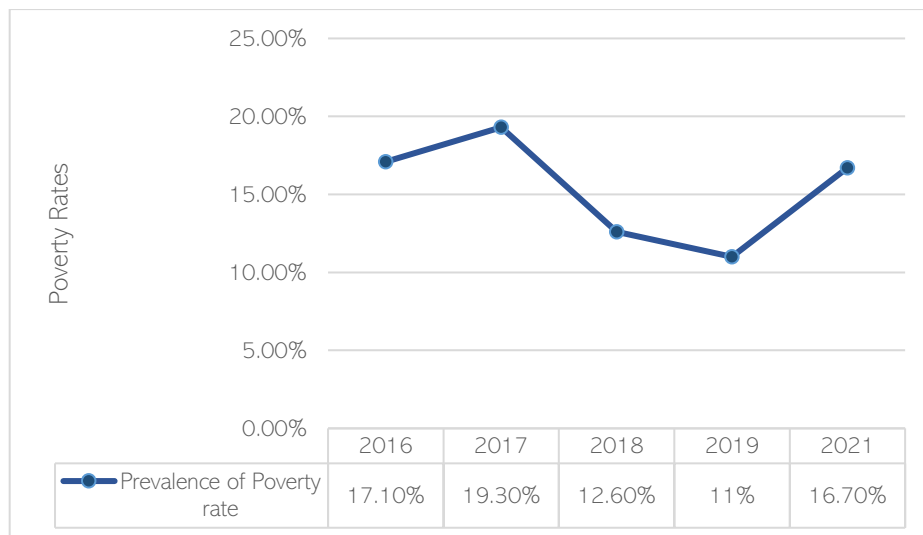
Absence of parish-based committees to support the role of the National Social Protection Committee

2.18 The Jamaica Social Protection Strategy required the NSPC to establish parish level structures in each parish to provide oversight for the implementation of the strategy at the local level. This parish level structure was to be chaired by the MLSS and was expected to reap synergies and reduce duplication of efforts as indicated in the NSPC’s terms of reference. However, whereas a draft terms of reference for the parish level structures were completed in 2015, the document was not finalised for implementation. Therefore, the expected parish level committees have not been established approximately nine years after the approval of the Jamaica Social Protection Strategy. PIOJ in its Policy Brief dated November 2018 noted, *“without a structure at the parish or regional levels to perform the role of conduit for effective implementation and monitoring of social protection interventions, and cross-fertilization of ideas, partnerships and resources, the goal of expanding coverage will be difficult to achieve”*.

Interagency issues affect the successful implementation of poverty reduction measures

2.19 In 2017, the Government established the National Poverty Reduction Programme Committee (NPRPC), through which the NSPC monitors poverty reduction. The aim was to eradicate extreme poverty by 2022 and reduce overall poverty below 10 per cent by 2030, aligning with SDGs¹⁵. In 2021, the level of poverty in Jamaica was estimated to be 16.7 per cent of the population, a 5.7 percentage point increase relative to 2019, reflecting the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (**Figure 5**).

Figure 5 Prevalence of Poverty Rate 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2020-21



Source: AuGD analysis of data presented in PIOJ reports on Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions

¹⁵ PIOJ, Jamaica Survey of living Condition - An individual is considered poor if his/her level of consumption falls below the poverty line and is considered to be in extreme (food) poverty if it does not surpass the food poverty line.

2.20 The establishment of NPRPC underscored the importance of monitoring the poverty reduction measures to address challenges in a coordinated manner. In keeping with the terms of reference, the Committee was required to keep bi-monthly meetings and maintain records and minutes of all meetings and produce annual reports to Cabinet. Over the period April 2018-19 to March 2022-23, the Committee was relatively successful from an administrative standpoint, having convened 25 meetings relative to a target of 30 meetings and achieved its target of producing 20 quarterly progress reports and five annual reports (**Table 12**).

Table 12 Performance of the National Poverty Reduction Preprogramme Committee (NPRPC), April 2018-19 to March 2022-23

No.	Administrative Procedures	Outputs	Expectation	Outcome	Status
1	Bi-monthly meetings of the National Poverty Reduction Programme Committee (NPRPC)	Meeting minutes	30	25	
2	Provide quarterly progress reports, as may be necessary	Quarterly Progress Reports	20	20	
3	Provide annual and ad hoc reports, as may be necessary, to Cabinet	Annual Reports	5	5	

Achieved Partially Achieved Not Achieved

Source: The Terms of Reference of the National Poverty Reduction Policy Committee 2017

2.21 A key objective of the National Policy on Poverty and National Poverty Reduction Programme is addressing Extreme Poverty and Basic Needs – Programme Area 1. The National Poverty Reduction Programme Medium-Term Cycles for 2018-2021 and 2021-2024 each identified 63 key strategic actions to be implemented by responsible agencies. Our review of the medium-term programme cycles revealed minimal change in achieving the strategic actions between 2018-2021 and 2021-2024. As of 2024, the implementing agencies achieved 36 of the 63 key action items to address extreme poverty and basic needs, two were ongoing and one not achieved. The NPRPC reported that the responsible agencies did not provide information on the status of the remaining 24 key actions (**Table 13 and Appendix 3[i, ii]**).

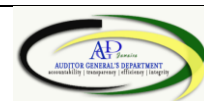
Table 13 Analysis of the National Poverty Reduction Programme Medium-Term Cycle

Years	NPRP Programme Area 1	No. of actions	Implementation Progress			
2018 - 2021	Strategic Line of Action	63	36	0	3	24
2021 - 2024	Strategic Line of Action	63	36	2	1	24

Completed In Progress Not started Not reported

Note: 2018-2021 – 4 of the 63 action items were removed from the Medium-Term Cycle
2021-2024 – 15 of the 63 action items were removed from the Medium-Term Cycle

Source: AuGD’s analysis of the National Poverty Reduction Programme Medium-Term Cycle



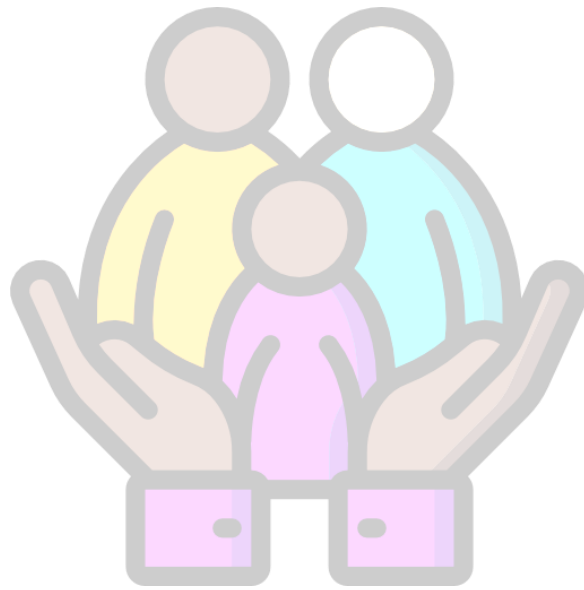
2.22 The NPRPC identified interagency issues affecting poverty reduction measures considering its goal of eradicating extreme poverty by 2022. (Table 14).

Table 14 Challenges affecting Poverty Reduction Measures

1.	Weakness in and incompatibility of monitoring and evaluation systems within MDAs to adequately generate required data and information, and in a timely manner.
2.	Need for greater levels of partnership among entities to strengthen programme delivery and follow-through on opportunities for networking and collaboration.
3.	There is need for greater levels of commitment from some partners regarding their role and input in the implementation of the NPRP.
4.	Weak institutional capacity among some MDAs to deliver the programmes in an effective manner.
5.	Staffing issues affecting the effective implementation of poverty reduction programmes proved challenging as some rely heavily on temporary workers. (Lack of financial, human and infrastructural resource, lengthy procurement processes, competing priorities, overlap of activities, and mindset of beneficiaries.)






Source: NPRPC's meeting minutes and annual reports




2.23 Despite varying changes in social challenges over the past decades, the governance framework for social benefit administration remains unchanged. This in a context where the pace of establishing and implementing critical legislation for social benefits distribution has remained sluggish. The successful realization of an overarching legislative framework was impeded by the lack of a unified approach to the legislative reform process, which has far-reaching implications for the delivery of social benefits to the poor and most vulnerable.



Part Three

Administration of Social Benefit Programmes

 At A Glance			
Systems and practices	Criteria	Key Findings	Assessment Against Criteria
Integrated social benefit distribution system.	Integration of social benefit programmes across entities.	The entities administering social benefit programmes maintain separate beneficiary databases, resulting in little or no coordination in data sharing.	
Performance monitoring.	Mechanism to monitor and assess programmes impact.	Most entities fell short in establishing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), necessary to ensure and measure the effectiveness of social benefit programmes.	
Operational efficiency.	Efficient management of social benefit programmes.	The absence of KPIs led to unpredictability and uncertainty in application processing timelines.	
Efficient Resource Management	Optimal allocation and utilization of resources, minimizing waste and maximizing impact.	Absence of a cohesive social benefit distribution system to reduce duplications and inefficiencies in administration and maximise economies of scale.	

 Met the criteria
  Criteria partially met; Improvement needed
  Did not meet the criteria

Various social benefit programmes have been developed to provide support to those in need

3.1 In keeping with the original goal of a unified approach to delivering social assistance, the Government developed the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) in 2002, as a cornerstone of the Social Safety Net Reform Programme (SSNRP), to streamline social assistance. The Government subsequently established five additional programmes, through administrative decisions, these were in addition to three other existing programmes (Table 15, Appendix 4). These programmes are administered by different Government entities; the MLSS, Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC), MLGCD, municipal corporations and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). The introduction of these programmes aimed to provide support to those who are considered poor and most vulnerable in the society. The common goal was to support individuals and families living at or below the national poverty threshold. MLSS, the main Ministry responsible for social security, administers four of the nine programmes – the Rehabilitation Programme, PATH, the Short-term Poverty Alleviation (STPA) Project and the Social Pension Programme. The other five programmes are administered by MEGJC, MLGCD through the municipal corporations’ poor relief departments and the OPM.

Table 15 Establishment of Social Benefit Programmes

Programme	MDA	Year Established	Legislation	Administrative decisions
Poor Relief	MLGCD/Municipal Authorities	1886	✓	X
Social Housing*	MEGJC	1969	X	✓
Rehabilitation	MLSS	1972	X	✓
PATH	MLSS	2002	X	✓
STPA Project	MLSS	2013	X	✓
MSAP	MLGCD/Municipal Authorities	2017	X	✓
CDF	OPM	2018	X	✓
New Social Housing	MEGJC	2019	X	✓
Social Pension	MLSS	2021	X	✓

*Established under the Housing Act 1969. Varying name change: Indigent Housing, Housing Assistance, Special Indigent

Source: Policy documents and Act

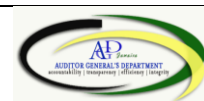
Each programme functions in silos with little or no coordination leading to a fragmented system

3.2 One of the common pitfalls in reforming safety net systems, highlighted by the World Bank, is having too many social benefit programmes¹⁶. The World Bank posited that *“having fewer, larger programs would allow them [i.e. countries] to achieve economies of scale. In countries with too many programs, they often overlap and are not sufficiently coordinated to achieve the best possible synergies”*. Therefore, World Bank cautioned countries to avoid having too many programmes and noted that, *“International experience is rife with countries that have too many programs each with low coverage, low benefits, inadequate administrative systems, and high overheads”*.

3.3 In the context of Jamaica, the various social programmes have similar objectives and overlapping functions, covering parts or the same areas of interest, with little or no coordination in the distribution of benefits. Each of these Government entities operate autonomous systems for managing the various social benefit programmes. For an effective distribution system, this structure requires collaboration among entities to prevent a disjointed approach in the social benefit delivery chain. However, the absence of structured collaboration and integration led to a fragmented social benefit system, which forced individuals to navigate multiple entities providing the same information to assess their eligibility in obtaining the support they need.

3.4 The entities administering social benefit programmes maintained separate beneficiary databases, resulting in the lack of integration to facilitate data sharing among the entities, enabling a cohesive distribution system. Moreover, from a strategic standpoint, the absence of integration and unified data management limited the potential for evidence-based policy decision and effective strategic development. While MLSS utilized an electronic database software to manage the PATH and Social Pension Programme,

¹⁶ World Bank Report: For Protection and Promotion - The Design and Implementation Effective Safety Nets



it, along with MLGCD and MEGJC, relied on paper-based systems and Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to manage beneficiaries’ data for the other benefit programmes¹⁷ (Table 16). The absence of integration of beneficiary data, not only increased the risk of benefit fraud, but also served to create inefficiency in the use of resources as individuals must navigate multiple entities providing the same set of information to assess their eligibility, creating duplications in data collection. Notably, only three of the programmes use a common identifier – the Government-issued Taxpayer Registration Number (TRN) to identify beneficiaries. This limited the ability to consolidate and share information to track and monitor beneficiaries across programmes for targeted delivery.

Table 16 Management of beneficiary information across entities

Programmes	Entities	Database Management Systems				Beneficiary Identifier
		Electronic database	Manual / Paper based	Microsoft excel		
Poor Relief	MLGCD	-	✓	-	Beneficiary number	
Social Housing	MEGJC	-	✓	✓	Name and address	
Rehabilitation	MLSS	-	✓	✓	TRN	
PATH	MLSS	✓	-	-	Beneficiary number	
STPA project	MLSS	-	✓	✓	None	
MSAP	MLGCD	-	✓	-	None	
New Social Housing	MEGJC	-	✓	✓	TRN	
Social Pension	MLSS	✓	-	-	TRN	

TRN - Tax Registration Number

Source: AuGD analysis of information from MLSS, MLGCD and MEGJC

3.5 Despite the NDP strategy to create a single comprehensive database that could support the administration and management of social benefit programmes, we observed that MLSS, MLGCD and MEGJC were maintaining or pursuing separate databases, rather than working together to create a single, unified database to manage the number of beneficiaries across programmes (Table 17).

¹⁷ PATH – Beneficiary Management Information System BMIS software, Social Pension Programme – Social Pension Management Information System (SPMIS).

Table 17 Number of beneficiaries reported across programmes, 2018-19 to 2023-24

Entity	Programmes	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Municipal Corporations	Poor Relief	13,144	13,412	13,617	13,911	13,901	NP
MEGJC	Social Housing	443	1,663	3,386	203	1,737	333
MLSS	Rehabilitation	3,477	3,641	2,487	5,002	4,253	5,041
MLSS	PATH	279,998	263,769	273,521	283,276	273,588	246,686
MLSS	STPA Project	3,928	3,450	3,915	4,784	4,260	8,717
Municipal Corporations	MSAP*	8,778	12,293	9,733	7,989	6,288	4,005
MEGJC	NSHP	0	2	31	26	77	68

NP – Not Provided

MSAP* - Beneficiary data incomplete (No data was provided for Kingston and St. Andrew MC)

Source: AuGD compilation of information provided by MLSS, MLGCD and MEGJC

3.6 The delay in implementing the database of beneficiaries resulted in Government agencies not leveraging technology for information sharing in the administration of the various social benefit programmes¹⁸. Creating a centralized database of social welfare beneficiaries is fundamental in Jamaica’s social welfare reform efforts, enabling the Government to streamline services, eliminate waste, and ensure that support reaches those who are most in need.

3.7 MLSS and MLGCD were among the agencies responsible to coordinate the development of a national register of persons benefiting from social welfare. In 2020, MLGCD engaged eGov Jamaica Limited to develop the National Poor Relief System aimed at automating the operations of the poor relief departments by November 2025. On the other hand, in June 2024, the Government entered a US\$20 million loan agreement with World Bank to develop and expand coverage of social protection and to strengthen social protection delivery system. Subcomponent 3.1 of this project was the development and implementation of an Integrated Social Protection Information System, initially for social benefit programmes within MLSS, with the potential to become a multi-sector, multi-agency system.

Extract: Public Investment Appraisal Branch Project Proposal Submission Form Social protection for Increase Resilience and Opportunity Project September 13, 2023.

Subcomponent 3.1: Development and implementation of an Integrated Social Protection Information System (SPIS). The current SP system lacks modern and interoperable management information systems. The MLSS’s vision for the SPIS is a modular system for social assistance programs, which would all be unified with a central intake system as a single-entry point to all their services and an advanced case management function. The system would function as a single registry and allow the identification of coverage and beneficiary overlap (to identify potential duplications and reduce inclusion errors due to data limitations). A modular and interoperable approach would allow for gradual SPIS development and replacement of existing program-level MISs, such as the beneficiary management system for PATH, or the development of new program MISs, such as case management. Other programs would include the Rehabilitation Program, Steps-to-Work, Social Intervention Services, Social Pension, electronic payments, and a monitoring and evaluation module, among others. The SPIS could become a multi-sector, multi-agency system, but would be launched initially incorporating a few key social assistance programs and services in MLSS and would be built to support integrated case management from enrolment to exit.

¹⁸ Integrated Beneficiary Registries link information on beneficiaries across programs helping to improve coordination, planning, budgeting and monitoring. World Bank 2019 Report

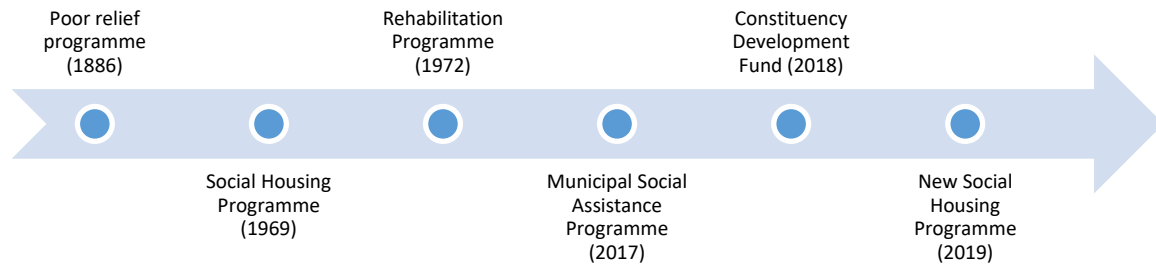
3.8 While MLSS allocated substantial funds towards the implementation of the integrated SPIS, MEGJC outlined efforts to digitize its beneficiary database for social housing but did not provide evidence that it adequately considered the potential duplication and associated costs. In its response, MEGJC highlighted its initiative to develop a database for its social housing benefits. As part of this effort, MEGJC indicated that it had commenced discussions with eGov Jamaica to explore options. Moreover, MEGJC indicated that its recently acquired Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Database system will be evaluated for its potential application to the social benefit programmes. The Dashboard was launched in June 2024.

MEGJC Response: “The exploratory process has commenced with the NSHP consulting with E-Gov Jamaica regarding options. Additionally, the Ministry’s recently acquired Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Database system will be assessed for applicability to the social benefit programmes. Also included in the Ministry’s operational improvements for SHO and NSHP, a strategic review of the organizational structures of the two (2) programmes is in progress”.

Duplications in housing related benefit programmes underscored fragmentation in administration

3.9 Over the years, the Government has developed six programmes that provide housing related benefits, all with similar objectives targeting vulnerable families and individuals (Appendix 5). These are the poor relief programme and the Municipal Social Assistance Programme (MSAP), administered by MLGCD, a rehabilitation programme under MLSS, the Social Housing Programme (SHP) and the New Social Housing Programme (NSHP) managed by the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation (MEGJC), and the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) operated through the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) (Figure 6).

Figure 6 Housing related benefit Programmes



Source: Source: AuGD graphical depiction

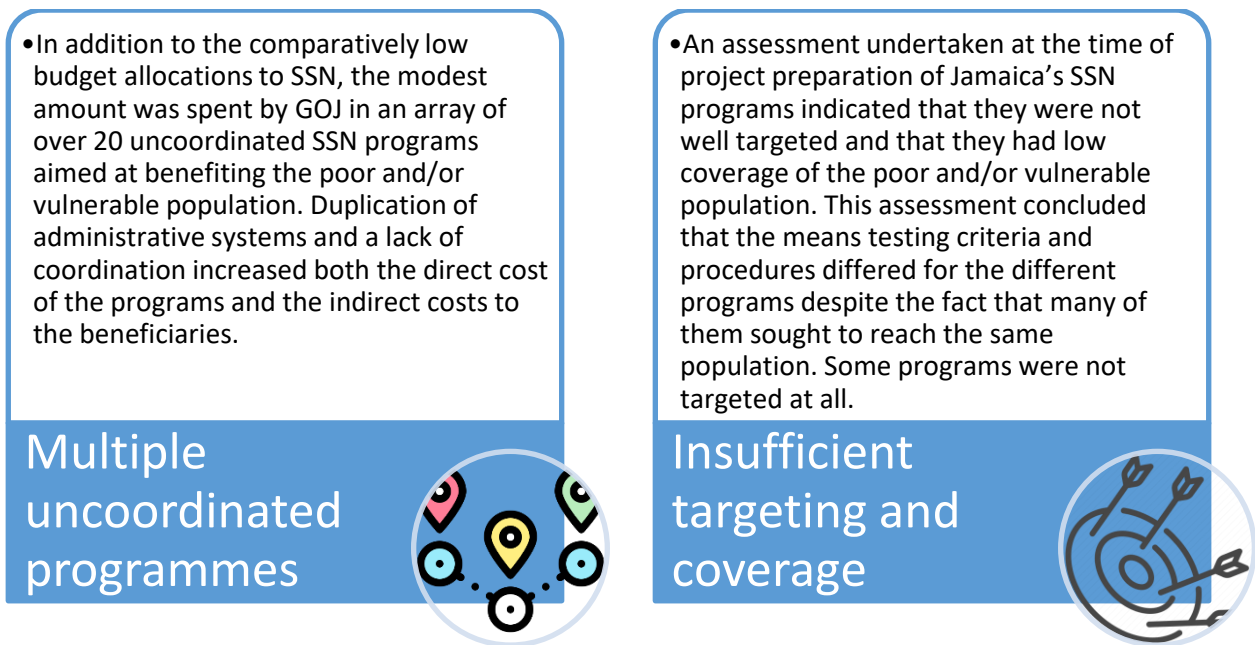
3.10 The distribution of housing related benefits started with the poor relief programme, under the MLGCD. The Government subsequently developed the rehabilitation programme under the MLSS and the Social Housing Programme under the MEGJC (formerly the Ministry of Housing)¹⁹. The poor relief housing and rehabilitation programmes administered by MLGCD and MLSS provide housing rental and home repair grants to individuals. The Government also introduced the Social Housing Programme (SHP), under the

¹⁹ Poor Relief Programme 1886, Rehabilitation Programme 1972, Social Housing Programme (date could not be determined).

MEGJC and the Municipal Social Assistance Programme (MSAP), under the MLGCD that provide home repair grants like the poor relief housing and rehabilitation programmes, as well as housing units. Home repairs grants are also provided through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) under the OPM. In 2019, the Government further introduced the New Social Housing Programme (NSHP), which offers housing units similar to the initial SHP, underscoring the fragmentation and overlapping functions in the administration of social benefit programmes. Of note, the SHP and the NSHP are concurrently administered by separate units within the MEGJC.

3.11 This issue is seen as a long-standing challenge, which was even identified by the World Bank as far back as 2009 where they highlighted the problem of multiple uncoordinated programmes and insufficient targeting and coverage among the issues that affected the distribution of social benefits to the poor and most vulnerable (**Figure 7**). Whereas the different programmes largely provide similar housing benefit assistance, we noted that the channels through which individuals can access the benefits, under each programme, differ among the MDAs. For example, whereas the rehabilitation and the initial social housing programmes accept direct applications, applicants under the MSAP, NSHP and the CDF are recommended by political representatives.

Figure 7 Document of the World Bank Jamaica Safety Net Project, 2009



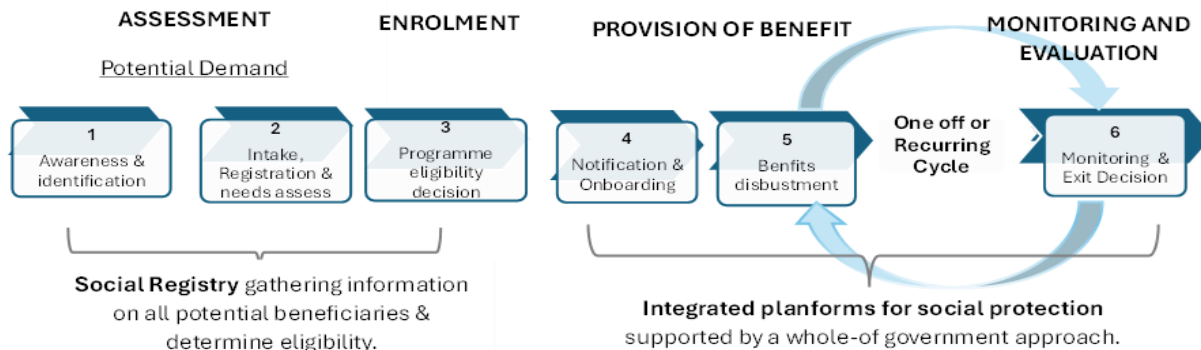
Source: World Bank Document 2009

Most programmes did not establish key processes to ensure and measure efficiency and effectiveness

3.12 The fragmented social benefit distribution system created administrative weaknesses, leading to duplications and other operational inefficiencies. As an important first step, we expected the entities to establish clear standards and protocols for assessment, enrolment, distribution, monitoring and evaluation, consistent with best practice for social benefit distribution. These include setting eligibility criteria, application requirements, enrolment review procedures, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for processing applications and benefit payouts, performance monitoring, grievance handling and interagency data sharing across programmes.

3.13 The World Bank’s social benefit delivery chain, for example, comprises six interconnected subcomponents under assessment, enrolment, provision of benefit, monitoring and evaluation, which together form a cohesive system aimed at ensuring effective support to beneficiaries²⁰. The first three subcomponents – awareness and identification of beneficiaries, intake registration and needs assessment and programme eligibility decision, incorporate a social registry for gathering information on all potential beneficiaries and determining eligibility for enrolment. The other subcomponents – notification and onboarding, benefits disbursement, monitoring and exit decision, together form a platform for social protection supported by a unified government approach (**Figure 8**).

Figure 8 Social benefits delivery chain



Source: AuGD depiction: World Bank study - Integrated Social Information System and Social Registries, October 2019

3.14 As shown in **Figure 9**, all programmes, except the Short-Term Poverty Alleviation (STPA) project, had manual or standard operating procedure that establishes eligibility, application requirements and timeline for benefit disbursement. However, most fell short in establishing KPIs for application processing, standards for monitoring performance, handling beneficiary grievances, and sharing data across programmes. Notably, Poor Relief met all eight criteria and MLSS successfully met seven of the eight criteria for PATH, with the exception being establishing KPIs for processing applications. However, its STPA project did not meet any of the basic expectations, to ensure the effective administration of the project, having lacked a manual or procedure document altogether.

²⁰ World Bank – Integrated Social Information System and Social Registries, October 2019

Figure 9 Existence of manuals, SOP and KPIs in administering benefit programmes

Social Benefit Programmes	Manual/SOP	Eligibility Criteria	Application Requirements	Processing Application	Benefit Disbursement	Monitoring Performance	Handling Grievance	Data Sharing
Poor Relief	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Housing	✓	✓	✓	⚠	✓	●	●	●
Rehabilitation Support								
o Compassionate Grant	✓	✓	✓	●	✓	●	●	●
o Emergency Grant	✓	✓	✓	●	✓	●	●	●
o Education and Social Intervention	✓	✓	✓	●	✓	●	●	●
o Rehabilitation Grant	✓	✓	✓	●	✓	✓	✓	●
PATH	✓	✓	✓	●	✓	✓	✓	✓
STPA Project	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
MSAP	✓	✓	✓	●	✓	●	●	●
New Social Housing Programme	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	●	●	●
Social Pension	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	●	✓
Met Partially Met Not Met								

AuGD's analysis of information

MLSS Response: “While we remain compliant with the Monitoring and Evaluation requirements of the Office of the Cabinet through our annual operational plans, we are also strengthening the mechanisms and developing performance standards for all clients facing social welfare programmes”. MLSS subsequently presented a one-page procedural document for the operation of the STPA project – Approved June 18, 2024, and indicated that “the MLSS is in the process of developing QuikApp solutions for automating the process for the Rehabilitation and the STPA project as interim solutions until the completion of the Social Protection Information System under SPIRO. The processes have been documented and requirements are currently being finalized to facilitate system development²¹”. MLSS also subsequently presented a master plan, which include major deliverables and targets for 2024/2025 for three of its programmes – PATH, Social Pension and Rehabilitation.

Beneficiaries experiencing variable turnaround times to access social benefits

3.15 The absence of performance indicators in social assistance programmes led to unpredictability and uncertainty in application processing timelines, resulting in unreliable and variable turnaround times across the agencies administering social benefit programmes. Establishing clear KPIs for processing applications, through to enrolling beneficiaries and distributing benefits, would not only reduce uncertainty, but also ensure individuals receive benefits as quickly as possible, improving the overall impact of the programmes. Notably, only two of the programmes assessed had established KPIs for application processing. The Social Housing Programme stood out, with a defined 15-day turnaround time for investigation after receiving

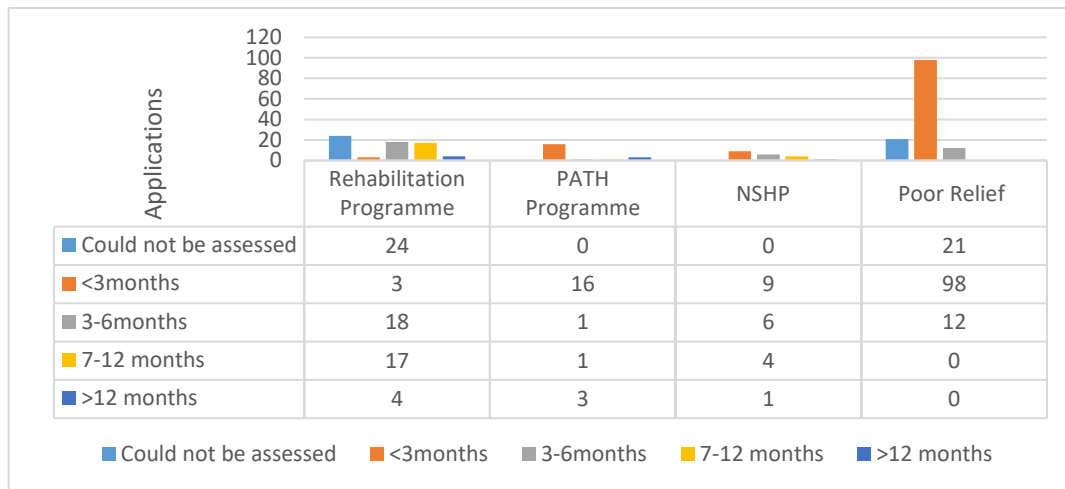
²¹ SPIRO – Social Protection for Increase Resilience and Opportunity

applications. This timeframe only covered the investigation phase, leaving the remaining processes to final approval, without established timelines. Additionally, we did not assess processing time for the STPA project and MSAP, as they did not accept direct applications from individuals. However, we identified operational weaknesses in the administration of the STPA project and MSAP, which are presented in **Case Studies 2 and 3**.

3.16 We assessed the turn-around time for beneficiaries under PATH and the Rehabilitation Programme, both administered by MLSS. While our review showed that applicants under PATH experienced variable turnaround times from application to registration due to issues with submitting outstanding information (**Case Study 1**), our sample of 21 applicants showed that MLSS generally made initial payouts within three months of registration. In contrast, the Rehabilitation Programme showed varying and significant turnaround times. For 21 (32 per cent) of the 66 applications sampled, the initial payouts took between seven and twelve months or more, from the application date. Another 21 beneficiaries received benefits within six months, but we were unable to determine the turnaround time for the remaining 24 beneficiaries due to missing disbursement dates in the files.

3.17 In addition, beneficiaries under the New Social Housing Programme experienced varying turnaround times from application to approval, spanning from less than three months to over 12 months. We sampled 20 cases, nine took less than three months, six took between three and six months, four between seven and 12 months, while one took more than 12 months. Turnaround time from application to the initial interim payments under the Poor Relief also varied up to six months, with 98 cases under three months and 12 cases three to six months (**Figure 10**). We were unable to determine the turnaround time for 21 of the 131 beneficiaries we sampled due to missing dates in the files.

Figure 10 Analysis of turnaround time for processing social benefit applications and payments



AuGD's analysis of information

Shortfall in the number of social workers to support social benefit administration

3.18 Jamaica's Vision 2030 NDP outlines the need for adequate human resources to effectively administer and deliver social assistance programmes. Social workers play a crucial role in supporting social benefit administration, including assessing individual needs to determine eligibility and benefits. Notwithstanding, in 2021-22, the MLSS managed 288,278 beneficiaries for its PATH and Rehabilitation programmes with 138 social workers, resulting in a ratio of one social worker to 2,089 beneficiaries. In 2022-23, the poor relief programme had 13,901 beneficiaries which were managed by 90 social workers, yielding a ratio of one social worker to 154 beneficiaries (**Table 18**). In both cases, we were not able to assess social worker to beneficiary ratio for 2023-24, due to the unavailability of data. These ratios fell outside the range based on international standard of one social worker per 100 beneficiaries, highlighting the need for resources to ensure continuous and effective support for vulnerable populations²². MEGJC social housing programmes had no assigned social workers.

Table 18 Social Workers to Beneficiaries Ratio Analysis

Entity	Programme	Year	No. of Beneficiaries	No. of Social Workers	Ratio
MLSS	PATH and Rehabilitation	2021-22	288,278	138	1:2,089
MLGCD	Poor Relief	2022-23	13,901	90	1:154
MEGJC	SHP	2023-24	333	0	0:333

Source: AuGD's analysis

3.19 MEGJC revealed that its current establishment does not include social worker classification. Instead, it employed community development officers with similar job descriptions. Notably, the minimum qualification requirement for MEGJC's community development officers is a bachelor's in business administration, with a finance or marketing major, significantly different from MLSS social workers, which require a bachelor's in social sciences or related qualifications. MEGJC noted that it is conducting a strategic review of the organizational structures of the two housing programmes to incorporate the social worker classifications. Meanwhile, MLGCD also indicated that it is introducing a new organisational structure for local authorities, which includes additional social worker positions (poor relief officers) to alleviate the shortage. Furthermore, MLSS noted that it received approval for the engagement of 240 new positions to augment the current staff complement.

MEGJC Response: *“the Ministry’s establishment does not have a social worker classification. The establishment includes Community Development Officers, for which the job description has similarities to that of a Social Worker”. “Additionally, a strategic review of the organizational structures of the two (2) programmes is in progress to include the Services Commission’s Social Worker classification”.*

MLGCD Response: *“the new organisational structure for the Local Authorities will address the shortage significantly, as additional posts for social workers (poor relief officers) have been included in the new structure for each local authority”.*

²² World Bank Articles - Integration and Intermediation: Case Management in SSN Programs and Social Services (Oct 2019)



CASE STUDIES

Social Benefit Programmes Deficiencies

Case Study 1: Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH)

3.20 The Beneficiary Management Information System (BMIS) plays a crucial role in determining eligibility for PATH applicants. Applicants' data are entered into the BMIS, which generates a score based on applicants' house-hold demographics to determine needs and eligibility. To qualify for PATH, applicants must meet the established cut-off score. Those who score less than or equal to the eligibility cut-off score are provisionally approved, while those within five points above the cut-off are classified as 'borderline', pending further verification. Applicants who exceed the eligibility cut-off score by more than five points are rejected, with the option to appeal. For provisionally approved and borderline applicants, social workers conduct verification to confirm their household demographics, using a house and services assessment (**Appendix 9**). After verification, applicants are either approved or rejected, based on their final score. Once approved and all documents are submitted, applicants are accepted and required to complete an awareness exercise and sign an agreement acknowledging the programmes' terms and conditions. Applicants are automatically moved from acceptance to registration and start receiving benefit payouts. Data provided by MLSS indicated a 12 per cent decrease in the number of PATH beneficiaries, moving to 246,686 in 2023-24 from 279,998 in 2018-19 (**Appendix 10**).

PATH applicants awaiting registration for long periods after being approved and accepted

3.21 Our analysis of a sample of 75 applicants, who were approved, between 2017-18 and 2023-24, revealed that the applicants remained on the approved list for extended periods (ranging from 5 months to 7 years), after their application date. Further, another 9,639 applicants did not sign their agreements for periods ranging from 12 months to 7 years, after being accepted for registration. The MLSS explained that applicants will remain on the approved and acceptance lists if they do not sign the agreement or submit required documents, such as birth certificates.

3.22 While applicants' data are stored in the BMIS, outstanding requirements are kept on checklist of physical files, which does not allow for an efficient monitoring system for applicants with outstanding information. An electronic system like the BMIS could flag these outstanding requirements, enhancing the overall tracking and follow-up process by social workers to identify and address the reasons behind the delays in signing agreements or submitting required documents. This deficiency contributed to delays in finalizing the registration process for hundreds of PATH applicants awaiting registration for extended periods. MLSS indicated that it is actively enhancing its monitoring mechanisms for applicants. To facilitate this, MLSS indicated that it has since put in place a system to generate monthly reports for parish management, aimed at investigating and resolving any outstanding applications.

MLSS Response: *“The MLSS accepted the Auditor’s recommendation and is currently taking steps to strengthen mechanisms to monitor. The new SPIS will provide improved accountability features. The MLSS has implemented a system to provide monthly reports to parish management for the investigation and resolution of the outstanding applications.”*

Case Study 2: Short-Term Poverty Alleviation (STPA) Project

3.23 From time to time, the social assistance system was called upon to respond to emergency situations such as natural or man-made shocks or other events²³. The Short-Term Poverty Alleviation (STPA) project was established in 2013 by MLSS after receiving approval to operate the project for four months, between December 2013 and March 2014, through a Cabinet Decision No.42/13, dated December 16, 2013. MLSS justified the project due to an increase in the poverty rate, which necessitated short-term intervention to provide immediate assistance in entrepreneurial and compassionate grants to vulnerable groups.

3.24 However, MLSS continued the administration of the project, for over 10 years without the necessary justification and Cabinet approval. MLSS did not conduct a project review to determine the effectiveness of the STPA project, to justify the project's continuation. However, MLSS indicated that the *“Ministry has been provided with the budget for the continuation of the programme, indicating the authorization for the continuation of the Short-Term Poverty Intervention”*. Significant sums were disbursed under this programme without any monitoring to determine the impact. Information provided by MLSS showed that over the last seven years, 2017-18 to 2023-24, MLSS received \$807 million to operate the project. MLSS disbursed \$726.4 million to an estimated 32,399 beneficiaries. There was a 160.5 per cent increase in the number of beneficiaries under the programme, moving to 8,717 beneficiaries in 2023-24 from 3,345 in 2017-18 (**Appendix 10**). Members of Parliament submitted the names of persons to receive benefits to MLSS. The MLSS did not establish standard operating procedures or eligibility criteria to ensure transparency in the selection of persons to receive benefits. Instead, MLSS made payments to individuals or companies on beneficiaries' behalf without the necessary social assessments to validate the needs of the beneficiaries.

3.25 Unlike other programmes with fixed benefit limits, the STPA project had no established benefit limits to determine the maximum benefit to be paid to an individual. We noted that some beneficiaries received one-off assistance under the programme, while others received assistance multiple times. Our review of payment records revealed repeated benefit payments to 867 individuals totalling \$54 million, over the period 2019 to 2024. Of the 867 individuals, 20 received payments ranging from \$300,000 to \$1.5 million. In 2021, beneficiary B1 received \$1.5 million in three transactions of \$500,000 each on the same day, while beneficiary B2 received five payments totalling \$907,500, over the period 2020 to 2024. We noted payments to individuals ranging from \$250,000 up to \$1.5 million (**Appendix 6**). In all these instances, we found no records to verify and validate the needs of the individuals.

3.26 The lack of established eligibility criteria, benefit limits, and social worker assessment created an environment of little or no transparency. These deficiencies also inhibited targeted delivery by exposing the project to persons who were not in need, thereby undermining the project's impact. The absence of these basic guidelines also heightened the risk of misuse of funds and potential mismanagement. This underscores the need for prompt remediation, by MLSS, to ensure responsible stewardship of resources and targeted support to only genuinely vulnerable individuals.

²³ Vision 2030 NDP [Page 78]

Project's duplication

3.27 The assistance provided under the programme was identical to the support already provided by MLSS's Rehabilitation Programme. Both the STPA project and the Rehabilitation Programme provide financial assistance such as compassionate, emergency relief, rehabilitation, education and social intervention grants to vulnerable individuals. In contrast, the Rehabilitation Programme had established standard operating procedures and was accessible by direct application. In addition to the STPA project and the Rehabilitation Programme that offered entrepreneurial grants, MLSS also offers entrepreneurial grants through its Social Intervention and Steps-to-Work programmes, underscoring the implementation of different programmes, with the same benefit offerings, creating duplication of efforts and cost-inefficiencies.

MLSS Response: *"The MLSS accepts that the mechanisms for the administration of the STPA needs to be strengthened. Since the audit, we have implemented a procedural document which includes mandatory needs assessment forms. As per analysis, the MLSS does not have the Social Worker capacity to verify an additional over 30,000 grants. As per the recently approved procedure document, the Needs Assessment is now mandatory". "MLSS is currently reviewing the operational structure for Public Assistance with a view to consolidate grants programmes. The target is for consolidation to become effective in the 2025/2026 financial year".*

Case Study 3: Municipal Social Assistance Programme (MSAP)

3.28 MLGCD established the Municipal Social Assistance Programme (MSAP) to improve the effectiveness of the local authority through the designation of special funding to address the various challenges, which exist within each division. The programme was designed to support individuals living below the poverty line to alleviate economic hardship and is managed and delivered by the local municipal corporations²⁴.

3.29 The programme has four social components - social housing, indigent housing, education grant, and funeral grant in addition to administrative support. MLGCD allocates funds from the Parochial Revenue Fund (PRF) to municipal corporations to administer the programme (**Appendix 7**). The municipal corporations administered the programme through the poor relief departments. According to the programme's manual, the poor relief departments were required to adopt the relevant government principles and standards to verify and validate the legitimate needs and eligibility of individuals. MLGCD has overall management and oversight responsibility for MSAP to ensure the highest level of transparency, probity, and accountability with the goal of ensuring that the funds are efficiently and effectively spent. However, we found weaknesses in the administration of the programme hindering transparency and accountability.

History of noncompliance in submitting quarterly expenditure and progress reports

3.30 Over the period, 2017-18 to 2023-24, MLGCD allocated \$1.53 billion to municipal corporations for MSAP based on requests submitted by municipal councillors²⁵. Quarterly progress and expenditure reports are required to account for the monies allocated for social benefit distribution under the various components of the programme and to determine if resources were being used effectively to support those in need²⁶. However, the municipal corporations did not faithfully submit the reports to MLGCD, which would outline the programme's progress and expenditure. We noted a history of noncompliance in submitting quarterly expenditure and progress reports by municipal corporations. This made it difficult for MLGCD to fully track the effectiveness of the programme for the period 2017-18 to 2023-24. MLGCD did not to prepare all the annual reports for the period to account for the \$1.53 billion allocated over the period, to the programme. MLGCD provided only three annual reports for 2018-19, 2020-21 and 2021-22. Whereas the reports for 2020-21 and 2021-22 reflected expenditure totalling \$144 million for only seven of the 14 municipal corporations, the report for 2018-19 did not include any information on the project's expenditure (**Table 19**). Due to the shortcomings in the reporting process, we remain uncertain about how MLGCD ensured the effective utilization of its resources and assesses the overall impact of the programme.

²⁴ MSAP Manual – Introduction

²⁵ Councillors shall submit budget to the Municipal Corporation based on established needs identified and the Corporation submits its application to the Minister by way of a resolution of Council.

²⁶ MSAP manual page 4 "The Municipal Corporations and Municipality must provide progress and expenditure reports for submission to the Minister."

Table 19 Analysis of MSAP allocation and expenditure

Year	MSAP Allocations ²⁷						Monitoring and Accountability			
	Education Grant	Social Housing	Indigent Housing	Funeral Grant	Admin Support	Total	Municipal Corporations Reported Expenditure	MC's Quarterly Reports	Annual Reports	Expenditure as per Annual Report
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000			\$'000
2017-18	73,950	-	3,720	-	46,536	124,206	122,833	X	X	-
2018-19	81,450	39,350	11,837	3,448	62,500	198,585	173,634	X	✓	*NR
2019-20	136,550	78,700	26,003	14,278	78,235	333,766	293,018	X	X	-
2020-21	137,250	-	28,255	33,690	75,570	274,765	256,140	X	✓	63,080
2021-22	113,500	-	58,162	4,365	80,400	256,427	239,149	X	✓	81,228
2022-23	42,432	-	53,035	4,490	82,380	182,337	231,231	X	X	-
2023-24	19,770	-	64,848	6,745	68,880	160,244	209,028	X	X	-
Total	604,902	118,050	245,860	67,017	494,501	1,530,330	1,525,033	-	-	144,308

*NR – Not reported

Source: MLGCD disbursement and MSAP annual reports

3.31 The MLGCD recognized the need for accurate and timely reporting to ensure proper accountability and has taken steps to improve reporting compliance. **Figure 11** shows extracts of four letters from MLGCD to municipal corporations, between January 2019 and July 2024, highlighting a systemic issue of noncompliance. Despite repeated reminders and reprimands, municipal corporations failed to submit the reports. To address this deficiency, MLGCD's letter dated July 17, 2024 instructed municipal corporations to submit monthly reports effective April 1, 2024, instead of quarterly reports. The letter warned that failure to comply would result in no further funding allocation under the programme.

²⁷ Source: Parochial Revenue Fund disbursement records

Figure 11 Extracts of MLGCD's letters to municipal corporations emphasizing the submission of quarterly progress and expenditure reports for MSAP

Date	Extracts from PS Letters
January 31, 2019	"As was established in the MSAP Guideline section 5j and k, a quarterly report must be submitted by all MCs regarding the success and challenges of the programme in order to make improvements where necessary. As such, the reports should be submitted on or before February 28, 2019".
April 08, 2022	"The MLGRD recognizes the need for consistent reporting and is therefore requesting reports for the fiscal year 2021-2022. We are also requesting an update report for the 2020-2021 period under each component of the Municipal Social Assistance Programme (MSAP) to be submitted to the Ministry by April 30, 2022".
May 26, 2023	"The MLGRD recognizes the need for consistent reporting and its therefore requesting the Municipal Social Assistance Programme (MSAP) Report for the fiscal year 2022-2023 under each component of the Programme to be submitted to the Ministry on or before June 7, 2023".
July 17, 2024	"This serves to advise that further to the meeting held July 17, 2024, all Municipal Corporations (MCs) are required to submit monthly reports to account for funds allocated to each MC under the MSAP programme with effect from April 1, 2024. In this regard, monthly reports for each month (April, May, June, and July) to include expenditure details are to be submitted to the Ministry by August 31, 2024...". "Please note that Chief Executive Officers should pay attention to accuracy of reports to ensure proper accountability and to note that failure to submit these reports will result in no further allocation to the MC under the programme".

Source: MLGCD Permanent Secretary's letters addressed to municipal corporations' chief executive officers

Inaccuracies in MSAP expenditures

3.32 Despite multiple requests, both MLGCD and the municipal corporations failed to provide the quarterly expenditure reports for our review. MLGCD and municipal corporations provided the expenditure information shown in **Table 19** to account for the \$1.53 billion allocated to MSAP, only after the adverse audit findings were presented in the draft report. However, our verification, coupled with the delayed provision of information, raises concerns about the accuracy of the reported expenditure of \$1.53 billion.

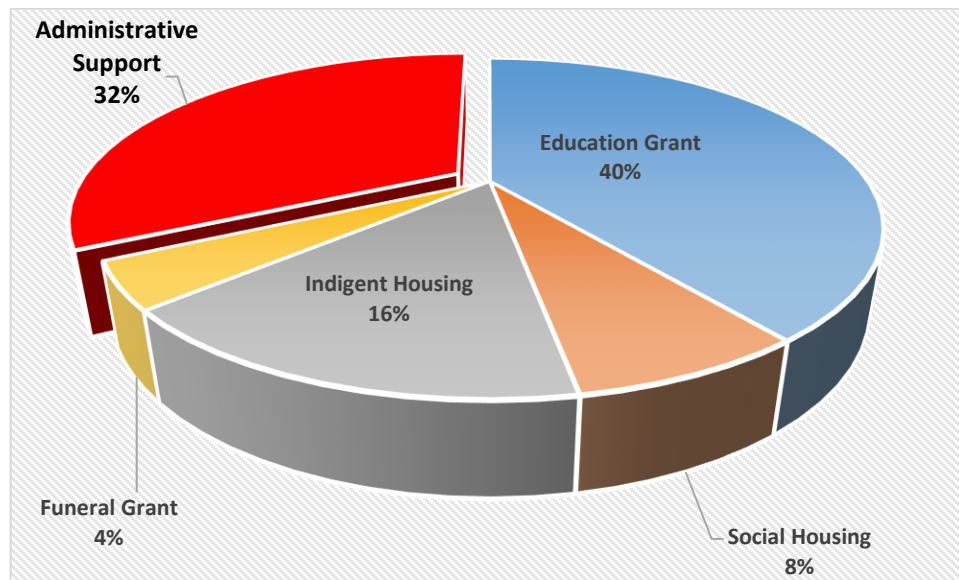
3.33 We visited four municipal corporations (St. Ann, Portmore, St. Catherine and Kingston and St. Andrew) to verify the reported expenditure. During our verification process, we uncovered significant variances in the reported expenditure for MSAP's four components. Notably, variances were identified at the St. Ann, Portmore and St. Catherine, municipal corporations, where we requested all payment vouchers for selected years. For instance, the St. Ann Municipal Corporation reported \$26.6 million in expenditure for 2020-21 and 2022-23, but we could only verify \$18.2 million, resulting in an \$8.4 million variance. Furthermore, the reported expenditure of \$6 million for 2023-24, contradicted the verified vouchers totalling \$11.6 million. Similarly, Portmore Municipal Corporation's reported expenditure of \$22 million, between April 2020 and March 2024, differed by \$7.2 million from the verified vouchers totalling \$29.2 million. The St Catherine Municipal Corporation also showed substantial variance of \$52 million, between reported expenditure (\$125.5 million) and verified vouchers (\$73.5 million). At the Kingston and St. Andrew Municipal Corporation, we encountered issues verifying 239 vouchers valued at \$13.3 million out of a sample 1,263 vouchers totalling \$150.6 million, due to missing documentation. These discrepancies compromised the credibility and accuracy of MLGCD's reported expenditure information, provided by the municipal corporations. Consequently, we cannot rely on information provided to ensure accountability. Also, there was a noted discrepancy between the reported \$1.561 billion allocated for MSAP and the PRF allocation disbursement recorded, of \$1.530 billion.

St. Ann MC	Portmore MC	St. Catherine MC	Kingston and St. Andrew MC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reported expenditure (2020-21 and 2022-23): \$26.6M - Verified expenditure: \$18.2M - Variance: \$8.4M (32% discrepancy) - Reported expenditure (2023-24): \$6M - Verified expenditure: \$11.6M (Contradicts reported figure) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reported expenditure (April 2020 - March 2024): \$22M - Verified expenditure: \$29.2M - Variance: \$7.2M (33% discrepancy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reported expenditure: (April 2020 - March 2024): \$125.5M - Verified expenditure: \$73.5M - Variance: \$52M (41% discrepancy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sample of 1,263 vouchers valuing \$150.6M - 239 vouchers valuing \$13.3M (9%) could not be verified due to missing documentation

Disproportionate allocation between administrative support and actual benefit payments.

3.34 Further, information obtained from the Parochial Revenue Fund disbursement schedule revealed that MLGCD allocated \$494.5 million to municipal corporations for administrative support over the period – representing 32 per cent of the \$1.530 billion allocated for the programme (**Figure 12**). Each Councillor in the municipal corporations was allocated \$30,000 monthly for administrative support to offset expenses for the rental of office space, purchase of basic stationery and office supplies and special allowance for administrative staff.

Figure 12 Analysis of allocation to MSAP Social Components and Administrative Support



Source: AuGD's analysis

3.35 Of note, for two years, 2022-23 and 2023-24, we observed that the 14 municipal corporations were allocated a total of \$342.5 million, with a notable imbalance in allocations. While \$191 million (56 per cent) was designated for actual benefit payments, \$151 million (44 per cent) was allocated for administrative support. Moreover, a closer examination revealed that eight municipal corporations allocated more funds for administrative support over benefit payments. For these municipal corporations, the amounts allocated for administrative support significantly outweighed the amounts allocated for actual benefit payments. In essence, the St. Ann Municipal Corporation incurred a cost of \$11.5 million for administrative support to deliver benefits of only \$4.1 million (**Appendix 8**). Further, on our site visits to the four municipal corporations, we noted that the administrative support payments of \$30,000 monthly were made to various individuals' bank accounts for administrative services, at the request of councillors.

Inconsistencies in the monitoring and reporting of the progress and outcomes for MSAP

3.36 We also noted inconsistencies in monitoring and reporting progress and outcomes under the indigent housing component of MSAP. We examined 10 projects administered by Kingston and St. Andrew Municipal Corporation (KSAMC), between June 2018 and August 2022, with MLGCD disbursing \$63.3 million. While project records and social worker reports showed four houses built at a cost of \$30.3 million for two fire victims and two registered indigents, we couldn't determine the beneficiaries of the remaining \$33 million worth of houses constructed, and if the basic requirement established by the MLGCD were met, as beneficiaries' names and social reports were not presented. In addition, although funeral grants were properly supported by social investigation reports, we found no evidence of social investigations to validate the eligibility of individuals receiving education grants. MLGCD provided incomplete data on the number of beneficiaries under the programme, between 2018-19 and 2023-24 (**Appendix 10**). The integrity of the programme was undermined by these transparency and accountability deficiencies.

MLGCD Response: *The Ministry has oversight of the MSAP programme. In exercising its duty, quarterly reports were required from the MCs in respect of the administration of the MSAP. See letters dated January 31, 2019. However, MCs were not consistent in providing quarterly reports to the Ministry as this was also the period the MCs were actively engaged in local response to COVID 19. Accordingly, to ensure the Ministry received reports from each MC, each MC was asked to provide annual reports via letters dated April 8, 2022, and May 26, 2023, respectively.*

Noting the challenge, the concept note establishing the MSAP was also recommended to be adjusted to include the following areas:

- 1. Enhanced Risk Management Matrix*
- 2. Handing over instrument to guide hand over of units to beneficiaries*
- 3. MCs to do monthly reports instead of quarterly reports*
- 4. Any other adjustment deemed relevant to strengthen the implementation and monitoring of the programme.*

This was intended to ensure an enhanced approach for the implementation of the MSAP. See relevant internal memos dated April 11, 2022, and August 8, 2023, respectively and revised concept note. In further reviewing the Programme, the Ministry further adjusted the requirements for submission of monthly reports as outlined in letter dated July 17, 2024, where MCS were advised that monthly reports for the period April 2024 to July 2024 are required to be submitted by August 31, 2024, and that report for August 2024 is required by September 15, 2024. Further, going forward, all monthly reports are required by the 15th day of the following month. Failure to provide same will result in no funds being allocated to the MC.

The intent of the administrative support component of the Municipal Social Assistant Programme is geared towards improving support to each division; improving the delivery of service and providing broad support for the programmes within the division. The revised concept document has been improved to outline more clearly the use of administrative support to each division including initiatives concerning care packages distribution, communication on infrastructure maintenance and liaising with community members on challenges in the communities.

The Ministry will strengthen its monitoring and oversight of the MSAP as indicated above through the MCs providing monthly reports by the 15th day of each month. The Parochial Revenue Branch is responsible to undertake in office reviews of each MC from time to time and provide detailed reports on any challenges and recommendations in the way forward. Each MC has also been advised that failure to provide monthly reports will result in non-allocation of funds.

All MCs have been directed to utilize all remaining funds allocated for housing support by November 30, 2024. The PRF Branch and BOS have been directed to conduct a detailed review with the KSAMC and provide a report on the beneficiaries by August 31, 2024.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Medium-Term Socio-Economic Framework (MTF)

National Outcome No. 3 Effective Social Protection

No.	Priority Strategies and Actions 3-3	Responsible Agency	Progress Results
MTF 2009-2012			
1	Identify vulnerable groups and specific needs	MLSS, MOHE, MLGRD	
2	Develop a national register of persons benefiting from social welfare	MLSS, MOHE, MLGRD	
3	Rationalise benefits within the PATH programme	MLSS, MOHE, NCSC	
4	Undertake public education and awareness building campaign through various media channels	MLSS	
MTF 2012/13 – 2014/15			
5	Complete and distribute the comprehensive social protection strategy document	PIOJ, MLSS	
6	Develop and commence implementation of the plan of action to support the social protection strategy.	PIOJ, MLSS	
7	Initiate and strengthen strategic public-private partnerships for social protection including financing	MLSS, Private Sector Organisations	
8	Develop social housing policy	MLSS, MTWH, NHT	
9	Increase public education and sensitization on the rights of senior citizens	MLSS, NCSC	
10	Strengthen the database of vulnerable population groups	MLSS, MLGCD, MOH, MOE, PIOJ, MTWH	
11	Strengthen the system of identification of beneficiaries and delivery of public assistance programmes	MLSS, PIOJ	
12	Strengthen the effective targeting of beneficiaries under PATH	MLSS	
MTF 2015/16 – 2017/18			
13	Revise the National Policy on Senior Citizens	MLSS, NCSC	
14	Continue to provide social assistance for needy elderly	MLSS, NCSC	
15	Undertake ongoing review and assessment of social safety net provisions	NSPC, PIOJ	
16	Continue promotion and implementation of case management for households on welfare	MLSS	
MTF 2018 /19 – 2020/21			
17	Continue promotion and implementation of case management for clients of state social assistance/welfare services and programmes	MLSS	
18	Provide social transfers to support income and livelihood of households	MLSS, PATH	
19	Support exit strategies for families on welfare by improving their attachment to labour market engagement	MLSS, PATH	

Achieved
 Partially achieved
 Yet to be Achieved

Source: PIOJ Medium Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework – Vision 2030 Jamaica NDP

Appendix 2 Priority Action: 2017-18 to 2022-23

No.	NSPC Priority Issue	Actions	Expected Output by	Progress
1	Prepare map of feeding programmes for the elderly, homeless.	Complete MAP of feeding programmes island-wide	Dec 2018	🛑
2	Conduct in-depth Assessment of PATH Beneficiaries (Tracer Study).	Complete Tracer Study Report	Dec 2018	✅
3	Conduct review of the Economic Empowerment Grants Programme for Persons with Disabilities.	Complete Terms of Reference, Report and Recommendations	Dec 2018	🛑
4	Coordination of services, and policy coherence re youth employment/interventions.	Coordination Matrix	Dec 2018	🛑
5	Examine ALMP for persons with disabilities, esp. youth	Position/Policy Paper	Dec 2018	🛑
6	Exploring the feasibility of an Unemployment Insurance scheme	Complete Unemployment Insurance Study	Dec 2018	✅
7	Examine status of small farmers, fishers (agricultural producers) in regard to social security (social assistance support and social insurance, crop insurance tec.).	Position Paper	Dec 2018	✅
8	Exploring the connection of informal sector workers to social security provisions	Forum Report	Dec 2018	✅
9	Structures and systems for youth empowerment programmes	Position Paper	Dec 2019	🛑
10	Assessment of HEART Trust NTA/post-secondary/tertiary institutions for academic inclusion for persons with disabilities	Terms of Reference for the Assessment (Study)	Dec 2019	✅
11	Social protection implications for private security guards' industry	Policy Brief with Recommendations	Dec 2019	🛑
12	SP provisions for persons with disabilities re pensions, insurance, protection of assets	Gap Analysis	Dec 2019	🛑
13	Social Housing and Homelessness as SP imperatives.	Complete Map of existing Government Social Housing programmes	Dec 2019	✅
14	Assess major gaps and challenges re access to programmes and provisions on the SP Floor	Brief/Gap Assessment on Major Gaps and Challenges	Dec 2019	⚠️
15	Poor relief Act to be repealed by the National Assistance Bill.	National Assistance Bill	Dec 2019	⚠️
16	Academic inclusion of boys and girls in juvenile detention facilities	Research Study	Dec 2020	🛑
17	Lifelong learning and Digital Literacy opportunities for Senior Citizens.	Brief Study	Dec 2020	✅
18	Develop a case management system for youth empowerment interventions.	Develop Case Management System, gender-based	Dec 2020	🛑
19	Costing of the Social Protection Floor.	Completion of a study to cost the Social Protection Floor	Dec 2020	✅
20	Retraining, retooling and redeployment for the marginal worker.	Policy Note	Dec 2021	🛑
21	Examine barriers to financial inclusion/access to financial services of seniors, persons with disabilities.	Policy Brief	Dec 2021	✅
22	Gaps in access to educational services for children/students with disabilities (primary and secondary levels).	Status Report on sample of schools: challenges and gaps, solutions and	Dec 2022	🛑

No.	NSPC Priority Issue	Actions	Expected Output by	Progress
		responses, sustainable efforts		
23	LNOB addressing gaps (VNR, NPRP Workshop).	LNOB Tool Kit	Dec 2022	☑
24	Youth unemployment, esp. female youth; (causes and opportunities) qualitative study to inform programmes and policies.	Draft Policy Paper & TOR	Dec 2023	☑
25	The Care Economy potential for employment, labour market engagement, economic growth.	Draft Policy Paper	Dec 2023	⊖
26	Care policy for the elderly.	Draft concept paper	Dec 2023	☑
27	Review Social Protection Legislation.	Position Paper on Anchor SP legislation.	Dec 2023	☑
28	Develop NSPC Parish-based structure.	NSPC Parish-based structure	Dec 2023	⚠



Achieved



In progress



Yet to be completed

Appendix 3 NPRPC Strategic Actions: Addressing Extreme Poverty and Basic Needs

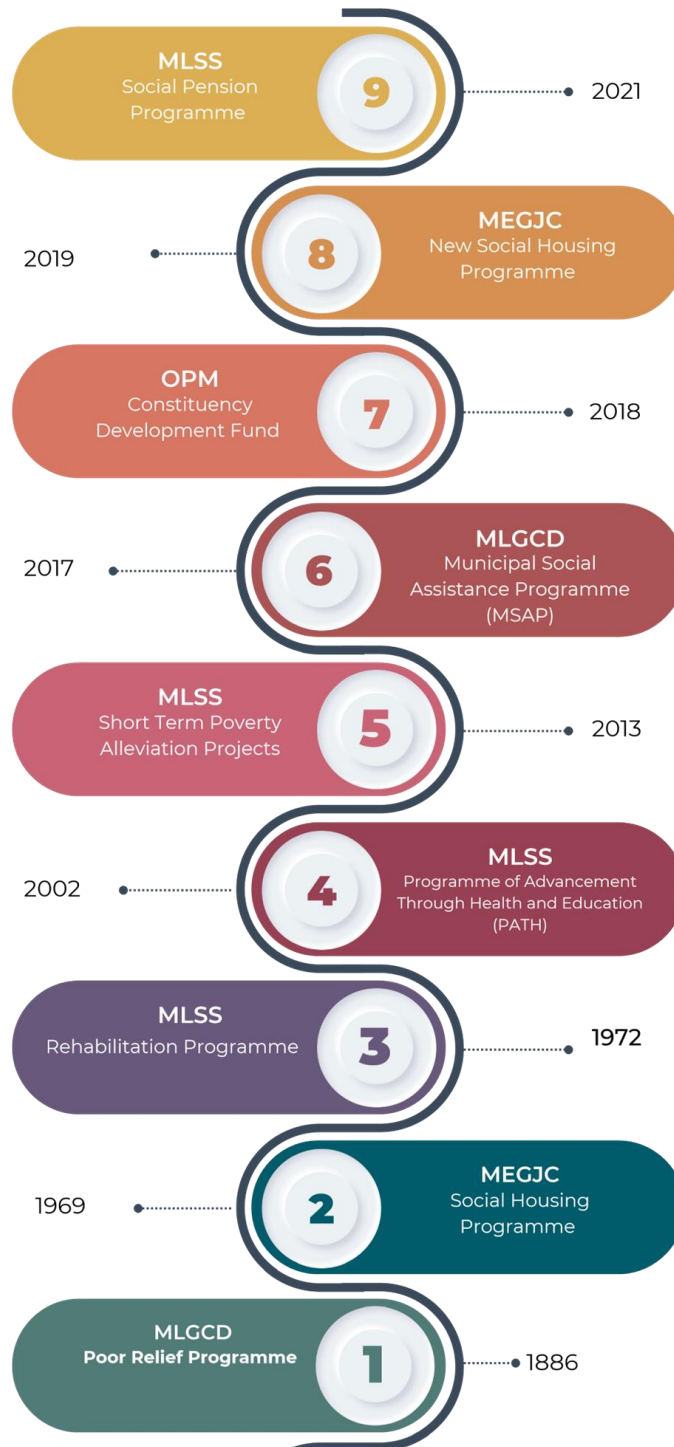
I. NPRP Medium Term cycle 2018-2021

NPRPC Strategic Actions: Programme 1		No. of Activities	Implementing Agency	Progress			
No.	Strategic Line of Action			✓	⚠	—	✗
1	Institutional strengthening, integration and expanded coverage, reach and efficacy of the School Feeding Programme from the early childhood to secondary levels in keeping with nutritional guidelines to ensure equity, adequacy, and accessibility	5	MOEYI MLSS	3	0	1	1
2	Design and implement appropriate programmes, mechanisms and facilities to ensure the availability, accessibility, safety, and stability of sufficient food supply for the extreme/food poor (food insecure) across the life cycle	13	Food for the Poor RADA	7	0	0	6
3	Ensure the availability of emergency food stocks in keeping with the National Food and Nutrition Security Targets for emergency recovery and relief	5	MOH, Food for the Poor, Salvation Army	1	0	0	4
4	Provide social transfers in the form of cash or kind to support the poorest (individuals or families) identified through appropriate screening mechanisms.	17	MLSS Food for the Poor	14	0	1	2
5	Formulate programmes to detect, prevent and mitigate malnutrition caused by inadequate intake of food	8	MOH National Parenting Support Commission	0	0	0	8
6	Ensure the availability of emergency food stocks in keeping with the National Food and Nutrition Security Targets for emergency recovery and relief	5	MLSS	4	0	1	0
7	Provide social transfers in the form of cash or kind to support the poorest (individuals or families) identified through appropriate screening mechanisms.	3	NHF/JADEP	3	0	0	0
8	Facilitate institutional care as required, for the infirm, indigent, or homeless, to ensure that the basic needs of the most vulnerable are met.	7	Board of Supervision /Poor Relief Programme	4	0	0	3
Total		63		36	0	3	24
 Completed  In Progress  Not started  Not reported							

II. NPRP Medium Term cycle 2021-2024

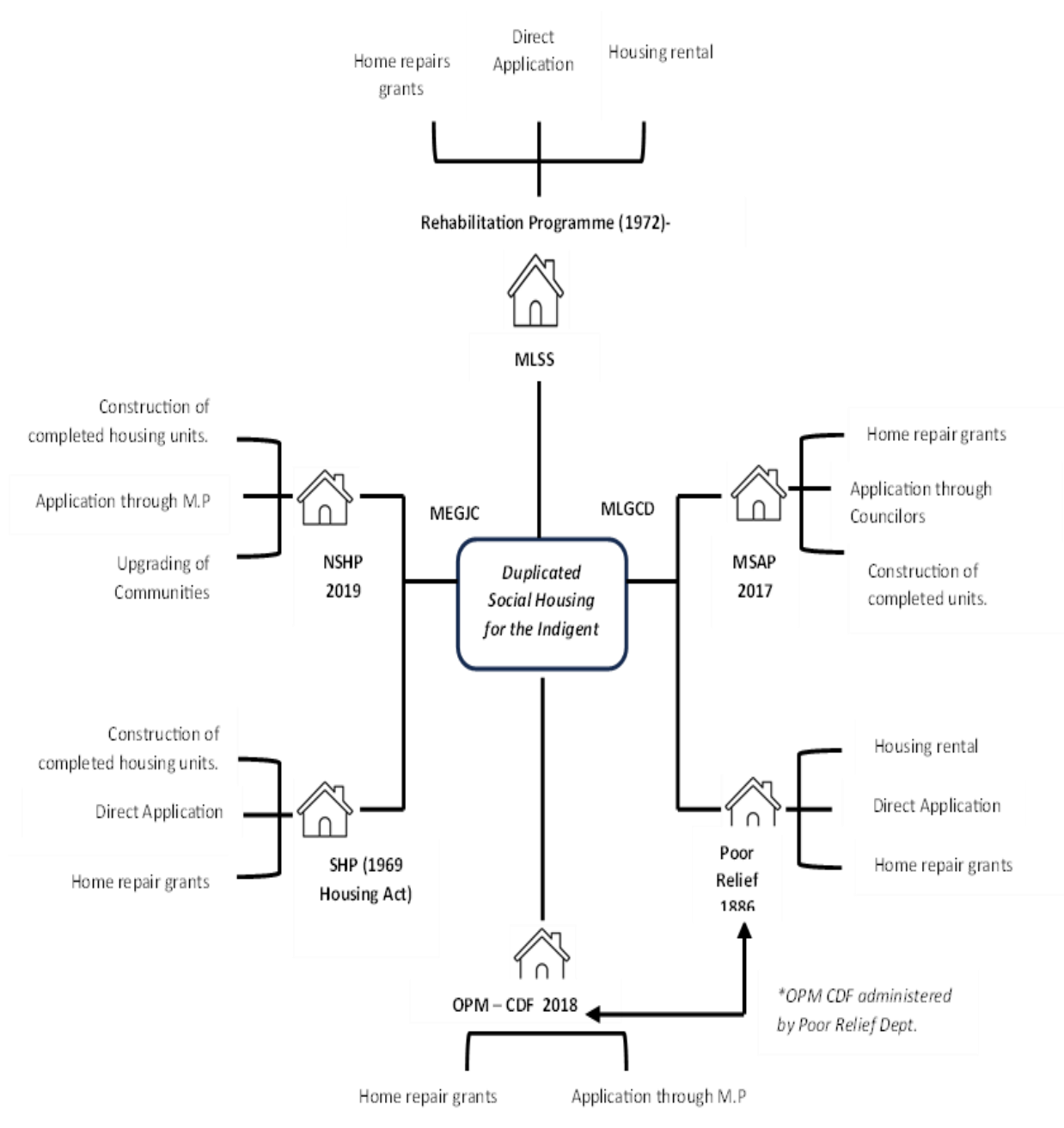
NPRPC Strategic Actions: Programme 1		No. of Activities	Implementing Agency	Progress			
No.	Strategic Line of Action			✓	⚠	⊖	✗
1	Institutional strengthening, integration and expanded coverage, reach and efficacy of the School Feeding Programme from the early childhood to secondary levels in keeping with nutritional guidelines to ensure equity, adequacy, and accessibility	5	MOEYI MLSS	1	1	0	3
2	Design and implement appropriate programmes, mechanisms and facilities to ensure the availability, accessibility, safety, and stability of sufficient food supply for the extreme/food poor (food insecure) across the life cycle	13	Food for the Poor RADA	7	1	0	5
3	Ensure the availability of emergency food stocks in keeping with the National Food and Nutrition Security Targets for emergency recovery and relief	5	MOH, Food for the Poor, Salvation Army	1	0	0	4
4	Provide social transfers in the form of cash or kind to support the poorest (individuals or families) identified through appropriate screening mechanisms.	17	MLSS Food for the Poor	15	0	0	2
5	Formulate programmes to detect, prevent and mitigate malnutrition caused by inadequate intake of food	8	MOH National Parenting Support Commission	2	0	0	6
6	Ensure the availability of emergency food stocks in keeping with the National Food and Nutrition Security Targets for emergency recovery and relief	4	MLSS	4	0	0	1
7	Provide social transfers in the form of cash or kind to support the poorest (individuals or families) identified through appropriate screening mechanisms.	3	NHF/JADEP	3	0	0	0
8	Facilitate institutional care as required, for the infirm, indigent, or homeless, to ensure that the basic needs of the most vulnerable are met.	7	Board of Supervision /Poor Relief Programme	3	0	1	3
Total		63		36	2	1	24
 Completed  In Progress  Not started  Not reported							

Appendix 4 Jamaica key non-contributory social programmes development over the years



Source: AuGD analysis

Appendix 5 Analysis of Housing Programmes at the various MDAs



Appendix 6 Short-Term Poverty Alleviation Project extract of individual payments

Beneficiary	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
*B1	0	1,500,00	0	0	1,500,000
B2	135,000	50,000	222,500	500,000	907,500
B3	70,000	0	90,000	500,000	660,000
B4	115,000	50,000	100,000	200,000	465,000
B5	0	0	0	450,000	450,000
B6	50,000	50,000	100,000	200,000	400,000
B7	50,000	50,000	100,000	200,000	400,000
B8	90,000	90,000	10,000	200,000	390,000
B9	20,000	30,000	300,000	0	350,000
B10	50,000	100,000	0	200,000	350,000
B11	50,000	50,000	25,000	200,000	325,000
B12	100,000	20,000	0	200,000	320,000
B13	320,000	0	0	0	320,000
B14	45,000	110,000	60,000	100,000	315,000
B15	100,000	10,000	0	200,000	310,000
B16	50,000	50,000	10,000	200,000	310,000
B17	250,000	20,000	30,000	10,000	310,000
B18	100,000	50,000	50,000	100,000	300,000
B19	50,000	50,000	0	200,000	300,000
B20	50,000	50,000	100,000	100,000	300,000
				Total	8,982,500

*Beneficiary B1 received \$1.5 million in three transactions of \$500,000 each on the same day (August 1, 2021)

Beneficiaries with one-off payment

Beneficiary	Payment Date	Amount
B21	May 1, 2020	500,000.00
B22	May 1, 2020	500,000.00
B23	November 1, 2020	400,000.00
B24	May 1, 2020	300,000.00
B25	December 1, 2021	300,000.00
B26	December 1, 2021	300,000.00
B27	March 1, 2022	265,000.00
B28	December 1, 2021	250,000.00
B29	December 1, 2021	250,000.00
B30	December 1, 2021	250,000.00
B31	December 1, 2021	250,000.00
	Total	3,565,000.00

Appendix 7 MSAP total fund allocation to MCs, April 2017 to March 2024

April 2017 to March 2024							
Parish	Avg. No. of registered poor	Social Housing	Indigent Housing	Funeral Grant	Education	Administrative support allocation 2017 to 2024	Total funding allocation
St. Thomas	594	5,190,000	29,855,800	3,246,500	28,620,000	18,935,000	85,847,300
Portland	1078	4,680,000	4,631,000	3,961,601	24,594,000	19,990,000	57,856,601
St. Mary	537	6,720,000	26,825,060	0	33,504,000	29,265,000	96,314,060
St. Ann	766	8,250,000	4,563,000	3,337,318	41,272,000	34,505,715	91,928,033
Trelawny	536	4,680,000	4,200,000	0	23,728,000	18,780,000	51,388,000
St. James	1438	8,760,000	0	16,203,000	45,138,000	31,935,000	102,036,000
Hanover	785	3,660,000	889,051	770,000	17,994,000	15,785,000	39,098,051
Westmoreland	523	7,230,000	28,189,471	4,496,300	33,538,000	28,140,000	101,593,771
St. Elizabeth	667	7,740,000	15,200,000	3,750,000	41,530,000	33,775,000	101,995,000
Manchester	592	7,740,000	16,808,930	0	35,830,000	33,765,000	94,143,930
Clarendon	1229	11,310,000	3,720,000	13,200,000	60,274,000	48,510,000	137,014,000
St. Catherine	1860	14,880,000	4,200,010	18,052,580	67,834,000	63,555,000	168,521,590
Portmore		6,720,000	3,553,819	0	31,516,000	26,810,000	68,599,819
KSAC	2996	20,490,000	103,224,729	0	119,530,000	90,750,000	333,994,729
Total		118,050,000	245,860,870	67,017,299	604,902,000	494,500,715	1,530,330,884

Appendix 8 MSAP total fund allocation vs administrative support 2022 to 2024

No.	Municipal Corporations	Total funding allocation 2022 to 2024	Allocation for Administrative support	Allocation for Actual Benefit Payouts	Administrative Support Percentage
1	St. Ann	15,592,000	11,520,000	4,072,000	74%
2	Clarendon	20,154,000	14,430,000	5,724,000	72%
3	Portland	9,054,000	6,210,000	2,844,000	69%
4	Portmore	11,686,000	7,920,000	3,766,000	68%
5	Trelawny	8,248,000	5,520,000	2,728,000	67%
6	Hanover	8,353,051	4,620,000	3,733,051	55%
7	St. Catherine	32,959,560	17,940,000	15,019,560	54%
8	St. James	16,408,000	8,820,000	7,588,000	54%
9	KSAC	63,561,001	27,600,000	35,961,001	43%
10	St. Elizabeth	25,230,000	10,350,000	14,880,000	41%
11	St. Mary	25,833,000	8,970,000	16,863,000	35%
12	Manchester	31,428,930	10,740,000	20,688,930	34%
13	Westmoreland	37,037,471	9,660,000	27,377,471	26%
14	St. Thomas	37,035,800	6,960,000	30,075,800	19%
Total		342,580,813	151,260,000	191,320,813	44%

Appendix 9 House and Services Assessment used for the PATH Programme

<p>35. In terms of the dwelling in which you now live, do you:</p> <p>1. Own 5. Live Rent Free 2. Rent 6. Squat 3. Lease 4. Government Rent</p>	<p>36a. Do you own a house?</p> <p>1. Yes 2. No</p>	<p>36b. If yes to question 36a, how many?</p>	<p>36c. If you own your house, do you pay insurance</p> <p>1. Yes 2. No</p>																																																															
<p>37. Do you have a land line telephone in your household?</p> <p>1. Yes 2. No</p>	<p>38. Do you have internet service at home?</p> <p>1. Yes 2. No</p>	<p>39a. What is the main source of Lighting for your dwelling?</p> <p>1. Electricity 2. Kerosene</p>	<p>39.b Do you pay for electricity</p> <p>1. Yes 2. No</p>																																																															
<p>39c. If yes to question 37b, How much do you pay monthly for electricity?</p> <p>J\$ _____ per month</p>	<p>40. What is the main material of the outer wall of your house?</p> <p>1. Wood 4. Concrete 2. Stone 5. Block and steel 3. Brick 6. Wattle and Daub 7. Other</p>	<p>41. How do you dispose of your garbage?</p> <p>1. Central receptacle 2. Burn 3. Garbage Truck 4. Other</p>	<p>42. What kind of toilet facilities are used by your family?</p> <p>1. Water closet linked to sewer 2. Water closet not lined to sewer 3. Pit 4. Other 5. None</p>																																																															
<p>43. Are toilet facilities used only by your household or do other households use the same facilities?</p> <p>1. Exclusive use 2. Shared</p>	<p>44. What is the main source of drinking water for your family?</p> <p>1. Indoor tap/pipe 2. Outdoor private pipe/tap 3. Public standpipe 4. Well 5. River/lake/spring/pond 6. Rainwater (tank) 7. Other</p>	<p>45. How do you store your water?</p> <p>1. Tank 2. Bottles 3. Drum 4. do not store water</p>	<p>46. How many rooms are occupied by your family (excluding veranda, kitchen and bathroom)?</p> <p>_____</p>																																																															
<p>47. Where is your Kitchen?</p> <p>1. Indoor 2. Outdoor 3. None</p>	<p>48. Amount spent for family per week</p> <p>J\$ _____ per week</p>	<p>49. Does the Family Head have a resident partner?</p> <p>1. Yes 2. No</p>																																																																
<p>50. Do the member of the family have?</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>1. Laptop</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>No</td> <td>8. Fan</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>No</td> <td>16. Motorcycle</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Desktop</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>9. DVD Burner</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>17. Electric Water heater</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Washing Machine</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>10. DVD Player</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>18. Generator</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Refrigerator</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>11. Stereo Equipment</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>19. Scanner</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Gas Stove</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>12. Video Equipment</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>20. Dryer (Laundry)</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>6. Electric Stove</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>13. Air Conditioner</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>21. TV Set</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>7. Car</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>15. Sewing Machine</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				1. Laptop	Yes	No	8. Fan	Yes	No	16. Motorcycle	Yes	No	2. Desktop			9. DVD Burner			17. Electric Water heater			3. Washing Machine			10. DVD Player			18. Generator			4. Refrigerator			11. Stereo Equipment			19. Scanner			5. Gas Stove			12. Video Equipment			20. Dryer (Laundry)			6. Electric Stove			13. Air Conditioner			21. TV Set			7. Car			15. Sewing Machine					
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Appendix 10 Analysis of allocation, expenditure and number of beneficiaries, 2018-19 to 2023-24

Poor Relief (Outdoor) Programme

Particular	2018-19 \$'000	2019-20 \$'000	2020-21 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000
Allocation	348,743	865,468	848,903	1,163,522	1,308,897	1,451,094
Expenditure	944,385	1,051,595	1,138,633	1,378,824	848,038	NP
Beneficiaries*	13,144	13,412	13,617	13,911	13,901	NP

*Average annual number of beneficiaries

Social Housing Programme

Particular	2018-19 \$'000	2019-20 \$'000	2020-21 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000
Allocation	55,000	200,202	96,941	45,584	140,000	140,000
Expenditure	29,372	73,136	127,570	27,089	125,070	120,806
Beneficiaries	443	1,663	3,386	203	1,737	333

Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH)

Particular	2018-19 \$'000	2019-20 \$'000	2020-21 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000
Allocation	6,799,488	7,403,858	7,610,158	11,813,650	10,411,755	8,849,503
Expenditure	5,939,204	6,339,683	10,897,972	10,818,600	10,082,970	7,685,822
Beneficiaries	279,998	263,769	273,521	283,276	273,588	246,686

Municipal Social Assistance Programme (MSAP)

Particular	2017-18 \$'000	2018-19 \$'000	2019-20 \$'000	2020-21 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000
Allocation	124,206	198,585	333,766	274,765	256,427	182,337	160,244
Expenditure	122,833	173,634	293,018	256,140	239,149	231,231	209,028
Beneficiaries	9,239	8,778	12,293	9,733	7,989	6,288	4,005

Beneficiary data incomplete (No data was provided for Kingston and St. Andrew MC)

New Social Housing Programme

Particular	2018-19 \$'000	2019-20 \$'000	2020-21 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000
Allocation	565,137	944,910	182,504	506,053	482,733	765,753
Expenditure	0	52,902	236,798	241,385	460,295	601,860
Beneficiaries	0	2	31	26	77	68

Rehabilitation Programme

Particular	2018-19 \$'000	2019-20 \$'000	2020-21 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000
Allocation	193,488	190,188	253,668	225,718	311,268	601,000
Expenditure	137,291	204,893	172,409	313,815	300,861	NP
Beneficiaries	3,477	3,641	2,487	5,002	4,253	5,041

NP – Not Provided

Short-Term Poverty Alleviation (STPA) project

Particular	2017-18 \$'000	2018-19 \$'000	2019-20 \$'000	2020-21 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000
Allocation	67,000	70,300	71,300	135,550	100,000	99,000	264,500
Expenditure	45,837	61,545	66,223	134,855	93,789	94,076	230,036
Beneficiaries	3,345	3,928	3,450	3,915	4,784	4,260	8,717

List of Acronyms

CDF	Constituency Development Fund
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KSAMC	Kingston and St Andrew Municipal Authority
MEGJC	Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation
MC	Municipal Corporation
MLGCD	Ministry of Local Government and Community Development
MLSS	Ministry of Labour and Social Security
MoHW	Ministry of Health and Wellness
MSAP	Municipal Social Assistance Programme
MTF	Medium-Term Framework
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPRPC	National Poverty Reduction Programme Committee
NSHP	New Social Housing Programme
NSPC	National Social Protection Committee
OAIA	Old Age and Incapacity Allowance
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PIOJ	Planning Institute of Jamaica
PLS	Parish Level Structures
PRF	Parochial Revenue Fund
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SDGs	Social Development Goals
SHP	Social Housing Programme
SSNRP	Social Safety Net Reform Programme
STPA	Short-Term Poverty Alleviation

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