



©UNICEF Tunisia/Giacomo Pirozzi/2022, Children in Talha primary school, Gabès

U.S. FUNDED SOCIAL SAFETY NET INITIATIVE

Protecting the most vulnerable children in Tunisia

Contribution: **60 Million USD** (2022-2024)

The Social Safety Net is a United States Government funded initiative that includes a \$60 million grant to the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) for direct cash transfers to the most vulnerable households across Tunisia. The program will fund a doubling of the Tunisian Government's back-to-school financial stipend for 421,000 children for the 2022-2023 school year, and a monthly child benefit for 305,000 children 6 to 18 years old for 11 months. The program was launched in September 2022 and runs for 28 months through December 2024.

The program was designed in response to the negative socioeconomic impacts of the crisis in Ukraine on the most vulnerable children and will enable the Ministry of Social Affairs to expand the child benefit to children aged 6-18 from poor and vulnerable households registered in the national social protection program AMEN Social.

Thanks to funding from USAID, all beneficiary households from AMEN Social (specifically within the AMG2 designation, which comprises the second poorest decile of the population and provides beneficiaries with access to health care at reduced rates) will receive the monthly child benefit enabling

families to mitigate the impacts of price increases on children’s food consumption and nutrition and supporting children’s continued school attendance and access to health care.

By reaching all children in the AMEN Social program, the Social Safety Net program protects Tunisia’s human capital amid compound crises, directly contributing to the national social protection program and government economic reform agenda for inclusive growth.

The program will be complemented by accompanying measures to strengthen children and families' food security, nutrition, and early childhood development; the national school drop-out prevention and response programs; capacities of social workers; water, sanitation, and hygiene in public institutions in most vulnerable areas of the country; and data collection and evidence generation for children.

Planned Beneficiaries

305,000 children aged between 6 and 18 years old living in vulnerable households (monthly child benefit for 11 months)

>421,000 children aged 6 to 18 years old (back to school financial stipend complementary to government back-to-school 2022-2023)

237,821 households receiving support on feeding and nutrition practices

500 social workers with strengthened capacity in child protection

25,000 children and families receiving support through referral or child protection services

In 2020, child poverty in Tunisia increased from 19% to 29% according to UNICEF and World Bank estimates.

This means that the number of poor children in Tunisia has exceeded one million, jeopardizing the possibility for these children to access their rights.

In 2015, the Tunisian National Institute of Statistics (INS) defined the national poverty lines per person per month as follows:

	Extreme Poverty	Poverty
Rural	79 TND	125 TND
Urban	87 TND	142 TND
Large cities	90 TND	156 TND

The weight of food expenditure in Tunisia represents nearly 27% of consumption expenditure of high-income households and **37% of consumption expenditure of the poorest households.**

The 2022 Fill the Nutrient Gap analysis indicates that the average cost in Tunisia for a nutritious food basket for a family of five is 4.5 times higher than an energy food basket, with the cost of a nutritious food basket varying between 130 TND and 250 TND per household (with costs varying per governorate), and that **23% of the population cannot afford a nutritious food basket.**

Sources: S&P Global Ratings & the WFP 2022 Fill the Nutrient Gap analysis