

# TRANSFORM

## NEWSLETTER

HIGHLIGHTS

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### STATS & FACTS

**135** Trainings in over **30** countries

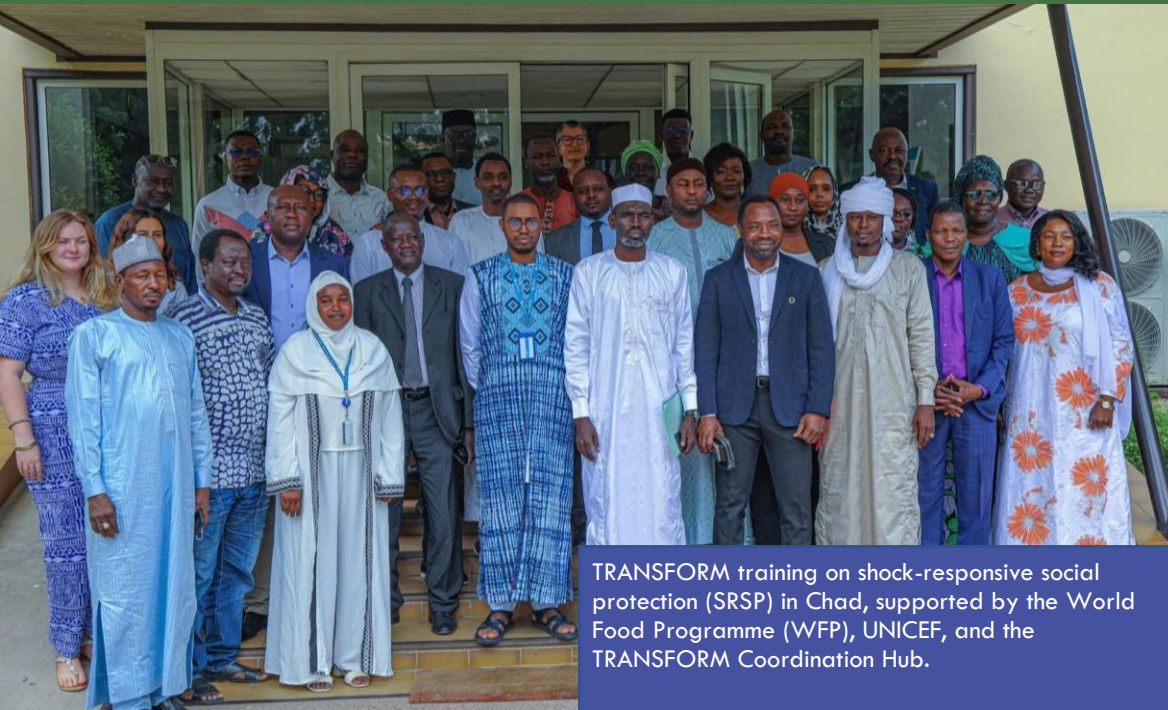
**8** E-TRANSFORM courses

**3934** Participants

**62** Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone Regional Master Trainers from **15** countries in Africa

**41** National Master Trainers from Malawi, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia

**13** In-depth Technical Modules



TRANSFORM training on shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) in Chad, supported by the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF, and the TRANSFORM Coordination Hub.

### MESSAGE FROM THE TRANSFORM ADVISORY GROUP CHAIRPERSON

Dear Members of the TRANSFORM Family,

As we approach TRANSFORM's 10th anniversary, I am proud to reflect on how far we have come. What began in 2016, at the request of the African Union (AU) has grown into a dynamic learning initiative that has reached nearly 4,000 social protection practitioners across more than 30 countries in Africa and the Arab region. With over 130 trainings delivered, TRANSFORM has become a cornerstone in building critical thinking and capacity for inclusive, effective, and resilient social protection systems.

TRANSFORM is an innovative learning package on the administration and management of national social protection floors in Africa and the Arab region. TRANSFORM aims to build critical thinking and capacity among policymakers and practitioners to improve social protection systems. As the initiative expands, our focus shifts to institutionalisation—encouraging regional bodies, governments, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and local training institutions to adopt TRANSFORM's content and methodology for ongoing training and leadership development. Institutionalising TRANSFORM within existing systems offers a timely opportunity to ensure its sustainability and guide its next phase while preserving its original purpose and quality.

To all members of our network and partners in African governments, United Nations (UN) agencies, NGOs and regional blocs, I welcome you to enjoy reading the updates shared in this special issue. Thank you to all our champions past and present whose advocacy, funding, coordination, and belief in TRANSFORM have propelled us forward. We are determined to continue on this journey of impact and innovation with you, leaving No One Behind.

The Mano River Union (MRU)— a sub-regional economic, political, and security cooperation body comprising Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire—recently hosted a TRANSFORM training in Freetown, Sierra Leone, aimed at strengthening regional social protection systems. Supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), the training brought together practitioners from all four member states to build shared capacity, harmonize implementation approaches and foster collaboration linking social protection to food security and nutrition.

Hon. Melrose Karminty, Sierra Leone's Minister of Social Welfare, opened the event by highlighting the role of inclusive social protection in fragile, post-conflict contexts. She emphasized that poverty and vulnerability transcend borders, and regional cooperation is essential to building systems that uphold dignity and reduce inequality. MRU Secretary General Ambassador Simeon M.B. Moribah expressed gratitude to FAO and ILO for their continued support. Deputy Secretary General Ama Gborie underscored that social protection is now a necessity and a foundation for resilience and stability across the region.

At the closing ceremony on 26 September 2025, Ambassador Ernest Mbaimba Ndomahina, Commissioner of the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), reaffirmed Sierra Leone's commitment to recognizing social protection as a right. He also highlighted the country's leadership in the newly launched ECOWAS Social Protection Framework and Operational Plan.

The training marked a milestone for TRANSFORM in West Africa. With growing interest from member states to host future sessions and momentum to institutionalize the programme at sub-national levels, the initiative is paving the way for more inclusive, responsive, and resilient social protection systems across the MRU region.



Seated from the left: Honourable Minister of Social Welfare, Madam Melrose Karminty, and MRU Secretary General, Ambassador Simeon Moribah. Standing (top row), second from the left: MRU Deputy Secretary General, Madam Ama Gborie, pictured with three TRANSFORM Master Trainers during the training in Freetown

“In fragile and post-conflict contexts like ours, inclusive social protection is not just policy—it’s a lifeline. It empowers communities to withstand crises, fight poverty, and live with dignity.”

**- Hon. Melrose Karminty,  
Minister of Social Welfare, Sierra Leone**

# WHATS NEW!

# 1

As we close the year, we thank Samuel Kapingidza, our outgoing Advisory Group Chair, and UNDP for their exceptional leadership in advancing TRANSFORM, strengthening capacity building, and supporting institutionalization of TRANSFORM across countries and regional bodies. Samuel, a Social Protection Specialist at UNDP's Regional Service Centre for Africa, brought over 15 years of expertise in inclusive social protection, climate resilience, and labour market transformation. With a PhD in Development Studies, he influenced the development of Zambia's National Social Protection Coordination Strategy and led partnerships with the African Union and University of Venda. His contribution has been pivotal in driving sustainable and inclusive social protection systems across Africa.

# 2

 **Look Out for the First & Second Episodes of the TRANSFORM Podcast Series!**

TRANSFORM's new podcast series explores the evolution of TRANSFORM from its origins and the values that shaped it, to its growing impact on social protection systems and practitioners around the world. The series is co-produced with socialprotection.org, hosted by UNRISD and supported by IPEA. With socialprotection.org's global reach spanning 80–90 countries and 878 monthly downloads, the series makes TRANSFORM's story accessible to a wide audience, offering insights into its prospects and continued relevance in building inclusive and resilient social protection systems. **Episode 1 and 2** are now available on [Spotify](#), [YouTube Music](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), and [Socialprotection.org](#).

## TRANSFORM JOINS THE AFRICAN UNION TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON SOCIAL PROTECTION IN AFRICA

The TRANSFORM Hub recently became a member of the newly formed Technical Working Group on Social Protection (TWG-SP) of the African Union. The TWG-SP aims to coordinate and harmonize social protection efforts across Africa by fostering collaboration among the AU member states, regional economic communities, international organizations and civil society. It will support the implementation of inclusive, rights-based social protection systems aligned with AU frameworks and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Among others the TWG-SP will promote social protection policy reviews & harmonization, capacity development and knowledge management & research.

During the launch and adoption of the Terms of Reference of the TWG-SP TRANSFORM was invited to make a presentation that showcased its contributions to strengthening social protection systems in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly through capacity building of social protection practitioners. The initiative seeks to work with TWG-SP to support capacity building efforts and initiatives.



Felix Mwenge, TRANSFORM Coordinator, presenting about the TRANSFORM initiative during the African Union's two-day symposium to launch and operationalize the Technical Working Group on Social Protection in Africa.

## MODULE DEVELOPMENTS IN 2024 AND 2025

### NEW MODULE ON EXTENSION OF SOCIAL PROTECTION COVERAGE TO THE INFORMAL ECONOMY.

In early 2025, TRANSFORM launched a new module focused on extending social protection coverage to informal economy workers, who represent almost 85% of Africa's workforce yet remain largely excluded from contributory schemes. Developed by Women in Informal Employment Globalizing Organizing (WIEGO) and reviewed by regional experts to reflect Sub-Saharan African realities, the module bridges the gap between social assistance and social insurance, offering practical tools, case studies, and insights for policymakers, CSOs, and development partners. It aims to address the limited reach of existing schemes—covering only 7% of working-age adults—and promote inclusive, contributory approaches. TRANSFORM is now seeking partners to support dissemination through Training of Trainers (ToT) and country-level implementation.

### REVISED MODULE ON SHOCK RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

The TRANSFORM Hub is revising the Shock Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) module to be able to address more context specific shocks such as political and economic shocks, climate change shocks as well as those emanating from contexts of forced displacement in order to meet the social protection needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Funded by the STAAR facility and coordinated by TRANSFORM MENA, the revision takes a global approach to ensure broad applicability, with regional pilots informing context-specific adaptations.

### TRANSFORM ANCHORING CAPACITY BUILDING FOR NIGERIA'S SOCIAL PROTECTION REFORM

The Nigerian Government, in partnership with the ILO and UNICEF, is implementing the *Supporting Sustainable Social Protection System in Nigeria* project, funded by the European Union with US\$14 million. The goal of the project is to establish a shock-responsive social protection system by 2026, underpinned by a robust policy framework and integrated financing within national and state budgets.

To achieve this, the project seeks to strengthen social protection policy development and implementation capacity among other objectives. Central to achieving this objective is the TRANSFORM initiative, which has been recognised and adopted as the main tool for building the capacity of social protection stakeholders in Nigeria. Grounded in international standards and tailored to the African context, TRANSFORM will use its methodology to enhance capacity of social protection stakeholders in Nigeria.

In October 2025, the first TRANSFORM training was delivered to senior policymakers to harmonize understanding of key social protection principles. This was followed by a training-of-trainers targeting civil servants with the objective of embedding TRANSFORM as an institutionalized, in-house resource for ongoing capacity development.





Jairus Miti (consultant) sharing the outcomes of the TRANSFORM outcome harvesting for Zambia during a validation workshop in Lusaka

## ORGANISATION AND FUNDING OF TRANSFORM

TRANSFORM exists as a partnership between UNICEF, the ILO, , FAO, WFP and UNDP. The initial curriculum development was greatly supported by the European Union through its Social Protection Systems programme, from the Government of Finland and from Irish Aid. The coordination role of TRANSFORM is played by the Hub, based at the ILO CO-Lusaka. Coordination activities, including supporting TRANSFORM trainings in Sub-Saharan Africa (covering Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone countries), coordinating module development and updates, and managing the TRANSFORM network of experts and partners is led by a Technical Officer under the Social Protection Unit.

## RESEARCH AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### BUILDING EVIDENCE TO INSTITUTIONALIZE TRANSFORM

Institutionalizing the TRANSFORM initiative across Africa requires demonstrating its effectiveness to a wide range of stakeholders—including governments, regional bodies, and NGOs. In 2025, TRANSFORM prioritized evidence generation and dissemination to showcase its impact continent-wide and globally.

A key milestone was the Outcome Harvesting survey conducted in Zambia in 2024, whose results have been validated by the government and the TRANSFORM Advisory Group. The findings show that TRANSFORM equips government officials and social protection practitioners with practical skills to design coherent policies and coordinate programme implementation at sub-national levels. Importantly, those trained through TRANSFORM often become advocates for strong, well-financed social protection systems, both within and outside government structures. This ripple effect strengthens national ownership and sustainability of social protection reforms.

To build on this momentum, additional Outcome Harvesting surveys are underway in Uganda and Malawi, aimed at further documenting the initiative's impact and informing future scale-up efforts. By generating credible evidence and sharing success stories, TRANSFORM is laying the groundwork for institutionalization—ensuring that social protection systems are not only technically sound but also politically and socially supported across the region.

## TESTIMONIALS

“One of the results of TRANSFORM is improved coordination, breaking ministerial barriers. Now, line ministries jointly plan and deliver social protection, enabling communities to access timely information and be enrolled through a single window based on eligibility.”  
- Education Officer, Ministry of Education, Zambia

## TRANSFORM

A Leadership and Transformation Learning Initiative on building and managing social protection floors in Africa.

### What is TRANSFORM?

TRANSFORM is an innovative learning initiative on the implementation of national social protection floors in Africa. TRANSFORM promotes critical thinking and builds capacity at national and subnational levels to improve the design, effectiveness and efficiency of social protection systems. TRANSFORM targets government officials and social protection practitioners at national and subnational levels engaged in policy design, oversight, and implementation.

### Why TRANSFORM?

TRANSFORM empowers learners to handle the complexities of their own social protection systems, appreciate diversity and uniqueness, own and implement creative solutions suitable for their contexts. All these elements are as important as the technical knowledge itself. TRANSFORM takes delegates through an experiential process and allows them to realize that whatever capacity they are in they have the power to action a difference.

### Funding of TRANSFORM

TRANSFORM is primarily funded by the Irish Aid-supported project on Accelerating the Achievement of Universal Social Protection to Leave No One Behind in ILO CO-Lusaka. This funding supports staff, operations, training delivery, and coordination. Module development has been co-funded by various partners including the EU, Finland, OECD and FCDO/STAAR, while country-level rollouts—including Training of Trainers and content adaptation—are supported by UN agencies in respective countries.

## Contact us:



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Learn more about the TRANSFORM Initiative on:

<https://transformsp.org/> and <https://socialprotection.org/connect/stakeholders/transform>