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Supporting people through crisis



Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus

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Introduction

Social protection is included as a central pillar in a number of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), most notably Goal 1 – to end poverty in all its forms everywhere.¹ Furthermore, as the Reference Document for this operational note mentions (European Commission 2018), there is now a clear international consensus and commitment to utilising social protection and social protection systems in fragile and conflict-affected environments to more effectively, efficiently and sustainably respond to affected populations.² These commitments are embodied in global commitments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Grand Bargain (European Commission 2018).³ The EU commitment to move from food aid to food assistance in humanitarian contexts, including cash and voucher programming, provision of relevant services, inputs, skills or knowledge, provides the historical context for the discussion in this operational note on benefit modalities.⁴ In addition, the relationship to the role of social protection in EU development cooperation is outlined here.⁵

This operational note is designed to give the reader a more detailed understanding of the actual and potential use of different benefit modalities when using social protection approaches to programme across the humanitarian – development nexus. It is designed to be short, practical and field-focused, providing a think piece that raises key issues while signposting the reader to further resources. This guidance is not designed as a ‘how to’ for modality programming – these resources can be found elsewhere, with some key ones included in the resources section under ‘Emerging guidance and tools’, below. Rather, this guidance note attempts to draw together the emergent learning around using social protection tools for programming in contexts of fragility.

To better understand the concept of using ‘social protection across the nexus’, and the part played by benefit modalities within this nexus, we begin by explaining some of the jargon.

First, ‘benefit modality’ essentially refers to those noted in *Annex II* of the reference document: cash and/or voucher, in-kind or subsidised (e.g. food, agricultural inputs), service delivery (e.g. primary healthcare, education, welfare services and accompanying measures (e.g. advocacy, trainings, public works programmes) (CaLP 2017).⁶ Benefits can be provided in multiple modalities, directly to households or to communities. Other commonly used terms for complementary programming that can include one or more benefit modalities within a package of interventions to achieve multiple objectives are: cash plus, graduation, resilience or shock-responsive social protection. These are also discussed here, but the primary focus remains on the role played by the modalities themselves. A *benefit modality* needs to be understood in relation to a *delivery mechanism*, which refers to the means of delivering a benefit modality (for example a smart card, mobile devices and agents, bank card/accounts, cash in envelopes, food distribution etc.).

- 1 Social protection is explicitly referred to as an instrument in SDG Goal 1 (Eradication of Poverty, Target 1.3), SDG 5 (Gender equality, Target 5.4), and SDG10 (Reduction of Income Inequality, Target 10.4), and also key for the achievement of SDGs 2,3,4, 16, 17 (ending hunger, healthy lives, quality education, decent work and economic growth, peaceful and inclusive societies and partnerships for the goals).
- 2 Social protection encompasses a set of contributory and non-contributory schemes, through various mechanisms such as cash transfers (conditional or unconditional), social insurance schemes, access to social services and associated developmental measures to promote livelihood, social inclusion and human development (https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/supporting-social-protection-systems-20151125_en.pdf). Social protection systems refers to the national institutional architecture (such as, MIS systems, appeals and complaints mechanisms, joined up delivery across sectors, etc.) required to deliver social protection in line with commitments on human rights and progressive universal access for those in need.
- 3 Grand Bargain Core Commitment 7: Humanitarian financing – Investing in Humanity, including scaling up and more systematically considering the use of cash transfers in conjunction with national social protection schemes.
- 4 Commission Communication on Humanitarian Food Assistance COM (2010) 126 – <http://aei.pitt.edu/38218/>
- 5 Commission Communication on Social Protection in EU Development Cooperation COM (2012) 446 <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2012/EN/1-2012-446-EN-F1-1.Pdf>.
- 6 The full definition is taken from the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) website – <http://www.cashlearning.org/resources/glossary>

Cash as a benefit modality

- As shown through the case study evidence, cash as a benefit modality (as part of humanitarian or development programming) clearly offers great potential and options across the nexus from social protection to humanitarian programming.⁷
- This guidance note focuses extensively on cash, as the SPaN Guidance Package case studies, at time of writing are cash-focused.

Second, it is important to define a ‘nexus’ and social protection’s role within it. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a nexus as ‘a bond, link, or junction; a means of connection between things or parts; (also) the state of being connected or linked’ (OED 2018). In the context of development, the concept of a ‘nexus’ can mean different things, but the reference paper and associated case studies broadly employ the term for countries or regional contexts of protracted fragility impacted by a range of natural and man-made shocks, in many cases combined with human displacement. Here, a combination or *nexus* of humanitarian, development and in some cases political interventions is deemed necessary to sustainably address the needs of vulnerable people and to help individuals, communities and systems build their resilience to shocks.⁸

When reviewing case study evidence, discussions of programming across the ‘nexus’ focus on what the international community has termed ‘shock-responsive social protection’ (SRSP). The reference document, drawing on O’Brien et al., defines SRSP as the adaptation of social protection programmes and systems to better address and cope with large scale shocks, either beforehand (*ex ante*), during, or afterwards (*ex post*), aligned to or building off emergency response interventions where appropriate (O’Brien et al. 2018).

Shock-responsive social protection (SRSP)

- SRSP provides the conceptual entry point and umbrella term for this operational note for understanding the role of benefit modalities in programming across the nexus (meaning different contexts of fragility and different levels of social protection (SP) system maturity or humanitarian presence). However, we note that this is still a new and evolving agenda and evidence of its effectiveness and applicability is limited.
- Alternative ways of framing this nexus in the accompanying paper identify three scenarios. It is under the first, where countries have substantial existing social protection programmes or systems, that SRSP has relevance. The second scenario is specific to the situation of refugees, which may sit outside nationally provided support. The third scenario is the provision of safety nets in countries where there is a deficit in national institutions.
- These three categories are useful, yet for the purposes of this note we frame SRSP as differentially applying over a spectrum of contexts, which could be more than three in number.

The majority of the country case study evidence reviewed for this paper on the use of social protection instruments in fragile contexts represent relatively stable governments responding to natural disasters, however; it should be noted that evidence from conflict affected, and displacement settings is at time of writing also emerging. The degree to which a social protection mechanism and modality can be utilised in any given context is dependent on the maturity of the SP system itself, the type of shock faced, and the ability to coordinate actors around a common objective. Such contexts include those where SP systems are non-existent or nascent, where emphasis is on how humanitarian approaches could lay the ground for future shock-responsive SP, or where SRSP can be built into SP design from the outset (see the note on sequencing in Section 3).

7 The case studies for review were provided as part of the TOR, along with those already in the public domain provided by OPM and others (<https://www.opml.co.uk/projects/shock-responsive-social-protection-systems>)

8 Some case studies such as that of Turkey discuss the 'triple nexus' referring to combining humanitarian, development and political / diplomatic efforts. This is touched on in Section 2 – 'Promising and innovative practices'.

1. **non-contributory** (recipients do not contribute anything to receive something) typically comprise 'social assistance programmes.' Examples include social cash transfers/vouchers/in-kind, public works, social care/services;
2. **contributory** (where the beneficiary or a sponsor on his behalf contributes financially, normally to a fund), which often refer to 'social insurance programmes.' Examples include insurance (unemployment, health, disability, climate risk-based) and pensions;
3. **active labour market policies** (ALMP) which refer to measures to enhance human capital, productive assets, and access to jobs.

This operational note focuses on non-contributory social assistance programmes (where benefit modalities are mostly used). However, it is important to note that for a social protection system to be sustainable, it should extend beyond social assistance programmes. It should include a broader long-term vision that evolves towards contributory and ALMP programmes comprehensive approach.

An overview of the different modalities (cash, voucher, in-kind, service delivery, accompanying measures) is provided in [Annex II](#). For this paper, three terms are clarified. First, cash transfers are known variously as ‘cash and vouchers’, ‘cash-based interventions’, ‘market-based interventions’, ‘multi-purpose cash’ and ‘cash transfer programming’. SP practitioners refer mostly to ‘cash transfers’, while a common term in humanitarian circles is ‘cash-based transfers’ (which includes vouchers as a proxy for cash) (CaLP 2017; ECHO 2018). For the sake of simplicity, as SRSP is a blending of SP and humanitarian worlds, this note will refer only to ‘cash transfers’, which is taken to include vouchers. We occasionally also use the term ‘social assistance’ to denote social protection cash transfer programmes. Second, ‘in-kind’ refers not just to food, but includes any commodity delivered to a recipient (e.g. shelter kits, agricultural inputs, medical supplies, educational materials, etc.). Finally, ‘service delivery’ is considered a benefit modality, and has elements of some resemblance (and difference) to ‘accompanying measures’. Furthermore, it also provides a crucial link to cash plus and graduation models, as discussed in Section 1 (p. 12 below).

Experiences to date and available evidence

10 Although other options for 'complementary' or 'single' programming also exist in this regard.

network coverage or bank branch presence, and additional training needed for all on delivering cash to new ‘customer profiles’. Digitisation also requires a certain level of recipient literacy and comprehension of new technologies (how to open bank accounts, operate phones, remember PINs, save and invest funds, etc.). Of course, the ‘cash first’ principle does not mean ‘cash always’, a practical discussion about what makes most sense in any given context is required (including the shock being responded to – see below). Initial and on-going assessments and monitoring are crucial to ensure the right modality is being utilised.

One tension in SRSP discussions is that whilst the majority of social assistance programmes use cash, the majority of humanitarian assistance is still provided in kind (although that is fast changing).¹¹ Very often a key challenge for cash delivery is a lack of mobile coverage or bank presence (delivering cash-in-hand does not maximise the efficiency gains offered by the first two). Consequently, SRSP programming may have to consider how it can align or complement in-kind with social assistance transfers, at least in the short term. Combinations of cash and in-kind support can be considered, as well as switching between the two when conditions change.

SRSP is a two-way process, as SP mechanisms can be used to address shocks, or humanitarian mechanisms can align with or lay the basis for future SP programmes and systems. Given this, it is possible that systems used to deliver an in-kind modality (e.g. vulnerability analysis, targeting, beneficiary management information systems (MIS), on-the-ground partner capacity, standing agreements with government, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, grievance referral mechanism (GRM) could all have the potential to be adapted or ‘tweaked’ to help deliver social cash transfers. Furthermore, they could be designed to lay the foundations for, or feed into, wider social protection system design, noting that in many cases humanitarians are already delivering mixed modality baskets (a mixture of food or cash or vouchers). Utilising the base provided by humanitarian systems has the advantage of including, but not being limited to, areas where government has minimal presence, where security constraints restrict movement, and where capacity is stretched in the aftermath of shocks.

Most importantly, alignment of SP and humanitarian systems to deliver complementary resources to the same households is only possible if there is common agreement on vulnerability assessments, coverage, targeting processes and transfer values, and ideally use of a common database such as a social registry. In some cases the potential for alignment may not be feasible or desirable (for instance in situations where the humanitarian situation is complex with possible involvement of a national entity). In others, alignment could be limited to creating standard operating procedures (SOPs), defining which systems and actors (e.g. SP or disaster risk management (DRM)) cover which areas or affected people for different shocks. These issues are further explored below.

With respect to on cost efficiency and effectiveness, although it would seem intuitive that using SP systems to deliver humanitarian resources would be efficient, and various literature demonstrates in general terms the cost-benefit ratios of longer-term or *ex ante* versus shorter term or *ex post* interventions (work which started with DFID analysis in Ethiopia (DFID, 2016)), generally international SRSP literature emphasises that there is a big evidence gap around the efficiency and effectiveness of SRSP (O’Brien et al., 2018). Some broad evidence is emerging around the use of scalable safety nets for shocks; see for instance the World Bank (2018). However, the range of caveats required for all these forms of cost-benefit analysis indicate that caution is required in interpreting their results at this stage. The evidence of the cost-benefit of utilising cash over in-kind as a modality is generally more clear.

Setting transfer values

Social protection in the form of social transfers must be regular and predictable if they are to achieve the multiple objectives of consumption smoothing and catalysing wider investments in livelihoods and productive sectors. Longer term cash or in-kind transfers such as those for social assistance programmes are frequently aligned to, or implemented through, government, and transfer values often aim to cover the gap in regular household consumption needs – measured either in terms of food security or nutrition levels – or to provide support

11 Whilst cash-based transfers as part of the overall humanitarian spend remains relatively small at 10 per cent in 2016 (USD 2.8 billion out of USD 27.3 billion) this has increased by 40 per cent from 2015 and 100 per cent from 2014 (Development Initiatives, 2017; Lattimer, Parrish and Spencer 2016; Abell et al, 2018). Alongside clear increases in humanitarian spending on cash-based transfers, there are also advances towards a harmonised delivery agenda for cash. See for instance the statement from UN Principals of WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNOCHA on creating a ‘common cash system’ (ReliefWeb 2018).

that catalyses changes in activity, behaviour or investment. While humanitarian transfers also follow gap analysis, their needs-based approach in times of emergency often means covering the majority or all requirements for an individual or household for a specific sector, per month, for technically a limited duration of time. This means that humanitarian transfers (especially for food, the largest sector) can be 2 to 4 times higher than for social assistance programmes, and can impact modality preference (on the side of the provider and on the side of the recipient).

Adjusting values can be disruptive when programming for SRSP. For instance, increasing the transfer value for a social assistance recipient significantly during a crisis or the lean season (vertical expansion) then reducing it again can be administratively difficult to implement in a timely fashion, but may also be disruptive for recipients. Similarly, providing households with multiple forms of support (e.g. both social assistance and humanitarian) in contexts of widespread poverty and food insecurity combined with scant resources can lead to strong community aversion to 'double dipping' (one recipient receiving more than one form of support – see for instance the experience from Malawi (Government of Malawi and UNICEF 2017; Holmes et al. 2017)). Furthermore, the frequent non-equivalence of transfer values between different sources of benefits can lead to social tension at the community level. Design needs to take into account this tension between, essentially, consumption-smoothing and needs-based approaches; a compromise may need to be sought, including decreasing humanitarian values to align with social assistance programmes to ensure future uptake by government (see below, examples from Kenya (urban food subsidy) and Turkey (ESSN)). In other cases, decisions have been made to keep all values at the level of the social assistance programme (Kenya (HSNP for drought), Kyrgyzstan (SASW for displacement) and Nepal (ECTP post-2015 earthquake)).¹²

A broader discussion has opened in several countries regarding what constitutes a 'shock' and therefore requires a 'humanitarian response'. If lean seasons and droughts are predictable, should the transfer-value increase and timing be the same as for fast onset or unanticipated shocks? Although humanitarian actors are compelled to respond to save and sustain lives, these questions highlight the need to decide which type of programme (long-term or short-term), and which sort of funding modality (e.g. contingency or ad hoc humanitarian), should be used to address different shocks.

Benefit modality and the link to shock typology

To make informed decisions about social protection programming in fragile and shock-affected contexts, it is important to note that modality choice can be linked to shock typology and seasonality. Fast onset shocks, such as floods, destroy existing market infrastructure and assets, may require an immediate response through the use of an in-kind modality, especially if commodities are not available (assuming ready supplies and stock piles). Slow onset shocks such as drought may offer greater potential for cash-based transfers from the start, depending on the performance of markets. Urban environments tend to have a higher capacity to manage mobile money transfers. Having the flexibility to shift between modalities or provide them in combination if needed is a useful programmatic contingency. A study of the food price inflation shock in 2007-2008 in Ethiopia showed that recipient preferences for food transfers dramatically increased, as compared to cash transfers (Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, 2010). This was because the real value of the transfer in terms of food purchase was greatly reduced. As the PSNP has the ability to change benefit modality between cash and food (within certain time constraints) the programme was able to make future payments in food.

For scalability, it is important that all actors understand the range of different shocks (both natural and man-made) that affect a country, that they have an understanding of which programmes use what types of modality where, and what types of capacity exist to expand and scale different modalities. A collaborative process is needed amongst the main actors in country (SP, humanitarian, climate adaptation and domestic resource mobilisation (DRM)), to map shock typologies, understand and agree on the differing vulnerabilities (and tools for their measurement) of the target populations, and define geographic areas of programme coverage, otherwise known as risk layering (see Section 4 for more on this). This would then be linked to an agreement (such as a standard operating procedure (SOP)) that would also include information on triggers and thresholds

12 In all the cases where there was agreement to stick to the transfer value of the regular social assistance programme, it was noted through assessment that these values were too low to meet households' essential needs; however, they did often lead to government adoption later, a good example of a key trade-off.

for action for different shocks, the modality of choice, values, and transfer mechanisms, and outline partnerships with different service providers. Moreover, this type of contingency plan would need to be linked to a disaster risk financing mechanism (such as a contingency fund, crisis modifier, catastrophe bond, or insurance mechanism) to support action.

FOOD AND CONDITIONALITY

The evidence as to which modalities are preferable for achieving different outcomes shows a nuanced picture. Food can be critical for ensuring food security in situations of high food-price inflation or where local markets are stagnant and food is limited (Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, 2010). Where local markets can respond to demand a strong body of evidence confirms that cash transfers are indeed a powerful mechanism for reducing poverty, promoting livelihoods and boosting local economies, increasing consumption and reducing food insecurity (Bastagli et al. 2016; DFID 2011; Daidone et al. 2016; Roelen et al. 2018). There are only a limited number of studies that directly compare the use of conditional versus unconditional transfers in social protection (Bastagli et al. 2016), and both conditional and unconditional cash transfers have been shown to have positive impacts on outcomes such as education and health service uptake, with no conclusive evidence to suggest one is more effective than the other (Mishra 2017). Despite this, across developing countries in the social protection sector, unconditional cash transfers are most prevalent, followed by cash-for-work, then conditional cash transfers (Mishra 2017). It is widely acknowledged that conditional cash transfers should not be implemented without accompanying quality services (Mishra 2017) (see section on ‘Cash plus and graduation’, below), and it is now also widely acknowledged that gender dimensions must be given close attention in programme design and delivery, particularly for conditional cash transfer (including public works programmes), as gendered patterns of work and care mean that women often bear the brunt of the additional unpaid and paid work requirements (Razavi 2007; Roelen et al. 2018).

When considering food insecurity as a key issue in nexus programming, evaluations comparing in-kind, voucher and cash transfers for food security (see for instance Hidrobo et al. (2012)) found that all three modalities significantly improve the quantity and quality of food consumed, but that differences emerge in the types of food consumed, with food transfers leading to significantly larger increases in calories consumed and vouchers leading to significantly larger increases in dietary diversity. Therefore, depending on the objectives of the programme, it might sometimes be more effective to provide food as opposed to cash. Meanwhile in Bangladesh, IFPRI and WFP (Ahmed et al. 2016) compared food, cash, and combinations including behavioural change communication (BCC) and found that cash plus BCC showed the largest improvements in child stunting.

System maturity and integration

Responses and modalities need to be appropriate to the scale and type of shock as well as the maturity of a social protection system. A key challenge for preventing and responding to humanitarian need through social protection is that many countries most in need of assistance do not have functional, large-scale social transfer programmes in place (Ulrichs and Sabates-Wheeler 2018). In certain cases even where a well-functioning SP system is in place, a country may still choose to manage shocks partially or fully through its DRM ministries and departments for a host of practical and political reasons.

Most SRSP evidence comes from countries with some form of social protection programme or system already in place. A range of different typologies have been developed to understand the capacity of a nascent, intermediate or advanced SP system to scale for shocks.¹³ O’Brien (2017) looks at system maturity, whilst Kukrety (2016) applies this same model and shows the specific linkages to the humanitarian sector, including which transfer modalities may be best applied. The typology from Winder-Rossi et al. (2017) shows that although institutionalised social protection programmes or systems may exist, they might not be ready to flex in response to shocks and to incorporate additional caseloads. In several cases, building the capacity of the social protection system to deliver

13 As well as the reference section, quick links are as follows: Kukrety - (<http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-humanitarian-practitioners-guidance-notes-en-web-.pdf>); Winder-Rossi et al. - (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7606e.pdf>); O’Brien et al. - (<https://www.opml.co.uk/files/Publications/a0408-shock-responsive-social-protection-systems/srsp-toolkit.pdf?noredirect=1>)

A key feature in the design of SRSP is having inter-operable and scalable support systems to enable multi-year and seasonal/crisis-based activities to function side by side and in a responsive manner. Indeed it is the development of the support systems and tools themselves that make scalable programmes possible, especially *at scale*, not a focus on individual programmes *per se*. This can include elements such as integrated data management systems (for example, single registries with harmonised targeting tools;¹⁴ common tools for assessing vulnerability and need; functional early warning systems; harmonised grievance and referral mechanisms (GRMs) to rectify targeting errors; and shock contingency funds, for instance).

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Coordination, collaboration, trade-offs

Effective collaboration and coordination is perhaps the keystone principle for SRSP and also its biggest challenge. Without it, a concept designed to bring actors together risks further fragmentation as everyone attempts their own versions of SRSP. Collaboration and coordination in turn demand trade-offs and compromise.

As noted, modalities are linked to decisions made partly by an assessment of context, and partly due to institutional experience, capacity, constraints or bias. Coordinating transfers between chronic and acute situations requires engaging with cluster mechanisms for humanitarian response, and sector working groups for social protection, each with their own compositions, mandate and implementation capacity, which complicates the task of coordination, implementation and monitoring for SRSP (for more detail see O'Brien et al. 2018). Sometimes a Cash Working Group exists that can act as entry point, as these include many of the institutional players across social protection and humanitarian contexts.

The silos found in international organisations are also found in government, where SP and humanitarian affairs/DRM are mostly handled separately, with their own coordination mechanisms, donors, funding channels and conditionality, and different entry points into international agreements, some of which have been developed and nurtured over decades (Browne, 2014). Frequently different ministries or departments cannot work together without a formal decree or signed protocol, and are competing for scant resources.

When blending partners and programmes, a balance has to be struck between programme objectives and a wider vision for (ideally government-led) shock-responsive social protection systems, now and in the future. Modalities can become a key technical battle ground, but evidence from case studies shows that compromise can be found in blending modalities (for instance providing cash transfers alongside in-kind nutritional supplements in Mauritania). Alternatively, negotiating common transfer values between humanitarian and government-led social assistance programmes (for instance in Kenya (urban food subsidy), or Nepal (ECTP post-2015 earthquake), where humanitarians reduced their transfers to align with social assistance levels) is a way to bring harmonisation between the two sectors.

The same close coordination across sectors and actors is needed at decentralised levels, including alignment of national and district government offices and committees. Oftentimes, the aims and operating principles of SRSP are not understood outside the capital and require continuous awareness raising and training to embed, otherwise misunderstanding can lead to programming disruption. Roles and responsibilities have to be clear, enshrined in policy documents (national DRM and SP policies), partnership agreements (memoranda of understanding – MoUs) and operational agreements (SOPs).

Different players will have prominence within different contexts. Where a social protection system is non-existent, for instance due to conflict, humanitarian actors might be the first and primary providers, and can design their interventions to provide the basis for social assistance programmes in the future, working with government structures (DRM, social protection and welfare ministries) to progressively take on the responsibility for targeting, information systems, and delivery. Within more mature social protection systems, the government should be the primary provider of SRSP and play the primary role; however, even in settings where social protection programmes or systems are institutionalised, they might not yet be flexible enough to adapt in the case of a crisis to incorporate additional caseloads (Winder Rossi et al. 2017). Depending on the size of the disaster, the response may be deemed beyond the capacity of the national authorities, and international appeals may be issued. Conflict can increase the need for SRSP while changing the nature of the support required and undermining capacity for response, and affecting which actors get involved in programme delivery (Kukrety 2016; Roelen et al. 2018).

An emerging trend within all cash and in-kind transfer programmes is to ensure greater linkages with complementary services. These efforts emerge from the acknowledgement that while transfers lead to many positive changes, they also fall short in achieving positive impacts in key areas such as malnutrition, health and education outcomes (Roelen et al. 2017). So-called ‘cash plus’ programmes offer linkages to other services, either by integrating them into cash transfer programmes (such as providing behaviour-change communication or psychosocial support) or by putting mechanisms in place for linking up with existing sectoral services, e.g. through referral mechanisms (ibid.). This complementarity aims to augment, and therefore leverage, the central cash transfer component by tackling underlying constraints to qualitative and structural change (Watson and Palermo, 2016; for evaluation evidence from Liberia: Blattman et al. 2017; evidence of cash plus nutrition BCC from Bangladesh: Ahmed et al. 2016). Both graduation and cash plus initiatives are concerned with integrated programming, but ‘cash plus’ approaches are different from graduation models due to an adapted vision for a range of ‘structural’ outcomes and thus a different combination of complementary interventions.¹⁵ There are, likewise, a range of graduation or complementary programmes that follow identical principles but use in-kind as the central modality around which complementary activities and services are ‘wrapped’.

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Options for complementary programming (alongside a modality of choice) include:

1. **provision of information** (such as behaviour-change communication (BCC), sensitisation meetings, climate information),
2. **provision of additional benefits and support** (such as supplementary feeding or psycho-social support),
3. **provision or facilitation of access to services** (such as through health insurance or setting up village savings and loans groups),
4. **implementation of case management** (ensuring referrals to other sectors),
5. **strengthening the quality of existing services and linking to them.**

It is in fact now widely acknowledged that transfer programmes and services are mutually reinforcing – transfer programmes should not be implemented in contexts without quality services, whilst evidence shows that these programmes have positive impacts, particularly on education and health service uptake (Mishra 2017). Examples include the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme in Ghana and the Integrated Nutrition and Social Cash Transfer (IN-SCT) pilot in Ethiopia (Roelen et al., 2018).

At a national level, cash plus can leverage synergies between social sector strategies and global movements, such as Universal Health Coverage (UHC) or Education for All (EFA). In fact, instead of being wedded to a social protection label called ‘cash plus’ it might be beneficial to analyse the possibility of more and larger outcomes by strengthening the synergies of social transfer programmes with other national service delivery and access to service strategies.

Unsurprisingly, conflict is associated with the deterioration of delivery systems and service provision, yet these same services can also be key to peace building, recovery, and re-establishment of state legitimacy (Carpenter et al., 2012). Whilst the scope for employing graduation and cash plus approaches in certain fragile and shock-prone contexts may be limited, some key points have emerged through the research:

1. **Several fragile contexts are in fact testing ‘accompanying measures’ alongside regular safety nets** (see for instance the work of the World Bank in the Sahel) to understand which combinations are most likely to support building household resilience to shocks (World Bank 2018a).
2. **Employing a ‘conflict-sensitive’ approach to programming and delivering social protection and services in a way that does not inadvertently contribute to conflict is a major challenge, but is also seen as a key mechanism for supporting peace processes, community cohesion and state legitimacy.** Evidence also points to supporting pre-existing informal structures for service delivery which can be built on in conflict contexts, and ensuring that flexible transitional funding modalities are in place to support the continuation and development of service provision in fragile contexts (this is discussed again in Section 3 below) (Carpenter et al. 2012).
3. **A longer-term exit strategy and transition vision is needed for vulnerable recipients beyond delivery through SRSP mechanisms for shock response, even if full graduation strategies may not be possible.** This includes coordinating with government from the outset and building its capacity, investing in flexible financing mechanisms and discussing fiscal space, and testing and monitoring different complementary investments etc. One big drawback is that many current graduation models are simply too complex and expensive to apply to fragile contexts, especially when providing several services to the same household in the midst of widespread need which can be perceived very negatively by communities themselves.

Promising and innovative practices

Drawing from the case studies provided for the reference document as well as other global examples, below are some innovations linked to benefit modalities, transfer values and modality delivery that will be useful for those working on SRSP.

Vertical and horizontal expansion (Kenya/Malawi):

Kenya (horizontal):

When scalable systems are in place, emergency assistance can reach people in a shorter period of time. The Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) in Kenya that operates in the four northern counties has a scalable emergency response component that provides additional households (beyond regular recipients) with periodic emergency payments for drought. Households were pre-identified, registered and issued with bank accounts. Beneficiaries can either use their bank card with agents based in local shops through point of sale devices, at ATMs, or collect their money over the counter at a bank branch. All households are targeted through a combination of PMT and community wealth ranking. The scalable mechanism has been triggered in 2015, 2016 and 2017, and has been able to deliver emergency assistance within 14 days of declaring an emergency.

Four key takeaways from this process have been:

1. cash transfers can be provided at a large scale and be delivered much faster than other response options with the use of electronic payment technology;
2. this is predicated on both the need for significant capacity and liquidity from the financial service provider (FSP), but also heavy investment in systems building (data management and fund transfer mechanisms, coverage of payment agents, clear SOPs); the utilisation of these systems to create simple triggers for action facilitate government ownership and speed, but come with targeting weaknesses;¹⁶
3. the payments released under the scalable component are the same as those provided on the routine cash transfer. In other words, there is an intentional effort to ensure transfer equivalence.

Using a single indicator for drought has been considered sufficient for a speedy, ‘no regrets’ response. However, there have been noted tensions between recipients and non-recipients, and very high levels of inclusion and exclusion error, highlighting the difficulty of employing proxy means test (PMT) targeting in contexts of high and widespread poverty rates. The rationale of keeping the emergency transfer the same as the regular one has been noted by some humanitarian actors as being insufficient to meet household food needs. Evaluations have found that emergency transfers are mainly used to increase food consumption and for medical-related expenses, but not to invest in measures that could help mitigate against the effects of shocks, therefore not helping address structural vulnerabilities.

Malawi (vertical):

Based on experience from two previous trials using social cash transfer programme (SCTP) for emergency response,¹⁷ the Government of Malawi (GoM), SP and humanitarian partners tested vertical expansion (VE) of the SCTP for the 2017/2018 lean season. This consisted of providing emergency 'top-ups' for 3,073 SCTP households in the drought

16 The release of contingency finance is based on data derived from satellite imagery of vegetation cover (VCI) as a proxy for grazing
resources and the effects of drought, linked to a four-phase drought declaration – when conditions reach ‘severe’ or ‘emergency’ levels
in a sub-country, an additional 25 per cent then 75 per cent of households receive an ‘emergency’ payment.
17 This section draws in part on Lonahurst and Sabates-Wheeler (forthcoming).

The VE trial was deemed a success and provided several key findings:

- The trial also flagged the importance of donor flexibility. Irish Aid financed the trial and provided funds for both the regular transfers and top-ups. They also committed to channel both forms of support through government systems (although top-ups were sent straight to the FSP account at district level), and to roll over some budgeting for a potential trial in 2018/2019, showing one of the many advantages of multi-year financing and planning. Lastly, the VE trial only focused on a slow onset shock (the lean season), but would need to evolve to consider the range of shocks faced by Malawi including fast onset, and decide which mechanisms are best suited to respond to them. This could mean for instance looking at horizontal expansion for floods or for wider-impact covariate shocks, and considering other instruments such as World Bank catastrophe bonds (CAT-DDOs) or insurance mechanisms.

Although certain donors are revising their structures to reduce compartmentalisation between humanitarian and development funding (see for instance recent DFID resilience business cases, ECHO multi-year assistance for cash transfers in Turkey, or DFID and ECHO issuing one call for proposals in Lebanon), routing funds through government to use existing social protection structures still remains off limits for many. This is related to concerns of transparency, accountability and fiduciary risk.

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Temporary laws and decrees are critical for opening up resources and services to new caseloads (including non-citizens) (Kyrgyzstan/Turkey)

Displaced people face barriers to obtaining support from a social assistance programme, including administrative (being unable to provide a fixed address or national ID), procedural (having to wait for a home visit before being enrolled in a programme), or personal (illiteracy making the provision of key information difficult). The examples of Kyrgyzstan (using the social assistance programme (SASW) for displaced people and refugees) and Turkey (using the social assistance programme (ESSN) for refugees) highlighted that temporary regulation or decrees issued by government that waived or changed some of these conditions were crucial to extend programmes in a timely and inclusive way. Additional work is then required to turn these changes into longer term SOPs/MoUs for future shock responses.

System feasibility studies (Turkey, Yemen, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi)

Completing a systems feasibility study covering partner capacity, systems coverage and conditions, beneficiary registration and eligibility requirements, relevant legislation, and payment process bottlenecks is a fundamental building block for adapting systems for SRSP. Several countries flagged the work of UNICEF in this regard (Turkey, Yemen, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi). An important factor when choosing the benefit modality is an understanding of whether social assistance programmes can deliver in a timely manner in response to shocks. In other words, there is a need to understand the approval and delivery chain (also in terms of timing and cost) to avoid delays in implementation, which in humanitarian aid conditions can potentially be life-threatening.

Technological innovation – Single delivery mechanisms, common service windows and e-wallet innovation (Lebanon/Jordan)

Where systems are in place and flexible funding allows payments to expand when a shock occurs, there are several ways in which e-payments add significant value for SRSP. Most obviously, they enable the beneficiary to receive multiple forms of support to one account or e-wallet, in a convenient, discreet and technically cost-efficient manner. Mobile devices also permit other uses, such as transmitting early-warning, health or nutrition messaging, or being used for M+E purposes. In certain fragile contexts, they may be the only way to reach recipients, due to access constraints or government restrictions (see for instance Yemen, WFP's work in Jordan, or UNHCR's efforts in Afghanistan). They provide new markets for commercial partners,¹⁹ and new ways to gather recipient user information that can help improve and tailor programming.

In Lebanon, WFP launched the OneCard platform to try to harmonise the 30 different cash providers to Syrian refugees through a single delivery mechanism to reduce costs and allow recipients to receive food vouchers and cash assistance through the same card. OneCard is now being used by a wide range of humanitarian actors and its use has expanded to Jordan, where in addition UN agencies and NGOs use one targeting mechanism (the Vulnerability Assessment Framework) to identify vulnerable refugees (Schimmel 2015; Idris 2017). Evidence from other countries shows that single delivery mechanisms are not always essential (or appropriate, if they lead to monopolies or poor coverage/access). But coordination amongst partners when negotiating rates with FSPs is important to avoid high transaction costs.

In Lebanon also, although the SP system has not yet been used for humanitarian transfers, the aim is to design the latter in ways similar to the former to achieve greater alignment, as well as incorporating good practices from the humanitarian response to refugees into the design of the SP system. Furthermore, there is a proposal for a 'common service window' through government-run Social Development Centres, to present a common interface for the recipient at the point of use, regardless of their status. Branding and management could make both schemes appear similar, as well as ensuring the same case worker staff serving both groups use similar registration forms, case management software, payment cards and needs-based transfer levels. The Lebanon case studies note that this could be an important measure to ease social tensions and counter perceptions held by Lebanese citizens of unequal treatment afforded to Syrian refugees.

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¹⁹ For instance, WFP claims that using e-payment to support Syrian refugees in host countries has injected USD 1.3 billion into the region up to 2016 (<https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/any-means-necessary-5-ways-wfp-supports-syrians>)

The issues that can arise from the use of e-payment structures, and their blending for SRSP, have been documented elsewhere (see for instance the resources and references in Ford, 2017). Perhaps one of the most pertinent big-picture questions is whether the institutions collecting all the data generated from e-payment platforms are sufficiently prepared and experienced to store and protect it, and whether combining humanitarian and social protection systems and data could be paving the way for future human rights violations, enhanced state surveillance or unchecked private sector use (Nyst and Hosein, 2014).

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Considerations for operationalising the nexus²⁰

Political economy considerations when designing SRSP

Shock-responsive social protection literature largely focuses on technical issues around setting up appropriate mechanisms that either facilitate coordination with disaster risk management agencies and/or allow social protection programmes to scale up assistance through appropriate targeting, delivery and management information systems (MIS). An area that has been insufficiently covered is the political economy of putting in place shock-responsive social protection systems and fostering linkages between short-term humanitarian assistance and longer-term programmes. This is an important area due to the large number of local, national and international actors – each with their own interests, funding priorities and institutional set-ups, that will be required to collaborate and coordinate to ensure more effective linkages between humanitarian assistance and social protection (O'Brien et al. 2017).

This fragmentation of interests not only applies across sectors, but also within sectors. For instance, reference is often made to national social protection systems which implicitly assumes there is some sort of sectoral coherence. In reality the majority of social protection sectors in low- and middle-income countries are highly fragmented and are finding themselves in processes of sectoral harmonisation, where programmes operated by different agencies and under different operational guidelines are being brought together under national social protection strategies. Processes of harmonisation can be challenging in contexts where social protection programmes have been in place for several years and were set up in parallel with different targeting and delivery mechanisms.

Examples of 'shock-responsive' social protection systems often refer to specific programmes that are situated within that wider, fragmented social protection landscape. In Kenya the HSNP is one of four flagship programmes under the National Safety Net Programme (NSNP) – yet it is the only one with the capacity to deliver emergency assistance following a drought. Currently there are few linkages between the HSNP and the operational systems of the other categorically targeted programmes (and there is limited recognition among national and international stakeholders of the contributions other cash transfers make to people's capacity to absorb shocks) (Ulrichs and Slater 2016).

The institutional mandate of national authorities/agencies implementing social protection and DRM programmes is another factor that affects coordination with humanitarian or disaster management agencies. Kenya's HSNP is managed by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) which is the main coordinating entity for the national Ending Drought Emergency (EDE) framework. It is therefore strategically well positioned to manage a social safety net programme that both addresses chronic food security, and links to national early warning systems and emergency response plans (Ulrichs and Slater 2016). Similarly, in the Philippines the main agency in charge of social protection coordinates humanitarian response and DRM (Smith et al. 2017). Although inter-departmental coordination challenges exist, the opportunity to integrate shock-responsive elements into existing programmes is significantly greater in the Philippines than in contexts where social protection and humanitarian assistance are operated through different agencies which manage social protection programmes for categorically vulnerable groups, such as children or older people. For those agencies the incentives of addressing vulnerability

20 In parts, this section currently draws heavily on Ulrichs and Sabates-Wheeler (2018).

to natural disasters are low, since this falls outside of their mandate. For example, in Lesotho while there is strong political will to expand the Universal Old Age Pension and the Child Grant, there is little interest in adapting these programmes to be shock-responsive (which explains why there is little collaboration at the national level between social protection and DRM) (Kardan et al. 2017).

Similarly, the humanitarian sector faces challenges around coordination of multiple actors responding to certain crises. The growing interest in cash-based approaches is considered to be an opportunity to increase partner coordination around a transfer modality that is more flexible and fungible than in-kind assistance (CaLP 2014). Initiatives like the Cash Working Groups initiated by Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) aim to coordinate cash transfer programmes, focusing on technical issues, but a recent evaluation in the Sahel highlighted the added benefit of the groups' participation through strategy development to contribute to policy processes (CaLP 2016; O'Brien et al. 2017). A Cash Working Group was also set up in the Philippines in 2012 and revived after Typhoon Haiyan to coordinate cash-based disaster response (Smith et al. 2017).

Lastly, whilst many of the examples provided in this operational noted have referred to utilising national social protection systems to deliver humanitarian assistance, this may not always be advisable. Humanitarian approaches can align to or coordinate with SP systems, with a view to future integration or not, depending on context, capacity, desire for coordination and the sensitivity of a situation. Likewise, national capacity needs to be built in both SP and DRM sectors, ideally with a view to enhanced coordination and integration, but again noting that context will determine to what degree this is possible or desirable.

To be kept in mind when operationalising the nexus:

- Be aware of the political economy of building SRSP systems – foster linkages between short-term humanitarian assistance and longer-term programmes.
- A large number of local, national and international actors – each with their own interests, funding priorities and institutional set-ups – will be required to collaborate and coordinate to ensure more effective linkages. Actors may see blending of systems as loss of prestige and resource mobilisation potential.
- The institutional identity of national agencies implementing social protection programmes can make or break better coordination between social protection or disaster management agencies.
- Potential for better linkages between national SP and DRM authorities is inhibited by individual donor's bilateral collaboration with different national agencies; need to encourage multi-donor platforms and incentivising multi-sector coordination at the national level.
- Design with a long-term view, build capacity for modalities appropriate to context.
- Enshrine operational decisions (including on modality choices) in protocols – MoUs, SOPs, decrees.

Funding strategy and modalities

A look at global trends shows that whilst humanitarian assistance still makes up a small percentage of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) (USD 27 billion compared to USD 167 billion in 2016), it has grown faster than overall ODA in the last decade. Meanwhile, 74 per cent of all humanitarian funding in 2016 went to protracted crises of eight years or more in length, and for the 20 largest recipients of humanitarian assistance, increases in humanitarian assistance have not been met by increases in non-humanitarian ODA (Development Initiatives 2018). This means that the majority of humanitarian funding is going to protracted emergencies, but that non-humanitarian ODA is not keeping up with increases in humanitarian expenditure.

What does this mean for SRSP? First, there is a greater requirement for longer-term programmes and funding to meet the chronic needs of vulnerable people, and there is a need to align funding modalities and transfer modalities to efficiently and effectively meet this need wherever feasible. Resourcing SRSP touches on two key issues – who pays, and how do they pay? Should humanitarian donors pay for vertical expansion top-ups or horizontal expansion, or should it be the government or through contingency funds from SP actors?

The strategy for resourcing would ideally be multi-pronged and context-specific:

- **create contingent financing within social assistance funding structures** (by government, within either funds / Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTFs), from a specific donor);
- **devise single delivery mechanisms** to flexibly channel and scale different resources to the same household through one coordination mechanism;
- **create SOPs for the use of aligned humanitarian resources or protocols** for when to utilise humanitarian mechanisms when the capacity of a SP system is exceeded, and beyond these, transferring risk to pooling mechanisms such as climate-risk insurance for catastrophic covariate shocks.

Other mechanisms include crisis modifiers (front-loading financing from other parts of a programme to address shock-based need) and catastrophe bonds such as those offered by the World Bank to countries, which provide low-interest, quick-access loans in the aftermath of shocks based on pre-agreed contingency plans. For this, risk layering is useful (matching the risk and shocks a country faces with the financial tools and programmatic responses best suited to address them), and more research is needed on donor requirements (both SP and humanitarian) for the use of their funds in fragile contexts, in terms of public financial management, reporting, timeliness and accountability. Fragmented coordination is often driven by siloed donor policies and independent donor bilateral agreements with respective national agencies. Effective coordination is shaped by multi-donor platforms, multi-sector coordination, and pooled resources at the national level.

Available resources can dictate modality choice. As in-kind will remain a modality of choice for many international donors and national governments (national strategic grain reserves linked to legislation that regulates commodity prices remain a legitimate humanitarian *and* social protection tool), especially in times of crisis, SRSP systems and funding strategies will need to be built to enable these in-kind resources to complement cash and service delivery. This is the case for the PSNP in Ethiopia, where different actors can channel their humanitarian assistance funds through common platforms that use the same targeting and delivery mechanisms.

To be kept in mind when operationalising the nexus:

- Increases in humanitarian assistance have not been matched by increases in non-humanitarian ODA. The majority of humanitarian funding is going to protracted emergencies.
- Increasing requirement for longer-term programmes and funding to meet the chronic needs of vulnerable people. It is therefore necessary to align funding and transfer modalities to meet this need efficiently and effectively.
- Modality flexibility may be required based on shock typology, impact and evolution, available resources or partner requirements.
- Donor influence on funding mechanisms and modality choice is key to greater coordination or silos.
- Strategy for resourcing would ideally be multi-pronged and context specific:
 - Create contingent financing within social assistance funding structures.
 - Devise single delivery mechanisms to channel different resources flexibly to the same household.
 - Create SOPs for the use of humanitarian resources aligned with SP resources.
 - Consider use of crisis modifiers and/or catastrophe bonds.

Sequencing – *ex ante* or *ex post*

Sequencing refers to the best time to integrate adaptive or shock-responsive components into a programme, either from the outset in the design phase, or by ‘grafting’ these measures onto pre-existing programmes once they have achieved a certain level of robustness and perform their core functions. In many cases some form of social assistance or similar programme may already exist in a country, requiring a form of retroactive ‘grafting’ of additional shock-responsive mechanisms and activities; however there are still countries where SP systems are non-existent or nascent, where shock response can be integrated into design. There are pros and cons to both. One can argue that whilst focusing on designing SP systems to respond to shocks is an efficient way to address the needs of the most vulnerable, adding these components adds greater complexity, especially where human and institutional capacity are weak, which risks over-burdening and jeopardising the entire system designed to address chronically vulnerable groups, a point O’Brien et al. make when flagging the need to ‘align programme objectives with institutional capacity to avoid ‘premature load-bearing’ of social protection programmes that might not be able to deliver on all fronts’ (O’Brien et al. 2018, p.7).

Others argue that social protection is, by definition, designed to address and protect against shocks across the life cycle, but that all too often the multi-dimensional drivers of vulnerability, and the full spectrum of shocks faced by the vulnerable (including climate- and conflict-driven) were all too often not sufficiently addressed in social protection programme design. Therefore including some structural flexibility for shock response *ex ante* makes good programmatic sense and could be more cost-effective than trying to include these elements later, proponents pointing for instance to the design of the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) in Kenya.

Both humanitarian and development practitioners have a responsibility to consider the long term implications of choosing either route, although perhaps the weight of emphasis from emerging evidence points to the need to integrate shock-responsive elements into design, whether *ex ante* or *ex post*, but doing so with a firm understanding of the context in which one operates – the maturity level of the existing SP system, the feasibility of proposed changes including assessment of capacity, learning through trialling, focusing on financial sustainability from the outset etc. Even where a social assistance programme does not exist at all, humanitarian actors can follow these principles to lay the ground work for future SP programme design where the context permits, and pre-established multi-year development programmes can also consider shock response options such as integrating crisis modifiers (integrally or on a case-by-case, shock-by-shock basis) into their programming.

Understanding modality options and preferences from the outset, including as part of a multi-annual approach, is a fundamental building block for sequencing.

To be kept in mind when operationalising the nexus:

- It is important to define whether a given context permits SRSP design at the outset (*ex ante*) or integration into a pre-existing system (*ex post*).
- Understanding modality options and preferences from the outset, including as part of a multi-annual approach, is a fundamental building block for sequencing.

Viewing vulnerability through the lens of seasonality

Given the overwhelming impact of climate change on development investments and drivers of vulnerability, including the intersection with food insecurity, displacement and conflict, it is pertinent for practitioners to re-consider climate shocks and their effects through the lens of seasonality.²¹ Reframing shocks not as unpredictable events requiring humanitarian support, but predictable and structural events whose magnitude and unpredictability are increasing, leads to different types of programming. A reframing along these

21 The World Bank estimates that 40 per cent of the recent accomplishments in poverty reduction could be reversed through the effects of climate change (Hallegatte et al., 2016).

lines requires systemic, multi-annual solutions that take as their starting point the ways in which the lives of the most vulnerable are affected by fluctuations across the year, including agricultural livelihoods, migratory patterns, flows of households income, and of course exposure to climate shocks. Seasonality also impacts discussions on how to integrate shock response into SP systems, by interrogating: when transfers are made (during or just before the effects of a shock are felt, or back when the shock was first predicted to prevent negative coping); which type of modality to use (with longer term multi-annual planning); which modality is more suitable for different times of the year or season; and the amount to provide.

This in turn requires looking at entry points multi-annually. Climate shocks and the crises they can engender occur over a (minimum) two-year cycle. For instance, a poor agricultural season drives up need for the next lean-season response (with a gap of anything between 3-8 months depending on the number of rainy/ planting periods in a country), with impacts felt by households on average anything up to four years after each shock (oft-cited examples include Hoddinott and Knippenberg's longitudinal studies in Ethiopia (2017)). Therefore anticipatory action has multiple windows – when the shock is predicted, when the shock hits, when the effects of the shock are felt (which is not always when the shock hits, especially for slow onset), after the shock, and then likewise for the following season, regardless of its performance (adjusted for need and household requirements etc.). Currently most attention is focused on providing life-saving response at the point where the effects of a shock are most acutely felt through humanitarian mechanisms which, by definition, are (or should be) short-term, life-saving, and inevitably more costly. As shocks pass, many households are deregistered and forgotten until the cycle repeats.

By contrast, shock-responsive seasonal top-ups could be designed with different criteria in mind, with smaller values and earlier timings not tied to the humanitarian response and the peak of shock impacts. Likewise, a larger one-off transfer can be provided for investments prior to these shocks and impacts. Then *potentially additional* transfers, for instance either horizontal or vertical, could be made for additional caseloads, with humanitarian mechanisms employed when SRSP mechanism capacity is exceeded. Thinking seasonally interrogates definitions of efficiency versus effectiveness. Using one delivery mechanism for two different types of transfer during a lean-season response is efficient (potentially saving time and money), but the effectiveness of this approach in terms of outcomes for recipients is less clear (and would need longer-term evaluation). Providing top-ups aligned to the seasonal calendar (in terms of timing and value) could move the discussion from one focused on efficiency, to one more about effectiveness, with hopefully a slow reduction in humanitarian need over time. More research into seasonally appropriate top-ups is required for SRSP, taking into account important periods such as agricultural investment, school terms, the start of negative coping, annual inflation rates for key commodities, peaks in clinic admissions for communicable diseases, and peaks in food and nutrition insecurity.

To be kept in mind when operationalising the nexus:

- Most shocks are predictable, and therefore issues are structural, pointing towards the need for long term solutions, despite gap being filled in many contexts by humanitarians.
- Viewing the lives and needs of affected people through the lens of seasonality, and understanding need as (often) cyclical and multi-annual, affects the modality choice, value, timing of transfer and partner choice.
- Need to define between seasonal need / fluctuations and unanticipated shock-based transfers/top-ups.

Risk layering

Supporting the spectrum of risks and activities from prevention to response, recovery and resilience across the nexus requires blended and differentiated activities, actors, financing mechanisms and modalities. Undertaking ‘risk layering’ exercises can be of benefit to understand which modalities to use when matching the risks people face with the most appropriate programmatic modalities, coverage and capacity, and aiming to achieve maximum risk coverage before, during and after shocks. This refers not only to cash, in-kind, voucher or service delivery, but also contributory and non-contributory modalities (the former including potential insurance mechanisms or pension platforms, for instance).

Although not explored in detail in this operational note for the reasons cited at the outset, addressing the full range of risks and their impacts in nexus programming, as well as ensuring the right actors are engaged and sustainability is addressed, should include considerations of contributory mechanisms such as insurance. Insurance plays an important role in the wider landscape of SRSP, albeit with caveats. It can be expensive, complex to set up and difficult to get buy-in from poor and vulnerable households due to the unpredictable nature of their income, the lack of immediate returns, and their risk profile. However, insurance has a clear role to play in SRSP and a wider social contract for SP by transferring the risk of catastrophic and or large-scale shocks to insurance providers. This would potentially reduce the risk profile of the insured over the longer term, thereby facilitating wider access to other goods and services (such as loans).

To be kept in mind when operationalising the nexus:

For humanitarian actors

- The humanitarian sector faces challenges around coordination of multiple actors responding to certain crises. The increasing interest in cash-based approaches is considered to be an opportunity to increase coordination across agencies, which can now rally around a transfer modality that is more flexible and fungible than in-kind assistance.
- Cash working groups tend to focus on the technical issues linked to cash transfers, but a recent evaluation in the Sahel highlighted the added benefit of the groups’ participation through strategy development to contribute to policy processes.

For development actors

- Reference to national social protection systems implicitly assumes sectoral coherence. In reality the majority of SP sectors are highly fragmented.
- Sectoral harmonisation is required where programmes operated by different agencies and under different operational guidelines are being brought together under national social protection strategies. Development partners can play a key role in advocating for greater coherence including with DRM actors
- Examples of SRSP systems often refer to specific programmes that are situated within that wider, fragmented social protection landscape.
- Development partners can work SRSP into programmes, including through crisis modifiers.

Annex 1

Emerging guidance and tools

CaLP – Social protection and humanitarian cash transfer programming

<http://www.cashlearning.org/thematic-area/social-protection-and-humanitarian-cash-transfer-programming>

CaLP – Guidance Note for Humanitarian practitioners. Working with cash based safety nets in humanitarian contexts (includes useful guidelines for programming and case studies)

<http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-humanitarian-pratitioners-guidance-notes-en-web-.pdf>

CaLP – Comparison of humanitarian market analysis tools (and links to tools)

<http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/comparative-table-of-market-analysis-tools-final.pdf>

CaLP – Vouchers delivery guide booklet

<http://www.cashlearning.org/resources/library/25-vouchers---a-quick-delivery-guide-booklet-version>

DG ECHO – Guidance on cash based assistance (including vouchers) (technical notes, case studies, programme cycle management, council conclusions etc.)

https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/cash-transfers-and-vouchers_en

DG-ECHO funding guidelines for the use of cash and vouchers in humanitarian crises (includes decision tree, checklist, lesson learned, creating proposals, etc.)

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/ECHO_Cash_Vouchers_Guidelines.pdf

ECHO Tools and Methods Series, Reference Document No. 14, 'Social transfers in the fight against hunger'

<https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/13725/download?token=CL73kuK3>

ECHO Staff Handbook on 'Operating in situations of conflict and fragility'

<https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-fragility/document/operating-situations-conflict-and-fragility-eu-staff-handbook>

HPG Guidance on evaluating the transfer modality decision making chain in emergency programming

<https://www.odi.org/publications/9285-cash-vouchers-or-kind-guidance-evaluating-how-transfers-are-made-emergency-programming>

IDS – Adaptive Social Protection (conceptual material, case studies, evaluations)

<https://www.ids.ac.uk/projects/adaptive-social-protection/>

OPM (case studies, SRSP global synthesis report and tool kit)

<https://www.opml.co.uk/projects/shock-responsive-social-protection-systems>

World Bank – Adaptive Social Protection (see documents section for case studies on aligning humanitarian and SP systems, poverty and vulnerability analysis, research on differing targeting methodologies, etc.)

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/sahel-adaptive-social-protection-program-trust-fund>

WFP – SRSP in Latin America and the Caribbean (various resources)

<https://www.wfp.org/content/shock-responsive-social-protection-latin-america-and-caribbean>

GIZ, World Bank and WFP – SRSP in Malawi (report)

<https://www.odi.org/publications/11024-towards-shock-sensitive-social-protection-system-malawi>

Annex 2

Cheat sheet tables

Table 1 – Modality types

MODALITY	DESCRIPTION
CASH	<p>Cash transfers are payments provided by either government or non-state actors that often target the poorest and most vulnerable in society. They are the transfer of resources using market mechanisms and essentially respond to problems of ‘access’ not ‘availability’, e.g. commodities or services are available but people can’t afford them. They can be known variously as ‘cash and vouchers’, ‘cash-based interventions’, ‘market-based interventions’, and ‘cash transfer programming’. SP practitioners refer mostly to ‘cash transfers’, and a common term in humanitarian circles is ‘cash-based transfers’ (which includes vouchers as a proxy for cash) (CaLP 2017). For the sake of simplicity in this section, as SRSP is a blending of SP and humanitarian worlds, we will refer only to ‘<u>cash transfers</u>’ which is taken to include vouchers.</p> <p>Cash transfers have expanded rapidly in the past decade across a diversity of contexts – originally starting as a core element of social assistance programmes, they have been increasingly used in humanitarian response. As the reference document for this operational note highlights, across all sectors, one third of ECHO humanitarian operations in 2016 were linked to cash-based interventions and over half of the European Commission’s humanitarian food assistance was provided in the form of cash-based responses (European Commission 2018). This reflects the same upward trend for all the main humanitarian actors.²²</p> <p>In social protection, cash transfers can either be unconditional (no compliance with further conditions required), or conditional (cash is transferred upon compliance with certain conditions, such as children accessing health and education services, or where adult members of the household complete works as part of a public works programmes (PWPs)). Cash transfers are generally payments to households or individuals that are non-contributory, direct and regular (mostly monthly or bi-monthly). They are also known as ‘social assistance’, ‘social transfers’ or ‘social safety nets’ (these are also wider categories that can also include in-kind payments such as school feeding or indirect tuition waivers or subsidies). They can be implemented by government, NGOs, or financial service providers (FSPs), and are usually funded through taxation or donors (Roelen et al., 2018). The number of developing countries implementing conditional cash transfers more than doubled from 27 in 2008 to 64 in 2014, and as of 2014, 130 countries had at least one unconditional cash transfer programme, with 94 having at least one public works programme (World Bank, 2015). It is also worth noting however that such programmes frequently only cover a small proportion of the population, offer low benefits, and suffer from weak institutionalisation (ILO, 2017; Roelen et al., 2018)</p> <p>‘Cash based transfers’ (CBTs) in humanitarian terminology also include vouchers as a proxy for cash or services, and are becoming increasingly used for humanitarian response, although in-kind is still the modality of choice for now. Cash transfers are used to meet the core needs of vulnerable people, to protect lives and livelihoods, alleviate suffering, and maintain dignity before, during, and after shocks (The Sphere Project 2011; CaLP 2017). They are designed to address acute or unanticipated need, although this line is often blurred as emergencies become protracted in nature. This includes when national government capacity is exceeded, or when governments are unwilling to act or are party to the crisis, and this alignment or otherwise to government policy and systems is highly relevant to SRSP programming, discussed later. International standards such as the Sphere Standards, (Survival) Minimum Expenditure Basket ((S)MEB) define the parameters for use of cash transfers in humanitarian response, though their application varies based on context and resources (The Sphere Project 2011; CaLP 2017). In line with the use of social protection cash transfers, humanitarian cash transfers can be unconditional or conditional, restricted or unrestricted, although for the most part they are unconditional, as needs are considered urgent and therefore conditionality inappropriate. Depending on the circumstances, cash transfers may be used on their own or in conjunction with other modalities such as food (a ‘mixed-modality basket’) (CaLP 2017).</p>

22 Recent international commitments such as the Grand Bargain (Agenda for Humanity, 2016) and World Humanitarian Summit (World Humanitarian Summit, 2016) have driven the increase of humanitarian assistance provided through cash transfers. WFP and UNHCR, the two largest humanitarian agencies, both delivered 50 per cent of their support in the form of cash in 2017 (Rammaciato, 2017), and together accounted for about two thirds of the total USD 2.8 billion spent on CBT in 2016 (Abell et al., 2018)). Several NGOs have made ambitious commitments as part of the Grand Bargain to increase their CBT provision, as have key donors such as DFID and ECHO.

VOUCHER	<p>Vouchers can come in different forms (e.g. paper or electronic cards), and can be a proxy either for cash, commodities or services. They can be more flexible than in-kind modalities, but come with restrictions on how they can be used. In places where local markets are functioning and commodities are available but unaffordable for shock-affected households, paper or electronic cards ('e-vouchers' or 'e-cards') can allow recipients to redeem pre-defined goods or services from pre-defined traders. Vouchers are also sometimes used in place of cash where there are high security or inflation risks, or when there is a desire to restrict what the recipient uses the transfer for (for example, to help address malnutrition, or ensure access to high quality inputs such as seed fairs). Vouchers bring lots of the benefits of cash (providing recipients with choice and spending power, boosting local economies, and reducing logistical costs) but also their own challenges and conditions (such as needing pre-approved local traders with the sufficient capacity to engage in the scheme, requiring established infrastructure and available technology, ensuring e-cards abide by national legislation on data management and protection etc.) (Technical Brief note 3 (Voucher) in ECHO 2018; CALP 2011)</p>
IN-KIND	<p>The most common in-kind modality in humanitarian settings is food (provided either by the international community or national governments), as the most basic need in emergencies and most frequently the highest expenditure in poor households. Other in-kind items include shelter and educational materials, agricultural inputs, and household kits. The past twenty years, however, have seen a rise in the number of natural disasters, protracted conflicts and major humanitarian emergencies, whilst rapid urbanisation and an ageing population are adding to the complexity of crises. This has led to a greater focus on DRM alongside response measures and has prompted an increasing number of agencies and donors to shift their terminology from aid to assistance to allow them to include the provision of cash to cover recipient needs in place of in-kind commodities, which for food-related purposes falls within definitions of food assistance (Harvey et al. 2010).</p>
BASIC SERVICES AND SERVICE DELIVERY	<p>Service delivery has become a central pillar of social protection approaches in the last decade. Access to services is seen as crucial to improving human development outcomes and fundamental, too, as part of rights-based approaches that states and other actors are under obligation to respect and promote. These are required to ensure that all individuals attain a minimum standard of living and can live a life of dignity, and directly correspond to addressing the multi-dimensional aspects of poverty and risks across the life cycle, by helping prevent shocks and stresses from having a harmful effect on well-being. Basic services most commonly include primary healthcare, education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), nutrition, and safety, security and justice services (ODI 2004).</p> <p>Whilst conflict is associated with the deterioration of delivery systems and service provision, these same services can also be key to peace building, recovery, and re-establishment of state legitimacy when governments take ownership and coordinate across actors (Carpenter et al. 2012).</p>
ACCOMPANYING MEASURES	<p>Another related concept is 'accompanying measures', which are services or inputs provided alongside a benefit modality. These can include nutritional trainings, maternal and infant health messaging, entrepreneurial trainings, formation of village savings and loans groups, or provision of a one-off cash grant or productive assets such as livestock. They are often linked to a broader graduation or cash plus strategy.</p>

Annex 3

Acronym list

Active Labour Market Policies	ALMP
Automatic Teller Machine	ATM
Disaster Risk Financing	DRF
Disaster Risk Management	DRM
Financial Service Provider	FSP
Grievance and Referral Mechanisms	GRMs
Horizontal expansion	HE
Household Economy Approach	HEA
Internally Displaced People	IDPs
Inter-Agency Social Protection	ISPA
Management Information systems	MIS
Memoranda of Understanding	MoU
Monitoring and Evaluation	M+E
Multi-Donor Trust Fund	MDTF
National Safety Net Programme	NSNP
Non-Government Organisation	NGO
Overseas Development Assistance	ODA
Public Financial Management	PFM
Proxy Means Testing	PMT
Standard Operating Procedures	SOPs
Shock Responsive Social Protection	SRSP
Social Protection	SP
Vertical Expansion	VE

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