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Supporting people through crisis



Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus

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This operational note has been written by Rebecca Holmes and Rachel Slater.

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Introduction

This note is one of a series of guidance notes for EU practitioners and their partners working at the intersection of social protection and humanitarian response. The aim of this note is to discuss the ways in which social protection interventions which bridge the humanitarian-development nexus can achieve the best outcomes for vulnerable groups and enhance their agency and resilience towards shocks and crises.

Terms such as ‘vulnerability’, ‘risk’ and ‘vulnerable groups’ can have substantially different meanings in different parts of the EU and among the humanitarian and development agencies of member countries (see for example EC 2013; EC 2016). This presents an immediate challenge to working on social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus. ‘Vulnerable groups’ are defined here as those who are exposed to risks and poverty on the basis of – or exacerbated by – social status, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, etc. ‘Risk’ is the possibility of harm or damage.

In this note, we draw on existing research and data including recent international studies and experiences to provide an overview of knowledge on current concepts, policies, instruments and promising practices, and offer guidance for operating in specific contexts, including pointing to more detailed resources. The scope of the note is not to set out new procedures or operational steps, but to offer practical and operational implications for EU operations based on the available evidence base. It focuses on key decisions a donor has to make around policy and strategy relevant to supporting vulnerable groups through social protection interventions in different types of emergency contexts and in contexts with varying degrees of state capacity and willingness to operate, and varying maturity of the social protection system.

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Section 1 focuses on key decisions a donor has to make around policy and strategy relevant to supporting vulnerable groups through social protection interventions in different types of emergency contexts and in contexts with varying degrees of state capacity and willingness to operate, and varying maturity of the social protection system. **Section 2** then discusses why it is important to focus on vulnerable groups’ needs, and how gender, age, disability, ethnicity and race create or exacerbate vulnerabilities and risks in crisis situations. **Section 3** discusses recent international experiences in designing and implementing SPaN interventions taking account of vulnerable groups’ needs. **Section 4** then concludes with lessons learned and implications for future policy.

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Key risks facing vulnerable groups

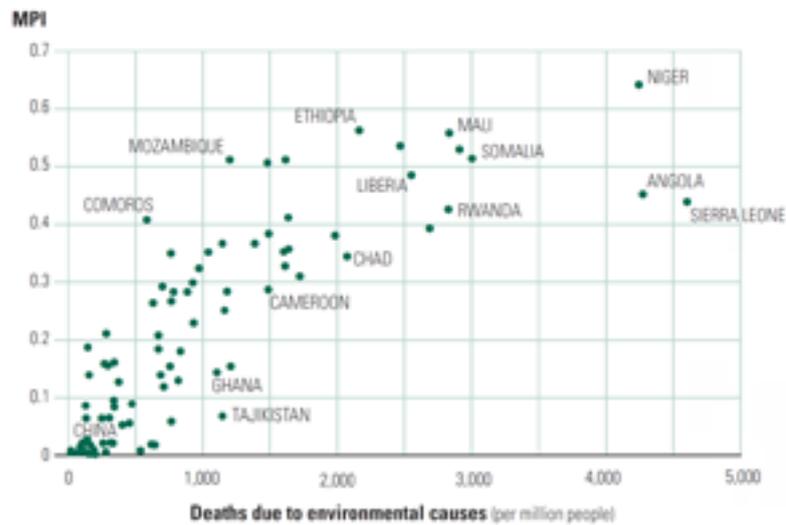


Figure 1: Deaths attributable to environmental risks are associated with high multi-dimensional poverty index (MPI) scores.
Source: UNDP (2011)

Global evidence shows that poverty is the core determinant of exposure to disasters. Poorer people are more likely to live in areas exposed to disasters or conflict. For example, informal settlements in Medellin in Colombia are found on steep slopes and close to rivers on the edge of the cities and are prone to flooding and landslides (Hallegatte et al. 2017). In urban areas, overcrowding increases the risk of fire, and living near open sewers and drains increases health hazards. In rural areas, poor households cultivate the least productive land that is most vulnerable to drought. In the Philippines, for example, there is considerable overlap between the geographical incidence of natural hazards and the regions with the highest poverty incidence: at the household level, exposure to disasters increases with poverty on account of the location and quality of housing, and the limited assets that poor households have at their disposal to cope with and recover from disasters (Walsh and Hallegatte, 2019).

‘Poor people suffer only a small share of the economic losses caused by disasters, but they suffer disproportionately. Based on estimates of *socioeconomic resilience* in 117 countries, and including in the analysis how poverty and lack of capacity to cope with disasters magnify losses in well-being, the effects of floods, wind storms, earthquakes, and tsunamis on well-being are equivalent to a USD 520 billion drop in consumption - 60 per cent more than the widely reported asset losses.’

(Hallegatte et al., 2017: 3)

Despite this primacy, other features are also critical and intersect with poverty which drive increased exposure to shocks and affect their impacts – notably context, demography, gender, disability and social status. First, the specific context is critical. The type and scale of the shock matters. In Nepal, Walker et al. (2017) find that the 2015 earthquake did not disproportionately affect poorer households, particularly because poorer households tended to have simple, single-storey dwellings that suffered less damage. This makes targeting humanitarian responses – especially early recovery and rehabilitation – very challenging indeed, with a tricky trade-off to navigate between

focusing on actual and proportionate losses of assets and livelihoods. The location of the shock is also important. In comparisons between rural and urban areas in Vietnam, only the urban poor are disproportionately exposed to flooding compared with non-poor households (Narloch and Bangalore, 2016).

Second, life-cycle risks – those associated with age and demography – have a strong and differential impact on who is most vulnerable to shocks and the severity of impact. There are numerous examples. During the 2015 heatwave in India the elderly were disproportionately affected (Hallegate et al., 2017). HelpAge International (2014) note that *‘Older people’s physical challenges can reduce their capacity to prepare for disasters – for example, they may struggle to stockpile food and water, bring livestock to safety quickly, or travel long distances ... many frail or housebound older people may be less able or willing to flee their homes’*. Older people can also be excluded from emergency cash transfer programmes either because of direct age discrimination or because of a failure to recognise the role they play in supporting their families and households.

Infants and children are also particularly affected by disasters and conflict because of their limited physical capacities and their dependence on parents. The impacts of crises for children are often long-term. In Africa, in households affected by drought, children have worse nutrition outcomes, are 2-3 cm shorter, and are delayed starting school and complete fewer school grades (Alderman et al. 2006). For children, the focus on immediate impacts on nutritional, consumption and shelter may also be inadequate. Peek (2008) notes that the psychosocial impacts of crises on children are relatively poorly understood. Although the HIV/AIDS pandemic has brought psychosocial care into sharp relief, addressing these longer-term, wider impacts of crises is rarely considered in the design and targeting of social protection programmes.

‘The differential impact of natural disasters [is explained] not merely by recourse to different physical exposures and biological or physiological gender differences, but also by the different socially constructed vulnerabilities that derive from the social roles men and women assume, voluntarily or involuntarily, as well as existing patterns of gender discrimination’

(Neumayer and Plumper, 2007 p. 551).

Third, other social groups, defined by gender, ethnicity and other social identity features also affect shock exposure and affectedness. There is substantial evidence of the relationships between gender and crises, which stresses that both exposure and impact of shocks on men and women are driven less by physical and biological differences and more by gendered roles and experiences. In the 2004 Tsunami, four times as many women died as men because social norms meant they had not been taught to swim or climb trees and because, especially in India and Sri Lanka, traditional clothing for women (saris) made swimming even more difficult (MacDonald 2005). The importance of gendered roles and norms is also highlighted in slow-onset crises such as drought: the Somalia case study finds that *‘Women’s low social status, lack of access to political power, decision-making, education, and capital severely constrain their economic opportunities and productivity’* (European Commission, 2019a). In Asia, Dhungel and Ojha (2012: 311) agree, finding that a range of factors *‘contribute to women’s vulnerability to disaster in Nepal, including their livelihood activities and domestic work burden, gender discrimination that limits their opportunities to speak out, and social norms that restrict their access to outside agencies offering assistance’*. Broader impacts of crises also have a gender dimension: the ICGTF (2015) find an escalation in violence against women and girls (VAWG), trafficking and other gender-based threats after the Nepal 2015 earthquake (Standing et al. 2016). Similarly, in Turkey and Lebanon, refugee women and girls faced particularly adverse consequences when displaced, as they are vulnerable to early marriage and child labour (Centre for Transnational Development and Collaboration, 2015). It is estimated that more than half of female refugees need psychological services as many have experienced intimate partner violence, sexual violence, or forced or early marriage (AFAD, 2014, cited in Maunder et al., 2018).

For people with disability there is a similar challenging combination of physical capacity (*'less mobility, speed and reduced sensory input [that] can mean more risk of injury or death'* (UNISDR 2017, p. 3)) plus the discrimination that people with disability face in their communities and on the part of humanitarian and development agencies. In Satkhira in Bangladesh, people with disability reported finding it difficult to evacuate during floods and being left out of distributions of relief, either because they were discriminated against, or because their limited mobility meant they always arrived last at relief distribution sites (Sightsavers 2015). They note how gender and disability interplay to reinforce vulnerability: *'women with disabilities ... face additional constraints on their movement due to conservative belief systems'* (p. 4).

Other groups are also marginalised based on ethnicity and caste, which may be exacerbated in crises (UNISDR, 2017). Minority ethnic groups and indigenous peoples often face difficulties in accessing their share of resources and assistance in disasters. In the flood-prone area of the Terai plain in Nepal, for example, Dalit communities are often deprived of access to resources and protection in disasters (UNISDR, 2017). Marginalised or minority groups may also be more vulnerable in situations of violent conflict and displacement. The Somalia case study notes that *'in Somalia, the majority of IDPs are from historically marginalised and minority groups and are often vulnerable to more powerful gate-keepers in their new urban locations'* (European Commission, 2019a: 1). Moreover, without careful context analysis, humanitarian interventions may also inadvertently contribute to conflict and tension between various ethnic groups in multi-ethnic community contexts, as was the case in Ampara District, Sri Lanka in post-tsunami distribution of aid (Amarasiri de Silva, 2009).

The intersection between poverty and social vulnerability therefore has important implications for delivering social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus. Humanitarian actors often target their social protection first on specific geographical areas where they respond to external or large-scale shocks such as conflict, displacement or natural hazards. Following the initial entry point of a geographical area, there may or may not be a subsequent focus on targeting by gender, poverty, disability, ethnicity, etc. Following the 2015 earthquake and 2017 floods in Nepal, for example, some needs assessments used to identify target groups were based on the damage incurred to housing – so richer households with multi-storey properties had often sustained more damage than poorer households living in more simple, single-storey dwellings. In contrast, in long-term social protection systems, there are many countries where the priority entry point for targeting social protection programming is life-cycle risks and social vulnerabilities such as gender, disability, ethnicity and other forms of marginalisation. So, there is rarely a neat overlap between the priority entry points for targeting in humanitarian and development settings. Other elements of humanitarian action may focus explicitly on these social elements, for example through specific health services for pregnant women and nursing mothers or therapeutic feeding for infants. In the case of general food distributions and cash transfers, however, a focus on specific vulnerable groups is rarely the predominant targeting feature.

Furthermore, vulnerable groups that receive social protection are sometimes excluded at the local level from humanitarian support on that basis (for example, see the case study of the Nepal floods in Slater et al. (2018). This is because of an assumption that they do not need support because they are already receiving, for example, pensions or child support. In practice, however, whilst these social transfers are important in supporting individual consumption, they are usually small and inadequate to provide a buffer against crises, particularly when being shared in households in which children and older persons reside.

Finally, it is also important to recognise that whilst vulnerable groups face increased risks in the contexts of crises, they may also have specific skills, resources, knowledge and agency which can be utilised to reduce risk and support emergency response (Lindley-Jones, 2018; Lord et al., 2016; UNISDR, 2017). In particular, women's extensive knowledge of their own communities and experience in managing natural environmental resources, children and youth's innovative thinking to an emergency situation, and older people's experience and knowledge of previous disasters, and traditional knowledge held by indigenous groups, can all provide alternative ideas and support disaster risk reduction and response (UNISDR, 2017). Local communities and civil society actors representing these groups are, however, often overlooked in humanitarian response (Oxfam Canada, 2018).

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What are the key issues?

Meeting the needs of vulnerable groups when delivering social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus

In the last decade, interest in delivering social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus has emerged from international policy and practice, with a growing number of experiences in designing and operationalising the delivery of SPaN. However, the extent to which these lessons help to ensure that the specific needs of a number of vulnerable groups are incorporated into programming is limited. So, while much progress has been made in designing and delivering social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus, overall it has not yet adequately addressed the specific needs of vulnerable groups. Five particularly important elements of this challenge are:

Incorporating a vulnerable-group lens into programme design - There is strong evidence that building resilience through social protection fundamentally requires delivering social transfers in a timely and reliable way and at adequate levels. Beyond this, however, limited attention is paid to whether timeliness and adequacy need to be tailored to specific vulnerable groups. Assessments are often dominated by food security and shelter experts in humanitarian agencies and may not take into account specific needs of vulnerable groups. Timings of payments may be the same for all groups, irrespective of when they need them most. For example, in Nepal, beneficiaries in five different programmes (senior citizens, widows and single women, disability, children under five and endangered ethnicities) receive four payments a year, irrespective of their geographical location or cultural traditions. So Buddhists receive payments at the time of Hindu festivals, and people in the mountains get payments that coincide with the time for planting on the Terai, which does little to help mountain-dwellers deal with the risks that they face. Programmes rarely provide for the varied mobility of different groups (although the Kenyan Hunger Safety Net Programme is an exception), and social protection benefits are rarely portable across district or provincial boundaries.

KEY ISSUE

Replication of programmes across contexts without attention to how programme function should be adapted limits the ability of programmes to meet the specific needs of vulnerable groups.

Understanding the impacts of flexible and scalable programmes on vulnerable groups - Some programmes have responded to shocks by expanding existing programmes that target specific groups. However, there is little disaggregated monitoring and evaluation on the effects of programme amendments on groups of beneficiaries. For example, the Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia provides beneficiaries of the 'direct support' component of the programme with cash or food transfers without being required to provide labour for local public works and so are mainly comprised of elderly, people with disability and pregnant women or nursing mothers. In years of drought, support has been extended – either by increasing the duration of the programme, or by increasing the size

of transfers. In Nepal in 2015, emergency ‘top-up’ cash transfers of around USD 30 were paid some months after the earthquake to households already receiving support through the national social security allowances which are targeted based on age, disability, gender and ethnicity. In the Philippines, the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* or ‘4Ps’ – a conditional cash transfer targeted at extremely poor families with children – was scaled up following Typhoon Haiyan.

KEY ISSUE

All programmes included strong monitoring and evaluation which proves that scalable social protection is feasible following a shock, but very little attention has been paid to the differential outcomes of programmes on the specific needs of these groups.

Addressing social vulnerabilities which contribute to tackling structural change and systems building -

Addressing poverty and vulnerability among specific groups of people depends on tackling structural causes and, in the long term, strengthening institutions and promoting empowerment. However, lessons from SPaN remain heavily focused on shock-responsive social protection and on whether humanitarian actors can ‘piggyback’ on existing social protection to meet people’s immediate needs.

In addition, in many countries there is limited social protection provision. In Somalia, the focus on meeting immediate needs (perhaps more of a ‘safety net’ approach) is undermining progress towards social protection systems and more strategic analysis and longer-term investment in Somali institutions. It is difficult to envisage how the drivers of social vulnerability can be addressed unless a long-term social protection system is the central focus of stakeholders.

KEY ISSUE

While there are arguments that shorter-term safety nets might then grow into longer-term social protection systems (EC 2019), the broader experience suggests that it is easier to adapt a programme that already pays attention to key risks and vulnerabilities among vulnerable groups rather than try and retrofit programme design later.

Doing things differently to ensure vulnerable groups’ needs are met – Lessons from international experience suggest working through existing (and perhaps longstanding) systems is critical but this may undermine the need for new approaches in order to tackle the exclusion and marginalisation of particular groups of people. It is hard to argue with the existing evidence that stresses the importance of working with existing structures and partners and ensuring that government is centre stage in delivering SPaN. This is challenging for those adhering to principles of neutrality and impartiality in humanitarian action but nevertheless a shift is reflected in the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) commitment to reinforce (rather than replace) national and local systems.

It is clear that long-term partnerships between international agencies and government, and familiarity with the social protection system facilitate a robust, timely and effective response to crises. For example, the Philippines case study highlights how WFP’s long standing relationship with the Department for Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the Philippines meant they were already familiar with the 4Ps social protection programme. They understood its objectives, modality and payment schedule, targeting system and the payment channels used. They knew the criteria for eligibility for 4Ps and could draw on the system in their response to Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda. This sped up the process of assessment substantially and allowed a rapid and effective response.

KEY ISSUE

Particularly in countries where there is a high level of social and economic division, or where vulnerable groups have been marginalised or excluded for some time, using existing social protection programmes which target this group is an important basis for emergency response. However, it is also difficult to see how working with the institutional status quo can have the transformative effect required to tackle exclusion.

Incorporating refugees into host social protection programmes – Refugees are vulnerable groups that are growing rapidly. There are a number of countries where humanitarian social protection is being delivered in protracted crises but, whereas there are substantial efforts to integrate education and health service systems for refugees and host communities, the integration of humanitarian cash transfers with national social protection for host populations is slower. In some cases this is due to reluctance on the part of national governments, and in others, reluctance of international donors to route funding through domestic systems. In Lebanon, the systems are parallel but increasingly aligned. Emergency cash transfers are delivered funded by international actors and delivered by WFP while national transfers are made through the National Poverty Targeting Programme. The principle is not to merge the two programmes but to harmonise – particularly targeting and payment levels – in order to reduce tensions between refugees and host communities. Other harmonisation efforts include using the same case workers for refugees and vulnerable or poor households in host communities (European Commission, 2019b). In Turkey, the established social protection system was more established and had greater coverage and has been expanded to deliver the Emergency Social Safety Net which links to the national system. International agencies, particularly ECHO, saw working through existing national administration systems as efficient compared to establishing a parallel system, as long as it would ensure humanitarian safeguards. However, as discussed further below, there are also challenges associated with harmonising programme design to meeting people’s specific needs.

KEY ISSUE

Where refugees or IDPs need different benefits from other vulnerable groups in host communities, there are challenges to working on social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus.

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Supporting SPaN for vulnerable groups: Experiences of programme design and implementation

Needs assessment and analysis

ISSUES, EXPERIENCE AND CHALLENGES

A common challenge is that few SPaN interventions carry out a needs assessment which specifically examines the types of risks and vulnerabilities faced by women, people with disability, and marginalised groups across the life cycle (Holmes, forthcoming 2019). Moreover, there are different understandings of vulnerabilities between development and humanitarian actors, and within sectors of the humanitarian community. Despite the increasing use of 'multi-purpose' cash, humanitarian assistance is often limited to sector-specific distributions – each with their own distinct view of vulnerability and needs and influenced by agency mandates, rather than on an analysis of the needs and vulnerabilities of, for example, poor households. There are a number of reasons for this.

First, a lack of resources, data and technical capacity undermines the ability to conduct a needs assessment that would support the appropriate design of programmes. Turkey provides a particularly insightful example here: in the case of Syrian refugees in Turkey, although a Needs Assessment for Syrians under Temporary Protection in Turkey was completed in April 2016, in the design of the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) for refugees no beneficiary consultations were carried out, programme partners did not use existing gender or protection data or conduct their own specific gender or protection assessments, and basic statistics on the number and types of disability were not available for planning purposes (Maunder et al., 2018). Moreover, there were limited specialised professional resources available at the start of the programme. As such, at the beginning of the programme, the ESSN had a relatively standard design for all refugees, and was not designed to accommodate the specific needs of particular vulnerable groups (Ibid.).

Second, as a way to deliver assistance quickly, targeting criteria often uses pre-identified lists of 'vulnerable groups' which may (or may not) adequately address the specific vulnerabilities and needs of particular groups and so may be of varied appropriateness to specific contexts. Indeed, existing lists of beneficiaries are not a perfect match for a needs assessment. There are frequent assumptions that if programmes are targeting 'vulnerable' groups (however they might be defined in different contexts), then those groups must be among the most vulnerable and in a crisis will need additional support and, by extension, that targeting these groups is appropriate and adequate. In practice, this can lead to a failure to address the specific needs that these groups face, can ignore intra-household relations and allocation of resources, and potentially lead to high exclusion errors of people affected by disaster. For example, in Nepal, estimates suggest that, depending on the disaster (earthquake, flood, landslide, fire and drought), making transfers to groups identified as vulnerable, as per the national social protection criteria, often leads to the exclusion

of a large share of disaster-affected households (World Bank, 2018; Holmes et al., 2019) (see Figure 2 below). Furthermore, while it was assumed that providing top-up cash transfer payments to individuals that receive regular social security allowances (for example the elderly or people with disability), would share their top-up and so it would ‘trickle down’ to other household members who were not targeted, there is limited evidence that this happened in practice (Merttens et al., 2017).

For refugees, there are rather rigid categories of vulnerabilities. For example, UNHCR has a [global list of ‘Persons with Specific Needs’](#)¹ which is used in all contexts. The extent to which the list takes into account context-specific vulnerabilities is debated, with the possibility of exclusion errors in programmes. While the list is useful in situations where the number of refugees is very high (and therefore time to assess vulnerabilities is scarce), it has been argued that the categories should be re-assessed and revised in the medium term when SPaN has the greatest potential to contribute.

LESSONS LEARNED AND PROMISING PRACTICES

While there are many impediments to robust assessment and analysis, there are also some strong lessons and positive practices. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, with high levels of displacement following violent clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, a community-based assessment took place to determine the needs of an inter-ethnic target group (European Commission, 2019c). UNICEF’s social policy unit led an unprecedented joint rapid assessment with health colleagues, in partnership with the government. Ensuring the exposure of government staff was also important for getting vulnerable group needs incorporated into the response and engaging staff in the rapid assessment resulted in a better understanding of the relevance of the programme to addressing the beneficiaries’ needs (Ibid).

In Turkey, the challenges associated with the ESN discussed above did change with time. A full-time WFP gender position was appointed in February 2018, beneficiary perspectives were included in programme monitoring and accountability mechanisms, and in 2017, a survey of the needs of those living with disability was conducted (Maunder et al., 2018). The European Commission Needs Assessment also identified protection risks faced by refugees, including challenges to accessing social welfare services, psychosocial issues, and heightened child-and gender-based violence risks, and sought to address them (Ibid).

Programme design

ISSUES, EXPERIENCE AND CHALLENGES

As discussed above, the specific risks and vulnerabilities which affect women, people with disability and minority groups across the life cycle, are not often well assessed or analysed, and therefore their needs are not generally well-reflected in programme design or implementation – particularly in humanitarian situations where there is limited time to incorporate specific design features into emergency response. Whilst vulnerable groups can benefit from social protection as it supports them to improve household food consumption and meet basic needs, there is far less evidence that social protection in humanitarian contexts does much to address the key risks and vulnerabilities they face on the basis of gender, age, disability etc. These features are rarely integrated into programme design beyond targeting – although a few examples of linkages with other programmes exist (as discussed below).

Choosing whether to target social protection based on (combinations of) location, poverty, and social and demographic categories is challenging but important. Many international experiences show that using eligibility criteria for social protection in responses to environmental shocks is commonplace but also can be problematic. Use of existing criteria is driven by many factors, including assumptions or evidence that existing social protection beneficiaries are particularly affected by shocks, but also that adapting an existing social protection intervention to respond to shocks in certain geographic areas and using the same target list and system facilitates a quicker emergency response. There is often recognition of a trade-off using this approach because whilst working within

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<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B95I9qaU50xgYWNpSWxXNGhTaUk/view>

existing social protection structures and partners enables a quick response, it also risks excluding other groups, notably i) those who are not social protection recipients but affected by the shock, and ii) those who may be poor (and vulnerable) but not covered by social protection (Figure 2). In this latter group there are two further issues to consider – those who may be eligible for social protection but not enrolled because of barriers to access; and those who are poor but not eligible because limited government resources reduces the size of the programme and number of beneficiaries. These two issues affect vulnerable groups acutely, for example, those who cannot get citizenship documents due to illiteracy or because they are ‘invisible’ in government and international policy processes.

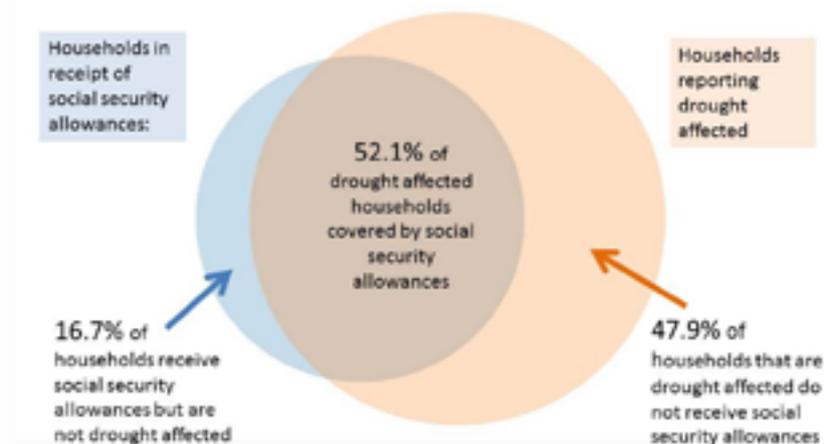


Figure 2: Does social protection coverage overlap with crisis-affected? Example from a drought-prone district in Nepal. Source: World Bank (2018) using Nepal Household Risk and Vulnerability Survey data

An example from Nepal following the 2015 earthquake demonstrates that a key limitation of using the existing lists of five vulnerable groups to target the cash transfer after the earthquake was that it did not affect existing social protection recipients disproportionately relative to non-recipients. As Merttens et al., (2017: 38) explain ‘the UNICEF programme worked under the assumption that many socio-ethnic groups were affected equally by the earthquakes, and since social protection beneficiaries are already vulnerable, and other relief assistance packages were being provided to all earthquake-affected households as well, providing targeted support to the vulnerable groups would help address the needs of a precariously placed part of the population. However, the earthquake’s wide reach left a number of additional groups vulnerable in the immediate aftermath, and these were not all reached by the Emergency Cash Transfer Programme (ECTP) or other relief efforts’.

Setting transfer levels – a key programme feature in social protection programmes – is influenced by many factors, and often aligning to existing social protection interventions or the size of the budget available are key factors in establishing a transfer level over and above needs, based on an assessment of the poverty line or food basket, for example. Most evaluations find that the transfer level of SPaN interventions is inadequate in humanitarian contexts. Moreover, other factors are not often taken into account – including household size, intra-household relations, the additional expenditure needs of people with disability, or implications of transfer size for risk of gender-based violence.

In Turkey, for example, there were challenges ensuring that programme design matched the needs of refugee families with children (European Commission, 2019d). The Ministry of Family and Social Policies (MoFSP) sought to use existing design features in Turkey’s long-term CCT programme – for example, including the same transfer modality, frequency, duration and value – for the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE). However, the transfer value of the national CCTE was insufficient to cover the income gap that refugee families face in meeting the needs of their children. The design of the CCTE for Refugees was aligned with design of the ESSN and, effectively became a ‘top-up’ assistance for education over and above the basic needs assistance provided by ESSN (ibid).

In Nepal, the Emergency Cash Transfer Programme (ECTP) in the aftermath of the earthquake proposed a transfer based on consideration of the national poverty line (around NPR 1,600 per person, per month) but the transfer value had to be reduced when the geographical coverage of the programme increased, therefore covering nearly half the value of total per capita consumption for a four-month period (European Commission, 2019e). But given that the support was meant to ‘trickle down’ to other household members, this was inadequate. Some respondents reported that it was not sufficient to address the needs of the whole family and the transfer was low against its stated objectives (European Commission, 2019e). The transfer also failed to take into account the additional costs borne by specific vulnerable groups – especially persons with disability.

A further implication of transfer levels and duration of receipt is the extent to which they are meant to make meaningful changes to beneficiaries’ lives. The Kenya case study shows how the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) emergency payments are set at same level as regular caseload transfers, but not only is this insufficient to meet the gap that households face in meeting their food needs, it is also not enough to cover any sort of investment in assets that would allow vulnerable groups to build resilience to the next shock (European Commission, 2019f). Households in the drought-affected areas receive a one-off ‘emergency’ payment in the month after drought conditions are reached, so can do little to transform their situations. The risk is that the inclusion of shock-response in social protection results in a change in priorities and makes it even less likely that social protection will tackle inequality or support empowerment and have truly transformative impacts on people lives.

LESSONS LEARNED AND PROMISING PRACTICES

Targeting: Some SPaN programmes have relaxed or amended registration and enrolment criteria to speed up the targeting process and increase coverage of an intervention. Mostly, experience shows that this has involved modifying the eligibility criteria in some form, adding additional targeting criteria or relaxing the criteria to ensure greater coverage of those affected by crisis. This often requires close collaboration and negotiation with the government when programmes are linked to national programmes, and donor requirements might also restrict such changes. However, there are examples of where criteria have been successfully modified, such as in the example from Turkey below. Moreover, as the Turkey example also illustrates, specific attention is often needed to particularly vulnerable groups, such as people with disability, to ensure that they will be reached by an intervention (this is also discussed further in the implementation section below). Indeed, this highlights that it is important to ensure that programmes are designed to incorporate the needs of vulnerable groups from the outset, as trying to ‘add-on’ gender, disability or ethnicity-based needs is difficult once the programme is running.

Turning to the example of targeting refugees in Turkey, this illustrates how a programme modified targeting criteria from the national social protection programme to reach the refugee population, and specifically relaxed criteria to ensure that vulnerable groups would be eligible for receiving programme benefits. To ensure a quick scale-up, eligibility for the ESSN is determined based on six easily verifiable demographic vulnerability criteria that are used as proxy indicators for wealth, while eligibility for the CCTE for Refugees is determined based on enrolment of children in school (Maunder et al., 2018). However, data also showed that the focus on these demographic criteria were excluding some vulnerable cases: in particular, people with disability struggled to get the required disability certification and families fell out of the system when girls turned eighteen, even though they were not allowed to work. The criteria for disabled members and dependence ratio were therefore relaxed in June 2017 to become more inclusive, with the aim of including 50 per cent of the refugee population (Maunder et al., 2018).

Other country examples also show that applying **additional targeting criteria** can help to increase coverage in the context of crisis. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, following conflict that resulted in large numbers of refugees and IDPs, the existing social protection programme was used to targeted new disaster-affected families – the same criteria for selection were used as before the conflict but the programme also expanded to support children whose parents were missing (European Commission, 2019c). Examples can also be seen from the 2008 global food, fuel and financial crisis which saw expansions in programme coverage in a number of countries, especially in Latin America, including Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru. The *Solidaridad* programme in the Dominican Republic almost doubled in 2008, from 1.2 to 2.1 million households, and has retained the same number of beneficiaries since then (OPM 2017).

Other targeting mechanisms that improve ease of access to programmes are institutional. In Lebanon, for example, Social Development Centres are well placed to be the common ‘service window’ for both emergency social protection

for refugees and national social protection for host communities. This approach has the advantage of building on and investing in existing institutions and infrastructure, and providing services to those in need (European Commission, 2019b).

In a number of contexts, modifying existing social protection targeting criteria has not been possible or feasible, and so another mechanism employed is to ensure **coordination** between social protection interventions and humanitarian responses to cover the needs of the affected-population. In the Philippines, for instance, the recognition that piggybacking responses on the 4Ps programme would not reach all poor households led to the design of complementary interventions. The Listahanan socioeconomic registry which underpins eligibility to the 4Ps programme included approximately 60 per cent of households in 2013. These gaps in coverage and the demographic eligibility criteria (households with pregnant women or children) meant that not all poor households were included in the 4P programme (European Commission, 2019g). As such, when WFP intervened with an emergency response to Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, there were thousands of families who were in need of emergency food assistance but not enrolled in the 4P programme. Registering additional beneficiaries at that time would have put too much pressure on the government so a complementary standalone humanitarian assistance programme was established to provide emergency response to other affected households (European Commission, 2018g).

Programme design features: In terms of particular features of the design of SPaN programmes, a number of programmes can offer important insights. For example, some programmes ensure that they **maintain features** which are known to support particularly vulnerable groups' needs. In Ethiopia, for example, the temporary expansion of the PSNP replicates existing design features to ensure the appropriateness of the programme for vulnerable groups. There are specific provisions for the inclusion of female-headed households (FHHs) in public works activities, given their higher concentration among the poorest, and recognition that FHHs need more flexibility in terms of working times so that they can accommodate their domestic work and care responsibilities. These are maintained in the expanded programme. Similarly in Turkey, ESN beneficiaries are now also allowed to apply for a disability carer's allowance in line with the benefits available to Turkish citizens (Mauder et al., 2018).

Another mechanism is to **add extra programme features** to the existing programme to respond to particular needs. This was the case in Guatemala in the context of the 2008 food crisis, for example, where the *Mi Familia Progresa* conditional cash transfer programme included an additional focus on nutrition with the provision of extra micronutrient supplements and activities to strengthen community-based services (Grosh et al. 2011).

Other programmes have recognised the importance of **relaxing programme conditions** which may hinder outcomes in times of crisis. In the Philippines, for example, following Typhoon Haiyan / Yolanda, the conditions in the 4Ps programme were waived during the emergency response and later these changes were integrated into the programme's operating procedures (European Commission, 2019g).

Linkages to complementary programmes and services: Social protection interventions need to be considered as part of a broader and coordinated response to supporting vulnerable households in the context of crisis. Developing appropriate programme linkages and referrals in emergencies to complementary programmes and services is a vital component to support specific groups' needs as well as actively contributing to addressing the longer-term impacts of crises, and supporting longer-term objectives of empowerment and transformative change, even in times of crisis.

There is little rigorous evidence to date on the role of SPaN interventions on promoting referrals or linkages to other programmes or services, although some studies do indicate potential. For example, in Turkey, there is a protection referral system in place to identify and support the specialised protection needs of refugees (Mauder et al., 2018). A cash transfer programme in Lebanon targeted at Syrian refugees links the transfer with training for recipients in budgeting, debt management and banking services. This has allowed women to save money and better manage debts, reducing negative coping strategies and exposure to gender-based violence (Berg and Seferis, 2015). Linking programmes to safe places and access to protection services (e.g. UN Women in ZaAtari camp), as well as gender-based violence, health and reproductive health services, may also be beneficial, given the heightened risks women face in emergencies. The use of strong positive messages to beneficiaries and engagement of men and boys might also be effective tools to influence gender outcomes, such as reducing intimate partner violence and promoting joint decision-making (Simon, 2018).

Implementation and M&E

ISSUES, EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES

Vulnerable groups face specific challenges registering, enrolling and accessing interventions. The registration and enrolment of beneficiaries in practice can be a lengthy process, yet responding to emergencies needs to ensure a quick response. In Kenya, households are pre-identified in advance of a shock to facilitate a rapid scale-up once the intervention is triggered. This is in comparison to *ex post* scaling up, which can take substantial time. In Nepal, for example, horizontal expansion of the child grant after the earthquake took three months to develop a registry of all children under five years old in targeted districts. As discussed above, a key challenge in reaching vulnerable groups is the potential exclusion rates – even where there are efforts to address barriers by modifying eligibility criteria – and vulnerable households can often face heightened barriers to access routine social protection. In Nepal, for example, recent estimates suggest that 58 per cent of the eligible population do not access the disability allowance because of lack of awareness of the programme, and the complexities and requirements of the application process (Holmes et al. 2018). Women also face information challenges, mobility restrictions and cultural barriers when accessing social protection (Ulrichs, 2016).

Moreover, in times of environmental disasters or conflict, these barriers may be exacerbated as people become displaced and documents are lost. Refugees may also face specific language barriers and difficulties in registering using physical addresses for each household (given the varied living arrangements of refugee families). In Turkey, for example, trying to use the national social protection app-based system was creating protection risks, with very vulnerable and illiterate families – including people with disability – struggling to attend the centres to apply for support, and to complete the application form (Maunder et al., 2018).

Delivery mechanisms have important implications for vulnerable groups' access to benefits. There is recognition that vulnerable groups may face specific barriers accessing SPaN benefits, depending on how they are delivered. For example, there are challenges for those who do not have access to bank accounts, such as child-headed households (Technical Brief 4), and protection-related risks have also been identified in Turkey, with overcrowding at some ATMs, difficulties utilising Turkish-language-only ATMs, and cases of vulnerable beneficiaries relying on others to use ATMs and losing some of their benefit.

Concerns have also been raised about certain groups – particularly the elderly, people with disability and those in remote areas – accessing banks and ATMs. In Nepal, for example, these are critical concerns in routine social protection, especially in the highlands, and are exacerbated during crises. In areas affected by floods, for example, travel becomes difficult and transport prices increase (Holmes et al., forthcoming).

There is little attention in the SPaN literature to date on the types of risks that women in particular may face. The issue is more prominent in the humanitarian literature which pays attention to the additional risks related to safety and mobility that women face in crises. For example, pregnant women faced challenges in collecting payments in the aftermath of the typhoon in the Philippines (O'Brien et al., 2018) and a cash transfer programme in Mogadishu indicated that 20 per cent of female respondents reported threats of violence (Hedlund et al., 2013 in Smith and Mohidin, 2015). A study on e-transfers in humanitarian contexts also finds that some women in Bangladesh reported having to be accompanied by a male relative when travelling to markets, which made mobile money inconvenient and complex compared to alternatives. Other women faced specific constraints that deterred them from using mobile money such as 'family' phones usually controlled by the male head of household, which limits women's ability to use the phone and access financial services (Bailey, 2017).

Monitoring and evaluation rarely disaggregates and analyses by sex, age, ability, and ethnicity to inform programme design and implementation. Whilst there are tools available to ensure that M&E uses a gender, age, and disability perspective (see section below), there are few examples of this occurring in practice or being applied routinely, leaving a wide data gap on understanding the needs of vulnerable groups, and the outcomes of programmes. Moreover, challenges around data protection can also hamper cross-institutional collaboration and data sharing. Without such data, it is difficult to know how programmes can be better designed and implemented to address the specific needs of these groups.

The post-distribution monitoring of the ECTP in Nepal, for example, focused largely on the operational aspects of the programme and very little information was gathered specifically on programme outcomes in the M&E plan relating to households adopting harmful coping strategies and households recovering without undue negative effects on children (Merttens et al., 2017: 58). In Turkey, a major challenge has been the Turkish Government's restrictions to international agencies accessing data on refugees and ESN/CCTE beneficiaries, due to data privacy legislation only granting access to a small sample of anonymised applicant data. This presents a challenge for ensuring the accuracy of targeting, and has compromised the programme's accountability (European Commission, 2019d).

LESSONS LEARNED AND PROMISING PRACTICES

Enrolment, registration and information: As discussed above, some SPaN programmes have relaxed or amended registration and enrolment criteria to speed up the targeting process and increase coverage of an intervention. As examples here show, this is only one step to ensuring that groups can benefit from SPaN interventions. Specific administrative changes as well as resources are also required to enable eligible beneficiary groups to **access** interventions. For example, in Kyrgyzstan, an extraordinary enrolment campaign was developed and operational systems modified to rapidly identify and enrol eligible households (European Commission, 2019c). This was specifically designed to overcome the bureaucratic procedures, including documentation required and travel distance to apply, which led to the exclusion of eligible households in normal times, and would hinder a rapid response. Approved by the President, a new regulation relaxed the proof of eligibility requirements for six months in the two affected provinces and was also applied to those applications that were already in the pipeline.

In the case of the Philippines, where the scale of the disaster led to massive displacement of households as well as loss of identification documents and deaths of caregivers, a revalidation exercise was planned immediately after the disaster for DSWD to track down displaced beneficiary households and replace documents, to ensure they could receive their payments, and to replace the named carers for newly orphaned children (European Commission, 2019g:5). The exercise took three weeks and was also used to inform beneficiaries of the emergency top-up payments.

In both these examples, the communications campaign, investment in human resources and the role of key actors in supporting registration procedures were important to reach the most vulnerable groups. In Kyrgyzstan, leaflets in three languages were produced and distributed to inform the population about the initiative, its purpose and ways to apply. Mobile social workers (from both ethnic groups) took registration to the community level, making it more accessible for the poorest and speeding up registration. In the Philippines, staff from outside the affected area were drafted in to assist the revalidation process, and community-based support structures helped in the process of locating and informing displaced families.

In the case of Turkey, 'handholding' activities to reduce exclusion are being used, funded by ECHO and other donors. NGOs are supporting refugees to complete their applications, by taking people to application offices, providing translation, covering transportation costs, and referring families to the helplines (European Commission, 2019d). Moreover, there is flexibility in supporting registration of multiple families at the same address and those living in non-residential accommodation.

Overcoming delivery challenges: The Turkey case study also offers insights into overcoming delivery challenges. The programme was modified to mitigate risks of overcrowding and language barriers, by including crowd control practices, providing support staff to reduce the work burden on bank branches, and banks providing Arabic as a language in their ATM service (European Commission, 2019d).

In addition, wider literature from humanitarian interventions also sheds light on how innovations in technology can serve to increase safety for women to receive transfers. For example, in a study of an emergency cash transfer programme in the informal settlements of Nairobi, some beneficiaries reported improved safety, attributed to receiving cash via SMS on mobile phones. Since the amount and timing of the transfer was not 'advertised,' recipients could collect the funds on their own schedules (Smith and Mohidin, 2015). E-payments may also be an efficient way to transfer money quickly after an emergency to men and women (Mansur et al., 2018), potentially reducing the time women spend collecting benefits, and some indicative findings suggest that e-transfers may improve some aspects of women's decision-making (Aker et al., 2016 cited in Simon, 2018). However, innovative technology can be a double-edged sword as it may exclude women and other vulnerable groups with lower literacy rates and those with less access to and familiarity with such technology (Simon, 2018). These challenges, though, can be overcome with attention to outreach, training, and help-desk services (Berg, et al., 2013).

Monitoring and evaluation: In relation to M&E practices, there are tools available to ensure that M&E uses a gender, age, and disability perspective. For example, at reporting stage, ECHO partners are required to disaggregate data by sex and age, and evaluations of ECHO-funded actions are explicitly encouraged to fill key knowledge gaps on i) the implications of different resource transfer options on control over resources at the intra-household level, including women and children; and ii) impact of intra-household targeting on the results of the programme. These evaluations are important to monitor both intended but also unintended programme effects, such as domestic violence. ECHO is also piloting a protection mainstream indicator which asks partners to provide information on 1) do no harm, 2) participation of communities, 3) meaningful access and 4) accountability (ECHO personal comms., 2019).

In Turkey, the CCTE for Refugees includes a complementary child protection monitoring and case management component that aims to sustain education outcomes and mitigate child protection risks. Outreach teams conduct household monitoring visits to children whose attendance drops or is at risk of dropping; a risk assessment is carried out, and families are referred to appropriate services, if needed.

Monitoring also picked up on gender issues in the Turkey example, showing that in some households men were taking control of the cash, husbands taking the card and leaving women and children without support, or women and children forced to leave home due to domestic violence. When the man is the registered card holder, women may not have access to support (Maunder et al., 2018).

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Gaps, guiding principles, recommendations and conclusion

Gaps in knowledge

Maximising the effectiveness of social protection for vulnerable groups across the humanitarian-development nexus is challenging. Despite potential to achieve better support for vulnerable groups, the focus of much of the lesson-learning thus far has been on whether social protection systems can deliver a rapid response at scale. In countries with established programmes there has been significant progress, but there are a number of major gaps in knowledge.

First, while we increasingly know about delivering shock-responsive social protection to vulnerable groups (and the advantages and disadvantages of this modality), there is less knowledge around the humanitarian-development nexus when it comes to social protection, preparedness and building resilience. This remains a substantial knowledge gap that limits options for delivering social protection that can tackle structural inequalities and make a transformative difference to the lives of vulnerable people.

Second, the vast majority of work on shock-responsive social protection pays scant attention to the specific needs and vulnerabilities that are associated with age, gender, disability, ethnicity and other forms of marginalisation or discrimination and focuses, at best, on whether people grouped by these social categories are included or not. Surprisingly, this is not an approach that is mirrored elsewhere in the humanitarian sector where, in emergency health, for example, there is a strong focus on specific needs of vulnerable groups. The implication is (at least) two-fold: a) beneficiaries tend to be viewed only in terms of their basic consumption needs and not in terms of broader needs and vulnerabilities, and b) there is relatively little complementary programming with other sectors, such as protection, or other services that would provide, for example, psychosocial support.

Finally, the evidence from countries is rather narrow in a number of ways. Much of the evidence on social protection across the development-humanitarian nexus to date is geographically limited and derives from relatively stable countries, often with relatively mature social protection programmes with high coverage. The focus is also on countries prone to 'natural' disasters with fewer examples from conflict and economic crisis (EC 2019). Most of the experience to date, of working with social protection in crisis situations, comes from social assistance – in the form of cash transfers, vouchers as well as in-kind transfers (EC 2019). Broadening this limited evidence base will require learning from a wider range of contexts, particularly least developed countries, those affected by conflict and insecurity and from experiences with a wider range of social protection instruments.

Guiding principles

Notwithstanding the implementation and knowledge gaps discussed above, there are five overarching principles that practitioners should draw on when working on social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus. These guiding principles can be further complemented by the more specific ‘*what should we do differently?*’ recommendations suggested below.

Work on a case-by-case basis, using local context and capacities as a guide. Experiences with shock-responsive social protection have emerged rapidly in the last decade, allowing international agencies to work with and through government systems to address crisis.

Prioritise both boosting the role of social protection in building household resilience before shocks occur and increasing the capability of social protection systems and programmes to respond to shocks after they occur, where appropriate. Greater attention needs to be paid to the former than is currently the case.

Understand and address the diverse vulnerabilities that people face. While ensuring that vulnerable groups are included in shock-responsive and resilience-building social protection programmes is important, it is insufficient. It is critical to also focus on how far the specific needs and vulnerabilities are addressed in social protection and to address the barriers that vulnerable groups face to accessing schemes in the first place (in both ‘normal’ times and crises).

Work in multi-actor partnerships in situations where there is social or ethnic division. In the case of inter-ethnic conflict, or divisions between refugees and poor households in host communities, a combination of actors – some government, some (nominally) impartial international actors, some civil society – can help social protection to be delivered in ways that are viewed as fair and equitable and do not increase tension between groups. In some contexts this might be through greater integration of support, but in others it could be through parallel systems.

Finally, and most important of all, **recognise that, notwithstanding the increased vulnerabilities that marginalised groups face in contexts of crisis, they often have substantial skills, resources, knowledge and agency which can be drawn on in a multiplicity of ways to support social protection design and delivery.** Without including representatives of vulnerable groups – including local civil society actors and beneficiaries themselves – as key participants, without capturing their local knowledge, vision and innovation in programme design, the opportunities to deliver social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus will be constrained.

Recommendations for programming: what should we do differently

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Box 1: Towards an integrated assessment process in Lebanon

The Lebanon case study argues that it is essential to try to obtain comparable data on Lebanese community and refugee needs in order to formulate a strategy towards providing a social assistance programme equitably. The starting point for this proposed approach is conducting analysis of all groups’ vulnerability, needs and benefits: Lebanese citizens, and Syrian and Palestine refugees. The Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) is an annual survey of refugees conducted jointly by UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP. The VASyR methodology can be extended to be more comprehensive and inclusive. Participation of Lebanese experts and resources (government, academic) in such an exercise provides an opportunity to develop a common understanding of vulnerability analysis and to build the capacity of Lebanese officials (European Commission, 2019b: 5).

Understanding the needs of those who are particularly vulnerable, and how factors such as age, gender, disability and ethnicity affect risk and vulnerability in crisis contexts, is critical to inform appropriate programming. It should not be assumed that scaling up existing social protection programmes to cover a larger population group will be sufficient: as the evidence demonstrates, there is a need to identify what these needs are, and programmes often need to be modified to meet those needs. This therefore requires investment in adequate needs and capacity assessments to support programme design in advance of the programme starting, and regularly throughout the programme. Lessons learned from programme experiences discussed above show that the following elements are important in conducting a needs and capacity assessment:

- A common understanding of vulnerabilities
- Adequate consultation of potential beneficiaries
- Institutional capacity assessments or self-assessments
- Adequate analysis of disaggregated data, and investment in translating the findings into appropriate programme design and implementation.

Other routine assessments – for example market assessments to evaluate the feasibility of using cash or food – should also include dimensions according to gender, age, disability and other marginalised groups. In some contexts, (for example Lebanon – see Box 1), combining rather than separating vulnerability assessment of refugees and host communities is critical for preventing tension between different groups and supporting ‘integrated but differentiated’ systems.

PROGRAMME DESIGN

The programme experiences and evidence presented in this note demonstrate that particular attention is needed in the design of programmes to adequately respond to vulnerable groups’ needs. This attention is required within the core programme design when adapting a programme to respond to emergencies, and when making linkages to other relevant and complementary programmes to help achieve programme objectives and meet the target groups’ needs. The following should be considered:

Assess whether to use existing social protection to deliver shock response on a case-by-case basis.

Targeting humanitarian responses through existing social protection programmes may result in inclusion errors (existing social protection beneficiaries receiving extra support even though they are not in crisis) and exclusion errors (affected households are left out because they are not currently social protection beneficiaries). This means that systematic verification exercises are required and it is important to assess each shock, in each geographical area, on a case-by-case basis. There may be good reasons to use existing social protection eligibility for a least a share of the humanitarian response. Social networks and patronage can be critical in many humanitarian situations and can lead to the exclusion of many vulnerable groups. Providing payments through social protection, where this already targets vulnerable groups, could help overcome targeting challenges where needs are mediated through local networks, power relations and individual discretion. The World Bank (2018, p. vi) finds that social protection is not ‘an alternative to a wider shock response but could work well alongside other complementary humanitarian response. Routing part of an emergency response through existing social protection would reduce the caseload of needs assessment and targeting that would be required at the local level during the response. [Alongside an appropriate verification process, it would mean that] only households not in receipt of social protection would require assessment with the potential to significantly speed up the assessment process’.

Modify programme targeting requirements to facilitate inclusion of vulnerable groups. There may be a need to relax or amend eligibility criteria to ensure that vulnerable groups can enrol easily in a timely manner, and that this is done with minimal exclusion of the most vulnerable. This may require collaboration and negotiations with the government and other relevant stakeholders.

Align with existing national programmes where feasible but ensure that programme design addresses the specific risks and needs of vulnerable groups. The programme examples discussed in this note indicate that often modifications of existing social protection programmes need to be made to support vulnerable groups in the context of crisis. For example, ensuring that benefit levels are adequate and that they meet the needs of specific groups – particular groups may face additional expenses such as refugee communities, people with disability; or the requirement to provide labour to public works programmes.

Coordinate with complementary services and programmes to address vulnerable groups' needs. Where SPaN programmes are unable to meet the specific needs of vulnerable groups, additional services and programmes are needed. SPaN interventions can support the facilitation of such linkages, including administratively through beneficiary data lists for instance. For example, programme linkages may include awareness-raising activities on women's rights, gender relations, domestic violence, available local services and resources; providing men and boys, community members and leaders with information and training; providing linkages to services for people with disability; psychosocial support; and linking to safe spaces for women. These can not only meet immediate needs in the context of an emergency, but can also help to address the longer-term impacts of crises, as well as supporting longer-term gains towards empowering and transforming lives and livelihoods.

IMPLEMENTATION AND M&E

Finally, attention to implementation issues and M&E within SPaN is critical to ensure that programme design features are delivered effectively, and that M&E indicators capture the outcomes and impacts of target groups inclusive of age, gender, disability and ethnicity dimensions. The following areas require attention:

Minimise application barriers for specific vulnerable groups – further attention is required to the types of barriers the most vulnerable groups face in registering and enrolling for SPaN interventions, with a particular focus on people with disability, women, the elderly and new refugee arrivals. Moreover, emerging evidence indicates that trying to use the same application process in national (or routine) social protection systems in times of crises may not always be appropriate, and may create additional barriers to accessing interventions. Relaxing the requirements to present citizenship or identity documents, and putting more resources into ensuring that programme enrolment does not require literacy can go a long way to ensuring vulnerable groups are included (also see next section). Where requirements for disability support incorporate a specific level of disability, then this can also be relaxed to include those with less severe disability. Other ways to reduce these barriers include increasing knowledge of the application process among relevant organisations to provide specific support to vulnerable groups applying for benefits, and establishing and institutionalising linkages between existing social protection and humanitarian interventions and tools.

Ensure that the services for registration, enrolment and delivery of transfers are close and accessible for the most vulnerable groups – especially for elderly, people with disability and women who may face more restricted physical mobility. Consideration may be given, for example, to transfers being delivered directly to households, or using innovations in technology to deliver benefits safely and securely, whilst ensuring these are appropriate and accessible to those with lower literacy rates or unfamiliar with new technologies. Additional support may also be provided by local or relevant social service providers, such as accompanying beneficiaries to receive the services.

Ensure that there are grievance mechanisms in place to give beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries the opportunity to appeal or complain and enable them to do so.

Invest in M&E systems. There is recognition that compliance with data protection laws may result in limited data sharing across organisations. However, organisations should look to share data where possible, and routinely collect and analyse disaggregated data by gender, age, disability etc. As part of this, they should: i) collect data at the household and intra-household levels; ii) disaggregate data but also apply a gender and inclusion analysis (thus also paying attention to, for example, power relations, allocation of time and resources between men and women, protection issues), and iii) provide a mechanism for feeding back the findings into programme design and implementation.

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