



European  
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Reference Document No 26  
on Social Protection across the  
Humanitarian-Development Nexus

# Supplementary Volume of Operational Notes

May 2019

# SPaN

Supporting people through crisis



*Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus*

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## Acknowledgements

This volume of ten operational notes is a supplement to the [Reference Document No 26 on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. A Game Changer in Supporting People through Crises](#). It was produced as part of the 'Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus' (SPaN). It is the outcome of an initiative jointly led by the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO), Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR) with the support of DEVCO Unit 04 and the MKS programme.

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## A note to the reader

For updates, readers are invited to join two specific communities of practice created to offer a direct link between learning and performance:

- The global, open online community on 'Social protection in crisis contexts' on [socialprotection.org](https://socialprotection.org), which is accessible at <https://goo.gl/aRzVqb>
- The unrestricted group, mainly for EU staff members, on 'Social Protection across the humanitarian-development nexus' on [capacity4dev](https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/sp-nexus), which is accessible at <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/sp-nexus>.

These spaces are exclusively designed to collectively and progressively build the knowledge base around the nexus between social protection and humanitarian assistance. Through these groups, readers can share ideas and news, ask questions, share experience through testimonials, upload and access documents, take part in online events, expand their networks and much more.

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# Executive Summary

**Humanitarian crises are becoming more frequent, severe, complex and protracted.** In 2017, an estimated 201 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance. Many countries requiring assistance are affected by multiple and compounded crises, such as conflict, natural disasters and forced displacement. Crises are lasting longer: two thirds of international humanitarian assistance now goes to long-term recipients. Forced displacement is witnessed on an unprecedented scale, most recently exceeding 68 million forcibly displaced persons (UNHCR, 2018a). As a result, the humanitarian system is under strain. Response capacity is stretched while the funding gap is widening. Alternatives need to be thought through.

**Against this background, international commitments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Grand Bargain forge closer links between humanitarian and development programming.** Social protection interventions are a promising avenue for common action. It breeds on the growth of social protection systems in low- and middle-income countries, the increasing use of cash transfers as a humanitarian response modality, and robust evidence of the efficacy of social protection and social transfers in both development and crisis contexts. Significant gains can be made by working with social protection systems and approaches. There is now a clear international consensus to maximise the use of social protection systems and approaches in fragile and conflict-affected environments, in order to provide more effective, efficient and sustainable responses to affected populations.

**Governments, international organisations, donors, and civil society organisations have gained significant and wide-ranging experience of working with social protection in crisis contexts over the past decade.** Their work has provided valuable knowledge and lessons learned on the use of a variety of approaches across the humanitarian-development nexus in countries in crisis. It reveals that it is possible to work with any type of social protection instruments in crisis settings. Most experiences are linked to social transfer schemes and their added value in terms of large coverage and robust operational set-up. Social protection instruments can support the most vulnerable people living in fragile and conflict settings in building their resilience before shocks occur, and can stabilise their livelihoods while they fully recover after a shock.

**Working with social protection in countries which are in crisis, vulnerable to crises and impacted by crises presents many challenges.** Though experiences to date are promising, this topic is relatively new and response options depend on a country's social protection system having a certain degree of maturity. Much of the evidence to date is from relatively stable countries prone to natural disasters. An overarching evidence gap exists around exactly how to work with social protection systems and approaches in crisis contexts. There is a need to generate broader and deeper evidence from which concrete and generalisable lessons may be drawn. As such, there is a need to invest in quality monitoring and evaluation for all interventions.

**This is why the EU has produced this volume of operational notes on providing Social Protection across the humanitarian-development Nexus (SPaN) for dissemination to practitioners working at EU headquarters, EU delegations, DG ECHO field offices and EU Member States' (MS) agencies.** It is a supplementary edition to Reference Document No 26 on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus and provides an overview of the key information, tools and procedures for implementing and operating social protection programmes in situations of shocks and protracted crises and for linking humanitarian aid with social protection systems. It identifies criteria to inform the most appropriate response option, to be embedded in the specificity of its own context and key enabling features for working together across the nexus.

Further progress on developing social protection is expected to be a game changer in supporting people through crises, building on global experience including the EU's emerging experience in fragile and forced displacement contexts, such as in Lebanon, Somalia, Turkey and many other countries



European  
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# Operational

# Note No 1

## *Benefit Modalities*

May 2019



## Irish Aid

An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

# SPaN

Supporting people through crisis



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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.**<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> These commitments are embodied in global commitments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Grand Bargain (European Commission 2018).<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the relationship to the role of social protection in EU development cooperation is outlined here.<sup>5</sup>

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).<sup>6</sup> 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](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>











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.<sup>13</sup> 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-partitioners-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>)



## 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).



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.







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).



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.



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](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](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><b>Cash transfers are payments provided by either government or non-state actors that often target the poorest and most vulnerable in society.</b> 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><b>Cash transfers have expanded rapidly in the past decade across a diversity of contexts</b> – 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.<sup>22</sup></p> <p><b>In social protection, cash transfers can either be unconditional</b> (no compliance with further conditions required), <b>or conditional</b> (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><b>‘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.</b> 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.

<p><b>VOUCHER</b></p>	<p><b>Vouchers can come in different forms (e.g. paper or electronic cards), and can be a proxy either for cash, commodities or services.</b> 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>
<p><b>IN-KIND</b></p>	<p><b>The most common in-kind modality in humanitarian settings is food</b> (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>
<p><b>BASIC SERVICES AND SERVICE DELIVERY</b></p>	<p><b>Service delivery has become a central pillar of social protection approaches in the last decade.</b> 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>
<p><b>ACCOMPANYING MEASURES</b></p>	<p><b>Another related concept is 'accompanying measures', which are services or inputs provided alongside a benefit modality.</b> 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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European  
Commission

**Operational**

**Note No 2**

*Targeting*

May 2019

**SPaN**

Supporting people through crisis



*Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus*

DEVCO  
ECHO  
NEAR



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# Introduction

This operational note provides:

- An overview of the beneficiary-selection process including target group identification, fiscal choice, design and implementation.
- A description of selection or ‘targeting’ mechanisms used to identify potential beneficiaries of social benefits and humanitarian assistance.
- An understanding of mix designs and specific policy instruments applying to direct social transfers to a target group.
- A definition of targeting costs, exclusion and inclusion errors and a number of challenges to improve the accuracy of beneficiary selection under the humanitarian-development nexus.
- A range of examples to illustrate the efficiency of selection methods in different contexts.
- An awareness of how to adjust the targeting process in fragile environments.
- A summary of the challenges of implementing beneficiary selection in conflict areas and areas exposed to climate shocks and other crises.

It is useful to formulate four stylised facts that are always crucial when elaborating a design of social assistance programmes in fragile contexts:

**Stylised fact 1:** Those who are most vulnerable and extreme poor are also those who suffer most from shocks and crises.

**Stylised fact 2:** In times of shocks and crises, it is generally challenging to obtain reliable and constantly updated data on new poverty status, migration flows and level of fragility.

**Stylised fact 3:** The vulnerable often require immediate support and ready-to-go solutions for assistance in fragile contexts.

**Stylised fact 4:** Social protection objectives may be different and change over time in fragile contexts in comparison to those in stable environments.

**Social protection and humanitarian assistance comprise a wide range of interventions aimed at the effective provision of resources and services to people who live in or are threatened by poverty.** These interventions, among others, cushion the impact of various shocks and crises at the individual, regional or country level. Social benefits are transferred in cash or in kind and can be either contributory or non-contributory, depending on whether they are financed through social insurance contributions or directly by governments. In developing countries, which are characterised by low tax-to-GDP ratios, high levels of tax evasion and weak state capacity, non-contributory social assistance schemes have proliferated as the main policy instrument to alleviate poverty and protect the vulnerable.

**Recent climate shocks, economic crises, political instability and radicalisation raise several challenges in the context of the rapidly evolving social protection agenda.** The design of social assistance programmes in less developed and fragile countries has gained increased attention under the humanitarian-development nexus. Could policy instruments which are universally effective in stable countries prove to work in fragile environments? How do short-term humanitarian emergency responses contribute to long-term sustainable development? Do they overlap with social protection initiatives? How can we design flexible selection processes that can be adapted in times of crisis or conflict? These and other questions need to be addressed to achieve the minimum standards of progressive humanitarian aid contributing to socio-economic development in fragile contexts.

**One important element of the design – often known as ‘targeting’ – is the method for identifying who receives social benefits.** In cases of crises and conflicts, social benefits would also imply immediate humanitarian assistance and other support. The beneficiary-selection process comprises both the establishment of eligibility criteria and picking out those who meet these criteria. This operational note focuses on targeted humanitarian interventions with a whole variety of beneficiary-selection mechanisms, giving brief overviews of cases when they can provide efficient policy solutions depending on the shock typology. The stylised facts formulated above help to highlight the main challenges and draw out general implications for the elaboration of the beneficiary-selection design in fragile areas.

**Weak targeting in social assistance remains a serious issue in both fragile and stable environments, but in fragile areas the consequences can be more tangible and irreversible.** At the same time, it is admitted that there is no significant evidence that beneficiary selection is qualitatively different in fragile and stable contexts (Carpenter et al., 2012). For example, in Sierra Leone, elite capture of funds was driven rather by poverty of the committee members allocating cash transfers and not by the post-conflict environment (Osofian, 2011). Yet fragile contexts, including severe climate shocks, conflicts or pandemics as well as other crises, raise a set of challenges for beneficiary selection in social assistance programmes in developing countries.

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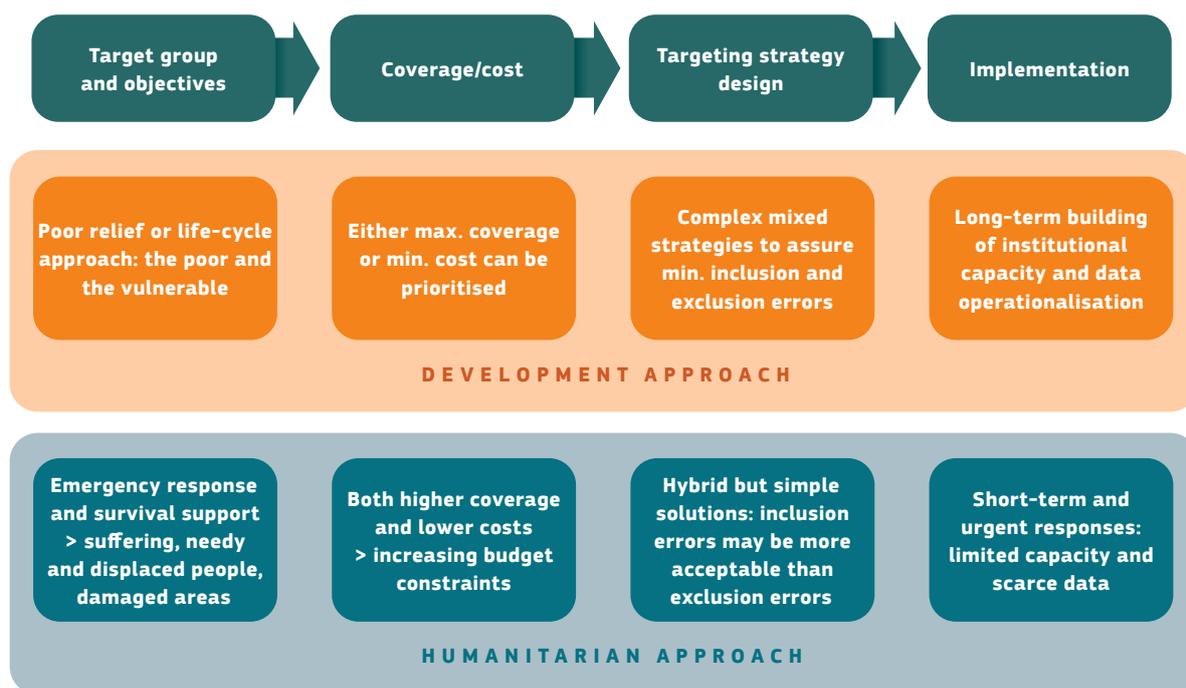
# Beneficiary-selection process across the humanitarian-development nexus

The beneficiary-selection process comprises several phases: target group identification (**who to select**), fiscal choice (**how many to select**), design (**how to select**) and implementation (**how to carry out the selection**). Figure 1 shows the distinctive features of the targeting phases in the development and humanitarian approaches.

**Phase 1** includes not only the identification of target groups but also the formulation of policy objectives. Under the development approach, social protection is aimed toward the poor and the vulnerable and provides either poverty relief or supports the minimum living standards during the life cycle. Under the humanitarian approach, the objectives can be more diverse – from short-term response to long-term recovery. At the same time, the target groups are easy to define, either on a geographical basis or based on rapid needs assessment. The beneficiaries are typically shock-affected, most suffering, and/or displaced people.

**Phase 2** consists of budgetary choices made by key actors (policy makers, NGOs and others) who can prioritise either the coverage or the cost of a social protection programme. For example, decision makers can maximise the number of poor households receiving a minimum benefit, or conversely, maximise the total amount of money going to poor households. In crisis contexts, as well as in contexts with high poverty prevalence, programmes should cover a large number of households and provide high enough financial support at same time in order to avoid high exclusion errors. This implies increased budget constraints.

Figure 1. Beneficiary-selection process across the humanitarian-development nexus

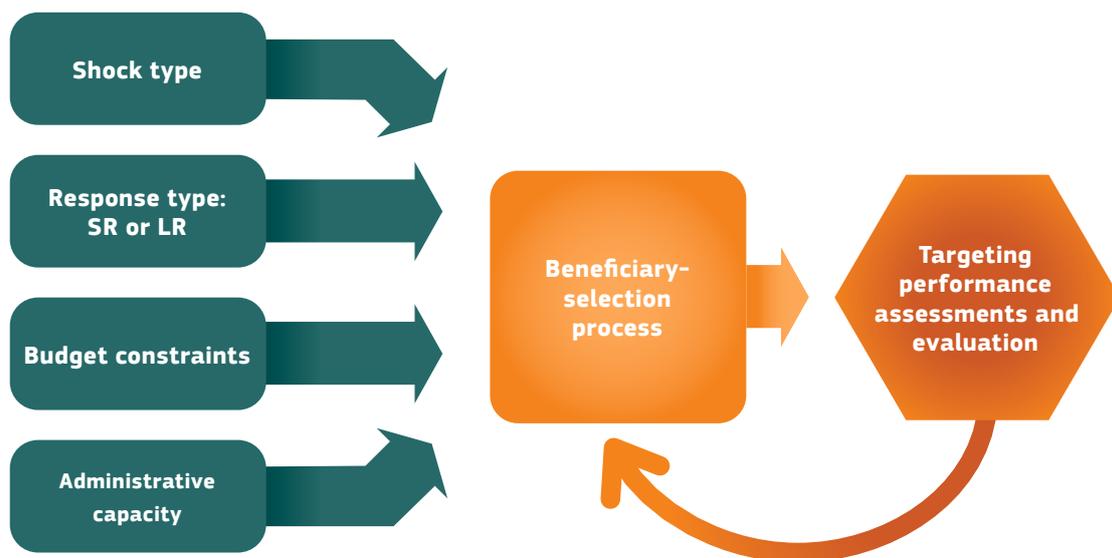


**Phase 3** aims to determine a method or a mix of methods for identifying needy areas and deserving households and individuals. A targeting method or combination of methods should be designed which is likely to select beneficiaries effectively and maximise the impact achieved. In stable situations, complex mixed strategies minimising both inclusion and exclusion errors can be elaborated. In emergencies, simple hybrid solutions can be most effective. In addition, inclusion errors may be more acceptable than exclusion errors.

**Phase 4** refers to the implementation of a chosen targeting strategy which is usually based on long-term building of institutional capacity and data operationalisation in stable environments. Under the humanitarian approach, the focus should be on preventive measures and *ex ante* capacity building and elaboration of the data base that can be used to assess the extent of damage and to reach the needy during shocks or crises. This phase also includes registering and verifying the eligibility of beneficiaries as well as establishing monitoring systems.

The decision at every phase of the beneficiary-selection process will depend on several inputs. Figure 2 displays the most important prerequisites, such as shock type (e.g. economic shock, conflict, disaster, pandemic, etc.), response type (short-term relief or long-term recovery, immediate or prolonged, etc.), budget constraints and administrative capacity. They basically define the choice of target groups, fiscal options, eligibility criteria, selection method and implementation strategies that constitute the beneficiary-selection process. The overall decision scheme also contains targeting performance assessments and evaluation for the purpose of making necessary adjustments in response to emergencies and changing environments.

Figure 2. Decision scheme for the beneficiary-selection process in fragile contexts



Targeting efficiency and performance depend on various factors including, first of all, country characteristics like administrative capacity or institutional accountability, then programme characteristics like the budget available for a programme, or a programme’s objective, and finally transitory conditions like environmental or institutional changes, crises or shocks.

**Principles of beneficiary selection**<sup>1</sup> across the humanitarian-development nexus are the following:

- Targeting should be **acceptable** from both political and social/cultural perspectives.
- Targeting process should **respect dignity** of population and foresee the participation of population throughout the process.
- Beneficiary identification should be **simple and clear** for all members of a society or community. The costs should be **justified**, procedures should be as **transparent** as possible.
- Targeting strategy should be **appropriate** for the type of shock and stage of the response.
- Selection method(s) should be **feasible** in view of available administrative capacity and operationalisation potential.
- Beneficiary selection should be **affordable** in terms of financial and institutional constraints.
- Targeting response should be **timely and contextual** depending on the type of shock and short-term or long-term recovery support required.
- Targeting strategy should be **flexible** with a potential of being adjusted to changing environments during a shock or crisis.

The EC summarises global experiences of modified social protection in fragile contexts with the following policy strategies: design tweaks, piggy backing, vertical and horizontal expansions and alignment.<sup>2</sup> Table 1 highlights advantages and risks in targeting processes associated with these five strategies.

Table 1. Beneficiary selection: advantages and risks across the humanitarian-development nexus

TYPE OF SHOCK RESPONSES	CONCEPT	ADVANTAGES FOR BENEFICIARY SELECTION	DISADVANTAGES FOR BENEFICIARY SELECTION
<b>Design tweaks</b>	Adjusting a social protection programme in operation in response to a shock.	Beneficiary selection should be improved depending on shock type and response objective.	Potential losses in value of transfers and coverage for existing beneficiaries may arise; therefore, there is a risk of perceived unfairness and conflicts.
<b>Piggy backing</b>	Using elements of an existing social programme in an emergency response.	Beneficiary selection might be slightly improved or completely new.	Requirement for capacity and experience to develop or adjust beneficiary-selection method(s).
<b>Vertical expansion</b>	Temporarily increasing the value or duration of transfers for existing beneficiaries.	No effort in adjusting beneficiary-selection method(s).	Potential ineffectiveness of existing beneficiary-selection method(s) in fragile contexts.
<b>Horizontal expansion</b>	Temporarily increasing the number of beneficiaries in an existing programme.	No effort in adjusting beneficiary-selection method(s).	Potential ineffectiveness of existing beneficiary-selection method(s) in fragile contexts.
<b>Alignment</b>	Aligning social protection and humanitarian interventions with one another and/ or aligning components of humanitarian interventions with one another.	Aligning beneficiary-selection method(s) might be challenging but may not be required.	No guarantee that the aligned beneficiary-selection method(s) will be equally effective in all social protection and humanitarian responses.

1 Adapted from the EC, World Bank, UNHCR and World Food Programme principles of targeting.

2 European Commission (2019) *Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus: A Game Changer in supporting people through crises*; O'Brien et al. (2018) *Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Toolkit*.

### Scaling up social assistance in times of crises: the Ebola case

**The Ebola virus spread rapidly in West Africa in 2014.** More than 20,000 infected people and about 10,000 deaths were registered. Such an epidemic crisis severely impacted economic situations in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea leading to job losses, closed schools, and hampered trade and businesses. The governments with the help of international donors attempted to improve food security by rapidly scaling up existing safety net programmes, particularly cash transfers and public works programmes. The total aid from the World Bank amounted to USD 45 million. In addition, the World Bank has contributed to building administrative capacity (e.g. e-payments), improving logistics, disease surveillance and data collection, especially in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone, about 5,000 young people have been enrolled into public works, and, additionally, more than 10,000 individuals receive social cash transfers. In Liberia, 10,000 young people have been reached by a public works programme and 10,000 extremely poor, labour-constrained individuals have been supported through a cash transfer programme. In Guinea, the Productive Safety Nets Project provides temporary jobs for more than 12,000 young people. Further, in 2015 the World Bank together with the United Nations and other development partners established an Ebola Recovery Assessment (ERA) covering Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

*(World Bank, 2015)*

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# Selection policy choices and beneficiary identification methods

**After the target group identification and fiscal choice, the targeting method(s) for beneficiary selection should be designed (Phase 3).** The process of selecting potential beneficiaries consists of identifying those individuals or households who are eligible to receive transfers and simultaneously screening out the non-eligible members of the population. Various methods exist to target social transfers to the desired groups (Coady et al. 2004; Barrientos, 2013; Devereux et al. 2017; Dodlova et al. 2018b). The first approach implies the distribution of social benefits based on explicit group characteristics like **categorical, seasonal or geographical** criteria. Transfers are directed to people belonging to a certain age, gender, status or social category, or to people for a particular period of time, or to people living in specific regions identified as the poorest within a country based on literacy rates or measures of nutritional status or consumption.

## Categorical selection: example

After the earthquake in Pakistan in 2005, the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund defined specific vulnerable groups which were used to target support:

- widows without sons over the age of 18
- women with disabled husbands
- divorced, abandoned and unmarried women who are dependent on others
- people with physical and mental disabilities
- orphans
- unaccompanied people over the age of 60
- people left landless as a result of the earthquake.

*(World Bank, 2009)*

The second approach is based on poverty or income assessment and includes means testing, proxy means testing and community-based selection. These selection methods imply that all individuals or households whose income falls below a certain threshold or whose poverty level is high are eligible for the programme benefits. The difference is in the technique for income assessment. Under **means testing**, the income of potential beneficiaries is self-reported or measured either through tax records or other sources of information, or if no information is available, which is a quite often the case in developing countries, by a programme official. Hence, a distinction must be drawn between verified and unverified means tests. **Verified means tests** use comprehensive data on the applicant's income or wealth, not relying solely on the information reported by an applicant but also additionally verifying the information against independent sources (e.g. pay stub, income and property tax records, wage information from employers, or financial information from banks, etc.). **Simple (unverified) means tests** are typically conducted by an official or social worker. The applicant's eligibility status is qualitatively determined during household visits. In particular, the observable living standard is used to derive information on income and wealth. In addition, simple interviews or the provision of documents stating the applicant's income or wealth-related indicators are utilised to collect the necessary information (Coady et al. 2004, 2013).

**Proxy means tests** are similar to means tests, but instead of using only one indicator of income, they use information on observable household characteristics that are strongly correlated with poverty to calculate a score for the given household's economic situation. The information typically collected for proxy means tests in poor countries includes the quality of the dwelling, the ownership of durable goods, household composition, education level, and occupational sector. The score is then used to determine eligibility for benefits.

In **community-based** programmes, the responsibility for identification is delegated to a group of community members or a community leader who decides on eligibility for a programme. This selection method takes advantage of the fact that local actors can usually obtain more and better information on the poverty composition within a community at a lower cost than programme officials. Local chiefs, leaders of social or religious groups, members of single-purpose NGOs, or locally elected officials are possible entities acting as community agents.

### Relative performance of proxy means testing and community-based selection

**Stoeffler (2016) evaluates the targeting performance of CBT and a PMT in a pilot cash transfer programme in Cameroon.** Using low per capita consumption as targeting criteria, the PMT outperforms CBT. Due to low administrative capacities, assessment, monitoring, and enforcement of the CBT allocation rules prove to be difficult. To enhance the targeting performance of CBT in such a context, clear guidelines on the definitions of poverty which need to be in line with the policy objective and local perception are highlighted to be essential. Alatas et al. (2012) confirms in a field experiment in Indonesia that PMT performs better than CBT in identifying households with low per capita consumption, but CBT can lead to higher levels of satisfaction than a PMT. Their results suggest that communities may apply other concepts of poverty and vulnerability which involve more information than solely measuring per capita consumption of a household. Interestingly, Alatas et al. (2012) did not detect any elite capture. Hence, CBT may be most effective when applying hybrid systems, which stipulate significant discretion for the community agents as well as clear and unambiguous targeting criteria, regulations that allow for external monitoring and evaluation of the community agents (Conning and Kevane, 2002). In addition, Hanna and Olken (2018) appraise the community approach as more efficient than a PMT in identifying those households who self-assessed themselves as poor. They also find experimentally a higher support from citizens of the community-based approach than of the data-driven proxy-means test.

**Participatory approaches** are widely applied in social welfare programmes as they help to use available information to rank households according their poverty or wealth status. The identification of the poorest or the vulnerable in this case can be based on household census and survey information or involvement of community members in the beneficiary selection process. Census participatory approaches use simple questionnaires and data on household assets to create a wealth index by which households can be ranked. Despite their simplicity, large-scale censuses are expensive and time-consuming. Alternative participatory approaches imply the direct involvement of community members in the household ranking procedure. For example, a group of community representatives could be responsible for making the final decision on household eligibility. Hence, many community-based approaches are participatory by design. **Participatory Wealth Ranking (PWR)** is a method of identifying the poorest households with the help of community resources. This includes meetings with community representatives to discuss the characteristics of households, which can be helpful in differentiating wealth categories (e.g. extreme poor, moderate poor, least poor, etc.). The community representatives then use these categories and characteristics to rank the households in the community and identify the poorest. Local expertise of community members allows the ranking to be made quickly and cheaply even in low-capacity contexts.

A stand-alone approach is to provide all citizens an opportunity to self-select into getting assistance. A good example of **self-selection** programmes are employment guarantee schemes based on a work requirement paid below the market level for unskilled labour or at the level of the minimum wage. This principle ensures that only the needy benefit from the programme and the non-poor are discouraged from programme participation. Another example is a free supply of an inferior good like yellow maize instead of the white maize normally consumed by all the people in a country. In addition, private participation or transaction costs might be imposed. Common examples include stigma costs associated with the programme participation or time restrictions on transfers, implying that applicants need to queue, which is used as filter; points of service delivery are situated in areas with high concentrations of poor people, resulting in higher costs for non-poor to reach the service point.

In the absence of targeting, social transfers are universally available to everyone in a society. **Universal approaches** propose that all citizens without restrictions receive identical benefits, which is emphasised as fostering social unity (Grosh et al. 2008). In countries where poverty is widespread, universal coverage may be more appropriate to attain poverty alleviation since it can reduce the administrative complexity and any potential for manipulation in eligibility identification (Standing, 2007). However, universal coverage is often claimed to be expensive and unaffordable, especially in poor countries. Further, the rich also get the same transfer as the poor, which leads to leakages of scarce resources. The rationale for implementing a targeted approach is generally illustrated by, on the one hand, ethical concepts of fairness and progressive redistribution of resources within a society and, on the other hand, the objective to maximise social welfare subject to a limited budget (Devereux et al. 2017). In the name of cost efficiency, equitable distribution and progressivity, beneficiary selection has often been preferred over universalism - not only in less developed countries (Dutrey 2007; Coady et al. 2013). However, both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages and offer a range of solutions suitable for different contexts.

Figure 3 summarises all types of selection methods that are applied in social protection programmes. Table 2 shows the main pros and cons of choosing one particular selection method. And Table 3 overviews the benefits, costs and risks of these methods in fragile environments.

Figure 3. Selection & Identification of Potential Beneficiaries in Social Protection Programmes.

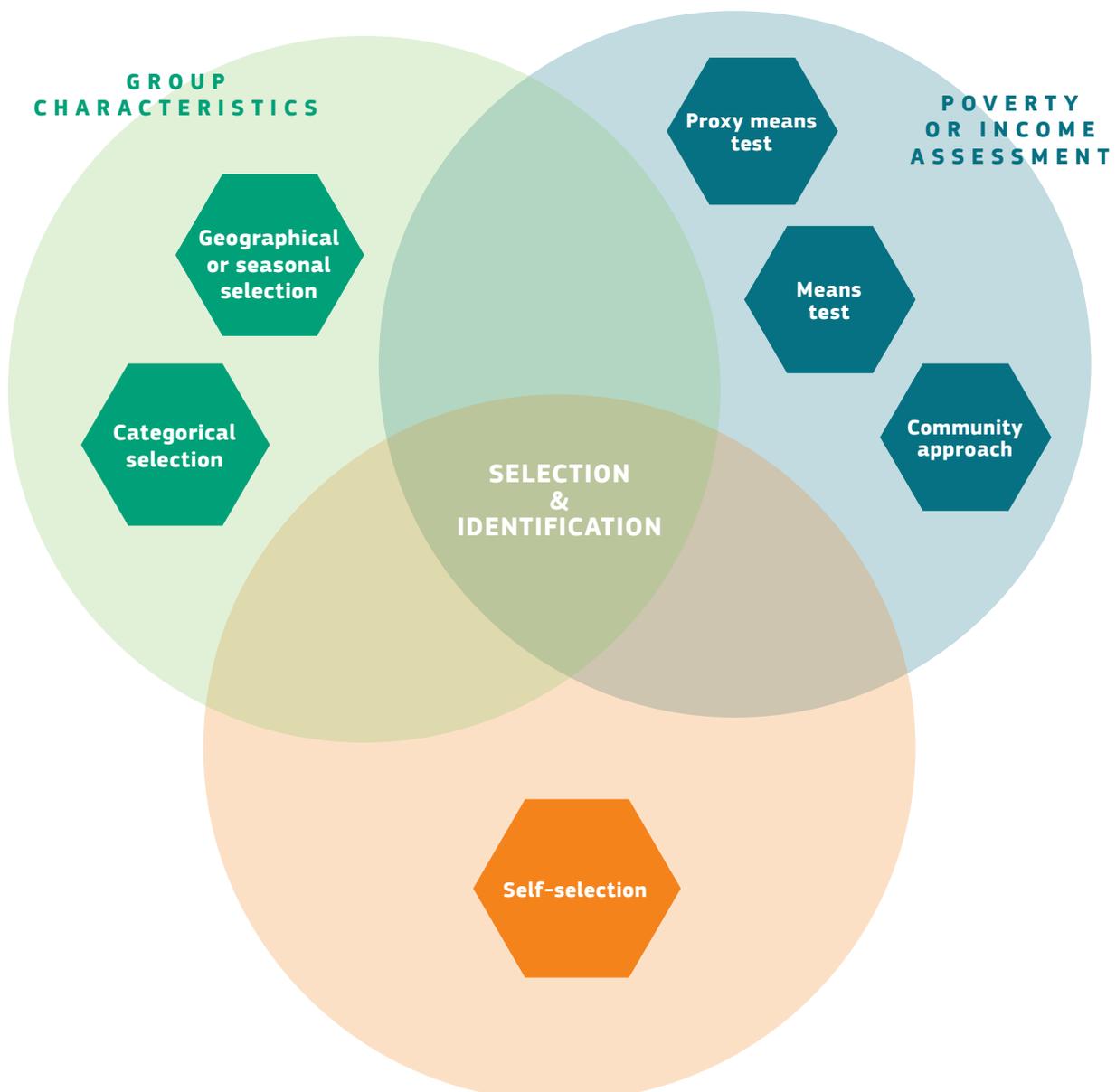


Table 2. Pros and Cons of Selection Methods.

SELECTION METHOD	PROS AND CONS OF SELECTION METHODS
Categorical	<p>The main advantage of categorical targeting is that benefits are distributed on the condition of fulfilling predefined demographic or social characteristics which are easily observed, hard to falsify, and associated with a high prevalence of poverty and vulnerability (Coady et al. 2004; Devereux et al. 2017). Apart from age and sex, the other categories might be based on disability, ethnicity or land ownership (Coady et al. 2013). If adequately designed, categorical targeting is highly transparent, and thus, it is often perceived as fair and should carry no stigma. Besides, it requires neither complex administration nor a large budget where essential statistical data are accessible. Yet targeting all children or elderly, for example, may not always coincide with reaching only the poorest or most vulnerable (Gatzweiler and Baumüller 2014). Hence, categorical targeting easily results in high rates of beneficiary-selection errors since the actual poverty status is not directly determined (Devereux et al. 2017).</p>
Geographical	<p>A special form of categorical selection based on the location of residence is referred to as geographical selection. Benefits are allocated to specific regions, districts, or communities with incidence of chronically poor residents. This means of targeting is also often applied in areas where natural disasters occur more frequently (Slater and Farrington, 2009). Blanket coverage of geographic units is considered to be appropriate where poverty is widespread or the administrative and social costs are excessively high (Sabates-Wheeler et al. 2015). Geographical targeting can be reasonable if there is a strong correlation between place and poverty (Coady et al., 2004a, 2013). Further, this method is administratively simple and low-cost. Stigma effects and labour disincentives are also unlikely to occur (Coady et al. 2013). Geographically targeted programmes, however, reveal a high rate of 'targeting errors by design', because geographical location remains a rather weak proxy for individual poverty even if poverty is to some extent spatially concentrated across a country. When the programme expands to less homogeneously poor areas, targeting efficiency decreases and leakage increases (Devereux et al. 2017). In addition, marginal populations residing in areas with a lower average prevalence of poverty are likely not to be covered by the social transfer programme (Choudhury and Räder, 2014). Nevertheless, significant gains in the targeting performance have been found when targeting at smaller administrative levels. This could be demonstrated in Ecuador, Madagascar and Cambodia, where the impact on poverty reduction was simulated using different geographical units. As a result, geographical targeting of smaller areas should be preferred over a national level targeting threshold (Elbers et al. 2007). Another important issue is that political compromise could lead to a fixed portion of coverage within each geographic unit rather than the coverage of the poorest units. This is often provoked by lobbying efforts on the part of representatives of each geographic unit to be included by the social transfer programme (World Bank 2016b).</p>
Means testing	<p>Means testing requires administratively complex implementation and the presence of documentation on economic transactions, which makes them less common in less developed countries. Unsurprisingly, verified means testing is the most laborious and data demanding selection mechanism but also considered to be most accurate (Coady et al. 2004; Devereux et al. 2017). In contexts of weak administrative capacity and/or a high share of informal labour, documenting and verifying income is not straightforward. Hence, there are large differences in the complexity and accuracy of means tests. Policy makers more often choose simple means tests where an officer assesses the income of a potential beneficiary in their home; or the applicant is interviewed in an office with the information taken at face value. In such cases, one threat is that an officer wields considerable power over eligibility decisions.</p> <p>Also, the targeting effectiveness of means-tested programmes in developing countries is generally disappointing. One of the reasons for this is that the majority of potential beneficiaries are most likely employed in the informal sector and lack any form of income documentation. Consequently, such an environment demands strategies other than relying on directly observable income or wealth as the basis for defining the poverty status of an applicant (Devereux et al. 2017).</p>

<p><b>Proxy means testing</b></p>	<p>Proxy means testing (PMT) might be relatively costly and require high administrative capacity to measure and verify income or conduct surveys. The targeting accuracy of PMT to screen out the poorest is highly dependent on the proxies selected, the weights applied to them, and on how thoroughly the identification process is implemented (Devereux et al. 2017). Statistical methods, such as regression or principal components analyses, are usually applied to derive the weighting of the indicators used. Subsequently, the weighted indicators are used across the population to predict the welfare situation of each individual or household (Coady et al. 2013). Due to the formulaic nature of the mechanism, which allows for replicable assessment based on consistent and observable criteria, horizontal equity can be expected from a well-instituted PMT. This implies that the same eligibility status should be assigned to the same or similar applicants, irrespective of which officer carries out the evaluation. Thus, concerns about malfeasance, such as rent-seeking or randomness of benefit assignment might be alleviated (Coady et al. 2013; Dodlova et al. 2018b). Niehaus et al. (2013) underline the complexity of designing an appropriate PMT, namely the trade-off between statistical accuracy and enforceability. While adding more targeting criteria increases the statistical accuracy, it may also increase the opportunity for corrupt behaviour since monitoring and enforcing of numerous criteria become more difficult. The assignment of individuals or households to a programme under a PMT is often not easily understood by the population since it is based on an opaque score (Gatzweiler and Baumüller 2014). This can lead to social conflicts within communities (Kidd et al. 2017).</p>
<p><b>Community-based selection/participatory tools</b></p>	<p>Community-based targeting (CBT) is an increasingly widespread mechanism, as applying local definitions of poverty status may be more appropriate than relying on rigid national definitions (Conning and Kevane 2002). Information asymmetries can be minimised, resulting in improved targeting effectiveness, since hiding wealth from your neighbours is more difficult than from official agents. This may circumvent the problem of assessing unobservable income (Rai 2002; Alatas et al. 2012; Devereux et al. 2017). Administrative costs as well as the total deadweight loss can be reduced by using community agents rather than official agents who need to be paid a higher salary and are less well-informed (Conning and Kevane 2002). The mobilisation of valid information functions best within clearly defined and cohesive communities without adverse domination by elites (McCord 2013). However, having comprehensive information on who are the neediest does not automatically lead to the most accurate beneficiary selection. The community agents may pursue interests of their own rather than operating purely on the basis of people's actual needs (Coady et al. 2013). The trade-off between more information and the risk of elite capture was analysed for two large-scale subsidy programmes of agricultural inputs and food implemented in Malawi. While mistargeting was occurring, the overall extent was only limited and often negligibly small. More importantly, community agents targeted households with higher returns to input of resources. In this case, the CBT is more productively efficient than could be achieved through a statistical method (Basurto et al. 2017).</p>
<p><b>Self-Selection</b></p>	<p>A self-selection mechanism is supposed to increase the opportunity costs of applying for a programme for the non-poor population. Consequently, labour disincentives are unlikely to be distorted and administrative costs are likely to remain low (Coady et al. 2013). However, imposed costs will lower the net value of benefits to some extent, which prevents the programme from transferring larger benefits. If the costs required to access the programme are too high, the poorest are unable to obtain any benefits at all. Thus, in the context of widespread poverty, the screening mechanisms may fail to adequately discourage the non-poor from applying to social programmes, implying both inclusion and exclusion errors (Devereux et al. 2017).</p>

Table 3. Selection Methods in Fragile Contexts.

SELECTION METHOD	BENEFITS	RISKS
<b>Categorical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy implementation</li> <li>• Possible to address the groups most affected or exposed to shocks (e.g. widows, ex-combatants, refugees and IDPs)</li> <li>• Minimal eligibility manipulation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low selection accuracy</li> </ul>
<b>Geographical/ Seasonal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy implementation</li> <li>• Possible to address worst affected areas or areas affected in a certain time period</li> <li>• Useful first-level targeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low selection accuracy</li> <li>• Potential for migration</li> </ul>
<b>Means test</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good selection accuracy</li> <li>• Potential to estimate damage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costly and difficult implementation</li> <li>• High eligibility manipulation if non-verified</li> <li>• Possible stigma and social conflicts</li> </ul>
<b>Proxy means test</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximal selection accuracy</li> <li>• Low eligibility manipulation</li> <li>• Possibility of including exposure to shocks in proxy indicators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costly and difficult implementation</li> <li>• Hard choice of proxy indicators</li> <li>• No transparency</li> <li>• Low public support leading to social unrest and conflicts</li> </ul>
<b>Community-based/ participatory tools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advantage of local information</li> <li>• Increase of social cohesion</li> <li>• Effective in decentralised countries</li> <li>• Potential to estimate damage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local capture and eligibility manipulation</li> <li>• Control and monitoring hard in the absence of supervising teams</li> </ul>
<b>Self-selection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective short-term intervention</li> <li>• Linked to recovery and reconstruction activities</li> <li>• Skill and income generation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costly participation</li> <li>• Potential gender bias</li> <li>• Opportunity costs to participation</li> <li>• Stigma</li> </ul>
<b>Universal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy implementation</li> <li>• High public support</li> <li>• No costs of targeting, e.g. migration or social conflicts/unrest/stigma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No selection accuracy</li> <li>• Costly</li> </ul>

## —3—

# Selection costs and errors

The beneficiary-selection process can be costly depending on contexts, available budget, capacities, and chosen targeting methods. Devereux et al. (2017) distinguishes between the following types of targeting costs:

- **Administrative:** budget, expertise, capacity, time, skills, etc. needed for implementation. These costs can be split between design and operational costs.
- **Private:** beneficiaries' time, effort, fees, lost income to prove their eligibility.
- **Indirect:** beneficiaries' changing behaviour to become eligible for a transfer (e.g. migration).
- **Social:** reduced community cohesion, potential conflicts, unfairness perceptions.
- **Political:** manipulations by politicians and community chiefs, local capture.

Table 4 reports the rough estimations of costs for different selection methods:

Table 4. Targeting Costs of Selection Methods.

SELECTION METHOD	CATEGORICAL/ GEOGRAPHICAL	MEANS TEST	PMT	CBT	SELF- SELECTION
TARGETING COST					
Administrative	Low	Low/High	High	Low	Low/High
Private	Low	Low	Low/ High	Low/ High	High
Indirect	High	Low	Low	High	High
Social	Low	High	High	Low	Low
Political	Low/High	High	Low	High	Low

Note: PMT = proxy means testing, CBT = community-based targeting

A trade-off needs to be made between targeting effectiveness and targeting costs (Sabates-Wheeler et al. 2015). Accurate beneficiary selection requires high administration capacities and strong enforcement rules, otherwise the identification of those who are eligible for a programme is unlikely to be effective. A common approach for assessing targeting effectiveness is to compare under-coverage and leakage rates (Cornia and Stewart 1993; Coady et al. 2013). These rates usually mirror targeting errors of exclusion and inclusion. Exclusion errors (errors of type I) are defined as the share of beneficiaries not receiving social transfers despite fulfilling the required eligibility criteria. Inclusion errors (errors of type II) are defined as the share of beneficiaries receiving social transfers despite not fulfilling the required eligibility criteria. Table 5 illustrates in more detail that exclusion errors are equal to  $B/(A+B)$  and inclusions errors are equal to  $C/(A+C)$ .

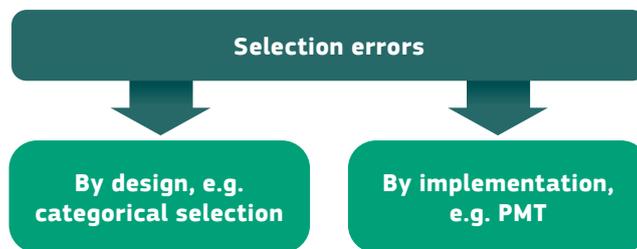
Inclusion errors are of more concern to governments and to those funding a social transfer programme, since costs are increased. On the other hand, exclusion errors deprive eligible individuals of receiving resources they most likely depend on, and are thus of concern to those involved with the rights of social protection (Devereux et al. 2017). However, Cornia and Stewart (1993) suggest weighting exclusion errors higher than inclusion errors on the basis that failing to include people in need is more serious than failing to exclude non-poor individuals from receiving social transfers. This is especially important in fragile contexts. Consequently, inclusion errors may be more acceptable than exclusion errors.

Selection errors can result from both programme design and implementation. Errors occurring **by design** are closely linked with the question of how to define the neediest (Braun and Gatzweiler 2014; Devereux et al. 2017). Clearly, perfect selection in terms of reaching all poor (eligible) and excluding all non-poor (non-eligible) people is unrealistic. Nonetheless, the scale of exclusion and inclusion errors in relation to the costs must be justified.

Table 5. Selection Errors.

		PROGRAMME CLASSIFICATION	
		Eligible	Non-Eligible
ACTUAL STATUS	Eligible	Correct Selection (A)	Exclusion by error (Type I) (B)
	Non-Eligible	Inclusion by error (Type II) (C)	Correct Non-Selection (D)

Errors caused **by implementation** typically originate from more complex selection methods. Brown et al. (2017) assess the targeting performance of various implemented PMTs in African countries and show that while inclusion errors are roughly halved, exclusion errors remain high due to overestimated living standards for the poor being predicted by the econometric models. Employing econometric simulation exercises to evaluate the targeting accuracy of PMTs in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka, Kidd and Wylde (2011) argue that they are inherently inaccurate. Their results revealed high in-built errors which increase in magnitude by decreasing size of the targeted population. Reasons for these inaccuracies are due to imperfect correlation between multiple proxies and household consumption, sampling errors in household survey design, and inaccuracies in the household survey analysis.



**Evaluation of targeting errors by design: PROGRESA example**

**A study evaluating the targeting performance of the Health, Education, and Nutrition Programme (PROGRESA) of Mexico presents one possible approach of how to estimate the severity of targeting errors by design.** The PROGRESA uses rigorous statistical methods to identify the extremely poor and assure objectivity in the selection process. Targeting errors are considered to be low if they apply mostly to the households close to the poverty line, i.e. those households just above or below the cut-off. The targeting strategy of PROGRESA, which uses a marginality index based on consumption levels, is compared to a geographical and a universal targeting approach. The severity of exclusion and inclusion errors can be estimated based on a predefined poverty index across the three targeting approaches. Both for exclusion and inclusion rates the PROGRESA targeting method outperforms the other two approaches. The households wrongly excluded or included in the programme are close to the poverty line, suggesting low severity of targeting errors by design under the PROGRESA method of targeting

(Skoufias et al. 2001)

Table 6. Selection Errors in Fragile Contexts.

	<b>INCLUSION ERRORS</b>	<b>EXCLUSION ERRORS</b>
<b>By design</b>	Hard to minimise, so costly but humanitarian support implies emergency responses so can be justified	Might be minimised by using very broad selection methods such as categorical or geographical selection
<b>By implementation</b>	Might be minimised by using self-selection methods or time-limited provision of benefits	Might be reduced by using local expertise like a community-based approach.

# —4—

## Conditionalities as a selection tool

**Conditional cash transfers (CCTs) occupy a special niche among poverty alleviation tools in developing countries.** They not only improve short-term consumption and reduce vulnerability but also increase investment in human capital, implying long-term sustainable development. However, they have recently been criticised because of costly enforcement and the exclusion of poor households who experience difficulties in complying with certain behavioural rules (e.g. Baird et al. 2011). Another risk from a social inclusion point of view is that recipients might be prevented by some other barrier from accessing the services upon which the transfer is conditional.

**Nevertheless, there are two main advantages of CCTs from the targeting point of view.** First, CCTs are considered as programmes with a self-selection mechanism, because potential beneficiaries decide for themselves whether they can bear additional costs in order to receive a social grant for maintaining their minimal living standards. Poor households incur costs for programme participation, and if they are willing to invest in children's human capital, they are self-selected into such programmes.

**Second, the costs incurred, for example school enrolment, may decrease current household consumption due to a loss of income from child labour.** School enrolment can thus be an indicator for low consumption households. This allows governments to target social benefits towards a specific group; in this example, households with lower consumption. This unexplored benefit of CCTs can be considered as a targeting benefit (Bergstrom and Dodds, 2018). It depends on the particular context whether this targeting benefit of CCTs is large or small. Specifically, it is defined by the distribution of income of eligible households, potential child earnings, and marginal utility from consumption.

**In fragile contexts, CCTs might have some potential if people can obtain additional benefits or food for adhering to certain behavioural rules like health check-ups (upon service availability).** Especially after natural disasters or conflict events, this might be effective to maintain human capital. Such an approach would help to minimise inclusion errors, as in this case potential beneficiaries would need to incur costs to obtain social benefits. However, it might increase exclusion errors if people face barriers to complying with conditions.

## —5—

# Hybrid solutions for beneficiary selection

**Best practices suggest that a combination of selection methods is likely to reduce exclusion and inclusion errors, bring complementary strengths and enhance the overall effectiveness of targeting** (Grosh et al. 2008; Coady et al. 2004; Mills et al. 2015). For example, Kenya’s Hunger Safety Net Programme relies on geographical targeting, community-based targeting (CBT), and a proxy means test (PMT); Mexico’s PROSPERA programme combines geographical targeting and a PMT; Brazil’s Bolsa Familia applies geographical targeting and means testing; and the Public Works Programme in Malawi uses self-selection together with either CBT or a PMT. Among more than 180 social transfer programmes considered, only 35 per cent employ a single targeting method (Dodlova et al. 2018a). About 15 per cent of all programmes apply three or more selection methods. The most frequent choices of targeting methods are categorical criteria, a means test or proxy means test only, combination of a means test and categorical criteria, and a combination of geographical with all other criteria. The combination of selection methods can assure flexibility, which is essential in times of crisis.

Hybrid/mixed selection methods **combining both participatory and statistical tools** are currently a widespread tendency for the selection of beneficiaries, as they include triangulation mechanisms and combine the benefits of both methods, thereby improving the quality of results. The broad use of a combination of PWR methods based on the household economy analysis along with the statistical analysis produces efficient solutions to identify the poorest and most vulnerable. However, this approach requires strong facilitation and analytical skills as well as the field presence of teams.

**In some cases, a mix of selection procedures is required by design.** For example, when the number of applicants exceeds the number of jobs in the public works programme, additional selection methods need to be implemented (e.g. means tests or proxy means tests). In the latter case, the programme is no longer self-selected.

**One crucial issue while following a mixed-method approach is order of targeting.** For example, the use of geographical targeting is recommended as the first stage within a multi-stage targeting framework (Devereux et al. 2017).

Another trade-off is how to reconcile self-selection (a potential beneficiary decides on his/her eligibility himself/herself) with screening mechanisms (where any other party, government or community actor or expert decides on eligibility). In programmes using self-selection, a potential beneficiary should apply for and incur a cost to receive a social benefit; for example, he or she should wait in a line (time cost), help to implement a project (public works), or express an interest in getting low-quality food (inferior food programmes). Hence, a potential beneficiary decides on his or her own whether he or she needs and deserves a transfer. In screening methods, a government or a social chief (any other actor except a beneficiary) decides on the beneficiary’s eligibility. Good examples are means testing, PMT or community-based programmes. Combining self-selection and screening approaches in beneficiary selection helps to reconcile rights- and needs-based approaches. While universalism in distributing social benefits expresses a rights-based approach, self-selection also gives people a right to choose whether or not to participate in a programme.

### Bolsa Familia: mix of geographical selection and means testing

**The Bolsa Familia Programme in Brazil uses means testing in combination with geographical targeting to identify eligible households.** The programme was created in 2003 through the unification of four existing cash transfer programmes to increase the efficiency of assistance and to scale it up towards the goal of universal coverage. Bolsa Familia provides conditional cash transfers to poor households with the objective of reducing current poverty and inequality, breaking the inter-generational transmission of poverty, and empowering beneficiary families. A unique database and social identification number were developed to determine eligibility and for further monitoring and evaluation purposes. Geographical targeting is applied at the municipality level and the federal level, employing set quotas to minimise issues of moral hazard and to enable municipalities to allocate the limited resources to the truly poor. Once the geographical quotas are implemented, means testing is conducted by selecting families with per-capita income below the poverty line.

*(Lindert et al. 2007)*

It has been shown that exclusion errors are smaller as a result of applying screening at the first stage and self-selection at the second stage, while inclusion errors are larger (Bergstrom, 2018). Recent results show that the objective and fiscal choices at Phases 1 and 2 should determine which selection mechanism is used first. Depending on whether the purpose is to maximise programme coverage or cost (transfer size), screening or self-selection approaches can be used at the first stage (Bergstrom, 2018).

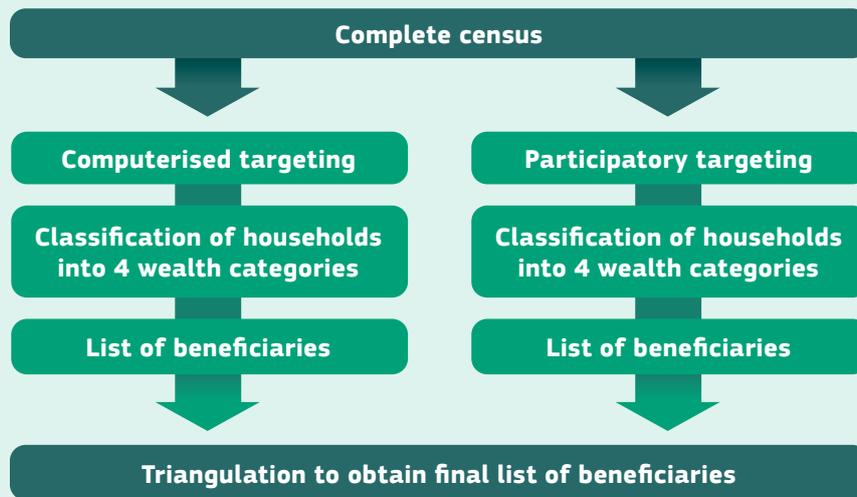
### Mixed/ hybrid selection process based on both participatory/'traditional' methods, adapted to complex contexts: example of northern Mali

The targeting method commonly used by international NGOs in northern Mali, particularly the members of the EUD-funded ARC initiative or NGOs receiving funding from DG ECHO, was developed in the aftermath of the 2012 crisis in a context of weak state presence, high security risks and presence of 'gate-keepers' leading to risk of fraud. The methodology is based on continuous participation of the population, is relatively simple, includes control mechanisms and is feasible in a volatile context. It requires the strong field presence of teams to ensure facilitation and supervision.

The selection process developed by ACF includes the following steps (ACF, 2018):

- use of Participatory Wealth Ranking to classify households according to four wealth groups, or alternatively, use of existing HEA (Household Economy Analysis) profiles of the livelihood zone, to identify specific key parameters ('proxies') for poverty in line with the local context;
- realisation of a complete census of the population, including collection of demographic data and poverty-related key parameters, both across sedentary villages and pastoral sites;
- establishment of a database;
- data analysis to rank households according to poverty and identify the poorest households;
- organisation of a community targeting process for villages and creation of a provisional list of beneficiaries.
- triangulation of data from the computerised targeting process with those from participatory targeting to finalise the list of beneficiaries.

The main steps of the approach include the following:



(World Food Programme, 2018)

In the following table we list several popular combinations of selection methods used in fragile contexts:

Table 7. Hybrid Solutions in Fragile Contexts.

SHOCK TYPE	EXAMPLES OF HYBRID SOLUTIONS
Economic shock	<p><b>Malawi's Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP):</b> community-based and categorical targeting with PMT that provides a voluntary alert indicator. First, a community committee identifies the 15 per cent poorest and labour-constrained households in its village cluster. Then enumerators visit the selected households and conduct a survey using a standard household questionnaire. Based on the survey, the categorical condition 'labour-constrained' is verified using a specific formula. Then each household is assigned to one of five poverty categories. Eligible households are those which meet both categorical conditions (poorest and labour-constrained).</p>
Conflict	<p><b>Yemen Emergency Crisis Response (ECPR):</b> geographical and multi-layered PMT targeting based on a 'distress index' that is constructed by determining the spread and intensity of people with emergency needs and food insecurity, and the level and intensity of IDPs/returnees.</p> <p><b>Serra Leone Youth Employment Support Project:</b> geographical and self-selection with the extensive use of mobile technology for registration, monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p><b>West Bank and Gaza Cash Transfer Programme:</b> geographical and PMT targeting based on the unified registry operated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and a uniform payment modality.</p>

<p><b>Climate shocks and disasters</b></p>	<p><b>Ethiopian Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP):</b> geographical targeting and CBT where geographical targeting at first stage is used to select areas with high prevalence of food insecurity and then a community committee ranks the neediest households according to their food gap, relying on both local knowledge and proxy indicators of food insecurity.</p> <p><b>Kenyan Hunger Safety Net Programme:</b> categorical, geographical targeting, PMT and CBT. A PMT is used to assess ownership of assets and enrolment in other programmes of households with orphans, elderly people or people with disabilities in selected areas; community agents rank the pre-selected households into different poverty categories.</p> <p><b>Yemen’s Social Fund for Development:</b> geographical, PMTplus and means test. In selected areas, the administrators can shift up the PMT cut-off point to rapidly increase beneficiary coverage in a face of a crisis; then a means test is applied to measure food insecurity in the areas affected by the shock using a quick survey; the results of the PMT and the means test are then cross-validated.</p> <p><b>Mexico’s Temporary Employment Programme:</b> geographical, marginalisation index and self-selection. In disaster-affected communities, a housing and property damage survey is used to assess livelihood losses. Eligible households are granted temporary employment opportunities on public works.</p>
<p><b>Pandemic</b></p>	<p><b>Guinean Productive Safety Nets Project after Ebola crisis:</b> geographical and self-selection by providing temporary jobs in the most affected regions.</p> <p><b>Liberia after Ebola crisis:</b> geographical and community-based interventions using multiple coping strategies like community-based surveillance response systems, community health workers and information dissemination, but also self-reliance and psychological support.</p>

In many contexts, hybrid solutions are preferred, since beneficiary-selection effectiveness is improved by employing multiple identification instruments. However, in case of low capacity and the necessity for immediate response, single selection methods can also demonstrate high efficiency. The specific advantages and disadvantages of every selection method under different shocks and response types are listed in Table 8. These can also be taken into account when combining selection methods.

Table 8. Beneficiary-Selection Methods in Fragile Contexts

SHOCK TYPE	POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF SELECTION METHODS
<b>Economic shock</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verified means testing, PMT (proxy means testing), CBT (community-based targeting) and self-selection can demonstrate high efficiency in addressing economic regressions, high unemployment, and hampered business.</li> <li>• The use of categorical/geographical targeting and non-verified means testing can lead to high inclusion errors.</li> </ul>
<b>Conflict</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Categorical/geographical methods can efficiently be used to identify the affected areas or population groups.</li> <li>• CBT helps to assess the damage, mobilise community forces and institutions for recovery, and increase social cohesion.</li> <li>• Self-selection is efficient in post-conflict recovery.</li> <li>• Poverty- or income-assessment methods like means testing or PMT are not optimal because of non-transparency and the threat of additional conflicts but might be helpful in constructing the marginalisation index or the scale of damage.</li> </ul>
<b>Climate shocks and disasters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Categorical/geographical methods can be efficiently used to identify the affected areas or population groups.</li> <li>• PMT and PMTplus accounting for shock exposure demonstrate a high potential in overcoming the aftermath of disasters and climate shocks as well as in preventing them.</li> <li>• CBT helps to assess damage and food insecurity within communities.</li> <li>• Self-selection is efficient in post-disaster recovery.</li> </ul>
<b>Pandemic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Categorical/geographical methods can be efficiently used to identify the concerned areas or population groups.</li> <li>• PMT is helpful in evaluating exposure to a shock.</li> <li>• CBT and self-selection can be efficient in providing relief and recovery.</li> </ul>
RESPONSE TYPE	
<b>Immediate response to shocks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Categorical/geographical and non-verified means testing can be quickly implemented.</li> <li>• CBT and self-selection can be efficient, as their implementation does not require much preparation or exploit private information of communities and potential beneficiaries.</li> </ul>
<b>Prolonged response of resilience building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More adequate and verified methods like PMT can be efficiently applied.</li> <li>• CBT remains helpful because of exploiting the local information advantage.</li> <li>• Categorical/geographical selection can efficiently be used at first stage to identify the needy areas or population groups.</li> <li>• Self-selection is especially effective in long-term recovery (e.g. public works, infrastructure projects).</li> <li>• More complex combinations of selection methods can be elaborated and adjusted over time.</li> </ul>

## —6—

# Implementation and Management Information Systems

**Variations in targeting performance originate from country-specific differences.** The poverty situation and fragility within the country have to be evaluated thoroughly in terms of depth, nature (chronic and transient), and spatial distribution. Along with the choice of humanitarian-programme objective and design, the implementation is one of the most important phases of the beneficiary-selection process (see Figure 1). Efficient implementation depends on operational and administrative capacities, data and management system resources, monitoring, evaluation and adaptation potential. Depending on the underlying approach, the response objective, the target group, and budget and administrative constraints, beneficiary selection can be realised in very different ways, with diverse practical implications for outreach and communications, registration/intake, enrolment, continuous monitoring and graduation. The implementation principles include impartiality, unhindered access, and equal conditions and opportunities for all eligible beneficiaries.

**Specific characteristics of shocks can also influence the targeting implementation.** Rapid-onset shocks (e.g. earthquakes, floods) are characterised by limited access to data and information; they often require immediate responses of beneficiary selection and do not allow any further adjustments in targeting the affected population. On the contrary, slow-onset shocks (e.g. droughts, on-going conflicts, pandemic) allow for preparing an efficient and timely response, updating data and monitoring damage, migration flows, food insecurity in the affected regions during the event, and more importantly, adjusting a humanitarian response to changing needs and emergencies. The targeting strategy is often a part of this adjustment process.

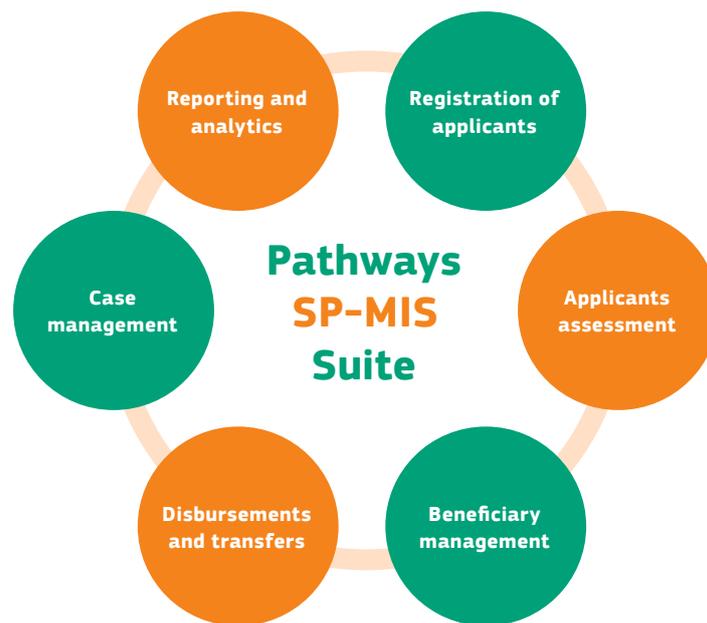
**The development of data capacity is one of the key components of the implementation process** (Barca and Beazley, 2019). Strategies for building data capacity should be followed with the use of modern technologies like smart cards, mobile phones, banking systems, electronic registries and **Management Information System (MIS)** platforms (e.g. Kosovo and the republic of Yemen). In particular, MIS platforms are critical for administering the programmes, including enrolment of potential beneficiaries, delivery of benefits, processing of appeals, etc. MIS make it possible to conduct integrated data management with equitable distribution of resources, systematic combination of multiple social safety programmes, oversight and evaluation. The **MIS components** within the programme are the following:

- Identification and registration of applicants and potential beneficiaries;
- Compliance with conditions in conditional cash transfer (CCT) and public works schemes;
- Management of appeals and grievance processes;
- Exit and graduation of beneficiaries;
- Production of payment lists;
- Reconciliation of payments.

The core MIS element is the creation of a well-designed centralised database or a social registry, which combines all current and potential beneficiaries and so facilitates preparedness for shocks and improves coordination across social assistance programmes and humanitarian responses. A functional registry can help to administer the programmes, disseminate information and increase coverage; it lowers beneficiary transaction costs and thus improves efficiency. It becomes possible to rapidly scale social assistance programmes up or down in response to shocks (Mills et al. 2015). Moreover, further integration of the databases of social programme beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries with national civil registries, poverty databases with additional data sources like disaster-response databases, climate and conflict data can facilitate vulnerability targeting, enhance early warning, facilitate real-time feedback and real-time awareness, and support the planning, design and delivery of assistance.

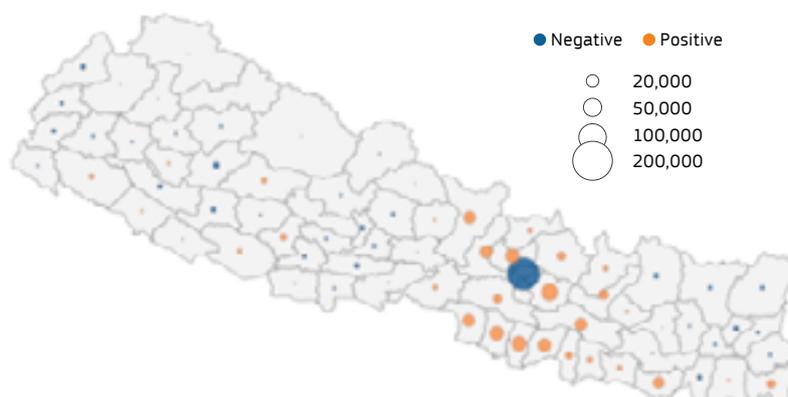
*Systems for Social Protection. Development Pathways.*

*Source: Mwasijaji (2016) Management Information*



### Using Big Data for tracing migration flows and disaster-relief aid allocation in Nepal

**Big data might be used to extract the information on conflict or natural disaster damage, migration, traffic, food insecurity and poverty.** Mobile operator data, geo-spatial or GIS data and web-scraping can be quite effective in searching out most affected areas and most suffering people. A good example is the initiative of Flowminder and Ncell (the largest mobile operator in Nepal), which collect detailed call records data to allocate disaster-relief aid. In the case of the Nepal 2015 earthquake it was possible to trace population outflows and inflows within the first 14 days and direct humanitarian assistance to areas with higher population inflows, as mapped below.



*Source : <http://www.flowminder.org/case-studies/nepal-earthquake-2015>*

### **Smart phones as an effective tool of beneficiary identification in the Sierra Leone Youth Employment Support Project**

The programme officers found a way to overcome the challenges of registry, payment system, monitoring and evaluation by using smart phones and mobile technology. *'Smart phones were used to register a comprehensive range of information/inputs. The phones were also operated on- and offline and used to upload data in real time, provided the beneficiaries had a SIM card and network coverage. Given the low capacity and absence of efficient beneficiary targeting and registry mechanisms, there was a general lack of identification documents, and the existing paper documentation suffered from errors and was difficult to access (Rosas and Martin 2014). Mobile technology was introduced in order to find a solution to the lack of documentation. Staff members were quickly trained to use smart phones to collect information on potential beneficiaries and to take photos for the beneficiary IDs. Each subproject registration with mobile technology lasted one day. Thus far, more than 6,600 beneficiaries have been registered in over 86 subproject sites. Where paper documentation existed, smart phones were used to digitize the information, which resulted in a digital beneficiary database. The database allows for enhanced coordination among different social protection players and institutions, by allowing for data sharing and comparison of information (Rosas and Martin 2014). The use of mobile technology in improving beneficiary registration resulted in a better payment system as well, through better data and payment flows. Upon registration, all beneficiary information is added to an electronic timesheet, wherein the payment amount is directly computed, and beneficiaries receive their SIM cards which are registered to be used for electronic payments.'*

*(Ovadiya et al. 2015: pp. 34-35)*

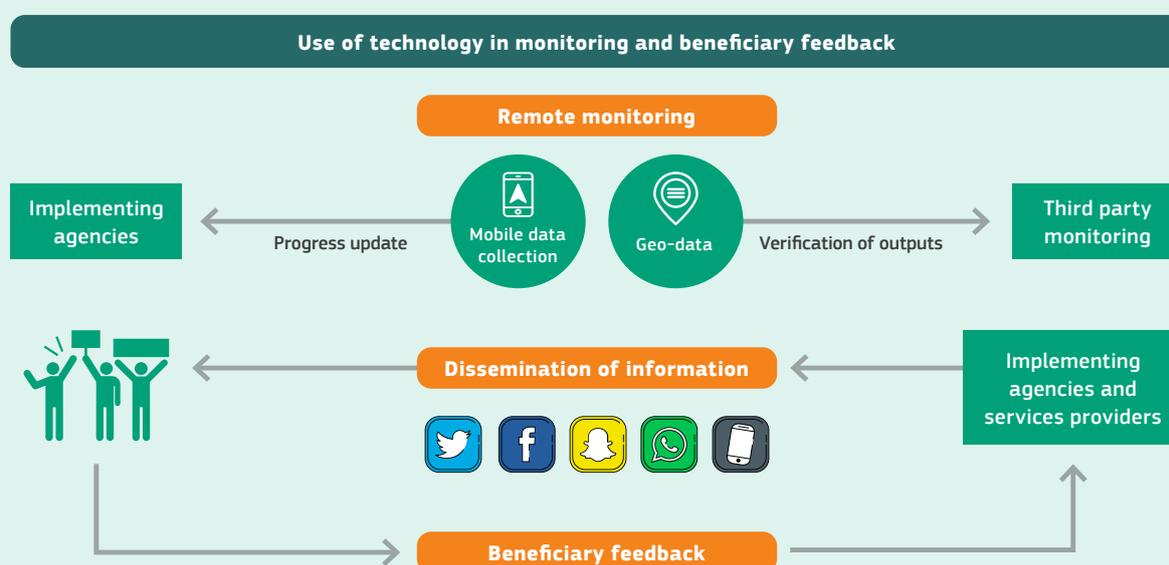
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# Monitoring and evaluation

Targeting performance assessment and evaluation constitute an important stage of the beneficiary-selection decision scheme (see Figure 2). Third-party monitoring, grievance mechanisms and other monitoring practices help to re-evaluate the beneficiary targeting process, correct selection biases and detect gaps in coverage. Constant tracking of inclusion/exclusion errors, occasional abuses, design manipulations and other inconsistencies is essential during any programme implementation. For example, Ethiopia's PSNP reassesses areas with food insecurity and retargets beneficiaries annually to improve targeting accuracy (Al-Ahmadi and de Silva, 2018). Further, fair and transparent appeals systems prove to be efficient in dealing with targeting errors. Information should be accessible to different groups within communities and should regularly be updated. For example, community key figures can be trained in the selection, verification, entitlement, and grievance procedures. Community level monitoring programmes can be launched, so that constant updates and feedback can be received. Further, the use of digital technologies, complaint hotlines, face-to-face communications and social media can be integrated for better oversight. The use of mobile phones and GPS devices helps to give quick access to reliable information.

## Feedback and Monitoring in the Emergency Crisis Response Project in Yemen

Yemen's Emergency Crisis Response Project (ECRP) started by the World Bank in 2016 extensively uses Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and other social media as well as modern technologies for getting feedback in an on-going conflict environment. It enacts the following scheme for monitoring beneficiaries:



The third-party monitoring agency works closely with trained community members who provide daily feedback using mobile and cloud-based applications. The feedback received makes it possible to learn from targeting errors, improve the quality of services, assure the credibility of the programme and achieve accountability of implementing agencies and service providers. The ECRP has also a specific scheme for complaints and appeals which allows it to constantly update and adjust the programme design and implementation.

(Al-Ahmadi and de Silva, 2018)

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# Up-to-date experiences and context specificities

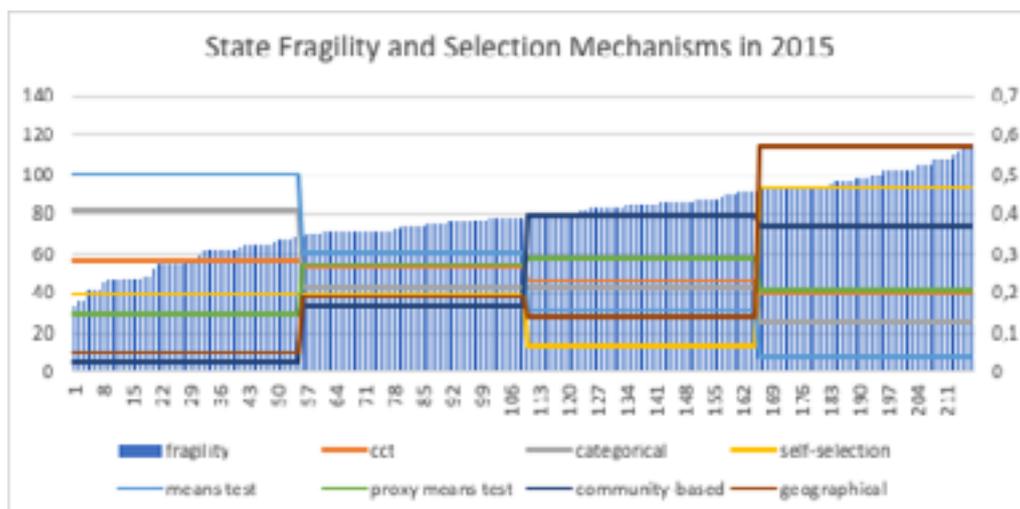
## State fragility and selection mechanisms

A comparative cross-country perspective allows for the study of whether fragile countries more often choose specific selection methods. The sample consists of more than 200 non-contributory large-scale social protection programmes, which are in operation in 2015 and implemented by national governments with or without donor assistance (NSTP dataset, Dodlova, 2018a).

A highly fragile country is a country with weak state capacity and low legitimacy where citizens are vulnerable to a range of shocks. Measuring fragility with the Fragile States Index constructed by the Fund for Peace<sup>3</sup> reveals differences in the applied selection methods across fragility quartiles. In highly fragile countries, **self-selection**, **geographical** and **community-based** targeting are the prevailing mechanisms of beneficiary selection. These methods work efficiently in fragile contexts, but they can also be strategically preferred because of a higher potential for eligibility manipulation in corrupt and shock-affected areas. CCTs (conditional cash transfers) and PMTs (proxy means tests) are equally adopted by countries in all quartiles. However, the purpose and rationale for choosing these methods in most and least fragile countries might be different. For example, in stable countries CCTs contribute to improving human capital, while in fragile contexts CCTs contribute to recovering human capital after crises and shocks.

Figure 4. State fragility and selection mechanisms used in social protection.

Notes. The Fragile States Index is measured along the left vertical axis. Vertical blue bars indicate increasing fragility in countries ranked along the horizontal axis. The shares of specific selection mechanisms across fragility quartiles are measured along the right vertical axis.



The same patterns are traced while considering the components of fragility, such as demographic pressures, group grievances, refugees and IDPs, and external intervention. In countries with high instability in these components, geographical and community-based selections remain among the most applied methods. Self-selection is also quite popular in such countries. Interestingly, a means test is used more often in the case of group grievance, and a PMT in the case of external intervention.

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# Systemic Failures

**Systemic failures in beneficiary selection arise when limited state or administrative capacity, higher rent-seeking environments and/or a high degree of political manipulation are associated with the design or implementation of social assistance programmes.**

**In cases of limited administrative capacity, selection mechanisms which incur minimum administrative costs are mostly effective.** These are categorical, geographical or community-based methods. In addition, in-kind transfers including school feeding programmes can be quite effective, as they are supposed to target the most suffering people experiencing high food insecurity. In-kind transfers might effectively be distributed in cases of emergencies and dysfunctional markets with the help of community structures like village chiefs in Timor-Leste or *femmes-mamans*, female vendors who prepare food for beneficiary children, in Togo (Ovadiya et al. 2015). The community approach in fragile contexts facilitates access to services and livelihood support and improves post-shock reconstruction by building local capacity for collective action and increasing social cohesion.

**Rent seeking can lead to large selection errors if policy makers choose selection mechanisms where a social chief or an officer plays a central role, as the probability of local capture and the distribution of benefits along kinship lines is quite high.** In these cases, selection mechanisms which either rely on intermediaries for beneficiary identification (CBT and means testing) or can be channelled towards specific regions (geographical targeting) show a higher potential for manipulation and discretionary spending. These methods are more effective in countries with participatory democracy and low levels of corruption. In particular, geographical selection is sometimes known as a method of ‘political targeting’. It can be used either to reward stronghold areas or to buy the support of particular regions. Several case studies address clientelism and vote-buying in social policy, and show that social benefits and public goods might be strategically used to increase popularity among the masses and gain or reward voters (De La O 2013; Manacorda et al. 2011; Nupia 2011; Zucco 2015).

## Geographical selection as a method of ‘political targeting’ in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) has been implemented in only four regional states. Among these four states, there are, for example, Tigray, where political support is high as it is a ruling party stronghold, and southern states where the opposition parties are dominant. In addition, the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) targets mostly areas bordering Somalia, where there is a risk of conflict.

*(Slater and Farrington, 2006)*

**By contrast, PMTs, categorical targeting and self-selection are recommended methods in countries which are prone to rent-seeking behaviour.** When implementing selection mechanisms that allow for more discretion in the allocation of benefits in corrupt countries, effective monitoring systems need to be in place to prevent possible misuse of funds (Dodlova et al. 2018b). Possibilities of fraud need to be addressed by exerting control; the effective detection of cheats and imposition of high penalties on them as well as repetitive updates on the targeting system should be part of the selection process. For example, the score algorithm for PMTs must *not* be made available to enumerators or interviewers.

### Selection drawbacks around elections in Colombia

A study in Colombia revealed that political manipulation took place within the local government, either by conducting a substantial portion of interviews before election periods or by changing, i.e. lowering, the poverty scores afterwards, once the composition of the PMT score was known. This suggests that conducting selection and identification activities, such as household interviews or data collection, in periods of elections is highly susceptible to fraud which undermines targeting performance.

*(Camacho and Conover, 2011)*

**Many challenges concerning the interaction of main stakeholders like governments, NGOs and donors arise in fragile contexts.** For example, governments may not allow other actors to select beneficiaries independently, even if it is more efficient in specific environments. In corrupt environments, a good strategy for channelling the funds from international donors can be to choose non-state actors like NGOs as implementing actors. Facing a dilemma that the countries in need are mostly those with a low quality of governance, donors may decide to bypass corrupt state actors by delivering social assistance to non-state actors (Acht et al., 2015). Apart from that, technical assistance and expertise of international donors on selection processes in different contexts can be helpful. For example, the World Bank helped to improve targeting by introducing PMT in the 2008 Social Welfare Fund beneficiary and applicant survey in the Republic of Yemen. The PMT method helped to reduce inclusion errors by distinguishing between non-poor beneficiaries and new poor beneficiaries (Ovadiya et al. 2015).

**The effectiveness of decentralising the selection process depends on the extent to which rent-seeking is prevalent within the local government.** If the local government compared to the central government is more vulnerable to capture due to a lack of accountability and the power of elites, decentralisation is likely to affect targeting effectiveness adversely (Bardhan, 2002). A study in West Bengal shows that while intra-village allocation of benefits is relatively accurate, significant leakage occurs in inter-village distribution. This effect is more pronounced for communities with high levels of poverty, low-caste households and inequality in land holding as a result of political discretion and lobbying power or the greater clout of representatives of each community. The use of statistical methods, such as a PMT, is recommended when resources are delivered across different communities instead of within the community. Furthermore, the allocation of a public good programme (local employment-generating programme) reveals a higher likelihood of elite capture compared to the allocation of private goods (credit or agricultural inputs), due to lack of transparency and vigilance (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2006).

In recent years, increasing attention has been paid in the literature to the fact that decisions on social policies might be political (Hickey, 2009). The debates conclude that the choice of types of transfer schemes or selection mechanisms might be a result of the bargaining process between different interest groups, or simply of government populist policies or preferences (Browne 2015; Barrientos 2013). For example, McCord (2012) argues that the expansion of public works programmes in sub-Saharan Africa is a political decision of governments which prefer to reduce the dependency of the poor who are able to work on unconditional transfers. Another example is the change of targeting of cash transfers to children in Mongolia from means-tested to universal benefits on the basis of the new government's socialist values (Farrington and Slater, 2006). The role of donors might consist of keeping track that the design of social policy, including beneficiary identification, is objective and transparent and has not been chosen because of any national government's self-interest or ideology.

Table 7. Key lessons on beneficiary selection in case of systemic failures.

TYPE OF FAILURES	KEY MESSAGES
<b>Limited administrative capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection methods which incur minimum administrative costs are preferred (e.g. categorical, geographical or community-based methods).</li> <li>• In-kind transfers directed to people with the use of categorical or community-based selection can be effective because of their self-selection potential.</li> <li>• Technical assistance and expertise of international donors on selection processes in different contexts can be helpful.</li> <li>• Building capacity is possible by using smart cards, mobile technology, electronic registries and management information system platforms in beneficiary-selection processes.</li> </ul>
<b>High rent seeking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection decisions should not solely depend on an intermediary like a social chief or an officer, to avoid local capture.</li> <li>• If such selection is applied, then effective monitoring systems and high penalties should be a part of the selection process.</li> <li>• PMT is preferred to exclude significant leakage due its non-transparency and complexity.</li> <li>• For programmes funded by international donors, NGOs might be better implementing actors than corrupt governments.</li> </ul>
<b>Political manipulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographical selection should be used with caution because of possible manipulations.</li> <li>• Household survey and data collection for selection purposes should be avoided in election periods. Similarly, enforcement procedures should be double checked around election dates.</li> <li>• International donors might contribute to avoiding biases in the design due to government ideology or the dominance of specific interest groups.</li> </ul>

# Climate shocks and food insecurity

**Given the persuasive nature of both covariate shocks (where exposure to the shock is correlated across households) and idiosyncratic shocks (where exposure to the shock is not correlated across households), in most less-developed countries, effective methods that rapidly identify affected households are vital in order to offer both short-term relief and long-term assistance.** Frequent exposure to shocks usually results in higher levels of transient poverty, meaning that households move in and out of poverty repeatedly. Providing temporary social transfers to households that are vulnerable to transient poverty may be more difficult than providing continuous support to chronically poor households. Targeting households vulnerable to transient poverty requires flexible methods that adjust to changes in the well-being of households. In addition, the impact of a shock on the livelihood of households is dependent on their capabilities to cope with it in the first place.

**In Malawi**, where the majority of households are exposed to shocks very frequently, the targeting effectiveness of a PMT (proxy means test) was analysed. Despite the time gap between the exposure to shocks and its impact on the PMT score, the applied PMT formula was able to correctly select 75% of households that had been affected by a shock as eligible or ineligible. The exclusion rate was 31% and the inclusion rate was 52%. When looking at the principal shocks (illness or loss of breadwinner, crop loss, or livestock loss) separately, the PMT successfully identified 74% to 77% of households, with exclusion rates ranging from 19% to 33% and inclusion rates from 41% to 56%. The performance of the PMT was independent of the type of shocks. The results were slightly improved when additionally applying geographical targeting, namely only in districts where more than 31% of households have experienced a shock within the last year. To further improve the accuracy of the PMT, it is recommended also to rely on community involvement in order to correct errors by addressing dimensions of poverty that have not yet been captured (Cnoblach and Subbarao 2015). CBT (community-based targeting) is a helpful tool for identifying the chronic poor within a clearly defined community. Furthermore, in post-crisis situations, community agents are able to rapidly identify those affected by a shock, even within a more heterogeneously structured community (Milles et al. 2015).

Overall, analysing the strategies employed by vulnerable households to cope with shocks, and the effectiveness of these for mitigating the impact of shocks, can be beneficial for identifying adequate selection indicators (Groover et al. 2015).

A drawback of the PMT mechanism lies in its insensitivity in response to spontaneous alterations of welfare. Particularly, crucial information on whether a household was hit by a shock cannot be captured (Basurto et al. 2017). To account for the impact of major shocks on the eligibility status of households, an extension of the PMT called the **PMTplus** can be applied. The fundamental idea of this method is that the cut-off point for a PMT can be adjusted in the event of a shock. Commonly, three additional strategies are known under PMTplus to accurately measure the impact of shocks on welfare. First, for covariate shocks regional information on climate shocks, drought, flooding, and historic rainfall is directly added into the PMT estimator. While the aggregated information may be correlated with household exposure to a shock, it is not a direct indicator of household exposure, leading to inclusion errors. Second, discrete indicators of household exposure to a shock are directly included into the PMT formula. This increases the method's accuracy. However, this information is not commonly available, and the information may be endogenous since households that are already poorer are very likely to suffer more heavily from a shock due to their higher vulnerability in the first place. Third, to account for possible endogeneity in the exposure to shocks, special types of models (e.g. endogenous treatment effect models) can be used to ensure that assessment of the impact of the shock is unbiased. Clearly, this method is very complex and depends on the availability of valid exclusion variables (variables that are correlated with exposure to shocks and affect the PMT score exclusively through their impact on exposure to shocks), which is often not given. After adding the variable which captures exposure to shocks based on one of the three strategies presented, the weighting associated with the impact of the shock needs to be incorporated into the **PMTplus** model.

Finally, a household is identified as vulnerable to shocks if it falls below a predefined threshold after being exposed to a shock (Mills et al. 2015). In any event, **PMTplus** is not designed to offer emergency support, but rather to support existing social protection programmes in expanding their outreach as soon as a shock has occurred (Leite 2015).

Vulnerability to climate change and international price fluctuation as well as a significant share of chronically food insecure households put high pressure on the social protection system in Kenya. Given such an environment, the **PMTplus** is highlighted to be a useful tool because it allows for rapidly expanding existing social assistance programmes to households affected by a recent shock (Leite 2015).

**Complex emergencies and natural disasters often have an adverse impact on food security in many less-developed countries.** Selecting appropriate metrics for food insecurity is critical to ensure an effective allocation of resources to people experiencing chronic hunger or the threat of a famine. A vast number of measures and concepts are used to define food insecurity, which can be broadly categorised into food security, availability, access, and utilisation. A detailed overview of the most commonly applied metrics is presented by Jones et al. (2013). The community-managed targeting and distribution approach introduced by Save the Children uses community agents to identify beneficiaries for food aid programmes based on food insecurity proxies which usually incorporate livestock and land ownership thresholds as well as economic activities. This method has been implemented in various countries. Evaluations of the targeting performance of selected countries display low inclusion errors ranging between 10 and 13 per cent in Zimbabwe and between 5 and 12 per cent in Tanzania (Mathys 2004). In Ethiopia, the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) uses geographical targeting at first stage to screen out areas with high prevalence of food insecurity from food secure areas. Then a community committee ranks the neediest households according to their food gap, relying on their knowledge as well as on proxy indicators of food insecurity. The PSNP is divided into a non-contributory and contributory scheme. Categorical targeting is utilised to differentiate between households with labour constraints, who receive transfers unconditionally, and those capable of working, who must complete public works activities in order to receive transfers. In addition, the PSNP is introducing full family targeting (FFT) to reinforce access to benefits by all family members. Under this approach, every household member receives a transfer despite some members being unable to work. The whole household is responsible for meeting the work requirements, so the able-bodied members work additionally to complete public works. Even though resources are primarily allocated to the target group, cases of elite capture have resulted in inclusion errors, while fixed quotas and targeting of geographic areas with high shares of food insecurity have caused exclusion errors (Slater and Farrington 2009).

## Conflict contexts

In conflict-affected areas, additional degrees of complexity arise when identifying adversely affected households and disproportionately suffering population groups due to the lack of reliable data and generally low capacities. Thus, selection methods with lower degrees of complexity and administrative capacity, such as community-based, categorical (demographic and geographical) targeting, or self-selection methods may be more effective in identifying the transient poor.

More specifically, social assistance is likely to be distributed to the most suffering population groups like widows, orphaned children, veterans and people disabled by war or by landmines. Especially female-headed households and the disabled population will have increased in number after conflicts. So categorical selection based on gender and disability would help to provide immediate compensations to these population groups. Many programmes that directed transfers to ex-combatants, young men and those disabled by conflict have been already implemented in Sierra Leone, Angola, Rwanda and Sri Lanka (Holmes, 2011; McConnell, 2010; Carpenter et al., 2012). However, women are likely to benefit very little from cash transfers as, in Angola for example, ex-combatant men do not necessarily feel obliged to use benefits in the interests of their family or dependents (Ozerdem, 2008). The choice of categories for programme selection should depend on context information and programme objectives.

### Categorical gender-based targeting in post-war and post-earthquake Nepal

Thousands of young widows and single women appeared as the result of a decade of the Maoist conflict in 1996-2006. Among emergency assistance initiatives in post-conflict Nepal, the Peace Support Programme supported widows by providing them cash grants to reduce their burden and disproportional damage after the war. Such a gender-sensitive approach helps a faster recovery and transition to a peaceful society.

After the two magnitude-7 earthquakes in 2015, a high number of female-headed households lost their homes and lands. They were disproportionately damaged for several reasons; for example, they could not clear the debris without neighbours' or relatives' help. Single women could not receive disaster relief if it had already been claimed by male family members living with them. Some widows have been denied legal rights to land or property that belonged to their husbands. As an emergency response, UN Women and WHR established a multipurpose centre to provide economic, social and psychological assistance and dignity kit distribution to single women and female-headed households in the destroyed village of Dharmasthali. The other 13 centres have been created with the help of local NGOs in five districts, thanks to which women are getting a chance to recover and improve their living conditions.

Relief assistance can be provided on a geographical basis, as certain regions might be worst affected by conflict. The more local areas are targeted, the more effective such assistance can be. However, geographical targeting should be cautiously used because of migration: an initial location of a conflict may be not an area most severely affected, and the most suffering people can be forced to displace to neighbouring regions. The ongoing debates are about effective targeting of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). One solution is to direct social benefits on the basis of categorical selection using refugee or displacement status. In addition, the combination of this method with self-selection would significantly improve identification of the needy migrants. Cash transfers combined with cash/food-for-work programmes would help to simultaneously assist refugees and support local infrastructure development.

Other negative consequences of conflicts and wars are limited economic activities and employment options. In view of this, public work programmes might become an effective tool to give short-term jobs, on the one hand, and to enhance investments in infrastructure reconstruction, on the other hand. For example, in the Republic of Yemen after the 2011 political crisis, 65 per cent of the extreme poor were involved in 2000 community projects. In Afghanistan's National Solidarity Programme, community funds have been used for public works to restore infrastructure, rebuild schools and install water pumps for the benefit of over 13 million people (Ovadiya et al., 2015).

In post-conflict areas, improving social capital and mutual insurance may prove to be a necessary driver of the recovery process, so community-based selection would help to mobilise all forces within a community. Therefore, it is important for the government to build local capacity to manage transparent and non-politicised intra-community selection.

The rationale for using all these selection mechanisms is not only to better reach the most vulnerable and increase their nutrition and health but also to maintain a stable balance between different population groups. This is especially critical not only in the aftermath of conflicts but also in politically unstable areas. In violent, insecure areas, policy makers and donors should choose selection methods that would allow the avoidance of social exclusions and tensions within communities. In particular, self-selection methods should be applied first, and screening methods should be used at the second stage. Also, opaque PMT schemes might not be a perfect solution in such contexts. Otherwise selection might be particularly contentious in the case of ethnic or tribal conflicts. In all cases, the focus should be on coverage and impartiality (Harvey, 2009). In terms of targeting effectiveness, inclusion errors are allowed to be high, but exclusion errors should be minimised.

Irrespective of the method(s) chosen to identify potential beneficiaries, selection criteria need to be implemented in such a way that they can easily be modified to respond to the incremental impact of a violent conflict (Darcy, 2004; Marzo and Mori, 2012). For example, targeting methods that use on-going registration processes are particularly suitable in reaching households which have been adversely affected by conflicts, but have not yet been eligible for social assistance (Bastagli, 2014). Another good practice has been employed in West Bank and Gaza, where a unified registry of beneficiaries across social safety net programmes has been created to improve selection accuracy and crisis-response capacity. In times of stability, unified registries can reduce costs and improve selection. In post-conflict times, unified registries can be used to quickly identify the most suffering population and expand coverage by adjusting eligibility criteria (Ovadiya et al. 2015). In severely destroyed areas and in emergency situations, it might be hard to rely on PMT indicators because they are often based on household assets, which may have been affected by conflict. Flexibility, simplicity and transparency should be indispensable elements of any selection process in conflict-affected areas.

Table 9. Advantages of specific selection methods in post-conflict contexts.

CATEGORICAL	GEOGRAPHICAL	COMMUNITY-BASED/ PARTICIPATORY SELECTION	SELF-SELECTION
Easy to target transfers to the most suffering groups like female-headed households, widows, orphaned children, disabled people, veterans and ex-combatants.	Easy to target areas worst affected by conflict or politically unstable regions. The methods can be combined with others to address refugees, IDPs and split households.	Transparent and non-politicised intra-community selection can improve social capital and mutual insurance.	Public works provide short-term jobs and enhance investments in infrastructure reconstruction.

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European  
Commission

**Operational**

**Note No 3**

*Stakeholders*

May 2019

**SPaN**

Supporting people through crisis



*Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus*

DEVCO  
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NEAR



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# Introduction

This is one of a series of guidance notes for EU practitioners and their partners working at the intersection of social protection and humanitarian response. It explores how social protection can be provided across the humanitarian-development nexus with a specific focus on stakeholders that deliver social protection in both contexts. The note aims to be straightforward and provide practical and operational guidance rather than focus on the theoretical frameworks that underpin working across the humanitarian-development nexus or the 'nitty gritty' of specific, individual programme design (covered by other documents listed under references and resources, below. Note also EC 2018a, Section D3. 'Stakeholders').

Users of the guidance – staff working in EU delegations in developing and fragile / conflict-affected countries but also those in ECHO, DEVCO and NEAR operational desks and EU Member State (MS) practitioners – are increasingly challenged to respond to growing interest in routing humanitarian responses through social protection in order to more quickly, effectively and efficiently meet basic needs following a shock or disaster. At present there is evidence that using social protection can be faster, more efficient and efficient but this evidence base covers a limited set of country and programme contexts. Furthermore, trade-offs between humanitarian and development objectives are common and it is recognised, especially by practitioners on the ground, that using social protection for shock response is unlikely to be sufficient alone, and should be one part of a broader response. Before shocks happen, social protection is and can be used to reduce people's exposure to and mitigate the worst impacts of crises – essentially, social protection builds the resilience of poor and vulnerable households.

The Operational Note aims to bring staff up to speed on the issue, help them acquire an understanding of the fundamentals (the rationale for deploying social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus, the main opportunities and challenges in seeking to do this, and the principles that might underpin policy and practical responses), and better equip them to tackle specific operational obstacles and barriers.

In order to do so, this note outlines the circumstances in which social protection can be realised across the humanitarian-development nexus (from here on in, 'SPaN') with a specific focus on the incentives, goals, roles and responsibilities, and coordination of different stakeholders. Across the globe and a range of different national contexts, there are many different constellations of stakeholder engagement in SPaN – with varying combinations of government ministries and departments, security and law enforcement organisations, donor agencies, NGOs and CSOs, and private sector actors' engagement. The note will map out these constellations, identify which might be more or less successful in different circumstances, and suggest what promising actions and forms of coordination might support stronger SPaN.

The note begins by outlining the emerging interest in Social Protection across the Humanitarian – Development Nexus and identifying the core focus of the note, namely, how EU and EU MS staff might work together on social protection in situations of crisis and what sorts of 'ways of working' might produce the best results. It then identifies some of the operational challenges in relation to stakeholder roles, responsibilities and coordination that emerge for practitioners seeking to deliver SPaN. The paper then provides practical guidance by demonstrating the lessons learned and promising practices from available case study evidence. Practical tips to support practitioners navigate specific challenging situations (for example when the state is party to a conflict, or has no capacity to respond to a disaster) are interspersed throughout. Outstanding knowledge gaps and questions about stakeholder roles, responsibilities and coordination that need addressing in order to improve SPaN are assessed, before concluding with some underpinning principles and recommendations that can provide an organising framework for future policies and practice.

## —1—

# Stakeholders for Social Protection across the Humanitarian- Development Nexus: What's the issue?

**In the past five years, global consensus has emerged that tackling the world's greatest challenges will require coordinated action by stakeholders working on poverty reduction and development, humanitarian responses, climate change and on building peaceful and stable societies (Box 1).** This consensus is echoed at a European level with Council of the European Union conclusions on 'Operationalising the humanitarian-development nexus' (19 May 2017) welcoming cooperation between EU humanitarian and development actors. The contribution of SPaN to these broad global partnership aims also raises significant and challenging practical and operational questions about the roles, responsibilities and coordination of a multiplicity of stakeholders working on social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus:

*Box 1: The importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships – a global consensus*

The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) include an explicit focus on revitalising the global partnership for sustainable development ([Goal 17](#)) noting that: 'A successful sustainable development agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society. These inclusive partnerships built upon principles and values, a shared vision, and shared goals that place people and the planet at the centre, are needed at the global, regional, national and local level'.



In relation to stakeholders, the [Sendai Framework](#) highlights the need for: the strengthening of disaster risk governance (including national platforms); accountability for disaster risk management; preparedness to 'Build Back Better'; recognition of stakeholders and their roles; and strengthening of international cooperation and global partnership.



Among the commitments made at the [World Humanitarian Summit \(WHS\)](#) in 2016 are a number of shifts in relation to stakeholders, including: developing solutions jointly with affected people; reinforcing (rather than replacing) national and local systems; transcending humanitarian-development divides; and investing in local capacities.

**First, although it is clear that humanitarian and development worlds are moving closer together for a number of reasons (see Box 2), there remain some substantial differences between the two sets of stakeholders that have implications for coordination of actors.** In particular, while the primary mantra in social protection is 'government-owned, government-driven', the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality can be at odds with working in partnership with governments. Partnerships between governments and humanitarian agencies are not impossible but they can be very difficult in practice. Conversely, choices at the national level about social protection – where it is targeted and to which people – are inherently political. So, notwithstanding the commitments made at WHS to reinforce rather than replace national and local systems, bringing humanitarian agencies and governments together can be especially challenging.

*Box 2: The convergence of humanitarian and development policies and practices*

The sharp division between humanitarian and development responses is increasingly blurring.

- Emergencies have become more protracted, some two thirds of international humanitarian assistance beneficiaries receive support for the long term (EC 2018a) and OCHA notes that 9 years is the average length of a humanitarian appeal.
- The growing use of cash transfers (rather than food transfers) in emergencies has brought greater alignment between the instruments of choice in humanitarian response and social protection.
- The focus of humanitarian action has for some time been on saving lives AND saving livelihoods and supporting recovery (particularly using cash or food-for-work programmes) while those working on social protection increasingly seek to be more responsive in the face of rapid-onset shocks.

**Second, situations of crisis present particular operational challenges.** The 'map' of stakeholders in crisis contexts can be opaque or difficult to decipher and it can change rapidly. This means that the most appropriate and effective distribution of roles and responsibilities delivering SPaN, the incentives of stakeholders and the best forms of coordination can also change very rapidly too. Furthermore, in many fragile and conflict-affected situations there may be stakeholders who are direct participants in the conflict (governments, armed wings of political parties, and security and justice organisations in particular), states may be 'predatory' or have weak capacity, and insurgents may be the first source of informal social protection at the local level. This raises challenges for humanitarian and development practitioners. Also, in post-conflict situations, there is often a perceived concern that the continued presence of humanitarian actors, especially NGOs, crowds out state building and undermines efforts to strengthen both state legitimacy and state capacity.

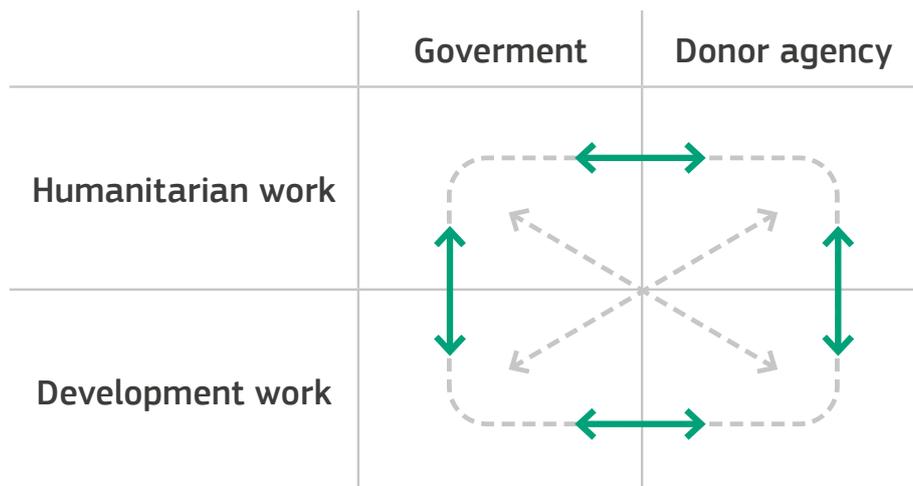
**Third, the technical and financing environment is challenging.** Competition for scarce funding and resources between humanitarian and development divisions – within governments, within donor agencies and within NGOs, and can lessen the incentive to cooperate and coordinate. Furthermore, information systems are often weak – providing poor-quality data about the needs of vulnerable people – and are poorly coordinated or difficult to share across organisations. As a result, '*most cash-based assistance for disaster-affected populations ... [continues to be] implemented by international organizations, often without government participation*' (Doocy and Tappis 2016: p. 58-59).

**Fourth, the geographical overlap between humanitarian and development social protection is not as widespread as is often assumed.** The EU evaluation of the use of different transfer modalities finds that national social protection or safety net systems are found in only a subset of ECHO's operational contexts and of a limited sample of ten countries where ECHO works on cash and vouchers, a third did not have national social protection programmes (Maunder et al. 2016). Where national programmes and systems do exist, the extent to which they are taken into account when planning is limited. The evaluation found that response proposals from ECHO's implementing partners in Ethiopia, Philippines and Kenya gave little consideration to national social protection systems in their design, particularly in the latter two cases.

**Fifth, while the longevity of many humanitarian appeals and actions is increasingly recognised, there remain substantial differences between humanitarian and developmental social protection that relate to timelines.** Timelines have a strong influence on programme design features. For example, a large share of social protection programmes are provided conditional on certain behaviours on the part of beneficiaries – enrolling their children in school, attendance at pre- or post-natal clinics, and inoculation of infants. Such conditionalities are rare in humanitarian response, where the priority is preventing the depletion of human capital rather than on building it. In practice, this means that, even in countries with substantial national social protection systems, the form and functions of the programme may not align well with humanitarian responses.

Overall, the solution to these challenges is, as FAO (2016, p. 16) note, *‘not simply a technocratic process of bringing together humanitarian and development instruments but involves reconciling fundamental differences’*. This includes differences between organisations that may have starkly different attitudes regarding equality and inclusion. Furthermore, this reconciliation is required across a complex web of relationships. Notwithstanding Gentilini et al.’s (2018: p. 2) assertion that *‘the interaction between international and national actors can be complex’*, Figure 1 provides a reduced view of that web of relationships and highlights ways in which humanitarian and development actors connect with one another. Limiting the stakeholders to government and donor agencies only, the figure highlights how, for example, development staff in donor agencies work with humanitarian staff in their own organisations and with development staff in partner governments. Similarly, humanitarian actors in government work both with humanitarians in donor agencies and with development actors in their own governments. International humanitarian agencies often have limited relationships and engagement with national governments: very little international humanitarian assistance (less than one-fortieth) is channelled through national governments (Gentilini et al. 2018 and Development Initiatives 2018) and *‘short funding horizons and limited ability to engage with governments, give ECHO [for example] a comparative disadvantage in directly supporting [national social protection] systems’* (Maunder et al. 2016: p. 28). As the figure shows, even if the horizontal and vertical connections are strong, they do not create a continuous whole and diagonal connections are weak, at best, and more often absent. The figure gets us to the root of the problem: **effective coordination for SPaN requires stakeholders to move beyond their existing ways of working, acknowledge wider goals and incentives and build new partnerships.** How can this be done? The next section draws on evidence from practical experience to identify promising practices from which transferable lessons can be applied and tested in other contexts.

Figure 1: Reduced stakeholder model across government and donor agencies



## —2—

# Lessons from positive experiences in crisis contexts

## A multiplicity of stakeholders

The operational challenges faced in working on social protection across the nexus are present in many countries, but various positive experiences have emerged in recent years that show where progress might be made. The primary lesson from across a range of countries and contexts is that effective programming across the nexus requires the engagement of a broad range of stakeholders including national and local governments, international donor agencies, international and local NGOs, CSOs and communities, and the private sector. Specific configurations of these various actors vary between contexts – depending on:

- the type of emergency (e.g. rapid or slow-onset, small or large number of people affected, short-term or protracted);
- the needs in specific sectors (health, shelter, education, water and sanitation, etc);
- the capacities of different actors/institutions (for example, do government departments have existing registries of poor and vulnerable households, or e-payment systems); and
- the extent and types of existing systems and procedures in place.

Two, contrasting examples are instructive:

In Ethiopia, systems are in place to expand the main social protection programme (the Productive Safety Net Programme – PSNP). In this case, the emergency tends to be associated with drought and this allows pre-positioned resources to be deployed to enable an increase in the transfers paid or the duration for which households receive support, and allows additional caseload of beneficiaries to be added temporarily to the programme. A substantial share of humanitarian response can be routed through the PSNP and depends on engagement between government, donor and NGO actors – including the provision of early warning data. Because PSNP is targeted based on food gaps in households, there are substantial overlaps between its beneficiaries and households experiencing drought.

In contrast, in Nepal, following the 2015 earthquake, the inclusion of social protection expertise in the emergency response was relatively modest. An emergency cash transfer top-up was provided some months after the earthquake to households already registered and receiving social protection. However, because the existing programmes target households primarily on the basis of demographic and social categories (age, ethnicity, disability) rather than poverty or vulnerability to disasters, they were less well placed to reach those most affected by the earthquake than other actions. The transfer also came too late to support immediate needs. Far greater emphasis was placed on support unrelated to the existing social protection system such as search and rescue, food, shelter and health and, as a result, a rather different configuration of actors emerged compared to Ethiopia.

### REFLECTION:

**A wide range of stakeholder participation is required to work across the humanitarian and development spheres but there is no single model – the configuration of stakeholders depends on the specific nature of the emergency, and of existing programmes (especially their targeting), systems and capacities.**

## Coordinating across a multiplicity of stakeholders

Statements about the importance of coordination of stakeholders are common in work on social protection in both the humanitarian and development spheres; for example, the Sendai Framework notes that working across disaster risk mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery requires *'coordination mechanisms within and across sectors and with relevant stakeholders at all levels, and it requires the full engagement of all state institutions of an executive and legislative nature at national and local levels and a clear articulation of responsibilities across public and private stakeholders, including business and academia'* (UNISDR 2015, p. 13). However, there is far less evidence about what the most promising mechanisms and systems for coordination are. A systematic review of cash-based responses in humanitarian situations found that despite the many studies finding coordination to be a key factor contributing to or hindering implementation of cash-based approaches, *'none of the studies ... provided evidence of what effective or ineffective coordination looks like'* (Doocy and Tappis 2016: p. 59).

Coordination is required at a number of different levels (global, national and local) and between numerous sectors. The risk is that there are simply too many actors to coordinate with in meaningful, constructive and effective ways. As Doocy and Tappis (2016: p. 59) note *'The importance of coordination is not unique to cash based approaches [in humanitarian situations], but challenges may be greater due to the fact that humanitarian coordination mechanisms are structured around sectors of intervention (including health, shelter, education) and cash can be used for many purposes (Ali, 2005; Aysan, 2008; Crisp, 2010; DiPetro, 2011; Dunn, 2011)*. Existing national social protection systems also have strong linkages into other sectors, creating a further set of potential development stakeholders – health, education, nutrition, infrastructure, livelihoods.

Again, the precise configurations depend on the specifics of local contexts but there are some emerging good practices from various locations – especially the identification of sectoral focal points and coordination leads in government agencies. The articulation of frameworks – that stakeholders can share and align to – is viewed as particularly important, especially where stakeholders are required to engage with new actors, such as the private sector, that have not traditionally been partners in social protection delivery. For Somalia, the SPaN Case Study 17 identifies the prerequisite steps for a long term framework and strategic plan and suggests that agreeing shared standard operating procedures and generating a *'convergence of policies and standards agreed between donors and government will lead to a more predictable and effective approach operating at scale'*. It also argues that a *'further prerequisite to developing a more coherent approach is improved collective donor coherence and capacity, built through convening a Donor Working Group'* (EC 2018b, p. 4).

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### REFLECTION:

**In order that it does not become overwhelming, coordination of a broad range of stakeholders requires strong focal points, particularly in governments, shared procedures and clear policy frameworks that stakeholders can anchor to.**

## National governments at the centre – in principle and in practice

One area in which there is common agreement is that national governments should provide a focal point for coordination, and should lead stakeholders in delivering social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus. This principle is backed up by many commitments, for example, in the WHS to reinforce rather than replace national processes. In practice, weak government ownership and leadership capacity is proving difficult – with a number of situations in which it may be challenging to uphold these principles, but nonetheless should be strived to be achieved.

Where there is limited government capacity, and in the absence of substantial progress being made to strengthen national and local government systems for social protection delivery, it may be necessary to seek out alternatives to delivering directly through government. Gentilini et al. (2018) draw on the example of the Ebola crisis in Liberia to argue that in countries with only fledgling national social protection capacity, there are limited opportunities to use local systems in a meaningful way.

Also important, particularly in countries with active violent conflict, is a plan for moving from ‘government-led but not government-implemented’ humanitarian programmes, towards ‘government-owned, financed and implemented’ social protection in the long term. In Somalia, for example, the SPaN Case Study 17 argues that effective donor coordination can provide ‘*Gains in effective planning, financing and coordination of a sustainable social assistance programme*’ and that working ‘*safety net programme in the short-term paving the way to a social protection approach in the long term*’ (EU 2018b, p.3)

**A state is predatory** when those in power pursue policies that seek to maintain the political status quo rather than achieve economic development, poverty reduction and peace. (See Robinson’s 2001 paper, ‘What makes a state predatory?’)

There are also often circumstances where international humanitarian donor capacity in country may be limited or where it cannot work directly with government – either because the government is predatory, or because it is a party to violent conflict. In Yemen, the World Bank operates an Emergency Crisis Response Project (ECRP) but, because of the severely restricted World Bank presence in country, it works through the Yemen Social Fund for Development (SFD)’s operational apparatus allowing it to deliver in a broad range of geographical locations including those controlled by Houthi groups. In Yemen, the importance of having a local implementing partner that is viewed as relatively objective, neutral and impartial and with a good knowledge of the local community is viewed as paramount to the delivery of both long-term and emergency public works programming (Al-Iryani et al. 2015).



## PRACTICAL TIP

***There are inherent trade-offs between building state capacity and strengthening state legitimacy through social protection.*** In conflict-affected situations where state **capacity** is the priority, it is important to deliver through government. Where state **legitimacy** is most important, the focus should be on high quality social protection delivery rather than delivering everything through the government.

Following a conflict, there is often substantial pressure on international humanitarian agencies to make way, borne of a concern that their continued presence ‘crowds out’ state building – especially the capacity and legitimacy of the state. In relation to state capacity, as noted in the 2018 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, there is still substantial work needed by international humanitarian agencies to ensure they contribute to building state capacity to sustainably deliver humanitarian assistance rather than crowding it out. SPaN Case Study 17 on Somalia highlights the tension effectively: ‘While channelling resources for social protection through [sic.] Government system might potentially improve state systems, delivery by international implementing partners is considered a lower risk. However, this does little to build capacity in Somali institutions, causes resentment and does not account for the risks and long-term effectiveness of not funding through Somali channels’ (EC 2018b, p.3).

However, regarding state legitimacy, emerging evidence from the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC) exploring livelihoods, service delivery and social protection in fragile and conflict-affected countries suggests some counterintuitive lessons. Rather than crowding out the germination of state legitimacy, SLRC find that the delivery of services and social protection by non-state providers has an inconsistent and negligible impact on it. SLRC’s longitudinal panel data from five conflict-affected areas in DRC, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Uganda shows that delivering social protection and other services such as health, education and water through non-state providers does not undermine people’s perceptions of their governments. At the same time, problems with service delivery can have a very negative effect on people’s perceptions of governments, suggesting that the quality of services does matter. Thus, rather than automatically seeking to deliver social protection through government apparatus in order to achieve state legitimacy, the SLRC argue that in situations of fragility and conflict, the priority should be the quality of social protection delivery (transfers made in a reliable, timely manner, and at levels that can make a meaningful difference to people’s lives). It is how well social protection is delivered, rather than who delivers it, that really matters improving people’s perceptions of the state. Prioritising quality can still allow for a stewardship role to be played by governments but offers operational space for other actors with greater capacity to provide high quality services.

*(Nixon and Mallett 2012, Slater and Mallett 2017)*

In an example from the Central African Republic (CAR), the Agence Francaise de Developpement (AFD) has sought to expand capacity strengthening and professional training project work outside the capital, Bangui, and into remote rural areas by working through AGETIP-CAF – a quasi-parastatal agency delivering public works that has a long standing presence throughout the country.

The experiences of the World Bank working with AGETIP-CAF also highlight how, where international agencies find it difficult to maintain a presence in country, new ways of contracting may be appropriate. In CAR, the World Bank works through ‘force accounts’ which allow more flexible contracting arrangements – especially where it is not clear initially what the precise quantity of work will be. For small infrastructure projects delivered through public works programmes, for example, the works may be small and scattered. Force accounts can make it easier to work through local partners with greater flexibility, but require high levels of trust, performance measures focused on outcomes rather than output, and strong mechanisms for accountability between donors and local NGOs and CSOs.

**PRACTICAL TIP**

***Use tripartite stakeholder configurations where national capacity or international agency presence are limited.***

There are alternatives to delivering through government where there is limited capacity. Gentilini et al. (2018) suggest that new forms of contracting and partnership arrangements – for example the World Bank and the UN, or tripartite arrangements between bilateral and multilateral agencies plus government – might prove useful though they also note the importance of further codifying, adapting and institutionalising these procedures.

An example of this tripartite is found in Yemen. Since March 2015, World Bank operations in Yemen operated under OP 7.30 (the policy relating to Dealing with de facto Governments) and all disbursements and all missions to the Republic of Yemen were suspended and staff evacuated. To maintain operations, the World Bank worked through UNDP – which oversaw project implementation on its behalf on the ground and transferred funds received from the World Bank to the executors – the Yemen Social Fund for Development (SFD) and the Public Works Program (PWP). Key for international agencies is the fact that the SFD is a public institution, albeit with substantial autonomy from government, and with whom international agencies have worked for more than two decades, primarily delivering social protection interventions.

**REFLECTION:**

**Government ownership and leadership of SPaN should be the first port of call, but there are other options where governments have limited capacity or are predatory.**

## Involving citizens and CSOs – finding the right level of participation

The importance of people in local communities as stakeholders is increasingly recognised. However, although there has been substantial attention paid to participation, consultation and accountability where social protection is delivered in development settings, there is far less work on participation and consultation in humanitarian situations.

*‘engage with relevant stakeholders, including women, children and youth, persons with disabilities, poor people, migrants, indigenous peoples, volunteers, the community of practitioners and older persons in the design and implementation of policies, plans and standards’*

*(UNISDR 2015, p.10).*

In emergency contexts, the time pressure to save lives is often assumed to be at odds with the time frames over which effective consultation and participation in decision-making can take place. But what is realistic and useful? In practice (and given that such a large share of humanitarian response takes place in the long term), Oxfam and Concern suggest that although ‘in-depth consultation can be constrained in a rapid on-set emergency, in repeated programmes ... it should be possible to consult at a more meaningful level’ (Oxfam and Concern, 2011, p. 34). Evidence from operations suggests that seeking to reach Rung 3 (informing) on a ladder of participation (Figure 2) by more effectively communicating information about humanitarian transfers can make a substantial difference to the effectiveness of social protection in rapid onset emergency contexts. ‘Transparency and communication with beneficiaries and other stakeholders, including open discussion of timelines and plans for discontinuation of interventions is important in all settings. Trade-offs between potential benefits and consequences of community engagement in targeting and implementation may be important to consider on a case by case basis’ (Doocy and Tappis 2016: 57).

Opportunities to move further up the ladder depend on bringing together stakeholders well in advance of a disaster or crisis so that they can have a say in decision-making but there are good examples of how this contributes to better programme outcomes. For example, in Concern's cash transfer following election violence in Kenya, involving the community in targeting decisions was found to be key to the programme's success (MacAuslan, 2010).

Figure 2: The ladder of participation

Source: Adapted from Arnstein (1969) from 'The Citizen's Handbook'



#### REFLECTION:

the protracted nature of many humanitarian responses allows for local level stakeholders, including communities themselves, to be far more engaged in planning, managing and implementing social protection transfers.

The lack of ownership by local partners is not simply confined to programmes led by national governments or international humanitarian agencies. While international NGOs are often credited with doing more than other international actors to empower people locally, this does not appear to translate to emergency social protection. Experiences with Concern and Oxfam emergency cash programmes in Indonesia, Kenya and Zimbabwe suggests that local partners are rarely deployed as co-managers but rather implement the plans of international experts. This is despite the strong local knowledge and an understanding of local gender issues among local actors. The way the agencies set up, conceptualised and implemented the emergency CTs was viewed as 'disempowering' for the partners. This lack of engagement of local partners trickled down to the community. Fieldwork by Concern and Oxfam found that *'there was no sense of community participation in, ownership of, or even real understanding of the programme among either recipients of cash or the village leadership that were interviewed. This led to a general sense of disempowerment and community jealousy with regards to the intervention'* (Oxfam/Concern Worldwide 2011, p. 33).

The emphasis, particularly in WHS and the Sendai Framework, on both the prevention of humanitarian emergencies and preparedness for them, and on recovery and 'building back better' may provide an entry point for greater engagement of local actors and communities. This engagement has multiple benefits, not least the reduction of corruption. Lessons from the tsunami response in Aceh, show that *'if beneficiary participation and transparency in decision-making are promoted in the program, corruption risks are minimized. This includes public meeting, multiple signatories, and transparency boards in public locations providing grant information'* (Doocy 2008).

#### REFLECTION:

Actions both before and after humanitarian emergencies, such as disaster prevention and preparedness, and recovery activities, are more effective when there is strong involvement of local partners and communities.

## The engagement of stakeholders to ensure gender-aware responses in SPaN

*‘Women and their participation are critical to effectively managing disaster risk and designing, resourcing and implementing gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes; and adequate capacity building measures need to be taken to empower women for preparedness as well as to build their capacity to secure alternate means of livelihood in post-disaster situations’*

(UNISDR 2015: p.23)

It is important to delve more deeply into the engage of communities as stakeholders in SPaN to ensure that specific vulnerable groups are included. A number of stakeholders can play key roles in ensuring that social protection delivered across the humanitarian-development nexus is populated with gender-aware responses.

Concern and Oxfam’s ‘Walking the Walk’ Report (2011) assesses experiences with emergency cash transfer programming in a number of countries and highlights the importance of using local partners in the design and implementation phases to ensure that programmes are gender aware and gender responsive. At the design phase they argue that local partners can ground and supplement gender analyses that are often carried out using the universally applied models and metrics of international agencies and ensure the active participation of women in design. During implementation local actors can support targeting and communications. The report notes that there was some involvement of local partners in Kenya and Indonesia, but that more could be done to ensure a gender-aware design.

### REFLECTION:

**Local women’s organisations and women’s ministry have a key role to play as stakeholders encouraging women’s participation in programme design, planning, distribution and ongoing management.**

## Investing in systems in advance

The contrast between drought response in Ethiopia and earthquake response in Nepal highlighted above provide salient lessons about the importance of investing in systems in advance. The limited role of expanded social protection in Nepal following the 2015 earthquake, does not mean that humanitarian responses can only be delivered through existing social protection systems where the shock is slow onset, but it does highlight the importance of having resources pre-positioned, procedures in place, and roles of specific actors defined before a shock occurs. There is broad agreement from a range of countries and contexts that ‘the time required to set up systems for delivery of cash at scale should not be underestimated’ (Doocy and Tappis 2016: p. 58). Where programmes have been successful in transferring international humanitarian assistance onto national social protection systems they have a number of features: first, they are usually long-standing, well-established systems and programmes that deliver the basics well; second, they have often had a strong donor support for the design and resourcing of adaptive and flexible elements; and, third, they have established registries of poor and vulnerable beneficiaries.

For some actors, particularly those in the humanitarian sector, it can be difficult to prioritise these sorts of investments and activities – especially with other pressing priorities. However, the increasing prevalence of climate change-related shocks and the increasingly protracted nature of crisis suggests that establishing and institutionalising stakeholder partnerships well in advance of a shock is now as important as shock response itself.

### REFLECTION:

**Delivering social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus requires investments to resource adaptive and flexible social protection, including the institutionalisation of stakeholder roles, responsibilities and delivery systems.**

## Delivering SPaN across borders

A core challenge for delivering social protection in crisis is how to support households that have been displaced across international borders. While this may occur following a natural disaster, in practice, it is far more common in situations of violent conflict, especially where the government is a party to the conflict. Displacement – such as South Sudanese refugees in Uganda, Afghans in Pakistan, and Syrians into Turkey and Jordan – is increasingly protracted (i.e. lasting 5 years or more).

The challenges are exemplified in Lebanon where many millions of Syrian refugees (the Lebanese Government stopped its official count when it reached one million) have fled, seeking to escape violent conflict in their home towns and villages. SPaN Case Study 18 articulates the challenge as follows: while *'Lebanese communities sympathise with the plight of refugees, their tolerance is strained by rising poverty and a worsening labour market which impedes Lebanon's capacity to host and absorb Syrians. While refugees are not segregated within camps, support for refugees and host communities operates through separate systems, and refugees and host populations receive uneven assistance. Perceptions of unfairness in the way 'others' are treated, and between those selected and excluded by an inaccurate targeting approach which uses a cut-off based on a one-time scoring of households' assets and means, give rise to socio-economic tensions and political unease'* (EC 2018c, p. 1).

Further challenges in Lebanon which are common elsewhere include coordination among donors providing humanitarian assistance, the reluctance on the part of some donors to support social protection in a relatively developed country, and a lack of portability of support from any existing programmes in the country of origin. Global conventions and commitments on social protection (including those in the SDGs) do little to help, particularly because the language in the [Social Protection Floor](#) focuses on entitlements as prescribed in national law which, in turn, means support for citizens rather than refugees.



### PRACTICAL TIP

***Delivering social protection to those displaced across international borders depends on harmonising international assistance with national social protection entitlements.***

The steps under way in Lebanon show how progress might be made towards delivering social protection in contexts of mass displacement across borders. On the humanitarian side, there have been substantial efforts to provide a single payment mechanism for multi-purpose cash transfers. These will continue alongside donor-supported efforts to extend coverage of Lebanon's existing programmes – the National Poverty Targeting Programme – which provides vouchers to unemployed citizens. 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.

## —3—

## Knowledge gaps and outstanding questions

Much of the current knowledge about stakeholders for delivering social protection across the humanitarian-nexus focuses primarily on using existing social protection systems to deliver an emergency humanitarian response. But the relationship is not one-way and there are outstanding questions about how far humanitarian actors can and should contribute to using social protection to build resilience in advance of an emergency. There is a growing evidence base on how social protection can help recipient households reduce their exposure to a hazard or shock, or buffer themselves against its worst impacts, but the roles of humanitarian actors in supporting this process is far less clearly articulated and is a key gap in knowledge to support effective policies and programming.

There is also a limited knowledge base to support decisions about when it is appropriate and how to harmonise social protection for refugees and poor and vulnerable households in host communities. This depends on: the scale of displacement and the extent to which it is protracted; the coverage, features of existing social protection in the host country; the capacity and willingness of host governments to absorb a refugee caseload into existing programmes, and the willingness of international donor agencies to resource this. Experience is growing – in Uganda, Pakistan, Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon – but more evidence is need to help decision-makers better understand the pros and cons of various options.

## —4—

# Principles, recommendations and conclusions

Various recommendations flow directly from the lessons outlined above, but there are further principles and recommendations that are worth stressing in conclusion:

**No one size fits all** – Disasters take many forms – ‘small-scale and large-scale, frequent and infrequent, sudden and slow-onset disasters caused by natural or man-made hazards, as well as related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks’ (UNISDR 2015, p. 11) — and there are multiple hazards across multiple sectors. Responses will be successful only when they identify appropriate configurations of stakeholders for different types of risks, different contexts and different levels of capacity among stakeholders.

**Build on what is already there, rather than crowding out or creating parallel systems.** The principle of ‘government-owned, government-implemented’ should always provide a starting point but it should be recognised that there are many circumstances (particularly in cases of violent conflict) where alternative configurations of stakeholders, perhaps without government at the centre, are required.

**Objectively assess the capabilities and limitations of all actors** (and interrogate our perceptions about them). The international humanitarian sector in particular appears to mistrust government systems – especially their capacity and accountability. Some of this may be legitimate and some may represent a reluctance to work in new ways with new partners, or a ‘corporate culture and a common assumption and conviction that humanitarian assistance delivers better and faster than government systems’ (EU Reference Document 2018, p.29). A key example is the acceptance by international humanitarian agencies of paying management costs to the UN where it acts as an implementing partner, but not to accept paying relatively similar management fees to many national governments in crisis-affected countries.

**Work towards capacity strengthening at national level** as a key priority and responsibility of all international actors, especially humanitarian actors. As the Sendai Framework notes, international actors can play a critical role ‘in addressing economic disparity and disparity in technological innovation and capacity among countries, it is crucial to enhance technology transfer, involving a process of enabling and facilitating flows of skill, knowledge, ideas, know-how and technology from developed to developing countries’.

**Work towards shared long-term goals by establishing shared ways of working (standard operating procedures) in the shorter term** – building effective delivery systems in partnership (Gentilini et al. 2018) by sharing information, beneficiary selection, and payment systems and other operational elements goes a substantial way towards attaining long-term coherence in policy goals and activities and building national capacities.

**Incorporate the principles of adaptive programming into operations** – in particular, to reflect that the configurations of stakeholders and implementing partners may change rapidly and be difficult to keep track of. This means inserting opportunities for reflection in the programme cycle, assessing whether the theory of change underpinning the action still holds, and revising roles and responsibilities accordingly.

**Put the principles of non-competition among stakeholders centre stage in social protection**, especially among international development agencies. While working collaboratively rather than competitively characterises many NGOs and humanitarian actors, at present, agencies working on social protection are highly competitive – strongly advocating for their preferred instruments (e.g. categorically targeted versus poverty targeted programmes, or conditional versus unconditional programmes).

**Document lessons (both successes and failures) and share knowledge** more widely between all stakeholders. The, on-the-ground, situations in which stakeholders seek to operationalise the delivery of social protection across the humanitarian-development is characterised by inconsistencies and contradictions. In fragile and conflict-affected situations in particular, it is not the case that ‘all good things go together’ (Zaum et al. 2015). As a result there are trade-offs that stakeholders must navigate together – for example, between the best way of delivering social protection to support state capacity versus state legitimacy – and, realistically, between the principles and recommendations presented here. Ultimately, making decisions about the configurations of stakeholders that will best contribute to delivering social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus depends on navigating these trade-offs. And doing so effectively depends as much on understanding the social, political, cultural and economic context as it does on technical knowledge about social protection itself.

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European  
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**Operational**

**Note No 4**

*Operations*

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**SPaN**

Supporting people through crisis



*Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus*

DEVCO  
ECHO  
NEAR



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# Introduction

**The world is seeing some of the worst levels of violence and displacement, driven by political instability, conflict, complex emergencies, failed peace agreements and disasters.** The international humanitarian system delivers assistance and protection to more people than ever. Many countries requiring assistance are affected by multiple and compounding crises, such as conflict, natural disasters and forced displacement, while crises are lasting longer: some 80 per cent of the humanitarian crises where DG ECHO works are lasting for five years or more. There is also increasing recognition of the need to protect development gains achieved during regular times from erosion by recurrent and predictable shocks and stresses.

**Traditional models of humanitarian and development assistance are challenged by such trends. Frequent, complex and protracted crises are placing extreme demands on the humanitarian system.** Providing short-term humanitarian support to complex, long-term challenges compromises the impact of assistance. Meanwhile, traditional development-oriented social protection approaches face challenges in scaling up, operating effectively, and adapting to or addressing the shocks and vulnerabilities found in fragile, conflict-affected and displacement contexts to better complement emergency assistance. New approaches are needed to better address the needs of vulnerable populations living in such contexts and help ensure they are not left behind.

**Against this background, international commitments to foster greater collaboration and coherence across the humanitarian-development nexus have strengthened.** Social protection and humanitarian assistance, particularly cash-based modalities, offer opportunities for common programming due to their prevalence, coverage and well-established impacts, including in fragile and conflict-affected and displacement situations and the similarities in design and operations between some humanitarian and social protection approaches.

**This operational note provides an overview of what fostering greater links between social protection and humanitarian assistance in fragile and conflict-affected and displacement contexts means in practice.** It explains why it is important to consider operations when fostering these linkages; key factors and considerations that guide operational decisions; underlying principles for success; key considerations, hints and tips at each stage of the delivery chain; requirements for coordination; and a checklist for mainstreaming operations considerations in the programme cycle. Case studies highlight operational challenges and promising practices. While the note is primarily based on experience and lessons from social transfers, the guidance is presented more generally and can be considered a sound basis for engaging with operational systems associated with other social protection instruments.

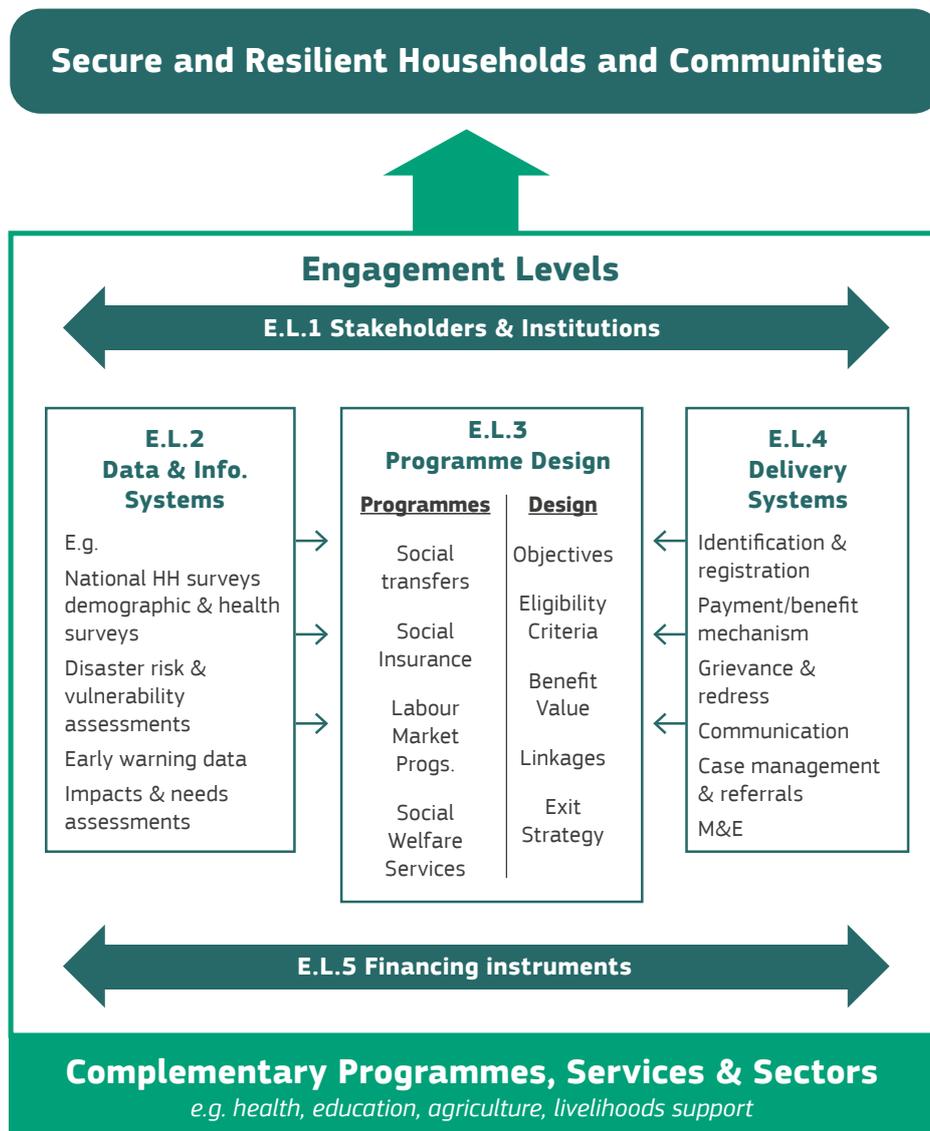
The note builds on the EU Reference Document '[Social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus: a game changer in supporting people through crises](#)' and is intended as a gateway to further resources. It is complemented by notes on social protection in contexts of fragility and conflict, and contexts of forced displacement. The target audience is European Commission practitioners in EU delegations and ECHO field offices as well as ECHO, DEVCO and NEAR operational desks and the note's purpose is to better equip them to address specific operational challenges. It also aims to be useful to practitioners from EU Member States, international and national agencies and national governments.



Social protection operations, or ‘delivery systems’, comprise the key business processes that enable the efficient and effective implementation of social protection policies and approaches. The implementation of social protection programmes (and especially social transfers) typically involves several administrative stages:

- communication,
- identification and registration,
- payment or benefit delivery,
- grievance and redress,
- case management,
- M&E

Figure 1: Levels of engagement with social protection in fragile and conflict-affected contexts



### Further resources

- **Social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus: a game changer in supporting people through crises**  
European Commission, provides information on different social protection instruments, and operational experiences of working with each. Annex 6 of the Reference Document lists additional online resources.
- **The Design and Management of Cash Transfer Programmes: An Overview**, Stephen Barrett and Stephen Kidd, KfW Development Bank Materials on Development Financing No. 3, 2015 [https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/PDF/Download-Center/Materialien/Nr.-3\\_Cash-transfer-programmes\\_EN.pdf](https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/PDF/Download-Center/Materialien/Nr.-3_Cash-transfer-programmes_EN.pdf)
- **Responding to shocks: considerations along the delivery chain**, Gabrielle Smith, Oxford Policy Management background paper for the World Bank (forthcoming).

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# Why is it important to engage with delivery systems?

**The EU Reference Document highlights that ‘the last decade has seen, on one hand, a considerable increase in the use of cash and vouchers in humanitarian assistance, and on the other hand, an expansion of social cash transfer schemes in developing countries as part of efforts towards integrated social protection systems’ and that ‘as a result, humanitarian and social protection actors have to deal with a set of common operational issues around cash transfer design and implementation, and links with other sectors and interventions’.**

These overlaps in delivery systems have been a major factor galvanising the interest of both communities to take forward this approach. Commonalities in operational processes provide concrete entry points for the two sectors to work together – they solidify how linkages between humanitarian approaches and social protection can be made in practice<sup>3</sup>. It is through sharing, developing and strengthening these common systems that several of the anticipated benefits from working with social protection in crisis contexts – such as reducing response times, avoiding duplications, strengthening national systems, and supporting sustainability and exit<sup>4</sup> – are expected to be leveraged. Humanitarian agencies set up temporary operational systems and processes, resulting in numerous parallel systems. These are time-consuming and costly to set up, lead to significant duplication of effort, have no added value beyond the period of the response and do not contribute to building national capacities. Where governments and/or their partners are seeking to strengthen social protection in humanitarian settings, this interest is being driven by expectations that doing so will reduce system fragmentation, improve the timeliness, predictability and efficiency of humanitarian response in the short term, and improve national capacities for addressing humanitarian and social protection needs in the longer term<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, emerging evidence indicates that beyond the intrinsic importance of such systems, this practical collaboration between stakeholders can be an important entry point for building relationships and confidence and ultimately catalysing broader collaboration across the nexus<sup>6</sup>.

At the same time, evidence shows that weak, or overstretched, delivery systems can undermine the achievement of programme objectives and increase exposure to protection risks<sup>7</sup>. Outcomes for crisis-affected populations will depend on the sound design and robust execution of these administrative processes and systems. This issue can be critical when providing social protection in humanitarian settings, where i) shocks can impact on the functioning of delivery systems; ii) existing operational processes are being used/adapted to meet additional needs; or iii) new systems and programmes are being designed and implemented in contexts of fragility.

## Further resources

- **Social protection and humanitarian actors**, Monique Pariat, Director-General, DG ECHO. <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/articles/social-protection-and-humanitarian-actors-qa-monique-pariat-director-general-echo>
- **Social protection as an instrument for emergency contexts**, Jean-Louis Ville, former acting Director of People and Peace Directorate, DG DEVCO. [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/node/119144\\_fi](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/node/119144_fi)
- **What role can social protection systems play in responding to humanitarian emergencies?** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=dHl38bb\\_cjs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=dHl38bb_cjs)

3 OPM (2018) Shock Responsive Social Protection Literature Review

4 See note on SP in FCA contexts for further details of the expected benefits from linking.

5 OPM (2018) Shock Responsive Social Protection: Synthesis Report; EU Concept Document

6 UNICEF (2017) Outcome Document from International Conference on Assistance in Fragile and Conflict-Affected and Forced Displacement Contexts

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# Engaging with delivery systems: Guidance for practitioners

## Factors and considerations that guide operational decisions

The **EU Reference Document** identifies several ways in which social protection can help bridge the humanitarian-development divide. These are not mutually exclusive and can be combined. Different approaches will be appropriate depending on the level of maturity of the social protection system, as well as the nature of the crisis and the fragility context. The approach, or approaches, selected and these contextual factors will all have a bearing on the extent and nature of the engagement with social protection delivery systems – how these will be used, adapted, built or strengthened. Key considerations when working with these approaches, and in these contexts, are summarised in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

Figure 2: Approaches to linking social protection and humanitarian action and the key considerations for engaging with delivery systems

APPROACH	OPTIONS <sup>8</sup>	USEFUL IN CONTEXTS OF...	ENGAGEMENT WITH DELIVERY SYSTEMS
<p><b>Adapting existing social protection programmes and systems during periods of fragility, conflict or forced displacement to better address, and respond to, the needs of crisis-affected populations.</b></p>	<p><b>Design tweaks:</b> adjustments to an existing, routine social protection programme to maintain the regular service in a crisis.</p> <p><b>Horizontal expansion:</b> temporarily include new, crisis-affected beneficiaries in an existing social protection programme.</p> <p><b>Vertical expansion:</b> temporarily increase the benefit value or duration of a benefit provided through an existing programme, for existing beneficiaries.</p> <p><b>Piggybacking:</b> elements of a programme's delivery system (e.g. beneficiary list, payment mechanism, communication system) are used to respond to a crisis, in a separately administered programme.</p>	<p><b>Intermediate/advanced maturity:</b> Government social protection has reasonable coverage and coherence, strong existing delivery systems and relatively clear institutional structures and mandates.</p>	<p><b>Guiding questions for decision makers:</b></p> <p>What is the operational performance of the day-to-day social protection programme(s) and its underlying processes?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are its processes enabling social protection to be effectively provided to people affected by crises?</li> <li>2. To what extent can these processes enable an effective response to needs caused by these crises?</li> <li>3. To what extent can they be amended, simplified, or otherwise supported, to enable them to be effectively used, and without undermining the operation of existing social protection schemes?</li> <li>4. Are there any alternative ways to meet the needs of crisis-affected populations and have these been compared?</li> </ol> <p><b>Considerations for success</b></p> <p>Success requires that existing processes and systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are sufficiently accurate, reliable and robust in normal times.</li> <li>• can continue to function, during or post disaster.</li> <li>• are suited to the realities and constraints of administering assistance in humanitarian settings or can be adapted to take these into account.</li> <li>• are accessible to humanitarian actors as well as national social protection actors.</li> <li>• (for shock response) have capacity to take on any additional tasks to administer humanitarian assistance.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Building new programmes during crises that include design and operational features to facilitate the transition of the programme or the caseload into a social protection system.</b></p>	<p>Alignment: humanitarian assistance is designed and delivered in a manner that can better meet the social protection needs of crisis-affected populations and potentially contribute to building future social protection systems. The ultimate aim is to transition eligible chronically poor and vulnerable households over to long-term government led systems. The approach may also be applicable as an interim measure for non-nationals prior to integration into national systems.</p>	<p><b>BASIC maturity:</b> social protection does not exist, is suspended, or is small-scale and fragmented, has limited coverage, unclear institutional structures, weak delivery systems.</p> <p><b>AND</b> refugee contexts where the aim is to eventually include the caseload within state services.</p>	<p><b>Guiding questions for decision makers:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the design of any social protection processes that are emerging or planned?</li> <li>2. Where are the main capacity gaps in relation to delivery systems?</li> <li>3. Is there potential to develop processes, and underlying systems and capacities, that can be taken on by government or contribute to building social protection in the longer term?</li> </ol> <p><b>Considerations for success:</b></p> <p>Success requires that any operational processes developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are informed by discussions with government and development partners.</li> <li>• are appropriate for the local context, including technological levels.</li> <li>• align with existing or emerging processes, where these are judged to be robust and appropriate to the context.</li> <li>• use, or collect, data that could inform subsequent national social protection systems.</li> <li>• may be suitable for sequencing with complementary interventions.</li> <li>• are transferrable to a government agency (with appropriate capacity support).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Building social protection programmes and systems during periods of stability, that are resilient to fragility, conflict and displacement.</b></p>	<p>Brings together humanitarian and development actors on long-term programmes to build the capacity of government staff and systems and extend, strengthen or maintain social protection, to enable its continued provision (and potentially also shock-responsiveness) for vulnerable populations during times of crisis.</p>	<p>ALL contexts – this forms the foundation for all the above.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b></p> <p>This underpins the above approaches.</p> <p>Investing in social protection systems in normal times, but with a humanitarian lens, can establish a system that is more suited to operating in and capable of meeting needs of those affected by crises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investing in social protection coverage in crisis-affected areas.</li> <li>• Building systems and processes that are designed with disasters in mind, and are resilient to impacts of disasters and continue to operate during crises.</li> <li>• Have flexibility in processes to enable continued access for affected populations during crises.</li> <li>• Incorporate processes that enable scaling up to meet new acute needs caused by crisis.</li> </ul>

**EXAMPLES:**

- ➔ *In Turkey, the condition for receipt of payments under the national conditional cash transfer for education is school attendance, verified through the integrated social assistance information system (ISAIS) which accesses data from the management information system of the national education ministry. When the EU adapted this programme for Syrian refugees, an interface between ISAIS and the management information system of the temporary education centres had to be built. This has improved linkages between, and management of, government services supporting refugees<sup>9</sup>.*
  
- ➔ *In Palestine, the EU and the World Bank supported capacity building of the national Cash Transfer Programme (CTP) including efforts to increase coverage, improve targeting and establish a management information system. Such measures have improved the ability of the emerging social protection system to provide support to households facing humanitarian emergency on account of the blockade. At the same time, WFP introduced a voucher programme for food assistance as a humanitarian response to high food prices. WFP aligned this voucher with the existing social protection processes used on the CTP and built the capacity of the Ministry of Social Development to implement the new electronic delivery processes associated with the voucher scheme. This programme is now partially managed by the ministry with technical support from WFP, enhancing the effectiveness of the CTP<sup>10</sup>.*

9 Maunder et al. (2018) 'Evaluation of the ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey, November 2016–February 2018'.  
10 Gentilini, Laughton & O'Brien (2018). Humanitarian Capital? Lessons on Better Connecting Humanitarian Assistance and Social Protection.

Figure 3: Linking social protection and humanitarian action in different emergency contexts – considerations for engagement with delivery systems

CONTEXT	POSSIBLE CHALLENGES IN ENGAGEMENT WITH DELIVERY SYSTEMS	PRACTICAL TIPS
<b>Fragility – insecurity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricted population movement due to conflict or government-imposed restrictions creates challenges for affected populations to access front-line offices and distribution points.</li> <li>• Restrictions for non-state actors and possibly government on accessing affected populations.</li> <li>• Conflict and insecurity create protection risks for those implementing and accessing administrative processes.</li> <li>• Government is implicated in the conflict, undermining humanitarian principles and meaning that donor funds cannot be transferred to government and/or government-owned and managed public services.</li> </ul>	<p>Assess the feasibility of and where appropriate promote the use of electronic transfers to distribute cash benefits, which can reduce protection risks for beneficiaries.</p> <p>Engage implementing partners (whether private sector or NGO/CBO) who are capable of operating and managing programme administration within the affected area (including good relationships with communities and strong mediation skills, and innovative approaches to working in these areas).</p> <p>Introduce additional monitoring-system checks and balances, according to best practices for remotely managed programmes (including employing third and fourth party monitors; leveraging digital technology; grievance and feedback mechanisms with hotline and social media channels).</p> <p>Engage with state bodies and their existing processes to the extent possible, to build capacities, involve them in programme decisions and continue or give active roles in implementation.</p> <p>Minimise its engagement in locations where this could risk escalating conflict, or in specific business processes in accordance with EU regulations. E.g. establish direct relationships with any private sector service providers involved in benefit distribution, for transfer of funds. Where these are not in place, map and identify such service providers.</p>
<b>Fragility – capacity</b>	<p>As social protection in many fragile and conflict-affected contexts is still at a nascent stage, capacity gaps in delivery systems will be more pronounced. This can contribute to fiduciary risk, bottlenecks in implementation and lack of accountability to affected populations.</p>	<p>Capacity assessment of relevant institutions (state as well as non-state actors) and any existing processes and systems to determine which can be effectively engaged with and where additional support is needed.</p> <p>Tailor the engagement with national delivery systems accordingly – it could be that government lead all processes; that some parallel processes are introduced; that funds or training are provided to augment capacity of systems to enable them to be used; or that parallel delivery systems are managed by implementing partners but designed with government and aligned with its needs, to build social protection systems.</p> <p>Ensure as much as possible that funding strategies include relevant technical assistance and finances to build capacity of staff and systems.</p>

<p><b>Fragility – legitimacy</b></p>	<p>While social protection may help build state legitimacy and contribute to peace and stability, where poorly designed or delivered it has the potential to exacerbate social tensions or undermine trust in the state. Every part of a social protection delivery system that people engage with will affect their experience of the programme and (by extension) their trust in the state, with potential to build or undermine legitimacy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where limited state capacities risk undermining the quality with which processes are implemented, engage relevant, trusted and capable third parties to support this delivery.</li> <li>• Ensure that all administrative processes are designed to be simple, transparent and easy to access, with clear procedures for their use.</li> <li>• Regularly seek experiences, suggestions and feedback from the affected population to inform the design and implementation of communication mechanisms and delivery systems.</li> <li>• Invest in appropriate communication mechanisms comprising a range of culturally appropriate and accessible channels</li> <li>• Build capacities of relevant actors (state and non-state) for front-line delivery.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Natural disaster</b></p>	<p>Natural disasters risk disrupting delivery processes, impacting on the infrastructure and staff of institutions involved in implementing these processes, and decreasing the capacity of delivery systems to continue ‘business as usual’ or expand operations to meet new needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider necessary adaptations to existing or nascent social protection delivery systems to better enable them to function following a shock.</li> <li>• Technical assistance and other relevant support for government bodies and others engaged in social protection provision to integrate DRR into SP operations and devise and implement strategies to ensure business continuity.</li> <li>• Work with implementing partners and service providers that have demonstrated ability to effectively mitigate this risk.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Displacement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Populations displaced across borders face challenges in engaging with service providers due to language barriers and difficulty accessing legal documentation on refugee or residency status.</li> <li>• Frequent movements of displaced populations, and government-enforced restrictions on refugee movement, or checkpoints, create similar access issues to conflict contexts above.</li> <li>• Risk that the inclusion of populations displaced across borders impacts on the quality of social protection delivery for citizens (e.g. queues at distribution points), creating tensions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy to bodies providing registration services to refugees, and technical assistance to streamline processes.</li> <li>• Where appropriate promote the use of new technology within core business processes (for communication, benefit delivery, grievance redress and monitoring), to reach mobile and dispersed populations.</li> <li>• In risk analysis of approaches and strategies, assess the potential for any escalation in social tensions between displaced and host communities at all stages of the delivery system.</li> </ul>

**EXAMPLES**

- ➔ *In Yemen, since 2016 donors and humanitarian actors have been working with the Social Welfare Fund (SWF) to provide emergency cash assistance to food-insecure households affected by the conflict. The nature of the conflict restricted transfer of humanitarian funds to government as well as the use of the programme’s main payment service provider, the national post office, to manage distribution. Instead, funds were transferred directly to the programme’s private sector payment service provider, which disbursed transfers to beneficiaries. SWF front-line staff have still been involved in other aspects such as registration and grievance redress<sup>11</sup>.*
- ➔ *In Iraq, the insecurity caused by the ISIS insurgency and limited resources and capacities has curtailed development of the emerging social protection system. Some of these needs have been covered in the interim through humanitarian partners. As the security situation steadily improves, the EU and humanitarian partners recognise that delivery of assistance should transition from humanitarian actors to government. An ECHO feasibility study provides an action plan for all actors.*

11 Smith (2017) ‘Linking Humanitarian Cash Transfers with National Social Protection Systems in the MENA Region’, a lessons learned case study for UNICEF; Smith (2017) ‘Use of Cash in Conflict-Affected Areas in the MENA Region – Example of Yemen’, a lessons learned case study for UNICEF.

*Capacity building for government includes reform of the core national social protection delivery systems and technical assistance. Meanwhile strategic alignment of the delivery systems used by implementing partners in the interim (harmonisation of registration and distribution processes) is expected to facilitate the transfer of vulnerable households over to government management as capacity builds<sup>12</sup>.*

- ➔ *In Turkey, the EU's Emergency Social Safety Net for Syrian refugees is making use of several of the delivery systems of the Turkish social protection systems to administer the programme, but for payment delivery a parallel system was set up with a different financial service provider. This built on the existing partnerships and systems of cash delivery used by humanitarian actors and minimised the risk that the national payment delivery systems would become overburdened, which could have impacted on delivery of assistance to Turkish citizens and escalated tensions. When programme monitoring found that the varied living arrangements of refugee families were creating barriers that prevented them formally registering with the Turkish government (a qualifying criterion for ESSN registration), advocacy with the government departments responsible for refugee registration led to relaxation of these procedures<sup>13</sup>.*

### ALWAYS BEAR IN MIND

1. Social protection and humanitarian assistance programmes are designed to achieve broadly similar functions but over different timelines and with broadly different outcomes in mind. Whilst operational processes on social transfer and humanitarian cash assistance programmes may therefore share many similar characteristics, these differences can mean that the optimum design of processes to achieve these objectives will differ.
  - *When using the systems of an existing programme, attention must be given to whether the current processes will allow for delivery of assistance that effectively meets the needs of populations affected by crises, or whether these need to be adapted.*
  - *When influencing the building or strengthening of social protection, the design of the operational systems need to take into account these dual objectives.*
  - *Compromises will need to be made. On the one hand, achieving humanitarian outcomes and conforming to humanitarian principles is important; on the other hand, implementation of social protection approaches in humanitarian settings should not impact negatively on the implementation or growth of the long-term social protection system.*
2. It will not be possible to work with all underlying processes and systems in all contexts, and some parallel processes may still be needed, for example:
  - *Where government cannot authorise access to or use of systems,*
  - *Where donors restrict flow of funds to government,*
  - *Where administrative procedures or capacity gaps are not conducive to effective response and cannot be amended, nor capacities quickly built.*
3. Other service providers and implementing partners can be engaged to implement parallel processes or to bolster capacity of social protection actors to implement existing processes.

### Further resources

- **Iraq: identifying opportunities to transition the chronically poor and vulnerable from humanitarian assistance to national schemes**, WFP lessons learned case study (forthcoming).
- **Quick Guidance for Planning an Intervention through Government Systems during an Emergency**, WFP, 2018
- **Cash Transfers in Remote Emergency Programming**, NRC, 2016.  
<http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/remotecashprojectguidancefinal.pdf>
- **Human(itarian) Capital? Lessons on Better Connecting Humanitarian Assistance and Social Protection**, Gentilini, Laughton & O'Brien, 2018.  
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialprotectionandjobs/publication>
- **Designing effective safety net programs**, Brian Culhane, World Bank, 1997.  
<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/532131468739326399/Designing-effective-safety-net-programs>

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12 WFP (forthcoming) *Iraq: identifying opportunities to transition the chronically poor and vulnerable from humanitarian assistance to national schemes*, WFP lessons learned case study.

13 Maunder et al. (2018), CaLP (2018) *State of the World's Cash Report*

## Principles for success

Lessons learned suggest that the following principles should inform and underpin approaches and actions when using, adapting or building delivery systems to link social protection and humanitarian action.

**Connectedness and interdisciplinary cooperation:** When engaging in these approaches in humanitarian contexts, they should be conceived through a broader analysis of the longer-term development context and apply development principles to address these problems. Social protection delivery systems provide a way to embed humanitarian action within longer-term systems and services. Longer-term investments to build, strengthen and adapt social protection delivery systems and extend coverage in stable times will improve the effectiveness of these systems to meet needs during crises.

**System resilience:** Providing social protection across the nexus should aim to enable households and communities to better absorb and recover from shocks of all kinds. Building this resilience depends on the resilience of operational systems. Continuing to provide or building social protection systems in areas affected by conflict or natural disasters, or using these systems to respond to such disasters, rely on the capability of these delivery systems to continue to operate during or after the shock. The more disruptive the shock, the more critical this becomes. It is important to have processes and implementers suited to operating in these contexts and clear procedures for timely restoration of systems, or for their modification in a post-shock environment.

**Do no harm:** Responding to shocks through social protection systems or activities aiming to build or strengthen social protection systems in fragile and conflicted-affected and forced-displacement contexts should not impact negatively on communities, or on the state's ability to deliver regular social protection. Context, risk and protection analyses should be jointly conducted to identify possible unintended negative impacts, and mitigation measures put in place. From a delivery system perspective this includes risks that activities will overburden staff, contribute to bottlenecks in process or otherwise undermine delivery of benefits packages. Social protection will not always be the most appropriate mechanism for achieving the desired outcomes for vulnerable populations in humanitarian contexts.

**National ownership:** The state is the primary duty bearer supporting vulnerable populations, and it is well recognised in EU and broader policy that social protection is a state-led service. The EU is committed to work with and through government to the greatest extent possible and working across the nexus is no exception. Depending on the nature of the crisis and the political context, this should be the aim. There are several benefits to doing so – from an operations perspective, it can build relationships between governments and donors and improve policy dialogue and influence on matters pertaining to adapting processes, strengthening delivery systems or amending laws and regulations to achieve this. A government-led approach still offers flexibility for the establishment of certain parallel processes, or for additional partnerships through which implementation of interventions can be realised, where government systems are still developing.

**Keep it simple:** Humanitarian contexts, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected environments, can be challenging to operate and deliver assistance in. Keeping operational processes as simple and straightforward as possible and clearly outlining process flows and roles and responsibilities will maximise effective implementation while minimising the likelihood of miscommunication, errors and bottlenecks, and will reduce protection-related and fiduciary risks.

**Flexibility:** The context on the ground can be complex and vulnerabilities, risks and other critical contextual factors can quickly change. Flexible approaches to programming are a key enabling factor, particularly the ability to modify and adapt business processes and systems and to have the capacity to implement such changes, based on the shock context and as new information becomes available.

**Accountability and accessibility:** Humanitarian programming is committed to achieving accountability for affected populations. Affected populations should be well informed about interventions, have meaningful participation in their design and implementation, and be able to feedback queries and complaints. Seeking the opinions, experiences and preferences of affected populations can help to adapt, build and strengthen social protection delivery systems in ways that improve their relevance and accessibility, enabling more effective assistance. At the same time these delivery systems provide the operational mechanism through which messages can be relayed and feedback shared.



<p>Are registration processes complex / time-consuming or presenting barriers to groups affected by crisis?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are documents difficult, time-consuming and costly to access?</li> <li>• Do vulnerable groups have access to the recognised forms of ID?</li> <li>• Have civil documents, programme IDs or bank cards been lost due to a crisis?</li> <li>• Are there barriers to refugees obtaining certification of refugee status (e.g. are services bureaucratic or overstretched)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relax or simplify processes and develop related standard operating procedures (SOPs) to speed up registration in times of emergency, or to improve inclusion of groups affected by crises in long-term programmes.</li> <li>• Advocacy to relevant government counterparts to relax regulations.</li> <li>• Support to services providing or replacing civil/refugee documentation.</li> <li>• Implementing partners can provide special assistance for vulnerable groups to access / replace documents.</li> </ul>
<p>Can a caseload of households that are vulnerable to crises be pre-identified <i>ex ante</i>?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be valid approach in FCAS but less applicable to forced displacement which is dynamic and unpredictable in nature and may include non-citizens.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider such a 'no regrets' policy to speed up new registration post-crisis.</li> </ul>

**EXAMPLES:**

- *In Turkey, eligibility for social protection is based on a range of socioeconomic criteria. Applicants register at local Foundation offices and data is verified through home visits. When the EU began providing assistance to refugees through this system (the Emergency Social Safety Net), processes were adapted to make them relevant to the refugee's situation and allow rapid scale-up. Working with the Turkish Government, the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) were limited to six demographic indicators and the home visit requirement was postponed to within one year of enrolment onto the programme. The programme recruited Arabic-speaking translators to assist staff at the Foundations. In areas of the country with large numbers of refugees, the programme also funded the Turkish Red Crescent to set up service centres, to assist with registration and reduce the burden on Foundation staff. After programme monitoring showed that some vulnerable families were struggling with the application process, ECHO and other donors funded complementary activities through implementing partners, such as providing transport to the Foundation offices and covering the cost of notaries and translators<sup>15</sup>.*
- *In Kyrgyzstan following the conflict, the government signed a Temporary Regulation which relaxed the registration requirements on two social transfer programmes for six months in the affected provinces. Under this regulation, ad hoc local social commissions were established, to rapidly assess social protection applications without needing a household visit. The government set up mobile outreach services to take registration to communities. Humanitarian partners supported this capacity by recruiting and covering salaries of additional social workers. Meanwhile verification documentation did not need to be submitted for six-months and a government taskforce fast-tracked claims for replacement of lost ID cards<sup>16</sup>.*
- *In Yemen, many poor and vulnerable women do not have a national ID, which is a requirement for registration in the Social Welfare Fund (SWF). When this programme was adapted to provide emergency cash assistance, it was agreed that beneficiary identity would therefore be verified from a range of IDs including national ID card, passport, family card, voter card, SWF ID or traditional leader/Aqel's attestation. SWF staff were also supported during registration by a local implementing partner contracted by UNICEF<sup>17</sup>.*
- *Following the earthquake in Nepal, the expansion of the child grant to affected families did not have the benefit of an existing database of the population, and UNICEF had to launch a new census in the affected districts to identify new cases. This was time-consuming and labour-intensive to implement post-disaster, although the end product has strengthened the social protection system in the country. Children without birth certificates were not excluded from the programme – rather, caregivers were encouraged to go and get the children registered<sup>18</sup>.*
- *In Kenya, prior to the roll-out of phase 2 of the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP2), a census was taken of all households in the drought-affected counties where the HSNP is implemented and participating households were registered into the programme's MIS. This created a database of most households in northern Kenya that can be wealth ranked. It 'pre-identifies' 180,000 additional households that are vulnerable to crises (in this case, natural disaster), for the provision of periodic emergency payments<sup>19</sup>.*

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15 Maunder et al. (2018)  
 16 Smith (2017) 'Supporting national social protection systems to respond to needs at times of crisis: lessons from Kyrgyzstan', a case study for UNICEF.  
 17 Smith (2017) 'Use of Cash in Conflict-Affected Areas in the MENA Region – Example of Yemen', a lessons learned case study for UNICEF'  
 18 Merttens et al. (2017) 'Evaluation of the Nepal Emergency Cash Transfer Programme through Social Assistance: Final Report', OPM  
 19 Farhat et al. (2017) 'Evaluation of the Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme Phase 2: Emergency Payments Deep Dive Study', Oxford Policy Management

*When building new systems:*

CONSIDER	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS/ACTIONS
<p>If a registration mechanism is being proposed/implemented by government or development partners, will this be effective to reach those in a crisis context?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will emerging or planned registration points be accessible in a conflict?</li> <li>• Can affected populations easily access the required civil documents?</li> <li>• What are the capacities of national services to manage registration?</li> <li>• Will data reflect changing vulnerabilities due to crises / will this be updated regularly?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop simple registration processes that make use of, or align with and have potential to be linked with, the existing or planned national systems and institutions.</li> <li>• Draw on learning from humanitarian assistance to test the efficacy of alternative registration mechanisms that may be more appropriate/accessible to the context, to influence the design of future social protection.</li> <li>• Build capacities of national services, including in affected areas – training, staff, budgets, and support from international partners.</li> </ul>

**EXAMPLE:**

- ➔ *In Mali, ECHO's implementing partners adopted a census approach to registration on the humanitarian cash assistance programme in the north, to ensure that data could contribute to developing the planned national social registry. Registration processes involved community wealth ranking, which differed from the process used on the social transfer programme being piloted by development partners elsewhere in the country (based on household surveys and proxy means testing) as it was considered a more appropriate process for the complex and conflict-affected context of the north. Evidence influenced changes to the registration processes when this social transfer programme was later scaled up in the northern regions<sup>20</sup>.*

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20 O'Brien et al. (2017) 'Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research: Case study – Social Protection and Humanitarian Responses to Food Insecurity and Poverty in Mali'; Kukrety (2016) 'Working with Cash Based Safety Nets in Humanitarian Contexts: Guidance Note for Practitioners', CaLP.

## PAYMENT/BENEFIT DISTRIBUTION

Ensuring that beneficiaries can access their social protection entitlements regularly, reliably and safely is fundamental to the success of social protection schemes. The delivery system for those social protection schemes that provide benefits in the form of resource transfers involves preparing lists of eligible beneficiaries according to the distribution schedule on the programme, informing beneficiaries of the distribution schedule, transferring lists and resources (cash/other) to service providers or front-line offices, disbursement of these directly to beneficiaries or into their accounts, and reconciliation of all benefits distributed. Most large-scale social transfer programmes will contract a financial service provider to lead this administrative process, in order to manage financial transactions quickly and safely while minimising risks.

### *When using or adapting existing systems:*

CONSIDERATIONS	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS/ACTIONS
<p>Is the existing delivery system reliable, convenient and safe for people affected by crisis to access?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does conflict and insecurity mean distribution points are inaccessible?</li> <li>• Does conflict and insecurity present protection concerns for beneficiaries and staff at distribution?</li> <li>• Will overcrowding at distribution points cause tensions between beneficiaries/ between them and the wider community?</li> <li>• Can households moving from location to location still access their benefits?</li> <li>• Are affected populations (including refugees) familiar with digital payment systems?</li> <li>• Is the delivery channel trusted by the affected population?</li> <li>• Does language present a barrier for refugees?</li> </ul>
<p>Are delivery systems resilient to the impacts of crises that occur?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the frequency and severity of disruptive natural disasters in the areas concerned?</li> <li>• How have these affected delivery systems (now or in the past)?</li> </ul>
<p>Is the distribution schedule the best fit for the objectives of a humanitarian response?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will modifying it increase the burden of work for those distributing the benefits? How will affected beneficiaries be made aware of any changes, especially those who are displaced?</li> </ul>
<p>Do service providers and their agents, or front-line staff, have capacity to distribute benefits to an increased caseload?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there specific issues affecting their ability to distribute benefits to non-citizens / refugees (e.g. language barriers)?</li> </ul>

**EXAMPLES**

- *In the Philippines, social protection beneficiaries can receive their payments either via an ATM card or as cash over the counter. After Typhoon Haiyan, power outages prevented the use of e-payment channels for several weeks. The payment service provider provided three mobile ATMs to help disburse card payments to beneficiaries and modified their service to provide payments over the counter while ATM services were reduced. This ensured that regular and additional emergency top-up payments to households affected by the typhoon were received in a timely fashion. However, these were not defined procedures in the programme and took time to put in place, meaning that payments were delivered later than originally planned. The financial service providers managing the ‘over the counter’ cash payments also faced challenges in making these payments as personnel and infrastructure had been affected by the typhoon. This was further compounded by the fact that humanitarian actors requested that the emergency top-up payments be provided monthly rather than bi-monthly. This was done in order to align this emergency assistance with that being provided to other households in the community through the parallel humanitarian system, but it created additional work to prepare, deliver and reconcile additional distributions at a time when capacity was stretched<sup>21</sup>.*
- *On the EU’s ESSN in Turkey, bank staff faced difficulties in communicating with Syrian refugees. Since then, the Turkish Red Crescent has provided focal points in bank branches to assist in making payments to refugees. The bank also updated ATMs to include an Arabic language function, which has improved accessibility for Syrian refugees<sup>22</sup>.*
- *In Yemen, humanitarian actors using the national social protection system to deliver humanitarian assistance were unable to transfer funds to the government due to the nature of the conflict, and could not use the SWF’s main payment service provider, which was the national post office. These actors still made use of one of the private sector payment service providers for the SWF and established a direct agreement with this bank for disbursing transfers to beneficiaries. When transfers were made to households in enclaved areas affected by the civil war, the payment service provider for the Social Welfare Fund selected pay-out points that were accessible to the affected communities (especially women) and set up temporary pay-out points in community spaces that were more secure. They also conducted home visits for those unable to attend the pay-out points<sup>23</sup>.*
- *In Nepal, social protection payments are made by local government staff, who also lead on the coordination of humanitarian activities in their communities during emergency response and recovery. These institutions also suffer from a shortage of staff in general. The scaling up of the social protection programmes following the earthquake placed additional responsibilities on already overworked government staff, who were frustrated that national government and humanitarian actors had not adequately considered their capacity to deliver the additional funds. An evaluation concluded that the capacity of delivery systems should have been assessed and necessary support provided<sup>24</sup>.*

*When building new systems:*

CONSIDERATIONS		POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS/ACTIONS
<p>What distribution systems are used already by government and humanitarian actors and how reliable, accessible and convenient will these be for those affected by crises?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will pay-out points become inaccessible due to conflict?</li> <li>• Are there barriers to refugees or displaced populations accessing these services?</li> <li>• Is coverage or capacity of service providers in the affected areas limited due to conflict or fragility?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map available service providers in the affected area and assess respective benefits and constraints for the task in hand – accessibility, efficiency, coverage, and reliability – as well as alignment with government financial regulations and plans for ‘government to person’ payments.</li> <li>• Pilot the option(s) that is familiar and accessible for beneficiaries, well adapted to the operating context and able to take advantage of economies of scale, and generate evidence on the efficacy of these systems to influence the design of future social protection.</li> <li>• Where possible, encourage all IPs to use the same service provider; however, it may be necessary to work with more than one, given coverage and capacity gaps.</li> <li>• Harmonise selection, negotiations and the cost per transfer across all operational actors within the locale.</li> <li>• Keep payment schedules simple, to a regular date.</li> </ul>

21 Smith et al. (2017) *Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research Case study—Post-Haiyan Cash Transfers in the Philippines*, OPM  
 22 Maunder et al. (2018)  
 23 Smith (2017) ‘Linking Humanitarian Cash Transfers with National Social Protection Systems in the MENA Region’, a lessons learned case study for UNICEF; Smith (2017) ‘Use of Cash in Conflict-Affected Areas in the MENA Region – Example of Yemen’, a lessons learned case study for UNICEF;  
 24 Merttens et al. (2017)

**EXAMPLES:**

- *In Mali, given the low capacity and coverage of financial service providers in the north, rather than use the service providers of the pilot social protection programme or set up a single payment channel, ECHO opted to work with the most appropriate service provider for the context in each of the affected communes. This involved innovative approaches including contracting traders to deliver cash in some remote and insecure areas that financial service providers could not reach. Implementing partners jointly negotiated the service fee with service providers, which reduced transaction costs. Payments on the pilot social transfer programme and the INGO humanitarian CTP were delivered once every four months to take into account the remote locations and challenging context<sup>25</sup>.*
- *In Kenya, Concern and Oxfam piloted the use of e-payment systems on the urban food subsidy programme, to influence the (mainly manual) payment mechanisms used by the government to deliver social protection in urban areas<sup>26</sup>.*

**COMMUNICATION AND GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS**

Communications are required to inform communities and potential beneficiaries about who is providing the programme; its objectives; who is eligible; how to apply; the value, frequency and duration of the assistance and any associated conditions; what to do to receive the transfer; and how to raise problems, queries, appeals or complaints. Effective communication systems can reduce the risk that beneficiaries will be exploited, and can increase accountability and reduce any misunderstandings of the programme among the population.

Grievance mechanisms are two-way communication channels that provide an opportunity for beneficiaries and others in the community to provide feedback on the programme and raise issues and concerns. This involves:

1. Informing beneficiaries (and non-beneficiaries) of how to raise grievances.
2. Receiving and logging feedback and grievances through various channels.
3. Responding to the complainant and acting to address grievances where appropriate.

There are broadly two types of common grievance in social transfer programmes: i) appeals against exclusion during registration/targeting, and ii) complaints about implementation, such as delays to enrolment or payments, loss of programme documents/instruments, challenges with accessing pay points, or fraud and coercion during registration and payment. These mechanisms are therefore important, to ensure that the right people receive assistance and to identify and address weaknesses or bottlenecks in programme operations.

To be effective, the channels used for communication and grievance mechanisms must be accessible and trusted by beneficiaries and the wider population. Choice of channels should reflect the language, level of education, literacy, social marginalisation, gender and age of the beneficiary group. Communication channels include printed media, word of mouth, local information sessions, SMS and social media. Grievance mechanisms should ideally include a number of communication channels so as to be accessible to beneficiaries.

*When using and adapting existing systems:*

CONSIDERATIONS		POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS/ACTIONS
<p>What is the capacity and reach of the programme's communications system, and does this need adapting to ensure messages reach those to be targeted?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will non-citizens/refugees be reached by the existing communication channels?</li> <li>• Are existing communication channels accessible during conflict?</li> <li>• Do word-of-mouth channels have capacity to 'scale up'?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add in or adapt specific communication channels that are accessible to those affected by the crisis.</li> <li>• Consider adding digital communication channels which are more easily scaled up than face-to-face communication, where appropriate.</li> </ul>

25 O'Brien et al. (2017)  
 26 Kukrety (2016)



## MONITORING, CASE MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are needed on social transfer programmes to ensure that programmes can provide key performance data and information to enable ongoing improvement of key business processes. Monitoring encompasses a range of activities and is important for ensuring oversight and reporting, effective management, and troubleshooting when problems and bottlenecks are identified. These include monitoring payment receipt; compliance with programme conditions; and administrative issues in the programme cycle. They require defined human resources and effective information systems for recording and managing data. Data should be analysed and used to inform changes to the programme cycle. Impact evaluations are commissioned intermittently to generate data on programme outcomes and impacts. Collection of 'outcome' data is not a common activity in day-to-day monitoring of social transfers.

Some social transfer programmes are complemented by active case management systems whereby social workers undertake outreach to or follow-up with vulnerable beneficiaries to ensure that their situation is assessed on a continuous basis and needs addressed. This might involve providing information or support to address specific issues facing certain households, such as non-compliance with conditionalities, or sensitisation to reinforce particular behaviours. It can also include referrals to other assistance and services. This so-called 'cash plus' approach is also increasingly being promoted in humanitarian contexts as a way to support greater outcomes from cash assistance in crisis contexts. Such systems, however, often have developmental shortcomings in low- and middle-income countries due to limited investment in trained social workers.

### *When using and adapting existing systems:*

CONSIDERATIONS		POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS/ACTIONS
Is the current monitoring system sufficient for the monitoring requirements of the planned programme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is household-level data on expenditure/outcomes captured regularly?</li> <li>• Are financial monitoring processes adequate for donor reporting purposes?</li> <li>• Can monitoring activities be scaled up effectively to include new caseloads?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and implement additional separate monitoring activities to fill gaps in data without overburdening the existing system.</li> <li>• Surge in staff from other non-affected areas or include an independent service provider to support monitoring.</li> <li>• Modify existing monitoring procedures and activities to incorporate what is needed.</li> </ul>
Do existing case management processes, and programme conditionalities, need to be reduced to suit the emergency context?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the shock, especially conflict, affected the accessibility of basic services?</li> <li>• Can social welfare officers or other services cope with case management tasks alongside managing any expansion of social transfers for shock response?</li> <li>• Do targeted populations need time to deal with the effects of the shock?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporarily reduce existing case management activities or enforcement of conditions, where this is needed to reduce burden on staff and systems or avoid putting beneficiaries at risk.</li> </ul>
How can existing case management processes be adapted to meet needs of the targeted population?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will non-citizens / displaced populations be included?</li> <li>• Do social welfare teams have the capacity to expand services?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move such activities to more accessible locations.</li> <li>• Modify case management data systems to effectively monitor and capture data on new beneficiaries.</li> <li>• Invest in recruitment and training additional social welfare teams, which can also strengthen the long term social protection system.</li> </ul>

## EXAMPLES

- *The Pantawid programme in the Philippines has strong monitoring and reporting systems in place. However, as a long-term development programme, there is less emphasis on monitoring the day-to-day uses of the transfers received by Pantawid beneficiaries; rather, this is something analysed during periodic evaluations. In contrast, WFP, which partnered with the Pantawid programme to top up cash assistance to beneficiaries affected by Typhoon Haiyan, had a responsibility to its humanitarian donors to demonstrate that the objective of meeting humanitarian food needs had been met. With the government's agreement, WFP implemented their own post-distribution monitoring activities and indicators in order to understand household expenditures and outcomes, as well as market monitoring. WFP's financial procedures also required specific evidence to demonstrate 'proof of delivery' of cash disbursements to beneficiaries (photocopies of the beneficiary receipts). This was not part of the Pantawid's usual financial monitoring processes. The government was able to adapt its systems to provide this proof, but it took several months and considerable resources. It was recommended that in future partnerships, these reporting requirements should be set out from the beginning<sup>30</sup>.*
- *In Kyrgyzstan, social welfare officers did not practise a 'case management' approach prior to the conflict. UNICEF provided training for social workers on outreach measures for family welfare and care and support plans to monitor needs and referrals for families. This approach was subsequently adopted by the government. UNICEF also recruited and covered salaries of additional social workers to support outreach activities during the response<sup>31</sup>.*
- *In Nepal, the expansion of social assistance after the earthquake was accompanied with comprehensive monitoring, including real-time process monitoring and monitoring of outcomes. Overall management was undertaken by the government's humanitarian partner on the programme, UNICEF, but involved government social protection staff in implementation. UNICEF collated field-monitoring data from government staff and maintained a centralised management information system (MIS) to track district-wise progress in implementation. The data informed conversations with implementing staff on solutions to challenges, such as delays in distribution<sup>32</sup>.*
- *On the CCTE in Turkey, verifying school attendance is through inter-governmental data management systems. Attendance data inputted into the ministry of education's management information system is accessed and verified through the Integrated Social Assistance Information System (ISAIS) before each payroll. On the CCTE for Refugees, some children were enrolled in temporary education centres, which were not connected to the Ministry of Education's management information system. The data management system used by the temporary education centres had to be integrated with ISAIS before the programme could begin<sup>33</sup>.*
- *In Lebanon, people in need across the country receive relief and support from the government through the national network of Social Development Centres (SDCs). These are staffed by social workers, health and administrative professionals and provide a range of social welfare services to poor citizens alongside the administration of certain processes concerning food vouchers for the extreme poor (under the NPTP). Many SDCs are also the primary social and healthcare services outlet for Syrian refugees. A DEVCO-ECHO scoping study identifies these as the natural locus for supporting access to social services and referrals for both populations, complementing cash and voucher assistance. However, these centres have a 75 per cent shortfall in their staffing budget and a range of capacities must be built<sup>34</sup>.*

## Further resources

- **Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research: Synthesis Report**, O'Brien et. al., 2018.  
<https://www.opml.co.uk/files/Publications/a0408-shock-responsive-social-protection-systems/srsp-synthesis-report.pdf?noredirect=1>
- **Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Toolkit: Appraising the use of social protection in addressing large-scale shocks**, O'Brien et al (2018).  
<https://www.opml.co.uk/files/Publications/a0408-shock-responsive-social-protection-systems/srsp-toolkit.pdf>
- **Human(itarian) Capital? Lessons on Better Connecting Humanitarian Assistance and Social Protection**, Gentilini, Laughton & O'Brien (2018).  
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialprotectionandjobs/publication/humanitarian-capital-lessons-on-better-connecting-humanitarian-assistance-and-social-protection>
- **Use of Country Systems in Fragile States**, Hart, et. Al, ODI (2015) .  
<https://www.odi.org/publications/10208-using-country-systems-fragile-states>

30 Smith et al. (2017)

31 Smith (2017) 'Supporting national social protection systems to respond to needs at times of crisis: lessons from Kyrgyzstan', a case study for UNICEF.

32 Merttens et al. (2017)

33 CaLP (2018)

34 EU (2018) A roadmap towards the development of a more systemic and longer-term social assistance mechanism for the most vulnerable refugees and Lebanese – case study for the Guidance package on Social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus (SPaN)

## Coordination Requirements

Forging links between social protection and humanitarian assistance in practice requires operational and strategic coordination, at national and sub-national levels, and with multiple stakeholders. Figure 4 outlines the types of entity that need to be engaged and their relevance.

Figure 4: Key considerations for multi-stakeholder engagement

STAKEHOLDER	KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THEIR ENGAGEMENT
National government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National governments are duty bearers for providing social protection, often manage existing processes, and are custodians of operating systems.</li> <li>National DRM structures are responsible for leading or coordinating humanitarian response and recovery.</li> <li>These mandates can be split across several ministries, requiring coordination across multiple departments.</li> <li>Government entities responsible for management of household registries, changing regulations etc. must be engaged where needed, to develop a supportive legal and regulatory framework and ensure access to data.</li> </ul>
International development and humanitarian actors (donors, operational agencies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Including a humanitarian lens in the long-term social protection programme and system requires partnerships between humanitarian and development policy makers and practitioners.</li> <li>Operational agencies add considerable value to implementation of approaches, especially where national capacities are limited.</li> <li>Lessons and experiences of delivery processes from humanitarian programmes should influence design.</li> <li>The primary instrument of cash transfers is a tool that is highly relevant to the work of all sectors.</li> <li>Social protection approaches in humanitarian contexts will never meet all the chronic and transitory sectoral needs of all households who need assistance, so coordination is essential with other assistance interventions across sectors (not only other resource transfers but also protection concerns, psychosocial and counselling, labour market and livelihood needs).</li> </ul>
Private sector capacity building, technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical roles to play in social protection service provision through management of core delivery processes.</li> </ul>

### EXPERIENCES TO DATE SHOW THAT:

- Cash transfers continue to lack a dedicated 'place' in humanitarian coordination structures.**
- There is no 'one size fits all' – coordination approaches, structures and mechanisms vary hugely due to contextual factors, differing levels of national involvement, the structure of governance in a country, and decentralised aspects of humanitarian coordination.**
- There is a need for coordination at various levels – both bilaterally between the actors implementing relevant interventions and their collaborators, and more broadly and strategically, at the level of the response and developmental strategy.**

Figure 5 summarises some of the strengths and limitations of typical coordination groups.

Figure 5: Considerations for establishing coordination mechanisms

STRUCTURE	CONSIDERATIONS
Clusters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where governments have established similar sectoral coordination structures for coordination of humanitarian action, or where they have a co-leadership role, this can ensure government involvement.</li> <li>• Useful for operationalising social protection approaches for specific sector-oriented instruments, for example school feeding, or public works.</li> <li>• If cluster system is not permanently active in the country, less useful for approaches that are undertaking activities during normal times/preparedness, or for smaller responses where governments have capacity to manage.</li> </ul>
Inter-cluster coordination or HCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donors can be engaged (HCT).</li> <li>• Useful in cases where social protection provision aims to meet multiple needs across sectors (intrinsic to cash transfers).</li> <li>• Can ensure strategic coordination of social protection approaches with the wider response.</li> <li>• Can support harmonised ways of working across clusters and sector actors.</li> </ul>
Inter-governmental bodies for disaster management, and/or social protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building on existing structures increases buy-in and integration with national development strategies and systems.</li> <li>• Such bodies are already multi-disciplinary and, as such, social protection departments will often have a seat at the table for DRM coordination and vice versa.</li> </ul>
Cash working groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becoming established in some form in almost all responses – though their structure, management and capacities vary and these remain ad hoc not formalised structures.</li> <li>• Increasingly cut across sectors (since cash is a multi-sectoral tool and is increasingly being provided with multi-sectoral objectives in mind).</li> <li>• Can engage stakeholders across government, international actors and private sector.</li> <li>• Useful for coordination of operational aspects such as harmonising processes between actors.</li> </ul>
Other sectoral working groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above, useful for operational coordination relating to other instruments.</li> <li>• Can provide linkages to other relevant service provision (health, education).</li> </ul>
Programme taskforces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can include every actor with a direct role to play in implementing an approach, as well as extending membership to others with valid expertise to aid effective management.</li> <li>• Depending on the level of engagement, can be limited to coordination of a specific intervention or can support coordination of social protection approaches with the wider response.</li> </ul>

#### SUGGESTED ACTIONS:

- **Map the actors engaging in social protection and humanitarian action and existing national and humanitarian coordination structures and build relationships ahead of the crisis.**
- **Strengthen collaboration between social protection, DRM and humanitarian actors by promoting common understanding of the different fields and the synergies between them.**
- **Improve policy coherence within the sectors of relevance (developing sector-wide strategies, policies or budgets) as a starting point for facilitating more cross-sectoral collaboration, and support weak departments to develop stronger and clearer institutional frameworks (e.g. clearer governance arrangements, legislation or policies).**
- **Strengthen or develop coordination structures that span sectors and disciplines (inter-governmental steering committees/taskforces; structures bringing together governmental and non-governmental stakeholders), including those for strategic oversight and information exchange, and others focusing on implementation aspects such as elaboration and harmonisation of technical processes, data analysis, and monitoring of programme implementation.**

- **Promote coordination between social protection interventions and the wider emergency response (i.e. with other programmes), including collaborating on practical issues such as sharing data, setting transfer values, minimising gaps and managing potential duplication in support to beneficiaries.**

#### EXAMPLES:

- *In Pakistan, to piggyback on the national social and economic register (NSER) for future disaster response would require clarification of roles and responsibilities between the Benazir Income Support Programme, the National Database and Registration Authority, national and provincial disaster management authorities and non-governmental actors<sup>35</sup>.*
- *In the Philippines, the Department for Social Welfare and Development co-led three clusters during the typhoon Haiyan response and, with the cluster members, they set up a system for coordinating data on typhoon-affected households assisted by aid agencies with its own database. This coordination led to the enrolment of an additional 20,000 households into a government cash transfer programme<sup>36</sup>.*
- *In Turkey an ESSN Taskforce (ECHO, INGOs, government and academic institutions) was set up to improve links to and complement the wider response. The Taskforce holds monthly meetings in four project locations. It has been effective in influencing changes to the ESSN transfer value and targeting criteria, and in aligning INGO protection activities to improve access to the ESSN<sup>37</sup>.*
- *In Nepal, UNICEF assumed that other humanitarian actors would support those households who were not existing beneficiaries of the social transfer programmes and in need of humanitarian assistance – but did not establish coordination mechanisms to ensure that this happened in practice<sup>38</sup>.*

#### Further resources

- **Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research: Synthesis Report**, O'Brien et. al., (2018). <https://www.opml.co.uk/files/Publications/a0408-shock-responsive-social-protection-systems/srsp-synthesis-report.pdf>
- **The State of the World's Cash Report: Cash Transfer Programming in Humanitarian Aid**, CaLP (2018). <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-sowc-report-web.pdf>
- **Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research Case study—Post-Haiyan Cash Transfers in the Philippines**, Smith et al., OPM (2017) <https://www.opml.co.uk/files/Publications/a0408-shock-responsive-social-protection-systems/opm-case-study-2017-srsp-philippines.pdf?noredirect=1>
- **White Paper on Cash Coordination**, CaLP and GPPI (2017). [https://www.gppi.net/media/Steets\\_\\_Ruppert\\_\\_2017\\_\\_Cash\\_Coordination\\_in\\_Humanitarian\\_Contexts.pdf](https://www.gppi.net/media/Steets__Ruppert__2017__Cash_Coordination_in_Humanitarian_Contexts.pdf)

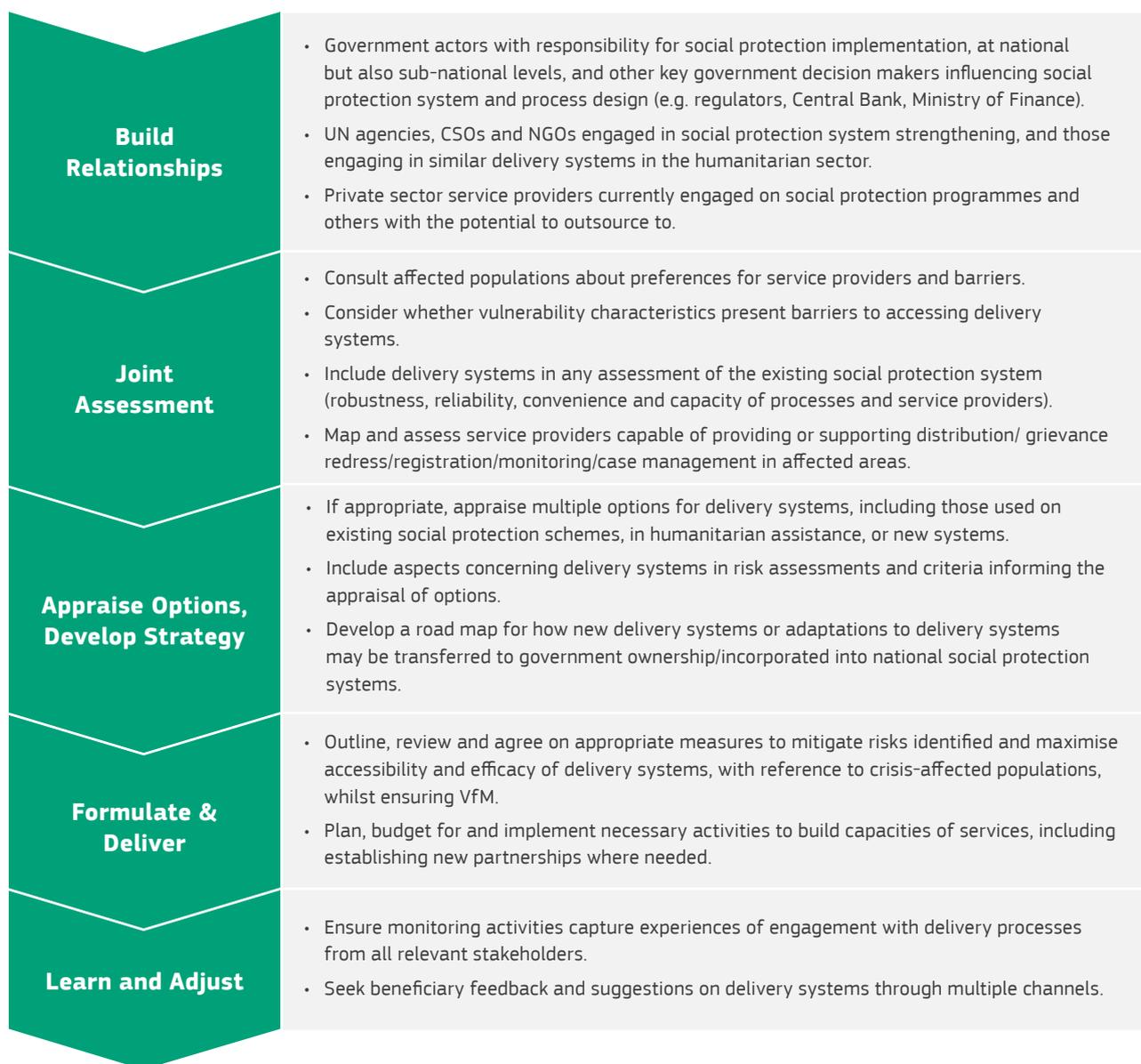
## Checklist for Mainstreaming Operational Considerations

Figure 6 outlines the steps in the process for working with social protection programmes and approaches in fragile and conflict-affected and displacement contexts<sup>39</sup>. Actions and decisions taken at each of these stages will impact on the nature of your delivery systems.

This process is applicable to and can be adapted for all stages of an emergency – preparedness, during an acute crisis, in protracted crises or as part of post crisis and long-term recovery efforts. That said, it must be noted that to undertake all steps and recommended actions effectively requires time. In the interests of effective and timely response, it is therefore recommended that wherever appropriate these actions should be considered as part of preparedness planning.

35 Watson et al. (2017) *Shock Responsive Social Protection Research: Pakistan Case Study*, OPM  
 36 Smith et al. (2017)  
 37 Maunder et al. (2018)  
 38 Merttens et al. (2017)  
 39 See Note on social protection in FCAS for further detail on these stages

Figure 6: Process for optimising operations in social protection and humanitarian assistance interactions

**Further resources**

- Cash Preparedness Assessment Tool, Guidance Document, UNICEF (forthcoming).
- Adaptive: Social Protection and Shocks, World Bank (forthcoming)
- The Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment Tools (ISPA)

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European  
Commission

**Operational**

**Note No 5**

*Integrated Financing*

May 2019

**SPaN**

Supporting people through crisis



*Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus*

DEVCO  
ECHO  
NEAR



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# Introduction

Improving the financing architecture for integrating social protection with humanitarian programming supports broad-based developmental outcomes, tackles poverty and vulnerability and contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals as well as World Humanitarian Summit commitments. In 2017 the European Union formally recognised that ‘countries in situations of fragility or affected by conflict require special attention and sustained international engagement in order to achieve sustainable development,’ committing to targeting development cooperation accordingly in order to achieve maximal impact.’ (European Parliament and European Commission, 2017). This reinforced commitments since 2011 to ‘help countries in situations of fragility to establish functioning and accountable institutions that deliver basic services and support poverty reduction’ to ensure ‘a smooth transition from humanitarian to long-term development measures.’ (European Commission, 2011).

In 2016 European development partners with global counterparts agreed a ‘Grand Bargain’ aiming to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of the humanitarian system. The agreement sought to expand aid commitments to close a USD 15 billion financing gap constraining the sector, specifically committing to increasing the proportion of aid allocated directly to local and national agencies to 25 per cent by 2020 and strengthening engagement between humanitarian and development stakeholders<sup>1</sup>.

The protracted nature of humanitarian crises over the past decade compounded by inadequate developmental interventions have vastly increased the volume, cost and length of the required donor assistance. Inter-agency humanitarian appeals have increased nearly 400 per cent over the past ten years and extend for seven years on average, intensifying the urgency of integrating humanitarian and development efforts (UN-OCHA, 2019). In the face of this challenge, diverse stakeholders at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS)<sup>2</sup> committed to a ‘New Way of Working’<sup>3</sup> that involves cooperating more closely over multiple years to collectively reduce need, risk and vulnerability. The agreement focuses on concrete and measurable ‘collective outcomes’ that result from humanitarian, development and other medium-term (three-to-five year) efforts that progressively achieve SDG targets<sup>4</sup>.

This reflects a vital commonality with the Grand Bargain, which firstly commits to ‘use existing resources and capabilities better to shrink humanitarian needs over the long term with the view of contributing to the outcomes of the Sustainable Development Goals’<sup>5</sup>. This common theme motivates the financing approach unifying this guidance note. Neither national governments (particularly fragile ones) nor development partners can sustainably finance the vastly expanding humanitarian burden associated with protracted crises exacerbated by neglect of core development priorities. **Only comprehensive approaches that not only integrate social protection with humanitarian efforts but also build broadly inter-sectoral development systems can effectively strengthen resilience and reduce fragility sufficiently to manage the financing burden.**

This note aims to inform European Commission practitioners (specifically staff working in EU Delegations and ECHO field offices, as well as ECHO, DEVCO and NEAR operational desks) with guidance on integrated financing across the humanitarian-development nexus in order to address short-term needs in the event of crises and to assure sustainable long-term social protection coverage for all. This work builds on the European Commission’s Reference Document ‘Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus: A game changer in supporting people through crises’ (European Commission, 2019) as well as other research and reflects global lessons of experience in financing this sector. This note summarises existing knowledge (current concepts, policies, instruments and promising practices) and synthesises the initial principles for a framework for financing integrated approaches in specific contexts. It provides references and links to more detailed guidance and evidence, serving as a gateway to existing specialised material, international standards and commitments, experiences to date, lessons learnt, available evidence, promising and innovative practices, emerging guidance and tools, and other materials.

1 For more details, see: IASC, 2016.

2 Including donors, NGOs, crisis-affected states and others.

3 United Nations, 2016.

4 Ibid. ‘This notion of ‘collective outcomes’ has been placed at the center of the commitment to the New Way of Working, summarised in the Commitment to Action signed by the Secretary-General and nine UN Principals at the WHS, and endorsed by the World Bank and IOM.’

5 For a complete discussion of the Grand Bargain and a review of progress, see: UN-OCHA, 2018.

## —1—

# Costing and financing shock-responsive social protection

## Costing models for social protection and humanitarian responses

**The starting point for estimating the financial requirements for building a shock-responsive social protection system typically involves a cost calculation of benefits delivered to a covered population, usually with distinct estimates for the direct costs of benefits and the associated administrative and delivery costs.** The actual models differ in subtle ways, but both focus on the cost of inputs and outputs. Typically, the costing models fail to map collective outcomes and rarely quantify the full range of contingent liabilities for which governments accept responsibility.

The typical social protection costing model focuses on three budgetary determinants:

- Coverage of the social protection system in terms of number of individuals or households,
- Direct unit costs of delivered benefits (for example, the value of a cash transfer), and
- Administrative expenses.

The first two determinants are specific policy choices – the government determines the coverage of the programme by its decisions in terms of who will benefit from the programme, and the pace at which the implementing institution scales up delivery. Similarly, policy choices drive benefit amounts which in turn determine direct unit costs. Administration costs are not directly policy-choice variables but they are substantially influenced by policy-design decisions in terms of targeting, conditionalities, payments mechanisms and other features.

The formula below illustrates a generalised method for estimating the cost of the proposed social transfer programme:

$$\text{Cost} = (\text{Coverage} \times \text{Direct Benefit Unit Cost}) + \text{Administration}$$

For example, the annual cost will equal the number of people or households receiving the benefit ('coverage') multiplied by the annual direct unit costs, plus the costs of administering the programme. Frequently, social protection costing models employ an alternative specification for this equation that directly yields cost as a share of national income, as measured by Gross Domestic Product.

$$\text{Cost (\% of GDP)} = \{\text{Coverage as \% of the national population}\} \times \{\text{Direct benefit unit cost as a \% of per capita income}\} \times \{\text{Administrative cost multiplier}\}$$

Most cross-country social protection financial models express cost as a percentage of national income (GDP). This is useful because cost expressed in terms of its burden on the overall national economy provides a better picture of the sustainable financing context. Models developed by the International Labour Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank (including the ADePT tool), and many studies by research institutes and NGOs employ this costing approach.

The integration of social protection with humanitarian programming requires a more complex model, because the humanitarian-development nexus involves coverage mandates, constrains delivery modalities, accelerates timing, and expands the administrative costs.

The conventional social protection financing model provides a starting point for methodologies adapted for integrated programmes that deliver humanitarian assistance. Willitts-King, Mowjee and Poole (2017) present a tiered costing approach, illustrated in Figure 1 below.



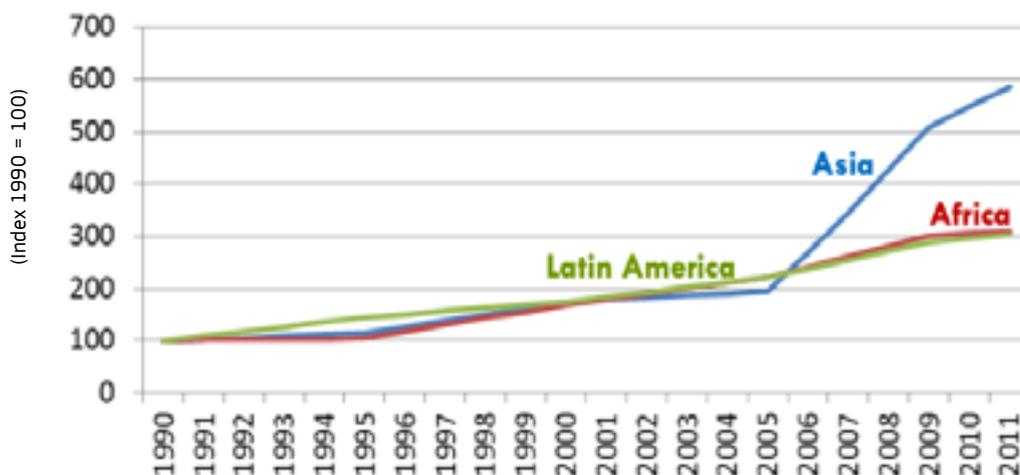
**These models go further than conventional approaches by including the interaction of spending across sectors to measure the impact of inter-sectoral synergies.** In this way, they pre-empt the traps into which conventional approaches can fall: (i) over-estimating the cost of SDG achievement by ignoring cross-sectoral synergies that increase efficiency and improve value-for-money; and (ii) under-estimating the cost by ignoring non-linear relationships that reflect higher costs of incremental achievements once initial initiatives harvest the proverbial ‘low-hanging fruit’. The more sophisticated inter-sectoral approaches estimate the joint production of SDG outcomes taking into account comprehensive inter-sectoral synergies. These models demonstrate that these developmental synergies among social and economic sectors generate powerful efficiencies that can substantially improve the affordability of SDG achievement.

## Sources of funding and financing instruments to achieve SPaN

**Investments in social protection represent one of governments’ most rapidly growing policy sectors in Africa, Asia and Latin America.** Figure 2 below illustrates a threefold increase in real spending in Africa and Latin America over the past several decades – and a sixfold increase in Asia. Nevertheless, spending remains low by industrialised country standards, and much lower in countries experiencing the greatest fragility. Nevertheless, national government funding for social protection systems often exceeds the budget for humanitarian interventions.

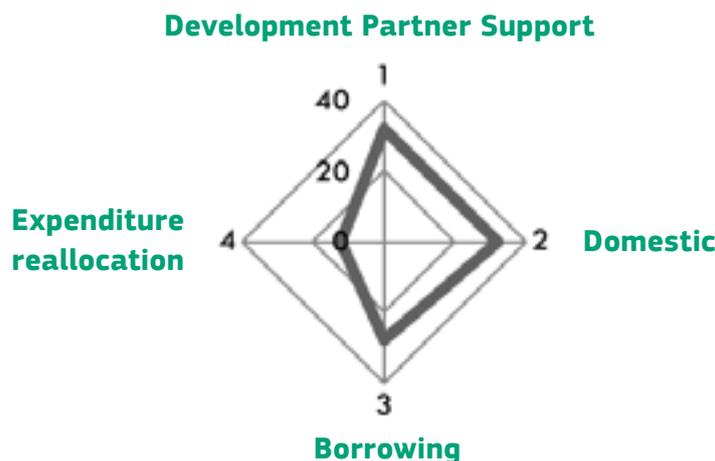
Figure 2. Growth in Social Protection by Region (Index 1990=100)

Source: OECD 2015



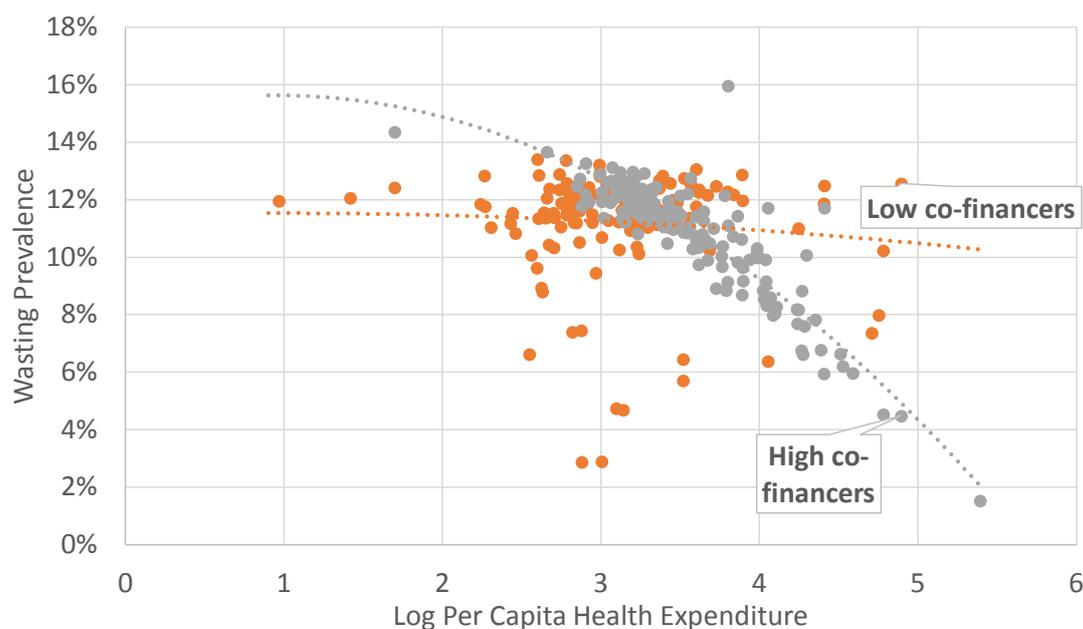
As illustrated in Figure 3, governments generally finance social protection spending from four sources: (1) development partner support, (2) domestic revenue, (3) borrowing and (4) reprioritising other spending or improving efficiency within the social protection sector.

Figure 3. Composition of Social Protection Financing



## Box 1. Ethiopia's financing of the Sustainable Development Goals to strengthen resilience

**Ethiopia's ongoing fiscal decentralisation provides an opportunity to measure inter-sectoral synergies and assess their role in achieving the SDGs.** Research developed and tested an innovative methodology to improve costing approaches using an econometric model that explicitly measures synergies that result from interactions among different sectors. The analysis tested a policy production function model that accounts for interactions among vital policy sectors such as health, education, agriculture and governance. The model enabled estimation of the costs of achieving an identified set of SDG indicators.



The figure shows that districts (*woredas*) that invest substantially in both education and agriculture ('high co-financers') are more efficient and better able to reduce wasting in children with health expenditures compared to those districts who do not co-invest in these complementary policy sectors ('low co-financers'). The study's findings support the hypothesis that comprehensive and integrated investments across key social sectors better enable a systems approach that has a greater likelihood of successfully achieving the SDGs. The analysis employed sub-national (district-level) expenditure data and developed a macro model to forecast public expenditures until 2030 through three scenarios. Findings demonstrate that single-sector solutions are unlikely to achieve substantial SDG achievement with any feasible set of resource allocations. The complexity of SDG inter-relationships and the challenges of diminishing marginal returns to socio-economic investments require cross-sectoral approaches at decentralised levels. These findings reveal that leveraging sectoral synergies at decentralised levels can enhance SDG performance at a lower cost. The evidence demonstrates the powerful returns to comprehensive and integrated approaches at decentralised level which generate developmental synergies, multiply impacts and improve value for money. In order to achieve the SDGs, Ethiopia must not only increase its fiscal commitments but must also identify and strengthen cross-sectoral synergies.

Source: UNICEF, 2019

**Around the developing world, governments finance most social protection spending with either domestic revenue (mainly taxes) or development partner assistance.** The reallocation of existing spending often proves politically challenging because of entrenched interests and even with the commitment to changing public expenditure, the process is at best a medium-term outcome (Barrientos, 2004) – Bangladesh committed five years ago to streamline over 150 fragmented programmes, but progress remains slow. Borrowing represents a financially and politically risky option, although multi-lateral development banks have provided billion-dollar loans for social protection to Mexico and Brazil. In the long run, domestic revenue is the only sustainable source of funding to scale up social protection systems. Nevertheless, development partner assistance can provide vital funding for interim support and can finance riskier innovations for which political will is still emerging. The European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for Africa provide an example of such an innovative financing mechanism in the spirit of the Grand Bargain and the New Way of Working; see Box 2).

*Box 2. The European Union Trust Fund as a developmental financing instrument of risk reduction*

**The European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) provides a model for financing social protection and other developmental initiatives that reduce the risk of humanitarian disasters.**

Individual trust fund projects map out an intervention logic that reflects the Grand Bargain and the New Way of Working. 'By investing in economic opportunities and in long-term resilience-building, measures with strong links between emergency, recovery and long-term development will have multiple impacts in a) achieving long term food security through increasing productivity and income; b) maximising direct and indirect employment opportunities for asset-poor groups; and c) empowering women and youth. By improving the food and nutrition security of the targeted areas and enhancing the economic/livelihoods opportunities, the proposed action will help tackling the root causes triggering destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration.' (EUTF-Action\_Document-EL\_Nino-Ethiopia, pages 1-2) The theory of change represents a comprehensive initiative tackling a complex, multi-sector challenge, with an integrated set of interventions aiming to achieve a portfolio of inter-related outcomes that build resilience and promote development.

The EUTF provides assistance in 26 partner countries across three targeted regions: Sahel region and Lake Chad, Horn of Africa and North of Africa. The fund focuses on economic development programmes that strengthen resilience for (i) improved food and nutrition security, (ii) improved migration governance and management, and (iii) improvements in overall governance.

The fund has contributed EUR 3.59 billion across 187 programmes, including EUR 20 million to the Health Pooled Fund in South Sudan. The project aims to improve health services at the county and state level. The Health Pooled Fund has many expected outcomes, including improving access to antenatal care during pregnancy, increasing access to nutrition services and providing essential medicines. In The Gambia, the EUTF for Africa contributed EUR 11 million to the Youth Empowerment Scheme.

The scheme aims to support economic development of The Gambia by enhancing self-employment and employability for youth. The programme focuses on providing vocational training, financial services, and business advisory support. It also focuses on creating 'decent jobs' by developing new linkages to different sectors of the economy through product transformation and exports. These and many other EUTF initiatives aim to pre-empt disasters from creating catastrophic shocks by building the developmental capacity of affected communities and strengthening their core resilience.

*Source: European Commission, 2018*

## Adequacy of resources and future sustainability

Inadequate or incorrectly allocated resources pose a serious threat to the sustainability of the financing of integrated social protection and humanitarian responses. Limited fiscal capacity to complete or continue donor-funded projects compounds low capacity to accurately estimate the need for funding and ensure sustainability. In the absence of mechanisms to estimate these annually or at a programme/project level, two options can better enable countries to mitigate the risk of inadequate or unsustainable funding:

- 1. Longer-term coordinated planning at the national level:** A country can adopt a long-term planning approach to ensure sustainable funding for critical projects and programmes. For example, in Mali (Kardan et al., 2017; O'Brien, et al., 2018), the government adopted a joint strategic planning process with donors for food security programming. They jointly completed medium-term planning and analysis of funding requirements to align donor and government priorities and ensure the sustainability of funds in the medium term. The National Response Plan of Mali presents the funding agreed by all agencies – government ministries, the UN and national NGOs. In contrast, the government and donor partners in Lesotho relied on a shorter-term financing agreement, which posed significant challenges for the resource-constrained country in responding to the El Niño crisis. At a programme level, Mexico's FONDEN is a useful model in decision-making and finance. It adopts a clear contingency plan and disaster risk financing plan with a budget process to ensure funding for recovery after natural disasters, with allocations every year. It clearly identifies risks and their owners, with pre-agreed rules between federal and local government on what is covered, how and when, with catalytic incentives for risk reduction. Regular budget contributions support reinsurance mechanisms with support from newly issued catastrophe bonds that transfer a specified set of risks to investors (Conference Report, 2017).
- 2. Multi-sectoral planning and financing:** To strengthen fiscal capacity to respond to shocks, governments can identify resources in multiple sectors (agriculture, health, etc.) in addition to social protection and disaster risk management. Inter-sectoral synergies drive comprehensive benefits, which can trigger and support multi-stakeholder planning and budgeting of contingency funds for integrated programmes. However, a key challenge is to mobilise resources that adequately meet the requirements at the time of need. While instruments like disaster risk insurance and contingency credit can provide some relief, they are not always appropriate – insurance is a one-time financial aid, and contingency credit increases debt. Permanent regional mechanisms such as the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) provide an example of a cost-effective multi-stakeholder instrument that can provide rapid response (see Box 3).



Reallocation of existing fiscal resources poses critical political and practical challenges. Existing programmes entrench vested interests, and any reallocation generates winners and losers. In particular, attempts at cross-sectoral reallocation may pit less powerful social protection and disaster risk reduction stakeholders against counterparts in more powerful ministries, risking backlash.

**States and agencies have been reallocating resources to improve public financing for social protection to reach the vulnerable timeously.** There are examples of ‘refocusing’ assistance, i.e. ‘adjusting the social protection programme to refocus assistance on groups within the caseload that are most vulnerable to the shock’ (OPM, 2017). Essentially, refocusing can be approached in two ways: giving more assistance to some people while removing it from the rest, or extending it to more people while reducing the amount provided to each. For example, the annual food distribution program in Mali changes its caseload and beneficiaries each year. This could potentially improve the overall impact of an emergency response as coverage is extended to the most vulnerable. However, it may lessen the impact for an individual/household that is rotated on and off the list and potentially cost the programme its ability to generate the intended impact.

**Other common mechanisms for generating fiscal space in the structural budget include addressing the proliferation of tax exemptions and expenditure on defence.** The revenues foregone from tax exemptions are often substantial. According to an IMF study (Montagnat-Rentier & Parent, 2012), revenue foregone from custom exemptions ranges from, as a percentage of GDP, 1.44 % in Benin, 2.04 % in Chad, 3.42 % in Senegal, 4.48 % in Burundi, to 6.15 % in the Republic of Congo. Avoidance of preferential tax systems adds more tax revenue, which can benefit the lives of the poor with more funding capacity for social protection.

## Coordinating among humanitarian and development actors

**The coordination of finance between humanitarian and development actors also plays an important role in effectively reallocating resources and building synergies to achieve SPaN.** The coordination of efforts across multiple donors and their partnerships with host governments and local actors, as well as host communities can significantly improve the sustainability and usefulness of external financing to simultaneously build stronger systems while responding to humanitarian needs, without necessarily reallocating funding in a fragmented manner and risk the breakdown of existing systems and programmes (IASC, 2016). Single-donor interventions can also build bridges across the development and humanitarian nexus. Box 4 describes the DEVCO’s Pro-Resilience Action fund that promotes more effective post-crisis responses by multiple actors.

**During a crisis, early donor engagement through flexible approaches can provide a coherent humanitarian response.** The Luxembourg development cooperation agency, which provides development assistance in Mali, adapted to the changing political environment in the country to continue its ongoing development support. In March 2012, a military coup destabilised the country, however, the agency continued to assist at the decentralised level by providing humanitarian relief to civilians impacted by the crisis. The agency also adopted an interim development strategy with the Malian government during a reconciliation road-map period. The strategy allowed the agency to deliver its ongoing projects, strengthen peacebuilding initiatives and support a multi-annual cooperation initiative. By responding to the country’s changing political landscape, Luxembourg did not have to terminate its development programmes and remained one of the few bilateral donors to provide humanitarian support to displaced civilians (Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 2013).

**In addition to adapting to changing realities, donors should also improve the flexibility of existing funding mechanisms.** Crises can be complex, requiring an urgent response to a wide range of issues. Making funding sources more adaptable reduces the need to create new funds to support each issue. In addition to complicating donor reporting, more funding instruments can create challenges for actors in the field, particularly in post-conflict crises. In this context, donors receive funding from different sources – i.e. refugee, humanitarian and migration aid – all to support activities for the same initiative. Donors should ensure their existing funding instruments can respond to changing contexts before creating new funds (OECD, 2017).

**Programmes with embedded flexibility mechanisms are better suited to address rapidly evolving cases.** Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme is regarded as a state-of-the-art scheme in that regard. While it is a nationally owned cash transfer programme, it has a clear objective for emergency responses and clear triggers. There is clear information on who is on the scheme in normal times, and who will be benefiting in a disaster. The programme is underwritten by an index insurance policy and can rely on donor commitment (DFID). By including provision for a crisis modifier (see Box 4 for another example), the programme can respond to changing contexts in the field (Conference Report, 2017).

*Box 4. Crisis Modifiers*

A crisis modifier facilitates the mobilisation of resources from on-going activities to response and relief efforts in the event of a large-scale shock. With funding from DFID, a joint UNDP-DFID team designed a crisis modifier tool as part of the Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund (ZRBF) – a USD 50 million five-year multi-donor fund providing humanitarian assistance in the country.

This crisis modifier is designed to adjust relief efforts flexibly by scaling up and/or down programme interventions, which are cash-based and distributed through current social protection mechanisms and other related programmes. The level of intervention is determined through early trigger mechanisms. Its built-in trigger approach follows four stages that depend on the severity of the shock: Normal; Alert; Alarm and Emergency. The ZRBF management team and implementing partners manage interventions for the first three stages, while the Emergency stage involves high-level donor and partner support.

*Source: DFID 2018, DFID 2017, OPM 2018*

## Initial principles for a proposed financing structure: Building intra- and inter-sectoral synergies – the role of a co-financing approach

Integrating social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus offers national governments and development partners a synergy-building enabler that supports achievement of 14 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The financing requirements of the social protection sector are substantial – and for the entire 2030 agenda much more so. No development partner – or even consortium of donors – can provide sustainable social protection financing at scale, much less for a nation's entire SDG agenda. Donor resourcing strategies that complement and enable the strengthening of national financing provide the most sustainable approaches to sustainable expansions of social protection systems. This requires guidance for countries to assess financing capabilities and priorities, and to understand linkages within the social protection sector and to build bridges to other sectors, particularly health, education, nutrition, gender, environment and livelihoods – sectors for which social protection has demonstrated particularly significant synergy-enhancing impacts.

One of the most promising innovations enables multiple policy stakeholders to 'co-finance' complex interventions linking social protection to other developmental sectors. 'Co-financing' for social protection moves away from a silo approach to a welfare-enhancing development planning approach, which recognises the complexity of interventions with multi-sectoral outcomes and further encourages inter-sectoral investment decisions that are rooted in economic evaluation of costs and benefits (see Samson 2016; Remme et al., 2016). Often an intervention that can yield benefits for multiple sectors goes un-financed because none of the sectors can individually finance the programme; a co-financing approach allows the multiple beneficiary sectors to collectively finance an intervention – their investments are often proportional to the values of the benefits each sectoral stakeholder estimates. By sharing the cost of an intervention across sectors that benefit from it, the co-financing approach allows multiple sectors to take ownership of the intervention, achieves developmental synergies, optimises resources, and prevents welfare losses. Policy makers see robust and credible evidence on cross-sectoral investment returns as essential for scaling up successful programmes. The United Nations Development Programme and UNICEF have hosted workshops and pilot projects to build capacity and political will for co-financing interventions.



## Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) supporting financing SPaN

Robust evidence-building through systematic and carefully designed evaluations and robust monitoring systems characterises social protection policy development. Humanitarian crises, however, offer little opportunity for the delays that robust M&E systems often require. A lack of rigorous evaluations by humanitarian organisations or governments in some of the most prominent examples of humanitarian response through social protection systems – for example, in Lesotho, Pakistan and the Philippines – makes it difficult to assess the value-added from integrated responses compared to standalone humanitarian interventions. Similar gaps characterise the broader global research on questions including targeting effectiveness and timeliness of response (O’Brien et al., 2018).

Given the challenges in financing SPaN, governments and their development partners will require credible and actionable evidence to mobilise political will, design value-for-money intervention models and ensure ongoing implementation. The complexity of the challenge requires appropriate M&E tools for achieving complex objectives. The EU Systems practice note outlines frameworks for building evidence in this context. In addition, harmonised evaluation frameworks will have to include indicators for shock-responsiveness.



**Kenya's progress reflects a global effort by development partners including WFP, FAO, DFID, EU and the World Bank to strengthen the integration of social protection, DRM and climate change adaptation strategies.** Since 2007, for example, the World Bank has incorporated Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Options (Cat-DDOs) in their development policy loans (see Box 6). Cat-DDOs provide up to USD 7 million of immediate liquidity if the government declares a state of emergency following a natural disaster. This option, however, requires the government to build *ex ante* capacity to manage risks. Development partners can create greater incentives for integrating DRM and social protection at the planning and programming stages.

*Box 5. World Bank Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Option*

**Kenya faces extreme susceptibility to droughts and floods, which, on average, have cost an estimated 2.0 to 2.4 per cent of GDP each year. In the past, the Government of Kenya has depended on humanitarian assistance from donors, who provided an average of USD 276 million each year between 2002 and 2012 to help cope with natural disasters.** The ad hoc nature of donor support leads to uncertainty and is also subject to delays. Given these issues, the Government of Kenya has taken measures to proactively manage climate and disaster risk; in particular, the adoption of a disaster risk management strategy.

The disaster risk management strategy includes financing options, such as the USD 200 million IDA Development Policy Financing with a Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Option (Cat DDO), approved by the World Bank in 2018. Both financing tools help address immediate liquidity needs in the aftermath of a natural disaster, while stakeholders mobilise other funds such as bilateral aid. In the instance of disaster arising from health emergencies and/or natural hazards, the Government of Kenya can draw down the credit by submitting a request to the World Bank, which disburses the funds within two to three business days – thereby providing rapid financing for relief efforts. As of July 2018, 12 other countries have utilised the World Bank's Cat DDO instrument.

*Source: World Bank, 2018*

## Multi-stakeholder, multi-year funding cycles

**Various donor funding mechanisms, such as multi-stakeholder and multi-year funding cycles, have different impacts on long-term outcomes.** Multilateral organisations including the UN facilitate multi-stakeholder humanitarian interventions. To address the financing gap, the UN adopted the Grand Bargain, which commits aid organisations and donors to providing an additional billion dollars of humanitarian aid over a five-year period. The funding is provided through efficiency gains in the working practices of donors and aid organisations, such as streamlined reporting requirements that reduce bureaucracy, increased financing for local and national responders and gearing up cash programming.

**Development partners also channel a small proportion of humanitarian assistance to 'humanitarian pooled funds,' which totalled USD 1.1 billion in 2014.** These UN-managed funds serve two main purposes – to provide funding for gaps in humanitarian interventions and to expedite responses to unexpected disasters (O'Brien et al., 2018; Kellett & Peters, 2014). The most prominent humanitarian pooled funds include the CERF, Emergency Response Funds and Common Humanitarian Funds. The CERF offers grants and small loans to UN agencies and the International Organisation for Migration for emergencies that require rapid response or are underfunded. Although the process for allocating funds is ambiguous, the fund has been successful in providing rapid response. On the other hand an evaluation found the Emergency Response Fund, which provides NGOs and UN agencies with limited funding (USD 100,000-700,000) for emergency relief, to be slow in response and underfunded at the country level (O'Brien et al., 2018; Universalia, 2013). Common Humanitarian Funds, which provide funding to NGOs and UN agencies, have limited scope, operating in only five countries (O'Brien et al., 2018; Kellett & Peters, 2014).

**DFID's analysis on early humanitarian response recommends moving to multi-year funding cycles that provide early response and build long-term interventions** (Cabot Venton, 2013); (Development Initiatives, 2014). In practice, donors are more inclined to provide protracted assistance in a small number of countries over several years. However, this has resulted in certain crises receiving more donor attention over others (Poole, 2015).

## Contingent risk financing

**Contingent financing complements a larger risk management system that includes effective early warning systems, contingency plans and adequate institutional arrangements and pre-established capacity in place that enable the plans to be implemented** (O'Brien, et al., 2018; Hobson & Campbell, 2012).

Low-income and shock-prone countries can mitigate the impact of a disaster by identifying resources that provide counter-cyclical shock response. Governments can use a wide variety of risk financing mechanisms to provide support for pre- and post-crisis needs. Banks and international finance institutions offer contingent credit facilities to finance shock-responses. Although countries may secure this form of borrowing more rapidly, it increases their debt burden and mainly benefits middle-income countries (Bastagli, 2014; McCord, 2013).

**The World Bank offers a range of financing instruments, such as the multi-donor Rapid Social Response (RSR) programme**, which focuses on scaling up social transfer systems in low-income countries following the 2006 food, fuel and financial (Triple-F) crisis. The Bank additionally developed Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Options (Cat-DDOs), discussed above, which provide member countries with funding up to USD 7 million to support rehabilitation needs (GFDRR, 2016).

**Other forms of financing include risk insurance, such as regional catastrophe insurance pools.** By pooling risk, countries can receive index-based coverage against a wide range of natural disasters (Ghesquiere et al., 2013; GFDRR, 2016). A pilot conducted by the World Bank found that in comparison to single country insurance, risk pooling among participating countries resulted in significant savings, up to 50 per cent of the premium. However, the World Bank also highlighted that the product is not suitable for all crises. Countries that experience more frequent but less severe disasters might prefer contingent credit and reliance on national reserves (DFID, 2015).

## Flexibility

**Increasing the flexibility of financing and reducing risk averse procedures in disbursement can improve humanitarian response outcomes.** The Internal Risk Facility (IRF), established in 2013, provides rapid and reliable assistance to support DFID's humanitarian efforts in Somalia. A review of the facility found that, in comparison to other financing mechanisms, the IRF is more efficient and consumes less time to disburse aid.

Other initiatives include the Productive Safety Nets Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia, which was established in 2005 to reduce dependence on emergency food relief efforts in districts with chronic food scarcity. In 2009, the government introduced a Risk Financing Mechanism (RFM) to help mobilise funds, up to USD 80 million each year. The first RFM was triggered in 2011 to respond to the food needs of 9.6 million people. Evaluations highlighted that the mechanism reduced response time from nine months to six weeks, providing a more effective and efficient shock-response method (Hobson & Campbell, 2012).

# —3—

## Conclusions

**Building a new financing structure to deliver an integrated social protection response across the humanitarian-development nexus requires both a new way of thinking and a new way of working together.**

The Grand Bargain and World Humanitarian Summit commitments pave the way to ensuring that comprehensive and integrated approaches to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals provide a strategy to effectively strengthen resilience and reduce fragility. After decades (arguably millennia) of focusing on coping and mitigation, the new way focuses on reducing risk and promoting development. This innovation does not replace the need for immediate and direct humanitarian response to emergencies, but it informs a developmental approach that integrates more effective response within the larger set of national systems, including social protection systems.

**This new way of thinking and working requires a transformational financing model.** Estimating the cost of siloed inputs and outputs cannot provide an actionable financing plan for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and building the developmental synergies required to transform fragility first into resilience and then into prosperity. Comprehensive financing models must measure inter-sectoral synergies and account for the complex relationships, mapping activities and inputs not only to outputs but further to outcomes and long-term impacts. Perhaps fantasy a decade or two ago, innovations and advancements in both data-collection and -modelling technology provide ground-breaking opportunities today to build the necessary evidence base on how to better integrate inter-sectoral interventions to achieve more effective and efficient developmental outcomes. Nearly every country today has multiple household living standards surveys that provide the baseline data for measuring Sustainable Development Goal outcomes at both national and sub-national (even district) levels. In an increasing number of countries, these outcomes can be mapped to fiscal inputs and other policy variables to produce policy production functions that quantify inter-sectoral synergies. The resulting systems-costing models can triangulate and inform other approaches, including systems dynamics models, that provide a better picture of how multiple ministries and development partners must work to build a humanitarian response system that strengthens social protection and other developmental systems while supporting the achievement of the SDGs.

**The resulting comprehensive financing model supports the overarching Grand Bargain commitment by better employing available resources and capabilities to both reduce long-term gaps in humanitarian support while strengthening achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.** This developmental approach can help tackle the intrinsic unaffordability of the otherwise vastly expanding humanitarian burden that results from protracted crises unmitigated by core developmental interventions. The proposed financing model enables a comprehensive approach that both integrates social protection with humanitarian efforts and also builds broadly inter-sectoral development systems that can effectively strengthen resilience and reduce fragility sufficiently to manage the financing burden.

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European  
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**Operational**

**Note No 6**

*Health and Education*

December 2019

**SPaN**

Supporting people through crisis



*Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus*

DEVCO  
ECHO  
NEAR



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# Introduction

**Globally, in 2017 around 201 million people were directly affected by humanitarian crises and in need of humanitarian assistance, compared to 40 million people over a decade ago** (Development Initiatives, 2018). Human displacement levels are also unprecedented: almost 70 million people are forcibly displaced, often for decades. Of these, there are nearly 25.4 million refugees, over half of whom are children (UNHCR, 2018).

**Traditionally, humanitarian assistance has been focused on short-term response to save lives and address acute needs of crisis-affected populations.** With humanitarian crises becoming increasingly complex, recurrent and protracted, and often compounding pre-existing high levels of poverty and vulnerability, a critical need for longer-term solutions has emerged (European Commission, 2019). Health is a key focus of humanitarian assistance and also a metric of humanitarian response. However, humanitarian assistance focusing on health is rapidly changing as the burden shifts towards chronic non-communicable diseases and growing urban refugee populations (European Commission, DG ECHO, 2014). Education is also one of the main pillars of humanitarian response, but the sector suffers from a significant funding mismatch, with only six per cent of the total humanitarian budget going to educational programmes (Justino, 2016).

**The 2018 General Guidelines of the European Commission on Operational Priorities for Humanitarian Aid identify the scaling-up of social protection systems through investments in health, education and overall poverty reduction as one of the core avenues to enhance the long-term resilience of vulnerable populations and to enable rapid and efficient assistance in response to shocks** (European Commission, 2017). This global policy shift has also been spurred by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): by explicitly recognising that many of the drivers of humanitarian emergencies can significantly reverse the progress in education, health and other development outcomes of the last decades, the 2030 Agenda sets out a vision for social protection, focusing particularly on vulnerable populations such as those exposed to humanitarian settings, so that 'no one is left behind' in the achievement of SDG 3 (Health) and SDG 4 (Education).

**This note builds on the main SPaN Reference Document to illustrate the state of play of health and education in humanitarian settings,** by providing: (i) an overview of the role of social protection for addressing educational and health needs (in both humanitarian and development settings); and, (ii) a review of evidence, promising instruments, tools and best practices on the implementation of social protection programmes in emergencies for health and education. The definition of social protection is broad and often subject to debate, particularly in the humanitarian-development nexus. In this note, we focus on the non-contributory social protection transfers that are most commonly employed in humanitarian and fragile settings (e.g. cash and in-kind transfers) (see Box 1).



## — 1 —

# Understanding Education and Health through a Nexus Lens

We start by providing a glossary of terms commonly used in the health and education sectors in Box 2. Then, in Table 1 below, we present an overview of the global state of play regarding health and education by reporting the main messages emerging from the latest relevant reports.

## Box 2: Glossary of Terms

### Education

- 'Educational access' or 'schooling': refers to school enrolment, attendance, and progression through the schooling system.
- Educational 'achievements': refer to the learning and cognitive outcomes and to the highest level of education pupils successfully completed. Educational 'sector': all the institutions (ministries of education, local educational authorities, teacher training institutions, schools, universities, etc.) whose primary purpose is to provide education to children and young people in educational settings, through policies, curricula and learning materials (UNESCO, 2016).

### Health

- Health care 'access': the ability to command appropriate resources to preserve and improve health. It relates to physical access to services, but also the extent to which a population gains access depends on financial, social and organisational barriers (Gulliford et al., 2002).
- Health care 'coverage': relates to the actual receipt of health care among people who are in need.
- Health outcomes: outcome measures at the individual, group or population levels (e.g. mortality, readmission, patient experience, morbidity etc.).
- Health system: organisation of people, institutions and resources that deliver health care for meeting the health needs of the target population (WHO, 2007).
- Universal Health Coverage (UHC): a situation in which all people and communities can use the promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative health services they need, of sufficient quality to be effective, while also ensuring that the use of these services does not expose the user to financial hardship.
- Basic package of health services (BPHS): policy documents prepared by the Ministry of Health describing the services that should be available. They usually include: maternal and child health, immunisation, nutrition, control of communicable diseases, mental health (DG ECHO, 2014).
- Communicable disease: an infectious disease that can be transmitted by direct contact or through a vector (e.g. enteric infections, respiratory infections and tuberculosis, malaria).
- Non-communicable disease (NCDs): a disease that is by definition non-infectious and non-transmissible. Currently NCDs are the leading cause of death and morbidity globally.





NCDs and mental health; (iv) injuries and violence; (v) UHC and health systems; (vi) environmental risks; and (vii) health risks and disease outbreaks. The World Health Organization (WHO) initiated a General Programme of Work aimed at accelerating progress towards the SDGs<sup>9</sup>. The programme focuses on the triple billion targets of: (i) one billion more people benefitting from universal health coverage; (ii) one billion more people better protected from health emergencies; (iii) one billion more people enjoying better health and well-being.

## AGENDA FOR HUMANITY

Complementing the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, the Agenda for Humanity<sup>10</sup> sets out an action plan to decrease humanitarian needs and vulnerability. The agenda focuses on the following areas to reduce humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability: (i) political leadership to prevent and end conflicts; (ii) uphold the norms that safeguard basic humanitarian principles; (iii) equity; (iv) reinforcement of local systems and the anticipation and overcoming of the humanitarian-development divide; (v) investments. Its main outcome was the Grand Bargain, an agreement among 30 of the biggest donors and aid providers to address the humanitarian financing gap. Of relevance to social protection, the Grand Bargain emphasises a shift towards greater cash programming, more un-earmarked finance, and increased multi-year funding to increase predictability and continuity in the humanitarian response.

## RESOLUTION 2286 OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND ‘CALL TO ACTION ON UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE IN EMERGENCIES’

The resolution 2286 of the Security Council<sup>11</sup> (2015) emphasised the needs of promoting health care during armed conflict. Although the resolution sets an international framework, important challenges remain, particularly with regard to UHC in humanitarian and fragile settings. During the latest World Health Assembly, Switzerland and Afghanistan started a multi-stakeholder ‘Call to action on universal health coverage in emergencies’<sup>12</sup> in order to accelerate efforts to improve the coverage of quality essential health services without risk of financial hardship.

## SPHERE STANDARDS

### Humanitarian Charter

The Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards<sup>13</sup> represent a reference tool for all organisations involved in humanitarian assistance based on the principle of humanity and the primacy of the humanitarian imperative.

### INEE Minimum Standards

The INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery is the only global tool that articulates the minimum level of educational quality and access in emergencies through to recovery. The INEE Minimum Standards are a companion to the Sphere Handbook.

## Relevant EU Policies

Health and education are key priorities for the EU along the humanitarian-development nexus. Table 2 provides a summary of the main policy documents that underpin the EU’s investments in education and health, as well as examples of programmes that respond to the development-humanitarian nexus.

9 [http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA71/A71\\_4-en.pdf?ua=1](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA71/A71_4-en.pdf?ua=1)

10 <https://agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861>

11 <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2286>

12 <https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/strategie-und-politik/internationale-beziehungen/internationale-gesundheitsthemen/UniversalHealthCoverageinEmergencies/UniversalHealthCoverageinEmergencies.html>

13 <https://spherestandards.org/humanitarian-standards/humanitarian-charter/>





## —2—

## Education and Health in the Nexus

## Social assistance in the humanitarian-development nexus

Humanitarian aid traditionally works on a short-term basis in fragile contexts linked to man-made crises, natural disasters or forced displacement settings, with a strong international leadership driven by humanitarian principles and in substitution (or in parallel) to national governments (Table 3). In contrast, development actors tend to operate with a longer-term perspective, in more stable environments, cooperating preferably with national and sub-national governments and state-led institutions.

Table 3: Traditional humanitarian and development settings

	HUMANITARIAN	DEVELOPMENT
<b>Policy framework</b>	Response aimed at saving lives/ensuring basic needs in different crisis contexts	National development programming (including social protection, health and education policies), international development strategies
<b>Outlook</b>	Mostly 6-24 months	Ideally 5-10 years
<b>Coordination/Leadership</b>	International or national-led, depending on crisis context	Ideally government-led, but in marginalised stable areas, international development actors may take leadership
<b>Legal framework</b>	Humanitarian principles/ international humanitarian law in conflict settings and natural disasters; otherwise sovereign law along with UN resolutions	Sovereign law, UN resolutions (e.g. SDGs)
<b>Types of settings</b>	Mostly fragile Lack of political will and/ or capacity	Stable (ideally willing, but lack of political will may also be present)

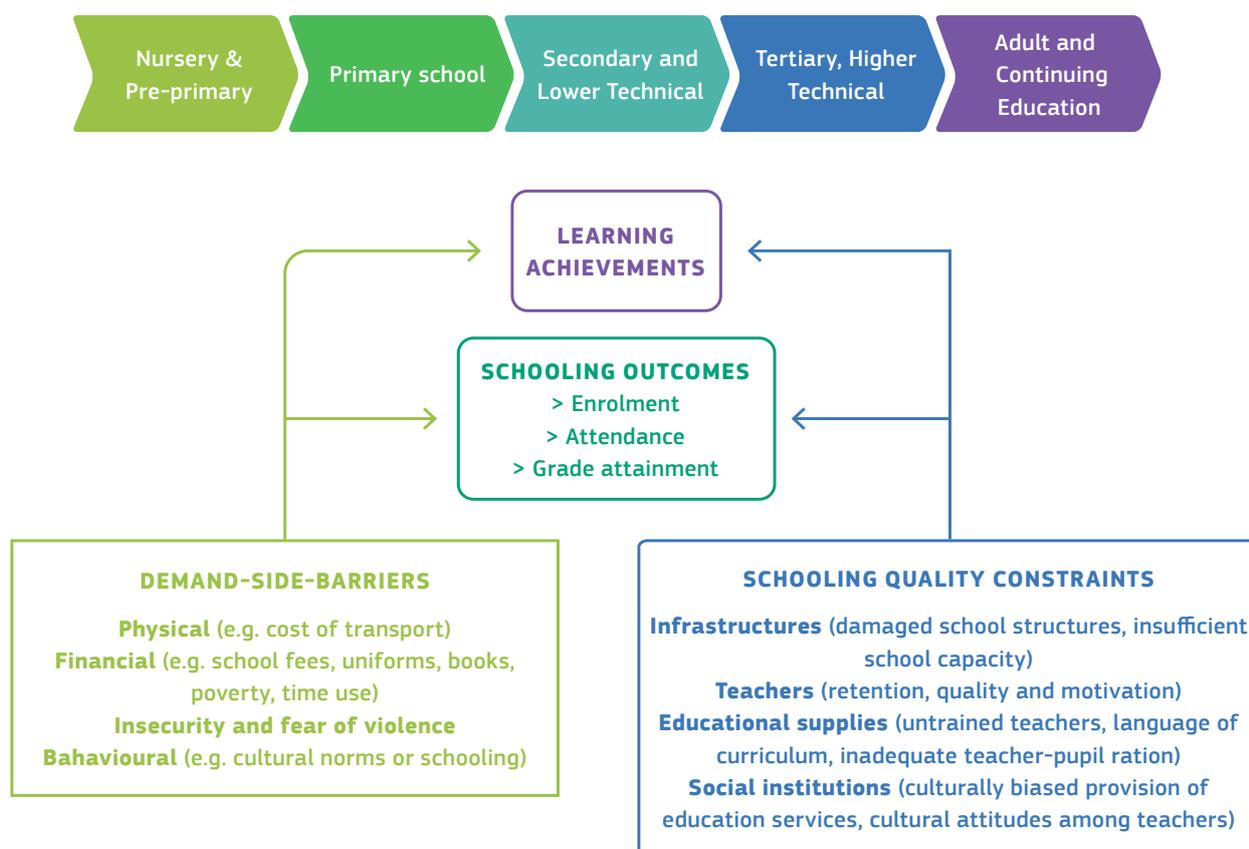
Source: Own adaptation of WHO Health Cluster (2018) and Cherrier (2014)



expenditures (e.g. transport or accommodation costs) for health care, which hampers UHC. The large share of out-of-pocket expenditures increases household vulnerability to sudden shocks related to ill health (Blanchet, Fouad, & Pherali, 2016). With a focus on UHC, the link between social protection and health is centred around health financing, with the ideal goal of reaching zero out-of-pocket spending.

Furthermore, during humanitarian crises, the opportunity costs of schooling or to accessing health centres can rise, as coping with the shock often increases the demand for all family members to work. Humanitarian crises can also intensify physical and social barriers impeding access to education and health services. For instance, the destruction of nearby schools or health centres increases the costs of transportation to the next closest facilities. Similarly, discrimination against refugees in hosting populations may impede their access to health and education services. Increased insecurity, fear of violence or unsafe environmental conditions may also hamper school attendance or willingness to travel to schools, health centres or to food markets.

Figure 1a. Supply- and demand-side barriers to education during humanitarian crises



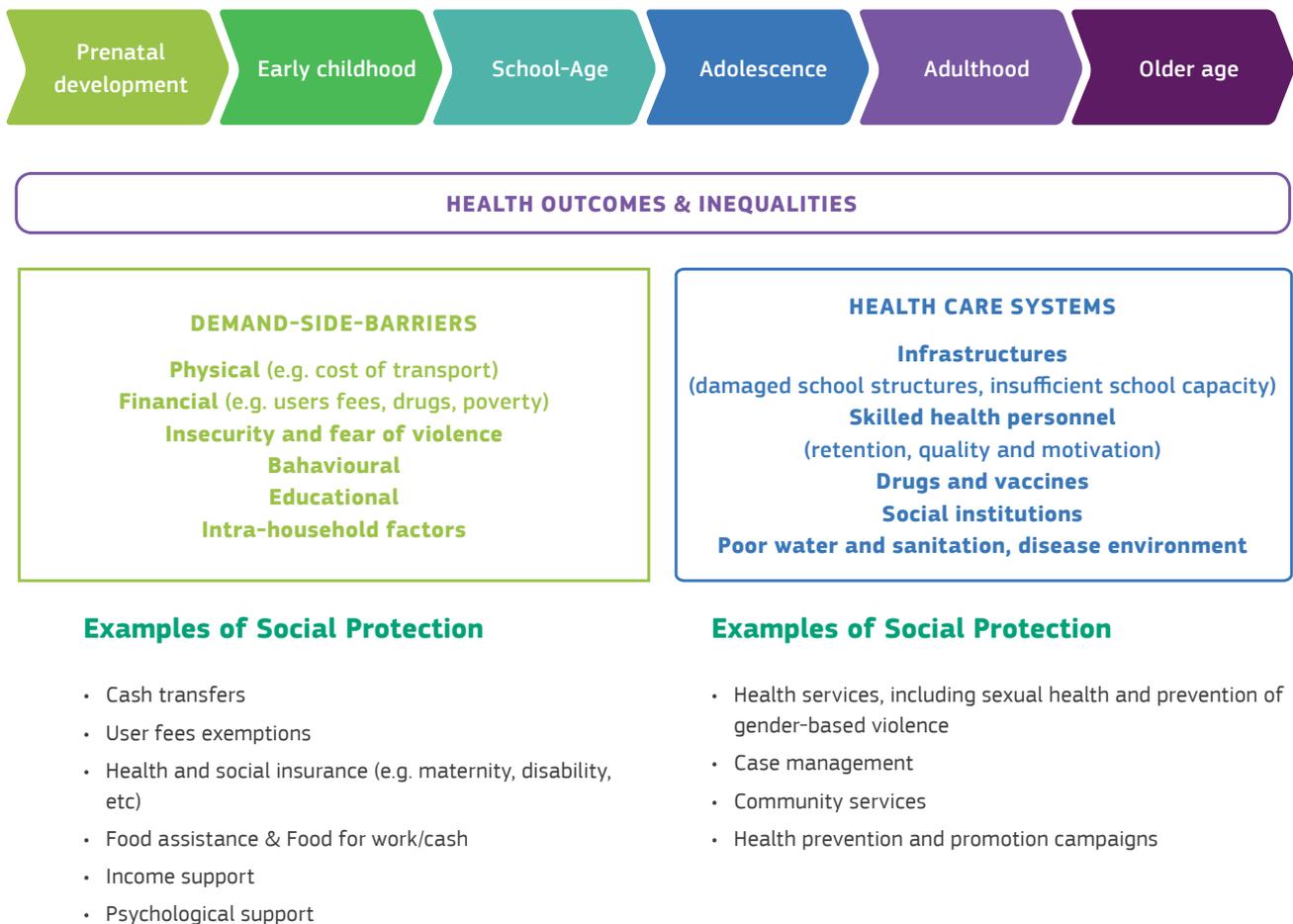
### Examples of Social Protection

- Multi-purpose cash transfers
- Education-specific cash and voucher assistance
- In-kind incentives, e.g. transport, uniforms, books, food (school feeding)
- Child safety and protection assurances, guidance, counselling
- Psychosocial support, counselling
- Educational fee waivers

### Examples of Social Protection

- Free basic education
- Child-friendly spaces – classrooms and recreational
- Proximity of schools
- Teachers – skilled, language of instruction, gender, ethnicity
- Adapted curriculum and materials
- Education assistance for vulnerable children (children with learning disorders, children with disabilities).

Figure 1b. Supply- and demand-side barriers to health during humanitarian crises and examples of social protection



Importantly, humanitarian crises do not affect all population sub-groups equally, thus potentially increasing pre-existing disparities on the basis of gender, age, socio-economic status and disability. For instance, worldwide, women and children are up to 14 times more likely than men to die in a natural disaster (Zeid et al., 2015). Children and adolescents are especially vulnerable to humanitarian disasters, given that many human capital investments occur in childhood (see Box 4). Elderly and disabled people are also at higher risk of poorer health outcomes during emergencies, as compared to other population sub-groups. As health care in fragile and humanitarian settings is mostly provided by an unregulated private sector, wide heterogeneity across population groups regarding their ability to afford health expenses leads to increasing inequalities of access to health care (WHO Health Cluster, 2018). Inequality in access should be therefore taken into account in the design of interventions that can effectively protect the most vulnerable population groups as per SDG 3 and SDG 4 (For a detailed discussion see Note 10).

Box 5: Quick Insights – The long-term and intergenerational effects of exposure to humanitarian crises during childhood

At least 476 million children aged 3-15 years live in countries affected by crises, and around 65 million of them are directly affected by emergencies (Nicolai et al., 2015). Protecting children’s health and education from the negative effects of humanitarian crises is imperative, as a body of evidence has documented the detrimental long-term effects on life-course health, education, incomes and overall well-being of being exposed to humanitarian crises during childhood (Akbulut-Yuksel, 2017; Akresh & De Walque, 2008; Buvinić, Das Gupta, & Shemyakina, 2014; Caruso & Miller, 2015). Recent literature has shown that the negative implications of exposure to humanitarian crises or disasters on health and education are also transmitted to the next generations: for instance, Caruso and Miller (2015) show that children of mothers affected at birth by a large earthquake in Peru have 0.4 of a year’s less education.





**Cash transfers** can address financial barriers covering out-of-pocket expenditures for both direct and indirect costs of health services. According to the WHO guidelines (WHO Health Cluster, 2018), in order to maximise their impact, cash transfers should target patients who need to use health services, and the amount of the transfer should cover diagnosis and treatment costs, and indirect costs. Cash transfers may also promote the use of free preventive services, such as immunisation or antenatal care, by establishing conditionality conditions to transfers' disbursement. Conditional cash transfers has been proved to significantly increase the number of preventative health services visits, and thus stimulate demand for health services in development contexts (Fernald et al., 2008; Lagarde et al., 2007) nutrition, and education. Families enrolled in CCT programmes receive cash in exchange for complying with certain conditions: preventive health requirements and nutrition supplementation, education, and monitoring designed to improve health outcomes and promote positive behaviour change. Our aim was to disaggregate the effects of cash transfer from those of other programme components.

**METHODS**

In an intervention that began in 1998 in Mexico, low-income communities (n=506. Social norms and attitudes to health care, possible sanctions for non-compliance, as well as delivering modalities plays a role in determining the effect of introducing conditionality on behavioural changing (Gaarder et al., 2010). As for education, conditionality increases monitoring costs. Often programme beneficiaries in humanitarian contexts cannot comply to the conditions for reasons beyond their control, such as unattended shocks, or violence escalation in conflict settings (WHO Health Cluster, 2018).

**Cash plus** interventions include awareness raising on health, dietary and sanitation practices and infant and young child feeding practices (such as the promotion of breast feeding). Cash plus programmes can be adapted to humanitarian crisis settings. For instance, the delivery of mental health services in addition to the cash disbursement can enhance psychological well-being to beneficiaries exposed to man-made or natural shocks.

Commodity or value **vouchers** are another commonly-used instruments in developing countries to subsidise access to health services for targeted populations. Brody et al. (2013) show that vouchers have a positive effect on health service delivery, although their impact on health outcomes is not clear and varies across contexts. To guarantee access to quality services and avoiding patients using money to buy substandard or ineffective (traditional) services, or poor-quality medicines, the use of vouchers can be restricted to providers from which minimum quality standards can be ensured.

**Targeted health user-fee exemption.** Targeted user-fee exemptions removing payment at the point of care by patients aim at removing one of the biggest barrier to access to care, in a view to facilitate the achievement of universal health coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 3. Such measures can target certain population groups, such as poorest households and/ or most vulnerable groups, such as under-fives. In spite of the existence of extensive literature on user fees, little is known about the long-term effects of user fee exemption policies on healthcare use in developing countries. Existing evidence is mixed (see Box 6 – The effects of user-fees and their abolition in Uganda). In Zambia, although the removal of user fees had positive immediate effects (free care at the point of use), there was considerable inequality in the incidence of catastrophic health expenditures. Free health care poses a sustainability challenge if expenditures are not paired with revenues (Masiye et al., 2016). Therefore, political commitment towards universal health coverage (UHC) is fundamental.

It is noted that for user-fee removal policies to be effective in increasing service use in the long term, they need be accompanied by additional measures, which notably target governance in the medical supply chain management, geographical barriers and knowledge gaps. Burkina Faso has recently introduced targeted exemptions.

*Box 6: The effects of user-fees and their abolition in Uganda (Xu et al., 2006)*

In Uganda, the first formal attempt to introduce user fees failed in 1990, which led to fees being charged illegally. User fees were universally introduced in 1993 and were expected to generate public resources, promote efficient use of these resources, and improve the quality and equity of health services. Unfortunately, the funds generated were typically less than 5 per cent of total expenditure for most hospitals and health districts, and had little or no effect on the quality or efficiency of services. Furthermore, their introduction was associated with a dramatic drop in take-up of health services. User fees were subsequently abolished in 2001. Although the abolition of user fees was a measure intended to improve equitable access, while it did improve access rates, it also increased household expenditures because medicines had to be purchased from private pharmacies and it also led to a system of informal payments to health workers.

*Box 7: Social health protection across the nexus in Burkina Faso*

In Burkina Faso, chronically high acute malnutrition and under-five child mortality rates threatened the lives and mental and physical development of children, especially during recurrent drought episodes such as the one experienced in 2005. In this context of a 'forgotten crisis', humanitarian organisations started to offer free access to health and malnutrition treatment in northern areas of the country where global acute malnutrition rates were far beyond the internationally accepted emergency threshold. This approach was part of the DG ECHO Global Plan Sahel designed as response to the regional Sahel Food and Nutrition Crisis, in line with the EU commitment to linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) in 2001.

From 2008 onwards these geographically targeted projects were coupled with extensive research and advocacy work through a network of NGOs and research institutes, and continued for several years, becoming a pilot for a new policy instrument.

It was in 2016 that free access to health finally became a reality for children under five and pregnant and breastfeeding women on national level in Burkina Faso, when the newly elected government decided on a major change in health financing policy: direct payments for health care for vulnerable groups were abolished as part of the national social protection system. Unlike in other countries in Africa, this decision took quite a long time. A crucial factor was the continued funding of pilot projects to test the new policy instrument and to generate evidence. Moreover, it took the continued mobilisation of advocacy coalitions, as well as action to counter preconceived notions about the instrument, and the emergence of an essential political window of opportunity – the 2014 popular uprising – for the decision to be possible.



**Food assistance programmes** (GFD, food for work and school feeding interventions) also have the potential to yield positive effects on the health outcomes of beneficiaries, especially by improving their food security and nutrition outcomes. For instance, Tranchant et al. found that humanitarian GFD and school feeding improved food security and child height in Mali (Tranchant et al., 2018). For in-depth discussion, see Operational Note 7 (Food and Nutrition Security). In a similar fashion to education, mixed cash and food interventions can have positive effects on health outcomes, by freeing up income resources that can be redirected to enhance preventive and curative health care.

## —3—

## Evidence of Impact – What does it tell us?

Although there is extensive empirical evidence analysis of the effects of social protection on health and education in non-humanitarian settings (see Box 9), the available evidence base for humanitarian contexts is remarkably limited. Furthermore, the existing knowledge is of mixed quality (see Box 8 for the definition of rigorous evidence): peer-reviewed experimental or quasi-experimental studies are scant, and most evidence relies on programmatic reviews and case studies (Murphy et al., 2018; Slater et al., 2012). Reporting of inequalities in access and impact of social protection on education and health by gender, poverty and other factors, as well as by type and degree of crisis, is very limited (Slater et al., 2012). In this section we discuss the available evidence, which we obtained by conducting a literature review to identify relevant research articles on the topic<sup>38</sup>. We categorised the articles emerging from this search into peer-reviewed and non-reviewed papers. We included all peer-reviewed papers and non-reviewed studies that employed rigorous methodology. Other contributions coming from grey literature, i.e. project evaluations, lessons-learned guides and policy papers published by international organisations and NGOs have been included in the discussions in the subsequent sections about ‘operational insights’ and ‘promising practices’. The list of rigorous studies included in this review is presented in Annex 1. Below we present a brief summary of what emerged from them about the impact of social protection programmes on education and health outcomes.

*Box 8: Key insights – Defining rigorous evidence*

An impact evaluation is an assessment of how an intervention or a policy being evaluated affects some outcome. Impact evaluation methods need to rule out the possibility that any factors other than the programme explain the observed impact. Statistical and econometric techniques can be used to identify a comparison group of beneficiaries who remain unaffected by the programme, and to estimate the counterfactual outcome. Experimental designs (e.g. randomised control trials) and quasi-experimental designs (e.g. quasi-natural experiments, difference-in-differences, regression discontinuity, propensity score matching) are considered the most rigorous types of impact evaluations from a quantitative methods perspective.

*Box 9: Rigorous reviews of social protection for health and education in development contexts*

There is extensive empirical evidence about the effects of social protection on health and education in non-humanitarian settings. Such evidence is well documented by the following reviews:

- Baird, S., Ferreira, F. H., Özler, B., & Woolcock, M. (2014). Conditional, unconditional and everything in between: a systematic review of the effects of cash transfer programmes on schooling outcomes. *Journal of Development Effectiveness*, 6(1), 1-43.
- Drake, L., Fernandes, M., Aurino, E., Kiamba, J., Giyose, B., et. al. (2017). School Feeding Programs in Middle Childhood and Adolescence. In: *Disease Control Priorities (third edition): Volume 8, Child and Adolescent Health and Development*, edited by D. Bundy, N. de Silva, S. Horton, D. T. Jamison, G. Patton. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Lagarde, M., Haines, A., & Palmer, N. (2007). Conditional cash transfers for improving uptake of health interventions in low-and middle-income countries: a systematic review. *Jama*, 298(16), 1900-1910.

38 The following search criteria were applied. Main bibliographical databases: Google Scholar, the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), the World Bank Development Impact Evaluation Initiative (DIME), the Poverty Action Lab, and the Social Science Research Network. Keywords terms: ‘cash transfers’, ‘social protection’, ‘school feeding’ and ‘child development’ or ‘education’, or ‘nutrition’, or ‘health’ and ‘humanitarian’ or ‘conflict’ or ‘crisis’ or ‘emergency’ or ‘climate shock’. Other contributions: grey literature issued by the European Commission, World Bank, UNICEF, Save the Children, UNHCR, Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP), WFP, FAO, OPM, and ODI, etc.).

- Ranganathan, M., & Lagarde, M. (2012). Promoting healthy behaviours and improving health outcomes in low and middle income countries: a review of the impact of conditional cash transfer programmes. *Preventive medicine*, 55, S95-S105.
- Owusu-Addo, E., & Cross, R. (2014). The impact of conditional cash transfers on child health in low-and middle-income countries: a systematic review. *International Journal of Public Health*, 59(4), 609-618.
- Brody, C. M., Bellows, N., Campbell, M., & Potts, M. (2013). The impact of vouchers on the use and quality of health care in developing countries: a systematic review. *Global Public Health*, 8(4), 363-388.

## Education

- **Mixed evidence on the impact of cash transfers among Syrian refugees in Lebanon:** the UNHCR winter cash assistance programme had a positive effect on school enrolment and attendance (Lehmann & Masterson, 2014). Transfers provided by the UNICEF and WFP No Lost Generation Programme had limited effects on enrolment but substantive impacts on school attendance (due to capacity constraints) among children enrolled in afternoon shifts (De Hoop et al., 2018). In contrast, no significant impact on school enrolment has been found for the Multipurpose Cash Assistance Programme of the Lebanon Cash Consortium (LCC) (Battistin, 2016).
- **Conditional cash transfers have been found to have a positive impact on school enrolment in high-intensity conflict areas** (Wald & Bozzoli, 2011) **Conditional Cash Transfer Programs (CCT), and on child development indicators** in protracted fragility linked to exposure to natural shocks in Nicaragua (Macours, et al., 2012).
- **School feeding programmes are generally associated with a positive impact on school enrolment and attainment** among conflict-afflicted children in Mali and in refugee camps in Northern Uganda (Alderman, Gilligan, & Lehrer, 2012; Aurino et al., 2019) there is limited causal evidence to support it. Moreover, little is known about how the design of FFE programs affects schooling outcomes. This article presents evidence of the impacts of alternative methods of FFE delivery on schooling in Northern Uganda using a randomized controlled evaluation conducted from 2005 to 2007. We compare the impacts of the World Food Program's in-school feeding program (SFP). In conflict areas, the effects depend on conflict intensity: programmes lead to rises in enrolment mostly in high-intensity conflict areas, while school feeding mostly raises attainment among children residing in areas not in the immediate vicinity of the conflict (Aurino et al., 2019). However, there are also negative effects that can include diversion of resources as well as partial and inequitable distribution, which can exacerbate tensions.
- **GFD had a negative effect (around 20 per cent) on school attendance for boys residing in households receiving GFD in high-intensity conflict areas in Mali.** Most of the existing rigorous evidence focuses on **school-aged children:** only two studies looked at social protection impact on pre-schoolers (Gilligan et al., 2012) and adolescents (Rosas Raffo & Sabarwal, 2016). Assessments by gender and levels of exposure to conflict are also limited. Most studies focus on schooling, rather than on learning, which is the focus of SDG 4.
- **The provision of safe or child-friendly spaces (CFS)** can help protect children and provide physical and psychological support to children caught up in crises (UNICEF 2011). Schools, where functional, are important safe spaces when afforded protection, and can also help build social cohesion in fractured communities. Conversely, safe spaces can temporarily assume some of the functions of a school where none exists.





maximise the chances of relevance and effectiveness (e.g. urban areas versus refugee camps). Also, the use of technology can leverage innovative and relatively low-cost platforms for cash delivery in humanitarian settings (Asi & Williams, 2018). For instance, the introduction of mobile phone-based money transfer systems (m-transfers, or mobile money) offers an alternative infrastructure for delivering cash in remote and fragile areas, reducing leakage associated with manual cash delivery, especially in non-stable areas (Aker et al., 2016). However, e-transfers pose significant challenges related to data protection.



#### Training opportunity!

The [socialprotection.org](https://socialprotection.org) community of practice has posted a free course to assist humanitarian practitioners in taking the necessary steps to operationalise the protection of beneficiary data in programmes using electronic transfers: [kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=516](https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=516)

## Designing tools to improve the efficacy of conditionality and targeting

Evidence available from humanitarian and non-humanitarian contexts indicates that transfers do not have to be conditional to be effective in enhancing schooling, if the only barrier to education is financial. Also, in fragile contexts, strict conditions may add additional strain for beneficiaries already dealing with post-traumatic stress and extremely challenging conditions. ‘Soft conditions’, such as labelling an UCT as an ‘education grant’ can be equally effective as conditions in fostering school enrolment and attendance, as documented by de Hoop et al., 2018 in the case of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. On the other hand, if conditions are linked to some specific groups or behaviours, CCTs can trigger behavioural change. For instance, the evaluation of the Girls’ Education Fund has highlighted that even raising awareness among parents about distributing household chores more equitably between boys and girls can improve girls’ schooling outcomes. Analysis of contextual barriers to education is therefore needed before setting the conditionality.

In relation to targeting, information from social protection programmes that existed before the crisis can help identify beneficiaries and improve targeting outcomes. For instance, the OECD Social Protection System reviews suggests that a way to bridge the governance and administrative gaps between UHC and other social protection policies is to use the existing social protection targeting mechanisms when setting up health insurance schemes, or, as in the case of Cambodia, to embed UHC within the national social protection policy (OECD, 2017). Similarly, health or schooling systems can support the identification of beneficiaries for social protection programmes. Information about wider population groups – including potential future recipients or households who have been assessed but classified as ineligible – is often collected by social protection systems, but not always stored and maintained (International Conference on Social Protection in context of fragility and forced displacement, 2017). Recent years have seen a rapid acceleration in integrated approaches to data and information management for social protection, in order to provide a coordinated and harmonised response to the multi-dimensional vulnerabilities faced by individuals across a life-cycle (Gentilini et al., 2018). Box 10 presents the introduction of a management information system (the Single Registry) in Kenya. A key issue, however, is the operationalisation of sound data protection across the full programme cycle, as discussed in Section 6 of this note.

*Box 10: The Single Registry in Kenya*

A harmonised management information system, the Single Registry, was launched in Kenya in 2016 to improve the delivery of social protection programmes (<http://socialprotection.or.ke/single-registry>). While each programme, including cash transfers for health and education, is responsible for collecting and maintaining data on its own beneficiaries and activities, essential data from each programme are transmitted to the Single Registry. The registry is also linked to the national identity system. Using the Single Registry, the number of beneficiaries of different programmes can be analysed by area, for example, or households receiving multiple benefits can be identified. The database facilitates the provision of support to households at times of crisis in two ways: first, other implementers – including those providing emergency response – can set up their own database such that it links to the Single Registry; second, it enables the coverage of existing programmes to be analysed, to determine whether they can be used for crisis response. Further reading: Aurino et al. (2018) ‘Administrative Data: Missed opportunity for learning and research in humanitarian emergencies?’: <https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/administrative-data-missed-opportunity-for-learning-and-research-in-humanitarian-emergencies/>

## Contributing to enhanced integration across sectors

There may be trade-offs across outcomes in programming transfers. For instance, a recent evaluation of emergency general food assistance in Mali highlighted that while GFD increased household food security and child nutrition (Tranchant et al., 2018), it also had a negative effect on schooling, particularly for boys (Aurino et al., 2019). These trade-offs depend on the costs and feasibility of providing assistance in conflict-affected areas, and on the multiple risks faced by vulnerable households and their individual members during a crisis. A coordinated and multi-sectorial approach should therefore be encouraged in order to assess multiple benefits and potential trade-offs, particularly between health and education, and the WASH, nutrition, food security and shelter sectors. Joint assessment and programming of social protection activities among multiple dimensions of intervention may help with: (i) assessing the multiple risks and needs households face; (ii) accounting for and taking advantage of trade-offs and complementarities within and across programmes; and (iii) designing a more coherent approach for delivering assistance. However, joint programming may also have implications in terms of lowering overall coverage, which is another important trade-off (Aurino et al., 2019).

Multi-purpose cash grants (MPGs), described in Box 11, provide a valuable operational tool for addressing the multi-dimensional needs and vulnerabilities of households in crises. MPGs require a joint multi-sector need assessment in the earliest days of a crisis and subsequent in-depth sector assessments. The IASC Needs Assessment Task Force<sup>42</sup> and the Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) Manual<sup>43</sup> provide guidelines for harmonising and promoting cross-sector needs assessment initiatives.

*Box 11: Multi-purpose Cash Grants*

Multi-purpose Cash Grants (MPGs) are unrestricted cash transfers that allows beneficiaries a wider and more dignified choice of assistance, based on their preferences. MPGs correspond to the amount of money a household needs to cover, fully or partially, a set of basic and/or recovery needs. This modality recognises that people affected by crisis are not passive recipients of aid who categorise their needs by sector. MPGs can be used in multiple contexts – urban and rural, rapid and slow-onset, chronic and acute crises, and even natural and complex disasters. A core element for the implementation of MPGs is a context-specific **Situation and Response Analysis** so that response options and modalities can be designed based on needs assessment and other contextual information. The operational guidance and toolkit for MPGs promoted by the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) recommends including health and education outcomes in the vulnerability assessment (CaLP, 2015). As multi-purpose cash assistance can meet multi-dimensional needs of beneficiaries, it requires a multi-sector and often inter-agency approach to assessments, analysis, programme design and implementation. Existing platforms like the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and other coordinating mechanisms at local level should provide the operational basis for the coordination effort to deliver services across sectors (The World Bank, 2016).

42 <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/programme-cycle/space/page/assessments-background>

43 <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-transformative-agenda/documents-public/multi-clustersector-initial-rapid-assessment-mira-manual>



### Training opportunity!

The Practical Scenario: Coordinating Multi-Sector Cash Transfer Programmes course allows learners to practise applying their Cash Transfer Programming (CTP) knowledge and skills in a programmatic setting. Available for free at: [socialprotection.org/practical-scenario-coordinating-multi-sector-cash-transfer-programmes](https://socialprotection.org/practical-scenario-coordinating-multi-sector-cash-transfer-programmes)

## Enhancing platforms for improved coordination of humanitarian and development actors

Overall responsibility for education and health rests with national governments, including in refugee contexts for the signatories of the 1951 Refugee Convention. In reality, the willingness, preparedness and capacity to fulfil these functions is highly varied in humanitarian crisis, and a myriad of actors operate at various levels providing resources, expertise and capacity to augment state-led efforts (Nicolai et al., 2015). In order to overcome this fragmentation and increase effectiveness, improved project management and inter-sector/cross-agency coordination in terms of programmes and information is needed (Karamperidou et al., 2019). Some examples of the available forums for country-level coordination of humanitarian response are the:

- IASC Education Cluster ([educationcluster.net](https://educationcluster.net));
- UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model ([emergency.unhcr.org/entry/256733/refugee-coordination-model-rcm](https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/256733/refugee-coordination-model-rcm));
- National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) in South Asia ([gsdrc.org/publications/national-disaster-management-authorities](https://gsdrc.org/publications/national-disaster-management-authorities));
- Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) IASC, 2016 ([humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/somalia/inter-cluster-coordination-group-iccg](https://humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/somalia/inter-cluster-coordination-group-iccg));
- WHO, through its Health Emergencies Programme (WHE), proposing ‘*The new way of working – Strengthening the Humanitarian, Development, Peace Nexus*’<sup>44</sup>;
- Humanitarian-Development-Peace Initiative (HDPI) by the United Nations and the World Bank Group<sup>45</sup> in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence (Cameroon, Somalia, Yemen, Sudan).

Progress in each country will be tracked closely so that results and lessons learned can inform efforts to adjust, replicate, scale up, and mainstream this ‘New Way of Working’ (2017). To incentivise coordination among multiple and heterogeneous actors it is essential to bridge the humanitarian-development divide presented in Table 3. Gentilini et al. (2018) suggest some key strategies to improve coordination among actors:

- Humanitarian organisations should guarantee greater flexibility in grant agreements and funding, in order to allow for flexible, longer-term programming in collaboration with national governments. Upon activation of clusters or any other type of coordination organisms, education and health sector leaders should establish a donor committee focusing on removing barriers between sectors and planning beyond narrow mandates.
- To ensure that emergency health and education responses are well planned, culturally-relevant and tailored to contextual specificities, organisations leading inter-agency coordination should actively seek out partnerships with national and community actors and, when necessary, invest in scaling up their capacities. Representatives of local implementing partners need to be fully involved in strategic planning and regularly participate in coordination meetings, to encourage the quick uptake of strategic decisions and recommendations.

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44 <https://www.who.int/health-cluster/about/structure/new-way-working.pdf>

45 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/the-humanitarian-development-peace-initiative>

## Foster interaction with supply-side service delivery: the contribution of cash plus

Although supply-side interventions or health/education system financing are not the focus of this note (see Box 1), the efficacy of social protection in determining access to quality education and health care also critically depends on the quality and availability of services. Crises considerably stress educational and health systems, which are often weak to start with. Coverage and quality of educational and health services can be very compromised during acute phases of humanitarian crisis. School and hospitals may be closed or unable to fully operate for several reasons, i.e. shortage of personnel or drugs/learning materials, damaged infrastructure and impeded access due to insecurity or physical obstructions. The same crisis-specific factors also affect the operability of social protection interventions (WFP, 2007). The quality of health service provision may be affected by the presence of informal local health providers, e.g. community health workers, healers or witchdoctors, and actors from key related sectors (e.g. water, sanitation and hygiene), who may have no interaction with the formal public or private health care sectors, as well as the role of non-state armed groups in health service provision in conflicts. In conflict settings, services may be withheld from certain groups in violation of humanitarian principles and medical ethics.

Given these constraints, there may be little scope to implement an intervention focusing exclusively on demand-side barriers if educational and health supplies are not available or are of insufficient quality. In other words, cash transfers do not substitute for services, and their use should be consistent with the obligation of ensuring service quality (WHO Health Cluster, 2018). On the other hand, evidence from non-humanitarian settings suggests that supply-side interventions alone may not be sufficient to increase schooling and learning outcomes in post-crisis contexts (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006; Snilstveit et al., 2015), which suggests that combining social protection to households with supply-side interventions constitutes a promising approach, particularly to increase learning outcomes, which are the ultimate focus of SDG 4. An example of a cash plus programme that combines cash transfers with service delivery within the Girls' Education Challenge Fund is described in Box 12.

### Box 12: Girls' Education Challenge Fund

The Girls' Education Challenge Fund was launched by the Department for International Development (DFID) in 2012, with the ambitious aim of targeting one million marginalised girls by March 2017. The 'InnovationWindow' projects operated in 12 countries, most of them in the midst of humanitarian crises or transitioning from conflict: Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The interventions mixed economic interventions to offset the cost of education (e.g. cash transfers, in-kind support or loans) with other components, i.e. improving school infrastructure and resources, teacher training and support, provided extra-curricular or non-formal education within the communities, strengthened school governance and management structures, empowerment and violence-related activities with young girls. Overall, there was a small increase in attendance rates and a substantial increase in learning outcomes. However, we cannot disentangle the effect of social protection-based interventions (e.g. cash transfers, in-kind support) from the other programme components (Girls' Education Challenge Fund, UK Aid, 2017).



#### Training opportunity!

This webinar explores the different types of cash plus interventions, different entry points to promote cash plus at country level based on the existence and maturity of national social protection schemes, and institutional coordination with state actors. Although the seminar focuses on agriculture-related 'plus' activities, the webinar provides background information that can be adapted to health or education programming. [socialprotection.org/fao-and-cash-how-maximize-impacts-cash-transfers](https://socialprotection.org/fao-and-cash-how-maximize-impacts-cash-transfers)







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# Annex 1

List of rigorous empirical studies included in the review of evidence

IMPACT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION INTERVENTION ON EDUCATION OUTCOMES									
HUMANITARIAN TYPE	COUNTRY	PROGRAMME	MODALITIES	STUDIES	PUBLISHED	METHODOLOGY	TARGET GROUP	OUTCOMES	
Internally displaced population	Northern Uganda	World Food Programme's in-school feeding programme (SFP)	School feeding versus THR conditional on school attendance	Alderman, Gilligan, & Lehrer (2012)	Yes (EDCC)	Randomised Control Trial (RCT) (Difference-in-Differences, DiD)	Primary school-age children	School enrolment, school attendance, age at school entry, grade promotion, and progression to secondary school.	
Conflict exposed area	Mali	World Food Programme's in-school feeding programme (SFP)	School feeding and general food distribution (GFD)	Aurino et al. (2019)	Working Paper	Quasi-experimental (DiD and Propensity Score Matching (PSM))	School-aged children	School enrolment, absenteeism and attainment	
Conflict exposed area	Rural Colombia	Familias en Acción	CCT conditional on medical check-ups for children less than 7, and 80 per cent school attendance for children 7-17.	Wald and Bozzoli (2011)	Conference Paper	Natural experiment (degree of conflict exposure)	Children aged 0-17	School enrolment, grade progression	
Refugees	Lebanon	No Lost Generation	UCT to households for children enrolled in an afternoon shift (Labelled but not conditional).	De Hoop et al. (2018)	Working Paper	Quasi-experimental – Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD)	Primary school children	School enrolment and attendance, household education expenditure	

HUMANITARIAN TYPE	COUNTRY	PROGRAMME	MODALITIES	STUDIES	PUBLISHED	METHODOLOGY	TARGET GROUP	OUTCOMES
Natural disasters	Nicaragua	Atención a Crisis	CCT conditional on medical check-ups for children under 5, and school enrolment and regular attendance for children 7-15; CCT + scholarship for vocational training courses; CCT + lump-sum payment to start a small non-agricultural activity	Macours et al. (2012)	Yes (Applied Econ.)	RCT	Children aged 0-15	Cognitive development of children less than 6 (TVIP, Language, Short memory, Assoc. Memory, Social Personal, BPI)
Drought and food crisis	Niger	Concern Worldwide humanitarian programme	UCTs delivered via the mobile phone: One-third of targeted villages received a monthly cash transfer via a mobile money transfer system (called zap), one-third received manual cash transfers and the remaining one-third received manual cash transfers plus a mobile phone.	Aker et al. (2011)	Working Paper	RCT	Households in selected villages having produced less than 50 per cent of their consumption needs	Household education expenditure
Civil war (internally displaced population)	DRC	Concern Worldwide humanitarian programme	UCT vs. VOUCHERS of the value of the transfer about 2/3 of the total annual GDP per capita for DRC	Aker (2013)	Working Paper	RCT (no control group – voucher is the reference group)	Internally displaced households in an informal camp in the Masisi territory	Household education expenditure, school dropout (coping strategy)

HUMANITARIAN TYPE	COUNTRY	PROGRAMME	MODALITIES	STUDIES	PUBLISHED	METHODOLOGY	TARGET GROUP	OUTCOMES
Conflict-exposed area	Uganda	World Food Programme (WFP)	UCT versus take-home rations, (and control group)	Gilligan et al. (2012)	IFPRI Working Paper	RCT (early childhood development centres randomly assigned in one of three intervention arms: food, cash, or control)	Children aged 3-5	ECD participation measures (Days ECD centre was open in the past 7 days, days child attended), Cognitive and non-cognitive development indicators
Famine	Niger	World Food Programme (WFP)	First phase: Cash for work (treat 1) versus food for work (treat 2). Second phase: cash transfer (treat 1) versus food transfers (treat 2)	Hoddinott et al. (2013)	IFPRI Working Paper	RCT – only one round survey with retrospective data collection	All households in selected clusters	Household education expenditure
Syrian refugees	Lebanon	UNHCR Winter Cash Assistance Programme (International Rescue Committee)	UCT	Lehmann & Masterson (2014)	Project report	Quasi-experimental (RDD)	Syrian refugees HHs living at high altitudes	School enrolment and attendance
Post-conflict area	Sierra Leone	Youth Employment Support Project	CCT (Cash for work)	Rosas and Sabarwal (2016)	WB Policy Research Working Paper	RCT	Youths aged 15-35 years (mean age is 27 years)	School enrolment and attendance (adolescents)
Refugees	Lebanon	Multipurpose Cash Assistance Programme	UCT	Battistin (2016)	Project report	Quasi-experimental (RDD)	Economically vulnerable Syrian households	School enrolment
Post-conflict area	Southern Sudan	Food for training and income generation (FFTiG) in Juba – WFP and BRAC	Food for training	Sulaiman (2010)	STICERD Working Paper	RCT (some evidence of contamination and non-compliance, then DiD)	Most vulnerable households (80 per cent female headed)	School enrolment (6-14)

IMPACT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION INTERVENTION ON HEALTH								
HUMANITARIAN TYPE	COUNTRY	PROGRAMME	MODALITIES	STUDIES	PUBLISHED	METHODOLOGY	TARGET GROUP	OUTCOMES
Natural disasters	Nicaragua	Atención a Crisis	CCT conditional on medical check-ups for children less than 5, and school enrolment and regular attendance for children 7-15; CCT + scholarship for vocational training courses; CCT + lump-sum payment to start a small non-agricultural activity	Macours et al. (2012)	World Bank Policy Research Working Paper	RCT	Children aged 0-15	Gross motor, fine motor, leg motor
Post-conflict	Afghanistan		CCT	Lin and Salehi (2013)	Yes (Lancet)	Quasi-experimental	Mothers and community	Maternal and child health-services: institutional delivery and DPT3 vaccination
Post-conflict	Sierra Leone	Youth Employment Support Project	CCT (Cash for work)	Rosas and Sabarwal (2016)	World Bank Policy Research Working Paper	RCT	Youth aged 15-35 years (mean age is 27 years)	Health facility visits of children 0-5



European  
Commission

**Operational**

**Note No 7**

*Nutrition Security*

May 2019

**SPaN**

Supporting people through crisis



*Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus*

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## —1—

# Understanding food insecurity and malnutrition through a nexus lens

It is important to be aware that commonly used and closely related terms such as food insecurity, hunger, undernourishment, undernutrition and malnutrition, in fact have very different definitions and methodologies for measurement. A brief review of key terms and guidance on their use is provided in [Annex One](#).

**Acute and Chronic Food Insecurity and Malnutrition:** As the humanitarian-development nexus agenda has evolved, so too has thinking about the different forms of food insecurity and malnutrition that exist and their linkage with crises. Both food insecurity and malnutrition can be classified as either chronic (also referred to as persistent) or acute.<sup>5</sup>

**Acute food insecurity** can be defined in terms of the current or projected severity of the situation, regardless of the causes, context or duration, whereas **chronic food insecurity** involves the prevalence of persistent food insecurity – i.e. levels of food insecurity that continue even in the absence of hazards/shocks, or a high frequency of years with acute food insecurity. Therefore, it is important that acute and chronic food insecurity should not be understood as mutually exclusive: a specific area or household can be in one of the conditions or both simultaneously, with acute food insecurity often found ‘on top of’ and exacerbating chronic food insecurity.

**Malnutrition** is a general term that refers to all forms of nutrient imbalance.

**Undernutrition** is a sub-category of malnutrition that includes:

- **Stunting** (also referred to as ‘chronic malnutrition’ and identified as low height for age) caused by chronic deficiencies that can inhibit child development (both mental and physical);
- **Wasting** (also referred to as ‘acute malnutrition’ and identified as low weight for height) caused by rapid weight loss and associated with increased risk of mortality in the short term;
- **Micronutrient deficiencies** (such as anaemia, a blood disease which can be caused by iron deficiency).

**Overweight and obesity** are also defined as forms of malnutrition and are increasing rapidly in low and middle-income countries, where different forms of malnutrition frequently can even occur at the same time in the same household or even individual.<sup>6</sup> For instance, stunting and wasting can often coexist in the same child, while an obese adult or child may also be severely micronutrient deficient<sup>7</sup>. The term ‘double burden of malnutrition’ is used to describe the coexistence of undernutrition and overweight and obesity. In Africa for instance, 41 per cent of women are overweight and 17 per cent obese, while 38 per cent suffer from anaemia.<sup>8</sup>

5 For example, the globally recognised analytical tool known as IPC, distinguishes between three classification scales: chronic food insecurity, acute food insecurity, and acute malnutrition, determined by analysing a range of outcomes based on international standards including food consumption levels, livelihood changes, nutritional status, and mortality.

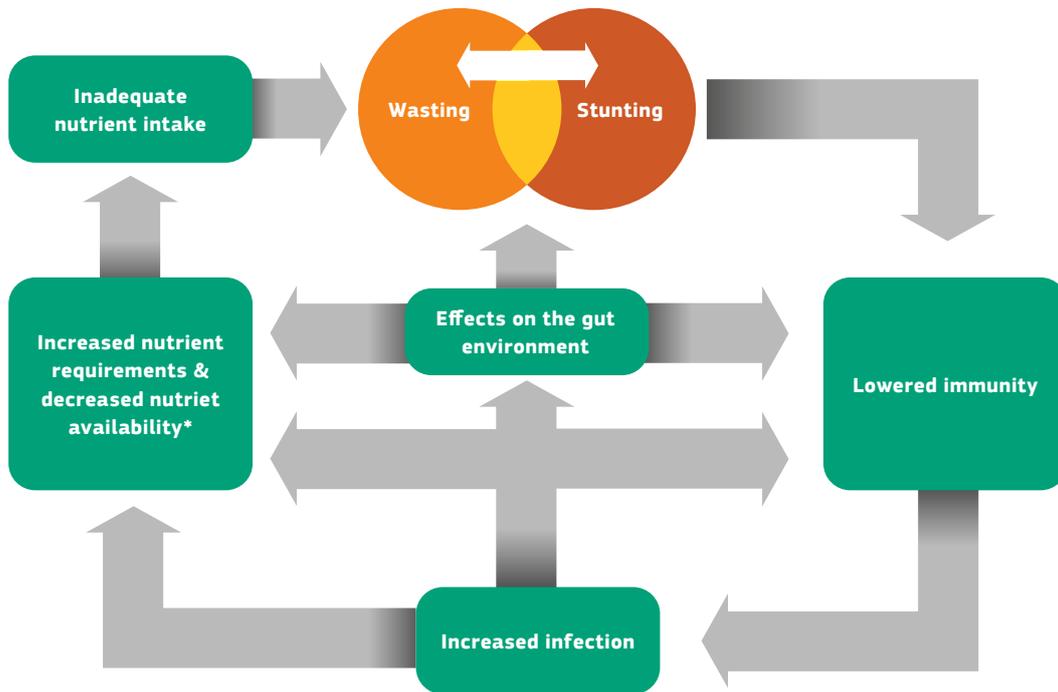
6 Food insecurity can contribute to overweight and obesity (as a result of restricted access to a healthier diet) as well as undernutrition. Furthermore, poor food access can increase the risk of low birthweight and stunting in children, both of which are associated with higher risk of overweight and obesity later in life.

7 The term ‘double burden’ is used to describe the coexistence of undernutrition along with overweight and obesity or non-communicable diseases (such as diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure) within individuals, households and populations as well as across the life-course. It is estimated that around 9.1 per cent of children in the developing world will be overweight or obese by 2020.

8 Global Nutrition Report (2018) Africa Profile.



Figure 1: Wasting, stunting and the cycle of infection  
 Source: ENN, June 2018 Briefing Note: Child Wasting and Stunting

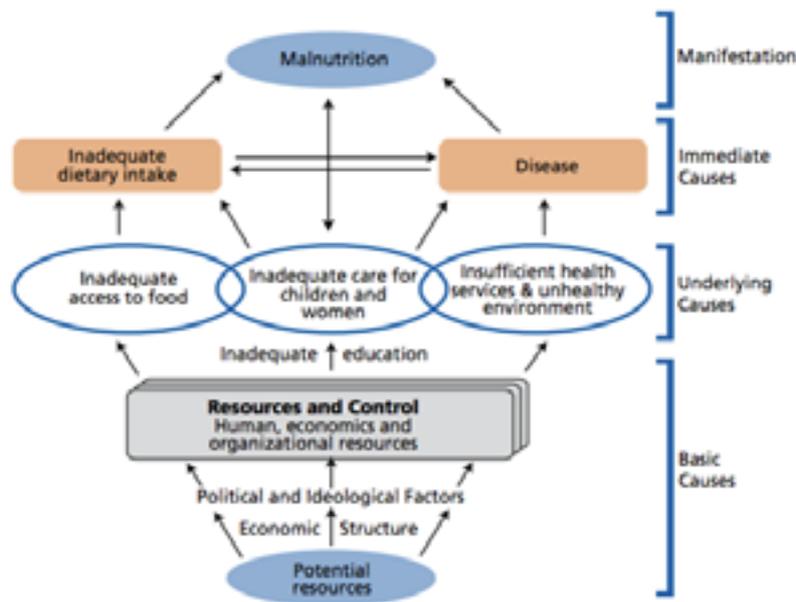


\* Due to malabsorption, altered metabolism, anorexia, nutrient losses and requirements to fight infection

**Understanding the causes of undernutrition:** The main focus with respect to the malnutrition agenda in crises contexts is on undernutrition. The underlying causes of both stunting and wasting are poor household food insecurity, inadequate feeding and care practices (especially suboptimal breastfeeding) and/or poor access to health, water, hygiene and sanitation services. All of these causes can be significantly exacerbated in humanitarian crises.

**Equal importance of access to health:** As recognised in the widely accepted conceptual framework for nutrition developed by UNICEF almost three decades ago, nutrition security cannot be achieved by ensuring ‘sufficient, safe and nutritious’ food alone. Rather, in addition to inadequate dietary intake as an immediate cause of malnutrition, it is important to recognise that disease presents another important immediate cause at the individual level. The enduring value of the conceptual framework can be further seen from the clarity with which it then presents the interlinkage between three underlying causes: (i) inadequate access to food; (ii) inadequate care practices (which for instance can negatively affect both the diet and the health of a young child); and, (iii) an unhealthy environment and insufficient health services.

Figure 2: UNICEF Conceptual Framework (1990)



Building on the conceptual framework, if an action is mainly focused on addressing the immediate determinants of nutrition at individual level it is often referred to as ‘nutrition-specific’ (for example the distribution of a micronutrient supplement), while if an action is addressing the underlying determinants of nutrition (for example with a cash transfer to enhance purchasing power or an intervention to improve water quality) it can be referred to as ‘nutrition-sensitive’.

In recent years, attention has been given to the apparent paradox that even where significant reduction in poverty and hunger appear to have taken place, there can still remain a relatively much higher (and often stubborn) prevalence of malnutrition. In this sense, and as highlighted by this conceptual framework, nutrition can be understood as a strategically valuable and *de facto* composite indicator for a broad understanding of human development in multiple dimensions. The human, social and economic costs of malnutrition are huge as well as being closely interrelated, so it is essential that good nutrition be understood as a human right and the foundation of well-being.















## —4—

# Understanding pathways of change: why social protection matters for food and nutrition security

In recent years, social protection has taken an increasingly visible place in the development policy agenda while referring to a wide array of instruments designed to address vulnerability. Poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition share many of the same structural drivers, and social protection comprises a set of policies and programmes that can address many of these economic, environmental and social vulnerabilities. In this way building risk-informed, shock-responsive and nutrition-sensitive social protection systems has been recognised as a critical strategy for enhanced food and nutrition security. It can address all four dimensions of food insecurity as well as making a crucial contribution to tackling the multi-dimensional poverty that underpins the burden of food insecurity and malnutrition.

While social protection can helpfully be classified into four main types of instrument (social assistance, social insurance, active labour market programmes (ALMP) and social care services), due to the commonality of the cash transfer as form of delivery for both social and humanitarian assistance, as well as the relatively large coverage compared to other instruments, a significant share of the experience of working with social protection in crisis situations comes from social assistance in the form of cash transfers, vouchers and in-kind transfers.<sup>36</sup>

Such systems also constitute a core component of a rights-based approach as they play a crucial role in bridging livelihood protection with longer term development strategies to address the root causes of hunger and malnutrition through increased incomes and more equitable and sustainable management of resources. From this perspective, flexible, regular, predictable and scalable social protection systems can support a dynamic and adaptable response to crises as they evolve on the basis of four functions:

36 *Analysis of public works and social care instruments is equally relevant from a nutrition perspective. In practice there is a broad range of social protection instruments that can be harnessed to enhance food and nutrition security outcomes. These include cash transfers (conditional and unconditional); child grants, disability benefits, pensions, health and social insurance, in-kind transfers, public works, unemployment and maternity benefits etc.. At the same time, there is a diverse range of additional interventions offering significant social protection functions including food transfer-related interventions (food reserves, food distribution, vouchers, nutrition supplements etc.); food and agricultural subsidies; livelihood and asset packages (which may also be seasonally targeted), and crop insurance.*

### Four functions of social protection for enhanced food security and nutrition

- **Protective** – through providing the basic means to access food, whether in cash or kind;
- **Preventive** – through averting deeper deprivation by strengthening resilience against shocks and stresses and preventing further erosion of incomes or asset base;
- **Promotive** – through direct support to investments in human resources (e.g. nutrition awareness, education and skills development,) and by reducing income insecurity, thereby inducing investments in livelihood activities,
- **Transformative** – through empowering people to increasingly reorient the focus of their lives, from day-to-day survival and meeting basic food energy requirements towards more healthy and nutritious diets and investments in their future (especially shifting power relations within households through women's empowerment and greater decision making).

The prioritisation, use and function of social protection instruments will inevitably vary from context to context depending upon such factors as the political economy, institutional context and existing capacities, dominant policy agendas, available resources, significance of international development assistance. The additional utilisation of rural enablers can also play a significant role in improving access to social protection instruments in the context of crises (such as supporting women's associations and producer organisations). Furthermore, investing in agricultural livelihoods in particular is often a critical step towards peace building and ensuring greater stability. The role of food security in conflict mitigation and prevention through the reduction of vulnerability, the strengthening of social protection interventions and the generation of income and employment, community dialogue and social cohesion cannot be underestimated.

The UNICEF conceptual framework for nutrition, presented above, provides a crucial starting point for understanding the linkage between pathways and determinants of food security and nutrition and the theory of change brought about as a result of social protection. To model the linkages between social protection instruments and food security and nutrition outcomes, the effects of transfers can be tracked via potential pathways on the basis of key determinants.

The conceptual framework identifies adequate diet, care and a healthy environment (critically dependent on factors such as access to safe water and sanitation facilities, healthcare and shelter) as the three key underlying determinants that influence the immediate variables influencing nutritional intake and health status, which together define nutritional status. Correspondingly, there are three main pathways through which cash transfers may affect the underlying determinants of nutrition, with women's empowerment particularly crucial in terms of mediating the relationship between cash transfers and care – both for women and children.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, by increasing the resources available to a household, cash transfers may:

- Improve both the quantity and quality of diet;
- Enable investment in productive assets;
- Enable investments in and improved access to shelter and WASH facilities;
- Facilitate access to health services and medicines;
- Support caregivers to allocate adequate time for childcare (for example, enabling exclusive breastfeeding of infants);
- If distributed to the main caregiver, directly impact on intra-household dynamics associated with control of resources,
- Decrease household poverty-related stress, thereby improving caregivers' physical and mental state (with the potential for positive impacts via all three pathways).

37 *Care in this context encompasses caregiver behaviours that affect all aspects of child development including psychosocial care, optimal breastfeeding, feeding practices, food preparation, hygiene, health-seeking behaviour and health care. Care is further determined by the caregiver's control over resources as well as their mental and physical status, knowledge, preferences and beliefs.*

On the basis of a simple typology of transfer instruments, the range of key impact pathways for food insecurity and nutrition is outlined in [Annex Three](#), together with an adapted framework for the Theory of Change. A key point is that cash can generally be considered both a prerequisite and a catalyst for enabling and facilitating the multiple changes in behaviour and access to services required for enhanced food security and nutrition-related outcomes via all of these key pathways. For example, cross-country analysis of the increased expenditure that would be required for households to routinely access a nutritionally adequate diet (on the basis of international guidance on the requirement to eat significant amounts of fruit and vegetables) invariably confirms a significant shortfall in comparison to actual levels of income.<sup>38</sup> Likewise, and while by no means the only factor involved in decision making, to be in a position to provide exclusive breastfeeding, women require basic economic security as a prerequisite, given the often very substantial opportunity costs involved as a result of reduced time for income-generating activities.

### **The crucial significance of breastfeeding for the food security of infants and young children and improved nutrition outcomes.**

In all contexts, but more than ever in times of crises, breastfeeding can be considered vital to a child's health, as it is a critical source of energy and nutrients during illness, and reduces mortality among children who are malnourished.<sup>39</sup> It is widely considered that:

- Breastfeeding all babies for the first two years would save the lives of more than 820,000 children under the age of five annually. Infants are at greater risk of death due to diarrhoea and other infections if they are only partially breastfed or not breastfed at all.
- Early initiation of breastfeeding, within one hour of birth, protects the newborn from acquiring infections and reduces newborn mortality. Starting breastfeeding early increases the chances of a successful continuation of breastfeeding. Exclusive breastfeeding for six months has many benefits for the infant and mother. Chief among these is protection against gastrointestinal infections and malnutrition, which are observed not only in developing but also industrialised countries.
- Breast milk is an important source of energy and nutrients in children aged 6-23 months. It can provide half or more of a child's energy needs between 6-12 months, and one-third of energy needs between 12-24 months. Children and adolescents who were breastfed as babies are less likely to be overweight or obese.
- Breastfeeding also improves IQ, school readiness and attendance, is associated with higher income in adult life, and reduces the risk of breast cancer in the mother.

38 As confirmed for instance by comprehensive and in depth 'Cost of Diet' analyses undertaken in twelve countries in Africa and South Asia. <https://www.heacod.org>. This also points to the need to distinguish between the proportion of the population currently defined as poor on the basis of established approaches for measuring poverty (such as the World Bank's definition of extreme poverty as living on less than USD 1.90 per day > (PPP), and moderate poverty as less than USD 3.10 a day) and the much more significant share who are unable to afford locally available nutritious food, and therefore remain food insecure on the basis of the accepted international definition.

39 WHO <https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/breastfeeding/en/>



## —6—

# Key lessons and insights arising from operational experience

In the context of food crises, cash-based assistance, and social protection initiatives more generally, can have as objectives a range of different outcomes relating to humanitarian, development and peace agendas. To understand the potential benefit (and cost benefits) of interventions in terms of food security and nutrition-related objectives, it is important to consider these multiple purposes which may involve a number of sectors. Similarly, analysis of the possible costs and associated risks for recipients is another key element to include when considering impact and, especially, the potential for unintended consequences amidst the uncertainties and rapidly evolving dynamics associated with crisis contexts.

Due to the potential complexity of issues requiring consideration, a framework to systematically guide all stages of the programming cycle through a series of key questions is provided below. Ultimately the impact of social protection via various diet and nutrition-related pathways will depend upon a number of crucial considerations arising from the operationalisation of such a framework in the specific context of various situations of crisis and risk.

While there is still a need to further strengthen the operational learning base, a growing body of experience has contributed significantly to increasing the understanding of social protection as an effective measure to combat food and nutrition insecurity in crises contexts. [Annex Seven](#) provides guiding questions to consider the use of social protection instruments in food and nutrition security programming.

Several of the most important issues can be further explored on the basis of insights and specific lessons emerging from experience to date, so as to more effectively illustrate the implications of such an approach:

## Size and duration of multi-purpose cash transfers

### QUICK INSIGHT

Transfer values in the context of humanitarian assistance have been increasingly debated in line with the monetisation of assistance in several sectors. The calculation of transfer value on the basis of need depends very much on the identification of which needs are to be covered by various interventions, and the logic of imposing a narrow sectorally-related objective on an individual recipient or household for whom food, water, child care, shelter, medicine, education and livelihood protection cannot be prioritised as they are mutually interdependent.

International research clearly highlights the advantages of prioritising cash as a modality for assistance as far as possible. This is primarily because it allows greater flexibility for recipients to determine expenditure on the basis of their own assessment of needs, as well as facilitating a smoother transition towards self-reliance and strengthening local markets through increased purchasing power. At the same time, it can generally be more efficient to administer. However, support during crisis needs to be sufficient (in terms of both level and duration of transfers) to adequately address both immediate food and nutrition-related needs whilst helping to restore productive investment and viable livelihood activities.

It is important to understand that an adequate level of cash transfer seeking to improve food and nutrition security cannot simply be calculated on the basis of the anticipated cost to meet the gap in expenditure. This is because at the level of the household economy, there may be other crucial expenditure priorities such as those relating to shelter, access to basic services, replacing lost assets in contexts of forced displacement and repaying debts. Consequently it can be seen that cash transfers disrupt conventional sectoral approaches and promote a greater awareness of the fact that recipients are likely to have multiple needs within the framework of their household economy. Transfer values in the context of humanitarian assistance have been increasingly debated in line with the monetisation of assistance in several sectors. The calculation of transfer value on the basis of need depends very much on the identification of which needs are to be covered by various interventions, and the logic of imposing a narrow sectorally-related objective on an individual recipient or household for whom food, water, child care, shelter, medicine, education and livelihood protection cannot be prioritised as they are mutually interdependent.

However, such a focus on supporting households to afford a minimally nutritious diet can at the same time give rise to tensions, owing to various pressures to reduce the size of the transfer, whether due to resource limitations (and the objective to optimise population coverage to the extent possible) or the requirement to ensure a degree of consistency with national benchmarks and existing social protection programmes. There may also be a tension with the logic of keeping payment below market rates so as not to distort local labour markets and to promote 'self-targeting' so as to attract the so-called 'poorest of the poor', while in practice such rates tend to be well short of what may be required to achieve desired food and nutrition-related outcomes.

## Integration with other interventions

Cash transfers alone may often not prove sufficient to significantly reduce child malnutrition in the context of crises and may therefore require integration with other context-specific interventions to achieve nutrition-related goals. The exact mix of interventions will depend on the nature of the crisis, the resources and infrastructure available to the affected population and the availability of goods and services through the market. Important drivers of food security and nutrition-related outcomes, which include access to public health services (e.g. vaccination), availability of water and sanitation infrastructure, market infrastructure (e.g. roads and bridges) and access to services for the treatment of malnutrition, are generally not strongly influenced by cash transfers and may require additional sector-specific investments.

The drivers of malnutrition are multi-dimensional but still closely connected to structural poverty and exclusion. International evidence indicates that a single programme implemented in isolation is unlikely to sustain a significant reduction in any population-level rate of stunting. Ensuring good nutrition for all is a crucial but complex feat that requires various sectors to work together in responding to needs through an integrated approach.

Addressing persistent child wasting presents particular challenges for operational agencies, in part as a result of structural issues within the humanitarian system with a tendency to focus on treatment of severe acute malnutrition, 'siloes' sectors, and short-term funding cycles that do not include nutrition causal analysis (NCA). The model developed in Kenya for the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition provides a useful opportunity to learn from a complementary 'shock-responsive' instrument for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition. Crucially, in the event of crisis intensification, the surge model associated with IMAM in Kenya has facilitated the shock-responsive scaling up of treatment in the most nutritionally at-risk arid and semi-arid lands, while at the same time serving to reinforce the nutrition-sensitivity of a comprehensive portfolio of social protection programmes including the Hunger Safety Net Programme. A brief overview of this experience is presented in [Annex Seven](#).

## Experience with conditionality and targeting

In order to understand how to optimise the food security and nutrition-related outcomes of shock-responsive social protection, it is important to start by thinking critically what is actually or potentially implied by the concept of 'nutrition-sensitive' social protection.

### QUICK INSIGHT

#### The scaling-up nutrition methodology for tracking nutrition-sensitive investments

In 2013, the SUN Donor Network developed a methodology and accompanying guidance note to promote a common approach to tracking global investments in nutrition.<sup>42</sup> To be nutrition-sensitive, the action must fulfil all the following criteria:

- Be aimed at individuals i.e. the action must intend to improve nutrition for women or adolescent girls or children,
- Have a significant nutrition objective or nutrition indicator(s),<sup>43</sup>
- Contribute to nutrition-sensitive outcomes which are explicit in the project design through activities, indicators and specifically, the expected results themselves.

On the basis of this methodology, for social protection to be classified as 'nutrition-sensitive' it must therefore demonstrate that all of these three criteria have been met. While requiring that a nutrition focus is built into design of the programme, including the utilisation of appropriate nutrition indicators in the monitoring and evaluation framework (going beyond the impact level and including the outcome and results levels), the actual design features are not specified.

In recent years, the emphasis by some agencies on nutrition-specific interventions as centre stage on the nutrition agenda has resulted in a tendency towards more prescriptive framing of 'nutrition-sensitive' social protection, based on the integration of a number of standardised ('nutrition-specific') features, including:

- **the application of targeting criteria explicitly linked to nutrition** (for example so-called '1000 days' women, or households with children who have been identified as wasted);
- **the imposition of conditionalities**, for example to ensure that pregnant women and mothers of young children access nutrition-specific services (such as attending ante-natal, growth monitoring and / or behaviour-change sessions, obtaining nutrition supplements, etc.),
- **the provision of additional transfers** in the form of food assistance in kind that has been fortified with micronutrients.

While such design features may indeed have the potential to bring about positive change in food and nutrition-related outcomes, the application of a more standardised approach to operationalising a 'nutrition-sensitive' approach to social protection in crises runs the risk of neglecting robust context analysis and encountering various significant challenges. A summary of the challenges that have been encountered and resulting concerns with such a model is provided in [Annex Seven](#). The key message is that despite the high profile that can often be given to nutrition in the design of a particular programme, it is possible that the nutrition-related outcomes may end up being significantly reduced as compared to a more straightforward unconditional, universal multi-purpose cash grant; for example, as a result of factors such as reduced overhead costs, higher transfer amounts and reduced errors of exclusion.

42 [http://docs.scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/RESOURCE\\_TRACKING\\_METHODOLOGY\\_SUN\\_DONOR\\_NETWORK.pdf](http://docs.scalingupnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/RESOURCE_TRACKING_METHODOLOGY_SUN_DONOR_NETWORK.pdf)  
Note that nutrition-specific commitments have proved relatively more straight forward to identify as they are simply tracked using the DAC purpose code 12240 'basic nutrition'.

43 According to the methodology, when the full project (i.e. main objective, results and indicators) is nutrition-sensitive, 100 per cent of the investment can be counted as nutrition-sensitive. However, when only a part of the project (e.g. one of the objectives, results and indicators) is nutrition-sensitive then 25 per cent of the investment can be counted.

## Identifying institutional and capacity-related challenges

In situations of crisis the government is expected to provide the leadership and coordination for humanitarian response. However, in fragile or conflict settings, the government may not always have the capacity to lead a response that is effective and neutral. In such cases, the coordination function may fall to the UN and the Humanitarian Country team, often with the activation of 'cluster' coordination structures for critical humanitarian sectors. Clusters were established precisely to support national service delivery, sector planning and strategy as well as informing strategic decision making for response, monitoring and evaluation for a given sector. An important challenge to bear in mind may relate to the requirement for procedures to prevent and manage conflicts of interest in order to safeguard public health and nutrition in the context of stakeholder engagement. However, the cluster approach has often been criticised for generating additional challenges and artificial barriers with respect to multi-sectoral coordination.<sup>44</sup> In practice, the focus of the nutrition cluster has been rather narrowly defined as largely on nutrition-specific interventions (especially the treatment of severe acute malnutrition) and a proactive effort will be required to ensure that cross-sectoral stakeholder dialogue informs the development of a nutrition-sensitive approach to social-protection-related interventions.

Ensuring rapid response understandably takes precedence in addressing emergency needs related to hunger and life-threatening forms of malnutrition, and this can involve the potential for tension between immediate impact and the strengthening of systems or development of capacities for long-term ownership, accountability and sustainability. However, ensuring the simultaneous focus on partnership and institution building at all times can generate crucial opportunities to reinforce models of sustainability throughout programme design and delivery.

In addition to ensuring the coordination of coherent, multi-sectoral nutrition action in times of crisis, further capacity development considerations may be necessary to enable nutrition considerations to be effectively integrated into processes around the strengthening of national policies and systems for social protection. Social protection programmes, especially when implemented at scale, are operationally intensive and require specialist, competent and motivated staff whose performance is actively managed. Even when well designed, administrative processes sit within a wider institutional and programme management context. Programme shortcomings can often be traced to policy makers under-estimating the operational demands involved and in pursuit of reducing administrative costs. For this reason, many countries have recognised the value of establishing semi-autonomous delivery agencies to manage large-scale social transfer programmes and ensure predictability and reliability. Often, though concerns may be raised about the costs associated with such specialised services, in reality under-investment in management capacity can be a false economy, undermining the overall effectiveness of a programme in the longer term. Whatever the institutional and staffing strategy, programmes need to develop capacity development strategies that are realistic about the absorptive capacity of staff at all levels and adopt relevant and appropriate training approaches.

## Experience with the promotion of a rights-based approach

Humanitarian interventions have tended to result in limited engagement with governments and local systems, reflecting an explicit emphasis on ensuring the operationalisation of guiding humanitarian principles: humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. In harnessing social protection during crises, there can be a degree of tension between humanitarian principles and a more rights-based approach with the emphasis on respecting the primary responsibility of states to assist and protect their citizens. Tackling this challenge may involve going beyond technocratic coordination, and necessitate reconciling fundamental differences in terms of principles and approach. At the heart of the challenge is the question of achieving a balance between strengthening national policies and government capacities to operationalise them, and ensuring optimal coverage of life-saving intervention in partnership with state authorities.

44 *For instance, with cash transfers/social protection/social assistance, in particular, the challenge is to ensure that transfer mechanisms are designed in such a way as to simultaneously support multiple sectors – for example, early recovery, food security, nutrition and shelter.*



## Recognising the significance of breastfeeding for food security and nutrition in crises

An estimated 820,000 children die every year because they were not fed exclusively with breast milk for the first six months. In times of crisis, it is more critical than ever to bear in mind that a child who is not exclusively breastfed is more than 14 times more likely to die than a baby fed on breast milk only. Young children may face heightened risks from diarrhoeal diseases, pneumonia and undernutrition as a result of factors such as overcrowding (for example in IDP camps), unsafe water, poor sanitation and overburdened health systems. Failure to fully protect breastfeeding in these circumstances dramatically worsens the situation. Living through a crisis can be stressful and cause trauma for mothers, making appropriate infant and young child feeding even more challenging. However, with adequate support, virtually all mothers can breastfeed even in emergency situations (see Promising and Innovative Practices, Section 7 of this note on protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding in crises). A particular challenge relates to the common practice involving donation of breast-milk substitutes (infant formula and powdered milk) in emergency contexts, which serves to exacerbate the health risks faced.

## Investment in more coordinated monitoring, evaluation and learning in contexts of crises

Robust monitoring and evaluation together with in-depth policy-responsive research in contexts of crises is critical for the advancement of more evidence-based programming. However, different situations may present significant challenges (for example operational and ethical constraints), and remote research support and management may be key, in addition to ensuring a flexible and pragmatic approach. Because of the broad range of crisis contexts in which opportunities for research may be identified, coupled with the fact that programmes are often designed by very different actors/agencies, an important challenge faced is the requirement to ensure that findings can be generalised to the extent possible. Priorities for further research include the generation of more robust evidence on: the extent to which behaviour-change communication and/or conditionality can enhance food security and nutrition-related outcomes and how decisions should be taken with regard to the allocation of scarce resources across various sectors and interventions in different contexts with potential significance for food security and nutrition.

Impact evaluations are important if reliable data is to be drawn on for strengthening public and political commitment. Ethical challenges can be problematic and costs high, but a potential (simpler and cheaper) alternative is a 'paypoint exit survey'. Also, a social protection module can be included into national surveys, permitting linkages with relevant data on food security and nutrition to be analysed. It is also crucial not to neglect the possibility of unintended or negative consequences; for example, reduced ability to maintain breastfeeding if conditional cash transfers involve regular travel to attend sessions or if participation in public works programmes requires long periods being spent away from the home. A recent study from the Philippines<sup>47</sup> suggested that the inflationary impact on food prices triggered by a targeted cash transfer programme, and corresponding increase in demand by beneficiary households, actually had a negative impact on the dietary diversity of those households excluded from the programme.

## Addressing fears regarding misuse of cash transfers

It is important to address the common (and seemingly persistent) fears expressed with regard to misuse of cash transfers by recipients, for such purposes as the purchase of alcohol or tobacco, or of weapons in conflict situations. Such fears also continue to reinforce the perceived requirement to impose conditionalities alongside direct assistance. However, there are a large number of studies confirming that people on low incomes generally use cash transfers wisely for food, productive assets, and essential services such as health and education. In fact, one multi-country research initiative that generated rigorous evidence on the impact of national cash transfer programmes in the context of sub-Saharan Africa even suggested the hypothesis 'whereby transfers encourage substitution into human capital-related investments and reduce poverty-related stress'.<sup>48</sup>

47 Filmer, D (2018) <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29557>

48 The Transfer Project <https://transfer.cpc.unc.edu>

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# Promising and innovative practices

**In the light of the various political, financial and programming challenges outlined above, in this section a selection of promising and innovative practices are presented to inform and inspire decision makers and programming processes.**

## Harnessing the humanitarian and development nexus for system strengthening and capacity development

In fragile states and protracted crisis contexts where there are essentially no formal social protection programmes in place, structures used for the delivery of emergency cash transfer programmes can be adapted to pilot and nurture nascent structures to become better able to respond in the context of predictable and recurrent risks. The provision of social protection should not be considered as a stand-alone objective and, wherever possible, the commitment and engagement of national governments should be considered as a priority in order to ensure sustainability. Capacity development and strengthening of governance mechanisms may be necessary to enable nutrition considerations regarding social protection to be effectively raised at policy level as well as via the coordination of coherent, multi-sectoral nutrition action at the country level. An important challenge to bear in mind may relate to the requirement for procedures to prevent and manage conflicts of interest in order to safeguard public health and nutrition in the context of stakeholder engagement.

The European Commission and EU Member States can play a key role either in strengthening existing systems and/or building on emergency structures. However, this role will necessarily vary according to the context.

- Where a social protection system is already in place, upstream policy work, capacity development and knowledge dissemination can be considered as the preferred engagement strategies in order to maximise coverage and hence bring about optimal food and nutrition-related outcomes. Conversely, minimal resources should go to field interventions unless there is a strong reason to pilot a specific and innovative measure.
- In fragile states and in the context of protracted crises where the provision of social protection by the national state is absent, deficient or primarily led by international development agencies, the EU can engage by providing humanitarian support, complemented by strategic measures to create an enabling environment. In turn, this can form part of the policy process designed to set up, in the medium and long term, a reliable and predictable social protection system. In such a context, ensuring a robust evidence base for various models implemented by different actors and in a range of contexts will be of crucial significance to inform eventual decision-making processes.

An important cross-cutting consideration is the need to build structures that reflect the multi-dimensional risks in a given context and have been designed on the basis of the available capacity at local level so as to reduce the requirement for ad hoc responses every time a crisis strikes or intensifies. [Annex Eight](#) presents various promising practices and insights related to system strengthening and capacity development on the basis of recent experience with 'nexus' strategies for food insecurity and malnutrition in both Somalia and Kenya.

In recent years, as a result of the growing attention to significant capacity gaps in various sectors with respect to the given sector's relevance for food and nutrition-related outcomes and the opportunities for enhancing nutrition sensitivity, there have been a number of innovative initiatives to promote capacity development for nutrition. One of the most comprehensive of these has been the Capacity Assessment Tool developed recently and jointly by a number of UN Agencies, which sets out a framework to guide systematic assessment of capacity development

needs, and which in turn serves to inform strategic planning for capacity development. A key premise of this initiative is that while capacity development can be understood as a critical prerequisite for achieving nutrition objectives, it is currently constrained by ambiguous and superficial conceptualisations of what capacity development involves and how it can be realised. Therefore, the tool recognises capacity to be determined by a range of factors including system, organisational, workforce and community levels. Since the launch of the tool, it has been utilised in several countries including Burkina Faso, Senegal, Chad and Lesotho. [Annex Nine](#) presents a short case study based on the recent experiences of implementing capacity assessments for nutrition in both Lesotho and Chad.

## A regional initiative to support food security and nutrition-sensitive social protection

It is estimated that approximately 6 million people in the region of Sahel and West Africa require humanitarian food assistance every year; anaemia in women is at record high levels, while around twenty million young children are stunted. This situation not only constitutes a serious threat to the development of these individuals' lives and ability to reach their full potential, but also the region's human capital and economic development more generally. Both cyclical factors (including climate and conflict) and structural factors (including social and economic inequalities) underpin these persisting food- and nutrition-related crises.

[Annex Ten](#) presents an overview of the regional approach to addressing food insecurity and nutrition-related crises in the Sahel and West Africa. Key insights can be summarised as:

- The role of region-wide institutions and associated initiatives in driving the commitment to change the strategic approach cannot be underestimated.
- These intergovernmental structures and mechanisms have, in turn, ensured strong policy visibility for the requirement to link humanitarian and development initiatives for food security and nutrition.
- Chronic food insecurity in the Sahel has been progressively reframed as a long-term development issue, whilst cash transfer initiatives have been reoriented to support national social protection policy frameworks to link social protection, nutrition and resilience, and often incorporated into national level Multi-Sector Strategic Plans for Nutrition.
- Remaining challenges include: the importance of promoting inter-sectoral coordination; strengthening linkages between early warning systems data and social protection interventions; and continued advocacy around the importance of gradually expanding routine social protection as a crucial contribution to resilience and a productive investment in human and social development.

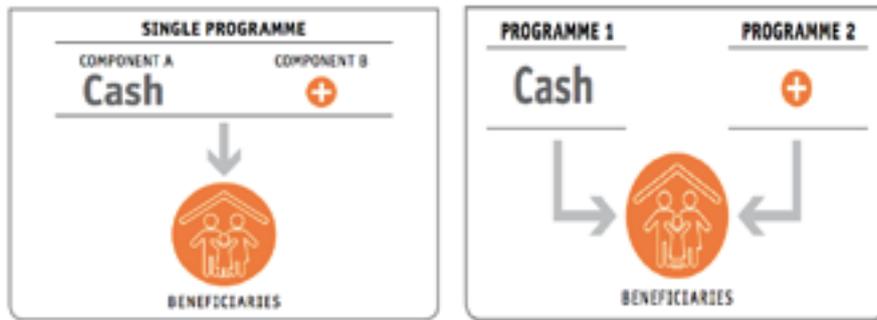
## Increasingly strategic implementation modalities: harnessing budget support to support rights-based, nutrition-sensitive and shock-responsive social protection in Bangladesh

International experience confirms that social protection can play a key role in the promotion of socio-economic rights and social justice, and the realisation of human rights (e.g. adequate standard of living, education, health, equity). When designed in accordance with a human rights-based approach, social protection programmes can contribute to the immediate realisation of the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, and to the progressive realisation of the right to food. These objectives can most effectively be pursued by supporting and advising the government in building inclusive, efficient and comprehensive social security systems based on agreed international standards. Ultimately, building state capacity to deliver social protection is critical to ensuring sustainability and accountability, as well as reinforcing the social contract between a state and its citizens in the framework of a rights-based approach to food and nutrition security.



**Cash+ implementation modalities** — There are several possibilities for the implementation of Cash+ programmes, according to a recent literature review of impact evaluations of the interactions between agricultural and social protection interventions. They include single stand-alone programmes (SPs), where a single programme includes multiple components, such as cash transfers and productive assets distribution and/or training, and complementary programmes (CPs), where a cash transfer programme and an agricultural intervention are designed and/or implemented in a coordinated manner by targeting the same households, with a view to boosting synergies between the programmes.

### Cash+: single and complementary programming models



Annex Eleven provides a brief overview of FAO's recent experience with 'Cash+' in Africa for enhanced food security and nutrition outcomes.

## Strengthening national information systems for nutrition

In times of crisis and as the situation on the ground may be rapidly evolving, the strategic value of having reliable and comprehensive data for timely decision making and resource allocation can paradoxically be increasing at the precisely same time as the quality of and access to data may be deteriorating. Heightened insecurity and weak capacities can further lead to monitoring and accountability challenges, as well as leaving significant data gaps at sub-national level.

### The importance of relevant indicators for dietary quality and nutrition sensitivity of programmes

**Nutrition-sensitive indicators will depend on the objectives, theory of change and corresponding design of the programme but should include impact level** (such as stunting, wasting, anaemia, overweight and obesity etc.) **as well as outcome level** (exclusive breastfeeding, minimum adequate diet for children 6-23 months, minimum dietary diversity of women, increased income, reductions in women's workload, access to safe drinking water, access to basic services, increased diversity of local production etc.). Indicators relating to capacity development should also be carefully selected on the basis of the programme's strategy for capacity development, which should in turn ensure ownership by the key stakeholders themselves.

The recently developed indicator for minimum dietary diversity in women (MDD-W51), which has benefited from support by the EU, is particularly significant for nutrition-sensitive social protection. MDD-W is increasingly being incorporated into programmes as well as integrated by governments into national action plans for nutrition and national surveys such as MICS and DHS.

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51 MDD-W is a dichotomous indicator of whether or not women 15–49 years of age have consumed at least five out of ten defined food groups the previous day or night. The proportion of women 15–49 years of age who reach this minimum in a population can be used as a proxy indicator for higher micronutrient adequacy, one important dimension of diet quality. Further detail can be found at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5486e.pdf>

Cash transfer and social assistance programmes are operationally demanding, time-sensitive and often attract political attention in case of problems. Therefore, well-functioning information systems to enhance monitoring and learning are crucial. Vulnerability and needs assessments are an essential component of decision making about whether social protection is the most appropriate vehicle for addressing a particular shock. A common challenge faced in the context of a crisis situation involves the disincentive to invest in a comprehensive multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder analysis of the causes underpinning different forms of malnutrition. The apparent disincentive may be due to various factors including the sense of humanitarian imperative and the challenges faced by efforts seeking to promote a multi-sectoral approach. However, the potential significance of such an investment for the relevance of programme design and implementation strategy should not be underestimated.

There are a number of proven initiatives that can generate valuable insights into the nature of food insecurity and the context-specific drivers of malnutrition and thereby provide a crucial starting point for the design, review and potential adjustment of social protection programmes. Early warning systems such as those utilising the Integrated Phase Classification initiative can kick-start action prior to the emergence or intensification of a crisis in order to reduce the negative impact. To be effective, these systems should trigger contingency and sector-awareness plans and response mechanisms which can then be scaled up to meet emergency needs. At the same time, there is growing awareness of the need for more robust nutrition diagnostics and monitoring; for example through tools such as Nutrition Causal Analysis and Cost of Diet to inform the design and ongoing modification of interventions in such a way as to strengthen the nutrition-related outcomes.

[Annex Twelve](#) provides a brief overview of these three key tools for improved knowledge in support of the programming of social protection for food security and nutrition that can be considered particularly appropriate in contexts of crises.

## Strategies to promote the localisation agenda and community-based support

Strengthening capacities, especially for sub-national delivery mechanisms and at local and community levels, is increasingly recognised as key to the humanitarian-development nexus approach.

### PROMISING PRACTICE

#### Nigeria

The 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Nigeria<sup>52</sup> confirms that women and children continue to bear the brunt of malnutrition in north-east Nigeria, where the conflict has acted as an important driver of hunger. Recent assessments have identified several pockets of extremely high malnutrition, while overall the nutrition sector estimates that 3.5 million women and children are in need of nutrition interventions. The majority of these (2.7 million) live in host communities, while a remaining 440,000 are internally displaced persons and 340,000 are returnees.

The approach taken by nutrition partners as outlined by the HRP will aim to strengthen the health system, as most nutrition partners are also implementing health interventions and working closely with the state primary health care development agency through trainings on key nutrition interventions in emergencies. The sector will promote partnerships between international organisations and local actors to enhance their capacity, transfer skills, and work towards sustainable results. In 2018, the sector will work through four local NGOs, compared to one in 2017. Capacity-building through the training of local NGOs on nutrition in emergencies will facilitate these actors' ability to deliver quality services, including in areas where they may enjoy enhanced access compared to international organisations.

Community structures are often best placed to support the effective identification of vulnerable populations, optimising linkages and coordination, messaging and household support and the handling of grievances, and creating opportunities to build on informal community redistribution mechanisms.

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52 [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2018\\_hrp\\_v5.4.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2018_hrp_v5.4.pdf)



**PROMISING PRACTICE****Learning from the HKI nurturing connections initiative in Bangladesh<sup>56</sup>**

Like many developing countries, the social mobility of women in Bangladesh is often limited by cultural norms, which in turn tends to marginalise women with limited ability to own land, access markets, or make financial decisions in the home. The *Nurturing Connections* programme was specifically designed to empower women to make the decisions needed to improve food security and nutrition status for themselves and their children, as well as enabling women farmers to engage on more equal terms in the marketplace so they can gain more fairly from their labour and investments. It did this by offering a participatory approach to challenging gender norms and building equality and constructive communications skills with every member of a community to create the best environment for improving nutrition. The curriculum creates a safe space for discussion and structured activities where men and women directly discuss and challenge existing household inequalities that contribute to health and economic problems at home and in communities. While the programme is oriented around nutrition and food security, it also builds skills in communication, assertiveness, and problem-solving. Drawing from HKI's fieldwork and the actual challenges faced by local women, it provides mothers, fathers, mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law with the opportunity to discuss nutrition and gender-related problems among their peer groups, and then to share their perspectives in a mediated, community-group setting

## Integrating a focus on protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding in crises with the strengthening of systems for maternity allowance

Led by UNICEF and WHO, the Global Breastfeeding Collective is a partnership of international agencies calling on stakeholders to prioritise and invest in breastfeeding worldwide<sup>57</sup>. Building on research such as that arising from the maternal cash transfer initiative in Myanmar<sup>58</sup> (where a combination of cash transfers for pregnant women and awareness was found to significantly increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding), raising the provision of cash transfers in times of crisis can be harnessed to pave the way for the incorporation of maternity provision within the evolution of national social protection systems. [Annex Thirteen](#) presents key insights from the EU-supported 'LIFT' programme in Myanmar, where the maternal and child cash transfer initiative has demonstrated impressive results to date.

However, the first step in protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding in emergencies is to make it the norm in all contexts. Therefore, strengthening systems for breastfeeding support is a crucial form of emergency preparedness. Country experience is highlighting that in addition to enhancing financial security to empower breastfeeding, additional priorities include:

- Disseminating accurate information about the value of breastfeeding and its life-saving importance, both in general as well as in crises, together with the heightened risks associated with the use of breast-milk substitutes in emergencies;
- Participating in monitoring the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and reporting violations to relevant authorities to ensure that crises are not being exploited for commercial interests;
- Advocating with the medical profession to strengthen their technical expertise and commitment to support breastfeeding;
- Identifying and documenting the impact of breastfeeding support interventions in emergencies and how to strengthen the linkage between humanitarian and development assistance in this regard.

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57 Reference can be made to the advocacy brief 'Breastfeeding in Emergency Situations', [https://www.unicef.org/nutrition/files/8\\_Advocacy\\_Brief\\_on\\_BF\\_in\\_Emergencies.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/nutrition/files/8_Advocacy_Brief_on_BF_in_Emergencies.pdf)

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## TOOLS

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*Capacity Assessment for Nutrition* (tool for supporting national and local stakeholders to undertake a robust and comprehensive assessment).

Cash and Learning Partnership (CaLP) *Cash-Based Assistance Programme Quality Toolbox*.

[www.cashlearning.org/resources/--pqtoolboxcashlearning---](http://www.cashlearning.org/resources/--pqtoolboxcashlearning---)

*ECHO E-Learning Tool for Humanitarian Food Assistance* (each topic starts with a general overview and contains information, videos, case studies and external web-links).

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*Global Nutrition Cluster website* (includes a comprehensive section on nutrition in emergencies related resources along with a guide as to the most useful guidance and tools on other agencies websites).

[www.nutritioncluster.net/topics/nie-and-cross-cutting-issues/](http://www.nutritioncluster.net/topics/nie-and-cross-cutting-issues/)

and [www.nutritioncluster.net/tools-and-resources/](http://www.nutritioncluster.net/tools-and-resources/)

*Save the Children. Household Economy and Cost of Diet Analysis* brings together resources on Household Economy Analysis (HEA) and Cost of the Diet (CoD) and serves as a one-stop shop for managers, decision makers, programme planners and practitioners).

[www.heacod.org/en-gb/Pages/Home.aspx](http://www.heacod.org/en-gb/Pages/Home.aspx)

*Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement* (offers a range of guidance and resources including a dedicated YouTube channel and detailed profiles/analysis for the 60 countries).

[www.scalingupnutrition.org/](http://www.scalingupnutrition.org/)

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# To keep in mind when operationalising the nexus

## Core principles of availability, access and adequacy<sup>59</sup>

The overarching message is that to maximise the impact of shock-responsive social protection on food security and nutrition, with a clear focus on realising the rights and ensuring the inclusion of those who are the most nutritionally vulnerable, it can be helpful to think in terms of the following core principles:

**Availability of support:** Inclusive social protection systems must guarantee access to a minimum set of non-contributory schemes if the rights to both social protection and adequate food and nutrition are to be covered. The establishment of strong legal and institutional frameworks with secure political and fiscal support can avoid the shortcomings of patchy, time-bound provision which undermines the processes of resilience-strengthening and means that beneficiaries are likely to become vulnerable to new shocks in the future.

**Access to support:** In both humanitarian and development contexts, social protection should be non-discriminatory and optimally inclusive. Evidence suggests optimal inclusion can best be achieved by universal programmes which are available to all without conditions. A robust analysis of food and nutrition insecurity in a given context can be expected to highlight the significant share of population having an inadequate diet and experiencing various forms of malnutrition. However, this is not to say that some groups may face greater challenges than others and face a higher degree of risk. For these groups additional measures may be introduced, as a complement to – rather than as a substitute for – universal schemes. Likewise, the evidence also points to conditionalities, (associated with narrower definitions of ‘nutrition-sensitive’ social protection) often resulting in exclusion or reduced benefits for the most disadvantaged. A clear lesson is the importance of ensuring beneficiary involvement in both design and delivery (including accessible public information campaigns, and robust and transparent grievance mechanisms) to enable the identification of potential barriers to access and the best ways of addressing them.

**Adequacy of support:** The effectiveness of social protection in terms of enhancing food security and nutritional status is fundamentally related to the extent to which transfers are adequate (in terms of both amount and duration) to guarantee income security and healthy behaviour for all. Expectations of short-term impact may be unrealistic, as vulnerable groups’ specific livelihoods and coping strategies to manage extreme insecurity may have developed over generations to maximise survival. For shock-responsive social protection systems to make a meaningful impact on the long-term resilience of populations, governments will need to be able to sustain and increase investments in social protection.

## Key points for both humanitarian and development actors to keep in mind when operationalising the nexus

Globally, the number of people experiencing hunger has increased to 821 million (of which it is estimated that around 500 million live in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence), while 124 million people face crisis levels of acute food insecurity. The provision of adequate nutrition in early life (particularly the first '1000 days' from conception until a child reaches two) should be considered crucial both in terms of saving lives and advancing the rights of children to realise their full potential. Currently 8 per cent of all children under five are wasted and 22 per cent stunted. Building risk-informed, shock-responsive and nutrition-sensitive social protection systems is increasingly recognised as a crucial and strategic component of efforts to strengthen the humanitarian development nexus within the framework of Agenda 2030 and the associated commitment to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition. On the basis of reviewing existing evidence, experience and promising practice, the following points can be borne in mind for improved food security and nutrition when operationalising social protection policies and programmes across the nexus:

- 1. Greater clarity of focus in the face of complexity** — The causes and far-reaching consequences of food insecurity and multiple forms of malnutrition are complex and interconnected, whether in contexts of crises or 'normal' times. It is therefore extremely important to be clear on the various terminology and definitions associated with food security and nutrition as this has important implications for programming and understanding the evidence in terms of outcomes and impact.
- 2. Moving beyond a 'siloed' approach to stunting and wasting** — The recent shifts in understanding the ongoing persistence, severity of risks and complex interrelationship with regard to stunting and wasting have profound implications for social protection in terms of its potential to support the transformation of a historically 'siloed' approach, so that alongside building systems for the treatment of severe wasting into national health systems, an increased focus on tackling stunting is ensured as a legitimate objective in protracted crises.
- 3. The need to avoid an overly narrow approach to 'nutrition-sensitive' social protection** — Coherence across the nexus in support of nutrition-sensitive approaches to social protection is crucial, but an overly prescriptive interpretation of what this means in practice should be avoided. In particular, the inherent logic of narrowly targeted and conditional transfer-based programmes which have frequently been branded as models of 'nutrition-sensitive' social protection, requires a fundamental rethink based on the growing body of causal analysis and evidence of impact generated in specific contexts. (A systematic guiding framework is presented in [Annex Five](#)). Systematically tracking wealth- and gender-disaggregated indicators at outcome level (such as exclusive breastfeeding, minimum dietary diversity and the adequate diets of young children, for instance) should be considered the crucial hallmark of genuine nutrition sensitivity.
- 4. Promote the coordinated utilisation of existing tools to link evidence with policy making** — Both humanitarian and development actors should work together to make more effective use of available tools and research priorities to better understand the relative significance of various causal factors in specific contexts, as well as to identify and measure crucial issues such as the gap between existing diet-related expenditure and that required to ensure that basic nutrition requirements are met. In particular, building on experience and promising practice to ensure greater attention to programming for greater gender equality and women's empowerment is a key priority.
- 5. Social protection can be harnessed to protect and promote breastfeeding across the nexus** — Given the tremendous significance for saving millions of lives and enhancing the food security and nutritional status of millions more children (which in turn has profound inter-generational implications), a crucial opportunity for partnership across the humanitarian-development nexus relates to harnessing social protection (together with a range of complementary actions) to support the protection and promotion of breastfeeding.
- 6. Cash-based assistance can lay the foundations for rights-based social protection systems** — Flexible, regular, predictable and scalable social protection systems can support a more dynamic and adaptable response to crises as they evolve. Cash-based assistance is inherently 'multi-purpose' and, on the basis of the widespread structural poverty and livelihood insecurities that underpin chronic food insecurity and persistent malnutrition (both in humanitarian crises and in 'normal' times), can be considered both a prerequisite and a catalyst for enabling and facilitating the multiple changes in behaviour and access to services needed for lasting progress.

In this way, social protection programmes can contribute both to the immediate realisation of the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger and malnutrition and to the progressive realisation of the right to food and good nutrition..

- 7. Building on promising experience with the Cash Plus approach** — The use and scale-up of the Cash+ approach can be considered a response priority in protracted crises; for example, to support livelihood resilience at the same time as ensuring that essential needs for food are met (as well as other essential requirements for good nutrition such as water, sanitation and hygiene, access to basic services). This should be done without the imposition of hard conditionalities, although this could still leave room for the adoption of either a ‘single stand-alone programme’ or a ‘complementary programme’ model.
- 8. The neglect of investment in system strengthening and capacity development is a false economy**— While the focus on rapid response and immediate impact has historically taken precedence in addressing needs in the context of a crisis situation, the potential for tension with system strengthening and capacity development must be addressed. This can be achieved by ensuring a simultaneous focus on partnership with national stakeholders around models for sustainable and inclusive delivery and the corresponding investment in institution building for good governance and the promotion of a rights-based approach. Working with national stakeholders to undertake a comprehensive Capacity Assessment for Nutrition (drawing on recent tools and guidance for such an exercise) can be an important first step towards the development of an agreed roadmap for investment. Strengthening national information systems for food security and nutrition should be approached as an integral component of such support. Neglecting such opportunities is a false economy, undermining impact in the longer term.
- 9. Make optimal use of budget support modalities for supporting SPaN and localisation** — Harnessing the Budget Support modality (also referred to as Sector Reform Contracts) to reinforce national governments’ policy commitments, for example towards rationalised, universal ‘life-cycle’ schemes (such as maternity allowance or child cash grants – whether framed as social protection or in the context of national multi-sectoral action plans for nutrition) should be considered as a key objective by EU Delegations (and where possible in partnership with Member States). This modality also offers strategic opportunities to promote a ‘localisation’ agenda by turning a spotlight on sub-national delivery mechanisms and improved results at all levels, as well as highlighting the significance of strengthening civil society’s role in enhanced accountability.
- 10. Coordinate backing for regional initiatives to accelerate national commitment** — Where possible, entry points for supporting regional initiatives promoting social protection across the nexus should be identified and acted upon to promote the role of intergovernmental structures and mechanisms to ensure strong commitment and policy visibility around the linkage of humanitarian and development approaches to accelerate food security and nutrition-related outcomes.

## Additional points specifically for humanitarian actors:

- **Ensure greater attention to child stunting in humanitarian crises** — While child wasting has been conventionally been given far greater priority in humanitarian crises than child stunting, it is increasingly recognised that high levels of child stunting can persist in areas of protracted crisis, while hard-earned gains in stunting reduction are at risk of being eroded. Furthermore, being stunted carries a significant mortality risk, especially when a child is severely stunted, or when stunting and wasting exist concurrently. This has fundamental and transformatory implications for strategic approach adopted in crises.
- **Invest now in analysis of the implications of profound shifts related to urbanisation and the ‘double burden’** — It is estimated that 68 per cent of the global population will be urban by 2050, with the greatest acceleration in Africa and Asia. The soaring prevalence of overweight, obesity and NCDs (with three quarters of NCD deaths in low- and middle-income countries), as well as the alarming increase in the prevalence of all forms of malnutrition among urban populations (the double burden), also has significant implications for social protection across the nexus. Almost three quarters of all NCD deaths (28 million people) and the majority of premature deaths (82 per cent) occur in low- and middle-income countries and the onset and persistence of crises can lead to an acute exacerbation or a life-threatening deterioration in the health of people with NCDs.

## Additional points specifically for development actors:

- ***Increase attention to both prevention and treatment of wasting across the development agenda*** — Based on the growing awareness that much of the child wasting in the world persists as a result of structural factors rather than crises *per se* and that both child stunting and wasting impact upon and interact with the other, tackling wasting through national systems for service delivery (addressing both prevention and treatment) is a key priority.
- ***Bear in mind the fundamental political nature of the social protection agenda and engage accordingly*** — Ultimately the social protection agenda is as much political as it is technical or economic, and it is therefore crucial to support inclusive political debate and engagement with the processes of design (whether around designing systems for registration of beneficiaries, payment delivery, awareness of entitlements, grievances etc.) and implementation, particularly with the most marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

# Annex 1

## Review of key terms and points to be aware of

### Hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition - key terms and points

#### to be aware of:

It should be recognised that the number of 'hungry' people indicated by the 'undernourishment' indicator should not be equated:

1. either with the number of people that may be defined as 'food insecure' or without the right to adequate food and nutrition, which may be significantly higher;
2. or with the number of people that may be defined as having one or more forms of undernutrition.

#### HUNGER

Hunger (or undernourishment) is used at population level to describe the situation when dietary intake is below minimum requirements (typically taken as an average of 2100 kcal per person per day). The Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU), as measured in FAO's State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, refers solely to the percentage of people having insufficient dietary energy consumption. Hunger is an outcome of food insecurity.

#### FOOD INSECURITY

Since the 1996 World Food Summit, the widely accepted definition of food security is a '*situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary need and food preferences for an active and healthy life*'.

This internationally agreed understanding of food security is important because:

- It includes the quality of diet (since adequate diversity is essential for health) and therefore goes beyond a narrow definition focused only on not experiencing hunger or having adequate energy consumption;<sup>60</sup>
- It refers to both the inability to secure an adequate diet today, and the risk of being unable to do so in the future,
- The emphasis on '*all people*' highlights the fact that food security must ultimately be measured at the individual level. Therefore, while a country might be self-sufficient in food production (and even though this may be routinely referred to as 'national food security'), or a household may appear to be able to produce or purchase enough to feed everyone in the family (which may be referred to as 'household food security'), it is often the case that certain groups or individuals will remain food insecure due to various inequalities and resulting vulnerability to imperfections in distribution.

It is for this reason that the comprehensive four-pillar framework for understanding food security was developed by the FAO, encompassing: availability (food supply); access (economic and physical); stability (over time) and utilisation (physical conversion of food into nutrients). Therefore, for people to be food secure:

1. Food must be **available** in sufficient quantities – either home grown, locally grown or imported from elsewhere;
2. Food must be **accessible** – in other words, people must be able to acquire it regularly in adequate quantities and diversity, whether through purchase, home production, barter, gifts, borrowing or food aid;

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60 By contrast the Prevalence of Undernourishment' or 'PoU', as measured in State of Food Security and Nutrition, refers solely to the percentage of people in the world having insufficient dietary energy consumption.

3. And finally, the food that is available and accessible needs to have a positive nutritional impact on people – this refers to the way it is **utilised** by households and individuals (considering, for instance, household storage, cooking, hygiene and sharing practices).
4. A fourth pillar – **stability** – refers to the fact that all three of the other pillars must be maintained on a consistent basis.

The focus of the Global Report on Food Crises is on acute food insecurity and malnutrition as measured by a methodology known as the ‘Integrated Phase Classification’ and defined as ‘*manifestations of food and nutrition insecurity found in a specified area at a specific point in time of a severity that threatens lives or livelihoods, or both, regardless of the causes, context or duration*’. They are highly susceptible to change, and can occur and manifest in a population within a short time as a result of sudden changes or shocks that negatively impact on the determinants of food insecurity and malnutrition (IPC, 2017).

While the definition of food security is largely uncontested, it is important to be aware that there are several methods for classifying it in various contexts and at different levels. Neither the ‘prevalence of undernourishment’ (PoU) or the ‘food insecurity experience scale’ (FIES) as used by the SDGs and tracked in the FAO’s State of Food Security and Malnutrition in the World (SOFI), take account of the significant additional numbers of people who (i) have insufficient money or resources for a healthy (i.e. minimally nutritious) diet, and (ii) are uncertain about their day-to-day ability to obtain food. Yet on the basis of the accepted World Food Summit definition above, ensuring ‘*sufficient, safe and nutritious*’ food ‘*at all times*’ is clearly a precondition for any individual to have good nutritional status.

## MALNUTRITION

Malnutrition comes in many forms. ‘Undernutrition’ includes child stunting, wasting and micronutrient deficiencies,<sup>61</sup> while ‘overnutrition’, which includes overweight and obesity, is also a form of malnutrition that can affect all ages.

**Wasting** (also referred to as acute malnutrition) occurs when children under five are too thin for their height as a result of recent rapid weight loss or failure to gain weight. While associated with increased risk of child death from infectious diseases<sup>62</sup>, wasting can be reversed if conditions improve and/or effective treatment is provided. Wasting is conventionally used as an important indicator of the severity of a humanitarian crisis impact. However, it is also generally higher during the rainy season and tends to coincide with the pre-harvest ‘lean season’, thus leading to a dangerous combination of food scarcity and higher disease prevalence.

**Stunting** on the other hand (also referred to as chronic malnutrition) can be largely irreversible after the age of two. It occurs when children under five are found to be too short for their age and develops over a longer time-period as a result of inadequate nutrition and/or repeated bouts of infection. Evidence shows that up to 70 per cent of stunting takes place between a child’s conception and their second birthday, a period commonly referred to as the first 1,000 days.<sup>63</sup>

The focus on micronutrient deficiency as a form of undernutrition<sup>64</sup> is especially important because it highlights the fact that a diet meeting only calorific requirements cannot be considered as ensuring either food or nutrition security effectively. Micronutrient deficiencies can seriously impair health and growth, with women, adolescent girls and children particularly vulnerable.

It is also important to recognise that overweight and obesity are also defined as forms of malnutrition and are increasing rapidly in low and middle-income countries, where different forms of malnutrition can frequently even occur at the same time in the same household or even individual.<sup>65</sup> For instance, stunting and wasting can often coexist in the same child, while an obese adult or child may also be severely micronutrient deficient.<sup>66</sup>

61 For details on key terms and undernutrition indicators, please refer to Annex 1 of European Commission (2011) Addressing undernutrition in external assistance – An integrated approach through sectors and aid modalities. Reference Document N°13.

62 Severe wasting (‘severe acute malnutrition’, SAM) is associated with the highest risk of death (a SAM child is 12 times more likely to die than a non-wasted or stunted child).

63 Leroy et al. (2014)

64 The most commonly recognised micronutrient deficiencies across all ages are caused by a lack of iron, zinc, vitamin A and iodine.

65 Food insecurity can contribute to overweight and obesity (as a result of restricted access to a healthier diet) as well as undernutrition. Furthermore, poor food access can increase the risk of low birthweight and stunting in children, both of which are associated with higher risk of overweight and obesity later in life.

66 The term ‘double burden’ is used to describe the coexistence of undernutrition along with overweight and obesity or non-communicable diseases (such as diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure) within individuals, households and populations as well as across the life-course. It is estimated that around 9.1% of children in the developing world will be overweight or obese by 2020.

# Annex 2

## Key international standards and commitments

### The Grand Bargain

As part of a series of formal negotiated commitments by governments and operational agencies at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the Grand Bargain initiative<sup>67</sup> provided a significant boost to the agenda for promoting cash transfer programming (CTP) in the context of humanitarian response via a specific focus on ensuring that cash is more routinely considered, increasing available resources, building capacity for CTP, ensuring quality, strengthening coordination and building the evidence base.

Building on this initiative, the United Nations Office for Coordinating Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) developed the New Ways of Working initiative<sup>68</sup> which calls for joined-up analysis of short- and long-term needs, joint humanitarian and development planning, joint leadership and coordination and new financing modalities to support collective outcomes.

As a result, institutions and agencies working on food security and nutrition in humanitarian contexts (such as, the WFP, UNICEF and the Global Nutrition Cluster) are increasingly demonstrating more integrated programming approaches, both multi-sectorally and more focused on working to support government and civil society structures through capacity strengthening.

### Framework for action for food security and nutrition in protracted crises<sup>69</sup>

The Committee on World Food Security's Framework for Action (CFS-FFA), endorsed in 2015, represents the first global consensus on how to mitigate the threat to food security and nutrition during protracted crises. The central aim of the CFS-FFA is to develop policy guidance for enhanced food security and nutrition in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, starting from the recognition that protracted crisis situations require special attention and that appropriate responses in such contexts may differ significantly from non-crisis development contexts.

Of utmost relevance from the viewpoint of food security and social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus, Principle 1 of the CFS-FFA includes the commitment to 'Align humanitarian and development policies and actions and enhance resilience, by [...] ix) Supporting appropriate and sustainable social protection programmes, including through predictable, reliable, rapidly scalable safety nets, to mitigate and manage food security and nutrition risks'.<sup>70</sup>

The CFS-FFA was elaborated through an inclusive consultation process, including representatives from governments, UN agencies, civil society and NGOs, international agricultural research institutions, private sector associations and international and regional financial institutions. The framework for action is based on eleven principles, which collectively underscore the importance of a focus on nutrition while meeting immediate needs, strengthening country ownership and accountability (in particular local governance), the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality, and recognising the contribution to peacebuilding through efforts to enhance food security and nutrition.

67 <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861>  
 68 <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/5358>  
 69 <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-home/activities/ffa/en/>  
 70 <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bc852e.pdf>



### Social protection for food security:

Summary of Key Recommendations by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security (2012).

1. Every country should strive to design and put in place a comprehensive and nationally owned **social protection system** that contributes to ensuring the realisation of the right to adequate food for all.
2. Social protection systems should pursue a **twin-track strategy** to maximise their positive impacts on food security, by providing essential assistance in the short-term and supporting livelihoods in the long term.
3. Social protection needs to be better designed and implemented to address **vulnerability** to poverty and hunger, for instance by being accessible on demand to everyone who needs assistance, and by putting contingency financing in place for rapid scaling up when required.
4. Social protection for food security should be underpinned by the **human rights** to food and social protection at every level, from governments signing up to global agreements, to national legislation and programme implementation.
5. Since a large proportion of the world's food insecure people earn their living from **agriculture**, mainly but not only as smallholder farmers, social protection for food security should support agricultural livelihoods directly.

# Annex 3

Social protection across the nexus – typologies, pathways of impact and a theory of change for enhanced food security and nutrition

## A typology of social transfers and the pathways of impact on food and nutrition security<sup>75</sup>

OBJECTIVE	IN-KIND TRANSFERS	NEAR-CASH TRANSFERS <sup>76</sup>	CASH TRANSFERS (UNCONDITIONAL / CONDITIONAL)
<b>Immediate causes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treatment of children with severe wasting</li> <li>• Take-home rations (may include cereals, pulses, oil etc. and may or may not be fortified)</li> <li>• Food-for-work / food-for-training<sup>77</sup></li> <li>• Nutrition supplements / complementary food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food vouchers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash transfers</li> </ul>
<b>Underlying causes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfers of productive assets (seeds, tools, livestock etc.)</li> <li>• Food for work / food for training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Productive asset vouchers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash transfers</li> <li>• Cash for work</li> </ul>
<b>Basic causes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School meals (can impact on enrolment and retention)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health fee waivers</li> <li>• Educational stipends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash transfers</li> </ul>

In-kind and near-cash transfers have the potential to act both directly on improving individual dietary intake (thus tackling the immediate causes of malnutrition), as well as indirectly by supporting people to increase agricultural production and vocational skills. School meals have also been shown to increase enrolment and retention rates particularly among girls and disadvantaged groups, which in the longer term can be a key driver of improved food security and nutrition.

The impact of cash transfers on improved food security and nutrition is most obviously driven by directly increasing household disposable income, and therefore purchasing power, to cover the costs of a nutritious diet (improved quantity and quality), as well as other costs that may be involved in food preparation such as fuel for cooking. However, the impact can also be indirect via a number of other important pathways; such as via the protection and acquisition of productive assets, helping recipients to smooth consumption and thereby avoid problematic coping mechanisms (such as withdrawal of children from school, overreliance on rising debt burden, etc.), enhancing ability to afford healthcare, or to enable local travel and communications in order to identify work opportunities, etc.<sup>78</sup>

75 Adapted from DFAT (2015) *Guidance Note on Social Protection and Nutrition*.  
<https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/social-protection-and-nutrition.aspx>.

76 These refer to the provision of in-kind commodities through the market.

77 Food-for-work/training may immediately provide food while at the same time contribute to the creation of productive assets or skill acquisition in the community.

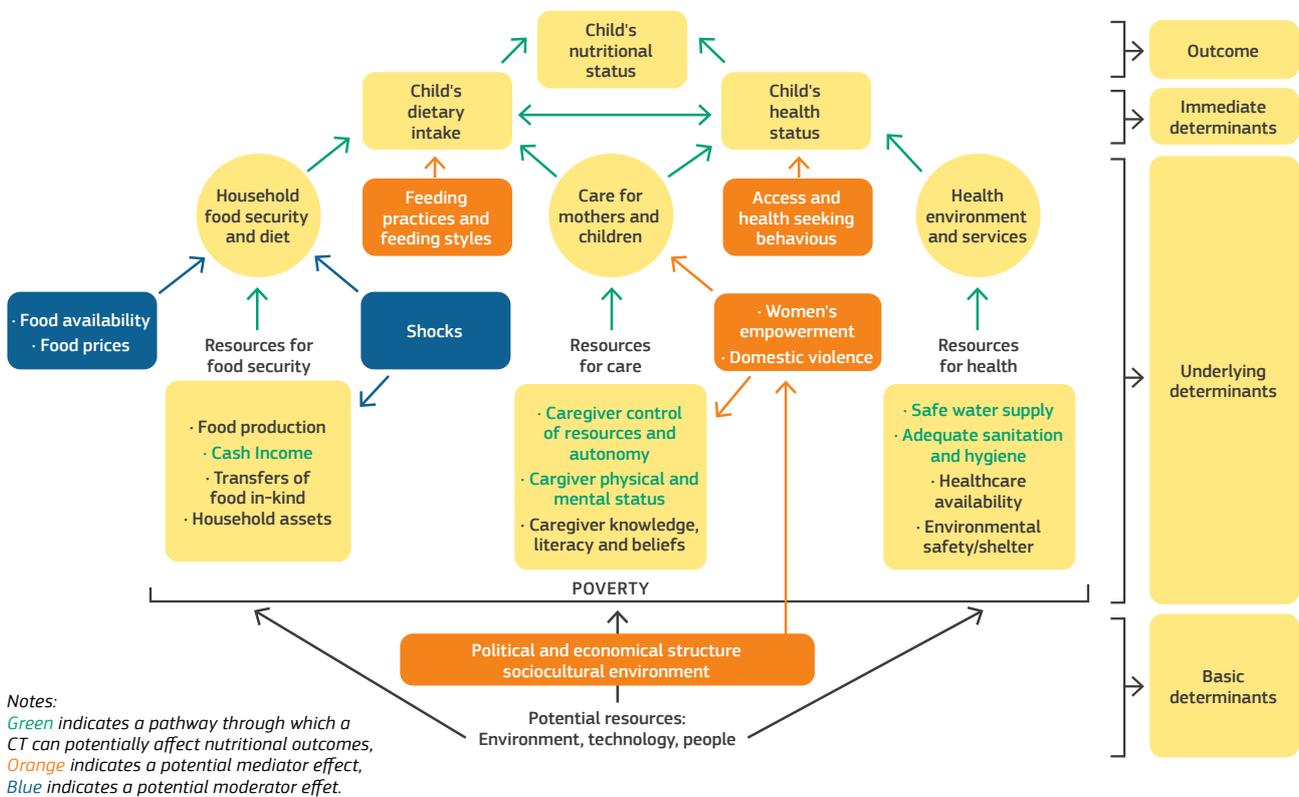
78 Even apparently small changes may have a strong multiplier effect; for example, increased disposable income can enable the purchase of soap for improved hygiene, thereby reducing the risk of infection and diarrhoea prevalence in young children.

Transfers have also been found to directly affect intra-household and gender dynamics. For example, if the transfer is provided to the primary caregiver, often the mother, she can be better able to advocate for her preferences as a result of improved control over resources. Likewise, transfers have also been found to decrease household poverty-related stress (as well as gender-based violence), which in turn can improve a caregiver's physical and mental state and increase the quality of care provision<sup>79</sup>. In terms of enabling adequate care practices, social protection may reduce the pressure on family members to work in the absence of appropriate childcare, while also supporting pregnant women to avoid excessive physical work and mothers to exclusively breastfeed their infants.<sup>80</sup>

Cash for work, as with food for work, can potentially also address problems relating to safe water and ending open defecation in the community, by providing the means to construct and improve water points and sanitation facilities (assuming adequate technical guidance and resources for materials are also available).

Finally, and at a deeper level, the provision of adequate and predictable transfers can provide an opportunity to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty, hunger and malnutrition by ensuring improved demand for and access to basic services (associated with out-of-pocket expenses such as costs for transportation and medicine), as well as boosting local markets and increasing economic opportunities. Social protection can also serve to generate strategic entry points for the provision of awareness and education on important issues related to food security and nutrition; for example by harnessing innovative communications technologies to relay information, messaging and advice. Ultimately, social protection can contribute to improving the foundation for good governance and a human-rights-based approach by transforming relationships (the 'social contract') between the state as duty-bearer and the citizen as rights-holder. Additionally, there is often significant potential for positive interaction effects between the various pathways, as assistance simultaneously gives rise to multiple impacts.

## Conceptual framework for the determinants that affect child nutritional status<sup>81</sup>



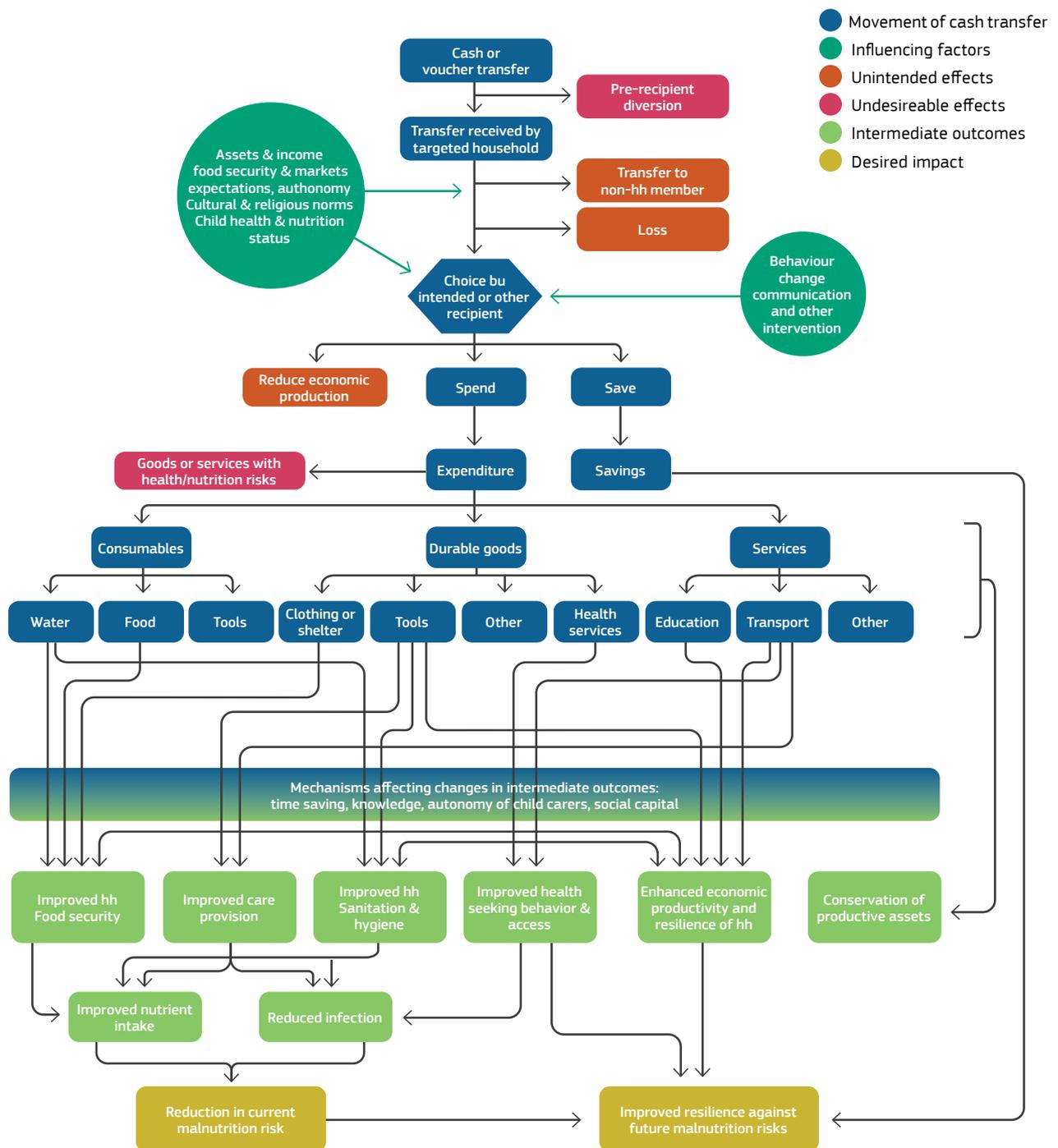
79 Yount et al. (2011).

80 However, the imposition of work as a condition for receipt of a transfer may risk having an adverse impact in this respect.

81 <https://www.enonline.net/jfex/51/cashtransfersandchildnutrition>

Building on the UNICEF conceptual framework of the causal pathways leading to undernutrition, a theory of change can be developed to inform the use of social protection instruments for food and nutrition security across the humanitarian- development nexus. Below is an illustration of how cash transfers may help enhance food and nutrition security.

## Towards a theory of change: Cash transfers for enhanced food and nutrition security<sup>82</sup>



82 Source: [https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/sites/default/files/publications/REFANI\\_Synthesis\\_Report\\_online.pdf](https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/sites/default/files/publications/REFANI_Synthesis_Report_online.pdf)

# Annex 4

## Main evidence of impact

### An overview of the evidence base:

SOURCE	EVIDENCE OF IMPACT
<p><b>Review of the evidence on the impacts of cash transfers on individuals and households between 2000-2015</b> (<i>Bastagli et al. 2016</i>)</p>	<p>This review is particularly important due to the breadth of evidence synthesised coupled with the detailed focus on programme design and implementation features. The range of indicators covered by the review included investment in productive assets, food expenditure, dietary diversity, child stunting and child wasting. However, while the vast majority of studies with statistically significant findings reported increases in productive investments, food expenditure and dietary diversity, there was much less evidence to demonstrate that cash transfers affect child anthropometry (height and weight). At the same time the review also found evidence showing improvement in various outcomes, including nutrition, arising from extended duration of receipt of cash transfers. The review concluded that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall the evidence confirms that cash transfers can be a powerful policy instrument with a range of potential benefits for recipients including livelihood support, enhanced food security and important contributions to dietary related nutrition pathways.</li> <li>• That there was limited evidence on improvements in anthropometric measures probably reflects the fact that achieving optimal child growth depends on a wider range of variables than simply increasing the range of foods eaten, although this may be an important requirement for improved nutrition. The review highlighted that the evidence on cash transfer impacts is less strong regarding direct, long-term outcomes such as nutrition due to the fact that such indicators may require longer periods for impacts to become manifest and also depend on a variety of mediating factors including service availability, prevailing social norms and human capital.</li> <li>• The design of core transfer features – particularly the size of the transfer and the duration of its receipt – is crucial to achieving greater impacts. This has important programming implications where resources may be scarce in terms of decisions relating to coverage and targeting. It may be more effective to focus on a smaller geographical area and population than to attempt wider coverage but at the expense of dilution of impact.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cash transfers and child nutrition: pathways and impacts</b> (<i>de Groot et al. 2016</i>)</p>	<p>A comprehensive review of global evidence from impact evaluation literature to identify critical elements that determine nutrition outcomes at the same time as potential knowledge gaps. The review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirms the general challenges associated with generating conclusive evidence for the impact of cash transfers on child anthropometry (e.g. stunting and wasting) while nevertheless highlighting the significant evidence that old-age pensions (e.g. in South Africa) and child grants (e.g. in Zambia) did demonstrate such impact.</li> <li>• Concludes that further research is required in several key areas such as the impact on children's dietary diversity, caregiver behaviours and the significance of stress.</li> <li>• Highlights the importance of factoring in design variables to understand heterogeneity of impacts, in particular the size of transfers; the age of children (larger effects for younger children which is consistent with the evidence that growth impairments occur primarily in the first '1000 days' of life); the effectiveness of targeting strategies; the access and quality of services; and the duration of programme participation. Potentially negative consequences identified across the wide range of programmes covered include increases in women's time burden and the reinforcement of traditional gender norms.</li> </ul>



**The impact of Ethiopia's productive safety net programme on the nutritional status of children (2008-2012)**

*(IFPRI, 2017)*

Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) is a large-scale social protection intervention aimed at improving food security and stabilising asset levels. It contains a mix of public works employment and unconditional transfers. The PSNP is widely held to have been successful in improving household food security. However, children's nutritional status in the localities where the PSNP has remained poor (48 per cent of children were stunted in 2012 and while this has fallen to 38.4 per cent as of 2018, Ethiopia remains off-track to achieve the international nutrition targets for 2025, while stunting among the poorest quintile is 45 per cent). This study examines the impact of the PSNP on children's nutritional status over the period 2008–2012.

- Doing so requires paying particular attention to the targeting of the PSNP and how payment levels have evolved over time.
- The study finds no evidence that the PSNP reduces either stunting or wasting and notes that child diet quality is poor.
- Likewise, the study finds no evidence that the PSNP improves child consumption of pulses, oils, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, or animal-source proteins.
- Most mothers have not had contact with health extension workers, nor have they received information on good feeding practices.
- Water practices, as captured by the likelihood that mothers boil drinking water, are poor.
- These findings have helped to inform revisions to the PSNP.

**Impact of cash transfers on social determinants of health and health inequalities in sub-Saharan Africa: a systematic review**

*(Owusu-Addo et al. 2018)*

A systematic review (of 53 studies) was conducted to synthesise the evidence of CT impacts and to identify the barriers and facilitators of effectiveness. Importantly, the findings were found to be largely consistent with those from Latin America. The review concluded that:

- CTs have a moderate impact on health and nutritional outcomes but that there is a requirement to ensure adequate and appropriate provision of supplementary services and behaviour-change interventions to optimise their impact;
- The key factors found to facilitate or conversely hinder effectiveness were the size of the transfer and the irregularity of transfer payments,
- Studies used savings and credit-related indicators to measure resilience and found that households could use CTs both to pay off their debt and / or to increase their access to credit.

**Impact of a multidimensional child cash grant programme on water, sanitation and hygiene in Nepal (Renzaho, 2018)**

A recent study in Nepal (using data between 2009 and 2015) evaluated the impact of a multidimensional and unconditional child cash grant programme that incorporated a behaviour-change component along with the cash transfer. The study found that:

- The intervention resulted in a significant reduction in the proportion of households reporting using drinking water from unimproved sources, having unimproved sanitation facilities and practicing unsanitary disposal of children's faeces respectively.
- It is also important to recognise the opportunities presented by social protection to address nutrition status via improved water, sanitation and hygiene outcomes.
- This is particularly the case in countries experiencing complex public health challenges and where, despite the importance of WASH for nutrition, social protection programmes generally do not include WASH indicators.

**Social protection in Ghana and Kenya through an inclusive development lens**

*(Pouw et al. 2018)*

This study is of interest because it adopts a comprehensive 'Inclusive Development' framework to systematically explore the complexity of effects arising from cash transfers at various levels.

- While highlighting several positive effects, it also underscores the tendency for the poorest to remain comparatively excluded, while those people who are less resource-poor are better placed to harness assistance in such a way that builds upon their existing asset base, capabilities and relatively better social relations.
- The study is therefore relevant for understanding the potential impact of social protection on food security and nutrition in crisis contexts as it underscores the challenges faced by the most disadvantaged in realising the full potential of social assistance, for which existing assets and capabilities are often a pre-requisite.
- This highlights the need to better understand the priorities of those most at risk and the way they make strategic decisions, and the study concludes that in all contexts, social protection outcomes tend to be restricted by programme design, implementation/delivery failure and exclusion.

**A review of  
evidence of  
humanitarian  
cash transfer  
programming in  
urban areas**

*(Smith et al. 2015)*

The rationale for this review was that despite the scale of urbanisation, nature of urban crises and urban vulnerability, much of the experience and research into cash transfer programming to date remains predominantly rural in focus.

- The review identified a growth in awareness of the potential role CTP can play in meeting urban humanitarian needs within sectors, including livelihoods; shelter; WASH and health.
- However, at the same time, experience of coordination around CTP was found to highlight challenges resulting from the existing coordination architecture being set up to deliver aid sectorally.
- Overall, the review concluded that the diversity of population groups, needs and vulnerabilities in urban settings tended to make cash assistance an effective response for times of crisis, while certain characteristics of urban areas even created an enabling environment for CTP.

# Annex 5

Guiding framework – nutrition-sensitive social protection across the nexus

## Key questions to guide assessment, analysis and action across the programming cycle:

IDENTIFICATION PHASE	
<b>Situation and causal analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has a robust analysis of food insecurity patterns and causes and/or nutrition situation assessment and causal analysis been undertaken?</li> </ul>
<b>Response analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the basis of the analysis, is there a clear theory of change whereby social protection can support improved food security and nutritional outcomes?</li> <li>Due to the complexity and/or severity of the situation, are multiple instruments required in order to ensure that in the short run lives can be saved while the gradual prevention of malnutrition is achieved in the longer term?</li> </ul>
<b>Policy analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there a good understanding of the policy context (both for social protection and nutrition)?</li> <li>To what extent is there policy coherence between policies and strategies around nutrition, the right to food, agriculture and food systems, land ownership, labour, trade, gender, social protection etc.?</li> <li>What is the state of play with relevant legislation and regulations?<sup>84</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Institutional context and capacities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there a good understanding of institutional roles, responsibilities and dynamics (both for social protection and nutrition)?</li> </ul>
<b>Expected impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have anticipated nutrition impacts been clearly identified for the programme (and have any potential negative impacts been considered?)</li> </ul>
DESIGN PHASE	
<b>Nutrition objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the intervention logic make clear the nutrition objectives at all levels?</li> <li>If the programme has additional objectives related to capacity development and system strengthening, or learning (for example through robust impact assessment), have these been well thought through?</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility and targeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the targeting strategy of the proposed programme build on experience and lessons learned (for example with respect to the costs and complexities of targeting mechanisms), while factoring in considerations relating to political economy and the profile of malnutrition?</li> </ul>

84 Important legislation from a nutrition perspective includes maternity protection (for example based on the ILO Maternity Protection Convention); implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes; and ending the inappropriate marketing of complementary food. Promotion of universal health coverage can also have important implications for promoting access to nutrition-related health services.



<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>	
<b>Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have 'SMART' nutrition indicators been included at different levels within the M&amp;E framework?</li> <li>• Are indicators sufficiently disaggregated to track reduction in nutrition inequalities related to wealth and gender, for instance, as well as heterogeneity of impact based on other variables (location, ethnicity, caste etc.)?</li> <li>• Has consideration been given to indicators that will measure possible negative impacts as a result of thinking across a range of determinants of malnutrition?</li> </ul>
<b>Data collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it clear how much nutrition monitoring data can be derived from existing reporting systems (e.g. HMIS)?</li> <li>• These systems need to be strengthened?</li> <li>• Additional data-collection efforts will be required?</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will the programme contribute to the strengthening evidence for the impact of social protection on nutrition?</li> <li>• Are there ethical issues to consider e.g. on the basis of excluding the control group from receiving basic, potentially life-saving services.</li> <li>• Are there opportunities to invest in research priorities such as understanding the value of different models of nutrition education, or the relative effectiveness of different transfer levels or targeting models?</li> </ul>

# Annex 6

## The IMAM surge model in Kenya.

### **An example of a complementary ‘shock-responsive’ instrument for the treatment of severe acute malnutrition in crisis settings:**

While social assistance in the form of cash transfers can ensure a life-line for those caught up in humanitarian crises by enabling basic needs to be met while maintaining productive assets and enhancing resilience, at the same time additional social protection instruments can play a key role in saving lives.

Over the last two decades, a type of social care service instrument known as Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) or Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) has been progressively established on the basis of efforts by humanitarians to address dangerously high levels of severe acute malnutrition in young children.<sup>87</sup> In recent years, the establishment of this service has been increasingly recognised as an essential component of routine health service provision in contexts where a high prevalence of acute malnutrition persists even where there is no obvious crisis.

The historical challenge of treating SAM was that specially formulated milks were often only accessible in hospital-based feeding centres that tended to be very difficult for most people to get to, especially in a crisis setting. Even if transport-related challenges could be overcome, treatment then involved being stuck in a ward for weeks while the child was treated, and this was often simply not possible for women with other children to take care of as well as many additional responsibilities.

The shift from a clinical perspective to a community outreach focus led to the birth of CMAM, with the critical elements of the programme being timely access to care and high programme coverage. It was found that wherever possible, treatment was much easier to provide at home in the community. This was made possible by two innovations: (i) the development of ready-to-use therapeutic food,<sup>88</sup> and (ii) the introduction of a focus on mid-upper-arm assessment to rapidly and simply identify at-risk and affected children.

A key element of Kenya’s strategy to scale up high-impact nutrition interventions in recent years has been the integrated management of acute malnutrition (IMAM), which has been embedded into the national health system. In the event of crisis intensification, the surge model associated with IMAM in Kenya has facilitated the shock-responsive scaling up of treatment in the most nutritionally at-risk arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL). This has also served to reinforce the nutrition-sensitivity of a comprehensive portfolio of social protection programmes in Kenya including the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) and Ending Drought Emergencies (EDE) framework for enhanced resilience, as well as several other cash transfer initiatives and social protection programmes for orphans and vulnerable children, the elderly and the severely disabled.

An important challenge faced has been the maintenance of community mobilisation and outreach of IMAM after the ‘surge’ process has been initiated (e.g. following declaration of emergency) and as a result, SAM coverage levels in Kenya remain comparatively low. Another key challenge is the risk of imbalance between the humanitarian-development nexus focus on nutrition-specific activities and the levels of investment required to ensure greater coverage for nutrition sensitive interventions.<sup>89</sup>

87 Severe acute malnutrition affects up to 20 million children under the age of five worldwide and, with a high case-fatality rate, can cause anywhere from between 500,000 to 2 million deaths per year.

88 A nutrient-dense paste often based on peanut butter and fortified with milk, sugar and micronutrients.

89 A recent field-based case study suggests that nutrition is in danger of being left behind in context of policy and programming associated with the humanitarian and development nexus and that nutrition should be positioned centre stage as a fundamental design consideration as opposed to simply being understood as an impact indicator (e.g. stunting and / or wasting). Dolan and Shoham et al. (2018) <https://www.ennonline.net/fex/57/nexusnutpolicykenya>

# Annex 7

## Avoiding narrow approaches to nutrition-sensitive social protection

**A critical review of the potential risks associated with an overly prescriptive approach and narrow definition of social protection:**

TYPICAL FEATURES ASSOCIATED WITH NARROW APPROACH	POTENTIAL CHALLENGES THAT MAY ALSO UNDERMINE NUTRITION OUTCOMES IN THE CONTEXT OF CRISES
<p>The application of overly narrow targeting criteria such as ‘1000 day’ women (i.e. pregnant women or mothers of children under the age of two) or families with children identified as acutely malnourished or families identified as the ‘poorest’.</p>	<p>Although it may seem intuitive that in order to optimise food security and nutrition outcomes with scarce resources, the most food-insecure and malnourished households and individuals should be identified and targeted, in fact the high costs, targeting errors and missed opportunity to enhance resilience means that such logic can, in practice, often lead to less effective SP interventions. A narrow targeting approach may be especially unsuitable in a high-risk or crisis context where the majority of families may be affected by various forms of malnutrition, and where the challenges of ensuring coverage and accurate identification of severely malnourished children may lead to <i>de facto</i> exclusion<sup>90</sup>. Likewise, a focus only on ‘1000 day’ mothers does not address in a timely way the poor nutritional status of many more women of reproductive age who may be about to become pregnant, or the requirement to enhance the overall resilience of the affected population.</p> <p>It can also be very difficult to implement an accurate ‘means test’ in the context of economies where a large share of the population work in the informal sector and / or are engaged in subsistence farming. The proxy means test (PMT) was developed to address this challenge on the basis of measuring household characteristics other than income. However, in practice PMTs have proved complex, costly and associated with significant errors of exclusion. By comparison, eligibility criteria based on age such as universal child grants or pensions require tend to be much more straightforward to implement and more accurate.</p>

90 For example, in the Philippines, and in the context of planning a National Emergency Cash Transfer Programme following post-Haiyan experience, defining mechanisms through which households are identified as ‘most vulnerable to and/or affected by hazards and disaster risk’ is reported to have been perceived as a key issue by local stakeholders. The national poverty database is only updated every five years and by no means corresponds to the proportion of the population actually and potentially experiencing food insecurity and various forms of malnutrition.







and safe water as well as the sanitation environment. However, it was decided to launch a nutrition capacity assessment, supported by the EU along with the UN Nutrition Network, to shed additional light and to contribute towards improved nutrition governance for a multi-sectoral approach that addresses the causes of malnutrition at all levels.

The assessment unfolded over a three-month period, enabling the consultants to speak with several participants. The REACH Facilitator played an integral role, with support from the UN Secretariat to promote learning from similar assessments in other countries (e.g. Burkina Faso, Lesotho and Senegal).

Taking the form of a qualitative study, information was gathered through a desk review, key informant interviews and focus groups with representatives from government and the respective SUN networks, including the UN Network. The assessment team measured capacities in four strategic areas: 1) the integration of nutrition into four main sectors; 2) enabling environment; 3) capacity building; and 4) advocacy, communications, data and networking. It also took into account the eleven pillars of the National Food and Nutrition Policy, 2014 – 2025 (*Politique Nationale de Nutrition et d'Alimentation* or PNNA), understanding that these constitute the functions of the CTPNA, and thus should be part and parcel of the assessment.

The study focused on the functional capacities of the Permanent Technical Food and Nutrition Committee (*Comité Technique Permanent de Nutrition et d'Alimentation* or CTPNA), led by the SUN Focal Point and supported by eight SUN networks. In addition, it also encompassed newly-established food and nutrition committees in five regions, looking at their respective capacity to plan, manage and coordinate nutrition actions. Not only did the assessment identify a series of capacity development needs, it also documented strengths and achievements. This enabled country actors to build upon these strengths when tackling the current challenges. In this light, the report positioned the members of the CTPNA both as change agents and recipients of capacity development activities, outlined in the 5-year nutrition capacity development plan.

Among the key findings, the assessment revealed that sectoral participation in monthly CTPNA meetings is variable, as is the functionality of the regional coordination committees and the extent to which nutrition is institutionalised within related sectors. The assessment recommended efforts to mainstream nutrition within the line ministries, including in sectoral policies for Social Protection. Country actors found the exercise to be useful in that it provided a context-specific diagnostic and avenues for action-based solutions. A Nutrition Stakeholder and Action Mapping was launched on 10 December 2018, thanks to UNN-REACH support and generous EU funding, to ascertain the coverage levels of core nutrition actions. The mapping will further build government capacity to better coordinate nutrition action across diverse stakeholders and sectors in pursuit of common nutrition goals.

# Annex 10

## Regional support for social protection in Sahel and West Africa

### **A region-wide approach supporting National Social Protection Initiatives to Tackle the Food and Nutrition Crises in Sahel and West Africa:**<sup>96</sup>

Without effective and shock- responsive national social protection systems in place, and committed to finding a more holistic response to break the cycle of dependency on unsustainable humanitarian assistance, in 2012 the region established the Global Alliance for Resilience (AGIR) in which the first two pillars address social protection and nutrition agendas. In recent years, most countries in the region had started to develop and implement national social protection policies (although coverage remained limited) and at the regional level in 2012, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted a General Convention on Social Security while supporting the development of a regional mechanism for developing expertise on social transfers.

The role of region-wide institutions and associated initiatives in driving the commitment to change the strategic approach cannot be underestimated. These intergovernmental structures and mechanisms have ensured strong policy visibility to the requirement for linking humanitarian and development initiatives for food security and nutrition. In addition to ECOWAS as a policy making and political body, these included the technical mechanism for food security and nutrition (the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel or CILSS) and the G5 Sahel with a primary focus on cross border governance, security and resilience. These bodies led to the launch of three initiatives, including AGIR, the Food Crisis Prevention Network (referred to as RPCA) and the Cadre Harmonise which became the reference instrument for assessing food security and providing early warning of a crisis.

A key concern was that national initiatives were predominantly reliant on external funding sources and therefore their sustainability was in doubt. Furthermore, the continued relevance of narrow targeting approaches associated with projects of the past was also questioned, given the scale and severity of the food insecurity and malnutrition faced. It was clear that regular national social transfer programmes would be far more appropriate and effective, and that there should be enhanced consistency between humanitarian assistance and the longer-term policy response. Correspondingly, chronic food insecurity in the Sahel has been progressively reframed as a long-term development issue and, at the same time, cash transfer initiatives were reoriented to support national social protection policy frameworks to link social protection, nutrition and resilience, and often incorporated into national level Multi-Sector Strategic Plans for Nutrition.

Key lessons arising from this regional experience can be summarised as follows:<sup>97</sup>

- The importance of promoting intersectoral coordination while recognising that this remains a challenge;
- Improving data analysis and use – with the opportunity to strengthen investment in comparative analysis across countries to promote policy exchange and learning, as well as to strengthen linkages between early warning systems data and social protection interventions,
- Supporting social protection development in general, recognising the importance of gradually expanding routine social protection as a crucial contribution to resilience and a productive investment in human and social development.

96 For further details, reference can be made to the 2016 Background Document on Nutrition and Social Protection [https://www.oecd.org/site/rpca/meetings/RPCA-social-protection-draft\\_EN.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/site/rpca/meetings/RPCA-social-protection-draft_EN.pdf)

97 O'Brien C. and Barca V. (2017) 'Regional approaches to addressing food insecurity and the contribution of social protection: the Sahel'. Policy Brief. Oxford Policy Management, Oxford, UK.

Furthermore, despite extremely encouraging results, ensuring the political commitment required to sustain adequate financing and therefore optimal coverage remains a key challenge to date. Tackling this challenge will require increased recognition that the cost of inaction in social, human and economic terms is far higher than the cost of action, and that investing in shock-responsive social protection systems is an inherently affordable and cost-effective investment. The rationalisation of existing programmes and subsidies, while politically complex, also presents significant opportunities to increase the budgetary resources available. Such a transition needs to involve both national governments and international donors, with the latter estimated to be currently spending over USD 1 billion annually for humanitarian assistance (with relatively high overhead costs) in the Sahel region in response to chronic needs.



# Annex 12

## Overview of three key tools to strengthen knowledge for policy

### A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THREE KEY TOOLS FOR KNOWLEDGE IN SUPPORT OF THE PROGRAMMING OF SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION THAT CAN BE CONSIDERED PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE IN CONTEXTS OF CRISES:

#### Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) [www.ipcinfo.org](http://www.ipcinfo.org)

- Supported by the EU and of key strategic significance from a humanitarian-development nexus perspective, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is an innovative multi-partner initiative for improving food security and nutrition analysis and decision-making.
- The main goal of the IPC is to provide decision-makers with a rigorous, evidence- and consensus-based analysis of food insecurity and acute malnutrition situations, to inform emergency responses as well as medium- and long-term policy and programming.
- By using the IPC classification and analytical approach, governments, UN agencies, NGOs, civil society and other relevant actors work together to determine the severity and magnitude of acute and chronic food insecurity, and acute malnutrition situations in a country according to internationally-recognised scientific standards.
- With over ten-years of application, the IPC has proved to be one of the best practices in the global food security field, and a model of collaboration in over 30 countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

#### Nutrition Causal Analysis [www.linknca.org](http://www.linknca.org)

A nutrition causal analysis (NCA) is a method for analysing the multi-causality of undernutrition, as a starting point for improving the relevance and effectiveness of multi-sectoral nutrition security programming in a given context. In order to strengthen the analytical foundation on which its programmes are built, Action Against Hunger invested in the development of a structured method for conducting a nutrition causal analysis, which it has called the 'Link NCA'.

Link NCAs aim to answer six key study questions combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods, and drawing conclusions from a synthesis of results:

- What is the prevalence and severity of wasting and/or stunting in the study population?
- What is the prevalence of known risk factors for undernutrition among the population and key 'nutrition vulnerable groups'?
- What are the causal pathways of undernutrition by which certain children in this population have become stunted and/or wasted?
- How have the stunting and/or wasting in this population and its causes changed a) over time due to historical trends, b) seasonally due to cyclical trends, c) due to recent shocks?
- Which causal pathways are likely to explain most cases of undernutrition? Which sets of risk factors and pathways are likely to be the most modifiable by stakeholders within a given context and within a given period?
- Based on the causal analysis results, what recommendations can be made for improving nutrition security programming? How can the analysis be linked to a programmatic response?

### **Cost of Diet Analysis** [www.heacod.org](http://www.heacod.org)

The Cost of the Diet (CotD) is an innovative method and software developed by Save the Children to estimate the amount and combination of local foods that are needed to provide individuals or a family with foods that meet their average needs for energy and their recommended intakes of protein, fat and micronutrients. The method was developed as a response to research which demonstrated that the impact of traditional nutrition education programmes has been limited because of poverty rather than a lack of knowledge.

The results from an assessment can be used for the following:

- To understand the extent to which economic poverty, typical dietary habits and the availability of food prevents households and vulnerable individuals from consuming a nutritious diet.
- To inform and influence nutrition and food security-related policy and advocacy processes and debates at a national and global level.
- To help understand changes in food and nutrition insecurity in a particular context and as an indicator within food security and nutrition early warning systems.
- To inform nutrition, food security, livelihood and social protection programmes.

# Annex 13

## Learning from maternal/child cash transfer programming in Myanmar

### Insights from the LIFT ‘Maternal and Child Cash Transfer’ initiative in Myanmar:

**Background:** The aim of the LIFT<sup>99</sup> funded MCCT (2016–2018) has been to improve nutrition outcomes for mothers and children through the delivery of nutrition-sensitive – but unconditional – cash transfers to pregnant women and mothers during the first 1000 days. MCCT has been implemented in 338 villages in a region where one in every four children under five are stunted, and often high rates of stunting occur in the same areas (as well as coexisting in the same child). Evidence shows that seasonality affects both, with stunting peaking a few months after wasting has peaked.

**Approach:** Following registration from the second trimester of pregnancy, all pregnant women receive monthly cash transfers of around nine euros every month until their child is two years old. The purpose of the cash transfer, also communicated to the women, is to contribute to the purchase of nutritious food. At the same time, regular Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) sessions were conducted with pregnant women, their family and other key stakeholders in the community. A Randomised Control Trial was designed to assess the impact of the MCCT together with the SBCC on stunting prevalence of children under two. The provision of cash-only as well as cash-plus SBCC was assessed alongside a control group receiving neither

**Insights:** After one year of implementation, and prior to endline assessment of anthropometric indicators, the midline survey showed significant impact on nutrition and IYCF practices. In particular, the analysis suggests impressive improvements in dietary diversity. In general, the effect of the cash transfers when accompanied by the SBCC was found to be greater than when cash alone was provided. In addition to the insights obtained from midline data, other important lessons included:

- Counselling skills of SBCC facilitators needed to be improved, and smaller groups allowed for greater discussion.
- Nutrition awareness needed to include more emphasis on hygiene and sanitation, and not only diet and feeding practices.
- There was a clear need to move towards a whole-of-household approach to addressing the drivers of malnutrition (including fathers, mothers-in-law, neighbours, the elderly and adolescents etc.)

**Challenges:** Even after the intervention, it was found that a high proportion of women and children still did not increase the diversity of their diets. A Cost of Diet study indicated that for many families the cash transfer would need to be increased or even doubled in order to enable adequate purchasing power for a nutritious diet. Furthermore, a significant number of families were found to be increasing the purchase of unhealthy snack foods following receipt of the transfer. This highlights the need to increase the intensity of SBCC if nutrition objectives are ultimately to be achieved.

**Scaling Up:** The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has already adopted the MCCT and implementation has begun in two states with government budget funding. There are plans to expand further.

99 LIFT is a multi-donor trust fund to improve the lives of rural poor people in Myanmar. Funding contributors include the UK, the EU and Australia as well as many other international donors. [www.lift-fund.org](http://www.lift-fund.org)

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European  
Commission

# Operational

# Note No 8

## *Vulnerable Groups*

May 2019

# SPaN

Supporting people through crisis



*Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus*

DEVCO  
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NEAR



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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.

## — 1 —

## Key risks facing vulnerable groups

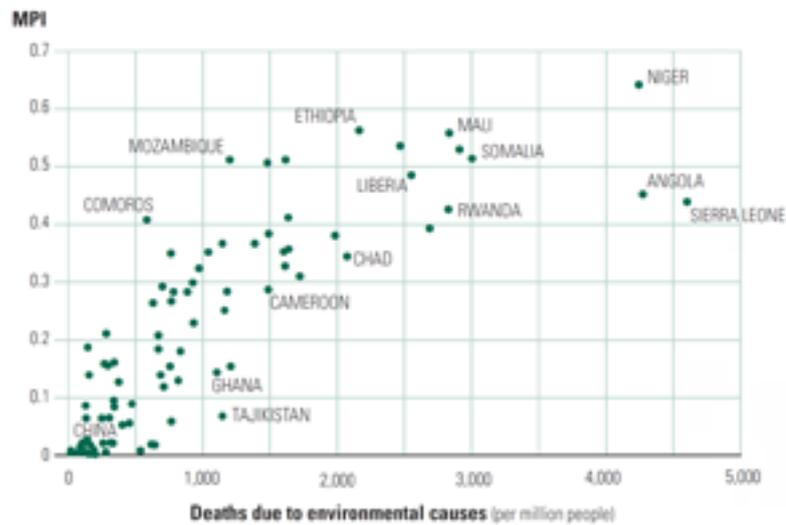


Figure 1: Deaths attributable to environmental risks are associated with high multi-dimensional poverty index (MPI) scores.  
Source: UNDP (2011)

**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’](#)<sup>1</sup> 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

1 <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.

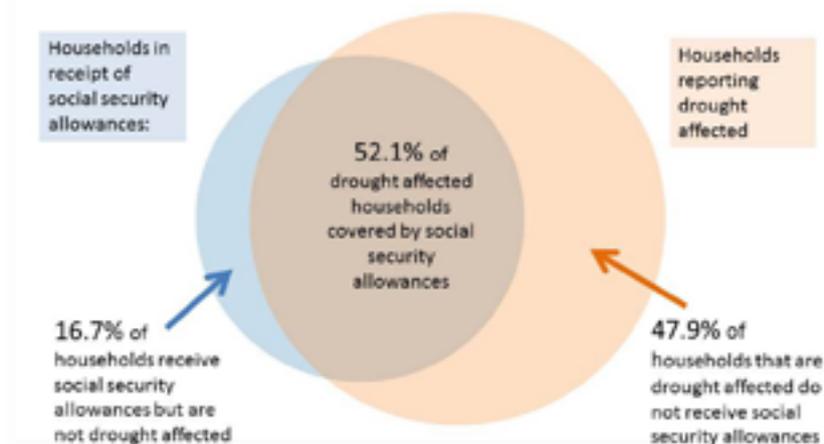


Figure 2: Does social protection coverage overlap with crisis-affected? Example from a drought-prone district in Nepal. Source: World Bank (2018) using Nepal Household Risk and Vulnerability Survey data

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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## OTHER RELEVANT RESOURCES

EU gender toolkit: [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/toolkit-mainstreaming-gender-equality-ec-development-cooperation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/toolkit-mainstreaming-gender-equality-ec-development-cooperation_en)

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European  
Commission

**Operational**

**Note No 9**

*Fragility*

May 2019

**SPaN**

Supporting people through crisis



*Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus*

DEVCO  
ECHO  
NEAR



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### Further Resources

- **Social protection and humanitarian actors**, Monique Pariat, Director-General, DG ECHO, <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/articles/social-protection-and-humanitarian-actors-qa-monique-pariat-director-general-echo>
- **Social protection as an instrument for emergency contexts**, Jean-Louis Ville, former acting Director of People and Peace Directorate, DG DEVCO, [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/node/119144\\_fi](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/node/119144_fi)
- **Beyond cash transfers: Social protection in fragile contexts**, <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/articles/beyond-cash-transfers-social-protection-fragile-contexts>
- **What role can social protection systems play in responding to humanitarian emergencies?** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=dHl38bb\\_cjs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=dHl38bb_cjs)

## Policy Instruments

There is now a clear international consensus to work towards maximising the use of social protection systems and approaches in situations of fragility and conflict.

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit [Grand Bargain](#) commitments include pledges to increase the use of cash-based assistance, work with and strengthen national social protection systems. The [Joint statement of the members of the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board \(SPIAC-B\)](#) to the World Humanitarian Summit calls on governments, development and humanitarian actors to invest in the development of nascent safety nets in contexts of extreme fragility and protracted crises.

At the European Union level, the [New European Consensus on Development](#) (2017/C 210/01) emphasises that fragile and conflict-affected contexts ‘require special attention and sustained international engagement in order to achieve sustainable development.’ The 2011 Commission Communication ‘[Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change](#)’ also underlined that the EU should strive to help fragile and conflict-affected countries ‘establish functioning and accountable institutions that deliver basic services and support poverty reduction.’ The Joint Communication on a [Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU’s External Action](#), (JOIN (2017) 21) and the Council conclusion of 13/11/2017 recognise that the EU should ‘...enhance close cooperation of EU political, humanitarian and development actors on protracted crises and displacement...’ Further details of policies are in Annex 2 of the EC Reference Document.

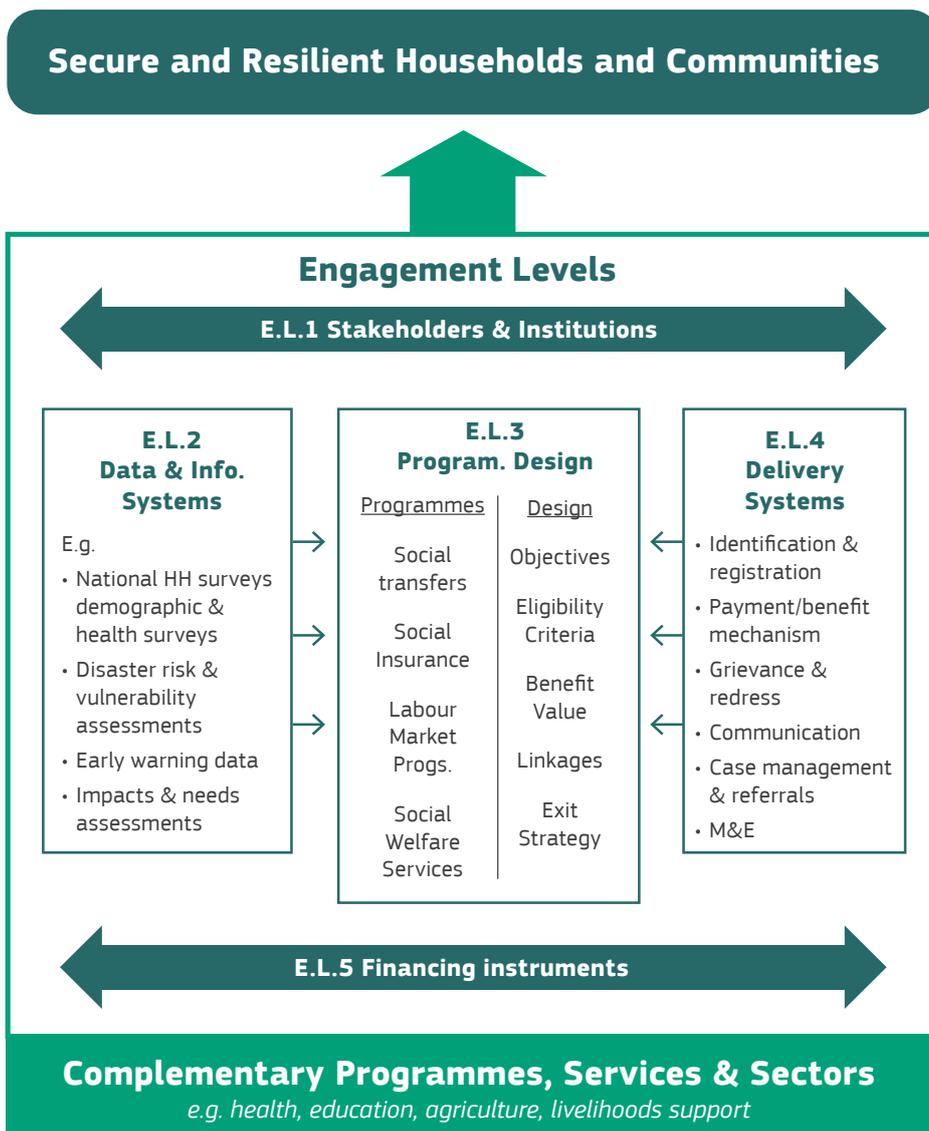
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# Strengthening the Links: What's Involved?

## Intervention Framework

Optimising interactions between humanitarian and social protection interventions requires practitioners to assess and engage with one or more of the **five** building blocks, outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Levels of engagement with social protection in fragile and conflict-affected contexts  
Source: Authors







## Approaches, Hints & Tips

The nature of social protection options and appropriate approaches in fragile and conflict-affected contexts will be influenced by at least three key factors:

1. The existing social protection context
2. The fragility context
3. The stage of the crisis

Approaches for operating in these situations are outlined below.

### Factor 1: EXISTING SOCIAL PROTECTION CONTEXT

The maturity of a country's social protection system informs the degree to which it may potentially be leveraged, in whole or in part, to reach populations in need in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Several indicators should be used to determine the system's level of development including the comprehensiveness and coherence of the legislative and policy framework, coverage of the population and of vulnerable groups, institutional coherence, capacities and coordination, levels, nature and sources of financing, strengths and challenges of particular programmes and their delivery systems, and the extent of government leadership. The more mature a social protection system is, the better able it is likely to be to reach people in need. There are broadly three common ways of working with social protection in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, each influenced in part by the maturity of the existing social protection system. These are outlined below. **The categories outlined below are not mutually exclusive. In many contexts a combination of adapting on-going programmes, framing new programmes in line with a nexus approach and building government capacity will be required.**

## APPROACH

## HINTS &amp; TIPS

## Align, Inform, Transition

Often most appropriate for a basic level of maturity.

Government social protection may not exist, may be suspended, or may be small scale and fragmented, with limited coverage, a weak policy and legislative framework, unclear institutional structures and mandates and weak delivery systems.

**This involves considering how to deliver humanitarian assistance in a manner that can better meet the social protection needs of crisis-affected populations and potentially contribute to building future social protection systems.** The ultimate aim is to transition eligible chronically poor and vulnerable households over to long-term government-led systems. The approach may also be applicable as an interim measure for non-nationals prior to integration into national systems.

- Can lead to short-term efficiency savings if it helps reduce duplication within the humanitarian system
- In the medium to longer term it can build a more sustainable approach to emergency response with greater predictability, potential for scalability and possibly government transition.

The approach may take the following forms:

- **Align existing or new humanitarian interventions with each other or with future or planned government social protection programmes.** For example, through aligning key design features such as eligibility criteria, transfer values, programme linkages or exit strategies. Or aligning delivery systems such as registration and enrolment processes, payment mechanisms, grievance and redress or communication systems.
- **Design and deliver humanitarian programmes according to principles of scalability, sustainability & long-term, future government delivery.** In practical terms, this may mean designing lower transfer values than a stand-alone humanitarian response (see Annex One for information on setting transfer values), or simplifying eligibility criteria (e.g. demographic) or targeting processes.
- **Document and engage with social protection actors on operational and information systems developed by humanitarian actors, to inform future social protection systems.** Various elements of humanitarian action, while geared to short-term relief, may be useful for social protection actors e.g. geospatial information systems, market analysis, nutritional programmes (Gentilini et al., 2018).

- Ensure extensive coordination and strong donor leadership
- Consider the need for simplification of design and delivery features (e.g. eligibility criteria or targeting processes)
- Be prepared to compromise between ideal humanitarian design and the most appropriate approach from a long-term perspective.
- Encourage implementing partners to work with the same service providers as each other and / or as exiting government programmes.
- Ensure good documentation and build engagement with government into programme plans to support knowledge transfer.
- Consider the risk that drawing on humanitarian interventions to inform future social protection programmes may result in a narrow or inappropriate conceptualisation of social protection (e.g. tight poverty- or vulnerability-focused targeting as opposed to entitlement-based, categorical approaches).
- Be realistic about long term transition possibility.

## PROGRAMME EXAMPLES

- ➔ *In Sudan, the EU and partners will advocate to government on the need to strengthen links between cash-based humanitarian interventions and nascent safety nets.*
- ➔ *In Mali, features of the EU funded KEY programme, such as transfer values, were designed to align with the nascent social transfer scheme being implemented in the south of Mali to support the eventual national roll-out of this scheme as part of the national social transfer system (Smith, 2018).*
- ➔ *In Somalia, the EU is working with a range of agencies and the government to help move from a situation of multiple, fragmented non-state emergency interventions towards a more predictable, government-owned comprehensive social protection system. A safety-net programme will serve as one programmatic stepping stone towards this aim. A Donor Working Group has been convened to liaise with government and coordinate the development of priority policies and approaches, and a Technical Assistance Facility will support donors, government and other institutions to further the long-term aim (Goodman and Majid, 2017).*



## Develop and Strengthen

### Appropriate for mature, intermediate and basic levels of maturity.

Applicable where it is possible and appropriate to work with the government and their programmes

This involves bringing together humanitarian and development actors to build the capacity of government staff and systems to extend, strengthen or maintain social protection. The objective is to build the capacity of government to design, deliver, monitor and coordinate social protection programmes in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. It might include, for example, capacity-building support to government staff, support to strengthen the policy and legal framework, the design of new programmes, and support to strengthen delivery systems including linkages to other services.

- Most relevant in protracted crises or post-conflict situations, where there is a strong overlap between chronically poor and vulnerable households and those also affected by transient risks resulting from fragility and conflict.
- Where possible this approach should be an integral part of all social protection engagement in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Even in the most challenging circumstances with very low levels of government capacity, evidence shows that it is often possible to deliver some form of modest capacity or system building support – see for example World Bank 2016 and 2018).

- Draw on well-established approaches and tools for building government social protection systems in more stable contexts as these are also relevant in many fragile situations – the difference in context being one of degrees rather than fundamental – e.g. more pronounced capacity, security or legitimacy gaps.
- Consider how lessons and systems generated by humanitarian agencies during an emergency (vulnerability data, beneficiary lists, distribution systems, etc.) can be retained and, if appropriate, shared with governments in a post-crisis setting.
- Consider opportunities for building shock-responsive social protection features into the design of nascent and emerging social protection programmes and systems.
- Building up a labour force of social workers with adequate skills, capacities and numbers may contribute to a crisis response through identifying complex needs and arranging referrals.

#### PROGRAMME EXAMPLES

Most experience comes from natural disaster and economic crisis contexts. Below are links to case studies from the use of social protection in response to fragility, conflict and forced displacement.

- ➔ *In Myanmar, the Livelihood and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT) works directly with the Department of Social Welfare to support delivery of the Mother and Child Cash Transfers (MCCT) in Chin State. The aim is for the Government of Myanmar (GoM) to assume full financial and management responsibility for the MCCT after the initial two-year implementation period. A robust programme of evidence generation, implemented by an international non-governmental organisation (INGO), further supports system building efforts. This has contributed to government efforts to now introduce the MCCT across Rakhine State to 30,000 pregnant women in addition to scaling up in Chin State. The GoM's policy commitments in the National Social Protection Strategic Plan, the Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Medium Term Costed Plan (2018-2022) to introduce a shock-responsive social protection system provides the incentive to 'future proof' the social protection portfolio of programmes (European Commission & European Union External Action, 2018).*
- ➔ *In Uganda, the EU plans to set up new social protection schemes, or reinforce existing ones, to better support refugees and host populations (European Union 2018).*
- ➔ *In Colombia, the availability of a network of professional social workers and the existence of a range of social protection programmes with broad coverage and robust delivery systems allowed the country to effectively respond to the rapid influx of 24,000 Colombians and Venezuelan nationals from Venezuela. Mobile units of interdisciplinary teams were deployed to identify and refer beneficiaries. 'Social inclusion and reconciliation' plans were developed, and existing psychosocial, legal, nutritional, public works and skills training programmes were scaled up (Uribe, 2016).*
- ➔ *In Palestine, numerous links between the flagship EU funded Cash Transfer Program, a WFP-supported food voucher scheme and other short-term emergency interventions are purposefully designed into the overall system. These include a common targeting methodology and database and a payment card which other organisations can use to deliver assistance. Capacity-building support to the Ministry of Social Development is designed to strengthen the sector as a whole rather than individual programmes (Gentilini et al., 2018).*

## Factor 2: FRAGILITY CONTEXT

Whilst many fragile countries may face challenges in each of the three areas of security, capacity and legitimacy, the relative degree of deficiency in each will influence available options and approaches. And fragility is a multidimensional context in which many other factors will play a role. The majority of fragile and conflict-affected countries and situations are also affected by natural disasters and the effects of climate change. Consideration should also be given to these compounding shocks.

### FRAGILITY CHALLENGES & APPROACHES

#### SECURITY

**Where a government faces challenges in maintaining basic security across its territory the following constraints in relation to social protection provision may occur, amongst others: suspension of donor funds and actions; restrictions for non-state actors and possibly government on accessing affected populations; movements of populations, creating challenges for programme delivery.**

- Conduct conflict sensitivity and other Do No Harm analyses.
- Consider multi-component projects to spread risk and maintain project momentum if some programme elements need to be suspended.
- Support UN agencies, NGO consortia, local actors and private sector partners who may have better access.
- Consider temporarily supporting government salaries and / or social protection delivery systems to preserve and prevent collapse.
- Consider simplifying programme design and delivery procedures.
- Promote IT-supported approaches; use electronic or mobile money transfers; challenge private sector service providers to propose innovative solutions to access and security constraints.
- Consider interventions for at-risk groups such as youth and ex-combatants – see [Annex Two](#).

#### PROGRAMME EXAMPLES

- 🕒 *In Yemen, despite the high risks of continuing to operate due to the active conflict, the World Bank considered that inaction or a delayed response would be far costlier from a strategic, institutional and development point of view. Innovative and flexible application of operational and financing instruments enabled reengagement.*
- 🕒 *In South Sudan, the multiple components of the social protection support provided through the Rapid Social Response Fund meant that when the security situation deteriorated in 2016, plans for in-country assessments could be put on hold whilst plans for the remotely-delivered technical assistance components were prioritised so that the project did not lose momentum (World Bank, 2018).*

#### CAPACITY

**Capacity gaps are often more pronounced in fragile contexts, than in stable situations. Challenges are focused largely on concerns around fiduciary risk, programme speed, effectiveness and accountability and compromising humanitarian principles.**

- **Work through government systems to the extent possible.** Ensure all programmes include technical assistance to build capacity of staff and systems. During stable times, support government to develop preparedness and contingency plans and risk financing strategies.
- **Identify an appropriate mix of instruments, to work simultaneously at different levels of state and society to meet short-and long-term objectives.** The approach is not necessarily a binary choice between working through the state or with parallel systems, nor one of progressive increase in government delivery. Identify and document trade-offs. Build flexibility into operation and financing plans so that arrangements can shift, mid-programme if needed.
- **Assess which parts of government, their programmes or systems can be most effectively engaged with and supported.** Different ways of working with government carry different risks and opportunities. Working with government might include, at a minimum, ensuring that aid is reflected in the country's plans, budgets and reports. It might include aligning the design and delivery systems of non-government projects with existing government programmes or policy ambitions. It may mean designing a programme in partnership with government, with scalability in mind but implementing and financing outside government. It may mean certain parts of projects are implemented by government, or building in progressive transition to government systems over multiple years (Hart et al., 2015).
- **Consider opportunities for working with different administrative levels.** For example, local authorities are often relevant as partners where central authorities are weak or lack authority and legitimacy.

- **Apply additional safeguards where needed.** This might include assessing programme design and delivery features from a fiduciary risk perspective. It might also include the suspension of registration and enrolment into programmes before sensitive political events such as elections, to address heightened risks of programme manipulation. An assessment of, and mitigating actions around, the sustainability of programme inputs may also be more pressing in a fragile context than in more stable contexts. See Hart et al., 2015 for further mitigating strategies.
  - **Consider whether engagement via EUD may be more appropriate with certain sections of government and on certain topics.** Agree common advocacy messages to be communicated by EUD. For example, highlight messages around preserving or expanding humanitarian space, the need for durable solutions and inclusive consultation processes. Agree 'red lines' from the outset and acknowledge that in some circumstances, it is not appropriate for humanitarian actors to engage even indirectly.
- 🔄 *In South Sudan, capacity-building support has been provided to government to strengthen their ability to coordinate social protection and related humanitarian interventions including those delivered by humanitarian agencies (World Bank, 2018).*
- 🔄 *In Nigeria, the EU and its implementing partners will support local authorities to identify and register vulnerable individuals and groups, building on work already under way by humanitarian agencies and state authorities.*

## LEGITIMACY

**Social protection may help diminish social unrest, help build state legitimacy and contribute to assuring peace and stability by increasing household income, access to jobs and social services, thereby building capacity to cope with shocks and stressors and the social contract.** However, poorly designed and delivered social protection can exacerbate existing tensions and undermine trust in the state. Recommendations include:

- Invest in context analyses. A [five-year, multi-country, mixed-method analysis](#) looking at the role of service delivery, public perceptions and state legitimacy found that multiple, complex national, local and historical factors play a significant role in shaping people's views of the state, independent of service delivery (Nixon and Mallett, 2017).
  - Review programmes through a peacebuilding and state-building lens. Consider questions such as how far the proposed programme is likely to contribute to peacebuilding and state-building goals, strengthen state institutions or undermine them. See the [EU Guidance Note on the Use of Conflict Analysis in support of EU External Action](#).
  - Consider a range of social protection instruments. Grievance, exclusion and unfairness in the workplace can lead to negative perceptions of government. Social protection schemes, such as labour market interventions which connect people to labour markets and improve conditions within them, may help tackle adverse incorporation of vulnerable workers. Interventions for 'at-risk' groups such as youth and ex-combatants may be appropriate. see [Annex Two](#) for information on programming for ex-combatants.
  - Ensure culturally appropriate, transparent, simple design and delivery. Where possible, align programme design with the social values of the beneficiary community. For example, in communities where consensus-based decision-making is highly valued, community-based targeting may be more likely to boost state legitimacy; in communities where there is broad consensus on 'vulnerable groups', categorical targeting may be more likely to boost state legitimacy than targeting based on opaque poverty indicators. Conversely, if communities don't understand or agree with the eligibility criteria of a programme or if beneficiaries are perceived to be receiving unfair levels of support, this can lead to conflict within communities and hostility towards programme implementers. Where feasible, design should be based on broad consultation involving all stakeholders including beneficiaries and communities.
  - Invest in the quality of front-line delivery, accountability and communication. Evidence shows that it is the on-the-ground individual experience of receiving services that matters more to perceptions of state legitimacy than who is providing the service (Nixon and Mallett, 2017). If front line programme staff are disrespectful, if programme delivery is unreliable or inconsiderate, this can undermine any trust-building benefits. Understand how people experience and perceive services at an individual level and what this might mean for building or undermining state legitimacy. Invest in grievance and redress mechanisms which promote participation, voice, empowerment and ownership, and in communication strategies to ensure the credibility and acceptance of programmes. Document delivery systems (and programme results) clearly to mitigate against, and rebuff, accusations of programme manipulation.
  - Maximise the role of the state in all processes where appropriate. Maximising front line visibility may help build trust and increase the likelihood that programme benefits are attributed to the state but evidence is mixed. Do not assume that non-government provision undermines state legitimacy. Look for a range of opportunities to involve government, including building capacity to coordinate.
  - Invest in social protection-oriented approaches for their own sake. Recognise that achieving state legitimacy is not the primary motivation for optimising interactions between social protection and humanitarian assistance.
- 🔄 *In Yemen, inclusive, transparent targeting and community-based approaches within the Emergency Crisis Response project have been identified as contributing to social cohesion including between host communities, returnees and IDPs (Al-Ahmadi and de Silva, 2018).*

### NATURAL DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**Most fragile and conflict-affected contexts are also impacted by natural disasters and, increasingly, by the effects of climate change. Fragility increases the chances of natural disasters occurring (for example, due to weak urban planning, insufficient or ineffective natural infrastructure), worsens their impact and, by definition, decreases the capacity of the state to respond. It also reduces the capacity to adapt to climate change.**

- Prepare contingency plans for emergency response
- Consider necessary adaptations to existing or nascent social protection programmes to build in greater shock-response, across all 5 levels of engagement with SP systems e.g.
  - ▶ Strengthen data systems to understand and predict disaster risks (e.g. early warning data and systems)
  - ▶ Clarify stakeholders, roles, mandates in emergency response and ex-ante capacity-building needs
  - ▶ Consider appropriate disaster-risk and vulnerability criteria in assessments and programme eligibility criteria. Consider streamlining beneficiary identification, registration and enrolment processes.
  - ▶ Consider appropriate changes to programme design such as modalities and transfer values
  - ▶ Consider necessary changes to delivery mechanisms
  - ▶ Develop disaster risk financing strategies

### Factor 3: THE STAGE OF THE CRISIS

The stage of the crisis will inform the most appropriate options and approaches. Advance planning and preparation should always be prioritised.

CRISIS STAGE	IMPLICATIONS AND ACTIONS
Pre-crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and strengthen government social protection capacities and systems.</li> <li>• Pre-plan responses in line with the existing social protection systems’ level of maturity and the fragility context, as outlined above.</li> <li>• Build relationships and inclusive dialogue; assess context, develop contingency and financing plans.</li> </ul>
Acute crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate existing contingency plans for social-protection-oriented responses where they exist.</li> <li>• Identify the primary objective for working with social protection programmes and approaches.</li> <li>• Consider appropriate and feasible response options in line with the maturity of the social protection system and the fragility context, as outlined above.</li> <li>• Build in frequent and comprehensive review and assessment of implementation risks to allow for timely identification of potential risks and real-time mitigation actions.</li> </ul>
Protracted crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and strengthen government social protection capacities and systems</li> <li>• For humanitarian interventions follow the approach of Align, Inform and Transition as outlined above. Consider opportunities for transitioning systems and/or beneficiaries over to government systems</li> <li>• Build shock-responsive features into existing programmes where social protection is advanced or intermediate, to help respond to acute shocks occurring on top of the protracted crisis.</li> <li>• Design interventions that offer sequential pathways between interventions as needs change.</li> </ul>
Post crisis & long-term recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on building government systems and capacities and transitioning humanitarian case-loads over to national systems as appropriate and feasible.</li> <li>• Position social protection in areas of government with political traction and embed social protection support in financing mechanisms with high traction, e.g. budget support.</li> <li>• Understand and address structural access constraints; legacies of conflict continue to shape people’s access to services and their exclusion from them (Nixon and Mallett, 2017).</li> </ul>

## Further Resources

- [Humanitarian Capital? Lessons on Better Connecting Humanitarian Assistance and Social Protection](#), Gentilini, Laughton & O'Brien, 2018.
- [Resilient social protection](#), Stefan Dercon keynote speech
- [How to support state building, service delivery and recovery in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Lessons from six years of SLRC research](#), Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium, 2017.
- [Use of Country Systems in Fragile States](#), Hart, et al, 2015, ODI
- The EC document [Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. A Game Changer in Supporting People through Crises](#) provides links to well-established approaches and tools for building social protection systems in more stable contexts which are also likely to be relevant in many fragile and conflict-affected settings.

## Engagement Levels

Each of the five levels of engagement with social protection systems and humanitarian assistance is discussed in turn below. Precisely which unit or actor should be responsible for the different actions will depend on the specific context. A tool for assessing response options is offered in the EC Reference Document [Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. A Game Changer in Supporting People through Crises](#).

### Level 1: STAKEHOLDERS AND INSTITUTIONS

This level of engagement includes all relevant stakeholders, capacities and commitment, coordination and the policy and legal framework.

#### Actions

- Build relationships with social protection and disaster risk management (DRM)<sup>15</sup> actors, ideally in advance of an acute crisis, as well as Ministries of finance, planning, and offices of the President or Prime Minister. Also Ministries of agriculture, education and health where there is interest in supporting demand-side interventions.
- Consider alternative entry points towards a national social protection system where there is no appetite for pro-poor social protection; e.g. pensions for retired military personnel following security sector reform.
- Strengthen strategic partnerships between humanitarian, development, security and diplomatic actors.
- Ensure government leadership where appropriate. In all contexts ensure strong leadership, clarity of process and expected outcomes.
- Clarify / agree mandates, roles and responsibilities for all actors.
- Build government capacity and consensus to invest. Highlight value-for-money evidence
- Strengthen coordination systems.<sup>16</sup> Align with any on-going in-country nexus-like processes
- Support policy and legislative reform. Crises can create new entry points for policy dialogue and offer a window of opportunity to develop new approaches.
- Innovate and be flexible with the use of existing and policy instruments.

15 *Disaster risk management is the application of disaster risk reduction policies and strategies to prevent new disaster risk, reduce existing disaster risk and manage residual risk, contributing to the strengthening of resilience and reduction of disaster losses. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)*

16 *Which sectors or groups to coordinate with will depend on the context. At a minimum it is likely to include government and non-government social protection, DRM and emergency response coordination fora as well as cash working groups. Depending on the context It may also include government and non-government coordination fora for livelihoods, food security, nutrition, health, education, child protection or resilience services and interventions.*

- Build awareness of the benefits of collaboration and awareness of one another's fields, recognising that humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and government service delivery have different cultures and ways of working. Factor in the different procedures and timelines of all stakeholders. Understanding the limitations and opportunities for decision making in each institution is fundamental for effective collaboration.
  - In contexts where many issues are contested, consider collaboration on practical actions which speak to the priorities of a range of actors and side-step more politically charged issues whilst moving a nexus agenda forward.
  - Partnering with government on low-risk actions, such as capacity building or evidence generation, can serve as an entry point for trust building and ultimately broader collaboration
- *In Sudan, joint analyses and missions conducted under the EU-led nexus pilot-country process and involving the EEAS, EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa team, Member States and nexus adviser to the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator led to common agreement on the context, programmatic and advocacy priorities, and areas for EU action.*
  - *In Uganda, the EC contracted a consultant to kick-start the nexus pilot-country process, focusing on inclusive dialogue and a comprehensive handover to the EU. A kick-off stakeholder workshop confirmed a common understanding of the context and priority actions, including political advocacy messages. The nexus pilot-country process is fully aligned to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (European Union, 2018).*
  - *In Iraq, DFID financed dedicated staff to take forward coordination and inclusive dialogue involving a wide range of stakeholders including civil society. 'Get-to know-you' workshops were organised to start developing trust and to start discussions. Later, collaboration between agencies looking at how many people on humanitarian programme beneficiary lists would be eligible for government support according to government programme criteria was found to be a useful way of building relationships and a stepping stone to further actions.*
  - *In Yemen, the success of the Emergency Crisis Response Project (ECRP) is attributed in part to the World Bank's longstanding partnership with Yemeni government institutions prior to the crisis (Al-Ahmadi and de Silva, 2018). A social protection consultative committee (SPCC) provides a platform for integrated and inclusive programming over the short and longer term. The Committee is chaired by the Ministry of Social Affairs & Labour and includes the Ministry of Finance, UN agencies, INGOs and the private sector (Smith, 2017b).*

*Sources from key informant interviews unless otherwise stated.*

## Level 2: DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

This level of engagement includes both ex-ante social protection data (e.g. national household surveys, demographic and health surveys, risk and vulnerability assessments) and DRM information (e.g. disaster risk assessments, ex-post impacts and needs assessments) and the systems that hold this data. Data and information management may often present significant practical obstacles to building greater links between social protection and humanitarian action – underscoring the need to invest in data and information systems in advance of a crisis, or possibly as a starting point for collaboration in protracted crises.

### Actions

- Strengthen social protection information systems, including both the data and information management systems, prior to a crisis as well as DRM information systems where appropriate. Develop clear areas of linkage.
- Consider opportunities for developing assessments that serve the priorities of humanitarian and development actors and management information systems (MIS) that serve the needs of both communities and/or are interoperable, including with government systems.
- Develop triggers for scaling up social protection with humanitarian and development actors.

- ➔ *In the Republic of Congo, donor support has helped the government establish a common platform for enrolment in the safety net system by creating a Social Registry Information System. The system contains a database to store applicant information and a management information system (MIS) to support monitoring, reporting, and coordination of a number of programmes (World Bank, 2016).*
- ➔ *In Myanmar, the Emergency Response Mechanism (ERM) established by ECHO shares information collected on a specific crisis context and seeks to reduce adverse impacts through a needs assessment and adapted response. The ERM is managed by the Durable Peace Programme Joint Strategy Team in Kachin State, and implemented via the same consortium of local CSOs, managed by the same INGO. This illustrates the significance of a coordinated humanitarian and development strategy. A multi-purpose cash grant maximises efficiency and flexibility for recipients to cover a range of needs and shifting priorities. The synergies between the two programmes, in a nexus approach, confirms that working with vulnerable people necessitates parallel support to ensure that basic needs are met and self-reliance promoted in order to make meaningful engagement with peace and governance issues feasible (European Commission & European Union External Action, 2018).*
- ➔ *In Yemen, to protect confidentiality during the conflict, data management functions were outsourced to non-government personnel; (previously the government had been managing these steps). (Smith, 2017b).*

### Level 3: PROGRAMME DESIGN

Programme design includes: programme objectives, eligibility criteria; transfer values (or the nature of the benefit); programme linkages, and the exit strategy.

#### Actions

- Assess socio-economic data, social protection coverage and disaster risk data ex ante, and impact and needs assessment data ex post, to inform programme design. Where not already available, commission political economy analyses to establish an understanding of interests and incentives, and conflict sensitivity and protection analyses to inform intervention design.
- Develop objectives that speak to the priorities of both humanitarian and development actors.
- Consider social cohesion objectives in design and delivery. Ensuring transparent programme processes and design features (such as eligibility criteria), basing design on existing community culture and norms and involving the community to the greatest extent possible in key design, delivery and monitoring processes may help foster social cohesion and promote a sense of community solidarity and collaboration. At a minimum it is likely to help avoid fostering social tension and unrest.
- Where appropriate design a series of complementary, coordinated programmes using both humanitarian and development policy and financing instruments or pooled funds. See for example the European Union Trust Fund experience in Mali and Burkina Faso. Use the same partners, design and delivery systems where possible.
- Build 'quick wins' into programme plans. Whilst building social protection systems takes decades, building early wins into programme design can help build confidence among all actors (Lindborg, 2018). Examples include government capacity-building initiatives or the short-term transition of some key functions (such as monitoring and evaluation) from non-state to state management.
- Consider transfer values with reference to short- and long-term objectives. Compromise and trade-offs are likely to be required. See Annex One for information on calculating transfer values.
- Build links to other programmes and services where appropriate.
- Recognise that some groups may be excluded from social protection for historical, political, geographical and/or cultural reasons. Ensure non-government provision of support to such groups.

- *In Nigeria, the EU and its implementing partners will undertake an assessment to determine the transfer value required to help people meet their basic needs, cope with shocks and stresses and access longer term livelihood opportunities.*
- *In Iraq, the exclusion of some groups from social protection services due to perceived affiliation with ISIS means that parallel non-government support will remain essential for these groups.*
- *In Uganda, the nexus pilot country process has committed to conduct conflict and protection analyses across all interventions (as well as gender analysis) to inform programming (European Union, 2018)*

## LEVEL 4: DELIVERY SYSTEMS

Programme delivery systems include beneficiary identification, registration and enrolment processes; payment mechanisms (e.g. mobile money, ATM & smart cards etc.); grievance and redress systems; communication systems, case management and referral systems, and monitoring and evaluation.

### Actions

- Select implementing partners with reference to the security, legitimacy and capacity context.
  - Consider simplifying existing beneficiary identification, registration and enrolment processes – a balance between speed and accuracy will be required.
  - Ensure that payment mechanisms are accessible and secure for beneficiaries, can continue to operate during a crisis, and ideally are able to absorb and disburse multiple sources of funds.
  - Ensure that programme communication and grievance and redress systems are effective and accessible to disaster-affected populations.
  - Jointly agree indicators and establish data-gathering processes that satisfy both humanitarian and development actors' needs.
  - Work on programme delivery systems as also being an entry point for broader collaboration. Beyond the intrinsic importance of such systems, practical collaboration between stakeholders to strengthen delivery systems can be an important entry point for building relationships and confidence and ultimately catalysing broader collaboration.
  - Consider innovative solutions to monitoring and evaluation such as third-party monitoring and the use of technology and social media for remote monitoring.
- *In Kyrgyzstan, the government set up mobile outreach services to take registration to communities. Conflict-affected households did not have to submit verification documentation for 6 months and a government taskforce fast-tracked claims for replacing lost ID cards (Smith, 2017a).*
  - *In Yemen, the private sector payment services provider for the Social Welfare Fund relaxed enrolment requirements during the conflict to make them appropriate to marginalised groups and women – who tend to lack formal identification. They also discreetly moved money into active conflict areas and set up temporary pay points that were relatively secure and accessible to women. Messages about the social assistance programme were also communicated through familiar social welfare fund staff and a local community organisation to help ensure that marginalised groups trusted the programme and that social tensions were minimised (Smith, 2017b).*
  - *In Yemen, the Emergency Crisis Response Project employs multiple levels of monitoring. Trained community members provide daily verbal and visual feedback using mobile and cloud-based applications. Mobile phone technology, GPS-enabled devices and geotagging of project sites helps provide timely and reliable information even from remote and difficult-to-access areas. WhatsApp platforms are used to communicate programme information. Beneficiary feedback is also shared on Twitter and live streams on Snapchat, and Facebook chats among donors, beneficiaries and the wider population are also envisaged (Al-Ahmadi and de Silva, 2018).*

## Level 5: FINANCING INSTRUMENTS

Effective financing strategies and coordination of financing instruments between development programmes and humanitarian financing make common programming a reality.

### Actions

- Undertake a context analysis and costing exercise to underpin a risk financing strategy for social protection scale-up.
- Identify, ideally in advance, what government is liable for, what it will do in a crisis and the cost.
- Identify multiple financing instruments to cover different magnitudes of risk. For national governments, financing options include: contingency funds, multi-year national and local disaster reserves; contingent credit; risk transfer instruments such as insurance.
- Pooled funds can spread risk across donors and agencies and allow all actors to operate under the same administrative processes, helping to harmonise operational timeframes.
- Crises can generate additional financing, offering a window of opportunity to develop new approaches.
- Innovate and be flexible with the use of financing instruments.
- Channelling financing in the midst of crises to agencies with dual humanitarian and development mandates may help forge or maintain partnerships that will be useful for post-crisis investments in national social protection systems.

🔄 *In Yemen, the World Bank demonstrated flexibility and creativity in the interpretation of operational and financial instruments, to enable reengagement following the suspension of donor funds. First, staff conducted a portfolio review, cancelling Yemen's pre-conflict portfolio of 20 projects (mostly IDA financed), while ensuring that cancelled funds remained available for recommitment to Yemen. This resulted in freeing up previously suspended IDA resources. World Bank Operational Policy 2.30 (Development Cooperation and Conflict), which stipulates that if there is no government in power, assistance may be initiated by requests from the international community subject to the prior approval of the World Bank Board, was triggered by a request from UN agencies. However, under IDA's policy framework, grants to entities other than the sovereign entity are offered only outside of the regional window. In this case, for the first time in the World Bank's history, the proposed grants were to be made out of the country's own IDA resources. The Bank decided to move ahead with using Yemen's IDA allocation without government acquiescence in recognition of the risks of inaction (Al-Ahmadi and de Silva, 2018).*

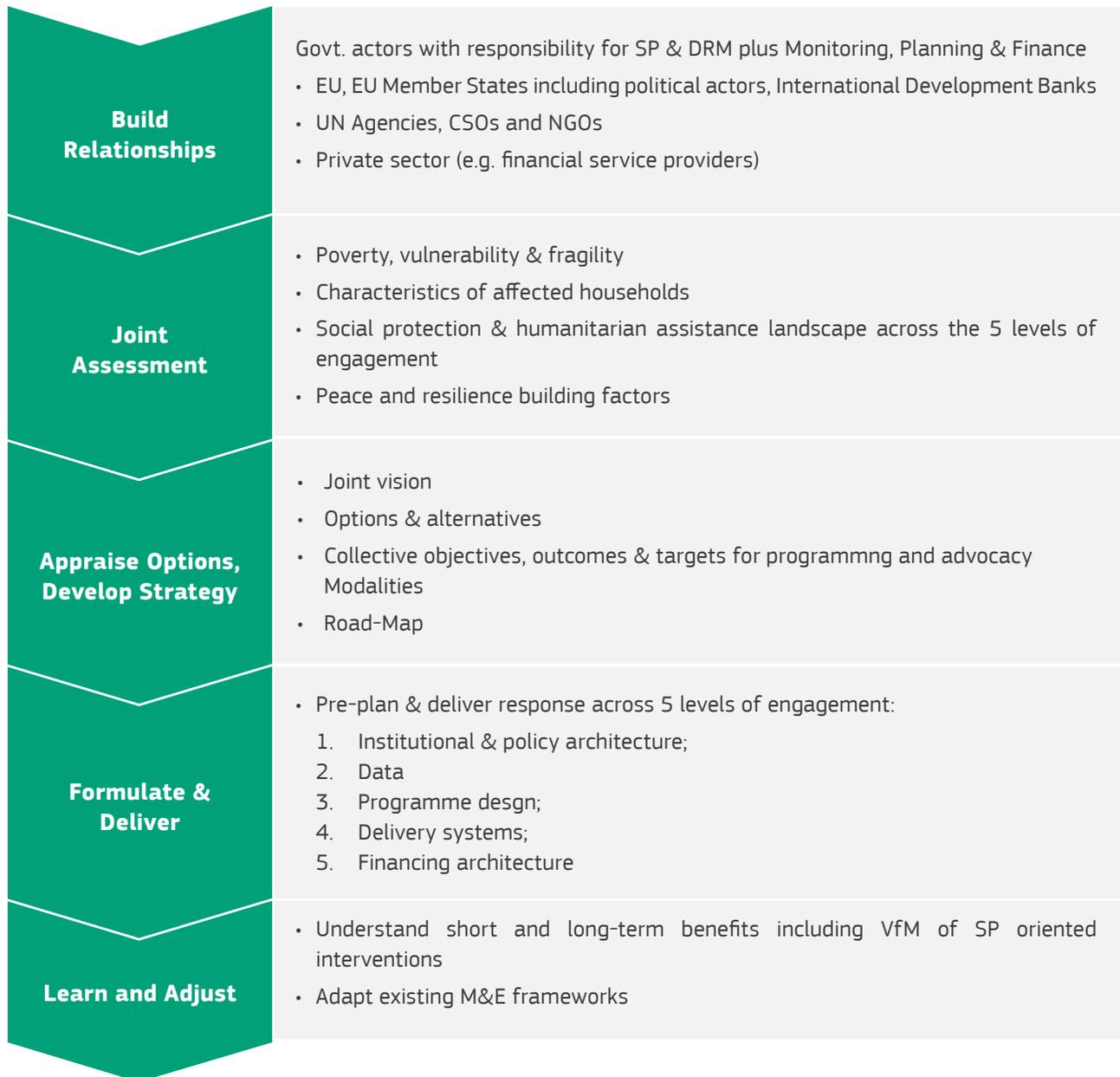
### Further Resources

- Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research: Synthesis Report, O'Brien et al., 2018
- Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Toolkit: Appraising the use of social protection in addressing large-scale shocks, O'Brien et al. 2018.

## Engagement Process

Figure 2 provides a summarised process for working with social protection programmes and approaches in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. It assumes that all stages are being carried out in advance of an acute crisis. However, this process is equally applicable during a crisis, in protracted crises or as part of post crisis and long-term recovery efforts.

Figure 2 Process for optimising social protection and humanitarian assistance interactions



### Further Resources

- **ASEAN Guidelines on Disaster Responsive Social Protection to Increase Resilience, 2019** (forthcoming). Sets out when and why building disaster risk considerations into SP systems is important and provides strategic guidance for policy makers on taking forward the approach. A detailed process, including critical questions to consider at each stage, is provided.
- **Cash Preparedness Assessment Tool, Guidance Document, UNICEF, 2019 (forthcoming)**. Supports practitioners to determine the 'readiness' of a country's SP system to implement preparedness and mitigation strategies supporting the use of cash transfer programming in emergencies. It provides guidance on identifying thematic areas to be considered in the analysis; information needs to inform assessment of 'shock readiness'.
- **The Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment Tools (ISPA)** offer resources to analyse the SP system at country level. Whilst not focused on nexus approaches they do provide a resource to help assess the strengths and weakness of the existing SP system. The tools provided are in-depth and reportedly can take a significant time. They are not for rapid assessment.

# Annex 1

## Transfer Values

Because regular social assistance programmes aim to supplement the income of target groups and have broader coverage and longer timeframes than humanitarian assistance, they tend to have lower transfer values than humanitarian assistance. Political economy factors also heavily influence social transfer values – including concerns about affordability, creating dependency, and creating social tensions between other poor beneficiaries. In most social assistance programmes in low-income countries, transfer values are widely acknowledged to be inadequate for the poorest households (ILO, 2017). In many cases, short-term poverty reduction impacts are sacrificed for long term system-building needs. In humanitarian assistance however, transfers may cover up to 100 per cent of a household’s total needs. The ‘[minimum expenditure basket](#)’ is often used to inform the transfer values of humanitarian cash transfers.

Generally establishing transfer values in humanitarian responses will be informed by consideration of:

1. the objective of the intervention
2. the income a household requires to meet their needs in line with humanitarian standards
3. beneficiaries’ existing capacities and what other assistance will be provided, including through any regular social assistance programme
4. the transfer values, frequency and duration for other humanitarian cash transfers
5. affordability

**The rationale for the transfer value, frequency and duration for interventions seeking to work with or orient towards social protection programmes should be clear and well communicated.** Compromise is likely to be required between the optimal value, frequency and duration from a humanitarian needs perspective and what is optimum from a long-term social protection perspective. For example, where a top up of funds is being provided to existing social protection beneficiaries (vertical scale-up), a decision must be made as to whether the value of the regular transfer should be included as part of the total benefit calculation, or whether there should be more direct alignment with the transfer value, frequency and duration of stand-alone humanitarian transfers being implemented in the same locations by other actors (O’Brien, 2018b).

### Further Resources

- [Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants](#), 2015, (CaLP, et al, 2015).
- [Guidance on measuring and maximising value for money in social transfer programmes – second edition](#) (White et al. 2015).

# Annex 2

## Social Protection, Violent Conflict and Ex-Combatants

Social protection programmes, particularly cash and food transfers, public works and labour market interventions, have been used in some countries as part of efforts to reintegrate ex-combatants into civilian life. This support can provide pathways of opportunity that might provide quick wins, reduce insecurity and minimise the likelihood of a return to conflict. Evidence from programmes targeting ex-combatants as well as programmes aiming to reduce violent conflict more generally, points to the following necessary considerations:

- **Context analysis and local adaption is essential.** Evidence on what works, what doesn't and why is scarce. There are no blueprints for implementation or clear 'best practices'.
- **Clearly identify a hierarchy of programme objectives to enable an informed approach to addressing trade-offs in programme design.** Different primary goals may lead to different programme designs depending on the context.
- **Consider targeting low or moderately-insecure rather than highly-insecure districts,** given evidence that social protection programmes may be better at reducing the risk of violent conflict in the former
- **Consider community engagement in targeting processes.** Involving the community may help promote social cohesion and reduce perceptions of corruption or manipulation.
- **Carefully consider eligibility criteria.** Programmes which require the handing-in of a weapon in order to be eligible can create perverse incentives.
- **Consider interventions to support wider community members,** alongside ex-combatants to avoid creating feelings of unfair treatment and community tensions.
- **Carefully consider payment location where cash (or food) is being used as part of demobilisation efforts,** to avoid the risk, or perception, of a cash-for-weapons programme.
- **Ensure a robust communication and grievance and redress system** to reduce the risks of misunderstanding or manipulation.
- **Consider benefit levels (transfer values, no./work-days) with a view to creating a sharper trade-off between participation in armed groups vs participation in a social protection programme.** Analysis of armed groups' organisational structures, tactics and incentives may help.
- **Consider labour market interventions** where the mistreatment of workers may be a driver of conflict.
- **Include conflict-related questions in monitoring and evaluation tools to maximise opportunity for learning.**

Source: Beazley, et al. 2016 and Willibald, S., 2006

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European  
Commission

**Operational**

**Note No 10**

*Forced Displacement*

May 2019

**SPaN**

Supporting people through crisis



*Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus*

DEVCO  
ECHO  
NEAR



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# Introduction

*‘Social protection is [...] imperative for empowering the forcibly displaced and giving them long-term regular and predictable support to address chronic vulnerability.’<sup>[1]</sup>*

**One per cent of humankind is living in forced displacement.** By the end of 2017, over 68 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, or generalised violence. This is the highest recorded total to date. It includes over 25 million refugees, over 3 million asylum seekers, and 40 million internally displaced people (IDPs).<sup>[2, 3]</sup> A large part of the crises behind these displacements have become protracted; displacement often becomes prolonged and repeated. More than 80 per cent of refugee crises last for 10 years or more, and the average duration of displacement is now 17 years.<sup>[4]</sup> The capacity of the humanitarian system to respond to them has reached its limits; response capacity is stretched while the funding gap is widening year on year.<sup>[5]</sup> Yet the crisis may still be within the range of what the international community can manage with adequate effort and effective collective action.

**The EU approach to forced displacement and development<sup>[1, 6, 7]</sup> is a development-oriented approach to refugees, IDPs and their hosts with a focus on their specific vulnerabilities and capacities.** It calls for a multi-actor response, including the private sector, based on improved evidence of what works and does not work in different contexts. Building on strong partnerships with hosting countries, it calls for greater synergies between humanitarian and development actors regarding shared analyses, programming and the predictability and flexibility of funding, including at local level, where the most innovative responses emerge. The aim is to foster the resilience and self-reliance of forcibly displaced people through quality education, access to economic opportunities and social protection.<sup>[1]</sup>

**This approach is part of a global move towards more effective responses to forced displacement.** Over the past few years, international commitments have created closer links between humanitarian and development programming. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the Grand Bargain commitments<sup>[8]</sup> coming out of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit recognise refugees and displaced persons as categories of vulnerable people who should not be left behind, and stress the need to strengthen the resilience of communities hosting refugees. In the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants<sup>[9]</sup> adopted in 2016, all world leaders committed to jointly respond better to refugee situations. This has laid the foundation for the adoption in December 2018 of the Global Compact on Refugees<sup>[10]</sup> and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration,<sup>[11]</sup> an intergovernmentally negotiated and agreed outcome. In this context, the United Nations system, notably the UNHCR and the IOM, is adapting its approach, while the World Bank is stepping up its engagement.

**Social protection has become a cornerstone of any long-term strategy to mitigate the impact of forced displacement on the lives of refugees, internally displaced persons and their hosts.** The increasing use of cash transfers as a humanitarian response modality, and robust evidence on the efficiency of social protection, and particularly, social assistance, in both development and crises contexts, led to the recognition of the multiple complementarities and growing convergence between humanitarian assistance and social protection. The motivation for creating closer links between social protection and humanitarian interventions is to better meet the chronic and acute needs of crisis-affected populations (including forcibly displaced populations and their hosts), contribute to reducing humanitarian needs and ultimately, secure a path to peace and sustainable development. Social protection systems, when in place, can be scaled up to deliver fast response and enhanced outreach. They also allow host communities to be assisted equitably in the event of crises, mitigating tensions between IDPs and refugees and local populations.<sup>[4]</sup>

**This note provides an overview of how to foster greater links between social protection and humanitarian assistance in contexts of forced displacement.** It illustrates what working with social protection approaches and systems may look like in contexts of forced displacement, and highlights practical tips drawn from past and ongoing experiences. Its primary target audience are European Commission practitioners, specifically staff working in EU delegations and ECHO field offices, as well as ECHO, DEVCO and NEAR operational desks. It also aims to be useful to EU Member States practitioners.

This note notably builds on and complements the following key EU documents:

- The 2016 Communication<sup>[1]</sup>, Staff Working Document<sup>[6]</sup>, and subsequent Council conclusions<sup>[7]</sup> on the EU approach to forced displacement and development;
- The Operational Guidance Pack on the EU approach to forced displacement and development,<sup>[12]</sup> prepared jointly by DGs DEVCO, ECHO, NEAR and EEAS and disseminated in July 2018;
- The Reference Document on 'Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus: A Game Changer in Supporting People Through Crises'<sup>[4]</sup> jointly endorsed by DGs DEVCO, ECHO, and NEAR and published in February 2019;
- The Guidance Note on 'Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus in Fragile and Conflict-affected Contexts'<sup>[13]</sup> published in May 2019.

The note is structured as follows:

1. It underlines critical aspects to keep in mind when addressing the needs of displaced and host populations;
2. It presents different approaches to linking humanitarian assistance to social protection systems in different contexts;
3. It outlines how the EU can engage in joint programming on that matter.

## — 1 —

# Addressing the Needs of Displaced and Host Populations

*'Equal vulnerability requires equal assistance.'*<sup>[14]</sup>

## Fostering Social Cohesion

**Political, human rights, humanitarian and development approaches must complement each other to create a 'win-win' scenario for both the displaced and their host communities.**<sup>[1]</sup> Peaceful coexistence in displacement settings is often fragile at best. Most displaced people are hosted in poor countries and communities; competition for employment that tends to be in short supply, or the perception that one group is receiving aid and others are left to fend for themselves, can easily break this delicate balance. Both the forcibly displaced and the host populations need to be actively engaged in the formulation of a localised approach to socioeconomic development, tailor-made to the specific vulnerabilities and capabilities of each region and each group. This would highlight the potential advantages of their co-existence.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Extending the provision of humanitarian assistance and social protection to the host community in addition to the displaced community, and supporting various social cohesion initiatives, help defuse tensions.**<sup>[15]</sup> This may involve, for instance, conducting a joint vulnerability assessment among displaced and host communities, using shared points of delivery, engaging both communities in joint activities, etc.

- *In Jordan, the government has a policy that requires equitable provision of support to both refugees and host populations.*<sup>[16]</sup> *The one-refugee approach entails supporting not only the Syrian refugees in urban settings, but also the Iraqis, Somalis, Sudanese, Yemenis and other needy refugee minorities. The one-refugee approach and the support to the hosting communities (i.e. vulnerable Jordanians) are de facto lessening the tensions among vulnerable individuals living in the same area/district.*<sup>[17]</sup>
- *In Colombia, different waves of displaced people over several decades have increased the population of the urban suburbs and caused enormous tensions in recipient communities, being themselves the result of previous displacements. The Houses of Rights, administered by the National Procurator of Colombia, are shelters that help everyone in the community to access basic health, education, documentation, and security services, among other things.*<sup>[18]</sup>
- *In Ecuador, a short-term programme implemented over six months by the WFP, including cash, food and food vouchers to Colombian refugees and poor Ecuadorians in urban and peri-urban areas, contributed to the integration of Colombians in their hosting community through increases in personal agency, attitudes accepting diversity, confidence in institutions, and social participation. These positive impacts are believed to have been driven by joint targeting, messaging around social inclusion and through interaction between nationalities at mandated monthly nutrition trainings.*<sup>[19]</sup>



*cuts across old silos and situates solutions for refugees at the intersection between development, trade, and security. This empowerment model does not depend upon the end of insecurity within Syria; it is working towards an eventual post-conflict reconstruction rather than feeding into a narrative of 'local integration'.<sup>[20]</sup>*

- *There are other precedents for Special Economic Zones for refugees. Zones were set up in **Thailand** for Burmese refugees and cross-border workers. What was originally the Bataan Refugee Processing Center in the **Philippines** was repurposed into a Special Economic Zone.<sup>[20]</sup>*

**'Alternatives to Camps' settlement strategies are to be advocated for whenever possible.**<sup>[1, 12]</sup> Restrictive camp settings limit the possibilities for boosting self-reliance. Alternatives to encampment can be facilitated by early development commitments to support such approaches. The fact that more forcibly displaced people now live in urban areas than camps gives them more opportunities to integrate.

- *In response to the 2016 earthquake in **Ecuador**, the government not only delivered cash transfers to the affected population but also to the host families and tenants. Such assistance was intended not only to help host families but also to encourage the displaced population to leave the temporary camps. Host families were entitled to USD 135 per month for six months for utilities. Tenants were entitled to USD 135 per month for six months. To access these schemes, affected families and recipients had to sign an agreement, which was subject to verification by the authorities.<sup>[24]</sup>*

**In the case of non-nationals, a primary focus should be granting refugees access to decent work and financial services for them to restore their livelihoods.** The right to work for refugees is protected in the 1951 Refugee Convention<sup>[25]</sup> and also prescribed in international and regional human rights instruments.<sup>[26-28]</sup> The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants<sup>[9]</sup> and its Global Compact on Refugees<sup>[10]</sup> including the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework<sup>[29]</sup> call for the enhancement of refugee resilience and self-reliance, as well as the need for and benefit of taking on a whole-of-society approach. The approach of livelihoods and economic inclusion programmes for refugees is threefold:<sup>[21]</sup>

- Engage in advocacy to enhance the enabling environment such that refugees have legal and de facto access to decent work (such as through rights to work, own a business, access financial services and own land/property, and through freedom of mobility);
- Partner with and convene expert entities to facilitate inclusion of refugees into existing programmes/services, ensuring decent work;<sup>[27, 30]</sup>
- As a last resort, implement interventions directly or through partners to fill a gap in service – in cases of implementation, operations are recommended to apply the Minimum Economic Recovery Standards.<sup>[31]</sup>

**A combination of diplomacy and advocacy efforts, development support and humanitarian assistance is required.** Implementation and advocacy are thus not mutually exclusive. A commitment to continue implementing while advocating for the involvement of relevant expertise is vital to respond to immediate needs (such as those relating to food security) and to promote the long-term economic inclusion of refugees.<sup>[22]</sup>

- *In **Lebanon**, the EU funded the Labour Force and Living Standards Survey, which has included Syrian refugees. The survey informed policymaking and the labour market information systems that are key for human development planning. As a follow-up to the Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Declaration on Blue Economy, the Commission promotes initiatives on the inclusion of forcibly displaced populations in skills development and job creation programmes in the marine and maritime sectors.<sup>[1]</sup>*
- *While it struggles with economic development for its own nationals, **Jordan** is now home to 650,000 Syrian refugees. In 2016, the EU-Jordan Compact was agreed to turn this refugee crisis into a development opportunity for Jordan. It shifts short-term humanitarian aid to growth, investment and job creation, both for Jordanians and Syrian refugees. It combines humanitarian and development funding, multi-year grants and concessional loans. To encourage businesses that export goods to Europe to employ refugees, the EU has relaxed its rules of origin to stimulate exports of goods from 18 designated areas where Syrian refugees are employed. The Compact has led to considerable improvements in labour market access for Syrian refugees who received, from February 2016 to October 2017, 71,000 work permits. It has also help reforms the business investment environment and formalise Syrian businesses, and has provided vocational training opportunities to Syrian refugees.<sup>[32]</sup>*

Adjustments in the modality of humanitarian/social assistance can contribute to building self-reliance. Notably, cash-based initiatives create livelihoods opportunities. Cash and vouchers are examples of some of the new approaches devised for providing support that can increase self-reliance and instil a sense of dignity and ownership among displaced people.<sup>[1, 33]</sup> The flexibility offered by cash-based initiatives provides a more dignified form of assistance, giving beneficiaries the ability to prioritise and choose what they need, and boost the local economy through purchases. Whenever possible, shifting from in-kind distribution of products and services to the provision of cash-based interventions instead can help create a more enabling environment for the economic inclusion of the displaced populations.<sup>[21]</sup> When considering the design of humanitarian/social assistance, one should always ask the questions: ‘why not cash?’ and ‘if not now, when?’<sup>[34]</sup>

- *In Jordan, the transition from supporting refugees with non-food items for different sectors (WASH, winterisation, shelter upgrade kits, etc.) as well as cash for rent (to landlords) to monthly unconditional multipurpose cash assistance for the most vulnerable refugees proved particularly effective.<sup>[17]</sup>*
- *Through cash transfers provided under the Emergency Social Safety Net in Turkey, refugees were able to prioritise expenditure to overcome barriers (e.g. public transportation) to seek opportunities in urban settings.<sup>[17]</sup>*
- *In Lebanon, over 80 per cent of Syrian refugees have settled in urban and peri-urban areas. A big challenge faced is securing adequate accommodation for families. In 2013, the Norwegian Refugee Council supported property owners to bring unfinished houses and apartments to a basic habitable condition in exchange for hosting Syrian families rent-free for 12 months. This in turn helped stimulate local economic activity and increased the value of property assets – a win-win approach.<sup>[17]</sup>*

Social protection and livelihoods interventions can also be explicitly combined, as exemplified in public works programmes or ‘Cash Plus’ measures, which combine cash transfers with one or more types of complementary support.<sup>[35]</sup> In many displacement contexts, the agriculture sector remains an engine of stabilisation and recovery; agriculture cannot be an afterthought when addressing the immediate and longer-term needs of the forcibly displaced and of the community hosting them.<sup>[36]</sup> There is potential for a ‘Social Protection Plus’ approach, contributing to: preventing the economic and food-insecurity-related causes of displacement; ensuring the portability of benefits; strengthening the economic capacity of host communities, particularly as social services, labour and productive opportunities may be strained; and providing access to social and economic opportunities for refugees and internally displaced populations, particularly in protracted crises (including camp settings).<sup>[37]</sup>

- *In the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the World Bank has been supporting labour-intensive public work (LIPW) programmes for returning IDPs and those without land. The rehabilitation of rural roads through LIPW facilitates the evacuation of agricultural produce while putting cash into the hands of local people – labour cost content is higher than 45 per cent of total cost. LIPWs also include, for instance, reforestation and other soil and water conservation works (natural disaster prevention measures), and garbage collection and street cleaning in urban centres. In rural areas, LIPWs are implemented during the agricultural off-season to avoid interfering with agricultural employment/livelihoods. In view of the temporary nature of LIPW employment, LIPWs are supplemented by activities aimed at increasing participants’ employability at the end of their employment: a voluntary savings programme to help participants put aside part of their wages as start-up capital for initiating post-LIPWs activities; training in life skills (e.g. conflict prevention, hygiene, HIV prevention, gender relations); and training in basic business (e.g. understanding the economic environment, setting up an income-generating activity, preparing a business plan for a micro-enterprise, basic accounting principles) and technical skills in areas where the local job market offers employment opportunities (agriculture and other non-agricultural rural activities determined on the basis of local market analysis). If requested by participants, training activities may also include functional literacy.<sup>[38]</sup>*

- For over five decades, **Uganda** has been generously hosting refugees and asylum seekers. Refugees in Uganda have some of the best prospects for self-reliance. The challenge, however, is to convert this potential into reality. The UNHCR, the WFP and their partners have been working together to help refugees take advantage of these opportunities and ensure that host communities benefit too. In 2014, they jointly launched a new programme to enable refugee farmers to engage more actively and profitably in the thriving agricultural economy found outside the refugee settlements. Having received land for cultivation from the host government, refugees are now being given training in post-harvest handling and storage equipment. Farmers from the host community are also being provided with the same assistance. Through this more inclusive approach, tension is reduced between the two communities and benefits are shared equally. At the same time, the UNHCR is working with the government, the World Bank and other partners to strengthen the self-reliance and resilience of both refugees and host communities through another project, the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment initiative (ReHoPE), a self-reliance and resilience strategic framework for refugee and host communities, which aims to facilitate the gradual transition from humanitarian to development programming in refugee-impacted districts. This goal will be achieved through joint analysis, collective advocacy, integrated service delivery, and joint resource mobilisation.

[22]

## Ensuring Access to Essential Goods and Services

**Identity documentation constitutes an essential element of protection for individuals.** Registering a child's birth is a critical first step towards safeguarding lifelong protection. Ensuring birth registration is particularly important for the prevention of statelessness.<sup>[39]</sup> Documentation is also essential to access labour and financial services.

- In **Nigeria**, which has ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention, the national legal framework is conducive to the inclusion of refugees in national systems and there is a political will to include them in national social protection programmes. Refugees have access to national education and health services and the right to access farmland. However, due to limitations in the documents they have available, most refugees can access financial services only partially. Equally, not all foreign degrees or other administrative documents are recognised.<sup>[21]</sup>
- The **Islamic Republic of Iran** hosts some 30,000 registered Iraqi refugees and an estimated 3.5 million (first, second or third generation) Afghans (registered refugees, passport holders and undocumented). In recent years the government has introduced policies conducive to inclusion and sustainable access to national services for Afghan and Iraqi refugees living in Iran. These include registration and status determination, as well as the issuance of refugee identity, or 'Amayesh' cards, which enable refugees to access basic services and work permits, and protect them against detention and deportation. Also, since 2015, all eligible children attend public schools regardless of documentation status.
- In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, the UNHCR, UNICEF and the National Commission for Refugees sponsored mobile courts that supported late birth registration and the delivery of birth certificates to 743 returnees and 181 urban refugees. As a result, about 99 per cent of children identified as at risk of statelessness received a birth certificate, representing a significant improvement from 2016, when 54 per cent of children at risk of statelessness received birth certificates.<sup>[39]</sup>

**Attending to the legal framework for social protection is crucial, not least to support the protection of unaccompanied and separated children.**

- In **East Africa**, the UNHCR has worked together with UNICEF and the East African Community to strengthen the inclusion of refugee children in national systems and services. In April 2018, the UNHCR supported a Regional Roundtable that brought together approximately 45 technical experts from child protection, social welfare, and refugee departments from the six East African Community Partner States (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda) and Ethiopia. The aim of the roundtable was to share learning, practices and experiences in facilitating the inclusion of refugee children into national child protection systems. The meeting resulted in a Statement of Good Practice on Inclusion of Refugee Children in national systems which was signed and endorsed by the East African Community.<sup>[40]</sup>

- *In the **European Union**, the UNHCR has worked with governments and civil society on a 'Roadmap to Strengthened Policies and Practices for Unaccompanied and Separated Children', following extensive consultations with staff and with young people themselves in 2016.<sup>[41]</sup>*
- *The UNHCR has been working with governments to strengthen community-based care arrangements for unaccompanied and separated children, including as an alternative to detention. In **Jordan**, the UNHCR worked with the Ministry of Social Development to formalise guidelines and procedures for alternative care of unaccompanied children. In **Mexico**, the government has undertaken work to strengthen 'Best Interests Procedures for Unaccompanied and Separated Children' as part of the implementation of the Child Rights Law and Regulations, which create a national child protection system with a new Federal Office for the Protection of Children's Rights.<sup>[42]</sup>*

**Social protection measures can address the demand-side barriers to essential social services, such as education and health.** Ensuring access to education and health for displaced populations is crucial as it creates opportunities for livelihoods and economic inclusion towards self-reliance. For instance, increased income through social protection schemes enables households to cover out-of-pocket education expenses such as transport, school uniforms or books.

- *In **Turkey**, the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education programme provides education to refugee children. Implemented by UNICEF and the Turkish Red Crescent, it is the EU's largest programme on education in emergencies. The programme uses the same ATM card as the EU Emergency Social Safety Net. It provides cash transfers to vulnerable refugee families whose children attend school regularly. It helped get 290,000 refugee children back into school.<sup>[32]</sup>*
- *In **Lebanon**, the No Lost Generation (Min Ila) programme was designed to cover the cost of commuting to school and to compensate households for income forgone if children attend school instead of working, two critical barriers to school participation among displaced Syrian children.<sup>[43]</sup> Implemented jointly by UNICEF, the WFP, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and Caritas Lebanon, it provides unconditional, regular and unrestricted cash transfers for around 50,000 children enrolled in the afternoon shift of a public primary school. This is coupled with follow-up and referral to complementary services for non-attending children to address non-income related barriers. A robust impact evaluation revealed substantive impacts on school attendance among enrolled children, as well as improvements in food security, reduction of child labour, and optimism.<sup>[44]</sup>*

**Supporting social welfare services, including a network of qualified social workers, is vital to support case management and specific services,** such as child protection, mental health care services and psychological support – particularly important yet often neglected aspects in forced displacement contexts.

- *In **Colombia**, a rapid influx of Colombian returnees and Venezuelan refugees in 2015 triggered the National System for Management of Risks and Disasters to respond. Assistance was provided across the four pillars of the national social protection system: health, education, housing and vulnerability. Mobile units of interdisciplinary teams, including social workers, were deployed to identify beneficiaries and their needs, refer them to appropriate services and monitor the support provided. 'Social inclusion and reconciliation' plans included the documentation of beneficiary needs, the creation of opportunities for productive inclusion, support from social workers in housing and financial assistance, and child and adolescent protection activities. Several existing programmes and services to provide psychosocial assistance, legal advice, nutritional guidance, public works and technical training for skills development were scaled up. Key factors that enabled this rapid and effective response were the availability of a network of qualified professional social workers and the existence of a range of social protection programmes with broad coverage and robust delivery systems.<sup>[4, 45]</sup>*

## —2—

# Aligning with the National System towards Transition and Integration

*‘Humanitarian practitioners should be required to demonstrate why they are not working with existing social protection systems, programmes or approaches, to prepare for and support crisis responses – not just on the onset of a disaster (ex post) but also in preparedness (ex ante), notably in contexts of cyclical crises, disaster and displacement events.’<sup>[4]</sup>*

## Aligning in Different Contexts

**The role of host governments is crucial and needs to be supported as they are responsible for the legal and policy frameworks through which the needs of refugees, IDPs and host communities can be addressed.**<sup>[1]</sup> Objective 22 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is to ‘establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits.’ Signatories ‘commit to assist migrant workers at all skills levels to have access to social protection in countries of destination and profit from the portability of applicable social security entitlements and earned benefits in their countries of origin or when they decide to take up work in another country’ and to ‘facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants into community life by providing them equal access to social protection and services, justice, psycho-social assistance, vocational training, employment opportunities and decent work, recognition of skills acquired abroad, and financial services, in order to fully build upon their entrepreneurship, skills and human capital as active members of society and contributors to sustainable development in the country of origin upon return.’<sup>[11]</sup> The New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants calls to improve the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance to those countries most affected and, where appropriate, develop national strategies for the protection of refugees within the framework of national social protection systems, as appropriate.<sup>[9]</sup>

**The EU should further expand its efforts to help host governments develop integrated approaches to providing services and developing social protection programmes for both the displaced and hosts.**

<sup>[1]</sup> In countries where there are well-developed social protection schemes for citizens, the inclusion of migrants, refugees and other forcibly displaced people in these systems is generally preferable to the development of parallel programmes delivered by international or national humanitarian and/or development organisations.<sup>[15]</sup> Humanitarian practitioners should always be required to demonstrate why they are not working with existing social protection systems, programmes or approaches, to prepare for and support crisis responses, not just when a mass influx of forcibly displaced people takes place but also in preparedness.<sup>[4]</sup> An integration of services benefits both displaced and host communities and is more cost efficient.<sup>[12]</sup> In contexts where states are fragile or fragmented, sub-national and informal governance mechanisms are particularly important in responding to forced displacement.<sup>[13]</sup>

**Humanitarian assistance should be time-bound and communicated as providing only a transitional support while displaced populations wait to access some or all of the various social protection benefits available at the national level.** Due to the lack of sustainable peace in many countries of origin, restrictive host country policies and limited resettlement places, most displaced people live in protracted displacement for more than five years. Few have found durable solutions, such as voluntary repatriation, resettlement or local integration.<sup>[1]</sup> The more protracted the displacement, the more humanitarian objectives align with social protection objectives. The

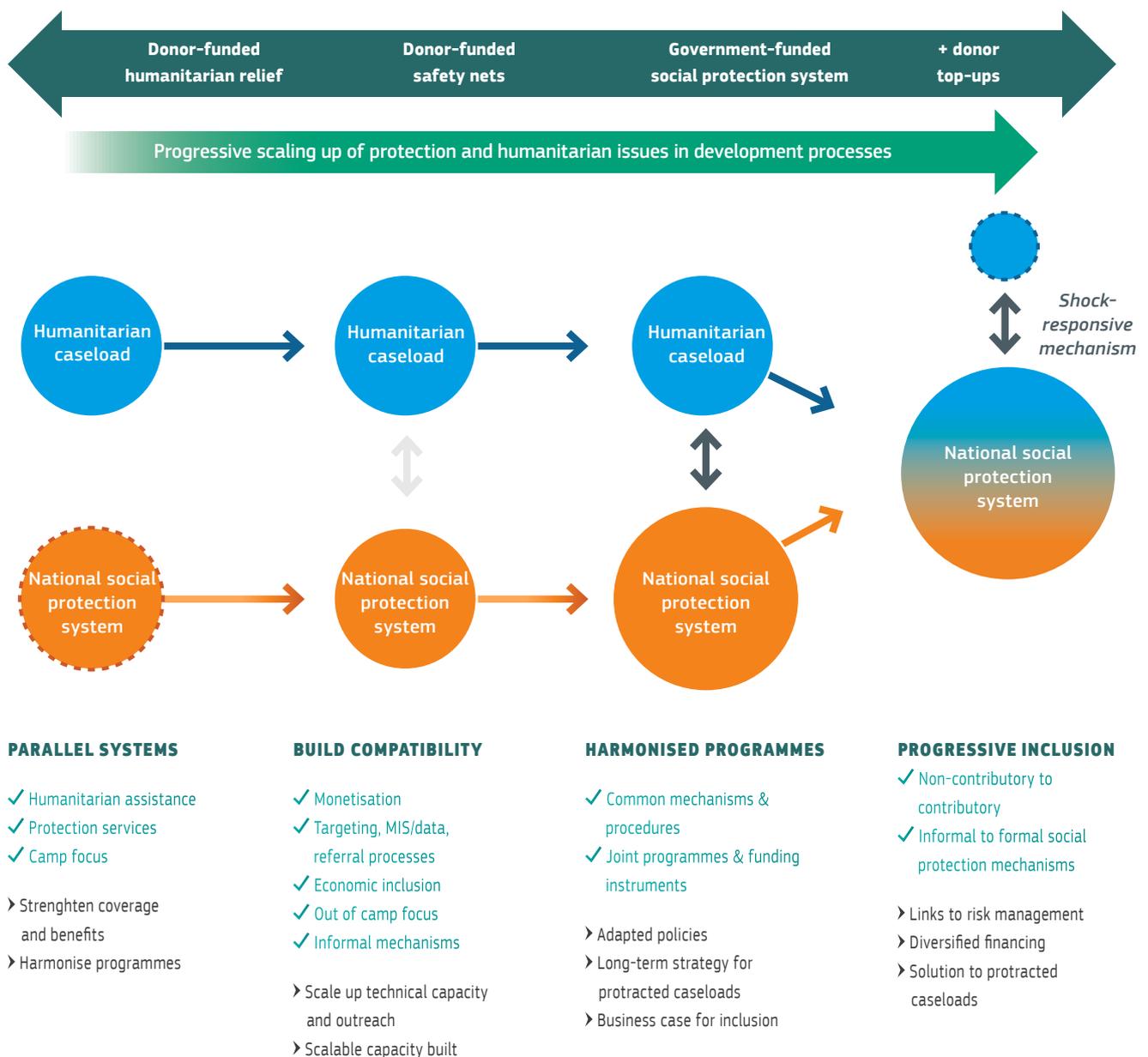
types of support needed by the host population and displaced people converge, notably to meet the potential longer-term dimensions of forcibly displaced people's needs, such as housing, healthcare, nutrition, protection, drinking water and sanitation, and education. Because displacement tends to be protracted, the level of assistance needed is not sustainable by humanitarian actors. After the immediate emergency state, before the situation becomes protracted, humanitarian organisations can and should prepare for more sustainable solutions, which include the incorporation of displaced populations in the national systems. Working with the national system can contribute to greater effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. It can also reduce response times, avoid duplications, support local economies and offer a progressive exit strategy – that is, a smooth exit, before a reduction in funding requires drastic and immediate changes to the assistance provided.

- ➔ *In Turkey, the EU Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) provides assistance to over one million Syrian refugees. It was designed in conjunction with the Government of Turkey and is implemented through a partnership between WFP, the Turkish Red Crescent, the Ministry of Family and Social Policy and Halkbank. It was specifically aligned with (and aims to support) recent policy reforms of the Turkish Government that aim to increase refugees' access to services and have opened up opportunities for more integration. While the ESSN has remained conceptually, administratively and financially distinct from the national social welfare system, it capitalises on national institutions. The national Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations are responsible for accepting and screening applications from refugees under temporary and international protection for ESSN assistance. The fact that the ESSN has been aligned to the Turkish national system makes its transition easier.<sup>[32, 46]</sup>*
- ➔ *In Greece, the UNHCR set up a completely separate system for the provision of assistance to asylum seekers. Now that funding for humanitarian interventions by external actors is dwindling, the transition to state-led assistance is not straightforward. Instead, a completely new structure, ideally leveraging on the mechanisms used for the national Social Solidarity Income scheme and other social payments such as pensions and disability support, will need to be built. Not only is this process both time-consuming and costly, but it may or may not be possible for the authorities to maintain the current level of assistance, which makes the approach unsustainable.<sup>[47]</sup>*

**Moving towards transition and inclusion requires long-term, coordinated efforts to be initiated early on.**

The decision to align with the national systems, away from parallel systems, should not come as an afterthought or be considered only once humanitarian financing starts to dwindle, despite there being no imminent prospects of return. Instead, it should be part of an overall response strategy, starting from preparedness. Figure 1 illustrates what such a progressive alignment process may look like, in the case of humanitarian cash transfers, progressively transitioning from humanitarian action to development support towards the full inclusion of displaced people in the national system. Political economy issues have so far prevented such integration in many contexts. Host governments' lack of willingness to absorb refugees into the national system, due to development and security concerns as well as political and long-term funding issues, lies at the heart of the problem. While there is no easy answer to this challenge, a few precedents show that a mutually beneficial deal may be found between a host government, development partners and the private sector to support economic development of refugee-hosting areas benefiting both displaced and host populations, as illustrated in the section 'Building Self-Reliance', above.

Figure 1: Progressive Alignment of Humanitarian Cash Assistance with National Systems



**An integrated approach combining alignment, gradual or immediate, and reinforcement of the national system is relevant in all contexts**, irrespective of the degree to which host governments are currently able to provide social support. Even when delivering assistance to displaced persons through the state-led system is not possible or desirable (for instance, because the system is ill-equipped, corrupted or biased), there may be elements of the overall system to align with and reinforce, not least a range of pre-existing non-government social/humanitarian assistance programmes targeted at vulnerable people. There are broadly three common ways of working with social protection in contexts of forced displacement, each heavily influenced by the maturity of the existing social protection system. These are not mutually exclusive and in many contexts a combination may be appropriate: align, inform, transition; utilise and preserve; develop and strengthen.<sup>[13]</sup> Weak governments in fragile settings might require more direct action by humanitarian and development actors, while stronger governments might require more support in enhancing the national system's capacity to respond. While building national social protection systems traditionally builds upon long-term commitments, the humanitarian community can play an important role in aligning with and complementing these efforts, where consistent with its principles.

- *By early 2014, at the height of the influx of refugees into **Lebanon**, and with the WFP e-card food voucher programme in full swing throughout the country for Syrian refugees, there was increasing evidence of growing tensions among poor Lebanese families and refugees residing within the same communities. In response, the World Bank and the WFP worked with the government to introduce food assistance via the e-card food vouchers to poor Lebanese families enrolled in the National Poverty Targeting Programme, providing a level of assistance parity received by refugees.<sup>[49]</sup> This scale-up was operated not only as a means of reducing poverty and tension between the two communities, but also to strengthen the national system. It included the financing of operational support, training and capacity-development assistance for the Ministry of Social Affairs to assume the overall responsibility for the implementation of key aspects of the food voucher programme.<sup>[50]</sup>*
- *In **Iraq**, the EU is supporting a sequenced, multi-purpose cash assistance programme to help displaced people and vulnerable households in host communities. The objectives are to align government-led and humanitarian cash programming more closely, avoid creating parallel systems and establish close cooperation between humanitarian assistance and long-term support. The cash programme was launched at local/governorate level to build local linkages which can then be raised to the national level in conjunction with ongoing support for, and reform of, national social protection policies and schemes.<sup>[1]</sup>*

**The nature of alignment options and appropriate approaches will vary depending on the context.** It will be influenced by at least three key factors:<sup>[13, 51]</sup> the displacement context (see Annex 1); the maturity and coverage of the national social protection system, including the legal framework (for instance, defining access to work for non-nationals); and the stage of the crisis.<sup>[13]</sup>

- *In **Greece**, both asylum-seekers and refugees have the right to work. But while refugees are eligible for the Social Solidarity Income made available to Greek nationals and other legal aliens, asylum-seekers are not. With ECHO funding, the UNHCR has been providing accommodation and monthly cash transfers to asylum-seekers and those who have expressed their interest in applying for asylum. Only asylum-seekers who have arrived in Greece after 1 January 2015 are currently entitled to receive accommodation and cash assistance. This cut-off date was jointly agreed upon by ECHO and the UNHCR in order to keep the beneficiary numbers in line with available resources.<sup>[47]</sup>*
- *In **Sweden**, which is perceived as having a relatively generous support programme, asylum-seekers who are able to provide for themselves must pay for their own accommodation. Those who are unable to manage without external support are entitled to housing, food and/or cash allowances. The maximum amount made available to asylum-seekers is lower than what an adult person with Swedish nationality or a recognised refugee on welfare may receive. The values are also different for adults and minors, with children, unaccompanied or not, receiving a lower amount.<sup>[52]</sup>*
- *In **Mexico**, non-nationals are not, at the moment, generally included in national social assistance schemes. Refugees have access to economic and social rights, including formal employment, health and education, but they have issues in accessing these rights due to discrimination and insufficient capacity for authorities to process documents. There is a temporary inclusion of asylum-seekers in the system to grant them with rights but the documents they have are not known or recognised. This is made worse by the increasing number of arrivals, which is stretching the national systems (e.g. health and education) beyond their limits.<sup>[47]</sup>*
- *In **Chad**, the EU-funded Inclusive Development Programme in Hosting Areas (Programme de Développement Inclusif dans les Zones d'Accueil, DIZA), a EUR 15 million programme developed jointly by the EU Delegation in Chad and ECHO, was launched in 2018. It is implemented by two NGO consortia in refugee-hosting areas in the South and East of Chad. The overall objective for this three-year programme is to improve the living conditions of local populations, refugees and returnees in hosting areas through support for inclusive local development. DIZA subscribes to the following principles of engagement in order to ensure alignment on areas of intervention and their modalities: targeting beneficiaries based on the same harmonised questionnaire; including beneficiaries in the same national database (Unified Social Registry); using the government's norms and standards in rehabilitating and building basic service infrastructure as well as the provision of services; supporting a phased transition from humanitarian interventions to development programmes that benefit refugees and host communities; and aiming to harmonise the level of cash transfer benefits to poor households.<sup>[53]</sup>*

## Aligning with Different Policy Instruments

**Cash transfers and vouchers have become the preferred and default humanitarian response modality,**<sup>[33, 54]</sup> away from in-kind assistance, which has demonstrated limits, and in line with international commitments, such as the Grand Bargain. Cash transfers and vouchers can be used in a variety of settings, as long as there is a stable and functioning market and a safe way to deliver them. The flexibility that this modality offers provides a more dignified form of assistance, giving displaced and host communities the ability to prioritise and choose what they need and boost the local economy through purchases. Livelihoods activities that can be supported through multi-purpose cash transfers<sup>[55]</sup> (unrestricted cash transfers, which can be conditional or unconditional) might include different types of investments in business and employment, such as business grants, cash for training, etc.<sup>[21]</sup> One should always ask the questions: ‘why not cash?’ and ‘if not now, when?’<sup>[34]</sup> In 2017, cash transfers and vouchers made up over 38 per cent of the European Commission’s humanitarian aid, for a total of more than EUR 990 million.<sup>[54]</sup>

➔ *The consequences of the conflict in Syria, which has displaced millions of people inside Syria and across borders to Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and elsewhere, were met with an unprecedented humanitarian response. Unconditional cash transfers became the EU primary response mechanism to support basic needs of refugees and IDPs.<sup>[32]</sup>*

**The increased use of cash assistance as part of both humanitarian and development assistance has opened up new opportunities for linking temporary, even if increasingly long-term, humanitarian assistance with national social support services,** notably in protracted crises. Annex 2 presents a framework for assessing the readiness of a given social protection scheme to deliver humanitarian cash transfers. It is always worth considering whether or not any alignment is appropriate from the outset (for instance, using the same payment mechanism, even if the value of the transfer is different) for it is much harder to align retroactively. A critical aspect when aligning humanitarian cash transfers for displaced populations with the national system is setting the transfer value and adjusting it over time, towards transition and integration, as outlined in Box 1.

➔ *In Mexico, the humanitarian minimum expenditure basket (MEB) has been estimated higher than the maximum value provided by the national scheme Prospera for the same purpose. However, it is in the interest of the UNHCR to align, immediately or in the medium-term, with the values in the national system, as the Prospera and other national support together with self-reliance are the only feasible exit strategy for humanitarian actors, including the UNHCR. Given the high income discrepancies in the country, providing refugees and asylum seekers with grants higher than those made available to nationals is likely to increase xenophobia and cause unnecessary conflicts between communities.<sup>[47]</sup>*

➔ *In Nigeria, the UNHCR together with partners will provide a 14-month emergency response focused on the delivery of unconditional cash assistance to meet immediate food needs, while simultaneously enhancing access to and profitability of livelihoods. The initial support will be equal to USD 100 per family per month or USD 20 per person, which is five times the assistance provided through the national safety nets. These amounts will be gradually, within a 14-month period, reduced to the standard amounts.<sup>[47]</sup>*

Box 1: Setting the transfer values of unconditional, multipurpose cash grants<sup>[47]</sup>

**Basic needs** – Minimum expenditure baskets,<sup>[56]</sup> used to calculate the transfer values for unconditional, multipurpose cash grants,<sup>[55]</sup> are regularly higher than the countries' minimum wage and therefore, if provided in full by one agency or jointly by a number of agencies, higher than what an educated government official might make and notably more than what a teacher earns.

**Initial transfer value** – On the other hand, many displaced people have left a situation of poverty and food insecurity. As a result, they do not, in general, have the means to compensate for the loss of income; their situation upon arrival is especially dire. Hence, it may in the first instance be justifiable to provide an amount higher than that available to host population members.

**Access to labour market** – Furthermore, if refugees are not allowed to work it does not necessarily make sense for them to be granted the same level of support as is provided in social protection to the national population because they have different needs (e.g. they may have lost their land, homes, etc.).

**Gradual alignment** – In contexts where national assistance is lower than that provided by humanitarian agencies, a gradual approach, with clear communication systems, is necessary to avoid abrupt changes and to allow beneficiaries to adjust their household economies so that they can weather the change, either in terms of the value of the grant or exclusion due to more restricted targeting.

**Communication** – Crucial to the success of this approach is communication to ensure that both refugees and host communities understand when, where and for how long assistance will be provided. Two-way communication is key to ensuring greater understanding of programme design, assistance levels and timeframes, while also addressing risks and allowing for programme adjustment. Those considered eligible for humanitarian cash transfer, whether blanket or targeted, should receive prior information about the upcoming transition, and in the intervening period, the transfer value should be slowly adjusted downwards until it is in line with the national value.<sup>[47]</sup>

**Beyond in-kind and/or cash transfers, complementary measures are essential to foster self-reliance** – as underlined in 'Building Self-Reliance', above. Humanitarian assistance is often insufficient to cover basic needs in full, but will enable families to manage, once they have access to some earning opportunities. Providing cash with other support can lead to stronger impacts compared to cash alone.<sup>[35]</sup> Such linkages might be in the form of referrals to existing services or social and behaviour-change communications on issues such as nutrition or sanitation. This presents additional opportunities for connecting displaced people with national services (such as livelihood training, social care services, psychological support) towards their integration.

➔ *In Cameroon, the UNHCR will be implementing a transitional safety net for Central African Republic refugees over the period 2018-2020, which reflects an integrated strategy that aims to: provide basic needs assistance through predictable monthly cash transfers over 24 months; support refugees' own pathways to self-reliance and graduation from assistance by means of livelihoods training and cash grants for income generation; provide immediate cash support to refugee new arrivals; provide additional support for highly vulnerable protection cases; and link refugees into national social protection systems.*

**Many different social protection instruments may be considered when aligning humanitarian assistance in contexts of forced displacement**, such as active labour market policies, health insurance, or social welfare services – as illustrated in ‘Ensuring Access to Essential Goods and Services’, above. Social protection encompasses a whole range of activities and services, many of which are similar to, if not the same as, those used in humanitarian programming.<sup>[4]</sup> Alignment of humanitarian cash assistance with these social assistance instruments will only be fully effective if active labour market policies include the forcibly displaced and they have, or will eventually have, access to basic services, including but not limited to health and education. Ultimately, the long-term vision should be progressive alignment and integration towards a comprehensive social protection package. Making this whole transition approach work, harnessing the whole of the national social protection system (not just cash transfers/ social safety nets), entails collectively covering the risk landscape affecting families, comprising large-scale (covariate) shocks and household-level/life-cycle (idiosyncratic) shocks.

➔ *In Iran, an EU project gives access for registered Afghan refugees to primary health care. Implemented by the UNHCR, the project integrates the delivery of medical care via the national health system. It allows Afghan refugees to access the existing Iranian preventive primary health care. Beyond direct treatment, it also allows Afghan refugees to use the national Universal Public Health Insurance. Refugees are responsible for paying part of their health insurance premiums subsidised by the government. By doing so, refugees use the same system used by the Iranians themselves instead of creating a parallel system, thereby making the response more durable and cost-efficient.<sup>[32]</sup>*

## Aligning Through Different Elements of the System

**Combining humanitarian and social protection expertise and know-how may contribute to reinforcing key elements of the national system, towards the progressive development of an integrated shock-responsive social protection system.**<sup>[57]</sup> Often, no single national programme will be ready to expand, as is, to deliver humanitarian assistance to displaced populations. Rather, different aspects of a relevant programme may (progressively) be integrated into the humanitarian response mechanism, towards full transition and integration in contexts of protracted displacement. For instance, it may be possible for the humanitarian response to adopt the same application process as the national programme but rely on a distinct payment mechanism, at least in the first stage.<sup>[58]</sup>

**Adopting a long-term, system approach to social protection is relevant in all contexts of forced displacement, notably in protracted crises.**<sup>[59]</sup> There may be circumstances where it is more appropriate or realistic for social protection to be delivered and financed by non-state actors, at least in the first stage (for instance, in the case of rural and isolated refugee camps with no nearby local population, or a weak or hostile host state). This can introduce challenges related to financial sustainability and the duration of provision, undermining any entitlement/rights intention of the provision, as well as raising questions about accountability. Such issues underline the importance of efforts to move from fragmented short-term humanitarian funding to more predictable long-term models which have some of the characteristics of a state-led system (such as common targeting, registration and financing), although led by international actors.<sup>[15]</sup> This may provide useful operational elements in the future development of the national social protection system.

**An assessment of the national system’s readiness to respond to a situation of forced displacement, or any other crisis, should not only assess individual social protection schemes but also consider any other relevant elements of the system**, as suggested in Annex 2 – for instance, disaster response institutions, civil registry, or agricultural extension services.

**Conducting joint vulnerability assessments, or targeting beneficiaries based on the same harmonised questionnaire may be useful initial steps towards progressive alignment, transition and integration.** In contexts where nationals have to apply for social assistance, adopting similar application processes for asylum-seekers/refugees supported by humanitarian actors can facilitate integration and encourage language learning and other similar activities that support medium- and long-term self-reliance.<sup>[47]</sup>

- *In Lebanon, the EUTF aims to carry out a joint vulnerability assessment including the Lebanese population, based on the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR), an annual survey of refugees conducted jointly by UNICEF, the UNHCR and the WFP, the methodology of which 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.<sup>[14, 60]</sup>*
- *To provide targeted support to poor and vulnerable Chadians, the Government of Chad has taken steps to develop a safety net system that is also suitable for the inclusion of refugees. A harmonised questionnaire was introduced by government decree as a first step towards building a Unified Social Registry, which aims to combine information from selected social programmes funded by the government and external partners into a single database. A flexible approach to identification, targeting and registration of poor and vulnerable households is used in order to have in place a highly adaptable system that can be scaled up to respond to urgent situations, such as a sudden inflow of refugees that impacts host communities. As part of the combined efforts to assist the government in building a shock-responsive social protection system, many WFP, ECHO and UNHCR partners are using the harmonised questionnaire during the lean season. In refugee camps, this approach will be supported by the extensive work that WFP and UNHCR have jointly conducted to survey more than 83,000 households using a questionnaire based on the harmonised questionnaire.<sup>[53]</sup>*
- *In EU Member States, monetary or material support to asylum-seekers is not automatic; each asylum-seeker is expected to apply for it; eligibility is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Application is usually done online but can also be completed manually. As is the case for any citizen or a recognised refugee, asylum-seekers are able to access information, support and guidance to manage these application processes. The level of support to asylum seekers in cash or as vouchers tends to be dependent on whether the applicant lives in catered or non-catered accommodation but also on his/her ability to support him/herself. Payments are usually made through pre-paid ATM cards as asylum-seekers are rarely able to open accounts.<sup>[47]</sup>*
- *In Finland, as in most other EU countries, eligibility is dependent upon one's own income (salary, income from rented property, pensions from another country, etc.) and assets as well as the income and assets of one's spouse. People with income or assets may be excluded from assistance altogether or receive a reduced amount.<sup>[61]</sup>*
- *For the Social Solidarity Income scheme in Greece, potential beneficiaries apply for the assistance online and provide information (on their household, their income, housing, etc.), based on which a decision is taken on whether they are eligible for assistance or not. The amount of the transfer is complementary to fill the gap between household income and the poverty line.<sup>[47]</sup>*

### **Interagency cooperation should be enhanced when designing social registries to support governments.**

Strict data protection rules may impede collaboration and data sharing. However, from a technological perspective, there are solutions such as cloud-based sharing with various firewalls. Full information sharing is not always necessary. It is possible, for instance, to establish a joint payment delivery platform among UN agencies. But any transition and handover to government will be much more complex if the tools that are used cannot be transferred to government. It runs the risk of having to start over once the government wants to take control of the registry system. Again, it is important to adopt a long-term perspective early on; the endgame is to have a unit in government to host and manage this information ethically and securely.

- *In Lebanon, beneficiary households of the Min Ila programme receive their payments through the LOUISE (Lebanon One Unified Inter-agency System for E-Cards) System which uses a single ATM Card (the 'Red Card') for all cash payments to households. The programme also has a complaints mechanism that is accessible via a hotline.*
- *In Somalia, given that there were few platforms relevant for registry purposes, working with various humanitarian actors that are already collecting data for beneficiary management systems has created opportunities for harmonisation and cost efficiencies. The number of donors that need to agree, representing funding, is not large, and the actors that represent all the beneficiaries are also few in number. Thus, there are big opportunities and even now there are coalitions of NGOs using the same databases. There are about five big databases in Somalia – and people are moving away from Excel files.*

- ➔ *The Government of Chad established the Cellule Filets Sociaux (CFS) in 2016 to manage its safety net programmes, particularly cash transfers and cash-for-work schemes. In December 2018, the government, through the CFS, was moving towards finalising the Unified Social Registry (USR) manual and procuring all necessary hardware (servers, mainframes) and software to establish the registry. It is envisaged that a USR unit will eventually be created within the government. These efforts are supported by the World Bank notably through budget support (via a Multi-Donor Trust Fund).<sup>[53]</sup>*

**If harmonised questionnaires and unified social registries/databases represent promising practices to operationalise the humanitarian-development nexus, they also raise important questions related to data privacy and security.** Opportunities for linking humanitarian actors' databases with the national social protection information system,<sup>[62]</sup> or delivering entitlements digitally, also entail risks, including competition for a 'dominant' registry system, security of a mega database, or data privacy and security in data sharing. In general, the use of third-party registration and identification systems, such as WFP's SCOPE,<sup>[63]</sup> is not recommended in traditional development programming or government-led programmes. This includes, for instance, the use of existing third-party systems to support or interface with social protection, health management information systems or birth registration systems. In fragile or conflict-affected environments, however, where a national government-led beneficiary registration or identification system does not exist, or in contexts that preclude sharing of beneficiary information with government, third-party beneficiary data systems may help to improve information management and delivery of services and are in the best interests of those in need.<sup>[64]</sup>

**There are important ethical and programme considerations associated with the digitisation of information systems and the inclusion of biometrics.** A critical question to be asked is whether the digitisation of information systems, and/or the inclusion of biometrics, will result in: gains in efficiency; gains in effectiveness; improved transparency and accountability; value for money, and strengthening of national systems (that is, government platforms versus humanitarian/development actors' platforms versus third party platforms).<sup>[64]</sup> With personally identifiable information, far greater care needs to be taken than with aggregate information, including: informed consent; right to rectification; right of access; right to erasure; right to portability; and threats to individuals by state and non-state actors. In forced displacement contexts, this brings specific challenges – for instance, whether an unaccompanied minor provide informed consent.

While UN agencies do not legally have to comply with regional and country policies, guidelines and regulations such as the EU General Data Protection Regulation<sup>[65, 66]</sup> or the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection,<sup>[67]</sup> they should seek to conform. However, as of December 2018, agencies have yet to adopt a corporate policy providing operational guidance for data privacy in programmes and for personally identifiable information. Annex 3 offers some guidance on biometrics and identification systems. A recommended practice is to involve a protection expert (available in ECHO) in all data protection discussions (such as, around setting up and operating a unified database, collecting biometrics, or sharing operational data while preserving data privacy and security).

## — 3 —

# Engaging in Joint Programming

*'The EU responses to refugee situations and internal displacement can only be effective if EU humanitarian, development and political action all bring in their specificities in a joint approach.'*<sup>[12]</sup>

## Getting Started

**The EU should pursue its involvement through its political and development actors and those of the Member States at an early stage of a crisis so as to enable a more coherent and coordinated approach.** Full respect for humanitarian principles and close coordination with the host government are key. The objective is to improve living conditions throughout the whole duration of displacement and to implement most effectively solutions that can bring the displacement to an end.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Making a first step towards better social protection across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus requires setting up a core team**, possibly informal, of interested individuals working in different relevant sectors and bringing different perspectives. This core team can then progressively connect with an extended team composed of key stakeholders. Personalities count a lot when establishing links between sectors. Spending time building up relationships and trust between personalities is worthwhile.



### PRACTICAL TIPS

**Be open-minded**, ready to learn from innovative approaches and from one another, across DG ECHO, DG DEVCO, DG NEAR and EU Member States, other donors, government bodies, UN agencies, NGOs, national civil society actors, private sector actors, et al.

**Connect with people** and help build up relations between personalities – institutions do not work together; people work together.

**Systematise joint EUD-ECHO-EEAS missions** – this is what really helps develop joint assessment and shared views on priorities and programming issues.

**Consider setting up a task team** who align different sectors associated with social protection (such as, education, health or livelihoods) and can help facilitate the transition from humanitarian assistance in their respective sector, as well as help linking up to their specific line ministry/national institutions.

## Outlining a Joint Intervention Strategy

**Engaging in a policy and programming process with humanitarian, development and political actors is necessary before focusing down on the use of social protection approaches and systems across the nexus.** This may be a Joint Humanitarian-Development Framework (JHDF) exercise or nexus process, or just any collaboration process that has traction in-country to bring humanitarian, development and political actors together. As of December 2018, there is no operational guidance on how to conduct a JHDF/nexus exercise, only a working script. The recent Joint Programming Guidance<sup>[68]</sup> might help (see, in particular, Section 13 on Joint Programming in Fragile Contexts). The working group meetings that are to be organised before the nexus workshop are even more important than the one-day workshop itself.

- ➔ *In Uganda, ECHO contracted a consultant to kick-start the nexus pilot-country process, focusing on inclusive dialogue and a comprehensive handover to the EU. EU Member States were involved from the start. Conflict analysis was integrated into the initial joint assessment exercise. A kick-off stakeholder workshop confirmed a common understanding of the context and priority actions including political advocacy messages.*
- ➔ *In Sudan, joint analyses and missions conducted under the EU-led nexus pilot-country process and involving the EEAS, EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa team, Member States and nexus adviser to the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator led to common agreement on the context, programmatic and advocacy priorities and areas for EU action.*



### PRACTICAL TIPS

**Engage in a (broader) Joint Humanitarian-Development Framework exercise or Nexus Workshop process** before focusing down on the specific issue of social protection across the nexus.

**Have a dedicated person to support the JHDF/nexus process** (such as, a consultant) but ensure that leadership remains with the EUD and ECHO.

**Secure dedicated time for EUD/ECHO staff to work on the nexus** – to see tangible progress, the process needs to be institutionalised.

**Engage with EU Member States early on**, and whenever possible, outline a shared position as EU donors before engaging with other stakeholders (including, the government, the UN, etc.).

**Conducting a joint assessment focused on people's capacities and needs is essential, before engaging in any programming discussion** in regard to social protection across the nexus – see examples presented in the Reference Document on 'Social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus.'<sup>[13]</sup> Political and conflict-related aspects are to be systematically included in the joint assessment exercise, not least to assess the expected duration of displacement. In some contexts, it may be useful to consider the 'triple nexus', that is, adding the 'peace dimension'. This is not to be approached as a one-off exercise; rather it may be turned into a yearly assessment aimed at questioning and revisiting the EU intervention strategy and programming.



## PRACTICAL TIPS

**Put people's capacities and needs at the centre.**

**Include conflict analysis** by default as part of the joint assessment – contact DEVCO B2, ECHO D1 (civil-military focal point) or NEAR for support and experts.

**Conduct protection analysis** as part of the joint assessment.

**Moving from joint assessment to joint programming is a critical step, often missed.** This is when politics, mandates, habits and path dependency kick in. The focus needs to remain on people: agreeing on priority populations to be reached; discussing how to identify and reach vulnerable individuals, how to foster their capacities and address their needs and vulnerabilities, what interventions are needed and how they can best be delivered. It can also mean that household constraints and opportunities are more effectively taken into account during implementation or can help identify potential social tensions between host and displaced communities.



## PRACTICAL TIPS

**Maintain the focus on people** (with the aim of fostering their capacities and addressing their needs) rather than on instruments (wondering which modality is best, and not focusing enough on working together to progressively build the national system).

**Work on delivery systems as an entry point to broader collaboration.**

**Ensure protection aspects remain covered** moving from humanitarian to development funding.

**Be a principled opportunist with a long-term perspective** – pick a policy entry point with potential and build momentum from there towards progressive national system building (for instance, starting with a narrow focus on refugees and later including IDPs, or starting with a focus on aligning humanitarian and social cash transfers and later expanding to other social protection aspects).

**Roles and responsibilities need to be clarified towards aligning with the national social protection system.** This requires a combination of diplomacy and advocacy, development support and humanitarian action. ECHO and DEVCO can play an advisory role in policy discussions led by EEAS and heads of agency. ECHO may introduce cash transfer projects, for instance, to demonstrate their relevance and effectiveness, but any scale-up should be handed over to DEVCO or NEAR or other development donors and negotiated with the government. The humanitarian principle of independence does not necessarily preclude working with governments and the use of government systems.<sup>[4]</sup>

➔ *In its regional strategy for the Syria Crisis, Sweden articulated an approach which can be qualified as 'Humanitarian+++'.<sup>[69]</sup> While working with the government is not possible, it is possible to identify pockets of stability where moves can be made towards integrated service delivery.*

**It is important to ensure that different transition streams are being supported.** Operationalising the nexus is about strengthening institutions and building systems. It requires joint analysis, collective advocacy, integrated service delivery and joint resource mobilisation. What is done from a humanitarian perspective needs to be consistent with a long-term view – see the note on Coordination of the Operational Guidance Pack on the EU approach to forced displacement and development.<sup>[12]</sup> Different levels of engagement are to be considered.<sup>[13]</sup> Depending on the stage of the crisis, an appropriate balance must be found between preparedness work and immediate response. Large-scale displacement is in most cases predictable; a stronger focus on preparedness is needed. Large-scale forced displacement often starts by trickle movements. Peaks occur on average four years after outflows start. Relevant factors for movements such as slow-onset disaster and land degradation can also be foreseen – see the note on Preparedness and First Response in the Operational Guidance Pack on the EU approach to forced displacement and development.<sup>[12]</sup>

➔ *Lebanon offers a very practical example on how to link policy and operations. ECHO funded the response to the forced displacement crisis for many years, then a donor consortium was established. The EU-Lebanon Compact includes an EU commitment to ‘Support the Government of Lebanon in its response to the current humanitarian crisis. Increase support to the most vulnerable Lebanese and refugees’. The Joint Humanitarian Development Framework (JHDF) for Lebanon for 2018-2019 was developed by ECHO and NEAR/EUTF Syria teams in order to further define a comprehensive EU response to the Syrian crisis by coherently addressing humanitarian, mid-term and development priorities. JHDF prioritises support to basic needs/social safety nets through a transition from short-term emergency safety nets into a more systemic and longer-term poverty-alleviation mechanism. In line with the strategic direction of the JHDF, USD 52 million were allocation to build the transition. A central objective of EUTF support is to achieve equity for the most vulnerable in Lebanon, whatever the background or citizenship of those in need. Achieving this vision will take time, including building a long-term commitment from donors and the Lebanese government. Hence, a longer-term objective of EUTF support will be to support the government to develop a clear and coordinated social protection benefits package including: nationally defined set of essential healthcare (under the leadership of the Ministry of Public Health) and education (under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education) services; minimum income security via transfers to facilitate access to essential goods and services (children, working age population); pensions/in-kind transfers that guarantee access to essential goods and services (pensioners).<sup>[60]</sup>*



## PRACTICAL TIPS

**Invest in preparedness** and measures that can prevent and mitigate massive displacement.

**Support a phased transition from humanitarian interventions to development programmes** that benefits both displaced and host communities.

**Aim to harmonise the level of support to vulnerable households** between displaced and host communities – equal vulnerability requires equal support.

**Build ‘quick wins’ into programme plans.**

**Develop programme linkages and pathways towards self-reliance**, for instance, through ‘Cash Plus’.

**Be realistic and ambitious.**

**Accept that sometimes nothing can be done** towards linking humanitarian action with the national system (for instance, when the government is heavily involved in the conflict).

## Mobilising Different Delivery and Funding Streams

**Mobilising resources and building fiscal space for the longer term is needed in order to hand over the system.** This is a long process, which requires lots of dialogue and underlines the importance of building trust with government counterparts. Governments hosting refugees may be persuaded that they should not only host the refugees but also contribute to their support: donors may provide extra resources to the national population as well as to the refugees; the average refugee has refugee status for 10 years – at some point, it makes sense that the government should want to enable these people to settle and pay into the system (for instance, contributory social protection), to give an exit for the government; countries understand that they will get waves of refugees, so they can recognise that building resilience of refugees as early as possible is necessary. It is possible to mobilise budget support, for instance, to help the government reinforce building blocks of the national social protection system (such as a unified social registry or an asylum registration system).

➤ *In Greece, the unprecedented arrival of forcibly displaced persons in 2015-2016 required a full range of humanitarian needs to be quickly supported and essential services such as shelter and protection, including health, to be offered to the people in need. After an initial traditional ECHO-funded humanitarian response, the EU set up its Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation programme (ESTIA). Implemented by the UNHCR, and aligned with the national social assistance programme for Greek destitute populations, it provides refugees and their family with a basic social safety net that allows them to meet their basic needs, using local markets and renting urban accommodation with dignity, in a cost-efficient way. From mid-2019, the programme will be handed over and will continue under the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (EMAS), freeing resources for other crises. DG HOME will provide budget support to the government. Aligning the emergency cash assistance to the national system has been essential for this transition.<sup>[32]</sup>*



### PRACTICAL TIPS

**Be creative** to seize funding opportunities, deal with constraints attached to planning and funding cycles and contracts, and make them operate in synergies within a coherent intervention strategy developed under a 10-year timeframe.

**Ensure flexibility in funding/contingency** to have room for new arrivals.

**Favour ‘reliable delivery’ over ‘ideal design’**, and ring-fence delivery.

**Consider contracting the same implementing partners** for different, complementary activities under humanitarian and development funding.

**Develop clear communication about downscaling** of assistance/alignment with national levels so that beneficiaries can have visibility and plan ahead.

**Involve a protection expert** (available in ECHO) **in all data protection discussions** (setting up and operating a unified database, collecting biometrics, sharing operational data while preserving data privacy and security, etc.).

**Supporting social protection across the nexus requires engaging with a variety of implementing partners.**

It is possible to choose one best-placed UN agency to deliver multi-purpose cash transfers. Each context is different, and this is to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Still, it is important to maintain support from other UN agencies. Indeed, social protection does not concern one ministry only. To maintain the social contract between citizens and their government, it is good to maintain different contracts for more buy-in, for instance, the Ministry of Agriculture working with the FAO, so as not to let that ministry lose traction in the crisis. Blending facilities can also be a tool to leverage additional public and private resources.<sup>[1]</sup> In all cases, a careful assessment of stakeholders' capacity and detailed process mapping are of utmost importance before the start of a programme.

➔ *In Turkey, no capacity assessment or process mapping was conducted to track the application process and identify potential bottlenecks prior to the start of the programme. This had important consequences for implementation. The ESSN design underestimated the capacity of the Turkish Government, overestimated the capacity of the Turkish Red Crescent, and the capacity of other agencies was not looked at at all. In contrast, before planning the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE), UNICEF conducted a detailed feasibility assessment that examined the strengths, bottlenecks and capacities of the national social assistance institutions, systems and operational processes; this informed the CCTE programme design.<sup>[32]</sup>*

**PRACTICAL TIPS**

**Ask the community of practice** for additional, specific hints and tips:

- The global, open online community on socialprotection.org (accessible at <https://goo.gl/aRzVqb>) allows reaching out to a network of over 170 practitioners;
- The dedicated group on capacity4dev (accessible at <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/sp-nexus>) offers an additional resource for EU-specific issues.

# Annex 1

## Rights and social protection access for different types of displaced populations<sup>[15]</sup>

- **Refugee** advocates argue that once recognised on a *prima facie* basis as a refugee, an individual should be able to presumptively enjoy all the rights, including to social protection, granted under the 1951 Convention,<sup>[25]</sup> which sets out a number of rights that provide a framework for refugees' full social protection. According to the 1951 Convention, Article 23, 'The Contracting States shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory the same treatment with respect to public relief and assistance as is accorded to their nationals'. However, in practice states may limit *prima facie* refugees' access to these rights, for instance by restricting their access to labour markets and insisting upon refugees' encampment.
- **Asylum-seeker** status should be short-term and temporary. Asylum-seekers have the right not to be returned to their country of origin until their claim for refugee status is adjudicated, but any social protection rights are dependent upon national laws. In practice, asylum-seekers can wait several months or years for their claims to be heard, and asylum-seekers' rights to work or access social protection are often heavily restricted, particularly in the first year after arrival.
- **Internally Displaced Persons** are very often citizens of the country in which they are resident, or in other cases are for the most part habitual residents, many with similar rights to nationals. The cornerstone of IDP protection is non-discrimination, i.e. equal recognition of IDPs' rights without regard to their displacement. This includes their rights to social protection, which should be recognised as equivalent to those other citizens or habitual residents. However, as a result of their forced displacement, IDPs may face specific challenges in realising their rights, especially if a state is actively hostile to the IDP group (e.g. ethnic discrimination) or where conflict or natural disaster has destroyed infrastructure and weakened state capacity.
- **Returnees** are generally citizens of the state to which they are returning, and should be able to claim equal rights to social protection alongside other citizens. In the case of refugee voluntary repatriation, the basis for claiming such rights/non-discriminatory treatment may also have been set out in a Tripartite Agreement. However, returnees may struggle to obtain adequate social protection from the state due to weak state and/or market capacity, especially in early post-conflict settings, and may have specific needs (e.g. housing) which result from their former displacement.

# Annex 2

## Key questions for assessing the readiness of a given social protection programme to deliver humanitarian cash transfers

	1. Individuals to be reached	2. Needs to be covered	3. Payment mechanism	4. Accompanying measures
Preliminary needs assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which areas are (most) affected? What are the characteristics of (most) affected individuals/ households?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the (financial/ material) needs of affected individuals? Are these needs temporary, or recurrent/long-term?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are cash transfers appropriate to meet the needs of affected individuals?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What accompanying measures are necessary?</li> </ul>
Key aspects to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the social protection programme have good coverage of the <b>geographical areas</b> affected by the crisis? If not, how easy would it be to expand the programme to affected areas?</li> <li>Are those enrolled in the programme among the worst affected by the crisis? Are there legal barriers for enrolling displaced people in the programme? If not, how easy would it be to expand the programme to (other) affected <b>households</b>?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do the social protection programme <b>objectives</b> align with the specific objectives of the (foreseen) humanitarian response?</li> <li><i>If so</i>, what do reviews and evaluations tell us about the appropriateness of the programme design to meet objectives?</li> <li><i>If not</i>, which aspects of the design may still be useful to meet humanitarian objectives?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there <b>robust</b> administrative systems with good capacity to deliver timely and accurate payments? Can this capacity be supported? Are payment distribution networks functioning post disaster?</li> <li>Is the <b>lead-time</b> for the delivery mechanism short enough in view of humanitarian needs (voucher/ATM card/SIM card delivery)?</li> <li>Is the delivery mechanism <b>accessible</b> to affected individuals (e.g. refugees)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the programme include any <b>complementary services</b> (e.g. education, health, psychological support, livelihood support, etc.) valuable for the humanitarian response? Can this capacity be supported? Are complementary services functioning post disaster, and accessible to affected individuals (including non-nationals/refugees)?</li> </ul>

	1. Individuals to be reached	2. Needs to be covered	3. Payment mechanism	4. Accompanying measures
Extent to which the programme could be used	<p><b>TARGETING CRITERIA:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could the same enrolment criteria be used for the humanitarian response?</li> <li>• Could enrolment criteria be relaxed to include other affected and vulnerable groups during the crisis period (e.g. relaxing conditions, cut-off point, etc.)?</li> </ul> <p><b>DATABASE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the programme underpinned by a social registry/single registry?</li> <li>• What personal identifying document is required and accepted?</li> <li>• What personal identifying data is recorded (biometrics, name, address, national ID number, phone number/SIM, specifically assigned registration number, etc.)?</li> <li>• Is beneficiary data and account information stored in an electronic management information system?</li> <li>• Does this contain information on other social protection programme beneficiaries? Does it contain data on non-beneficiaries?</li> <li>• How reliable is the programme database? How often is this data updated?</li> <li>• How is data protected?</li> </ul> <p><b>ENROLMENT PROCESS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the enrolment of beneficiaries take place; is this on a rolling basis or only at certain times?</li> <li>• How well do people understand the application process and how decisions are made; is there any evidence of political bias, or corruption, in the registration and approval process; or of any delays/bottlenecks?</li> <li>• How easy and fast would it be to run a new enrolment campaign, in existing programme areas and/or new areas?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the current transfer value and frequency adequate to cover needs?</li> <li>• Are there any procedures for modifying the programme in the event of a crisis?</li> <li>• Could the transfer value be topped up if needed (e.g. during the crisis period)? How fast is the decision process likely to be?</li> <li>• Could the frequency of the transfer be increased if necessary (e.g. during the crisis period)? How fast is the decision process likely to be?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can the current delivery system be used as it is?</li> <li>• Can the payment distribution network be expanded to cover new areas?</li> <li>• Could a different delivery mechanism be incorporated (voucher/ATM card/SIM card delivery)?</li> <li>• Can processes be modified to meet humanitarian needs, and accommodate people with additional support needs or who are not familiar with the system?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can current complementary services be used as they are?</li> <li>• Does the programme have the capacity to take on an additional caseload, or can this capacity be supported?</li> </ul>
Extent to which other elements of the system could be used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could other existing systems/databases be considered to identify and reach affected individuals (e.g. civil registry, unified registry, humanitarian database, etc.)?</li> <li>• What is the policy and practice on data sharing?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there existing regulations enabling or restricting the extension of social protection to particular groups (e.g. non-nationals, asylum-seekers, etc.)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could other existing systems be considered to deliver cash transfers to affected individuals (e.g. post offices, humanitarian systems, etc.) as an alternative or complementary measure?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could other existing services be relevant and made available to affected individuals?</li> </ul>

## Additional questions for deciding whether or not to link with the national system to deliver humanitarian cash transfers

Humanitarian response	System building	Administrative feasibility	Internal capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the opportunities and risks associated with using the national system, in terms of:</li> <li>• Timeliness of the response;</li> <li>• Adequate coverage of affected populations;</li> <li>• Adequate coverage of needs?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any opportunities to help strengthen the national system (especially in case of recurrent/long-term needs)?</li> <li>• Are there any risks that linking will overburden/ do harm to the social protection programme/ system? If so, could they be mitigated?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there restrictions preventing the EU from transferring funds to government?</li> <li>• If so, could an alternative set-up be envisioned (e.g. humanitarian/development partners directly paying transfers, but relying on the system)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the EU and its humanitarian/development partners have the required setup/resources to effectively deliver humanitarian cash transfers via, or in alignment with, the national system?</li> <li>• If not, can additional resources/support be mobilised?</li> </ul>

# Annex 3

## Guidance on biometrics and identification systems <sup>[64]</sup>

- **Gains in effectiveness and efficiency, and value for money** – The decision to digitise, as well as collect personally identifiable information, including biometrics, should be assessed individually to determine the expected impact against the cost.
- **Ethical considerations** – When capturing personally identifiable information, including biometrics, areas including informed consent, delinking provision of critical humanitarian services to such consent, and protecting information from misuse by government and non-state actors, must be prioritised.
- **System strengthening** – It is critical to assess, when selecting a strategy as well as considering any proposed solution, whether we are trying to address a short-term humanitarian crisis, strengthen national systems, or both. In the case of the later, issues of data sovereignty and ownership, as well as sustainable technical and financial support models, should be considered.
- **National laws, policies and guidelines** – Relevant regional and national policies, laws and regulations should be fully understood and addressed in any proposed strategy or solution.

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