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## 16. The humanitarian–development nexus

*Cécile Cherrier*

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### 16.1 INTRODUCTION

An increasing number of countries around the world are experiencing situations of fragility and crisis. This context represents a serious threat to achieve universal social protection. A single shock can jeopardise years of progress, impeding the maintenance and expansion of social protection rights. The changing frequency, nature and complexity of crises have encouraged a shift in the way support is provided to affected people. There is now a growing global momentum to strengthen the linkages between humanitarian assistance. This chapter provides an introduction to the topic.<sup>1</sup> It introduces key related concepts, summarises key drivers and motivations for stronger linkages, presents empirical examples illustrating what such linkages may look like and discusses some of the main prospects of this emerging field.<sup>2</sup>

### 16.2 INTRODUCTION TO KEY CONCEPTS

This section presents the concept and nature of humanitarian cash transfers (HCTs) before introducing the shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) agenda that provides a framework for linking HCTs and social protection.

#### 16.2.1 The Concept and Nature of HCTs

The concept of HCTs remains subject to interpretation. Essentially, it depends on whether the term ‘cash transfers’ is considered to encompass vouchers<sup>3</sup> (World Bank 2016) and which definition of humanitarian assistance is used – whether it is actor-oriented, purpose-oriented or conflict-centred (Gentilini et al. 2018). The question of the linkages between social protection and HCTs arises differently depending on the definition used for ‘humanitarian’.

It remains that HCTs tend to be used to mitigate and respond to the risk of natural and man-made disasters induced by covariate shocks, such as drought, floods or armed conflict. In contrast, most social protection policies and programmes are designed to support households experiencing shocks as a result of life-cycle events, such as loss of job, illness or death. Still,

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<sup>1</sup> It focuses on the linkages between humanitarian cash transfers and national social protection systems.

<sup>2</sup> For updates and a review of the state of the art, readers are invited to join the dedicated global community of practice on socialprotection.org: <https://socialprotection.org/connect/communities/social-protection-crisis-contexts>

<sup>3</sup> The term ‘cash and voucher assistance’ is also widely used, notably by the Cash Learning Partnership, a global network of humanitarian actors.

social protection is by essence meant to protect people in the event of a shock, be it the death of a breadwinner in the household (idiosyncratic) or global recession (covariant).

Cash assistance to disaster-affected people may thus be labelled differently, notably depending on who is providing or overseeing it. It would often be termed ‘emergency cash transfers’ regardless of whether it is provided through a national social protection system, within a national disaster risk management system or by international actors. However, when considered as an integral part of a national social protection system, it may also be categorised as ‘social cash transfers’.<sup>4</sup> Conversely, the term ‘humanitarian cash transfers’ would tend to refer to cash assistance (co-)funded by the international community and supported by the global humanitarian system and its international actors through the activation of the United Nations clusters.<sup>5</sup> At times, the line between an emergency response and a social protection response may be hard to draw, as with the distinction between HCTs and social cash transfers. This is the case of internationally supported cash transfers provided as part of government-led annual responses to seasonal food insecurity, for instance.

HCTs provided through the global humanitarian system are guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence that provide the foundations for humanitarian action. Adherence to these principles is particularly vital in armed conflict-affected settings where international humanitarian law applies. For that reason, humanitarian actors have tended to maintain some critical distance from states. In contrast, social protection actors have a strong focus on working with a state and building the social contract with its citizens. These divergent ways of thinking about the role of the state appear as a major difference between humanitarian assistance and social protection, from which arise ‘equally important and divergent issues around coordination, funding streams, technical tools, partnership arrangements and so forth’ (Longhurst et al. 2020, 3).

Despite the distinction commonly drawn between HCTs and social protection, HCTs can nonetheless be viewed as contributing to the function of social protection. Internationally supported HCTs are provided whenever emergency needs exceed national capacity – when the state is overwhelmed, complicit or lacks control over its territory – and the global humanitarian system is activated. As such, they may be considered as an extra layer of social protection organised globally to fill gaps in national social protection systems; a layer, however, that remains semi-formal and unsatisfactory from the viewpoint of a rights-based approach to social protection. Cash transfers provided by international actors outside the framework of the United Nations cluster system or national social protection policies would only qualify here as charity-based transfers, which might still, by extension, be considered as an informal form of social assistance. The question thus becomes how to turn such transfers into a guaranteed minimum, moving from semi-formal to formal social protection.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Social cash transfers, when elevated to a social guarantee status, constitute an entitlement guaranteed by law that (eligible) citizens can claim, and an obligation on the state.

<sup>5</sup> Clusters are groups of humanitarian organisations, including United Nations agencies and others, in each of the main sectors of humanitarian action (food security, shelter, logistics and so on). They are designated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and have clear responsibilities for coordination. For more information, visit [www.humanitarianresponse.info/fr/coordination/clusters](http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/fr/coordination/clusters).

<sup>6</sup> HCTs might be considered as part of the innermost core of the risk-sharing model advanced by Packard et al. (2019) as an alternative to the traditional model of social protection, articulated around contributory and non-contributory schemes, that are ill-adapted to the new nature of work.

### 16.2.2 The Shock-Responsive Social Protection Agenda

The more effective a national social protection system is at addressing shocks of different kinds, the less need for additional HCTs. By building people's resilience, an effective social protection system may simply prevent a shock turning into a disaster. As Levine and Sharp (2015) underline, not every shock results in a crisis, only when the event combines with existing vulnerabilities. Furthermore, an effective social protection system may be able to respond, at least partially, to the needs of people affected by a disaster, through built-in response mechanisms or the introduction of a dedicated social protection scheme.

Ideally, social protection systems should be able to handle any amount of people needing assistance, irrespective of whether their needs are caused by idiosyncratic or covariate shocks. However, the case of covariant shocks presents specific challenges for a social protection system. It implies that an extra number of individuals are in need of social protection benefits simultaneously (or the same number of individuals are in need of extra benefits) while, at the same time, the consequences of the shock may limit the capacity of the system to deliver.

In recent years, the concept of SRSP has emerged in an attempt to bring greater attention to the potential role for social protection systems in the response to shocks that affect a large proportion of the population simultaneously.<sup>7</sup> This approach considers 'the adaptation of routine social protection programmes and systems to cope with changes in context and demand following large-scale shocks. This can be ex-ante by building shock-responsive systems, plans and partnerships in advance of a shock to better prepare for emergency response; or ex-post, to support households once the shock has occurred'<sup>8</sup> (O'Brien et al. 2018, 7). The related concept of 'adaptive social protection' considers how synergies between disaster risk management, climate change adaptation and social protection can be gained in order to reduce the impacts of shocks and stressors on people's livelihoods and build resilience (Vincent and Cull 2012).<sup>9</sup> Both areas of research, adaptive social protection and SRSP, have informed the literature and practice linking HCTs and social protection.

The topic of 'linking cash and voucher assistance and social protection' that has gained considerable momentum within the international humanitarian community can be regarded as one specific aspect of the broader SRSP agenda. It has emerged as part of a wider and long-running discussion about ways to link emergency relief and development. It calls for stronger cooperation between international humanitarian and development actors. The topic is largely focused on how national social protection systems can be leveraged to channel HCTs in response to a disaster. As such, its scope is almost exclusively limited to the links between HCTs and social assistance (also often referred to as safety nets), and the associated social protection systems development.

Ultimately, the SRSP agenda and the topic of linking HCTs and social protection cut across different disciplines, primarily humanitarian assistance, disaster risk management and social

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<sup>7</sup> The term was popularised by a global research study commissioned by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development and conducted by a research consortium led by Oxford Policy Management (2018).

<sup>8</sup> The terminology 'shock-sensitive social protection' is sometimes preferred to ensure that focus does not get narrowed to emergency responses, and that adequate attention is also given, for instance, to reducing the exposure to shocks.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 42.

protection, and to a certain extent also climate change adaptation and livelihood resilience. The SRSP work was primarily meant to unpack what national governments can do to improve their own emergency responses – whether international actors are involved or not, and whether the international actors get their money from the pot labelled ‘development’ or the pot labelled ‘humanitarian’. It calls for better alignment, coordination and integration of humanitarian assistance, disaster risk management and social protection actors either before or after the crisis occurs.

### 16.3 DRIVERS AND MOTIVATIONS FOR STRONGER LINKAGES

The increasing complexity, frequency, severity and duration of crises have further encouraged efforts to bring together humanitarian responses and social protection. Most countries requiring international assistance are affected by multiple types of crisis – with many conflict-affected countries also hosting refugees and experiencing disasters associated with natural hazards exacerbated by stressors such as climate change, rapid urbanisation and globalisation. Between 1980 and 2012, the annual frequency of natural disasters increased by 250 per cent while the number of people affected increased by 140 per cent (World Bank 2018). Globally, the numbers of forcibly displaced people grew for the seventh consecutive year to a record 70.8 million in 2018 (UNHCR 2019b). Overall, over 206 million people living in 81 countries were deemed in need of humanitarian assistance that same year (Development Initiatives 2019). Crises are also becoming more protracted: an estimated 88 per cent of official humanitarian assistance went to medium- or long-term recipients in 2015 (Development Initiatives 2017); nearly four in every five refugees are in displacement situations that have lasted for at least five years; and one in five have been in displacement situations that have lasted 20 years or more (UNHCR 2019b). The poorest countries host a third of all refugees worldwide (UNHCR 2019b). These global changes have put the humanitarian system under strain.<sup>10</sup> They have led to an increased recognition that business as usual is no longer an option, and that new ways of working are needed (OCHA 2017).

In that context, the SRSP agenda is appealing. The growing coverage of social cash transfer programmes and the increasing overlap in target populations have made this agenda opportune. It brings the prospect of addressing multi-annual shocks in a more sustainable, integrated manner, anchored in investments in national capacity, systems and ownership wherever possible. It presents the potential of producing better results for people in crises, mitigating the impact of shocks and delivering assistance in a more timely and efficient manner.<sup>11</sup> Humanitarian actors may expect to improve the cost-efficiency of their interventions, or to be able to transfer part of their chronic caseload to the government and its partners. Social protection actors can envision leveraging the humanitarian system to go the ‘last mile’ and

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<sup>10</sup> The percentage of unmet humanitarian needs steadily rose from 32 per cent in 2007 to 40 per cent in 2016 (Development Initiatives 2018).

<sup>11</sup> For example, Cabot Venton (2018) estimates that every USD 1 spent on social protection and resilience programming in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, when combined with early intervention around the time of the crisis, results in savings in the order of USD 2.30–3.30, compared to an international humanitarian response delivered after a crisis has occurred.

extend their services to hard-to-reach vulnerable groups. Ultimately, better articulations and synergies between HCTs and social protection appear essential not least to protect gains made in social protection, avoid duplication of efforts in contexts of scarce resources and progressively expand basic social protection in situations of extreme fragility, protracted crises and forced displacement towards universal social protection.

Recent global and institutional commitments reflect a growing consensus on the need to better link humanitarian assistance, and HCTs in particular, and social protection. The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit Grand Bargain commitments include increasing the use and coordination of cash-based programming, which involves commitments to use, link or align with local and national mechanisms such as social protection systems (IASC 2016). Specific commitments were also signed for refugee situations (UNGA 2016). Signatories to the Grand Bargain have increasingly reported using existing national social protection systems for humanitarian cash programming (Metcalf-Hough et al. 2019). In general, humanitarian actors are increasingly required to demonstrate the rationale for not using existing national systems to provide assistance (European Commission 2019; Council of the European Union 2015; World Bank 2016).

## 16.4 CONCEPTUALISATION AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE LINKAGES

SRSP has become a buzzword, and there are still many misconceptions around it.<sup>12</sup> In particular, it is often reduced to the issue of leveraging a social protection system *ex post* to channel HCTs, or that of adding flexible scale-up mechanisms to a flagship social protection programme. This section shows that there is much more to it than that. It underlines all that can be done *ex ante*, stresses the distinction between leveraging the system and expanding a programme and touches on a couple of special cases, those of non-nationals and conflict-affected areas.

### 16.4.1 Acting *Ex Ante* versus Reacting *Ex Post*

Improving the shock responsiveness of a social protection system is not a one-off exercise; it is an ongoing process that starts by making regular social protection programmes better in terms of their coverage and effectiveness. Strengthening routine social protection is worthwhile in its own right for building resilience and reducing the negative consequences of shocks. Making the regular social protection programmes and their delivery systems resilient to shocks, continuing to function in a crisis, is vital. Incremental adjustments can then be considered to allow the system and its core programmes to be more relevant and effective for large-scale shocks to better respond to covariate shocks (O'Brien et al. 2018). In the Sahel, the adaptive social protection programmes complement regular cash transfers with accompanying measures to help households become more resilient to the effects of climate change (World Bank 2020).

System preparedness work is another important set of activities. Making the system more responsive to shocks may not necessarily require adaptations to existing programmes

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<sup>12</sup> See, for instance, O'Brien (2020) for ten important myth-busting messages.

(O'Brien, 2020). This can take different forms, such as strengthening social protection databases and their information systems, adapting delivery mechanisms, coordinating with disaster risk management actors, establishing contingency funds, having stand-by partnership agreements in place or linking programmes to early warning systems.

#### **16.4.2 Leveraging the System versus Expanding a Programme**

While still work in progress, the conceptualisation of the range of approaches for linking HCTs and social protection has evolved from a set of options popularised by O'Brien et al. (2018) to a pick-and-mix approach articulated by Seyfert et al. (2019). This working framework disaggregates different possible connection points between a national social protection system and the humanitarian system, at the policy, programme design and administration levels. They are then set against a continuum of integration options, from an entirely parallel systems approach of zero integration to an entirely national systems-led approach of full integration (Lowe et al. Forthcoming).

This emphasises the fact that linking HCTs and social protection is not all about 'expanding a social protection programme', but would rather often be about 'leveraging (elements of) the social protection system'. Collaborations may emerge around select programmatic functions, with various degrees of connection within a given function. For instance, it may be possible for a humanitarian response to use the payment system of a contributory pension scheme (as happened in Lesotho in the El Niño crisis in 2016), or the existing network of registration centres (as in Lebanon), or data stored in the national social registry – this is often referred to as 'piggybacking'.

In Malawi, social protection and humanitarian actors are discussing how to operate an interconnection between the two main systems that are currently delivering cash transfers to food-insecure households: the national social protection system, notably through the Social Cash Transfer Programme; and the emergency system, through the Joint Emergency Food Assistance Programme. The latter is now activated every year in response to seasonal acute food insecurity; yet, it has remained heavily dependent on international partners for funding as well as delivery. In a context of resource constraints, it is not cost-efficient, nor effective, to support the development of both delivery channels, which increasingly tend to reach the same populations. In the immediate future, the government and its partners are exploring how responses triggered by the emergency systems could leverage elements of the national social protection system. However, in this 'new normal' context, a more profound reflection is needed to define how the respective roles, responsibilities and ways of working of social protection, disaster management and humanitarian actors need to evolve in the medium term (Cherrier 2019b).

In the aftermath of a disaster, where a social protection programme has large coverage, robust administrative systems and institutional arrangements, and where there is an overlap between shock-affected people and its regular beneficiaries, that programme may be used to channel additional resources (a 'top up') to existing beneficiaries – this is often referred to as a 'vertical expansion'. After Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013, both the World Food Programme and UNICEF funded top-up payments to beneficiaries of the Philippines' flagship conditional cash transfer programme in affected areas to help meet their immediate

needs and facilitate recovery.<sup>13</sup> The use of existing systems reduced transaction costs compared to delivery through implementing partners. Time was also reduced – the World Food Programme reached over 105,000 households within two months, compared to 85,000 through non-governmental organisations. Besides, the memorandums of understanding established on that occasion with the Philippines’ Department of Social Welfare and Development could be quickly modified and adopted in the subsequent response to Typhoon Ruby in 2014 (Gentilini et al. 2018).

It may also be possible to temporarily include new, shock-affected beneficiaries in an existing scheme – something often referred to as ‘horizontal expansion’. In the immediate aftermath of violent ethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF agreed with the government to launch an extraordinary campaign to enrol new households meeting the regular eligibility criteria of existing long-term programmes. These households were maintained in these programmes at the end of UNICEF’s intervention. The fact that the government was financially responsible for providing these transfers from the outset, from the national budget, contributed to this sustainability (European Commission 2019).

In protracted emergency situations, built-in scalability mechanisms can allow a programme to mechanically expand and contract independently of emergency actors. This requires pre-enrolling potential beneficiaries (that is, establishing and maintaining a database of all beneficiaries and other vulnerable households), pre-defining objective triggers and agreeing on funding sources and channels *ex ante*. In Kenya, the Hunger Safety Net Programme, a permanent safety net for chronically vulnerable households, delivers one level of standardised payment to everyone in a geographic area within 10 days once a trigger point is reached – while humanitarian aid used to take three to nine months to reach beneficiaries.<sup>14</sup> Of course, there are challenges with this approach, notably with a conscious trade-off between simplicity, cost and targeting accuracy. It remains that such arrangements have enabled transitioning recurrent humanitarian caseloads from short-term to more systematic assistance.

### 16.4.3 The Case of Protracted Refugee Situations

In the specific case of protracted refugee situations, working towards a progressive harmonisation of HCTs with the national system is particularly vital. A critical aspect is setting the transfer value and adjusting it over time, gradually harmonising it with amounts available to host populations while accounting for any extra needs refugees may have – if they are not allowed to work, for instance. Communication is crucial in that regard to ensure that both refugees and host communities understand when, where and for how long assistance will be provided (UNHCR 2019a).

In Lebanon in early 2014, at the height of the influx of refugees, with the World Food Programme’s 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 World Food Programme 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,

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<sup>13</sup> Other affected households who were not on the programme had to be reached through separate interventions.

<sup>14</sup> For more information, visit [www.hsnp.or.ke](http://www.hsnp.or.ke)

providing a level of assistance parity received by refugees (World Bank 2014). 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 financing 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 (Gentilini et al. 2018). Likewise, a central objective of the European Union's support has been to achieve equity for the most vulnerable in Lebanon, whatever the background or citizenship of those in need – encouraging, for instance, joint vulnerability assessment for both refugee and national populations (European Commission 2019).

#### **16.4.4 The Case of Fragile, Conflict-Affected Areas**

In armed conflict-affected situations where the national social protection system is not yet or no longer functional, it may still be feasible and valuable to establish linkages between HCTs and social protection. The systems developed by humanitarian actors may provide inspiration for longer-term support for the poor and vulnerable.<sup>15</sup> They may align with national policies to somehow expand social protection to hard-to-reach areas. They may leverage elements of a formerly active social protection system. All this requires strong donor coordination and leadership, as well as close collaboration between humanitarian actors, guided by humanitarian principles, and development-oriented actors, equipped to engage in policy discussions with national authorities, whenever possible.

In Somalia, a roadmap has been developed for incrementally transitioning the numerous HCT projects into a medium-term social assistance programme that is aligned behind the new federal government's vision and in which both humanitarian and development actors can play a role.<sup>16</sup> To this end, a Donor Working Group has been convened to liaise with the government and coordinate the development of priority policies and approaches, while a new Technical Assistance Facility is to facilitate dialogue and understanding of governance, systems, policy, financing and technical processes (European Commission 2019).

In Mali, international non-governmental organisations operating cash transfer projects in the insecure north worked hard to establish common designs and administrative processes (logical framework, assessment tools, transfer value, registration method, and monitoring and evaluation) that were aligned with key parameters of the government's nascent social cash transfer programme in the south. Linking the projects in the north to the national early warning system and surveys also assisted with engaging the government. This has resulted in the genesis of a *de facto* national programme, and led to a policy commitment to transition out of humanitarian responses over time and progressively strengthen the national social protection system so that it could absorb repeated, and relatively predictable, humanitarian caseloads (European Commission 2019).

In Yemen, humanitarian actors have managed to revive and sustain the national social assistance scheme that the armed conflict had erupted in 2015. UNICEF introduced an HCT programme that, although run as a stand-alone project, leveraged the administrative structures of the no longer funded national scheme (such as scale, proven functioning delivery systems,

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<sup>15</sup> Such an aspiration is likely to be facilitated by the recent commitment by major United Nations agencies to work towards a common cash system (OCHA et al. 2020).

<sup>16</sup> Such an approach is also referred to as 'shadow alignment'.



human resources and effective design) without compromising humanitarian principles. A number of operational adaptations were necessary for the programme to be effective, including facilitating enrolment processes, reinforcing a payment provider, outsourcing data management functions to non-government personnel and having the programme monitored by a neutral civil society organisation accepted by all parties.

## 16.5 CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

The move to cash transfers, and related efforts to link them with national social protection systems, is one of the most significant areas of innovation in humanitarian assistance. It has profound implications that go beyond the humanitarian sphere. As international humanitarian assistance becomes increasingly provided in the form of cash transfers delivered through private financial service providers, overseen by the national social protection system or United Nations agencies,<sup>17</sup> the role of non-governmental organisations might have to evolve. New financial instruments (including, for instance, contingency funds, pooled funding, sovereign risk insurance) also need to be introduced to blend traditional humanitarian and development financial resources strategically in order to enable countries to plan for likely emergency responses rather than relying on the vagaries of humanitarian financing. Preparedness needs to evolve to prepositioning data (rather than goods), such as registries of vulnerable households or inventories of possible payment networks, in close collaboration with social protection and other development actors. The tendency towards multi-purpose cash transfers is changing the way targeting and monitoring and evaluation are approached. In a cross-sectoral approach, targeting, for instance, would be based on socioeconomic criteria, rather than, say, food security indicators alone. As social protection systems become more mature, the provision of emergency cash transfers might increasingly be discussed in connection with broader debates related to a country's choice of social protection/development model – for instance, between (discretionary) household-based targeting and categorical targeting (towards individual entitlement), or towards universal basic income.

The international community has adopted the SRSP agenda rather enthusiastically, but greater caution is needed moving forward. Such integration poses risks as well as rewards. It cannot be assumed that linking HCTs and social protection is unequivocally positive or universally applicable (Longhurst et al. 2020). While it is valuable for social protection actors to look at how covariate shocks are covered, it might not always be appropriate to use social protection for disaster response (O'Brien 2020). It might be an opportunity to build the national system, or a threat. There may be risks of overburdening what are often nascent social protection systems. However, to date, there is still limited theoretical agreement on how to determine which integration approaches, if any, are likely to be most suitable and effective in a particular context (Lowe et al. Forthcoming).

Linking HCTs and social protection remains a relatively new topic, for which the evidence base is still emerging (European Commission 2019). Only a handful of rigorous research studies have looked at what works, for whom and why in the provision of cash transfers in humanitarian settings (Brück et al. 2019). There are significant knowledge gaps on the 'how'.

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<sup>17</sup> In 2016, over two-thirds of humanitarian aid disbursed as cash transfers and vouchers came from two organisations: the World Food Programme and UNHCR (CaLP 2018).

More experiences and evidence are needed on each of the possible connection points between HCTs and social protection systems, looking at social cash transfer programmes and beyond (social services, social workers, social insurance, labour policies, etc.).

So far, the issue of linking HCTs and social protection has largely been approached from a technical standpoint, but many challenges in deciding whether and how to operate such linkages are not amenable to technical fixes. The SRSP work is as much about managing an inclusive, cross-sectoral process as achieving an outcome. It requires building trust and relationships between sets of actors who often do not know and understand each other well enough. It is about identifying entry points and negotiating compromises. As Longhurst et al. (2020, 3) emphasise, people working on that issue ‘cannot only be trained to come up with the right technical solutions but need to be equipped with the right ethical frameworks, policy acumen and analytical skills to navigate dilemmas and make informed choices about how to engage’. Applying a systemic approach, through an inclusive co-learning and creating movement, could allow hitting three targets with one shot: providing an inclusive analysis of a system; building the capacity of system actors by empowering them to find their own solutions; and resulting in immediate action. Each crisis context is different and rapidly changing, and practitioners will necessarily need to learn by analogy (Cherrier 2019a). In contexts of increasing complexity, focus needs to be on developing approaches to problems rather than seeking solutions, and promoting adaptive management.

Fundamentally, and most importantly, this agenda requires reconciling different viewpoints and translating them into constructive action. From a donor perspective, the question is how governments can be persuaded to be more inclusive; from a government standpoint, it faces disproportionate political and economic risks from being left with the bill; and from the international humanitarian agencies’ viewpoint, there might be dilemmas on how to reconcile commitments to neutrality and independence with those to respecting the primary responsibility of governments (Seyfert et al. 2019). Clarifying the nature of humanitarian needs (occasional or recurring), agreeing on shared goals over the short to medium term and redefining respective roles and responsibilities towards that vision require soft skills to steer dialogue and negotiate differences across actors. It necessitates ambition and realism (notably to avoid the premature overload of a nascent social protection system), as well as patience (in many instances, it cannot be a quick exit strategy for humanitarian actors). Further efforts are also needed to ensure local evidence and voices are brought to the table and heard (especially when humanitarian interventions are intended to lay the foundations for a national social protection system).

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