# Integrating gender equality and inclusion into social protection systems

Rebecca Holmes

## Cross-cutting GESI considerations

04 JULY 2023

# CONTENTS

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Social protection reduces both poverty and inequality. Predictable access to support, when it is needed, empowers people to navigate foreseeable and unexpected risks throughout their lives. And can help them to overcome deeply ingrained inequalities.

The Social Protection Technical Advice, Assistance and Resources Facility (STAAR) is dedicated to expanding and improving the effectiveness of investments in both gender-responsive social protection and social protection approaches in crises. Actors from national governments, donors and implementing partners are encouraged to access the Facility for free, with direct support from STAAR's independent expert roster – in the form of technical assistance, specialist advice, or bespoke resources. The facility is a joint initiative of FCDO's Better Assistance in Crises (BASIC) and Gender Responsive Social Protection (GSP) programmes (funded by UKAid).

> **The Gender-Responsive Social Protection programme (GSP)** aims to enhance outcomes for the most marginalised women and girls from social protection and gender equality programmes and policies globally. The programme has four interrelated workstreams:
>
> **Building the evidence through high quality research:** strengthening the evidence on what works to enhance results for women and girls from gender-responsive social protection. This is being delivered by UNICEF's Office of Research (OoR).
>
> **Improving the effectiveness of FCDO and partners' bilateral investments in social protection and gender (Technical Advisory Facility):** strengthening the gender focus of social protection programming and policy to enhance results for women and girls through on-demand access to expert technical advisory (TA) services. Delivered through the Social protection Technical Assistance, Advice and Resources (STAAR) Facility, by DAI.
>
> **Strengthening capacities and influencing practices on social protection and gender in the World Bank:** influencing the gender focus of a key multilateral and partner governments by partnering with the World Bank (WB) to better integrate gender equality considerations into their social protection portfolio. With FCDO support the WB has established a Gender Window in the Rapid Social Response (RSR) Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF). It is a competitive fund that provides small catalytic grants to WB teams to strengthen social protection systems in low- and middle-income countries. The Gender Window was designed to strengthen the gender-responsiveness of these social protection systems and to enable the WB to learn and drive a change in its policies and practices. FCDO part funded a Senior Gender Specialist based in the Social Protection and Jobs (SPJ) global practice.

## 1.1 Objectives of this note

This note was developed to support those working on designing and delivering social protection activities, specifically to:

» Highlight the key issues relating to gender equality and social inclusion and why it's important for social protection policy, programming and systems.

» Present best practices and ideas for integrating gender equality and social inclusion into social protection.

» Identify the ways in which technical assistance can ensure a gender and inclusion lens.

» Point to further relevant resources on gender equality, social inclusion and social protection.

# 2. KEY ISSUES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI) IN SOCIAL PROTECTION

## 2.1 What do we mean by gender-responsive and inclusive social protection?

Gender-responsive and inclusive social protection refers to social protection-related laws, policies, programmes and services that are designed and/or delivered in ways that recognise and proactively seek to overcome gendered and intersecting inequalities. Intersecting inequalities typically refer to social, economic or spatial inequalities (e.g. gender inequality, life-course risks, disability, HIV-status, civil status, indigeneity, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, geographic location etc) which result in marginalisation, discrimination or exclusion, and contribute to the persistence of extreme poverty and vulnerability. A gender-responsive and inclusive social protection approach aims to overcome and eliminate such inequalities in order to achieve equality, inclusion, rights and empowerment across the life course.

It can do this through **supporting social protection systems to be more inclusive of excluded groups** (for example, including people with a disability, indigenous peoples, LGBTIQ+ communities and other excluded groups) (e.g., **extending coverage**) and **to respond to their specific requirements through intentional programme design and implementation** (e.g., ensuring social protection **adequately** addresses needs or are part of a **comprehensive** approach to do so).

> **ⓘ** **Examples of gender-responsive and inclusive social protection:** Social protection can include initiatives which enable girls to enrol in school and reduce secondary school drop-out (and avoid coping strategies such as early marriage); enhance women's access to reproductive and maternal health care; increase women's access to employment opportunities; recognise and support women's unpaid care and domestic responsibilities; and increase women's household decision-making and bargaining power including by providing access to financial services, leadership opportunities, local women's collectives, or complementary interventions.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION ACROSS WOMEN AND GIRLS' LIVES

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

### ⬡ THE RISKS

Women and girls face specific risks, which can be exacerbated by discrimination based on other characteristics, including age, disability, race and LGBT+ Identity.

- **More girls are out of school**
- **Women have fewer economic opportunities**
- **Women and girls face higher risks of violence**
- **Women and girls have less access to adequate social protection**

**STRONG SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS** mitigate risks and advance gender equality in the contexts of poverty and crises

**SOCIAL ASSISTANCE**
Cash and in-kind transfers, fee waivers, subsidies

**SOCIAL INSURANCE**
Social security contributions, health insurance
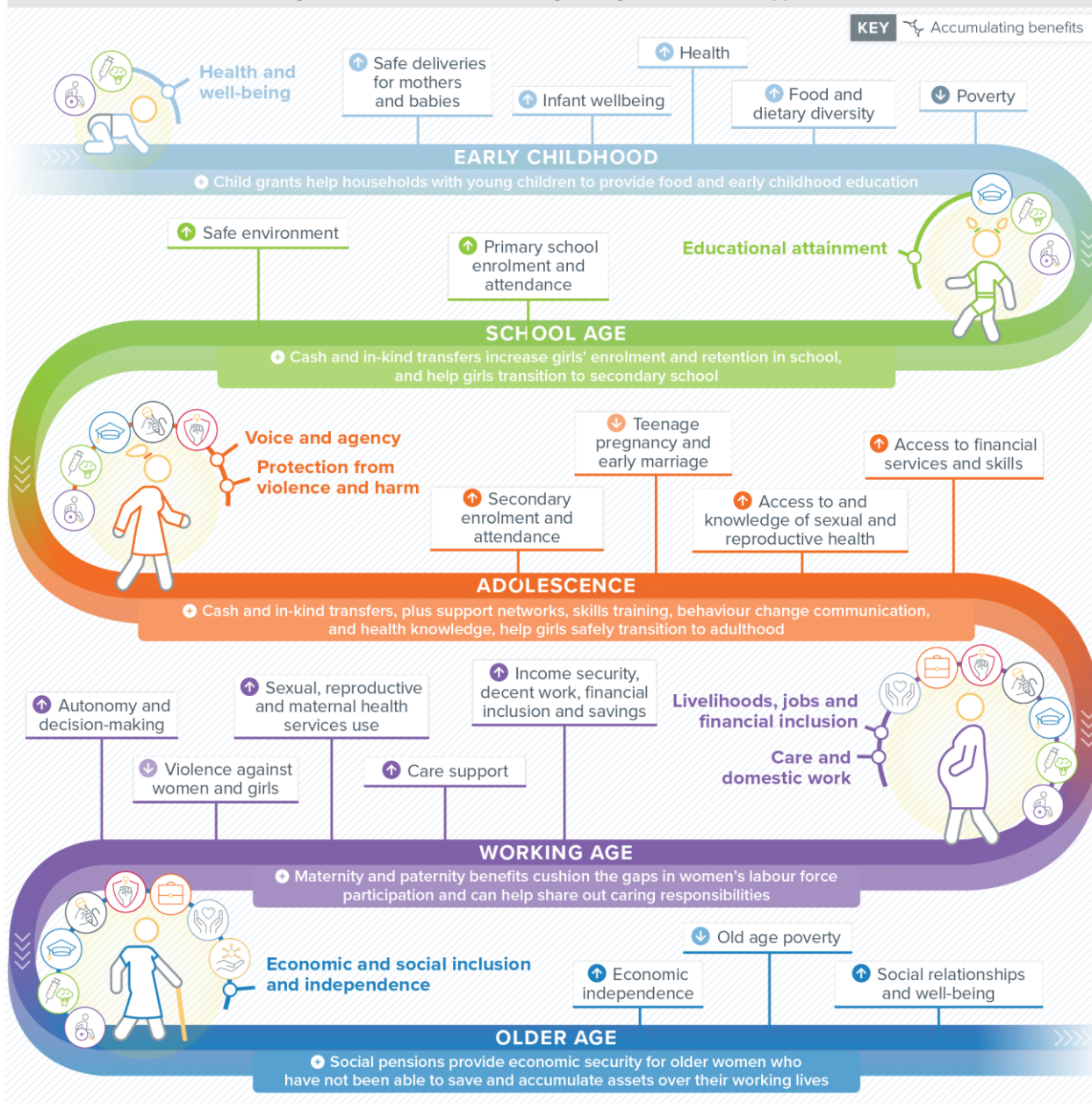
**LABOUR MARKET POLICIES**
Skills training, job search, parental benefits

**SOCIAL CARE SERVICES**
Child and adult care and support, protection services

Social protection measures can be combined with **complementary interventions** such as awareness raising, social behaviour change communication, skills training, savings, and nutrition supplements

**KEY** ⤲ Accumulating benefits

**Health and well-being**

- ⬆ Safe deliveries for mothers and babies
- ⬆ Infant wellbeing
- ⬆ Health
- ⬆ Food and dietary diversity
- ⬇ Poverty

### EARLY CHILDHOOD
⊕ Child grants help households with young children to provide food and early childhood education

- ⬆ Safe environment
- ⬆ Primary school enrolment and attendance
- **Educational attainment**

### SCHOOL AGE
⊕ Cash and in-kind transfers increase girls' enrolment and retention in school, and help girls transition to secondary school

**Voice and agency**
**Protection from violence and harm**

- ⬇ Teenage pregnancy and early marriage
- ⬆ Access to financial services and skills
- ⬆ Secondary enrolment and attendance
- ⬆ Access to and knowledge of sexual and reproductive health

### ADOLESCENCE
⊕ Cash and in-kind transfers, plus support networks, skills training, behaviour change communication, and health knowledge, help girls safely transition to adulthood

- ⬆ Autonomy and decision-making
- ⬆ Sexual, reproductive and maternal health services use
- ⬆ Income security, decent work, financial inclusion and savings
- ⬇ Violence against women and girls
- ⬆ Care support
- **Livelihoods, jobs and financial inclusion**
- **Care and domestic work**

### WORKING AGE
⊕ Maternity and paternity benefits cushion the gaps in women's labour force participation and can help share out caring responsibilities

- ⬇ Old age poverty
- ⬆ Economic independence
- ⬆ Social relationships and well-being
- **Economic and social inclusion and independence**

### OLDER AGE
⊕ Social pensions provide economic security for older women who have not been able to save and accumulate assets over their working lives

One way to understand the extent of gender integration into social protection is to consider the 'gender integration continuum' which ranges from gender discriminatory to gender transformative[1].



| Gender Discriminatory | Gender Blind | Gender Aware/Sensitive | Gender Responsive | Gender Transformative |

» At the start of the scale, **gender-discriminatory systems** may actively exclude women or **gender-blind systems** which do not consider women's and girls' gendered needs. For example, pensions which do not account for women's interrupted employment due to care responsibilities, or public works programmes unintentionally paying women less due to the type of work that participants are employed in, or transfers via mobile payments where some women are unable to access mobile phones.

» In the middle of the scale are **gender-sensitive systems** – where a programme employs a basic level of gender-sensitivity but gender concerns are not the primary objective. For example, incorporating quotas to enhance women's participation.

» **Gender-responsive systems** explicitly address women's and girls' needs. These programmes are fair and equitable in processes and outcomes. Programmes are informed by a gender analysis and respond to the challenges women face in accessing and benefitting from social protection, such as labour market interventions to increase income earning capacity among women, that provide flexible work hours, maternity/paternity benefits and interventions that support a more equal division of care work.

» At the furthest end of the scale, are **gender-transformative systems**, which aim to transform unequal gender relations and address the *structural and root causes of inequality and discrimination* through a social protection intervention (UNICEF Innocenti, 2020). This means proactively promoting change in processes, access and outcomes through deliberate design and implementation choices, enabling empowerment and transformative outcomes. For example, programmes which delay girls' marriage or support girls to continue in school or linking recipients with awareness raising activities to challenge discriminatory social norms.

## 2.2 Why is it important to integrate gender equality and inclusion into social protection systems?

**Women and girls face specific – and often heightened – risks across the course of their lives.** These risks increase the likelihood that women live in poverty, face increased vulnerability to shocks and violence, and reduce their life-time opportunities for improved socio-economic well-being. These risks also accumulate over time and persist for generations if the cycle is not broken. They are also compounded by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including disability, age, race, ethnicity, and nationality, and are exacerbated in crises contexts. For example:

» **At a young age,** girls face barriers to accessing and staying in quality education. Nearly half a billion women and girls aged 15 years and over are illiterate, and just 39% of rural girls attend secondary school[2]. Girls with disabilities are more likely to be out of school - of an estimated 58 million out-of-school children at the primary level, one-third have a disability, with girls far less likely than boys to enrol or attend school[3]. The impacts of crises also threaten progress made in girls' education: an estimated 11 million girls may not return to school after the COVID-19 pandemic[4]. Factors such as

---

[1] UNICEF Innocenti, 2020. This builds on similar distinctions in the gender and feminist literature over the years (see, for example, Molyneux, 1985; Young, 1987; Mullinax et al., 2018; Villarreal, 2014). https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/1116-gender-responsive-age-sensitive-social-protection-a-conceptual-framework.html

[2] UN - Women and Girls – Closing the Gender Gap

[3] UN Women (2017) Issue brief: Making the SDGs count for women and girls with disabilities

[4] UNESCO (2021) Girls' education and COVID-19: New factsheet shows increased inequalities for the education of adolescent girls

domestic work responsibilities, early marriage, and prevailing negative attitudes towards girls' education and life opportunities are key driving forces reducing girls' education.

»   **Adolescent girls** are at particular risk of early pregnancy, gender-based violence, marriage and secondary school drop-out. Whilst gender norms put adolescent boys more at risk of child labour, overall, they tend to have better access to training opportunities, paid employment, assets, and financial institutions. Whereas girls are almost universally disadvantaged.

»   It is estimated that 60% of **chronically hungry** people are women and girls[5]. Adolescent girls also face specific **health and nutrition** risks - they are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition problems such as anaemia, are at risk of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV, and often face limited access to family planning and reproductive health services.

»   While children and young adolescents have limited opportunities to make decisions, due to age-related hierarchies, the opportunity to express **voice and agency** tends to become more sharply gendered over the course of adolescence, and in most cases adolescent girls become increasingly disadvantaged in this regard relative to boys[6].

»   Less than 50% of **working-age women** are in the labour market. Employment rates for women with disabilities are even lower (20% compared to 53% for men)[7]. When women do work, they are more likely than men to work in precarious and informal jobs; shoulder a greater burden of unpaid care; and face interruptions and inequalities in paid work because of disproportionate care responsibilities, low skills and higher engagement in informal sectors with low pay and low or no social protection benefits (including as care and health workers).

»   In many contexts, women and girls are vulnerable to high levels of **physical, sexual and emotional violence and abuse**. One in three women will have experienced some form of gender-based violence at some point in their lives[8]. Women with disabilities are at least two to three times more likely than other women to experience violence[9], and it is estimated that one-fifth of forcibly displaced women in humanitarian crises have been subjected to sexual violence.[10]

»   These lifecycle vulnerabilities accumulate, increasing poverty and vulnerability in **old age.** Older women are more likely to have a disability than men, and their economic situation is likely worse because of disability-related reduced earning power and less access to pensions and savings during the course of their lives. Older women pay less into a pension (if at all) across their working life, have limited access to and ownership of productive assets and resources (including because of discriminatory inheritance practices favouring men) being in low paid or unpaid work, as well as limited access to quality health care. Many older women also continue to take on unremunerated care work for grandchildren.

**Social protection is an important policy tool to address these risks across the life course.** Evidence demonstrates that social protection systems which do address gendered risks across the life course can significantly improve women's and girls' opportunities and empowerment, with wider positive effects for men and boys, their families and communities[11]. **Evidence shows that social protection can support women and girls across the life course in multiple ways[12]:**

»   **Enhance resilience and reduce poverty and insecurity:** including helping families to cope with risks and recover from shocks.

»   **Support protection from violence:** Evidence shows that cash transfers are a successful mechanism to reduce intimate partner violence, and to reduce the risk of adolescent pregnancy and early marriage.

---

[5] UN Women Facts and Figures

[6] Jones and Presler-Marshall (2019) Advancing learning and innovation on Gender Norms

[7] UN Women (2017)

[8] https://www.thelancet.com/article/S0140-6736(21)02664-7/fulltext

[9] UN Women (2017)

[10] Vu et al. (2014)

[11] SPIAC-B Gender Group Joint Statement

[12] Perera et al. 2022; Jones (2021); Jones and Presler-Marshall, 2019; Buller et al., (2018); Bastagli et al., 2016

» **Address risks that girls and women face at critical points in their lives:** for example, supporting the transition so secondary school, supporting girls and women to access reproductive health services and family planning, reducing the risk of HIV transmission, supporting women's care work and participation in the labour market, access to financial services (e.g., through mobile money transfers or opening bank accounts) and increasing savings.

» **Increase access to services:** including facilitating linkages to other relevant programmes and interventions to improve women's and girls' outcomes in health and education, the labour market, justice, and protection from violence and abuse.

» **Promote women's and girls' economic empowerment, voice and agency:** for example, enabling women's and girls' access to services and empowerment opportunities over the course of their lives, improving women's access to and control over income and assets, strengthen social networks and improve women's public, economic, social and political status.

**However, there are currently significant gaps in the coverage and adequacy of social protection to support wide-spread outcomes on gender equality for the majority of women and girls who need it most.** For example:

» A recent review of 74 countries and their social protection policies found that there were **significant gaps in the extent to which strategies and programmes** acknowledged gendered risks and vulnerabilities[13].

» There is an **8-percentage point gender gap** in the coverage of comprehensive social security for working age between women and men[14]

» Despite some countries' progress towards universal or near-universal effective maternity coverage, **less than half of women with newborns worldwide receive a cash maternity benefit**[15]

» The share of **people with severe disabilities worldwide receiving disability benefits remains low**, at 33.5%, and only 9% of social protection measures announced in response to COVID-19 specifically referred to people with disabilities (ILO and UNPRPD, 2021).

» **Less than one in five global social protection measures during COVID-19 has addressed gender**, such as supporting women in informal employment, mitigating risks of violence, and confronting the unequal distribution of care work[16]

## 2.3 Operationalising the integration of GESI into social protection systems: key considerations

The gaps that remain tell us that we need to a) strengthen gender and inclusion in existing social protection systems and programmes; and b) put in place gender-responsive and inclusive preparedness plans in advance of crises. Annex 1 provides more details of the specific entry points to strengthen gender and inclusion across the social protection system (policy, design and delivery) along the following areas summarised here:

» **Extend coverage:** Extension of social protection to "hard to reach" groups, including persons with disabilities, minority groups, and ensuring women's individual entitlement to social protection in their own right.

» **Improve adequacy and comprehensiveness:** Recognise and value unpaid (and underpaid) work through social protection systems; recognise and address additional costs persons with disability face; bundle social assistance with other interventions to address social norms and protection risks; promote women's economic autonomy.

---

[13] UNICEF Innocenti (2021) Mainstreaming gender into social protection strategies and programmes
[14] ILO (2021) World Social Protection Report 2020-21.
[15] ILO (2021) ILO 2021 World Social Protection Report 2020-21.
[16] Gavrilovic et al., (2022) Gender-responsive social protection post–COVID-19

**STAAR** ⭐  **Integrating gender equality and inclusion into social protection systems**
Cross-cutting GESI considerations

UK**aid**
from the British people

» **Coordinate and build partnerships**: Build partnerships and work with specialist organisations on disability, ethnicity, age, gender equality and women's rights to inform, plan and implement gender-responsive social protection

» **Strengthen data and evidence:** Collect, analyse and report disaggregated data on the intersecting and multiple risks and inequalities that people face to inform decisions on social protection design and implementation

» **Develop inclusive systems and implementation:** Harness digital platforms; strengthen accountability mechanisms so that they are accessible to all

» **Plan and prepare for crisis response**, with clear gender-equality and inclusive objectives and strategies, alongside coordination mechanisms to engage with a coalition of national and local actor

» **Identify opportunities to support marginalised populations' rights and empowerment**, even in crisis response, including ensuring that policy choices do not undermine gender equality, and that they are embedded as part of a broader strategy supporting individuals across their life course.

# 3. CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTEGRATING GESI INTO TA ASSIGNMENTS

This section is applicable to all Technical Assistance assignments and is therefore of broader applicability and represents a useful starting point for interested and involved in such work.

It can often be overwhelming thinking about how to integrate GESI into the social protection work we do – there are multiple considerations when it comes to thinking through how gender and intersecting inequalities influence women and girls' experiences of poverty and vulnerability, how these change in different contexts, and what the entry points are for ensuring that social protection policy, design and implementation does not exacerbate inequalities, but enhances outcomes and opportunities for women and girls.

Here we focus on simplifying some of the key steps that can be taken across different TA activities to help guide a GESI approach in the work we do.

1. **Conduct a GESI context analysis**

» Understand what are the different – or heightened – risks and vulnerabilities that girls and women face in your context. Consider:

– **Risks of violence and discrimination** (violence against women and girls, intimate partner violence, forced marriage, early marriage, adolescent pregnancy, stigma associated with disability, HIV, ethnicity or religion etc. – may be heightened in crisis)

– **Limited economic opportunities** (lack of access to income opportunities, labour market participation, limited livelihood opportunities – may be more disrupted in crisis and women more likely to be out of employment/income opportunities for longer post-crisis)

– **Care economy** (how domestic and care responsibilities limit women's labour market participation, or reduce girls' attendance at school – time spent on care and domestic work may increase in times of crisis)

– **Voice and agency** (at household and community level, including control over income, decision-making and intra-household resource allocation/ spending patterns – may change in crisis)

– **Access to services (human capital):**

  i. **Specialised reproductive health needs** (access to family planning, health services – access may be disrupted in crisis)

  ii. **Education** (girls or boys not enrolled or dropping out of school – may be more disrupted in crisis and heightened risk of not returning to school after crisis)

STAAR ☆ | **Integrating gender equality and inclusion into social protection systems**
Cross-cutting GESI considerations

UK aid
from the British people

    – **Financial, technological and institutional inclusion** (ownership of bank accounts, mobile phones or internet access, civic documentation – access may be disrupted, or documentation lost in crisis)

» What are the key drivers of these differential risks? Consider structural drivers, such as discriminatory gender norms, harmful traditional practices and gender-blind laws and policies.

2. **Identify the implications of these risks for social protection policy, programme design and implementation**

After identifying the heightened or different risks that women and girls face, it is important to consider what this means for social protection in terms of policy, design and delivery. It may be useful to again consider this in terms of coverage (are women and girls excluded from social protection?), adequacy (do the social protection interventions meet these heightened or differential needs?) and comprehensiveness (if social protection can't meet these needs directly, can programmes be linked or better coordinated with gender-focused interventions?).

In the table below we take the six key risks identified above and highlight some examples to illustrate what this means for social protection in practice.

| Gendered risks | Implications for social protection |
|---|---|
| **1. Risks of violence and discrimination** | • Identify how discriminatory practices and norms impact poverty, vulnerability and livelihood opportunities to inform programme design and implementation and ensure risks are not exacerbated by the programme.<br><br>• **Considerations**: **programme design** e.g. benefit levels of cash transfers to provide incentives for girls education or to delay marriage; ensure level, type and frequency of benefits do not increase violence risks; consideration of what additional services are needed (beyond social protection)); remove **barriers to programme participation** e.g. limited mobility, stigma, lack of identification documents; design appropriate **communication strategies** (using sensitive and positive language); put **protection and safeguarding** in place for recipients and staff; ensure **accountability** mechanisms are functioning (e.g. complaints and feedback where protection issues can be reported); build **capacity of staff** on safeguarding and referrals; put in place indicators in **M&E** to monitor potential unintended risks; ensure linkages across national **policies and legislation** on gender equality, empowerment and protection.<br><br>• Identify opportunities for transformative change to discriminatory behaviours through social protection messaging, community sensitisation, linkages to complementary programmes, include M&E indicators to track changes in behaviour, attitudes and practices. |
| **2. Economic opportunities** | • Understand the challenges and barriers to women's economic participation and livelihood opportunities, and the sectors that women work in (e.g., because of low skills and literacy, care and domestic responsibilities, unequal pay, predominance of unpaid work, hazardous work etc).<br><br>• **Considerations:** ensure **programme participation** in livelihood opportunities are accessible to women, including women with disabilities – provide flexible hours, childcare options, accessible and safe locations; consider access to non-traditional jobs and in the green economy; **design –** decent pay / equal wages, skills training, market access support; extension of social protection to informal workers; policies support decent work, maternity and paternity benefits and leave, reducing pay gaps, extension of social security to informal workers. **Implementation:** consider opening bank accounts, mobile money transfers, support to access other financial services. |
| **3. Care economy** | • Understand differences in time allocations between men and women (girls and boys) including in paid work, unpaid household work and care & domestic responsibilities. Use this information to ensure that social protection programmes do not exacerbate women and girls' time poverty.<br><br>• **Considerations: programme participation** - identify (and remove) barriers to programme participation because of time constraints or domestic/care responsibilities; **design**: consider time constraints and domestic / care responsibilities when designing conditionalities for using services or work, e.g. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | offering flexible work times, part-time work, work close to home, integrating the provision of care facilities; **communications and outreach** consider timing of communication, modality if mobility from outside home is limited; **enrolment and registration, and in delivery** mechanisms – consider time, timing and distance to collection/ delivery points. |
| | • Identify opportunities to promote more equitable division of labour and caring responsibilities within the household (e.g., providing or linking to joint parenting classes, messaging on sharing domestic responsibilities, parental leave policies etc.). |
| **4. Voice and agency** | • Understand the ways in which women and girls are able (or not) to control income, their decision-making ability in the household, their participation in community and programme decision-making and planning. |
| | • **Considerations: design** - understand how household members will be able to control benefits (and whether programmes need to provide additional support such as messaging and awareness raising on women's control over income), how benefits may be allocated and distributed in the household (e.g. providing additional messaging on the intended use of benefits, shared decision-making over who takes on responsibilities for meeting conditions including work); **accountability** -assess whether household members can equally feel they can raise complaints and provide programme feedback; **support local women's rights groups** and community actors representing diverse groups to engage in social protection programming and decision-making. |
| | • Identify opportunities to promote empowerment and control over resources, including through skills training, raising confidence, through leadership opportunities in programme committees, supporting networks and collective action. |
| **5. Access to services** | • Understand the specific situations of the women and men, girls and boys, and the intersectional inequalities they face and the services they need. Consider the division of roles, responsibilities, restrictions and entitlements within households. |
| | • **Considerations**: inform **programme design** elements (type and level of benefit (e.g., higher level of benefit for people with disability, specific health needs for young children and pregnant women, adolescents, those living with HIV), **frequency and duration of benefits** to best meet needs and support access to services. |
| | • Identify what other types of additional or complementary interventions may be required, such as referrals to protection services, information or support to access sexual and reproductive health services. |
| **6. Financial, technological and institutional inclusion** | • Understand how access to (and control over) financial services, technology and documentation is different between men and women (and across age, disability) to inform (and remove) potential **barriers to participation** (e.g. lack of access to online enrolment and registration procedures); design appropriate **delivery mechanisms** (e.g. providing alternative payment options if limited access to banks because of mobility or non-accessible infrastructure for older persons or persons with disability; where there is, lack of bank accounts, or lack of access to or ownership of mobile phones for e-payments provide handsets, training etc; consider alternative documentation requirements). |

ⓘ **Identifying skills and knowledge of population groups:** Whilst recognising the risks and vulnerabilities that diverse women and girls face, it is also important to emphasise their existing knowledge, skills sets and expertise, and to find ways that social protection systems can support this. For example, by identifying, using and valuing the social and cultural skills and knowledge that programme recipients and communities have, bringing them into programme planning, design and implementation through programme participation and governance committees, particularly supporting the voice of those who are often most marginalised and excluded. And, by providing opportunities through social protection programmes to enhance the social and cultural skills, leadership and knowledge of programme recipients and communities.

3. **Consulting and engaging with gender-focused organisations throughout the TA assignment**

Consult with key stakeholders in country to identify the GESI-related needs and inform the context analysis. Also include GESI-focused organisations in dissemination plans, including considering how to encourage coordination/lesson sharing between GESI-focused organisations and social protection actors.

Key stakeholders are likely to include (but not limited to):

» Women's rights organisations (WROs), organisations of people with disability (OPDs), local gender focused and other relevant representative organisations (ethnicity, youth etc), including community and member-based organisations.

» NGOs such as IRC, WRC, ActionAid, CARE and the NGO Working Group on women, peace and security

» International agencies such as UN Women, UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank

» Gender experts / protection specialists within the client organisation

# 4. FURTHER RESOURCES

» For the most recent evidence on gender-responsive social protection see UNICEF Innocenti's Impact of social protection on gender equality in low- and middle-income countries: **A systematic review of reviews**

» For a collection of recent resources, news and webinars on gender and social protection see the **database of resources** on gender-responsive social protection hosted on socialprotection.org

» For a **comprehensive overview** of social protection, including chapters on gender and across the life course, see the Handbook on Social Protection Systems

» For guidance on how to leverage social safety nets to prevent gender-based violence, see the World Bank's operational manual.

» For social protection and **disability**, see Disability - Social Protection - Inclusion: Dialogue for change

» For further reading on the gaps and opportunities for improving diverse **SOGIESC** inclusion in cash transfer and social protection programmes, see the report "We Don't Do A Lot For Them Specifically"

# ANNEX 1: ENTRY POINTS FOR STRENGTHENING GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION THOUGH SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS – POLICY, DESIGN AND DELIVERY

| Stage in the policy / programme cycle | Objectives and essential actions |
|---|---|
| **Policy** | |
| **Legal and policy framework** | Objective: An enabling legal and policy framework to support gender equality and transformative objectives within social protection policies and programmes<br><br>• Use evidence on gendered risks and vulnerabilities across the life course to inform social protection and integrate gender concerns<br>• Collaborate and advocate with gender-focused partners for an enabling gender-responsive legal and policy environment<br>• Support the representation of gender-responsive organisations at policy discussions<br>• Make evidence-based strategic policy linkages on the role of social protection supporting gender equality and rights in other sector relevant sectoral or national strategies (e.g. education, health, disaster reduction, gender, protection, climate, livelihoods) |
| **Financing** | Objective: Invest in financing gender-responsive social protection systems, to extend coverage and improve adequacy to respond to women and girls' risks across the life course<br><br>• Conduct evidence-based budget analysis or cost estimations to identify the allocation of resources needed and value for money for reaching women and girls, tailoring programmes to respond to gendered risks across the life course, and invest in adequate monitoring, data collection and analysis<br>• Allocate multi-year, predictable and long-term funding flows to allow for longer-term planning for structured and sustainable programmes to benefit women and girls longer-term outcomes |
| **Governance and coordination** | Objective: Promote good governance and effective coordination mechanisms between social protection and gender actors at national and sub-national levels<br><br>• Identify clear objectives on gender-responsive social protection and prioritise specific sectors to coordinate with<br>• Promote partnerships with gender-responsive organisations, ensuring participation and representation of diverse groups – local actors, community members – at national and sub-national coordination forums<br>• Establish coordination mechanisms with clear ToRs and allocation of responsibility for promoting gender-responsive social protection<br>• Establish or strengthen networks on gender-responsive social protection |
| **Functional and technical capacity** | Objective: Build the capacity of governments and partners to design and deliver gender-responsive social protection systems, and provide linkages to complementary services and programmes<br><br>• Strengthen organisational and institutional capacities and processes to integrate gender equality in social protection programmes and systems<br>• Identify individual capacity gaps and needs within the programme staff and partners on gender equality (e.g. from monitoring, data collectors, programme design, implementation, and evaluators)<br>• Provide capacity support to government leaders, technical and administrative staff and partners on gender equality (through training, coaching and mentoring, communities of practice, knowledge exchange)<br>• Develop multi-disciplinary teams, include participatory processes, and bring in local gender equality and inclusion experts to policy and programme design and implementation |

STAAR ☆ | **Integrating gender equality and inclusion into social protection systems**
Cross-cutting GESI considerations

UK**aid**
from the British people

|  |  |
|---|---|
|  | • Establish a culture of knowledge sharing on equality and inclusion, and reward staff who promote gender equality and empowerment in their work<br>• Support local, national, and international women's rights organisations and movements to articulate demand for improved design and delivery of social protection for all women and girls, and to strengthen accountability. |
| **Programme design** | |
| **Gender and age poverty and vulnerability assessments** | Objectives: Understand gender (and intersectional) inequalities, risks and vulnerabilities across the life course to inform social protection design and implementation<br><br>• Collect and analyse disaggregated data and their intersections (e.g. sex, age, disability, ethnicity, citizenship status, geography) to identify needs, priorities and capacities to inform programme design and implementation<br>• Ask specific questions to understand people's experiences of power relations (household, community levels) and social and gendered norms which drive poverty, vulnerability and exclusion, resilience, and pathways to empowerment<br>• Conduct stakeholder / institutional mapping at community, sub-national and national levels to identify organisations, individuals and practices that can be key allies supportive of gender-responsive social protection (and conversely the barriers / challenges to overcome)<br>• Intentionally observe the needs of those who may be the least visible in existing surveys and statistics (e.g. LGBTQI populations, domestic or home based workers, stateless people)<br>• Use participatory research methods to understand the needs, experiences and personal accounts of poverty, vulnerability, exclusion, resilience and pathways to empowerment<br>• Ensure multi-disciplinary teams to collect and analyse data, with skills in social protection, gender equality and diversity. Some assessments may need to be carried out by specialised staff, for example assessment of needs related to specific disability conditions, protection assessments. |
| **Eligibility criteria and qualifying conditions** | Objectives: Eligibility criteria is gender-sensitive, progressively moving towards universal provision of benefits, and actively reaching the target population related to the objectives of the programme<br><br>• Develop strategies for identifying and minimising inclusion and exclusion errors of women and girls<br>• Pay attention to the needs of individuals who are less visible in statistics or assessments, or when using household or individual eligibility criteria<br>• Carefully consider the implications of targeting households versus individuals. Assess the options for targeting women in households and implement actions to avoid potential negative effects of targeting, such as intrahousehold conflict or adding to women's unpaid labour responsibilities<br>• Consider the use of gender quotas for women's participation labour market programmes |
| **Benefit type, level/value, frequency and duration** | Objectives: The programme design responds to gender-specific risks across the life course within its core programme paramaters<br><br>• Programme design is informed by the gendered poverty and vulnerability context analysis above. Ensure a clear theory of change reflects the key design features chosen and integrates gender risks across the programme<br>• Larger-size transfers can have important benefits for individuals, especially given higher costs associated with disability or HIV-health needs, specific nutritional requirements over the life course (e.g. adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women), supporting girls' education<br>• Provide regular and predictable benefits<br>• Consider a broad defintion of work in public works programmes, and consider developing assets and community goods and services which benefit women and girls (for example, accessible services, reducing time burdens etc). Support women and youth to enter into non-traditional occupations by providing skills and training in higher-value sectors |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • Ensure that programmes are designed to consider women's childcare and domestic responsibilities, allowing flexibility in participation times, providing (or facilitating access to) quality childcare services<br>• Consider the effects of household size and composition on the value of the benefit transferred<br>• Assess and monitor how the design of the programme addresses (or may create or exacerbate) protection risks. Put in place a protection strategy to prevent risks.<br>• Consider how the intervention contributes to long-term objectives of gender norm change and transformation. |
| **Benefits services package, linkages and referrals** | Objectives: Create complementary linkages and services to address multiple-dimensions of gendered poverty and vulnerability across the life course<br>• Assess and map the availability of relevant additional services and interventions to support gender equality and empowerment for women and girls, such as basic or specialised services, behaviour change communication programmes, financial services, insurance, skills training etc. Consider relevant programmes that promote economic opportunities and empowerment (childcare services, economic / financial training, skills development, access to financial services etc), that address drivers of social inequalities (gender-based violence, protection risks, supporting transitions to adulthood)<br>• Establish / develop linkages with complementary programmes and services, consider, for example: information sharing on availability of services; facilitating access through waiving fees, automatic enrolment etc; integrating programmes with the social assistance programme |
| **Programme delivery** | |
| **Information systems** | Objectives: Develop inclusive information systems, proactively collecting relevant data and supporting interoperable systems across sectors to enable more comprehensive and transformative approaches supporting gender equitable outcomes<br>• Collect minimum but relevant data necessary for the information system to reduce exclusion and to respond to specific requirements and needs – collect disaggregated data at individual level not just at the household<br>• Develop interoperable information systems to provide linkages to complementary services and programmes, and to increase efficiency in enrolment processes |
| **Outreach and communication** | Objectives: Key information about the programme is clearly communicated and accessible to all, including eligibility criteria, enrolment processes, benefits, and expectations (dignity, rights, entitlements, behaviour). Communication strategies are tailored to reach specific groups / individuals where required taking into consideration differences in men and women's preferences and access to information<br>• Communicate relevant programme information: programme details and entitlements, delivery systems and process, rights responsibilities, protection and safeguarding, address socio-cultural constraints (perceptions of trust, fear)<br>• Use proactive, accessible and gender-sensitive communication tools. Use multiple communication channels, direct and community-based outreach, via intermediaries and indirect outreach, informal mechanisms which are known to reach women<br>• Proactively reach out and tailor communications to hard to reach groups (remote or marginalised contexts), use inclusive and accessible language to reach diverse individuals and groups<br>• Develop community engagement strategies based on participatory techniques<br>• Consider promoting awareness-raising campaigns on equitable, inclusive and transformative transfers to communities, inform the entire community of entitlements and encourage them to support individuals at risk of exclusion and marginalisation, explicitly engage men and boys in community sensitisation |
| **Registration and enrolment** | Objectives: Reduce gender-specific barriers to registration and enrolment, ensure processes are inclusive of the hard to reach and uphold the dignity and rights of recipients<br>• Ease the burden and simplify application and registration processes through offering a choice, reducing administrative burdens on recipients (including time and costs), ensuring user-friendly online systems, engaging communities |

- Support administrative requirements where needed, for example, national identity documents, disability or medical certificates.
- Ensure the application, registration and enrolment processes are rights-based and dignified. Train interviewers and build respect and rapport with beneficiaries, ensure data protection and consent, design culturally-sensitive interview guides, build trust with the service provider
- Consider gender-specific barriers, including social norms and gender dynamics, access to mobile phones, bank accounts, physical safety and transportation, literacy rates, lack of access to official documentation information in applying for social protection programmes and benefits.

| Provision of benefits | Objectives: Programme benefits are delivered in gender-sensitive ways, tailoring modalities to specific contexts and ensuring equal access (and control over) benefits |
|---|---|
| | • Identify the gender-specific barriers to accessing benefits (time, technology, safety etc) |
| | • Combine and tailor multiple strategies to accommodate individuals and groups facing unequal access to benefit modalities |
| | • Provide collection / pay-point services close to where recipients, distribute benefits to those who are unable to travel. Reduce opportunity costs and travel times in the collection of benefits. |
| | • Allow flexibility in payment schedules to accommodate paid, unpaid and domestic responsibilities |
| | • Assess the safety and security of distribution / collection points for recipients and implementation staff and partners |
| | • Employ diversity of individuals as programme implementers who could be more effective in reaching hard to reach groups and bring about additional benefits (employment opportunities, public visibility, relevant insights to improve service delivery). Remunerate fairly |
| | • For digital payments, identify where mobile access / ownership is low, employ strategies to respond to this (combining mechanisms, providing technology, providing training etc). |
| Accountability | Objectives: Programmes are accountable to the population. Accessible complaints and feedback mechanisms are available to all. |
| | • Ensure safe and accessible complaints and feedback mechanisms are functioning |
| | • Promote the active participation of individuals and groups in the complaints and feedback mechanisms: identify obstacles to having women's voices heard, ensure equal representation in committees, include diverse representation in social and gender audits, ensure multiple mechanisms are available to lodge complaints, including helpdesks, call centres, apps |
| | • Document, analyse and respond to feedback, addressing needs and risks faced |
| | • Design accountability mechanisms to identify protection-related concerns, including referrals |
| Monitoring and evaluation | Objectives: Monitor and evaluate programme outcomes and processes to assess and improve gender-equitable outcomes for diverse populations |
| | • Collect and analyse gender and age disaggregated data in monitoring and evaluation at a minimum |
| | • Include inclusive-related indicators in data analytics and insight platforms |
| | • Commission joint evaluations with gender specialists and include intersectional analyses to feed back into programme design |
| | • Promote a culture of sharing within programmes / institutions and cross- agency on lessons learnt. Generate ideas and positively influence gender and transformation in national social protection programme design and delivery |

Published by STAAR, on behalf of FCDO.