



*A 4-day learning event  
to delve into  
cutting-edge issues*

EC Staff Seminar

## **Social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus**

23-26 October 2017  
Manos Conference Centre, Brussels

### **What to expect from this EC Staff Seminar**

#### **Rationale**

Social protection is the set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing or protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion throughout their lifecycles, with a particular emphasis towards vulnerable groups. Common social protection instruments include social assistance (usually social cash transfers), social insurance (such as pensions and provident funds), and active labour market interventions aimed at helping people find employment/earn income (such as training or micro-credit) and price subsidies.

Experience from a number of fragile and conflict-affected countries is showing that social protection has considerable potential to support recovery, resilience and livelihoods among the people who are most affected. In these contexts, recurring shocks and stresses affect a large share of the population and put considerable strain on, or overwhelm, already inadequate systems. In situations of crisis, donor-funded, NGO humanitarian assistance fill the gap.

Social protection and humanitarian assistance have traditionally been provided independently of one another, sometimes to the same populations. While this may work in the short-term, the challenge is to establish how humanitarian and development assistance can be better integrated in such a way as to strengthen national social protection systems, build resilience and mitigate shocks. There is now growing recognition that continuing to work in parallel structures is often not only inefficient and counterproductive, but that there are in fact multiple areas of complementarity between these two approaches.

While the agenda around building national social protection systems has largely been developmental in nature, there is now a clear consensus that the humanitarian community could play an important role in aligning with and complementing these efforts where appropriate and consistent with humanitarian principles. The EC reiterated its commitment to better **work with social protection systems and approaches as an effective short and long-term response to multivariate shocks, protracted (food/humanitarian) crises and forced displacement** during the [International conference on Social protection in contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement](#) held in Brussels on 28-29 September 2017. This EC Staff Seminar fits into global efforts towards ensuring basic social protection for all.

#### **Target audience**

The seminar is aimed at DEVCO, ECHO and NEAR staff, both in Delegations/ECHO Country Offices and Headquarters, working on policy and programmatic responses to protracted (food) crises, measures for resilience building and/or social protection in fragile and conflict-affected environments and in context of forced displacement.

## Learning objectives

This event is *not* a basic course on social protection, nor is it a basic course on humanitarian cash transfer programming. The specific theme of the event is a **cutting-edge topic**, for which the evidence base is still emerging. Building on the emerging field of knowledge and practice, the seminar will focus on two specific questions:

- How to work with social protection systems and approaches to prepare for, mitigate, respond to and recover from crises;
- How humanitarian interventions can contribute over the long-term to the progressive building of sustainable national social protection systems, which in turn can contribute to mitigating future shocks and building the resilience of populations to withstand future shocks and creating an exit strategy for humanitarian interventions.

The staff seminar is to help participants:

- Comprehend the issue from both perspectives (with humanitarian and development lenses);
- Take social protection approaches and systems on board in their analysis and definition of strategies;
- Advocate for the issue internally and externally;
- Reinforce collaboration between EU services in order to identify and exploit potential mutual synergies in building, improving and using social protection measures across the humanitarian-development divide;
- Provide feedback and guidance on what technical resources are required for the upcoming EC Guidance Package on Social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus.

## Approach for collective learning

Making use of social protection approaches and systems in humanitarian contexts raises many complex questions for which we need to collectively build knowledge. This experiential and practical course will bring together EU staff working in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance to learn about and explore what this looks, or may look, like in practice.

The seminar will focus on a synthesis of the latest research and a selection of case studies. These case studies will provide a key resource for enquiry, dialogue and learning, alongside participants' own experience, and the specific issues they wish to work on. As such the discussions and learning during the staff seminar will be actively contributing to our understanding of the interaction between social protection and humanitarian action across the EC and how to improve the provision of assistance in fragile environments.

It is a participatory learning event exploring the specific challenges and opportunities associated with the use of social protection approaches in humanitarian contexts, based on the study of real-life cases, promising practices, and emerging evidence. The seminar presents an opportunity to bring together the perspectives and experience of humanitarian and development practitioners from across the EC to share learning and generate new ideas and approaches.

## Acknowledgements

This learning event is part of a broader initiative jointly led by DEVCO B3 ([Juergen.Hohmann@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Juergen.Hohmann@ec.europa.eu)), DEVCO C1 ([Helene.Quentrec@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Helene.Quentrec@ec.europa.eu)) and ECHO B1 ([Montserrat.Pantaleoni-Giralt1@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Montserrat.Pantaleoni-Giralt1@ec.europa.eu)) aimed at developing a common Guidance Package on Social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus. The implementation of this initiative is supported by the Methodological and Knowledge Sharing (MKS) programme ([Lukas.Hahnel@mksp.eu](mailto:Lukas.Hahnel@mksp.eu)) and the ASiST advisory service ([Cecile.Cherrier@asist.support](mailto:Cecile.Cherrier@asist.support)). The expert team involved in the preparation and facilitation of the EC Staff Seminar is composed of Georgia Rowe, Gaby Smith, Matt Hobson, Isobel McConnan, Cécile Cherrier and Zena Mouawad. For more information, please consult the [end-of-phase-1 report](#), and join the dedicated restricted group on [capacity4dev](#) and the public group on [socialprotection.org](#).