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United Nations Development Programme

**LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND:**  
A SOCIAL PROTECTION PRIMER FOR PRACTITIONERS



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## FOREWORD

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is about balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental. Underlying the Agenda is the powerful commitment to leave no one behind and to reach those farthest behind first.

The level of ambition of Agenda 2030 points to a paradigmatic shift—an aspiration to improve the lives of every single person in the world. The eradication of poverty entails going beyond a narrow focus on providing individuals with the specific needs they lack, towards a systemic view that aims to remove the structural drivers that prevent individuals from living the lives they value. This shift requires looking at development policy in a different light and focusing on tools that advance people's well-being by tackling the interconnected issues that result in poverty and deprivations.

Social protection systems that are inclusive and risk-sensitive can be a powerful tool to fulfil this commitment. By advancing human rights and tackling inequalities, exclusion, vulnerability and deprivations, social protection is a means to reach those left furthest behind. The experience with the MDGs has shown that growth alone cannot guarantee the eradication of poverty and reduction in inequalities. Even when growth lifts the incomes of millions of people, it does not necessarily lift all incomes, particularly those of the poorest, unless explicit policies are implemented with this aim. It is now evident that poverty reduction efforts are not likely to be sustainable unless the underlying drivers of poverty such as exclusion and vulnerability are tackled.

The momentum for expanding social protection has been building in recent years. In 2009, the UN System's Chief Executive Board for Co-ordination (CEB) launched the Social Protection Floor initiative, which was endorsed by member states in the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development. The commitment to social protection is also embedded in the SDGs, not only as a specific target (Target 1.3) which calls for the "implementation of nationally-appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including social protection floors", but also as a feature in Goals 3, 5 and 10. In addition social protection is one of the pillars of decent work and is therefore featured in Goal 8, and more specifically Target 8.5.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda also includes a commitment to delivering social protection and essential public services for all. The "new social compact" calls for the provision of "fiscally sustainable and nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, with a focus on those furthest below the poverty line and the vulnerable, persons with disabilities, indigenous persons, children, youth and older persons."<sup>1</sup> The 2015 Human Development Report recognizes extending social protection as key policy strategy for enhancing human development through work.

UNDP has been an important partner to national and local governments in efforts to articulate and implement social protection for sustainable development. The cross-sectoral scope of UNDP's work has positioned it as a key player in advancing policy dialogues concerning social protection, generating evidence and bringing together relevant partners. UNDP has also played an important part in extending social protection programmes, reforming them, fostering innovation, transferring know-how across countries, and working closely with traditionally excluded communities to ensure that their voices are represented and their needs addressed. As the UN's lead agency for sustainable development, UNDP is also well placed to support countries in integrating environmental sustainability policies into social protection.

1 United Nations, 2015. Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda). Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 July 2015. Paragraph 12.



This Primer is intended to provide UNDP Country Offices, programme staff and relevant partners with a practical resource on ways to strengthen social protection to address the systemic and interlinked objectives of the Sustainable Development Agenda. It articulates and highlights some lessons learned from the countries that are leading the way in thinking about social protection in the context of sustainable development. Ensuring that no one is left behind is not just about transferring resources that push people above the poverty line, it is also about ensuring that people have the freedom, opportunities and access to live the lives they value. Social protection, when designed and implemented from a social inclusion perspective, is an important means to fulfil this commitment.



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# INTRODUCTION

“**Agenda 2030 is ambitious and achievable. It is integrated and universal. It recognizes that poverty and hunger have complex and interconnected root causes. We made our promise. Now it is time for action.**”

**Secretary General Ban Ki-moon  
Opening Ceremony for World Food  
Day at Milan Expo**





## 1.1 Why a Social Protection Primer for Leaving No One Behind?

Social protection has gained significant traction around the world. A wide body of evidence in the past few decades strongly suggests that social protection programmes can be effective tools to reduce poverty and inequality, increase human capital and protect men, women, girls and boys from risks. The combination of this growing evidence base, and growing political will, has stimulated an appetite for implementing social protection programmes in virtually every country around the world.

UNDP has been a key player in assisting governments in developing countries in designing and implementing social protection programmes and projects. As this note was being finalized in 2016, roughly 133 UNDP projects in more than 50 countries were related to social protection.<sup>2</sup>

However, there is much more to be done in terms of social protection. Across the board, social protection programmes in place are not enough. Certain groups are systematically left behind. Gender stereotypes and traditional roles are either left intact or reinforced. Too often there is no continuation of protection across the life cycle of individuals. Programmes are fragmented. The design and implementation of programmes does not take account of the changing environment and its environmental impacts. The underlying and structural drivers of deprivations, including social norms, institutions, and agency, are often left unchanged. Funding is limited and recurrently cut in times of economic contraction.

Traditionally, social protection has been conceptualized as a poverty reduction strategy focused on fulfilling the unmet material needs, such as income, health and education, of individuals and households. This approach emphasizes the individual characteristics and circumstances of men and women as the drivers of deprivation, and often ignores other interlinked and reinforcing patterns, such as social norms, institutions and environmental factors, which produce deprivations and exclusion.

Sustainable development is a multidimensional concept that encompasses social, economic and environmental dimensions, and strives for social inclusion and the removal of barriers for individuals to achieve the life they value.<sup>3</sup> In that sense, it focuses on both the individual characteristics and the structural constraints that drive the deprivations faced by women, men, girls and boys. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a paradigm shift in how we think and act towards development. It is a shared vision for humanity and the basis of a new social contract where no one is left behind, and the furthest behind are reached first. This requires breaking out of the silos in the way we approach development and moving beyond singular thematic approaches. It also requires strengthening the relationship between duty bearers and rights-holders.

As the world aligns national priorities with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we have an unprecedented opportunity to position social protection not only as a specific target (Target 1.3), and as a feature in Goals 3, 5 and 10, but as a critical tool to simultaneously achieve progress in many fundamentally interlinked Goals and Targets. In addition, social protection is one of the pillars of decent work and is therefore featured in Goal 8, and more specifically Target 8.5.

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2 UNDP 2016.

3 Social exclusion is defined as the “denial of full personhood and full citizenship to certain groups on the basis of who they are, where they live, or what they believe.” (Kabeer 2010)

**FIGURE 1.1 SOCIAL PROTECTION AS FEATURED IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**



**1.3**

Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable



**10.4**

Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality



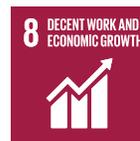
**3.8**

Achieve universal health care coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all



**5.4**

Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate



**8.5**

By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

Source: UN 2015.

Aligning social protection to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda implies thinking about social protection from an equity perspective, as a tool that has the potential simultaneously to address many drivers of exclusion and deprivation. If designed and conceptualized in this manner, social protection will not only directly contribute to SDG 1, but will also contribute to the agenda as a whole.



9



## FIGURE 1.2 SAMPLE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION'S IMPACT ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL <sup>4 5 6</sup>

**1** Social protection accounts for an 8 per cent decrease in the poverty headcount ratio, and a 15 per cent decrease in the poverty gap. (World Bank 2015b).

South Africa's non-contributory grants have reduced the poverty gap by more than one-third (ILO 2015b).



**8** An estimated US\$1.08 -US\$2.52 for each cash transfer dollar spills over into the local economy because beneficiaries invest in their livelihoods. In Nicaragua, Mexico and Zambia, beneficiaries of transfers, feeding programmes or fee waivers are more likely to start up micro enterprises. Cash transfers can also contribute to financial inclusion.

Cash transfers, when designed appropriately, can contribute to financial inclusion. The New America Foundation which tracks 84 social protection programmes in 43 countries-found that 64 per cent of cash transfers enabled savings by providing access to a bank account, while 27 per cent of cash transfers actively encouraged savings.<sup>4</sup>



**2** Households receiving transfers average significantly higher spending on and consumption of food. The impact of cash transfers on hunger has been most pronounced in lower-income countries (LICs)

where poverty is generally more severe. In these settings, households receiving additional income are particularly likely to prioritize spending on improving the quantity and or/quality of food consumed (DFID 2011).



**10** The correlation between public social protection expenditure and inequality (Gini coefficient) is strong ( $R^2 = 0.3893$ )<sup>5</sup>.



Brazil's *Bolsa Familia* Programme is estimated to be responsible for 16 per cent of income inequality reduction in the country between 1999 and 2009.

**3** In Rwanda, following the introduction of CBHI, utilization of health care increased from 31 per cent in 2003 to 107 per cent in 2012.<sup>3</sup> Pregnant women in Peru, enrolled in cash transfer, are more likely to have doctor-assisted deliveries.



**13** The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) list of "permissible" works include conservation of water, groundwater recharge, reduced soil erosion, increased soil fertility, conservation of biodiversity, reclamation of degraded crop and grazing lands, enhanced leaf manure, fuel wood and non-wood forest products supply among others.



**4** Beneficiaries of Mexico's *Progresa* had higher school enrolment, less grade repetition and better grade progression, lower dropout rates, and higher school re-entry rates among dropouts, particularly in rural areas.



**15** Brazil's *Bolsa Verde* programme provided additional income to 73,000 Brazilian families in end of 2014 in exchange for maintenance and sustainable use of natural resources improving both forest health and economic conditions.



**5** In Brazil, the labour participation rate of women beneficiaries from *Bolsa Familia* is 16 per cent greater than for women in similar non-participating households. Other social protection and reforms can have an impact on gender equality, such as the introduction of maternity/paternity benefits, the development of long term care systems, the uniformization of retirement age, etc.



**16** The Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) cash transfer scheme in northern Kenya was successful in introducing rights education and enhancing the ability of community groups to claim priority public services.

The MGNREGS public works programme in India established a rights-based framework to enable citizens to claim their rights to employment and social protection.



Sources: World Bank 2015b; Barrientos and Niño-Zarazúa 2011; Slater, Holmes and Mathers 2014; GIZ 2013.

4 ILO 2016b.  
5 Ravi and Tosh 2012.  
6 ILO 2015b.

The challenge, and what this primer hopes to address, is articulating how social protection can play a transformative role in supporting the achievement of well-being for all, going beyond individual characteristics and averages to address the structural constraints that hinder progress towards sustainable development. This includes social protection that recognizes that the causes of deprivation do not lie solely within the individual, but rather are part of established social norms. The need is for social protection that looks beyond providing for specific lacks, and considers how to remove barriers for women, men, girls, and boys, to overcome the constraints that limit their well-being in a systemic way. The primer also aims to articulate how to achieve greater coherence among economic, environmental and social objectives by means of social protection systems.<sup>7</sup>

**The primer's key objective is to provide UNDP Country Offices, programme staff and relevant partners with a practical resource on ways to strengthen social protection to address the systemic and interlinked objectives of the sustainable development agenda.** It articulates and highlights some lessons learned from the countries that are leading the way in thinking about social protection in the context of sustainable development. Also, it aims to provide general, and useful, guidance on how to embed social protection as an effective and efficient tool for sustainable development into governments' priorities and programmes.

The primer emphasizes six guiding principles for social protection: ensure protection and promotion of human rights; promote non-discrimination; foster gender equality and women's empowerment; be risk-informed and sensitive to environmental concerns; provide a continuum of protection; and promote universality. It also provides a common understanding of how to position social protection in the context of sustainable development.

Readers will find information on the definitions and conceptualization of social protection; why UNDP is a key actor in providing technical assistance for social protection; UNDP's offerings in this area; and more in-depth analysis of what it takes to move towards social protection that is systemic, inclusive and linked to efforts to improve environmental sustainability. It includes good practices for different types of interventions, country contexts, themes and target groups, as well as the current thinking of specialists and practitioners on the role of social protection in the broader sustainable development agenda.

This primer is not a guidance note on how to design and implement specific social protection programmes (e.g. cash transfers or cash-for-work), or administrative systems (e.g. a single beneficiary registry). Fortunately, numerous such guides of excellent quality, developed both by UNDP and others, already exist and are listed in the references section (Annex 3).<sup>8</sup>

## 1.2 Who is this Primer for? Where would it be useful?

This primer is for managers and programme staff at UNDP Country Offices working in areas related to social protection, employment and livelihoods, gender or other areas where social protection can provide a useful framework to organize government actions around national development objectives comprehending the SDGs. It is also intended for policy advisers at UNDP regional centres and headquarters as well as all relevant partners involved in the design, implementation and expansion of social protection programmes at the country level. These include national and local government partners, civil society organizations, UN agencies, donors and the private sector.

This primer will be most useful for providing advice and technical assistance in countries looking to use social protection as a policy for sustainable development. The alignment of country development plans with the SDGs will provide an effective mechanism for anchoring social protection in the development agenda and for the advancement of social protection systems.

This primer will help readers understand social protection. Why is it necessary and critical in the process of SDG implementation? What are some of the challenges of implementing and scaling up social protection? What is UNDP's comparative advantage in this area and what can it do in your country? How can you design and implement systemic, inclusive and environmentally sensitive social protection? It also provides guidance on funding and raising resources for social protection.

7 Devereux and McGregor 2014.

8 For a set of practical tools that help countries improve their social protection system by analyzing its strengths and weaknesses and offering options for further action, please visit [www.ispatools.org](http://www.ispatools.org).

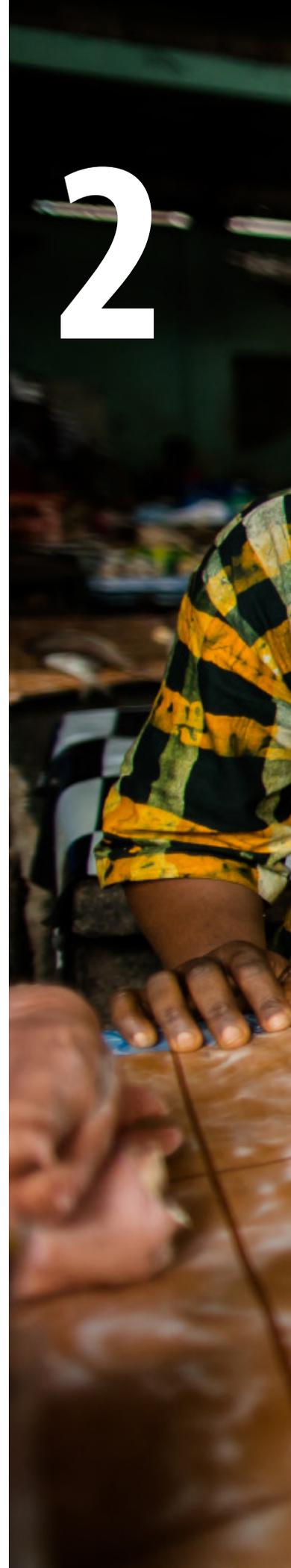


# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

## Approach and Guiding Principles of Social Protection for Leaving No One Behind

**This primer defines social protection as a set of nationally owned policies and instruments that provide income support and facilitate access to goods and services by all households and individuals at least at minimally accepted levels, to protect them from deprivation and social exclusion, particularly during periods of insufficient income, incapacity or inability to work**

# 2





## 2.1 What is social protection?

Traditionally a concern of industrialized economies, in the past few decades, and in particular as a result of the financial crises of 2008, social protection has emerged as a critical tool to improve the lives of people, including the poorest and most marginalized across the world, and as a means to mitigate the effects of crises and shocks. Today, every country in the world has at least some form of social protection.

The concept of social protection is blurred around the edges, and there is a great deal of variation in its vision, objectives, approach, composition, and implementation. Different schools of thought exist and their views on social protection are the subject of long debates and a rich body of literature.

Various agencies and organizations use differing organizing concepts to define social protection. Some definitions of social protection focus on its building blocks, and define it as the aggregate of contributory, non-contributory, and labour market programmes, or alternatively social assistance and social insurance.<sup>9</sup> Others define it in terms of its purpose or developmental goals, such as poverty reduction or the protection of vulnerable individuals. Still others focus on the ways it moves individuals closer to developmental goals, commonly referred to as protection, promotion, prevention and transformation.<sup>10</sup> Approaches vary in terms of rationale (poverty reduction versus risk prevention), scope (universal versus target groups), or preferred social protection measures. The common factor in all these definitions is that social protection provides a policy framework to address (prevent and reduce) poverty and vulnerability.

**TABLE 2.1 SOME DEFINITIONS OF SOCIAL PROTECTION FROM AGENCIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Agency	Definition	Source
<b>ILO</b>	ILO refers to social protection as a right (Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). “Social protection” is always seen as a system, all measures providing benefits, whether in cash or in kind, contributory or non-contributory, to secure protection across the lifecycle from lack of income caused by sickness, disability, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, old age, or death of a family member. Social protection systems include child and family allowances, maternity benefits, support for those without jobs, employment injury insurance, disability benefits and old-age pensions.	World Social Protection Report 2014/2015.
<b>World Bank</b>	Systems, policies, and programmes that “help individuals and societies manage risk and volatility and protect them from poverty and destitution—through instruments that improve resilience, equity, and opportunity.”	The World Bank 2012-2022 Social Protection and Labour Strategy: Resilience, Equity and Opportunity.

9 Ferreira and Robalino 2010.

10 Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux 2007.

Agency	Definition	Source
<b>UNICEF</b>	“The set of public and private policies and programmes aimed at preventing, reducing and eliminating economic and social vulnerabilities to poverty and deprivation.”	UNICEF Social Protection Strategic Framework. Integrated Social Protection Systems: Enhancing Equity for Children
<b>IDS</b>	“Social protection describes all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised; with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social vulnerability of poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups.”	Devereux, Stephen and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler, 2004. Transformative Social Protection. IDS Working Paper 232.
<b>Asian Development Bank</b>	“Set of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing people’s exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and interruption/loss of income.”	Social Protection Strategy
<b>African Union</b>	Social Protection “encompasses a range of public actions carried out by the state and others that address risk, vulnerability, discrimination and chronic poverty.”	First Session of the AU Conference of Ministers in Charge of Social Development Windhoek, Namibia 27 - 31 October 2008
<b>European Report on Development</b>	“Social protection is the specific set of public actions to address the vulnerability of people’s lives via social insurance, offering protection against risk and adversity throughout life; via social assistance, offering payments to support and enable the poor; and via social inclusion efforts that enhance the capability of the marginalised to access social insurance and assistance.”	European Report on Development 2010
<b>UNAIDS</b>	“The objective of ‘social protection’ is broadly to reduce the economic and social vulnerability of all people, and to enhance the social status and rights of poor and marginalized people by providing social transfers, and ensuring access to basic essential services and equitable regulation, which can take many forms.”	UNAIDS/UNICEF/IDS: “HIV-Sensitive Social Protection: What does the evidence say?”

This primer defines social protection as a set of nationally owned policies and instruments that provide income support and facilitate access to goods and services by all households and individuals at least at minimally accepted levels, to protect them from deprivation and social exclusion, particularly during periods



of insufficient income, incapacity or inability to work.<sup>11</sup> On a more operational level, social protection systems provide contributory or non-contributory forms of income support that reduce and prevent poverty; ensures access to basic social services to all, especially for groups that are traditionally vulnerable or excluded; stimulates productive inclusion through the development of capabilities, skills, rights and opportunities for the poor and excluded; builds resilience and protects people against the risks of livelihood shocks throughout their lifecycle; and helps remove structural barriers, including barriers within the household, that prevent people from achieving well-being. Social protection systems can include various schemes and programmes, including universal schemes, social assistance, social insurance, employment guarantees and other public employment programmes, and measures to facilitate access to education, health and care services.

This concept of social protection is not new. Many countries are leading the way in their vision of social protection as an investment to overcome deprivation, in making social protection inclusive, and in the integration of economic, social and environmental concerns in their social development agenda.

## 2.2 Why do we need social protection to achieve sustainable development?

Growth alone cannot guarantee the eradication of extreme poverty or the significant reduction of inequality. In the past 25 years economic growth has been an important driver in the reduction of poverty around the world, and it will continue to play a critical role in future poverty reduction efforts. But eradicating poverty by 2030 will require growth that is sustainable and inclusive, complemented by redistributive interventions that guarantee at least a minimum level of well-being for those who are unable to participate in and benefit from growth.

This section briefly reviews the international evidence on whether, how and in what circumstances social protection programmes enhance sustainable development outcomes such as poverty eradication, the reduction of inequality, including gender inequality, and the achievement of inclusive and sustainable growth.

### **Poverty reduction**

Empirical evidence indicates that social protection is an effective tool to fight poverty. In the last decade or so, there has been a significant and widely studied proliferation of large-scale cash transfer programmes, including cash-for-work, in developing countries with over 700 million people around the world enrolled in cash transfer programmes.<sup>12</sup> One of the best-known and successful conditional cash transfers (CCT) is the Brazilian *Bolsa Familia* (family grant). The programme currently covers more than 13 million households and transfers around US\$17 per month per child to mothers as long as children attend school and health services. A 2009 study based on the National Household Survey, found that the *Bolsa Familia* programme explained 18 per cent of the reduction in the poverty gap and a quarter of the reduction in the squared poverty gap—from 5.9 per cent to 4.6 per cent—in the country.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, administrative records suggest that, in 2009, 4.3 million out of 12.4 million beneficiary families moved out of extreme poverty because they received the financial benefits.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Mexico's *Oportunidades* programme has reduced the numbers living in poverty by 10 per cent and the poverty gap by 30 per cent.<sup>15</sup>

Universal cash transfers potentially have even greater impact. In Tanzania, for example, simulations conducted by the ILO show that basic universal old age pension benefits and child benefits to school children under the age of 14 have the potential to reduce the overall poverty rate by around one-third.<sup>16</sup>

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11 Based on ILO and UNDP 2011.

12 World Bank 2015b.

13 Soares and Satyro 2009.

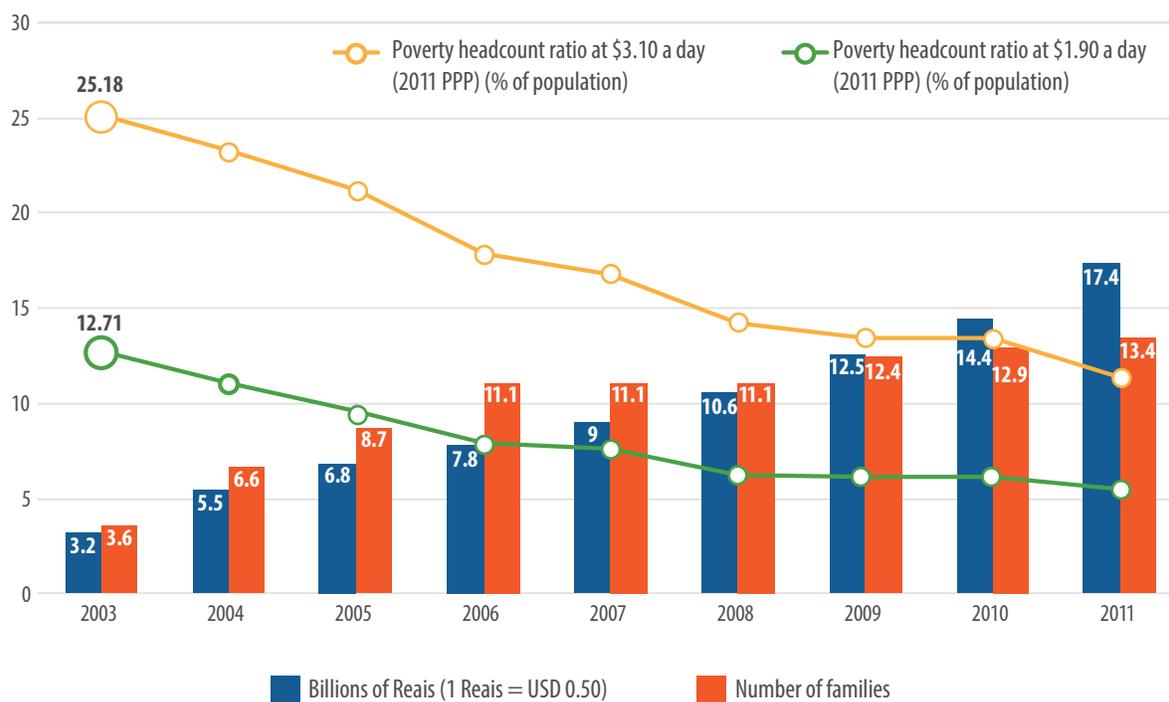
14 Brazil, Ministry of Social Development 2012.

15 Skoufias and Parker 2001.

16 Cichon, Hagemeyer and Woodall 2006.

Social protection also prevents people from falling into poverty. For example, the World Health Organization estimates that every year around 100 million people are pushed under the poverty line just because they have to use, and pay for, health services. Social health insurance mechanisms reduce reliance on out-of-pocket payments. Many countries are achieving universal health coverage through robust public investments in health.

**FIGURE 2.1 POVERTY REDUCTION AND BOLSA FAMILIA EXPENDITURE IN BRAZIL**



Source: Brazil Ministry of Social Development and World Development Indicators.

### Improvement in nutrition, health and schooling

In terms of nutrition, health and schooling, studies of various social protection interventions such as child benefits, temporary employment schemes, unemployment insurance, pensions, and cash transfers, provide evidence that they can have positive impacts on school attendance,<sup>17</sup> health, food security and nutrition,<sup>18, 19</sup> and productivity. Barrientos and Niño-Zarazúa (2011) provide a comprehensive review of the available empirical evidence on the impacts of transfer programmes, summarized in the table below.

17 Fernandez and Lopez-Calva 2010.  
 18 Devereux 2001; Barrientos and Niño-Zarazúa 2011.  
 19 Devereux 2012.



**TABLE 2.2 EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION IMPACT IN NUTRITION, HEALTH AND SCHOOLING**

Programme	Nutrition	Health	Schooling
Child Support Grant (South Africa)	3.5 cm increase in height as adults. Increased future earnings 60-130 per cent greater than the cost of the grant.		
Old Age Pension (South Africa)	Significant impact on nutritional status of children in beneficiary households.		Pensions regularly used to pay grandchildren's school fees.
Mexico's Progresa-Oportunidades	One centimetre gain in height for age, two years after the start of the programme	Doubled per capita health care visits in rural communities;  12 per cent lower incidence of illness amongst children.	Higher school enrolment, less grade repetition and better grade progression, lower dropout rates, and higher school re-entry rates among dropouts, particularly in rural areas.
Bono de Desarrollo Humano in Ecuador	Increased food expenditure by 25 per cent.		Increased school enrolment for children aged six to 17 by about 10 percentage points.
Familias en Accion (Colombia)	Reported increase in intake of protein-rich foods and vegetables.	Increased percentage of children attending health check-ups;  Decline in proportion of children affected by diarrhoea.	10 per cent improvement in schooling for children aged 12 to 17 living in rural areas, and a 5.2 per cent improvement for those in urban areas.
Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme	Decreased seasonal malnutrition and income variability among poor households.		
Chile Solidario		Preventative health care amongst children living in rural areas improved by four to six percentage points.	Participants report that their school enrolment in primary education improved by seven to nine per cent, relative to non-participants in the programme.

Source: Barrientos Niño-Zarzúa 2011.

By tackling poverty and improving human capacities, social protection is an effective instrument for narrowing development gaps and reducing inequality in all its forms. For example, a universal child allowance (*Asignación universal por hijo*) introduced in Argentina in 2009 is estimated to have reduced inequality by approximately 5 per cent.<sup>20</sup> The previously discussed Brazilian *Bolsa Familia* Programme is estimated to be responsible for 16 per cent of income inequality reduction in the country between 1999 and 2009.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, social protection programmes with gender-sensitive design features can be efficient mechanisms for empowering women, and cash transfers that focus on historically underprivileged groups can help mitigate horizontal inequalities.

### **Resilience building**

Shocks and risks have important implications for people's well-being.<sup>22</sup> Not only do they lead to immediate losses in income and increases in poverty rates, but they also have longer-term effects that can be irreversible. As households struggle, they engage in coping behaviours such as selling of productive assets, skipping meals or eating less nutritious food, postponing medical care, and taking children out of school. By preventing people from falling below a critical threshold of well-being, and reducing households' perception of risk, social protection can prevent transitory shocks from having permanent consequences. Protecting human and productive capital allows households to recover to pre-crisis levels once the temporary shock has passed. In countries with social protection schemes in place, social protection can stabilize the economy and facilitate early recovery in times of economic shock.<sup>23 24</sup>

Social protection instruments also have the potential to strengthen resilience against natural disasters, promote measures to protect ecosystems from further degradation, and facilitate quick recovery from extreme weather events. Weather-indexed crop insurance, public works programmes, asset and cash transfers have helped build resilience to climate shocks.

### **Growth**

Evidence also suggests that social protection contributes significantly to economic growth by improving access to health care, education and income, which improves productivity, labour market participation and entrepreneurial activity,<sup>25</sup> and also acts as a stabilizer in times of economic upheaval. During economic downturns, social protection can prevent aggregate demand from dropping sharply, maintain purchasing power at a minimum level and stop unemployment from eroding human or productive capital accumulation.<sup>26</sup>

There is also some evidence that social protection contributes to business performance, particularly by SMEs. A recent study examining the relationship between social security provision and firm level performance among Vietnamese SMEs, finds that those SMEs which increase the social security covered workforce by 10 per cent, experience a revenue gain per worker of between 1.1 and 2.6 per cent and a profit gain of between 1.3 and 3.0 per cent.<sup>27</sup>

20 ILO 2015b.

21 Soares, Ribas and Rafael 2010.

22 Cutler et al 2002; Paxson and Schady 2005; Baird, Friedman and Schady 2007.

23 Davies and others 2009.

24 De Janvry, et al. 2010; Siegel and de la Fuente, 2010 López-Calva and Ortiz-Juárez 2009; Fernandez et al., 2011.

25 Samson 2009.

26 ILO 2014.

27 Lee and Torm 2013.





## Social cohesion

Social protection can, in theory, contribute to building social cohesion and strengthening the legitimacy and effectiveness of states in a number of ways. There can be no inclusive and cohesive society where the poor and rich drift further and further apart. While the sources of political conflict vary from one country to another, conflict generally originates in severe social grievances, often rooted in the perception of inequality among social, ethnic, religious or other groups. Social protection measures have a central role to play in easing and preventing such sources of conflict. The OECD (2009) and the Chronic Poverty Research Programme (CPRC) both emphasize that social protection can contribute to social cohesion in a manner that strengthens the “contract” between citizens and the state, and promotes social inclusion, integration and greater accountability. A recent UNESCAP report concludes that individuals living in countries with well-established and generous social protection systems have greater trust in their governments.<sup>28</sup> The UN Independent Expert on Extreme Poverty recognizes that cash transfers can assist states in fulfilling their human rights obligations. Transfers have the potential to enhance a number of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. Unfortunately, less evidence is available on social protection’s impact on social inclusion. Some studies do point to an improvement in recipients’ social status as a result of social protection.<sup>29</sup> But more evidence needs to be generated in this area.

A recent study of the *Familias en Acción* programme in Colombia found qualitative and quantitative evidence of a positive impact on social capital. It found that the programme requirements that women recipients engage in social activities, such as attending meetings and visiting health centres, have improved cooperation and trust in beneficiary communities.<sup>30</sup>

28 UNESCAP 2015.

29 Arnold and Greenslade 2011.

30 Attanasio, Pellerano and Reyes 2009.

## Environmental sustainability

The impact of social protection on the environment is twofold; in the short run, as previously discussed, social protection builds resilience to climate change by increasing the adaptive capacity of those that rely on a changing environment for their livelihoods. In the longer term, social protection can promote environmental sustainability by, for example, improving natural resource management. Social protection is linked to climate change in several ways. National social protection systems can be used to respond to climate-related shocks. In many cases, this is done through the addition of climate vulnerabilities to regular social protection needs assessments, and then adapting and entering intended beneficiary data into social registries. Additionally, relevant triggers can be used to disburse payments or payment top-ups automatically, or to relax eligibility criteria, making it easier for more beneficiaries to participate, after adverse weather-related events. Social protection can also be used as a set of measures to facilitate the social acceptance of climate reforms aiming at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

### 2.3 Guiding principles of social protection for sustainable development

Social protection for sustainable development supports the objectives of social inclusion, economic development and environmental sustainability. The specific form this takes will vary from country to country, in objective, goal, design, implementation and results. Each country will find a model that suits its priorities and context. This primer sets out a set of guiding principles with the objective of enhancing social protection systems that are consistent with, and have maximum impact on, the achievement of sustainable development.



#### ***Protect and promote human rights***

If inclusive and systemic, social protection provides a mechanism for individuals to realize their human rights to social security and adequate social services. By ensuring that all individuals have access to essential services (health care, education, water, sanitation, etc.) and at least a minimum level of income and food security, countries can promote social inclusion and the full participation of all people in society and



economic opportunities. The notion of social protection as an obligation under human rights law is very well established and flows directly from the right to social security and a decent standard of living, which is articulated in Articles 22 and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 9 and 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.<sup>31</sup> The human rights framework provides an operational guideline for transforming the dynamics between the state and the individual, shifting the role of beneficiaries from passive receivers to active participants in the system.

### ***Ensure non-discrimination***

Social protection systems, in design and implementation, must be free of discrimination. While most legislation regarding social protection uses inclusive language, marginalized groups are likely to miss opportunities to benefit for various reasons including stigmatization, discrimination, and lack of access and lack of accessible information about their rights. Social protection systems and processes need to recognize that the more excluded people are, the harder it is to reach them and hear their voices. Non-discrimination needs to be an active target of social protection systems, seeking to hear the voice of right holders, both at community and individual levels, understand their specific needs and barriers, and address them. This requires the involvement and participation of the community, and specific groups within the community, such as social partners (workers and employers organizations) in the process of social protection design and implementation. The dominant relationship in existing social protection is between the state and the individual, and non-discrimination requires the involvement of community groups to identify the needs of those left behind.

### ***Foster gender equality and women's empowerment***

The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women is a core principle of sustainable development. Social protection must be gender-responsive in its design and implementation. It must seek to encompass the different needs and constraints faced by women, men, girls and boys, and reduce gender inequalities in access to and control over resources and the benefits of development. Women and men face different risks and vulnerabilities, some specific to their gender and others exacerbated by gender inequalities and discrimination. The design and implementation of social protection programmes should address such gender-related constraints, including the unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work and other barriers to women's economic advancement. For example, maternity and child care benefits can contribute to women's empowerment and active participation in the labour market while improving maternal health and children's health and nutritional status and school attendance.

### ***Remain risk-informed and sensitive to environmental concerns***

Social protection must address social and environmental opportunities and risks in an integrated manner, recognizing the fundamental linkages with environmental sustainability. First, the implementation of social protection needs to do no harm. Social protection proposals must be reviewed for potential environmental risks, and ensure that potential adverse impacts are assessed and avoided, or minimized, mitigated, and managed.<sup>32</sup> Second, social protection should seek opportunities to improve environmental sustainability. The poor rely on increasingly unreliable natural resources for their housing and livelihoods. They also tend to have knowledge about how to preserve the natural resources they rely on, and thus are key to finding solutions to environmental challenges. Finally, social protection must be risk-informed and aim to improve the resilience of individuals to the threats of a changing environment. Improved human capital, asset accumulation, and management of land can make individuals less exposed to shocks, and provide more coping mechanisms if shocks do hit.

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31 The right to social security is also enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 11; Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 26; the Convention for the Protection of Migrant Workers and their Families, Article 27; and the Commission on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 28. CEDAW, Art 11(e) and 12.

32 Based on UNDP Social and Environmental Standards.



### ***Provide a continuum of protection (life-cycle approach)***

Social protection should be based on a continuum of protection, available at different stages in individuals' lives, including transitions from one stage to the next and from one employment status to another (for instance when workers move from the informal sector to the formal sector or vice versa). This means it will encompass the particular risks faced, and the specific rights to be protected at each stage in life. Importantly, social protection systems must recognize the need to prevent and address the build-up of risks and vulnerabilities throughout the life cycle; for example, infant malnutrition that has lasting impacts on the human capital and productive capacities of individuals throughout their lives. Therefore, social protection systems must cover all stages to prevent circumstances in one phase, or temporary shocks, from becoming permanent or affecting the next stage in life. Special attention must be paid to sequencing and timing interventions to develop capabilities at the appropriate time, as well as to prevent the intergenerational transmission of deprivations. Special effort must be made to design and implement interventions that are mutually reinforcing, for example, childcare provision that helps women go back to work, and pensions that improve schooling outcomes.

### ***Promote universality***

Universality of social protection recognizes the right to social protection, and it needs to be fulfilled by a comprehensive and coherent system of programmes based on national solidarity. Countries achieve universality generally by a mix of contributory and non-contributory programmes. The principle of universality aims to address the specific needs of marginalized groups to ensure that social protection is truly universal and sustainable, and to maximize delivery and impacts across a large number of SDGs.

Differences in needs, gender, ethnicity, cultural norms, and place of residence, among others, require differentiated services and delivery mechanisms. Resources must be allocated accordingly to ensure appropriate levels of support and access to all. This approach to social protection focuses on creating linkages and coordination among social protection programmes, and across sectors, while addressing power imbalances that drive and entrench poverty, vulnerabilities and inequality. It requires the reduction of fragmentation across programmes, actors, and levels of government, to decrease inefficiencies, enhance coverage, and improve responsiveness to risks.



# UNDP'S WORK ON SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

UNDP's extensive portfolio of social protection includes activities to support governments in the development of national strategies, policies and laws concerning social protection, to build local and national capacities in the design, implementation and delivery of social protection and to improve gender-responsiveness of social protection, among others.





### 3.1 The added value of UNDP in social protection

With a portfolio of over US\$170 million worth of projects on social protection in 2015 in more than 50 countries, UNDP views social protection as a key tool to transform its vision to “help countries achieve the simultaneous eradication of poverty and significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion,”<sup>33</sup> as stated in its Strategic Plan 2014-2017, into reality.

UNDP is very well-positioned to be an important partner working with national and local governments on efforts to articulate and implement social protection for sustainable development. The cross-sectoral scope of UNDP’s work touches on all aspects and systems of social protection. It has been a key player in advancing policy dialogue concerning social protection, generating relevant evidence and convening relevant partners. It has also been a key player in extending social protection programmes, reforming them, fostering innovation, transferring knowhow across countries, and working closely with traditionally excluded communities to ensure that their voices are represented and their needs addressed. Finally, as the UN’s lead agency for sustainable development, UNDP is well-placed to support countries in integrating environmental sustainability policies into social protection.

UNDP possess a number of key advantages:

- UNDP has a mandate to support countries in their development paths, and coordinate the UN system at the country level. It has five decades of experience in supporting development processes. Its strength relies on its **on-the-ground presence in some 170 countries, close partnerships with government, and role as a bridge between government, civil society and other relevant actors**. In particular, UNDP has a history of effectively promoting dialogue between government and civil society at national and local levels, and engaging a wide range of stakeholders to enable a broadening of support for improvements in social policies.
- As coordinator of the UN systems, **UNDP can lead on “One-UN” work on social protection floors**. In a call in 2014, the UNGD Chair, Helen Clark, and the ILO Director, Guy Ryder, requested all UN Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams to consider a number of steps towards implementing social protection floors (see Annex 1). These steps include building One-UN social protection floors teams. UNDP has advanced these efforts, helping constitute social protection teams and task force at the regional and country level.
- **UNDP has a cross-sectoral approach to development**, with a mission to empower people to address deprivations in all the areas that matter for well-being, while helping nations grow in a manner that is inclusive and sustainable. UNDP’s policy and programming work covers inextricably linked areas such as inclusive and sustainable growth, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, environmental sustainability, and poverty and inequality reduction. In its social protection portfolio, UNDP draws on its extensive technical expertise. This cross-sectoral approach enables synergy and the delivery of multiple benefits, adding value to UNDP’s work on social protection. It also positions UNDP to lead in supporting social protection that has a maximum impact on the interrelated Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP is fit to connect the dots, and look at interventions in the different policy areas that impact the lives of people in a coherent and cohesive manner to discover win-win solutions and minimize trade-offs.
- With the **knowledge accumulated as the scorekeeper of the MDGs** and through its work to accelerate MDG achievements, UNDP has the necessary experience to help countries position the SDGs as the organizing principle of development efforts. UNDP is already playing a key role in supporting comprehensive policy approaches that mainstream the 2030 Agenda at the national and local levels, including policies relevant

33 UNDP 2014a.

to social protection. It is also positioned to assist with the identification of accelerators that can maximize progress across various goals and targets of the SDGs, help countries to navigate the trade-offs implicit in the ambitious sustainable development agenda and devise adequate policy responses.

- UNDP has extensive experience advocating and working towards **universal social protection** policies. Universality recognizes the right to social protection, and needs to be fulfilled by a system of programmes that ensure universal coverage. Normally this is achieved by a mix of contributory and non-contributory schemes.
- UNDP has a long history and ample experience of supporting **inclusive social protection** that goes beyond income redistribution to include reforms that tackle social exclusion. These include legal and policy reforms to change disempowering and discriminatory social norms and practices and to create social environments that enable and encourage the most marginalized to register, access, and benefit from social protection. UNDP works with right bearers, particularly traditionally excluded groups, to empower and engage them and generate relevant evidence about both enabling factors and obstacles related to their specific needs.
- UNDP's experience includes assistance towards the **implementation of social protection floors**<sup>34</sup> to guarantee minimum access to services and income security for all women, men, girls and boys. This is generally focussed on setting One-UN social protection country teams. UNDP, together with its partners, has worked with a wide number of countries to assist in the process of building their nationally defined social protection floors or to introduce elements thereof. The results of programmes in these countries show that the impact of the social protection floor on poverty, vulnerability and inequality can be dramatic.<sup>35</sup> In particular, UNDP has worked to overcome gender gaps in the services guaranteed by social protection floors that result from intra-household dynamics where women are often less protected (their access to social security within the labour market is limited), more vulnerable (because they bear the majority of unpaid care and domestic work) and disproportionately socially excluded (they have less access to productive resources and to economic and political power). Identifying the gender gaps that the social protection floor proposes to correct means doing away with the systematic assignment of unpaid care and domestic work to women. It means calculating and taking full account of the economic and social benefits cost of unpaid care and domestic work, and establishing social protection mechanisms predicated on reducing the inequitable assignment of unpaid care and domestic work to women and girls.<sup>36</sup>
- UNDP has a **vast portfolio of work on people-centred environment and natural policies**. The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs link the concerns of people and planet)— recognizing the interdependence of human well-being and healthy ecosystems. UNDP's experience supporting effective environmental management through a focus on: biodiversity and ecosystem services; sustainable land management and desertification; water and ocean governance; extractive industries: and green economy, uniquely positions the agency to make the connections to bridge social protection and environmental sustainability efforts. UNDP's integrated programming at the country level is already successfully linking environmental sustainability with issues of poverty, gender, governance and crisis prevention. In India, for example, UNDP conducted an assessment of the environmental implications of rural development schemes, and provided recommendations for "greening" them.<sup>37</sup> This cross-sectoral approach supports synergies and the delivery of multiple benefits across the SDGs, and promotes resilience, sustainability and inclusive growth.

34 The social protection floor (SPF) approach promotes access to essential social transfers and services in the areas of health, water and sanitation, education, food, housing, and life- and asset-saving information. It is an approach that emphasizes the need to implement comprehensive, coherent and coordinated social protection policies to guarantee services and social transfers throughout the life cycle, paying particular attention to vulnerable groups.

35 UNDP and ILO 2011.

36 ILO, UNEGEEW and UNDP 2012.

37 UNDP India 2012.



### 3.2 What can UNDP do to support social protection in my country?

A systematic review of UNDP projects linked to social protection in 2015 found that UNDP's current portfolio of social protection activities can be organized around the following categories:

- Support for governments in the **development of national strategies, policies and laws concerning social protection**. In 2015, UNDP supported the Government of Mauritius in the development of an integrated national plan against poverty and social exclusion, covering a wide variety of sectors, including social protection, environmental sustainability, inequality reduction, employment generation and improved social housing. In The Gambia in 2014, UNDP supported the formulation of the National Social Protection Policy and Implementation Plan 2015-2020, which presents a comprehensive and cross-cutting social protection framework, defining a set of priority actions to guide the gradual establishment of an integrated and inclusive social protection system in the country. Similarly, in Tanzania, UNDP contributed to the revision of the National Social Protection Policy and the development of the Action Plan. In Uzbekistan, UNDP's input papers on social protection, environmental sustainability, and governance have put the issues of sustainable environment and socio-economic development at the core of the Vision 2030 discussions.
- Provide the **framework and approach for building social protection systems**, including social protection floors, at the country level, including coordination within governments and with development partners. For example, UNDP Belize, in partnership with UNDP's International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), supported the Government to ensure the coordinated development of a Social Protection System systematically to address the increasingly pressing needs of the poor and vulnerable. In Mauritius, UNDP engaged in intense advocacy and provided technical assistance for setting up the *Social Register of*



*Mauritius* (SRM) Unit within the Ministry of Social Security, and also provided statistical advisory services to formulate the proxy-means test and analyse data. More than 40,000 households, the equivalent of 140,000 individuals (11 per cent of the population) registered for the SRM schemes in 2014.

- Support efforts to **build local and national capacities in the design, implementation and delivery of social protection**. This includes enhancing policymakers' awareness of evolving social challenges, policy options, strategies and good practices in social protection. In Viet Nam, as part of its support to the Government's Master Plan for Social Assistance Reform, UNDP co-sponsored the Viet Nam Social Protection Summer School, a week-long course for government officials on designing and implementing social protection programmes in the context of Viet Nam. In India, UNDP provides on-site technical assistance to the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), which has been able to reach out and provide social protection entitlements to approximately 700,000 people living with and affected by HIV. The UNDP Model on HIV social protection was scaled up and made operational in 100 priority districts in early 2014. In Egypt, UNDP and the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth organized capacity-building workshops to enhance the capacities of governmental and non-governmental officials to monitor and evaluate social protection programmes.
- Lead and participate in the **generation of evidence-based analysis** for social protection systems, including gap analysis, diagnostics, evaluation of existing programmes, impact evaluation on specific groups, and analysis of specific barriers to access. In Croatia, for example, UNDP is working with the Ministry of Social Policy to collect data on all social assistance and analyses of social assistance benefits to create the Strategy for a Cost-Effective Social Protection System. This strategy aims to avoid overlaps in benefits at national and local levels, and improve efficacy. In Egypt, in collaboration with the Ministries of Planning (MOP) and Social Solidarity (MOSS) and the World Bank, UNDP produced a desk review on Conditional Cash Transfers which was used as concrete input in the policy formulation of the national Government's programme for cash transfers launched in 2014: *Karama* and *Takaful*. *Karama* is a cash transfer for the elderly and disabled living in poverty. *Takaful* is a conditional cash transfer based on school enrolment and scheduled health visits, targeting poor families with children. All payments are done electronically. The Government plans to reach 500,000 beneficiaries in six Governorates in 2015 and two million by 2017.
- Support national partners' efforts to **increase the gender-responsiveness** of social protection measures so that women as well as men can participate in the economy and manage their households. These measures include social insurance to protect against unemployment, ill health and disability, as well as subsidized agricultural inputs and employment guarantee schemes. In Central America and the Dominican Republic, UNDP partnered with the ILO and UN Women to contribute to the policy debate on the implementation of social protection floors with a gender dimension. With the elaboration of the sub-regional report "Fighting inequality from the basics: The social protection floor and gender equality," UNDP advocated the implementation of national social protection floors as key elements of addressing gender inequalities. The report emphasized that correcting gender gaps means doing away with the systematic assignment of unpaid care and domestic work to women. It also means calculating and taking full account of the economic and social costs of unpaid care and domestic work. As a result of this work and at the request of the Government of the Dominican Republic, UNDP, the ILO and UN Women have analysed the inclusion of the gender dimension in the existing social protection system, proposed solutions and developed a cost analysis for its implementation.
- **Enable communities to organize and articulate their needs** and generate evidence of the gaps in services. Breaking the cycle of inequality and poverty requires institutions that are responsive to the needs of people and promote their active participation in decision making processes. Enabling communities to articulate their needs has been a particularly powerful tool for more inclusive and sustainable social protection. In Cambodia, for example, UNDP and UNAIDS, in partnership with the Cambodian People Living with HIV network (CPN+), organized the national consultation on Advancing HIV-Sensitive Social



Protection with more than 70 representatives from the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), civil society, community groups and development partners. The consultation identified key areas for improving access to social protection services and developing services that meet the needs of households affected by HIV. These included adapting eligibility criteria, making services more user-friendly and non-discriminatory, increasing the community's understanding of how to access and use available services, and ensuring that communities are engaged in designing, planning, implementing and monitoring services. Since then, many of these recommendations have been adopted in Cambodia's National Development Strategy.

- **Support groups affected by crises** such as natural disasters, conflict or political instability, through cash transfers, cash-for-work, and other livelihood- and income-generating programmes, with a special focus on marginalized or vulnerable groups such as women, children, youth, ethnic minorities, indigenous people, people living with disabilities, people living with HIV, etc. In Tajikistan, for example, UNDP supported the mainstreaming of the mine action victim assistance programme in UNDP's Disability Programme and the activities of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection in favour of persons with disabilities (PwD). In Yemen, to support displaced and host populations, UNDP established a cash-for-work scheme targeting displaced people and the communities that host them. The programme provides two months of paid work to both men and women.
- **Facilitate international knowledge, expertise and experience sharing** between countries that have successfully established social protection and other countries interested in planning, expanding, extending or reorienting their social protection programmes. These efforts include UNDP's work on south-south cooperation, communities of practice and international exchanges. For example, in 2015 UNDP in collaboration with the Brazilian Government and the African Union, hosted an International Seminar on Social Protection in Africa, bringing together experts from 12 African countries and Brazil to share experiences and promote the debate on social protection. The seminar resulted in a set of recommendations for social protection in Africa that were then endorsed by some 70 ministers of African countries at a high-level meeting in Addis Ababa. In Jamaica, UNDP facilitated a study tour to Chile and Peru of four government staff members on Social Protection and Poverty Reduction in conjunction with the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) in Brazil. The study tour aimed, among other things, to collect evidence for the participants to have input into elaborating a new long-term anti-poverty strategy and social protection for the country.
- **Development of knowledge products** such as guidance notes, documented case studies of good practices and lessons learned from countries' experiences. In Tanzania, UNDP's support, with other development partners, of analysis of poverty and drivers of poverty dynamics as revealed in the 2007 and 2011/2013 Household Budget Surveys, has resulted in commitments by UN Agencies, the World Bank, development partners and the Government to support scaling up of the social protection programme, through a UN Joint Programme on Social Protection (consisting of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and ILO) to accelerate poverty reduction and enhance the inclusiveness of growth in Tanzania. In 2013, UNDP supported a study on the multidimensionality of poverty in the Seychelles. The results (published in 2014 in the first edition of *Island Studies: Journal of the University of Seychelles* and launched at the SIDS in Samoa explored poverty and gender as well as various other dimensions. The study found a tendency for poverty to be more pronounced in female-headed households, and a high level of shelter destitution. This could lead to a rethinking of the social welfare programmes, and has provided important information to the Government in its pursuit of policies and programmes to support the sector. Additionally, the design of policies aimed at improving the low coverage and fragmentation of the social protection systems has been the main goal of the UNDPs Commitment to Fiscal Equity Project in Latin America through the development of a toolkit for diagnosis and micro simulations of social and fiscal reforms. In coordination with national governments, UNDP has implemented the initiative in Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru, fostering a national debate on fiscal and social reforms, and on how to finance social protection schemes. The toolkit has provided the governments of these countries with



detailed information on how much poverty and inequality reduction can be achieved through reforms to social programmes, subsidies, taxes and universal protection schemes; which tax and social benefit reallocations may affect the progressivity of social policies; and what the gains from a particular tax and social reform are likely to be. In all the countries mentioned above, the development of the simulator implied the transfer of capacities and knowledge from UNDP to national governments.

- Provide technical assistance on **“greening” social protection programmes**. In India, for example, UNDP conducted an assessment of the environmental implications of rural development schemes in India, and provided strategies for inclusive rural development embodying the principles of environmental sustainability.<sup>38</sup> It did this through the analysis of six flagship Government of India schemes, including the *Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme* (MGNREGS), the largest rural development programme in India, and looked at improving quality of ecosystems, enabling sustainable livelihoods, strengthening the resilience of local communities to enable them to recover from extreme weather events and reducing ecological footprint through efficient use of energy, material and natural resources.

38 UNDP India 2012.



# POLICY COHERENCE:

## towards a system of social protection

**For social protection to be effective in reducing inequalities and leaving no one behind, it must be a coordinated system of programmes that interact and complement each other across development objectives, and address the underlying causes of deprivations.**

# 4



FORMES-GÉOMÉTRIQUES  
KWADRATI    MRABA    FEMBE-TATU  
FIGURES-CARRÉ    RECTANGLE    TOMBWU

14 15 16 17 18 19 20  
Bangladesh 10/5/14/2011  
2011  
Og 19/11



## 4.1 Overview of programmes and policies

The building blocks of social protection systems are the programmes and policies they encompass, and the processes through which they reach right holders and connect with each other and with other sectors. The success of a social protection system relies on the extent to which the combination of programmes is effective in achieving the objectives set out by the government in social protection strategies or development policies. There are many different ways to categorize the different social protection instruments used to improve the lives of women, men, girls and boys. In this primer we will look at (i) non-contributory social transfers; (ii) social insurance (fully or partially contributory); (iii) social services; and (iv) labour market policies. This section will provide an overview of these categories and the type of programmes that fall into them.

A **social transfer** is a benefit provided by the government or another actor to an individual (or household) in need of a specific type of social assistance. Social transfers encompass a wide spectrum of programmes, ranging from *ad hoc* instruments such as humanitarian relief, to regular, institutionalized and predictable instruments such as child grants or food stamps.

The positive effects of social transfers include a direct increase in the income and/or purchasing power of the individual or household, and, depending on the specific form of the transfer, enhanced nutrition, education, health, living arrangements, access to safe water, sanitation, etc. However, when social transfers are provided to households it cannot be assumed that they are equitably shared within them, and for this reason, gender-responsive social transfers must target individual women and men and should not lead to an increase in unpaid care and domestic work.

**Contributory schemes** are those where beneficiaries make regular contributions to a scheme that protect them in the event of, for example, maternity, unemployment or illness.<sup>39</sup> Sometimes costs are matched or subsidized by the government. Insurance can be provided through public social insurance (see below), insurance companies, or through mutual funds. Given that formal sector employment is usually male-intensive, many existing contributory schemes perpetuate or reinforce gender inequalities, yet many social insurance schemes contain provisions that work towards closing gender gaps.

**Social insurance** refers to contributory schemes that include a risk-pooling mechanism based on the principle of solidarity. Usually, social insurance schemes guarantee protection in the case of specific risks or contingencies, such as unemployment, sickness, maternity, disability, employment injury or old age. In many cases, social insurance schemes include non-contributory elements that allow for a more equitable distribution of benefits, particularly for those with low incomes and limited contributory capacity. This can include redistribution within the schemes, or partial financing from the government budget (general taxation); the latter type of schemes are also referred to as partially contributory schemes. One caveat of contributory social insurance is that it is strongly linked to the formal labour market and excludes workers in informal employment, yet many countries have made great strides to extend coverage to those workers.

Many countries have combined contributory and non-contributory schemes to extend pensions and health coverage to men and women with low incomes not covered by contributory systems, because they are in the informal sector or self-employed. A large number of countries have implemented non-contributory old age pensions to achieve universal pension coverage, including Bolivia, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Nepal and South Africa. Other countries have put in place partially contributory schemes to ensure coverage for previously uncovered workers, such as the rural pension in Brazil. Many countries have achieved, or are working towards, universal health coverage through the combination of contribution- and tax financing, such as Colombia, Ghana, Mexico, Rwanda or Thailand.

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39 Barrientos 2010.

The positive effects of social insurance include reduced risk, improved coping mechanisms, and consumption smoothing.<sup>40</sup> By building resilience, particularly in rural settings, social insurance can allow individuals to take productive risks. When social insurance reliably reduces the risk of deprivation faced by households, these no longer need to worry about a temporary shock having devastating, permanent effects on their well-being. Thus, they can move towards higher-return investments that imply more risk.<sup>41</sup>

**Social services** will be considered as social protection instruments, for the purpose of this primer, when they refer to efforts to ensure availability, continuity, and access to essential public services such as water and sanitation, health, education and household- and individually-focused social work support. Social services, such as early child care, have the potential to reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work.

**Labour market interventions** improve access to productive and decent employment. Active labour market policies aim to help the unemployed and other jobseekers find jobs, through interventions such as job centres and training. Other relevant policies include changes to legislation and measures to ensure the effective implementation of these policies, for example establishing a minimum wage or promoting safe working conditions. Labour market interventions must recognize and aim to address the constraints that women face in accessing decent employment because of the expectation that they perform unpaid care and domestic work.

**TABLE 4.1 TAXONOMY OF SOCIAL PROTECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Category	Programmes	Benefits
<b>Social transfers</b>	<p><b>Cash transfers:</b> unconditional cash transfers, conditional transfers, child grants, foster care grants, housing allowance, emergency support, scholarships, old age pensions, disability allowance/benefits, war veterans benefits, burial allowances, cash for work, payment for environmental services</p> <p><b>Food, in-kind or near-cash transfers:</b> food stamps and vouchers, supplementary feeding, school feeding, nutrition programmes, emergency support, health subsidies or waivers, education subsidies or waivers, agricultural subsidies, housing subsidies, utility subsidies, food for work</p> <p>Other transfers: land tax exceptions</p>	<p>Increased income, consumption, expenditure and asset accumulations, increased human capital accumulations, improved health outcomes, reduced unpaid care and domestic work</p>
<b>Social insurance</b>	<p>Old-age pension, survivor pension, disability pension, unemployment insurance, sickness/injury insurance, maternity/paternity benefits, health insurance</p>	<p>Increased income, consumption, expenditure and asset accumulation, reduced exposure to risk, improved coping mechanisms, consumption smoothing</p>

40 Maintaining levels of consumption even when levels of income fall due to shocks or crises.

41 Barrett and McPeak 2004.



Category	Programmes	Benefits
<b>Social services</b>	<p><b>Children:</b> day care services for children/orphans, early childhood development programmes, foster care, specialized care for children (abandoned, neglected, abused, orphaned), non-residential psychological services, social care for substance abuse</p> <p><b>Family:</b> preservation and unification counselling services, domestic violence victims services, rehabilitation services, community development services, mother care and counselling services</p> <p><b>Working Age:</b> social care for the homeless, immigrant counsel and care services</p> <p><b>People living with disabilities (PLWD):</b> residential care for PLWD, psychosocial care, personal assistance and day care, transportation services specialized for PLWD</p>	<p>Reduced unpaid care and domestic work, improved health outcomes,</p> <p>increased human capital formation,</p> <p>reduced gender-based violence</p>
<b>Labour market policies</b>	<p>Intermediation services, training (vocational, life skills, cash for training), job rotation and job sharing, employment incentives/wage subsidies, employment measures for PLWD, public works and direct job creation, start-up incentives (cash and in-kind loans), unemployment benefits (contributory and non-contributory), early retirement based on labour market</p>	<p>Increased employment both by increasing both the supply and demand of labour,</p> <p>improved labour conditions</p>
<b>Informal social protection</b>	<p>Funeral insurance services, village grain banks, rotating services and credit groups, community-based health insurance</p>	<p>Consumption smoothing, reductions in unpaid care and domestic work</p>
<b>Other relevant interventions</b>		
<b>Legislation and Transformative policies<sup>42</sup></b>	<p><b>Institutional:</b> legislation on economic, social and cultural rights, anti-corruption measures, citizen juries</p> <p><b>Societal:</b> sensitization and anti-discrimination campaigns (i.e. HIV/AIDS anti-stigma campaign)</p> <p><b>Legal:</b> minimum wage legislation, workers' rights legislation (e.g. maternity leave), children's rights (laws against child labour), social funds that invest in infrastructure pertinent to the poor, agricultural policies that improve productivity of small land owners</p>	<p>Remove barriers for marginalized groups</p> <p>Improved outcomes (income) and opportunities for all, reductions in unpaid care and domestic work; reductions in gender-based violence, reductions in social conflicts</p>

## 4.2 Assessment Based National Dialogues: Building coherent national social protection strategies

Building social protection systems is a long and continuous process. The Assessment Based National Dialogue (ABND) exercise is the first step towards the achievement of nationally defined social protection floors and comprehensive social protection systems. This national dialogue helps formulate relevant and feasible policy options, based on a collaborative assessment of the social protection situation and cost estimations for coverage reform and expansion. It involves all relevant ministries (labour, social welfare, health, education, planning commission, finance, agriculture, and so on), national social protection schemes and programmes, research institutions and statistics offices, employers' and workers' representatives, civil society organizations and UN agencies who formulate recommendations in line with government strategies and international commitments, and who advocate for these recommendations to ensure that they can be translated into concrete action.

The ABND provides an opportunity to “deliver as One-UN” on social protection in line with the 2030 Agenda. It is also a practical methodology and process to plan social protection pillars as part of the UNDAF. All UN agencies involved in the Social Protection Floor Initiative (UNDP, ILO, UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UN WOMEN, WFP, FAO and others) usually take part in a national ABND. Each agency has core competencies in different areas, which, when combined, create an unparalleled body of expertise and more efficient division of labour.

The ABND follows a three-step approach<sup>43</sup>:

**Step 1.** Development of the assessment matrix. The four guarantees of the social protection floor (SPF) (e.g. access to health care, social protection for children, social protection for the working age group, and old age pensions) are used as benchmarks to measure existing social protection and other poverty alleviation programmes, identify policy gaps and implementation issues, and produce recommendations for the design and implementation of further social protection provisions with the aim of guaranteeing at a minimum the SPF to all the population. The assessment matrix is compiled in close collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, using face-to-face consultations and workshops at both national and sub-national levels.

**Step 2.** Rapid Assessment Protocol (RAP)—The cost of the proposed social protection provisions is then estimated and projected over a 10-year period using the ILO Rapid Assessment Protocol (RAP). This costing exercise can serve as a basis for discussions on available fiscal space, government budget reallocations, and the prioritization of different social protection policy options. After costing the different scenarios through the RAP exercise, the parameters of the different scenarios are fine-tuned at participatory costing workshops on social protection.

**Step 3.** Finalization)—The finalized assessment report is handed over to the government for endorsement and decisions on next steps.

In Thailand for instance, social protection was chosen as one of the six key areas of partnership between the Royal Thai Government and the United Nations system within the United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPAF). To enhance Thailand's capacity to provide universal basic social protection and higher levels of benefits, a UN Social Protection Floor (UNSPF) Joint Team, including the ILO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, UN WOMEN, and WHO, was created in March 2010. From June 2011 to October 2012, the UNSPF Joint Team

42 While legislation and transformative policies are often not strictly social protection policies, if implemented alongside social protection instruments to remove structural barriers and address the needs of marginalized people, they can have a truly transformative effect on social inclusion, and thus are worth mentioning here.

43 ILO 2016a.



engaged line ministries, social partners, civil society organizations, academia and other relevant stakeholders in the conduct of an Assessment Based National Dialogue (ABND) to assess the social protection situation. This 18-month process drew up appropriate policy recommendations for the achievement of a comprehensive social protection floor in Thailand. In the wake of the launch of the SPF Assessment Report in 2013, Thailand adopted a child support grant in 2015 and is considering the introduction of a long-term care scheme. The assessment also contributed to the publication of the ABND good practices guide, which is a unique resource package that provides step-by-step support for conducting an ABND exercise.

### 4.3 Linking programmes: A systemic view

Social protection programmes are often fragmented, falling under the responsibility of different line ministries, public organizations and local governments, and developed as a response to specific problems without building on or offering complementarities with other programmes or broader public policies. Although significant advancements have been made by tackling development objectives separately and great expertise and problem-solving ability have been developed at the international and country levels, integrating social protection into systems and programmes that deal with issues simultaneously has proven difficult.

Fragmentation occurs at various levels: (i) among sectors (e.g. health, education and social security); (ii) in coverage for formal and informal worker; and (iii) at different stages in the life cycle, when the transition from one stage to another is left uncovered. Fragmentation can happen at the policy level and at the implementation/delivery level. To avoid gaps, overlaps, and inefficiencies, the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders need to be defined and their actions coordinated.

The danger of fragmented programmes is that even if they alleviate the immediate consequences of poverty at certain points in people's lives, they may fail to address the underlying causes of deprivation and exclusion and to ensure that individuals do not fall behind when transitioning from one stage in life to another, or when shocks occur. For example, education programmes that do not support the school-to-work transition process or establish links to labour markets often do not succeed in enabling individuals to increase their productivity and accumulate the assets they need to escape poverty and deprivation in the long term. People often have multiple social protection needs and require a package of complementary services and transfers (such as food, education, and child support grants; income support and vocational training) that demand coordination between institutions from the policy development stage to the practical implementation of SPF components.

The taxonomy described above provides a coherent framework to organize programmes. However, when designing systems of social protection, the interaction and complementarities among these programmes must be considered in the context of the established objectives as well as their differentiated impact on men and women. A systemic view of social protection organizes programmes around the objectives set out at the country level. Thus, instead of independently operated programmes, a social protection system should be focused on how programmes interact and complement each other across objectives.<sup>44</sup>

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44 Robalino et al. 2012

**TABLE 4.2 LINKAGES BETWEEN INSTRUMENTS AND OBJECTIVES IN A SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM**

Objective/Target Group	Instruments				
	Transfers	Insurance	Services	Legislation and transformative policies	Labour Market
Income Poverty	X	X	X	X	X
Childhood	X	X	X	X	
Maternity	X	X	X	X	
Unemployment	X	X	X	X	X
Sickness/Injury	X	X	X	X	
Disability	X	X	X	X	X
Old Age	X	X	X	X	

Source: Based on Robalino et al., 2012.

Linking programmes with similar objectives or target population groups can improve the overall performance of the system and of the individual programmes. For example, cash transfers can be more effective in preventing poverty and helping people enter employment when they are joined up with measures that ease the burden of unpaid care and domestic work for men and women and develop their skills and employability through the provision of high-quality services such as skills development programmes.

Coordination can happen at various levels of the policy cycle. Ideally, it is integrated within the legal and policy frameworks, such as the social protection strategy, in place. Thus, objectives are aligned, and instruments chosen and combined to reach those objectives. Additionally, appropriate bodies for oversight, policy implementation and coordination across government and non-government actors should be appointed with an explicit mandate and mechanisms to take effective actions toward programme coordination. The coordination must be at the national level among the institutions and the ministries responsible for developing national social protection policies; among the different levels of government (federal, national, regional, municipal) to guarantee the implementation of the defined policies, the financial sustainability of social benefits and their efficient and decentralized distribution to beneficiaries; and at the management level to guarantee cost reductions and greater administrative transparency and efficiency.

Coordination is also critical in the planning and implementation of programmes, where relevant actors plan joint actions that maximize benefits and reduce trade-offs. Coordination at the delivery level can help facilitate the use of similar information management systems, delivery systems and shared information and knowledge. Coordination at the financing level could allow the pooling of resources from various actors towards one set of interventions.

To improve coordination at the policy and implementation level, UN agencies have developed, as part of the UNDG Asia-Pacific Thematic Working Group on social protection, a UNDG Coordination Toolkit. It provides an opportunity to “deliver as One-UN” on social protection in line with the 2030 Agenda. It is also



a practical methodology and process to analyse the country's current social protection system and decentralization policies and to assess gaps and issues in the delivery, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation of the social protection system. This analysis is then followed by concrete recommendations to improve coordination at policy development, delivery, monitoring and evaluation levels. UN agencies can then support national stakeholders in the practical implementation of the processes, tools and information management systems required for the implementation of the coordination mechanism.

The link between social protection programmes and labour markets merits special attention. Social protection can be effective in improving the lives of women and men in the long term if it helps them in the transition towards productive employment and sustainable livelihoods. In doing so, careful policy design ensures that the right incentives are set for people to engage in decent employment. Thus it is important for social protection programme designs to include incentives for transitioning to productive employment where appropriate, to build the productive capacities of individuals, and to reduce unpaid care and domestic work.

Some public works programmes have explicit training objectives, which aim to result in long-term employment opportunities once people exit the programme. In Ethiopia's *PSNP*, social protection is implemented alongside complementary training programmes, in order to simultaneously promote employability and consumption smoothing simultaneously. The programme ensures that immediate consumption needs are met while skills are acquired.

Countries with well-integrated systems of social protection include Brazil and Chile. Brazil's poverty eradication strategy, *Brasil sem Miséria*, launched in 2011, comprises 120 public actions targeting 16.3 million extremely poor Brazilians. The strategy builds on Brazil's 12-year commitment to *Bolsa Família*, to include efforts for social inclusion, improved access to services, and strengthening the social assistance network. Chile's *Chile Solidario*, noted earlier, provides a package of programmes tailored to meet the specific needs of women and men.

## Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme

One of Africa's most acclaimed programmes is Ethiopia's *Productive Safety Net Programme* (PSNP), a hybrid programme combining cash transfer and public works. The programme has reduced poverty and increased food security in the short run while enabling asset growth in the long run. It reaches more than seven million people, or about 10 per cent of the population, and oversees the implementation of about 34,000 small works projects per year.

Ethiopia is also a good example of institutional coordination across government institutions and between the government and donor agencies. After 30 years of disarticulated emergency food programmes, in 2005 the PSNP consolidated funds from donors, which the government then used. For its part, the government covers the cost of the civil servants who manage the programme. All donors are represented on the government-chaired Joint Coordination Committee, which meets biweekly to discuss priority issues. The Food Security Coordination Directorate and the Natural Resources Management Directorate at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development jointly implement the PSNP. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development oversees financial management of the programme and disburses cash resources. These federal implementation arrangements are replicated in regions and subregions (*woredas*). Within the regions, the ultimate authority for the PSNP resides in the regional council, which is the highest regional-level decision-making body (Monchuk 2013). In terms of operation, the PSNP has a single payment system for both components—i.e., cash transfer and public works—which increases efficiency and complementarity (Lieuw-Kie-Song 2011).

Sources: UNDP, 2015d; Monchuk 2013; Lieuw-Kie-Song 2011.



## 4.4 Universal vs. targeted social protection programmes

UNDP is a proponent of **universal social protection**. This refers to an integrated set of policies that ensures that anyone who needs social protection has access to it. In fact universal social protection is a goal endorsed by most development agencies, including the ILO, the World Bank, the African Union, ASEAN, the European Commission, G20, OECD and the United Nations. The ILO and the World Bank, together with other partners, recently launched the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection Initiative.<sup>45</sup>

Universal social protection coverage can be achieved through different means, and in many cases social protection systems combine universal and targeted programmes. Universal programmes are those available to everyone, or those in a broad category of the population (such as older persons or children), without consideration of individual or household income status. Targeted programmes are usually understood as programmes directed specifically to the poor and vulnerable.

In some policies and programmes, universalism is well established, especially in sectors such as education and health, considering that universalism benefits the poorest and marginalized.

Other programmes aim to remove specific constraints faced by groups and need to find mechanisms to concentrate the benefits of programmes on specific segments of the population.<sup>46</sup> Targeting is commonly thought of as a way to channel resources towards the poor; however existing targeting mechanisms often face difficulties in reaching these groups, often leading to the exclusion of the most vulnerable. As we move towards more comprehensive social protection systems that address the various dimensions of deprivations that affect the lives of people, a more comprehensive approach is necessary that incorporates dimensions of poverty, such as the vulnerability and time poverty that results from unequal allocations of unpaid care and domestic work.

Targeting defines a beneficiary group and identifies the specific individuals who will receive benefits. In this sense, the target population can be the poor, but also non-poor women and men who face specific barriers, such as those at risk because of where they live (for example, a group of people living near a river prone to flooding), those who face barriers to access labour markets (for example, women with heavy burdens of unpaid care and domestic work), people with disabilities who lack the means to collect their benefits even if these are provided, etc.

Targeting needs to take into account the national context and identify and mitigate any potential unintended effects. For example, there are negative reports from Bangladesh that gender-based domestic violence may increase with transfers to women.<sup>47</sup> More therefore needs to be understood about the situations where women, girls or female-headed households should be preferentially targeted and the most appropriate mechanism for doing so. Female-headed households are not a homogenous group—for example, widows and abandoned mothers are more likely to be poor than women whose husbands provide remittances.<sup>48 49</sup>

An ongoing debate about social protection has to do with dependency and graduation. The debate springs from the negative notion that social protection, in particular in the context of cash transfers, can make people dependent, and increasingly less capable of sustaining their own livelihoods. Many governments are concerned with graduation from programmes, designing programmes that are temporary and have a clear exit strategy. These are often financially and politically easier to sell. The fear of generating dependency by distributing cash transfers has motivated very rigorous targeting methodologies and limited the duration of programme benefits in many countries.<sup>50</sup>

45 <http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/NewYork.action?id=34>

46 Slater and Farrington 2009.

47 Luttrell and Moser 2004.

48 Thakur, Arnold and Johnson 2009.

49 For more on Targeting see Annex 2

50 Samson 2015.

However, the other side of this debate recognizes a more systemic role for social protection and understands graduation as exiting poverty or deprivations in general, rather than exiting specific programmes. In this sense, it looks at social protection as offering bundles of services that complement and supplement each other depending on the conditions, and stage of life, of the people who benefit from social protection. This vision of graduation is more closely aligned with the notion of social protection as a contract between right holders and duty bearers.

## 4.5 Unified social registries

Information registries and associated integrated management information systems (IMIS) have become important mechanisms to integrate data and manage information across programmes, and establish links between them and with other services and sectors.

There are two types of registries used by countries for social protection programmes:

- **Social Registries** serve many programmes for the purposes of determining eligibility for social programmes, and therefore contain eligibility-related information on all applicants not just on beneficiaries (inclusion of non-beneficiary applicants is very important for appeals, dynamism, and the ability to serve multiple programmes), and
- **Beneficiary Registries** that serve as a backbone for benefits administration, but only contains information on approved beneficiaries

Many countries are moving towards a unified social registry, to serve multiple programmes as a common beneficiary system, organized into a database, of all households and individuals interviewed to be registered into social protection programmes. A unified social registry aims to collect, record and store updated and historical information on individual and household characteristics and circumstances, to determine eligibility for certain programmes. The data are usually compiled and unified from the data collection of several programmes or from a large data collection drive performed by one programme, which is then used by several others in the social protection sector. These registries are often linked to a software application that determines eligibility for individual programmes. An IMIS refers to the broader system that enables the flow and management of information within and between social protection programmes and sometimes beyond to other sectors.<sup>51</sup>

At an operational level, unified social registries allow for coordination of social protection programmes, reduce duplication of efforts (for example, of data collection), combat fraud (by keeping track of which beneficiaries are receiving which benefits), improve efficiencies (for example, common payment systems, monitoring and evaluation), and ease the transition of beneficiaries between schemes as circumstances change, thereby ensuring continuation of services as needed. They can potentially also improve social protection programmes' responses to emergencies if they are designed to include records of households that are vulnerable.

For example, Kenya's *Single Registry* consolidates information from five of the country's main programmes: the *Hunger Safety Net Programme*; the *Persons with Severe Disability Programme*; the *Older Persons Cash Transfer*; the *Urban Food Subsidy Programme*; and the *Orphans and Vulnerable Children Programme*. The single registry consolidates information, including targeting, registration and enrolment, payments, and grievance mechanisms, across different processes of the country's social protection programmes.<sup>52</sup>

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51 Barca and Chirchi 2014.

52 Barca and Chirchi 2014.



Another example is the new National Households Registry in Ghana, which identifies potential beneficiaries for all social protection programmes. In many countries individuals receive information about social protection programmes in ways that are passive or semi-passive, i.e., the state relies on the mobilization of the potential beneficiaries by radio, TV or occasional visits by social workers to stimulate the target groups to visit the registry centres. However, the model that has been designed for Ghana implies an active search process, registering target households. It is a very recent initiative. The design may bring some solutions for Mauritius, which is seeking to develop a similar initiative.

Unified social registries can also improve common targeting across programmes by minimizing errors of exclusion and inclusion, reducing the costs associated with collecting data for each programme and improving the transparency of targeting mechanisms. Brazil is a good example of a unified social registry that consolidates targeting from many of the country's programmes. Brazil's Unified Registry for Social Programmes (*Cadastro Unico*) was established in 2001 and contains information about more than 21 million households. It was initially built using data from the country's large conditional cash transfer programme (*Bolsa Familia*). A large majority of Brazil's social programmes select beneficiaries on the basis of information contained in the Unified Registry.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, unified social registries also facilitate the integration of operations and services into one entry point for beneficiaries. This entry point, also known as Single Window Service or One-Stop Shop, consolidates services so that families need to approach only a single office, ideally at the subnational level, where they can access information and register for a number of services provided by the social protection system and links to other sectors. In many instances, individuals are assigned a social worker who evaluates their needs and proposes an integrated package of programmes relevant to them and their households. This reduces beneficiaries' time and money costs to access services, and improves coordination and information. It also increases outreach, integrates social protection interventions with other sectors (for example, maternal and child health); links social protection to employment programmes (for example, access to health care for those enrolled under public work programmes); empowers subnational institutions involved in designing, administering and overseeing the Single Window Service; and facilitates overall coordination and monitoring and evaluation.

53 [https://wfp.org.br/sites/default/files/introduction\\_to\\_brazils\\_unified\\_registry.pdf](https://wfp.org.br/sites/default/files/introduction_to_brazils_unified_registry.pdf).



# REACHING THOSE LEFT BEHIND:

## making social protection inclusive

**Inclusive social protection emphasizes the need to reach everyone that needs to be reached, addressing deprivation in all areas that matter for well-being, beyond income poverty; it recognizes the need to make social protection sensitive to the specific needs and constraints faced by different groups, as well as how these needs and constraints interact with each other.**

# 5





Paying special attention to those left behind, to ensure inclusive systems, will be critical for the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; it corresponds to the recent SDG Declaration: “We pledge that no one will be left behind... And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first.”

The focus on inclusiveness also directly follows UNDP’s mandate as stated in the Strategic Plan’s proposed outcomes to help countries move towards growth and development that is inclusive (Outcome 1), strengthen institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services (Outcome 3), and foster progress in reducing gender inequality (Outcome 4).

For social protection systems to be inclusive, they have to look beyond income poverty and address deprivations and vulnerabilities in the many dimensions that matter for well-being. These include social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities, income poverty and marginalization. They have to understand the barriers that stand between the poor and most vulnerable groups, such as (documented and undocumented) migrant workers, refugees, people with health disabilities and HIV and marginalized groups such as the LGBT community, drug users and many others, and access to social protection. Social protection that goes beyond income redistribution includes reforms that tackle social exclusion, such as legal and policy reforms to change disempowering and discriminatory social norms and practices and to create a social environment that would enable and encourage the most marginalized to register, access, and benefit from social protection.

The inclusion of traditionally left behind groups not only has to do with what is done (programmes and systems described above) but also with how they are implemented and resources distributed.

From this perspective, this section will focus on inclusive social protection that: (i) reaches everyone that needs to be reached, addressing deprivation in all areas that matter for well-being, beyond income poverty, and (ii) is sensitive to the specific needs and constraints faced by different groups, as well as how these needs and constraints interact with each other.

## 5.1 Reaching all that need to be reached: Expanding coverage

For social protection to move from a poverty reduction strategy to one of sustainable poverty eradication, coverage is an important aspect of design and funding. As social protection programmes have grown, so has the recognition that certain groups are traditionally left behind. Even where universal social protection frameworks exist, certain segments of the population, particularly those that experience discrimination and exclusion, face challenges accessing services and programmes. Targeted programmes that reach out to these groups, overcoming the barriers they face, can be a powerful mechanism to ensure that “no one is left behind”. A vast number of countries have embarked on reforms to expand coverage to rural populations, older people, ethnic minorities, informal workers, migrants, and many other groups.

Actively searching for beneficiaries is one innovation for reaching people left behind. This model implies that state workers actively seek out beneficiaries, particularly in remote areas, instead of waiting for them to come forward to request services. *Brasil sem Miséria* is a good example. Before 2011, one of the greatest challenges of the strategy, despite Government efforts and funding increases, was reaching the most deprived and isolated. Either because of lack of identification, migration, residence in isolated or remote areas, or lack of information, many of those eligible for benefits did not claim them. In 2011, to promote social and economic inclusion of Brazilians living in extreme poverty, the Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger, in partnership with other ministries, states and municipalities, implemented *Busca Ativa* (active search), a strategy to locate extremely poor families and include them in the *Cadastro Unico* and to link them to programmes such as *Bolsa Família* and *Bolsa Verde* to foster productive activities. The active search also aims to ensure that the poorest families have access to basic services. According to the Ministry of Social Development, since 2011 almost 800,000 families have been identified, registered and included in the programme.

Other countries, particularly middle income ones, have focused efforts on expanding health and pension coverage for those outside the contributory system. Pensions in particular have been extended to many older people who would otherwise not be covered by formal contributory insurance pensions and depend on their families and social networks for financial support and social care. Old-age pensions cover less than 10 per cent of the population over statutory age in more than 40 countries including Indonesia, Yemen, Honduras and Kenya.<sup>54</sup> Some of these countries apply a means test to determine beneficiaries or the level of benefits, and other criteria including age, location and family composition. Other countries apply a universal scheme where anyone over a certain age is eligible. Mauritius, for example, has established a non-contributory universal pension scheme funded by the state budget. The programme is significantly contributing to ensuring income security during a fast demographic transition, reducing income inequality and building social cohesion.<sup>55</sup> Similar schemes have been established in Bolivia, Lesotho, Namibia, Nepal, among others. Furthermore, its success is embedded in a progressive economic, social, and political policy agenda that includes: investing in free health care and education for all; widespread government ownership; reduced military spending; strong commitment to democratic institutions; and cooperation among workers, government and employers. Other countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Peru, South Africa, Thailand, Viet Nam and Zambia have also extended non-contributory pensions and health with important results.

Existing evidence demonstrates that social pensions contribute to the spending of older people on basics such as food, health care, and expenses associated with social and ceremonial activities.<sup>56</sup> Research from South Africa, for example, shows that the state's old-age non-contributory pension reduces poverty and inequality and is used for income-generating purposes by the elderly themselves as well as other household members.<sup>57</sup>

Expansion of social protection is also critical to provide coverage to those of active working age that are not benefiting from the formal labour market. This can include informal workers both in urban and rural settings including domestic workers not covered by contributory systems. It can also include those whose principal responsibility is unpaid care and domestic work. Even when eligible for voluntary contributory systems, many informal workers find requirements and criteria too burdensome and expensive. To encourage this population's participation, it may therefore be necessary to adapt administrative processes and financing arrangements rules to the situation of informal workers, to ensure their effective coverage both during their active period of work and during retirement.

Some countries have increased the flexibility allowed in contributory systems to address coverage of informal workers. For example, Chile has adopted flexible contributions to encourage participation of agricultural workers, whose income is highly volatile by season and vulnerable to unforeseen conditions. In this way, when yields are good, agricultural workers can make larger pension contributions than the norm, and when yields suffer due to unexpected conditions (e.g. flooding or pest problems), they can lower the level of contribution.<sup>58</sup> Tax incentives and subsidized contributions for those with low earnings flexibility are other ways to strengthen participation in pension systems.

Other countries have provided targeted comprehensive social protection to informal workers in particular sectors where the needs are known to be large. The *Bidi Welfare Fund* in India, for example, provides social protection for workers, mostly women, employed in producing bidis, small, hand-rolled cigarettes. The welfare fund, set up by either the central or state government, is funded through a bidi export tax and provides medical care, education for children, housing, water, and recreational facilities.<sup>59</sup>

54 ILO 2015b.

55 UNDP 2015d.

56 Handayani and Babajanian 2012.

57 OECD 2009.

58 Hu and Stewart 2009.

59 Cameron 2014.



Reaching out to the traditionally left behind also often implies exploring community-based mechanisms of social protection, which tend to be decentralized and flexible. Community-based social protection (CBSP) is usually defined as an informal grouping of activities that protect community members from risk through “locally arranged social protection measures that are predicated on people’s cultural beliefs, norms and values.”<sup>60</sup> Community-based insurance mechanisms are probably the most common form of CBSP. However, it is difficult to extend coverage with these mechanisms. Today, development work focuses on expanding coverage and building universal social protection systems.

There are some instances of CBSP that have successfully expanded and linked to state programmes. The *Self-Employed Women’s Association* (SEWA) in India is a good example of the potential of CBSP. Started in 1972 in Gujarat by a few women employed seasonally in the textile industry, SEWA has grown into a trade union of self-employed women with more than 200,000 members. It provides health, life, asset, and loan insurance, as well as maternity benefit, to more than 30,000 members.

Expanding coverage of social protection presents a number of challenges related to affordability and institutional capacity. It is often expensive to reach those traditionally left behind, as they may be cut off from information. It also requires local capacities in remote and isolated areas. Furthermore, the socially excluded often lack the voice or agency to participate meaningfully in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. This lack of agency and political participation further entrenches social exclusion and thus limits the transformative effects of social protection interventions. Efforts are needed to make social protection everyone’s business and promote it as a tool for many sectors.

## 5.2 Sensitization of social protection: Addressing needs and overcoming barriers

For social protection to reach certain groups, programmes and processes must be adapted to those groups’ needs and constraints. Much has been written, for example, on gender-sensitive or child-sensitive social protection that optimizes positive effects and minimizes potential adverse consequences for these specific groups.

There is certainly a trend towards social protection that is inclusive and addresses the barriers and specific needs of excluded groups. This is apparent in evaluations of some of the largest programmes around the world. The women’s participation rate in India’s *MGNREGA* is much higher than the national labour force participation rates for women, due partly to the introduction of child-care measures in the programme design.<sup>61</sup> Marginalized tribes and castes are disproportionately represented on the programme compared with their share of the population.

Evaluations of Mexico’s *Oportunidades* programme, a large CCT programme that reaches over 6 million households, found that it has performed well in terms of reaching 94 per cent of indigenous people, who are historically poorer and difficult to reach with government services. However, the poverty impact of *Oportunidades* has been lower for indigenous people. It is argued that this is due to supply factors—for instance, the quality of education services provided to communities is below national standards—and because they face “a lack of social mobility and discrimination in the labour market.”<sup>62 63</sup> This illustrates that increasing the uptake of education and health services does not immediately result in improved well-being. Other factors come into play, such as the quality of the services on offer, the adequacy of the service to serve the needs of a specific community, and the compounding barriers that certain groups face when transitioning to labour markets.

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60 Mupedziswa and Ntseane 2013.

61 Ghosh and others 2008.

62 Ulrichs and Roelen 2012.

63 Gonzalves de la Rocha 2009.

Much can be done in the design and implementation of social protection to ensure that it supports social inclusion. In terms of gender equality, for example, the objectives of social inclusion presuppose that the gendered division of labour must change. Temporary or permanent personal care and caring for other members of the household and family, such as children, old or disabled people, addicts and ill people are time-consuming activities, disproportionately assumed by women. The time taken to carry them out may have direct important consequences for the well-being of those who provide such care. Thus, maternity dynamics and the unpaid care and domestic work the “hard core” underpinning the gendered division of labour and a contributing factor to social exclusion, vulnerability and poverty)— have to be reconfigured.<sup>64</sup>

As the UNDP MDG evaluation finds, there has been progress in that direction, but the impact that the absence of a universal social security system has on women, as well as how unpaid care and domestic work and the obligation to provide family care are at the very heart of poverty and vulnerability among women, but not among men.<sup>65</sup>

Even in programmes where women are defined as the main target group, women tend to benefit less from social programmes due to specific intra-household relations. Some social programmes even reinforce traditional gender roles and responsibilities, and thereby diminish women’s ability to strengthen their position in society.<sup>66</sup>

For example, some argue that conditional cash transfers (CCTs), an important form of social protection, reinforce gender stereotypes. Many programmes assume that women are available to carry out the unpaid care and domestic work-related obligations associated with CCTs without consideration of their breadwinning responsibilities or need for paid work, and to the neglect of any recognition of men’s responsibilities to contribute to unpaid care and domestic work. Some Brazilian experts have commented that *Bolsa Familia* utilizes the “culture of mothering” without necessarily supporting the personal progress of women as active citizens.<sup>67</sup> In Ecuador some evidence about the *Bono de Desarrollo Humano* (BDH) CCT programme suggests that when one of the requirements of the programme was that the household was not part of the national social security system, mothers receiving a benefit were more likely to remain unemployed and less likely to seek formal employment. This restriction was lifted in 2009. However, new rules regarding the proxy means tests also disqualify households employed in the formal sector.<sup>68</sup>

Additionally, women are more likely to be excluded from various social protection interventions as they are systematically underrepresented in formal sector employment. Social security measures in many developing countries tend to be restricted to the small, male-dominated section of the workforce employed in the formal state and private sector. In this case, poor women’s interests can be served by extending social insurance to informal workers, including own-account and contributing family workers. For many women, this is the main source of income.

Lack of time in some cases may be minor, but in other instances it can be forbidding, preventing the attainment of even a bare-bones living standard. Should a household officially classified as non-poor be facing a time deficit, and should it also not have the option to make up for it by purchasing market substitutes, that household will be encountering deprivations not reflected in the official poverty numbers. In other words, though many may experience time pressures on an occasional or daily basis, for some segments of the population such time deficits are literally poverty-inducing but invisible to official income poverty as well as to multidimensional measurements of poverty.<sup>69</sup>

64 UNDP 2013.

65 Blixen 2015.

66 UNDP and UNCDF 2013.

67 Thakur, Arnold and Johnson 2009.

68 Ordoñez and others 2015.

69 Antonopoulos, Masterson and Zacharias 2012.



## Time Poverty, Gender and Social Protection: An illustrative example

Consider two households with identical incomes just above the poverty threshold (taking into account differences in household size and using appropriate equivalency scales). The first household consists of two adults, one of whom participates in full-time paid work, while the other performs most of the unpaid household production and maintenance activities. The second household has two members who are full-time paid workers and two young children. Both of these households will have the same poverty ranking. Upon closer examination, the second household lacks time to perform necessary household activities (including caring for children), and the resources to purchase market substitutes.

As a result, despite identical incomes, these households of largely disparate levels of access to a minimum set of goods and services are given the same poverty ranking. More importantly, bridging income gaps, without addressing time-deficits at the same time, may result in an overall deterioration of living standards for some households and individuals.

Standard measurements of income poverty, as well as multidimensional poverty, tacitly assume that all households and individuals have enough time to attend to the daily household needs of their members. If poverty is not measured accurately, its real breadth and depth remain invisible, and its underlying causes are not fully accounted for, and thus less likely to be redressed by policies using traditional sectoral and fragmented approaches.

To promote equitable, inclusive and resilient societies it is necessary to shed light on hidden deprivations and consider the range of interconnected mitigation policies, including social protection. The Levy Institute Measure of Time-Income Poverty (LIMTIP), which integrates household production time requirements with income requirements, shows that awareness of gender differences (in this instance, unpaid work) can bring to the forefront a “missing” but key analytical category that allows for an improved measurement of poverty and a deeper and more precise poverty classification of households and individuals, as well as a more efficient policy response. Such a lens allows a better allocation of diverse social support measures, increasing the efficiency of public investment on social spending. For instance, some segments of the population require direct cash transfers, others will mostly benefit from in-kind government services, others from public service job creation, yet other types of households may require specific combinations of all of the above.

In response to these challenges, more efforts are required to ensure that social protection programmes address gender-specific barriers to access, including the distribution of unpaid care and domestic work. Some modalities and mechanisms that can improve women’s access to social protection are family- friendly provisions, such as availability of social care and flexible schedules, efforts to raise awareness and provide women with information on their social protection rights, and gender-sensitivity training to service providers and other stakeholders who implement programmes.

Uruguay is an example of important strides in more gender-sensitive social protection. Specifically, it provides transfers for every child or minor in the household and has worked to position social care services as a critical complement to social protection, to allow women to balance work and family life. UNDP, in collaboration with other agencies and civil society, has worked to generate evidence about the use of time and care, provided support to advocacy efforts and an exchange of relevant international experiences, and was able to position early childhood, disability, old age, and care services in the Government’s social protection agenda. This allows women to better balance work and family life, and improves their access to labour markets. The country has also made great strides in extending unemployment benefits to domestic workers, a predominantly female occupation.

In other countries, making social protection gender-sensitive includes affirmative action measures. Such was the case in El Salvador, where UNDP supported the Government in mainstreaming gender into the Universal System of Social Protection, specifically into its main programme, “*Comunidades Solidarias*”. The mainstreaming exercise resulted in education grants for young mothers and pregnant women, gender violence prevention measures, priority land titling for women, and a 60 per cent quota



for women in cash-for-work programmes. Additionally, the programme is now being monitored with sex-disaggregated data, which allows monitoring the progress of women, and will help influence gender-sensitive policy design and implementation in the future. In Viet Nam, UNDP helped lay the groundwork for collecting much needed sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive information as part of a research programme on social protection. Similarly, a module on gender and social protection has been added to the Gender and Economic Policy Management training materials which are aimed at sensitizing economic policy makers to the differentiated aspects of economic policies on women and men.

Ethiopia's *PSNP* has tailored its programme to include specific groups. To improve women's participation, it makes provisions for childcare at its work sites, by including within the daily tasks the appointment of one person to mind children who is paid the same rate as other participants. It also allows women to work fewer hours than men for the same pay, and facilitates a switch to direct support when women are pregnant or breastfeeding. In this way, the programme has an impact on unpaid care and domestic work. The programme also aims to empower women in rural society by mandating their participation in programme structures and decision-making bodies at community levels.

The *Banzir Income Support Programme* (BISP) in Pakistan, a cash transfer aimed at smoothing consumption, particularly among women, has provided women with access to the National ID cards and bank accounts. Since the introduction of *BISP*, the female registration of Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs) has almost doubled, which can potentially open avenues for their socio-economic and political empowerment.<sup>70</sup>

Mechanisms to move towards more gender-sensitive social protection, that address potential intra-household conflicts, include: (i) strong gender analysis during social protection intervention design, such as gender-sensitive vulnerability assessments; (ii) capacity-building on the part of social protection case workers or agents to address intra-household relationships and peaceful conflict management as an integral part of case management; (iii) engagement with men and their peers (such as influential elders, religious leaders) to promote different types of behaviours.

70 World Bank, 2015a.



## Gender-sensitive Vulnerability Assessment

Gender-sensitive vulnerability assessments can be important tools in the design of social protection strategies or programmes, recognizing that women are systematically more vulnerable and marginalized among the poor, and subject to discrimination and burdens of unpaid work. Such assessments bring to light how men, women, boys and girls often experience economic and social risks differently. Due to gender norms, and roles and responsibilities, their vulnerability to the same risks can vary as can their exposure to different types of risks. When designing a social protection intervention, it is therefore of the utmost importance to consider how these experiences of different economic and social risks intersect at the individual, intra-household and community levels, and potentially reinforce one another, hindering the realization of full human capabilities.

Some gender-related themes considered when conducting a gender-sensitive vulnerability assessment<sup>71</sup> include:

- **Time use patterns** among men, women, girls and boys, and how these are distributed between income-generating and unpaid care and domestic work within and outside the household, as well as leisure time;
- **Intra-household balance of power and decision-making**, which affects the use of labour within and outside the household and the ownership and use of resources, incomes and assets, including productive assets;
- **Lifecycle-related stresses**, such as expenses related to marriages, births, or funerals;
- **Costs associated with ill-health**, and the ways these are distributed among men and women (e.g. do coping strategies have differential implications for assets owned by men compared with women?);
- **Gender-based violence** at the intra-household and community level, including the absence of safe spaces for women;
- **Intra-household informal forms of social protection** that reflect the fact that unpaid

care and domestic work reduce the risks faced by individuals and households, facilitate the ability of individuals and households to meet their needs, and in so doing contribute to their capacity to claim individual and collective rights. In these ways unpaid care and domestic work is, without doubt, the most important primary source of social protection for individuals;

- **Other informal safety nets and coping strategies**, such as support from neighbours and friends, funeral societies, savings clubs, religious institutions, distress sale of assets, migration and remittances sent by family members, and access to loans for consumption smoothing;
- **Gendered risks to the realization of full human capacities** for health, nutrition, education and literacy (this would include an analysis of infant, child and maternal mortality and morbidity, stunting, educational attainment, literacy rates by gender, as well as the distribution of unpaid care and domestic work);
- **Opportunities for participation** in social networks, local politics, and decision-making mechanisms related to social programmes;
- **Exclusion on the basis of a lack of civic documentation**;
- **Employment and labour market risks**, such as unequal wages, employment insecurity, labour market segmentation and discrimination, unequal access to markets (especially in the context of mobility constraints), and lack of child-care facilities;
- **Environmental risks** and the implications for livelihood opportunities, coping strategies and household roles and responsibilities of men, women, boys and girls. Women are also more vulnerable to the impact of climate change, and generally have fewer resources to mitigate risks or to cope with the aftermath of weather-related crises. Women face particular difficulties in accessing and benefiting from basic services such as health and education, are overrepresented in the informal economy, and tend to be less informed about social protection programmes and social services, resulting in greater exclusion and more reluctance to make a complaint or seek redress.<sup>72</sup>

71 Holmes and Jones 2010.

72 Jones, Stavropoulou and Presler-Marshall 2013.

Special attention also needs to be paid to the needs of other groups, ensuring that social protection is responsive to their circumstances. For example, evidence shows that people living with HIV (PLVIH) are particularly vulnerable to falling into poverty and have less access to social protection. Stigma and discrimination often prevent affected households from accessing existing programmes. Also the multiple, overlapping and sometimes unique vulnerabilities faced by HIV-affected households are often not recognized in the design and implementation of conventional targeting mechanisms. For example, the income-based eligibility criteria used in traditional cash transfers, leave out households affected by HIV/AIDS that are forced to shift consumption patterns (e.g. from food, housing and education to health care-related expenses) and to liquidate assets and savings. HIV-sensitive social protection can reduce vulnerability to HIV, improve and extend the lives of PLHIV, and support individuals and households.<sup>73,74</sup>

UNDP study in India provides some evidence that PLHIV and their households face severe socio-economic consequences including exclusion, marginalization and poverty, and are at constant risk of increased illnesses, loss of jobs and income, rising medical expenses, depletion of savings and other resources, food insecurity, psychological stress and related morbidity, discrimination, social exclusion and imminent impoverishment that is often irreversible.<sup>75</sup> These risks are more acute in households headed by HIV widows. The severe and wide-ranging socio-economic impact on PLHIV and their households is further aggravated by stigma and discrimination and slows down the uptake of HIV prevention and treatment services.

The Royal Government of Cambodia, in collaboration with UNDP, UNAIDS and other development partners, embarked on a comprehensive process to make social protection schemes in the country sensitive and inclusive to the needs of people affected by HIV. A socio-economic impact study to better understand the household-level impacts of HIV on human development led to the inclusion of people affected by HIV as a priority group in the National Social Protection Strategy. To move towards the implementation of the strategy, a regional High Level Technical Consultation on HIV-Sensitive Social Protection for Impact Mitigation was hosted in Siam Reap, and a comprehensive review of the existing and potential impacts of social protection schemes on households affected by HIV was carried out. The recommendations derived from the consultations and review are guiding the actions of the Government in moving towards HIV sensitive social protection.

People living with disabilities (PLWD) also tend to have higher poverty rates than national averages, while certain barriers in design and implementation keep them from receiving social protection benefits. Some of the specific constraints include lack of physical mobility that makes it hard for beneficiaries to enrol and collect benefits, lack of sensitivity to their specific needs, difficulty in linking with labour markets, and a problem with defining the criteria of “disability” that encompasses a wide range of sub-categories.

Many countries have aimed to surmount these barriers by creating specific programmes and funds aimed at PLWD. The disability allowance in Nepal, for example, was introduced in 1996, with an aim to improve the economic vulnerability of disabled and partially disabled people. The allowance reaches around 25,000 people across the country.<sup>76</sup>

73 Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS 2010.

74 UNDP 2014b.

75 UNDP India 2011.

76 UNDP and UNCDF 2013.



# MAKING THE LINK BETWEEN SOCIAL PROTECTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

**Social protection, as an entry point of government into the household, has the potential to improve environmental outcomes by influencing people's behaviour towards more sustainable management of natural resources and by reducing households' vulnerability to climate risks.**





The 2030 development agenda and goals link the concerns of “people and the planet”—recognizing the interdependence of human well-being and healthy ecosystems. We know that the destruction of the natural resource base as a result of environmental degradation aggravates deprivations, since the poorest depend disproportionately on natural resources for their livelihoods. Furthermore, increased deprivations aggravate environmental degradation if the poor are forced to resort to the overexploiting of natural resources, such as overfishing and slash-and-burn agriculture, for survival. When comparing the impact of hurricanes on the shared island of Hispaniola, devastation and loss of life tend to be much more severe in Haiti than in the neighbouring Dominican Republic due, in part, to the much lower percentage of remaining forest cover in Haiti following decades of deforestation. Differences in levels of education, political stability and infrastructure also have a compounding effect.<sup>77</sup>

Unfortunately, the vital policy links between poverty and inequality reduction and environmental sustainability are still more often overlooked than integrated into the mainstream in both developed and developing countries. In the context of the SDGs all governments are committed to poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. However, many governments continue to believe there are major trade-offs between these goals.

There is still much to be learned in this area of work. The rest of the chapter lays out some links between (i) social protection and the sustainable use of natural resources; and (ii) social protection and climate risks. It also discusses programmes that have been successful in bridging these two areas of work, and some general lessons that can be extracted from successful programmes.

## 6.1 Social protection and the sustainable use of natural resources

Natural assets make a fundamental contribution to meeting basic needs such as providing livelihoods, shelter, food, fresh water and energy. Ecosystem services are estimated to contribute between 47 and 89 per cent of rural incomes, termed the “GDP of the poor” (i.e. the effective GDP or total source of livelihood of rural and forest-dwelling poor households)<sup>78</sup>. Loss or degradation of these natural assets, therefore, has serious implications for the incomes and well-being of the populations that social protection targets.

However, social protection is usually designed with little connection to or consideration for environmental policy. Similarly, environmental programmes, although much more aware of their social impacts, are not usually seen in conjunction with social protection programmes. Ultimately, programmes and projects are often implemented with either exclusively social or environmental objectives, and the way in which the outcomes in these two areas reinforce each other is often overlooked.

From a social protection perspective, there is a need to recognize the imperative to address risk, regenerate natural resources and conserve ecosystems to stimulate rural economies, create jobs, increase resilience, ensure that schemes can have a maximum impact on people’s lives, and prevent the reversals of hard won gains in well-being. The mechanisms and dynamics through which social protection can contribute to sustainable natural resource management include:

- **Increase investment capacity of the poor.** Rises in household income, through social protection benefits, can have a positive impact on land and natural resource management. When adequately targeted and provided on a regular and predictable basis, social protection can facilitate increased investment in sustainable productive activities, including inputs, tools and livestock. Even small transfer amounts can help the poor overcome liquidity constraints, and provide some

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77 Webersik and Klose 2010.

78 TEEB 2010.

insurance against risks that prevent them from investing in activities that improve land yields in the future.<sup>79</sup> A study of the *Cash for Relief Programme* (CfR) in Ethiopia, for example, aimed primarily at enabling households hit by crop failure to rebuild their productive assets, finds that the recipients invested in restoring land productivity, in order to regenerate their livelihoods.<sup>80</sup>

This suggests that certain social protection interventions can simultaneously reduce land and natural resource degradation and poverty, while increasing productivity. Examples of such strategies include public works programmes that promote investments in soil and water conservation and agroforestry; regular and predictable cash transfers that result in investments in productive assets; and insurance that lessens the incentives to deplete natural resources.

- **Providing incentives for adopting positive natural resource management practices.** Additionally, social protection schemes can also be used to directly increase the adoption of sustainable natural resource management practices. Social protection can be used as a vehicle for disseminating the information, skills, and equipment necessary for conservation purposes, and creating the incentives for conservation behaviours. In China, for example, the *Conversion of Cropland to Forests Program* (CCFP) provides grain and cash subsidies, migration assistance, energy, irrigation and training to farmers who agree to convert their cropland to forests. Over the past 16 years, 32 million rural households in 25 provinces have benefited. The CCFP has increased forest restoration and cover and is the largest poverty alleviation programme in China.<sup>81</sup>
- **Easing the transition towards greener economies.** Finally, as countries transition towards greener economies, following their commitments at the COP21 in 2015, it is likely that many economies will undergo significant structural changes. This transition, despite being necessary, will undeniably produce winners and losers, with new types of work created and existing jobs disappearing. This is likely to affect women and men living in poverty disproportionately; they could face significant costs such as rising energy prices, restricted access to forest resources, and employment loss. Individuals whose occupations will disappear, and are not equipped with other skills, will not automatically be able to access the new opportunities provided by the developing greener sectors.<sup>82</sup> Research by UNRISD<sup>83</sup> provides examples of the poorest being harmed by transitions to green economies. For example, large numbers of poor people and food crop production were displaced in Brazil, India and Indonesia to make way for biofuels, promoted as an alternative low-carbon energy source. Big hydroelectric dams, built as renewable energy sources, have led to the relocation of large numbers of forest dwellers, often without adequate compensation.

Social protection can be a mechanism through which governments provide compensation and address transitional costs. It can serve as a platform to provide incentives for skills training associated with industrial restructuring and green jobs, increase women's ability to engage in green economy jobs or projects by easing care burden responsibilities, and seek co-benefits and transformational change.

To understand the links between social protection and environmental sustainability, it is important to examine the large number of policies and programmes aimed primarily at the sustainable use of natural resources, but with proven strong social impacts, and ask: what can social protection learn and adapt from these programmes? Where can synergies be found to maximize both social and environmental outcomes?

UNDP has decades of experience promoting and implementing conservation efforts that have multiple benefits and create opportunities for poverty eradication and social inclusion. In the course of implementing projects, UNDP

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79 FAO, 2015b.  
80 Standing 2007.  
81 FAO 2015a.  
82 Dercon 2012.  
83 UNRISD 2012.



recognizes that building local support, based on improving the livelihoods of local people, is likely to improve the project's management and sustainability. As early as 2006, a GEF study entitled "The Role of Local Benefits in Global Environmental Programs"<sup>84</sup> examined how social benefits contributed to project success and sustainability. It concluded that for many GEF-related activities, local and environmental benefits are interlinked, and local support for improved environmental management is built upon the achievement of benefits at the community level, which can offset locally incurred costs and generate sustainable support. In a way, the success of conservation efforts depends on finding appropriate strategies for working with local people. Thus, many of the instruments used for sustainable natural resource management involve the creation and support of sustainable livelihoods for communities dependent on natural resources through innovative tools, such as payment for ecosystems services (PES) and micro-grants. These tools, although conceived as market-based policy instruments with environmental objectives, mirror social protection instruments, such as cash transfers and start-up support services, very closely.

A few lessons distilled from relevant literature and studies as well as ongoing local experiences in conservation, with strong impacts on the well-being of the poor and vulnerable that could be used in the context of social protection policy design, include:

- 1. Design programmes that merge the priorities of individuals with technical specifications for sustainable natural resource management, to maximize the impact of both social and environmental outcomes simultaneously.**

For maximizing impact there is a need to integrate social and environmental objectives into programme design and decision-making. After all, both aspects are integrated into the workings of the real world and affect the well-being of the poor. A big challenge for this is the institutional home of both social and environmental programmes, often situated in different ministries. This presents difficulties in bridging the expertise and experience to address both objectives together.

An interesting example of merged environmental and social concerns at every stage of programme implementation can be found in *Ecosystem Based Adaptation (EBA) Programmes*. Ecosystem Based approaches are defined as "a strategy for integrated water management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. Humans, with their cultural diversity, are an integral component of ecosystems."<sup>85</sup> The EBA approach recognizes that ecosystems are complex and interact dynamically with social and environmental systems.

EBA measures have demonstrated significant environmental and social benefits at the local and national levels, such as enhanced food security, access to clean water, improved livelihoods, strengthened local capacities to manage natural resources, increased soil moisture and vegetation cover, sustainable grassland and livestock management, among many others.<sup>86</sup> These programmes also provide a means to engage women and vulnerable groups proactively and give them a voice they did not previously have. In a programme implemented by UNDP in Panchase, Nepal, for example, women have been active participants in planning and implementing EBA measures associated with broom grass cultivation, which have resulted in a new source of income, as well as strengthening bonds between women of different castes.

The design and selection of EBA approaches is very much based on a combination of social and environmental objectives. For examples, the selection of EBA measures for a mountain ecosystem project in Peru (see table below), combined criteria to increase the resilience of the population and the ecosystem they depend on, simultaneously.

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84 GEF Evaluation Office 2006.

85 <https://www.cbd.int/convention/>.

86 UNDP 2015a.

## CRITERIA FOR SELECTING EBA MEASURES FOR PROJECT IN NOR YAUYOS COCHAS LANDSCAPE RESERVE IN PERU

		Are the criteria social or environmental?
<b>1. Criteria for Selecting what is (and is not ) EBA</b>	The measure reduces the population's vulnerability to climate change	Social
	The measure directly or indirectly increases the resilience of biodiversity and ecosystem services	Environmental
	The measure uses biodiversity and ecosystem services in a sustainable manner, without damaging them, and in some cases enhances them	Environmental
<b>2. Criteria for prioritizing between EBA options</b>	Size of affected population	Social
	Capacity of the measure to reduce the vulnerability of the population (efficiency)	Social
	Importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services to the population (prioritizing ecosystem services that support main productive activities, and biodiversity used by the population)	Social
	Vulnerability of biodiversity and ecosystem services to climate change	Environmental
	Durability and immediacy of the measure	Social and environmental

Source: Adapted from UNDP 2015b.

One important challenge identified in the implementation of EBA is merging environmental and social objectives, despite a difference in where and when the benefits materialize. While the environmental objectives of programmes might be concerned with longer term, larger scale benefits, local communities often prioritize short term gains and local scale benefits. Understanding and designing programmes that can deliver both types of benefits is critical for the success of EBA. For example, the mountain EBA project in Peru generated immediate benefits of enhanced water for increasing agriculture and livestock productivity, as part of a broader effort to improve ecosystem services. Such short term gains were critical to make the case for EBA at local level and to secure local commitment.

Another interesting example of combined social and environmental objectives is South Africa's *Working for Water Programme*, implemented by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (which administers the programme), the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, and the Department of Agriculture. The programme employs 20,000 people per year, in 300 projects in nine provinces, and aims to remove water-intensive alien tree and plant species from local habitats while relieving poverty. Since its inception in 1995,



the programme has cleared more than one million hectares of alien plant species, releasing 50 million cubic meters of additional water per annum. Much of this water is used for irrigated agriculture, thereby reducing local food insecurity. The programme targets marginalized groups as potential employees: it seeks to ensure that 60 per cent of its staff is female, 20 per cent youth, and 5 per cent living with disabilities.<sup>87</sup> The programme also provides training for workers, not only in the technical skills required for the job, such as herbicide application, but also small business development and health education.

## **2. Use established social protection mechanisms for the development of sustainable natural resource management programmes**

In countries where social protection mechanisms are well developed, there is an interesting opportunity to use them to further programmes that have environmental sustainability objectives. Since the livelihoods of the poorest are so closely linked to natural resources, social protection information systems that map the poor, such as registries of beneficiaries, can provide very useful information to inform and target environmental sustainability policies.

Brazil's *Bolsa Verde* is a very clear example of a programme that benefits from a well-established social protection information system. The programme has three main objectives: i) ecosystem conservation and sustainable use; ii) improvement of participants' quality of life; and iii) income support for the extreme poor that carry out activities for conservation. The programme builds on Brazil's successful CCT programme, *Bolsa Familia*, providing additional income support to families who live in extreme poverty in rural areas in exchange for maintenance and sustainable use of natural resources—improving both forest health and economic conditions. The programme had provided additional income to 73,000 Brazilian families by the end of 2014.

The targeting for *Bolsa Verde* combines both socio-economic factors and geographic location. It targets families that are registered in the *Cadastro Unico*, the largest single beneficiary registry in the world, receive other social protection benefits and live in federal protected areas and extractive reserves in the Amazon.<sup>88</sup> It targets mainly traditional and indigenous communities, recognizing the important role of these communities for environmental conservation. It efficiently uses *Bolsa Familia's* established beneficiary identification system and delivery mechanism to identify and reach communities that are in the best position to provide an environmental service.

Similarly, established social protection programmes can consider adapting the conditions and incentives to promote the sustainable use of natural resources. For example, conditional cash transfer can be conditional on reforestation or the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices. In such cases, cash transfers would correct the market failures that make unsustainable activities more valuable than the sustainable use of natural resources. Actually, payment for environmental services programmes (PES), in some instances, look exactly like conditional cash transfer programmes with environmental conditions. However, it is important to note that PES are designed with the main objective of creating a market-based incentive for a conservation activity. Thus, beneficiaries of PES are not necessarily the poor; instead they target the managers of natural resources, such as land owners. Conditional cash transfers with environmental conditions would combine both environmental and social objectives, and will need to take into account the capacity to monitor compliance with the conditions and the availability of the supply side factors (school, health centres; seeds, water) to fulfil any conditions imposed.

Finally, social protection mechanisms can be used to enable beneficiaries to acquire knowledge and skills on the sustainable use of natural resources. Public works programmes, for example, can require beneficiaries

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87 UNDP 2012b.

88 Ramachandran and Garity 2012.

to acquire skills and work on sustainable agricultural practices. Also, points of payment for social protection benefits could be used to distribute information and equipment to promote more sustainable use of natural resources or training towards environmental capacity-building activities. Cash transfers are already being used in a number of countries as points of entry for complementary intervention to achieve related outcomes—called “cash plus” interventions. For example, countries like Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso combine cash transfers with participation in awareness seminars on nutrition, family health practices and sanitation. In Ethiopia, Cameroon and Malawi, cash transfers are combined with participation in awareness seminars on productive practices. Similarly, pre-established cash transfers can be supplemented by innovative interventions to promote environmental sustainability.

### 3. Bringing the local dimension to the forefront

Sustainable natural resource management efforts build on local knowledge and experiences. UNDP has been strongly involved in promoting a community-based approach to sustainable natural resource management that builds on the deep knowledge developed by local communities about the natural resources they depend on, as well as their essential roles in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating solutions.

Underlying the community-based model is the notion that communities are central to planning efforts that aim to improve their lives. One example of such an approach is community-based adaptation, which operates in communities that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. It identifies, assists, and implements community-based development activities that strengthen the capacity of local people to adapt to living in a riskier and less predictable climate. Community-based adaptation generates adaptation strategies through participatory processes, involving local stakeholders as well as development and disaster risk-reduction practitioners. It builds on existing cultural norms and addresses local development concerns that make people vulnerable to the impacts of climate change in the first place.<sup>89</sup>

Similar local level involvement and participatory processes can strengthen the effectiveness of social protection implementation. As is the case in community-based adaptation projects, local level participation could provide a way to understand local circumstances, needs and deprivations, and offer opportunities and innovations for tailoring programmes, delivery and outputs to the local context. Since poverty is often the result of intersecting circumstances and deprivations, local level inputs and participation can shed light on the local drivers of poverty and how to overcome poverty, enhancing both the social and environmental impacts of programmes.

Local level processes can foster innovation in the adoption of ways of addressing local priorities, as can be observed in community-based adaptation projects. In Bangladesh, for example, the *Forest, Fish and Fruit* (or Triple F) model, implemented by the Government in partnership with UNDP to reduce vulnerability to climate change in five coastal communities, offers a new way to transform barren coastal land into productive land. By building mounds and ditches, fruit and timber trees can be grown to be protective and productive, and fish can be cultivated within the ditches. In addition, high yielding vegetables can also be grown between the trees and along the banks of the ditches. Thus the *Triple F* model not only provides protection against floods, but also provides additional sources of income to the communities. This project adopted an innovative participatory approach and a simple implementation arrangement. After assessing the vulnerability of the communities, which were often hit by floods, the project worked with the community to develop adaptation solutions deemed appropriate and effective. What started off as a pilot project in 2009, has grown to benefit 14,350 households in four vulnerable districts who are able to use the *FFF* model and complementary adaptation measures (such as improved varieties of agricultural crops and livestock) to cultivate fruit and vegetables, grow timber trees and rear fish, and ultimately manage and protect their natural capital in a changing climate.

89 Ayers and Forsyth 2009.



In the context of social protection, local participation can be especially suited for the identification of the types of activities to be conducted under public works programmes. This is the case of *MGNREGS*, in India, the massive rural development programme that benefits one in every five rural households in the country by guaranteeing one hundred days of waged employment per year to rural households whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Under *MGNREGS* the list of “permissible” works is selected at the local level and includes environmental services such as conservation of water, groundwater recharge, reduced soil erosion, increased soil fertility, conservation of biodiversity, reclamation of degraded crop and grazing lands, enhanced supply of leaf manure, fuel wood and non-wood forest products among others. An assessment conducted by UNDP of the environmental implications of rural development schemes in India,<sup>90</sup> finds that the works under *MGNREGS* that are linked to water, soil and land, have resulted in higher crop productivity and production, reduced potential damage due to extreme weather events, the regeneration of degraded soil, land, and water resources, reduced soil erosion, improved soil fertility, increasing biodiversity, augmentation of surface and ground water resources for irrigation and household use and increasing carbon sequestration.<sup>91</sup>

The assessment also finds that the environmental impact of *MGNREGS* could be potentiated by preparing a perspective plan for every local unit, *Gram Panchayat*, incorporating landscape and watershed based planning, and by strengthening the capacities of *Gram Panchayats* to develop green proposals and monitor green results.<sup>92</sup>

In the case of CCTs, local discretion can help identify locally appropriate conditionalities, environmental or social, to enhance the development impacts of the programme. Conditionalities would be based on local priorities as well as supply-side constraints, such as the availability of school and health infrastructure and professionals, seeds, or local capacity to deliver and monitor.

A community focus can also provide a more appropriate unit to identify complementary interventions to improve the well-being of communities. For example, a UNDP led project in Niger, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which aims to address adaptation in the agricultural sector in eight vulnerable communities, combines adaptation efforts with other income generation programmes to build resilience. The interventions include the implementation of adaptation practices at community level to enhance agricultural activities, as well as supporting extra-agricultural productive activities in rural areas. These activities enable poor households and those particularly vulnerable to climate change to earn sufficient income to offset the risks to their agricultural systems from climate change. The project also improves the provision of financial services (micro-finance) to poor and particularly vulnerable households to climate change, by financing 1,000 climate-adaptive income-generating micro-projects in the areas of agriculture, fisheries and pastoral activities. Such credits benefit nearly 200,000 people of which 80 per cent are women, and improve their income by over 10 per cent. The combination of these activities responds to the needs and priorities of the local communities in an integrated manner.

## 6.2 Social protection and climate risk

Climate change is increasingly a source of vulnerability and risk for people around the world, as it increases the incidence and intensity of natural hazards. Natural disasters affect more than 200 million people a year.<sup>93</sup> In the last 20 years the impacts of disaster have affected 4.4 billion people, with 1.3 million lives lost, and over US\$2 trillion of economic losses.<sup>94</sup> This includes large scale disasters, such as the Haiti Earthquake in 2010 and the West Africa Ebola Outbreak in 2014, as well as smaller local disasters.

90 UNDP India 2012.

91 Sharma 2010.

92 UNDP India 2012.

93 Barder, Owen, 2015. “On World Humanitarian Day: Can we do Better with Cash?”. ODI Blog

94 UDP, UNICEF, OXFAM and GFDRR, 2014. “Disaster Risk Reduction makes Development Sustainable.”



*“Disaster risk reduction and building of resilience to disasters to be addressed with a renewed sense of urgency in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and, as appropriate, to be integrated into policies, plans, programmes, and budgets at all levels and considered within relevant future frameworks.”*

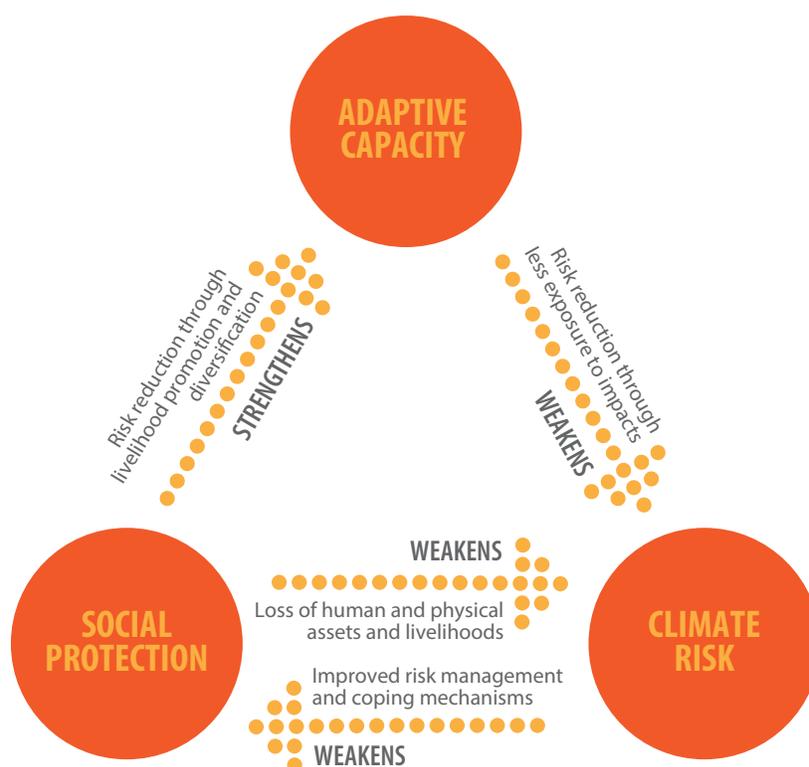
UN General Assembly Resolution on Sustainable Development

Natural disasters have differing impacts on people and communities. Poor families often live in insecure, disaster prone areas, in poorly built housing, and depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. The poor also have a lower capacity to recover when hit by a climate related shock, since they have little or no access to savings or other consumption smoothing mechanisms. Thus, they are often forced to sell the few assets they own, or disinvest in education or health, compromising their future livelihoods. Climate risks may also lead to high and volatile food and commodity prices, due to temporary disruptions of supply chains, infrastructure and/or transportation, hitting the poor, who spend a large proportion of their income on food, the hardest.

Social protection can be leveraged as an important mechanism to buffer some of these effects by improving the adaptive capacity<sup>95</sup> of individuals, strengthening their ability to manage risk, cope with the consequences of natural hazards when they happen, and eventually reduce risk. Below is a visual representation of the linkages between social protection and climate risk.

95 Adaptive Capacity refers to the ability of a system to adjust to climate change (including climate variability and extremes), to moderate potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities, or to cope with the consequences. McCarthy and others 2001.

**FIGURE 6.1 LINKAGES BETWEEN SOCIAL PROTECTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE**



**Risk-informed social protection:** defined as social protection that has risk reduction as one of its key objectives and that considers risk in its design and implementation—can optimize scarce resources, and prevent reversal on both social and natural capital due to changing environment.

The relationship between social protection and disaster risk reduction policies is still nascent, and legal and institutional frameworks do not sufficiently integrate both objectives into policies or programmes. As a result, linkages between social protection and risk management often appear incidental, and synergies are not being built to their maximum potential.

Nevertheless, there is significant interest in countries around the world in making social protection more disaster and climate risk-sensitive. There is also a growing recognition of the importance of bridging the gap between humanitarian response and social protection. As a contribution to the “World Humanitarian Summit” in 2016, the Social Protection Interagency Cooperation Board<sup>96</sup> submitted a statement on the need to bridge the development-humanitarian divide. It stressed that “social protection can contribute to build capacity at individual, household, community and national level to effectively withstand the negative impacts of shocks while contributing to promote sustainable management of resources.”<sup>97</sup>

Below, we review a number of instruments and examples of programmes that are successfully tackling both climate risk and human well-being. The actual choice of instruments or set of instruments is highly contextual, depending on social protection systems already in place in the country, on risk levels, as well as on capacity and resources available for implementation. However, a set of key lessons extracted from these experiences is included at the end of the section.

96 Of which UNDP is a partner, together with more than 20 international organizations and development partners  
 97 “Leaving no one behind” n.d.

**Cash transfers as disaster response and resilience building instruments:** As a disaster response mechanism, the scaling up of existing cash transfer programmes that had some flexibility built into them has proven to be an effective way to provide immediate relief to those affected. For example, after Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, the Government immediately doubled the amount distributed to registered beneficiaries of its conditional cash transfer programme (*Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program - 4Ps*) in typhoon affected areas. Through an emergency cash transfer top-up the Government, in collaboration with development actors, provided additional payments for some 100,000 recipients through almost 200,000 payments. These payments were delivered via the *4Ps* cash card and over-the-counter, where the cash card was not feasible. Given the success of this response, the Government passed a resolution to provide a “Guiding framework for the adoption of Cash Transfer Programming in addressing emergency and early recovery needs”, which allows flexibility to expand the programmes to be able to respond to crises.

Cash transfers can also be used to provide incentives for specific relevant behaviours, such as debris clearing, house reconstruction and savings. In the case of the Philippines, as a complement to the emergency cash transfer top-up, UNDP implemented a large-scale cash grant project conditional on 15 days of debris clearing work; 45,000 received grants to cover their basic needs through these cash grant schemes. Similarly, in the aftermath of Haiti’s earthquake in 2010, UNDP partnered with the Government of Haiti, to deliver cash instalments targeted to household reconstruction through a mobile money transfer mechanism. More than 2,000 mobile money transfers were delivered in a three month period to 1,000 low-income families receiving subsidies totalling US\$500 to purchase construction materials such as cement, iron and wood at selected project-certified stores for high-quality assurance at affordable prices. The initiative is part of the *Community Support Centres for House Repairs*. Distributing the cash through mobile mechanisms helped boost financial inclusion in Haiti, where nearly two-thirds of the population has access to mobile phones but only 10 per cent have bank accounts. The beneficiaries gained access via mobile phone checking accounts, a safe and cheap method of storing cash that also reduces financial transaction costs, improves users’ ability to save and helps bring more people into the formal financial sector.

**Public Works** programmes are another instrument that can contribute to several development objectives and play an important role in reducing and mitigating the risk of climate change. Short term public works, implemented immediately after crises, can provide cash income to affected people while taking care of the immediate needs of communities, such as rubble removal, restoration of rural roads, and restoration of basic services infrastructure such as schools and health facilities. Longer term public works, that focus on disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation practices such as soil conservation, water harvesting, afforestation and sustainable agricultural techniques, can protect the livelihoods of millions, enhancing their resilience to the adverse effects of climate change.

In particular where risk reduction as a priority is reflected in the type of projects that are selected to be carried out, public work programmes have been successful at generating environmentally sound public goods that increase the resilience of the communities. Land management practices are labour intensive and must be adapted to local realities and require the participation of local communities to be effective. Public works interventions are an appropriate tool in both emergency and rehabilitation/development contexts to implement these practices. Planting trees, digging planting pits, building earth embankments and other water and soil conservation practices can be implemented on a large scale through public works interventions.

*Ethiopia’s PSNP* is good example of a risk-informed public works programme. Initially developed as an instrument to support food insecure households and address some of the drivers of food insecurity, the PSNP is a combination of cash transfer and public works programmes, providing cash to those households in exchange for working in public works programmes, as well as unconditional cash to those unable to work. The PSNP adopted an integrated approach to watershed planning that aims to reverse the severe environmental degradation and raise the agricultural incomes of the poor. The project selection within the programme is actually done through the Government’s Community-based Participatory Watershed Management Planning



process, and focused mostly on soil and water conservation activities. Some of the types of projects executed under the PSNP include soil and stone embankment construction, pond construction and maintenance, spring and well construction, land rehabilitation through area enclosure, small-scale irrigation canals, and tree nursery site establishment.

The programme also prioritizes investments that have been locally identified, giving people a sense of ownership of community assets, promoting better use and maintenance of these assets, and increasing local institutional capacity. The works have brought demonstrable benefits to the communities in the form of environmental transformation. For example, improved water conservation has led to increased agricultural productivity and an increase in groundwater recharge so that dry springs have started to flow again. In addition, the communities have enhanced income generation from area closure, and improved access to markets, education and health facilities.<sup>98</sup> An assessment of the programme after the 2008 drought found that in most instances households receiving PSNP transfers were better able to withstand shocks—including drought, flood, illness, loss of livestock or loss of crops—than those not receiving the transfer.

**Index-based insurance** is another social protection mechanism that can help manage climate-related risks. In places where conventional insurance is inaccessible and unlikely to work due to high transaction costs and incentive problems (moral hazard and adverse selection), index-based insurance mechanisms provide a viable alternative. Payments are triggered by an easily measurable event such as rainfall below a certain level, the occurrence of frost, or temperatures above a certain threshold, thus there is no need to verify damage and pay outs can be speedily distributed. Low

## Weather Index-Based Insurance in the Philippines

UNDP and the Government of the Philippines through the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC) are co-implementing a project in the Mindanao region called *Weather Index-Based Insurance (WIBI) Mindanao*.

The project aims to reduce poverty by strengthening the resilience of agriculture-based rural communities in Mindanao through an insurance mechanism and productivity enhancement measures. To ensure the cohesive and holistic delivery of project results to the targeted 2,000 farming households, WIBI Mindanao works on three components.

The first component is focused on policy advocacy and knowledge to adjust regulatory incentive structures to stimulate private sector engagement in climate risk transfer mechanisms. It seeks to create an enabling environment for WIBI by influencing relevant credit and financing policies to accelerate the scaling up process and implementation.

The second component primarily works on customizing and applying the weather index-based integrated financial package to strengthen the resilience of target beneficiary communities. To date, WIBI policies have been distributed to 837 clients, both self-financed and borrowing farmers. Access to WIBI enables farmers to restore livelihoods through immediate pay outs following the occurrence of extreme weather events and climate shocks. WIBI offers two different forms of cover to major insurable grain crops like rice. One against low rainfall and another against excess rainfall.

Finally, through community-based adaptation learning and measures, the project aims to build the capacities of farmers and producer organizations to analyse climate risk and develop and implement adaptation practices that enhance agricultural productivity. This is currently being carried out through various trainings on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies, good agricultural practices and climate resilient field schools.

*Source: WIDI Mindanao Project 2016.*

98 Grosh and others 2008.



verification and administrative costs make it possible to offer these insurance mechanisms to small scale farmers, for whom conventional commercial insurance are too costly to be accessible. The speed of pay outs for the impact of erratic weather patterns improves the resilience of subscribing farmers who are able to react rapidly to resume agricultural activities, sometimes even within the same cropping season, after an adverse event. Some schemes, concerned with reaching the poorest farmers, allow them to pay for insurance through labour.

One example of index-based insurance is from the Philippines. In 2015, the government of the Philippines, in collaboration with UNDP, began a project to afford weather index-based insurance to farmers in the Mindanao region to reduce the financial costs of extreme weather events to poor farmers and to increase investment in agriculture.

Similarly, in Ethiopia crop insurance is one of the coping strategies that UNDP is helping to introduce in order to reduce the vulnerability of smallholder farmers who are increasingly dependent on unpredictable rainfall and crop failure. Insurance pay outs are determined according to an established threshold value for rainfall. Around 12,000 smallholder farmers benefit from Ethiopia's weather index insurance claims payment to cover loss for crop failure loss due to El Niño in 2015. This initiative is a collaboration between UNDP/GEF, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and two local insurance firms.<sup>99</sup>

Although it is a relatively new instrument, there is mounting evidence of the positive impact of index-based insurance on mitigating the effects of climate change. A study of index-based livestock insurance established in 2010 in Kenya finds that participating households that received pay outs after the 2011 drought, were 36 per cent less likely to distress sell their livestock, and 25 per cent less likely to reduce meals, than uninsured households.<sup>100</sup> The mechanism also seems to have a positive impact even in the absence of a pay out, according to surveys of subjective well-being in Ethiopia, after insurance was purchased. Another assessment of index-based insurance in Ethiopia shows that insured farmers save more than twice than those without any insurance, and they invest more in seeds, fertilizer and productive assets, such as plough oxen. Women, who often head the poorest households, achieved the largest gains in productivity, through investing in labour and improved tools for planting.<sup>101</sup>

99 UNDP 2015c.

100 Barret 2014.

101 Oxfam America 2013.



One important prerequisite for the viability of index-based insurance programmes is the availability of high quality, reliable, timely, long-term data to calculate the premium and to determine pay outs. This can be addressed with satellite data, early warning systems or weather station data. Also establishing informed effective demand is critical, especially among clients with little experience with any insurance, much less a complex index-based insurance product. To build demand for index-based insurance in Kenya, simulation games with real information and incentives were conducted among potential buyers. Finally, it is important to consider the design or availability of a low cost delivery mechanism for making insurance available for numerous small and medium scale producers. Mobile payments and ICT innovations can be used for this purpose if available.

A few general recommendations can be distilled from the above examples of instruments used around the world that combine social protection and climate risk reduction objectives. These include:

1. **Widening targeting criteria to include vulnerable populations:** Broadening targeting approaches to consider vulnerability to multiple stresses, including climatic ones, can allow the social protection programmes to build resilience among those that need it most, as well as reach vulnerable groups affected by disasters rapidly and efficiently. To do this it is necessary to look at environmental circumstances and risks as part of the beneficiary selection criteria. It is also critical to include within beneficiary databases, those that might not be income poor, but are vulnerable to shocks, either because of their geographic location or occupation, or with a high propensity of falling into poverty when shocks occur. This is exactly what the Dominican Republic is doing through its single registry of beneficiaries, as described in the box below.

## Risk-Informed Conditional Cash Transfers in the Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic, in close collaboration with UNDP and other development partners, is undertaking innovative efforts to coordinate their Conditional Cash Transfer programme with disaster risk reduction measures to protect vulnerable households in the event of climate shocks.

As a first step in this process, the government is generating a set of mechanisms to help identify those most vulnerable to climate risks. These include the addition of environmental variables to the information captured by the single registry of beneficiaries for social programmes, known as *SIUBEN (Sistema Unico de Beneficiarios)*, which help identify the geographic areas that are vulnerable and recurrently exposed to climatic shocks. This information will be complemented by information collected through the questionnaire used to identify poor households which will now include five questions related to environmental risks. Additionally, the country is in the process of developing of a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) which combines both material well-being and environmental variables.

The results from the supplementary variables included in the SIUBEN, additional questions of identification questionnaires, and the revamped MPI will serve as the basis for the development of an index of environmental vulnerability (IVAM), and an index of vulnerability to climate shocks (IVACC). The aim is that both these indexes will be incorporated as criteria for eligibility into the conditional cash transfer programme. Ultimately, this will ensure that when vulnerable households are faced by a climatic shock, they can easily be reached through the CCT mechanisms, and provided with adequate benefits to prevent them from engaging into negative coping strategies that result in losses of human capital investments.



- 2. A focus on building livelihoods and assets that strengthen community and individual resilience to climate change.** A focus on adaptation and mitigation practices in the design of programmes, including the selection of projects in public works programmes, training programmes in cash plus schemes, or climate related insurance policies. For example, in disaster prone areas programmes that build physical infrastructure could prioritize infrastructure that increases community preparedness. Or livelihood programmes could focus on improving skills related to disaster response or risk mitigation. Cash transfers and public works programmes need to be delivered as part of, or in combination with, a longer term development oriented programme of work that aims to strengthen and protect assets and livelihoods, decrease vulnerability, build resilience and develop the institutional structures and systems to enable sustainable growth.
- 3. Align social protection information systems with climate related information such as early warning systems and risk mapping.** Allowing feedback loops with early warning systems and coordination with agencies responsible for weather tracking can provide an indication of when to activate benefits in a particular area or to a specific population.
- 4. Building an inherent flexibility within programmes,** to allow for easy integration of beneficiaries that are affected both by recurrent events, and by one-off disasters. Experience from a number of countries where flexible social protection instruments were already in place on a large scale when shocks occurred, demonstrate that they can be efficient in reaching very large numbers of vulnerable households and communities through relatively minor adaptations of targeting criteria and timeframes, often with comparatively low additional costs.<sup>102</sup>

102 UNISDR 2011.



# FUNDING AND RAISING RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION

**Social protection is an investment in people, with a multiplier effect that promotes sustainable development, inclusive economic growth, job creation, and social inclusion.**





## 7.1 Is social protection affordable?

It is critical to understand social protection as an investment in people, with a multiplier effect that promotes sustainable development, inclusive economic growth, job creation, and social inclusion. In this context, affordability can be assessed based on long-term benefits.

Implementing social protection policies entails start-up costs and recurrent costs. Estimation of the costs of different schemes is normally done at the time of the Assessment-Based National Dialogue (ABND). The affordability of social protection benefits and administration is well established in the literature. Several recent studies suggest that social protection packages that extend income security and scale up essential health services are affordable even in the poorest countries.<sup>103</sup> ILO costing studies on a basic package of social protection for a selected set of low- and low-middle-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia show that a cash benefit package, including old age, disability pensions and family allowances, but excluding health care, would cost between 2.2 per cent and 5.7 per cent of GDP.<sup>104</sup> The annual cost of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia, which covers 8.2 million people, is equivalent to 1.2 per cent of GDP. Safety net coverage in Kenya, which provides benefits to around 3 million people, is equivalent to 0.8 per cent of GDP.

Moreover, evidence shows that every dollar invested in social protection can generate much larger pay offs when increases in productivity, prevention of illnesses, and days of school attendance are taken into account. One study found that in very poor countries, each dollar spent on nutrition interventions for children has at least a US\$30 payoff.<sup>105</sup> In the United States of America, it is estimated that every dollar invested in early childhood interventions saves taxpayers US\$13 in the future. Analysis of the impact of cash transfers on HIV outcomes provides evidence that the value of averted HIV infections far outweighs the cost of the programmes.<sup>106</sup>

Many countries have shown a significant commitment to social protection and have assigned a percentage of the national budget to social protection programming. Brazil is well known for its commitment over the last 12 years to Bolsa Familia and more recently to Brasil sem Miséria. Similarly, the government of Bangladesh has shown clear commitment to social protection. In its budget for 2012-2013, it allocated 5.7 per cent of the national (non-development) budget and 4.5 per cent of development budget for social security purposes.

## 7.2 Financing mechanisms

Financing mechanisms for social protection are often included as part of national social protection strategies. This is of particular importance because, despite growing levels of political support and demand for social protection, funding remains a very important challenge for many countries. This is particularly the case in least developed countries, fragile states, highly indebted countries, where resources are limited. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) also present significant challenges due to structural characteristics, such as very small populations widely disbursed over multiple islands a long distance from each other. This makes the per capita cost of service provision in these countries much higher than in other countries.

The financial sustainability of social protection requires the commitment of domestic financing at least to cover the recurrent costs of social protection (i.e. the cost of the benefit and administration), and therefore to create or secure fiscal space for social protection. Fiscal space essentially is the budgetary room governments have to increase expenditures to finance a certain project or policy. Fiscal space is determined by the balance between government revenues and expenditures. In order to create or increase fiscal space for social protection a government can either:

103 ILO 2011.

104 ILO 2008.

105 Hoddinott, Rosegrant, and Torero 2012.

106 Remme and others 2014.

- (i) reprioritize public spending (i.e. from military expenditure, underperforming programmes, or distortive general subsidies to social protection);
- (ii) increase tax revenues, notably through tax reforms and enforcement (i.e. income taxes, corporate taxes and taxes to the financial sector, natural resources extraction taxes, import/export tariffs, 'green' taxes, tourism taxes, and other taxes; consumption/sales taxes are not advised as they are generally regressive);
- (iii) expand social security coverage and contributory revenues;
- (iv) eliminate illicit financial flows;
- (v) use fiscal and foreign exchange reserves, some countries even use stabilization funds or other sovereign wealth funds.<sup>107</sup>

It is often argued that social protection is not affordable or that government expenditure cuts are inevitable during adjustment periods. But there are alternatives, even in the poorest countries. The seven financing options above are supported by policy statements of the United Nations and international financial institutions. Many governments around the world have been applying them for decades, showing that there is a wide variety of revenue choices and demonstrating the creativity to address vital social investment gaps. Each country is unique, and all options should be carefully examined, including the potential risks and trade-offs, and considered in national dialogue.

According to the ILO, between 2010 and 2015, more than 100 governments have considered removing food and fuel subsidies and replacing them with programmes targeted on the poor.<sup>108</sup> Indonesia recently eliminated fuel subsidies and used the resources to finance newly introduced universal health coverage. The Philippines introduced taxes on tobacco and alcohol to expand the scope of its universal health coverage and reduce health expenditures due to mortality and morbidity associated with tobacco and alcohol consumption. Thailand issued licences to access generic versions of medicines, which led to substantial price reductions, enabling the Government to provide treatment to more than 84,000 people.

Allocating funds raised from taxes to mineral and natural resource extraction is another way of financing social development. Mongolia, for example, finances a universal child grant, the *Mongolian Child Money Programme* (CMP), from windfall taxes on mining profits. Other countries have created emergency stabilization funds from taxes on extractive sectors, to use in time of shocks. This ensures that investments in social and economic development remain constant. Examples include Chile's *Copper Stabilization Fund*, Iran's *Oil Stabilization Fund* and Timor-Leste's *Petroleum Fund*. During the 2008 economic downturn, a number of countries drew on these funds to finance stimulus measures for national growth and increase social protection.<sup>109</sup>

Other innovative ways to raise funding for development are being explored for financing the SDGs. Some of these might be appropriate for financing social protection, including an international solidarity levy on air tickets, debt conversions (e.g. Debt2Health, debt-for-environment and debt-for-education swaps), voluntary solidarity contributions (e.g. Product (RED), the Digital Solidarity Levy), weather- and commodity-related insurance, counter-cyclical lending, climate adaptation funding, emissions trading, and curtailing illicit outflows of capital, among others.<sup>110</sup>

107 Ortiz, Cummins and Karunanethy 2015.

108 ILO 2014.

109 ILO 2014.

110 UNDP 2012.



Some countries have been quite successful in scaling up social protection programmes. The Government of Zambia, for example, has been able to scale up the budget allocation to social protection by 133 per cent between 2010 and 2016. The allocation for its cash transfer programme has increased by 67 per cent between 2015 and 2016, and more than seven-fold over six years.<sup>111</sup>

There is also a critical role for donors in supporting countries to cover the start-up costs of inclusive and systemic social protection that moves them closer to sustainable development. It is important to consider where donor money will be more efficient and have higher impact. Ultimately, social protection programmes need to be government-owned and the recurrent costs (benefits and administrative costs) of social protection must be covered by national resources. Thus donors and governments must collaborate in line with the countries' development objectives. In recent decades, a large amount of donor funding towards social protections has gone towards financing pilots and demonstration projects that fail to become government-owned projects. This shows the importance of identifying national resources from the onset of piloting social protection and of producing sound costing and/or actuarial studies to ensure the sustainability of social protection systems. Donor funding might have a more significant impact if it is used in the context of government-driven programmes, working with policymakers to monitor, evaluate, improve and scale them. Additionally, outside funding can be critical to establish and facilitate coordination mechanisms among government ministries, civil society and international and bilateral donors.

## Rwanda's *Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme*

The *Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme* (VUP) in Rwanda is a good example of nationally owned social protection that has successfully garnered the international community's backing. The VUP is a flagship programme to accelerate the reduction of extreme poverty. It has three core components: a public works programme called the *Ubudehe* (traditional practices and cultural activities of collective action to solve community problems); a credit scheme; and direct support to those unable to participate in the public works. The initiative builds on past experiences where isolated interventions by sector ministries, donors or NGOs were unsuccessful in lifting people out of extreme poverty. The VUP balances central guidelines for socioeconomic transformation (i.e. economic growth, job creation and extreme poverty eradication) with local participatory mechanisms. This intends to make the best possible use of scarce resources while ensuring adequate local incentives for sustainable progress. The programme is rooted in the national development strategy with strong support from the central government, combined with a highly decentralized administrative structure and an innovative community-based targeting system. The programme has led donors to align themselves with government priorities and positions, avoiding pilot programmes or fragmentation.

*Source: UNDP 2015d.*

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111 UNICEF 2016.

# ANNEX 1. LETTER FROM UNDG CHAIR AND ILO DIRECTOR GENERAL TO ALL UN RESIDENT CO-ORDINATORS AND UN COUNTRY TEAMS



24 March 2014

Dear Colleagues,

In April 2009, the UN System's Chief Executives Board for Co-ordination (CEB) launched the Social Protection Floor Initiative. Endorsed by UN Member States at the Rio +20 Conference on Sustainable Development, and supported by the G20 and many other fora, the Initiative garnered significant attention and momentum.

UN-wide implementation was given a boost in June 2012 when governments, employers, and workers adopted the path-breaking [ILO Recommendation Concerning National Floors of Social Protection \(No. 202\)](#) by consensus at the 101<sup>st</sup> ILC session, on 14 Jun 2012, in Geneva.

Social Protection Floors (SPFs) comprise at least basic social security guarantees for health care, and also for income security for children, older persons, and for those unable to work - in particular in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity, and disability. The ILO Recommendation and UN follow up helped lead to the establishment of Social Protection Floors (SPFs) in a number of countries.

We write to encourage you to maintain momentum behind this important work.

The need remains enormous: more than 76 per cent of the world's population continues to live without adequate social protection coverage. Expanding people's access to social protection is both a way to advance human rights and a sound economic policy. Well-designed social protection systems support household incomes and domestic consumption; build human capital; and increase productivity.

In the face of an uncertain global recovery and lower demand, the adoption of a social protection floor is an opportunity to help stabilize economies, generate inclusive growth, and build political stability. Social Protection Floors are an indispensable tool for helping countries to reduce poverty, curb inequality, strengthen resilience, and lay the ground for sustainable human development.

For this reason we ask Resident Co-ordinators and UNCTs to consider a number of specific steps to advance this work, which could include;

1. building, or where they already exist, strengthening **One UN national social protection floor teams**, which should include committed UN organization representatives, relevant national stakeholders, and development partners.



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2. supporting national dialogues, including within Governments, on potential options for designing and implementing locally appropriate SPFs, consistent with relevant provisions in the ILO Recommendation, and related initiatives - such as WHO's work on universal health coverage and existing national development priorities and strategies.
3. assisting countries to undertake analysis of social protection needs and gaps, optional measures which would close these gaps, tools to monitor progress, and possible sources of financing, with the hope of increasing floors over time.
4. in the context of preparing United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), promoting SPFs as instruments to advance inclusive and sustainable development.
5. working with national statistical offices to strengthen their ability to collect the data needed to analyse social protection needs and existing provisions, disaggregated by factors such as gender, age, and geographical locality. Promote an efficient and co-ordinated UNCT approach to data collection and capacity support.

The "Manual on the Strategic Framework for Joint SPF UN Country Operations" sent to UN Country Teams in 2009 remains a useful guide for your efforts to undertake these or other steps. As well, a set of complementary tools is being developed (to be circulated shortly). It can be used to help governments assess the cost and the design of SPFs.

The undg will shortly be publishing an Issue Brief on SPFs which lays out a joint UN position, helps guide the work of UNCTs, and highlights entry points and concrete examples of UNCT support. The note builds on the successful experience of undg Asia-Pacific in this area.

Strong and concerted UN support has played a role in helping countries across regions to formulate national Social Protection Floors. The leadership and guidance of Resident Co-ordinators can play an important role. We ask, therefore that you consider, within your country context, the steps which could be taken to help make social protection a reality for all.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Clark  
Chair  
United Nations Development Group



Guy Ryder  
Director-General  
International Labour Office

## ANNEX 2. GLOSSARY

Adaptive social protection	A series of measures which aims to build resilience of the poorest and most vulnerable people to climate change, and integrates social protection with Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change adaptation.
Assessment-based national dialogue	<p>The assessment-based national dialogue (ABND) exercise is a methodology that was developed by several UN agencies and is being applied in 35 countries across the world. It is a process of national dialogue involving governments, employers, workers, civil society and development partners. The process helps to define a Social Protection Floor (SPF) and advocate for its national endorsement and ownership. As the SPF is cross-cutting in nature, the ABND requires active participation as One UN, according to the strengths and mandates of different agencies.</p> <p>The ABND consists of three steps. First, the tool reviews the social protection schemes in a country, identifies the gaps and challenges, and makes recommendations to address them. The recommendations are designed to address the existing gaps and challenges and establish an SPF. Second, the cost of the recommendations or the cost of completing the SPF over the next few years is estimated. Third, the recommendations are presented to the government for their endorsement and further action.</p> <p>The strength of the ABND lies in the fact that it is based on a continuous and sustained national dialogue process. The recommendations are an outcome of the dialogue process (and in some countries, a consensus between participating agencies) and are therefore more acceptable to governments.</p> <p>Link to ABND guide:  <a href="http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowRessource.action?ressource.ressourceld=53462">www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowRessource.action?ressource.ressourceld=53462</a></p>
Associated Integrated Management Information System (IMIS)	See “single registry”
Basic social services	Basic social services consist of basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation
Cash-for-work	The use of cash payments as an aid instrument and alternative or complement to in-kind forms of assistance, such as food aid.
Climate change adaptation (CCA)	Adaptation refers to adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli and their effects or impacts. It refers to changes in processes, practices, and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change.
Climate responsive social protection	Social protection mechanisms that are adapted to be risk-informed, improve resilience and protect vulnerable people from the risks of a changing environment. Conditional transfers, temporary employment programmes and micro insurance schemes are examples of such widespread instruments that have an important resilience-building component.



Climate-smart social protection	Social protection that adheres to the principle “do no harm.” Social and environmental opportunities and risks are addressed in an integrated manner, recognizing the interrelatedness of social and environmental issues. Beyond understanding the potential social impact of social protection, proposals are reviewed for potential environmental risks to ensure that potential adverse impacts are assessed and avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized, mitigated, and managed.
Community resilience	The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure.
Community-based adaptation projects	Adaptation projects that seek to enhance the resiliency of communities, and/or the ecosystems on which they rely, to climate change.
Community-based social protection	An informal grouping of activities that protect community members from risk through “locally arranged social protection measures that are predicated on people’s cultural beliefs, norms and values.”
Community-based targeting	Community-based targeting uses established community groups to identify the beneficiaries of a specific programme within their communities.
Conditional cash transfer (CCT)	Programmes that give money to poor people in return for fulfilling specific behavioural conditions. These conditions include for example children’s school attendance.
Consumption smoothing	The ways in which people or households optimize their lifetime standard of living by ensuring a proper balance of spending and saving during the different phases of their life.
Contribution schemes	Schemes where beneficiaries make regular payments to a scheme that will cover costs in the future, for example, maternity, unemployment or illness. Sometimes costs are matched or subsidized by the scheme provider, which can be the government or a private entity.
Country Diagnostic Instrument (CODI)	An instrument developed by the Social Protection Interagency Coordination Board that provides guidance for the collection of information and performance assessment of social protection programmes and systems. The CODI can be used to assess the social protection system and a selected number of schemes in a country, often the major schemes or the ones with high coverage. The tool also measures their performance against a set of benchmarks. It provides a snapshot of the social protection situation in the country. The strength of the CODI lies in its detailed and systematic assessment of schemes. Link to CODI tool: <a href="http://ispatools.org/core-diagnostic-instrument/">http://ispatools.org/core-diagnostic-instrument/</a>
Debt conversions	The exchange of debt—typically at a substantial discount)—for equity, or counterpart domestic currency funds to be used to finance a particular project or policy. Debt for equity, debt for nature and debt for development swaps are all examples of debt conversion.
Developmental graduation	An approach providing integrated services to improve opportunities and capabilities across the lifecycle. It focuses more on exiting deprivations than on exiting specific programmes.

Diaspora bonds	A retail savings instrument marketed to diaspora members. A developing country government (or a reputable private corporation in a developing country) can tap into the wealth of relatively poor (but financially aware) migrants by selling such bonds in small denominations (from US\$100 to US\$1,000).
Disaster risk reduction (DRR)	The concept and practice of systematic efforts to analyse and reduce the causal factors of disasters. Reducing exposure to hazards, lessening vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improving preparedness and early warning for adverse events are all examples of disaster risk reduction.
Duty bearers	Actors who have a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights and to abstain from human rights violations. The term is most commonly used to refer to state actors, but non-state actors can also be considered duty bearers.
Endogenous graduation	Graduation or exit from a social security scheme after a change in the beneficiary's condition related to the objective of the scheme. For example, end of a scholarship after graduation.
Exogenous graduation	Graduation or exit from a social security scheme based on a change in the circumstances of the beneficiaries not related to objective of the scheme. p. 38.
Extreme poor	Individuals living below the international poverty line of US\$1.90 a day.
Graduation model	A model providing a sequenced and intensive package of support to the very poor, or the ultra-poor. The main objective is to "graduate" the beneficiaries to productive livelihoods.
Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, HIPC	International response to provide comprehensive debt relief to the world's poorest, most heavily indebted countries. The HIPC Initiative was launched by the World Bank and the IMF in 1996.
Inclusive social protection	Social protection that goes beyond income redistribution to include the type of reforms that tackle social exclusion, such as legal and policy reforms to change disempowering and discriminatory social norms and practices and to create an enabling social environment that would enable and encourage the most marginalized to register, access, and benefit from social protection.
Index-based insurance mechanisms	Insurance where pay-outs are based on an objectively measured index, such as weather.
Informal social protection	Community based informal safety nets, such as remittances from relatives living abroad, borrowing between family/community members, work reciprocity and gift exchanges.
Life-cycle approach/continuum of protection	Social protection based on a continuum of protection, available at different stages in the life of individuals, including transitions from one stage to the next.
Means testing	Collecting information on the income or assets of individuals or households.
Multidimensional poverty	Multidimensional poverty is made up of several factors that constitute poor people's experience of deprivation)—such as poor health, lack of education, inadequate living standards, lack of income (as one of several factors considered), disempowerment, poor quality of work and threat from violence.



Multilateral debt relief initiative (MDRI)	An Initiative that provided for 100 per cent relief on eligible debt from three multilateral institutions to a group of low-income countries. The initiative, aimed to help eligible countries advance toward the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), focused on halving poverty by 2015.
Non-contributory social insurance	A mechanism to extend pensions and health insurance to low-income workers not covered by contributory systems, either because they work in the informal sector or are self-employed.
Payment for environmental services (PES)	Systems, established in many countries, providing incentives for individuals to perform environmental services that can diminish the exposure to natural risks of communities, and improve their coping mechanisms.
Poverty gap	The mean shortfall of the total population from the poverty line (counting the non-poor as having zero shortfall), expressed as a percentage of the poverty line. This measure reflects the depth of poverty as well as its incidence.
Poverty gap squared	The mean shortfall of the total population from the poverty line squared, thus giving more emphasis to those that fall far behind, than those closest to the poverty line.
Proportionate universalism	Resourcing and delivering of universal services at a scale and intensity proportionate to the degree of need.
Proxy means testing	A testing mechanism using household characteristics that are easily observable to determine the socio-economic status of the household.
Self-targeting mechanism	Self-targeting consists of providing incentives to encourage participation of the target approach group, and non-participation of those outside the target group.
Single registry	A beneficiary system, organized into a database, of all households and individuals interviewed to be registered into social protection programmes. The aim of a Single Registry is to collect, record and store updated and historical information on individual and household characteristics and circumstances, to determine their eligibility to certain programmes.
Single window service/ one-stop shop	Services consolidated so that families only need to approach a single office, ideally at the subnational level, where they can access the information and register for a number of services provided by the social protection system and links to other sectors.
Social exclusion	Inadequate participation of individuals in key aspects of their society. The forms of exclusion can be categorized into exclusion from income, exclusion from services or exclusion from participation.
Social insurance	Contributory schemes that include a risk-pooling mechanism based on the principle of solidarity. Usually, social insurance schemes guarantee protection in the case of specific risks or contingencies, such as unemployment, sickness, maternity, disability, employment injury or old age. In many cases, social insurance schemes include non-contributory elements that allow for a more equitable distribution of benefits, particularly for those with low incomes and limited contributory capacity. This can include redistribution within the schemes, or partial financing from the government budget (general taxation); the latter type of schemes are also referred to as partially contributory schemes. One caveat of contributory social insurance is that is strongly linked to the formal labour market and exclude workers in informal employment, yet many countries have made great strides to extend coverage to those workers

Social protection	A tool available to governments for protecting individuals from the consequences and drivers of deprivation and social exclusion. On a more operational level, social protection systems provide contributory or non-contributory forms of income support that reduce and prevent poverty; ensures access to basic social services to all, especially for groups that are traditionally vulnerable or excluded; stimulates productive inclusion through the development of capabilities, skills, rights and opportunities for the poor and excluded; builds resilience and protects people against the risks of livelihood shocks throughout their lifecycle; and helps remove structural barriers, including barriers within the household, that prevent people from achieving well-being. Social protection systems can include various schemes and programmes, including universal schemes, social assistance, social insurance, employment guarantees and other public employment programmes, and measures to facilitate access to education, health and care services.
Social protection floor	The minimum access to services and income security that needs to be provided for all.
Social transfer	A benefit provided by the government or another actor to an individual (or household) is considered to be in need of a specific type of social assistance.
Sustainable development	Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	A set of 17 Goals to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030 agreed upon by world leaders on 25 September 2015.
Targeted programmes/ approach	Programmes directed to a specific group of people to fulfil a previously identified need.
Targeting mechanism	The mechanism through which the household that will benefit from a programme is targeted.
Transformative policies	Policies that remove structural barriers to the improvement of people's well-being. These include legislation against discrimination, minimum wages, the enforcement of the rights of children, etc.
Universality	A principle recognizing that the right to social protection is universal, and it needs to be fulfilled by a social protection system that ensures universal protection through adequate benefits and services, with an appropriate allocation of resources.
Universal programmes / approach	Universal programmes are those available to everyone who chooses to use them.
Universal social protection schemes	See "Universal programmes".



## ANNEX 3. TARGETING APPROACHES AND MECHANISMS

Targeting programmes requires definition of a targeting approach and a targeting mechanism. Currently, it is very often concentrated on households even though it cannot be assumed that the benefits of targeting will be equally shared within households. Some commonly used targeting approaches include:

**Poverty:** focuses on the income, expenditure, consumption, or assets of a household, rather than an individual, or (more recently) a multi-dimensional poverty index.

**Social category:** focuses on whether a household or an individual belongs to a specific demographic group, such as disadvantaged ethnic groups, people living with disabilities (or their care givers), LGBT, the homeless, women headed households, etc.

**Geographical location<sup>112</sup>:** focuses on different regions, villages or districts with widespread poverty or increased risk of droughts or floods.

**Age:** focuses on specific age groups, including infants, children, youth, working-age women and men, and elderly women and men. Age brackets commonly used are: 0-5, 6-14, 15-24, 25-64 and above 65 years.

**Risk level:** focuses on populations that are prone to risks (including the risk of falling into poverty, the risk of being affected by a changing environment, the risk of HIV, etc.), and the extent to which they have coping mechanisms.

The definition of the targeting approach is critical to ensure that social protection actually addresses the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. Targeted policies often adopt the poverty approach based on income, and neglect other forms of deprivation. Moreover, as noted, if targeted at households, specific members of households may receive fewer benefits because of a lack of income pooling. If not adequately targeted, such policies can actually increase inequality, and make certain groups worse off. Using a nationally defined multidimensional poverty index is a step forward, but other dimensions must be considered when targeting specific policies.

A targeting mechanism is the actual mechanism through which the household that will benefit from a programme is targeted. It aims to reduce errors of under-coverage, where households within the targeting approach are left out, and leakage errors, where ineligible households are included. Some commonly used targeting mechanisms:

Community-based targeting uses established community groups to identify the beneficiaries of a specific programme within their communities. The community groups can be locally elected officials or other governing bodies, NGOs, religious groups, or any other group that is very well embedded in the community. Community-based targeting is typically used where other administrative structures and data are weak or non-existent. If implemented appropriately, it can be less expensive than other more data-driven means of targeting. Households can also be identified quickly since community groups may already have better information for identification of needs. There also might be less opportunity or incentive for households to misrepresent their needs or their levels of income, assets or risks. Furthermore, local criteria or definitions of deprivation may be more adaptable to local conditions and culture than rigid technical national formulas. Also, community involvement at this level may potentially foster and strengthen social cohesion and community organizations, with positive external effects. This may be especially true for disadvantaged groups who may

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112 Geographical location can be both a targeting approach and a targeting mechanism.

be empowered to articulate and press demands. Community mobilization may be an end in itself, but may also confer legitimacy that in turn helps build political support for targeted approaches.<sup>113</sup> However, the effectiveness and cost of this method strongly depends on the integrity of implementation and the risk of political capture.

Self-targeting consists of providing incentives to encourage participation of the target approach group, and non-participation of those outside the target group. In that sense, it is the household that decides whether or not to participate in a programme. The incentives are designed in such a way that the cost of participation by the non-targeted is higher than for those targeted. The household's decision to participate or not is usually influenced by the opportunity cost of participation, the quantity and quality of goods provided, and the stigma that participating creates. The main advantage of self-targeting is the low cost it entails. However, there are some ethical and social implications to such self-targeting mechanisms. For one, the quality of the service/transfer provided has to be below a certain level where non-targeted households will opt out. Secondly, it can have important stigmatizing effects, and effects on earning in the future.

Cash-for-work programmes very often use this approach, setting the daily wage at a level slightly below the minimum wage, so that only those who are destitute or cannot find other employment benefit from the programme. Households decide to participate based on whether they have the opportunity to work somewhere else for a higher wage, the kind of work done, and whether participating means a loss of social standing or stigma. It should be noted that one disadvantage of self-targeting cash-for-work programmes is that since poor women are expected to perform unpaid care and domestic work cash, financial poverty may be reduced but time poverty may be increased.

Some food subsidies or food programmes targeted at the poorest also use self-targeting mechanisms by subsidizing only products that are more highly valued by the poorest. For example, a FAO study found that yellow maize flour was not consumed by higher-income groups because it was deemed to be of inferior quality than a more expensive alternative, white maize flour. The poor, however, did consume yellow maize flour as a component of the basic basket of products. By subsidizing yellow maize flour, the programme was able to self-select only the poorest households.<sup>114</sup>

Means testing collects information on the individual or household's income or assets. It usually involves some sort of corroboration method through sources such as utility bills or pay stubs. Households under a certain threshold qualify. This method requires strong data availability.

Proxy means testing uses easily observable household characteristics to determine socio-economic status. Some of the indicators, or proxies, include location and quality of the household's dwelling, assets owned (land, livestock, productive equipment), goods available in the household (such as radio, television or cell phone), the composition of the household (e.g. single-parent household), and the education level and occupation status of family members. Using Demographic and Health Surveys or other other types of surveys, such as Household Budget Surveys (HBS) or Living Standards Measurement Studies (LSMS), each proxy is given a weight based on its estimated impact on household expenditure. Data are collected through household visits. Then, using the agreed weights, a score is calculated for each household. Households that score below the cut-off point are eligible for the social protection programme. A problem with this approach is that it assumes that all members of a household share the same socio-economic status, and thus neglects intra-household inequalities. It also requires the availability of at least one recent Demographic Health Survey, and updating such information can be very costly.

113 Conning and Kevane 2000.

114 FAO 2001.



In most countries, targeting is actually a combination of targeting approaches and targeting mechanisms, which are often applied in various layers. For example, Mexico's large conditional cash transfer programme, Oportunidades, employs a targeting approach based on poverty, age category and geographic locations, targeting poor families with 7-14-year-old children in both urban and rural areas. The targeting mechanisms identify small rural communities of marginality (a multidimensional index): i.e. limited access to or utilization of education and health infrastructure. Within those communities, targeting is also age categorical—it focuses on families with 7-14-year-old children. In parallel, in rural areas, a combination of community-based and proxy means testing mechanisms are used. The poorest households are identified based on socio-economic data from census gathering and then a community feedback mechanism is used to reclassify households. In urban areas the programme has adopted a self-targeting on-demand application approach.

**TABLE 6.1 PROS AND CONS OF TARGETING MECHANISMS**

Targeting Mechanisms	Administrative Costs	Susceptibility to Inclusion and Exclusion Errors	Political Implications
<b>Means testing</b>	High, accurate data on income are costly and very difficult to assess.	Low, providing accurate data are available.  Does not assess intra-household inequality.	Requires high statistical capacity, degree of intelligence required to verify claims may be unpalatable, politically may be only way to make acceptable to elite.
<b>Proxy indicators</b>	Medium	Medium	
<b>Community-based</b>	Low, no need for data and can be done quickly. Might have implicit costs to community cohesion if targeting is perceived as unfair.	Variable, transparency and flexibility hard to achieve in practice.  Does not assess intra-household inequality.	Liable to local elite capture and to replicate existing forms of discrimination. May exacerbate divisions in a community.
<b>Self-targeting</b>	Low	Low, if well designed. However, targeting is usually not the driving feature of design.	Can create stigma for poorest and socially excluded households if it results in low wages, or inferior food payments.

Source: Based on Shepard, and Barrientos 2004.

Two emerging issues that are discussed in the primer and relate to the discussion on targeting are the need for dynamic inclusion and flexible systems, where individuals can apply for benefits, update their information, file appeals and grievances at any time; and integration across programmes and systems (including the interoperability of information).

In terms of flexibility to incorporate new beneficiaries and change information, some targeting mechanisms, such as proxy means testing (PMT), can be very static. They require data collection, which is only available every set number of years, and result in static ranked lists of names that are fixed for many years. This can bar new applicants from applying in interim years (e.g. if their situation changes or if they were missed by the survey-sweep), and limit the ability of programmes and systems to respond to shocks. However, a combination of increased capacity, integration (interoperability) and improved technology can make other methods (such as means testing) more dynamic, and reduce the amount of data that needs to be directly collected by applicants, since some data can come from data exchange with other administrative/information systems.



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