Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research

Synthesis Report

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About the project

The Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems study is a research programme (2015 to 2018) led by Oxford Policy Management (OPM), in consortium with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) and INASP. Its aim is to strengthen the evidence base as to when and how social protection systems can better respond to shocks in low-income countries and fragile and conflict-affected states, thus minimising negative shock impacts and reducing the need for separate humanitarian responses. The research is funded by UK Aid from the UK Government as part of the UK Department for International Development's (DFID's) Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme, an initiative to improve the quality, quantity and use of evidence in humanitarian programming.

Six case studies form the core of the analysis of features of social protection systems that facilitate their use to respond to shocks, and of the ways in which social protection, humanitarian assistance and disaster risk management (DRM) systems can best work together for a more effective response. The three in-depth case studies—of Mozambique, Mali and Pakistan—explore the issue across a wide range of shocks, and review a number of social protection interventions. Two light-touch country case studies, of the Philippines and Lesotho, focus on a single shock. Finally, a light study of the Sahel region reviews regionwide mechanisms for responding to food security crises.

About this report

This synthesis report consolidates the evidence and lessons learned from the research, drawing on all the case studies and other outputs, including the literature review as well as policy briefs on systems development and monitoring and evaluation. It highlights the key ways in which social protection systems may contribute to mitigate the effect of, or respond to, large-scale shocks, and the opportunities and challenges therein; presents the features of programme design and implementation that determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the response; and summarises lessons on achieving a successful collaboration between the humanitarian, DRM and social protection systems. The individual case study reports are available separately.

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Executive summary

Introduction to the research

Globally, the frequency, size and duration of natural, economic and political disasters and crises are on the rise. Governments and international agencies alike are committed to finding a way to respond more efficiently and effectively to shocks. Our research explores two themes in relation to this: first, the potential role for long-term social protection systems in the response to large-scale shocks, either before or after the crisis occurs; and second, opportunities for coordination (and possible integration) of humanitarian interventions, disaster risk management (DRM) and social protection. We address the types of covariate shock—those that affect a substantial share of the population—likely to trigger an international humanitarian response.

We have explored the research questions by means of six case studies, a literature review and a series of consultations globally. There are two case studies in Asia (Pakistan and the Philippines), two in southern Africa (Mozambique and Lesotho) and two in west Africa (Mali, and a regional study of the Sahel). A number of related products have been published (see Annex B).

Key concepts

Social protection is the set of public actions that address the deprivation and vulnerabilities of the poorest, and the need of the currently non-poor for security in the face of shocks and the particular demands of different stages of the life cycle. It covers many instruments that may be labelled as ‘social assistance’, 'social care', ‘social insurance’, and ‘labour market policies’. Our focus is mainly on social assistance since this is most prevalent and most often considered for crisis response in the countries under review (we explore cash and in-kind transfers, school feeding programmes, public works programmes and a food subsidy).

A social protection *system* can be considered at three levels: (i) the sector (mandates, policies, regulations etc.); (ii) individual programmes; (iii) delivery systems underpinning the programmes (databases, payment mechanisms, etc.). While many countries do not yet have a coherent social protection system, all have elements that can be assessed for their potential contribution in responding to shocks. The maturity of a country's social protection system has considerable consequences for its ability to be shock-responsive.

Humanitarian assistance is designed to save lives and alleviate suffering in disasters. We use the term to cover responses by governments as well as international agencies. It overlaps with social protection and DRM. *DRM activities* are all the processes that aim to reduce the likelihood of a disaster, lessen the impact of hazards and improve people's ability to cope if a disaster occurs. It is often viewed as having five focal areas: prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

When resources are transferred to households to enable them to meet basic needs, the tools used for humanitarian assistance are often similar to those used in social protection. Both sectors may use interventions such as the distribution of food or cash, or the provision of free school meals. In some cases we find convergence in their approaches in terms of objectives (especially in protracted crises), the actors involved, and governance arrangements (particularly when governments are in a position to lead the emergency response). This means that the discussion on shock-responsive social protection is not about how to move from one sector to the other, which is hard to distinguish; it is more about the improvements that governments and agencies are trying to achieve, compared with what they have been doing until now. We offer a framework for this next.

Frameworks for analysing shock-responsive social protection

In order to know whether shock-responsive social protection is a useful complement or substitute for alternative forms of assistance, it is important to determine the criteria by which a judgment can be made about it. In our case studies the key themes that emerged by which judgments were made by our respondents were: (i) meeting needs; (ii) coverage; (iii) timeliness; (iv) predictability; (v) elimination of duplicated delivery systems, and (vi) sustainability. No intervention is likely to improve all these dimensions at once: there are trade-offs. The same factors are relevant for assessing the suitability of humanitarian responses and what works better depends on the context.

Beyond these six factors, others may also be relevant. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD's) guidance for evaluating humanitarian assistance offers seven pertinent criteria: the 'relevance' of the action; 'connectedness' to the wider development context; 'coherence' with other interventions; 'coverage' of those in need; efficiency, effectiveness and impact. Likewise it is important to consider the value for money of shock-responsive social protection, compared to other humanitarian assistance. DFID's '4E's approach provides a framework for maximising impact with available resources, by considering ‘economy’, ‘efficiency’, ‘effectiveness’ and ‘equity’. Our research found that the discussion on improving shock-response focuses particularly on improving *efficiency*, ie. how well inputs (financial, material and human resources) are converted into outputs (e.g. amount disbursed to beneficiaries or number of people reached with assistance). There is less attention to outcomes and impact, and limited value for money analysis in general.

Options for shock-responsive social protection

Five key options for shock-responsive adaptation are: (i) **Design tweaks**—making small adjustments to the design of the core programme (ii) **'Piggybacking'**—borrowing elements of an existing programme or system while delivering a separate emergency response (iii) **'Vertical expansion'**—topping up support to beneficiaries (iv) **'Horizontal expansion'**—temporarily extending support to new households (v) **Alignment** of social protection and/or humanitarian interventions with one another. A combination of these may be most appropriate[1].

- **Design tweaks:** These are small adjustments to a routine social protection programme. They can introduce flexibility to maintain the regular service in a shock (e.g. the Philippines allows compliance with conditionality for its cash transfer programme, Pantawid, to be waived in a calamity). Alternatively they can improve coverage, timeliness or predictability without requiring a flex at the moment of the shock. For example, Mozambique's cash transfer programme regularly experiences disbursement delays at the start of each new financial year in January; unfortunately, that coincides with the period of greatest risk of climate shocks such as cyclones. A design tweak, such as a double payment in December in place of one in January, might ensure that households were covered at the time of increased vulnerability. The merits of different design tweaks would need to be examined on a case-by-case basis. The risks—if the change is implemented sensitively—are low, provided the adjustment does not divert the programme from its core objective or close off opportunities to achieve greater impact.
- **Piggybacking** occurs when an emergency response uses an established system or programme while delivering something new. For example, implementers might use an existing programme's beneficiary list, its staff or payment mechanism. There must be some element of a system in place; however, even if minimal it can be beneficial to use it. Unlike scaling up an

[1] A sixth option, 'refocusing'—retargeting an intervention without expanding it—was previously considered, but no longer included as we now perceive this to be more a resourcing strategy in a constrained environment than an adaptation.

entire programme, piggybacking on some elements of a programme allows the adoption of just the most relevant parts. It is easier to piggyback on a programme if actors already have a working relationship it. Challenges include identifying the components worth connecting to, and coordinating with multiple actors. It is important to avoid overloading the system, particularly where there is a risk of uncoordinated piggybacking efforts.

- **Vertical expansion** is the temporary increase of the value or duration of an intervention to meet beneficiaries' additional needs (i.e. a top-up). Examples are the top-ups to the school feeding programme in Mali in 2012-13 (through extra meals in school, take-home rations, and meals in the school holidays) and extra payments to beneficiaries of the Child Grant Programme in Lesotho in the El Niño crisis in 2016. For such top-ups to be relevant the programme, or programmes, must have good coverage of the disaster-affected area, and also of the neediest households. Top-ups have the opportunity to be effective on account of their established administrative systems and relationships, though this does not always make them quicker than emergency responses. Non-beneficiaries who are affected will, of course, miss out so must be reached by other means. Challenges include deciding on what basis to calculate the size of the top-up; coordinating between agencies to make sure the same beneficiaries do not receive multiple top-ups; not overloading staff and infrastructure; and explaining the temporary top-up to communities.
- **Horizontal expansion** is the temporary inclusion of a new caseload into a social protection programme, by either extending geographical coverage, enrolling more eligible households in existing areas, or altering the enrolment criteria. This expansion is the premise of on-demand enrolment onto poverty targeted programmes for example during economic shocks, i.e. where anyone who has temporarily fallen into poverty can be enrolled. In other contexts we find few instances where horizontal expansion has been applied, other than the Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme. In three case study countries—Pakistan, the Philippines and Lesotho—the temporary expansion of a scheme had been considered but dismissed owing to both practical challenges and perceived risks to the impact of the core programme. Major challenges are: conceiving what the benefit is intended to cover; selecting new recipients; resourcing, adherence to pre-set procedures and communication (as with vertical expansion). However, horizontal expansion has the potential to reach more disaster-affected people than through vertical expansion alone, and the extra beneficiaries could eventually be incorporated into the programme's regular caseload.
- **Alignment** describes designing an intervention with elements resembling others that already exist or are planned, but without integrating the two. Governments may align their systems with those of humanitarian agencies or vice versa. It offers the opportunity to mimic social protection provision in an environment where the core intervention cannot operate, which might facilitate eventual integration. For example, in northern Mali in 2016, some NGOs aligned the frequency and value of their emergency cash transfer to match the national cash transfer programme. There is a risk that the immediate impact on beneficiaries is lessened if, for the sake of investing in longer term sustainability, support is less tailored to the needs of the crisis.

Designing and implementing shock-responsive social protection

Preparing for an effective response to shocks

We do not assume that shock-responsive social protection is always a good idea, or always better than alternatives. We offer some key principles when considering its appropriateness.

1. Strengthening routine social protection is worthwhile in its own right for building resilience.

2. Vulnerability and needs assessments are an essential component of decision-making about whether social protection is a suitable vehicle for addressing a shock.
3. Interventions are likely to work more smoothly if they are planned in advance, through early decision-making, active planning and perhaps early delivery of support.
4. Mature social protection contexts have more options in a crisis. Tiny programmes are unlikely to replicate the kind of response possible in mature systems supporting millions of individuals.
5. Shock-responsive social protection will never meet the needs of all households who need assistance, so coordination with other interventions is essential.
6. Measuring success in 'shock-responsive' interventions is contingent on the identification of appropriate indicators that can be compared across humanitarian and social protection responses, and that cover outcomes and impacts, not just inputs and outputs.

Contextual factors that influence design choices

The appropriate programme design will be affected by the overall context for policy-making. We discuss five attributes: (i) political will; (ii) the regulatory environment; (iii) organisational capacity and mandates; (iv) financing; and (v) conflict:

- **Political will** for shock-responsive social protection may be determined by governments' appetite for social protection and DRM, including their openness to 'preparedness' activities; the relative power of ministries; party politics that affect perceptions of interventions; and public opinion. Donors face their own political imperatives.
- **Regulations:** Countries differ enormously in their laws, policies and regulations for social protection, humanitarian action and DRM. Some, such as Mozambique, Mali and Lesotho, include references to the potential use of social protection in responses to shocks. However, DRM policies and social protection policies within a country are not always consistent on this. Moreover, opinion varies as to whether embedding social protection programmes in law helps or hinders their use in shocks: some felt that a legal basis assured programme longevity while others felt it introduced rigidity, limiting the possibility of flexibly adjusting the intervention.
- **Organisational capacity and mandates:** All our case study countries have some government capacity in social protection, though this is often stretched even without a shock. Many rely on volunteers and have little prospect of surge capacity in a crisis. Shocks worsen constraints by increasing demand and requiring rapid adjustments to programming while staff capacity is reduced. In many countries, non-government actors are likely to continue to be a key part of the human resource capability in shock-response for the long term. Decentralised governance has major consequences for coordination, resourcing and information exchange across levels of government, especially if, say, DRM functions are devolved but social protection is not.
- **Financing:** To secure fiscal space for mitigating and responding to crises, governments could identify resources in many sectors—e.g. agriculture or health—not just social protection and DRM. Effective programming requires robust processes for anticipating the size of any funding requirement: we found this to be more systematic in some countries (e.g. Mali) than in others (e.g. Lesotho). A separate challenge is how to mobilise resources, so that contingency funds are not discovered to be empty just when they are needed. Instruments such as disaster risk insurance and contingency credit can play a role but are not always appropriate: insurance does not provide annual payouts, while contingency credit increases debt.
- **Conflict** can increase the need for shock-responsive social protection while changing the nature of the support required and undermining capacity for response. It can affect which actors can get involved in programme delivery. Displacement also makes shock-response more difficult, reducing the accuracy of data on beneficiaries.

Operational factors

Effective shock-response through social protection also depends on how delivery systems work. Practical factors include: (i) procedures for undertaking needs assessments, targeting, data management (who to support) (ii) setting how much support to give (iii) resilience of payment mechanisms and infrastructure (iv) communication to beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

Regarding needs assessments, the question is whether social protection offers an effective alternative to procedures commonly used by humanitarian and DRM actors such as annual vulnerability assessments or multi-hazard risk assessments. Our research finds general agreement among respondents that the poor are often some of the most vulnerable to disaster, so some overlap can be expected. The extent of the correlation between social protection beneficiaries and disaster-affected people is hugely affected by how households are selected for social protection (geographical or community-based targeting, proxy means-testing etc.). Where it is intended to shift from a 'humanitarian' to a 'social protection' caseload, divergence between the types of households identified as vulnerable can be problematic, as it implies the exclusion of previously eligible households. Beneficiary databases and wider social registries have the potential to contribute to shock-response. However, their use should not be automatic: it depends if they are better than alternative methods used by humanitarian and DRM actors. The five dimensions of these databases that affect their suitability for use in emergencies are their relevance (what variables they contain), completeness (how many records they have), currency (how up to date they are), accessibility (who can use them) and accuracy (data quality).

Transfer values in humanitarian assistance are increasingly debated as aid becomes monetised across sectors. It depends on what needs are to be covered, e.g. basic survival needs or to rebuild livelihoods and promote resilience; trade-offs between scale, sufficiency and political support; and the support provided by other agencies. Addressing these issues as part of preparedness planning where possible is important, so that values can easily be computed post-disaster.

Shocks can disrupt or damage infrastructure and payment systems for routine social protection. We find no consistent relationship between the type of payment mechanism and its appropriateness in a shock. The manual distribution of benefits (as in e.g. Mozambique's cash transfer programme) can be resource-intensive and slow and one might assume that digital payment channels offer better scope for shock-responsiveness; yet in the Philippines, it was the e-payment infrastructure that was damaged after Typhoon Haiyan, and recipients reverted to over-the-counter payments.

Strong communication with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries is vital. Experiences in Pakistan, Lesotho and the Philippines highlight the potential risk that aspects of humanitarian assistance provided through social protection programmes may not be well understood by communities. This includes decisions on targeting (who is included and excluded, and why); the transfer value (what it is based on, why this differs from the value of social protection in normal times, or other parallel humanitarian assistance, or both); and for how long households will be enrolled.

How humanitarian, DRM and social protection systems can best work together

Collaboration among social protection, DRM and humanitarian actors may be strengthened by promoting common understanding of the different fields, and improving policy engagement and coordination of programmes and delivery systems. Definitions of 'social protection' and 'DRM' are often not understood outside their sectors. Yet social protection initiatives can contribute at multiple stages of the DRM cycle, offering much more than material support for disaster response. Most importantly, they help to strengthen households' resilience to shocks. Understanding may be

promoted by targeted initiatives to train stakeholders in the principles of the other sectors. In many countries, collaboration between the social protection, DRM and humanitarian sectors is limited. Better coordination is valuable not only between sectors nationally, but also among their representatives at different levels of public authority—regional, national, subnational and community. Coordination can be at the level of institutions (policy) or organisations (staff).

A starting-point for improved institutional coordination *between* sectors is to improve policy coherence *within* each sector. The more each sector is internally consistent, the more feasible cross-sectoral collaboration becomes. Actions such as developing sectorwide strategies, policies or budgets can contribute to this. In most of the case study countries one of the sectors tends to have a stronger institutional framework than the others (such as clearer governance arrangements, legislation or policies). This is often accompanied by greater political power and resources and tends to mean that this sector dominates. A challenge is that each sector is itself multisectoral: core activities may be conducted by numerous stakeholders including in health, nutrition etc. This increases the risk of particular sectors being omitted from consultations on policy development. In Mali, for example, the DRM and agriculture sectors tended to be left out of discussions on shock-responsive social protection; while at regional level in the Sahel, the agriculture sector has a role in policy discussions but may not be well linked to its social protection and DRM counterparts.

Organisational coordination must be deliberately built within and across sectors while minimising duplication of structures. Coordination bodies may conduct activities from planning to strategic oversight and information exchange, to the elaboration and harmonisation of technical processes, data analysis, and monitoring of programme implementation. This type of coordination differs dramatically between countries. Examples of relevant groups that we identified during our research, and that may combine government, donor and/or other non-governmental agencies, include forums for data collection and analysis (such as the Cadre Harmonisé in the Sahel); technical working groups on specific themes, including Cash Working Groups; groups that manage disaster response (e.g. the District Disaster Management Teams in Lesotho, humanitarian clusters, or the UN Humanitarian Country Teams); alliances for advocacy and policy coordination; temporary committees, e.g. to monitor food insecurity during the lean season; and periodic conferences. Mali is an example of a country with quite a comprehensive set of active coordination bodies, including some country-level incarnations of Sahel-wide or global structures.

These coordination structures have several benefits. They can improve understanding of technical concepts, enhance intersectoral harmonisation and offer a space for agencies to develop working relationships that can be called on in crisis times. Nonetheless we recognise that coordination is often easy to call for, but much harder to implement. There is a need not to overburden a small number of individuals with repeated meetings.

As for coordination of specific programmes or delivery systems to improve shock-responsiveness, this requires agreement on the many design and implementation details discussed throughout this report. One of the main opportunities that is often underexplored among social protection actors is the link to those used by the DRM sector, ranging from contingency plans and early warning systems to post-disaster needs assessments, DRM committees and laws.

Recommendations

Our evidence highlights opportunities for shifts in policies and practice among social protection, humanitarian and DRM actors. We present 12 recommendations. For policymakers, these are:

1. Don't overlook the value of strengthening routine social protection for reducing the negative consequences of shocks.

2. Consider how to increase the ability of social protection programmes and delivery systems to withstand the shock themselves, continuing to function in a crisis. This should include details of how procedures for regular programmes will be used, modified or waived.
3. In relation to particular shocks or types of shock, analyse systematically whether and how social protection can best contribute to a response. This should include identifying needs and vulnerabilities; understanding current shock response through DRM and other mechanisms, and the maturity of the social protection system; and considering the relative merits of using different interventions, recognising that there will always be trade-offs.
4. Increase *ex-ante* planning and action. Enhancing a 'disaster risk reduction' approach, focusing on preparedness, will improve the effectiveness of shock-responsive social protection.
5. Develop guidance on shock-response through social protection (e.g. roles and responsibilities, protocols for accessing data etc.), so procedures do not have to be defined during a crisis.
6. Build strategic collaboration across sectors—it does not happen organically.
7. Pay close attention to adverse impacts: ensure households are not worse off with a social protection response than with an emergency response.

For programme implementers the key recommendations are:

8. Take into account that many social protection programmes can become more shock-responsive with simple design tweaks.
9. Ensure that finances are available to facilitate the adaptation of programmes and systems. Robust processes need to be in place for anticipating and releasing funds.
10. Consider capacity constraints so that you do not have a negative impact on the underlying social protection programme or system (e.g. by overburdening staff as described above).
11. Promote coordination between individual interventions, where appropriate. Social protection programmes and systems will only ever be part of a wider emergency response and so coordination with other programmes is vital. This includes collaborating on practical issues such as sharing data, setting transfer values, minimising gaps and managing potential duplication in support to beneficiaries.
12. We need more M&E information on the efficiency and effectiveness of shock-responsive social protection. If social protection programmes and systems are used for shock-response then it is important to understand whether they provide a better alternative than other responses.

Topics within shock-responsive social protection that merit further investigation include comparative analysis of individual programmes, including value for money analysis; how shock-responsive social protection can support equitable outcomes; the potential of social insurance as a way of protecting consumption and livelihoods; and community perspectives on shock-responsive social protection.

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Abbreviations

ARC	African Risk Capacity
ASP	Adaptive Social Protection
BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme
CaLP	Cash Learning Partnership
CCT	conditional cash transfer
CGP	Child Grant Programme, Lesotho
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSA	Food Security Commission, Mali
DFID	Department for International Development
DRM	disaster risk management
DRR	disaster risk reduction
DSWD	Department for Social Welfare and Development
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department
ECOWAP	ECOWAS Agricultural Policy
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EMOP	Emergency Operations (World Food Programme terminology)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
HEA	Household Economy Approach
HIEP	Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme
HSNP	Hunger Safety Net Programme
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INAS	National Institute for Social Action, Mozambique
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MGCAS	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action, Mozambique
MIS	management information system
MSAH	Ministère de la Solidarité et de l'Action Humanitaire, Mali

MSPC	Ministère de la Sécurité et de la Protection Civile, Mali
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority, Pakistan
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NISSA	National Information System for Social Assistance, Lesotho
NSER	National Socioeconomic Registry, Pakistan
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
PMT	proxy means test
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
PSSB	Basic Social Subsidy Programme, Mozambique
RAMED	Régime d'Assistance Medicale, Mali
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme

PART A: INTRODUCTION AND KEY CONCEPTS

1 Introduction to the research

1.1 The rationale for the research

Globally, the frequency, size and duration of disasters and crises—be they the consequence of natural phenomena or economic or political shocks—are on the rise. Many of these shocks are slow-onset, predictable and/or protracted. National governments bear the main formal responsibility for mitigating the risk of shocks and responding to them. The demands for assistance from governments and the international humanitarian community—as well as the enormous informal support that communities themselves provide—continue to grow. The cost of responding to these disasters has been increasing, too. The value of international humanitarian assistance keeps hitting record highs—the last three years have each seen the highest ever levels of assistance—yet the shortfall continues to increase (Development Initiatives, 2016).

Governments and international agencies alike are committed to finding a way to respond more efficiently and effectively to shocks, including through improved preparedness as well as post-disaster response. They aim to 'use existing resources and capabilities better to shrink humanitarian needs over the long term', in the words of the Grand Bargain at the World Humanitarian Summit ('Grand Bargain', 2016, p. 14).

Many actors are now asking whether and how long-term social protection systems can be part of the solution, since these are already intended to meet the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable households and to build resilience. Naturally, all social protection interventions are in some sense shock-responsive, in that they help households to deal *ex-ante* or *ex-post* with chronic or sudden events that negatively affect their livelihoods. The crucial distinction for the present research is between shocks that affect a large proportion of the population simultaneously (*covariate shocks*) and those that affect individuals or individual households, often through life cycle events such as a loss of jobs, illness, death, etc. (*idiosyncratic shocks*) (e.g. Holzmann and Jorgensen, 2000). We look particularly at covariate shocks (see section 1.2).

For the UK Department for International Development (DFID), this question forms part of its strategy to enable decision-makers to find new ways of tackling humanitarian problems, to maximise the effective use of resources to support households that are affected by—or are at risk of—major shocks. DFID commissioned this study to explore this issue.

1.2 Research questions

We examine two related but distinct themes: first, social protection and its potential role in shock response; and second, the opportunities for coordination (and possible integration) of humanitarian interventions, disaster risk management (DRM) and social protection (Box 1 below).

Policy-makers who look at the 'shock-responsiveness' of social protection systems tend to refer implicitly to covariate shocks. This is the focus of our research. We concentrate on the types of shock that affect a substantial share of the population and result in a ‘crisis situation’ likely to trigger an international humanitarian response. Covariate shocks may be:

- **natural**—e.g. drought, floods, typhoons and earthquakes;
- **political**—e.g. political crises and armed conflict; or
- **economic**—e.g. economic downturns or high food prices.

In turn these can be classified as 'rapid-onset' (hitting suddenly, like an earthquake), or 'slow-onset' (a gradual intensification of a stress, in which it may be difficult to pinpoint the moment it becomes a crisis, such as a drought). They can vary in their predictability, duration and geographical distribution. They may be one-off or recurrent, or fluctuate seasonally as with countries that experience an annual 'lean season'. Often populations can be afflicted by several shocks at once (e.g. when a political crisis or conflict turns a natural 'shock' into a disaster). In a disaster caused by a covariate shock, the degree of individual crisis is hugely affected by idiosyncratic shocks and individuals' capacity to cope (see OPM (2015) for more analysis of types of shocks and stresses).

Our research covers examples of many of these types of shock. We do not cover the influx of refugees, which triggers specific international mechanisms and is not the sole responsibility of the host country, or disease outbreak, which calls primarily for a response from the health system.

Box 1 Key research questions

Our overarching research question is: **What factors enable social protection systems to be responsive to shocks and to deliver effective shock response?**

The two associated sub-questions are:

1. **What features in the design and implementation of social protection systems facilitate an effective response to shocks?**
   Here we look both at the overall system—contextual factors such as governance and political contexts, the budget process, levels of fragility, and laws and regulations—and also at specific programmes and their delivery systems, to shed light on how their design features and implementation arrangements shape the extent to which they provide effective shock response.
2. **How can humanitarian, DRM and social protection systems best work together for effective responses to shocks?**
   We identify areas of commonality between humanitarian, DRM and social protection objectives, review how these sectors interact in practice and consider where there is scope for greater coordination and perhaps even integration of interventions. We identify the policy options and trade-offs associated with linking these sectors, taking into account differences in purpose and scope.

1.3 Approach to the research

We have addressed the research questions by means of a series of six case studies, a literature review and numerous consultations worldwide. The case studies look at low and middle income countries' experiences to date, as well as at possible future options. The case studies were purposively selected to permit a reflection of recent experiences with major shocks (Table 1). There are two in Asia (**Pakistan** and the **Philippines**), two in southern Africa (**Mozambique** and **Lesotho**) and two in west Africa (**Mali**, and a regional study of the **Sahel**) (Figure 1 and Annex C). These capture different types of shock—rapid-onset cyclones and floods, and slow-onset drought, as well as political instability—and a variety of responses. In Pakistan, Mozambique and Mali the team conducted many periods of research over several months, looking at many shocks and responses; in the others the team delivered a lighter study that explored a single shock, or a single aspect of the social protection system. Each case study draws mainly on consultations with several dozen key informants, as well as a wide-ranging review of documentation (see Annex D).

Beyond the case studies the team has also engaged in many consultations globally with policy-makers from national governments, and regional and global bilateral and multilateral development and humanitarian organisations, including those from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the United Nations (UN) agencies. This has included participation by team members in webinars, conferences, workshops and round-table events. These discussions have also enriched the findings in this synthesis report.

Table 1 Case studies

	Country	Region	Depth of analysis	Hazards reviewed	Characteristic	Social protection programmes discussed in the case study
1	Pakistan	Asia	In-depth	Flood / earthquake	Experiences with, and potential use of, cash in rapid-onset emergencies (especially since the 2005 earthquake and 2010 floods). Focus on the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and consideration of decentralised governance arrangements for shock-responsive social protection.	• Cash transfer programmes (social protection and humanitarian)
2	Mozambique	Southern Africa	In-depth	Flood / drought / cyclone	Extensive development of DRM systems and robust capacity, in comparison to the social protection sector. Consideration of how social protection can play a role in both slow and rapid onset emergencies in such contexts.	• Cash transfer programmes • In-kind assistance • Public works programmes
3	Mali	Sahel	In-depth	Food insecurity / drought (with conflict)	Review of recent efforts to reduce reliance on annual humanitarian responses to chronic seasonal food insecurity arising mainly from slow-onset drought. Consideration of the impact of the 2012 conflict.	• Cash transfer programmes (social protection and humanitarian) • Free food distribution • School feeding programme • Medical assistance
4	Philippines	Asia	Light	Typhoon	Study of the temporary scale-up of the national cash transfer programme, Pantawid, after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, and developments related to shock-responsive social protection since then.	• Cash transfer programmes
5	Lesotho	Southern Africa	Light	Food insecurity / drought	Consideration of the use of social protection programmes and systems in response to the droughts caused by El Niño in 2016.	• Cash transfer programmes (child grant, old age pension) • School feeding programme • Food subsidy
6	Regionwide	Sahel	Light	Food insecurity / drought	Review of the role of regionwide policy-making bodies and regional strategies in supporting national responses to food insecurity. Consideration of coordination structures and mechanisms at multiple levels.	• n/a (not programme-specific)

Source: OPM consortium.

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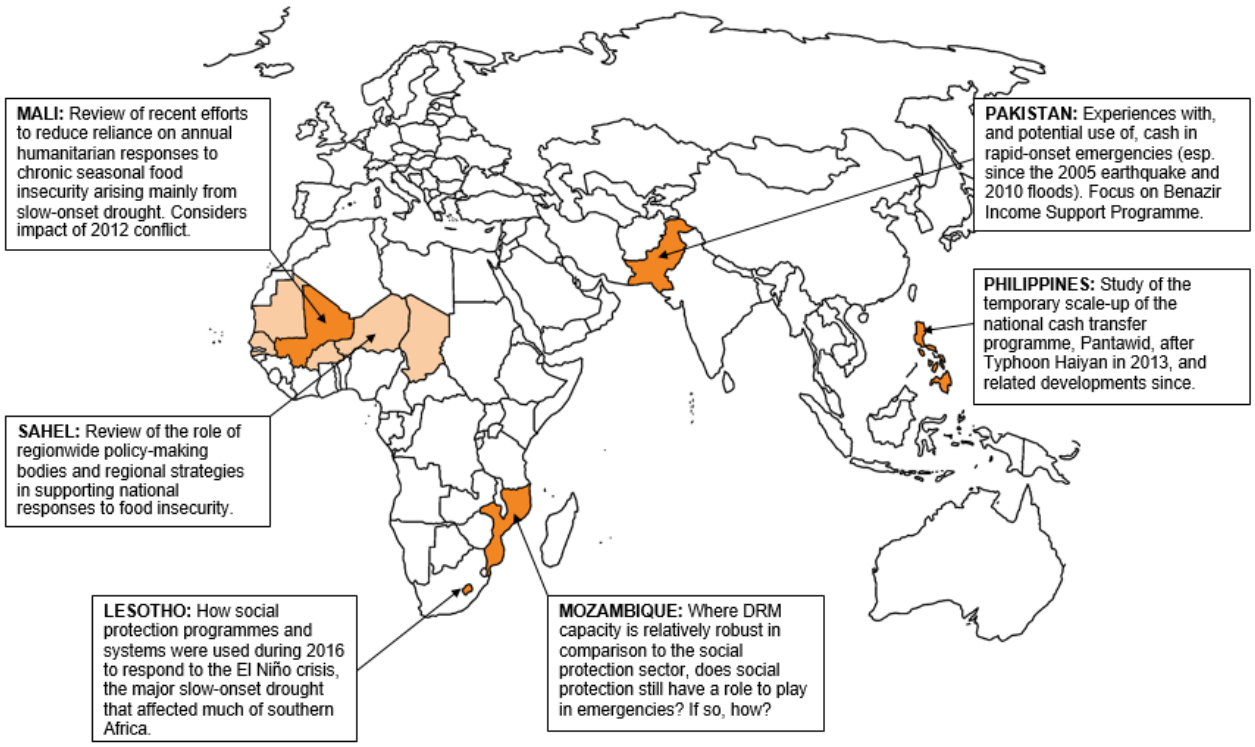
Figure 1 Case studies



Source: Authors.

A number of related products have been released that draw on the research findings: these include a toolkit, a policy brief on social protection databases, a series of working papers and an animation (see Annex B for a list of outputs).

1.4 Research limitations

The scope of the research is global and yet resource constraints inevitably meant data collection had to be limited to a handful of low and middle income country contexts. The case study approach allows for *depth* of study, but necessarily limits *breadth*. The global literature review broadened the evidence base and improved the team's understanding of the transferability of findings.

Access to key informants was generally good in the case study countries, aided by our inclusion of national consultants in each team, meaning that data collection could continue outside the visits of the international teams. Given the focus of the research on policy-making and implementation, and resource constraints, our respondents were drawn mainly from national and international policy-makers (both government and non-government) rather than beneficiaries and their communities.

Due to the number and complexity of the research questions, it was not possible to pre-test the questionnaires or to discuss every topic with every interviewee. The teams determined prior to, and during the interviews, what topics were most pertinent to the key informant's expertise, and that needed validation or triangulation. The team mitigated any risk of bias or information gaps by agreeing on the most important topics to cover, and validating findings across all stakeholders.

Security concerns had some impact on the research. In Mali the team was unable to travel outside the capital, and resolved this by interviewing some respondents from other regions when they came to Bamako for meetings. In Pakistan, the selection of provinces for case study visits was guided by security considerations.

2 Key concepts

Key points:

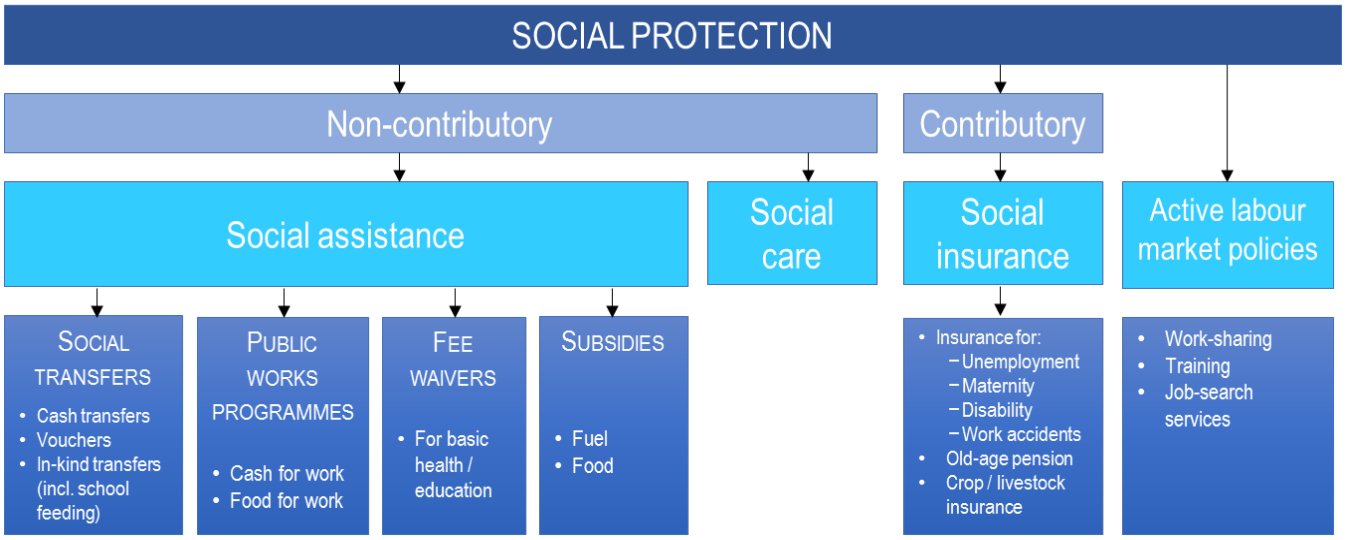
- Social protection is the set of public actions that address the deprivation and vulnerabilities of the poor, and the needs of the non-poor for security in the face of shocks and the particular demands of different stages of the life cycle.
- Our focus is mainly on social assistance since this is most prevalent and most often considered for crisis response in the low- and middle-income countries under review (we look at cash and in-kind transfers, school feeding programmes, public works programmes and a food subsidy).
- We consider three levels of 'system': the overall sector (mandates, policies etc.); individual programmes; and programme delivery systems (databases, payment mechanisms etc.).
- Analysis takes into account the varying maturity of social protection systems in different countries.
- 'Humanitarian assistance' is designed to save lives and alleviate suffering in disasters and crises. It has overlaps with social protection and DRM. Social protection interventions are not a substitute for every type of humanitarian assistance.
- DRM activities are all the processes that aim to reduce the likelihood of a disaster, lessen the impact of hazards and improve people's ability to cope if a disaster occurs.
- Traditionally humanitarian and social protection objectives have been different. This distinction in objectives is diminishing.
- There is also some overlap in the instruments different actors use. Because of this overlap it is sometimes hard to distinguish between social protection and humanitarian assistance.
- There is now a convergence in the approaches of DRM, humanitarian assistance and social protection: humanitarian actors are looking towards multi-year funding, while social protection actors are considering how to respond more flexibly to needs when shocks occur.

2.1 Social protection

It is useful to define what we mean by a 'social protection system'. First, *social protection*, in line with the long established definition of Norton *et al.* (2001, p.22), is the set of public actions that deal with, 'both the absolute deprivation and vulnerabilities of the poorest, and also with the need of the non-poor for security in the face of shocks and the particular demands of different stages of the life cycle'. This ‘public’ response may be governmental or non-governmental. Social protection encompasses a wide range of instruments, with varying objectives and financing mechanisms: we consider policies that may be labelled as ‘social assistance’, 'social care', ‘social insurance’ and ‘labour market policies’ (Figure 2). A commonly used analytical framework notes that these instruments can serve four different broad functions: protection (providing relief from deprivation); prevention (averting deprivation); promotion (enhancing real income and capabilities); and transformation (addressing social inequity and exclusion) (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004).

In line with the interventions in place in the countries under review, our study looks especially at the use of social assistance, since this has often been used or considered for crisis response. The case studies provide examples of cash transfers (child grants, poverty-targeted household grants, non-contributory old age pensions); in-kind transfers (food—including school feeding programmes—and agricultural inputs); public works programmes; and a food subsidy. Contributory social insurance is not covered where these respond to idiosyncratic shocks, given the focus on response to covariate shocks.

Figure 2 Our typology of social protection



Source: OPM (2017). Notes: (1) 'Non-contributory' schemes are defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as those that, 'normally require no direct [financial] contribution from beneficiaries or their employers as a condition of entitlement to receive benefits' (ILO, 2017). Public works programmes are usually counted as 'non-contributory' even though the recipient contributes labour. (2) Social transfers may be conditional or unconditional. A conditional transfer requires the recipient to meet certain behaviours (such as ensuring school attendance) to receive the benefit.

As for what counts as a *system*, we bear three levels in mind.

1. At the highest level are the overall components that steer everything that is grouped under 'social protection' (referred to by some agencies as the '**big S**' system): the ministries and other agencies and their mandates, their coordination bodies, their policies and strategies, the laws and regulations they issue, the sector budget and the way its distribution is prioritised.
2. Next are the **individual programmes** that are the visible face of social protection for households in a country: the cash transfer programme, the school feeding programme etc.
3. Beneath these are the **delivery systems** (the **'little S**' systems) that underpin the programmes: their registration processes, databases, payment mechanisms, frameworks for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and so on.

It is commonly stated that many countries do not yet have a comprehensive social protection system. While this may be true—in that they may not have a set of programmes that offer seamless support to people in need from cradle to grave, avoiding gaps and duplication, and articulated in a strategy that is fully resourced—all countries have some kind of assistance in place, even if delivered *ad-hoc* by non-state actors. The elements of a system listed above can still be assessed to determine their use in a shock relative to alternative emergency responses. Do they enable a better response, by improving synergies across the social protection, humanitarian and DRM sectors, or by resolving any shortcomings in the way that the DRM sector and humanitarian actors handle shocks, before or after the shock occurs (such as by enabling a faster response or reaching more people, and ultimately reducing the severity of impact of the shock)?

The maturity of a country's social protection system has considerable consequences for its ability to be used to respond to shocks. This is not a fixed state: indeed, emergency responses to large-scale disasters can drive improvements to the overall maturity of the long-term social protection system as they may trial delivery systems—identity cards, payment methods,

databases—that are later retained for use in other social protection interventions[2]. Nonetheless, it is useful for policy-makers to consider the maturity of the social protection system in which they are working in order to plan approaches that are most likely to succeed. Table 2 offers a typology in this regard.

Table 2 Typology: Maturity of a social protection system

	Category of maturity	Description
1	**Non-existent**	No state interest in developing long-term social protection, and only ad-hoc foreign aid / humanitarian interventions
2	**Internationally led**	No clear progress in state policy, but emerging foreign aid interventions shaping up to a system with elements of harmonisation or coordination
3	**State-led interest**	Some state interest to expand social protection to the poor and vulnerable, including elements such as the outline of what could become a national programme
4	**State-led commitment**	Commitment to expand social protection (as articulated in e.g. national strategy), with some flagship initiatives for the poor and vulnerable (co-) funded by the state
5	**State-led expanding**	Clear state policies / laws and a growing set of social protection schemes
6	**State-led mature**	Well established system with high coverage of populations and needs.

Source: OPM (2015).

2.2 Humanitarian assistance

Since our aim is to understand how the systems used in social protection interact with those used for humanitarian assistance and DRM it is useful also to define those other areas. Humanitarian assistance is defined in the guide to Principles and Good Practice of Good Humanitarian Donorship, agreed in 2003 by a group of international donors, NGOs and multilateral agencies, as the resources used to fund actions that are designed to, 'save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of man-made crises and natural disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations' (Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, 2003, p.1).

Humanitarian assistance may take many forms. It may include reconstruction and rehabilitation (e.g. restoring infrastructure and community assets such as water supplies), emergency food or cash assistance, services such as the provision of shelter, health, nutrition and education, and measures to protect the safety of the population. Some argue that it extends also to DRM activities, early warning systems and contingency planning (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2014). The mix depends on the particular needs of a crisis and the priorities of the actors involved. In some circumstances the UN coordinates assistance in thematic clusters in line with sectoral objectives (food security, shelter etc.). The precise boundaries of humanitarian activities and expenditures with development ones are debated and often blurred (Borton, 2009).

Only a few of these relate directly to social protection. There is a clear overlap in relation to the provision of material support to households in need of assistance and to enable populations to restore their livelihoods after an emergency. Moreover, a link with DRM activities is explicit. However, actions such as the supply of emergency shelters, water and sanitation, the provision of health and education, and the reconstruction of roads and telecommunication systems are not

[2] See e.g. Pakistan, where a major earthquake in 2005 and massive flooding in 2010 prompted the development of a policy framework for DRM and for the accumulation of experience in cash transfer programming (Watson *et al*., 2017)

social protection activities. They would not be expected to be linked to, or affected by, shock-responsive social protection, except insofar as social protection interventions help households to access these services, through e.g. cash transfers, fee waivers or in-kind transfers.

The vocabulary relating to humanitarian assistance is not fixed, so we set out here the variations in common usage, and the way we use it in this report. The term 'humanitarian assistance' is generally used interchangeably with 'humanitarian action' and 'humanitarian response'[3] – and sometimes 'emergency response'. We use the term 'humanitarian sector' to refer broadly to humanitarian actors and their activities. A 'humanitarian actor' is an agency or organisation which perceives its work to relate to the provision of humanitarian assistance, be it a short- or long-term crisis[4]. Usage differs as to whether this includes government agencies: for example, in some parts of the world the government itself will have a humanitarian policy and/or a ministry for humanitarian action, while in Latin America the term tends to be reserved for international aid agencies, such as UN agencies and international NGOs[5]. In this report we use the term in its broader sense, including government. Often, when it is necessary to distinguish actions outside the government and national organisations, these phrases are prefaced with the word 'international' ('international humanitarian assistance', 'international humanitarian actors' etc.)

The crises to which this assistance responds may be called 'humanitarian crises', though some use that term more narrowly to refer only to crises that exceed the government's capacity to respond. Again, in this report we consider that governments can respond to a humanitarian crisis.

Humanitarian assistance is often consciously provided in line with some or all of the key 'humanitarian principles' of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. These are formulated specifically for working in conflicts. The extent to which these are adhered to—especially in non-conflict situations, for which they were not intended—varies. The humanitarian principles are a voluntary moral code rather than an obligation for all humanitarian actors and they are subject to varying interpretations. For example, international humanitarian actors sometimes query the extent to which international donor funding compromises independence and whether national governments can take on an increased role in responding to humanitarian crises when there is an expectation of independence; yet others believe that the principle of independence does not in fact preclude working with governments and use of government systems. Actors may have different interpretations as to how to deliver principled humanitarian assistance through government systems—and, indeed, this may raise important and challenging questions about, for instance, how to avoid certain people being excluded from the support they may need—but in this report we do not consider the use of government systems to be necessarily incompatible with the principled humanitarian action. Rather we believe that the application of humanitarian principles and potential trade-offs of working through government systems would need to be considered in individual circumstances, particularly when states are party to conflicts[6].

[3] The alternate uses may be a matter of preference within a country: for example, Francophone countries tend to use the phrase 'humanitarian action' ('*action humanitaire*').
[4] In contrast, we use 'social protection actor' to refer to government and non-government agencies, including UN agencies and donors, who perceive their work to be contributing to long-term development
[5] Consequently, in the Latin American region governments tend to be described as delivering 'emergency response', not 'humanitarian response', for consistency.
[6] The role of states is clearly recognised in law, and most statements of principle start with a reaffirmation of the primary responsibility of states for the welfare of victims of humanitarian emergencies within their own borders. According to the key UN humanitarian resolution, Resolution 46/182 of 1991, 'Each State has the responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies occurring on its territory. Hence, the affected State has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory'. The Sphere guidelines 'acknowledge the primary role and responsibility of the state to provide assistance when people's capacity to cope has been exceeded'. The Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative 'reaffirms the primary responsibility of states'

2.3 Disaster risk management (DRM)

DRM activities are all the processes that aim to reduce the likelihood of a disaster, lessen the impact of hazards and improve people's ability to cope if a disaster occurs (UNISDR, 2009). DRM is defined as, 'the application of disaster risk reduction policies and strategies to prevent new disaster risk, reduce existing disaster risk and manage residual risk' (UNISDR, 2017). It is often viewed as having five focal areas: prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. These are similar in concept to the functions of social protection of protection, prevention, promotion and transformation (see above and also section 15.1). Establishing a shock-responsive social protection system clearly relates to preparedness, response and recovery from a disaster, so potentially links with many DRM activities and mechanisms[7]. The types of mechanism that are often run by DRM actors but that might be relevant to people working in social protection include:

- **Early warning systems**, that give early alerts of potential threats such as droughts or cyclones, or even small variations in weather patterns (these alerts can be used to trigger interventions that can help avert or mitigate the threat);
- **Risk assessments and vulnerability assessments**, that can help identify locations and populations likely to be in greatest need of assistance;
- **Contingency plans**, that set out what will be done in different types of emergency, and that might include a role for social protection in the planned response;
- **Local disaster response teams** that may coordinate the targeting and distribution of support to communities after a shock; and
- **DRM financing mechanisms or insurance mechanisms**, that can release funds for emergency measures which might include social protection.

2.4 Convergence between social protection, humanitarian assistance and DRM

When a covariate shock occurs, humanitarian assistance may be undertaken to deliver goods and services to affected people to facilitate their return to their normal lives and livelihoods. Support may be delivered by government or (usually at its request) by international agencies or national civil society organisations. The policy issue is whether social protection systems and processes can deliver services in response to crises that address some of people's needs in a way that eases the burden on humanitarian assistance, and offers greater effectiveness, efficiency and/or improved accountability. We discuss here where those areas of common ground might be.

Across the humanitarian, DRM and social protection sectors, some policymakers and implementers are seeking to create a system that can provide better responses to shocks. This activity can be either *before* the shock is fully felt—helping to reduce the negative impact of the shock when it arises, through better preparedness measures or through assistance that is triggered early—or *after*, providing immediate relief to those affected and supporting long-term recovery. Interventions that are framed as 'strengthening resilience' also contribute to this goal.

When resources are transferred to households to enable them to meet basic needs, the instruments used for humanitarian assistance are often similar to those used in the social

[7] We are using the UNISDR definitions which can be found here: http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/7817

protection sector. Both sectors may use interventions such as the distribution of food or cash, or the provision of free school meals.

Conventionally one might have expected the humanitarian and social protection sectors to be distinguished in three ways: their objectives, their governance arrangements, and the time and place of action. However, we find a high degree of convergence globally in the approaches of actors in these sectors:

- **Regarding their objectives, social protection actors might typically state their aim as being to reduce chronic poverty or vulnerability, while humanitarian actors might frame their objectives in terms of addressing immediate food needs to save lives.** This distinction is being eroded, with an overlap in the objectives of many organisations and programmes. A multi-year 'emergency' intervention might look similar to a 'social protection' intervention in terms of its urgency, the extent to which it saves lives and the temporary or chronic nature of the needs it addresses (see e.g. Levine and Sharp, 2015). Many organisations that count themselves as '*humanitarian agencies*' are considering how to move away from the cycle of annual emergency appeals towards multi-year funding arrangements where relevant. This is part of a long-standing recognition that many crises are long term, and is especially the case in countries in protracted crisis (e.g. Mali). They are also offering more flexible assistance to households and individuals, including through a greater use of cash rather than in-kind support in places where markets are functioning. At the same time, actors supporting *social protection* programmes are considering how to make interventions more responsive to changes in people's needs, including by exploring ways to adapt programmes quickly when shocks occur, or to complement emergency responses.
- **Regarding the governance arrangements, social protection is often framed as being state-led and/or deliberately aiming at increasing state capacity, while humanitarian assistance is often thought of as being of the international variety, delivered outside the state**. In practice, as we have seen, this distinction does not hold. Governments play a vital role in emergency response, often leading the implementation of a response themselves as well as coordinating the activities of others (see section 2 above; also e.g. United Nations, 1991, and OCHA, 2012). Governments may perceive the social assistance and humanitarian assistance they provide to be closely interconnected, as we found in Mali, where the Ministry of Solidarity and Humanitarian Action is responsible for the whole spectrum of interventions:

  > 'There isn't a clear distinction between humanitarian assistance and social protection. Taking care of the poorest people […] is a continuous activity that doesn't wait for a crisis to break out' (Key informant, Ministry of Solidarity and Humanitarian Action, Mali).

  Governments that provide an annual response to a seasonal crisis—public works programmes in Mozambique or food distribution in Mali—may not distinguish whether this is a seasonal social protection intervention or a seasonal emergency response (and the terminology may not even matter). Some of the same actors engage in both social protection and humanitarian response. This, again, blurs the distinction between the sectors. For example, some UN organisations (the World Food Programme, WFP, for instance) have a dual mandate, and some NGOs have a dual mission statement, providing both routine and emergency support.
- **It is not always possible to distinguish humanitarian from social protection interventions by time or by place.** In a crisis situation, regular development activities do not necessarily cease. There is not a linear transition from humanitarian activities to development activities: this means that often agencies address chronic needs while working alongside others who are supporting a response to a short-term crisis. Conversely, and particularly in conflict situations, development activities may be absent from places that need long-term

assistance because of insecurity; in these cases non-governmental humanitarian agencies may deliver services that might otherwise be expected to be part of regular development programming. These services might then be operated under the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and so on.

A similar convergence is found between social protection and DRM, in relation to some of their objectives and governance arrangements. Awareness is emerging among DRM actors of the relevance of social protection interventions for the whole of the DRM cycle, including mitigating the impact of disasters. They are incorporating social protection initiatives into strategies for DRM, such as the African Risk Capacity, the extreme-weather insurance mechanism that pools risk across African countries: it envisages that governments could use payouts to finance the rapid scaling-up of social protection measures following a weather-related shock, particularly drought. As for the institutional setup, in some instances, as in the Philippines, the ministry responsible for social welfare has a remit for some aspects of DRM.

All of this means that to envisage shifting from a 'humanitarian' to a 'social protection' crisis response, or to ask how 'social protection' interventions can respond to 'humanitarian' needs, is to risk missing the point. It is not always clear what this implies in terms of a change in who is responsible, the nature of the intervention, its objective, duration or geographical location. Instead it is more useful to think about what is different about the improvements that governments and agencies are trying to achieve, compared with what they have been doing until now. We provide a framework for this next.

PART B: OPTIONS FOR SHOCK-RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

3 Frameworks for analysing shock-responsive social protection

Key points:

- Six factors emerged in the case studies as forming a basis for a judgment as to whether a system or programme is more responsive to shocks than alternatives. These are: meeting needs; coverage; timeliness; predictability; elimination of duplicated delivery systems and processes; and sustainability. Other factors that might be considered relevant are e.g. transparency, accountability and fairness.
- No intervention is likely to improve all these dimensions at once: there are trade-offs. Neither shock-responsive social protection nor standalone humanitarian responses are always better than the other across these dimensions. Which works better according to these criteria depends on the context and stakeholder perspectives.
- The OECD's guidance for evaluating humanitarian assistance, and DFID's '4Es' guidance offer frameworks for assessing the suitability and value for money of shock-responsive social protection interventions.

'Shock-responsiveness' is currently a hot topic in the social protection, humanitarian and DRM sectors. It has featured as an area of thematic importance in recent global events such as the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, and in global policy debates: for example, it is mentioned in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. There have also been numerous conferences, workshops, webinars, seminars, training courses and publications on the topic in recent years. As with any hot topic there is a risk of shock-responsive social protection being assumed to be desirable, without reference to any given context, so it is important to determine how to judge whether it is indeed desirable.

An objective of this research has been to identify how policymakers and implementers themselves judge the suitability of using social protection as a response to shocks, **compared to a traditional humanitarian response**. Over the course of the case studies several themes emerged. These frame our assessment of options in the remainder of this report. Views on the effectiveness of shock-responsive social protection tended to centre on one or more of the following factors. Note that we are not stating that shock-responsive social protection is effective in all these areas, or that these are the only areas to consider, but that these were the main factors upon which judgments were based:

1. **Meeting needs**. The key issue is whether an intervention delivers an equal or greater impact than its alternatives. Better meeting the needs of any given set of people might be achieved through a response that is better targeted, provides a more adequate level of support, or provides support of a more appropriate nature. The eventual impact might include a reduction in household poverty, vulnerability or inequality (see e.g. White et al., 2013).
2. **Coverage of the population.** Some policymakers aimed to use social protection programmes or systems to increase the absolute number of people reached, or the relative share of those in need of assistance. Coverage can be improved by reducing the number of people who need assistance in the first place (including by having long-term support in place or by strengthening household resilience), as well as by supporting households after a crisis occurs.
3. **Timeliness.** There was a widespread emphasis on the need for a timely response to avoid interventions being delivered too late to be of use for the shock they were intended to address. According to some studies an early response generally produces a better outcome than the same response delivered later (see e.g. Cabot Venton *et al*., 2012).

4. **Predictability.** This has two aspects: predictability of funding for implementing agencies (including through guaranteeing that funds are available to be released when needed, or through providing longer term support), and predictability of assistance for households. For implementers, predictable funding has the advantage of improving planning and facilitating longer term investments. For households, the receipt of predictable assistance—such as financial support over a number of years rather than unexpected short-term relief following a shock—can help with household budgeting and may help them to build up assets, or not sell of their assets in a crisis.
5. **Elimination of duplicated delivery systems and processes,** such as multiple agencies conducting similar targeting exercises in the same communities. Duplication can be reduced by increasing coordination between programme implementers, or by harmonising aspects of programme delivery. The aim of doing so may be to reduce costs, to improve coverage of those in need, to improve timeliness, or to achieve a greater consensus among agencies as to how to tackle a policy problem.
6. **Sustainability**. In the context of delivering a response to emergencies, the sustainability of an intervention can be perceived in part to be a function of whether it leads to strengthened organisational capacity, especially whether it is embedded in government-led systems.

The same factors are relevant for assessing the suitability of humanitarian responses. It is not the case that social protection will automatically be better than a separate humanitarian response in each of these areas. For instance, in some contexts international aid agencies may be able to disburse support faster or provide a higher value of support than an alternative response through a social protection intervention; or they may be able to enter a geographical area that government systems are unable to reach (e.g. in a conflict), thereby extending coverage.

No intervention is likely to improve all six of these dimensions at once: there are trade-offs. For example, an agency might be better able to achieve a better targeted response if it conducts a needs assessment at the moment of a crisis, but this may reduce its timeliness; or it may meet more short-term needs by funding a response through an emergency appeal, but at the expense of establishing a longer term predictable flow of funds or promoting sustainability through the use of government systems. In no case did we find all six of these factors being improved simultaneously when a social protection intervention was used in an emergency response, in comparison with humanitarian assistance responding to the same shock. Conversely, nor did we find any cases where humanitarian responses always outperformed the use of shock-responsive social protection. Highlighting these trade-offs is a central aspect of much of this report. To take one example, in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, many households in receipt of a child grant were given a top-up. This was done to improve coverage, though a trade-off was that the response was slower than some emergency responses delivered by NGOs (see Box 11).

What works better, according to the balance of positive and negative points about these criteria, depends on the context and on stakeholders' particular perspectives and priorities, which may not all be the same. This may be driven by:

- The type of crisis (e.g. whether it is rapid- or slow-onset, which may determine the extent to which the speed of response affects household well-being);
- The regularity and size of the crisis, which may affect whether it should be treated as a one-off exceptional event—perhaps requiring the enactment of a contingency plan—or whether governments should plan to integrate a response to the shock into their routine activities;
- Whether the intervention is taking place in a conflict context, and whether the government is a party to the conflict, which may have implications for the use of or alignment with government systems;

- The capacity of agencies, including access to financing and infrastructure, which may influence whether the use of an existing system will overwhelm it or can be absorbed.

If social protection systems or programmes are to be useful in the event of a shock they need to offer a solution that improves on existing DRM or humanitarian approaches in one or more of these aspects without, on balance, worsening other aspects.

Beyond the six factors outlined above that were indicated by respondents during our research, others may also be relevant. Assessing the relative merits of shock-responsive social protection and standalone humanitarian responses can also include considerations of e.g. transparency, accountability and fairness. A relevant framework is the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD's) guidance for evaluating humanitarian assistance, as it is logical to assess shock-responsive social protection interventions against the criteria by which the success of humanitarian assistance is measured. The OECD guidance covers seven criteria: the 'relevance' or appropriateness of the action; its 'connectedness' to the wider development context; its 'coherence' with the interventions of other actors; its 'coverage' of those in need; the 'efficiency' with which it delivers outputs; the 'effectiveness' of those outputs for achieving the purpose; and the overall 'impact'.

Table 3 Analytical frameworks for evaluating and assessing value for money of an emergency response: OECD and DFID

Criterion (OECD)	Explanation
Relevance / appropriateness	Extent to which the intervention is in line with local needs and priorities (as well as donor policy) and is tailored to local needs, increasing ownership, accountability and cost-effectiveness
Connectedness	Ensuring that activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a context that takes long-term and interconnected problems into account
Coherence	Extent to which policies of different actors are complementary or contradictory—including humanitarian, development, security, trade and military policies
Coverage	The need to reach major population groups facing life-threatening risk wherever they are
Efficiency	How economically inputs are converted to outputs
Effectiveness	Extent to which an activity achieves its purpose, including timeliness and coordination
Impact	Longer-term consequences of achieving or not achieving objectives

Criterion (DFID)	Explanation
Economy	Purchase of inputs of the appropriate quality at the right price
Efficiency	How well are inputs converted into outputs (“Spending well”)
Effectiveness	How well are outputs achieving the desired outcomes and ultimately impact. Impact has three distinct elements: the direct impact on the intended beneficiaries; impact on policy design; and impact through the strengthening of organisational capacity (“Spending wisely”)
Equity	Degree to which benefits are fairly distributed (“Spending fairly”)

Source: ALNAP (2006) and DFID (2011).

Likewise it is important to consider the value for money of shock-responsive social protection, compared to other humanitarian assistance. DFID's '4E's approach to assessing value for money provides a framework for maximising impact with the available resources. It considers ‘economy’, ‘efficiency’, ‘effectiveness’ and 'equity' (DFID, 2011). 'Economy' refers to the

purchase of the right inputs at the right price; 'efficiency' refers to the way those inputs are used to run processes and achieve outputs; 'effectiveness' refers to the use of those outputs to deliver the right outcomes and ultimately impact, and ‘equity’ refers to the degree to which benefits are fairly distributed. Table 3 outlines the OECD-DAC criteria and ‘4E’s’ metrics.

Often emergency programmes measure their inputs and outputs (i.e. economy and efficiency components) but are less explicit about their intended outcomes and how to measure whether they have succeeded[8]. Our research found that, similarly, the discussion on improving responsiveness to shocks is focused particularly on improving *efficiency*, ie. how well inputs (financial, material and human resources) are converted into outputs (e.g. amount disbursed to beneficiaries or number of people reached with assistance). There was less attention to outcomes and impact, and limited information available on value for money in general (see 16.3.1). We explore these issues in more detail in section 12.6 below and in the toolkit that accompanies this report.

We now turn to a summary of the different ways in which social protection systems and programmes can be used before or after a crisis to improve each of the criteria / indicators.

[8] A recent review by the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) on DFID's approach to delivering impact perceives that value-for-money assessments have tended to focus on outputs more than outcomes, and expresses concern about the number of programmes that measure their reach—the number of people notionally benefiting—without considering the result for those people (ICAI, 2015).

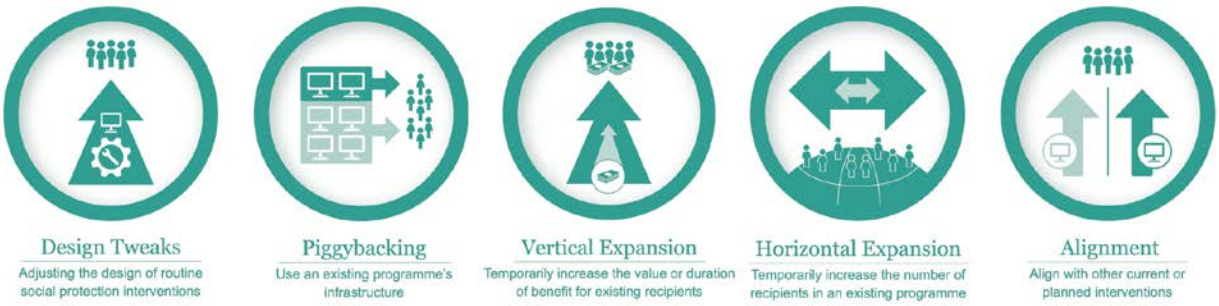
4 What are the options and where might they work?

Key points:

- Five key options for shock-responsive adaptation are: making small adjustments to the design of the core programme ('design tweaks'); using elements of an existing programme or system while delivering a separate emergency response ('piggybacking'); topping up support to beneficiaries ('vertical expansion'); temporarily extending support to new households ('horizontal expansion'); and aligning social protection and/or humanitarian interventions with one another ('alignment').
- A combination of these may be most appropriate.
- Table 4 summarises the prerequisites, opportunities, risks and challenges of each of these options. The details are presented in sections 5-9 that follow.

Governments and their partners worldwide have considered various options for making use of their social protection programmes and systems in a shock, and for linking them with emergency responses. At the beginning of this research, we organised examples from the literature into a typology of five options. This was tested in our fieldwork in five countries and one region over a two-year period and has subsequently been revised. The revised typology is presented in Figure 3. The 'design tweaks' option has been added, and a 'refocusing' option has been dropped.

Figure 3 Typology of options for shock-responsive adaptation



Source: OPM.

The best potential for shock-responsive social protection in a particular country may well involve implementing a combination of these options – as well as combining these with other, separate, humanitarian and DRM responses. Some options are better suited to certain contexts and certain types of disaster than others, and some have specific prerequisites that must be in place before or after a shock for them to work. As noted in section 3, key determinants for selecting a particular option will be the nature of the shock, the extent of the vulnerability and the maturity of the underlying social protection programmes or system. Sections 5-10 explore the different options open to those wishing to explore shock-responsive social protection, giving practical examples as well as details of the benefits, risks, challenges and contextual prerequisites for each type.

Options vary in their applicability. Adjusting the design of a social protection intervention can be considered anywhere that an intervention exists; piggybacking on one intervention but delivering something else offers a lot of flexibility, but does require at least some element of the social protection system to be functioning; giving top-ups to programme beneficiaries ('vertical expansion') or temporarily expanding the number of people who receive support ('horizontal expansion) may require delivery systems that can withstand large variations in the amount of support they provide. The descriptions and details are presented in sections 5-9 that follow. Table 4 in section 11 summarises the evidence.

5 'Design tweaks' to routine social protection interventions

Key points:

- A design tweak is an adjustment to a programme or system which takes account of the type of shocks expected in a country. Ideally this will be made before a shock, though it could be after.
- This can either introduce flexibility into the programme so as to maintain support for regular beneficiaries (e.g. waiving conditionalities in a crisis), or can entail improving the core social protection system in a manner that is consciously designed to reduce the vulnerabilities of crisis-affected populations (such as expanding an intervention into geographical areas most at risk).
- The opportunity for design tweaks can exist for all programmes, though the merits and feasibility of different options would depend on the context and on available resources.
- The main challenges are political will and satisfying multiple developmental agendas.
- The risks—if implemented sensitively—are low, provided the adjustment does not divert the programme from its core objective or close off other opportunities to achieve greater impact.

5.1 Definition of a 'design tweak'

The design of social protection programmes and systems can be adjusted in a way that takes into consideration the crises that a country typically faces. These 'design tweaks' can serve one of two purposes. First, they can introduce flexibility into a social protection programme so as to maintain the provision of the regular service for existing beneficiaries in the event of a shock. This may be particularly relevant in areas prone to rapid-onset disasters such as earthquakes or cyclones, where infrastructure may be damaged, or in areas affected by conflict where access to services may be disrupted. Examples might include developing protocols that allow people to receive a cash transfer over the counter if a usual electronic payment system is no longer functioning, or that waive conditionalities (such as school attendance) if these cannot be fulfilled as a result of the crisis. Box 2 illustrates how this was achieved in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan.

Box 2 Regulatory changes for greater shock-responsiveness: example from the Philippines

Changes to the regulatory environment can enhance shock-responsive social protection, particularly when they are made before the shock occurs. Before Typhoon Haiyan, earlier in 2013, the Department for Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the Philippines had passed a resolution that if a state of calamity was declared, household conditions on cash transfer programmes would be waived for three months. This change meant that Pantawid transfers automatically became unconditional following Typhoon Haiyan, at the same time that DSWD and WFP began their discussions on delivering an emergency cash transfer through Pantawid. This made it easier to plan an unconditional top-up and vertically expand the programme.

Similarly, in the wake of the typhoon, the Central Bank relaxed its national financial regulations related to ‘know-your-customer’ requirements, in acknowledgement that many households had lost their identity cards. This contributed to the conducive environment for implementing emergency cash assistance.

Source: Smith *et al.* (2017).

Second, changes to a programme's design can be introduced that can improve its coverage, timeliness or predictability in the event of a crisis, even without requiring the programme to flex at the moment of the shock itself. This can be explored even when shock-responsiveness is not the primary focus of the intervention. It is a variant on strengthening the core social protection system—which is in any case likely to be of some value in a large-scale crisis, given that social protection is intended to improve households' capacity to deal with the shocks they face (see section 12.1)—but with the difference that this strengthening is oriented towards vulnerabilities that

are likely to increase in a large-scale disaster or crisis. Examples of this second type of design tweak might include prioritising areas vulnerable to shocks when expanding a programme, or changing the timing of support so that it is received at a time when people are most susceptible to food insecurity or the consequences of a natural hazard (Box 3).

Box 3 Example of a design tweak: School feeding programme in Mali

In Mali the government has tailored the roll-out of its school meals programme to prioritise the most food-insecure areas. The Ministry of Education's long-term objective is to provide free meals for pupils in all schools, but as it does not yet have the capacity to do so, it reaches 20% of primary schools for now (others are supported by WFP). The government has geographically targeted its programme so as to prioritise the 166 communes considered most vulnerable to food insecurity. Within the targeted zones, priority is given to schools with low enrolment and retention rates, especially of girls. Although shock-responsiveness is not the primary objective of the programme, by prioritising these areas—and by prioritising girls, whom some evidence show to have higher vulnerability to disasters compared to boys—it is more relevant in the event of a shock.

These 'design tweaks' can be relatively small. Because of this, they may be feasible in systems at any level of maturity, and can be considered for all social protection initiatives, provided they do not divert the underlying programme from its primary purpose: they are relevant even in places where the creation of more sophisticated emergency scale-up mechanisms is inappropriate. If these tweaks are made *ex-ante*, rather than *ex-post*, they may fulfil a resilience-building and disaster risk reduction (DRR) function. This new addition to the typology, not in the initial version, has been added as we found it fundamental to the initiatives we encountered during fieldwork[9].

5.2 Contextual prerequisites for tweaking a programme's design

A key benefit of this approach is that there are few prerequisites for any specific strong underlying system or programme for a design tweak to be effective, provided that some form of social protection exists. The principle of this type of approach can be explored in any context, with any type of social protection programme, in relation to any type of shock (both slow- and rapid-onset). It is necessary to have data that permits an understanding as to how social protection interventions are likely to be disrupted in a shock (for the first type of tweak) and which areas and/or households are most prone to chronic poverty or cyclical shocks and how their needs will change (for the second type), so that design adjustments can be made to best effect. However, each variation would, of course, require different levels of financial resources, staff capacity, data and so on: the merits and feasibility of different design tweaks would need to be examined on a case-by-case basis according to the context. To maximise the effectiveness of any adjustment to the programme design it would also be useful to have the capacity for a thorough appraisal of the options, including through consultation with a range of stakeholders.

5.3 Opportunities

Design tweaks can be seen as a baseline step; all social protection programmes could be audited for any quick-win 'design tweaks' that could be made to improve shock-responsiveness. Those that entail the introduction of flexibility to maintain provision of a social protection programme in a shock represent a gentler introduction to shock-responsive adaptation than some of the options included in this typology. Strengthening a core social protection programme in a shock-sensitive way may be as resource-intensive—or more so—as other improvements to the programme, but may reduce the resources required for separate responses at

[9] See OPM (2015) for the initial conceptual framework.

the moment of the crisis. They present an opportunity to start a dialogue with programme implementers about shock-responsiveness and raise awareness of the issues.

Box 4 An opportunity for a design tweak: Mozambique's cash transfer programme

In Mozambique, where the social protection programmes are relatively under-resourced and the overall system is relatively immature (although some programmes have been established for a long time), our research team identified an opportunity to tweak the design of the cash transfer programme, the Basic Social Subsidy Programme (PSSB). The PSSB routinely suffers from disbursement delays in the first quarter of each new financial year in January. Unfortunately, that also coincides with the period of greatest risk of climatic shocks such as cyclones and floods. A simple design tweak could be made to the payment plan, such as a double payment in December in place of a payment in January or February: this would ensure that households were covered at the time of increased vulnerability, and would be fiscally cost neutral if the aggregate amount paid across the year remained the same. In addition, as the programme continues its expansion in line with the objectives of the national social protection strategy, it could consider prioritising geographical areas and populations most vulnerable to particular shocks, as in the Mali school meals example above.

Source: Kardan *et al*. (2017a).

5.4 Challenges for programme implementers

We identify four primary challenges in successfully tweaking the design of a social protection system to improve its relevance in the event of a shock:

1. **Different shocks may give rise to ideas for different design tweaks.** For example, in Mozambique, the areas most prone to floods and cyclones are not necessarily the areas most prone to the negative impacts of a drought. If the degree of susceptibility to shocks were a criterion guiding the further roll-out of the programme, policymakers would need to consider which indicators to use to determine which geographical areas to prioritise. One way might be to compare the characteristics of households receiving long-term support with those typically in need of emergency assistance, to see where there is most overlap. It may be decided that households who face seasonal food insecurity (rather than, say, those who experience cyclones) are most similar to those who receive a regular transfer, in which case policymakers might wish to start by expanding to areas with a high incidence of that type of shock.
2. **Political will for preparedness measures.** It may be difficult to generate political will and momentum for these kinds of adaptation when designed *ex-ante*, without the imperative of a high-profile disaster: it may be easier to find resources for responses to a disaster than for preparedness activities.
3. **Social protection programmes are subject to multiple development agendas.** For example, they may also be required to mainstream gender equality, child protection or a human rights approach in addition to their poverty-reducing objectives. In this context there is a risk that shock-responsiveness may become just another in a long list of important considerations and demands placed on a programme, and therefore may be less likely to be adopted. Competing demands may be equally justifiable but may not help the usefulness of the social protection system in an emergency. The result of this is that, if the design tweaks that improve shock-responsiveness are not the most useful for the core social protection programme, they may not be implemented. Alternatively, changes may be introduced that make the core programme less rather than more useful for shock-response: see Box 5.
4. **Practicalities of working in places prone to disasters and crises.** If a social protection programme is absent from places most vulnerable to a shock, or currently has limited capacity to operate in those areas, this may be because of very real challenges in delivering services in that environment. This is especially the case in areas affected by conflict. In Mali, for example,

the national cash transfer programme, Jigisèmèjiri, was launched around the time of the 2012 political crisis, in precisely the areas that were *not* experiencing fighting, because it was more feasible. The mere fact of recognising the importance of getting social protection to shock-affected households may not be enough to initiate a tweak to fix this anomaly: it may require huge investment and a different delivery model.

Box 5 A challenge in adjusting programme design: Lesotho's socioeconomic database

Lesotho is reforming (overhauling rather than tweaking) its large database, the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA), which records the socioeconomic characteristics of poor households in some areas. Under the reform it aims to record details of 50% of households in each location, selected by the community, rather than seeking full coverage in each area as per the earlier database. The change is intended to increase the influence of the community, improve accuracy and speed up completion of the database. However, a side effect is that the data—while possibly more accurate—may cover a smaller percentage of households in any given area than the previous one, so may be a less useful starting point for finding out about households in the event of an emergency, since many of those who were not considered poor initially will not be on it.

Source: Kardan *et al*. (2017b).

5.5 Risks of tweaking a programme design for improved shock-responsiveness

The main risk to be aware of is that by focusing on improving a social protection programme so as to enhance its impact in the event of a shock, the policymaker may divert it from its core objective, or close off opportunities to enhance its impact for other purposes. Governments and agencies are under pressure to promote linkages between their programmes across numerous sectors, and it is unlikely that a single adjustment to the design will be beneficial to all sectors (Box 6).

Box 6 A risk in tweaking programme design: observation from the Sahel

Fifteen countries in west Africa are members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Its regional agricultural policy, known as ECOWAP, includes promotion of the use of social assistance to address food security crises. With ECOWAP now 10 years old a revision of the document is underway, alongside a revision of the national and regional investment programmes that go with it.

We understand from key informants that member states have been advised to consider new cross-cutting themes in preparing the new documents. However, with so many plausible intersections between food security and other themes—nutrition, climate change, employment and gender, for example—it may be difficult to integrate all the linkages being promoted by agencies offering technical assistance. It is unlikely to be feasible to adjust the programmes in a way that simultaneously offers improvements in all of these areas. This may mean that any adjustment that attempted to strengthen the links between social protection and food security risks reducing the resources available for strengthening the links between food security and other sectors.

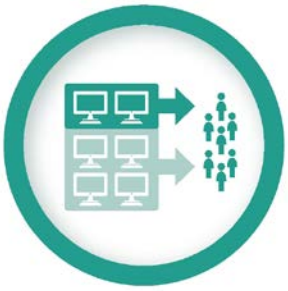
Source: O'Brien *et al*. (2017).

6 'Piggybacking' on an established system or programme

Key points:

- Piggybacking is a programme response using part of an established system or programme
- Some element of a system must be in place; however, even if minimal it can be beneficial to use it.
- Piggybacking can be more cost-effective and it can take a 'pick and mix' approach. It is easier if some actors are already connected.
- Challenges include identifying the components worth connecting to, and coordination among actors.
- Important to avoid overloading the existing system, particularly where there is a risk of multiple, uncoordinated piggybacking efforts.

6.1 Definition of piggybacking[10]



Piggybacking occurs when an emergency response, delivered by either government or its partners, uses part of an established system or programme while delivering something new. Exactly which and how many elements of the overall system or programme are borrowed will vary; it could be e.g. a specific programme's beneficiary list, its staff, a national database and/or a particular payment mechanism. This response option has three key features. First, by definition there has to be an existing programme or delivery system to piggyback on, since the idea is to take advantage of something that is already there rather than starting from scratch. Second, policymakers can piggyback on either part of a programme *or* an underlying delivery system that may support multiple programmes: this distinguishes it from the temporary scale-up of a specific programme (vertical or horizontal expansion—see below). Third, it can be delivered by different actors to the core system or programme, working within their own political mandates and administrative structures. Humanitarian actors can piggyback on government programmes and systems, or vice versa.

Box 7 Examples of piggybacking on beneficiary lists and databases: Lesotho and Mali

During fieldwork, several examples of piggybacking were found to be under discussion or under implementation. Commonly, actors take advantage of databases or households lists that have already been set up by another programme, in order not to duplicate the effort: indeed, often these databases are set up with that purpose in mind (see section 14.1 below for more on such databases).

- In Lesotho during the El Niño-induced drought in 2016, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) piggybacked on a specific programme: they used the Child Grant Programme's beneficiary list to distribute seeds, training and vouchers.
- In Mali, the government has piggybacked on humanitarian databases to build the *Registre Social Unifié*, a unified social registry that is still being developed but is envisioned as a gateway for all actors working on social assistance to access information about individuals and households.

The appropriateness of this action depends on factors such as the extent to which social protection programme beneficiaries are also disaster-affected, and the data privacy arrangements in place.

Source: Kardan *et al*. (2017, b); O'Brien *et al*. (2018).

Some piggybacking of humanitarian assistance onto social protection programmes—especially when done as an ex-ante measure—bears similarities to the 'cash plus' concept. This recent term describes interventions that provide households with a cash transfer together with

[10] For readers who are not familiar with the term, a 'piggyback' is a ride on someone else's back, as sometimes given to children. The term is used metaphorically to mean the use of something that someone else has already made or done in order to make life easier.

additional support, to enable the household to build resilience and/or develop new livelihood opportunities (e.g. 'cash + agricultural inputs'). This, too, is piggybacking on a beneficiary list while delivering alternative measures with the aim of reducing the household's susceptibility to future shocks. Taking the example in Box 7, the FAO was piloting the distribution of seeds to households enrolled on the Child Grant Programme long before the El Niño crisis: this was perceived as a resilience-building measure, which does in turn relate to the 'prevention' and 'preparedness' components of DRM. A conceptual difference is that 'cash plus' is generally a social protection intervention linked to complementary *services*, while piggybacking an emergency response onto a social protection intervention involves different programmes using some common *systems*.

6.2 Contextual prerequisites for piggybacking on a system or programme

As noted, for piggybacking to bring benefits to emergency response there has to be a programme component or system to piggyback on. When social protection systems are very weak, piggybacking may not be viable. All our case study countries already piggybacked emergency responses onto social protection systems or were considering it. For example, in Mozambique, although the social protection system has quite considerable resource constraints, emergency responses use the administrative framework of the implementing agency for social protection, the National Institute for Social Action (INAS): government agencies and NGOs regularly rely on or consult the social assistance focal points ('*permanentes*') in identifying the most vulnerable or affected populations. On the other hand, neither Mozambique's management information system (no unified system across programmes) nor the manual payment systems used by INAS were judged capable of emergency response owing to staff and operational constraints.

This means that piggybacking can be considered in a wider range of contexts than the vertical or horizontal expansion discussed below, as there is no requirement for a single 'flagship' programme, or programmes, with good coverage or robust systems throughout. In relation to our typology of system maturity, it is likely that piggybacking could work well from 'internationally led' environments reliant on foreign aid interventions up to contexts with much greater maturity (levels 2 to 6 in Table 2).

6.3 Opportunities

A major benefit of piggybacking is that a 'pick and mix' approach can be taken—the best bits of different programmes and systems can be used as seems most appropriate, rather than a single programme having to be used wholesale. Piggybacking—especially on delivery systems such as a database—may be less likely to encounter some of the risks around brand dilution, beneficiary confusion and political obstacles that can be a feature of the vertical or horizontal expansion of a specific programme (see sections 7 and 8). Piggybacking provides an opportunity to take advantage of some existing systems whilst maintaining the integrity and core focus of the underlying system or programme. These were the main reasons why piggybacking on the National Socioeconomic Registry (NSER) appeals to some social protection, DRM and humanitarian actors in Pakistan (Box 8).

There is also some evidence that emergency responses can be more cost-efficient if they piggyback on robust systems. From its experience of implementing emergency cash transfers in Pakistan, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has identified beneficiary targeting, selection and registration as a significant driver of costs and time for programming in humanitarian situations. A small pilot research project conducted by IRC in Sindh province, comparing the use of community-based targeting in some communities with piggybacking on the NSER to identify

beneficiaries in others, suggested that piggybacking on the NSER resulted in a higher level of operational efficiency (including reduced delivery time and burden on communities) (IRC, 2016).

Box 8 An opportunity for piggybacking: Pakistan's National Socioeconomic Registry

Piggybacking was identified by some stakeholders as the most feasible option for effective shock-responsive social protection in Pakistan. Agencies responding to a disaster might usefully build on elements of the delivery systems used by the national social assistance intervention, the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). For example, they could obtain support regarding data from the NSER and regarding registration from the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) who are responsible for the issuance of computerised national IDs. This would provide the opportunity to build upon the technical knowledge and procedures developed within BISP, including the strong relationship with NADRA and the NSER database which, despite some limitations, still contains the strongest household data that exists in the country.

Source: Watson *et al*. (2017).

It becomes easier to piggyback on a programme or system if humanitarian actors already have a working relationship with the people who run it. There are greater opportunities to select between different delivery mechanisms—especially in contexts where there are many options, e.g. a child benefit, an old age pension and a school meals programme—if those who deliver emergency programmes are familiar with how each works (see also section 15.2.2). The use of these systems is likely to be even more effective if they establish a memorandum of understanding during non-crisis times as to how the system might be used in an emergency. The Philippines was considering this in the design of its National Emergency Cash Transfer (under discussion at the time of the research), in relation to linking with the Pantawid programme.

6.4 Challenges for programme implementers

Key challenges for actors attempting to piggyback on a programme or system are:

1. **Identifying which components to piggyback on.** Decisions as to which elements to use will benefit from a careful comparative analysis of objectives, beneficiaries, coverage, accuracy, operational feasibility and a system's resilience when stretched. For example, it can be administratively appealing to reach for a ready-made database to identify beneficiaries in a shock, but while this may improve the timeliness of a response compared with the setup of a separate emergency targeting system, it may have less impact than a standalone intervention if those beneficiaries are not those most in need. The closer the overlap between those on the database and those most affected by the shock, the more relevant piggybacking would become (see also section 14.1.3). Moreover, any weaknesses in the system being piggybacked on will be transferred to the shock response (such as insufficient staffing, gaps in geographical coverage, or out-of-date data).
2. **Securing the agreement of the implementers of the core programme.** Organisations will not necessarily be aligned in their approaches, capacities, knowledge or objectives. Using the Pakistan example from Box 8 above, BISP is a federal programme operating in a devolved context where provinces are responsible for both social protection and disaster response. Implementers at provincial level may not necessarily be in a position to adopt elements of BISP's delivery systems in their responses to shocks even if it seems relevant. In turn, BISP may be reluctant to allow other programmes to piggyback on its systems if it risks causing confusion about its core objectives which are primarily to address chronic poverty.
3. **Coordinating with actors from multiple agencies.** Effective coordination mechanisms have to be put in place. For example, in Pakistan, to piggyback on the NSER for future disaster response would require clarification of roles and responsibilities between BISP, NADRA, national and provincial disaster management authorities, non-governmental actors and

financial service providers. Where actors wish to piggyback on delivery systems (rather than specific programmes) it is necessary to identify who is responsible for authorising their use and for overseeing it. In the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan, for instance, agencies sought the use of the national social registry, the Listahanan, which included details both of households who received the conditional cash transfer for children (the Pantawid programme) and of households who were non-beneficiaries; yet there was no coordinated decision-making as to whether agencies implementing an emergency response should specifically include the Pantawid households (on the grounds that they were likely to be vulnerable) or specifically exclude them (on the grounds that they were already being supported) (Smith *et al.*, 2017) (see also section 14.1 below).

Box 9 A challenge in Lesotho: to piggyback on the national social registry or not?

In Lesotho, during the 2016 drought, some humanitarian agencies considered whether to select households for support by piggybacking either on the national social assistance database, the NISSA, which listed over 100,000 households who were thought to be chronically poor and vulnerable; or on a subset, the 27,000 households who received transfers under the Child Grant Programme (CGP).

Some international agencies had positive relationships with the implementers of the NISSA and the CGP, which made it an accessible route through which to reach affected households. The relatively extensive coverage was also an advantage. On the other hand, the database covered households in only about half the community councils (subdistricts) in Lesotho; some areas had been picked by lottery, so were not necessarily the areas most affected by a drought; and the data had been collected several years earlier, some of it in 2010, so much of it was out of date. The data were also not visible to people outside the capital, including the district disaster management teams who coordinated the emergency response.

In the end no agency used the broader NISSA database, ie. of non-CGP households, since that data had not been used since it was collected and it did not seem the best way to identify households currently facing food insecurity. However, some agencies—such as FAO and CRS—did piggyback on the CGP beneficiary list to distribute their assistance as those households were currently in receipt of transfers so their records were more up-to-date and they could be traced (see also Box 7 above).

Other social protection databases were not assessed for their suitability to be piggybacked on, so we cannot compare these benefits and drawbacks relative to other programmes.

Source: Kardan *et al.* (2017b).

6.5 Risks to other programmes

Taking advantage of a programme or system to deliver a separate intervention may be appealing to the implementer of the emergency response, but is not without risk to the underlying mechanism. The additional work can have a knock-on negative impact, e.g. by overloading staff or computer systems. It is important to ensure that piggybacking does not undermine normal operations of the system. Part of the process of identifying which components to piggyback on must consider capacity within those organisations and how to bolster it if needed. Piggybacking on programmes can also lead to misunderstanding of programme objectives.

This risk is compounded in an environment where coordination of an emergency response is weak. If multiple agencies decide that it is administratively convenient to piggyback on, say, the beneficiary list of an existing programme, but without any coordination with one another, there is a chance that the same households receive multiple interventions while others receive none. Similarly, if several agencies try to use the same payment mechanism to deliver cash assistance then it, too, may be overwhelmed if not sufficiently robust.

7 'Vertical expansion': top-ups to current beneficiaries

Key points:

- Vertical expansion is the temporary increase of the benefit value or programme duration
- It is critical that the social protection programme has a good geographical coverage of the disaster-affected area, and the most needy households within that area
- Potential to offer a quick, cost-effective response to a shock (ready list of beneficiaries, administrative systems in place, established relationships between partners)
- Challenges include coordination, calculating the top-up, resourcing, communication with communities
- Risk of neglecting some disaster-affected people, and of gaps or duplication.

7.1 Definition of top-ups to current beneficiaries

Social protection programmes can be 'vertically expanded' following a shock: this means the benefit value or duration of the programme is temporarily increased for some or all beneficiaries. This can be done via an adjustment of transfer amounts or values, or through the introduction of extraordinary payments or transfers. It is unlikely that all programme beneficiaries would have been affected by the disaster in the same way or to the same extent, so these temporary top-ups are likely to be further targeted within the current beneficiary group. There are several recent or current examples of vertical expansion (see e.g. the Philippines and Lesotho case studies: OPM (2017), Smith *et al*. (2017), Kardan *et al.* (2017b)). In some cases vertical expansion of a programme may look similar to piggybacking on its beneficiary list. The difference is that, with a vertically expanded programme, the extra support is not separate but rather is an integral part of the existing intervention. It is likely to use the same implementers and delivery systems and the same name. Note that the emphasis is on scaling up a specific *programme*, not just borrowing an element of a delivery system.

Box 10 Example of vertical expansion: top-ups to a cash transfer in the Philippines

The Philippines has a major government-led national conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme, the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme (Pantawid, or 4Ps). Pantawid routinely delivers cash benefits to 4.4 million poor households with children—making it the world's third largest CCT. Following Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, Pantawid was vertically expanded in two ways: WFP provided a small amount of extra cash and rice to 105,000 beneficiary households in typhoon-affected areas immediately after the disaster, and UNICEF provided a much larger top-up to about 5,800 beneficiary households with children for six months during the subsequent recovery phase, prioritising structurally vulnerable households.

We class this as vertical expansion of Pantawid—rather than WFP and UNICEF piggybacking on Pantawid's beneficiary list—because the response was fully integrated into the national programme: all the Pantawid systems were used, rather than just one or two and the programme continued to be branded as Pantawid throughout.

Source: Smith *et al.* (2017).

Cash transfers are not the only types of social protection programme that can be vertically expanded: many forms of social assistance can be topped up. In Mali, for example, WFP complements the government's national school feeding programme by delivering free school meals to several hundred thousand pupils. Following the 2012-13 crisis, relating largely to the conflict in the north of the country, WFP topped up the support it provided in three ways: it sometimes offered two meals a day instead of one, extended the provision of meals into the school holidays or gave some pupils extra rations to take home. This represents a 'vertical expansion' as the emergency support served as a top-up to beneficiaries of the existing school meals programme.

7.2 Contextual prerequisites for top-ups to current beneficiaries

A critical prerequisite for vertical expansion is a strong social protection programme, or programmes, with good coverage of the geographical areas affected by the disaster, and of the neediest households within those areas. If it does not have good coverage then vertical scale-up will be of limited use unless it can be conveniently complemented with other assistance.

To determine whether these conditions exist, there must be a clear understanding as to who is affected by the shock, and whether the social protection beneficiaries are a close match to that group. This requires some form of needs assessment or vulnerability assessment to have been done, perhaps by DRM or humanitarian actors (see also section 14.1).

Impact also depends on it being useful for beneficiaries to receive more of what they already receive, and without worsening local conditions. For instance, if beneficiaries are recipients of a cash transfer, will local markets be affected by the flow of additional cash? In a rapid-onset natural catastrophe, which may destroy infrastructure, can recipients spend it?

As the scale-up is entirely dependent on the pre-existing programme then all related administrative and delivery systems need to be robust, adequate, and able not only to withstand the disruption of the shock, but also to be stretched beyond their regular capacity. For example, there is a need for good logistics in place to make an in-kind top-up work; and a strong payment system (combined with good price data and confidence in local markets) to make cash top-ups work (see also section 14.3).

Vertical expansion of an existing programme is therefore likely to be more feasible for social protection systems that are somewhat more mature than is necessary for tweaking or piggybacking on a system or programme. We would hope to find at least a state-led commitment to expanding social protection with some flagship initiatives for the poor and/or vulnerable (categories 4 and above in the typology of system maturity presented in Table 2); a slightly less developed system may still be able to incorporate this type of flexibility, but is likely to have less impact or face more implementation challenges. The Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia—which has extended the period of beneficiaries' eligibility for its public works programme beyond the regular six months a year during heightened food insecurity—is often cited as a model of good practice in relation to vertical scale-up; but replicating this example is not always realistic in countries without strongly institutionalised social protection programmes with high coverage.

7.3 Opportunities

Vertical expansion of an existing programme, or programmes, may offer the opportunity for a quick, cost-effective response to shocks on account of the following:

1. **Coverage.** A readily identified set of households, already classified as poor or vulnerable by the criteria of the social protection programme. If these households are also shock-affected the programme may offer a route to reach many of those in need. In Lesotho, for instance, although the total number of households in receipt of the child grant, the CGP, was only about a quarter of those estimated to have been affected by the El Niño crisis, this still meant that topping up the CGP was a way of reaching around 130,000 people.

   A programme's beneficiaries are most likely to include a high proportion of the shock-affected population if the absolute size of the programme is large, if it operates in locations known to be susceptible to shocks, or if the characteristics of those affected by a shock are associated with the programme's eligibility criteria. This last might occur e.g. if an economic shock or seasonal food insecurity particularly affects low-income households, in a context where there is a

poverty-targeted social assistance programme. The association is less likely to hold true, for instance, between the beneficiaries of a poverty-targeted programme and those affected by a rapid-onset disaster which affects the non-poor as well as the poor.

2. **Tried and tested administrative systems.** There is already a way to reach these households, and they are familiar with the system for receiving support. Service providers who understand the programme may already have agreements. The ability to use these systems depends on whether they are resilient to the shock and can cope with the extra caseload (see section 7.4).
3. **Established relationships** between the implementing agency and any line ministries, if relevant. For example, in Lesotho, UNICEF and the European Union were already partners of the Ministry of Social Development in the delivery of the CGP so this made it natural to think of building on the same relationship for the delivery of emergency support.

The Pantawid case study demonstrates some of these benefits (Box 11).

Box 11 Benefits of vertically expanding a cash transfer: example of the Philippines

In wanting to respond with cash at scale following Typhoon Haiyan, WFP could not find an NGO with the capacity to identify households and disburse cash quickly across the affected area, which would have required new systems and processes for communication, targeting and payment. The Pantawid programme had well established systems and extensive coverage, and many disaster-affected families were already enrolled in it. It therefore offered a rapid means to reach a large number of people with emergency cash assistance, at a speed and scale that was not possible through traditional humanitarian channels (over 105,000 households within two months, compared to 85,000 through NGOs over a longer period). In terms of timeliness Smith (2015) cites WFP:

> 'The first cash we got out was through our NGO partners. But to reach the scale that we reached with cash transfers through the Pantawid partnership—there was no other way of doing this rapidly. The targeting, verification, ID, delivery instrument and multi-pathway delivery channels with pre-existing contracts all helped' (Smith 2015, p. 56).

The timeframe for launching the vertical expansion of Pantawid (one month) also compared favourably with the several months that it took WFP to establish a service agreement with a financial service provider on its separate 'cash for assets' programme during the recovery phase (WFP, pers. comm.).

This ability of the CCT to disburse emergency relief quickly at scale means that for those affected households who were Pantawid beneficiaries, it was a more efficient channel for cash distribution than the parallel humanitarian system. The donor, WFP, reports that using existing systems also meant relatively low transaction costs compared to alternative channels through implementing partners (Betteley, 2016).

Source: Smith *et al.* (2017).

7.4 Challenges for programme implementers

The vertical expansion of a programme in a shock generates challenges around effective coordination, calculating the size of the top-up, staff capacity and material resources, adherence to pre-set procedures, and communication with communities. Investing in resolving these in a preparedness phase is worthwhile to reduce difficulties in implementation:

1. **Coordination.** If an agency delivers extra assistance to the beneficiaries of its own social protection programme in an area where other agencies are also delivering aid, it will be beneficial for the agencies to coordinate—such as by informing one another as to the support they have delivered—either to avoid gaps, or to be aware of how much is being provided if households are eligible for multiple benefits. It may also be important to coordinate to identify a subset of beneficiaries most in need of assistance, or to agree on the size of any top-up. These considerations also hold across shock-affected areas, as further discussed in section 15.
2. **Calculating the size of the top-up.** Selecting an appropriate value and duration of assistance for the top-up is difficult. For a routine social protection programme that supports chronically

poor and vulnerable households, one option in the event of a shock might be to top up its value to enable the same standard of living as in the absence of the shock (e.g. if the cost of living has risen). Alternative options might be to increase the value further to allow an element of resilience-building, or to match the level of an emergency response (to the top-up, or to the core transfer and top-up combined) which might aim to ensure that households can meet their entire food needs rather than offering a partial contribution. Section 14.2 below discusses this challenge further[11]. In practice the amount is also, of course, driven by budgetary feasibility, as was the case with UNICEF's top-up to CGP beneficiaries in Lesotho (Kardan *et al.*, 2017*b*).

3. **Resourcing.** In theory, vertical expansion of a programme should be less burdensome on existing capacity than horizontal expansion, because a delivery system is already operational and procedures for enrolling new beneficiaries (such as identity checks) are not required. However, extra resources are still needed, e.g. for coordination or management. In some cases extra physical amenities are required. In-kind transfers will need more storage and distribution capacities: these were not in place in the Philippines, which led to the spoiling of some food. Extensions to public works programmes may require substantial additional inputs in the form of design, management and materials. Meanwhile, if the top-up is delivered separately to the existing benefit then it may consume considerable extra staff time, transport, commission etc.
4. **Adherence to pre-set procedures.** Not every feature of an existing social protection programme will be ideal for a given emergency. Yet it may be difficult to vary the elements that are inconvenient. For example, if a transfer is paid out quarterly, agencies will have to decide whether to wait up to three months for the next payout or whether to disrupt the standard cycle.
5. **Communication with communities.** Delivering top-ups to some social protection beneficiaries leads to a scenario where some programme beneficiaries receive more than others, and where some households receive even more support than usual while non-beneficiaries continue to receive none from that programme. This can be very confusing and breed ill-feeling if it is not clearly explained. In the Philippines, the implementers of Pantawid faced challenges from both these groups. Municipal counterparts explained to programme beneficiaries who were not targeted by the top-up that the extra funding was a donor initiative, not the government's. If two types of aid are rolled into one vehicle, it is particularly important to have a strong grievance procedure to ensure people are not wrongly excluded.

These challenges can be eased if some of the fundamental decisions, such as the means by which the extra transfer will be calculated, are decided during non-crisis times. Such preparedness will also help improve efficiency through better timeliness of response.

7.5 Risks

The greatest adverse effect that vertical expansion of a social protection programme risks creating is that a large percentage of the disaster-affected miss out on support, as they are not enrolled in the programme being scaled up. This may happen if the implementer focuses on the administrative convenience of the top-up (looking at output measures such as speed of response and numbers of households reached) rather than on higher-level impacts.

The size of this risk depends on the degree of overlap between beneficiaries and disaster-affected communities, and the extent of any culture of sharing assistance among households. Vertical expansion is only ever, at best, a partial solution as the disaster-affected population is extremely unlikely to map exactly onto the programme's beneficiary list. This is particularly true for rapid-onset natural shocks which are indiscriminate and so the non-poor (less

[11] Note we do not touch upon the *form* of support (e.g. cash or in kind) and the implications this has, as it is beyond the scope of the research.

likely to be beneficiaries) are also affected and require support. It is therefore probable that separate interventions will be needed to assist non-beneficiaries. In the Philippines, for example, UNICEF complemented their Pantawid top-up with a cash assistance programme run through international NGOs to provide blanket coverage of families in the municipalities where they worked.

The need for multiple programmes providing response alongside a vertically expanded social protection programme creates risks around duplicating or overlooking individuals unless there is strong coordination between initiatives, as outlined in section 7.4. A top-up that appears cost-efficient and convenient to its funder may impose additional costs on other agencies working in the same area, if they have to spend time removing from their lists the households who have already been supported. It is therefore important to consider wider costs and benefits, not only costs and benefits of the top-up.

Some agencies are concerned that emergency top-ups will have a longer term negative impact on perceptions of the generosity of the underlying programme. For instance, in Mozambique, vertical expansion of the PSSB cash transfer was ruled out because, amongst other reasons including political acceptability and operational feasibility, policymakers sensed a risk that top-ups would raise beneficiary expectations which would be difficult to manage in the future.

8 'Horizontal expansion': temporary inclusion of new beneficiaries

Key points:

- Horizontal expansion is the temporary inclusion of new beneficiaries in a social protection programme
- Existing programmes should have strong administrative and delivery systems to cope with scale up.
- This offers the potential to reach a higher percentage of disaster-affected people than through vertical expansion alone, in a potentially more timely manner.
- Challenges include conceiving what the benefit covers, identifying recipients, resourcing and communications
- The risks include that the core objectives of the programme become diluted or obscured. This lack of clarity could also cause confusion amongst beneficiaries and communities.

8.1 Definition of horizontal expansion of a programme

The 'horizontal expansion' of a social protection programme refers to the temporary inclusion of new beneficiaries from disaster-affected communities. This could be done in three ways: extending the programme's geographical coverage; enrolling additional beneficiaries in geographical areas already covered, who meet the programme's usual criteria (i.e. an extraordinary enrolment campaign[12]) or bringing in additional beneficiaries by modifying the eligibility criteria. In the successful examples that emerged during fieldwork, preparations for horizontal expansion had been factored into the design of the programme rather than being added following a disaster. The ease with which the temporary expansion is done depends partly on whether the extra beneficiaries come from a pool of households pre-selected to be the first recipients in the event of an emergency, or whether they are identified only at the moment of the crisis (see discussion of challenges in section 8.4 below).

Box 12 Example of horizontal expansion: the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) in Kenya

The case of the HSNP cash transfer in northern Kenya, led by the National Drought Management Authority, is routinely cited as a prime example of a programme with a flexible component that allows for horizontal expansion in an emergency. The core programme gives cash every two months to 100,000 very poor households across the region. Every household has been registered with a bank account, into which money is paid directly. An innovation in Phase 2 of HSNP, which started in 2013, has been the registration of almost all other households in the four participating counties—nearly 300,000—and giving them a bank account as well. The account of these 'Group 2' households is normally dormant—they do not receive a routine transfer—but some are eligible to receive ad-hoc payments from HSNP in a drought, depending on their wealth ranking at the time of a targeting exercise. HSNP has triggered this temporary expansion of transfers to more beneficiaries several times since a first emergency payment in early 2015.

It is worth noting that the HSNP operates in an environment where the social protection system is relatively sophisticated and well resourced (by both the government and donors), and where the routine HSNP already reaches over 25% of the population in the areas where it operates. We therefore caution against assuming this can be easily replicated in contexts with nascent social protection systems where the challenges and risks mentioned below are likely to be felt more strongly.

Source: Authors.

[12] This will be especially necessary where registration and enrolment is only carried out periodically, see section 14.1.

In a manner of speaking a seasonal emergency response—such as annual food distribution during the lean season—may also be a form of horizontally expanding programme in that it may expand or contract the number of enrolled households from one year to the next depending on need. The difference is that there is not an explicit core set of beneficiaries who remain constant while others come and go (though in practice many may be the same for many years). This difference is fairly marginal and highlights the rather artificial divide between many so-called 'humanitarian' and 'social protection' programmes. The challenges of having enough capacity to respond to ever-changing numbers of beneficiaries are much the same.

During fieldwork we found some examples where horizontal expansion had been tried in the past, or had been considered for recent shocks, but few current examples of actual implementation. In three of our fieldwork locations—Pakistan, the Philippines and Lesotho—we found that the temporary extension of flagship social protection schemes to extra beneficiaries had been considered but dismissed in relation to recent shocks owing to a range of design and implementation challenges as well as perceived risks to the impact of the underlying programme.

8.2 Contextual prerequisites for temporary inclusion of new beneficiaries

A key prerequisite for horizontal expansion is a mature social protection programme with strong delivery systems that can cope with scale-up. The programme needs to be functioning well enough that the caseload can be increased without damaging normal operations. If spare capacity does not exist then 'surge capacity' will need to be available, for example by bringing in staff from other geographical areas or other programmes. Ideally, the programme will have been designed with horizontal expansion and contraction in mind, rather than trying to add this element in *ex post*, thereby avoiding some of the potential problems with brand dilution, confusion and inadequate targeting data (see below). Such a mechanism might be feasible in countries with less sophisticated social protection set-ups, but in those circumstances it would be more natural—and perhaps more sustainable—to concentrate on expanding and embedding a good core social protection system before embarking on technically complex variations. Mali, for example, has been considering options for flexibly scaling up its cash transfer programme, Jigisèmèjiri, in a shock; but the core programme reached only 3% of the population at the time of our research in 2016 (in a country where 44% of people are estimated to be below the poverty line). This leaves scope to achieve impact by expanding the routine programme, perhaps focusing on areas that experience the greatest food insecurity (see section 12.1, and the 'design tweaks' discussion in section 5).

Another key requirement is that robust data must be available for the identification of new beneficiaries. Ideally (particularly for slow-onset disasters) data will be used before the shock and individuals or households may have been pre-enrolled. An alternative option is that data must be able to be rapidly collected following a disaster (see section 14.1 and discussion of challenges in section 8.4).

In some cases, complementary system components that are only indirectly connected with the core social protection intervention may also need to be in place. For example, in Mali around the time of the 2012-13 conflict, implementers of the school feeding programme observed that they could not extend the programme back into areas that had been disrupted by the conflict, until they could be sure that the schools also had teachers and functioning, safe buildings and teachers: it was not enough simply to offer the extension of the school feeding programme, even if agencies were ready to supply that.

8.3 Opportunities

Horizontal expansion offers the potential to reach a higher percentage of those affected by a disaster than is likely through vertical expansion alone, as the worst affected areas and communities can be specifically targeted. This potential for increased coverage, beyond core programme beneficiaries, is represented in Figure 4. For example, horizontal expansion could temporarily modify eligibility criteria to remove the focus of many social protection programmes from 'the poor', as these are not necessarily the most affected by crises (see section 14.1).

It may also lead to a more timely response. Although specific examples of cost-efficiency and effectiveness of programmes did not arise during the fieldwork, international experience suggests that horizontal expansion offers an opportunity for some benefits related to timeliness compared to an emergency response starting from scratch, given that most of the infrastructure is already in place (OPM, 2017). This potential is most likely to be realised if reliable data already exists on new beneficiaries or if horizontal expansion has been built into the design of the programme, for example through pre-enrolment measures (as is the case for Kenya's HSNP, see Box 12).

Horizontal expansion may be particularly appropriate for economic shocks, especially for poverty-targeted programmes. Where benefits are intended to relieve consumption poverty, a crisis will make some previously ineligible households eligible, and it is reasonable to include them at this time of stress. This is the principle of on-demand enrolment in poverty-targeted programmes in mature social protection systems. In Latin America and the Caribbean, such expansion of safety net programmes has been used frequently in response to economic shocks such as the 2008 global food, fuel and financial crisis (see e.g. Beazley *et al.*, 2016, and OPM, 2017).

Horizontal expansion offers an opportunity to expand long-term social protection: after the crisis is over, it may be possible to incorporate the temporary beneficiaries (or some of them) fully into the programme rather than withdraw support. This would be relevant if they meet the programme's regular eligibility criteria but were not previously enrolled (e.g. those in a different geographical area). In this way it enables expansion of a social protection programme to households who are known to be in need. In Lesotho, following a food security shock in 2012, the Child Grant Programme was horizontally expanded to some 6,800 extra households on a temporary basis; it subsequently incorporated 3,500 of these households as regular beneficiaries (Niang and Ramirez, 2014; Kardan *et al*., 2017*b*). A similar experience of 'incorporation' was reported in the Philippines (Smith *et al.*, 2017). If temporary horizontal expansion of a programme is undertaken several years in a row, this may serve to strengthen the case for the expansion of the long-term programme.

8.4 Challenges for programme implementers

For programme implementers the key challenges of temporarily enrolling extra beneficiaries onto an intervention as a response to shocks are as follows:

1. **Conceiving what the benefit should cover.** A routine social protection package may aim to help poor or vulnerable households to meet some of their basic needs in non-crisis times. The same type and quantity of support is not necessarily relevant to other groups in a large-scale shock, since people often need more assistance in a crisis (because their resources have diminished—e.g. from a failed harvest—or because of an increase in the cost of living, e.g. owing to price rises). However, it would be odd to expect that those already on the programme are not also experiencing worse conditions than usual, necessitating extra support. Implementers need to carefully consider transfer values across existing and new beneficiaries, ideally aligning these to emergency needs (see section 14.2).

2. **Identifying recipients.** Another fundamental challenge is to identify which disaster-affected communities and households are to be enrolled. This is a particular problem in contexts of high migration or displacement, which is common during and after a shock. Data on new (or potential) beneficiaries can be collected either before the shock or after it. The ease with which existing datasets provide enough information to enable the timely identification of beneficiaries depends on a set of factors discussed in section 14.1 (see also Barca and O'Brien, 2017).

   Existing data is truly useful if it can be immediately used in the aftermath of a crisis for timely delivery. This is the case where households are not only pre-registered, but also pre-enrolled. This might entail e.g. giving them a programme identity card, a telephone SIM card or bank account, but leave their participation dormant until a shock arises, as has been done for HSNP in Kenya (Box 12 above). This can be costly to set up and manage, depending on how many households are enrolled. It may be less feasible for rapid-onset natural shocks than for slow-onset or recurrent disasters such as drought, since the group of people likely to be affected by the latter is perhaps more predictable than for a rapid-onset shock. It also requires a degree of planning not always feasible in a low-income context.

   The option of deciding who to enrol by collecting new data after a shock provides more up-to-date information, and enables the collection of information on indicators relating to the specific shock, such as households' dietary diversity in the event of food insecurity (an indicator commonly used to determine who is in need of assistance). However, data collection after a shock can be slow and costly, particularly in conflict situations or following natural catastrophes such as floods or earthquakes where access to populations may be difficult.
3. **Timely inclusion.** We have noted that the timeliness of support delivered to new beneficiaries can be improved if households are pre-identified, and improved further still if they are pre-enrolled and/or equipped with the relevant cards, accounts etc. The trade-off may be one of increased cost of enrolling people.
4. **Resourcing.** Financial, staff and material capacity constraints are a very real challenge with horizontal expansion. These are greater than when providing top-ups to existing beneficiaries. As well as coping with an increased caseload, there is a need to rapidly verify new beneficiaries, modify registration processes, extend delivery channels and amend programme documentation, e.g. around objectives and conditionalities. Surge capacity, i.e. bringing in support from another area or programme may help and, again, should be planned in advance. Certain types of shock, such as cyclones or earthquakes, may reduce overall capacity (e.g. through the loss of buildings or staff) at the same moment that greater capacity is sought.
5. **Adherence to pre-set procedures.** As with the case of vertical expansion, a horizontally expanded programme may be defined by the parameters of the underlying intervention; or, if it diverges, may face additional costs. These parameters may include e.g. having a set schedule.
6. **Communication to communities.** The temporary expansion of a programme faces the same need for communication as the provision of top-ups, in terms of explaining to non-beneficiaries why they are not included. In addition, programme implementers must have a means of letting new beneficiaries know that they are in the programme, explaining why they will be in it for only a short period when others are in it for longer, and informing what assistance they can receive.

Box 13 Horizontal expansion challenges: decision not to proceed in the Philippines

In the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan, WFP and UNICEF considered horizontal expansion of Pantawid but quickly dismissed it. It was considered unfeasible to design and implement it quickly or effectively post-disaster. This was due, first, to the scale of the disaster, which had affected the government's and the payment service provider's personnel and resources; and, second, the acknowledgement that such an expansion could not be automatic but would require definition, communication and implementation of processes and procedures for identifying, enrolling and paying beneficiaries.

Source: Smith *et al*. (2017).

Progress on these challenges could be made before a disaster occurs. However, there is often little political will for 'risk-reducing' efforts: politicians and the international community are still disproportionately focused on disaster response, which has greater visibility than ex-ante preparedness measures such as updating databases. The key challenge here, then, is to create sufficient impetus to consider design and implementation, and take concrete steps towards both, before the disaster occurs.

8.5 Risks

The risks of horizontal expansion refer primarily to situations where support is extended to people who are not normally eligible, rather than the cases of on-demand inclusion of people whose circumstances have temporarily changed. The extension of a programme to people who are not its usual beneficiaries risks diluting or obscuring its core objectives. To take an example, school feeding programmes aim to improve educational outcomes (by encouraging school attendance) as well as having a social protection objective. As one of our respondents observed, if the offer of free meals at the local school was temporarily extended in a crisis to others in the community there would no longer be an incentive to attend school and the wider impact might be lessened.

There is a risk that horizontal expansion will create confusion amongst beneficiaries and perhaps undermine the programme's 'brand' (Box 14)**.** This is due not only to lack of clarity about the programme's purpose but also to the practicalities of implementation: beneficiaries may look like they are all on the same programme, but some receive support at times when others do not. On Kenya's HSNP, for example, households registered as potentially eligible for emergency cash periodically check at the pay point whether their bank card happens to be 'working', because they have seen their neighbours' (routine beneficiary) cards 'working' (O'Brien *et al.*, 2015).

Box 14 Risks of horizontal expansion: perspectives from Pakistan and the Philippines

Reservations were expressed by some stakeholders in Pakistan at the prospect of the horizontal expansion of BISP in the event of a major shock. Early experiences with its horizontal expansion in a specific crisis had not subsequently been pursued. Most stakeholders felt that BISP had been designed for a clear purpose and had clear associated targeting criteria. These would need to be changed in times of disaster, which risked obscuring BISP's objectives, and also risked inappropriately raising expectations of long-term support among the temporary caseload.

Similar concerns were cited by government personnel in the Philippines as a reason for not pursuing horizontal expansion of the Pantawid programme after Typhoon Haiyan. Again, there was concern that enrolling a caseload that did not fit the usual eligibility criteria would change Pantawid's focus, which is very specifically to improve human development of poor families. This risked undermining the legitimacy of the long-term programme. The same issues also arose around communicating the temporary nature of the programme's expansion, which could create problems when households were removed post-disaster.

Source: Smith *et al*. (2017); Watson *et al*. (2017).

Few countries have programmes that are sufficiently robust for this kind of expansion to be feasible currently. Yet horizontal expansion could prove to be a cost-effective option for social protection systems that are mature, well-resourced, highly-capacitated and offer broad coverage, as well as being underpinned by an inclusive approach to data collection and management. For example, a truly 'on-demand' enrolment system could be an ideal way by which a social protection programme might expand and contract at any time in accordance with need.

Two further solutions to the challenges faced by less mature social protection systems can be considered. First, a separate emergency programme – piggybacking on existing systems – could be designed in readiness for a shock, to be triggered when needed. This is being done in the Philippines with its national Emergency Cash Transfer programme. The intervention is

planned to have its own protocols, targeting criteria, transfer values etc., yet it would leverage existing systems in order to, 'preserve the integrity of the Pantawid CCT as an instrument for long-term human capital accumulation and poverty reduction' (Bowen, 2015). This might achieve the goal of improved timeliness while avoiding raising expectations and causing confusion over programme objectives and timeframe.

Second, if levels of need vary seasonally—e.g. seasonal food insecurity—but the households typically in need of support are broadly the same, households could be enrolled onto a multi-year programme that delivers support at a certain time each year. Here the distinction between long-term social protection and emergency support is increasingly blurred, suggesting the need for further research on the timing of delivery of core and emergency support.

9 Alignment

Key points:

- Alignment describes the development of one or more elements of a parallel humanitarian system that align as best as possible with those used in a current or possible future social protection programme.
- Opportunity for governments to adopt approaches based on humanitarian innovations; could lead to transfer of a programme to government and therefore reduction in need of separate international humanitarian response.
- Challenges include identifying which systems or programmes to align with, and maintaining relationships long enough for the eventual integration of the parallel systems, if this is intended
- Risk of efforts of alignment detracting from impact on the beneficiaries, if it means that the emergency

9.1 Definition of alignment

We use the term 'alignment' here to mean the development of one or more elements of a parallel humanitarian response that align as best as possible with those used in a current or possible future social protection programme[13] or DRM system. For example, this could be an alignment of objectives, targeting method, transfer value or delivery mechanism. This is distinct from piggybacking on elements of a system as it uses a parallel infrastructure rather than the same system.

Alignment may arise for two reasons. First, an existing social protection intervention may be replicated because it is not operational as needed in a crisis, e.g. because it operates in geographical areas other than the crisis-affected areas, because it is not reaching all the required caseload, or because it has ceased to function as a result of the crisis itself (see the example of Mali in Box 15 below). Second, a relevant social protection intervention may not yet exist, but it is possible to perceive what one might look like. An emergency response that is designed deliberately to align with another (actual or emerging) programme or system may facilitate future integration of the two. This has the potential for increasing impact by contributing to the 'sustainability' component of the framework set out in section 3, and may eventually relieve pressure on the international humanitarian system. It may also have real-time benefits, such as alleviating concerns about receipt of varying levels or types of support among different groups[14].

Alignment may be a useful option to consider as part of a response to shocks in areas with very weak capacity or high fragility, provided that it makes sense for achieving programme objectives. It offers the opportunity to ‘work with the end in mind’ even if there are no social protection systems currently in place. In protracted crises it may establish a delivery system or process that can be smoothly taken on by a development actor after the end of the crisis.

Alignment is not confined to international humanitarian actors aligning their programmes with those of the government. It can also work in the other direction, especially when the international humanitarian assistance is foreshadowing a potential future national programme. In such contexts the end goal may be for the government programmes and systems to align with a successful model implemented by international humanitarian actors, and perhaps even for the programme eventually to be incorporated into a government-led system.

[13] Alignment can be with either the core programme, or its adaptions (e.g. vertical or horizontal expansion)
[14] In the original conceptual framework this was called 'shadow alignment'. The word 'shadow' was dropped following fieldwork, as our research made it clear that humanitarian programmes do align with concrete interventions that are operational, rather than only foreshadowing future programmes.

Box 15 Example of alignment: cash transfers in northern Mali

In Mali, following the 2012 political crisis, only humanitarian and dual-mandate organisations were able to work in the north. A group of NGOs, with ECHO funding, provided one year of emergency cash support in 2014 to nearly 40,000 households under the banner of the '*Cadre Commun*' ['Common Framework']. The support consisted of a total of CFA 100,000 (about $160) per household, split into three tranches.

Meanwhile, the government had set up an unconditional poverty-targeted cash transfer programme, Jigisèmèjiri, with World Bank funding, in the south in 2012. This supported households with CFA 120,000 (about $194) a year, i.e. CFA 10,000 ($16) per month. Jigisèmèjiri had been unable to roll out in the north while the area was not fully under government control. One aim of the Cadre Commun—known as the CCFS in 2014, and the CCTS in 2016—was to provide a model for extending Jigisèmèjiri to the north.

Acknowledging that the Cadre Commun was not dealing with exceptional crisis needs, but rather with cyclical food insecurity or chronic poverty that is also an issue in the south, the transfer value for the CCTS in 2016 was aligned with Jigisèmèjiri and disbursed with the same frequency. This has two advantages: first, when the CCTS finishes, households that transfer onto Jigisèmèjiri (if it is still running and enrolling new beneficiaries) will not be surprised by a sudden change in support. Second, if others in the same localities are enrolled on Jigisèmèjiri there will not be a mismatch between the benefits received.

It is worth noting that not all aspects of cash transfer delivery were deemed suitable for alignment by the NGOs. For example, the CCFS used its own mixture of payment modalities (both cash and voucher) and payment service providers (microfinance institutions, mobile phone operators and local traders) depending on what they thought would work best in a given area.

Source: O'Brien *et al*. (2018)

Alignment is simply one option to explore and may not always be an appropriate response to shocks. In fact, sometimes diversity may be the more shock-responsive approach. If an NGO, for example, routinely aligns its support with a social protection programme then when an emergency occurs it may wish to adjust its assistance. Likewise, it may not always be effective for government and non-government actors to constrain their programme to, say, delivery by the same service provider, if that service risks being interrupted by a crisis.

9.2 Contextual prerequisites for aligning interventions

Alignment does not necessarily require the presence of an intervention that is very mature or long established. This makes alignment feasible to consider in fragile and conflict-affected states, subject to the challenges and risks cited below. In our typology of maturity of social protection systems in Table 2, alignment could be used in any context, although in categories 1 or 2 (non-existent systems or only internationally led rather than government led) it might take the form of aligning with a potential future intervention rather than an existing one. Similarly, for contexts where the system maturity is high, humanitarian programmes may be able to piggyback on strong social protection systems and programmes, rather than just align with them.

9.3 Opportunities

A humanitarian assistance programme that is aligned with an existing social protection programme offers the opportunity to mimic social protection provision in an environment where the core intervention cannot operate. This may be particularly true in conflict situations, especially where the government is a party to the conflict, as in Mali (Box 15 above). As mentioned above, government systems and programmes can align with humanitarian approaches, and use that as an opportunity to upgrade their approaches based on humanitarian innovations. An example might be a government programme adopting a mobile phone payment service provider that has been trialled by humanitarian actors and found to be effective for delivering payments to populations on the move, as is likely following a shock.

Alignment, if it is a precursor to eventual transition of a programme or system from an international humanitarian agency to government ownership and leadership or to other development actors, offers the prospect of reducing the eventual international humanitarian caseload. In this way, alignment has the potential to help programmes provide 'better' responses to shocks because the programmes will be more predictable and ultimately should become more sustainable. Potentially they would be less duplicative and therefore more cost-effective. Importantly, the funding will also be more predictable as it will not be reliant on humanitarian funding cycles (though see section 13.4 below for a discussion on the feasibility of shifting resources between funding streams). Alignment therefore offers an initial step in the direction of more sustainable approaches to emergency response and a transition from an emergency mindset to a longer-term development approach to tackle recurrent, predictable disasters.

9.4 Challenges for programme implementers

In countries with several social protection programmes and systems, there can be a challenge for actors working in an emergency context to assess whether there is merit in aligning with any of them, and if so, with which. This decision requires an understanding of the relative strengths of the options, especially in volatile contexts that are subject to frequent changes of government, personnel or policy. A primary determinant is likely to be the programme's objectives. In the Mali context it made sense for the group of NGOs in the north to align with the social protection programme in the south because they recognised that they were tackling a similar problem (of chronic poverty and food insecurity), just in a post-conflict environment where it was not yet feasible for long-term support to be re-established. In other instances where there is clearly an emergency it may not make sense to align with any programme.

A subsequent challenge that is important for delivering sustainability is the ability to go on to work closely with the selected programme. This will require resources and capacity. Whilst initial alignment might be done quite quickly (e.g. of a transfer value), collaboration will lead to greater benefits over time. The eventual aim of alignment, which is likely to be the full institutionalisation of the programme or system within government rather than it being run as a one-off solution or implemented by humanitarian actors indefinitely, is likely to take many years.

9.5 Risks

The main risk with aligning elements of a humanitarian programme or system with an equivalent in a development context is that the immediate impact on beneficiaries may be reduced. This is because, for the sake of investing in longer term capacity and sustainability, the support may be less tailored to the immediate needs of the crisis. In the northern Mali example, aligning the 'emergency' transfer value with the long-term social protection programme made sense because it was recognised that households were in a situation of chronic poverty rather than a state of temporarily increased need (Box 15). In other contexts the alignment of, for example, a transfer value might cause concern because agencies that perceive their assistance as humanitarian might wish to provide a different level of support to households than is affordable by a long-term social protection programme, or provided through a shock-responsive top-up . This was the case in Lesotho, where the value of an emergency cash transfer delivered by one agency considerably exceeded the support (basic transfer plus top-up) given by UNICEF and the government to the beneficiaries of its long-term social protection programme, the CGP (see section 14.2 for a discussion on transfer values). The decision to align emergency with routine support may be determined by political acceptability rather than by an independent assessment of needs in the crisis context.

10 Refocusing

Key points:

- 'Refocusing' was defined earlier in the research as adjusting the social protection system to refocus assistance on groups most vulnerable to the shock.
- We now perceive this to be more accurately a strategy for financing and resourcing shock-responsive social protection in a constrained environment than an adaptation, so do not explore it further in this report.

The research team's original typology also included an option called 'refocusing'. This was defined as, 'in the case of budget cuts, adjusting the social protection programme to refocus assistance on groups within the caseload that are most vulnerable to the shock. One might consider this to be an austerity strategy'. We found examples of something similar taking place in different countries, as agencies and governments moved their resources around from one year to the next, although it was not typically referred to as refocusing (OPM, 2017). Moreover, the refocusing was found to be in accordance with changes in need, not just budgetary constraints: for example, the annual food distribution programme in Mali varied its caseload and beneficiaries each year.

In essence, the original concept of refocusing is a trade-off between horizontal and vertical expansion and contraction that occurs in a resource-constrained environment: giving more assistance to some people while removing it from others, or conversely extending coverage to more people while reducing the amount provided to each. This may have the benefit of improving overall impact of an emergency response, as assistance may be better targeted to those who need it most (though, of course, it may lessen the impact for any individual household that is rotated on and off the list and could create confusion and resentment if not communicated appropriately).

However, we have removed it from the typology: it can more accurately be seen as a strategy for financing and resourcing shock-responsive social protection, rather than a way of adapting a programme or system so that it can provide a better response to shocks. Given that all social protection is inherently linked to building resilience and reducing vulnerability, and low-income shock-prone countries need more long-term social protection rather than less, we decided that it was not useful for it to remain as a separate category in this typology. A 'design tweak' to a social protection programme such that it could, first, more accurately identify and enrol those most in need of support, and second, cease support to households who no longer needed it, would achieve a similar effect.

11 Summary of the options

Table 4 Summary of typology of options for shock-responsive social protection

Type	Prerequisites	Opportunities	Design / implementation challenges	Risks
DESIGN TWEAKS to social protection programmes	• Some social protection programme must exist • Resources and capacity required depends on nature of the tweak • Data needed to identify appropriate design tweak	• Approach can be considered anywhere (though what is feasible will vary) • Opportunity to be a gentle introduction of shock-responsiveness into programmes and systems	• Different shocks may call for different tweaks—need to decide which to prioritise • *Ex-ante*, so may be hard to get political buy-in • Policymakers may face competing demands to adjust programmes to meet other agendas • Major challenges of working in crisis and conflict contexts may not be resolvable by small adjustments to programme design	• Risk of overloading programmes with concerns unrelated to core objective • Design tweaks to enhance shock-responsiveness may close off others that have alternative benefits
PIGGYBACKING on existing programmes or systems	• No requirement for a mature single programme with robust systems, as can pick and choose which elements to use • But need some elements of a programme or system to piggyback on	• Can select strongest components for piggybacking without inheriting weak elements or capacity constraints • May be more politically acceptable than some alternatives as the use of a separate system may avoid diluting the 'brand' of a specific programme • Potential for time-savings and improved cost-effectiveness • Works well in situations where implementers already have a relationship with a programme	• Challenge to identify which system components to piggyback on • Weaknesses of the underlying system may be transferred to the emergency programme (timeliness, staff capacity etc.) • Need to secure agreement of the implementers of the core programme • Increased coordination with multiple organisations and agencies required.	• Systems being piggybacked on risk being overwhelmed. • If coordination is poor, multiple agencies may decide to piggyback on the same programme • Piggybacking on programmes can lead to misunderstanding of programme objectives
VERTICAL EXPANSION *(top-ups to existing beneficiaries)*	• Strong social protection programme with good coverage of disaster-affected areas, and of the neediest households. • Understanding of who is affected by the shock • Understanding of relevance of top-up support for beneficiaries • Adequate administrative systems, able to withstand the shock	• Potential to be quick and cost-effective • Coverage—existing social protection programme may reach a substantial proportion of the disaster-affected caseload • Programme infrastructure already in place (provided it withstands the shock and has capacity to absorb extra workload) • Existing relationships between partners	• Coordination with other actors implementing emergency responses • Determining the size of the top-up (many different ways could be justified) • Additional resource requirements • Some features of the social protection programme may be inconvenient for the emergency component (e.g. timing of payouts) • Considerable effort required on communication to explain why beneficiaries are getting more assistance while non-beneficiaries receive nothing	• Key risk is not reaching significant % of those affected, since non-beneficiaries are not covered. • Risk of duplicating support or missing some individuals as difficult to align with other actors providing complementary responses. • Risk of negative impact on people's perceptions of the generosity of the underlying programme

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Type	Prerequisites	Opportunities	Design / implementation challenges	Risks
HORIZONTAL EXPANSION *(temporary extension of social protection programme to new beneficiaries)*	• A mature social protection programme with strong administrative and delivery systems • Accurate data for the identification of new beneficiaries when the programme is expanded • Sometimes, complementary system components that are only indirectly connected with the core social protection intervention may be needed (e.g. teachers and buildings, for a school feeding programme).	• Potential to reach a higher percentage of those affected by the disaster than is likely through vertical expansion alone, as the worst affected areas and communities can be specifically targeted • Potential for more timely response • May work well in relation to means-tested social protection programmes with on-demand registration during economic shocks, where people fall temporarily within the eligibility threshold • Temporary additional caseload may serve as a foundation for the eventual expansion of the core programme	• Challenge in deciding who should receive the extra benefit and how they should be selected, including trade-off between prepositioned data and data that more accurately reflects the emergency • Timely inclusion of households can be problematic, especially if not pre-enrolled • Additional resource requirements, including for verifying and enrolling new beneficiaries and extending delivery mechanisms. • Some features of the social protection programme may be inconvenient for the emergency component (e.g. timing of payouts) • Considerable effort required for communication	• If programme extended to people who are not normally eligible, underlying programme's core objectives may be diluted or obscured • May create confusion amongst beneficiaries about objectives and about implementation arrangements, and perhaps undermine the programme's 'brand'
ALIGNMENT between different programmes or systems	• No prerequisite for strong programmes or systems, can be applied in fragile contexts with weak social protection infrastructure	• In short term can lead to efficiency savings if reduces duplication of delivery systems • In longer term, opportunity for a more sustainable approach to emergency response, with greater predictability of funding, possibly leading to long-term government ownership and freeing up humanitarian actors from responding to predictable, recurrent crises. • Opportunity for government to upgrade their approaches based on humanitarian innovations.	• Difficult to choose which elements to align with and hard to know how to align with something that is not fully established • Will need to work with other programmes and organisations, and maintain those relationships over the long-term given that full transition likely to take many years	• While alignment between programmes may have positive impact on organisational capacity it risks having less direct impact on beneficiaries, if the support is less tailored to their needs

Source: OPM. Notes: (1) This is a summary of the details presented in sections 5-9. (2) In situations where multiple shock-responsive interventions are used, some of these opportunities and challenges will be mitigated or increased. The precise effect will, of course, depend on the context.

PART C: DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING SHOCK-RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

12 Preparing for an effective response to shocks

Key points:

- Strengthening routine social protection is worthwhile in its own right as a way of reducing households' vulnerability to shocks, even without introducing shock-responsive options.
- Vulnerability assessments and needs assessments are vital for improved effectiveness of a response.
- Interventions are likely to work more smoothly if they are planned in advance.
- More mature social protection contexts have more options for flexibility in a crisis.
- Shock-responsive social protection will never meet the needs of all households who need assistance, so coordination with other interventions is essential.
- It is vital to consider from the outset how to measure the success of a 'shock-responsive' intervention.

Our research suggests that countries will benefit from taking the time, first, to consider whether these shock-responsive social protection programmes and systems are a priority and the most appropriate way of responding to a crisis, and second—if they are implemented—what needs to be done in advance of a crisis in order to maximise their effectiveness at the moment they are needed. We offer six principles here:

1. Extending routine social protection is itself likely to reduce households' vulnerability to shocks.
2. Understand the needs—both general and shock-specific—and determine whether it is appropriate to use social protection to meet these needs.
3. Make your plan long before a shock happens.
4. Recognise what is feasible, given the current maturity of systems and programmes.
5. Recognise that shock-responsive social protection will never be the sole solution.
6. Plan how you will measure whether you are succeeding.

These form a backdrop to the design and implementation of any particular form of shock-responsive social protection system, of the types just presented.

12.1 Consider extending routine social protection

Strengthening routine social protection is worthwhile in its own right as a resilience-building measure. Providing more social protection for people who are very poor and vulnerable *all the time*—whether through increasing relevant assistance to current beneficiaries, or extending coverage—is likely to reduce the overall vulnerability of households to disasters. This is in part because idiosyncratic shocks (those that affect individuals and individual households) continue, of course, in the midst of large-scale crises; they may even increase. Such shocks may range, for example, from the death of a breadwinner, to a major health care emergency, to the need to take on the care of extra children. Social protection support that takes care of these episodes will make a huge contribution to the ability of households to cope with the more general crisis or disaster. Box 16 gives an example of how routine social protection can be strengthened in a way that is likely to reduce households' vulnerability to a shock.

We would therefore suggest that it is worth exploring whether and how to extend routine social protection, independently of any shock-responsive options. An additional step might be to make tweaks to the programme design that more explicitly take into account the nature of shocks and

vulnerability, as per section 5, if this is relevant and does not divert the programme from its core objective. Policymakers should therefore not be concerned that only highly visible 'shock-responsive' actions, such as vertical or horizontal expansion of their programmes, add value.

Box 16 Strengthening routine social protection: cash transfers and medical assistance in Mali

In Mali it was realised that the assessment form for the Jigisèmèjiri cash transfer could, with a few adjustments to questions, be used to simultaneously assess eligibility for the free medical assistance programme, known as RAMED, for the poorest households. By aligning the forms and the targeting criteria, so that Jigisèmèjiri beneficiaries were automatically enrolled onto RAMED, enrolment onto RAMED greatly increased, as lack of resources for targeting had previously been one of the impediments to its take-up.

At the time of the research there were proposals to formalise a protocol of collaboration between the two interventions, harmonise the household ID code for improved monitoring, and changing the duration of eligibility for the medical assistance to three years to match the cash transfer.

This type of harmonisation, which improves the coverage and duration of RAMED assistance, can be expected to improve beneficiary households' ability to withstand a shock when it strikes.

Source: O'Brien *et al*. (2018)

12.2 Understand the needs—both general and shock-specific

Careful vulnerability assessments and needs assessments are a critical step in ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of any emergency response. Vulnerability and needs assessments done before any crisis can help to identify geographical areas or population groups that are at greatest risk of being affected by different types of shock, including differences in vulnerability owing to factors such as age, disability and gender. Those done after the onset of a specific shock can identify specific households who are most in need of assistance.

Needs assessments should feed into practical decisions about targeting, and the type, scale and duration of support needed for greatest impact. Who do you need to reach, with what, how much, when and where? Once the answers to these questions are clear then it will be much easier to assess whether a particular social protection programme, set of programmes, or underlying systems could be used to adequately meet some of the needs and how effective and efficient it would be at doing so. For example, it may be that a disaster disproportionately affects women and so this should be taken into account in designing the response. In some countries we noticed that the selection of programmes or systems to use in a response was not always based on a comprehensive review of the options that might best meet the needs that were to be addressed. This was sometimes because expanding a particular programme seemed like the easiest option administratively, because donors had existing relationships with its implementers or because there was a lack of awareness of alternatives. Making good use of vulnerability assessments and needs assessments is part of trying to maximise *impact*, not just maximising *efficiency* for the funder.

12.3 Make your plan long before a shock happens

It is clear that much can be done, and *should* be done, in advance to ensure that the best response can take place. In several countries we found that discussion of how to use social protection programmes and systems progressed only after the disaster occurred. This was even the case in countries like Lesotho where it was common knowledge that an El Niño drought was on its way for several months, or the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan, even though they had significant experience with early warning systems and had previously experimented with scaling up

social protection programmes following shocks. This may be because the practice of considering whether social protection programmes and systems can contribute to crisis response has not been embedded for long enough to become a routine part of contingency planning.

This early action may take three forms: *early decision-making* as to what options are likely to be feasible under what circumstances (contingency planning); *active preparation*, such as through pre-positioning of data, financing arrangements and memorandums of understanding with key service providers; and perhaps also *early delivery* of support. Options from our typology such as 'design tweaks' to a routine social protection system (see section 5) work best when actions are taken *ex-ante*. Responses will run more smoothly when relevant data has been pre-positioned; when early warning data is being monitored with pre-agreed trigger points; when arrangements for finance to flow quickly have been previously agreed; and when sectors can align behind joint contingency planning and operational procedures.

The DRM community has long struggled to shift the global mindset from response to preparedness and mitigation. Skewed incentives (such as the fact that it can be easier to attract the interest of the media, access to donor funding and political attention when a response is underway than when drawing up contingency plans) can hamper preparedness activities even when shocks are cyclical and recurrent. It is therefore not easy to shift to an *ex-ante* mindset, but this should be the goal for those working on shock-responsive social protection to ensure that the responses have the maximum impact. The fact that the concept of social protection can include 'prevention' measures to avert deprivation should provide a basis for moving forward in this regard (see section 2.1).

12.4 Recognise what is feasible, given the current maturity of systems and programmes

The more mature, comprehensive and effective the existing social protection system or programmes in a country, the more options there are for making it responsive to a crisis. Government-led social protection systems that offer broad coverage and are well-resourced, highly-capacitated and underpinned by an inclusive approach to data collection and management are more likely to be able to deliver larger-scale and more complex shock-responsive options. For example, the Philippines' Pantawid cash transfer programme that was successfully scaled up following Typhoon Haiyan was already serving 4.5 million households with an infrastructure of 11,000 staff and an underlying social registry (Listahanan) covering approximately 60% of households in the country (see Box 10 and Box 11). This meant that more options for expansion were feasible than for a smaller, less mature and less well-resourced programme. Bear in mind, of course, that even if a programme is large, it is still essential to assess its appropriateness in terms of objectives, capacity and so on before determining whether to use it.

12.5 Recognise that shock-responsive social protection will never be the sole solution

While an adaptation to a social protection programme may prove an efficient or effective vehicle to reach some of those affected by a shock, it is highly unlikely to be able to reach all those affected. Piggybacking on some of the underlying delivery systems, without being confined to delivering the same long-term programme, may be one way of meeting part of the gap in needs (see section 6); so, too, might the design of a separate emergency programme that is triggered in the event of a crisis, as is being considered in the Philippines (Smith *et al*., 2017). The greater the size of the disaster-affected population, the greater the potential for additional strain on routine social protection systems and programmes if they are to be used as a basis for responding

to the crisis. A combination of adaptations to several social protection programmes could be considered, though this would be administratively complex: it would be necessary to look very closely at whether this is more efficient and appropriate than a standalone emergency programme.

As other response channels are highly likely to be operating at the same time, issues of coordination and collaboration with other organisations, systems and programmes become more important. This is true for both governments and their partners, and at international, national and local levels. Our fieldwork confirmed that this is an area where considerable improvement could be made which would lead to better overall disaster response. More practical advice on coordination and collaboration is provided in section 15 below.

12.6 Plan how you will measure whether you are succeeding

Policymakers will wish to know if the use of social protection systems to respond to shocks is 'better'—by some definition—than alternative approaches such as separate emergency responses. Several pieces of information or decisions are useful in improving understanding of this: first, what should count as 'better' in a given context; second, how alternative approaches have fared in similar situations; and third, the effectiveness of the shock-responsive social protection option(s). In our research we found all three of these areas to be underexplored.

First, consistent indicators to measure the use, costs and benefits of social protection to respond to shocks, and to compare the results with equivalent support through separate humanitarian responses, have not yet been established. These might usefully cover the seven areas identified by the OECD-DAC criteria for evaluating humanitarian assistance, and DFID's '4Es' framework for analysing value for money (see section 3).

Second, it is difficult to fully understand the relative merits of shock responses through social protection programmes compared with standalone emergency responses, when results are not measured in a comparable way. In the Philippines, Pakistan and Lesotho, where responses through social protection systems have been implemented, it is difficult to say with any certainty that this approach was ‘better’ than standalone humanitarian cash assistance due to a lack of documented monitoring or evaluation of interventions, or any comparative evaluations, by humanitarian agencies or governments. This lack of comparable information—on issues such as timeliness, targeting accuracy etc.—was also apparent in our broader global research. If policymakers wish to understand the efficiency, effectiveness and limitations of shock-responsive social protection compared to alternatives, then it will be essential to strengthen the M&E of emergency responses more generally, however they are delivered. .

Third, the measurement of programme progress should incorporate a chain of results ranging from the provision of inputs and activities through to the achievement of outputs, outcomes and ideally longer term impacts of shock-responsive social protection systems. Recent analysis indicates that even the monitoring frameworks for regular social protection programmes tend to have an imbalanced focus on quantitative input and output indicators, rather than results-oriented indicators that capture social protection outcomes and impacts (McCord *et al.*, 2017)[15]. Moreover, since most social protection programmes have not been designed with shock-response as an integral objective, indicators relating to 'shock-responsive' elements are generally not captured in standard programme M&E frameworks.

[15] For social protection programmes, independent impact evaluations are often conducted to assess performance, including outcomes and impacts. However, it is also important for monitoring systems to periodically collect information on outcomes to ensure that the programme is meeting its agreed objectives.

The objectives of shock-responsive social protection programmes are not always clearly defined. In some cases, implementers propose that routine social protection should reduce households' vulnerability to shocks; in other cases scaled-up social protection is proposed to reach an increased caseload affected by disasters. In other examples, there was no pre-planned response, but social protection infrastructure was piggybacked on as part of an emergency response. As such, the shock-responsive function does not always have the same objective as the social protection programme which it is attached to; its purpose might be to deliver humanitarian assistance faster and more cost-effectively. Indicators to measure progress towards shock-responsiveness (the inputs / process and outputs indicators) are likely to be quite different depending on the way in which shock-responsive systems and programmes are being developed, and the level of the existing social protection system capacity.

It could be useful, in disaster-prone countries, to establish a framework of criteria against which the effectiveness of responses to shocks could be measured. This framework could be developed as part of a preparedness exercise and might capture:

1. Activities and effectiveness of the routine social protection programme to reduce household vulnerability to shocks. This is usually a core objective of long term social protection programming (protecting/increasing household income, consumption and assets and/or preventing households from falling deeper into poverty). It might also capture the effect of 'design tweaks' that further strengthen the programme's resilience and relevance in an emergency.
2. Activities and effectiveness of the shock response to enable households to secure their immediate needs.
3. Activities and effectiveness of coordination efforts between social protection, humanitarian and DRM actors to better prepare for, respond to and facilitate recovery from shocks.

Typical indicators to measure progress might assess areas such as:

- **Input indicators:** the resources needed (cost, time and human resources); system components in place (e.g. databases, targeting mechanisms); planning and preparedness (e.g. contingency plans and funds in place); pre-agreed partnerships / coordination mechanisms.
- **Output indicators:** both the number and proportion of households receiving the response through social protection; and the timeliness of delivering benefits to the affected population.
- **Outcome indicators:** these are important to include, to understand the benefits to households. Includes indicators on targeting effectiveness and the adequacy of benefits.
- **Impact indicators:** changes to wellbeing and coping strategies; reduced household vulnerability or increased resilience to shocks (subject to the existence of baseline data).

These should include the collection of disaggregated data in order to better understand the outcomes and impacts on women and marginalised groups.

This full set is needed to understand progress along the dimensions of efficiency and effectiveness described in the framework in section 3, ie. whether the shock-responsive programme is improving its coverage, timeliness and/or predictability, reducing duplication in delivery systems and processes, and delivering a response more cost-effectively and sustainably than alternatives. It will also highlight the capacity of existing social protection programmes and related infrastructure to deliver benefits in 'normal' times and in crisis.

13 Contextual factors that impact programme design and implementation

Key points:

- The choice of programme design will be affected by the overall context for policy-making: political will; the regulatory environment; organisational capacity and mandates; financing; and conflict.
- Political will for change may be determined by governments' appetite for social protection, humanitarian assistance and DRM, agencies' relative power, party politics, and public opinion. Donors face their own political imperatives.
- Regulations in the DRM, humanitarian assistance and social protection sectors are not always consistent. Experiences vary as to whether embedding social protection programmes in law helps or hinders their use in shocks.
- All our case study countries have some government capacity in social protection, though this is often stretched even in the absence of a shock. Shocks can exacerbate constraints by increasing demand and requiring rapid adjustments to programming at the same time that staff capacity is reduced.
- Decentralised governance arrangements have major consequences for coordination, resource availability and information exchange across levels of government.
- Besides securing fiscal space for mitigating and responding to crises, governments will benefit from improving their anticipation of the size of any need, and their mobilisation of resources.
- Conflict can increase the need for shock-responsive social protection while changing the nature of the support required. It can affect which actors can get involved in programme delivery. Displacement also makes shock-response more difficult by reducing the accuracy of data on beneficiaries.

Governments and their partners need to make strategic decisions about programming in the light of the country context. These 'big system' factors influence whether it is feasible to adjust how households receive emergency assistance, and if so, in what way. They can be classified as 'institutional' factors, in that they refer to the general policy-making context, not specific to any programme. The following contextual factors will affect their choice:

1. **Political will** for the policy change.
2. The state of the **regulatory environment**: the laws, regulations and policies on social protection, humanitarian assistance and DRM.
3. **Organisational capacity and mandates**, especially in relation to decentralisation.
4. Overall levels of **financing** for the sectors, and systems for funding interventions.
5. **Conflict and fragility**.

13.1 Political will for policy change

Political factors can either increase or reduce the options available for shock-responsive social protection. As Lavers and Hickey (2015, p.11) note in relation to routine social protection, 'There are likely to be multiple combinations of causal factors that can lead to elite commitment to social protection expansion'. The same is true for the development of more shock-responsive social protection systems and programmes, or for substituting emergency assistance with long-term support. These causal factors are dynamic: stakeholders should not assume that a government's position on shock-responsive social protection is unchanging, but they will need to take into account the political position in the short run while considering how to either influence policy or to be prepared for a change of position in the medium term.

Political will among government actors on the issue of shock-responsive social protection is likely to be determined by many such factors:

- **The government's perspective on social protection in general**. For example, in Mozambique the government discourages actions perceived as handouts, which it associates with dependency: policymakers emphasise that assistance should be short-lived, and advocate the use of public works programmes for those who can work. This translates into a reluctance to provide cash transfers in an emergency. In Mali, in contrast, the expansion of social protection systems is perceived as a welcome and more efficient alternative to the annual 'emergency' responses that, for decades, have addressed the seasonal food insecurity that affects millions of people during the lean period in the run-up to the harvest each year.
- **The relative power of the agencies for social protection, DRM and emergency response**. In each of our case study countries the relative power of the government agencies in these sectors varies enormously. Mozambique, for instance, offers the strongest example of a country with a relatively robust DRM sector, while in the Philippines the Department for Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) handles both social protection and disaster response, and in Mali the Food Security Commission plays a leading role in shock-response (since food insecurity is the major cyclical shock facing the country) (Box 17). The relative influence of international agencies in the different sectors also plays a role here.
- **The degree to which 'preparedness' measures are embedded in policy and practice**. As noted in several places in this report, there remains scope in many countries for improving early action to prevent or mitigate crises, rather than acting only after a disaster. It can be politically difficult for a government to secure resources for the avoidance of a crisis that may or may not happen—even though, as Cabot Venton *et al.* (2012) observe, the savings generated by early action are often considerable. This difficulty may extend to a reluctance to allocate resources to contingency funds or insurance premiums, where the benefit of the expenditure is not immediate. There can then be a reluctance to declare a crisis, for fear of it making a government appear unable to handle a disaster, even though a declaration may enable humanitarian agencies to release financial support. This may affect the government's ability to invest in shock-responsive social protection actions that rely on early action or early response.
- **Party politics**. Many social protection programmes have been initiated only within the last few years and may therefore have been associated with only one governing party. It is possible that a subsequent change of government may lead to decisions to terminate or reduce the influence of a social protection programme that has strong connections with the previous administration (see e.g. Box 18 for an indication of the implications in Pakistan).
- **Patronage of certain target groups**. Some groups of the population may be deemed to be a priority group for social protection, which may lead to a focus on support for e.g. children or older people. This may affect the relevance of the social protection programmes as a means to reach households most affected by a crisis. Other groups may have advocates among policymakers, who may not be aware of the range of needs of other groups of the population. In Lesotho, for instance, the government introduced a price subsidy on two brands of maize flour as a response to the El Niño-induced drought in 2016. However, the brands were not those most commonly bought by the poorest rural households, but rather were found more in urban areas; even with the subsidy, they remained more expensive than the flour that poorer households tended to buy, so the subsidy had less direct impact on households that might be considered to need it most.
- **Access to resources**. Reclassifying an intervention as 'social protection' rather than 'humanitarian assistance', or moving it from being run independently of government to being run through the government systems, may have considerable ramifications in terms of access to funding. Some international agencies may be required by their mandate or mission statement not to channel funds through government; some may hesitate to do so if this reduces their ability to be accountable for their expenditure; others may be confined to working only in an emergency context. Governments may, inevitably, be hesitant to introduce alternative

models that cut off funding streams or place a burden on the state budget (and funders may be reluctant to do the same—see below).

- **The likely public perception of any policy changes**. As we have seen in sections 7.4 and 8.4, measures that temporarily extend support to households and then withdraw it, or that give support to some households but not to others who are equally in need, may cause concern for some communities if the strategy is not clearly communicated, including the way the programme will be terminated. This potential for confusion may have an impact on policymakers' inclination to use such measures.

Box 17 The relative power of different sectors: examples from Mozambique and Mali

Disaster management in Mozambique is led by an agency, known as the INGC, which has held an annual contingency planning process with ministries, international aid agencies and some district representatives for a decade already. It asserts its role in leading the coordination of disaster responses. Non-contributory social assistance is led by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action (MGCAS) and a subordinate agency called INAS. In contrast to the INGC, MGCAS has less convening power in its sector, and a rather limited footprint at district level.

In Mali, responsibility for addressing shocks is split mainly across three ministries: the Ministry of Solidarity and Humanitarian Action (MSAH) for social protection, the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection (MSPC) for DRM, and the Food Security Commission (CSA). Compared with its equivalent in Mozambique, the MSPC has much less visibility and convening power in relation to 'humanitarian' emergencies. Even the MSAH has only a very small department working on humanitarian issues. The CSA has relatively high visibility, as addressing food insecurity is an annual priority and is the main cyclical shock affecting several million people each time.

Source: Kardan *et al*. (2017); O'Brien *et al.* (2018).

Box 18 The impact of party politics on the use of BISP for shock-response in Pakistan

BISP was launched in Pakistan by the ruling party, the PPP, as a response to the food, fuel and financial crisis in 2008. It was named after the party's deceased leader (the 'B' is for 'Benazir'). This has had some impact on long-term political support and implementation. At national level, where the government is now led by a different party, the PML-N, the financial commitment to BISP has not diminished but some political branding is being phased out (such as the image of Benazir Bhutto on the debit cards).

In Pakistan's federal system, provincial governments are responsible for social protection and DRM, and differences are emerging in their approaches, including on the use of social protection to respond to emergencies (see also section 13.3.2). In part these different approaches may be related to the fact that, for example, Sindh and Punjab are governed by different political parties and therefore have different motivations to either make use of BISP for shock-response or create their own social assistance and shock-responsive programmes.

Source: Watson *et al*. (2017).

Development and humanitarian partners face their own political imperatives and have their own approaches in terms of principles. These may lead them to advocate for—or caution against—closer integration of humanitarian responses with social protection interventions, or to argue for the use of a specific programme or delivery system for expansion or to be piggybacked on. Such decisions may be driven by a desire to maintain their visibility or by the need to adhere to conceptual approaches favoured by their organisation (e.g. an emphasis on poverty targeting rather than categorical targeting, or the implementation of public works programmes rather than cash support). In some cases they may have built up relations with a particular government agency or programme over many years, so it seems natural to continue to invest in the same programme rather than explore other options for shock response. This was the case, for example, with the funders of the Child Grant Programme in Lesotho, who were providing top-ups to the programme as a response to the El Niño-related drought.

However, these partners can also shape the political climate. First, by achieving a consensus amongst several agencies—on topics ranging from approaches to targeting, to transfer values, to indicators for monitoring progress—they can make it easier for government social protection actors to consult with or work with them, and can strengthen their position to advocate for specific policies. This may result in improved alignment of humanitarian and social protection programmes or systems. This has been demonstrated in the Sahel where, in several countries, NGOs funded by the European Union's humanitarian directorate, ECHO, have formed an alliance to harmonise many of their approaches to delivering emergency cash transfers. Second, agencies can build their relations with government institutions in non-crisis times so that both sides are more familiar with each other's programmes, approaches and personnel (see section 15 for more on collaboration and coordination). This is likely to increase the policy options available when a crisis occurs.

13.2 Regulatory environment

Countries vary enormously in the content of their laws, policies and regulations for social protection, humanitarian action and DRM. In general in our case study countries we found some kind of policy, strategy or national framework on social protection issues, sometimes very recently updated. These are often approved by a cabinet of ministers so have traction. They are not laws, though, so can be expected to be changed and updated with greater ease. In some countries, such as Mali and Pakistan, social protection is recognised as a constitutional right. The legal basis for specific social protection programmes is less firmly established. The Philippines has quite a comprehensive legislative framework, with a series of national resolutions that have led to the establishment of a common definition of social protection and its component parts; but its main cash transfer programme, the Pantawid, is not enshrined in law. In contrast other programmes may have a legal footing, such as Lesotho's Old Age Pension. As for the regulatory environment for DRM, the global impetus provided by, first, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–15, and more recently the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–30, has done much for the development of national policies to reduce and response to disaster risk. Formal laws and policies governing humanitarian action, though, were less commonly found in our case study countries[16]. Naturally, decentralisation has a big impact on the nature of what is contained in laws and policies: this is seen particularly in Pakistan (see section 13.3 below and the Pakistan case study report).

In some cases these documents include a concept of social protection being relevant as a response for covariate shocks. In Mozambique, Mali and Lesotho the national social protection policy or strategy specifically mentions shock-responsiveness as an objective, talks about the value of social protection interventions in disasters, and/or recognises the importance of consolidating links between the agencies responsible for social protection and DRM. Having such a statement in policy documents may open the door for more active policies promoting shock-responsiveness, but the absence of these statements is not necessarily an impediment (though may have implications for policymakers' ability to secure funding). Some of the statements on shock-responsiveness were reported to be the influence of international consultants or aid agencies and not felt to be strongly owned by the government.

There is not necessarily coherence between the legislation and policies that relate to social protection and those related to DRR or humanitarian action. For instance, although the national Social Protection Policy in Mali includes the concept of shock-response as a central theme and objective, this is not duplicated in the DRR policy, which instead only conceives of social

[16] For example, a National Policy on Humanitarian Action was drafted in Mali in early 2015 but has not been approved.

protection as making a contribution to DRR through reducing vulnerabilities. This example highlights the need for greater sectoral coherence in policy-making (see section 15).

We find contrasting experiences as to whether embedding a social protection intervention in law helps or hinders its use for shock-responsiveness. In the Philippines, where steps are being taken to prepare for a future national emergency cash transfer programme that might piggyback on some of the Pantawid's delivery systems, some respondents expressed concern that any such initiative could be put at risk since Pantawid is *not* enshrined in law and could ultimately disappear as its political and financial future is not guaranteed. In Lesotho the opposite scenario emerged where one respondent was hesitant to consider using the old age pension for shock-response as it *was* enshrined in law, and it was therefore inappropriate and time-consuming to adapt it to respond to shocks.

Changes to the policies and regulations are more easily achievable and can lead to some 'quick wins' in improving the shock-responsiveness of social protection interventions. This relates to the concept of the 'design tweaks' to programmes set out in section 5.

Regulations on sharing data are particularly relevant for creating a conducive environment for shock-responsive social protection and should also be considered in advance. Determining eligibility for emergency response and/or social protection programmes requires substantial personal information to be gathered from potential beneficiaries, which may include sensitive data on health, income, assets and housing (see section 14.1). The right to information privacy is embedded in international law and countries should adhere to international data transfer and information privacy protocols (Barca, 2017). Important principles include ensuring informed consent; establishing a grievance mechanism; conducting regular audits; developing risk mitigation strategies; and implementing appropriate security standards (CaLP 2013; OPM 2015a). In the Philippines, a new Privacy Law has created barriers for sharing the personal data in the national database, Listahanan, with external agencies. Recognising that this would create difficulties for shock-responsive social protection in the future, the Cash Working Group is seeking an executive order that will allow for flexibility in data management in the case of disaster response.

Policies and legislation that relate to shock-responsive social protection may need updating to reflect new ideas and approaches, but this is a lengthy process. It can take many years to get policies and legislation passed, and this is a fast-moving debate with new ideas emerging frequently, so countries may well be working with old regulations, legislation and policies. In any case, though, just because a law or regulation is in place does not mean that it is being enforced, or that corresponding human or financial resources are available. Examples of this mismatch between policy and practice were repeated across many of the case study countries. The next section discusses some of the resource constraints.

13.3 Organisational mandates and capacity

The administrative setup of government departments responsible for social protection, humanitarian action and DRM not only influences the relative power of these sectors, but also affects the way policies are implemented. Some key organisational features that must be taken into account in the design of an effective response to shocks are: human resource capacity; any devolution of administrative functions; and agencies' connections to wider regional or international initiatives.

13.3.1 Human resource capacity

In all our case study countries we find that some government capacity exists to deliver social protection services: none is starting from scratch. However, this staff capacity is extremely stretched, which affects the delivery of even routine social protection. This is particularly the case when interventions use resource-intensive methods such as the manual distribution of cash to beneficiary households, as in Mozambique. The constraints refer to both staff shortages, and skills gaps among those employed. Several countries, such as Mozambique, have a freeze on public sector recruitment which means that their staff shortage cannot be resolved in the short term even if an argument could be made for greater investment in the sector. Besides staff shortages, a common resourcing limitation is that of staff knowledge and technical capacity: a policy of frequent rotation of government staff can pose a challenge to institutional memory, and in any case it may be unrealistic to expect staff to take on a new set of demands relating to shock-responsive social protection. This is particularly relevant when it comes to delivery through subnational administrations.

Large-scale shocks can place an extra strain on staff capacity, requiring them to do more with less:

1. The number of households seeking assistance may increase, including to meet basic needs such as food.
2. At the same time, the number of available personnel may be reduced, particularly in rapid-onset shocks such as earthquakes where they themselves may be affected or cut off.
3. The support that staff need to provide may change from their regular service: they may have to find rapid solutions to unexpected problems on numerous issues ranging from households being unable to prove their identity, to payment providers being unable to distribute support.

Ideally, a solution to the first two might involve creating 'surge capacity' by bringing in additional personnel at the time of the crisis. In prolonged or recurrent crises, though, such as the seasonal food insecurity in Mali, governments are often not in a position to do so since the shock is continually present. Governments may be in even less of a position to bolster their presence in conflict zones, as was the situation in northern Mali during the 2012-13 crisis. In the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan a solution was found by drafting in staff from surrounding unaffected regions to help with the scale-up of the Pantawid cash transfer, including for the household validation exercise among other things.

Regarding the third issue above, it could be useful for staff to document their changes to their usual practices or to capture lessons learned. If a similar shock arises some years later staff may be better placed to consider options for response even if they were not present. In the Philippines in 2014 there was little movement to institutionalise learning about the use of social protection to respond to shocks because many of the key staff—from both government and the UN—moved onto other jobs. Meanwhile, in Lesotho during the response to the El Niño crisis in 2016 we found little institutional memory of how the country's Child Grant Programme had been used as part of a response to a previous crisis in 2012 (Kardan *et al*., 2017b).

Human resource capacity constraints may be intensified—though not always—in contexts of decentralisation. Local government staff may have lower qualifications, and fewer opportunities for professional training, than those at national level (Kardan *et al*., 2017c). With only a small number of staff, local authorities may not have the resources to meet a surge in demand at the time of a crisis. On the other hand, in some circumstances local staff may be better placed to respond to a crisis than a national agency if they are more trusted or have better access to communities, as may be the case in a conflict situation.

Many social protection interventions are already run with the support of volunteers, such as the '*permanentes*', the community volunteers who assist government staff with activities such as targeting in Mozambique. A vital issue in efforts to use social protection to respond to shocks is whether it is fair or feasible to expect these volunteers to shoulder the burden of additional tasks without remuneration; and if not, who would undertake the tasks required.

It is likely that, in many countries, non-government actors will continue to be a key part of the human resource capability in shock-response and social protection for the long term. Besides relieving day-to-day implementation, humanitarian actors can also pilot linkages with social protection initiatives, which may then more easily be adopted by government staff.

In the meantime, agencies wishing to engage government ministries in the delivery of emergency responses which were not previously under their authority will need to consider several implications: what additional staffing requirement this imposes, how many other agencies are also trying to add tasks onto the same staff, and whether the core social protection programme will suffer as a result of being diverted for alternative purposes.

13.3.2 The implications of decentralisation

Decentralised governance arrangements have major consequences for coordination, resource availability and information exchange across levels of government. This is true whether functions are *deconcentrated* (transferred to local branches of central government authorities, who are still accountable to the central government) or fully *devolved*, allowing local authorities to design their own policies and distribute their budget as they see fit. If one of the sectors under review falls under the remit of the national government but another is a local government responsibility, then attempts to blend interventions across the sectors may need to result in a transfer of responsibilities or resources. This can be complex, and can be skewed by international development partners if they interact with the national government more than with local ones. To give examples from our case studies:

- Pakistan has a federal structure. A major administrative reform in 2010 abolished many national ministries. Responsibilities, including for both social protection and DRM, were transferred to provincial governments. The national cash transfer programme, BISP, remains attached to the central government but this is an anomaly as it was set up before the reform. Donors looking to support an improved response to emergencies in Pakistan may find it appealing to try to link up with a national programme such as BISP but this will limit the options, since social protection and DRM programmes are now being developed at provincial level. It will be important also to engage with the provincial governments. This does not, however, preclude consideration of piggy-backing on BISP operating systems at provincial level (see Watson et al., 2017).
- In Lesotho, the major social protection interventions are run at national level—spread across several ministries—while emergency response is deconcentrated to district-level disaster management teams. Efforts to use national social protection schemes for emergency response would have to consider how district-level teams would interact with them, including how they would access programme databases and other resources.
- In the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan, opinion differed as to whether the vertical expansion of the national cash transfer programme, Pantawid, should be managed centrally or through the devolved governments (see Smith et al., 2017). Some stakeholders felt it important for local government to have a leading role. Others suggested that a centralised response would lead to automatic implementation everywhere, whereas if it was administered through devolved structures it would have to be included in every local disaster response plan. Some

also expressed concern that local government administration of the programme might lead to political bias in targeting and potential exclusion of some people in need.

Centralised management sometimes seems sensible from a resourcing perspective, and to reduce the number of people to collaborate with, but this is not always either possible or desirable. In devolved contexts the full involvement of different levels of subnational government is crucial to ensure support for the implementation of interventions.

13.3.3 Links with regional and international initiatives

In some parts of the world, mandates relating to shock-responsive social protection policy may also rest with a regional (supra-national) infrastructure. This may influence national decisions on shock-responsive social protection if it is well integrated. The Sahel is particularly rich in this regard, having numerous regionwide bodies relating to food security and emergency response. In some cases, regional collaboration is improving some aspects of diagnosis, monitoring and knowledge exchange on food security shocks, e.g. through the Cadre Harmonisé and the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA) in west Africa, or the work of the Vulnerability Assessment Committees in many countries of southern Africa. However, an organisational challenge is that sometimes focal points for regional initiatives are often drawn from a single sector (e.g. an agriculture ministry) and may not have the authority to mobilise action in their home country on multisectoral issues such as building resilience or improving food security. This can limit the effectiveness of supra-national decision-making.

13.4 Financing for systems and programmes that respond to shocks

To embed a 'shock-responsive' element into a long-term government-led social protection programme or system it is necessary to understand many aspects of its financing: whether funding is likely to be available to sustain it, how that funding would be obtained if not, the challenges of current funding mechanisms, and the opportunities presented by alternative funding methods. There has been relatively little exploration of these themes to date among stakeholders in the countries reviewed in this research. We summarise here our observations in three key areas:

1. How to understand what funding might be available for shock response
2. Anticipating funding requirements in a crisis.
3. Making funds available for shock response.

13.4.1 Understanding fiscal space for shock response

Governments' fiscal space for shock-response is shaped, first, by the overall health of the budget; and, second, the share of that budget that is—or could be—devoted either to routine social protection or to mitigate or address covariate shocks. Actual expenditure is also determined by its ability to disburse and use the amounts budgeted. These conditions vary enormously between countries. Large-scale covariate shocks—not only economic downturns and conflict, but also e.g. food security shocks that result in greatly reduced production—can often radically alter the state of the economy at precisely the moment that households find themselves in need of increased support: measures that overcome this resource constraint are essential for minimising the adverse effects of a crisis.

Table 5 The state of government financing for shock-response in the case study countries

Country	Overall economic / financial outlook	Issues regarding sector-specific funding from the government budget	
		Social protection expenditure	DRM expenditure
Lesotho	• Lower middle-income country • Economy deemed to have performed reasonably well for several years	• Social protection as % of GDP is much higher than sub-Saharan Africa average • Main focus is on improving efficiency through e.g. a clean-up of databases and some harmonisation of procedures.	• Limited. Disaster Management Authority's budget covers coordination, not the response itself • A Disaster Management Fund had been established but did not contain funds when sought for the El Niño response.
Mali	• Low-income country • Now recovering from 2012 crisis • Outlook at risk from climate shocks • Enormous demographic pressures. Budget for basic social services is devoted increasingly to education and job creation (rather than e.g. social protection).	• Incorporated within 'social development'. Government funding for social development is set to increase in absolute terms, but decline in its overall share because of other priorities. Funding for food security is planned to increase hugely.	• Difficult to identify trends in funding for DRM as it has no line in the state budget (not classified as a sector). • Responsibility for DRM has been decentralised, but not clear that funding has followed.
Mozambique	• Low-income country • Economy was growing robustly over the past five years, but government disclosed hidden debts of around $1.4 billion. Direct aid by development partners suspended • Tightening of fiscal management means strict limits on new public sector hiring.	• Basic social security budget rose continuously in 2012–15; state subsidies for fuel, food and transport declined. • Increase unlikely to continue given the changed economic context.	• No overall figure available. Government has contingency budget of about $4 million to cover some immediate emergency response • Longer term recovery and reconstruction is funded separately from that budget. • Most international humanitarian response does not pass through government budget
Pakistan	• Lower middle-income country • Decentralisation means much policymaking now falls within remit of provincial government, including social protection and DRM.	• Social protection budget is poorly mapped so may be under-reported (misclassified) • BISP receives regular (and rising) funding from government and donors. • Social protection appears to be low priority in provincial budgets but will need attention as responsibility is now devolved.	• DRM classified in budget as subset of social protection. • Government has mandated establishment of disaster management funds. So far, none in place • Requests may be submitted to federal government for grants to cover unforeseen expenditure eg in disaster
Philippines	• Lower middle-income country • Strong recent economic performance, though benefits not fully felt by population (high inequality and poverty remains)	• Expenditure on numerous social protection programmes, including nearly $1 billion a year on Pantawid cash transfer (2015)	• 5% of national budget earmarked for DRM • Several disaster management funds in place • Government can call on international assistance when national calamity is declared but aims to use its own means

Source: IMF (2016); Kardan *et al.* (2017*a, b*); O'Brien *et al.* (2018); Smith *et al.* (2017); Watson *et al.* (2017)

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Table 5 above gives a flavour of how variable the conditions are for funding shock-response in our case study countries. Some countries, such as the Philippines, have clear funding streams for DRM activities; others, such as Lesotho, have relatively high spending on social protection but are less systematic about funding DRM. Determining the approximate level of funding available for response to shocks entails a review of both national and local government budgets, as well as funding that is not recorded within the government budget, e.g. from NGOs. All the contextual factors outlined in this chapter—political issues, the existence of coherent policies and strategies, mandates and staffing—have an effect on the relative size of the budgets for different sectors, as does the overall economic situation.

Funding for disaster mitigation and response does not have to be confined to the DRM and social protection sectors. It may be allocated to numerous sectors from agriculture (e.g. a fund to help farmers recover their livelihoods following a drought, as proposed in Mali) to education (school feeding programmes) to health.

13.4.2 Anticipating funding requirements in a crisis

Effective programming also requires robust processes for anticipating the size of any need for funding. Establishing or strengthening systems for anticipation and analysis of needs and funding requirements in preparedness planning is an important precursor to securing the timely and predictable financing of shock response through social protection. This is particularly necessary in slow-onset and/or recurrent crises. Box 19 indicates some experience from our case study countries.

Box 19 Experience with anticipating funds: Mali and Lesotho

In Mali steps have been taken to improve medium-term planning and analysis of funding needs. There is joint government–donor strategic planning (including both humanitarian and development partners) for the annual response to food security shocks. The National Response Plan presents funding agreed from all sources—government ministries and agencies, the UN and NGOs. In contrast, in Lesotho, a lack of forward planning by government and also donors created challenges and delays in the response to the El Niño crisis.

Source: Kardan *et al.* (2017b); O'Brien *et al*. (2018)

13.4.3 Making funds available for shock response

Having identified the expected level of funding required, a different challenge is to mobilise those funds. Both Lesotho and Mali, for instance, have faced challenges in making available the funds pledged to interventions. In the Philippines, too, despite the existence of contingency financing mechanisms for disaster response, there were administrative delays in releasing the emergency funding allocated to the department overseeing disaster response after Typhoon Haiyan.

Governments and their partners could explore measures to ensure more rapid financing to support households during crises. It is likely that a combination of funding sources, topped up by humanitarian appeals where required, will be appropriate. Options available to governments may include contingency funds, disaster insurance and contingent credit lines.

- **Contingency funds:** Funds that can be called upon in an emergency must be accompanied by the clear allocation of responsibility for ensuring that they are adequately resourced and for disbursing their contents. In many case study countries (Lesotho, Mali, Pakistan) we heard of funds that had been set up but that were standing empty. Where funds do exist, they may

require additional financing if they take on the additional task of providing social protection assistance in a crisis, in order to avoid diverting existing financing from other essential preparedness and response activities.

- **Disaster insurance:** Insurance is one way in which governments can smooth the cost of responding to disasters and reduce reliance on emergency appeals. Several countries in Africa have signed up to the African Risk Capacity (ARC) that insures governments against climate shocks—initially drought. In Mali, the as-yet-untested operational plan includes use of ARC funds for expansion of the national cash transfer programme after a major climatic shock. However, such insurance mechanisms are designed to respond to exceptional events, not annual food insecurity, meaning that while ARC may be one part of a portfolio of funding mechanisms for use in a crisis, it cannot be the only one.
- **Contingent credit lines: The release of emergency credit can provide immediate liquidity** to countries in the aftermath of a natural disaster, though has the drawback of adding to debt. The Government of the Philippines, for example, has established this type of option with the World Bank in the event of a disaster. This has the potential to assure financing beyond a government's own disaster response funds.

It is likely that, for many countries, a reliance on donor finance will continue for many years to come—especially where governments are struggling to finance existing programmes. In these contexts the priority question in terms of funding may be how to ensure greater sustainability of donor financing, including by increasing resources for long-term expansion of routine social protection programmes. Beyond this, to handle peaks in demand generated by cyclical or exceptional emergencies, some donors are considering the introduction of so-called 'crisis modifiers', or protocols with pre-agreed finance that permit the injection of additional funding into regular development programmes in an emergency. Meanwhile, humanitarian agencies have also started to overcome some of the constraints of annual response plans, using multi-annual planning and financing. Donors, UN agencies and NGOs with a dual mandate covering both development and emergency response are well placed to consider how to create links between the two: an example is the European Union's support for an emergency cash transfer programme and complementary resilience activities in Mali through links between its humanitarian and development arms (ECHO and DEVCO).

Box 20 Mobilisation of private funding sources: examples from Pakistan and Mali

In Pakistan, donations through Zakat, the Islamic tax through which those who can afford it pay 2.5% of their financial assets to provide assistance, have been used to support disaster-affected households such as those internally displaced after the 2010–11 floods (though assessments have indicated that the scheme has relatively low coverage and is not strongly directed towards the households most in need).

In Mali, funding of development activities by private sector organisations and by individuals—especially the Malian diaspora—is encouraged by the government and is used to supplement national budgets and action plans. The National Solidarity Fund collects and channels these donations to Malian civil society organisations.

Source: Watson *et al. (2017);* O'Brien *et al. (*2018*)*

Finally, private contributors, too, are likely to continue to be a vital source of funding (Box 20)**.** In recent years about one-quarter of all international humanitarian assistance has come from private sources including members of the public, corporations, faith-based organisations and trusts and foundations (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2017). The ease with which these are mobilised in an emergency depends on how they are channelled into the response. The use of private sources would need to be a complementary rather than a primary mechanism for funding responses to shocks since they may experience challenges with countercyclical financing, i.e. donations may be lower during crises.

13.5 Conflict and fragility

The relationship between social protection interventions and conflict is complex, involving multiple causal mechanisms that are not necessarily cumulative, linear or even positive. Evidence is scarce and mixed, but some argue that public works programmes and, to a lesser extent, cash transfers may impact on violent conflict by increasing the opportunity cost of participating in armed groups; by incentivising sharing information with the state; by influencing the strategies of armed groups; by fostering improved perceptions of state legitimacy; and by influencing other non-economic motivations to participate in violent conflict, such as social status or perceptions of corruption (Beazley, Morris and Vitali, 2015). Our research did not attempt to assess the impact of social protection on conflict, and during the course of fieldwork we came across limited evidence to either support or refute these theories. We did, however, find that a context of conflict or fragility shapes the likelihood and nature of the shock, and the feasible mechanisms of delivering shock-response.

Conflict can increase vulnerability and therefore the need for shock-responsive social protection, whilst simultaneously undermining capacity for shock-response. For example in Mali, the political crisis of 2012 and the ongoing conflict in the north, which affected 3 million people, exacerbated vulnerability. This was because of a lack of assets amongst the 400,000 displaced, pressure on infrastructure and services in host communities and a lack of access to markets. Across the Sahel, crises emerge from a combination of different triggering cyclical factors, including climatic hazards, but also conflict. Conflict and fragility also simultaneously undermine the capacity for providing social protection during shocks, and for scaling up or adapting programmes. Resources have to be diverted to deal with the conflict; personnel are harder to recruit to fragile areas; governance tends to be weaker; infrastructure can be damaged; and structures that ensure continued operations and regular services can be disrupted by insecurity. Therefore the capacity issues mentioned earlier in this chapter (section 13.3) become even more pressing.

Conflict changes the nature of the need for shock-responsive social protection, for example through displacement, and can turn an already severe crisis context into a highly complex one. To design social protection systems and interventions that work effectively to mitigate and respond to the effects of a crisis, a clear analysis of its nature is essential: yet fragility or active conflict introduce an extra dimension of complexity. A policymaker dealing with a situation similar to that in Mali during the 2012–13 conflict, where several hundred thousand people were displaced from the north to the south, may face trade-offs between prioritising the needs of those in the south, where the population is much greater, food insecurity is high and the 'shock' is the influx of displaced people; or those in the north, where the 'shock' is the conflict itself. These are difficult issues to consider, with complex implications; for example, considering how providing shock-responsive social protection may, in fact, incentivise migration (an issue which might equally be applicable, of course, to other forms of emergency response).

Displacement also makes shock-response more difficult by reducing the accuracy of data on beneficiaries. As noted in section 14.1 below, social registries can play a role in identification of new beneficiaries to include in scaled up social protection programmes following shocks. The completeness and currency of these databases is greatly reduced if people have moved around or had their material circumstances considerably altered as a result of ongoing conflict.

Conflict and fragility can also dictate the actors who are able to participate in implementation, particularly in relation to government actors. Ideally, social transfers should be provided by the state, but in fragile and conflict affected contexts, it may not have the capacity to deliver, donors may be unwilling to work with the state for political reasons, or it may not have control over all its territory. In situations where the state is weak or absent there may be a role for

other organisations (NGOs, private sector organisations, or UN agencies) in supporting, augmenting or replacing the capacity of a state-run programme, or in providing social transfers purely through non-governmental actors. Local NGOs may be able to gain access to territories that are out of reach to national governments or international partners. In scenarios like this, where transfers are being provided by non-state actors, it may be relevant to align with government systems and programmes to facilitate future integration (see section 9 on Alignment), though the need for neutrality and independence may have an impact on the degree of cooperation, and the challenges and risks outlined in section 9 still apply.

14 Operational factors affecting effective shock-response

Key points:

- Achieving effective shock-response through social protection depends on how delivery systems work.
- Social protection (especially social assistance) generally aims to address chronic poverty and vulnerability. The correlation between this and disaster vulnerability affects the suitability of social protection systems for targeting humanitarian assistance.
- Two types of database—beneficiary lists and social registries—have the potential to contribute to shock-response. Their use should not be automatic: it depends if they are an improvement on the alternative targeting methods used by humanitarian and DRM actors.
- The five dimensions of these databases that affect their suitability for use in emergencies are their relevance (what variables they contain), completeness (how many records they have), currency (how up to date they are), accessibility (who can use them) and accuracy (data quality).
- The value of assistance depends on what needs are to be covered; trade-offs between scale, sufficiency and political support; and the support provided by other agencies.
- Shocks can disrupt or damage infrastructure and payment systems for routine social protection. Delivering humanitarian assistance through the same systems risks compounding the disruption.
- Strong communication with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries is vital so that the difference between long-term and emergency interventions is clearly understood.

Achieving effective shock-response through social protection programmes and systems is contingent on the administrative processes and delivery systems for their implementation. For implementers of particular programmes or systems, some of the main challenges in achieving an improved response to shocks by means of social protection include the following[17]:

1. Needs assessment, targeting and data management (identifying who to support).
2. Setting a value for an emergency transfer (identifying how much support to give)[18].
3. Resilience of payment mechanisms and infrastructure.
4. Communications to beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

We discuss here in turn the features in the design and implementation of these elements of a social protection programme or system that can facilitate or impede an effective response.

14.1 Needs assessment, targeting and data management

14.1.1 Typical needs assessment and targeting approaches in emergency response

We noted in section 12.2 that a core principle of an effective shock-response is to be clear who needs what assistance. This means making good use of vulnerability assessments, needs assessments and response analyses. Actors responsible for emergency response have processes for deciding where to go and whom to support. In respect of slow-onset food security crises, many of our case study areas—including in Mali and other Sahel countries, and Lesotho—conduct an annual vulnerability assessment jointly between government agencies and their partners to determine the severity of food insecurity by geographical area, and to estimate roughly how many households need assistance. Such assessments often have considerable traction in calculating the impact of a crisis, providing the main estimate of the food deficit that is one input into decision-

[17] These are drawn from among the key challenges discussed in relation to the options in sections 5–9.
[18] There is of a course an important discussion to be had around the *type* of transfer, e.g. in cash or in kind, yet this is beyond the scope of this report (see also OPM, 2017).

making about the level of support needed. There are challenges in relying on vulnerability assessments, besides general concerns around their reliability. These include:

- Their timeliness for any given crisis. They estimate the number of people on the verge of crisis (or already suffering extreme food insecurity) each year, so the information is not early enough to contribute to measures for preventing food insecurity or building resilience; and the release of the annual report may be unrelated to the timing of a particular shock;
- The risk of bias and political pressure to either over- or under-report need; and
- Possible limitations in their analysis of gender and marginalised groups, depending on what is covered in the assessment. A poor analysis in this respect risks being replicated in the shock response, to the detriment of women and marginalised groups.

An exercise that is sometimes conducted to identify need is the 'Household Economy Analysis' (HEA) approach. This is often done on an as-needed basis in certain communities, not as a blanket exercise for an entire country. It entails working with communities to identify the characteristics they associate with several wealth groups (e.g. very poor, poor, average, better-off). This can later be used as part of a conversation to identify specific households for support. It is quite common, for example, in the countries of the Sahel.

Other relevant assessments may be conducted by DRM actors. These include e.g. multi-hazard risk assessments, as a preparedness activity, and/or rapid needs assessments and assessments of damages after a disaster. In Pakistan, for example, the first stage of a rapid assessment in the event of a natural hazard such as an earthquake or flood is a process of geographical targeting through a combination of satellite imagery, aerial surveys and rapid stock-taking used as a basis for declaring certain administrative units as 'calamity hit' through a notification of the provincial government.

A subsequent process leads to the selection of specific recipients, if relevant. These areas and numbers of households may vary widely from one year to the next—perhaps by several million people. Approaches for targeting recipients in an emergency response can take the same forms as those for routine social protection: for example, the CCFS emergency cash transfer in northern Mali in 2014 used an approach of community-based targeting, triangulated with data from a household listing (CCFS, 2015). Other approaches to targeting are more specific to an emergency context: in the case of the rapid assessment method in Pakistan mentioned above, the second stage of the process is a physical inspection of the degree of damage (to lives, properties, and livelihoods) carried out by local revenue officials who compile a list of affected people / households verified by the deputy commissioner's office. Not all emergency responses require the identification of households or individuals for support: Lesotho's food price subsidy in 2016 was for anyone who purchased the subsidised products, not for named households or individuals.

14.1.2 Do social protection targeting approaches offer a comparable alternative?

Can the social protection sector contribute an effective alternative to these processes from its experience with supporting chronically poor or vulnerable households? In many social protection programmes an implementing agency also identifies specific groups, households or individuals for support[19]. Of course, the central objective of targeting social protection, too, is to ensure that those most in need receive support. This might give the impression that people in a social protection scheme also merit being prioritised for assistance in a shock. However, this is not

[19] Such programmes might be e.g. a cash or in-kind transfer (unlike, for example, a general food price subsidy for which individual recipients are not specified).

always the case, as the concepts of vulnerability differ. Effective targeting of a humanitarian response is based on households' exposure to, and ability to cope with, specific disasters. Social protection in the form of social assistance generally aims to address chronic poverty and vulnerability—aiming to benefit those who are poor, at risk of becoming poor or otherwise vulnerable. The correlation between chronic poverty and vulnerability and disaster vulnerability therefore affects the suitability of applying a targeting approach used by a social protection intervention to a humanitarian response. This relates particularly to vertical expansion of a programme (where the beneficiaries are the same), piggybacking on a programme's beneficiary list, and horizontal expansion in cases where the same eligibility criteria are applied for temporary beneficiaries as for existing beneficiaries.

Our research finds general agreement that the poor are often some of the most vulnerable to disaster, meaning some degree of overlap can be expected. The emergency context, and the scale of the disaster, can influence the extent of overlap. Our findings suggest that a higher degree of alignment of target groups between social protection and humanitarian interventions can be expected in slow-onset food security crises, since chronic and seasonal food insecurity are often due to poverty and livelihood characteristics, than in rapid-onset emergencies which cause widespread damage to property and livelihoods. In the Philippines, the impact of Typhoon Haiyan meant that the near-poor and middle-income groups were also in need of assistance.

Clearly, the way households are targeted for the core social protection programme has a huge impact on the likely extent of this correlation. There is often an element of *geographical targeting*: beneficiaries may be confined to certain areas of the country. Within these areas, the programme may select households through methods ranging from defining eligible categories, e.g. people of certain age groups (*'categorical targeting*') to consultation with communities about who they believe to be the most vulnerable (*'community-based targeting*'), to collecting socio-economic data to estimate how poor the household is (*poverty targeting*, e.g. through 'proxy means testing', PMT), or a combination[20]. Some types of programmes implicitly define their target group, based on their operations: some public works programmes use *self-targeting* of those willing to accept the set wage, while universal school feeding programmes target all of those who are in school.

As an example, targeting using the PMT generally delivers a very different list of households classified as poor, compared with the HEA approach more commonly used in emergency programming. The HEA tends to be better at identifying food insecure households and the PMT tends to be better at identifying chronically poor households (Anonymous, 2016; Schnitzer, 2016). This can be problematic where there is an intention to make a transition from a humanitarian to a social protection intervention, as it implies a change in eligibility criteria and the potential exclusion from the programme of households that were previously eligible. Across the Sahel, in particular, many countries have been conducting assessments of the relative merits of the two approaches to understand the implications of a potential switch from one targeting method to the other (see O'Brien et al., 2017). One such study has been taking place in Mali, and is considering whether a hybrid approach might be the solution (Box 21).

All targeting approaches, because of either their design or errors in implementation, result in some degree of exclusion of people who are intended to receive support, as well as the inclusion of some people who are less in need. This has an impact on the connection between the individuals or households registered on a programme, and those in need of assistance in a crisis: even if there is a close match between the two target groups by design, it is important to

[20] See e.g. Sabates-Wheeler *et al*. (2015) for an assessment of different targeting methods for social assistance

remember that there will be omissions of some households in implementation, and these will need to be reached by other means.

Box 21 Comparing the HEA and PMT targeting approaches: experience from Mali

Mali is one country that is assessing the implications for household targeting that are brought about by a transition from a humanitarian to a social protection intervention. During our research period the social assistance programme, Jigisèmèjiri, was moving into Gao region where the consortium of NGOs delivering emergency assistance, the CCTS, had been delivering cash to beneficiaries identified using the HEA framework. In four communes both interventions would be operating. While the solution had not been reached at the time of writing, all actors were fully aware of the issue and ECHO commissioned a comparative analysis of the targeting approaches of the HEA and PMT methods to see the extent of overlap of the beneficiary lists and to determine how to address it. Jigisèmèjiri also adjusted its traditional PMT method, drawing on the previous NGO database from the earlier intervention in 2014 as a starting point (European Commission and World Bank, 2016). This hybrid approach may be part of the solution.

Source: O'Brien *et al*. (2018).

14.1.3 Existing social protection databases: can these contribute?

Where social protection programmes are targeted to specific households or individuals, their information must be collected and maintained in a database. Information about a wider population group—including potential future recipients or households who have been assessed for social protection programmes but classified as ineligible—is also collected in the process, but not always stored and maintained. The distinction between these two types of database—beneficiary databases and databases containing information on a wider population group of potential beneficiaries—is crucial and is applied throughout this chapter. The most extensive databases including information on non-beneficiaries are known as 'social registries', and are designed for the purpose of collecting socio-economic data to serve multiple programmes, in social protection and perhaps also other sectors. Social registries exist (with varying degrees of completeness and accuracy) in many countries including the Philippines, Lesotho and Pakistan. One is planned for Mali, though its starting point is a combination of beneficiary lists from several programmes[21].

Stakeholders are recognising that, where an existing social protection system has pre-positioned data, it may be able to contribute to improved shock-response. For example, both vertical expansion and timely horizontal expansion of programmes at a time of emergency can involve using existing social protection data (see sections 8 and 9), while there is also a clear rationale for new programmes piggybacking on existing datasets where possible, rather than collecting data from scratch.

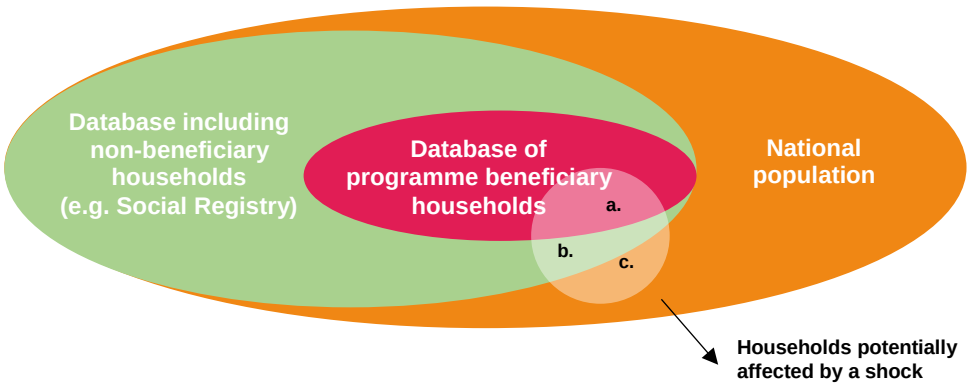
Existing social protection data have the potential (subject to the challenges described below) to improve the efficiency of emergency response in the four dimensions listed in section 3. Primarily their use is intended to avoid duplication of data by multiple agencies. They should also improve the timeliness of identification of individuals for assistance (leading to timely support if acted on promptly), coverage (depending on data completeness—see below), and predictability of assistance for the household (provided they know the circumstances when support will be delivered). It may also reduce costs of data collection and management—though evidence on this is scarce—and may increase programme sustainability over time. Existing data could also promote better understanding of households' vulnerability, providing inputs for better planning. Whether or not this improves programme impact depends on the database's ability to help identify the neediest people in any given shock, compared with alternative data collection arrangements.

[21] We call this an 'integrated beneficiary registry' in line with Barca (2017).

This can only be an estimate of *likely* need, since, of course, a database cannot predict outcomes of a shock at an individual household level.

Bearing this in mind, a policymaker will need to make a judgement as to whether there is a good match among either beneficiaries of social protection programmes, or among those listed in social registries, for the disaster-affected individuals or households that the policymaker aims to support. This does not automatically mean that such lists should be used for targeting: it depends on whether they are an improvement on the alternative targeting methods used by humanitarian and DRM actors. We note three possibilities (Figure 4):

Figure 4 Options for reaching households through social protection databases



Legend:

a. Households that can be reached through **vertical expansion (or piggybacking on the beneficiary database)**
b. Households that can be easily reached through **horizontal expansion (or piggybacking on the social registry)**
c. Households **less easily** reached through **horizontal expansion or piggybacking** (not covered by existing social protection databases)

Source: OPM. Notes (1) The size of each oval will depend on each country's circumstances. (2) The 'National population' oval represents 100% of the population. (3) To keep the figure simple, the red oval exemplifies one programme (e.g. the country's flagship programme with highest coverage), yet most countries have several programme databases, sometimes partly overlapping.

1. Characteristics of disaster-affected households closely resemble those on the beneficiary list of a programme (these households are shown as 'a' in Figure 4). Here it is worth considering whether to provide top-up support to those beneficiaries and/or piggyback on the list to deliver assistance, bearing in mind the risks and challenges cited in Part B.
2. Characteristics resemble those who are not beneficiaries of the programme, but whose data is contained in a social protection database of all 'potential' beneficiaries (e.g. a social registry, 'b' in Figure 4[22]). The registry might be loosely associated with a social protection programme, like the NISSA with the Child Grant Programme in Lesotho, or the NSER with BISP in Pakistan. In that case, it might be worth exploring the feasibility of extending the programme horizontally to new beneficiaries, or piggybacking on the registry but delivering separate assistance[23].
3. Characteristics do not match households covered by social protection databases ('c' in Figure 4). Horizontal expansion of an existing social protection programme to reach these households will be harder as no information exists on them.

Of course, it is quite likely that the set of households affected by a shock falls across all of these categories. Moreover, the categories are not necessarily this clear-cut as each country runs a wide variety of social assistance programmes, each with their own approach to data management and varying levels of integration across programmes. Policymakers must decide

[22] "Social Registries are databases of potential beneficiaries of social assistance". They centralise data integration up front, "collecting data for a national database/ register that is then drawn upon by specific programs. Their primary function is to support and consolidate the initial implementation phases of intake and registration". This is different from Integrated Beneficiary Registries which "integrate data from program MISs of several different schemes" providing a "consolidated overview of data collected by different programs, focusing on beneficiaries alone" (Barca, 2017).
[23] As was noted in section 6, there is a clear difference between piggybacking on a beneficiary list and on a more general social registry: see section 14.1.4 for the implications for data completeness and accuracy.

which approach is best given their context, including whether to use separate ways of reaching groups a, b and c, or whether to implement a single emergency response that covers all groups. This assessment is best made by looking at the response as a whole.

14.1.4 Data management and its implications for data quality[24]

Countries have very different approaches to data and information management for social protection, including different levels of integration across programmes, with implications for what they can achieve in a crisis. Some have made important progress towards developing comprehensive social registries (reaching e.g. over 85% of households in Pakistan and over 60% in the Philippines), including state-of-the-art information systems that link data across social protection programmes and make them easily accessible to a wide range of stakeholders. At the other extreme, some social protection programmes hold only beneficiary lists and run their information systems entirely 'on paper', meaning no digital data is easily retrievable for any purpose. Some programmes—including Mozambique's cash transfer programme, the PSSB—retain digital data but only on beneficiaries (not the wider population), limiting the potential for timely horizontal expansion to those who were initially registered but not eligible.

Given this premise, we briefly discuss the five key dimensions of social protection data (and related information systems) that enhance or limit their potential use in emergencies: data relevance/appropriateness, completeness/coverage), currency, accessibility and accuracy/usability (Barca and O'Brien, 2017).

1. **Data is relevant if it is suitable for its intended purpose.** Data collected for the provision of long-term social protection may not always be relevant in an emergency if it does not contain the required variables. In some cases databases may contain a fuller set of variables for current programme beneficiaries, and a shorter set for those registered but never enrolled as beneficiaries (e.g. because deemed ineligible). This means that, even if data on those non-beneficiaries are adequately stored and maintained, the system may not be immediately useful in an emergency if it omits operationally relevant information (often collected at enrolment stage): recipient details, full address, GIS reference, contact number, bank account number, biometric data, etc. Data on existing beneficiaries may contain more relevant variables but is inherently limited to a smaller group. That data may therefore be more relevant but less complete[25]. More generally, the types of indicators that determine eligibility of households for standard social protection programmes may not be best suited for identifying households vulnerable to disasters. Pakistan has recently tackled this by including some data on climatic vulnerability in its new NSER being developed at the time of our study.
2. **Completeness refers to the number of records (of individuals or households) compared with a perceived full set—perhaps 100% population coverage, or 100% of those in need.** The database may assist a comprehensive emergency response if all or most of those in need are included. Yet databases may omit large parts of the country. In Pakistan and the Philippines the social registries have near national coverage, while in Lesotho the NISSA database contains no data for 28 out of the 64 community councils (sub-districts). Moreover, within an area, countries have very different levels of completeness of social registries—i.e. including non-beneficiaries—while beneficiary databases are likely to cover an even smaller

[24] The issues in this subsection are discussed fully in the policy brief on social protection databases that accompanies this report (Barca and O'Brien, 2017).
[25] The targeting criteria for the emergency response strongly influence the relevance of a given database. For example, if an agency wishes to support households experiencing low dietary diversity in a period of food insecurity, it will seek a variable that reveals current dietary diversity. This will not be in a database for which data were collected years earlier. The agency would need to decide whether or not to still use the data but to collect additional variables to complement it.

subset of the population. For example, the Child Grant Programme in Lesotho and Pantawid in the Philippines reach only poor households with children (and not all of those). Of course, other databases are also an option in this context—including, potentially, a country's national ID database or its civil registry.

3. **Data currency is the degree to which data are current (up to date), reflecting households' real circumstances at the required point in time.** It is, of course, impossible for standard social protection data to reflect reality after a disaster, meaning some post-disaster revalidation is always required. The key factor is how up-to-date the data are overall, since data underpinning social protection programmes (both beneficiary lists and social registries) can often be rather static. Data currency varied widely in the case study countries depending on specific approaches to:
   - *Data collection* e.g. whether in a mass 'census survey' every few years or through continual on-demand registration by households. In all social registries encountered in this study—Pakistan, the Philippines and Lesotho—updates were infrequent (over five years apart).
   - *Targeting*, e.g. poverty targeted vs. categorical—relevant for beneficiary lists rather than social registries. In low- and middle-income countries, keeping poverty-related indicators up to date tends to be more difficult than categorical indicators such as age.
   - *Information management*, e.g. who updates the information and whether updates can be shared across programmes.

   The extent to which household well-being is affected by the shock also has a major impact on data currency: conflict and many natural shocks, for example, may cause widespread internal displacement, split up households and significantly change their material circumstances.

Box 22 Efforts to maintain data currency: experience from Pakistan

The NSER is a database of 27 million households in Pakistan, some 85% of the population (Cheema et al. 2016). Data on 23 key variables to be used as proxies for consumption were originally collected in 2011, nationwide, adopting a census survey approach. Poverty scores were subsequently assigned to households, and eligible households enrolled onto BISP to receive the cash transfer. Over the years, data from NSER have been shared with other national and provincial programmes, including emergency response programmes by external actors.

Given the scale of the 2011 data collection process, it is unsurprising that re-registration was only conducted in 2016—and is ongoing. A new poverty survey was being piloted in 16 districts at the time of write-up, with a few variations to the original approach:

- A revised proxy means test (poverty test), to balance rural–urban and provincial indicators more effectively and to include indicators of agro-climatic zones, to bring in aspects of climate vulnerability
- Piloting of an on-demand desk-based approach to data collection (followed by a home visit), to test the possibility of creating a more dynamic social registry which could allow for more regular updating of changes to a household's circumstances
- Capturing GPS coordinates of households

Our research stressed the importance of such an update, and of regular re-registration, in a context where short-term wealth fluctuations are very common, and where migration and internal displacement are major concerns.

Source: Watson *et al*. (2017).

4. **Accessibility refers to the ease for potential users to obtain the data when needed.** In our research countries this was affected strongly by: a) who the users were (e.g. other government units vs. decentralised government authorities vs. non-government agencies); b) what processes were in place for data sharing (e.g. whether agencies had to submit a request to a central authority to be given permission to obtain the records. This was the case in Lesotho, for example, where the NISSA database was held by the Ministry of Social Development); c) whether data were digitised or not; d) the type of data interface (e.g. web service); and e) provisions for data security and privacy. Again, the nature of the shock has an impact: natural

catastrophes may destroy infrastructure, while conflict may impede access. Conflict may also give rise to considerable concerns about protection: sharing data with governments that are parties to a conflict may put beneficiaries at risk.

Box 23 Challenges with data accessibility: experience from Pakistan and Lesotho

Formalised processes for data sharing, and close institutional coordination between those leading on social protection, DRM and humanitarian response, are likely to be needed in order to overcome barriers to accessing data that have been collected by one organisation but are needed by others. This was a consistent finding in our countries of study. In Pakistan, access of other government departments and non-state actors to BISP or NSER data is theoretically possible but difficult and time-consuming.

In Lesotho, use of the NISSA database for the El Niño response was abandoned, in part because the database was located only in the capital and so was largely inaccessible to the local District Disaster Management Teams who are mandated to respond to disasters. Improving accessibility is a challenge in highly resource-constrained environments since it requires investments in technical training, staffing and technology, including at sub-national levels.

Source: Kardan *et al*. (2017b); Watson *et al*. (2017).

5. **Data accuracy concerns the quality of the content, being free from mistakes and omissions**. This affects the confidence that can be placed in the data, its wider credibility and ultimately its usability. In Mali, for instance, a unified beneficiary registry is being constructed from the beneficiary lists of several different programmes; yet an independent evaluator of one of those programmes cautioned that the speed with which that programme's database was compiled posed problems for its reliability and that it would need to be updated systematically. Perceived accuracy depends very much on where data is housed and who has oversight over its quality.

14.1.5 If the database looks usable…then what to do with it?

Existing social protection data could be used for planning purposes (e.g. estimating caseloads or aligning emergency response design) or to support targeting before or after a shock. We focus here on targeting as it is the most controversial. Options have different trade-offs.

Regarding the use of beneficiary databases (e.g. for vertical expansion or piggybacking) there are three main options:

1. Target *all* beneficiaries of a social protection programme within the crisis affected geographical area. This can be pragmatic and improve timeliness in severe shocks where most households are likely to have been affected, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. It could lead to inclusion errors, however. This approach was used by WFP and UNICEF alongside the government in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan – with additional data collection of affected households who were not in the Pantawid programme database.
2. Target *some* of the beneficiaries. For less severe crises, or where there is variation in impact, it may be appropriate to take the beneficiary list as a start from which household needs are verified.
3. Target *no* beneficiaries. Our research suggests that in some cases where beneficiary lists have been provided to organisations delivering emergency response, those households have been de-prioritised on the grounds that they already receive some help. This appears to have happened during the response to the El Niño drought in Mozambique in 2016, resulting from a lack of clear directive to agencies as to what to do with the list, leading to discretionary and inconsistent decisions (Kardan *et al,* 2017*a*).

As for the use of data on non-beneficiaries (e.g. for horizontal expansion or piggybacking), options could include:

1. *Drawing on variables in the database to select households*. This presupposes that households worst affected by a disaster can be identified from a certain variable, e.g. their wealth ranking; their geolocation (if GPS coordinates are collected and can be overlaid with hazard vulnerability maps); or the characteristic of a household member. If the criteria, and the circumstances in which they would be used, were planned in advance, such an approach would effectively pre-identify a cohort of households for assistance, enabling immediate targeting in a disaster. Pre-enrolment (e.g. collecting operationally relevant data) might also be possible as part of preparedness planning, and might enable a timely response in the manner of 'no regrets'.
2. *The records could be used as a starting point for establishing a list of households, to whom further screening would be applied post-disaster* in order to identify which households have been worst affected. This might enable a more rapid validation process.

However the data are used, gaps in coverage and quality mean complementary methods must be used to identify other households in need. Since no targeting mechanism is perfect, errors deriving from either design or implementation will lead to errors of inclusion and exclusion in social protection programmes. Agencies must ensure that those excluded from a programme, or a registry, are not systematically excluded from the shock response.

Implementing an effective shock response based on social protection databases will require careful planning. In particular, there should be guidelines on:

- Which types of crisis these databases will be used in. For example, in the Philippines, typhoons, El Niño events and earthquakes could lead to the prioritisation of different geographical areas and population groups;
- Who can engage in shock response and how those managing social registries will coordinate with social protection, DRM and humanitarian actors;
- How to use the systems so as to avoid social protection beneficiaries either receiving multiple benefits from different actors, or being excluded; and
- Options for building three-way information-sharing between social protection, DRM and humanitarian actors, to help maintain data currency and strengthen the underlying social protection system, while maintaining safeguards around what can be shared for data privacy purposes, especially in conflict settings.

14.2 Setting a value for an emergency transfer

Humanitarian interventions aim to ensure that those affected by crises receive the right amount of assistance to meet their needs, which can be a challenge. Authorities and agencies leading emergency response have processes for determining the value of assistance. The increasing frequency and severity of crisis, and shortfalls in international humanitarian funding as well as constraints in government funding for emergencies, mean that there are inevitable trade-offs between scale and value—supporting all those in need with less, or provision of adequate assistance to a smaller number.

Transfer values in humanitarian assistance are increasingly debated as aid becomes monetised across sectors—households are increasingly likely to receive emergency relief in cash rather than being given food or other goods—and through use of multisectoral grants, which enable them to spend the cash on whatever they feel is most appropriate for their household (which might be e.g. education, health or shelter, besides food). Households, governments and

agencies can make comparisons between the value of cash given on emergency programmes and that provided through social assistance programmes. This is highlighting the need for strong coordination and harmonisation of transfer values across the response, an awareness of the different objectives of different schemes which can justify variations in amounts provided, and the importance of taking into account the transfer value provided by national social protection schemes.

This issue can become more complex when humanitarian assistance is delivered *through* social assistance programmes, not just alongside them. It can be challenging to harmonise transfer values between interventions delivered through national social protection programmes and systems, and those implemented separately by humanitarian actors. As noted above (section 7.4), if emergency top-ups are provided to existing beneficiaries of a social protection programme (vertical expansion), implementers must decide whether either the top-up alone, or the total value including the original support—or neither—should reflect what other households are being provided through separate emergency interventions. Similar decisions and clear rationales will be needed when setting transfer values for horizontal expansions (see section 8.4).

Box 24 Setting a transfer value: experience from Lesotho and the Philippines

In Lesotho, Child Grant Programme beneficiaries who received the routine transfer plus a top-up still received substantially less per month than the recipients of WFP's separate emergency cash assistance. This was partly due to the initial lack of coordination on transfer values between actors, and also because of the different programme objectives. WFP's programme was purely humanitarian and aimed to meet acute food needs resulting from the drought in line with humanitarian standards. In contrast, the CGP top-up was intended to sustain efforts of the long-term programme to reduce chronic vulnerabilities—despite it being designed as part of the humanitarian response. The top-up value was based on affordability rather than a pure calculation of need. As households did not receive both, CGP beneficiaries (some of the most vulnerable to the drought) received less. Moreover, the top-up was a flat rate to all households while the usual child grant assistance is tapered by household size. The result was that households within the same community were receiving different amounts. Some stakeholders feared that the higher value provided to emergency recipients would ultimately lead to long-term discontent among CGP households about the usual value of CGP assistance.

In the Philippines the Department of Social Welfare and Development's cash response to Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, delivered through its Pantawid programme, was supported by WFP. The transfer value was set at a level that was intended to meet the food needs of beneficiaries. Additional needs of these households had to be met through parallel interventions.

Source: Kardan *et al*. (2017b); Smith *et al*. (2017).

In respect of the typical determinants of transfer values for emergency assistance, our respondents highlighted the following issues for emergency assistance delivered through of a social assistance programme:

1. **The needs that must be addressed, and the type of support that best addresses them** (response analysis). For example, findings from the Philippines and Pakistan suggest that, in a rapid-onset disaster such as an earthquake or cyclone, it may be easier for implementers to manage a response that focuses on basic food and non-food needs through transfers that can be easily standardised—certainly in the early response phase. More specific needs could be factored in during a recovery phase, though this adds a layer of complexity to programme administration since transfer values will vary over time and between households. However, this frames the response in terms of the convenience of the system rather than individual variations in need (see also fourth point).
2. **How the transfer value is calculated, and the trade-offs.** If the emergency assistance is intended to fulfil humanitarian objectives, and especially to substitute for other humanitarian interventions (i.e. taking on the responsibility of a portion of the caseload) then transfer values must be based on a calculation of humanitarian needs. However, there are trade-offs. The first

is between scale and sufficiency, driven by funding limitations—whether to meet some needs of many affected households, or the full needs of fewer.

A further trade-off, more likely on a programme linking to national social protection, is between securing adequate value and securing political support. In Lesotho, there was some political resistance to temporarily topping up the Child Grant Programme owing to concerns about its impact on popular support for the transfer value of the core programme. In practice the difference between the transfer values used in social protection and emergency response is, in part, that social protection actors assume people have other resource entitlements (including from relatives) whereas emergency response actors may assume that people have lost more of their entitlements. The difficulty arises in situations such as that in Lesotho described in Box 24 above, where, even with their top-up, Child Grant Programme beneficiaries were receiving less than the recipients of emergency transfers, a scenario which could not be justified on the grounds of need alone. Considering transfer values as part of preparedness planning is important, so that values can easily be computed post-disaster.

3. **Harmonisation of transfer values.** It is recognised good practice to harmonise transfer values and agree standards for humanitarian assistance across agencies. Therefore it is important that humanitarian transfers delivered through social protection systems are aligned with those delivered through parallel interventions – or at least that the rationale for the choice of any given transfer level is clearly stated and widely shared. In both the Philippines and Lesotho, variations in transfer values between standalone humanitarian responses and the top-ups to social protection beneficiaries risked confusion and disappointment. The development of common transfer guidelines for government and aid agencies in Philippines and Lesotho subsequently supported greater harmonisation. In contrast, in Mali the value of the standalone NGO-implemented CCTS in 2016 was aligned with the government's social assistance programme, Jigisèmèjiri (see Box 15). As noted above, agencies reached agreement on this alignment in part because it was recognised that agencies dealing with 'emergency' assistance were actually addressing chronic poverty more broadly. However, this approach has risks. If going through a social protection system means lowering the support people receive compared with what they would have received under a standalone response, there is a danger of compromising the appropriateness of the support.
4. **The scope for varying the transfer value delivered through national systems.** Transfer values that are more closely aligned with a household's real needs—which vary, for example, according to the size of the household, location, or phase of the response—will be more effective. This adds a layer of complexity to programme administration (communication and delivery). We did not find evidence of this type of variation.

14.3 Payment mechanisms and infrastructure

Natural catastrophes and conflict can disrupt systems, damage infrastructure and displace people and businesses. Rapid-onset disasters and conflict may be particularly prone to these consequences. A slow-onset crisis such as a drought may cause less damage to infrastructure but may affect population movements. If this disruption affects the delivery of routine social protection it will also affect any humanitarian assistance delivered through the system, at least initially. Delivering humanitarian assistance through social protection systems risks compounding this burden unless actions are taken to make the underlying systems more disaster-resilient.

Agencies in our case study countries selected different approaches in the use of social protection payment mechanisms for the delivery of cash-based emergency responses. These related to their readiness and capacity to diverge from the regular payment schedule and process in order to accommodate the additional activity. In the Philippines, for example, cash top-ups to Pantawid beneficiaries were issued separately from the routine payment in order to get it out

faster. In Lesotho, top-ups were added to the usual quarterly payment, which reduced the need for an extra round of manual payments but which added three months to the time taken to pay beneficiaries as they had to wait for the next scheduled payment date (Box 25).

The mechanism for delivering support also varied. We found no consistent relationship between the type of payment mechanism and its appropriateness in a shock. The determination of the 'best' mechanism depends on all the factors cited in the analytical framework in section 3 above. The manual distribution of benefits can be resource-intensive and take time: in Mozambique, for instance, payments for two social protection programmes are meant to be monthly but they are disbursed every two months because it takes the implementing agency, INAS, several weeks to complete the manual distribution of cash to all beneficiaries (Kardan *et al.*, 2017a). One might assume that digital payment channels offer better scope for building shock-responsiveness into social protection systems: yet in the Philippines, the infrastructure that was damaged after Typhoon Haiyan was the network infrastructure for e-payments. In that instance households reverted to receiving payments over the counter (Box 25). Meanwhile, in other contexts, e-payments might be useful, e.g. if it is deemed relevant to have the potential to vary the size or frequency of transfers according to changing needs. In any case e-payments are primarily an advantage only in schemes where beneficiaries tend to store and use the money electronically. Often, schemes that claim to be 'electronic' consist of a text message to the recipient, or a deposit in a bank account; the recipient then commonly withdraws the full amount in cash. The constraints about the availability of cash then still apply, but the burden of obtaining it is transferred to the payment service provider. In all the research countries, digital payment systems are growing but still do not have national coverage or high penetration among the poor.

Training or guidance for programme staff and any payment providers on recovering operations and managing social protection payments following disasters will better ensure continuity. This could cover e.g. processes for ensuring liquidity and replacing payment instruments, and contingency plans for manual payments where infrastructure has failed.

Box 25 Adapting payment mechanisms in a crisis: experience from the Philippines

In the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, power outages prevented the use of e-payment channels for several weeks and many Pantawid beneficiaries lost their ID cards and ATM cards. To restore the functioning of the regular transfer programme, the government drafted in staff from non-affected regions to help social welfare officers conduct a validation exercise within three weeks, locating beneficiaries and cross-checking answers to questions against copies of the beneficiary roster, then issuing temporary ID cards. Households who usually received payments electronically were allowed to collect them over the counter instead while awaiting a replacement cash card. This flexibility greatly helped the response.

The cash top-ups to beneficiaries added to the workload of service providers. Rather than waiting for the next bi-monthly payment, the top-ups were issued separately, so payment providers had to deliver extra rounds of transfer. It was necessary to obtain additional physical cash, which was a challenge in remote areas, and to agree the commission to payment providers for the ad-hoc payments. On the whole, however, these operational challenges were considered to have been addressed fairly well.

Source: Smith *et al*. (2017).

14.4 Communications

Clear communication with communities about the rationale and scope of humanitarian assistance is vital, regardless of how the assistance is delivered. Experiences in Pakistan, Lesotho and the Philippines highlight potential sources of misunderstanding by communities when humanitarian assistance is delivered through social protection programmes. This includes decisions on targeting (who is included and excluded, and why); explanations of the transfer value (what it is based on, why this differs from the value of social protection in normal times, or other

parallel humanitarian assistance, or both); and for how long households will be enrolled. These messages are important to communicate on standalone humanitarian assistance programmes but on a programme linking with social protection it is crucial that such information is clearly understood because misunderstandings can have further reaching, long term and political ramifications. If social protection is understood by citizens to be the responsibility of the state, any dissatisfaction with the humanitarian assistance will be directed towards these institutions and/or the incumbent government. Providing additional payments to beneficiaries (or to some beneficiaries), or including households who do not fit the targeting criteria, without clear explanation may create tensions or undermine public support for the long term programme. This issue was experienced in the Philippines where it was not always clear to Pantawid beneficiaries residing in areas outside the WFP project zone why they were not receiving top-up assistance when their neighbours were, since Pantawid was understood to be a government programme with national coverage. This is not to suggest that such support is inappropriate, but rather to emphasise the importance of good communication about the approach being used.

15 How can humanitarian, DRM and social protection systems best work together for effective responses to shocks?

Key points:

- Collaboration among social protection, DRM and humanitarian actors may be strengthened by promoting understanding of one another's fields, and improving policy engagement and coordination of programmes and delivery systems.
- Definitions of 'social protection' and 'DRM' are often not understood outside their sectors though they have long been conceived similarly (broadly prevention > protection > recovery).
- Coordination can be at the level of institutions (policy) or organisations (staff). A starting-point for improved institutional coordination is to improve policy coherence within each sector individually.
- Organisational coordination differs dramatically between countries and can include working groups, committees, alliances etc. Structures that work all year round can offer a space for agencies to develop working relationships that can be called on in crisis times. There is a need not to overburden a small number of individuals with repeated meetings.
- Regarding coordination of programmes, one of the main opportunities that is often underexplored among social protection actors is the link to those used by the DRM sector, ranging from contingency plans and early warning systems to post-disaster needs assessments, DRM committees and laws.

The need for social protection, DRM and humanitarian actors and systems to work more effectively together is a theme emerging from all case studies for this research. We have noted that change is occurring, as social protection actors become more engaged in emergency response and humanitarian actors adopt longer-term perspectives (see section 2.4). The ideal scenario for shock-responsive social protection is that a coordinated social protection sector feeds into a disaster management platform that coordinates a response. In many countries, this is not the situation owing to challenges that often relate to the multisectoral nature of the sectors, and to their maturity. The research identified three phases by which collaboration might be strengthened:

1. Improving *understanding* of one another's fields.
2. Strengthening engagement between *sectors*—in policy and practice.
3. Strengthening coordination between *programmes* and between *delivery systems*.

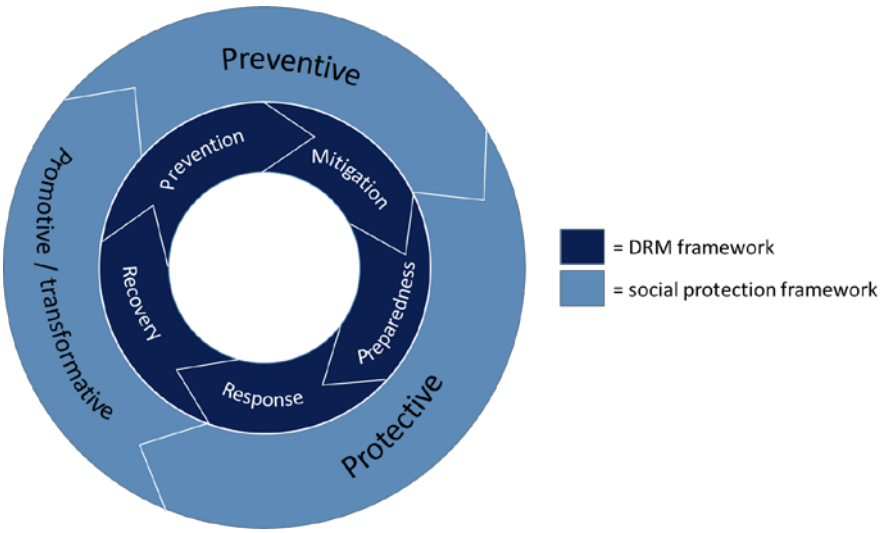
15.1 Understanding one another's fields

The definitions of 'social protection', 'disaster risk management', and how they relate to humanitarian work, are often not widely understood outside their respective government departments. This knowledge gap was noted at the national level and is likely to be pronounced also at the local level. Among international partners, too, individuals tend to be more familiar with one of these fields than with the others. Social protection and DRM are often regarded as separate functions with their own technical requirements, with little recognition of all the ways in which the two can be—and are starting to be—mutually reinforcing. This is the case, to varying extents, even in countries where they fall under the same budget line (Pakistan) or under the same ministry (the Philippines), and more so in cases where there is no institutional link. Humanitarian assistance falls somewhere between the two: it can be associated either with social protection or DRM, or be viewed as a sector independent of both. As for 'shock-responsive social protection', this is newer still: the concept has only been evolving over the last few years[26].

[26] A related term, 'adaptive social protection', is also entering more widespread use. It refers to interventions that aim to support development while reducing vulnerability to climate change (Béné, 2012). It is associated with, but slightly

In fact, both social protection and DRM have long been conceived of in similar cycles, revealing multiple entry-points for joint thinking and working. Both sectors have a component of 'prevention' (of deprivation, or of the shocks that risk leading to deprivation); both aim to reduce negative impacts if a shock occurs, to support communities, households and/or individuals that are affected by an idiosyncratic or covariate shocks, and to invest in measures that lessen the impact of any future shock (again, these might variously be for communities, households or individuals). These aspects are reflected in the commonly used four-function analytical framework for social protection—protection, prevention, promotion and transformation (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004)—and the five-stage DRM cycle (prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery) outlined in section 2 above. Their relationship is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5 Analytical frameworks for DRM and social protection



Source: Authors.

Shock-responsive social protection straddles the two sectors. Social protection can *prevent* and *mitigate* disasters by addressing underlying causes of vulnerability such as poverty and gender inequality. Ex-ante measures to improve the shock-responsiveness of social protection programmes such as 'design tweaks', having response procedures in place, or pre-enrolment of potential beneficiaries contribute to *preparedness*. Social protection can play an important role for households in disaster *response*. It can also contribute significantly to *recovery* and 'building back better', for example through the distribution of drought-resilient seeds, or potentially—if implemented effectively—through post-disaster public works programmes that invest in agriculture and infrastructure schemes.

Nonetheless, there are also perceived differences between the sectors, as well as between these two and humanitarian assistance. Sometimes these appear to present an insurmountable barrier to collaboration or harmonisation. For example, the fact that some humanitarian agencies working in conflict situations aim to adhere to principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, and that they may feel that social protection and DRM interventions are not obliged to follow these principles, is sometimes considered to be an impediment to closer integration (see section 2.4).

Greater understanding of one another's fields may be promoted by:

different to, shock-responsive social protection because of its exclusive focus on climate-related risk and because it is concerned with living with climate impacts over the long term, not only responding to specific crises.

1. **Targeted initiatives to train stakeholders in the basic principles of social protection and DRM, and the relationship between these and humanitarian assistance**. In the Sahel, for example, efforts to improve responsiveness to shocks focus particularly on addressing cyclical food insecurity. Yet social protection as a theme is relatively new to the food security agenda so does not yet form a core part of the technical capacity of some of the regional agencies leading policy development in this area. It was recommended that training in social protection might be useful for experts in other disciplines, such as agriculture, in the regional body that provides technical assistance on drought response, to increase understanding of the contribution of social protection to the resolution of food insecurity (O'Brien *et al*., 2017).
2. **Further national reflection on broader institutional links** between social protection, humanitarian assistance and DRM through the full DRM cycle (prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery). These links are starting to be seen in some aspects of the cycle in some countries, e.g. in a handful of policy pronouncements (see section 13.2) and in the vulnerability assessments and needs assessments in the Sahel and Lesotho (see section 14.1). There remains scope for increasing the range of connections.

15.2 Strengthening engagement between sectors

In many countries, collaboration between the social protection, DRM and humanitarian sectors is limited. To ensure more effective responses to shocks, better coordination is valuable not only between sectors nationally, but also within and between their representatives at different levels of public authority—regional, national, subnational and community. They may coordinate on their policies and governance arrangements (i.e. their 'institutions') and also, in practical terms, may coordinate the activities of their staff such as through working groups and forums, and share material resources and logistical arrangements where appropriate[27]. This engagement across sectors is useful also for national and international organisations working alongside governments.

15.2.1 Coordination at an institutional level

A starting-point for improved institutional coordination is to improve coherence within each sector individually. The more each sector is aligned within itself, the more feasible is cross-sectoral collaboration. Actions such as developing sectorwide strategies, policies or budgets can help, such that when a policymaker tries to engage with, say, the 'social protection sector', he or she knows broadly which agencies are involved, their objectives and their core programmes. Social protection is often difficult to draw together, given its wide-ranging scope and the fact that it is typically funded from numerous sources and spread across many ministries. In Lesotho, efforts to make the sector more cohesive have been launched, such as with the creation of the Ministry of Social Development and the elaboration of the National Social Protection Strategy in 2014; while in Pakistan the sector is still rather dispersed (see section 13.2). As we saw in section 2, the 'humanitarian sector', if it can be called such, and the DRM sector are equally difficult to define. Some of the apparatus of the international humanitarian system, such as the cluster system and UN Humanitarian Country Teams, can help bring a sense of coherence and alignment to international and national efforts but may not be strongly embedded in national policy frameworks.

In most of the case study countries one of the three sectors tends to have a stronger internal institutional framework than the others (such as clearer governance arrangements,

[27] We follow a social science definition of institutions (based on the work of Douglass North) as being the 'rules of the game' that shape behaviour. Institutions therefore encompass formal structures and mechanisms (laws, policies, governance arrangements etc.) as well as informal patterns of behaviour. Institutions differ from organisations which can be defined as groups of individuals bound by a common purpose, e.g. a committee or a government department.

legislation or policies). This is often accompanied by greater political power and resources and tends to mean that this sector dominates (see Box 17 for the different experiences of Mozambique and Mali). This may reflect the maturity of that system.

A challenge, as noted above, is that each sector is itself multisectoral. They need to liaise with numerous other sectors and stakeholders to conduct their core activities, including health, education, water and sanitation, nutrition, agriculture and so on. This leads to an increased risk of particular sectors being omitted from consultations on policy development, or from coordination groups. In Mali, for example, the DRM and agriculture sectors tended to be left out of discussions on shock-responsive social protection. Similarly, in the Sahel, there is a need to strengthen exchanges between the agricultural sector and social protection and DRM actors (Box 26).

Box 26 The multisectoral nature of policymaking in the Sahel

Across the Sahel, intergovernmental structures and mechanisms play a notable role in lending greater visibility to the *policy question* of the need to improve links between humanitarian assistance and development initiatives across sectors. To date, regionwide mechanisms have not yet been as prominent in supporting the *delivery* of new interventions. A key challenge in the region is to reduce cyclical food insecurity, which calls for coordination across numerous sectors from agriculture to social protection to nutrition. The multisectoral nature of the policy problem can make it difficult for member states' delegates from one sector to speak on behalf of all the interlocking initiatives in other sectors at regional forums.

Source: O'Brien *et al*. (2017).

Possible solutions to overcoming these complex institutional barriers include

1. Working to improve individual sectoral coherence, for example through national or subnational strategies that other actors can align behind (though noting the political imperatives that can make this challenging—see sections 13.1 and 13.2 above).
2. Attention to intersectoral policy coherence: joint policies, strategies and/or frameworks that clearly set out the synergies and overlaps between the sectors and are developed together.

15.2.2 Coordination at an organisational level

Organisational coordination needs to be deliberately built within and across sectors. Coordination bodies may conduct activities from planning and agreeing roles and responsibilities, to strategic oversight and information exchange, to the elaboration and harmonisation of technical processes, data analysis, and monitoring of programme implementation. In so doing, an effective coordination body may contribute to connectedness between emergency and long-term programmes, and policy coherence among different actors, as well as efficiency of resource use (Table 3). Coordination bodies must be carefully designed to ensure the inclusion and voice of those that need to participate, without unnecessary duplication of structures. Getting this right in relation to the very broad topic of shock-responsive social protection is not easy. The presence and effectiveness of these bodies differed dramatically between the case study countries. Examples of relevant coordination groups that we identified during our research, and that combine government, donor and/or other non-governmental agencies, include:

- Forums for data collection and analysis (e.g. for vulnerability assessments, such as the Cadre Harmonisé in the Sahel, or the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee);
- Technical working groups on specific themes (e.g. shock-responsive social protection)
- Cash Working Groups, to coordinate cash assistance, especially in emergencies (those in Mali and the Philippines were both valued by stakeholders for information-sharing and planning);

- Groups that manage disaster response (e.g. the District Disaster Management Teams in Lesotho, humanitarian clusters, or the UN Humanitarian Country Teams);
- Alliances for advocacy and policy coordination (e.g. the alliances of ECHO-funded NGOs delivering cash transfers in the Sahel)
- Temporary committees (e.g. the 'monitoring committee' for the National Response Plan for food security in Mali, which meets every two weeks from April to October to monitor food security in the lean season); and
- Periodic conferences (e.g. annual social protection conferences or social protection 'weeks' in Mali and Mozambique, or the twice-yearly food security conferences in the Sahel).

The experiences of Mali and Lesotho in this regard are summarised in Box 27.

Box 27 Intersectoral coordination: experiences from Mali and Lesotho

Mali has quite a comprehensive set of active coordination bodies, including some country-level incarnations of Sahel-wide or global structures. Leadership arrangements for the groups are diverse (some led by government and others by development partners), as is their composition. These bodies include a technical working group on scaling up safety nets, a donor Social Protection Group, a Cash Working Group, the 'Cadre Commun' alliance of ECHO-funded NGOs, as well as committees that oversee the vulnerability assessments and the national response plan for food security, and several humanitarian clusters. The government has held an annual national social protection conference since 2015.

Lesotho has a structure for coordinating the annual vulnerability assessments—the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee—and has a Humanitarian Country Team. At the time of the El Niño crisis in 2016 Lesotho did not yet have active permanent forums for dialogue or interaction between international agencies and the government either on shock-responsive social protection specifically, or on social protection more generally. The sectoral reforms underway are aiming to change this.

Source: O'Brien *et al*. (2017 and 2018).

These coordination structures have several benefits. First, they can improve understanding of technical concepts and of who is doing what in the country. Second, they can promote intersectoral coordination and harmonisation. Third, those structures that function year-round enable agencies to develop working relationships with one another in non-crisis times. This is vital since we have seen that, in an emergency, stakeholders may find it expedient to piggyback their response on the interventions that they know best, rather than looking at the full set of options (this was partly the case with the decision to top up the Child Grant Programme in Lesotho during the El Niño crisis in 2016; see also section 6.3 for further discussion about piggybacking on programmes).

Without formal coordination there is a risk of policy agendas and programmes overlapping with, or even competing with, one another. In a vacuum, we find that agencies may set up a group with a name such as 'social protection committee' to handle their organisational interests, thereby inadvertently excluding other agencies from joining discussions on social protection issues, or confining the discussion to their own interpretation of the field (perhaps covering only social assistance and not also social care services or contributory social insurance, thereby potentially missing out on engaging important actors and initiatives from across the sector).

Nonetheless we recognise that coordination is often easy to call for, but much harder to implement. There is a need not to overburden a small number of individuals with repeated meetings containing slightly differing combinations of invitees. Moreover, groups often face challenges that considerably outweigh the financial resources they can secure to address them.

Options for improving organisational coordination on shock-responsive social protection include:

1. The creation and activation of some of these forums and structures for both information exchange and—ideally—strategic coordination at an organisational level. Given the breadth of social protection, humanitarian assistance and DRM, more than one type of group is likely to be necessary, but attention should be paid to ensure that there is not excessive overlap and a risk of meeting fatigue.
2. Wide membership, drawing on multiple sectors, agencies and government ministries, including with actors working at subnational level where relevant. Rotating leadership, including government, is also recommended to ensure diversity of views and to prevent the dominance of one organisation.
3. Strengthening Cash Working Groups, where cash is becoming a significant feature of both long-term social protection and emergency response. This could lead to joint planning exercises, shared lessons on design and implementation features, and joint capacity building.

15.3 Coordination between different programmes and systems

Linking programmes and delivery systems to improve shock-responsiveness requires agreement on many design and implementation details as discussed throughout this report (see in particular section 14). If a programme aims to fulfil both development and emergency functions there will need to be coordination between the agencies involved in implementing the two components—if they are not the same—to streamline processes for e.g. enrolling households and distributing support, or alternatively to communicate why there are differences. Moreover, since shock-responsive social protection will only ever be a partial solution for responding to emergencies, many separate emergency interventions will need to be effectively coordinated with the social protection intervention to ensure that the neediest households are not missed from support (see section 12.4). Effective coordination of M&E across interventions will also be needed.

Minimising both gaps and duplication of support to households in shock-response was a preoccupation across the case study countries, though sometimes addressed in conflicting ways. We find a dichotomy among stakeholders between their advocacy for delivering multiple social assistance programmes to the same households when framed as being complementary measures as part of development programming and, on the other hand, their advocacy for avoiding the same scenario when it is presented as 'double-dipping' of emergency interventions. Deliberate exclusion of social protection programme beneficiaries from emergency response is concerning given that the value of humanitarian assistance can be significantly higher than the value of social assistance provided each month (as was seen in Lesotho). Sometimes the approach used is framed by the rules of informal social protection mechanisms: in many parts of the Sahel, for example, local norms may encourage households to redistribute some of any targeted assistance they receive to others in the community, in order to build up their social capital as a guarantee of reciprocal aid in the future (Watson, 2016).

One of the main opportunities for enhanced coordination that we consider to have been underexplored in many countries is the link between the delivery systems and programmes used by the DRM sector with the social protection and/or humanitarian sector. Noting from section 15.1 above that DRM is more closely aligned with these other sectors than might be commonly assumed, there are numerous examples of systems that could offer benefits in shock-response if their work was more broadly coordinated with that of social protection. This ranges from preparedness activities such as linking the expansion of social protection programmes to the release of funding under disaster risk financing mechanisms (as is proposed with the African Risk Capacity mechanism in Mali), to the use of early warning systems as triggers for different thresholds of emergency support (as per the HSNP in Kenya) to the planning of emergency assistance using local DRM committees. Table 6 offers some examples.

Table 6 Opportunities for collaboration between DRM and social protection programmes and delivery systems

Element of DRM cycle	Typical DRM programmes and systems	Opportunities for collaboration with social protection
Prevention and mitigation	Programmes to reduce vulnerability to disasters	Given that reducing poverty and vulnerability is both an underlying driver of disaster resilience and a focus of social protection efforts, there is great potential for collaboration and mutual learning.
	'DRM mainstreaming' efforts	DRM mainstreaming efforts—linking in with development plans, cross-sectoral strategies, committees, forums etc. at all levels—provide an opportunity for social protection and DRM staff to work together
	Community-based prevention programmes	'Cash plus' social protection programmes may contribute to disaster prevention and mitigation through the additional elements, e.g. by distributing drought-resilient seeds or training on flood-mitigating farming techniques.
	Resettlement or adaptive livelihoods programmes	Political economy analysis would be necessary to fully understand how social protection could contribute to incentivising change and what obstacles exist
Preparedness	Disaster risk financing mechanisms	Mechanisms such as contingency funds and sovereign risk insurance schemes could be linked to social protection interventions (see section 13.4)
	DRR contingency plans	Could incorporate any expected expansion of social protection programmes following a shock. We found several examples of joint working between DRM and social protection on this
	Early warning systems and criteria for levels of alert	These systems should trigger action before an emergency to reduce losses. Data can be used to achieve consensus on the approach and/or extent of a crisis, and trigger finance for social protection response
	Vulnerability, risk and hazard assessments / committees	Assessments can be used not just to design responses, but to shape the targeting of social protection programmes to make them more shock-responsive (design tweaks). We found many examples of these committees
	Public information systems	Awareness-raising mechanisms and emergency communication systems, including disaster warning alert apps on mobile phones, could explain to beneficiaries their entitlements under expanded social protection programmes
Response	Provision of cash and in-kind emergency transfers	Shared modalities, programmes and systems. This was the area of greatest collaboration between the sectors across the case study countries, although shared approaches did not guarantee coordination in many places
	Post-disaster needs / damage / loss assessments	Post-disaster assessments may be useful for targeting social protection programmes, depending on the speed with which they can be conducted and the content
Recovery	Reconstruction programmes ('build back better' approach)	In theory, public works programmes could be used for reconstruction activities such as rebuilding infrastructure. However, this requires technical expertise, machinery, skills and resources that are generally not present
	Post-disaster rebuilding of livelihoods	Many ways in which these programmes could be linked to social protection, e.g. through in-kind transfers linked to livelihood development e.g. tool distribution
General	DRM committees at regional, local and community levels	DRM committees may be able to play an important role in supporting planning, targeting and the implementation of social protection initiatives.
	Institutional and organisational framework	The DRM institutional framework—laws, policies, codes etc.—could formally incorporate attention to social protection. There should be opportunities to bring social protection and DRM professionals together.

Source: OPM consortium.

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PART D: RECOMMENDATIONS

Key points

- We present seven key recommendations for policymakers, and five recommendations for programme implementers.
- For policymakers the key recommendations are: (i) Don't overlook the value of strengthening routine social protection systems, even without flexible mechanisms for shocks: this will help in a crisis (ii) Consider how social protection programmes and delivery systems can continue to function in a crisis. (iii) Conduct a systematic assessment of how interventions might be used in a crisis (iv) Shift to *ex-ante* planning and action as much as possible (v) Develop guidance on any shock-response through social protection, so procedures do not have to be defined at the moment of the disaster (vi) Collaboration across sectors has to be strategically built—it does not happen organically. (vii) Ensure households are not worse off with a social protection response than with an emergency response.
- For programme implementers the key recommendations are: (i) All social protection programmes can become more shock-responsive with simple design tweaks (ii) Know where funding will come from to support adaptations in the event of a shock (iii) Consider capacity constraints so you do not adversely affect the underlying social protection programme (iv) Social protection alone is not enough, so coordination with others is essential. (v) M&E of shock-responsive social protection needs attention.
- Further research is recommended to explore the comparative costs and benefits of different interventions, and gender and broader inclusion implications of shock-responsive social protection.

16 Recommendations

The evidence presented in this report highlights many opportunities for shifts in attitudes, policies and practices amongst social protection, humanitarian and DRM actors. The report provides many detailed recommendations, for which the reader is referred to the relevant sections in the main body of the text. Similarly, each of our case study reports and policy briefs suggest country specific recommendations. In contrast, this section sets out what the research team believes are the 12 critical shifts that need to take place in relation to policy-making and programming for the global community to take a necessary step forward in facilitating effective shock-response through social protection programmes and systems.

16.1 Policy recommendations

1. **Don't overlook the value of strengthening routine social protection for reducing the negative consequences of shocks.** In some countries, focusing on adapting social protection systems and programmes to be ‘shock-responsive’ is not necessarily the right starting point. There has been considerable attention paid to shock-responsive social protection on the international policy stage, which creates a danger that it is perceived to be a ‘silver bullet’. However, as one respondent observed, the more sophisticated variants may be a 'distant dream' in highly resource-constrained environments. Strengthening routine social protection is worthwhile in its own right: it will help in a crisis by laying a better foundation for shock-responsiveness, and by reducing underlying vulnerability, including to the idiosyncratic shocks that can still affect households in the midst of covariate shocks. Social protection will only ever be part of an emergency response, so it is important not to overstate its potential as a tool for responding to shocks.
2. **Consider how to increase the ability of social protection programmes and delivery systems to withstand the shock themselves, continuing to function during and after a crisis**. This should include details of how procedures for regular programmes will be used, modified or waived during shock response, and the definition of procedures to ensure business continuity following a disaster.

3. **In relation to particular shocks or types of shock, analyse systematically whether and how social protection can best contribute to a response[28].** This should take into account:
   - The current way that shock-response is delivered through DRM and other emergency response mechanisms, their costs and benefits, and the challenges to which social protection might be expected to provide a better alternative;
   - An assessment of the maturity of the current social protection system (see Table 2);
   - A mapping of the different social protection programmes operating (see Table 4);
   - Needs assessments (see section 14.1);
   - Analysis of the comparative merits of adapting social protection programmes in different ways, recognising the trade-offs in that it will not be possible to improve all aspects of programme efficiency and effectiveness by the same means (and improving one aspect—such as timeliness—may worsen another, such as targeting accuracy);
   - Understanding of the context and how that might help or hinder shock-responsive social protection.

   This information will lead to a judgement as to which programme(s) should be adapted in which way(s), according to the criteria set out in our framework for decision-making (section 3). It can help identify the full set of options so that programme implementers can deliver the most *effective* response rather than the most expedient.
4. **Increase *ex-ante* planning and action.** Gathering and analysing information as above is complex. Some actions in this respect can be made in advance. In the case of cyclical, recurrent disasters, ex-ante planning is feasible and advisable. Where shocks cannot be so easily predicted, preparatory conversations and actions should be undertaken to the extent possible. We recognise that this is easier said than done, but enhancing a DRR approach, with a focus on preparedness and planning, is critical for improving the feasibility and effectiveness of shock-responsive social protection. As well as pre-identifying programmes for adaptation and potential beneficiaries, this might include, for example, pre-positioning finance, contingency planning and identifying early warning data that can trigger pre-agreed actions.
5. **Following analysis, develop guidance and procedures on how to implement a shock response through national social protection systems.** Setting out clearly defined operating processes for shock response through national social protection systems as part of preparedness planning, supported by a continuous training initiative, will ensure everyone is aware of how to adapt programmes and leverage systems and staff following a crisis, for timely and effective response. This could cover agreements on the mechanism for triggering a shock response; the roles and responsibilities for the different actors and institutions involved; and related protocols for these entities to utilise social protection administrative data, if appropriate.
6. **Build strategic coordination and collaboration between the social protection, humanitarian and DRM sectors**—it does not happen organically. section 15 above highlighted the benefits of improving collaboration by enhancing understanding of, and building on, the approaches, tools and capacities of the different sectors.
7. **Pay close attention to potential adverse impacts.** Make sure that households are not worse off if social protection systems are used to deliver the response than they would be using another emergency intervention (there is a risk of this if, for example, the use of the social protection system either constrains the implementer to a lower level of support, or excludes certain disaster-affected households from assistance while closing off the possibility of others offering complementary support).

[28] The toolkit that accompanies this report provides guidance on this (O'Brien, Holmes and Scott, 2018).

16.2 Programme-level recommendations

8. **Take into account that many social protection programmes, across all types of context, can become more shock-responsive, often with simple adjustments.** It is not always necessary (or possible, in very challenging contexts) to adopt formal shock-responsiveness, for example through vertical or horizontal expansion of a programme. Tweaking programme design, so that households are better provided for in a shock, can be done prior to an emergency (see section 5). We recommend that considering how to support shock-response should be mainstreamed into the design of social protection programmes and systems.
9. **Ensure that finances are available to facilitate the adaptation of programmes and systems.** Predictability and timeliness are supposed by many to be a benefit of shock-responsive social protection, but these can immediately be undermined if the necessary finance has not been pre-positioned. This is equally true of government funds as well as resources from the international system. Robust processes need to be in place for anticipating and releasing funds.
10. **Consider capacity constraints so that you do not have a negative impact on the underlying social protection programme or system.** Emergencies place the normal operations of social protection programmes under strain, for example due to disruptions to delivery systems. Adapting programmes so that they can provide good shock-response is likely to place a very high burden on programme staff and sap capacity even further. This should therefore be considered in advance where possible, and mitigating actions taken, for example surging in support from other areas.
11. **Promote coordination between individual interventions, where appropriate.** Social protection programmes and systems will only ever be part of a wider emergency response and so coordination with other programmes is vital. This may include collaborating on practical issues such as sharing data, setting transfer values, managing potential duplication and minimising gaps in support to beneficiaries. Too often these issues are simply overlooked, leading to much confusion, particularly around duplication. Collaboration needs to be prioritised so that all programmes can benefit, for example from overall improved technical knowledge and shared information.
12. **We need more M&E information on the efficiency and effectiveness of shock-responsive social protection** (see section 16.3.1 below)**.** If social protection programmes and systems are used for shock-response it is important to understand whether they provide a better alternative to other forms of emergency response. Unfortunately, robust information on this in relation to previous examples of programmes and systems that have been adapted following shocks is not available. M&E of shock-responsive social protection, and of emergency responses more generally, is an area that merits further investment.

16.3 Future research

‘Shock-responsive social protection’ is a relatively new topic with an emergent discourse. During the research, the team observed a number of areas that fell outside the scope or the resource constraints of this research project, but merit further investigation.

16.3.1 Comparative analysis of programmes, including value for money analysis

The thesis behind shock-responsive social protection is that, instinctively, it feels rational to assume that in a crisis it must be more efficient, or in other ways 'better', to make use of existing programmes or systems that support households than to create parallel programmes and delivery structures solely for an emergency response. Of course, as we have seen throughout this report,

there is no universal answer as to whether this assumption holds true, as it depends on numerous factors ranging from the type of shock, to the maturity of the social protection, humanitarian and DRM sectors, to the resources available for response (see section 3).

Yet, as explained in section 12.6, during our study we found three significant information gaps that limit policymakers' ability to verify this assumption in their own context: first, what should count as 'better' (i.e. which indicators to measure); second, how alternative approaches have fared in similar situations, including standalone responses; and third, the effectiveness of the shock-responsive social protection option(s) itself. Of particular concern is the risk that the overall impact of the intervention on households and individuals, including non-beneficiaries, is overlooked if the focus is on outputs such as the number of people reached, but not on the appropriateness of the support or on coherence with other interventions. Even information on 'economy', i.e. the cost of interventions, was not readily available in our case studies, and is limited in the wider literature.

This suggests there is scope for considerable further thinking at a system wide level, within countries and globally, on ways to measure the relative effectiveness of different interventions. The OECD-DAC framework for evaluating humanitarian assistance is a useful starting point in this regard. Beyond this, at the level of specific interventions, more comparative research will be valuable for strengthening the evidence base on the relative merits of different approaches. This could include a focus on how programme design (e.g. poverty targeted versus universal, conditional versus unconditional, cash versus in-kind, etc.) and implementation (staffing, resources, information systems, data management, etc.) affect outcomes.

16.3.2 Gender and marginalised groups

Despite consciously including a focus on gender in some of the research sub-questions, we found that in general the interventions under analysis did not themselves have a strong gender focus. Support tends to be directed at households rather than individuals and organisations are not prescriptive about the distribution among men, women or marginalised groups; support is aimed at the needs of all people affected by a shock, considered from a geographical rather than a gendered or inclusion perspective. Having said that, gender and social exclusion clearly shape patterns of vulnerability and capacity, as well as potentially shaping access to and benefits from social protection systems, and so further research is needed to understand how shock-responsive social protection can support equitable outcomes.

16.3.3 Insurance

This research focused mainly on social assistance, particularly transfers as they were the primary social protection instrument being used for shock-responsiveness in the case study countries (for some evidence on the use of social insurance in emergency contexts, see OPM, 2017). It would be interesting to widen this to consider the potential of social insurance as a way of protecting consumption and livelihoods. This may be a longer-term consideration as social protection systems potentially evolve in MICs and LICs to better integrate social assistance and social insurance.

16.3.4 Community perspectives

The research did not include household level interviews or data collection from beneficiaries of shock-responsive social protection. However, in the Sahel study, a theme relating to the strength of local communities' own 'shock-responsive' systems and capacities emerged and was documented in a working paper (Watson, 2016). Further investigation of the perceptions, logic and strategies of beneficiaries and civil society groups would be welcome, as well as how best to engage communities and the impact this can have on programme effectiveness.

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Annex B List of research outputs

Under this project the team has produced the following outputs. These are available on the OPM website at http://www.opml.co.uk/projects/shock-responsive-social-protection-systems.

B.1 Case study reports

There is a full report on shock-responsive social protection and an accompanying short (<10-page) policy brief for each of the six case studies:

1. **Lesotho**. *Social protection response to the El Niño crisis in 2016*. Full report and policy brief.
2. **Mali**. *Social protection and humanitarian responses to food insecurity and poverty in Mali* (Full report).
3. **Mozambique.** *Potential for, and experience in, shock-responsive social protection*. Full report and policy brief.
4. **Pakistan.** *Considers potential for shock-responsive social protection, including through BISP.* Full report and policy brief.
5. **Philippines.** *Social protection response to Typhoon Haiyan*. Full report and policy brief.
6. **Sahel regional study**. *Regional approaches to addressing food insecurity, and the contribution of social protection.* Full report and policy brief.

B.2 Other policy briefs

1. **Factors affecting the usefulness of existing social protection databases in disaster preparedness and response**, here
2. **Summary** of this synthesis report

B.3 Working papers

1. Working paper 1—Conceptualising Shock-Responsive Social Protection
2. Working paper 2—Preparatory document for Mali case study [*Document de travail 2 : Etude de cas du Mali. Document préparatoire*] (in French only).
3. Working paper 3—Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Sahel: Community Perspectives (also available in French).

B.4 Other outputs

1. **Literature review** of shock-responsive social protection (first edition, 2016; revised edition, 2017).
2. **Animation** available on OPM's 'Medium' website.
3. **Webinars** (slides and YouTube recording available for each):

Webinar 1—A framework and practical guidance on linking humanitarian cash transfers with long-term social safety nets. May 2016.

Webinar 2— Shock-responsive social protection in practice: perspectives from Kenya and Mozambique. August 2016.

Webinar 3—Shock-responsive social protection in practice: experiences in Pakistan and the Philippines. March 2017.

Annex C Selection of case studies

At the beginning of the research, DFID's terms of reference proposed that case studies should be undertaken in, 'five countries where social protection programmes and systems are in the process of being built', three in the Sahel and two outside the Sahel. Early in the inception phase it became clear that significant resources were being invested into research on social protection and humanitarian response in the Sahel, including by the World Bank, through its DFID-funded Adaptive Social Protection programme, and by UNICEF, through implementation of the social protection component of the UN's Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. Given the intensity of other research activities in this region, and to avoid duplication, it was decided that we should place an equal focus on the Sahel, on eastern / southern Africa and on Asia, with two case studies in each region.

The research team divided case studies into 'in-depth' and 'light-touch' studies because of the varying experiences of countries in establishing and implementing shock-responsive social protection systems, and the likely readiness and willingness of stakeholders to engage in research on the issue. In-depth studies were undertaken in countries that either had set out in policy documents their intent to develop social protection systems that can respond flexibly to shocks; or had undertaken large-scale social protection responses to humanitarian emergencies; or received significant humanitarian interventions, with a willingness on the part of donors to support a move towards more systematic social protection. The light-touch studies covered countries that were either early in the process of considering shock-responsive social protection systems or, conversely, had already put in place and used such a system, with some reviews of the process already having been undertaken.

Case studies were selected from a longlist of 21 countries across sub-Saharan Africa, south and east Asia. The criteria for selection were as follows:

- Countries should have at least some kind of government-run long-term social protection system in place;
- Shock responses should not be run exclusively by humanitarian donors;
- Governments should have expressed some interest in exploring the possibility of using their regular social protection systems for humanitarian response, either through policy statements or through the implementation of programmes;
- DFID should have a programming presence in in-depth case study countries;
- Countries should not be overwhelmed with existing research initiatives on similar topics (this ruled out Kenya, Ethiopia and Niger);
- The set of countries chosen should enable the team to capture a wide variety of experiences. These include exploring responses to different types of shock, both rapid- and slow-onset, natural and economic; varying degrees of fragility and conflict; and different types of social protection programmes.

The final set of case studies is: Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, Pakistan, the Philippines and a regional study of the Sahel.

Annex D Research method

D.1 Approach to the research

The overall research combines quantitative and qualitative data gathered through a combination of desk-based research (literature review and interviews) and six country case studies, three in-depth and three light ones (document review, consultations with key informants and stakeholders). In-depth case studies provide detailed information gathered over at least three in-country research periods, accompanied by regular consultations and interactions with key stakeholders. The light case studies analyse information relevant to the main research questions, but during just one in-country research period and focusing on a specific aspect of interest. The research has three main components: normative, diagnostic and explanatory:

1. **Normative**: this component clarified key terminology and concepts for consistency across the project e.g. on the objectives of social protection and key enabling factors and constraints identified by the literature. Some of this was completed during the literature review and inception phase. The aim was to identify what qualifies as a shock-responsive social protection policy and system, their properties and the links to humanitarian interventions.
2. **Diagnostic:** this component mapped out social protection policies and systems and considered their (actual and potential) degree of responsiveness in the context of different shocks. It also provided descriptive analysis of broader processes that influence that effectiveness, such as political considerations, the budget process and the legislative framework.
3. **Explanatory**: this component addressed the question 'why'? It examined the factors underlying the patterns and results highlighted at the diagnostic stage. Its objective was to provide information on the reasons why policy and systems have evolved and performed as outlined. Factors considered include: policy design and implementation details, administrative / operational capacity, political economy variables and financing sources and arrangements. The analysis was applied to both social protection policies, systems and to the coordination or integration (and/or lack thereof) between social protection and humanitarian shock response.

D.2 Analytical tools

Answering the research questions required the application of a broad set of analytical tools covering different themes and pursuing different objectives. These are:

1. **Mapping and analysis of stakeholders, power relations and governance:** This set of tools analyses the people and organisations who are—or might be—involved in contributing to a shock-responsive social protection system; their mandates, interest and influence, the way they organise themselves and their capacities. It consists of stakeholder analysis, institutional analysis and organisational capacity assessments.
2. **Vulnerability / poverty analysis**: This involved creating a 'risk and vulnerability profile' for each country, drawing on secondary quantitative and qualitative data from reputable sources.
3. **Mapping and analysis of policies and systems for social protection, humanitarian assistance and DRM:** This involved reviewing and updating existing mappings and collecting information on the design of relevant policies and systems and the features of policy delivery. Following the mapping exercises, policy analysis was conducted to review explanatory factors.
4. **Budget / financial analysis**: This involved review of the macroeconomic environment and medium term outlook of key economic indicators; review of budgetary processes and rules for allocation of budgets, their use and reallocation within and across sectors or administrative entities; analysis of sources and levels of expenditure allocated to social protection, DRM, humanitarian response, and (if relevant) climate change; and financial analysis of specific social protection, DRR / DRM, or humanitarian response programmes or interventions.

Our approach paid attention to issues of conflict and fragility and their impact on the development and implementation of policies and systems that can respond to shocks. This has been linked to the questions explored under analytical tools such as the vulnerability analysis and financial analysis, since conflict and fragility may have a bearing on topics such as the assessment and mitigation of risk and issues surrounding funding cycles.

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