



WORKING WITH CASH BASED SAFETY NETS IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS

Guidance Note for
Humanitarian practitioners



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Photo: Poul Henning Nielsen Danish Red Cross

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I INTRODUCTION

I.1 BACKGROUND

In the past decade social protection has emerged as an important social policy measure to tackle poverty and inequality in society and to address people's vulnerability to shocks. The concept evolved from a focus on those in formal sector employment to include populations that participate in the informal economy, and those that face vulnerabilities to lifecycle related or disaster related shocks and stresses.

The food, financial and fuel crises that started in 2008 reiterated the Ex-ante and Ex-post¹ potential of social protection to address vulnerabilities and the impacts of crisis². Since then, there has been increased discussion on forging better links between humanitarian assistance and social protection measures to reduce the need for recurrent humanitarian assistance³, and to facilitate an effective response in times of crisis⁴. Over the years, significant gains have been made in some East African countries^{5,6} to strengthen the design of existing social safety nets to make them shock responsive⁷; while in Asia, the Middle East and West African contexts, efforts to use social assistance to deliver humanitarian assistance have begun to emerge.

These efforts notwithstanding, social protection continues to be a fairly new concept that is not fully understood by most humanitarian actors. It does not help either that most documentation (i.e. research and papers/notes etc.) on the subject have been written from a development perspective that do not provide clarity to humanitarian actors on their role in social protection policy formulation and programme design. With the increase in expectations among policy makers on a more active engagement of humanitarian actors with social protection, it is increasingly important to empower humanitarian actors with knowledge and information on this topic. This guidance note is an attempt in this direction, and also aims to facilitate better linkages between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD).

I.2 SCOPE OF THIS GUIDANCE NOTE

This guidance has been prepared from a humanitarian perspective, and for humanitarian actors. It recognises that social protection is the responsibility of the national government and the state has to play the lead role in designing and managing social protection within their respective countries. Nevertheless, there is immense scope for humanitarian actors to play a role in strengthening existing, and support the creation of new, social protection systems where they do not exist or are underdeveloped.

It is based on discussions with humanitarian actors that have direct experience of working on the issue, research reports and documents on the subject, and from the literature review of an ongoing research study on shock responsive social protection⁸. This document will support humanitarian actors to decide on their role and consider options for support at different stages of the humanitarian programme management cycle in three different types of context (basic, intermediate and advanced). The guidance comprises three key parts: (i) conceptual clarity on the terms; (ii) establishing the link between humanitarian cash based response and social protection; and (iii) practical guidance for humanitarian actors on linking humanitarian cash based response with social protection in the three different contexts. In addition, it provides examples of efforts made in this direction in each of the three types of context.

¹ CFS, 2011, [Price volatility and food security: A report by the HLPE on food security and nutrition](#)

² CFS, 2012, [High Level Panel of Experts Report on Social Protection and Food Security and Nutrition](#)

³ Ibid

⁴ CaLP, 2011, Ready or Not?: Emergency cash transfers at scale.

⁵ For example, [Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme \(HSNP\)](#)

⁶ For example, [Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Project \(PSNP\)](#)

⁷ Shock responsive social protection means the ability of the social protection system to scale up in a timely manner to support crisis-affected populations during a crisis, and scale back afterwards

⁸ OPM, 2015, [Literature Review](#), DFID Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research

This guidance is by no means a primer on social protection and as such does not go into the detail of all elements of social protection. It is narrowly focused on one element of social protection that is most relevant for humanitarian practitioners engaged in cash based programming⁹. It is also not a guidance document to help with the general design of humanitarian cash programmes, for which other documents developed by the cash community of practice should be referred to¹⁰.

1.3 AUDIENCE FOR THIS GUIDANCE

This guidance has been prepared solely for humanitarian actors who are involved in cash based programming and would like to better engage with social protection in their areas of operation. In particular, this guidance will be useful for country-level interagency cash coordinators who support humanitarian actors in providing technical and strategic support on cash transfer programming, and programme managers/coordinators of emergency cash transfer programmes within agencies who are deployed in any of the three contexts covered in this guidance. Sector specialists and policy/advocacy staff across all humanitarian sectors that have an interest in cash based programming will also find this guidance useful.

2 CONCEPTS, DEFINITIONS AND LINKS BETWEEN SOCIAL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Social Protection is a broad term and means different things to different people or agencies. A range of definitions have evolved over the last decade to define social protection, most of them influenced by the mandate of different organisations. For a deeper understanding of the subject it is important to start by unpacking the common terminologies used in social protection discussions.

2.1 SOCIAL PROTECTION

The most commonly used definition in the past 15 years is the one put forward by Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler in 2009¹¹. They define social protection as a *'set of all initiatives, both formal and informal, that provide'*:

- **social assistance** to extremely poor individuals and households;
- **social services** to groups who need special care or would otherwise be denied access to basic services;
- **social insurance** to protect people against the risks and consequences of livelihood shocks; and
- **social equity** to protect people against social risks such as discrimination or abuse.'

⁹ It may be noted that while this document is focused on cash based safety nets, most recommendations in this document may be relevant for in-kind social assistance as well.

¹⁰ See the [Resource Library](#) hosted by the Cash Learning Partnership to access a wide range of guidance, case studies etc. relating to humanitarian cash transfer programming

¹¹ OPM, 2015, Literature Review, DFID Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research (ongoing)

2.1.1 Social assistance and safety nets

Social assistance refers to a set of non-contributory¹² social protection benefits provided under state leadership (as opposed to humanitarian assistance). It includes 'social transfers' which themselves encompass '**social safety nets**'¹³. It comprises transfers (cash or in-kind) by the state, which are regular, predictable and long term.

While the definition of social assistance above encompasses social safety nets, there is a difference in the way the term safety nets is used by humanitarian actors, particularly in protracted crises. These are contexts where either the state is unwilling to support¹⁴ or is unable to support¹⁵ those who are poor and chronically vulnerable to shocks. In such contexts humanitarian actors provide humanitarian assistance year after year that can be regular and long term in nature. Such programmes are referred to as safety net programmes by humanitarian actors. The difference mainly being that such safety nets are not provided under the leadership of the state agencies and by virtue of the humanitarian funding system, they are designed year upon year, hence are not completely predictable. **Such safety nets must not be confused with 'social safety nets' that are a part of social assistance provided under the leadership of the state.**

As this guidance is written for humanitarian actors, the terms social assistance and safety nets will not be used interchangeably. Safety nets will be used to refer to regular and long term humanitarian (cash based) assistance¹⁶ in protracted contexts. The reasons are two-fold:

1. To maintain consistency in what is understood by humanitarian actors as safety nets; and
2. To highlight the significance of such assistance in contexts where the state is either unwilling or unable to lead the process.

2.1.2 Conceptual framework for Social Protection

Having clarified the definition and elements of social protection, it is useful to understand the functions of social protection. The most commonly used conceptual framework in social protection is the one developed by Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004). This framework illustrates the following functions of social protection:

- **Protection:** to provide relief from deprivation;
- **Prevention:** to avert deprivation;
- **Promotion:** to enhance incomes and capabilities; and
- **Transformation:** to address concerns of social equity and exclusion.

¹² Non-contributory means where the beneficiary does not have to pay anything to receive the benefit in return.

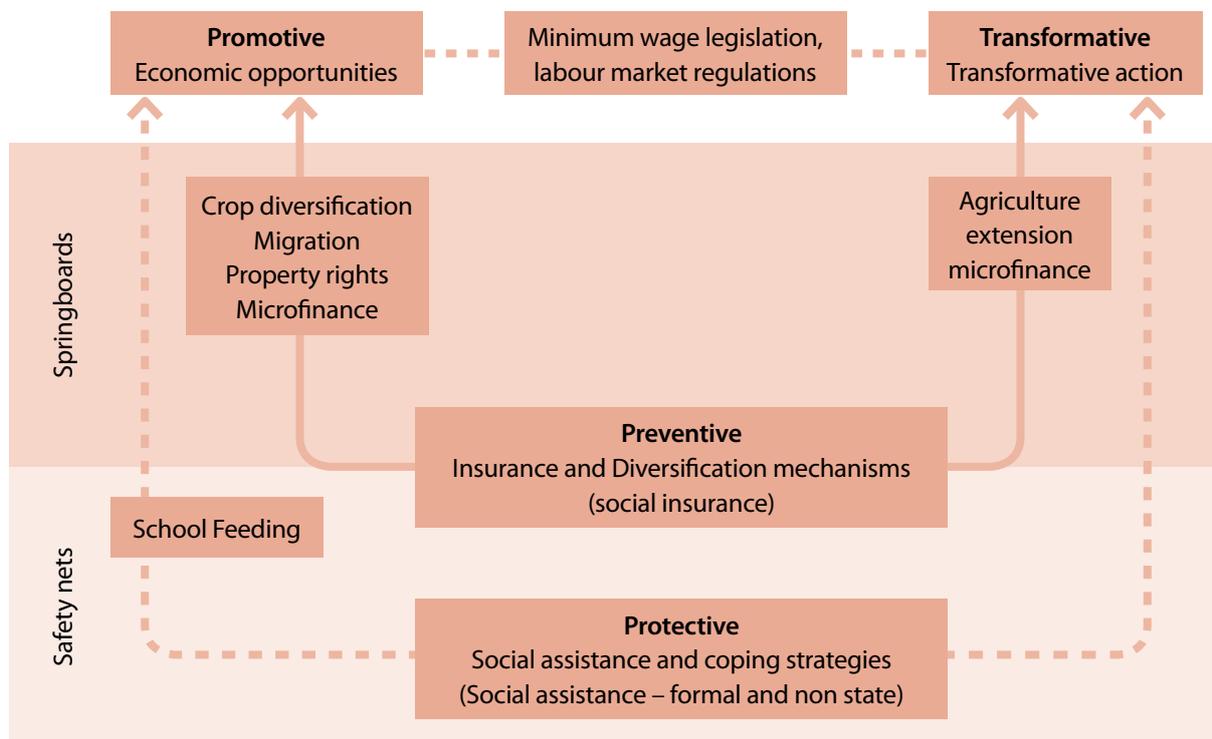
¹³ OPM, 2015, Literature Review, DFID Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research (ongoing)

¹⁴ Usually owing to political reasons

¹⁵ Usually owing to resource and capacity constraints

¹⁶ Although this paper focuses on cash based safety nets, most guidance laid out in this paper is relevant for "in-kind" safety nets too.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for Social Protection¹⁷



The framework highlights that all the functions of social protection are linked and contribute to each other. While safety nets or social assistance mainly play the protective function, if designed well they could also lead to prevention i.e. to avert destitution. For example, if the value of transfer for social assistance is based on the livelihoods protection threshold¹⁸, it would allow households to invest in different sources of income and in strengthening them. Diversification of income sources would in turn help with spreading risk across different income sources, thus helping prevent the household from becoming destitute as a result of shocks. Strengthening of income sources can help with livelihoods promotion, which helps in building resilience to future shocks. Thus a simple safety net/social assistance initiative could act as a springboard to move out of poverty by helping the households to manage risks. Special design elements of the programme that are based on affirmative action, such as providing opportunities to women and other socially excluded groups to participate in the programme, can contribute to social equity through social transformation.

Understanding the link between humanitarian assistance and social protection is important to design and implement humanitarian assistance that speaks to the social protection policy and programming in the target country.

¹⁷ Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004, Transformative social protection, IDS paper 232

¹⁸ The Livelihoods Protection Threshold represents the total income required to sustain local livelihoods. This means total expenditure to: a) ensure basic survival plus b) maintain access to basic services (e.g. routine medical and schooling expenses), plus c) sustain livelihoods in the medium to longer term (e.g. regular purchases of seeds, fertilizer, veterinary drugs, etc.), plus d) achieve a minimum locally acceptable standard of living (e.g. purchase of basic clothing, coffee/tea etc.) (Save the Children, 2008, The Practitioners’ guide to HEA),

2.2 HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

The Sphere Handbook, 2011 states that *‘The objectives of humanitarian action are 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. Humanitarian action has two inextricably linked dimensions: protecting people and providing assistance. Humanitarian action is rooted in humanitarian principles - humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence’*¹⁹.

This definition stresses that humanitarian action is not merely about reacting to an event (only to save lives), but that it also includes efforts to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of people-made crises and natural disasters in an impartial manner²⁰. Humanitarian assistance, or humanitarian response, is one part of humanitarian action.

2.3 LINKS – SOCIAL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

As mentioned earlier, social protection comprises four components. The instruments used and the purpose of all these components are similar to those of the instruments used in humanitarian assistance. The table below is a presentation of potential areas of convergence between social protection and humanitarian assistance:

Figure 2: Potential convergence between social protection and humanitarian assistance

Social Protection components	Humanitarian Assistance
Social Assistance (child benefit, conditional cash transfers, disability pensions, public works/employment guarantee works etc.)	Multi-purpose cash grants, unconditional and conditional cash grants, value and commodity vouchers, in-kind transfers, cash/voucher for work etc.
Social insurance (group health insurance etc.)	Risk financing mechanisms
Social services (health and education services etc.)	Prevention and treatment of malnutrition, pre-natal and anti-natal health services to women, primary health care, health user fee exemption in emergencies, prevention and treatment of diseases (including WASH interventions), education services, psychosocial support etc.
Social equity (affirmative actions to empower socially excluded groups in the country, labour market policies)	Processes related to the implementation of the above that empower the poor and marginalised communities/people, work on supporting refugee populations to access work opportunities in a safe environment etc.

While all components of social protection are important and hold serious possibilities of linking social protection better with humanitarian assistance, **social assistance provides the most direct link to cash based humanitarian assistance, and is therefore most relevant for the cash community of practice.**

There are two clear points of intersection between social assistance and humanitarian cash based assistance:

- **The function of humanitarian cash based assistance is similar to social assistance** i.e. to protect people from deprivation (save lives and suffering) by providing relief and maintaining human dignity during and in the aftermath of the crisis; and
- **The instruments/tools used in cash based social assistance and humanitarian cash based assistance are similar (as elaborated in figure 2).** This is where the potential to hook humanitarian assistance (including safety nets) with social assistance is strongest.

¹⁹ Sphere Handbook, 2011, Sphere Handbook. Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response.

²⁰ This is important given that other actors can also provide need based humanitarian assistance. While engaging with social protection system strengthening, humanitarian actors can play a role to highlight this element so that the design of social protection systems allows for an impartial scale up in times of crisis

2.4 RELEVANCE OF ENGAGING WITH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

For humanitarian actors, savings lives and reaching out to the maximum number of people in the shortest time frame is of primary importance. The question of linking humanitarian response with national social protection systems, in particular cash based social assistance, is therefore of significance as it offers potential opportunities for more timely delivery of humanitarian assistance.

In this regard, cash based social assistance is relevant for humanitarian actors for 'use' and 'contribution' reasons, as explained below:

- It can serve as an appropriate platform to support humanitarian cash based response. An existing system can potentially help with embarking on a response at speed and reach out to large number of people; and
- Engaging with social assistance systems to deliver humanitarian cash based responses can contribute to strengthening the state system. A stronger system will enhance preparedness of the state to deal with future crises and help with building resilience of communities and systems.

Despite the obvious links, this interface is not common practice in humanitarian action. There are a range of factors responsible for this and some of them are listed in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Some common challenges to linking social protection with humanitarian assistance

Political	Technical	Strategic
Lack of buy in from the government system to forge the link, perhaps due to competition for scarce resources and for fear of losing power;	Little or no compatibility with the design of the humanitarian programme (e.g. mismatch in targeting and intervention area, choice of cash transfer type, adequacy of transfer etc.);	Potential mismatch with Humanitarian principles, especially in contexts where the role of state is under question;
Low levels of enthusiasm/ motivation of the government staff, especially at the local level, to forge the link, particularly in implementation at ground level or in sharing data with humanitarian actors;	Need for coordination with multiple stakeholders in the humanitarian sphere and also within government;	Perceptions among long term development practitioners on the role of humanitarian actors in social protection and perception among humanitarian actors on their role in social protection;
Risk of political capture/influence on humanitarian response which threatens humanitarian principles;	Challenges in scaling up owing to differences in systems, capacities and styles of functioning.	Lack of technical and financial capacity within the government system to embark on scale up;
Challenges faced by decision makers within humanitarian organisations in balancing the requirements of humanitarian programming (speed, adequacy etc.) and development programmes.	Heavy procedures that were created without consideration for crisis response, e.g. crisis modifier not built into procurement, and payment systems that result in contracts with payment agencies that cannot be modified to allow vertical and horizontal expansion	Funding – (i) humanitarian funding structure affects the duration and predictable delivery of programmes; (ii) political influences on the flow of funds to countries and for the types of programmes etc.

2.5 OPTIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT

Despite the challenges, examples of engagement with social assistance to deliver humanitarian assistance have emerged in the past few years, and these provide useful insights on the value and role of humanitarian actors in engaging with national social protection systems. The table below presents the options for humanitarian engagement with social protection.

Figure 4: Five options for linking humanitarian cash based response with social assistance

Name of Option	Description	Example (refer to Annex 1 for detailed case studies)
Vertical expansion	Increasing the benefit value or duration of an existing programme. May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustment of transfer amounts • Introduction of extraordinary payments or transfers 	Scale up of social assistance by Unicef for earthquake response in Nepal
Horizontal expansion	Adding new beneficiaries to an existing programme. May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of the geographical coverage of an existing programme • Extraordinary enrolment campaign • Modifications of entitlement rules • Relaxation of requirements / conditionality to facilitate participation 	Hunger Safety Nets Programme in Northern Kenya
Piggybacking	Using a social protection intervention’s administrative framework, but running the shock-response programme separately. May include the introduction of a new policy	Scale up of the Pantawid (4Ps) programme by WFP for the Haiyan response in the Philippines.
Shadow alignment	Developing a parallel humanitarian system that aligns as best as possible with a current or possible future social protection programme	The Kenya urban food subsidy programme of Oxfam and Concern Worldwide
Refocusing	In case of a budget cut, adjusting the social protection system to refocus assistance on groups most vulnerable to the shock	

Source: OPM, 2015, Shock responsive social protection systems, Literature review (modified by author)

2.6 CONTEXTS WITH POTENTIAL FOR LINKING SOCIAL ASSISTANCE WITH HUMANITARIAN CASH BASED RESPONSE

Humanitarian actors are likely to engage with cash based social assistance in three types of context. These are:

- **Basic:** Contexts where cash based social assistance does not exist, or is extremely weak, and humanitarian agencies implement cash based safety nets;
- **Intermediate:** Where at scale cash based social assistance systems exist, but they are not designed and tested for shock responsiveness; and
- **Advanced:** Contexts where cash based social assistance is responsive to shocks.

Figure 5: Typology of contexts for linking humanitarian programming and social protection

	Basic →	Intermediate →	Advanced →
Some examples (refer Annex 2 for more information on these programmes)	Urban food subsidy programme, in Kenya; Kory Lavi programme in Haiti; Shared framework for seasonal safety nets in Mali;	Unicef’s earthquake response in Nepal; WFP and Unicef’s humanitarian response in the Philippines; Oxfam’s food crisis response through SWF in Yemen;	PSNP in Ethiopia; HSNP in Kenya; Scaling up of voucher based social assistance during the war in Gaza
Key features related to their status	Cash based safety nets designed to address seasonal or chronic hunger and malnutrition in the country; They are mostly designed and led by humanitarian actors in the initial stages but with an intent of engaging the state & development donors and eventually handing over the leadership when appropriate; These programmes are at different stages of being integrated into the national social protection framework.	State led cash based social assistance that are designed to address chronic poverty in the country; They have been used at least once to deliver humanitarian aid and have the potential to be more responsive to shocks; They are at different stages of evolution with regard to being responsive to humanitarian needs.	State led cash based programmes that are designed to address chronic poverty and respond to covariate shocks; They are large scale and have demonstrated their capacity to expand vertically and horizontally. Humanitarian assistance may be needed to fill gaps; Their design has evolved over a period of time.

3 WORKING WITH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEMS: PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

This section presents practical steps and considerations for humanitarian actors to design and implement cash based humanitarian assistance that engages (uses and contributes to) effectively with the national social assistance system. It comprises 2 main parts namely; (i) generic guidance and (ii) guidance specific to each of the three contexts mentioned in section 2.6 (i.e. basic, intermediate and advanced).

3.1 GENERIC GUIDANCE

For humanitarian actors interested in forging links between cash based humanitarian assistance and social assistance, the starting point entails being clear on the purpose.

In all contexts the main **purpose** should be to, *‘save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain dignity during and in the aftermath of the crisis’*.

The strategy to achieve this purpose should be:

1. **In contexts where social assistance systems exist:** to work with and strengthen the system in times of crisis to deliver humanitarian assistance and in doing so, to identify inherent strengths and practical challenges for which workable solutions can be sought for better preparedness to future shocks. In other words, to make them more responsive to shocks;
2. **In contexts where social assistance systems do not exist:** to influence the creation of shock responsive social assistance systems through direct design and implementation of safety nets, identifying sources of funding or through policy engagement at the appropriate level and knowledge transfer.

In line with the humanitarian programme cycle, the following steps will help with achieving the above stated purpose and the relevant strategy. While these are presented in a linear fashion, some contexts may warrant undertaking some steps simultaneously.

Figure 6: Steps in programme design and management

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Preparedness	Needs Assessment + Market Assessment + SP System Assessment for shock responsiveness	Determine system status	Select humanitarian programme option and decide the role for humanitarian actors	Design and Implementation of the programme (Response and Recovery)	Use learning for future preparedness
		Advanced	Vertical or horizontal scale up of existing SP system		
			Shadow alignment of humanitarian programme where necessary		
			Fill gaps through piggy backing or standalone humanitarian programme where necessary		
		Intermediate	Vertical scale up if possible		
			Piggy backing on the existing SP system if possible		
			Shadow alignment of humanitarian programme with SP system		
			Design and implement standalone humanitarian programme where necessary		
		Basic	Shadow alignment of humanitarian programme with SP system		
			Design and implement standalone humanitarian programme where necessary		
↔ Coordination, Communication (with beneficiaries and others), Documentation, Influencing ↔					

Preparedness is an important step that lays the foundations for linking humanitarian cash assistance with social assistance. Good preparedness can help with faster decision making and embarking on a scale-up process. However, as the issue of linking humanitarian assistance with social protection is a new subject for most humanitarian actors, such preparedness either does not exist or is extremely weak. For this reason, the figure above presents preparedness as a 'zero step' on the left, and as Step 5 in a box on the right. The idea being that the learning from efforts (however small they may be) to link humanitarian assistance with social assistance must be utilised for preparing the system to become responsive to shocks.

Step 1

As in any humanitarian programme, assessment is the first step to designing a response. While needs assessment and markets assessment help with determining the technical response, i.e. whether to embark on cash based response and if so, what should the amount be and what would be the most appropriate type of cash programme, Social Protection (SP) systems assessments will help with operational decisions. An **assessment of the social protection systems' responsiveness to shocks must be conducted along with an assessment of needs and the market systems**. Use the following checklist²¹ for this:

- Does an at **scale** social assistance system exist in the country? If not, is it planned? / is there political will/appetite?
- Is the existing social assistance system designed for **cash transfers**? If so, is it designed for unconditional cash grants?
- Can the system rapidly **expand** coverage during crisis and scale back?
- Is the system **flexible** enough to deliver more resources and through different types of cash programmes (i.e. cash grants, vouchers, cash for work etc.)?
- Can the system do all of the above in a **timely** manner?
- Is the value of the transfer **adequate** to meet the range of needs of crisis affected people?
- Is the system in sync with **humanitarian principles**?
- What are the potential **risks** for humanitarian actors and can they be **mitigated**?

In addition to the above as a part of assessment, humanitarian actors must gather information on Who is doing What, Where and How.

Step2

If the needs assessment and market assessment suggest the appropriateness of a cash based humanitarian response, then humanitarian actors must consider step 2. Based on the findings of the systems' assessment, **the shock responsiveness status of the social protection system must be determined**. While various scenarios may emerge, it is advisable to keep it simple and categorise it as:

- **Advanced:** Where existing social assistance systems are designed as such or have evolved over a period of time to be responsive to predictable shocks;
- **Intermediate:** Where at scale cash based social assistance systems exist but they are not designed and tested for shock responsiveness; and
- **Basic:** Where social assistance systems either do not exist or are extremely weak.

Basic Conditions

1. Existing cash based social assistance system;
2. Political acceptance of linking humanitarian programming with social assistance system;
3. Beneficiary preference for cash support;
4. Strong intent to strengthen the existing state system

²¹ This list of questions is collated from the OPM, 2015, Shock Responsive Social Protection Systems research, Literature review.

Step 3

This step includes two crucial parts:

- **Selection of the humanitarian scale up option:** Depending on what is possible in the identified scenario, a decision must be taken on the programme option. This also entails deciding whether it is appropriate to link humanitarian assistance with social assistance. At this step answers to the following questions must be sought:
 - Does the availability of funding and its constraints facilitate any particular scale up option;
 - Do basic conditions for forging links with social protection exist in the particular context?; and
 - If so, what scale up option (see figure 4) will be the most appropriate for the context?

Refer to section 3.2 for guidance on decision making for each context.

- **Decision on the role for humanitarian actors:** It is crucial to be extremely clear on the role of humanitarian actors from the outset. It is worth remembering that social protection is the responsibility of the national governments, therefore the role of humanitarian actors must be to support national governments. It may be easier for humanitarian actors to engage with existing social assistance programmes if they are donor funded (as compared to fully funded by the national government through their own taxes and revenues). Not all situations will warrant a role for humanitarian actors, and in many contexts it may be counterproductive as well, therefore the role must be chosen carefully. Answering the following checklist will guide in deciding the role:
 - What is the objective of your programme and how does that match with the objectives/purpose of the social assistance programme?
 - Why do you want to forge this link? i.e. how will it help in the short term (immediate response) and long term (preparedness and resilience building)?
 - How do you want to link the two, and does your organisation have the relevant capacity?
 - What can you realistically do in the current context?

The table below presents possible roles and activities for humanitarian actors in different scale up options. Humanitarian agencies may choose one or a combination of activities from those presented below, based on capacity, need and feasibility.

Figure 7: Potential role for humanitarian actors in each scale up option

Scale up option	Potential role and activities for humanitarian actors
Vertical scale up	<p>Humanitarian actors would play a support role to the government in scaling up an existing programme. Typically, this process will be led by the government, therefore the role of humanitarian actors will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer of resources to the government system or work with the state to raise resources; • Influencing the design of existing social assistance by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining the transfer value based on the range of needs²²; • Determining the duration of the programme/expansion; • Changes in the payment schedule where needed; • Type of cash transfer programme i.e. grants (multipurpose or sector specific, vouchers, cash for work/public works, or a combination); • Targeting for special needs (e.g. pregnant women) and purpose (e.g. recovery activities with selected beneficiaries); • Support the setting up of sound M&E systems, plan for documentation and proactive sharing of lessons from humanitarian cash based programmes; • Monitor the scale up programme and apprise relevant authorities on gaps, and where appropriate fill gaps in coverage; • Set up beneficiary communication and accountability mechanisms if they do not exist; • Facilitate coordination and smooth communication between humanitarian and development stakeholders, and mutual learning; • Preparedness activities for future scaling up.
Horizontal scale up	<p>In this option too humanitarian actors would play a support role to the government in scaling up an existing programme. Typically, this process will be led by the government, therefore the role of humanitarian actors will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the state with targeting in new areas, verification and registration of new beneficiaries; • Supporting with implementation of the programme in new areas if appropriate; • Influencing design of existing social assistance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining the transfer value based on the range of needs²³; • Determining the duration of the programme/expansion; • Changes in the payment schedule where needed; • Type of cash transfer programme i.e. grants (multipurpose or sector specific, vouchers, cash for work/public works, or a combination); • Targeting for special needs (e.g. pregnant women) and purpose (e.g. recovery activities with selected beneficiaries); • Proactive sharing of lessons from humanitarian cash based programmes; • Monitor the scale up programme and apprise relevant authorities on gaps, and where appropriate fill gaps in coverage; • Set up beneficiary communication and accountability mechanisms if they do not exist; • Facilitate coordination between humanitarian and development stakeholders; • Preparedness activities for future scaling up.

²² Refer to the [Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants](#) for guidance on calculating the amount for a multi sector cash response

²³ Ibid

Scale up option	Potential role and activities for humanitarian actors
<p>Piggy backing</p>	<p>In this option, humanitarian actors would use a part of the existing system to deliver humanitarian response. This will happen in 2 ways: (i) using the existing beneficiary list; and/or (ii) using the cash delivery mechanism. In both cases, humanitarian actors would lead the process of designing and implementing the humanitarian response and contributing to the existing and/or building a national social registry.</p> <p>In case of using a Social Assistance beneficiary list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the government to access the list of beneficiaries; • Carry out targeting to fill gaps in the existing targeting list. Proactively involve relevant government staff in this process; • Where appropriate, sharing information on the additional beneficiaries with relevant government department for making the existing system responsive to shocks by adding beneficiaries who are vulnerable to crisis; • Involve local government staff in the implementation of the programme for influencing on good practice, capacity building and enhancing government and beneficiary interface; • Documentation and sharing of experience and good practice with humanitarian and development stakeholders. <p>In addition, follow all steps necessary for cash based programming.</p> <p>In case of using the same cash delivery mechanism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive engagement with the relevant government department to negotiate on service charges for delivering cash; • Work with the relevant cash delivery mechanism to design and implement a plan that ensures cash is delivered on time, at designated locations, in the required denominations, and to the right people; • Where possible work with the cash delivery system to make it more efficient i.e. faster and smoother delivery of cash, closer to beneficiary locations; • Involve local government staff in the implementation of the programme for influencing on good practice, capacity building and enhancing government and beneficiary interface; • Documentation and sharing of experience and good practice with humanitarian and development actors. <p>In addition, follow all steps necessary for cash based programming.</p>
<p>Shadow alignment</p>	<p>In this scale up option humanitarian actors would play a lead role in directly designing and implementing a humanitarian cash based programme that aligns with the existing, or future, social assistance programme. Shadow alignment will happen in 2 different contexts: (i) Where the social assistance system is weak or evolving with insufficient coverage e.g. in conflict-affected areas; and (ii) Where a social protection system does not exist. In both contexts the role of humanitarian actors will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with like-minded organisations to design and pilot safety nets that can be scaled up/adopted by the government in future; • Proactive engagement with relevant government ministries and departments at all stages of the programme cycle to influence a future shock responsive social protection system in the country; sharing of lessons-learnt and knowledge transfer/ capacity building of state actors.

Scale up option	Potential role and activities for humanitarian actors
Refocusing	The leadership for this will be with the government and the role of humanitarian actors would be to support the efforts of the government by providing support where it is requested by the government.
Standalone humanitarian programme	It is not mandatory for humanitarian actors to link humanitarian assistance with existing or planned social protection systems where it is not appropriate (e.g. where humanitarian principles are likely to be compromised), feasible and/or needed. Embarking on standalone humanitarian response should be adopted in such contexts, and humanitarian actors would lead this process.

Step 4

While step 3 sets the stage for the design of the humanitarian cash based response, Step 4 entails **designing the programme in detail**. This includes: agreement on targeting (or filling the gap in beneficiary targeting), registration of new beneficiaries or accessing the social registry, determining the transfer value, the type of cash transfer programme, payment schedules, agreement on ways of working, setting accountability measures, monitoring processes and outcomes, recovery plans and exit strategy etc. More details on this step can be found in section 3.2.

Step 5

As this is a relatively new and uncharted area of work, documentation of experience and sharing learning within the wider humanitarian community is important. It is equally important that the **learning generated from the process is utilised effectively in strengthening preparedness for future shocks**. In fact, where the scope for strengthening preparedness exists, humanitarian actors should conduct steps 1, 2 and 3 as a part of preparedness exercise in the country. Stakeholder mapping and scoping of existing social assistance programmes are important prerequisites for working with social assistance in times of crisis. As these processes take time, they must be conducted as a part of preparedness during normal (non-crisis) times.

Cross-Cutting Activities

Some important activities that cut across all steps are:

- **Coordination** is among the most essential requirements for linking humanitarian cash based programming with social assistance owing to the multiplicity of actors and approaches. The following levels of coordination are important for a successful engagement in all three contexts:
 - **Technical Coordination:** includes coordination with the technical staff in relevant ministries/departments, other development stakeholders, and humanitarian agencies, on the design of the programme e.g. targeting, setting the value of transfer, choosing the type of cash transfer, payment frequency, monitoring changes in peoples’ lives and in market systems, MIS, sharing learning, etc.
 - **Strategic Coordination:** includes activities such as influencing and advocacy for changes in the current/ future system to accommodate shock responsive elements, introduction of new service providers, investment in new technologies, creating awareness among development stakeholders on humanitarian cash based programming and the role of humanitarian actors in SP and vice-versa , exploring complementarities with other programmes, sharing experience and good practice examples, capacity building efforts for humanitarians on SP, and for development stakeholders on humanitarian cash programming, and improving mutual understanding of objectives, constraints, guiding principles etc.
 - **Operational Coordination:** includes: coordination on roles and responsibilities, geographic division of operations, agreement on frequency of payments and the logistical set up for payments, beneficiary communication, setting up M&E, accountability and complaint mechanisms, etc.;

- **Communication** with beneficiaries, not only to assess needs but also to communicate the design of the programme, cash distribution plans, and introduce new systems and technologies etc. In addition, communication within the sector to constantly learn from the experience of others;
- **Influencing** is crucial to efforts to make existing systems responsive to shocks or to facilitate the creation of shock responsive social assistance systems where social assistance systems do not exist. For this reason, it is crucial that a clear strategy is devised, and appropriate capacities are brought on board by humanitarian programme managers.

3.2 SPECIFIC GUIDANCE FOR DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

While steps 1 and 2 are common to all contexts (i.e. advanced, intermediate and basic), there are nuances in each context that determine the activities in Steps 3, 4 & 5. This section focuses on each context separately.

3.2.1 Advanced (Contexts where social assistance systems are responsive to shocks)

The case for linking humanitarian programming with social assistance is strongest in contexts of recurrent crises. In some such contexts repeated humanitarian crises have led national governments to coordinate efforts and invest in the development of social assistance systems that are responsive to shocks. This is the ideal context, and ironically a rare one also.

3.2.1.1 Enabling features of this context: Existence of the following pre-conditions for linking humanitarian cash based response and social assistance in this context facilitates a speedy response

- Beneficiary population is accustomed to receiving cash transfers;
- Beneficiaries for a potential humanitarian scale up programme are pre-identified, or at least some criteria are agreed, to enable speedy targeting at the time of crisis, including a highly functional database and database management system;
- The beneficiary registration system is able to include new beneficiaries without significant delay;
- The cash delivery mechanism is set up and is able to expand to include more people, more money, and in some cases more frequent transfers;
- Clarity of roles of different stakeholders within the government system exists for normal and peace times;
- Structure for coordination between different line ministries/departments and local governance structures is established (or at least planned) for social assistance and humanitarian programmes;
- A Social Protection policy and/or strategy is in place that includes humanitarian scale-up, and it is resourced either through government resources or through donor commitments;
- Early warning system(s) are linked with the social protection system to alert on impending crisis.

Value based vouchers are a part of social assistance provided to chronically food insecure households in Gaza to facilitate their access to a range of food items from pre-identified local shops. During the war in 2014, this electronic vouchers based social assistance was expanded efficiently by WFP to deliver water, hygiene material and blankets for Unicef and Helpage. This expansion was not only to support a multi sector response, but it also included adding new beneficiaries and new traders to the system. Prior to the war, WFP had invested in preparedness activities that supported the expansion at the time of the crisis (see Annex 1 for more detail)

3.2.1.2 Learning from humanitarian experience in such contexts

The Productive Safety Nets Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia, the Hunger Safety Nets Programme (HSNP) in Kenya, and the voucher based social assistance in Gaza (see Annex 1) are a few examples of cash based social assistance that have demonstrated their responsiveness to shocks. Important learning from these programmes are:

1. **It is important to plan for the long term and invest accordingly:** All the social assistance programmes mentioned above have evolved out of a context of recurrent humanitarian crises that necessitated humanitarian assistance year after year. The introduction of social assistance has meant that the support has transitioned from being unpredictable to being more predictable, allowing households to better plan their lives. Working with a longer term vision will help humanitarian actors in planning activities and forging strategic partnerships that enhance efficiencies of the existing system, such as introduction of new technologies for registration and cash delivery, development of a social registry, and other systems for M&E etc.
2. **There is immense scope to link multipurpose grants with social assistance designed for food security:** Most shock responsive social assistance has been designed in response to chronic food insecurity and uses food basket calculations to arrive at the value of transfer. This serves as a good foundation on which a multisector cash based response can be initiated. Refer to Part 1.2 of the *Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants*²⁴ for more information.
3. **Working with the state is an essential prerequisite for shock responsive social protection:** Country governments are responsible for designing and implementing shock responsive social protection. It is therefore important for humanitarian agencies to work with the relevant national-level ministries/ departments, as well as local governments, engaged in social protection during normal times to enhance system-level preparedness for future shocks. Pre-existing relationships with government not only provide an important insight into the efficiency of the existing system, but also instils confidence in both parties for joint operations in times of crisis.
4. **A multiplicity of actors requires strong coordination between all stakeholders:** Large scale social assistance cannot be implemented without ensuring coordination between a range of stakeholders within the government system (i.e. ministries, departments, different levels of governments etc.) and outside (donors, research/academic institutions, local civil society, NGOs etc.). In the case of shock responsive social protection, coordination must be sought with the humanitarian structure, which not only includes the government structure responsible for humanitarian response, but also the UN humanitarian coordination structure that comprises different clusters and cash working groups (where they have been established).

3.2.1.3 What to do in different stages of the humanitarian programme cycle

Step 1– Assessment

Use the following checklist to decide the humanitarian agency's role and the design of the humanitarian response:

- Are the areas affected by the crisis covered by a social assistance programme?
- If so, is there a significant overlap with beneficiaries of a potential humanitarian programme/ Does the social assistance targeting criteria cover all those who are affected by the crisis?
- If not, what are the plans of the government to cover those affected but excluded?
- Are there any gaps in coverage that may need to be filled through a standalone humanitarian programme?
- What is the cash delivery system used by the social assistance programme? What is the flexibility for scale-up, and what alternatives exist to expand in the same and new areas if needed?
- What systems and policies are in place to streamline/align humanitarian response with social assistance in areas not covered by social assistance?

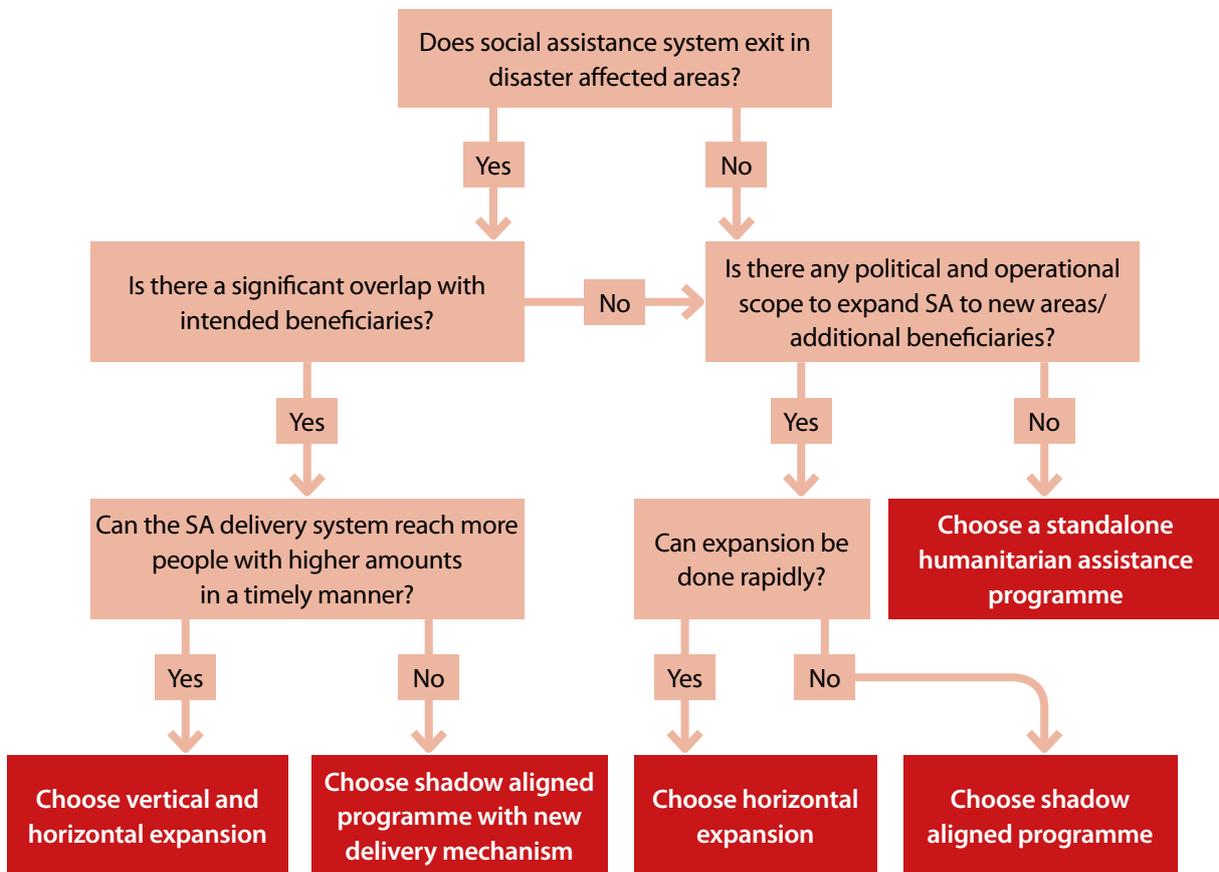
²⁴ [Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants](#) (2015)

- Who are the key stakeholders in government with whom coordination will be essential at different stages of the humanitarian programme cycle?
- Is there a political space for humanitarian agencies to engage in designing and implementing a scale-up programme, particularly a multipurpose grant?
- What are the potential risks for humanitarian agencies to work with the social assistance system?
- Are the risk mitigation measures adequate? Do they give confidence to humanitarian actors to forge links?

This checklist complements the cash transfer programming specific checklist that humanitarian agencies use for designing a cash based response.

Step 2 & 3: Deciding the humanitarian programme option and humanitarian agency role

Figure 8: Decision tree to decide humanitarian programme options for this context



In general, the role of humanitarian actors in contexts where social assistance programmes are responsive to shocks is: (i) to support the government by filling gaps in coverage; and/or (ii) monitor progress and highlight concerns in implementation of the scale-up of social assistance.

Step 4: Design and Implementation

Targeting and registration: As this is an advanced context, there is a strong possibility of significant overlap between the beneficiaries of social assistance and those in need of humanitarian assistance. However, there may be gaps in coverage in the areas that are not covered by social assistance. In this context, humanitarian actors should support the state in scaling up through:

- Working with the relevant government department to define targeting criteria for inclusion in the scale up programme, especially if the crisis is not predictable or the targeting of social assistance does not factor in vulnerability to all types of covariate shocks;
- Helping the government with targeting and registering beneficiaries that are not already included in the social assistance system. This includes areas currently covered by social assistance and new locations;
- In case of a standalone humanitarian programme, conducting vulnerability based targeting for embarking on a humanitarian response. Where possible, involve government staff in this process and share the list with the relevant ministry/department for inclusion in the national database/social registry. Use this opportunity to introduce innovation such as the use of new technology for registration where feasible and appropriate.

Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme is designed in line with public works, which means that the social assistance payment is not higher than local wage rates. To use this system for a multi sector response, supplementing it with another type of cash programmes would be necessary.

Choosing the type of cash transfer programme: It is likely that social assistance programme would include a pre-tested cash transfer method, hence the discussion on choosing the type of cash transfer method may not arise. However, with a move towards multipurpose cash grants, humanitarian actors have a role to play at this stage of the design of a scale-up. Moreover, shifting from response to recovery may require a combination of cash transfer methods which necessitates the involvement of humanitarian actors.

- Check if the existing type of cash transfer will support a multipurpose grant i.e. is it an unconditional grant which can be scaled up to include support for a range of needs? If it will not, then, work with the relevant government team to design a programme that utilises more than one type of cash transfer;
- If the existing system can support a multipurpose grant, then work with relevant government team to ensure that the system is able to expand effectively;
- In case a standalone humanitarian response is needed, choose the type of cash transfer that best aligns with the existing social assistance;
- For recovery purposes the cash assistance may need complementary services. This must be agreed at this stage with relevant ministries;
- Be mindful of what type of cash transfers will work best with the local market conditions;
- Check if the existing type of cash transfer programme is suitable for the crisis context, or whether it needs to be modified temporarily.

During the Yolanda response, the government of the Philippines temporarily relaxed the conditions attached to the conditional cash transfer programme to support those affected by the typhoon.

Setting the value of the cash transfer: The amount provided as social assistance will require adjustment in times of crisis. To this end:

- Work with relevant government teams and multisector actors to conduct a gap analysis using data collected in needs and markets assessment to determine the transfer value required to meet immediate needs and for recovery purposes. In case of a single sector response, this exercise may be done with government stakeholders and sector specific actors only;
- In consultation with the government team, decide on the duration of the scale-up for immediate needs, the timing of phasing in of the recovery support, and exit from it.

Delivering cash: Although a system will exist to deliver cash, it may need adjustment in line with the humanitarian programme:

- Work with the relevant financial service provider and the government representatives to assess the capacity of the existing financial service provider to: (i) service an increased case load; (ii) to make (more) frequent payments; (iii) to transfer a larger volume of cash; and (iv) to deliver cash in all geographical locations affected by the crisis;
- Where gaps exist, work with relevant stakeholders to work on ways to fill the gaps;
- In the case of a standalone humanitarian response, use this opportunity to pilot innovation in cash delivery mechanisms (i.e. introduce new technology, introduce private sector players to increase competition etc.) if the social assistance delivery system needs strengthening.

Monitoring and evaluation: In light of a humanitarian response the existing M&E system will need adjustment, or a new temporary parallel system to be established to monitor the humanitarian scale-up.

- Work with relevant government department or independently²⁵ to set up a baseline using the information gathered in Step 1 (assessment);
- Introduce sector specific or multisector outcome and process indicators;
- Agree on a simple and efficient methodology to monitor changes in the lives of people and in the local market systems;
- Work on a system to analyse the information in time to make any necessary adjustments to the programme;
- Work with a range of stakeholders to factor in an independent evaluation of the humanitarian scale-up.

Management of information: Advanced social assistance systems usually have well developed Management Information Systems (MIS).

- Contribute to the existing database by proactively sharing the information gathered from the scale-up or standalone programme. This includes demographic data on beneficiaries where appropriate, monitoring data, information on financial service providers etc.;
- Where it does not already exist, influence the setting up of early warning systems and link them with social assistance to enable timely scale-up in future

Exit strategy: As social assistance programmes are long term in nature, it is important that humanitarian scale-up happens for a defined period. Humanitarian actors can contribute in the following manner:

- Lending technical support in calculating the gap in needs and analysing the duration of this gap so that scale up of existing programmes for response and recovery can be planned accordingly;
- In standalone humanitarian support programmes, liaise with relevant departments/ministries for complementary support to enable the transition of disaster affected households from relief to recovery;
- Sharing the names of new beneficiaries from the existing and new locations with the government and supporting updating of the beneficiary database. Influencing efforts may be needed in some contexts to include new poor in the national social assistance programme.

Step 5: Preparedness

Even though this context is one where social protection systems are responsive to shocks, preparedness is a crucial element for strengthening the system for future. Humanitarian actors can contribute to further strengthening the system in the following ways:

- Stakeholder mapping to understand the role, connectedness and influence of different stakeholders (government and others) in the design and management of shock responsive social protection in the country;
- Analysis of the existing social assistance system to pre-identify gaps and define a role for humanitarian actors;

²⁵ This may be needed in contexts where neutrality of the process is important.

- Work with the relevant government authorities to determine targeting criteria for a multisector or varied sector response;
- Work with relevant government authorities to determine targeting criteria, conduct targeting exercises, and pre-registration of potential beneficiaries for a future horizontal expansion in new areas;
- Support government in the management of caseloads by revisiting the beneficiary list in areas of operation;
- Conduct mapping of financial service providers and feasibility of more efficient cash delivery mechanisms in existing (if needed) and new areas for future scale-up;
- Create a cross sector platform to facilitate links between early warning systems and the social protection system, and communication between actors;
- Capacity building of development stakeholders on humanitarian cash programming, and of humanitarian actors on social protection;
- Documentation of good practice and proactively sharing them within the country and through regional/global platforms to encourage development of shock responsive social protection in crisis-prone countries.

Coordination: For social protection systems to be responsive to shocks, coordination between different line ministries and all levels of governance is absolutely essential. In such (advanced) contexts therefore, it is likely that the coordination mechanism is well established and functioning. Therefore, the role for humanitarian actors will be to acknowledge the coordination mechanism and work as closely as possible with this system so as to not create parallel structures. This will entail the following:

- Proactive engagement at technical, strategic and operational levels with relevant ministries, departments and teams in the government and outside (i.e. donors, technical support providers, civil society). This is best done as a part of preparedness in normal times;
- Coordinating across clusters on technical aspects of cash programming, and to agree on an effective mechanism for engagement with the government system and development stakeholders in the country.

REMEMBER!

- Refrain from making untested assumptions on the shock responsiveness of the existing system. The system may be able to respond to a particular shock in one year, but may not be as efficient in another crisis context or in new areas;
- Do not completely rule out the need for and importance of standalone humanitarian assistance;
- Invest in understanding the stakeholders involved in social protection in the country, and their perceptions on the value added of humanitarian actors in social protection programming and implementation;
- Do not over-estimate the capacity and influence of humanitarian actors in social protection programming;
- Be clear on the risks and related mitigation measures.

3.2.2 Intermediate (Contexts where at scale social assistance exists, but it is not designed to respond to shocks)

In many middle income countries, low middle income, and low income countries, at scale cash based social assistance exists to address chronic poverty. In such contexts, it seems logical to use the system to deliver humanitarian cash assistance to reach those affected by the crisis.

3.2.2.1 Enabling features of this context

- Existence of the following pre-conditions for linking humanitarian cash based response and social assistance in this context can give confidence to embark on a speedy response:
- Existence of cash based social assistance that has a good coverage in crisis-affected areas;

- Beneficiaries of social assistance and non-beneficiaries are familiar with cash transfer programming;
- Potential overlap of beneficiaries that have been affected by the crisis;
- An existing and well-functioning cash delivery system that is able to scale-up;
- A pre-existing positive relationship with the government which allows for sharing of information/accessing the government database(s) for beneficiary information;
- Capacity and a clear intent of the government stakeholders to coordinate internally and with humanitarian actors at the time of crisis.

3.2.2.2 Learning from humanitarian experience in such contexts

While social assistance systems exist in many countries, they are not automatically considered by humanitarian agencies as a potential mechanism for delivering humanitarian assistance. Recent examples from Yemen, the Philippines and Nepal indicate a changing trend, with the following learning emerging from these experiences:

1. **Importance of a pre-existing relationship with the system:** It has been observed that it is easier to work with social assistance in contexts where the humanitarian agency and the state social protection structure have either been in dialogue as a part of preparedness, or have worked on joint projects in the past. Pre-existing working relationships help with confidence building and also in developing a better understanding of the functioning of the system, which is crucial for programme design and delivery.
2. **Having a clear vision to strengthen the state system:** With the increased use of cash and voucher based programming, it is important for humanitarian actors to look beyond ministries and departments that are traditionally associated with humanitarian response in the government system. Cash based social assistance is often under the Ministry of Social Development/Welfare, that do not have the requisite capacity and resources to respond to a crisis. A clear vision to invest in the state social assistance system to enable it to respond to future crises would help with building a system that becomes responsive to shocks over time. This requires a strong political will at the humanitarian agency level, including adequate and reliable funding mechanisms.
3. **Preparedness is crucial:** Working with national social assistance systems requires a lot of advance preparation. Most social assistance programmes are designed to address chronic poverty; therefore, preparedness efforts must include development of joint SOPs, pre-agreements with the line ministries and service providers, coordination among relevant stakeholders, and capacity building of government and humanitarian agency staff etc.
4. **Some appetite for risk taking is important:** This being a relatively new and evolving mechanism of delivering humanitarian assistance, there are very few tried and tested procedures. This requires a certain degree of confidence to take risks, and address unplanned and unforeseen operational and political challenges as they emerge during the course of implementation.

In Nepal, Unicef had a clear interest in strengthening the existing system of child grants. During the 2015 earthquake response, Unicef used the social assistance system to deliver cash assistance to approximately 434,000 people in 19 districts of the country. An existing working relationship with the Government of Nepal helped with providing cash-based humanitarian assistance at scale within 2 months.

3.2.2.3 What to do in different stages of the humanitarian programme cycle

Step 1: Assessment

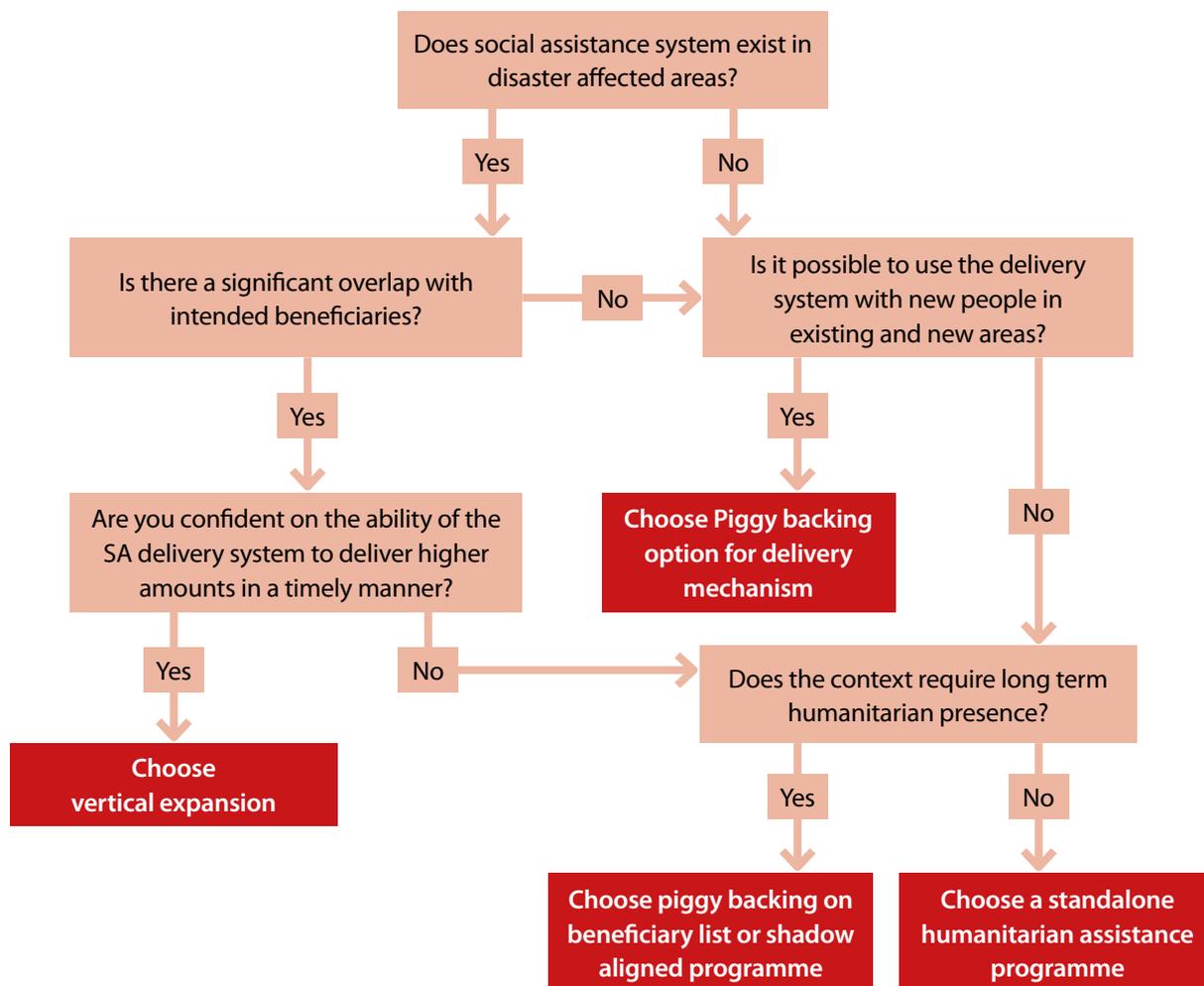
This step is crucial for scoping the capacity of social assistance to scale-up for humanitarian response. It is therefore, advisable that such an assessment is conducted by humanitarian staff who possess at least a basic understanding of social protection, and approach the idea of working with social assistance with an open mind. Follow the checklist below:

- **To understand the existing system:**
 - What are the objectives of the social assistance programmes? Is there scope for synergy with the humanitarian programme objective(s)?
 - What is the targeting method used, and does the existing beneficiary list adequately cover those affected by the crisis?
 - What is the transfer value used for social assistance?
 - What type of cash programme is used for social assistance?
 - Does the payment mechanism have the capacity to provide top-up and to add new beneficiaries? What is the frequency of payments? Can the system cope with an additional caseload, higher volumes of cash transfers, and increased transfer frequency?
 - Where is the payment delivered? How accessible is the cash point to the affected population, especially in a crisis context? How flexible is the financial service provider to deliver cash closer to the beneficiaries? Would this involve additional costs?
- **To map stakeholders and their position on cash programming:**
 - Which Ministry/Department is responsible for managing social assistance? Are they doing anything to respond to the crisis? Which other ministry is involved in crisis response? Which links already exist between the different ministries, or could be developed?
 - Do the preconditions for working with national social assistance exist e.g. pre-existing relationship, pre-contracts etc.?
 - Willingness of the relevant ministry/department to engage with humanitarian response?
 - What is the perception of the government system's neutrality and impartiality?

Step 2&3: Deciding humanitarian programme options and humanitarian agency role

Use the decision tree below to finalise the programme option and role for the humanitarian agency.

Figure 9: Decision tree for deciding humanitarian programme options for this context



Step 4: Design and implementation

Upon deciding the humanitarian scale up option the following points in design and implementation must be followed:

Targeting and registration: Depending on the objective of the social assistance programme and the scale of crisis, there could be varying degrees of overlap between the recipients of social assistance and humanitarian assistance.

- Check the extent of overlap between those who receive social assistance and those affected by the crisis in areas of humanitarian operation;
- Focus on minimising exclusion errors and work on a strategy/plan to reduce such errors;
- Identify and register those who are affected by the crisis and not included in the social assistance system for provision of direct assistance by humanitarian agencies;
- In the case of using the beneficiary list of a social assistance programme, seek permission from relevant authorities in the government to access and use government data;
- Where possible and appropriate, work with the relevant government department to develop crisis based targeting criteria and include new beneficiaries in the government registration system for future expansion of the system;

- Engage with the humanitarian donor to keep them informed on the use of social assistance targeting and humanitarian agency efforts to fill gaps in targeting;
- Where possible, proactively involve relevant government departments in beneficiary selection and registration processes, and introduce new technologies tested in humanitarian programming to make the system more efficient.

During the typhoon Haiyan response in the Philippines in 2014, WFP used the existing conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme to reach the social assistance beneficiaries who lived in the typhoon affected areas. Disaster affected people who were not a part of the CCT were identified and provided assistance directly by WFP. This strategy allowed WFP to reach out to a section of the crisis affected population (i.e. those on the social assistance list) without spending too much time in targeting. It also freed WFP and partner staff to focus on covering gaps through direct operations

Choosing the type of cash transfer programme:

- Check if the type of cash transfer used for social assistance matches with the requirements of different stages of the humanitarian programme. Be clear from the outset that the requirements in the recovery phase may be different as compared to the immediate relief phase;
- Request/influence the relevant government department/ministry for flexibility in the type of cash transfer for humanitarian assistance if the existing type does not match the objectives of the humanitarian programme;
- In the case of piggy backing on the beneficiary list or cash delivery mechanism, choose a type of cash transfer method that is most suited to the objectives of the humanitarian response;
- In the case of shadow aligned programme, proactively involve the relevant government ministry/department to choose the most suitable type of cash transfer method so that they understand the rationale for choosing a different method, and can use it in future crisis;
- In the case of cash for work, there is a chance of confusion as some governments/agencies may treat these as employment programmes, thus requiring humanitarian actors to contribute towards social security benefits for those on the programme. In such contexts, it is important to discuss and negotiate a workable solution with the relevant government department/ministry. Where this delays the process of humanitarian response, consider choosing an alternative type of cash transfer method to avoid negative impacts on the timeliness of assistance;
- Conditional and restricted cash programmes are more complicated to implement through a social assistance system that is not designed as such. Opt for simpler type of cash transfer programme when working with social assistance systems.

Setting the value of the cash transfer: Cash amounts transferred as social assistance are usually small, whereas humanitarian transfers may be relatively large, especially if it is a multipurpose grant. It is therefore important that relevant government ministry/department is involved and made aware of the rationale for arriving at the amount and process used for calculating the same.

- In case of vertical expansion, work with the relevant ministry/department to determine the gap in needs using data collected during assessment. Be mindful of the capacity of the system that may have been designed to deliver small amounts, and less frequently;
- In case of other scale-up options, where possible involve the relevant ministry/department to calculate the value of transfer;
- Be aware of the political, technical capacity and resource constraints faced by governments in delivering large scale cash transfers while calculating the value of transfer. Work closely with relevant stakeholders to find a workable solution.

In Yemen, Oxfam piggy-backed on the delivery mechanism of the Social Welfare Fund (i.e. post office) to deliver humanitarian cash assistance, and realised that the system was based on manual records which made the post office staff risk averse and slow. Oxfam worked with the local post office staff to develop simple computer based forms to track payments and maintain a database while providing on-the-job shadow support on using the formats.

Delivery mechanism: Social assistance programmes usually have a state agency/department mandated to provide financial services. While such financial services may be familiar to the beneficiaries, such systems may not necessarily be best suited for humanitarian response.

- Check if the existing cash delivery mechanism is agile enough to scale-up to include more people, and deliver cash frequently and on time;
- In the case of a weak delivery mechanism, work with government stakeholders and members of the cash working group to explore and introduce new technology in delivering cash. Be aware that government systems may not be flexible to change the existing cash delivery mechanism. In such cases, humanitarian actors should take a lead in piloting new and efficient cash delivery mechanisms. Such pilots should be documented and proactively shared at appropriate forums to influence future change;
- In a slow onset crisis, be open to work with basic/weak systems with the aim of strengthening them for future crises. This involves providing capacity building support to relevant government teams. Keep the humanitarian actors informed in such cases;
- Work with the financial service provider to agree on a cash payment schedule and location that suits the needs of the humanitarian programme. In case of challenges, work with the service provider to address them if possible;
- Ensure that the service agreements with the financial service provider (in case of piggy-backing) or the MoU (in case of vertical scale up) with the government department/ministry specify the payment schedule;
- If the challenges outweigh the benefits of using the system, be open to use a new cash delivery system.

In the Nepal earthquake response, it was not possible in all districts to align the timing of the humanitarian payments with the regular social assistance payments. Unicef realised that the Village Development Committee Secretaries had little incentive or resources to make additional trips to remote villages to disburse the cash for humanitarian assistance. To address this challenge in the second phase of the response, Unicef included transportation and administration costs for them.

Monitoring and evaluation: The monitoring system can be a particular challenge when using a social assistance system to deliver humanitarian assistance owing to a mismatch in objectives, donor requirements, and the neutrality of the government system in some contexts. Guidance for humanitarian actors for this context is similar to those already elaborated in section 3.2.1.3

Management of Information Services: National social assistance implementation is linked with national level database/registers which can be strengthened by humanitarian actors.

- Proactively share information collected for humanitarian programme using the range of (multisector) criteria. Where governments are responsive, this will help to strengthen the existing database e.g. updating of records to add new poor, or to remove some others, or introducing shock related criteria for adding beneficiaries for future crisis response etc.;
- Where appropriate introduce and demonstrate to relevant government department/ministries tried and tested technologies/tools for managing data for humanitarian programme e.g. SCOPE, LMMS etc.;
- Accessing data from the national social assistance system can prove challenging if no prior relationship exists with the ministry/department responsible for social protection. This can be a serious constraint if the humanitarian agency is planning to piggy back on the existing system by using the beneficiary database. This should be considered as an important preparedness activity.

Recovery: Recovery begins in the first phase of the humanitarian programme cycle and must be accordingly integrated into the design of the programme. This could entail changing the value of transfer and/or the type of transfer. As this would require changes at different stages of the programme, it is important to engage relevant ministry staff at the design stage to plan jointly and also to seek early buy-in to potential changes later on.

It is important to bear in mind that not all recovery activities can be included within the social assistance framework and would have to be designed and implemented separately.

Exit strategy: This is an important aspect of linking humanitarian cash assistance with social assistance systems.

- It is relatively simpler for vertical scale up and piggy backing options wherein the return to a normal situation would mean withdrawal of the humanitarian assistance. In the case of shadow alignment, an exit strategy must be integrated into the programme design in such a way that it helps with strengthening the existing or future system. Some ideas include:
 - Documentation of experience and sharing it in lessons learned workshops;
 - Continuation of engagement with the state system to prepare for future crises, for example contributing to the creation of a social registry;
 - Linking beneficiaries with longer-term programmes implemented by other ministries, such as those related to livelihoods promotion or natural resource regeneration in pastoral areas, relevant education, and health promotion programmes, etc.

Step 5: Preparedness

How effectively a humanitarian response is implemented depends on the preparedness efforts made during normal times. The following level of preparedness is needed for this type of context:

Internal

- Capacity building of humanitarian staff at all levels on social protection, and the recruitment of staff with relevant skills (not just technical skills, but influencing skills as well);
- Stakeholder mapping to understand the role, connectedness and influence of different stakeholders (government and others) in the design and management of social assistance in the country;
- Analysis of the existing social assistance system to pre-identify gaps and define a role for humanitarian actors;
- Develop an advocacy/influencing strategy with clear action plans.

External

- **Establish a relationship with appropriate government department/ministry and where possible:**
 - Conduct scenario planning with them;
 - Link national early warning systems with social assistance systems by sharing experience from contexts where social assistance systems are moving towards being shock responsive;
 - Work on pre-agreements, and if needed sign protocols for sharing data;
 - Create an inventory of service providers, their outreach, and negotiate service charges;
 - Agree on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), define staff roles, and communication and coordination channels, etc.
- Create a cross-sector platform to facilitate links between humanitarian and social protection stakeholders. Some options include:
 - Invite social protection stakeholders to cash working group meetings;
 - Organise joint learning events on the subject;
 - Document and share experience of forging links in similar contexts;
 - Capacity building of social protection stakeholders on humanitarian cash programming;

- Influence humanitarian donors to support preparedness activities for forging better links with existing systems.

Coordination: Coordination is very important, and in addition to guidance provided in Step 3 in section 3.1, humanitarian actors must do the following in this particular scale-up context:

- Use opportunities in the crisis context to create platforms/forums to facilitate interactions between humanitarian and development stakeholders at the technical, strategic and operational level;
- Use the existing cash working groups (or create one where it does not exist) in the country to mobilise interested actors for influencing relevant government ministries/departments.

Communication with beneficiaries: While communication with beneficiaries is important for any form of programme, specific measures must be taken when linking humanitarian cash assistance with social assistance:

- Work in partnership with local governments to clarify the purpose and the design (including the targeting criteria, transfer value, payment schedules, payment methods, payment process, duration of the programme etc.) of the humanitarian scale-up programme at the outset to beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries;
- In case of introducing new technology that beneficiaries are expected to use, share as much detail as possible, and train beneficiaries in its use to avoid confusion or delays at later stages;
- Set up a feedback and complaint system that is accessible to all and includes reporting back to beneficiaries on action taken on the feedback provided. It is likely that a lot of feedback would be on the social assistance programme, so it is important that the relevant ministry/department staff are actively involved in this process.

REMEMBER!

- Strengthening systems for shock responsiveness is an incremental and iterative process, and it therefore requires long term vision and commitment from humanitarian actors;
- Working with others is essential to making social assistance systems responsive to shocks;
- Start small by influencing a few but 'doable' changes in the existing system to develop confidence for bigger changes over the years;
- Be aware of the risks of linking humanitarian programme with social assistance.

3.2.3 Basic (Contexts where cash based social assistance does not exist or is extremely weak, and humanitarian agencies implement cash based safety nets)

In some contexts, cash based social assistance may not exist or may be extremely weak or thin on the ground. In such contexts it is simpler for humanitarian agencies to design and implement a one off cash based humanitarian response. However, when the problem leading to a crisis is chronic in nature and causes recurrent crises, one off or short term humanitarian measures are not the solution. These are contexts where humanitarian actors can play a strong and constructive role of laying the foundations of a shock responsive social protection system by piloting safety nets:

- That can be scaled up as regular social assistance by the government²⁶; and/or
- That can be absorbed within the social protection system as a temporary scale up option linked to crisis response²⁷.

3.2.3.1 Enabling features of this context

Some enabling features of this context are:

- Functioning market systems to support cash based programming or opportunities to strengthen the market systems through cash based interventions;
- Long term presence of humanitarian agencies engaged in cash based programming, leading to accumulation of experience and good practice in cash based programming;
- Existence of platforms/forums to share learning and coordinate at technical and strategic levels on cash based programming;
- Humanitarian donor interest in supporting cash based programming (sometimes for long term);
- Evolving interest among development stakeholders²⁸ and government to set up cash based social assistance programmes.

3.2.3.2 Learning from humanitarian experience in such contexts

Most advanced contexts have evolved out of a similar basic context. Experience of programmes that have used the opportunity of humanitarian programming to create the basis for cash based social assistance highlights the following key learning points:

5. **Engage and be inclusive:** If the vision is for state-owned and managed social assistance in future, then it is essential that the relevant state actors are involved in the planning of the programme from as early a stage as possible. Humanitarian actors have constraints in engaging in projects over the long term, therefore it is of utmost importance that non-humanitarian actors from NGOs and government representatives are provided enough space to engage with the programme. As engaging different stakeholders, especially state actors, takes time, this may mean initiating dialogue with them during normal times rather than doing it at the time of humanitarian response. It is equally important to create opportunities for sharing programme progress and making links with planned initiatives.
6. **Be open to being influenced:** When working with multiple stakeholders it is important to recognise that they may be guided by their specific political interests. If the intention is for the government to eventually take over the programme, or to set up a similar one, the design must include elements that the state actors are comfortable with and confident to take forward. In this regard, it is important for humanitarian actors to be less rigid with the technical aspects of the design and be open to accept suggestions.
7. **Be persistent/tenacious:** Unlike most humanitarian programmes that are implemented under tight time frames, systems development is process-oriented, which requires a certain amount of tenacity to move towards the intended goal. Humanitarian actors have to imbibe this skill/culture and require organisational and donor backing to do this successfully.

²⁶ Predictable long term transfers.

²⁷ Temporary/short term social assistance only for the period of the crisis.

²⁸ Includes donors, NGOs working on longer term development issues, research/academic institutions, local civil society etc.



Photo: Mark Chilvers Oxfam

8. **Demonstrate and document:** Social Protection is not considered the domain of humanitarian actors by those who work on long term development. However, contexts of chronic/ protracted crises offer opportunities to humanitarian actors to engage with the issue through the development of seasonal safety nets or long term cash based humanitarian assistance. Designing and implementing a multi-year safety net programme with short-term and long-term objectives helps. However humanitarian agencies often stop at that. It is important to document the programme and the learning emerging from it for wider sharing and learning, which requires prior investment in monitoring and evaluation.
9. **Staff capacity:** Humanitarian actors are good in cash based programming in crisis contexts; however, they don't always have a good understanding of social protection and advocacy/ influencing processes. It is important for the staff involved in such processes to be trained in the basics of social protection and possess skillsets relevant for advocacy and influencing. In some contexts, it may be useful to recruit staff with these specific skills.

Following the spike in food prices in 2008–09, Oxfam and Concern Worldwide embarked on the urban food subsidy programme in Kenya. Food basket calculations for the programme recommended a transfer value that was higher than the cash transferred through social assistance in the country. On the suggestion of the Ministry of Gender, both agencies agreed to opt for a smaller transfer amount in their pilot programme. This strategic decision helped both agencies in winning the confidence of the government. Later, the government launched social assistance for the urban poor that is based on the design of the pilot implemented by Oxfam and Concern Worldwide.

3.2.3.3 What to do in different stages of humanitarian programme cycle

Step 1: Assessment

As social assistance is either extremely weak or does not exist in this context, this step entails conducting the typical assessment that humanitarian actors would undertake for a humanitarian cash based programme. This information must be complemented by seeking information to understand the structural causes of the crisis. Assessment tools must be adjusted to include the following information:

- Areas of recurrent crises and groups most vulnerable to and affected by recurrent crisis, and the causes of their vulnerability;
- **Markets:** the capacity of markets to respond to the range of needs of people living in crisis prone areas, trends in prices of essential commodities (food, water, medicines, transport, fuel etc.) over the years and across seasons (i.e. seasonality), availability of essential commodities in different seasons, factors that enable and disable markets in the area etc.;
- **Stakeholders:** who they are (government and non-government), what do they do, their interest and approach to social protection, their influence over government policy makers, their understanding of humanitarian programming and the role of humanitarian actors in setting up demonstrable pilots on cash based safety nets;
- **Existing programmes:** government policies and existing, as well as planned, programmes to address the structural causes of recurrent crisis, existing capacity and structures to implement the programme, any efforts on setting up a social protection floor in the near future and what this would entail, government database on poverty profiles/social registry if it exists, any early warning mechanisms in place and their quality/influence over national policy makers.
- Perceptions among communities on the neutrality of the state administration.

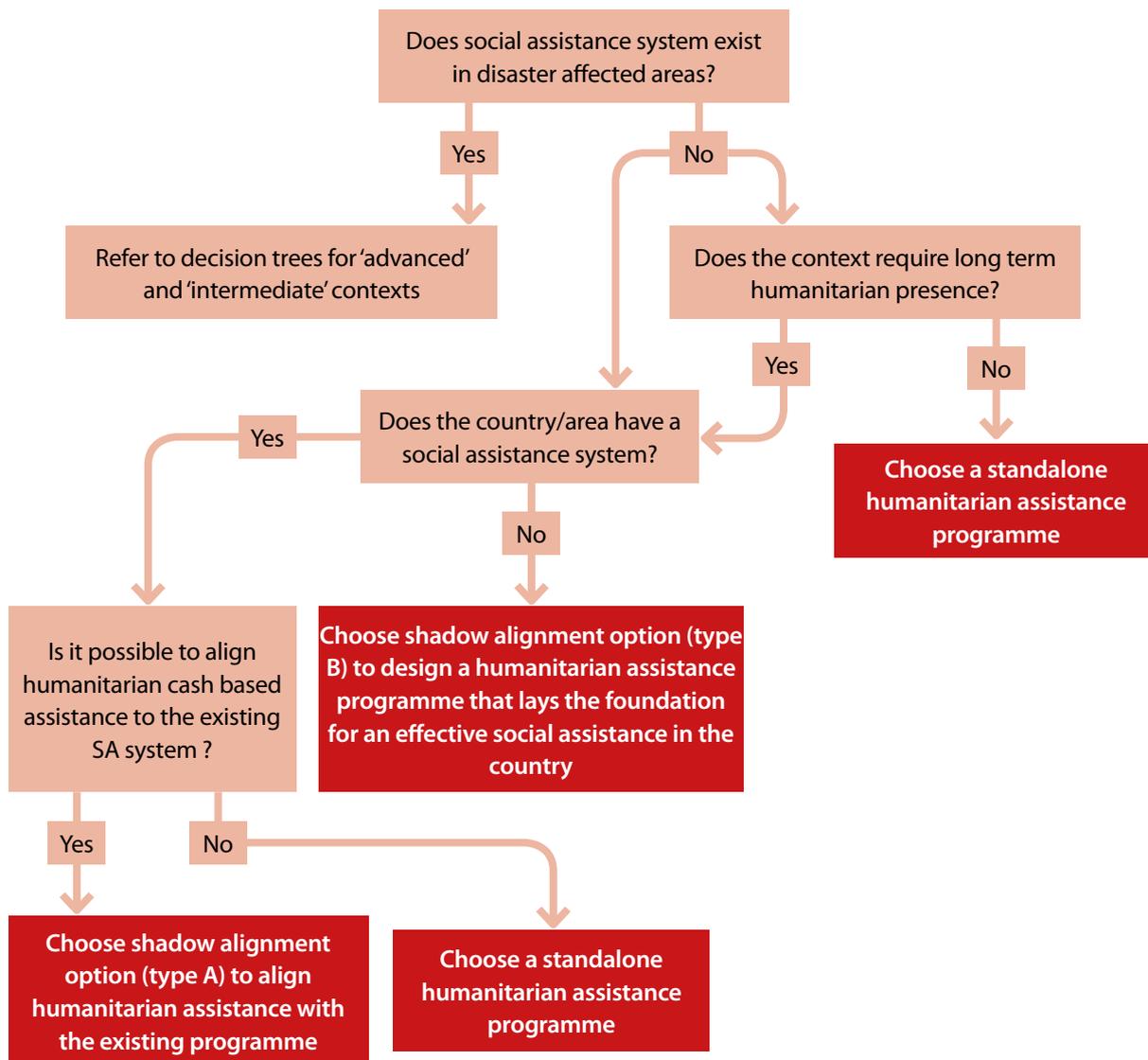
Social protection floor is an outcome oriented approach that takes into account national conditions, priorities and institutions. It comprises four nationally defined guarantees:

- All residents must have access to a nationally defined set of essential health care services;
- All children should enjoy **minimum income security through transfers in cash or in-kind** aiming at facilitating access to essential goods and services, such as nutrition, education and care;
- Those in the active age groups unable to earn sufficient income in the labour market should enjoy **minimum income security through transfers in cash or in-kind** aiming at facilitating access to essential goods and services, such as nutrition, education and care;
- All residents in old age and with disabilities should enjoy **minimum income security through pensions/transfers in-kind** that guarantee access to essential goods and services.

A consensus among governments, employers and workers organisation from 185 countries was reached in 2012 to set up national social protection floors. Accordingly, efforts are underway in some countries.

Step 2 &3: Deciding humanitarian programme options and humanitarian agency role

Figure 10: Decision tree to choose humanitarian programme option in this context.



For standalone humanitarian responses, follow the process for cash based programming in humanitarian contexts. The following sections are relevant if the decision is to link humanitarian assistance with social protection in the country.

Step 4: Design and implementation

Some important points to consider at this stage are:

- Make conscious efforts to involve government and development stakeholders at all stages of the programme design;
- Keep the design simple to enable and encourage governments to scale it up with potentially limited resources and capacities.

Note that it may not be possible to work with governments in all contexts (especially where governments are unwilling or unable to support its people). In such contexts it is important for humanitarian actors to engage with development stakeholders who have an interest in social protection and are likely to stay in the country for a longer period as compared to humanitarian agencies.

In Mali, an NGO-managed shared framework for seasonal safety nets in the north and the World Bank supported Safety Net project ('Jigisemejiri') programme in the south used similar mechanisms to target beneficiaries i.e. community level participatory wealth ranking. Both parties made efforts to coordinate their methodology for data collection on households and link different programmes to create a basis for a national Social Registry that comprises data on the poorest households in Mali. Upon completion of the humanitarian programme in the north, the NGOs shared all the data on beneficiaries with the government for integrating into the national Social Registry which is currently being developed with support from the World Bank.

Targeting and registration: It is important to balance the criteria for chronic poverty and vulnerability to chronic crisis at this stage.

- Engage and build consensus with relevant government and/or development stakeholders to arrive at the most acceptable targeting criteria and the targeting methodology;
- If short of time, move ahead with targeting for the humanitarian programme, but keep it simple so that it is easy to link with poverty targeting and to scale-up;
- Register beneficiaries using a simple process that can be easily replicated. Use the existing system of identification in the country if possible. If the existing system of identification is not strong, depending on availability of resources, technology for registration can be introduced at a pilot scale;
- Work with relevant government ministry/department and/or other stakeholders to explore funding opportunities to invest in a strong registration and data management system;

Choosing the type of cash transfer programme: Decide the type of cash transfer in active consultation with relevant government and/or development stakeholders and by balancing the following criteria:

- The objective of the programme and expected outcomes;
- Ability of beneficiaries to participate in the type of cash programme and their preferences;
- Scalability (what is easier and faster to scale up in crisis? and what can be scaled up by governments in a resource-constrained context?);
- Political acceptability among the community and government policy makers.

The PSNP in Ethiopia differentiates between those able to undertake physically intensive activities and those who are unable to participate in them. Physically constrained beneficiaries are eligible for unconditional grants, whereas those able to work are required to participate in public works

Setting the cash transfer value: Involve relevant government and development stakeholders in deciding the value of the cash transfers. The transfer value should be based on the following:

- Analysis of the gap in needs (short term, and long term for resilience building);
- Seasonality and anticipated duration of the gap;
- Political acceptability of the amount among general public²⁹ and the policy makers in the country. It is important for humanitarian actors to engage with the government and other development stakeholders on financing of social assistance;
- Type of cash transfer e.g. if it is public works then even if the gap in needs is high, the value will have to be set in line with the labour rates to avoid distorting the labour market;
- Resource availability now and in future.

This process is likely to be challenging for humanitarian actors because a strategic choice has to be made by finely balancing government constraints and humanitarian principles. In case the agreed amount is small and inadequate to fill the gap in needs, humanitarian actors may consider a combination of types of cash transfers to distinguish between short term support and long term social assistance for resilience building. For example, the

²⁹ When scaled up by governments, social assistance will be tax financed and therefore opinion of tax payers is an important determinant.

transfer value could be set at the level accepted by all stakeholders and the gap in needs could be met through a top up by another type of cash transfer such as cash for work or cash grant for a specific purpose (asset creation), or vouchers for school fees/nutrition outcomes/vaccination etc., or with other modalities of support.

Delivering cash: Consider the following to decide how, where and when to deliver cash:

- While it is important to choose a cash delivery mechanism that has a good outreach, the specific value addition of humanitarian agencies can be to identify and pilot an efficient system of cash transfer;
- Use the seasonal calendar to determine the phasing of instalments to support people in their recovery efforts;
- Agree a cash delivery plan with the financial service provider to a point closest/most accessible to beneficiaries, especially if it is not a direct transfer into bank accounts or e-wallets.

Monitoring and evaluation: Humanitarian agencies can contribute to the creation of strong monitoring and evaluation systems through:

- Creation of a baselines and endlines in the areas of operation that includes income and expenditure patterns of different wealth groups, market systems for essential commodities, seasonal variation in livelihood patterns and market systems, coping strategies, and shock patterns;
- Engaging an independent institution to design and manage the M&E system. This will not only bring neutrality and objectivity to the findings, but if done by a credible institution, the results will have a higher acceptability among policy makers;
- Budgeting for and documenting (written as well as video) the learning from the pilot and share widely in different forums to inform policy makers about the programme and its achievements;
- Budget for baselines and impact evaluations, as well as learning events from the beginning;
- Plan for joint monitoring and supervision with development actors (government, donors and other stakeholders) in order to facilitate early involvement and ownership;
- Establishing links with early warning system (e.g. Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)) processes if they exist to feed information to such systems and to identify common triggers for crisis that could be built into the design of the future social assistance system.

In northern Mali, owing to the challenges in accessing the areas an independent institution could not be recruited. To ensure neutrality of data collection and analysis, NGOs recruited a staff for the consortium who was assigned the responsibility of oversight, control and data analysis. across all agencies. The principle of neutrality was thereby being respected, whilst allowing access to the field.

Management of Information Services: Setting up MIS systems requires specialised skills and humanitarian actors are not always best placed to set them up. However, they can contribute to the development of such systems by proactively coordinating their data collection efforts at the beginning, and by sharing information collected as a part of the pilot programme with relevant government or development stakeholders.

Recovery and Exit strategy: Safety net programmes that do not have a well-planned exit are less appealing to governments in resource constrained contexts. Exit strategy is therefore extremely important, especially for seasonal safety net programmes. Consider the following:

- Categorise the beneficiaries based on their ability to embark on early recovery and those who would require social assistance over a longer timeframe;
- Include interventions in the design of the programme that help with livelihoods promotion and resilience building for those who are able to embark on such activities (see previous section on 'deciding the type of cash programme' and 'setting the value of cash transfer');
- Acknowledge that some vulnerable groups will require social assistance for much longer, and provisions must be made in the programme design accordingly for eventual absorption of such beneficiaries into the government led social assistance.

Step 5: Preparedness

Unlike other contexts where humanitarian actors use an existing system to deliver cash based humanitarian response, in this context preparedness would mean essential preparation for grounding the pilot safety net. The following will constitute essential preparation:

- Mapping of stakeholders and their power to influence decision making to identify targets for advocacy/ influencing and forge partnerships;
- Take the lead in setting up and piloting a coordination mechanism that involves humanitarian and development stakeholders;
- Scoping the existing poverty reduction efforts and specifically the plans for setting the social protection floor;
- Initiating a dialogue with the relevant line ministry/department on the need for safety nets, and seeking their participation to design a pilot project;
- Sharing the concept with donors and mapping donor interest in supporting such a pilot;
- Building staff capacity, and recruitment of relevant skills (especially related to advocacy);
- Where possible work with others to build consensus on targeting criteria and support any efforts to pre-target and pre-register beneficiaries.

Coordination: In addition to the guidance provided in Step 3 in section 3.1, humanitarian actors should do the following in this particular scale-up context:

- Create platforms/forums to facilitate interactions between humanitarian and development stakeholders at the technical, strategic and operational level. Proactively invite development stakeholders to participate in these platforms/forums;
- Use the existing cash working groups (or create one where it does not exist) in the country to mobilise interested actors for influencing relevant government ministries/departments and development stakeholders;
- Set up a system to consolidate information on actors, different cash based programmes (humanitarian and developmental) and their locations;
- Where possible coordinate with other humanitarian agencies engaged in cash based programming to agree on a common design to achieve demonstrable scale, and engage an independent agency to monitor, evaluate and document the work by the collective (as compared to individual organisations);
- Include activities to strengthen coordination (such as stakeholder mapping, power mapping etc.) as a part of preparedness activities.

REMEMBER!

- Social protection is the responsibility of the government and the role of humanitarian actors in this context is to lay the foundation of a shock responsive social protection system;
- Keep the design simple to understand, simple to communicate and simple to implement for scaling up by the government in the long-term.
- Be aware of the constraints of humanitarian agencies and do not over estimate capacities;
- Recognise and acknowledge that short term and one-off cash transfer programmes are not safety nets

4 WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION/ RESOURCES

Humanitarian Cash Transfer Programming

[Operational Guidance & Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants](#)

Shock Responsive Social Protection

[Oxford Policy Management – Shock Responsive Social Protection Systems](#)

Social Protection

[Overseas Development Institute – Social Protection](#)

[Centre for Social Protection - Institute for Development Studies](#)

[Socialprotection.org](#)

[World Bank Social Protection Strategy and Atlas](#)

www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialprotectionlabor

<http://datatopics.worldbank.org/aspire/>

[Social Protection Interagency Cooperation Board – International Labour Organisation](#)

[Social Protection Floor](#)

Social Protection Online Learning Resources

<http://socialprotection.org/learn/virtual-campus>

ANNEX

ANNEX I: CASE STUDIES FOR THREE CONTEXTS

A: CONTEXT: WHERE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM ARE RESPONSIVE TO SHOCKS

Case Study 1: Vertical and horizontal expansion of voucher-based safety nets in Gaza

Years of blockade and depleting natural resources provide very little option for economic development in Gaza. It is a unique context where year-round humanitarian presence is required, and especially so during the escalation of violence. Despite the challenging context, Palestine has a social protection strategy (2014-2016) which has been prepared through a very inclusive process that involved the Palestinian Authority, UN agencies, World Bank, local civil society and other donors. Social Protection is a pillar within the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) which has a focus on strengthening the state system in Palestine. The Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) leads all social protection work in Palestine. The development of systems for social assistance and empowerment of the poor and marginalized is one of the five strategic objectives within the national social protection strategy.

Social assistance in Gaza includes a quarterly transfer of cash for 280,000 non refugees³⁰ provided directly by MoSA, and a monthly (electronic) cash voucher to meet the food needs of 285,000 people provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) in partnership with Oxfam. Until June 2014, these e- vouchers were redeemed through a network of 60 shops in the different governorates of Gaza.

During the war in July 2014, the social assistance system was effectively used by WFP in partnership with Oxfam to deliver humanitarian assistance to the affected population in Gaza. As a part of emergency preparedness funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), prepaid printed cards were kept ready by WFP. A waiting list of shops had also been prepared and approved. Scenario planning had been conducted and remote ways of working were set up. In addition, software was developed to support a vertical and horizontal scale-up in case of crisis. Therefore, within a week of the escalation of violence in 2014, the first cards were distributed and utilised by beneficiaries in Gaza.

Before the war WFP reached approx. 285,000 people through these e-vouchers, however during the war the system increased its capacity to reach over 1 million people. From the regular 60 shops, the system expanded to include 92 shops in all 5 governorates of Gaza during the war, which enabled households to redeem vouchers from anywhere within the Gaza strip. As banks had liquidity problems, no money changed hands and all cash payments were made electronically to traders. This scale-up was done in coordination with all actors including MoSA, and was led by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Interestingly, this was the first time that the system of e-vouchers was used to deliver non-food items, such as WASH items provided by Unicef and blankets provided by HelpAge. Up to that stage the e-vouchers had only been used to deliver food assistance as a part of social assistance.

This successful scale up of the social assistance mechanism in Gaza was possible for the following reasons:

Learning

1. **Preparedness:** Existing long term presence and relationships with relevant stakeholders (state and private sector) helps immensely in the effective scale up of safety nets/social assistance in times of crisis. It is not just important to pre-position stocks and have system readiness, but it is equally important to have all the relevant relationships well maintained so that they can be called upon at such times. The pre-existing relationship with local shops and vendors was useful here. This is especially of significance because liquidity was a problem for banks during the peak of the crisis, but it was confidence among local shop keepers of being paid that enabled them to participate in this scale-up.

³⁰ Those households who are not recipient of assistance from UN Relief & Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)

2. **Strength of partnership:** WFP and Oxfam have worked together for a number of years in Gaza, influencing each other in the process. As a result, the level of trust and confidence in each other is high. During the peak of the crisis the two agencies worked together as a single team on the ground identifying beneficiaries, distributing emergency vouchers (different from the regular vouchers during normal times), monitoring the quality of products being sold in shops etc. Similarly, pre-existing relationships with MoSA helped with accessing the beneficiary list that included the newly vulnerable. WFP works closely with MoSA on social protection and has played an important role in ensuring food security indicators are included in the targeting process, and the tools used for collecting information are robust. In addition, WFP has been instrumental in supporting MoSA to develop the M&E for the entire social protection strategy.
3. **Coordination:** There is coordination among all actors even during normal times in Palestine, with a permanent OCHA office which ensures that policies and responses are aligned as far as possible. Most humanitarian assistance is taken up within the social protection framework. Accordingly, Social Protection is a pillar in the UNDAF.
4. **Coordination with donors is equally key to successful scale up. The context of Gaza requires flexibility in funding so that funds for development programmes can be temporarily channelled to meet immediate humanitarian needs.**
5. **Use of technology:** The context in Gaza requires a system that can expand vertically and horizontally and that can work without money changing hands. Accordingly, investments were made in a software by WFP that allowed them to include a top-up of non-food items (e.g. water and hygiene kits for Unicef) on the same cards. Similarly, the payment mechanism was developed such that payments to vendors could be made electronically. This has been further strengthened since June 2015 with the introduction of PalPAY. This is a Bank of Palestine system that makes payments live to the trader as and when the voucher is used.
5. The composition and structure of the local team helps in engaging effectively at the policy level. It is useful to have appropriately skilled local staff in the team to engage at different levels with national policy makers. In Palestine, WFP's technical capacity in VAM (Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping) and M&E helped in gaining the confidence of MoSA to work on their targeting and monitoring system. Internally, the VAM and M&E functions are a part of programme support unit in WFP's Palestine country office, which gives staff from both teams adequate space and time to view WFP's engagement on social protection in a holistic and broader perspective, without getting bogged down by day to day operations on the ground. Work on social protection is a significant component of the work for some staff and accordingly, it is a part of their objective/ goal setting for their performance management.

Case Study 2: Horizontal scale up of the Hunger Safety Nets Programme (HSNP) in Kenya³¹

The northern parts of Kenya are comprised of Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) that are prone to recurrent droughts. This part of the country had been receiving humanitarian assistance year after year for more than a decade and in 2008, DFID in partnership with the Government of Kenya (GoK) initiated the Hunger Safety Net Programme to address poverty and food insecurity in the region.

As this was an ambitious programme that aimed to provide long term and predictable assistance to targeted people, a pilot phase (also called as HSNP 1) was implemented between 2008-13. This phase reached approximately 69,000 people, who were targeted using three different targeting criteria (i.e. community based targeting of the poorest, the elderly, and households with a high dependency ratio). This pilot phase allowed the GoK and DFID to test out methodologies and tools for targeting, registration, MIS, cash delivery, beneficiary accountability etc. The 2011 food crisis in the Horn of Africa was experienced during the pilot phase and this further helped in strengthening the design of HSNP to make it responsive to shocks. The second phase of HSNP (HSNP 2) was initiated in 2013 and builds on the learnings from the HSNP 1.

HSNP is a social protection programme that provides unconditional and predictable cash transfers of up to Kshs 2,700/month to approximately 100,000 of the poorest and most vulnerable households (approximately 600,000 chronically poor people) in four counties of Northern Kenya, namely Turkana, Mandera, Marsabit and Wajir. It is a Government of Kenya flagship programme which is a part of the National Safety Net Programme (NSNP) and is managed by the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA). It is funded by the Governments of Kenya, the UK (DFID) and Australia (Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade, DFAT).

³¹ For more information on HSNP visit: www.hsnp.or.ke

HSNP Phase 2 comprises the following useful elements that make it responsive to shocks:

1. **Targeting and registration:** Approximately, 374,000 people in the 4 districts of Northern Kenya are registered under HSNP using a combination of community based targeting and proxy means test methodologies. Biometric information (thumb imprints) of all registered individuals has been collected and is used to identify beneficiaries at the time of payments. All registered people are issued with a smart card which holds their biometric information and allows for accessing payments. While a large number of people have been registered, only 100,000 people are regular beneficiaries of the HSNP. The idea behind registering a large number was to ensure a speedy horizontal scale up of the regular programme to support non-beneficiaries (approximately 272,520 people) in times of crisis.
2. **Payment mechanism:** Payment to beneficiaries is made every 2 months through fully operational bank accounts with the Equity Bank. The smart cards provided to beneficiaries can be used to withdraw the cash at ATMs by using a PIN, from pre-identified agents of the bank, over the counter of their local bank branch, or any Equity bank branch. This flexibility of the system to allow different types of cash payments helps people to access cash close to their homes.
3. **MIS:** The registration of large number of people in the Northern parts of the country has created a database that can provide information and help with coordination of responses and support to crisis affected populations.
4. **Scale up:** In 2015, HSNP scaled up to provide humanitarian cash assistance to over 90,000 non routine pre-registered beneficiaries in the 4 counties of Northern Kenya. The scale up process was linked with the National Disaster Management Agencies (NDMA's) Vegetative Condition Index (VCI). This is an index which monitors the vegetative cover on a regular basis and classifies the situation according to the following thresholds: 'moderate', 'severe' and 'extreme'. Areas declared as having reached 'severe' and 'extreme' thresholds qualify for a scale-up of HSNP. In 2015, all scale-up beneficiaries received 2450Kshs/month for the duration of the crisis in their areas. This amount was similar to the payments made to regular beneficiaries of HSNP. No top-up was provided to the regular HSNP beneficiaries during the scale up.

While the design of HSNP is still evolving to make it more robust and enable a speedy scale-up in response to shocks, there are a few gaps/challenges that set a basis for useful learning:

1. **Communication with people is important:** Owing to the large scale targeting and registration process, communities in Northern Kenya were actively engaged with the process. This meant that there was significant confusion when only 100,000 regular beneficiaries were selected while more people received the smart cards. The different layers of beneficiaries for the programme were not (and is still not in many places) immediately clear to most people, who after receiving the smart cards thought that they would receive the regular payments.
2. **Investments are important for a long term programme that is shock responsive:** HSNP benefits from significant investment in technology-based systems, which are not only faster but also reduce multiple types of risks e.g. biometric information reduces the chance of impersonation, fiduciary risk etc. Such investments at scale are however possible and practical only when there is a clear vision to develop/strengthen the social protection system in the country. Use of technology can be challenging too, especially in contexts where such technology is new for the communities. There are examples of thumb imprints of beneficiaries not matching the data at the time of payment because the skin has worn off, or smart cards/PINs may be misplaced by the beneficiaries (especially those who do not receive assistance on a regular basis).
3. **Balancing efficiency with risk management:** The Hunger Safety Net Programme is a large scale programme and is thus prone to multiple risks. The implementation and management system is therefore designed with multiple checks and balances to reduce risks such as fraud. This however means that problems can take a while to be sorted. For example, if the biometric data of the beneficiary does not match at the time of payment, it can take a few months before a new card can be issued to the beneficiary.

B CONTEXT: WHERE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM ARE NOT DESIGNED TO RESPOND TO SHOCKS

Case study 1: Vertical expansion of the social assistance system in Nepal

A devastating earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale hit Nepal in April 2015. Although emergency cash programming had only been introduced fairly recently during the floods in 2014, many agencies decided to embark on cash based responses to meet the needs of the affected population. Cash programming constituted approximately 6% of the total humanitarian response.

Nepal has a social assistance system that provides cash transfers to individuals. It includes a monthly pension to all those above 70 years of age; a single women and widows allowance; cash grants to people with disabilities; a child-grant to children under 5 years of age and belonging to Dalit households; and a marginalised ethnic group allowance. Different amounts are transferred under each programme to the recipients through the Secretary of the VDC (Village Development Committee) in rural areas and through a bank transfer in municipalities. All social assistance programmes are managed by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD).

Unicef decided that they would use the existing social assistance mechanism to provide immediate relief to the maximum number of vulnerable people possible. The agency has a strong interest in strengthening the Child Grant in the long term, hence the choice of using the social assistance mechanism was deliberate. It was recognised early on that there would be coverage gaps (i.e. some affected households may not be covered under the existing social assistance programmes) but this mechanism was seen as a strong option to reach out to a large population, with pre-existing vulnerabilities, in a short timeframe. Accordingly, Unicef transferred all the money earmarked for cash assistance to approximately 434,000 people in 19 districts through the government's social assistance system. A flat amount of NRs. 3000 was provided to each beneficiary as a top-up to the existing social assistance payment by the government. The amount transferred was equivalent to approximately 2 months of consumption for an individual at the poverty line.

The programme was discussed and designed with MoFALD, and the MoU signed with the Ministry of Finance. MoFALD was in overall charge of implementation of the programme. The money was transferred directly to the 19 districts by UNICEF and the VDCs/Municipalities ensured its delivery to recipients at the village/town level. This is similar to the process followed for the transfer of social assistance by the Government of Nepal (GoN). After distribution, the VDCs/Municipalities submitted their distribution reports to the district authorities, where they were compiled and sent to Unicef and MoFALD. Monitoring and communication on the programme was managed directly by Unicef through local NGOs and scouts who distributed leaflets and used the local FM radio for sharing information. The monitoring included an SMS-based monitoring system with 5 simple questions, spot check monitoring of distribution, and a systematic household survey for post distribution monitoring.

Challenges/Learning

1. **Pre-existing relationship with the government helps:** Unicef had an existing working relationship with MoFALD before the crisis. This meant that the usual checks required for transferring resources had already been done prior to the crisis for other Unicef programmes. Both stakeholders were aware of the systems and procedures to be followed. This enabled them to embark on the project and ensure that the humanitarian cash assistance was delivered to the beneficiaries within one to four months of Government approval. It is believed that the total time taken by Unicef and MoFALD in transferring cash to a large caseload is comparable to the time taken by NGOs to do the same to a smaller number of beneficiaries.
2. **Being mindful of political challenges in decision making:** Unicef were able to seek an approval for the project within one week of submitting the proposal to the GoN. It was initially planned to provide a total of NR 6000 to all beneficiaries in two instalments of NR 3000 each in 11 districts of the country. The GoN however felt that the need was great and that the programme should be expanded to 19 districts affected by the earthquake. This created a bottleneck and took close to one month to resolve and agree that all 19 districts would be covered, but instead of two instalments a one-off payment of NR 3000 would be made. Once the decision was taken, funds were immediately transferred to the district level and distributions took place within the following three months. Unicef plans to use the same system to deliver assistance for recovery; however, this time round the decision making process has been slower due to the current political climate in the country.

3. Simplicity of the design

Targeting: Unicef used the same categorical targeting that were used in the social assistance programmes. These categories are simple and easily understood by the people. By doing so, Unicef reached out to those who were poor and vulnerable prior to the crisis and whose condition would have either remained similar or perhaps deteriorated after the crisis. However, this targeting process has its flip side too. Firstly, it excludes households who may have been poor and vulnerable but not included in the programmes such as children under 5 years from non-Dalit households. It also excludes those who have been made vulnerable by the crisis. At the same time, this method creates a potential for overlap of assistance for households who may have more than one category of beneficiary. As the assistance provided was based on individual vulnerabilities, Unicef were fine with the overlap. Their monitoring highlighted that there were very few households with three eligible beneficiaries, whereas around 20% of households have two eligible beneficiaries in one household. Some of the gaps in coverage will be plugged in phase two of the programme by including all children under 5 years in the cash assistance for recovery.

Provision of top up: The design was very simple and included provision of a top-up to the social assistance already provided by the GoN. This did not require setting up of a new programme structure for targeting, delivery, coordination etc.

Delivery mechanism: The existing system for delivering social assistance was used to provide humanitarian assistance. As people are familiar with the system, it did not require training sessions and support for beneficiaries to become familiar with the system. The system however depends on VDC Secretaries to deliver the cash, which increases the chances of financial mismanagement. However, post-distribution monitoring suggests that mismanagement was absent or negligible. Also, VDC members were themselves affected in some cases and in the absence of any additional benefits had little incentive to take on extra work of delivering cash in remote hill districts. In the second phase of the programme, transportation and administrative costs have been included to support the VDC staff in delivering cash. In addition, new cash delivery mechanisms will be explored to transfer cash to people.

4. **Coordination with other stakeholders:** The negative side of using categorical targeting is the exclusion of households who are affected, but did not fulfil the social assistance category criteria. An early engagement with the cash working group in the country could have helped with plugging the gaps in coverage.
5. **System building for future:** As mentioned earlier, Unicef has an interest in strengthening the child grant system³². The second phase of the programme was planned from the beginning to plug the gap in coverage and to link to the longer term reform of child grant, and of the social assistance system as a whole. It is planned that phase two will be focused in 11 districts, but it will reach out to all children under 5 years with cash transfers. As a part of a longer term vision, this phase entails working on certain implementation reforms, such as improving the registration process³³ and making it more shock responsive, strengthening the payment system by exploring other payment mechanisms, and introducing MIS in some districts.
6. **Documentation:** A lessons learned exercise is planned for this project, and it will document the process and key learning with the purpose of sharing the experience widely. Standard Operating Procedures will also be prepared with the government for implementing humanitarian cash assistance in future.

³² The Child Grant is a cash transfer for mothers with children under the age of five, aimed at improving the nutrition of children. It offers a payment of NRs 200 (\$2) per child per month. It is universal in Karnali and targeted at Dalit households in the rest of the country. In 2012/13, it covered 551,916 children in Nepal (approximately 21.5% of the population of children aged less than five), with 90,349 of these from Karnali Adhikari et al, 2014, The contribution of Nepal's Child Grant to social inclusion in the Karnali region. Country Briefing, NEPAN and ODI

³³ Currently the registration is done once a year and budget allocated tightly according to that. This excludes children born after the registration process is over for the year.

Case Study 2: Vertical scale up of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme (4Ps) in the Philippines

On 8th November 2013, a super typhoon called Haiyan (locally called Yolanda) made landfall in the Philippines. It was one of the strongest tropical typhoons ever recorded and resulted in large scale death and destruction. It is estimated that 16 million Filipinos were affected by the typhoon, either through displacement or damage to their houses, or through loss of income and/or loss of a family member.

The Philippines is prone to recurrent natural disasters such as typhoons and earthquakes, and some parts of the country are affected by armed conflict. Despite being a middle income country, owing to the recurrent nature of crises, the country has a permanent presence of humanitarian actors (UN agencies, international, and national NGOs). In 2008, the Government of the Philippines launched its flagship social protection programme called the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme (4Ps) that provides conditional cash transfers to the poorest of the poor to improve the health, nutrition and education of children under 18 years of age. The targeting for this programme is done through the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction which is a database of poor households in the country. It reaches a total of 4,353,597 households across all 17 regions in the Philippines, delivered through the Land Bank of the Philippines in most areas³⁴. This programme is managed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

After Haiyan, WFP used the existing system of the 4Ps to deliver unconditional cash assistance in the affected areas. Prior to Haiyan, WFP was a part of the interagency technical advisory committee for technical assistance to support the DSWD, and there was a degree of familiarity with the existing system and its working. In the past some discussions had already taken place between WFP and DSWD on how the existing system could be used to deliver humanitarian assistance in times of crisis, although no concrete agreements had been made. Nevertheless, based on the results of independent evaluations of the 4Ps, there was a general trust/faith in the effectiveness of the existing system within WFP.

As many of the Haiyan affected areas were urban and peri-urban, with a history of remittance flows, cash transfers were considered an appropriate modality for humanitarian assistance by donors and NGOs. WFP followed a two-pronged approach:

Beneficiaries of 4Ps: WFP provided a top up of \$30/household to the beneficiaries of 4Ps thereby reaching a large number of affected people without spending time in targeting. Beneficiaries of the 4Ps in the affected areas were already the poorest before the crisis, therefore they were likely to be severely affected by the typhoon. This top-up was provided for purchase of food commodities other than rice, which was not available locally.

Non-beneficiaries of 4Ps: In villages severely affected by Haiyan and covered by 4Ps, all non-beneficiaries were provided with in-kind food assistance, whereas in areas less affected by the typhoon and with low coverage of 4Ps' beneficiaries, WFP partnered with NGOs to provide cash based food assistance.

Key challenges/learning

1. **Important to maintain neutrality:** When linking humanitarian assistance with a social protection system, it is important to ensure that humanitarian principles are not compromised. In the Philippines, WFP conducted a parallel assessment of financial service providers to check if the necessary risk management protocols were in place and also to have a plan B in case the government system was found to be lacking on any aspect. Additionally, while cash transfers happened through the social protection system, WFP engaged NGOs as third party actors to conduct the monitoring of the programme in order to maintain neutrality in the humanitarian scale-up.
2. **Support to rebuild/strengthen the capacity of the system:** Typhoon Haiyan affected the existing government system in more than one way. Not only were staff affected but the infrastructure in the regions was also severely damaged. In such a context it was important to work with the system and influence changes to make the system more robust. Soon after the typhoon hit, DSWD embarked on a validation process to locate 4P beneficiaries along the path of Haiyan. Many humanitarian agencies participated in this process with the Local Government Units (LGUs). Having access to this data helped WFP, and later on Unicef, to scale-up their

³⁴ Overview of the 4Ps Programme, www.gov.ph/programs/conditional-cash-transfer (accessed on 24th February 2016)

cash based humanitarian assistance relatively easily, and in a short time frame. Positioning staff that had prior experience in cash based programming to support the government at the regional level helped in re-establishing government credibility in that context. WFP had its own team that worked with local authorities to work out details of how and when cash would be distributed and to monitor the process. The main challenge faced by WFP with regard to the capacity of the system was the inability of the government system to provide all the necessary documentation to WFP in a timely manner. Despite the challenges, the fact that two UN agencies (WFP and Unicef) worked with the existing social protection system to deliver humanitarian assistance enhanced the profile of DSWD and placed the department in a leadership role on cash based programming in humanitarian contexts.

3. **Provide adequate resources to enable scale up:** If humanitarian agencies expect high efficiency and quality from the government system then they must provide adequate resources to build the capacity of the government system. In the Philippines, WFP provided about 1/6th of the total value of the humanitarian assistance delivered through DSWD as administration costs. This allowed DSWD to take on the additional work that the vertical scale up of humanitarian assistance required.
4. **Important to invest in preparedness:** WFP was able to embark on a humanitarian scale up of an existing social protection programme in the first phase of the crisis because of its pre-existing links with DSWD. As mentioned earlier, WFP was a part of the technical advisory committee to DSWD and had engaged in discussions to use the system to deliver humanitarian response. Prior familiarity with the system enabled quick decision making to embark on a speedy response. Additionally, WFP invested in documentation of experiences for future preparedness.
5. **Cash delivery mechanisms must be strengthened to respond to crisis:** The cash delivery system for the 4Ps was not designed to respond to crisis, which meant that there were serious challenges in delivering cash frequently over a longer time frame, and to deliver closer to where the affected communities lived. In case of frequency of transfers, the Land Bank risk management system did not allow for transferring more than a certain amount in a day. This meant that the cash flow for cash delivery was affected. Moreover, in some areas Land Bank contracted cooperatives in local areas, but these cooperatives were affected by the typhoon and were unable to support cash delivery at the last mile. The payment mechanism was designed for development, so in one LGU they had only one payment point which meant people had to travel long distances.
6. **A multitude of actors requires strong coordination:** Working with the existing system during the Haiyan response highlighted the multiple actors involved, and underscored the need for coordination at different levels: (i) Internal coordination within the government between different ministries/departments; (ii) Coordination between different levels of the government system i.e. centre and local government units (which can be independent or locally elected bodies); (iii) Coordination among humanitarian agencies on various aspects of cash programming including targeting, calculating the value of cash transfers, cash delivery mechanisms, engaging with the private sector, inter sector cash issues etc.; and (iv) coordination between humanitarian agencies and the government. In the Philippines, UNOCHA played a key role in coordinating strategic and technical discussions on cash programming. While this was effective at the national level, with OCHA even organising a CaLP L1 training for the DSWD staff in Manila, regional level cash coordination was challenging and required better resource allocation to recruit appropriate staff to lead/steer technical discussions.

Additional Learning from Haiyan: Owing to challenges with coordination, there was considerable confusion regarding social security payments to cash for work beneficiaries during the Haiyan response. This indicates that technical discussions around public works and cash for work must be held as a part of preparedness. This confusion discouraged some agencies to choose this type of cash programming (cash for work). The issue was however resolved in the cash coordination forum, but such discussions are best held as a part of preparedness rather than at the time of the crisis where they are likely to distract humanitarian actors from their life saving functions.

C CONTEXT: WHERE CASH BASED SAFETY NETS DO NOT EXIST OR ARE EXTREMELY WEAK

Case Study 1: The Urban food subsidy programme, Kenya

In 2009, the UN estimated that one million people were on the brink of starvation as a result of the combined effect of the food, fuel and financial crises. The sudden increase in prices of staple food items severely affected the poor in Kenya. The effect was more pronounced in urban areas owing to a higher dependency on markets for meeting food needs. To give an example, the price of maize (staple food) increased by 133% in 2008, whereas the income levels either remained static or declined for the poor. This situation meant that many poor households (e.g. approximately 55% of households in the Mukuru informal settlement) were forced to use 83% of their income on average to buy just one food commodity (i.e. maize), and manage all other food and non-food needs (which includes high rents, transportation, medical & education costs etc.) with the remaining 17% of their already low incomes.

While social assistance in the form of elderly pensions and Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) assistance existed in the country, it did not adequately cover the number of chronically poor in urban areas. The Hunger Safety Net Programme was in its pilot phase and was concentrated in the Arid and Semi-Arid areas of the country, with no plans of expansion to other parts of Kenya. As such there was no existing mechanism to protect the urban poor from the effects of high price rises or any other shocks.

Against this backdrop Oxfam and Concern Worldwide initiated the urban food subsidy programme in the Mukuru and Korogocho informal settlements of Nairobi. It was started with the twin objectives of responding to the immediate needs of crisis affected households in urban areas, and also to persuade the Government of Kenya of the need for social assistance for the urban poor. This was a two year programme, with a monthly transfer of KSH 1500 through the well-established mobile banking network of MPESA, for an initial 8 months to 5000 households in the two informal settlements.

Following the intervention 3400 households had been able to save enough to invest in their livelihoods and voluntarily move out of the programme. These households were supported with skills building, market information and linkages to financial services. Support to the remaining 1600 households was continued beyond this stage as they comprised the elderly, chronically ill headed households, or those with high dependency ratios.

Parallel to the direct intervention, advocacy efforts were made to engage national policy makers in the programme from the beginning. This included being a part of the Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Food Subsidy, which reported to the Prime Minister's office. This task force mandated the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development (MoGCSD) to design and implement a pilot programme to respond to the food crisis. By virtue of being a part of this committee, Oxfam and Concern Worldwide drew on their experience of implementing a similar programme in Mukuru and Korogocho to input into the design of the government's pilot project.

Over the past 5 years, the Government of Kenya has designed and implemented food subsidy programmes in Mombasa, and is now expanding its coverage in Mombasa and expanding to Kisumu and Nairobi to reach approximately 68000 households. The programme is designed on the same lines as the small scale pilot implemented by Oxfam and Concern Worldwide, but it is now a fully government-owned, resourced and led initiative. The role of non-government actors in the current scenario is centred around provision of technical and capacity building support.

Key challenges/learning

Technical

1. **Targeting:** Community-based targeting was used to identify households for the programme by Oxfam and Concern in their pilot project. This was taken forward by the government in its own programme as well. However, this posed a challenge in enabling a simple and transparent exit from the programme. To overcome this challenge, the beneficiary profiles were studied which revealed that approximately 97% of the existing caseload is eligible for support under the social assistance provided to the elderly, OVC and to those with a physical challenge. It is agreed that the exit from the urban subsidy programme for this group will be an inclusion into the regular social assistance programme. The remaining 3% population will be supported with women's fund/youth fund and vocational training to enable a smooth exit from the programme.
2. **Setting the value of the cash transfer:** Based on the food basket calculations approximately 4700 KSH was required per household to meet their food needs. This amount was significantly higher than 1500 KSH that was paid by the government as social assistance to the elderly and the OVCs. After serious deliberations within their own organisations and with the GoK, Oxfam and Concern Worldwide decided to peg the transfer amount to 1500 KSH, with the assumption that it will be easier to influence the government to accept and own a programme that is consistent with other similar programmes. This was a risk and challenging from a humanitarian perspective. However, this strategy paid off and the design of the programme was adopted by the GoK. The value of transfer has since then increased to 2400 KSH and is likely to be increased to 3000 KSH in the coming months.

Logistical/administrative

1. **Delivery mechanism and capacity to scale up:** The pilot programme implemented by NGOs used the well-established network of MPESA (mobile banking, provided by Safaricom) in the urban settlements, whereas the social assistance support from the GoK to the elderly and OVCs was delivered through the Post Office. The Post Office follows a manual system of data management, and is therefore comparatively slower. Oxfam and Concern Worldwide encouraged the GoK to look at alternatives, following which an open bidding process was followed to select the service delivery agent. Through this process, Equity Bank, which has a significant experience and strong systems developed while implementing cash transfers in the HSNP³⁵, was selected to transfer cash, along with the Post Office. This has improved the payment mechanism significantly. However, the system is likely to face challenges if a sudden crisis were to occur in the urban areas because the cash delivery system is not designed to expand horizontally³⁶. To overcome this, the GoK is considering a multiple service provider option, which may add healthy competition among service providers and also enable faster service to the beneficiaries.
2. **Data management:** In Kenya, data protocols have to be signed for sharing of beneficiary data in the HSNP; however, this is not the case for the urban food subsidy programme. Without this protocol, agencies cannot access beneficiary data to provide top-ups to the existing beneficiaries of the urban food subsidy programme.
3. **Internal systems:** Oxfam IT systems were not compatible with the MPESA system and also did not allow the addition of software that could enable a smooth transfer and monitoring of transfers to large number of beneficiaries. The project staff resolved this by procuring an external drive on which the software was loaded and this worked well.

Political

1. **Navigating the government system:** While cash transfers are now an accepted modality of providing assistance to the chronically poor, in 2009 some members of the GoK had serious reservations, particularly around creation of dependency. Oxfam and Concern Worldwide had to work consistently at all levels and across government departments to highlight that this was not the case. Case studies and video documentation

³⁵ Hunger Safety Nets Programme in the Arid and Semi Arid areas of Northern Kenya

³⁶ In the HSNP areas, potential beneficiaries are registered within the system and issued a card in anticipation of a crisis. This enables a horizontal expansion during times of crisis. Such registration process has not been followed (and may not be possible either) in the urban food subsidy programme thereby restricting horizontal expansion.

of the programme implemented by the NGOs in Mukuru and Korogocho were prepared and shared widely among policymakers. Proactive involvement of the staff from Ministry of Gender from the very beginning helped to get an early buy-in on the design of the programme. During the course of the programme, it also became clear that because the coverage of social assistance is thin, the priority on the government side is to expand horizontally as compared to a vertical expansion.

2. **Lack of early warning system and triggers:** The food crisis highlighted the lack of trigger mechanisms for urban areas. Most early warning systems are based on indicators that are more suited to rural settings and don't necessarily reflect the reality of urban areas. As a result, hunger in urban settlements of Nairobi continued to be hidden for a long time, and when it was highlighted by Oxfam and Concern Worldwide, traditional humanitarian donors were unwilling to support a response.

Case Study 2: The Kore Lavi programme in Haiti

Two and a half million Haitians live in extreme poverty. One hundred thousand children under five years of age suffer from acute malnutrition, while one in three children is stunted or irreversibly short for their age. Shocks induced by climate change threaten over 500,000 Haitians every year³⁷. Until recently, short term humanitarian programmes were implemented in Haiti that did little to address the chronic problem of hunger and under nutrition in the country

In 2013, Kore Lavi programme was introduced as a four-year pilot project to reduce food insecurity and vulnerability by supporting the Government of Haiti (GoH) in establishing a replicable safety net system, and expanding capacities to prevent child undernutrition. The programme works with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MAST) in order to create a social safety net for food and nutrition security that prioritizes consumption of quality local products. It will be implemented in 24 communes and 5 departments in Haiti over the four years (2013-2017). The programme is financed by USAID and implemented by a consortium of CARE, Action Contre la Faim (ACF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and World Vision (WV). By the end of the pilot phase the project is expected to achieve the following:

- A vulnerability targeting and information management system that is owned and run by MAST and which provides information on more than 150,000 households in 15 communes.
- A food security social safety net based on cash vouchers that are worth 1100 Gourdes (\$25) and an electronic voucher system for 16,500 households that allow them to access nutritious local products.
- Prevent malnutrition in more than 173,000 pregnant or breastfeeding women, children under two, and children under five suffering from acute or moderate malnutrition.
- Build capacity of MAST, other ministries and key national institutions in the management of food security safety nets.

It is envisioned that after four years, the programme will be completely led by the MAST (i.e. at the strategic level to ensure coordination among different actors and ministries; management and monitoring of the programme) and will be incorporated within its social protection measures.

As of August 2015 the following key achievements had been accomplished:

- 130,937 households from 16 communes had been listed in the MAST database; steady progress in the development of the Information System of MAST (SIMAST) had begun; interagency sharing of protocols on vulnerability data were established;
- 14434 beneficiary households were enrolled in the programme. Of these 21% had received more than 12 cumulative months of transfers, (66% between 6-12 months, and 25% - 6 months)
- Signing of the agreement between the MAST and Kore Lavi for the management of the program.

The programme is very new yet it presents important learning that can be useful for humanitarian practitioners interested in linking humanitarian cash based programming with national safety nets, especially in contexts where there are no national cash-based safety nets.

³⁷ WFP, 2015, 10 Facts About Hunger in Haiti, www.wfp.org/stories/10-facts-about-hunger-haiti (accessed on 16th Dec 2015)

The challenges/learning

Technical

1. **Working with government to decide the value of transfer:** Kore Lavi entails transfers of vouchers, food rations and school meals. A positive aspect of the programme has been the active involvement of the MAST in identification of beneficiaries and in deciding the value of transfers. An early involvement of the line ministry in a project designed and implemented by non-government actors is extremely useful in building an early ownership of the government in the programme and its future management.
2. **Maintain a distinction between humanitarian scale-up and the regular programme:** Apart from being the poorest country in the northern hemisphere, Haiti is prone to cyclones, earthquakes, flooding and droughts on a regular basis. The Kore Lavi programme has the potential to expand horizontally to include new beneficiaries in the areas of its implementation. In one year, the programme expanded to include households affected by droughts; however, MAST felt that a distinction must be maintained between the humanitarian programme and the regular voucher based safety net programme. The reason being that a similar programme for new beneficiaries would create confusion (despite communication efforts) within the community on why some people were included earlier, and why some were being included now, and why some are still not included in the programme. A different modality of support i.e. cash for work, was therefore agreed for those beneficiaries who have been temporarily included in the programme. In future this could be turned into a voucher-for-assets programme to address specific dietary diversity concerns.

Management/Administration

1. **Ownership by Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MAST):** Although the project management made efforts to include MAST from the very early stages of the programme, their involvement was largely limited to technical matters such as deciding the value of the voucher. MAST was less engaged with discussions on coordination, management and implementation of Kore Lavi. This meant that there was a lack of clarity on the role of different parts of the Ministry i.e. Which part of the ministry will host Kore Lavi? Who will do what? What will be the protocols? etc. It was assumed by the consortium that the MAST would be happy to play a leadership role. However, whilst MAST were happy with the project and to be a part of it, it soon became clear that they did not want to lead it. There was a clear mismatch of expectations between the two parties in the initial stages of the programme which impacted on the progress of the programme. By mid-2015 efforts had been renewed by Kore Lavi to proactively involve MAST by addressing the specific blocks to their active leadership of the programme.
2. **Consistency in the programme is important for scaling up by governments:** Kore Lavi is implemented by a consortium and even though the core design of the programme is common across all implementing partners, the implementation processes vary from partner to partner depending on their policies and procedures. This is also reflected in the staffing of the programme, wherein there is an inconsistency between the payments made to staff in different locations. For example, one agency's policy allows them to pay for staff transportation and communication, whereas the other agency's policy does not allow the same flexibility. This has serious implications for future ownership and scale-up by a government who would like to have consistency across the programme. These issues must be ironed out at the design stage to avoid problems further down the line.

Political/ Coordination

As Haiti is a poor country, the financial, logistical and human capacity of the government is limited, and this restricts their ability to take a complete ownership of the programme. With increased interest among donors in the programme, MAST is increasingly getting involved, and this is reflected in the recruitment of staff for the programme. Constant pressure to be more involved can elicit a defensive reaction, especially at the field level. At times, decisions are taken at the central level which are not communicated effectively to the staff on the ground, which creates hurdles in implementation. It is important that roles are not only clearly defined between all stakeholders, but within stakeholders as well at the start of the programme. Clear ways of working should be established to avoid overlap of roles and gaps in responsibilities.

Case Study 3: Cadre commun des filets sociaux (ACF, Oxfam, Handicap International, DRC, Solidarités), Mali 2014/ 15. (Case study written by Sigrid Kuhlke)

Following the 2012/13 political turmoil in Mali, coupled with severe drought that led to an important food and nutrition crisis in the north, food insecurity and malnutrition levels were worryingly high: the Emergency Food Security Assessment (WFP) of July 2013 survey showed prevalence of food insecurity as high as 93% in areas such as Gourma Rhaous; the GAM rate in May 2013 stood at 13.5% at national level; and the Cadre Harmonisé of March 2013 had classified Northern Mali in Phase 4 "Crisis Level".

At the very onset of the crisis in 2012/ 13, humanitarian actors responded in an ad hoc way, as best as they could, given the difficult access to Northern Mali, the unclear political circumstances, and the limited capacities humanitarian agencies had at their disposal (offices had been looted, staff killed).

In mid-2013, confronted with these high humanitarian needs, and the changing political context, tending towards more stability (Presidential elections in August/September 2013; setting up of an UN military mission to support stabilization of the north – MINUSMA), the EU set aside a LRRD funding envelope of 23 Million EURO with the aim of facilitating a transition through provision of basic social services, until state services were restored. The funds were transferred to DG ECHO for management and a specific funding decision for 18 months was approved. Within this envelope, 10 million EUR were set aside for "emergency safety nets" aiming at providing direct support to poorest and most-affected households in order to improve access to basic food and non-food items, as well as laying foundations for resilience building (both at household level, and by strengthening in-country social protection systems).

A dialogue with the major humanitarian NGOs operational in northern Mali began with a view to design a programme that would: a) create synergies with the ongoing humanitarian response (especially in-kind food distributions and blanket feeding by WFP and ICRC) in order to supply a complete package adapted to the needs of the poorest households most affected by food insecurity; b) enhance coordination among humanitarian actors and enable better influencing; c) engage development actors, including government and donors into safety nets dialogue in order to facilitate ownership and continuation in terms of funding after the end of the programme; and d) influence the design of the World Bank (WB) funded safety nets project "Jigisemejiri", and make it "fit" for the north.

The programme covered half of the communes of the two northern regions - Gao and Timbuktu (37 communes) – with a coverage of one-third of households. About 40,000 households, i.e. approximately 350,000 people benefited from three cash/voucher instalments throughout 2014, with a total transfer of 100,000 F to each household over the year. The five NGOs shared a common log frame and agreed on a division of labour with regards to geographical coverage, committing to shared indicators and cross-agency documentation and lessons-learning. Each NGO, according to its strength, was designed as lead for a specific issue in order to ensure quality and mutual learning (DRC: accountability; ACF: nutrition; Oxfam: advocacy; Solidarités: M&E; Handicap: national registry).

The amounts and transfer frequency were defined taking into account those set by the WB for the safety nets program Jigisemejiri that had just begun the first cash transfers beginning in 2014 for 5000 pilot households (quarterly transfers of 30,000 FCFA), but also including the planned in-kind food distributions for the north.

Given the high prevalence of malnutrition in the country, it was decided to include a nutrition component within the package (blanket feeding supplied by WFP, plus sensitization). This was coherent with the national safety nets programme which includes a nutrition component as well.

At the beginning of the programme, a full population census coupled with wealth ranking of all households took place, with several objectives: a) avoid exclusion errors; b) have a better idea of programme coverage in a context of moving population; and c) contribute to the set-up of a national social registry.

The transfers, largely based on direct cash transfers, happened mainly through traders already present in the north, as existing microfinance institutions were quite weak. DRC opted for voucher distribution with local traders, given the local market context (weak market infrastructure), the instable security environment and local power stakes (vouchers perceived as less risky; especially with collaboration with local traders who are the "local elite").

Challenges/ learning

Technical

1. The objective linked to resilience building turned out to be too ambitious to reach within the short timeframe (15 months). The impact evaluation realized 6 months after the end of the last cash transfer showed positive immediate effects on household food consumption and asset-building, as well as on local markets, but these effects did not last over time. This confirms the importance for humanitarian actors to create links with national systems and development interventions, with a view to ensure support to households running over several years.
2. The joint M&E framework was demanding given the volatile security context, with limited access to the field, and limited capacity of local field staff. Further simplification would be needed, as well as more accurate and better software than Excel for the database in order to gain in time and efficiency. However, important initial investment in sound M&E (harmonized PDMs and common baseline and endline evaluation) produced impressive results in terms of robustness and findings, which were publicly presented to the government and development donors.
3. With regards to transfer mechanisms, the most adaptive way of transferring money in a volatile security context with low density of population and markets (in addition very weak in some areas), proved to be local traders. Micro-finance institutions struggled to reach remote areas, adapt their procedures to the local contexts (missing ID cards by households, etc.), ensure sufficient availability of funds, and to pay beneficiaries on time. In terms of distribution modalities, both pure cash and in-kind vouchers worked well, and positive effects on local markets were significant.

Management/administration/ logistics

1. The NGO Alliance was not formalized into a “consortium” in order to avoid administrative burden. However, as a drawback, the different staff which were shared among the five agencies, as “joint HR” (M&E, GIS, advocacy, coordination, nutrition) did not have a clear reporting and management line, which produced some inefficiency and frustration.
2. The five NGOs succeeded in jointly negotiating a lower commission paid to traders (5%, versus 7 to 8% for some NGOs who negotiated individually with traders). However, there is still scope to strengthen collaboration, e.g. adopting a common approach with regards to distribution cards to improve efficiency.

Political/coordination

1. Opting for a complete population census and a sound targeting process based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods before the start of the program in order to produce reliable data that could be used by the future national Social Registry, caused an important delay of the humanitarian response. Other elements contributed to the delay as well, such as contract negotiation with the donor, internal coordination issues, etc. As a result, the first cash instalment did not take place as planned during the pre-lean season period (April/May), but only during the peak of the lean season (July/ August), which meant a loss in value of the transfer due to increased staple prices in local markets. Although the full census clearly improved the quality of the programme with regards to minimizing exclusion and improving targeting, it is a very time consuming exercise which needs to be better factored in when defining the project timeline.
2. The database comprising the census data of almost 1,000,000 people (129,000 households) was handed over to the Ministry in charge of Solidarity/Social Protection. The handover process was quite long as safeguards had to be elaborated with regards to protection of personal data, a very sensitive issue in the conflict-affected area of northern Mali. The Ministry, not having the capacity to manage such databases and not having in place protocols to share information on demand, has so far been unable to use the data (update it, share it with other agencies, etc.), which is rapidly outdated in a changing environment such as Northern Mali. A process is currently underway to integrate the database into the national Social Registry, which is being set up by the World Bank-funded safety nets project (sitting within the Ministry of Finance), and which, in the future, is planned to be under the Ministry of Solidarity.

3. Establishing close collaboration with all concerned actors was a priority for the NGOs and the donor, despite the fact that this created a high level of extra workload. After a while, the Ministry of Solidarity showed high interest in the work done by the NGOs, despite the fact that funds were not channelled through state services (and NGOs in such contexts can be perceived as a “competition” to the state). Local staff of the Ministry got involved in project monitoring and benefited from training wherever possible, and an open dialogue was established. As a consequence, they agreed to get involved in the Cash Working Group, which is now has a triple leadership of the Ministry, WFP and Oxfam, in a context where national state-led coordination mechanisms are not yet in place. It should be noted however that the CWG did not function well in 2014 as the five major NGOs did not feel a need for additional coordination mechanisms, thereby weakening existing mechanisms.
4. As a consequence of continuous dialogue led by all actors (lessons-learned workshop, impact evaluation, organization of a national conference on social protection, creation of a dedicated donor group involving the Ministry), safety nets are now high on the agenda. The Ministry of Solidarity was officially designated in January 2016 as being in charge of safety nets (not included in their mandate before). However, there is not yet a dedicated budget line for predictable and regular safety nets targeting the poorest households in the national budget, and funding is so far still ensured by the donor community.
5. Responsibility for safety nets is shared by several ministries in Mali: in addition to the Ministry of Solidarity, the key actor being the Commissariat à la Sécurité alimentaire (CSA), in charge of short-term crisis response. The link between both Ministries is still weak and no mechanisms are yet in place to ensure safety nets are scalable in crisis times i.e. shock-responsive. The creation of the common national Registry might help to move forward, but an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism is still awaited.
6. Despite the important amount of learning produced by the CCFS, influence on the World Bank funded Jigisemejiri project was limited, as the project design was already finalized and no review is planned before the mid-term-review. It would have been beneficial to have a clear agreement with the WB at the outset of the project on how lessons-learned would be formally taken on board (e.g. participating into the MTR of the Jigisemejiri project).

Further reading

[Atelier bilan du Cadre Commun de Filets Sociaux Saisonniers au Nord Mali, 2015](#)

[Cadre Commun sur les Filets Sociaux Saisonniers au Nord Mali, 2014](#)

ANNEX 2: METHODOLOGY AND PEOPLE CONSULTED

METHODOLOGY

A two tiered methodology was used for preparing this guidance. This included detailed interviews with humanitarian actors who have either directly been, or currently are, involved in making efforts to link humanitarian cash based responses with national social protection systems, or have been in advisory functions supporting humanitarian teams in the field in making the links. In total 20 humanitarian practitioners have been interviewed for the preparation of this guidance.

Information collected through these interviews was complemented with the literature review. This guidance draws heavily from the literature review conducted by OPM as a part of their research on shock responsive social protection³⁸.

People Interviewed

Name	Designation	Organisation
Cecile Cherrier	Independent consultant	
Marianne Vik	Independent consultant	
Sumananjali Mohanty	Country Director, Kenya	Oxfam
Elena Qleibo	Food security coordinator, Occupied Palestinian Territories	Oxfam
Rachel Eichholz	Food security and social protection advisor, Lebanon	Oxfam
Nick Mathers		Unicef, Nepal
Remy Pigois		Unicef, Ethiopia
Assiatta Fall		Unicef, West Africa
Nicola Hyper	Social Protection Advisor	Save the Children, London
Davina Jeffery	Livelihoods Advisor	Save the Children, London
Jessica Saulle	Emergency food security Advisor	Save the Children, London
Gabrielle Smith	Independent Consultant	London
Chris Porter	Humanitarian Head of Profession	DFID, UK
Heather Kindness	Senior Adviser, Social Protection Team	DFID, UK
Massimo La Rosa	Regional Food Assistance Expert	ECHO, East Africa
Dipayana Bhattacharya	Social protection and safety net advisor – OMC	WFP, OMC Regional Bureau
Madeliene Evrard Diakite		Niger
Betty Kweyu	Independent consultant	Kenya
Julien Morel	Social Protection Advisor	ACF, France

³⁸ OPM, 2015, Literature Review, DFID Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research

Name	Designation	Organisation
Julien Jacob	Head of Food Security and Livelihood Department	ACF, Spain
Mathieu Vernusse	Deputy Country Director/ Programs	ACF, Haiti
Rebecca Vo	Regional Focal Point – Asia	CaLP
Greg Urayayi Mutsindikwa	Regional Focal Point – East Africa	CaLP
Nathalie Cissokho	Regional Focal Point – West Africa	CaLP
Sigrid Kuhlke		World Bank, Mali

ANNEX 3: TARGETING MECHANISMS*

*The text below has been taken from the High Level Panel of Expert's Report on Social Protection for Food Security. There are many ways to identify eligible beneficiaries for social protection programmes. Each has advantages and disadvantages:

1. Means testing is based on an assessment of each individual's income and assets. In theory this is the most accurate mechanism, but it requires detailed personal information that must be verified and regularly updated, because claimants have incentives to under-report income and because the livelihoods of poor people tend to be variable and unpredictable. This makes means testing extremely expensive to implement.
2. Proxy means testing, using a combination of observable characteristics that are associated with poverty (such as housing quality or access to electricity), is not as accurate but is considerably cheaper.
3. Community-based targeting draws on local knowledge, by asking residents to identify their poorest or most vulnerable community members. Though potentially more accurate and less expensive than other mechanisms, it requires a cohesive community – so typically performs better in rural than urban areas – and is susceptible to 'elite capture', so it requires careful design and close supervision to ensure it is well implemented.
4. Categorical targeting defines eligibility in terms of characteristics that are fairly easy to observe, difficult to manipulate or falsify, and well correlated with poverty or food insecurity. Common targeting categories are based on age (e.g. older persons), gender (female-headed households) or disability. Another example is geographic targeting – delivering benefits to all residents of an area. Categorical targeting is attractive to programme administrators because it is relatively inexpensive, but targeting errors can be high – e.g. not all female-headed households are food insecure (inclusion error), but many male-headed households are (exclusion error).
5. Self-targeting is achieved by raising the costs of accessing benefits or lowering the value of benefits to discourage the non-poor. This may involve: demanding heavy labour and paying low wages on public works schemes; making cash or food recipients queue for transfers at designated pay-points at certain times; transferring 'inferior' commodities (e.g. low quality wheat, or yellow maize). There are ethical concerns with this approach, which can also be counter-productive by reducing programme impacts. For example, lowering public works wages could mean the income participants receive is insufficient to reduce poverty and food insecurity.

Often targeting mechanisms are used in combination, rather than singly, and evidence suggests that this enhances their accuracy (Coady et al., 2004b). For instance, a drought relief programme might first define the drought-affected districts (geographic targeting), then offer public works employment to food insecure people who can work (self-targeting), and free food or cash transfers to food insecure people who cannot work, like child-headed households and older people without support (categorical targeting).

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The Cash Learning Partnership

Over the past decade social protection has emerged as an important social policy measure to tackle poverty and inequality in society, and to address vulnerability to shocks. In line with these developments, there has been increasing interest in forging better links between humanitarian assistance and social protection systems in order to reduce the need for recurrent humanitarian assistance, and to facilitate an effective response in times of crisis.

This has led to gains being made in some countries to strengthen the design of existing social safety nets to make them 'shock responsive', along with a growing number of examples of efforts to use social assistance systems to deliver humanitarian aid. However, social protection continues to be a fairly new concept that is not fully understood by most humanitarian actors.

This guidance note aims to help fill this knowledge gap. It has been prepared from a humanitarian perspective, for humanitarian actors engaged in cash based programming. It recognises that social protection is the responsibility of national governments, but also that there is immense scope for humanitarian actors to play a role in strengthening existing, and supporting the creation of new, social protection systems where they do not exist or are underdeveloped.

This document will support humanitarian actors to decide on their role and consider options for support at different stages of the humanitarian programme management cycle in three different types of context (basic, intermediate and advanced, in terms of the existence of shock responsive social protection systems). The guidance comprises three key parts: (1) conceptual clarity on the terms; (2) establishing the link between humanitarian cash based response and social protection; and (3) practical guidance, including examples, for humanitarian actors on linking humanitarian cash based response with social protection in the three different contexts.

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