SAHEL ADAPTIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAM

Linking Humanitarian Cash Assistance and National Social Protection Systems

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MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK
UKaid from the British people
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
AFD AGENCE FRANÇAISE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT
WORLD BANK GROUP Social Protection & Jobs

Nascent systems

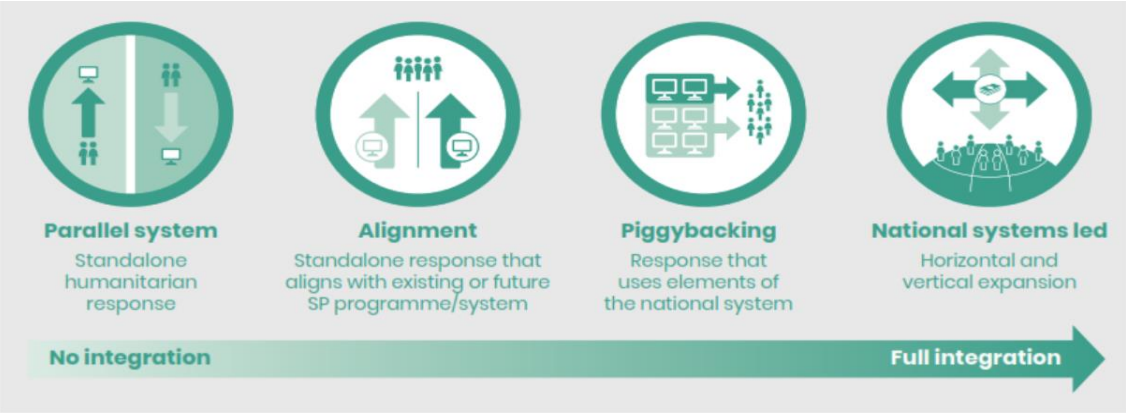
- Since 2014, the six Sahel countries have been laying the foundations of national ASP systems with the support of the Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Multi- Donor Trust Funds (SASPP).
- Despite achievements and expanded reach, national systems in most countries still are not able to cover all the poorest through regular safety nets, and even less so provide at scale support in the lean season
- Coordination with humanitarian partners is key to expanding reach in Sahel- convergence is a technical and financial necessity

Objective

- Identify the most effective connecting points for alignment between social safety nets and humanitarian assistance, with a focus on cash-based assistance;
- Identify the key enablers and barriers to convergence; and
- Provide strategic, policy, and operational reflections on the potential and value add of convergence.

Analytical Framework

Continuum of delivery options



Source: Seyfert et. al (2019)

Instead of framing the humanitarian-social protection links as an 'either-or', the framework 'unbundles the variety of ways and options that actors can consider for better connecting humanitarian and social protection approaches.'

The programmes studied in each country were analysed with regards to 16 different elements, grouped into four different levels: national policy; programme objectives; programme design; and programme implementation

	Parallel System	Alignment	Piggy-back-ing	National System
Legal and policy framework				
Financing				
Governance				
Coordination				
Programme objectives				
Poverty/Vulnerability assessment				
Price and market analysis				
Targeting design, eligibility, and qualifying criteria				
Transfer value, frequency, and modality				
Conditionality				
Beneficiary MIS				
Outreach and communication				
Registration and enrolment				
Payment and delivery				
AAP				
M&E				

Six country case studies

- Analysis focused on cash assistance components of studied programs
- Selected programs for comparison had to support at least 5,000 households and provide cash assistance for at least three months

Burkina Faso

Focus: seasonal drought response and IDPs

Programs:
- PFS- WB funded
- PFS (KfW funded
- PFS (AFD funded)
- UNICEF
- FAO
- PROGRES (NGO Consortium)
- WFP
- Red Cross
- Oxfam

Chad

Focus: Refugee support

Programs:
- PARCA
- WFP support to refugees
- DIZA Sud and DIZA Est (Developpement Inclusif des Zones d'Accueil)

Mali

Focus: seasonal drought response

Programs:
- Jigisemejiri horizontal expansion
- PRESA (Programme de Renforcement du Dispositif National de Securite Alimentaire
- WFP emergency response
- EU-funded PDU implemented by consortium

Mauritania

Focus: seasonal drought response

Programs:
- Tekavoul programme
- Elmaouna shock response program
- WFP, Oxfam, ACF

Niger

Focus: COVID-19 response

Programs:
- World Bank funded response
- WFP and UNICEF BMZ funded response

Senegal

Focus: seasonal drought response

Programs:
- World Bank funded shock responsive pilot for lean season
- Start Network's ARC replica (2020 response)
- WFP lean season response 2021

Mixed picture of convergence

- Convergence is not a goal in itself, and does not always result into better outcomes
- Convergence is not one-directional, it can be reversed
- Overall, there isn't strong convergence yet in the region, despite opportunities and avenues for it
- Some key elements which are weak on convergence actually present great opportunity and are not very contentious and are not yet fully leveraged
- There are compelling strategic reasons in all Sahel countries to aim for stronger convergence. So, how do we translate the principled agreement into action
- The resource situation in the region should oblige partners to work more efficiently together and should be nudged more strongly by donors
- Common tools can be a way of achieving efficiencies, but the investment in their set-up is often a long-term endeavour and humanitarian actors and development actors tend to have different opinions about the business case of this investment

Enablers and barriers exist on a spectrum

Ways of working

Enabling convergence	Enablers-in-waiting	Bi-directional, can help when existing and hinder when not	Barriers and blockages
Established relationships, a history of collaboration and collective learning	Global policy commitment to convergence among actors	Donor policy and administrative procedures	Lack of inter-operability of data systems and different policy approaches to data protection
		Government leadership	Political economy and institutional interest
		Clear and coherent policy objectives	
		Institutional set-up and division of responsibilities on the government side	
		Coordination	
		Capacity strengthening of national partners	

Some ways of working are enablers

History of collaboration and collective learning

- Long term presence of actors and historical collaboration does lend itself toward greater convergence – however its absence is not a barrier
- In Mauritania, repeated interaction and learning built trust and promoted convergence
- Two consecutive EU-funded programmes in Mali had an explicit objective on collective learning through common review of practices, lessons learned workshops and knowledge building and dissemination.

Some ways of working are bidirectional

Leveraging donors

- How donors use their influence on programme design and implementation plays a major role for convergence
- Donors do not always leverage their potential for encouraging convergence. Despite a context favourable to convergence in Senegal, some actors still opt for parallel delivery designs. Donors fund these parallel systems, while also supporting long-term government system-building efforts
- Donors' priorities and risk appetite can be a disincentive for convergence

Some ways of working are enablers when present

Government leadership

- Stable government leadership is important in setting clear policy objectives that guide partners and contributes toward having a stronger system which partners can rely on and converge with.
- Senegal and Mauritania show strong signs toward convergence , in part resulting from the established systems and government's clear role and lead.
- The less established systems in Chad and Burkina Faso means partners are less keen to converge on many key elements despite the need.
- Leadership can be impacted by the country context, in particular the level of stability.

Institutional set up and division of responsibilities

- Stable institutions that reflect buy-in for SP and for building linkages with responses to shocks are pre-requisite for getting partners to rally. Reliable, repeated and long-standing interaction can build trust among different partners.
- A government set-up where roles and responsibilities are unclear, or where there is high turnover or change or where they are 'fragmented by design' is a barrier for stronger coherence

Barriers

Political economy and institutional interest

- Government actors and international agencies have institutional interests. And within the international community the interests of humanitarian and development agencies can be different.
- These interests may be well known but remain unsaid, leaving specific barriers to convergence undiscussed.
- Competition between agencies undermines trust and impedes further harmonisation of efforts even among cash assistance programmes
- Adopting government systems means losing control over, and potentially funding for, implementation arrangements and associated funding, including overhead budgets.

Untapped opportunities for greater convergence

Program elements

Level of contention

Potentially easy to agree upon	Contentious but can be overcome with additional effort	Hard-wired barriers
Utilisation of the same payment system	Sources of funding	Eligibility criteria
Working with the same outreach actors	Registration	Transfer values
Use market assessment to update transfer values	Needs assessment and geographic targeting	
Conditionality		

Less contentious elements

Payment systems

- In many countries government and partners already contract the same payment delivery services but separately and there is limited attempts to leverage joint negotiations to achieve better terms
- Using the same service provider is a low hanging fruit in some countries and a path to converge on

Outreach, comms, and GRMs

- Many programmes establish a network of local partnerships with local civil society organisations. In several countries, these local partner organisations already work across various programmes but there is rarely a systematic mapping of those overlapping engagements.
- Relying on the same front-line delivery staff can act as an enabler for convergence if their presence on the ground is used for joint messaging, for consolidated and harmonised communication
- Joining forces and harmonising complaint and feedback mechanisms would be a way to strengthen overall accountability to affected populations across the sectors and governmental and non-governmental programmes

Contentious but room to move forward

Registration

- Registries can be a connecting point but they can also be contentious
- There is agreement across programmes that a national social registry is a key building block of a SP system and can potentially be a useful instrument for humanitarian programmes
- Tension over the registry is often caused by diverging technical opinions on the methodology and perceived lack of transparency of the process

Less contentious

Mauritania	The development of Mauritania's registry was iterative and participatory and a collaborative approach. But humanitarians have not yet opted to exclusively use its data. The registry's coverage is unclear; the data needs updating; and the captured data do not allow to fully assess levels of food insecurity
Senegal	In Senegal use of registry is mandatory for all social programmes. It is viewed by stakeholders as a way to gain time and to reduce the cost of targeting for the lean season response. However, numerous respondents highlighted the importance of keeping the data up to date to maintain its credibility and relevance
Mali	Use of the registry is considered as a potential element to facilitate convergence. However, transferring beneficiary data from seasonal cash programmes to the registry has been inconsistent. Partners argue that the registration process is too heavy and time consuming. Lack of budget to support this is identified as a barrier for timely and useful implementation
Chad	Actors see the usefulness of a registry but have concerns over the heaviness of the process and associated costs. Following a request from donors, humanitarian actors applied a census approach to registration. As a result, the cost of the exercise increased, it took a long time and created high expectations among communities
BF	The process of building a registry is highly contentious and parallel approaches have resulted in the existence of 4 databases, each managed by a different institution. The reasons are: partly technical; partly institutional (owning the database seen as a major institutional asset to attract funding); and partly linked to lack of collaborative spirit

contentious

Contentious and difficult to change

Transfer value

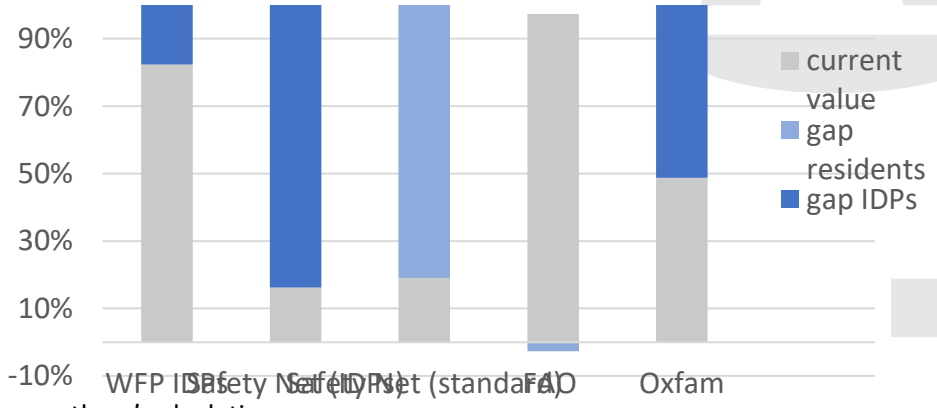
- The way they are calculated and the review processes to assess whether they need to be adjusted, are a recurrent topic of dissent between social safety nets and humanitarian cash programmes in the region and beyond
- Humanitarian actors base the transfer value calculation on the objective of meeting basic needs without resorting to negative coping strategies when the transfer is added to the income that a household is able to achieve on its own
- Governments are under higher pressure to prioritise coverage and often follow the principle of equity. They have to ensure fiscal sustainability of the transfers,
- Humanitarians, however, usually prioritise adequacy over coverage and accept that they can only select a limited number of beneficiaries as their resources are finite. This is also the reason why they pay such high attention to the beneficiary selection process

Contentious and difficult to change

Transfer value

- Harmonising the values is a complicated process. There are different ways that the harmonisation could occur, and harmonising does not necessarily mean 'homogenising' transfer values
- Three ways of harmonising: 1) aligning social protection payments to humanitarian transfer values in a crisis; 2) aligning humanitarian transfer values to social protection levels; or 3) a layered and complementary approach.
- In Burkina Faso and Mauritania, actors are actively discussing ways to implement the third model
- Layering of support can be perceived as unfair by communities not benefitting

Current transfer values and gaps in comparison to MEB in Burkina Faso



Source: authors' calculation

Conclusion/Recommendations

Conclusion/ Recommendations

- There are compelling strategic reasons in all Sahel countries to aim for stronger convergence. So, how do we translate the principled agreement that working together will bring better results into practical ways of doing so.
- The strategic added value is not yet sufficiently debated at country level.

  → Need to establish a shared and clear vision of what it means in country and second how it should look like.

- The resource situation in the region should oblige partners to work more efficiently together and should be nudged more strongly by donors

  → Reducing overhead costs is seen as an important added value of stronger convergence, either by leveraging government social protection delivery systems but also, where this is not possible, by negotiating better terms and conditions e.g., with financial service providers

- Common tools can be a way of achieving efficiencies, but the investment in their set-up is often a long-term endeavour and humanitarian actors and development actors tend to have different opinions about the business case of this investment
- There will continue to be a trade-off between the extent of coverage that a sustainable social transfer system can provide and the need to remain affordable for the government in the long term

Conclusion/ Recommendations

- Missed opportunities lend themselves to being seized promptly:
  - Mapping how different agencies partner with the same local NGO for outreach could be easily done.
  - Leveraging shared payment mechanisms is equally a valuable next step that is fully under the control of the operational actors.
  - Global policy commitments, need to trickled down to the country level and it is important that agencies invest more time and energy in disseminating those commitments across their country operations.
- There are two sets of barriers that are difficult to overcome:
  - Those linked to principles of operating and 'programme identity' as well as those resulting from underlying institutional interests. Especially the latter 'are not amenable to technical fixes.
- The literature recommends focussing on developing shared objectives to make progress also on difficult topics

Thank you