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SOCIAL PROTECTION

AS A PATHWAY TO
SUSTAINING PEACE



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Abbreviations

BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
COP	Colombian peso
CSO	civil society organization
DDR	demobilization, disarmament and reintegration
ESSN	Emergency Social Safety Net
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)
IDPs	internally displaced persons
IEP	Institute for Economics and Peace
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
KISED	Kalobyei Integrated Social and Economic Development Programme
ND-GAIN	Notre Dame-Global Adaptation Initiative
NGO	non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PHP	Philippine peso
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPIAC-B	Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board
TRY	Turkish Lira
UAH	Ukrainian hryvnia
UISSS	Unified Information System of the Social Sphere
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

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Executive summary

Global crises are becoming the new normal. From the COVID-19 pandemic to climate change and the contemporary food price crisis, vulnerable populations are facing increasingly difficult odds of flourishing. Such challenges are even more pronounced where there is violence and conflict. The causes and drivers of conflict are often complex and interrelated, with the impacts on rural populations being profound, far-reaching and long-lasting. The multidimensional nature of conflict demands from actors to direct more attention to its causes, drivers and impacts. Demographic growth, poor governance, identity mobilization and structural inequalities are often exacerbated by limited access to scarce renewable natural resources, which are often intimately connected to rural lives and livelihoods. Slow- and rapid-onset shocks, including those associated with climate change, can reinforce existing drivers of conflict, requiring a comprehensive response to support sustainable peace. Addressing underlying vulnerabilities among rural populations, such as food insecurity, social inequality and poverty, is foundational to responding to the impacts of conflict as well as to enhancing efforts to support peace.

Rural populations, and in particular smallholder farmers, are bearing the brunt of the consequences of global crises, including many of the most pressing social and environmental challenges. It is estimated that small farms (less than two hectares) represent 84 percent of farms around the world, operating on approximately 12 percent of available agricultural land and producing around 35 percent of the world's food (Lowder, Sánchez and Bertini, 2021). Resource-limited populations, such as small-scale farmers, foresters, or pastoralists, persist in rural areas despite a historical focus by governments worldwide to urbanize and industrialize.

Evidence on social protection and its adaptation to respond to recent global challenges has induced governments worldwide to establish and invest in new and improved systems, and related programmes. Cash transfers, insurance schemes and public employment programmes are just a few examples of how social protection is improving the lives of the poor and vulnerable. Social protection interventions have indeed proven to contribute to broader development outcomes, such as those related to poverty reduction, food and nutrition security, and gender equality. Besides, social protection systems are deemed an effective tool to address covariate shocks, as exemplified by the scale of social protection responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and related containment measures, as well as the current global food crisis.

There has instead been very limited operational research regarding social protection's contributions to peace outcomes. In order to start addressing the gap, this paper discusses how social protection can potentially support sustaining peace efforts by understanding peace not as an outcome but, rather, as an ongoing process. In doing so, it presents social protection's potential contributions to addressing both the drivers as well as the impacts of conflict. Since social protection's contributions to sustaining peace is a novel subject of research, this paper also offers an overview of potential areas where further investigation can provide a more detailed and empirically rich analysis to inform the design and implementation of interventions.

There is a pressing need for such a research agenda. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly identifies peace as a core element necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): "there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development" (United Nations General Assembly, 2015, p. 2).

Thus, the process of sustaining peace is an essential worldwide objective, and interventions such as social protection programmes will need to be conflict-sensitive in order to contribute to this effort in the short- and long-term. This is particularly the case in social protection, a sector that, by definition, involves working with government and national systems which may themselves be compromised by ongoing conflicts, and hence this poses a challenge to humanitarian principles of conflict neutrality and “do no harm”.

As a starting point, this paper differentiates such contributions between “working in conflict” and “working on conflict”. These categories offer productive ways to disentangle the different paths through which social protection interventions can be implemented in a responsible manner that minimizes the potential to do harm and maximizes the potential to contribute to addressing both drivers and impacts of conflict. One of the most important areas where social protection can make clear contributions to tackling the impacts of conflict is addressing underlying vulnerabilities and inequalities of food insecurity and poverty, which can also

indirectly contribute to addressing conflict drivers. Conceptual understandings and empirical evidence on this latter contribution are currently lacking. Therefore, this paper intends to open up new possibilities for looking at the crucial role of social protection in sustaining peace, especially if it is conflict-sensitive.

Sustaining peace may be a context-specific challenge, but it is a shared goal among governments and humanitarian and development stakeholders globally. With that said, and while generally moving towards the realization of a vision where social protection systems are gradually being strengthened and are likely to support peace, there are numerous settings in which engaging with governments that are involved in conflicts is not possible or recommended, and may directly violate the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and doing no harm. In such cases, it becomes a complicated question of whether, when and how to engage in social protection, and of formulating concrete country-specific strategies to bridge the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus in partnership with other relevant stakeholders.



Introduction: A grounded approach to social protection

As conflicts and crises have become more complex and recurrent, the world finds humanitarian resources increasingly strained to provide effective protection to the rapidly increasing volume of directly and indirectly affected populations. In this context, the most recent reports and strategies produced by the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General have made the link among humanitarian, development and peace the focus of their approach, namely, the Triple Nexus (United Nations, 2018). As stated in the Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (2020), «comprehensive cross-pillar approaches to building and sustaining peace are the cornerstone of the work of the United Nations to promote the coherence of international efforts in support of national Governments and their people” (United Nations, 2020, p. 5).

In line with the role that social protection can play in strengthening social cohesion, there is also a recognition of the positive contribution social protection can make in contexts affected by conflict and to the Triple Nexus (Cherrier, 2021). Thus, in November 2021, the UN Secretary-General outlined a four-point “roadmap for inclusion”, urging countries to take greater action on the issues of people, prevention, gender and institutions: “Without full inclusion and equality, peace is a job half done. Because true, sustainable peace can only be carried forward by people who are supported, who are included and valued, who feel they are truly part of their society – and have a stake in its future” (United Nations Secretary-General, 2021, p. 2). Furthermore,

the UN Secretary-General recommended that countries invest in human development and a “New Social Contract” that includes universal health coverage, social protection, and COVID-19 vaccines for all.¹

Donor and international humanitarian and development communities have explicitly made commitments to strengthen the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, which incorporates an emphasis on building inclusive social protection systems in settings affected by conflict (Sabates-Wheeler *et al.*, 2022). For instance, in 2016, the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) recognized the role that social protection plays in supporting the Nexus by addressing vulnerabilities and scaling up systems to cover needs during shocks. In line with this, SPIAC-B proposed a new approach to tackle fragility and crises by viewing humanitarian interventions “as a window of opportunity to trigger investments in the development of ‘nascent’ safety nets or social assistance structures. The longer-term aim is to progressively move chronic humanitarian caseloads into social protection systems where possible” (Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board, 2015, p. 2).

The present paper analyses the role of social protection in the process of sustaining peace. Governments and international organizations are striving to integrate social protection into development programmes in contexts affected by conflict. In support of their actions, it is not only necessary, but also urgent, to identify the variables and modalities of action to optimize the potential

1 The COVID-19 pandemic and its shortfalls on nearly all socioeconomic dimensions of life have indeed put the role of social protection at the heart of the debate, both as a safety net and as a core component of the social contract, i.e. in an indirect (socioeconomic) and direct (politico-societal) dimension of contribution to peace. The press release is available at: <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sgsm21013.doc.htm>.

contributions of social protection interventions to sustaining peace.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has devastated societies and economies around the world, with the poorest and most vulnerable bearing the brunt of its consequences. The pandemic has proven the need for comprehensive social protection systems in all societies. However, in many contexts, the direct and indirect effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related containment measures might aggravate existing conflict drivers and inequalities between and within communities. According to the UN Secretary-General, “the current pandemic threatens not only hard-won development and peacebuilding gains but also risks re-instigating conflicts or fomenting new ones” (United Nations, 2018, p. 3).

Devereux (2000) and Ovadiya *et al.* (2015) claim that the greatest need for social protection is often found in countries where the state has the lowest capacity to provide it. This is particularly the case in conflict-affected contexts (Ovadiya *et al.*, 2015). Clearly, the relationship between social protection programming and conflict is an important area that warrants careful attention. On the one hand, conflict exacerbates existing vulnerabilities that social protection interventions seek to address, thereby posing the need to increase support for existing recipients as well as extending it to new groups of the population (Sabates-Wheeler *et al.*, 2022). On the other hand, conflict may create new challenges that hinder the effective design, targeting and delivery of social protection programming. These challenges vary from context to context. Further important challenges may include: the association of the national government with one party in the conflict; the collapse of the administrative structures required to deliver social protection benefits and/or services; the perception that state-provided benefits support one group over another, hence exacerbating tensions; or the inaccessibility of some areas of the country because of the presence of armed groups (Sabates-Wheeler *et al.*, 2022).

In conflict-affected contexts, internationally-led humanitarian action often plays a crucial role in addressing acute needs of populations (Sabates-Wheeler *et al.*, 2022). However, as conflicts become more protracted, humanitarian interventions are increasingly seen as an inadequate mechanism to support chronic needs over the long-term (Sabates-Wheeler *et al.*, 2022). Hence, priority is given to developing approaches that go beyond the immediate need of saving lives and reducing human suffering. Social protection programmes can reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities, promote social cohesion and the social contract, as well as support human development and build the resilience of people and their livelihood systems (Sabates-Wheeler *et al.*, 2022). At the same time, humanitarian aid fits into the political economy of fragile, violent or conflict-affected settings and can be used as a tool that lends legitimacy to, or influence on, national or subnational actors that have an interest in maintaining the status quo.

Two assumptions guide this paper:

- (i) social protection can contribute to sustaining peace or improve the prospects for peace at multiple scales, depending on the context; and
- (ii) specific considerations are required to ensure that social protection interventions are conflict-sensitive.

These hypotheses are tested both conceptually as well as operationally. The conceptual approach draws on existing literature, evidence and examples, while the operational testing uses case studies from countries in contexts affected by conflict or exposed to significant socioeconomic vulnerabilities. The latter also relies on interviews with numerous social protection practitioners. Additional details of evidence and examples from case-study countries are included in boxes throughout the paper.

1. Defining conflict and sustaining peace

To assess any contribution of social protection systems to sustaining peace, it is first necessary to define and situate the concepts of conflict and peace. Assessing or evaluating a contribution to peace requires not only an understanding of a conflict dynamic, but also a situational analysis on the nature of peace envisaged as an outcome. The outcome may refer to the mitigation of conflict, a reduction in violence, improved inter-community relations, or post-conflict peacebuilding and national reconciliation.

This section not only explores current definitions of key concepts, but also seeks to contextualize terms to better frame how social protection may or may not contribute to peace.

1.1. DEFINING CONFLICT

Conflict is broadly defined as irreconcilable or opposing positions by two or more groups over actual or perceived differences in needs, interests, and/or goals (FAO, 2019a). Conflict is commonly associated with the use of violence, whether at the interpersonal, intercommunity or international level. Yet, conflict may also be non-violent. For example, there are ongoing, non-violent and localized disputes over the access to and/or the control over renewable natural resources, such as land or marine resources.

Although conflict primarily evokes negative connotations, it may also draw attention to existing imbalances within a system. If such imbalances are acceptably resolved, improved cooperation and engagement at differing spatial levels may contribute towards a more beneficial societal transformation. While violent conflict is extremely destructive and often disproportionately affects the most vulnerable, managing or resolving conflict may also contribute to new ways of thinking,

realize agricultural and livelihoods potential, and also create space for previously marginalized voices, including women and youth. Conversely, when conflicts are not addressed or managed in an inclusive and participatory manner, there is the risk of escalation or intensification, which may adversely affect intra and intercommunity relations, trust in institutions and the state, and undermine livelihoods and household resilience, among other areas.

Conflicts rarely possess a linear causality, which refers to when one action or issue can be directly attributed to a specific conflict. For example, a conflict line may exist between communities or user groups over access to a water point, however, the conflict line is situated within a broader conflict dynamic or system, influenced by a complex array of interlinked structural causes and drivers, producing differing and disaggregated impacts. What may appear to be a horizontal community conflict over access to water may in fact be part of a broader conflict involving different user groups (farmers, livestock owners), identities (tribe, ethnicity) and a history of socioeconomic marginalization of one or more of the conflict actors.

It is important to underscore that the actors involved in organizing and sustaining conflict and violence may not necessarily be interested in “peace”. Irreconcilable differences in needs, interests, and/or goals, including economic, political and ideological, may prevent some groups from engaging in dialogue. Prior to any considerations on supporting peaceful dialogue, management or resolution processes, a structured understanding of the broader conflict dynamics is necessary to understand the complex interactions between the causes and drivers of conflict at differing spatial levels.

1.2. THE CAUSES AND DRIVERS OF CONFLICT IN RURAL AREAS

The causes of conflict are usually not immediately visible to casual observers. The causes are systemic or foundational and are most often associated with the national landscape after having been generated over longer periods of time. The drivers of conflict are more visible, being the issues or factors contributing to a greater likelihood of divisions and disputes occurring. Conflict drivers can initiate, deepen, intensify or prolong conflict. Collectively, the complex interrelationship between causes and drivers is referred to as the conflict dynamic or system.

Understanding why conflict occurs can be a difficult undertaking for governments or policymakers. Conflict dynamics are complex and multi-layered, while causality is influenced by the interrelation of conflict lines. To better understand the multidimensional drivers, FAO has worked with Interpeace to field test and develop both a *Guide to Context Analysis* and a *Conflict-Sensitivity Programme Clinic*. These outcomes identified the following five dimensions to categorize conflict drivers: political/governance, economic, social, environmental and insecurity (FAO, 2019b). The

work from FAO and Interpeace is in line with the five dimensions of fragility presented in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report on *States of Fragility 2016: Understanding Violence*, summarized in Table 1 with a description (OECD, 2016).

The risks and weaknesses presented above are disproportionately found in low- and middle-income countries with weak or weakened public institutions and participatory processes, and particularly in rural areas, which are often sparsely populated. These areas are more challenging to control as well as to enforce laws and regulations and are the preferred base for non-state armed groups (FAO, 2022a). Indeed, in many of the world’s armed conflicts, key structural causes and conflict drivers are found in rural settings. Often, there is also the risk that non-violent conflicts, including those over the access to and management of natural resources, can devolve into violence, affecting rural development, livelihoods and human security.

Economic causes include poor economic infrastructure, structural underemployment and inequality. High levels of youth underemployment, the closure of markets and

TABLE 1. FIVE DIMENSIONS OF FRAGILITY

Dimension	Description
Economic	“Weaknesses in economic foundations and human capital including macroeconomic shocks, unequal growth and high youth unemployment.”
Environmental	“Vulnerability to environmental, climatic and health risks that affect citizens’ lives and livelihoods. Risk factors can be external or internal, including exposure to natural disasters; air, water and sanitation quality; prevalence of infectious disease; number of uprooted people; and vulnerability of household livelihoods.”
Political	“Risks inherent in political processes, events or decisions; lack of political inclusiveness (including of elites); and transparency, corruption and society’s ability to accommodate change and avoid oppression.”
Security	“Violence and crime, including both political and social violence.”
Societal	“Risks affecting societal cohesion that stem from both vertical and horizontal inequalities, including inequality among culturally defined or constructed groups and social cleavages.”

Source: Authors’ elaboration adapted from OECD. 2016. *States of Fragility 2016: Understanding Violence*. OECD. doi.org/10.1787/9789264267213-en

economic shocks, including those emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic and related containment measures, can undermine social and economic resilience and food security. Poverty, the lack of livelihood opportunities, and dim prospects for a better future are often rooted in social exclusion and can ultimately fuel conflict dynamics. Moreover, economic downturns can contribute to further scarcity of natural resources, neglect of rural infrastructure, and threaten rural livelihoods through loss of employment, decreased agricultural demand and increased living costs. In addition, these stressors can lead to negative coping mechanisms fuelling conflicts, such as recruitment into non-state armed groups, early marriages, or increased disputes over resources among groups in a society (FAO, 2022a).

Causes related to the environment and renewable natural resources refer to insecure land tenure, deforestation, land degradation and water scarcity. With a combination of slow- and rapid-onset events, natural hazards can deteriorate food security and climate-sensitive livelihoods. Furthermore, there has been an increasing phenomenon of climate-induced displacement and migration “which may be defined as persons or groups of persons whose displacement was mainly triggered by slow-onset environmental degradation” (Samuel Hall, 2021, p. 6). The effects of climate change are exacerbated by unequal access to renewable natural resources and underdeveloped infrastructure, difficult market access or lack of crop diversification. However, questions around access to and control over natural resources are beyond the scope of this paper.

Yet, it is important to consider that longstanding issues related to extraction and exploitation have shaped structural resource inequality in low- and middle-income countries. These inequalities are further exacerbated by forced displacement and continued land-use changes, such as mining industry or the intensive exploitation of palm oil, cocoa, coffee, etc. The relationship between food (in)security and conflict is especially relevant for rural areas where communities and, in particular, small-scale food producers, tend to experience

higher levels of poverty and dependence on climate-sensitive livelihoods. Conflict can lead to food insecurity by displacing rural populations reliant on agriculture, destroying agricultural assets, and disrupting market functionality. Moreover, food scarcity often dismantles the social fabric and can lead to the emergence of conflict (Cullen and Brinkman, 2013). As Berman (2009) points out, the ability to obtain food and capital often plays as much of a role – if not more – than ideological motives for joining a cause. The availability of food is foundational for sustaining peace.

Political causes may consist of poor governance, corruption, centre-periphery marginalization and exclusionary political structures. In rural areas, issues related to governance are often revealed during disputes over the access to and control over natural resources. Poor governance is manifested by vulnerability to eviction resulting from weak land tenure and natural resource governance, which especially penalizes indigenous peoples or pastoralist communities of minority social groups. Unaddressed long-standing grievances over political, economic and social inequalities perpetuate distrust within and between communities, leading to weak social cohesion and potentially the emergence of conflicts. Effective governance, which is at the heart of the service delivery for social protection, is key to ensuring social accountability by the citizenry and to strengthening social cohesion, thereby reducing the risk of conflict.

There are also causes related to security. Depending on the context, they may include lack of accountability of law enforcement bodies, porous borders, the proliferation of weapons and the presence of non-state armed groups. The effect of these causes and drivers may assume the form of widespread criminality, the proliferation of armed groups and a negative impact on citizens’ freedom of movement and the exercise of their livelihoods. Broader insecurity can also undermine the effectiveness of governance institutions, reduce accountability and have disproportionate impacts on already vulnerable populations.

Societal causes contributing to a conflict dynamic may encompass demographic growth, patriarchal norms, traditional customs and weak educational systems. As emphasized by Babajanian (2012, p. 18), “The mechanisms that produce and reproduce social exclusion include inadequate or discriminatory policies, poor governance, and exclusionary local norms and traditional customs. Social exclusion may result from social identity (e.g. race, gender, ethnicity, social status, caste, or religion) or social location (e.g. areas that are rural, remote, stigmatised or suffering from war or conflict).

1.3. SUSTAINING PEACE: AN INCREMENTAL AND SYSTEM APPROACH

When is a society in a state of peace? When does a society shift from being in a state of conflict to one of peace? This paper considers peace to operate on a spectrum. At the minimalist end of such a spectrum, the “absence of violence”, as defined by Galtung (1964, p. 2), is a situation of negative

peace, while “the integration of human society” represents a state of positive peace. Expanding on Galtung’s definition, the Institute for Economics & Peace (2022, p. 4) defines positive peace “as the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies”. Understanding how to conceptualize peace enables policymakers involved with social protection systems to enhance their potential to contribute to peace, and the means to monitor and evaluate that contribution.

Sustaining peace is not a static achievement or simply the absence of conflict. It is about the extent to which a society is able to manage and transcend conflicts peacefully and constructively. A dual emphasis on prevention and shared responsibilities has two direct implications.

On 27 April 2016, the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council passed two substantively identical resolutions on sustaining peace (*A/RES/70/262 2016* and *S/RES/2282 2016*) in conclusion of the 2015 review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. The term “sustaining

BOX 1. FOOD INSECURITY IN SOMALIA

Looking at the recent history of Somalia, food insecurity may have played an ambiguous role in the occurrence of local armed conflicts. Cullen and Brinkman (2013, p. 4) note that “while food insecurity may be a source of grievances and motivate individual participation in rebellion in some instances, it may suppress conflict via its effect on the resource base necessary to sustain rebellion”. Hammond and Vaughan-Lee (2012, p. 2) argue that the food security crisis fuelled not only domestic conflict in Somalia, but also that “it has eroded trust between stakeholders and increased insecurity for humanitarian personnel and civilians living in conflict zones, severely constraining humanitarian space”. In other words, domestic food insecurity not only fuelled conflict in the country, but also between national insurgencies and international humanitarian agencies.

The 2011 famine caused the forced displacement of thousands of farmers and herders, which directly affected the economic base of Al-Shabaab and led to massive defections in 2012 and 2013. The same phenomena were observed in 2017 and 2019 during locust infestations and recurring droughts. In the case of Somalia, food security concerns were and continue to be a key driver of conflict. The prolonged and repeated food insecurity exacerbated existing social and political issues that undergirded conflict in the country. Therefore, addressing food security is of fundamental concern not only to improving rural livelihoods but also to addressing drivers of conflict.

Sources: Cullen, H. & Brinkman, H.J. 2013. Food Insecurity and Conflict Dynamics: Causal Linkages and Complex Feedbacks. *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 2(2): 26, 1–18. Department of Peace Studies and International Development. Bradford, UK, University of Bradford. [Cited 22 June 2023]. doi.org/10.5334/sta.bm; Hammond, L. & Vaughan-Lee, H. 2012. *Humanitarian space in Somalia: A scarce commodity*. HPG Working Paper, April 2012. London, Humanitarian Policy Group and ODI. [Cited 06 June 2023]. <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/7646.pdf>

peace” was introduced as a counterpart to “peacebuilding”. The latter has been narrowly interpreted as an exogenous and time-bound process after the guns have been silenced (Mahmoud and Makoond, 2017). In contrast to previous discussions, where conflict and peace were seen as binary, “sustaining peace” reclaims peace in its own right, which not only affects states after a conflict but also states considered to be stable:

“The Security Council recognizes that ‘sustaining peace’, as drawn from the Advisory Group of Experts report, should be broadly understood as a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development, and emphasizing that sustaining peace is a shared task and responsibility that needs to be fulfilled by the Government and all other national stakeholders, and should flow through all three pillars of the United Nations engagement at all stages of conflict, and in all its dimensions, and needs sustained international attention and assistance.” (United Nations, 2016, p. 2).

As a concept, sustaining peace is sufficiently expansive to comprise interventions intending to decrease the level or frequency of conflict, to better manage conflicts when they arise, to support improved cooperation, and to build trust in and between communities and the state. This is in addition to more holistic responses in post-peace agreement contexts.

Even after the signing of peace agreements, peace is certainly not a guaranteed outcome. In other words, sustaining peace is an ongoing effort and process. Effective peace and reconciliation agreements need plans to address the underlying causes and drivers of conflict, while effectively supporting the implementation

of any peace accord. For example, in post-conflict contexts, reconstruction and avoiding future conflicts is not just about forming a government and building physical infrastructure, but also rebuilding the social fabric and contract in addition to economic stability. A process of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants is likely needed. Efforts to address grievances and reconcile communities should be accompanied by support for livelihoods and investments in economic infrastructure and the provision of services, such as inclusive social protection systems.

Positive peace necessitates time. Effective coordination between state and non-state actors is required to agree upon and implement an incremental and iterative approach. In order to sustain peace in “low peace countries”, stakeholders may need to improve relations between different ethnicities and social groups, enhance administrative effectiveness and inclusivity of the legislature, boost administrative transparency and accountability, reduce socioeconomic disparities and/or improve access to social services (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2020).

Structural causes of conflict contribute to an environment where conflict is more likely to occur once they become associated with factors that drive, mobilize or incite disputes, tensions and violence. Defining contributions to sustaining peace, therefore, requires an understanding of temporality and causal complexity. As Miall (2007) argued, there is a need to put the context back within peace and conflict theories, as contextual factors condition the probability of both conflict emerging and peaceful resolutions.

First, only through the adoption of a systems approach, or by developing a comprehensive contextual understanding and formulating interventions that address the causes and drivers of conflict while incentivizing peace contributing activities, can sustaining peace be effectively supported. An essential and foundational driver for sustaining peace in rural areas is to understand that local contexts are often shaped

by long-entrenched causes and drivers (e.g. centuries-old agricultural practices, sociocultural norms, gendered roles and functions, clan and tribal rivalries, etc.) and more recent ones (e.g. displacement, imposition of monoculture, non-state armed groups, ethno-politics and geopolitics). Understanding the complex causes and drivers of conflict and how they interact should inform how interventions are formulated and implemented.

Second, interventions that contribute to sustaining peace must be conflict-sensitive. Conflict sensitivity is the process of understanding the interaction between the context and an intervention and minimizing an intervention's potential negative impacts on conflict dynamics while at the same time maximizing its positive influence on them. There are three areas of consideration that relate to conflict sensitivity: governance effects, economic effects and social effects (FAO, 2022a). Interventions may inadvertently fuel conflict along each of these areas if they are not designed in a conflict-sensitive manner. Peace-contributing activities are implemented in fragile or conflict-affected contexts, where poor governance, high levels of need and fractured societal relations are present. By lacking conflict sensitivity, interventions may reverse or undermine any positive contribution to peace, or themselves become a factor contributing to fragility.

Third, a systems approach implies that action on only one of the determinants of peace is insufficient. At the same time, extensive stakeholder coordination is required. Only a system approach through action on the different dependent variables can effectively contribute to sustaining peace and reducing the drivers of conflict. This understanding suggests that social protection interventions are one piece of the puzzle. One intervention or one actor cannot effectively contribute to sustaining peace without the support of state actors (international, regional, national and subnational), but also not without the collaboration of other stakeholders (donors, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations [NGOs]) as well as local communities, civil

society actors and possibly the private sector. For example, income security provided through a social protection system may be able to make a significant contribution to avoiding the resurgence of conflict in a volatile area by strengthening the absorptive capacity of communities. Such a contribution helps to reduce the risks of conflict recurrence in a context where economic hardship may otherwise exacerbate underlying tensions.

In this regard, it is indeed more accurate to situate social protection as offering more of a contribution than addressing causality. It is a question of understanding whether and how social protection programmes, like other interventions, can positively influence peace in each context. This contribution can be direct or indirect. It can have short- or long-term effects, and it can be more or less pronounced depending on the modality of the social protection mechanism considered (cash transfers, pensions, maternity insurance schemes, etc.), and according to the level of socioeconomic development and social cohesion of the area considered. With that said, concrete components of social protection-related interventions could be designed in a way that they initiate, foster and accelerate positive dynamics, for example, around building community accountability and trust through well-designed and inclusive targeting and communications, installing effective and independent grievance and complaints mechanisms, or developing transparent and trustworthy approaches to payments.

1.4. PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINING PEACE IN RURAL AREAS

This section presents seven illustrative pathways (FAO, 2022a) to sustaining peace in rural contexts, each of which articulate the underlying logic and causal mechanisms through which interventions may have a positive impact on local peace dynamics. Each of these pathways serve to describe how change is expected to happen, and on which assumptions a status of peace is based. Furthermore, the pathways offer context-specific solutions that are interlinked and

based on technical activities with potential peace outcomes. Individual or coordinated interventions may follow one or several pathways subject to the localized context. It is important to note that the pathways describe contributions envisioned to primarily support localized peace in place of more national processes. Improved prospects for local peace can, however, reduce the risk of vertical escalation, while also supporting higher level national peace agreements.

Pathway 1: Governance of land and other renewable natural resources

If regulatory frameworks are strengthened and institutions more effectively regulate the use and rights to land and other natural resources, *then* competition over natural resources will be reduced and trust between communities and local authorities will increase, *because* natural resource governance mechanisms will be more transparent to users, will function more effectively and will be perceived as being impartial. Importantly, effective governance of land and natural resources will also depend on the level of resource inequalities present (see Pathway 4).

Pathway 2: Strengthened conflict management mechanisms

If people have stronger peacebuilding and conflict-resolution skills, and formal and informal mechanisms for conflict management are established or revived, *then* tensions and disputes will more likely be addressed in a non-violent manner and resource-related incidents will be reduced, *because* community members will have increased capacity and willingness to prevent and resolve conflicts, and community members and local authorities will play their part effectively in preventing or mitigating conflict, and building peace locally.

Pathway 3: Increased agricultural productivity

If the productivity of renewable natural resources is increased, *then* there will be less competition for natural resources and the opportunity cost of engaging in violence will increase, *because* scarcity of natural resources will be reduced, and more people will be able to benefit from

natural resources and agricultural outputs. On the contrary, increased productivity can lead to an increase in the value of resources, which could attract additional competition and draw more powerful actors to the scene, potentially leading to increased tensions or further marginalization of those with more informal rights. Interventions to increase productivity should be tailored specifically to the more marginalized sectors of society.

Pathway 4: Equitable access to natural resources

If natural resources are accessed and used more equitably by community members and social groups, *then* grievances and a sense of injustice will be reduced, and horizontal and vertical social cohesion (i.e. trust among people, and between people and authorities, respectively) will increase, *because* tenure rights to, and control over, productive resources will benefit marginalized social groups (e.g. ethnic groups, pastoralists) and community members (e.g. women and youth), and their sense of exclusion will be reduced.

Pathway 5: Improved relationships and joint problem-solving

If relationships are improved and the capacity for joint problem solving within and between communities is increased, *then* disputes will more likely be addressed in a non-violent manner and horizontal social cohesion (i.e. trust among people) will increase, *because* there will be increased trust within and between communities, and more collaborative management of collective natural resources.

Pathway 6: Constructive engagement and inclusive decision-making

If constructive engagement between local communities and local institutions is increased and decision-making is more inclusive, *then* disputes will more likely be addressed in a non-violent manner and vertical social cohesion (i.e. trust between local authorities and people) will increase, *because* people will feel more empowered and taken seriously by authorities; authorities will be more aware of communities'



needs, including marginalized groups; and authorities will be more responsive and committed to implementing solutions in line with community needs.

Pathway 7: Viability of agricultural livelihoods in conflict situations

If the viability of agricultural livelihoods in situations of conflict and insecurity is maintained, *then* the opportunity cost of involvement in violence will be increased, *because* people’s key livelihood assets will be protected; they will have a more positive, longer-term perspective; and they will not resort to negative coping strategies, including conflict and violence.

Sustaining peace in rural areas is a multidimensional and ongoing challenge worldwide. The next chapter discusses the potential contributions of social protection to sustaining peace in rural areas. It is important to consider that social protection is only one of a series of important measures for policymakers and governments to use in promoting peace. As demonstrated in the Box 2, longstanding structural inequalities continue to shape conflict in contemporary rural areas. Addressing those structural inequalities is still fundamental to the process of sustaining peace. However, if social protection is conflict-sensitive, then it can also be an effective tool for working in contexts affected by conflict, whether working in conflict or working on conflict.

BOX 2. THE AGRARIAN PROBLEM IN COLOMBIA

What is referred to as the “agrarian problem” in Colombia illustrates the need for a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace efforts. The problem involves various inter-related drivers and has been a core cause of conflict dating back to land dispossession during the colonial era. As FAO (2017a, p. 2) stated: “82 percent of the country’s productive land is in the hands of only 10 percent of the total owners, while 68 percent of the farms have less than 5 hectares, and only 50 percent of the land is formalized”. The historic unequal distribution of land has also been perpetuated by economic policies favouring large landowners and neglecting rural areas’ economic development (Faguet, Sánchez Torres and Villaveces, 2017).

The demand for an agrarian reform played a pivotal role in forming the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, FARC) as a group representing peasants in 1964. The conflict between FARC and the national army lasted for five decades and led to the forced displacement of over seven million people. The peace talks between the national government and FARC led to an agreement in 2016 which:

“Included a chapter on rural reform, stipulating efforts to formalize land tenure, modernize the rural tax system, boost land use and productivity with increased access to credits and technical advice, increase investment with incentives geared at the private sector to move operations to remote rural areas, and promote inclusion of vulnerable social groups, such as dispossessed peasants, victims of the armed conflict, and rural women” (Rettberg, 2018, p. 10).

Representatives from the government stressed the importance of land reform to increase rural productivity for development and achieve sustainable peace (Posada, 2016). In combination with this, the government introduced three additional measures to support economic reintegration of ex-combatants, as a basis for sustainable peace. The first one consisted in delivering an initial one-off cash transfer of COP two million (approximately USD 415) to former FARC members who had demobilized and handed in their weapons. The second measure consisted in a provision of a monthly stipend corresponding to 90 percent of the legal minimum wage for a duration of 24 months unless the individual had other sources of income. Finally, previous combatants were also entitled to receive additional financial support if they produced a business proposal, which had then to be approved by a committee. Interestingly, the majority of the projects that had been approved were in the agricultural sector, wholesale and retail trade, and manufacturing industries (Rodríguez, 2022; Van Broeck, Guasca and Vanneste, 2019).

While these examples would not typically fall under social protection programming, but rather under demilitarization, demobilization and reintegration programming, they do point to the important role that social transfers can play in conflict-affected contexts. Moreover, these reforms can potentially transform political, economic and social inequalities deeply rooted in institutions. An important broader lesson here is that interventions such as social protection might have limited ability to contribute to peace or to affect a broader societal change more conducive to peace if they do not comprehensively address longstanding, structural causes of conflict, or latent driving factors such as high numbers of armed unemployed people.

Sources: Faguet, J.P., Sanchez Torres, F. & Villaveces, M.J. 2017. *The Paradox of Land Reform, Inequality and Development in Colombia*. Working Paper Series 2017, No. 17-181. London, Department of International Development, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). [Cited 22 June 2023]. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/69207/1/Faguet_The_paradox_of_land_reform_17-181_2017.pdf; FAO. 2017a. *Latin America and the Caribbean is the region with the greatest inequality in the distribution of land*. In: *FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean*. Rome, FAO. [Cited 06 June 2023]. <http://www.fao.org/americas/noticias/ver/en/c/878998/>; Rettberg, A. 2018. *Peace-Making as a Struggle Over the Social Contract: Challenges and Opportunities of the Peace Agreement in Colombia*. *Análisis* 6/2018. Bogotá, Universidad de los Andes. [Cited 23 June 2023]. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kolumbien/17361.pdf>; Reyes Posada, A. 2016. *La Reforma Rural Para La Paz*. First edition. Bogotá, Colombia Debate. [Cited 8 November 2013]. <https://ediciones.uniandes.edu.co/library/publication/la-reforma-rural-integral-en-colombia-debates-acuerdos-y-trasfondo-historico>; Rodriguez, S. 2022. *How has the immobility experienced by some FARC ex-combatants harmed the peacebuilding efforts in Colombia since 2016?* Ottawa, Canada, UO Research, University of Ottawa. [Cited 23 June 2023]. https://ruor.uottawa.ca/bitstream/10393/43667/1/MRPpercent20Sergio_RODRIGUEZ_percent20Finalpercent20DRUPAL.pdf; Van Broeck, A.M., Guasca, M. & Vanneste, D. 2019. *Tourism Initiatives as a Lever for Reintegration of Former FARC Combatants in Colombia*. *Open Edition Journals*. [Cited 22 June 2023]. doi.org/10.4000/viatourism.3551

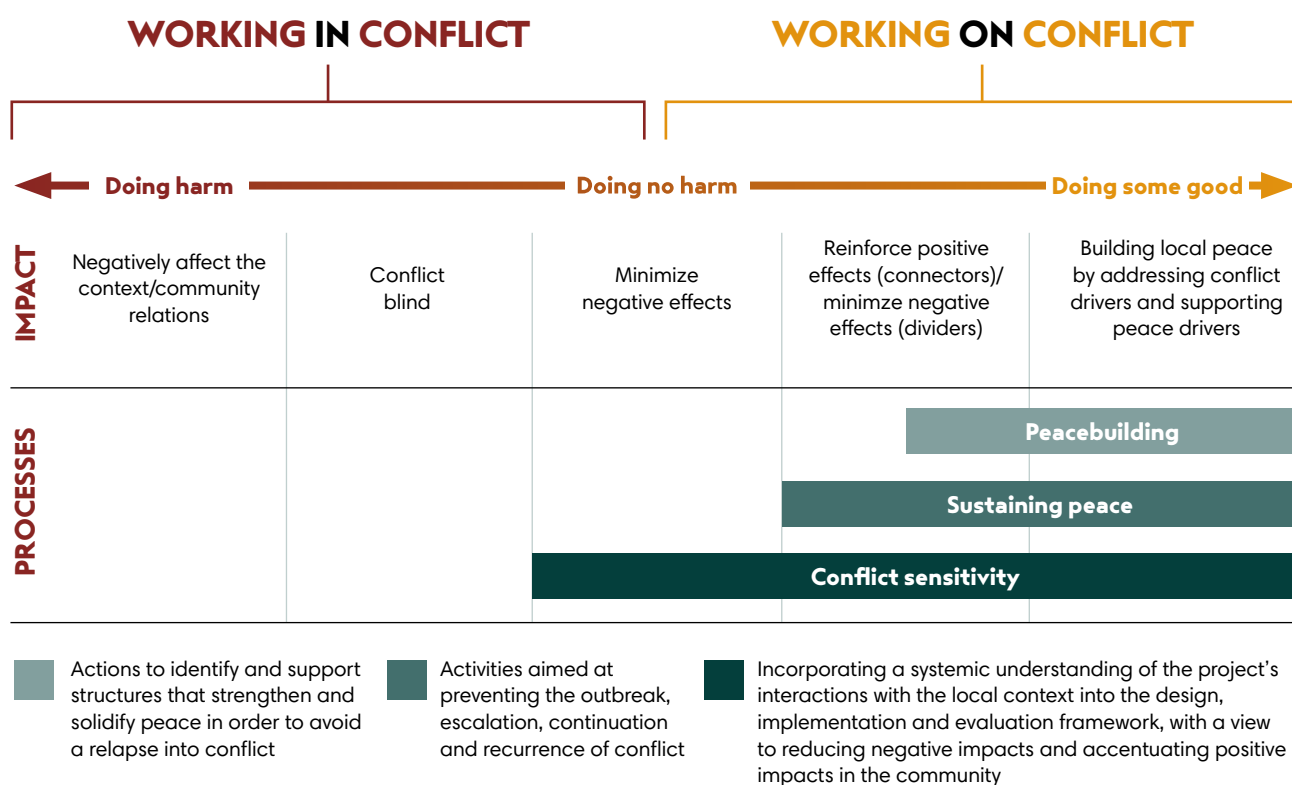
2. Social protection's contributions to working in and on conflict

Beyond material poverty reduction and human development objectives, there is heightened interest among policymakers and researchers in the wider transformative role of social protection. One potential transformative contribution may take place in contexts affected by conflict. Social protection addresses food insecurity and poverty, which are both the direct impacts of conflict as well as its key underlying drivers. This section outlines major areas where social protection can make potential contributions to sustaining peace. Additionally, it clarifies that, in order to make contributions to sustaining peace, social protection needs to be conflict-sensitive. Conflict sensitivity must be incorporated in

social protection interventions to avoid creating inadvertent negative effects or being conflict blind. Conflict-sensitive interventions are those that can either minimize their adverse effects or go beyond doing no harm to deliberately contribute to peace outcomes (see Figure 1).

A conflict-sensitive approach considers the interactions between stakeholders and beneficiaries at multiple scales. In line with a conflict-sensitive approach, a systematic understanding of the local power dynamics, such as intersectional social hierarchies along with gender, age, migratory status, ethnicity, religion, complex root causes of violence and

FIGURE 1. SPECTRUM OF INTERVENTIONS IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED CONTEXTS



Source: Adapted from FAO. 2022a. *Operationalizing pathways to sustaining peace in the context of Agenda 2030 – A how-to guide*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc1021en>

historical inequalities, need to be streamlined in all processes of the programme, from the design to the targeting, delivery and evaluation. To achieve this, a context analysis seeks to understand the interaction among a diverse range of local and international actors, their interests and their spheres of influence. Within a context analysis, it is important to include power, as power relations are inherent to processes of exclusion and privilege. In brief, conflict-sensitive approaches ensure that each phase of the intervention does not have an irreversible, negative impact in either the short- or long-term, on a given population or a given socioeconomic balance, while concurrently strengthening opportunities for peace.

It is important to understand that peace is not an outcome but, rather, an ongoing process. Social protection can make a positive contribution to the peace process but there are many elements to consider for it to do so. This section outlines existing evidence on the impacts of social protection and the ways in which those impacts can make contributions to the process of sustaining peace. Those contributions are divided between two overlapping scenarios: working in conflict and working on conflict. The former refers to ongoing efforts to offset the

impacts of conflict, whereas the latter relates to interventions that intend to deliberately address underlying causes and drivers of conflict. By distinguishing between these two contexts, this section will highlight the specific evidence on how social protection can contribute to sustaining peace. It is noted, however, that these categorizations are merely theoretical and that in reality these two scenarios may take place and vary contextually.

2.1. DEFINING SOCIAL PROTECTION

Social protection comprises “a set of policies and programmes that addresses economic, environmental and social vulnerabilities to food insecurity and poverty by protecting and promoting livelihoods” (FAO, 2017b, p. 6). These policies and programmes include a vast number of interventions that can be delivered by government or non-government actors, and in some cases can be provided by communities as informal social protection. However, this paper focuses on state-led social protection systems, and more specifically, on those programmes that are categorized under the “social assistance” pillar,² as defined in Table 2, since social assistance is particularly relevant to conflict contexts because of

TABLE 2. SOCIAL PROTECTION PILLARS

Social assistance	Social insurance	Labour market interventions
Non-contributory programmes for the most vulnerable groups with no other means of adequate support. Examples of this type of assistance are in-kind transfers (e.g. agricultural inputs, food subsidies, etc.) or cash transfers (e.g. cash+, cash-for-work, etc.).	Contributory programmes aimed at protecting people from potential financial losses linked to life-cycle events, livelihood risks or climate-related shocks and stresses. Instruments under this pillar include maternity or unemployment benefits, pensions and agriculture risk insurance.	Policies and programmes for the working age population designed to safeguard workers' rights and entitlements, enhance employment, improve skills and boost productivity. This includes employment guarantee schemes, wage subsidies and skills transfer programmes.

Source: Adapted from FAO. 2017b. *FAO Social Protection Framework: Promoting Rural Development for All*. Rome <https://www.fao.org/3/i7016e/i7016e.pdf>; FAO & Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, 2019. *Managing Climate Risks through Social Protection: Reducing Rural Poverty and Building Resilient Agricultural Livelihoods*. Rome, FAO. <https://www.fao.org/3/ca6681en/CA6681EN.pdf>

² In this paper, “social protection” will be used interchangeably with “social assistance”, unless specified otherwise.

the importance of mobilizing support for groups that quickly become vulnerable, or are most likely to be involved with and affected by the causes of conflict.

Social protection interventions are determined by national policies, which are often included in broader development strategies, and are governed by national institutions at different levels – from national to local. However, external social protection actors often have supporting and implementing roles to play, particularly in contexts affected by conflict where the government's capacity to deliver social services – including social protection – is often limited (Carpenter, Slater and Mallet, 2012).

There are four main functions that social protection interventions can play: preventive, protective, promotive and transformative (FAO, 2017b). Social protection interventions prevent poor and vulnerable individuals and households from falling into deeper poverty and deprivation by strengthening resilience against shocks and averting losses of income, livelihoods and assets through the delivery of cash or in-kind support. When shocks – including conflict – materialize, social protection protects livelihoods by ensuring basic subsistence and providing relief from poverty and vulnerability.

Moreover, social protection's livelihood-enhancing programmes can support asset accumulation and investments in human capital. They can also provide a buffer for the uptake of climate-smart agricultural practices, stabilize incomes, enhance capabilities and smooth consumption, thus playing a promotive role. Finally, social protection can potentially play a transformative role by promoting social equity and inclusion, addressing the structural causes of exclusion and vulnerability, and supporting the realization of social and economic rights at the policy and programme level (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004).

In conflict-affected contexts, social protection interventions that are based on a solid understanding of the local context and conflict

dynamics may have a positive impact on them through two approaches: working in conflict and working on conflict (see Figure 2). At the same time, there are significant challenges and risks, and working through or with social protection may not at all be desirable in certain situations where that system is perceived as being associated with the drivers of conflict. The issue of how, and to what extent, social protection can address these impacts, causes and drivers as it relates to contexts of conflict will be discussed in the next sections.

Moreover, since social protection is government led, implementing conflict-sensitive social protection interventions in conflict settings may simply not be possible or even desirable. Indeed, a critical component that needs to be addressed when deciding whether and how engage in social protection in a conflict setting is whether the government is in fact a reliable partner to interact with. If the government is on an international sanctions list, or is actively perpetrating human rights violations, it may be difficult to justify investing resources directly into strengthening that government's institutional capacity or that of its systems and services.

Finally, social protection systems are likely to be severely affected by the context, often being heavily represented by, or even entirely limited to, the provision of humanitarian aid through modalities that mimic certain components of non-contributory social assistance, such as cash transfers. As such, for the purposes of this paper, we also consider systematic and sustained humanitarian transfers as part of the social protection system architecture in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

2.2. WORKING IN CONFLICT

The following two subsections present the contributions and challenges of designing and implementing social protection interventions while working in conflict, which means addressing conflict impacts. This entails responsive social protection interventions that primarily aim at offsetting the humanitarian and economic impacts

of conflicts. Such impacts include food insecurity, malnutrition, disruptions to productive activities, reduced access to basic social services and poverty.

Whereas traditional social protection systems are not designed to work specifically in conflict, they can nevertheless play a positive role by enhancing the capacity of poor and vulnerable households to withstand, adapt and recover from conflict-related impacts. Concurrently, governments and international stakeholders can work together to make such systems more responsive to shocks including, but not limited to, those stemming from conflict.

In this process, however, and particularly when international organizations are also involved in humanitarian aid, programmes should carefully adhere to humanitarian principles such as to “do

no harm” and maintain neutrality if appropriate. Therefore, great caution must be taken when making programmatic design choices to ensure that they do not inadvertently fuel conflict drivers.

2.2.1. Working in conflict: supporting inclusive disaster management operations

Potential contributions

A first contribution that social protection systems can make to address the impacts of conflict, if they are sufficiently mature, well-structured and still functioning despite the conflict, is responding adaptively by scaling up vertically or horizontally to ensure increased support is provided to vulnerable households, while also extending assistance to new groups of the population that have become vulnerable as a consequence of conflict. In both

FIGURE 2. SOCIAL PROTECTION’S CONTRIBUTIONS TO SUSTAINING PEACE



Source: Authors' elaboration.

scenarios, social protection can be an opportunity to support households in meeting their basic needs and limiting their reliance on negative coping mechanisms. In this sense, social protection also addresses vulnerabilities to food insecurity and poverty derived or exacerbated by conflict. This contribution is discussed at more length in the next section.

Traditionally targeted at the most vulnerable, social protection can make disaster management interventions more inclusive by sustaining incomes and supporting food security and nutrition. These outcomes can enable households to meet basic needs while limiting their reliance on negative coping mechanisms, such as reducing food consumption, selling productive assets or resorting to indebtedness. When social protection systems are able to scale up to provide additional support to households, these take the name of “shock-responsive social protection systems”. Such an approach requires close coordination with the domestic disaster management system and the humanitarian community, if present.

An effective shock-responsive social protection system must take into account the multidimensional nature of shocks. Shocks are especially important to consider when operating in a conflict-affected context. According to FAO (2016a, p. 3), “it is critical to build risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection systems that can swiftly and effectively respond to threats and crises”. In conflict-affected contexts, households can be subjected to rapid changes in their living conditions. Forced displacement, loss of livelihoods or other severe disruptions can occur often with little or no warning. Flexible targeting mechanisms should enhance social protection capacity for what the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2021) defines as “dynamic inclusion”, in order to meet the needs of populations facing disruptions resulting from conflict.

Potential challenges

The design of a social protection programme in a peaceful setting can substantially differ from social protection in conflict-affected contexts. In the latter, there is often low institutional capacity, a large part of the population in need of social assistance, and a damaged social fabric (Nixon and Mallet, 2017). Moreover, in such circumstances interventions can potentially be harmful and fuel social tensions if they do not comprise adequate considerations of local power dynamics and inequalities (Bastagli, 2014).

It is indeed important to recognize the limits of social protection programmes. Rohwerder and Szyp (2022) warn that the same structures and factors that cause people to become marginalized and excluded can continue to operate during conflict times, thereby precluding them to access social protection. It is necessary to understand which barriers – institutional, environmental, physical or attitudinal – people face to access social protection (Freccero *et al.*, 2019; Rohwerder and Szyp, 2022) and which groups are most vulnerable.

Governments might lack the capacity and funding to incorporate shock-responsive features into their social protection systems in contexts affected by conflict. In many of those contexts, governments are in the early stages of building a social protection system, and a large part of the population might be in need of immediate food or cash assistance. Donors and international actors can play a role not only in providing funding, but also in sharing technical expertise in support of the establishment of such systems. However, external actors might also be reluctant to provide funding for longer-term social protection initiatives rather than towards humanitarian assistance when the population is in immediate need. Because of this possibility, it is crucial to generate a better understanding of how existing or nascent schemes may be sustained in conflict settings, whether through governments or through being complemented by external responses (Rohwerder and Szyp, 2022).

BOX 3. SOCIAL PROTECTION RESPONSES TO THE CURRENT ARMED CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT CRISIS IN UKRAINE

In Ukraine, social protection is proving to be a crucial policy and programmatic tool to mitigate the impacts of the armed conflict and displacement crisis, which began on 24 February 2022.

Ukraine has a mature social protection system, which, however, requires consolidation (Blin and Billings, 2022a). Indeed, the system still exhibits low coverage, exclusion errors, low adequacy of benefits and low budget allocations (Blin and Billings, 2022b). Nonetheless, it has proven to be responsive to covariate shocks in the past, such as the Chernobyl disaster, the 2008 and 2009 gas and economic crisis, and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the onset of the conflict in 2022, the Government of Ukraine has acted with remarkable speed to strengthen the social protection system to ensure the continuous delivery of routine support, and scale it up to extend coverage to additional people suddenly fallen in need (Sojka, Harvey and Slater, 2022). Indeed, the Ministry of Social Policy delivers support by leveraging the Unified Information System of the Social Sphere (UISSS), which was piloted in 2021 to simplify the process of accessing benefits and services, enhance effective delivery of such services and reduce corruption risks. The UISSS has been linked to the Diia App, launched in 2020. The Diia App combines a mobile application where Ukrainian citizens can store their personal documents and a single portal through which citizens can access over 70 governmental services (Government Portal, n.d.; Ukraine Now, 2023). After the outbreak of the crisis, the application was also used to issue simplified, digital IDs containing passport and taxpayer data (Blin and Billings, 2022a). Moreover, as of early March 2022, employees for whom social security contributions are paid and individual entrepreneurs in conflict-affected areas can log into the Diia App to request assessment of eligibility to receive a one-off cash transfer of UAH 6 500 (USD 180).

Building upon the progress made to enhance digitalization of social protection in Ukraine, in April 2022 the government established an innovative platform: the eDopomoga (Byrnes, 2022). The eDopomoga serves three main purposes: awareness raising, registration and assistance. First, the platform provides information to the displaced population on their entitlements and on how to access them. Second, the system allows Ukrainian families to register themselves, add their details and the type of in-kind assistance they require, such as food, clothing, hygiene kits, medicines or fuel. Finally, the system enables contributors to register, review requests for support and make direct donations, which the platform then sends through SMS to recipients in the form of a voucher (Byrnes, 2022).

At the same time, the national social protection system was leveraged by international actors that channelled humanitarian response through it and this concurrently contributed to strengthening the system. Indeed, through a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Ministry of Social Policy, the World Food Programme (WFP) was able to channel humanitarian cash transfers to affected populations while also improving the efficiency, transparency and accessibility of the UISSS in support of the response. Further to this, WFP set up the Social Protection Task Force under the existing Cash Working Group to assess where support may be most needed and understand how the humanitarian response could best complement and align with the social protection system. (WFP, 2022; Lacerda, 2023).

The Ukraine case illustrates the importance of system building to ensure social protection provision during shocks, including conflict. It also highlights the importance of adapting existing tools or developing new, innovative ones that can keep the system running even in the context of conflict-induced disruptions, while contributing to longer-term system strengthening.

Sources: Blin, S. & Cahill Billings, N. 2022a. *Strengthening shock-responsiveness of social protection systems in the Ukraine crisis*. Social Protection Technical Advice, Assistance and Resources (STAAR) Facility. London, UK, DAI Global. [Cited 21 June 2023]. https://socialprotection.org/sites/default/files/publications_files/B022_Humanitarian%20Assistance%20and%20Social%20Protection%20Linkages%20in%20the%20Ukraine%20crisis%20%28Final%29%20%284%29.pdf; Blin, S. & Cahill Billings, N. 2022b. *Poland: A social protection country profile for the Ukraine crisis response*. Social Protection Technical Advice, Assistance and Resources (STAAR) Facility. London, UK, DAI Global. [Cited 21 June 2023]. <https://socialprotection.org/discover/publications/poland-social-protection-countryprofile-ukraine-crisis-response>; Byrnes, T. 2022. *Innovation and Digitalization in Social Protection Services in Ukraine – Peer-to-Peer fundraising via eDopomoga*. Blog post. Sunnyvale, California, USA, LinkedIn. [Cited 22 June 2023]. <http://www.linkedin.com/pulse/innovation-digitalization-social-protection-services-ukraine-byrnes/>; Government Portal (Official website, Government of Ukraine). n.d. *E-service Development*. Ukraine, Government of Ukraine. [Cited 06 June 2023]. <http://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/reformi/efektivne-vryaduvannya/rozvitok-elektronnih-poslu>; Lacerda, C. 2023. *The state of the social protection system in Ukraine as it reaches the one-year mark of the conflict*. socialprotection.org. [Cited 06 June 2023]. <https://socialprotection.org/discover/blog/state-socialprotection-system-ukraine-it-reaches-one-year-mark-conflict>; Sojka, S., Harvey, P. & Slater, R. 2022. *Ukraine – can social protection be sustained and support a humanitarian response?* Wolverhampton, UK, Centre for International Development and Training, University of Wolverhampton. [Cited 06 June 2023]. <https://cidt.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Ukraine-SocialProtection.pdf>; Ukraine Now. 2023. *Digital Country*. Administered by BRAND UKRAINE NGO in cooperation with MFA Ukraine. Ukraine, Ukraine Now. [Cited 06 June 2023]. <https://ukraine.ua/invest-trade/digitalization/>; WFP (World Food Programme). 2022. *World Food Programme signs MoU with Government of Ukraine to provide half a million people with cash*. News Release. Rome, WFP. [Cited 22 June 2023]. wfp.org/news/worldfood-programme-signs-mou-government-ukraine-provide-half-million-people-cash

Finally, Rohwerder and Szyp (2022) discuss how benefiting from social protection during conflict may also expose recipients to risks such as violence, discrimination and sexual exploitation, in addition to disrupting informal social support networks they depend upon.

Such risks can materialize at different points in the path to accessing social protection, as defined by Rohwerder and Szyp (2022):

- **Pre-distribution:** risks at this stage may include lack of data or knowledge on the specific needs of different groups, which may further aggravate their marginalization from social assistance programmes; limited space for social accountability; and corruption, discrimination, exploitation or tensions. For instance, Freccero *et al.* (2019) report that internally displaced people in Cameroon and Afghanistan felt that those deemed to be the most vulnerable within their communities, such as widows, orphans, the elderly or households with disabled or chronically ill members, were either regarded as not eligible for social protection schemes or, if eligible, had not been enrolled. In Afghanistan, Freccero *et al.* (2019) claim that corruption of village leaders or government officials often led to the exclusion of eligible participants from accessing social protection.
- **Distribution:** risks that may materialize at distribution points encompass theft, exploitation, violent attacks, sexual harassment and abuse, particularly to the detriment of women and girls. Further, it is crucial to mitigate risks by considering the type of assistance to be delivered and the characteristics of its recipients. For instance, households headed by children may not be able to benefit from digital cash transfers as children may not have right to have a bank account. Similar issues face households headed by women, who may have limited access to mobile phones compared to men (ECHO 2013; Rohwerder and Szyp, 2022).
- **Post-distribution:** risks may include theft and violence, extortion and retaliation; increased tensions between recipients and non-recipients, which may also affect informal support that many households receive from relatives and

neighbours. In fact, Rohwerder and Szyp (2022) warn against short-term social protection schemes, as they run the risk of leaving recipients with neither formal nor informal social protection.

Yet, Rohwerder and Szyp (2022, p. 8) claim that “the risks should not be considered to outweigh the potential benefits that social assistance can provide to these marginalised people in crises”. Indeed, the exclusion of marginalized groups from social protection may exacerbate deprivation and food insecurity, as well as increase reliance on negative coping strategies, such as child marriage, survival sex or child labour (Amar, Hames and Clifton, 2019; Amnesty International, 2020; Lehrer, 2009; McGivern and Bluestone 2020; Pearce, 2015; Rohwerder and Szyp, 2022).

2.2.2. Working in conflict: addressing vulnerabilities to food insecurity and poverty

Potential contributions

Poverty and hunger can be both drivers as well as impacts of conflict. As such, they can be significant barriers to the process of peace. In the short-term, social protection can provide relief to people facing conflict-related shocks, such as the loss of livelihoods or restricted/uncertain access to land, which can lead to reduced food consumption. Regular and predictable social protection provision helps vulnerable populations address liquidity constraints. For both rural and urban consumers, easing liquidity constraints allows households to better plan their food consumption, whether in the form of improved and more diverse nutrients or by protecting their assets during shocks. For rural producers, specifically, the alleviation of liquidity constraints from social protection can also result in productive investments, which in turn can strengthen the resilience of rural livelihoods (FAO and Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, 2019). All of these potential contributions are conditional upon social protection taking a conflict-sensitive approach. With respect to food insecurity and poverty,

BOX 4. HOW CONFLICT AFFECTS SOCIAL PROTECTION IN ETHIOPIA'S TIGRAY REGION

According to Slater (2022), a crucial aspect to consider is how social protection systems are affected by conflict and other types of covariate shocks. Not only do shocks increase the demand for social protection, but they also affect the systems themselves through direct impacts on human and physical resources (Slater, 2022; Hu *et al.*, 2010). Hu *et al.* (2010, p. 107) describe these impacts on social protection systems as a “double blow”. Such an effect materialized in Ethiopia’s Tigray region where the combination of conflict, climate shocks, disease outbreaks and the socioeconomic downfall from the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated already dire humanitarian conditions (Center for Disaster Philanthropy, 2022).

The crisis has exacerbated the humanitarian needs of Tigray’s population. Humanitarian efforts are concurrently facing disrupted response capacities, limited access to areas of the region and large-scale displacement, including that of many government employees responsible for social protection. Beyond services, many markets were disrupted, with access to them becoming increasingly difficult, resulting, in turn, in many businesses and banks being closed down (Lind, Sabates-Wheeler and Szyp, 2022; Sabates-Wheeler and Lind, 2021). The entire situation has led to a reduction in the provision of support from the Productive Safety Net Programme in Tigray. The Productive Safety Net Programme is a scheme designed by the government to support food security during seasonal droughts and was regarded as one of the best performing programmes in the region before the conflict erupted in November 2020 (Lind, Sabates-Wheeler and Szyp, 2022; Sabates-Wheeler and Lind, 2021).

Slater and Lind (2021, p. 4) warn that this “stands as a cautionary tale”, which compels policymakers and researchers to closely assess the potential impacts of conflict on the delivery of social protection to make interventions more resilient to future conflict shocks. Part of the solution arguably lies in leadership and the political will to improve state-society relations in areas potentially prone to conflict. In addition, national governments can work with stakeholders at multiple scales – from the local and regional to the national and international level – to ensure that social protection programmes incorporate conflict-sensitive measures. At the same time, in cases where conflict renders a social protection system inoperable, there is a strong argument to avoid those entirely and rely on purely humanitarian support, delivered in line with humanitarian principles.

Sources: Center for Disaster Philanthropy (CDP). 2022. *Ethiopia Humanitarian Crisis*. Washington, D.C., CDP. [Cited 06 June 2023]. <https://disasterphilanthropy.org/disasters/ethiopia-tigray-crisis/>; Hu, X., Salazar, M., Zhang, Q., Lu, W. & Zhang, X. 2010. Social Protection During Disasters: Evidence from the Wenchuan Earthquake. *IDS Bulletin*, 41(4): 107–115. Brighton, UK, IDS. [Cited 06 June 2023]. <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/20.500.12413/7836>; Lind, J., Sabates-Wheeler, R. & Szyp, C. 2022. *Cash and Livelihoods in Contexts of Conflict and Fragility: Implications for Social Assistance Programming*. BASIC Research Working Paper 8. Brighton, UK, IDS. [Cited 23 June 2023]. doi.org/10.19088/BASIC.2022.008; Sabates-Wheeler, R. & Lind, J. 2021. Social protection during conflict: reflections on Tigray. Op-ed, *IDS Bulletin*. Brighton, UK, BASIC Research, IDS. [Cited 06 June 2023]. www.ids.ac.uk/opinions/socialprotection-during-conflict-reflections-on-tigray/; Slater, R. 2022. *Sustaining Existing Social Protection Programmes During Crises: What Do We Know? How Can We Know More?* BASIC Research Working Paper 14. Brighton, UK, IDS. [Cited 06 June 2023]. <https://doi.org/10.19088/BASIC.2022.014>

taking such approach requires considering: (i) the causes of structural exclusion and marginalization; (ii) the identification of conflict-sensitive entry points, including social protection targeting; and (iii) the development of contextual and programming monitoring systems, including feedback mechanisms.

If such measures are taken, social protection initiatives can positively impact food security and

dietary diversity in the medium- to long-term. Indeed, a large body of evidence from Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East and South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa reveals that social assistance increases caloric acquisition, value of food consumption as well as dietary diversity within households (Hidrobo *et al.*, 2018). Social protection can improve households’ food security and dietary diversity through a number of ways. For instance, cash transfers provide increased

income to enable the poor to purchase more food or to introduce new foods into their diets. Rural populations, in particular, may use cash to diversify their resource-based income, which can fluctuate as a result of conflict, seasonality and unforeseen natural or climate shocks.

Poverty and conflict are closely interdependent, often mutually reinforcing each other (Ovadiya *et al.*, 2015). With the rise in the number of fragile and conflict-affected contexts, global poverty will be increasingly concentrated in these settings. Indeed, it is projected that by 2030, up to two-thirds of global extreme poor will be living in contexts affected by conflict and fragility (Corral *et al.*, 2020). Poor people in fragile and conflict-affected contexts face multiple types of deprivation beyond monetary poverty, such as deprivations relating to consumption, health, education, or skills. Altogether, these produce loss of human capital, which translates into lost economic growth and structural poverty (Corral *et al.*, 2020).

The relationship between social protection and poverty reduction, including improved food consumption and health and education indicators, has been discussed extensively and is often the primary objective of social assistance programmes in contexts affected by conflict (Winder Rossi *et al.*, 2017). With long-term, regular, and predictable support, individuals and households can improve consumption behaviour and invest in productive assets to better cope with shocks. There is extensive evidence across Latin America, Africa, South and Southeast Asia showing that cash transfers can reduce monetary poverty, have a positive impact on education and health spending in a context of liquidity and credit constraints, as well as support households to engage in income-generating activities (Bastagli *et al.*, 2016), and enable investments in long-term human capital (Devereux, 2015). These outcomes can contribute to a reduction of inequalities and exclusion (Ovadiya *et al.*, 2015), and create informal social safety nets that can improve social cohesion, while ultimately contributing to sustaining peace processes.

It must be noted that in contexts affected by conflict, the value and coverage of social protection might be limited, non-existent or shattered, and the delivery hampered by conflict or state capacity. To achieve more transformative outcomes in terms of resilience, social protection ideally needs to be of sufficient value and coverage, timely and predictable. This requires a comprehensive strategy alongside other complementary programmes and interventions in sectors such as health, education or infrastructure – following the previously discussed hub approach to sustaining peace (Samson and Taylor, 2015). Indeed, there is a broad consensus on the need for social protection interventions with transformative objectives to address systemic drivers of vulnerability, such as those related to land rights and distribution (Naess, Selby and Daoust, 2022; Siddiqi, 2011; Davies *et al.*, 2013; Johnson *et al.*, 2013; Browne, 2014; FAO and Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, 2019).

Potential challenges

A major challenge in establishing a social protection system perceived as fair and just is finding ways to enhance the accountability and responsiveness of governments, which may themselves be party to conflict, or not perceived as legitimate and/or fair by their population. Technical design parameters in programmes play an important role in trying to foresee and mitigate these risks. One approach can be to try and create an effective social accountability mechanism and to include appropriate modalities to address poverty. Regarding the latter, targeting is the biggest concern, as it is often heavily influenced by political dynamics. Who is perceived as the most vulnerable is, indeed, often very politicized, which can lead to the emergence of social tension between recipients and non-recipients (Babajanian, 2012). Most policies are targeted at the poor, which is not always an easily identifiable group (Devereux *et al.*, 2017). This is especially true in areas affected by conflict, where groups of people might rapidly fall into poverty or conditions of vulnerability because of displacement and/or loss of livelihoods.

Evidence suggests that the best way to benefit the poor may not be to target them exclusively but follow a more inclusive approach that depends on the particular contexts of conflict-affected areas. It is important to also consider that the issue of targeting is politicized at national and international levels (Ellis, 2012). Whichever approach is used, it is essential to effectively communicate its rationale to society so that social protection systems are perceived as fair and accountable. Otherwise, trust in social protection and the state may be undermined, and this may potentially create or exacerbate disputes and conflicts. For instance, a briefing paper that captures the learnings from six years of research carried out under the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium, that focused on exploring livelihoods, basic services and social protection in conflict situations, found that in Pakistan and Uganda survey respondents felt that strong politicization and favouritism were associated with the delivery of social protection (Slater and Mallett, 2017; Shahbaz *et al.*, 2017).

Words and concepts such as poor and vulnerable have different meanings for subgroups within communities, NGOs, governments, and donors. The poor are not a fixed group but rather a fluid one, particularly in conflict-affected contexts. Therefore, “distinguishing the target groups for distinct policy interventions is hard because the poorest, transitory poor and vulnerable non-poor are fluid and fuzzy rather than static and crisp sets” (UNDP, 2006, p. 7). Generally, poverty targeting generates errors of exclusion and inclusion, and static surveys or assessments to identify the poor are not able to account for the dynamic nature of poverty (Slater and Farrington, 2009). International and national poverty benchmarks can be helpful to establish initial targeting for social protection. However, in the case of conflict-affected contexts, it is important to consider that vulnerabilities can shift rapidly and often without notice. Early warning systems and flexible targeting can improve rapid service delivery to help vulnerable populations cope with shocks and the potential loss of livelihoods.

There are numerous technical challenges and risks to programme design, and ways of addressing these, but it must once again be underscored that national or regional authorities might wish to divert resources or use them to bolster their image or narrative in the conflict setting. Aid is likely not to be perceived as neutral and international definitions of vulnerability, food insecurity and poverty may be supercharged in a conflict setting, severely limiting the ability to engage in the social protection sector within a short time frame.

2.3. WORKING ON CONFLICT

The subsequent four subsections present the contributions and challenges of social protection interventions when working on conflict, which means addressing conflict causes and drivers. This refers to how social protection systems contribute to minimizing, mitigating, and positively transforming and resolving conflicts.

For example, food, agriculture, or natural resources are often identified or perceived as causes or drivers of conflict, and therefore, appropriately managing the availability and access of such resources can be important considerations reducing the potential for a relapse into conflict following post-conflict reconstruction and recovery. Conceivably, improving access to, or fair distribution of, resources would ease pressures and tensions that might otherwise be used as drivers of conflict. Moreover, programming can seek to explicitly address drivers such as weak institutions, discriminatory practices in social service provision and redistribution, or lack of trust in fellow citizens, other communities, or the state at large.

2.3.1. Working on conflict: improving horizontal social capital

Potential contributions

Despite broad evidence existing on the positive impacts that social protection can make in reducing vulnerabilities to poverty and food insecurity, limited research has focused on the societal outcomes of social protection

interventions (Burchi *et al.*, 2022). Social protection that is perceived as fair and just has the potential to enhance horizontal social capital. Social capital refers to the “accumulation of trust and willingness to cooperate in a society, based on past experiences of cooperative interactions, networks, social ties and mutually beneficial economic exchange” (FAO, 2022a, p. 2). More specifically, “horizontal” social capital refers to members of a local region or community with relatively limited differences in institutional power at a higher scale, such as the provincial, state, or federal levels, or the larger power relations at higher scales. Improvements in horizontal social capital at the local level can contribute to peace through a sense of solidarity and shared norms and values, which improve understandings and reduce inequalities and grievances (see Corral *et al.*, 2020).

Social protection might contribute to cohesiveness by strengthening a society’s progress towards the well-being of all members at the community level and by reducing exclusion or marginalization, two potential triggers of conflicts (Babajanian, 2012). By addressing drivers of social exclusion and enhancing the well-being of households and their social capital, social protection interventions can create a feeling of belonging among beneficiaries (Babajanian, Hagen-Zanker and Holmes, 2014a). Social protection programmes have the potential to make effective contributions to reducing inequalities among societal groups. This can result in an enhanced feeling of trust in other members of the society (Burchi *et al.*, 2022). All of these impacts are maximized when social protection programmes encourage interactions between people belonging to different groups.

Depending on the context, different approaches should be prioritized. While urgent needs indeed take priority, a post-conflict setting provides an opportunity to redefine societal dynamics and state-society relations through social protection. In conflict-affected contexts, social protection is often used to reduce social tensions, serve as a peace dividend for certain population groups, and promote social inclusion and the building of social

capital (Ovadiya *et al.*, 2015). Ovadiya *et al.* (2015) argue that in conflict and fragile settings, social protection often plays the two-fold role of addressing social inequalities and exclusion, while contributing to state-building. Iraq, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Timor-Leste are all examples of how social protection has been targeted at disenfranchised groups, or even universally, to reduce social tensions and foster inclusion (Ovadiya *et al.*, 2015). In these countries social protection has taken the form of short-term youth employment, entrepreneurship support, and input or food distribution schemes.

Conflict-sensitive social protection uses non-stigmatizing affirmative action or targets groups with specific vulnerabilities to address underlying mechanisms that produce and reproduce social exclusion. Thus, it can transform local power dynamics by giving a legal entitlement to socially excluded groups and by improving their economic status, allowing them to participate more in social and economic spheres. Studies suggest that cash-based transfers targeting the most vulnerable serve not only as a safety net for households during shocks, but they also enhance horizontal social capital by reducing tensions within and between social groups (Molyneux, Jones and Samuels, 2016). An example of this is the Kalobeyei Integrated Social and Economic Development Programme (KISED), established in the north of Kenya by the Turkana County Government, at the request of the Government of Kenya. The KISED targets refugees mainly from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and South Sudan. It aims to reduce refugees’ dependence on humanitarian assistance by improving their socioeconomic status and fostering socioeconomic interactions between refugees and host communities. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2019) found that the programme had a positive impact on the local market and contributed to creating a sense of ownership and empowerment among refugees by building horizontal capital between refugees and host communities.

BOX 5. THE INCLUSION OF REFUGEES IN TÜRKIYE

With the support of international actors, the Government of Türkiye extended cash-based transfers to vulnerable out-of-camp Syrian refugees as part of the national social protection system. The situation faced by Syrian refugees has become a protracted crisis, which was recently further compounded by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme was launched in December 2016 to improve the living conditions of refugees under the Facility for the Refugees in Turkey. The ESSN is implemented through the government with leadership of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services. It is funded by the European Union and was supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Turkish Red Crescent Society, Halkbank and UN agencies, such as WFP and UNICEF. The ESSN targets the most vulnerable refugee households under international or temporary protection who do not have valid work permits, including non-Syrians, and it currently reaches over 1.5 million individuals (IFRC, 2022). Every month, eligible families receive TRY 155 (approximately USD 8) on their debit card, or Kizilaykart, which allows them to decide for themselves how to spend the cash to cover basic needs.

Concurrently, such an approach facilitates the participation of refugees in the local community life, and local economy, thus fostering social integration while having positive spillover effects on the host community (Maunder *et al.*, 2020). More recently, humanitarian assistance has been shifting its focus to improve refugees' employment opportunities, boost their self-reliance and facilitate their integration into the labour market (IFRC, 2022). Examples such as the ESSN programme in Türkiye, demonstrate the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration to utilize social protection as a tool to address the transnational impacts of conflict. By facilitating refugees' integration into their new communities, the ESSN also offers a glimpse into how social protection can have wider positive impacts on horizontal social capital.

Sources: IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent). 2022. *Issue 29: September 2022 Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN)*. Geneva, IFRC. [Cited 06 June 2023]. http://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/2022-09_ESSNMonthlyReport_0.pdf; Maunder, N., Seyfert, K., Aran, M. & Aktakke, N. 2020. *ESSN Mid-Term Review 2018/2019*. Rome, WFP and Oxford, UK, Oxford Policy Management. [Cited 23 June 2023]. doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.22019.73769

As emphasized previously, the ability of social protection to promote the accumulation of social capital can only be realized if modalities are perceived as fair and just by the society (Babajanian and Hagen-Zanker, 2012). Social protection interventions must therefore adhere to human rights principles, ensure participation and address the vulnerabilities that certain groups experience because of their social status. Moreover, participatory and inclusive mechanisms in the design and delivery of programmes ideally give a voice to socially excluded groups and enhance their involvement in community decision-making processes (Pavanello *et al.*, 2016).

Potential challenges

The ability of social protection interventions to build social capital and address underlying drivers of exclusion and income deprivation can only be realized if they come with a design, targeting and delivery that are conflict-sensitive. Ensuring access

to social protection by rural populations and other socially excluded groups means understanding the specific intersectional barriers they face, and following an inclusive approach (FAO and ILO, 2021). Furthermore, addressing structural inequalities rooted in societal institutions or related to norms requires a comprehensive approach and cannot be tackled by social protection initiatives alone (Babajanian, 2012).

Evidence from Devereux *et al.* (2017) suggests that social protection programmes that are not conflict-sensitive can potentially impact horizontal social cohesion negatively by generating conflicts between recipients and non-recipients. Pavanello *et al.* (2016, p. 1157) argue that: "When this has occurred, it seemed to be largely linked to targeting-related issues, notwithstanding the variability of local context and pre-existing social structures and dynamics that may have further contributed to the emergence or reinforcement of

BOX 6. SOCIAL PROTECTION THROUGH A GENDER LENS

Women are frequently identified as a vulnerable group, especially in conflict-affected contexts. However, it is important to note that gender intersects with other categories, such as ethnicity, age, migratory status, and disability, highlighting that women are not a homogeneous group and intersectional approaches are needed to ensure intended programmatic outcomes (ILO, 2021). Currently, many social protection programmes tend to be gender blind, or, at best, gender sensitive in the sense that they acknowledge gender without explicitly trying to change underlying power relations. Cash transfers, in particular, often target women as recipients as they are perceived as more responsible recipients and better able to utilise and invest the cash provided to them. There is some evidence that women spend money at their disposal differently, notably with regards to increased spending on nutritious food and on children (Yoong *et al.*, 2012). However, explicit studies that compare how cash transfers received by men and women are spent have provided mixed results (Somville *et al.*, 2020). Some cash transfer programmes include conditionalities, such as attending health centres or ensuring that children attend school. From a gendered perspective, conditionalities may place a greater burden on female recipients as most societies are structured around patriarchal norms, which assume that women's responsibility is to fulfil time-consuming household-related duties, particularly those linked to health and education. Therefore, such interventions targeting female recipients, that may even be labelled as gender-sensitive precisely because they only target women, can perpetuate gender norms within the household (Holmes and Jones, 2013). This point highlights the crucial role of both accounting for context and adapting the programme design of social protection interventions in order to positively influence gender outcomes – a point also shared with conflict-sensitive social protection programming and its role in sustaining peace.

Social protection and its role in promoting economic empowerment – namely, the ability for individuals to generate income, participate in the labour market, control resources, and make economic decisions, all of which women are on average more likely to experience exclusion and restrictions (Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, 2021) – has also contributed to the increasing focus on women-targeted programmes. These programmes often involve providing access to financial resources, asset transfers, training, and employment opportunities, alongside access to other complementary social services. A summary of the evidence, as presented by Hagen-Zanker *et al.*, (2017), on whether cash transfers in particular impact women and girls' empowerment found that transfers increase women's decision-making power and choices, notably on the topics of marriage and fertility, whilst also reducing physical abuse by male partners. They note, however, that a number of studies show opposite effects with increases in physical and emotional abuse, with the likely conclusion that these results were in part because of restrictive gender norms and household dynamics, as well as other contextual factors not addressed by the cash transfers, resulting in some cases in "negative" outcomes including violence. Nevertheless, the relationship between cash transfer programmes and intimate partner violence is a topic that has been extensively researched, with the weight of evidence noting that cash transfers are more likely to reduce intimate partner violence (Dervisevic, Perova and Sahay, 2022). The literature states that the provision of cash transfers can affect intimate partner violence via three pathways: (i) economic security and emotional well-being, (ii) intrahousehold conflict and (iii) women's empowerment (Buller *et al.*, 2018). How contextual factors and programme design features impact on these three pathways is key in positively, or indeed negatively, affecting observed outcomes (Halim, Ubfal and Wangchuk, 2023).

Peterman and Roy (2022) offer recommendations on how to improve cash transfers to make them more conflict-sensitive and reduce the likelihood of them triggering intimate partner violence. They suggest using mobile transfers, if digital literacy and accessibility is high, so that women can retain control over the transfers. Additional options include: to deliver transfers through women's groups to strengthen horizontal social capital; to integrate grievance and complaint mechanisms that consider intimate partner violence issues and other forms of violence, exploitations, and abuse; and to ensure that the location and manner of pay points are convenient and safe for women (Peterman and Roy, 2022). Similarly, FAO (2023) provides a summary of the evidence regarding conducive cash transfer

BOX 6 (Cont.)

targeting strategies, effective registration, and delivery mechanism features, as well as insights on conditionality options and complementary supply-side services, all of which may contribute to support efforts to reduce reported experiences of intimate partner violence. In summary, social protection programmes have the potential to reduce intimate partner violence and household conflict, but they need to be conflict-sensitive and utilize gender lenses, and care must be taken to understand the pathways in which cash transfers can positively or negatively affect violence and conflict trends, as experienced by the programme's recipients.

Sources: Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL). 2021. "Designing financial services and social protection programs to enhance women's economic empowerment." *J-PAL Policy Insights*. [Cited 22 August 2023]. <https://doi.org/10.31485/pi.3090.2021>; Buller, A.M., Peterman, A., Ranganathan, M., Bleile, A., Hidrobo, M. & Heise, L. 2018. A mixed method review of cash transfers and intimate partner violence in low- and middle-income countries. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 33(2): 218–258. [Cited 23 August 2023]. <https://doi.org/10.1093/wbro/lky002>; Dervisevic, E., Perova E. and Sahay, A. 2022. Conditional Cash Transfers and Gender-Based Violence—Does the Type of Violence Matter? *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 10122*. [Cited 22 August 2023]. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099856507072222123/pdf/>; FAO. 2023. *The status of women in agrifood systems*. Rome. [Cited 25 August 2023]. <https://www.fao.org/3/CC5060EN/online/status-women-agrifood-systems-2023/chapter1.html>; Hagen-Zanker, J., Pellerano, L., Bastagli, F., Harman, L., Barca, V., Sturge, G., Schmidt, T. and Laing, C. 2017. The impact of cash transfers on women and girls: A summary of the evidence. ODI Briefing. London: Overseas Development Institute. <https://odi.org/en/publications/the-impact-of-cashtransfers-on-women-and-girls/>; Halim, D., Ubfal, D. and Wangchuk, R. 2023. *Policy Lessons on Social Protection*. Gender Innovation Lab Federation Evidence Series, World Bank Gender Group and the Gender Innovation Labs. [Cited 22 August 2023]. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099607201252324829/pdf/IDU0526a849d0c74a04d3c0aeb504737f50978c7.pdf>; Holmes, R. & Jones, N.A. 2013. *Gender and Social Protection in the Developing World: Beyond Mothers and Safety Nets*. London, Zed Books. [Cited 06 June 2023]. doi.org/10.5040/9781350220300; IDU09733c89b0f84e0492609f970a1b1fb55ce51.pdf; ILO. 2021. *Peace and Conflict Analysis. Guidance for ILO's programming in fragile and conflict-affected contexts*. International Labour Office, Interpeace, United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office and World Health Organization. Geneva, ILO. [Cited 06 June 2023]. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_776063.pdf; Peterman, A. & Roy, S. 2022. *Cash transfers and intimate partner violence: A research view on design and implementation for risk mitigation and prevention*. IFPRI Issue Brief June 2022. Washington, D.C., International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). [Cited 23 June 2023]. doi.org/10.2499/9780896294332; Somville, V., Almas, I., & Vandewalle, L. 2020. The Effect of Gender-Targeted Transfers: Experimental Evidence From India. *NHH Dept. of Economics Discussion Paper*, (16). [Cited 29 August 2023]. <https://openaccess.nhh.no/nhh-xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2676341/DP%2016.pdf?sequence=1>; Yoong, J., Rabinovich, L., & Diepeveen, S. 2012. *The impact of economic resource transfers to women versus men: a systematic review*. Institute of Education technical report, University of London (London, EPPI-Centre). [Cited 29 August 2023]. <https://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Portals/0/PDF%20reviews%20and%20>

those sentiments." In conflict-affected contexts and economic recessions, targeting is a particularly critical factor as most people experience some sort of economic and social vulnerability. Exclusion from social protection initiatives can lead to questions of scapegoating, generate feelings of unfairness or fuel pre-existing grievances, potentially deepening societal divisions and creating the conditions for conflict, where conflict is more likely.

Without an understanding of intersectional power dynamics in a society, a social protection programme might perpetuate certain social hierarchies instead of promoting equality. For social protection to have a transformative effect, policymakers need to understand how different social groups experience risks and vulnerabilities, and have access to resilience capacities in the face of economic, climate and ecological stressors. This understanding includes gendered differentiation, as well as specific vulnerabilities faced by rural populations, migrants, informal

workers, and minorities. In short, social protection needs a contextually informed, conflict-sensitive approach that addresses unequal social power dynamics and contributes to marginalized groups' agency and social status (Carpenter, Slater and Mallet, 2012).

2.3.2. Working on conflict: building or enhancing vertical social capital and the social contract

Potential contributions

Social services can contribute to existing government efforts to forge a social contract and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions by strengthening state-society relations and executing a long-term agenda for sustainable peace. The concept of a social contract is linked to vertical social capital. Vertical social capital refers to the relationship between the society and state institutions in terms of the perceived legitimacy of the state authority over its citizens, while horizontal social capital

refers to the ties among people or groups in a society (Burchi *et al.*, 2022). A key difference between horizontal and vertical social capital is the scale of social and power relations inherent to building social contracts. A social contract is established or consolidated where the state and political processes meet citizens' expectations (Haider and Mcloughlin, 2011). For a social contract to be established, a need for it must arise from the people and the ensuing contract has to be addressed to them. Moreover, the contract represents the way in which governments respond to the socioeconomic needs of their citizens (Mcloughlin, 2015).

In contexts affected by conflict, service delivery is a central mechanism through which a state can engage with its citizens and potentially (re) build its legitimacy and systems of accountability. Indeed, the provision of social services, including social protection, is a crucial element that the parties of the social contract – the state and the groups in the society – have explicitly or implicitly agreed to exchange (German Development Institute, 2019). While success in delivering such services can encourage societal groups to recognize the state's legitimacy and to pay taxes or provide alternative obligations in return, a failure to provide these services may result in societal discontent and political instability (German Development Institute, 2019).

Recipients of social protection benefits and/or services who are provided with income support and are equipped with tools to deal with life cycle risks can feel a stronger sense of trust in state institutions (Burchi *et al.*, 2022). Positive impacts on vertical social cohesion are maximized when social protection interventions are established or financed by the state and recipients are aware of it (Burchi *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, effective communication with the population aimed at explaining the rationale for the existence and design of social protection schemes is essential (Burchi *et al.*, 2022).

Governments have adopted social protection initiatives during, or after, periods of conflicts

to resolve political and social injustices, recover from social turmoil and gain the trust of their citizens. Often, such measures may include subsidies or categorical cash transfers aimed at easing political and social tensions by rewarding specific population groups following conflict, such as the war veterans (Ovadiya *et al.*, 2015). For instance, after the armed conflict ended in Nepal, the government established several categorical schemes, especially in conflict-affected areas, even if they did not always benefit the most deprived parts of the population (Ovadiya *et al.*, 2015). Similarly, Timor-Leste has in place a veteran pension programme to provide a dividend to those who fought the independence war, thereby containing a volatile group and maintaining political stability (Ovadiya *et al.*, 2015).

An interesting example is represented by the Philippines, where Crost, Felter and Johnston (2015) studied the impacts of the flagship social protection programme, the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme (4Ps) on civil conflict. The programme aims at reducing poverty and enhancing human capital by providing monthly cash transfers of up to PHP 1 400 (approximately USD 24) conditional to health and educational requirements. Although the scheme is not designed to specifically offset political or social tensions, the study found important impacts of the 4Ps on decreasing conflict-related incidents and diminishing insurgent influence in treatment villages, as compared to control villages. The most probable explanation of this result is the increased popular support for the government, which makes it more likely for the population to provide information on insurgents, better enabling government forces to capture insurgents and to reduce insurgent attack rates (Crost, Felter and Johnston, 2015). This second impact is particularly important, as influence by combatants on a geographical area can have adverse consequences even in the absence of violence, such as through erosion of the rule of law and restrictions on civilians' access to markets and employment. As such, diminished insurgent influence is likely to have more additional long-term benefits than that

BOX 7. STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS IN SRI LANKA

Godamunne (2016) explored the extent to which social protection delivery shaped state-society relations in post-conflict Sri Lanka. The study found that perception of favouritism in beneficiary selection and benefit provision, disrespectful treatment by government officials, ineffective grievance mechanisms and delays in receiving benefits all contributed to generating a feeling of discontent towards the government. Discontent even affected state legitimacy and societal trust in government institutions. This example from the post-conflict years showcases why it is crucial to apply a “do no harm” approach, at a minimum, to social protection programming in order to mitigate the potential delegitimizing impacts of poor state delivery. Such an approach must ensure that programmes incorporate grievance and accountability mechanisms, as well as inclusive and just decision-making (Slater and Mallett, 2017).

Sources: Godamunne, N. 2016. Can social protection build state legitimacy? Perspectives from Post War Sri Lanka. *International Relations and Diplomacy* 4 (11): 703–717. Wilmington, USA, David Publishing Company. [Cited 06 June 2023]. <https://securelivelihoods.org/wp-content/uploads/587f285a3ce1f.pdf>; Slater, R. & Mallett, R. 2017. *How to support state-building, service delivery and recovery in fragile and conflict-affected situations: Lessons from six years of SLRC Research*. Synthesis Briefing 2. London, SLRC, ODI. [Cited 06 June 2023]. https://securelivelihoods.org/wp-content/uploads/SLRC_briefing_29_V5_web_view.pdf

of simply reducing the combatants’ incentives to join a conflict (Ibid.).

Although research on social protection and state-citizen interactions is still limited, existing evidence points out to the contribution that social protection can make with respect to state building (Sabates-Wheeler *et al.*, 2022; Ovadiya *et al.*, 2015; Andrews, Kryeziu and Seo, 2014; IEG, 2011; Kidd *et al.*, 2020; McLoughlin, 2015). Existing evidence mainly refers to cash transfers (UNICEF, 2015). There is evidence on the direct relationship between public welfare spending and sustaining peace. For instance, Taydas and Peksen (2012) found that as the level of the government investment in welfare policies, including education, health and social protection increases, the likelihood of civil conflict onset declines significantly, and that the redistribution of state resources among citizens contributes to sustaining peace efforts. For this to happen, governments need an efficient and streamlined administration to deliver social services equitably and thereby ultimately contribute to reducing economic and social inequalities (McCandless, 2020).

Potential challenges

While the provision of nationally owned social protection programmes can strengthen vertical social capital and support the consolidation of the social contract, potential challenges are involved.

For example, neglecting national ownership, governance weaknesses and politicized targeting can undermine citizens’ trust in the state and fuel conflict. These adverse effects can potentially lead to a failed social contract (McCandless, 2020). Even though the state might not have the capacity and resources to deliver social protection in a fragile context, it is essential that there is a social protection policy in place and citizens recognize the national leadership of the social protection system.

However, existing evidence shows that state delivery of services does not automatically enhance state legitimacy, as this often depends upon the performance in delivering such services as well as the expectations regarding these services, the types of services provided, or subjective assessments of impartiality in service delivery (McLoughlin, 2015; Slater and Mallett, 2017; Godamunne, 2016). Indeed, a poor provision of services can result in worsened perceptions of a government by its citizens (McLoughlin, 2015; Slater and Mallett, 2017; Godamunne, 2016).

In a conflict-affected context, disputes over territories and legitimate authority are often still unresolved. Indeed, when a national government is not in a position to exercise its authority across the whole country and territories remain disputed, it is unable to lead social protection initiatives effectively and form a social contract. Moreover, it is worth noting that social protection might not

be an option in countries where the government is part of the ongoing conflict, i.e. where national institutions fuel or are themselves parties in the conflict.

Frequently, the delivery of social services by the state is limited in conflict-affected contexts. Governments often depend on the support of development and humanitarian partners to provide social services for their citizens and in social protection capacity-building (Carpenter, Slater and Mallet, 2012). International actors can be valuable in building capacity and providing

technical expertise to support the process of establishing a social protection system, which then steadily moves from being a parallel external system to a nationally owned social protection system. Such a process is resource- and time-intensive. Rather than a rigid exit strategy for international support, it requires the gradual transfer of operational and funding elements to national institutions, and the extension of social protection coverage through a handover process that is adaptive to changing circumstances. However, it is paramount that the government

BOX 8. THE VETERAN'S PENSION SCHEME IN TIMOR-LESTE

Timor-Leste spends 7 percent of its GDP on social assistance, a much higher ratio than the regional average (1.1 percent) and the average for its income group (1.4 percent) (World Bank, 2020). Still, the impact of social protection on poverty reduction is not proportionate to the spending level. As stated by Dale, Lepuschuetz and Umapathi (2014, p. 287), “this is explained by the proportion of expenditure devoted to transfers to veterans, the large proportion of the poor population which is not reached by the current targeting mechanisms, and the small coverage and benefit level of the only program that explicitly targets poor households”. Introduced in 2006, the Veteran's Pension Scheme targets East-Timorese citizens who participated in the independence struggle, on the one hand, to provide them with social security, while, on the other hand, to increase prospects for peace following the conflict. The monthly transfer value varies based on the number of years of service and on the rank. However, the pension amounts provided under the social assistance programme have exponentially risen over the years, with questions raised regarding fiscal sustainability, as well as challenges associated with better-off groups continuing to receive benefits, and those most in need being excluded. Moreover, further tensions have arisen because the scheme covers the veterans of the formal Armed Front but fails to benefit those who belonged to the Clandestine Front, composed of civilians who supported the combatants and the women who also made contributions to the resistance. These categories may only be entitled to the survival pension as widows or children of male veterans (Kent and Wallis, 2014).

While the implementation of this scheme has contributed to the transition from conflict to recovery, it needs a reform of the veterans' benefits and a revised social protection system that addresses the country's high rates of poverty and inequality (Dale, Lepuschuetz and Umapathi, 2014). Roll (2018) has shown how the veterans' pension scheme has expanded to include tens of thousands of East-Timorese, despite the narrowly drawn legal criteria: “the pensions programme is sweeping in scope and recognises thousands of veterans that do not meet the legal criteria” (Roll, 2018, p. 3). Therefore, it is important for actors to work closely with the national government on long-term planning so that effective targeting matches conflict-sensitive objectives, alongside addressing overarching structural issues concerning fiscal sustainability, policy reform and other system design and delivery features.

Sources: Dale, P., Lepuschuetz, L. & Umapathi, N. 2014. Peace, prosperity and safety nets in Timor-Leste: Competing priorities or complementary investments? *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies* 1 (2): 287–96. Hoboken, USA, Wiley-Blackwell. [Cited 22 June 2023]. doi.org/10.1002/app5.25; Kent, L. & Wallis, J. 2014. *Timor-Leste's Veterans' Pension Scheme: Who are the Beneficiaries and Who is Missing Out?* In Brief 2014/13. Canberra, Australian National University. [Cited 06 June 2023]. <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/143160>; Roll, K. 2018. Street level bureaucrats and post-conflict policy-making: Corruption, correctives, and the rise of Veterans. *Pensions in Timor-Leste. Civil Wars*, 20(2): 262–285. [Cited 23 June 2023]. doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2018.1477270; World Bank. 2020. *Timor-Leste. Human Capital Index 2020*. Washington, D.C., World Bank. [Cited 06 June 2023]. data.worldbank.org/indicator/HD.HCI.OVRL?locations=TL

takes the lead publicly, because providing social protection during uncertain and delicate times allows states to take responsibility for meeting their citizens' needs and provides them with an avenue to strengthen state-society relations (Kidd *et al.*, 2020).

From a rights-based perspective, the government is held accountable by its citizens. This is especially important in contexts where social protection interventions are financed, and might also be delivered, by international partners. Several valid concerns about the involvement of international donors are raised by Hickey, such as:

“Given that social contracts are determined by bargaining processes between governments, social groups and citizens within specific contexts, it seems very unlikely that donor agencies will be the main players here. This raises a number of challenges for donors, particularly concerning

their engagement with issues of sovereignty, ownership and working in more politically attuned ways with regard to country systems, political discourses and existing policy channels” (Hickey, 2011, p. 435).

However, as Zucco (2011) notes, social protection initiatives can also be used by governments for clientelist appropriation of public policy and services to gain electoral benefits (see also Ansell, 2014). Social protection targeting can reinforce social inequity and distrust in the government when policymakers decide to support certain population groups that are favourable to their political ambitions. In a similar vein, the government might extend support to some groups to gain popularity with them, and prevent or quell protests.

A lack of transparency in social protection targeting can fuel feelings of unfairness and

BOX 9. GEOGRAPHICAL PRIORITIZATION OF SOCIAL PROTECTION IMPLEMENTATION IN BANGLADESH

Mahmud and Mahmud (2014) argue that the low coverage of social protection programmes in Bangladesh among poor households and individuals is the result of inadequate coverage in poor regions which, in turn, is influenced by political factors. Many programmes are not performing well in terms of targeting poor regions, which translated into low coverage of poor households, partially because of the centralized allocation system and partially because of inadequate information on the geographical distribution of poverty (Ibid.). This case offers an example of the pitfalls of centralizing social protection administration. Yet, this also poses important trade-offs. For example, a centralized structure for social protection may help ensure long-term funding, wider coverage (Prismakova, 2021) and that political and ethnic balances are maintained.

Sovacool (2018) has shown how social protection programmes implemented under the banner of climate change adaptation draw on the centralized structure of programme implementation. Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change, and poor rural populations in the country will be those most affected. Social protection has a key role in mitigating these effects. However, the clientelist nature of social protection implementation within the context of climate change adaptation has enabled political elites to capture land and public resources (Ibid.). The key takeaway in this case is that social protection, while an important tool for both mitigating the effects of climate change and conflict, can be less effective, or even regressive, if it is not implemented under an adequate institutional arrangement.

Sources: Mahmud, W. & Mahmud, S. 2014. *Bangladesh: The Limits of a Developmental Welfare State under Governance Dysfunction*. Social Science Research Network, SSRN Electronic Journal. [Cited 06 June 2023]. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2560160; Prismakova, P. 2021. Public service motivation of public and non-profit employees: Comparative analysis of social service providers in a centralized system. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 44(6): 513–529. Milton Park, UK, Taylor & Francis Journals. [Cited 23 June 2023]. doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2020.1729798; Sovacool, B.K. 2018. Bamboo Beating Bandits: Conflict, Inequality, and Vulnerability in the Political Ecology of Climate Change Adaptation in Bangladesh. *World Development*, 102: 183–194. Amsterdam, Elsevier Ltd. [Cited 06 June 2023]. doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.10.014

resentment, which can lead to worsened horizontal social capital through tensions between programme recipients and those excluded, as well as weakened vertical social capital through decreased trust in the government (Burchi *et al.*, 2022). When designing social protection interventions, it is important that they do not increase stigma (Li and Walker, 2017; Loewe *et al.*, 2020; Roelen, 2017), and that the target group participates in the design and implementation of the schemes (Sabates-Wheeler *et al.*, 2017; Loewe *et al.*, 2020).

Especially in challenging implementation settings such as those affected by conflict, there is a need for social accountability and for a space where citizens can demand their rights and access adequate information. Indeed, lack of social accountability and lack of citizens' trust in government institutions are some of the drivers of conflict and fragility (Thindwa, 2017). Molyneux, Jones and Samuels (2016) assessed social accountability mechanisms in social protection programmes in conflict-affected contexts in Mozambique,

BOX 10. SOCIAL COHESION AND TRADE-OFFS IN COLOMBIA

Colombia has long faced issues of internal conflict. Organized drug cartels are the most renowned actors responsible for unrest in the country, which has led to internal displacement and challenges to state provision of social services, especially in rural areas. Adding to the decades-long domestic conflict with organized crime, the recent displacement of Venezuelan migrants has posed a new challenge for the provision of social services and for building social cohesion in the country.

A recent study analysed the extent to which Familias en Acción (a social assistance programme) covered internally displaced persons (IDPs) and Venezuelan migrants in Colombia compared to the vulnerable host population, and the effect of Familias en Acción and other social protection programmes, including those launched to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, on social cohesion. Familias en Acción is a cash transfer programme targeting 2.6 million poor and extreme poor households and conditioned to medical check-ups for children aged under six, and to school attendance of children aged between seven and eighteen (Prosperidad Social, 2023; Ham *et al.*, 2022). Ham *et al.* (2022) found that existing social protection provisions do not match the demand and do not allow IDPs and Venezuelan migrants to fully meet their basic needs, let alone ensure long-term stability in terms of, for instance, employment. However, when the subnational government participated in the design and provision of social protection, improved outcomes for IDPs and Venezuelan migrants were observed. The study also found a strong relationship between the provision of social protection and social cohesion. Based on a survey of 1 532 households (511 host households, 512 IDP households and 509 Venezuelan households), the study observed that the provision of social assistance to IDPs and Venezuelan migrants influences social cohesion in different ways depending on who is receiving and providing assistance.

The case of Colombia demonstrates that horizontal social capital can be negatively affected if one sector of the population (IDPs or Venezuelan migrants) receives assistance while the others (poor Colombians) do not. At the same time, social assistance to IDPs and Venezuelan migrants helped build vertical social capital by strengthening their trust in the government and in international organizations, which aligned their response to the displacement crisis to the national social protection system. Furthermore, recipients of social protection also reported high levels of trust in the national government and international organizations, as compared to non-recipients. This highlights how, for social protection to contribute to social cohesion, it needs to incorporate inclusive targeting mechanisms that do not create exclusionary relationships.

Sources: Ham, A., Garcia, S., Dedio, M.C., Guarín, A., Majerowicz, S., Gomez, M.M., Pizano, C.C. & Lowe, C. 2022. *Social protection responses to forced displacement in Colombia*. London, UK, ODI. [Cited 06 June 2023]. odi.org/en/publications/social-protection-responses-to-forced-displacement-in-colombia/; Prosperidad Social. 2023. *Familias en Acción*. Bogotá, Prosperidad Social. [Cited 06 June 2023]. <https://prosperidadsocial.gov.co/sgpp/transferencias/familias-en-accion/>

Palestine, and Yemen. They concluded that technocratic and donor-led mechanisms generally failed to consider the impact of the political context on programme governance and institutional dynamics. A related effect was that the most vulnerable members of a society were often not able to participate in any social accountability mechanism as they did not feel empowered to do so based on a clientelist worldview. Part of the reason for these effects is that government personnel and other actors involved in operations on the ground lack incentives to establish safe spaces for people to voice opinions and grievances (Ibid.).

2.3.3. Working on conflict: improving social cohesion by building horizontal and vertical social capital

Social cohesion is the result of building both horizontal and vertical social capital. There are three broad elements to social cohesion: (i) social relations – vertically and horizontally; (ii) the identification of the population within a given geographical scale; and (iii) collective orientation towards the common good (Schiefer and van der Noll, 2017). Within each of these elements, social protection has the capability to contribute positively towards strengthened social cohesion. As explained in the preceding two sections,

social protection policies and programmes can be important instruments in strengthening both horizontal and vertical relations in the society. Improved social relations can promote a sense of shared values, trust and a willingness to work towards improving overall human well-being and a common sense of belonging.

For instance, collective action in rural areas has a long tradition of supporting access to formal and informal social protection, contributing to social cohesion, rebuilding the social contract between the rural population and state, increasing resilience and sustaining peace. Collective action in rural areas can take the form of formal or informal groups, including civil society organizations (CSOs), community-based organizations, cooperatives, producer organizations, and Indigenous Peoples' organizations.

Collective action can take other forms beyond community organizations. Notably, religious institutions, such as the Zakat, play important, albeit less documented, roles in the provision of informal social protection in the Arab region. Zakat is the main source of social wealth redistribution in Muslim countries, as it is considered a religious duty for wealthy people to support those in need. During the Syrian conflict, a large portion of the

BOX 11. KEY GROUPS TO ENGAGE IN RURAL AREAS FOR INCREASED SOCIAL COHESION

In conflict-affected contexts, women and youth are often primarily perceived as victims, while youth are also seen as perpetrators. However, women are central actors in natural resource management and livelihood strategies in rural areas. In certain contexts, women also have a protected status which gives them a unique role in resolving clan, tribal and ethnic conflicts. Together with youth, women can be agents of change in transforming relationships between different groups for increased social cohesion. As argued by Myrntinen, Naujoks and El-Bushra, efforts to sustain peace are more effective if: “[They are] built on an understanding of how gendered identities are constructed through the societal power relations between and among women, men, girls, boys, and members of sexual and gender minorities. This gender-relational approach is, on the one hand, broader in the sense that it moves away from equating gender with women (and girls) and, on the other hand, deeper in that it examines the interplay between gender and other identity markers, such as age, social class, sexuality, disability, ethnic or religious background, marital status or urban/rural setting” (Myrntinen, Naujoks and El-Bushra, 2014, p. 5).

Source: Myrntinen, H., Naujoks, J. & El-Bushra, J. 2014. *Re-Thinking Gender in Peacebuilding*. London, International Alert. [Cited 23 June 2023]. <https://www.international-alert.org/publications/rethinkinggender-peacebuilding/>

social assistance provided in-kind and in-cash to vulnerable groups had been channelled informally through Zakat institutions (UNESCO, 2019). Similarly, against the backdrop of the political crisis and the disintegration of the Libyan welfare state, Zakat provided effective aid to those most in need (Ibid.). When such institutions are formalized, as in the case of Mauritania, they can be important levers in promoting social dialogue and strengthening synergies between rural civil society organizations and state actors (Joint SDG Fund, n.d.).

Another key determinant in improving social cohesion at the local and national scale is equality. While human well-being is an important goal, inequality at the local or national level can undermine the positive development of social cohesion. As Idris (2017, p. 3) argues: “social protection is thought to address the distributional aspect of social cohesion: it can reduce poverty, enhance income security of vulnerable people, improve their access to basic services and establish legal entitlements for previously excluded groups”.

Available evidence on cash transfers and its contribution to building horizontal social capital has found that while targeting strategies do have the potential to lead to more conflict, providing financial support to the poorest of the poor allowed recipients to participate as equals, or more equal, in community social networks. In this regard, the building of horizontal social capital can contribute to improved social cohesion through strengthening connections and participation of various groups within social networks. Qualitative fieldwork across six sub-Saharan countries noted that cash can positively impact re-engagement and participation of especially disadvantaged groups within local communities and social networks. Therefore, cash transfers generally increase “the ability of the poorest and most vulnerable beneficiaries to ‘re-enter’ the social life of their extended families and communities, leading to a reduction in the ‘social distance’ between the poorest households and local institutions” (Daidone *et al.*, 2017, p. 22). Indeed, where particular stigma is directed towards those that are poor or deemed as particularly vulnerable, Barca *et al.* (2015) noted that

beneficiaries reported that being less obviously poor enabled them to participate more in the social life of the community.

2.3.4. Working on conflict: supporting the transition to resilient livelihoods

Potential contributions

Climate change and environmental degradation threaten lives, exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, and put strains on societies through adverse impacts on food and economic security (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2020; Van Bronkhorst and Bousquet, 2021). The impacts of climate change are unevenly distributed among groups of people already facing hardship and with limited means to cope with them (see Ensor, Forrester and Matin, 2018). These include poor and marginalized people, especially women, as well as those whose livelihoods are dependent upon the weather and natural resources, such as small-scale food producers (Jafino *et al.*, 2020; FAO and Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, 2019, International Committee of the Red Cross, 2020).

The negative impacts of climate change on vulnerable people are even greater in contexts affected by conflict. This is a result of vulnerability to such impacts in conflict-affected contexts. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (2020), 60 percent of countries considered to be most vulnerable and least able to adapt to climate change by the Notre Dame-Global Adaptation Index (ND-GAIN) Country Index are currently facing conflict, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Niger, and Somalia. Impacts from climate change are felt harder in conflict situations as the disruptions that conflict causes on the social, political and economic spheres weaken institutional capacities to provide support in the face of climate shocks, thus aggravating inequalities and ultimately hindering the ability of people to adapt to and cope with them (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2020; Van Bronkhorst and Bousquet, 2021).



There is broad consensus that climate change does not directly fuel conflict. Yet, it is also clear that climate change does increase the risk of conflict or prolongs it. Climate change exacerbates issues that, in their interplay, can lead to conflict, such as social exclusion, disputes on the management of natural resources – particularly land ownership, or economic stressors (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2020; Brown and Crawford, 2009; Peters *et al.*, 2020; Selby *et al.*, 2017; Theisen, 2017; Buhaug, 2015).

For example, evidence shows that shifts in agricultural practices or pastoral routes in response to climate change may cause tensions when communities have to share land or natural resources, especially when these do not have previously established relationships or conflict-resolution mechanisms in place (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2020, De Juan, 2015; Linke *et al.*,

2015). Research also finds that in economies that are dependent on natural resources, changes in rainfall heighten the risk of localized violence. This is particularly the case in communities where resources are already scarce and where government institutions are not able to resolve conflict arising over them (Adger *et al.*, 2014; International Committee of the Red Cross, 2020).

During the past fifteen years, increased attention has focused on the potential synergies between social assistance and climate change interventions. Indeed, social assistance – and more broadly, social protection – can be an effective way to manage climate risks by addressing vulnerabilities to poverty and food insecurity, by supporting the transition to climate-resilient livelihoods and by supporting inclusive disaster management interventions when climate (along with other covariate) shocks materialize. Yet, most research

and practice, to date, has been centred on the first and third of such contributions (Sections 2.1.2. and 2.1.1., respectively), while less attention has been devoted to understanding how social protection can support adaptive and transformative capacities of households and their livelihood systems (Béné, Cornelius and Howland, 2018; Tenzing, 2020; Naess, Selby and Daoust, 2022).

Social protection systems that incorporate climate considerations in their design can make specific contributions to transforming livelihoods by making them more adaptive and resilient. In turn, such an approach can be one way to address climate-related vulnerabilities that may then exacerbate tensions and represent conflict drivers.

Social protection can contribute to increasing climate resilience of rural households by promoting the uptake of climate-smart practices and technologies. When poor households adopt these new practices or climate-smart technologies, they improve adaptation and mitigation measures and enable the sustainable management of natural resources (FAO and Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, 2019). The application of such an approach to conflict-affected contexts is, however, relatively new as the existing literature on social assistance and climate change mostly focuses on stable settings. In the few instances where this kind of research has been conducted in conflict contexts, the specific challenges posed by conflict itself, or by fragility, were not taken into consideration (Naess, Selby and Daoust, 2022).

In operational terms, the way social assistance may promote climate-resilient livelihoods may be through either establishing social assistance schemes with this specific objective, or by tweaking existing programmes to incorporate climate change considerations (Naess, Selby and Daoust, 2022; Lemos *et al.*, 2016; Ulrichs, Slater and Costella, 2019). To do so, it is crucial to assess how individual, household and systemic factors drive vulnerability among social assistance recipients, and how climate change interacts with these drivers (Naess, Selby and Daoust, 2022). This is pivotal to ensure that social assistance

interventions do not inadvertently increase existing vulnerabilities. As Ulrichs and Slater claim (2016, p. 5), “at a minimum social protection needs to consider the implications of climate risks in programme design to avoid unintended impacts in relation to maladaptation and to harness any potential positive impacts on adaptation”.

Furthermore, there are limitations to how extensive the impact of standalone social protection interventions can be, especially in contexts where poor households have limited access to inputs, information, financial services or markets (FAO and Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, 2019). Social assistance schemes must be implemented in conjunction with complementary programmes. These may include the provision of information or messages, training and capacity building, and other incentives that help small-scale food producers to make more productive and climate-resilient investments.

Potential challenges

If conflict has implications for social assistance programmes, this is even truer for those interventions that seek to promote the climate resilience, going beyond merely addressing household vulnerabilities. Adapting to the impacts of climate change often demands important social, cultural or economic transformations. Yet, it may be challenging to put in place such processes in contexts affected by conflict because governments may prioritize restoring national security, restarting the economy or rebuilding destroyed infrastructures (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2020). Thus, vulnerable populations often rely on informal social protection mechanisms to increase their resilience against climate change, such as remittances or religious institutions and funds (Naess, Selby and Daoust, 2022).

Even when there may be willingness to implement climate-resilient social protection interventions, their design and implementation may be hindered by scarce financial resources, weakened administrative capacities, limited intragovernmental coordination, low technical

capacity and knowledge or politicized decision-making (Naess, Selby and Daoust, 2022; International Committee of the Red Cross, 2020). With respect to this last issue, Naess, Selby and Daoust (2022) analysed the implications for climate resilience interventions where there are sharp political divisions that often characterize conflict-affected contexts. The authors describe how such settings often involve the presence of a dominant group. This group is favoured by the state through such initiatives as the provision of subsidies, credit, land, water resources and public employment. In these contexts, state support in the form of social protection may have a direct role in producing or reproducing existing climate vulnerabilities by delivering or, quite the reverse, denying access to resources that underpin people's capacity to adapt to climate change (Naess, Selby and Daoust, 2022).

Situations characterized by violence can have especially important impacts for climate resilience and social protection programmes. Beyond its cost in terms of human lives, violence can be directed

against property and infrastructure, which are foundational to livelihood strategies and climate resilience, such as water tanks, well pumps or diesel generators (Coward, 2009; Graham, 2010; Sowers, Weinthal and Zawahri, 2017; Naess, Selby and Daoust, 2022). Violence can also hinder the delivery of social assistance, especially by preventing access to certain areas of the country or through capture of social assistance benefits that are being distributed, such as agricultural inputs (Naess, Selby and Daoust, 2022).

Finally, another potential challenge for implementing social assistance programmes aimed at enhancing climate resilience in conflict-affected contexts is represented by the heavy strains on, and demands for, such programmes, namely, in displacement settings. Refugee camps or informal settlements in peri-urban areas are often extremely vulnerable to climate change because they are densely populated, offer limited livelihood opportunities, are equipped with poor infrastructures and rely on particularly scarce natural resources (Naess, Selby and Daoust, 2022).

3. Recommendations and the way forward

This section provides recommendations for any social protection intervention that aims at improving peace outcomes in the context of working in and working on conflict. The design and implementation of any programme should be based on a solid feasibility assessment and willingness to engage in social protection (WFP, forthcoming). Then, a conflict-sensitive approach must be applied from the onset: an analysis of the root causes and drivers of conflict, as well as of how the conflict has impacted people, must underpin the design of the programme. Finally, its implementation must be accompanied by rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess impacts.

3.1. WORKING IN CONFLICT

Social protection policies and programmes need context-appropriate and conflict-sensitive approaches, mechanisms and modalities – beyond the “do no harm” approach – that can promote peace-contributing outcomes.

Incorporating such provisions is essential for the potential contributions to peace by social protection interventions to take shape. A social protection intervention or system is always part of a broader ecosystem. Conflict sensitivity entails considering and incorporating all the interactions between the components of this ecosystem. A transformative and sustainable social protection system needs to be carefully contextualized for the local power dynamics, political systems and governance structures, as they affect how different society members have access to resources and experience vulnerabilities, and how social protection can contribute to greater equality (Molyneux, Jones and Samuels, 2016).

Even in the most deprived countries – where the social contract and social protection system

are still very fragile and nascent – sustaining peace requires a horizon of universality, sustainability and equality to guide both objectives and implementation.

Building universal social protection systems that provide income security and are able to support all people across the lifecycle is a key issue in contributing towards stability and peace in regions most exposed to conflict and recurring societal tensions. Concurrently, it is important to incorporate two complementary dimensions of universality: sustainability and equality. Through the former, national ownership of social protection systems must be sought as well as a fiscal space ensured, ideally based on various domestic financing sources. Through the latter, direct and indirect discrimination in social protection policy and programme design and implementation must be eliminated.

3.2. WORKING ON CONFLICT

Only a coordinated approach to the different dimensions and determinants of peace can incrementally make a contribution to peace.

Addressing structural inequalities rooted in societal institutions or norms needs a comprehensive approach and cannot be tackled by social protection interventions alone. In this regard, coordination with other interventions in complementary sectors, and with other stakeholders (governmental or non-governmental, public, or private, international, or national NGOs, other UN agencies, CSOs, donors, etc.) involved in the promotion of specific dimensions of peace is crucial. This coordination may go beyond the country-level context to also encompass regional and global levels whereby, for instance, informed common vision and funding strategies may be determined (WFP, forthcoming). Social protection programme portfolios need to be comprehensive

across pillars and complemented with inclusive social, economic, and political policies (i.e. land reform in Colombia) and interventions have to positively impact social cohesion. Ultimately, governments and development partners should work together towards a policy synergy that gives socially excluded and marginalized groups a legal entitlement to access assets, services, and opportunities in an inclusive and fair manner (Babajanian, 2012). Examples of coordination platforms may encompass technical working groups and communities of practice at the local, regional, and international level.

Actors must work towards establishing nationally owned social protection systems to contribute to achieving a social contract and strengthening social cohesion.

All actors involved need to work towards establishing a nationally owned and sustainable social protection system that is able to address potential conflict drivers in the future, such as climate shocks (see Hickey, 2011) and inequality (Fiszbein *et al.*, 2009). Social protection is an endogenous process, which means that transferring models from other countries cannot work. It needs to be a nationally owned process based on inclusive and participatory design, which considers context-specific needs and challenges. Building on existing societal assets means looking at informal safety nets and resilience capacities such as Zakat, traditional authorities, or traditional community coping mechanisms, which can be a common element in rural areas.

Using a rights-based approach, social protection systems in low- and middle-income countries – and, in particular, in remote and rural areas – should ensure that all citizens can access social protection when they need it and be empowered to claim their right to it.

While there are different legal foundations for social protection, a rights-based approach aims at empowering people to claim their rights and accountability for entitlements, and enables them to be active citizens, thus strengthening state-citizen relationships (Devereux and

Sabates-Wheeler, 2007). According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), social protection is a fundamental right for all people and a universal right of every human being (Sabates-Wheeler *et al.*, 2017). However, the realization of this right is complex in a context affected by conflict. Conflicts present obstacles that limit resource access and alter forms of control, as well as creating obstacles for legal entitlements and access to social services. Social protection access is the right of every citizen and a fundamental responsibility of the state. Effective communication from the government on the rights citizens are entitled to, and delivering services based on those rights, is key to any contribution towards trust and vertical social cohesion. In a conflict-affected context, rights-based social protection is not just a universal approach; it is a pathway through which the state moves towards inclusion, empowerment of people and universality as well as ownership and sustainability. Such a process is not linear but depends on available funding, capacities and political willingness.

3.3. WORKING IN CONFLICT AND WORKING ON CONFLICT

Equality should not only be understood as the absence of discrimination and inclusion of minorities, but also as a model of society where inequalities in social or economic terms are gradually reduced.

Social protection needs to be perceived as fair and just by society to avoid negative impacts on social cohesion. Socioeconomic inequalities and unfair access to resources are key factors that can lead to the emergence of social tensions and episodes of violence. In order for inequalities to lead to conflict, people have to perceive them, be aware of them, react to them with frustration and consider them unjust. Numerous studies have established the link between inequality and conflict, and have proven that perceived inequality and perceived unfairness are more relevant than actual inequalities (Annan and Atta, 2009; Rustad, 2016;



Must and Rustad, 2019). The exclusion of legal entitlements within social protection programmes for certain marginalized groups is a potential conflict driver. In this regard, social protection interventions need to incorporate considerations of socially excluded groups, particularly rural populations, to avoid triggering tensions. Rural populations are often socially excluded and experience relatively higher poverty levels, limited access to social protection because of financial, administrative and programme design barriers, as well as the inadequacy of benefit levels to meet their needs (FAO and ILO, 2021). At the same time, conflicts frequently affect rural areas (FAO, 2016b). Ensuring adequate access to social protection for rural populations and other socially excluded groups means understanding the specific barriers they face and following an inclusive approach in the conceptualization and delivery of social protection to address them, as well as establishing an adequate legal framework (FAO and ILO, 2021).

A social protection programme might perpetuate certain social hierarchies instead of contributing to equality, without understanding intersectional power dynamics in a society.

Gendered and intersectional realities remain largely unchallenged in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of social protection programmes. Yet, women are identified as the most vulnerable. In order for social protection to have a transformative effect, policymakers need to understand how different social groups experience risks and vulnerabilities differently, and in what way they can access resilience capacities in the face of socioeconomic stressors and ecological shocks. This includes gendered differentiations, but also specific vulnerabilities faced by rural populations, non-nationals, informal workers and ethnic minorities (Mushunje, 2017).

In most low- and middle-income countries universality will often be a regulatory horizon, an ideal and necessary aspiration before it can become a reality.

Poverty alleviation, social assistance or economic protection mechanisms are necessary, but not sufficient, for the implementation of a genuine social protection system. Non-universal targeting may raise some issues in terms of criteria and methodology, social tensions and exclusion errors while paradoxically increasing the gap between the better off and the most deprived segments of a population (Kidd, 2015). However, in a context affected by conflict where the economy and social fabric are often still hampered by episodes of violence, conflict-sensitive social protection initiatives can present a potential pathway to address social exclusion, vulnerability, food insecurity and, ultimately sustaining peace (Babajanian, 2012). Most governments lack the public funding and capacities to establish universal social protection systems. They are often dependent on the support of international donors and actors. As argued by Molyneux, Jones and Samuels (2016, p. 1096): “Economic crises and fiscal deficits set up financial barriers to taking programmes to the scale needed; investment in longer-term processes may be discouraged, including in those required to empower citizens and strengthen capacities of service providers.” Because of this, establishing universal social protection systems often remains a horizon that can only be realized progressively. As a consequence, many countries implement targeted interventions using a wide variety of targeting mechanisms, while moving gradually towards universalization of social protection. In doing so, it is crucial not only to employ fair, well-established targeting criteria but also to put in place effective communication strategies with recipients and non-recipients to avoid unintended impacts and fueling conflict.

Optimizing the contributions of social protection in all its four main functions – preventive, protective, promotive, and transformative – is particularly relevant in a conflict-affected context, given that the intersection of poverty, insecurity and exclusion threatens the process of sustaining peace. What is, however, the status of these contributions? And how do efforts aimed at sustaining peace translate into tangible results?

At a time when governments and international organizations are striving to integrate social protection into development programmes in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, there is an urgent need to clearly answer such questions by conducting rigorous analyses of social protection interventions to assess their contributions to peace outcomes as well as their potential, unintended negative impacts. At the same time, assessments must be made of the potential impacts that conflicts themselves may have on the implementation of social protection to make interventions more resilient to future conflict shocks.

Evidence gathered in this paper demonstrates that social protection interventions have the potential to make specific contributions to sustaining peace by addressing some of the causes and drivers of conflict, as well as by supporting individuals and households in addressing its direct impacts. Indeed, during episodes of conflict, social protection – in conjunction with humanitarian assistance – can provide a crucial avenue to help them address basic needs. Beyond that, social protection is a proven strategy to contribute to addressing vulnerabilities to poverty and food insecurity in the medium- to long-term. There is sustained and substantial evidence on this contribution in different contexts around the world. However, the relationship between social protection’s positive impact on underlying vulnerabilities and the specific challenges in conflict-affected contexts remains underexplored.

With respect to enhancing prospects for sustaining peace by addressing some of the underlying causes and drivers of conflict, social protection can have a positive impact in supporting people in rural areas by enhancing their livelihoods and making them more resilient to climate change. By addressing deprivation and social exclusion, social protection interventions can also contribute to a sense of solidarity, and of shared norms and values among citizens, which is part of building horizontal social capital. Vertical social capital is the other side of the coin in strengthening social cohesion. This requires a vertical integration of social capital through improving state legitimacy and establishing a social contract between the state and society. While many of these areas have not been sufficiently explored so far, the initial evidence is promising.

It is important to recognize that social protection interventions in a conflict-affected context can potentially be harmful and fuel social tensions

in the absence of adequate considerations of local power dynamics. Therefore, social protection strategies and programmes need to be conflict-sensitive in their approaches, mechanisms, and modalities – beyond the “do no harm” approach – to contribute to sustaining peace outcomes.

Working in this sector is highly uncertain, requiring constant trade-offs, and an embracing of a certain amount of risk. Moreover, international organizations are often operating in a high pressure and fast-paced environment with limited time for assessing and mitigating risks or changing course of large programmes. As such, building meaningful coalitions at country level among like-minded social protection practitioners, where possible and where the appetite exists, is critical to build momentum and seize opportunities, as well as to share and limit exposure to risks.

Glossary

- Agriculture** For FAO, agriculture refers to crop-based farming systems and livestock systems, including rangelands and pasturelands, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, and the related resources they use (water, land, soils, genetic resources and biodiversity). When the discussion concerns a specific agriculture sector, it is specified in the text.
- Climate change** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines climate change as “a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g. by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer” (IPCC, 2018, p. 544).
- Climate change adaptation** IPCC defines climate change adaptation as “the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects [in human systems], in order to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In natural systems, the process of adjustment to actual climate and its effects; human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate” (IPCC, 2018, p. 542).
- Climate change mitigation** IPCC defines climate change mitigation as: “A human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases” (IPCC, 2018, p. 554).
- Community** There is no commonly accepted definition of “community” in the relevant literature. In the context of this research, community is defined as a number of persons who regularly interact with one another within a specific geographic territory, share common values, beliefs and attitudes, the same services, and self-identify as a group.
- Conflict** The United States Institute of Peace defines conflict as “An inevitable aspect of human interaction, conflict is present when two or more individuals or groups pursue mutually incompatible goals. Conflicts can be waged violently, as in a war, or non-violently, as in an election or an adversarial legal process. However, when channelled constructively into processes of resolution, conflict can be beneficial” (United States Institute of Peace, 2017, p. 1).
- Conflict sensitivity** FAO defines the term as: “Incorporating a systematic understanding of the interaction between the local context and a policy and/or programmatic intervention into the design, implementation as well as evaluation framework with a view to reducing potentially negative impacts and accentuating peaceful outcomes” (FAO, 2019a, p. 2).

Fragility	FAO (2019a) characterizes fragility as the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate that risk. Fragility can lead to negative outcomes, including violence, the breakdown of institutions, displacement, humanitarian crises or other emergencies.
Peace	Peace is often defined as positive or negative peace. Negative peace is the absence of violence. In order to create negative peace, we must look for ways to reduce and eliminate violence. A cease-fire would be an example of an action for negative peace. Positive peace is the presence of social justice and equality, and the absence of structural or indirect violence. It is characterized by the presence of harmonious social relations and the “integration of human society” (Galtung, 1964, p. 2).
Resilience	UNISDR and WMO define resilience as: “The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management” (UNISDR and WMO [United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and World Meteorological Organization], 2012, p. 3).
Social assistance	Social assistance can be defined as: “Direct, regular and predictable cash or in-kind transfers that are means-tested, or categorically targeted programmes for vulnerable groups (e.g. senior citizens, children). The programmes are non-contributory and financed through taxes and/or international development aid” (FAO and Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, 2019, p. 14).
Social capital	Social capital refers to people’s ability to work together as a group. The reference to “capital” in social capital means that it is an asset of a “collective resource of a group in terms of networks and social trust which facilitate its collective action for mutual benefit” (Putnam, 1995, p. 67).
Social cohesion	Social cohesion is the “extent of trust in government and within society and the willingness to participate collectively toward a shared vision of sustainable peace and common development goals” (UNDP, 2020, p. 10).
Social protection	FAO defines social protection as a “set of policies and programmes that addresses economic, environmental and social vulnerabilities to food insecurity and poverty by protecting and promoting livelihood” (FAO, 2017b, p. 6).
Social protection systems	According to FAO and the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, when it comes to social protection systems “[...] definitions vary across different institutions and contexts, but generally describe a set of integrated social protection programmes that provide comprehensive protection from a range of social, economic, life cycle-based and climate-related risks” (FAO and Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, 2019, p. 44).

Social safety nets

According to FAO and Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, a social safety net is “[...] often used interchangeably with social assistance, [and] refers to non-contributory provision of benefits (cash or in-kind)” (FAO and Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, 2019, p. 44).

Sustaining peace

According to the UN Secretary-General: “Sustaining peace encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict” (United Nations, 2018, p. 1).



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