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Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC

# WORKING AID STRENGTHENING SOCIAL PROTECTION



IN SWISS INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



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# Abbreviations

ALMPs	Active Labour Market Policies
ARC	African Risk Capacity
ASP	Adaptive Social Protection
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CODI	Core Diagnostic Instrument
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMIS	Insurance Management Information System
IPC-IG	International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth
ISPA	Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessments
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PD-SPD	Policy Dialogue on Social Protection and Development
PMT	Proxy Means Test
PWD	People with Disability
RSSB	Rwanda Social Security Board
SCTP	Social Cash Transfer Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPIAC-B	Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board
SRSP	Shock Responsive Social Protection
UCT	Unconditional Cash Transfer
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USP	Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection
VSD	Vocational Skills Development
WFP	World Food Programme

# Introduction

**Social protection is a human right.** It supports people in need at different stages in life and protects them against risks, such as illness, accident or unemployment. In this way, social protection helps to combat poverty and contributes to social equality and justice. By boosting human capital and productivity and supporting domestic demand, it facilitates structural transformation of national economies. The lack of access to social protection is a major obstacle to economic and social development.<sup>1</sup>

**Over the last decades, many middle- and low-income countries have invested in social protection recognising its role as an important mechanism to address rising inequalities and poverty rates.** In many countries, social protection is a key element of national strategies to promote human development, political stability and inclusive growth.

**The significant positive impacts of social protection have brought social protection to the forefront of the development agenda.** A range of international organisations, financing institutions and bilateral partners have identified social protection as a priority theme in their development portfolios. While the SDC has been implementing social protection for over a decade, a more systematic engagement in social protection, in particular with regards to its key role for Leaving No One Behind (LNOB), is relatively recent.

**This working aid aims to provide concrete guidance for the SDC staff to engage in social protection programmes and policies.** Providing concrete case studies and reflection questions, the tool aims at supporting management and programme officers in identifying potential entry points in their country or regional context to implement social protection and engage in a policy dialogue with national and global partners. It shall support the SDC staff working in a range of sectors in making strategic use of social protection as a cross-sectorial instrument to foster and enhance sectoral outcomes and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development

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*“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widow-hood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”*

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25(1)

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opment Goals (SDGs). The document is the direct result of the SDC’s learning journey on social protection, which took place from 2021 to 2022 and included 10 webinars on various aspects of social protection.<sup>2</sup>

**Target audience of this working aid** is (1) the management and programme officers in Swiss representations abroad, including regional thematic advisors involved in the operations at country and regional level and (2) the thematic and operational SDC staff at headquarters, including middle management.

**This working aid has two main sections:** *Chapter 1* gives an overview of **what** social protection is, discussing basic concepts of social protection, objectives, instruments and impacts. It further discusses **why** the SDC should engage more in social protection as an effective approach to contribute to the SDC’s core mandate of reducing poverty and inequalities and promoting sustainable development. *Chapter 2* elaborates on **how** to engage in social protection in practical terms, identifying entry points for strengthening the domestic social protection systems in the context of national or regional SDC priorities.

The second part includes several toolboxes with more detailed information. *Toolbox 1* explains social protection instruments in more detail and gives an overview of their impacts, including case studies from across the globe. *Toolbox 2* illustrates the sectoral perspective linking SDC priority themes with social protection. *Toolbox 3* elaborates the approaches to social protection of relevant international organisations.

*The working aid was developed by the SDC Core Learning Group on Social Protection under coordination of Stephanie Guha. Technical support and expertise were provided by Barbara Rohregger und Franziska Holzäpfel (GOPA Worldwide Consultants).*

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<sup>1</sup> ILO (2023) Social Protection. Available from: [https://www.ilo.org/africa/countries-covered/tanzania/WCMS\\_549369/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/africa/countries-covered/tanzania/WCMS_549369/lang--en/index.htm) (25.02.2023).

<sup>2</sup> SDC (2023) SDC Social Protection Online Learning Series. Available from: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Poverty-Wellbeing/social-protection/Pages/SDC-Social-Protection-Online-Learning-Series.aspx> (12.03.2023).

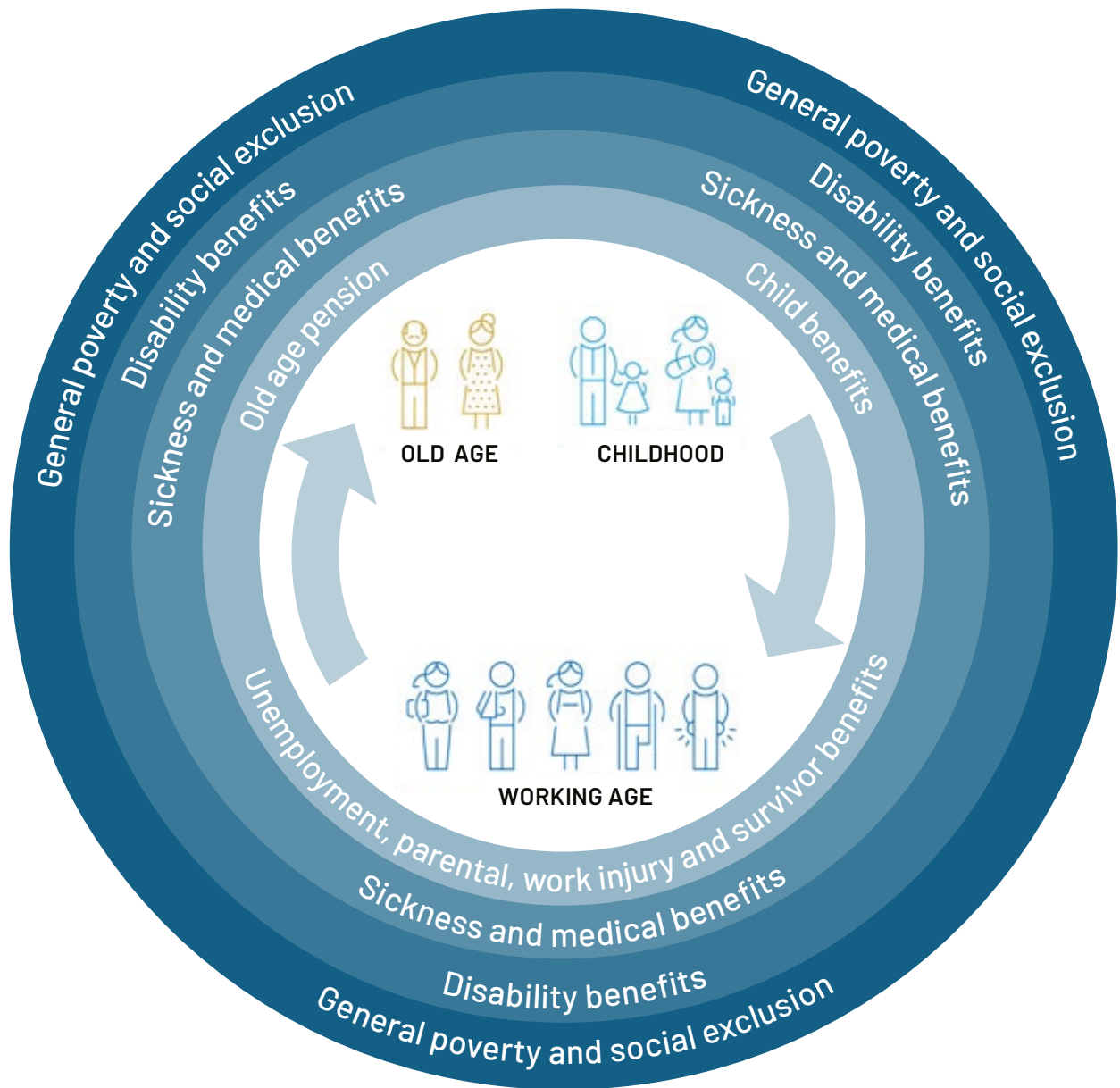


Figure 1: “From the Cradle to the Grave”: Life-Cycle Approach to Social Protection<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Based on UN ESCAP (2022) Broadening Social Protection Coverage. Available from: <https://www.socialoutlook.unescap.org/broadening-social-protection-coverage> (20.04.2023).



# Chapter 1: Background on Social Protection

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*The first chapter gives an overview of ‘what is social protection’, explaining concepts, definitions, key stakeholders and potential impacts as well as why it fits well within the SDC’s overall approach.*

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## 1.1 What is Social Protection?

### 1.1.1 Definition

The SDC defines social protection as a “(...) set of public and private initiatives designed to support all people across the life cycle, providing protection against social and economic risks and ensuring sustainable livelihoods. Well-designed social protection systems ensure a minimum income and equitable access to essential services for the poor and vulnerable and enable people to cope with shocks. Social protection both prevents people from falling into acute poverty and enables sustainable escape out of poverty.”<sup>4</sup>

**The SDC’s engagement in social protection is based on a life cycle approach.** Recognising that individuals face different risks and vulnerabilities at different stages in life, including childhood, unemployment, maternity and work injury, illness and invalidity, old age and death as well as general poverty and exclusion, the SDC emphasises a comprehensive approach to social protection that provides a minimum of coverage for all people at each life cycle stage – “from the cradle to the grave” – (Figure 1). Social protection instruments support individuals and households to prevent, mitigate and cope with these risks.

**Social protection does not only protect people from individual risks but from shocks affecting large groups of people at the same time,** such as political or economic crises, pandemics, natural disasters or climate change. The use of social protection systems to prepare and respond to large-scale shocks is called adaptive social protection (ASP)<sup>5</sup> (Toolbox 2.VII). By expanding the coverage and increasing

transfer levels and services to enable people to deal with all the consequences of a crisis, ASP helps to increase peoples’ resilience, making sure that they do not fall into poverty or remain in poverty due to a crisis.<sup>6</sup>

**While everyone is in need of social protection at some stage of the life cycle, poor people are disproportionately more exposed to social and economic risks and vulnerabilities.** These are often compounded by other intersecting factors, such as gender, age, ethnicity, race or informality. In low-income countries where the degree of poverty is high, social protection is predominantly targeted towards the poor.

This also explains the role of social protection as a key **poverty reduction tool**: Through meeting basic needs, smoothing consumption and mitigating the immediate impact of shocks, social protection reduces poverty in the short term. By improving opportunities for inclusive growth, strengthening human capabilities, and promoting social stability, social protection serves as a vital support system, empowering people to permanently move out of poverty and break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Simultaneously, it prevents them from falling back into poverty again.

**Social protection is a human right** enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Social, Economic and Cultural Rights Charta (1966).<sup>7</sup> It is understood as an integral part of the state-citizen relationship. The ‘social contract’ defines the rights and responsibilities states and

4 SDC (2018) Leveraging Switzerland’s Experience to Enhance SDC’s Engagement in Social Protection. Available from: [https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Poverty-Wellbeing/social-protection/Documents/Social%20Protection\\_SDC%20Reflexion%20Paper.pdf](https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Poverty-Wellbeing/social-protection/Documents/Social%20Protection_SDC%20Reflexion%20Paper.pdf) (20.04.2023).

5 While adaptive social protection is considered a broader concept entailing the adaptation of social protection also beyond the immediate crisis context, shock responsive social protection is a more narrow definition, focusing on the role of social protection in responding in the immediate crisis situation. Increasingly the terms are used interchangeably. See UNICEF (2019) Programme Guidance: Strengthening Shock Responsive Social Protection Systems. Available from: <https://www.unicef.org/media/63846/file> (21.05.2023).

6 Bowen, T., Del Ninno, C., Andrews, C., et al. (2020) Adaptive Social Protection. Building Resilience to Shocks. Washington D.C.: World Bank. Available from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/7ab2af13-08ca-5b10-b08b-268e6519eb15/content> (20.04.2023).

7 UN (1948) Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Available from: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights> (20.04.2023); UN (1966) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Available from: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights> (20.04.2023).

citizens have towards each other, including the responsibility of the state as duty-bearer to take care of its citizens and to LNOB.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.1.2 Instruments of Social Protection

Social protection is provided through four main instruments (Figure 2):

**Social assistance** encompasses cash or in-kind transfers to address special needs. Social assistance is usually tax-financed or non-contributory. Instruments include cash transfers, such as child benefits, invalidity benefits and social pensions, in-kind transfers such as school feeding or food vouchers, as well as subsidies or fee exemptions (*waivers*) to enable access to services (e.g., access to primary health care).<sup>9</sup> The SDC finances cash transfer programmes in several countries (e.g., Tanzania, Zambia).

or women and children facing gender-based violence (GBV). Care services are usually provided as a complement to material support in order to address structural and systemic causes of violence, abuse, exploitation, discrimination or social exclusion (e.g., Albania<sup>11</sup>).<sup>12</sup>

**Social insurances** are contribution-based mechanisms that collect money in advance in order to prevent people from falling into poverty once a shock occurs. Such shocks can include adverse personal circumstances (for example sickness, disability, accident), life cycle events (pregnancy, old age) and risks related to natural, ecological- or climate-related hazards, including droughts, floods, earthquakes, or cyclones. The SDC is particularly active in the provision of health insurance, providing technical support to strengthen delivery systems. Concerning climate insurance, the SDC supports the development of micro-insurance products against climate-induced risks, including the development of a conducive legal environment for insurance (e.g., Bolivia).

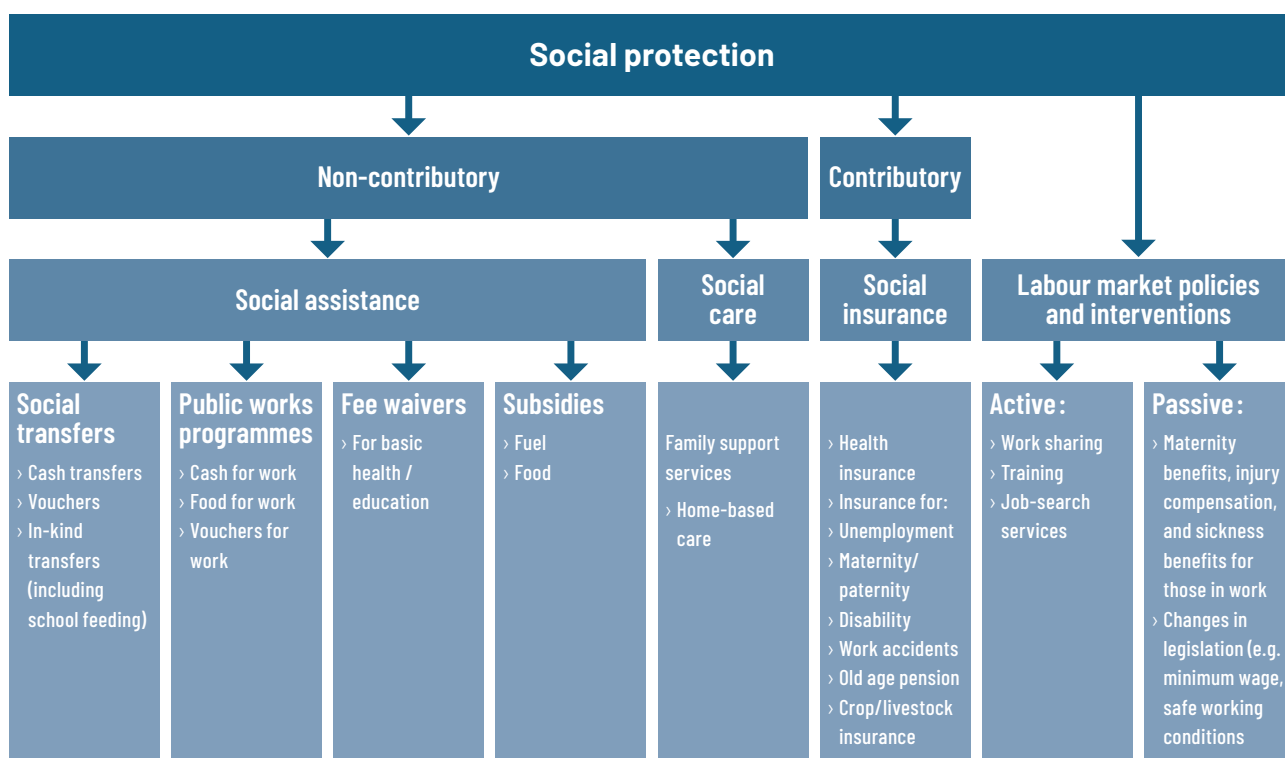


Figure 2: Social Protection Toolbox<sup>10</sup>

**Social care services** include all services that are provided through direct outreach or allow people to connect to needed services. This may range from family support services, counselling services for young people, migrants and workers

**Labour market policies** encompass programmes and policies that aim to protect economically active people, including through the provision of basis standards and labour rights (e.g., the decent work agenda or minimum wage policies). Labour market policies can active (e.g., supporting people to acquire skills to (re)integrate into the labour market) and

8 Hickey, S. 2014. Relocating Social Protection within a Radical Project of Social Justice, in the European Journal of Development Research, Vol. 26(3), pp. 322 – 337.

9 Social protection should not be confused with other social sectors such as education and health. While social protection supports access to health and education services, for example through social health insurance, conditional cash transfers or school meals programmes, health and education services are social sectors apart.

10 UKAID K4D (2019) Social Protection Topic Guide. Available from: <https://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/social-protection/types-of-social-protection/> (20.04.2023), adapted from O'Brien et al. (2018: 6).

11 SDC (2019) Social Care Services for Children with Disabilities – Lushnje Development Centre. Available from: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Poverty-Wellbeing/leave-no-one-behind/Pages/LNB-Albania.aspx> (06.06.2023).

12 Social care services are sometimes subsumed under social assistance, as being financed from the same source (Figure 2).

passive (e.g., protecting people against the loss of income during unemployment or job search).<sup>13</sup> Labour market measures are implemented in various countries through the SDC, including technical and vocational training that focuses on the integration of particularly marginalised groups, including women and girls, as well as ethnic minorities in the labour market (e.g., Nepal, Albania).

Social protection instruments may also be distinguished according to the way they are financed: non-contributory schemes refer to those instruments and mechanisms that are directly financed, mainly through taxes of national governments. In the case of low-income countries, this also includes financial support from international development aid. Contributory schemes are based on a mix of financial sources, typically including contributions from the employers and the employees, which are collected and complemented by the state or responsible agencies.

The different social protection instruments are explained in more detail in Toolbox 1.

### 1.1.3 Target Groups

In order to design efficient and effective social protection mechanisms, it is important to understand the needs and capacities of the potential target group. In low-income countries with a high degree of poverty, social protection is mainly targeted towards the poor and most deprived groups of society. The “poor”, however, are not a homogeneous group. Men and women have different vulnerabilities and thus different needs in terms of social protection. Women are disproportionately more affected by shocks and crises (e.g., hunger crises, job losses, etc.), and less covered by social protection mechanisms, due to their higher presence in the informal economy, higher share of unpaid work in social care and family businesses. Other intersecting factors, such as age, ethnicity and geographic location, make poor and vulnerable people a highly heterogeneous group.

While moderately poor people may still afford to pay contributions for insurance, ultra-poor people will hardly ever be able to do so. Also, they often lack additional labour force at household level to engage in additional income generating

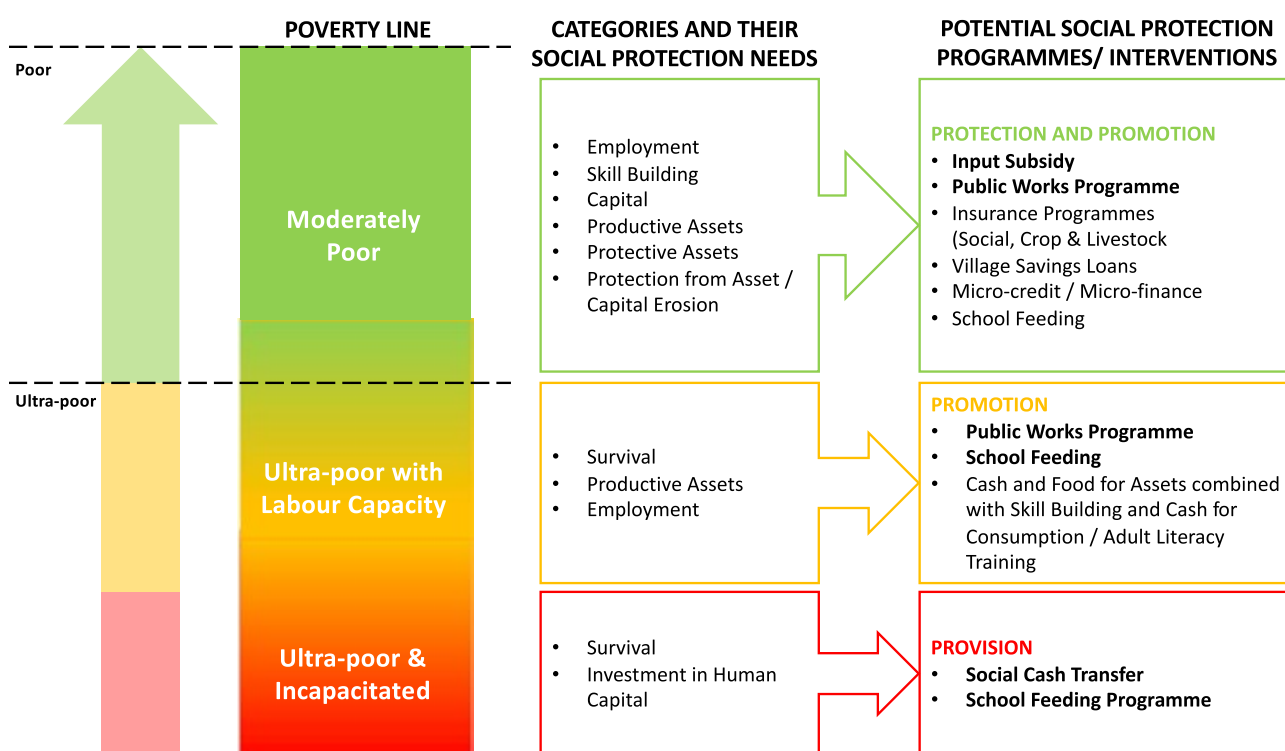


Figure 3: Target Groups and Corresponding Programmes<sup>14</sup>

activities or social protection measures that require surplus labour in order to be able to participate, such as public works programmes. Understanding these characteristics is important in order to design instruments that fit these specific vulnerabilities and risks. For example, while public works programmes that require potential recipients to engage in productive labour in exchange for food or cash may be politically favourable, they may not be suitable for ultra-poor labour constrained households who lack surplus labour to engage in such programmes (Figure 3).

13 Malo, M. (2018) Finding Pro-active Features in Labour Market Policies. A Reflection Based on the Evidence. Future of Work Research Paper Series No.8, Geneva: ILO. Available from: [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/future-of-work/publications/research-papers/WCMS\\_650075/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/future-of-work/publications/research-papers/WCMS_650075/lang-en/index.htm) (20.04.2023).

14 Authors adjusted the figure based on UNICEF (2017) and Schubert (2010), Malawi National Social Support Program. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Malawi-National-Social-Support-Program-2010-Source-Republic-of-Malawi-Ministry-of\\_fig5\\_342983127](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Malawi-National-Social-Support-Program-2010-Source-Republic-of-Malawi-Ministry-of_fig5_342983127) (20.04.2023).

**A key question in social protection relates to targeting**, which is the identification, selection and registering of recipients based on specific eligibility criteria that define who receives a benefit and who does not. Various targeting techniques exist, ranging from administrative selection, e.g., geographic targeting, means testing or proxy means tests (PMTs), to community-based and self-selection processes.<sup>15</sup> Targeting is common in many low-income countries as it is considered a cost-effective way to deal with widespread resource constraints. Critics argue that aside from being costly, it is very difficult to identify the poorest in an accurate way. This difficulty in identification results in the exclusion of individuals who, in theory, would be eligible, thereby reinforcing inequalities. Instead, they propose universal approaches that provide social protection to everyone in society. In practice, targeting choices always involve a trade-off between the available resources to implement a programme and the level of accuracy in identifying the intended target group. This is not purely technical; but it is also always a political decision (Toolbox 1).

## 1.1.4 Social Protection Environment

### 1.1.4.1 Key National Actors and Legal Frameworks

**State institutions**, including relevant line-ministries and departments,<sup>16</sup> implement, coordinate and manage social protection programmes at local, regional and national level. These also include specialised agencies, such as national social security funds or disaster risk management units.

In the context of employment related social protection measures, **trade unions and employers' organisations** are important stakeholders (social dialogue). Workers associations also include those in the informal economy, such as vendors', casual labourers' or mining workers' unions (e.g., Zimbabwe).

While social protection is mainly provided by public sector institutions, **the private sector** also plays a role. Commercial insurance companies offer a range of micro-insurance packages, including life, health or crop insurance or insurances against natural hazards. With digitalisation, the private sector has gained an increasing role regarding the design and provision of the digital infrastructure for administrating, managing and delivering social protection programmes. This includes electronic transfer systems to deliver cash transfers through mobile banking systems or biometric cards, the development of digitalised management information systems (MIS), registries and storage of beneficiary data.

**NGOs**, including volunteers and cooperatives, have a key role in delivering services complementing public delivery structures which often face human, technical and financial constraints. NGOs play a key role in so-called 'cash plus' programmes. These are programmes that link monetary transfers to complementary measures, such as extension services, counselling and awareness raising measures, technical and vocational training or with regards to the monitoring of conditionalities in cash transfer programmes.

While some countries have the right to social protection enshrined in their constitution, for example South Africa, Kenya or Cambodia, many existing social protection programmes are not legally and institutionally anchored. This constitutes a big gap concerning the realisation of the right to social protection independent of political windfalls and change in governments. Over the last decade, many low- and middle-income countries have developed **national social protection strategies** that provide directions concerning social protection policy priorities (e.g., Kenya, Ghana), some also with the support of the SDC, such as Haiti.

Social protection policies and programmes are commonly provided and financed by the state (tax-financed or contribution-based). In countries where social protection is weak and resources are scarce, development actors play an important role in developing and financing social protection (SDC [Social Protection Online Learning Series – Module 10 for more information on Financing Social Protection](#)).

### 1.1.4.2 Key International Actors and Initiatives

Bilateral donors, multilateral agencies and international financing institutions have a significant influence on social protection in many countries. Through financial and technical support, they aim at strengthening national social protection systems, also by supporting the development of national social protection frameworks and strategies. In many countries where social protection is high on the agenda, national social protection donor working groups exist where development partners regularly meet in order to better coordinate interventions on social protection and work towards a more coherent approach.

Over the last decade, a range of national and international development actors have developed their social protection strategies underpinning the role of social protection as a new development priority. Germany, Australia<sup>17</sup>, Ireland and the UK<sup>18</sup> significantly engage in social protection in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Devereux, S. (2021) Targeting. In: Esther Schüring und Markus Löwe (eds) Handbook on Social Protection Systems. Cheltenham: Edgar Elgar: pp.150- 162. Available from: <https://www.elgaronline.com/display/edcoll/9781839109102/9781839109102.xml> (20.04.2023).

<sup>16</sup> These may include but are not limited to the Ministry of Labour or Social Affairs (formal insurance schemes, social assistance programmes), Ministry of Education (school feeding) and Ministry of Health (social health insurance), Ministry of Agriculture or Rural Development (school feeding and public works), Ministry of Infrastructure (public works) or Ministry of Development and Planning (implementation of new programmes). The development of single registries and management information systems often involves the Ministry of Interior, while financing social protection involves the Ministry of Finance.

<sup>17</sup> For the respective national social protection strategies see Toolbox 1.

<sup>18</sup> Over the last few years, FDCO has significantly re-focused and reduced its political and financial engagement in social protection (UK Government's Strategy for International Development 2022).

<sup>19</sup> SDC (2021) Development Partners Working on Social Protection. Available from: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Poverty-Wellbeing/social-protection/Pages/Development-Partners-Social-Protection.aspx> (20.04.2023).

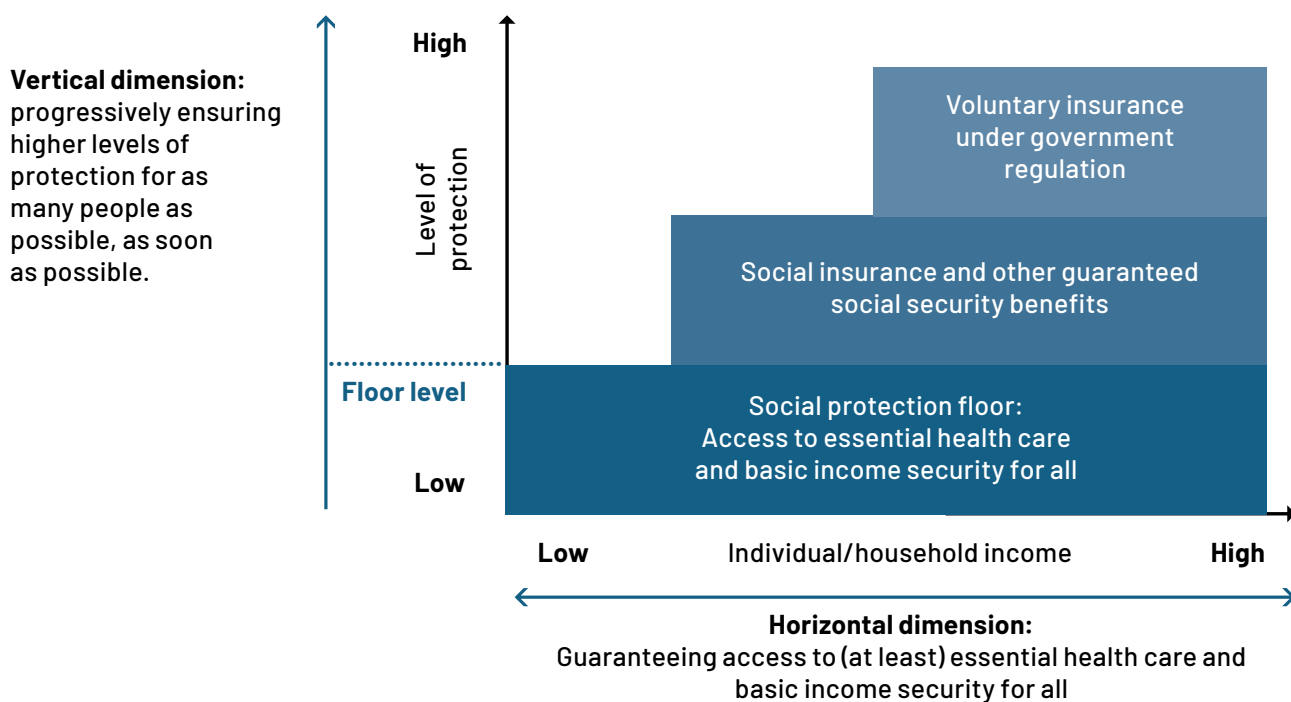


Figure 4: The Social Protection Staircase<sup>20</sup>

Among the **UN**, the International Labour Organization (ILO) holds the core mandate for social protection. Over the years other UN-organisations and financing institutions – traditionally not involved in the topic – have identified social protection as an important policy tool to enhance and foster development objectives in the context of their specific mandates. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF),<sup>21</sup> Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)<sup>22</sup> and the World Food Programme (WFP)<sup>23</sup> have meanwhile developed their own approaches to social protection under the umbrella of the ILO’s social protection floor approach.

In 2012, the ILO set forth the **social protection floor** recommendation (No. 202),<sup>24</sup> an important stepping-stone that emphasises the key role of social protection for development. The recommendation complements the ILO social protection minimum convention No. 102 of 1952<sup>25</sup> and calls for a minimum social protection floor for all based on four major life cycle risks: health, family support, unemployment and old age (Figure 4). It is a direct outcome of the global

financial crisis of 2008 which has generated a broad political consensus around social protection recognising its positive role in mitigating its worst social and economic outcomes.

The **World Bank** is an important global player in social protection, also in terms of financing social protection programmes in partner countries.<sup>26</sup> Since the 2000s, the bank has developed a range of strategies for social protection. In its most recent Social Protection and Jobs Compass,<sup>27</sup> the World Bank emphasises the need for a progressive realisation of universal social protection (USP) in order to be able to increase resilience, equity and opportunity for all. USP is considered critical for effectively reducing poverty and boosting shared prosperity.

A range of global and regional initiatives exist aiming at strengthening the technical exchange and the policy dialog on social protection:

In the wake of the growing importance of social protection as a development tool, in 2012, the G20 requested a body for donor coordination on social protection, which led to the establishment of the **Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B)**. SPIAC-B is a group of likeminded development actors, including the UN, civil society organisations and think tanks with the aim to promote social protection as a key development priority at the global, regional and national levels. Through strengthening coordination and collaboration and promoting knowledge sharing, it aims towards a

20 Hermann, B. (2017) Social Protection Floors in the Financing for Development Agenda. FfDO working paper. Available from: [file:///C:/Users/Barbara/Downloads/II.A.2-Social-protection-floors-in-FFD\\_FfDO-working-paper.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Barbara/Downloads/II.A.2-Social-protection-floors-in-FFD_FfDO-working-paper.pdf) (20.04.2023).

21 UNICEF (2014) Social Protection Strategic Framework. Available from: <https://www.unicef.org/socialprotection/framework/> (20.04.2023). Initiating and piloting social protection programmes in various countries and having established a broad-based research agenda on the topic, UNICEF contributes significantly to the global discourse on social protection.

22 FAO (2015) Nutrition and Social Protection. Available from: <https://www.fao.org/3/i4819e/i4819e.pdf> (20.04.2023).

23 WFP (2021) World Food Programme Strategy for Support to Social Protection. Available from: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/world-food-programme-strategy-support-social-protection-2021> (20.04.2023).

24 ILO (2012) R202 - Social Protection Floors Recommendation (No. 202) Recommendation concerning National Floors of Social Protection Adoption: Geneva, 101st ILC session (14 Jun 2012). Available from: [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:3065524](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:3065524) (20.04.2023).

25 ILO (1952) C102 – Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102). Available from: [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C102](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C102) (20.04.2023).

26 Markus, M. (2022) Financing Social Protection: Domestic and external options in low-income countries. FES: Bonn. Available from: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/19401.pdf> (20.04.2023).

27 The World Bank (2022) Charting a Course Towards Universal Social Protection. Resilience, Equity and Opportunity for All. World Bank: Washington DC. Available from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/38031> (20.04.2023).

greater coherence of different donor approaches.<sup>28</sup> In practice, the activities comprise policy and technical discussions, joint positioning through policy statements on current issues affecting social protection (e.g., COVID-19) as well as technical work on core social protection topics at the global level. An important direct outcome of SPIAC-B is the establishment of the [socialprotection.org](https://www.socialprotection.org) knowledge sharing and capacity building platform.

In 2016, the ILO and World Bank launched a [Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection \(USP 2030\)](#) as a joint initiative. In line with the 2030 Agenda to build national social protection systems for all, USP 2030 aims at advancing the commitment towards universal social protection systems based on sustainable and equitable financing and a broad social dialogue. In practice, USP 2030 has similar objectives to the SPIAC-B but has a broader membership base, including also partner countries. While research, knowledge exchange, technical exchange and support of partner countries are central to its mandate, USP 2030 has so far primarily engaged in lobbying, largely driven by international organisations and member states.<sup>29</sup> With the COVID-19 pandemic, the network has gained increased momentum as a platform and lever to promote social protection at the global level, including sustainable financing mechanisms.

In 2021, the UN-General Secretary launched the [Global Accelerator Initiative on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions](#) as a reaction to COVID-19 and unprecedented loss of jobs and livelihoods.<sup>30</sup> By bringing together member states, international financial institutions, social partners, civil society and the private sector it aims to support countries to accelerate their reforms towards the creation of productive employment, including in the green, digital and care economies and extend social protection coverage to those so far excluded, in line with national priorities and development plans.<sup>31,32</sup> This will allow to better manage and anticipate the major transitions underway – social, environmental and economic<sup>33</sup>.

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## Socialprotection.org

*Socialprotection.org is a free, unbranded, member-based online platform for knowledge exchange and capacity building on social protection with a focus on developing countries. The platform provides directed access to the most up-to-date learning resources, including regular webinars and online training courses on social protection. It is open to social protection practitioners, policymakers, including donor organisations, think tanks and research institutions.*

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The [Policy Dialogue Forum on Social Protection and Development](#) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) started in 2020. The dialogue forum focusses on building social protection mechanisms that fit the diverse needs of informal workers and informal employment.<sup>34</sup>

The [Cash Learning Partnership \(CALP\) Network](#) is a global network of over 90 organisations engaged in the areas of policy, practice and research in humanitarian cash and voucher assistance (CVA) and financial assistance more broadly. Over the last years, the network is increasingly engaged in the debate around linking humanitarian cash and voucher assistance to social protection programmes in a crisis context. The SDC is a long-term partner of this network. As a member of the [SPIAC-B working group on linking humanitarian \(cash\) assistance and social protection](#) (formerly the Grand Bargain Sub-Workstream on Social Protection), the CALP Network conducts research in this area, produces capacity building materials and provides technical support to coordinate actors.

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28 SPIAC-B (2012) Social Protection Interagency Board. Available from: <https://www.ilo.org/newyork/at-the-un/social-protection-inter-agency-cooperation-board/lang-en/index.htm> (20.04.2023).

29 Current members include Argentina, Belgium, Cabo Verde, Djibouti, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Mexico, Paraguay, South Africa, Togo (governments); FTUDC, Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, HelpAge International, Humanity and Inclusion, International Council for Social Welfare, ITUC, Save the Children, WSM, WIEGO, Oxfam (civil society and social partners); African Union, CISS, European Commission, FAO, IDB, ILO, ISSA, OECD, UNDP-IPC, UN-ESCAP, UNICEF, World Bank (international and regional organisations).

30 The initiative encompasses the UN system, the World Bank, DFIs, development partners, the private sector, employers and workers organisations.

31 The initiative is based on three interrelated pillars: (1) In-country development of integrated and coordinated employment and social protection policies and strategies, (2) Establishment of integrated national financing frameworks which pool public and private domestic and international resources to invest in universal social protection and inclusive, environment- and gender-responsive employment interventions, (3) Improvement of multilateral cooperation on jobs and social protection, including with international finance institutions (Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. Available from: <https://unglobalaccelerator.org/>)

32 Global Accelerator (2022) Frequently Asked Questions. Available from: [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/sdg-2030/WCMS\\_868097/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/sdg-2030/WCMS_868097/lang-en/index.htm) (20.04.2023).

33 ILO (2022) ILO calls for universal social protection, wage support for low-income households. Statement of the ILO Director-General, Gilbert F. Houngbo to the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) on 14.10.2022. Available from: [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/ilo-director-general/statements-and-speeches/WCMS\\_857901/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/ilo-director-general/statements-and-speeches/WCMS_857901/lang-en/index.htm) (04.06.2023)

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34 Policy Dialogue on Social Protection and Development (2020) First meeting of the Policy Dialogue on Social Protection and Development: Extending Social Protection to Informal Economy Workers, Summary of the Discussion on 27 and 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020, OECD Available from: <https://www.oecd.org/dev/inclusive-societies-development/Summary-Report-PD-SPD-nov2020.pdf> (20.04.2023).

## 1.2 Why Social Protection?

### 1.2.1 Objectives and Coverage of Social Protection

For a long time, social protection has been regarded as a luxury good that only high-income countries could afford. Over the last three decades, the role of social protection in reducing poverty and promoting growth has been increasingly recognised. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has put social protection high on political agendas globally, underlining the role of social protection in addressing social and economic shocks and building resilient societies by enabling individuals, households and economies to recover more quickly.<sup>35</sup>

are not protected by any labour law (Chapter 2.2.3)<sup>37</sup>. Cash transfers protect individuals and households against risks, but they are also an investment multiplying returns through increased purchasing power and improved productive capacities. Social protection renders recipients less risk-averse and reduces the use of negative coping strategies, such as school absenteeism, child labour, child trafficking or reduction of health expenses. It reduces economic and social vulnerability and increases resilience to shocks.

Social protection has a positive impact on food security and adequate nutrition. It improves educational outcomes, in

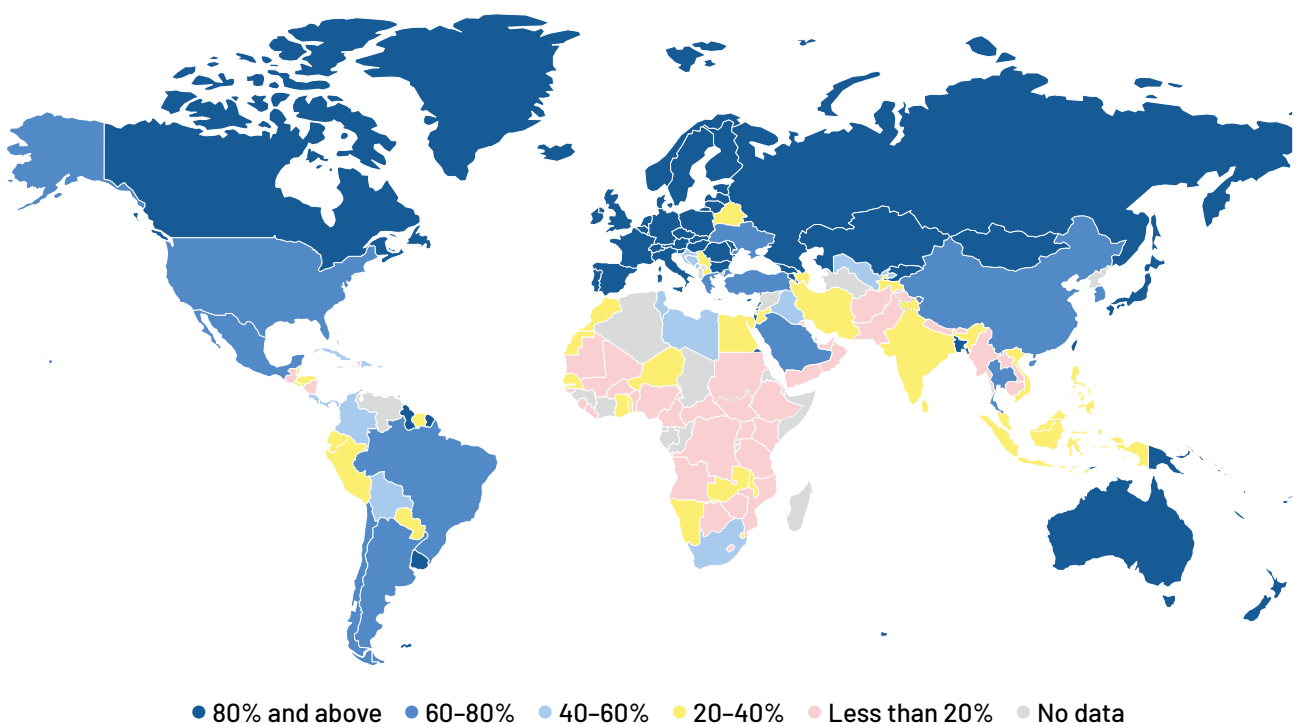


Figure 5: Proportion of Population Covered by Social Protection<sup>36</sup>

Social protection is an important tool to address rising inequalities and poverty by redistributing resources towards the more vulnerable, and enabling them to participate in the economic development of their countries in an inclusive and sustainable way. By helping households to smooth their consumption, social protection reduces insecurities for workers and stabilises economic growth. This also concerns workers in the informal economy who make up more than 60% of all workers globally. They mostly lack social protection and

particular for women and girls. Cash transfers are associated with a reduction in risk behaviour (early pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse), as well as improved health outcomes, in particular for children. Recipients of social protection have a more positive outlook on life and are more economically productive.<sup>38</sup>

However, only 46.9 % of the global population are effectively covered by at least one social protection mechanism.

<sup>35</sup> Gentilini, U., Almenfi, M., Okamura, Y. et al. (2022). Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/37186> (20.04.2023).

<sup>36</sup> ILO (2022) Global Social Protection Report. Geneva: ILO. Available from: <https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/world-socialsecurity-report/2020-22/lang--en/index.htm> (20.04.2023)

<sup>37</sup> ILO (2018) Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture. Third edition. Available from: [https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS\\_626831/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_626831/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>38</sup> Tirivayi, N., Waidler, J. and Otchere, F. (2021) Cash transfers: Past, present and future. Evidence and lessons learned from the Transfer Project. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research. Available from: <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/cash-transfers-evidence-and-lessons-from-the-transfer-project-research-brief.pdf> (20.04.2023).

This leaves 53.1% or 4.1 billion people completely uncovered. The regional coverage rates reveal substantial variations: In Europe, Central Asia and the Americas, 83.9% and 64.3% of the population are covered, while Asia and the Pacific (44.1%), the Arab states (40%) and especially Africa (17.4%) are well below the global average coverage rate. The majority of those not covered by any social protection mechanism belong to the most vulnerable population groups, including women, informal workers, migrants and forcefully displaced, and other marginalised groups.<sup>39</sup>

The coverage gap is associated with a significant financing gap or underinvestment in social protection. Countries spend on average 12.9% of their GDP (excluding health) on social protection. However, there are high regional variations. High-income countries spend on average 16.4% of their GDP on social protection, upper-middle-income countries around 8%. Lower-middle income countries spend 2.5% of their GDP on social protection. Low-income countries spend on average only 1.1% of their GDP on social protection, which is almost 14 times less than high-income countries.<sup>40</sup>

## 1.2.2 Core Functions of Social Protection

Commonly four core functions of social protection are distinguished. They describe how social protection measures support people to minimise risk(s) and vulnerabilities they are facing:

**Prevention:** Social protection supports people to prevent them from falling into poverty, reducing risks from the outset (ex-ante) or mitigating them once they occur (ex-post). Health or old age insurance mechanisms, public works and livelihood diversification programmes are examples for preventive measures. By supporting people to be more resilient to shocks, social protection measures allow people to avoid using negative coping strategies, such as selling off productive assets, taking children out of school or foregoing the use of health services.

**Protection:** Social protection supports people to protect themselves once a risk occurs, helping to smooth consumption, protect human capital and livelihoods. Examples are so-

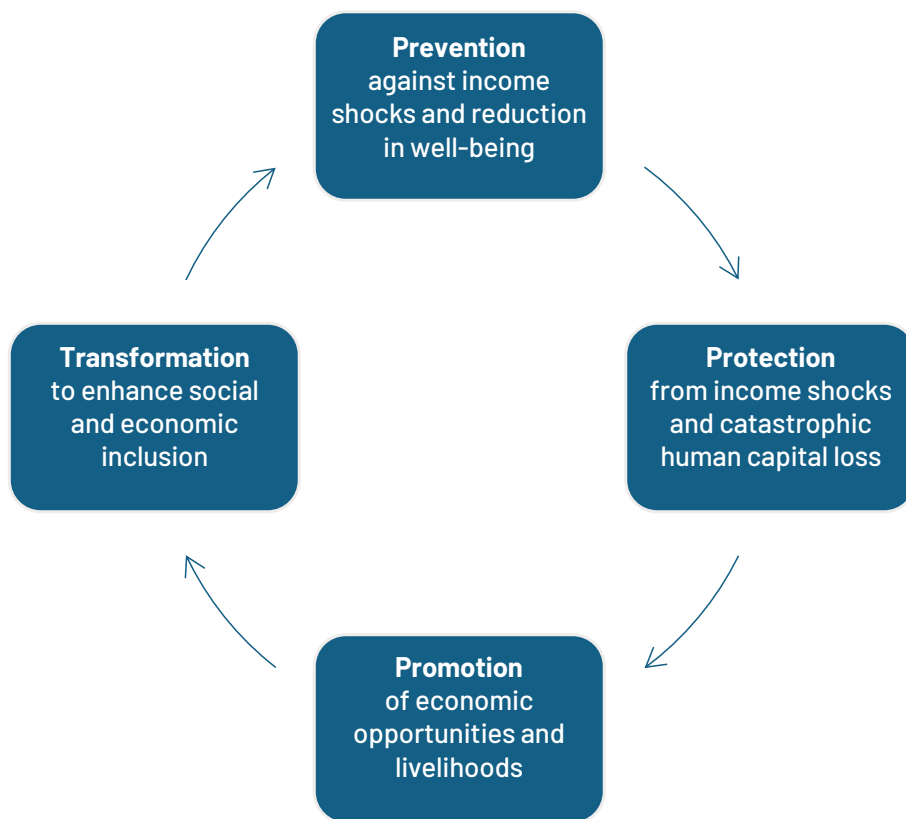


Figure 6: Core Functions of Social Protection<sup>41</sup>

cial transfers in cash and in-kind for families or for extremely poor households, public works programmes, food vouchers and school meal programmes.

**Promotion:** Social protection plays an important promotive role by enhancing income and stabilising livelihood effects. It is a catalyst for local economies, creating economic opportunities and contributing to improved livelihoods.

39 ILO (2022) Global Social Protection Report. Geneva: ILO. Available from: <https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/world-social-security-report/2020-22/lang-en/index.htm> (20.04.2023).

40 ILO (2022) Global Social Protection Report. Geneva: ILO. Available from: <https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/world-social-security-report/2020-22/lang-en/index.htm> (20.04.2023).

41 Devereux, S., Sabates-Wheeler, R. (2004) Transformative Social Protection, (IDS) Working Paper 23. Sussex: Institute of Development Studies. Available from: <https://www.ids.ac.uk/download.php?file=files/dmfile/Wp232.pdf> (20.04.2023).



**Transformation:** Social protection supports women and men to transform their livelihoods through measures that address structural economic, social or political exclusion and inequalities aiming at enhancing social inclusion, equity, empowerment and rights. This aspect refers in particular to the rights-based dimensions of development, transparency and social accountability, including labour or anti-discrimination laws.

In practice, these dimensions of social protection (Figure 6) cannot be separated from one another. Commonly, mechanisms address more than one dimension. Cash transfers,

for example have a protective function supporting people in addressing immediate needs by smoothing consumption. Likewise, they have an important promotive impact by boosting local economies and increasing small-scale business.

### 1.2.3 Social Protection in the 2030 Agenda

Influencing multiple drivers of exclusion and deprivation, social protection plays a critical role to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Social protection directly and indirectly contributes to a range of SDGs and respective targets:



Table 1: Social Protection and Sustainable Development Goals<sup>42</sup>

42 ILO (2015) SDG Note Social Protection. Geneva: ILO. Available from: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---integration/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_561758.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---integration/documents/genericdocument/wcms_561758.pdf) (20.04.2023).

43 SDG 16 has no specific sustainable development indicator that reflects the link between social protection, social cohesion and peace, justice and strong institutions.

## 1.3 Relevance of Social Protection to SDC

The SDC mainly implements social protection as a cross-cutting issue aiming at strengthening the outcomes of SDC's thematic areas. The SDC is applying all four SP instruments as described in chapter 1.1.2. The SDC also supports the strengthening of social protection systems and governance. Two thematic areas are of particular relevance for the SDC with regards to social protection: governance and emergency relief, reconstruction and protection. The transversal notion of social protection points to the role of social protection in bridging themes and sectors emphasising the need for improved collaboration.

### 1.3.1 Contribution of Social Protection to SDC's Priority Themes

The themes where SDC is most active in implementing social protection as a cross-cutting dimension are agriculture and food security, health, basic education and vocational skills training, private sector development and financial services, and disaster risk reduction.<sup>44</sup>

#### Agriculture and Food Security

Social protection has a positive impact on food security and nutrition, in particular for women and girls. It improves food security and nutrition outcomes for pregnant women and children under the age of two (first 1000 days). It is an important catalyst for agricultural production and labour. Cash transfers have a positive impact on the purchase of agricultural assets and allow recipients to diversify their income portfolio through small investments – often in the non-agricultural sector. They have a positive impact on local markets through improved purchasing power. Asset transfers or cash plus programmes have an indirect impact on increased employment creation along the supply chain (savings and loans, micro-credit, skills and livelihoods diversification). Agricultural insurance mechanisms protect livelihoods arrangements and increase resilience.

The SDC supports various agricultural insurance mechanisms to cushion the impact of climate-related risks and increase resilience (e.g., the SDC's engagement in the African Risk Capacity – ARC – or the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative) ([SDC Social Protection Online Learning Series – Module 3 for More information on Agriculture, Food Security and Social Protection](#)).

#### Basic Education and Vocational Skills Training

Social protection measures, including (conditional) cash transfers, school stipends and vouchers as well as in-kind transfers (school feeding and take-home rations) play an important

role in increasing access to education, and enable retention and successful completion. They support families to take care of out-of-pocket costs for children to be enrolled, attend more regularly, and perform better in school. This is of particular relevance for girls who usually face lower enrolment and completion rates. Education influences health outcomes, including gender-based violence, early and forced marriages and early pregnancies. It is a main driver of economic growth through facilitating transition to work which is of special significance for young, poor, women and girls who suffer from multiple exclusionary practices (See below).

SDC supports school feeding programmes in a variety of countries, including Ruanda and Somalia via the Global Partnership on Education GPE ([SDC Social Protection Online Learning Series – Module 4 for More Information on Social Protection in the Context of Education, Employment and Private Sector Development](#)).

#### Employment, Income and Financial Inclusion

Labour market measures maintain the productivity of workers by providing an income substitute during unemployment or job search. Through vocational skills training or counselling measures, they actively support human capital formation with positive outcomes on the productivity and employability of workers in the formal and informal economy (e.g., graduation or cash plus programmes). Insurance is both a social protection and financial service instrument. Products encompass individual insurance, such as input or productive asset insurances, as well as broader fund solutions to mitigate climate-related risks, protect investments and productive employment. They increase the resilience of recipients, ensuring that they do not fall back on negative coping strategies, such as selling off assets, while at the same time allowing them to maintain their productivity.<sup>45</sup> Passive labour market measures also encompass legal dimension. By enacting labour laws and implementing minimum wage policies, along with ensuring the portability of social security rights and benefits, decent working conditions can be established. These contribute to the creation of improved job opportunities, including for migrants<sup>46</sup>. Financial systems play a key role in delivering social benefits – usually through bank accounts or mobile banking devices, including ATM and cash cards. Financial services (savings and loan schemes) are important complementary measures in the context of cash plus interventions, enabling beneficiaries to sustainably graduate out of poverty and increase their resilience.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> For the full list of themes of the Swiss international cooperation: SDC (2023) Themes. Available from: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/themes-sdc.html> (20.04.2023).

<sup>45</sup> SDC (2021) SDC Financial Sector Development Guidance. Bern: SDC. Available from: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/EI/Documents/Topics/IED%20Handbook/SDC%20Financial%20Sector%20Guidance%202021.pdf> (20.04.2023).

<sup>46</sup> SDC (2021) Addressing Decent Work in International Cooperation. Available from: [https://www.shareweb.ch/site/EI/Documents/Topics/World%20of%20Work/Input\\_Paper\\_Decent%20Work\\_final.pdf](https://www.shareweb.ch/site/EI/Documents/Topics/World%20of%20Work/Input_Paper_Decent%20Work_final.pdf) (20.04.2023).

<sup>47</sup> SDC (2021) SDC Financial Sector Development Guidance. Bern: SDC. Available from: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/EI/Documents/Topics/IED%20Handbook/SDC%20Financial%20Sector%20Guidance%202021.pdf> (20.04.2023).

The SDC supports active labour market measures, including vocational and skills development in both formal and informal economies. These initiatives specifically focus on the most vulnerable populations such as ethnic minorities, youth and women, for example in Albania or Nepal ([SDC Social Protection Online Learning Series – Module 4 for More Information on Social Protection in the Context of Education, Employment and Private Sector Development](#)).

## Health

Poor women and girls and marginalised people suffer the most from the consequences of unequal access to health. Health insurance schemes, (conditional) cash transfers or fee waivers provide important financial risk mechanisms that enable people to receive the services they need without the risk of falling into poverty or suffering financial hardship. Beyond health financing mechanisms, social protection directly and indirectly influences a broad range of health outcomes. Social assistance programmes, such as cash transfers or public works, positively impact on nutrition and dietary diversity, child and maternal mortality and mental health. These programmes provide positive outcomes on wider social determinants of health across the life cycle (productivity and economic well-being, educational outcomes, social cohesion, civic participation or female empowerment).

The SDC has a long-standing experience in supporting health financing mechanisms (e.g., Tanzania), including the development of open source software to manage social health protection programmes (e.g., OPEN-IMIS) ([SDC Social Protection Online Learning Series – Module 5 for More Information on Health and Social Protection](#)).

## Gender and Social Equality

Social protection is a powerful tool to combat gender inequalities and gendered poverty that are mostly at the expense of women and girls. Social protection enhances women's economic empowerment and has a positive impact on girls and women in terms of improving education and learning, nutrition, health and financial inclusion. Linked to complementary measures such as health measures, vocational and skills training or productive measures, social protection can support women in developing their economic potential and help them to use their resources in a meaningful and sustainable way. Social protection policies targeting women and girls have an important transformative gender dimension strengthening women's social position and bargaining power. They contribute to the reduction of child labour, reduce early and forced marriage and GBV and delay teenage pregnancies.

Gender equality in social protection has been addressed with regards to various social protection instruments, for example gender-sensitive vocational and skills development in Laos, access to insurance initiative A2ii or increasing access to employment opportunities for women in Albania ([SDC Social Protection Online Learning Series – Module 8 for More Information on Gender and Social Protection](#)).

## 1.3.2 SDC's Principles of Engagement and their Interlinkage to Social Protection

Social Protection is intrinsically linked to the SDC's core principles of engagement. There is a mutual relationship (in parallel to the thematic links just described): On the one hand, social protection contributes to the operationalisation of these principles of engagement. On the other hand, these principles guide the SDC in the implementation of social protection instruments.

### Leave No One Behind (LNOB)

The SDC adopts LNOB as a core principle to address poverty, fighting inequalities and social exclusion. The principal guides the SDC's work across all sectors and thematic areas in order to develop sustainable and inclusive programmes. This includes social protection, which the SDC understands – in line with other policies – as an important long-term investment in society strengthening and harnessing transformative economic growth and social cohesion in good times and cushioning both in bad times. This is of particular relevance for those groups and individuals 'left behind', who are typically also those most excluded from sustainable development and a minimum standard of living.<sup>48</sup>

### Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)

The SDC is firmly committed to upholding and promoting human rights through all its interventions.<sup>49</sup> The key principles of the HRBA (non-discrimination, inclusion, participation, transparency and accountability) also apply to social protection interventions, striving to empower rights-holders and build capacity of duty-bearers. This also requires social protection measures to be adequately financed and designed in a way to allow recipients (as rights-holders) to voice their complaints through established grievances and redress mechanisms.

### Gender Equality

Exclusion and discrimination are the result of deeply rooted power structures and mind-sets that result in policies and behaviour that further entrench existing inequalities. Gender equality is a key principle of SDC engagement in all programmes. Inclusive social protection means designing programmes that are accessible and inclusive to all, in particular women and girls, allowing them to realise their rights and entitlements to social protection. The two-pronged SDC transformative gender approach promotes gender equality as a crosscutting theme through gender-principal measures with the aim to overcome structural barriers and address specific needs and vulnerabilities related to women's reproductive

48 SDC (2018) SDC Guidance for Leave No One Behind. Bern: SDC. Available from: [https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Poverty-Wellbeing/leave-no-one-behind/Shared%20Documents/sdc-guidance-leave-no-one-behind\\_EN.pdf](https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Poverty-Wellbeing/leave-no-one-behind/Shared%20Documents/sdc-guidance-leave-no-one-behind_EN.pdf) (20.04.2023).

49 SDC (2018) SDC Guidance on Human Rights in Development and Cooperation. Available from: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/PGE/DocumentsFCHR/SDC%20Guidance%20on%20Human%20Rights%20in%20Development%20and%20Cooperation%20EN.pdf>

role.<sup>50</sup> Social protection positively impacts gender outcomes contributing to women's social and economic empowerment. Through gender-responsive social protection measures (e.g., designing gender-responsive health care packages), gendered outcomes may be reinforced.

## Governance

Governance is at the heart of all SDC interventions, acknowledging that governance considerations are an essential lever for the systemic transformation needed to achieve sustainable development and lasting impact. Applying transversal governance includes a systemic approach to development challenges looking at structures, processes and actors; the application of the good governance principles, and adopting a political approach that takes into account underlying power dimensions and formal and informal rules and norms ("thinking and working politically").<sup>51</sup> All this is particularly relevant for social protection, as sound social protection solutions require strong legal, administrative and operational foundations that reflect the local context and take account of local power dynamics. The SDC contributes to building and strengthening governance systems that promote equal access to basic services and social protection for all in an accountable, non-discriminatory and transparent way.

### 1.3.3 Switzerland's Added Value Enhancing Coherent Social Protection Systems

With the SDC's principled, locally anchored and long-term approach, Switzerland can add value to the social protection landscape. This concerns on the one hand governance or system strengthening. System strengthening plays a prominent role in the SDC's engagement in social protection. The SDC's independent evaluation<sup>52</sup> has shown that in the context of its governance programmes, the SDC contributes significantly to enhancing and strengthening social protection systems, thus making them more efficient, effective and transparent.

The other dimension concerns the nexus between humanitarian aid and social protection. The SDC is a nexus institution aiming at bringing together experiences across different sectors and instruments (e.g., humanitarian aid, development, peace promotion). Social protection has an important bridging function in this regard, as the current debate around linking social protection and humanitarian aid in a crisis (context) shows. Given that the debate around how to address large-scale shocks will most likely increase in the future, Switzerland needs to develop a clear vision in relation to this

aspect of the nexus, in particular how to better align social protection and humanitarian (cash) assistance.

### 1.3.3.1 Strengthening Social Protection Systems and Governance

System strengthening is a key operational feature of social protection. This includes measures aiming at enhancing the legal, institutional, financial and operative dimensions of social protection systems, including data management as well as monitoring and evaluation. The development of regulatory frameworks and strategies for social protection are important to ensure equitable financing and access to social protection for all and guarantee their entitlement. Well established institutional and human resource arrangements, integrated management information systems and beneficiary registries, effective and efficient selection and registration procedures (targeting) as well as streamlined payment and distribution mechanisms can sustainably improve access to social protection, delivering benefits in a faster and more transparent way (Table 2). Good governance is important in order to make social protection more accountable, transparent, inclusive and responsive to local needs. Improved coordination and integration of social protection programmes and their delivery structures sustainably improve the performance of social protection systems, also in crises contexts (Toolbox 1 Subchapter Governance).

Effective governance encompasses good financial management, including the creation of fiscal space to sustainably finance social protection (Toolbox 1 Subchapter Financing). The right to data protection and privacy is of particular relevance in the context of social protection, especially against the background of massive digitalisation of management information systems and payment modalities (Table 2).

System strengthening has been addressed in the context of various SDC projects, including the creation of one-stop-shops for public services, including social protection programmes, in Mongolia or SDC's Leave No One Behind Project in Albania (SDC Social Protection Online Learning Series – Module 7 for More Information on Governance / Systems Strengthening and Social Protection).

50 RC Staff Unit Gender (2015) Gender at the SDC – strategic lines and thematic priorities 2015-2018. Available from: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Gender/Documents/Gender%20Policies/SDC%20Gender%20Policy/2015-06%20SDC%20Gender%20Strategic%20Lines%202015-2018.pdf> (24.03.2023).

51 SDC (2020) SDC's guidance on governance. Available from: [https://www.shareweb.ch/site/PGE/Documents/Governance/SDC\\_Governance\\_Guidance\\_Web.pdf](https://www.shareweb.ch/site/PGE/Documents/Governance/SDC_Governance_Guidance_Web.pdf) (24.04.2023).

52 SDC (2019) Independent Evaluation of SDC's Performance in Social Protection 2013 – 2017. Available from: <https://www.aramis.admin.ch/Texte/?ProjektID=45248&Sprache=en-US> (06.06.2023).

Table 2: Critical System and Management Processes for Social Protection<sup>53</sup>

<b>Institutional &amp; Human Resource Arrangements</b>	To ensure a smooth functioning of the operations (individual skills and capacities, human and operational capacity)
<b>Operational Documents with Detailed Programme Operations Rules</b>	To guide the administrators
<b>Social Accountability Mechanisms</b>	To ensure that government, programme managers and administrators can be held accountable
<b>Payment Systems</b>	To ensure that transfers can be accessed
<b>Computerised Management Information System (MIS)</b>	To ensure a more efficient and effective delivery of services for eligible citizens and increase accountability and transparency
<b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation Systems</b>	To enable systems to flexibly adapt and develop in order to increase access and coverage
<b>Financial Management</b>	In order to render implementation sustainable and ensure financial sustainability

### 1.3.3.2 Linking Social Protection and Humanitarian Aid

Globally, large scale or covariate shocks<sup>54</sup> caused by economic, political or climate-related factors such as hunger, armed conflicts or natural disasters have substantially increased in size, frequency and duration. Poor and vulnerable people are disproportionately more affected by these new and amplified threats. Against this background and the emergence of social protection systems in many countries, more coherent approaches between disaster risk management, emergency relief and social protection are sought with the aim to create more effective, efficient and sustainable solutions to address shocks and crises in the short-term, while aiming at increasing the capacity and strengthening government systems to enable national social protection systems to better anticipate and meet shocks in the future.

**Ex-ante:** Where social protection systems are in place, they allow governments to react to shocks in a more flexible manner. Through the adaptation of routine social protection mechanisms to be able to respond to shocks in an adequate, comprehensive and timely manner, governments can increase their shock-preparedness. This is particularly the case for shocks that are cyclical or recurrent. By scaling-up coverage to groups considered 'at-risk' and considered to be non-eligible under normal circumstances (horizontal expansion) and/or increase the size of transfers and expand services (vertical expansion) in a crisis situation, ASP can mitigate shocks by protecting people from falling into poverty and allow them to recover more quickly. This prevents shocks from turning into broader humanitarian crisis.

**In-crisis situations:** Adaptive or shock-responsive social protection has an important role in reacting to shocks supporting and complementing emergency relief interventions. The extent to which social protection can support humanitarian aid interventions depends on the institutional capacity and degree of integration of existing social protection systems (Table 3). It also depends on the compatibility of humanitarian aid principles and those of national social protection systems, which for example are commonly confined to citizens only or may be targeted at specific groups. Creating linkages between social protection and emergency relief also presupposed a willingness of all involved actors to coordinate and cooperate and take on their respective roles and responsibilities, including financing. Different options for linking social protection and humanitarian aid exist (Table 3). Depending on the context, actors may combine these in different ways: while they may opt for a fully parallel approach to funding and payments, transfer values and eligibility criteria may be aligned while piggybacking on social protection management information systems and capacity.<sup>55</sup>

53 UN DESA and ILO (2021) Global research on governance and social protection. Geneva: UNDESA/ILO. Available from: [https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2021/04/Global-overview\\_SP-Governance.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2021/04/Global-overview_SP-Governance.pdf)

54 Covariate shocks refer to shocks that affect a large number of people simultaneously.

55 Smith, G. (2021) Deciding When and How to Link Humanitarian Assistance and Social Protection: Guidance and Tools for Response Analysis, Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19 Expert Advice Service (SPACE), UK: DAI Global UK Ltd. Available from: <https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/ninja-forms/2/Deciding-when-and-how-to-link-humanitarian-assistance-and-social-protection-1.pdf>

Table 3: Options for Adapting Social Protection to Humanitarian Aid<sup>56</sup>

<b>Parallel Systems</b>	Humanitarian aid is delivered independent of national social protection programmes. A stand-alone humanitarian response is common in low-income countries where social protection systems are weak and not sufficiently responsive.
<b>Alignment</b>	Taking account of the context, in which an emergency is taking place, humanitarian and social protection systems are being implemented separately but their design features are aligned (e.g., transfer value, target group, targeting).
<b>Piggybacking</b>	Elements of an existing SP-programme/system are being used for the implementation of a separate humanitarian aid programme (mainly concerning operations and delivery).
<b>National System Led Schemes</b>	National social protection schemes are used to deliver emergency aid through: a.) vertical expansion or temporary increase in transfers; b.) horizontal expansion or temporary increase in number of programme beneficiaries, or c.) design tweaks (e.g., design features are temporarily lifted, such as conditions).

**Protracted crises:** In protracted crisis situations there is an increasing need to bridge the large gap between short-term humanitarian assistance and longer-term development aid and work on the nexus of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace promotion. This implies integrating forcibly displaced persons into existing social protection schemes, enabling them to gain access to regular support and achieve economic inclusion. An integration into national systems also enables them to contribute to social protection systems in the long-run. This is of particular concern for international migrants and refugees.

The SDC supports partner countries in transitioning from humanitarian cash and voucher assistance to establishing long-term social protection programmes (e.g., Haiti). It supports approaches towards an integration of refugees into established social protection programmes (e.g., Jordan) ([SDC Social Protection Online Learning Series – Module 6 for More Information on Linking Social Protection and Humanitarian Aid](#)).

**Ex-post (reactive system building):** In most fragile states and protracted crises contexts, investing in building more predictable, efficient and comprehensive support is important, also in order to raise the resilience of people and societies for future crisis situations. Humanitarian aid systems and mechanisms can provide the building blocks for future social protection systems (e.g., SDC support in Mali, Zimbabwe or Haiti). Especially in a post-conflict context social protection has an important role in contributing to the re-integration of society and strengthening of social cohesion (Toolbox 1 Subchapter Linking Humanitarian Aid to Social Protection).

Linking social protection and emergency relief can be more cost-effective and efficient as it can reach vulnerable groups faster and support humanitarian efforts. It can also provide an entry point for linking short-term and long-term needs, thereby bridging the gap between the humanitarian and the development sectors (*Ibid.*).<sup>57</sup>

56 Lowe, C., Cherrier, C. and Holmes, R. (2022) Linking humanitarian assistance and social protection in response to forced displacement: an analytical framework. London: ODI. Available from: [https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/Final\\_analytical\\_framework\\_Nov\\_2022\\_1.pdf](https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/Final_analytical_framework_Nov_2022_1.pdf)

57 Smith, G. (2021) Deciding when and how to link humanitarian assistance and social protection: guidance and tools for response analysis. Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19 Expert Advice Service (SPACE), UK: DAI Global UK Limited. Available from: <https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/ninja-forms/2/Deciding-when-and-how-to-link-humanitarian-assistance-and-social-protection-1.pdf>

# Chapter 2: Strengthening Social Protection in SDC Programming

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*This chapter provides a short guidance on how to approach the topic in practical terms and implement social protection interventions in a country context. It provides several signposts on how to approach the design and implementation of a social protection programme or component. The SDC can draw on a range of competencies and experiences relevant to social protection: the SDC's long-term presence in countries and its intimate knowledge of the local context ensures that projects and programmes are well entrenched in local structures – an important precondition for building social protection systems that respond to local needs and fit local capacities. This allows the SDC to work on systemic solutions that are scalable and sustainable.*

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## 2.1 Getting Started: Mapping of the Social Protection Landscape in a Country

Undertaking a mapping exercise is a valuable approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the social protection landscape within a country. This facilitates a better overview of existing programmes, their target groups, the risks they address, and their coverage (including any existing gaps). It also highlights the challenges associated with their implementation. Moreover, the mapping exercise assists in identifying potential entry points and refining initial programme concepts. Finally, it creates a better understanding of the roles of national and international stakeholders involved in specific programmes and helps identifying potential partner institutions with whom to collaborate (Table 4).

The [Inter Agency Social Protection Assessments \(ISPA\)](#)<sup>58</sup> tools can provide further guidance. They include a unified set of definitions, assessment tools, and outcome metrics. They aim at supporting the assessment by providing systematic information on a country's social protection system, programmes, and on implementation arrangements.

Other institutions or development partners, especially those closely engaged in social protection, may have already con-

ducted similar exercises. It is useful to consult their global, regional or national websites (e.g., [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialprotection>, [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)).

Global or regional knowledge sharing platforms, such as [www.socialprotection.org](http://www.socialprotection.org) or [www.saspen.org](http://www.saspen.org), and Think Tanks such as the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) or the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) are valuable sources for up-to-date information on countries and global social protection themes.

Good quality data plays a crucial role in substantiating evidence on social protection. Comprehensive and updated data on social protection can be found here: [World Bank Atlas on social protection indicators ASPIRE](#) and [ILO World Social Protection Database \(WSPDB\)](#)

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<sup>58</sup> ISPA (2023) Inter Agency Social Protection Assessments. Available from: <https://ispa-tools.org/> (20.04.2023).

Table 4: Supporting Questions for Mapping Social Protection at Country Level

<b>Policy Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a social protection strategy in place?</li> <li>• What are the policy priorities of the government concerning social protection, including cross-sectorial themes such as food security and nutrition, gender equality or ASP?</li> <li>• Are relevant sectoral strategies in place (e.g., food and nutrition strategy, gender equality-strategy, disaster risk management strategy, etc.) and do they explicitly refer to social protection?</li> <li>• What laws or other norms regulate social protection mechanisms (e.g., pension law, health insurance law, labour law, etc.)?</li> <li>• How is social protection funded and who makes decisions on the budget allocation for non-contributory schemes?</li> <li>• Is a donor coordination mechanism in place? What are the priorities?</li> </ul>
<b>Programme Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What governmental social protection programmes are in place and how are they operating (e.g., national scale or pilot phase)? How many people do they cover?</li> <li>• What are the objectives of the social protection programmes?</li> <li>• Do they reach their goals? Is an impact evaluation available?</li> <li>• What are challenges in reaching programme objectives, including operational challenges (e.g., delivery, targeting, grievance and redress, human resources, capacity, etc.)?</li> <li>• Are women and girls covered at the same levels as men and boys?</li> <li>• How do these programmes support cross-sectorial objectives, such as rural development, food security and nutrition, education and health outcomes or job creation?</li> <li>• What implications does this have for cross-sectorial coordination?</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholder Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the major stakeholders in social protection (e.g., line-ministries and other government agencies, private sectors, NGOs, social partners, development partners)?</li> <li>• Who is managing the social protection programmes?</li> <li>• Who is responsible for the implementation at local level (e.g., public servants, NGOs, traditional authorities, village committees, etc.)?</li> <li>• What is the role of NGOs or the private sector?</li> <li>• Who are potential partners to link up with in order to use synergies and support common social protection objectives and policies?</li> </ul>

## 2.2 Identify Entry Points for Strengthening National Social Protection Programmes

Social protection is essential to meeting the LNOB commitment, and contributes to the five dimensions of the 2030 Agenda's framework: People (access to essential services and adequate standard of living/human development), Planet (disaster risk reduction, resilience), Peace (social cohesion), Prosperity (inclusive economic growth) and Partnership (global solidarity, private sector and resource mobilization).<sup>59</sup>

### 2.2.1 Assessing the Swiss Portfolio in View on how Social Protection Instruments can Strengthen Swiss Portfolio Outcomes

While social protection directly and indirectly contributes to all five dimensions, it is key to assess where social protection measures may fit into the overall framework of the SDC's regional and country cooperation programmes and portfolio outcomes. This assessment helps identify the most efficient and effective pathways for social protection to support the overall goals and objectives of a cooperation programme (Table 5).

<sup>59</sup> UN (2015) Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Available from: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/291/89/PDF/N1529189.pdf?OpenElement> (20.04.2023).



Table 5: Supporting Questions to Identify Entry Points for Social Protection in the SDC Portfolio

<b>Cross-Sectorial Dimension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent can existing social protection measures support or maximise specific programme goals, planned interventions and target groups of the Swiss portfolio?</li> </ul> <p><i>Examples:</i> Linking skills and vocational training or savings and loan groups to existing cash transfer programmes to support sustainable poverty graduation and productive employment creation; integration of a school feeding programme into an education programme.</p>
<b>Specific Vulnerabilities (LNOB)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent can social protection policies help to address specific vulnerabilities that the country programme tries to reduce, e.g., youth unemployment, malnutrition, improving ecological conditions or access to local services?</li> </ul> <p><i>Examples:</i> Strengthening local delivery structures, including for social protection in order to increase access for particularly vulnerable groups, including women and raise accountability; improving targeting techniques to reduce exclusion of marginalised groups; linking soil conservation activities to the provision of cash-for-work programmes to address social, economic and ecological vulnerabilities.</p>
<b>Swiss Competencies and Strategic Interests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where is the SDC's support best placed given its competencies and experiences?<sup>60</sup></li> </ul> <p><i>Examples:</i> The SDC has significant know-how and experience in a range of fields and sectors related to social protection programming and implementation (e.g., governance, gender equality, health, education, humanitarian cash and voucher assistance, rural development and food security). Where social protection is well established, ongoing initiatives by government or development partners may provide good entry points to complement efforts, competencies and experiences.</p>

### 2.2.2 Expand Existing Programmes for Better Outreach and Inclusion

In many countries, more comprehensive social protection programmes only exist for formal sector employees. Social protection programmes targeting the informal sector workers, the extreme poor or other vulnerable groups (such as children, elderly or people with disabilities) are rare. Often, they have limited outreach or do not reach national scale. The lack of financial resources to expand programmes, or the lack of data on vulnerable population groups, are the main reasons why programmes do not expand. International development partners can play an important role in supporting partner countries to expand programmes to wider beneficiary groups, also through strengthening administrative and management systems. This may include as well the adaptation of social protection schemes enabling them to respond to recurrent shocks in a flexible manner. It may also entail reassessing existing transfer schemes, including targeting systems to ensure that they reach the intended target group and are adequate to achieve programme objectives, for example to cover the costs of healthy diet to reduce child malnutrition. Expanding programmes may also include adding complementary measures to strengthen intended outcomes, such as supporting recipients to graduate out of poverty and strengthen productive employment, through savings and loan schemes, the provision of productive assets or vocational skills training.

### 2.2.3 Support Setting Up of New Social Protection Programmes

Although the expansion of social protection in many countries has substantially increased over the last two decades, many countries do not yet have a social protection floor that provides a basic coverage for all. Most people in low- and middle-income countries enjoy only partial protection with regards to the full range of risks and contingencies across the life cycle. The provision of a comprehensive set of social protection benefits is important in order to realise the right to social protection.

In many countries, vulnerable population groups who need it most face major constraints in accessing social protection. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that groups at constant risk of falling into poverty, even if they do not belong to the poorest segment of the population, are largely excluded from social protection measures. This 'missed-middle'<sup>61</sup> of social protection notably encompasses workers in the informal economy or small-scale farmers, who are exposed to climate-related vulnerabilities. There is a growing recognition that these non-poor informal workers must be part of an integrated social protection strategy to ensure lasting graduations out of poverty and inclusive economic growth.

Setting up new social protection programmes requires resources. And, while domestic funding for social protection is desirable in the long run, in the short-term it will be important to bring more development partners on board in order to set up new social protection programmes, including for informal workers.

60 For an overview of SDC programmes and projects in social protection Shareweb: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Poverty-Wellbeing/socialprotection/Pages/SDC-Projects.aspx>

61 World Bank (2021) Social Protection for the Informal Economy Operational Lessons for Developing Countries in Africa and Beyond. Available from: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/946341635913066829/pdf/Social-Protection-for-the-Informal-Economy-Operational-Lessons-for-Developing-Countries-in-Africa-and-Beyond.pdf> (04.06.2023).

## 2.3 Designing and Implementing Projects in Support of Social Protection Systems

The design and implementation of projects in support of social protection systems does not fundamentally differ from other development projects. The following elements, however, require particular attention:

- › **Understanding vulnerability and gender dynamics:** Although social protection often targets the most vulnerable and poor, design and implementation challenges often hinder vulnerable men and women from gaining access to a programme, even if they are eligible. A gender and vulnerability assessment can help to identify gender-blind gaps and other exclusion errors in the design of a programme and can help to reduce exclusionary practices.
- › **Understanding the political economy behind social protection programmes:** Social protection is highly political. Power holders might favour particular localities or interest groups and intervene or overrule eligibility decisions to gain support from certain constituencies. Rent-seeking behaviour of potential beneficiaries, as well as social norms and gender relations, might equally impact the effectiveness of otherwise technically sound interventions. It is thus key to understand the interests and motivations of key stakeholders to ensure politically smart design, implementation and refrain from harm. In view of the massive digitization processes in social protection, this increasingly also includes data protection issues.<sup>62</sup>
- › **Policy Dialogue and Elevator Approach:** The SDC's engagement in social protection so far has been focusing on technical assistance and financial support. Policy dialogue at national and international level is equally

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### Use Backstopping Support from the SDC

*The Peace Governance and Equality section (PGE) provides thematic advice on social protection. Concerning linking humanitarian cash and voucher assistance with government social protection, the most effective contact person may be the Programme Officer for Cash and Voucher Assistance at Humanitarian Aid Operations. It will be important for programme officers to engage in a dialogue with headquarters and contribute to institutional learning.*

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important to advance issues in social protection. In the context of its bilateral cooperation, Switzerland should identify opportunities (e.g., along existing initiatives and coordination mechanisms) to engage in national policy dialogues. Existing national initiatives and formats, such as donor working groups or so-called "social protection weeks"<sup>63</sup> or conferences, could provide 'easy' entry points to start with. The know-how collected at national level should feed into debates at regional and global policy level. Opportunities for dialogue are many. Switzerland provides core contributions to a range of global and regional key initiatives and institutions which finance and implement social protection. These include the World Bank, Providing for Health (P4H), the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the Grand Bargain.

## 2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Measuring outcomes in social protection in a more systematic and coherent manner is important in order to create evidence on the role and value of social protection, and to contribute to increasing Switzerland's visibility on the topic.

The SDC has introduced a Social Protection Results Indicator (POV TRI 2: Proportion of population protected in at least one social protection area), which allows reporting on progress of social protection aligned to SDG targets 1.3. (e.g., implement nationally appropriate social protection systems for all) and 10.4 (e.g., adopt social protection for greater equality) (Toolbox 1). In addition, there exist a range of other Aggregated and Thematic Reference Indicators (ARIs and TRIs) that make explicit links to social protection (Table 6).

<sup>62</sup> GIZ (2020) Data Protection for Social Protection: Key Issues for Low and Middle-Income Countries. Available from: [https://socialprotection.org/sites/default/files/publications\\_files/GIZ\\_Data\\_Protection\\_For\\_Social\\_Protection.pdf](https://socialprotection.org/sites/default/files/publications_files/GIZ_Data_Protection_For_Social_Protection.pdf) (06.06.2023).

<sup>63</sup> A range of countries organise social protection weeks or conferences on a regular basis (e.g., Cambodia, Kenya, Zambia).

Table 6: ARIs and TRIs with Explicit Links to Social Protection<sup>64</sup>

<b>GEN TRI 5</b>	Proportion of supported governments with gender-responsive budgeting
<b>DRR ARI 1</b>	Number of persons benefitting from nationally or locally implemented disaster risk reduction measures
<b>HLT TRI 2</b>	Proportion of total current expenditure on health paid by households out-of-pocket
<b>FCHR TRI 3</b>	Proportion of population satisfied with public service delivery by supported state authorities according to key human rights criteria and principles
<b>IED ARI 2</b>	Number of persons having new or better employment
<b>IED TRI 4</b>	Number of people who, due to insurance, consider that they can more easily recover from shocks and adverse events
<b>HA ARI 1</b>	Number of persons reached in emergency situations
<b>MIG ARI 1</b>	Number of migrants or forcibly displaced persons benefitting from services that enable them to access safe and decent work opportunities
<b>MIG ARI 3</b>	Number of migrants and forcibly displaced persons who gained access to local health, education and other services
<b>MIG TRI 1</b>	Number of migrants or forcibly displaced persons having new or better employment

A series of ARIs and TRIs indirectly refer to social protection measures, e.g., GEN ARI 1/GBV; GOV ARI 2/local resources etc. In Toolbox 3, a range of links are provided that support developing further indicators and/or suggest existing indicators (SDC Social Protection Online Learning Series – Module 9 for more information on Social Protection Indicators to Leave No One Behind).

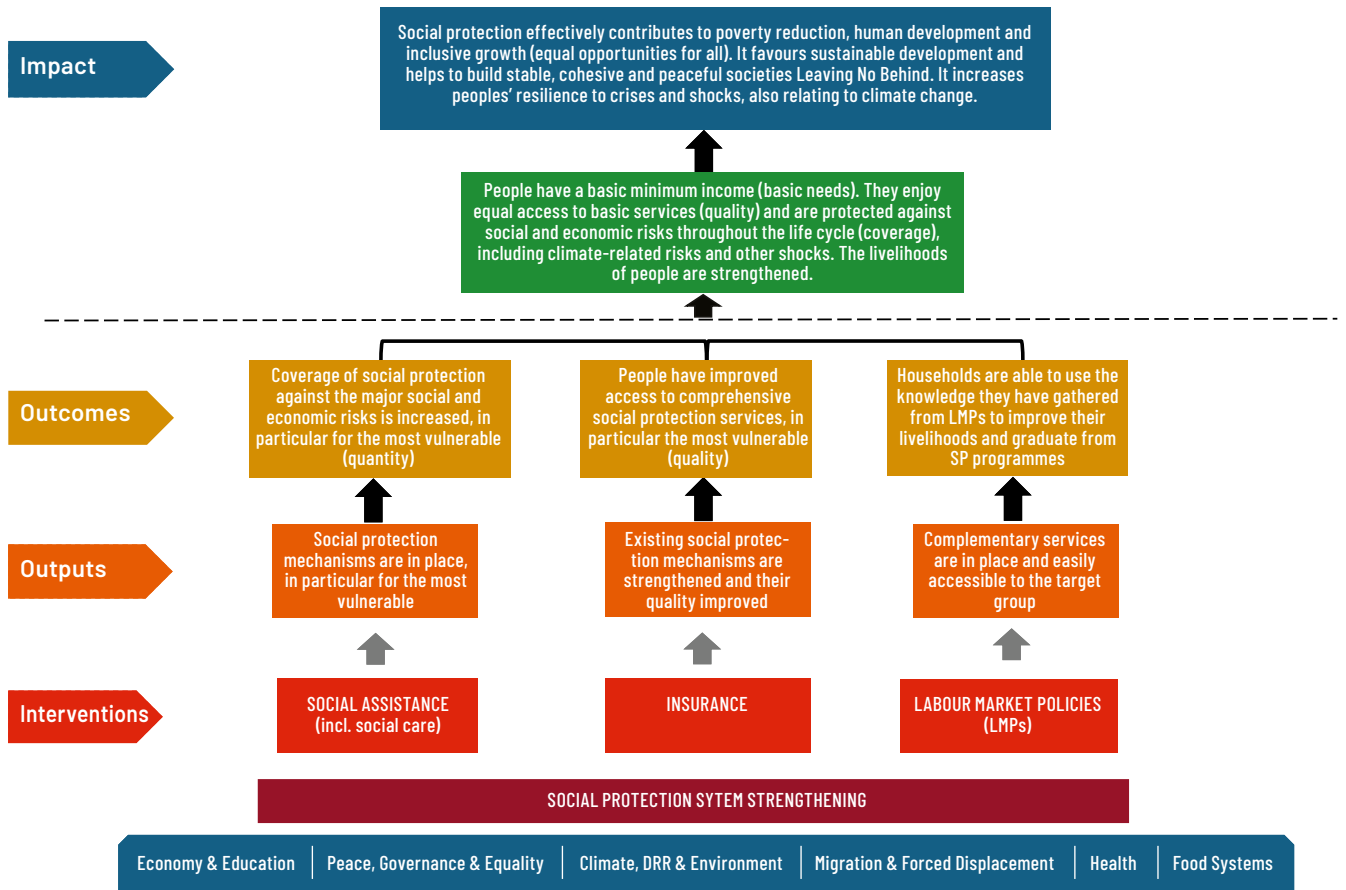
**SAP Characteristics:** It is important that programmes supporting the implementation of social protection select the relevant SAP characteristics. Currently, social protection can be accounted for through the sector data. There are two dedicated sector codes: Social Protection (20086) and School Feeding (20092). Given the growing importance of social protection, the introduction of a more differentiated set of SAP-markers, alongside various social protection instruments (e.g., social insurance, labour market measures, cash transfers, social assistance, etc.), would allow for a more systematic monitoring on the SDC’s work on social protection across sectors.

Based on the evaluation of social protection programming in the SDC<sup>65</sup> a **Theory of Change** on social protection has been developed based on three major fields of interventions, including social assistance, insurance and labour market policies underpinned and complemented by system strengthening measures as a key operational principle that cross-cuts and supports the implementation of programmes and policies (Figure 7). Through these interventions, social protection coverage shall be enhanced and its quality improved, guaranteeing equal access to a minimum set of social protection measures for all, in particular the most vulnerable. This also includes protection from recurrent large-scale shocks and crisis (*adaptive social protection*). Complementary measures enhance productivity and enable people to have a basic minimum income and graduate out of poverty in the long run. As a result, poverty is reduced. Through improved access to social services (e.g., health, education), social protection supports human development for all with a positive impact on inclusive growth and resilient livelihoods to better resist crisis and shocks. Social protection for all is an important precondition for building stable, cohesive and peaceful societies.

64 SDC (2023) Overview of ARI and TRI Indicators. Available from: <https://www.rdm.eda.admin.ch/Indicators/AriTri> (16.05.2023).

65 SDC (2019) Independent Evaluation of SDC’s Performance in Social Protection 2013 – 2017. Available from: <https://www.aramis.admin.ch/Texte/?ProjektID=45248&Sprache=en-US> (06.06.2023)

Figure 7: Theory of Change Social Protection in the SDC





# Toolbox 1: Social Protection Instruments in Detail

Toolbox 1 presents the social protection instruments mentioned in Chapter 1 in more detail, including case studies from various country contexts. The toolbox is categorised into the following sections: I.) Social Assistance (social cash transfers, cash plus programmes, in-kind transfers, public works programmes, subsidies and fee waivers); II.) Social Care Services; III.) Contributory Insurance Schemes (social insurance, micro-insurance schemes, crop and livestock insurance

and other insurance schemes); IV.) Labour Market Policies and Interventions (active labour market policies – ALMPs, passive labour market measures). It also contains information on: V.) Social protection system strengthening; VI.) Financing and VII.) Targeting. An end section is dedicated to VIII.) Social protection in crises and linking with humanitarian aid.

# I. Social Assistance

## I.1 Social Cash Transfers

Social cash transfers are regular cash payments made to vulnerable individuals or households based on specific selection criteria. Recipients include the extremely poor or specific population groups, such as children, elderly or people with disabilities. Whereas initially most transfers were delivered manually, in many contexts and where possible, pay-outs are currently being delivered through electronic services via bank accounts, mobile money accounts or smart cards.

The main objective of social transfers is to provide immediate relief to smooth consumption (protection), and boost economic activity (promotion). Social cash transfers allow beneficiaries to make small investments to improve their livelihoods and increase their income portfolio, such as purchasing of small animals or investing in small-scale businesses. They contribute to increasing beneficiaries' resilience by enabling them to make savings, invest and cope better with future risks and shocks (preventative).

Different forms of cash transfers exist:

- › Simple programmes or unconditional cash transfers (UCTs)
- › Conditional cash transfers (CCTs)
- › Cash plus transfer programmes

**Simple programmes or UCTs** are cash transfers with no strings attached. This means, they do not impose particular conditions on the recipients as to how the money must be spent, or any other conditions that recipients are required to meet in order to access the money. Examples are the child grant in South Africa,<sup>66</sup> the universal old age pension in Lesotho<sup>67</sup> or the social cash transfer programme (SCTP) in Malawi targeting extremely poor households.<sup>68</sup>

**Social cash transfers may be conditional**, meaning that beneficiaries are required to meet certain conditions, often related to human capital development, such as ensuring that children go to school, undertake regular health check-ups or participate in immunisation campaigns. **Conditional cash transfers (CCTs)** aim at combining the short-term goal of reducing immediate poverty and food insecurity with the long-term goal of reducing intergenerational poverty by improving human capital of children and youth through behaviour change measures.<sup>69</sup> The most well-known example is Bolsa Familia in Brazil.<sup>70</sup>



### Box A: Unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) for children in Zimbabwe

*The Child Protection Fund in Zimbabwe is a multi-donor trust fund managed by UNICEF and has been co-funded by the SDC and FCDO since 2012. It has a three-pronged approach to child protection: a.) improving access to child protection services, b.) implementing activities towards bolstering community economic resilience, and c.) cash transfers to reduce extreme poverty of the most vulnerable households. The Harmonised Social Cash Transfer programme provides regular and reliable bi-monthly cash payments with the aim to address multi-dimensional child vulnerabilities simultaneously and to tackle household poverty, gender disparities, disability, HIV and risks of violence, exploitation and abuse. The main target groups are vulnerable and poor children and their parents or carers. The programme provides protection for orphans and vulnerable children. It is a long-term UCT programme with additional complementary services (cash plus).<sup>71</sup>*

**Cash or social transfers are typically targeting the extreme and chronically poor** who face major challenges to sustainably graduating out of poverty. This particularly includes individuals, who due to their age or their physical conditions, face productivity constraints. Examples include children, elderly or people with disabilities, as well as households that face labour constraints, including households headed by a single (grand) parents or children.

66 South African Government (2014) Child Support Grant. Available from: <https://www.gov.za/services/child-care-social-benefits/child-support-grant> (20.04.2023).

67 ILO (2016) Universal Old Age Pension Lesotho. Available from: <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceId=53518#:~:text=All%20citizens%20of%20Lesotho%20over,per%20cent%20of%20the%20population> (20.04.2023).

68 The Transfer Project (2022) Malawi's Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP). Available from: <https://transfer.cpc.unc.edu/countries/malawi/>

69 HLPE (2012) Social Protection for Food Security: A Report by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security. Rome: High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition. Available from: [https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/hlpe/hlpe\\_documents/HLPE\\_Reports/HLPE-Report-4-Social\\_protection\\_for\\_food\\_security-June\\_2012.pdf](https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/HLPE_Reports/HLPE-Report-4-Social_protection_for_food_security-June_2012.pdf) (20.04.2023).

70 Government of Brazil (2023) Investment in Brazil's Bolsa Familia reaches record high in March – and its highest average value in history. Available from: <https://www.gov.br/planoalto/en/latest-news/investment-in-brazil2019s-bolsa-familia-reaches-record-high-in-march-2013-and-its-highest-average-value-in-history> (20.04.2023)

71 Openaid (2022) UNICEF Child Protection CPF III Zimbabwe 2019-2022. Available from: <https://openaid.se/en/activities/SE-0-SE-6-12309A0101-ZWE-16010> (20.04.2023).



### **Box B: The conditional cash transfer (CCT) Bolsa Verde protects extremely poor people and the forest in Brazil**

The Bolsa Verde was implemented by the Government of Brazil between 2011 and 2018. It targeted extremely poor people in the Amazon region. Its objectives were to encourage the conservation of ecosystems, promote citizenship and improve living conditions by raising the incomes of extremely poor individuals who carry out natural resource conservation activities in rural areas. Additionally, it encouraged beneficiaries to participate in environmental, social, technical and professional training activities. The main condition for receiving the cash transfer was that the forest cover must be maintained above 80%; otherwise, all beneficiaries in the region would lose the cash payments. Training opportunities were provided on topics concerning alternative land use, sustainable production, enterprise development and marketing eco-friendly products. Opportunities for employment were created in latex extraction, artisanal fishing and handicraft production. The Bolsa Verde had positive environmental impacts. Deforestation was between 44% and 53% less than the counterfactual and carbon reduction benefits valued at approximately USD 335 million between 2011 and 2015. The CCT programme had multiple social and economic impacts, including immediate poverty reduction through additional income to address seasonal fluctuations, normalisation of pro-environmental activities and creation of new job opportunities through training. It enabled beneficiaries to purchase additional household goods and ‘tools’ that could accumulate value and increase incomes (e.g., fish hooks, nets, school money, machetes, etc.). It increased market access and raised productivity levels by between 39.6% and 44.7%. The Bolsa Verde CCT created behavioural change by shifting livelihood practices away from deforestation.<sup>72</sup>

72 Oxfam (2020) Protecting the People and the Forest: Bolsa Verde, Brazil. Available from: <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/protecting-the-people-and-the-forest-bolsa-verde-brazil-621099/> (20.04.2023).

## **I.II Cash Plus Programmes**

Cash transfers may be combined or linked to the provision of complementary services – often provided by other sectors and line-ministries. The aim of these interventions is to support beneficiaries with a comprehensive support package that addresses multi-dimensional needs and structural barriers to poverty alleviation. Depending on the context, they typically combine cash transfers with health measures, livelihood assets, technical and skills training – including soft-skills and access to credit and savings schemes (Box C).<sup>73</sup> Cash plus programmes focus on improving human development and human capital outcomes by improving nutrition and reproductive health or reducing violence against women and girls. They aim at strengthening productive inclusion by sustainably graduating people out of poverty.



### **Box C: Cash plus programme increased savings and improved access to loans for village-saving group participants in Malawi**

As part of the Malawi Social Cash Transfer Programme, beneficiaries received a lump sum cash payment combined with training, which increased the likelihood that people would spend the money in a productive way. About 35% invested the lump sum payment in agricultural productive assets (livestock or tools), 40.5% invested in businesses, and 17% started new business activities. Training measures were offered for village-saving and loan groups. The membership to these groups increased from 15% to 95% ex-post training (after four months). Overall, 82% of village-saving and loan group participants were able to obtain loans.<sup>74</sup>

73 BRAC (2021) Impact and Reach of BRAC's Graduation Approach. Policy Brief. Available from: <https://bracupgi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/BRAC-Graduation-Impact-and-Reach-Brief.pdf> (20.04.2023).

74 Beierl et al. (2017) Economic Empowerment Pilot Project in Malawi. Bonn: DIE. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317758458\\_Economic\\_Empowerment\\_Pilot\\_Project\\_in\\_Malawi\\_Qualitative\\_Survey\\_Report](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317758458_Economic_Empowerment_Pilot_Project_in_Malawi_Qualitative_Survey_Report) (20.04.2023).

### I.III In-kind Transfers

There are three types of in-kind transfers:

- › Food rations
- › Cooked meals (school meals or soup kitchen for homeless individuals)
- › Vouchers for services or food

The distribution of **food rations** is typically found in the context of disaster or crisis situations (e.g., flooding or transient regular crisis situations, such as lean season hunger periods). In many cases, there is a tendency to revert to cash instead of food in order to reduce costs and enable people to make their own choices concerning how the money is spent, including the choice of food. Distribution of food may still make sense in specific contexts, in particular where there are no markets available and food availability is scarce.



#### Box D: Take-home rations for girls in South Sudan

*In Sudan, the WFP encourages school attendance of girls through the provision of monthly take-home food rations consisting of 10 kg of cereals and 3.5 litres of vegetable oil as an add on to normal school feeding in South Sudan. This programme targets girls attending grades 3 to 8. Girls need to be enrolled in school, attend grades 3 to 8 and have a school attendance rate of at least 80% in order to receive the benefits. This programme has increased the enrolment of girls, improved their performance in national examinations and reduced early marriages and teenage pregnancies.<sup>75</sup>*

**School feeding** is a typical in-kind transfer programme that provides free nutritious meals to pupils during school hours (either as breakfast or lunch). These may be complemented with take-home rations, such as flour, rice or wheat. School meals programmes typically target children of school age

<sup>75</sup> Mahadi, M. (2021) How School Meals are Empowering Girls in South Sudan (30<sup>th</sup> April 2021). Available from: <https://www.wfp.org/stories/how-school-meals-are-empowering-girls-south-sudan> (20.04.2023).

from poor or other vulnerable backgrounds with the aim to increase school enrolment and attendance while reducing hunger and malnutrition. Through increased food intake, the cognitive performance and learning outcomes of poor pupils improves, resulting in higher human capital development in the long run. Many programmes specifically target girls, who tend to have a lower enrolment rate than boys. In addition to the meals at schools, girls are sometimes provided with take-home rations. In order to receive these food rations, they have to provide proof that they have attended school on a regular basis (Box D).<sup>76</sup>

While school feeding programmes have shown to substantially increase enrolment rates of poor children, this is not the case for children from extremely poor backgrounds who lack the most basic means to attend school, such as soap, clothes, pencils or transport money. From a food security and nutrition perspective, school feeding is an important measure, but comes too late to reach children during the first 1000 days, the period considered most crucial for cognitive development.<sup>77</sup>

Over the last decade there has been a growing debate about food aid as an undermining factor to local farmers' activities and income. Some countries have embarked on so-called home-grown school feeding solutions (e.g., Cambodia, Kenya, Haiti, and Honduras). Schools contract local farmers and traders who produce food for the local school meals. This reduces transaction costs for food transport from the national level and contributes to increased income for local farmers and the creation of much needed local markets.<sup>78</sup>

**Vouchers** give their owners the right to access specific services or receive specific goods which otherwise would be unaffordable for certain population groups, such as food, agriculture inputs (e.g., seeds, fertilizer) or health and education services. Vouchers are often used to induce a behaviour change with regards to food habits or health-related behaviour, for example vouchers for ante-natal care services for pregnant women to improve child and maternal health outcomes or food vouchers to increase nutrition outcomes in children or pregnant and lactating mothers. Vouchers are considered smart subsidies that prevent market distortion, while strengthening local economies and markets. Vouchers guarantee stable food and agricultural input prices. This is of specific importance against the background of rising inflation and increasing food and agricultural input prices.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> HLPE (2012) Social Protection for Food Security: A Report by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security. Rome: High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition. Available from: [https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/hlpe/hlpe\\_documents/HLPE\\_Reports/HLPE-Report-4-Social\\_protection\\_for\\_food\\_security-June\\_2012.pdf](https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/HLPE_Reports/HLPE-Report-4-Social_protection_for_food_security-June_2012.pdf) (20.04.2023).

<sup>77</sup> SUN (2022) The SUN Homepage. Available from: <https://scalingupnutrition.org/about/what-we-do/history> (20.04.2023).

<sup>78</sup> World Food Programme (WFP) (2017) Home Grown School Meals Benefit Children, Farmers and Communities. Available from: [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000050971/download/?\\_ga=2.148489909.384575554.1681804193-2022030097.1681804192](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000050971/download/?_ga=2.148489909.384575554.1681804193-2022030097.1681804192) (20.04.2023).

<sup>79</sup> Olney, D., Gelli, A., Kumar, N., Aldermann, H. et. Al. (2021) Nutrition Sensitive Social Protection Programs within Food Systems. Washington DC: IFPRI. Available from: <https://ebrary.ifpri.org/digital/collection/p15738coll2/id/134593> (20.04.2023).



## I.IV Public Works Programmes

Public works programmes cover food-for-work or cash-for-work programmes and directly link productive as well as protective dimensions of social protection. They encompass mainly public measures that offer poor population groups temporary work opportunities in exchange for fixed hourly wages in cash or in-kind, mainly food, or food vouchers. Public works programmes have multiple goals: they serve as a protective measure for people to bridge short-term poverty, mainly with regards to food shortage during slack or dry seasons; they have a wider poverty reducing impact by producing public physical or social assets, such as roads, schools, hospitals or water basins, especially in the rural context. This may also include climate change mitigation measures, such as the restoration of ecosystems (e.g., soil and water conservation activities like terracing, embankments, gully check dams, water-infiltration trenches, and especially reforestation).<sup>80</sup>

The impact of public works programmes on long-term and chronic poverty reduction remains limited. Given their high costs of implementation, the question arises whether other measures, such as direct social transfers, might not achieve the same outcomes in a more cost-effective way.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, public employment programmes leave the question of target group equity unanswered, as poorer households which often tend to face labour constraints, remain automatically excluded from this type of social protection. By linking public works to passive employment policies, for example the provision of child care opportunities or the adaption of types of work to the work capacity of elderly people, attempts are being made to increase access for women and elderly, rendering public works more equitable.

## I.V Subsidies and Fee Waivers

Subsidies for staple food, fuel and energy are common social protection measures in many countries. While these measures are in place in many low-income countries, the war in Ukraine and soaring energy prices have brought the topic back on the agenda also in high-income countries. The commonest form of food subsidy is a direct, untargeted subsidy that lowers the price of a staple food or fuel for all consumers in a country. Targeted subsidies mean that governments subsidise food prices for certain households, targeted either by income level or by category, who are then entitled to lower prices for certain types of staple food while non-targeted individuals continue to buy food at market prices.<sup>82</sup> Fee waivers are another



### **Box E: The public works programme MUVA Assistentes (assistant teachers) creates employment and develops skills of female youth in Mozambique**

*Launched in 2017, this public works programme trains adolescent girls and young women (aged 18-25) from poor urban backgrounds as assistant teachers. The female students receive an intensive 4-week training course, followed by a year of paid work experience as part-time teaching assistants (4 hours per day) in over-crowded primary school classrooms. They receive USD 32 per months for their work. The programme had a significant impact on improving technical skills of the assistant teachers; it improved their opportunities for employability in the labour market and helped building soft-skills through training and mentoring, while enhancing the primary education experience of students.<sup>83</sup>*

<sup>80</sup> Beierl, S.; Grimm, M. (2019) Do Public Works Programmes Work? A Systematic Review of the Evidence in Africa and the MENA Region. Working Paper, GIZ and University of Passau. Available from: <https://socialprotection.org/discover/publications/do-public-works-programmes-work-systematic-review-evidence-programmes-low-and> (20.04.2023).

<sup>81</sup> McCord, A. (2018) Linking Social Protection to Sustainable Employment: Current Practices and Future Directions. Social Protection for Employment Community. Available from: <http://socialprotection.org/connect/communities/social-protection-employment-%E2%80%93-community-spec>

<sup>82</sup> HLPE (2012) Social Protection for Food Security: A Report by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security. Rome: High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition. Rome: HLPE. Available from: [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/hlpe/hlpe\\_documents/HLPE\\_Reports/HLPE-Report-4-Social\\_protection\\_for\\_food\\_security-June\\_2012.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/HLPE_Reports/HLPE-Report-4-Social_protection_for_food_security-June_2012.pdf) (20.04.2023).

<sup>83</sup> Oxford Policy Management (2021) MUVA: Female Economic Empowerment in Mozambique. Available from: <https://www.opml.co.uk/projects/female-economic-empowerment-mozambique> (20.04.2023).

## II. Social Care Services

Social care services encompass in-kind services, such as family support services, counselling services for children and women experiencing violence or care services for elderly. In many low-income and middle-income countries, the social care services sector is not big and continues to be carried out in the context of the family and community, often by women and girls. Where services are provided, this is often being done in an institutionalised manner (e.g., through homes for elderly, people with disabilities, orphans and women facing violence). However, provision of services does not sufficiently meet a rising demand. Social, economic, and cultural changes, including urbanisation, migration, rising poverty and inequality as well as climate-related risks and catastrophic

events, have increased the demand for a broader and more structured offer of social care services in low- and middle-income countries. This has led to a stronger recognition of the role of social care or welfare services as an important social protection instrument that enables people to overcome traumatic experiences, learn new skills and re-integrate in society. While traditionally child protection and social protection have been separate work streams, they are increasingly thought as complementing each other<sup>84</sup>

<sup>84</sup> For example, UNICEF (2016) Promising Practices in Social Protection for Children. New York: UNICEF. Available from: <https://www.unicef.org/eca/reports/promising-practices-social-protection-children> (20.04.2023).

## III. Contributory Insurance Schemes

### III.I Social Insurance

Particularly in low-income countries where the majority of the population lives and works in the informal economy (including subsistence agriculture), productive and reproductive risks are closely intertwined. Due to lacking social protection measures, life cycle risks, such as sickness, death, disability or maternity have an immediate impact on economic activity. Sickness, in particular, is associated with great economic loss. Each year a significant number of households are being pushed into poverty as a result of impoverishment caused by out-of-pocket payments for health services.<sup>85</sup> In addition to the temporary loss of income, people are forced to sell-off their assets to finance health services and related costs, such as transport or medication.

Social insurance schemes cover the costs of risks related to health, age, unemployment or maternity. They are based on principles of solidarity and often are mandatory. This allows for an adequate sharing of risk among individual members or risk-pooling (e.g., between sick and non-sick, old and young or unemployed and employed), and guarantees the system's long-term financial viability.<sup>86</sup> The development of health insurance systems for the informal poor and marginalised population groups who do not have access to formal health insurance schemes can, for example, make an important contribution to mitigate this risk.

Community-based health insurance schemes, which are limited to a certain geographical area or region, are one way for marginalised populations to obtain access to health insurance. Other schemes are group-based. These use large organisations, such as farmers' or agricultural workers' cooperatives or microfinance institutions, as distribution channels. To attain universal health coverage, numerous countries have merged various schemes into a unified national health fund. The objective is to increase access to basic health care services for all individuals by optimising the utilisation of existing resources. More affluent health insurance schemes, such as those available to formal sector employees, cross-subsidise less affluent health insurance schemes, such as community health insurance schemes. This cross-subsidisation enables lower contribution rates or even finance-free access for individuals who cannot afford to pay contributions.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>85</sup> WHO (2021) Universal Health Coverage. A Factsheet. Available from: [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/universal-health-coverage-\(uhc\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/universal-health-coverage-(uhc)) (20.04.2023).

<sup>86</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO) (2014) World Social Protection Report 2014/15: Building Economic Recovery, inclusive development and social justice. Geneva: ILO. Available from: <https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/world-social-security-report/2014/lang-en/index.htm> (20.04.2023).

<sup>87</sup> For more detailed information on the National Health Insurance Fund in Ghana see ESCAP (2019) The National Health Insurance in Ghana. Social Protection Toolbox. Available from: <https://www.socialprotection-toolbox.org/practice/ghanas-national-health-insurance-scheme> (20.04.2023).



### Box F: Health insurance for the informal rural sector in Tanzania

Social Health Insurance in Tanzania has been in place since 2010. The SDC supported the Government of Tanzania with the reform of the Community Health Insurance Fund model. The aim of the reform was to remove financial barriers for accessing health care through a voluntary health insurance scheme, thus achieving universal health coverage for all. The scheme mainly targets the informal rural sector and is complemented by an Insurance Management Information System (IMIS) for transparent and accountable, including enrolment of insurance members, validity status of members and processing of insurance claims. The improved insurance model developed by the SDC-financed Health Promotion and System Strengthening Programme scaled-up nationwide (to 185 districts) in 2018. Enrolment rates increased from 18% in 2015-2016 to 25% in 2018-2019 or 7% of the total population. Standard Operating Procedures and Financial Management Guidelines were also developed.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>88</sup> SDC (2022) Direct Health Facility Financing. Available from: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/countries/tanzania.html/content/dezaprosjcts/SDC/en/2018/7F10147/phase1?oldPagePath=/content/deza/en/home/laender/tansania.html> (20.04.2023).

## III.II Micro-insurance Schemes

Micro-insurance schemes offer basic coverage for a limited contribution. They are designed for poorer workers, mostly in the informal economy and are usually on a voluntary basis. They may be public, such as the community-based health insurance schemes, but may also be provided by private commercial partners that offer specifically designed micro-insurance packages for the low-income sector, such as individual micro life insurance or health policies (e.g., Life Insurance Cooperation India). Index-based micro-insurance is a special form of insurance for the agricultural sector and is used to hedge against droughts, floods or crop failures.



### Box G: Micro-insurance scheme for small-scale farmers in Bolivia

The SDC-funded Promotion of Micro-insurance for agricultural production (PROSEDER) programme offered micro-insurance for agricultural production to small-scale farmers in Bolivia between 2010 and 2022. Agricultural micro-insurance products were developed and piloted in 3 departments and 21 municipalities, in cooperation with municipalities to address natural hazards induced by climate change. PROSEDER provided insurance to more than 1000 small-holders. It supported the elaboration of the law 144 that prescribes the creation of an agricultural insurance based on the evidence generated by SDC-funded pilot projects.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>89</sup> SDC (2021) Rural Micro-insurance. Available from: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/it/home/temi-dsc/sviluppo-settore-privato/sviluppo-finanziario/microassicurazioni.html/content/dezaprosjcts/SDC/en/2010/7F06552/phase2.html> (20.04.2023).



### Box H: Catastrophic risk insurance for smallholders, most vulnerable and food insecure people in the African Union

The ARC is a programme supported by multiple donors including the SDC and the WFP. It aims at building resilience to climate related shocks through early response and disaster risk management against natural disaster (e.g., flood, tropical cyclones) and outbreak of contagious diseases. It comprises insurance products as well as contingency plans. The main target groups are smallholder households and the most vulnerable and food insecure populations of the African Union. The ARC issued 41 drought insurance policies to ten African Union member states, provided outbreak and epidemic insurance products, flood insurance products and comprehensive disaster risk management by integrating early warning and contingency plans in insurance models.<sup>90</sup>

90 ARC (2022) The ARC Capacity Building Programme. Available from: <https://www.arc.int/capacity-building-programme> (20.04.2023).

## III.III Crop and Livestock Insurance

Due to the complexity of individual index-based micro-insurance schemes, including high operational costs, more broad-based insurance funds have been developed that, instead of insuring individual farmers or households, insure whole countries and regions, mainly against climate-related risks and disasters (e.g., flood, tropical cyclones) or outbreaks of contagious diseases. These disaster-triggered risk pools at regional level are embedded in a wider set of measures that link insurance to early warning systems and national contingency plans. In this manner, it is guaranteed that insurance premiums are paid out early and can be delivered in a timely and efficient manner in order to allow smallholder households and the most vulnerable to access support quickly and build resilience to climate-related shocks (e.g., the African Risk Capacity – ARC).<sup>91</sup>

## III.IV Other Insurance

A number of countries have established options for informal sector workers and companies to join formal sector health or pension funds on a voluntary basis. Other countries, such as Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina, have established a tax and contribution system that is tailor-made to the contributory capacity and labour structure of the informal sector, including different company sizes, simplified procedures, and contribution levels allowing for flexibility in payments.

An innovative approach to old age security has been launched in Rwanda in 2017. The government established a long-term voluntary saving scheme (EJOHEZA), which caters for both salaried and unsalaried individuals. It is a defined contribution scheme, which is based on individual savings accounts with a scheme administrator, the Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB). The government of Rwanda provides a matching contribution for low-income members. In this way, EJOHEZA guarantees access to old age security for the poorer part of the population as well.<sup>92</sup>

91 See for example the African Risk Capacity, ARC (2023) African Risk Capacity Group Homepage. Available from: <https://www.arc.int/> (20.04.2023).

92 RSSB (2023) Rwanda Social Security Board Homepage. Available from: <https://www.rssb.rw/scheme/ejo-heza> (20.04.2023).

# IV. Labour Market Policies and Interventions

## IV.I Active Labour Market Policies

ALMPs and measures aim at actively enhancing the (re-)integration into the labour market by increasing employability and creating opportunities for income. In low-income and emerging economies, ALMPs have a wider scope and include income support and poverty eradication measures, such as cash transfers, education grants or support to access savings

and micro-credit schemes (Table 7). Measures are often combined. Vocational skills training measures may be linked to public works programmes or temporary income support to compensate for the loss of income during the training; some countries offer employment subsidies to incentivise prospective employers to contract young jobseekers or newly trained people to facilitate their integration into the labour market.

Table 7: Active Labour Market Programmes – An Overview

Measures	Implementation
<b>Vocational Skills Training</b>	Interventions aimed to improve skill portfolio of recipients; may be accompanied by other active measures (e.g., public works) and include some type of income support
<b>Public Works Programmes</b>	Closely related to poverty alleviation, frequently providing social and income protection during economic downturns/ lean-season-response, etc.
<b>Self-employment and</b>	Necessary support to start a business activity, often combined with cash transfers, micro-credit or savings
<b>Micro-enterprise Creation</b>	Interventions aimed to connect jobseekers and employers (counselling, labour market intermediation and job search assistance)
<b>Labour Market Services</b>	Mainly used in the context of paying employers to hire employees from poor backgrounds
<b>Employment Subsidies</b>	Number of migrants or forcibly displaced persons benefiting from services that enable them to access safe and decent work opportunities



### Box I: Gender-sensitive Vocational Skills Development (VSD) enable more women to participate in TVET measures in Laos

*Engaging women in VSD poses greater challenges compared to men. Women may experience intersecting inequalities (e.g., ethnicity, poverty, etc.), face limited access to VSD and are more likely to lack control over resources to travel to training centres. They are already (over-) burdened by care and agriculture work responsibilities, which make entrepreneurship more difficult for them. The SDC-funded SURAFCO project supported the government of Laos, who runs the Northern Agriculture and Forestry College (NAFC) for upland hill agriculture in Northern Laos. The project trained these extension agents. Extension agents were selected based on local language skills and characteristic to ‘match’ better the target population (like caste, ethnicity, gender and economic status). The projects’ target population were vulnerable people and mainly women. The project supported an incentive system, conducted campaigns in local languages, recruited participants in local schools and provided scholarships to students from poor families (including tuition, board and food costs). The project increased women’s enrolment from 13% to 30% in just one year.<sup>93</sup>*

## IV.II Passive labour Market Measures

Passive labour market measures support economically active people to compensate for periods without work, for example due to sickness, injury, maternity or job loss. Through the provision of sickness benefits, maternity allowances or unemployment benefits, workers and employees are able to support themselves while at the same time, maintain their productivity.

These types of measures also include wider legal dimensions, such as labour regulations, collective agreements or minimum wage policies. In a low-income setting where labour migration is common, this also relates to regulations regarding the social protection of migrants working abroad. Ensuring a minimum level of social protection for labour migrants and their families left behind is an important concern for both sending and destination countries, as well as for the migrants themselves. This is evident by the substantial remittances being sent back to their home countries.

Several countries have established unilateral measures for labour migrants where special provisions for the inclusion of migrant workers exist or where nationals working abroad can join or retain membership in an existing general social protection scheme on a voluntary basis (e.g., the Overseas Workers Welfare Fund in the Philippines). Several countries that have established labour corridors from other countries, have signed bilateral or multilateral social security agreements that provide for equality of treatment between migrant workers and nationals with regards to labour and social security rights in the receiving country. This includes the portability of acquired rights once a labourer goes back to his or her country of origin (e.g., the European Union or the Economic Community of West African States – ECOWAS).

<sup>93</sup> SDC (2017) Gender and Vocational Skills Development. Available from: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Gender/Pages/Topics/Economic-Empowerment/Vocational-Skills-Development.aspx> (20.04.2023).

## V. Social Protection Systems Strengthening

An important precondition for building integrated social protection systems is the existence of a well-functioning operational system. This includes regulatory frameworks to ascertain the right to social protection, as well as working financing mechanisms, administrative and management structures, M&E as well as coordination mechanisms. Good governance in social protection aims at increasing the accountability and transparency of social protection measures and operations, also in order to increase trust in the system and strengthen state-citizen relations. Social protection is highly political. Strengthening social protection governance systems also needs to take account of the political economy of a programme, developing systems in such a way as to prevent rent-seeking behaviour of potential beneficiaries or social norms and gender relations to reduce access to social protection measures, in particular for the most vulnerable and poor.

Delivery and operations are one of the major challenges of social assistance programmes in low- and middle-income contexts. Weak administrative structures are a major barrier for delivering transfers on a regular basis. This includes lack of human resources, capacities and skills, as well as financial resources to carry out programme tasks assigned e.g., lack of office space, stationary, internet connection or transport. Poor people often do not have a proof of identity or birth certificate – necessary to apply for a programme – even if they are entitled to receive the transfer. Administrative resource constraints are even more challenging in the context of CCTs or cash plus programmes which require close coordination across different service providers and sectors to monitor conditionalities and provide services in a coordinated way.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) allows to compensate for a range of these shortcomings, rendering operations both faster and more transparent. Mobile banking mechanisms via mobile phone operators or biometric cash cards allow beneficiaries to easily access money and receive support in case of emergencies. Digital technology has also significantly streamlined the process of selecting and identifying beneficiaries, registering individuals, verifying compliance with conditions, facilitating payment of contributions, and enabling effective grievance management. The creation of social registries and the development of management information systems that link different programmes have enabled beneficiaries to access to a broader range of services, while enhancing transparency in detecting cases of double-dipping.

While the digitalisation of management information systems and social registries has significant advantages in terms of accessing social protection services in an efficient and transparent manner, it also presents challenges. The lack of data security is a considerable challenge that is increasingly being addressed.<sup>94</sup> Another challenge, yet to be solved, relates to closing the digital divide. This particularly concerns poor women and men, as well as a considerable portion of marginalised population groups.

While ICT can address certain administrative weaknesses, it is still crucial to strengthen administrative operational and managerial structures, particularly at the local level. Even with the significant facilitation provided by ICT, the presence of skilled personnel is essential to effectively manage the programmes – including targeting and enrolment – as well as the provision of social care services or outreach.

<sup>94</sup> GIZ (2020) Data Protection for Social Protection: Key Issues for Low- and Middle-income countries. Available from: [https://enabling-digital.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/GIZ\\_Data\\_Protection\\_For\\_Social\\_Protection.pdf](https://enabling-digital.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/GIZ_Data_Protection_For_Social_Protection.pdf) (20.04.2023).



openIMIS

**Box J: OpenIMIS to strengthen e-health and social protection worldwide – ready to use and adaptable software**

OpenIMIS is an open source software for managing social protection and health processes that helps digitalise the link between beneficiaries, providers and payers for social protection. The SDC and BMZ technically and financially support OpenIMIS implementation in partner countries via a catalytic implementation fund. OpenIMIS is supported by a community of developers, users and implementers around the world and pursues the joined mission to increase and improve universal health coverage and universal social protection. It is currently implemented in at least seven countries, with many more countries expressing interest in the software. OpenIMIS is used to manage health insurance in Cameroon, Nepal and Tanzania, including formal sector and informal sector schemes. It can be used to manage beneficiaries, record services and generate insurance claims for the digital transmission of claims and review the claims. It is currently also used to manage a voucher scheme for maternal care in Cameroon, an employment injury insurance in Nepal (social security fund) and a cash transfer scheme for COVID-19 in Gambia.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>95</sup> OpenIMIS (2022) Open IMIS Open-Source Software. Available from: <https://www.openimis.org/> (20.04.2023). SDC (2022) Social Protection Learning Module 5. Available from: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Poverty-Wellbeing/social-protection/Documents/SDC-Social-Protection-Module-5-FINAL.pdf> (20.04.2023).



**Box K: Governance and system strengthening for equitable access to social protection in Mongolia**

The government of Mongolia, with the support of the SDC, has implemented One-Stop-Shops (OSS) as a convenient solution for accessing public services. These OSS facilities, available at provincial and district levels, provide a single-window approach, enabling individuals to conveniently access a range of services such as social protection and employment counselling services. The SDC provides financial and technical support in a governance and decentralisation programme, which aims to foster the development of subnational governments that respond to citizens' needs. It also aims to reduce social and spatial inequalities in service provision (create equitable access) for the socially and spatially marginalised population at local level in Mongolia. The OSS programme enhanced coordination between institutions in charge of social protection and employment promotion; increased the quality of public services by reducing duplications and inefficiencies; and contributed to fostering a comprehensive social protection system with more than 60% of the population using OSS facilities on a regular basis in 2018.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>96</sup> SDC (2017) One-Stop Shops Public service reform in Mongolia: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/mongolia/en/home/news/news.html/content/countries/mongolia/en/meta/news/2015/oss>

SDC (2015) Governance and Decentralisation Programme Phase II: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/mongolia/en/home/international-cooperation/projects.html/content/dezapros/SDC/en/2012/7F08183/phase2?oldPagePath=/content/countries/mongolia/en/home/internationale-zusammenarbeit/projekte.html>

## VI. Financing

Social protection systems are typically financed through a combination of both tax-financed non-contributory schemes and social insurance schemes that are traditionally funded by regular contributions from workers and employers. For low-income countries, raising the resources to be able to finance at least a minimum social protection floor is a significant challenge. Domestic fiscal and administrative capacities to increase the fiscal space for social protection are often limited, as is the social insurance coverage – usually confined to the formal public sector economy. This also provides a challenge for development partners aiming at investing in social protection policies, with particular concern for long term sustainability.

Several strategies and options for increasing the fiscal space for social protection both at national and international level are explored. These include innovative ways of increasing domestic tax revenues, through the introduction of transac-

tion taxes or taxes on natural resources or luxury products (sin tax). The elimination of illicit financial flows, effective debt management, as well as efficient management of the ODA aid and transfers, are additional options to explore in order to sustainably improve the domestic resource base for financing social protection (see also Global Accelerator Initiative). Budgetary analysis to re-prioritise public expenditure and improve budgeting towards social protection are being proposed, as is improving the capacity for increasing fiscal space, for example through improved management and administration of contribution collection ([SDC Social Protection Online Learning Series – Module 10 for more information on Social Protection and Financing](#)).





## VII. Targeting

Targeting is the identification, selection and registration of beneficiaries based on specific eligibility criteria that define who receives a benefit and who does not. In many low-income countries, targeting is considered a cost-effective way to deal with widespread resource constraints.

- › Narrow the geographical coverage (e.g., targeting areas with the highest poverty rates)
- › Always target gender gaps, mostly at the expense of women, but limit the intersection with other categories selected (e.g., old age pension or child grant)
- › Narrow the category selected (e.g., limiting the age of eligibility<sup>97</sup> or introducing percentage caps for targeting the poor<sup>98</sup>)
- › Direct resources at those living in poverty (e.g., by means testing or proxies)
- › Use a combination of approaches (e.g., a poverty-targeted child grant<sup>99</sup>)

While this is undeniably the most efficient way to distribute limited available resources, targeting faces a series of constraints. The fact that most poor people are working as subsistence farmers or in the informal economy makes it difficult to assess the income status of households and individuals. Various techniques have been developed to overcome this challenge, including PMT or using the communities directly to assess the poverty status. They usually know best who the poorest are.<sup>100</sup> Some programmes use self-selection or self-targeting (e.g., mechanisms ensuring that only the needy apply), such as reducing the value of transfers until they are not attractive anymore to those who are better-off or raising the costs of accessing benefits. Public works programmes that offer low salaries for many hours of hard manual labour are a classic example.

The overall increase in data and the use of digital technology has resulted in increasingly sophisticated technologies, used to improve the quality of targeting by reducing the exclusion of eligible persons into programmes and reducing the inclusion of those who would not be eligible from the outset, e.g., hybrid PMTs.<sup>101</sup>

However, evidence shows that an ideal targeting method does not exist. While methodology plays a role, inclusion and exclusion errors are, to a large extent, caused by the poor quality of the administration of the selection process rather than the method itself.<sup>102</sup>

Against this background and LNOB, some argue that universal approaches which target the entire population or specific categories (categorical universalism), such as children, elderly or pregnant women, without applying additional inclusion or exclusion criteria, are more suitable and cost-efficient in providing social protection to those who need it most. Some low- and middle-income countries have implemented universal categorical approaches, in particular for the elderly. Universal social pensions exist, for example, in Lesotho or Kenya.

In general, the '3 As of targeting' offer a practical guideline: Targeting must be appropriate (e.g., contribute to the programme's goal), achievable (e.g., fit the financial resources, the staff capacity and the technological level) and acceptable (e.g., enjoy the support in the population and politics).<sup>103</sup>

97 The age of eligibility for child grants vary widely across countries, as does the age threshold for being eligible to social pensions.

98 E.g. the Malawi Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) currently targets 10% of ultra-poor labour constrained households in all districts only. For more details see: Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare (2023) The Social Cash Transfer Programme. Available from: <https://mtukula.com/> (20.04.2023).

99 UKAID K4D (2019). Social Protection Topic Guide. Available from: <https://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/social-protection/types-of-social-protection> (20.04.2023).

100 For a more detailed overview of targeting measures, including targeting methods based on the use of digital geo-data see Grosh, M., Leite, P., Wai-Poi, M., Tesliuc, E. (2022) Revisiting Targeting in Social Assistance: A New Look at Old Dilemmas. Human Development Perspectives. Washington, DC: World Bank Available from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/a6b0063a-4805-5542-89a9-f6da877b5e37> (20.04.2023).

101 Ibid.

102 Coady, D., Grosh, M., Hoddinott, J. (2004) Targeting of Transfers in Developing Countries: Review of Lessons and Experiences. Washington DC: World Bank. Available from: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/464231468779449856/pdf/302300PAPER01TargetingOfTransfers.pdf> (20.04.2023).

103 Slater, R. and Farrington, J. (2010). Appropriate, Achievable and Appropriate: A Practical Tool for Good Targeting. Social Protection Tool Sheet: Targeting Social Transfers: ODI: London. Available from: <https://odi.org/en/publications/appropriate-achievable-and-acceptable-a-practical-tool-for-good-targeting/> (20.04.2023).

## VIII. Social Protection in a Crisis Context

The degree to which humanitarian aid and social protection can be linked depends on the existence and the maturity of a country's social protection system.<sup>104</sup> The temporary adaptation of routine social protection programmes to shocks relates to four dimensions: 1.) expansion of coverage; 2.) increase of transfers to allow people to adequately react to the crisis; 3.) provision of a comprehensive set of risk mitigation measures to address the risk in a comprehensive manner, and 4.) timeliness (e.g., ensure that support is delivered in a timely manner to meet immediate needs). In order for ASP to work well, an efficient coordination and cooperation between social protection and humanitarian aid actors, including NGOs and other non-government organisations, as well as disaster risk management actors is a precondition. In order to make sure that social protection systems can react quickly and reach out to the at-risk population, comprehensive management information systems or dynamic registries, need to be in place. To fully support the population when a shock occurs, social protection systems need to be comprehensive. This includes well-working delivery systems, as well as having a high degree of coverage. Finally, governments need to ensure in advance that enough resources are available to be able to disburse funds quickly.<sup>105</sup>

Beyond technical aspects, challenges relate to political, institutional, financial and legal dimensions. Integrating refugees and migrants, who constitute a mobile and vulnerable population, into national social protection schemes presents a significant challenge. These individuals face obstacles such as the absence of legal entitlements to access national schemes and also the lack of valid documents required for enrolment. Political economy aspects, in particular the inherent contradictions between humanitarian aid principles ('do no harm') and nationally led often-targeted social protection programmes are another considerable challenge. Public social protection systems are not always willing to pay for the integration – even on a temporary basis – of migrants and refugees. Likewise, coordination can become a challenge dominated by diverging interests and various stakeholders. While the humanitarian sector tends to be dominated by non-government actors, social protection is represented by state and para-state actors and organisations.



### Box L: Adapting social protection for extremely poor households and vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic in Tanzania

As part of the COVID-19-response, the existing Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) II in Tanzania was utilised to provide assistance to vulnerable groups who lacked savings to cope with the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic. The aim was to prevent these individuals from falling (back) into poverty. These COVID-19-related ASP measures were funded by a multi-donor trust fund managed by World Bank and to which the SDC contributed.<sup>106</sup> The measures targeted approximately 300,000 additional extremely poor households and other vulnerable groups under the PSSN. During the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple measures were being undertaken, including fast tracking the ongoing validation exercise of PSSN beneficiaries, suspension of conditionalities for the CCT, approval of two payment cycles in one payment and the establishment of safe benefit payment guidelines plus rollout of e-payments. A one-year humanitarian cash grant for vulnerable individuals was implemented on a temporary basis using the PSSN targeting and delivery system. The projected results highlighted that 300,000 additional households were covered through a humanitarian cash grant and 270,000 additional jobs were created under the public works component of the PSSN.<sup>107</sup>

104 Barca, V., Henderson, E., Sjöberg, A. et al. (2019) Linking Cash and Voucher Assistance and Social Protection:

Demystifying the entry points for humanitarian aid. PPP Webinar socialprotection.org. Available from: [https://socialprotection.org/sites/default/files/publications\\_files/Webinar%20presentation%20-%2010%20Dec.pdf](https://socialprotection.org/sites/default/files/publications_files/Webinar%20presentation%20-%2010%20Dec.pdf)

105 Bowen, T., Del Ninno, C., Andrews, C., et al. (2020) Adaptive Social Protection. Building Resilience to Shocks. Washington D.C.: World Bank, Available from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/7ab2af13-08ca-5b10-b08b-268e6519eb15/content>

106 FCDO, USAID, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the International Fund for Agriculture Development, Government of Norway, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the OPEC Fund and SDC contribution.

107 World Bank (2022) Tanzania Productive Social Safety Net Project II. Available from: <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P169165> (20.04.2023).



**Box M: School feeding for refugee children and children from host communities in Jordan**<sup>108</sup>

*The National School Meals Programme in Jordan exists since 1995. It targets public schools in poor areas and aims at raising health and nutrition conditions of marginalised children. Since 2013 (onset of the Syrian crisis), the programme is also taking care of refugee children enrolled in Jordanian schools or attending schools in refugee camps. Between 2013 and 2020, the programme which is implemented in collaboration with WFP has increased its coverage from 115,000 to 419,000 children (20% – 37% of all children in Jordan) and was extended to three refugee camps. The programme increased school enrolment and attendance and improved the social inclusion and integration of refugees, which is important for psychosocial health.*<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup>The SDC support for the programme finished in 2022.

<sup>109</sup>WFP Jordan (2022) Food Security Outcome Monitoring – Q1 2022 Camps Factsheet. Available from: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/food-security-outcome-monitoring-q1-2022-camps-factsheet> (20.04.2023).



## Toolbox 2: Sectoral Perspectives

Toolbox 2 is structured along SDC themes and sectors and provides a set of guiding questions that are designed to support programme officers in identifying potential entry points

for future interventions in social protection at national level, and incentivise further thinking on social protection. The questions are structured along four dimensions:

# I. Social Protection, Agriculture and Food Security

## Potential Entry Points and Food for Thought

Table 8: Entry Points and Food for Thought for Social Protection, Agriculture and Food Security

<b>Policy Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a social protection strategy in place?</li> <li>• Are policies linking agriculture and food security and social protection a strategic priority, such as nutrition sensitive social protection or social protection policies targeting rural areas (e.g., linkages, graduation or cash plus, public works, micro-insurance / crop insurance schemes)?</li> <li>• Does the country have a food and nutrition policy / strategy in place that includes food and nutrition sensitive social protection measures?</li> <li>• Is a donor coordination mechanism in place? Does a technical working group exist on agriculture and food security and social protection/ nutrition sensitive social protection?</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the national partners working on social protection and nutrition-sensitive food security in the country?</li> <li>• Who are the international partners working on social protection and food security/nutrition-sensitive food security in the country?</li> <li>• Who are the sub-national stakeholders in local social protection?</li> <li>• Who are potential partners to link up with in order to support agricultural and nutrition-relevant social protection policies?</li> </ul>
<b>Programme Level<sup>110</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What social protection programmes are in place and where do they operate?</li> <li>• To what extent do they support food and nutrition security outcomes and other goals related to agriculture (e.g., climate-related risks, lean-season response, public works to improve ecological conditions, etc.)?</li> <li>• How accessible are they for poor and marginalised groups (LNOB)?</li> <li>• How do and can these programmes support wider strategic goals of the agricultural sector in country, including food and nutrition security?</li> </ul>
<b>Identification of SDC entry points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent could current social protection measures support your specific programme goals / planned interventions / target group?</li> <li>• To what extent could social protection policies help address specific vulnerabilities that your programme tries to address (e.g., increase productivity, soil conservation and other measures towards improving ecological conditions, periodic hunger, etc.)?</li> <li>• What are the challenges and gaps these policies are facing and where is the SDC's support best placed?</li> <li>• How does this relate to the SDC country programme or sector programme objectives?</li> </ul>

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- › GIZ (2017) The Role of Social Protection for Food and Nutrition Security: Examples from Practice and International Discussion. Available from: <https://socialprotection.org/discover/publications/role-social-protection-food-and-nutrition-security-examples-practice-and> (20.04.2023).
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- › FAO (2017) Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture and Food Systems Toolkit. Available from: <http://www.fao.org/nutrition/policies-programmes/toolkit> (20.04.2023).
- › ISPA (2019) Food Security and Nutrition. What matters Guidance Note. Available from: <https://ispatools.org/food-security-and-nutrition/> (20.04.2023).

<sup>110</sup>The term refers to national social protection programmes.

## II. Social Protection and Health

### Potential Entry Points and Food for Thought for Integrating Social Protection

Table 9: Entry Points and Food for Thought for Social Protection and Health

<b>Policy Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a health strategy in place and what are the priorities (e.g., health financing mechanisms, expansion of UHC, etc.)?</li> <li>• Do social determinants of health play a role?</li> <li>• Is a donor coordination mechanism for health in place?</li> <li>• Do working groups exist that look into specific dimensions (e.g., nutrition and health, sexual and reproductive health, etc.)?</li> <li>• How is the health sector financed?</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the national partners working on social health protection?</li> <li>• Who are the international partners working on social protection in the country?</li> <li>• What about other potential partners in the health sector, including private partners?</li> <li>• What is the role of NGOs and community-based groups for delivering health?</li> </ul>
<b>Programme Level<sup>111</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of social health protection mechanisms are in place?</li> <li>• What kind of social protection mechanisms exist outside of health protection that have a potential health impact (e.g., child grants, old age pensions, maternal leave, etc.)?</li> <li>• How are health financing mechanisms organised?</li> <li>• How is the health system organised?</li> <li>• How accessible are health services for poor and vulnerable groups (LNOB)?</li> </ul>
<b>Identification of SDC entry points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How could existing social health protection mechanisms be made more pro-poor/LNOB?</li> <li>• How could existing social protection instruments be strengthened in such a way as to increase their health outcomes, social health insurance, cash transfers, vouchers, etc.?</li> <li>• What role could OpenIMIS software play in strengthening health and social protection delivery systems?</li> </ul>

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- › WHO (2015) Health and Social Protection: Synergy between Sectors: Fostering Better Social and Health Outcomes. WHO Regional Office for Europe. Available from: [https://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/324631/Health-2020-Social-protection-and-health-en.pdf](https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/324631/Health-2020-Social-protection-and-health-en.pdf) (20.04.2023).
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- › WHO Africa African Health Action Toolkit. Available from: <https://who-afro.ctb.ku.edu/> (20.04.2023).

<sup>111</sup> The term refers to national social protection programmes.

# III. Social Protection and Education

## Potential Entry Points and Food for Thought for Integrating Social Protection

Table 10: Entry Points and Food for Thought for Social Protection and Education

<b>Policy Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is an education strategy in place and is social inclusion reflected adequately?</li> <li>• What are the priorities and does vocational training play a role in the strategy?</li> <li>• Is a social protection strategy currently in place that addresses educational aspects? If yes, how are these aspects addressed?</li> <li>• Which coordination mechanisms (donors and others) are in place supporting equal access to education?</li> <li>• What role does social protection play in the debates around education and VSD in the country?</li> <li>• What are the legal provisions / financial support for education?</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the relevant national partners (authorities, institutions, civil society etc.) with regards to education and social protection?</li> <li>• Who are relevant international partners and what are their priorities in the sector?</li> <li>• How are social protection mechanisms that impact education delivered at local level? How are processes organised and what challenges exist?</li> <li>• Is there coordination between relevant line-ministries and / or donor organisations and NGOs concerning social inclusion in education?</li> </ul>
<b>Programme Level<sup>112</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What social protection mechanisms are currently in place that address social inclusion and LNOB in education / to ensure equal access to quality education?</li> <li>• Who are the target groups (e.g., girls, boys, children and youth living in poverty, socially excluded women or/ and men)?</li> <li>• What are the impacts and challenges of these programmes? Are there still gaps that need to be filled?</li> <li>• Do these programmes effectively address the exclusion pattern that respective target groups are facing?</li> </ul>
<b>Identification of SDC entry points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do intervention opportunities (e.g., existing programmes around education and social protection) link up with the SDC's programme focus?</li> <li>• Where are potential entry points, in particular with regards to reaching out to those left behind in order to increase social inclusion?</li> <li>• How could social protection measures complementing education activities further strengthen the transition to work?</li> </ul>

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- › ILO and UNICEF (2023) More than a Billion Reasons: The Urgent Need to Build Universal Social Protection for Children. Second ILO–UNICEF Joint Report on Social Protection for Children. Geneva and New York. Available from: <https://www.unicef.org/documents/urgent-need-for-universal-social-protection> (20.04.2023).
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<sup>112</sup> The term refers to national social protection programmes.

# IV. Social Protection, Employment, Income and Financial Inclusion

## Potential Entry Points and Food for Thought for Integrating Social Protection

Table 11: Entry Points and Food for Thought for Social Protection, Employment, Income and Financial Inclusion

<b>Policy Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a labour and employment strategy in place?</li> <li>• What are the priorities?</li> <li>• What role do social protection measures play in this strategy, including ALMPs?</li> <li>• How does the social protection strategy link with employment related or productivity enhancing policies, including financial inclusion?</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are relevant national partners working on employment / decent work / social protection, including employers' organisations and trade unions in both the formal and informal economy?</li> <li>• Who are relevant international partners? What are their priorities with regards to economic development, including labour and productivity?</li> <li>• Is there coordination between relevant line-ministries and / or donor organisations and NGOs concerning this topic?</li> </ul>
<b>Programme Level<sup>113</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What social protection mechanisms are currently in place that address economic and employment aspects? And for which target groups?</li> <li>• How are employment related social protection mechanisms organised and how are they delivered?</li> <li>• Have these programmes been evaluated?</li> <li>• How inclusive are these schemes with regards to vulnerable workers and economically active individuals?</li> <li>• How are these schemes financed? How could financial sustainability be improved?</li> <li>• What role does financial inclusion play with regards to accessing social protection, as well as in relation to complementing social protection measures (e.g., cash plus / graduation)?</li> </ul>
<b>Identification of SDC entry points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are current employment measures of the SDC aligned with national social protection programmes and strategies, including ALMPs?</li> <li>• Where do gaps exist that could provide potential or additional entry points for the SDC to engage in?</li> <li>• To what extent are existing SDC measures inclusive (LNOB)?</li> <li>• How could labour market measures further strengthen the transition to work / re-integration into work?</li> <li>• Is there a role for financial inclusion measures in social protection delivery or as a complementary measure?</li> </ul>

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- › WIEGO (2023) Extending Social Protection to Informal Workers Initiative. Available from: <https://www.wiego.org/extending-social-protection-informal-workers> (20.04.2023).
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<sup>113</sup> The term refers to national social protection programmes.



# V. Social Protection System Strengthening / Governance

## Potential Entry Points and Food for Thought for Integrating Social Protection

Table 12: Entry Points and Food for Thought for Social Protection and Governance

<b>Policy Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a social protection strategy currently in place? What role does system strengthening play in the strategy?</li> <li>• How does the legal framework of social protection look like in the country?</li> <li>• How is social protection financed?</li> <li>• Who is in charge of social protection (e.g., central-decentral mandate), including financing?</li> <li>• Who is responsible for the delivery of social protection? How is the division of labour between the national and local levels determined in terms of the types of services provided?</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the partners involved in the design, development, management and coordination of social protection programmes? Who is financing social protection?</li> <li>• Who are the international partners involved in the design, development, management and coordination and financing of social protection?</li> <li>• How is social protection delivered at local level? What are institutional, operational, financial and human resource challenges in this regard?</li> </ul>
<b>Programme Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the country have an efficient and effective social protection system in place, including delivery structures?</li> <li>• How is the management and delivery system of different programmes organised?</li> <li>• Is a social registry in place? Are programme MISs digitalised? What about delivery of services? Are systems adaptive to shocks?</li> <li>• How accessible are these services, in particular for the most vulnerable? What are the governance challenges associated with delivering services in a manner that is both appropriate and equitable, considering factors such as political dynamics, social factors, cultural considerations and gender-related aspects?</li> <li>• What are major gaps concerning the governance structures of specific programmes in the country, including accountability and transparency measures such as grievance and redress mechanisms?</li> </ul>
<b>Identification of SDC entry points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are entry points for the SDC in social protection system strengthening in the country, particularly related to ASP?</li> <li>• How can the SDC governance programme establish a connection to social protection when engaging in system strengthening for improving access to services?</li> <li>• To what extent do existing programmes aimed at strengthening access to social services at the local level incorporate protection programmes, including social care services?</li> <li>• How could social protection governance systems be strengthened? How could the need to strengthen social protection governance systems be highlighted in entry proposal/ M&amp;E framework?</li> <li>• How can broader impacts around peace, equity, gender and social inclusion through strengthening governance for social protection be maximised? Where are the areas where connections need to be established?</li> </ul>

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# VI. Social Protection and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

## Potential Entry Points and Food for Thought for Integrating Social Protection

Table 13: Entry Points and Food for Thought for Social Protection, Gender and Social Inclusion

<p><b>Policy Level</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is gender / disability mainstreamed in policies and strategies?</li> <li>• How is gender addressed in the current social protection strategy, or in social protection provisions of other sector policies? Does it reflect differentiated needs of men and women, as well as of those with accentuated vulnerabilities and poverty levels? What dimensions are addressed, what is missing?</li> <li>• How is disability addressed in current social protection strategies, or does a separate strategy exist?</li> <li>• Do social policies and / or strategies have also a gender transformative character?</li> <li>• Does a national gender strategy currently exist? Does it link to a social protection strategy?</li> <li>• What role does gender play in the overall policy discourse on social protection (e.g., gender responsive/trans-formative social protection)?</li> <li>• What role does disability play in the overall discourse on social protection?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partners</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the relevant social protection partners in the government?</li> <li>• Are there specific institutions or departments promoting gender equity, including NGOs, trade unions, PS or other associations?</li> <li>• Are there specific institution or departments promoting social protection for people with disabilities, including NGOs?</li> <li>• What is the available gender expertise / expertise on people with disabilities, in particular in connection with social protection?</li> <li>• Is there a gender focus among development partners? Do they have a working group on gendered social protection?</li> <li>• Is there a focal point on social protection for people with disabilities? Is there a coordination body at national level that addresses social protection and disability issues?</li> <li>• Is there a coordination body on gender aspects within government?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Programme Level<sup>114</sup></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are gender-specific social protection programmes currently in place? Are people with disability (PWD)-specific programmes in place?</li> <li>• Do social protection programmes and / or measures in other sectors include gender specific dimensions?</li> <li>• How gender-responsive and transformative are they?</li> <li>• Do they address other factors that intersect with gender inequality?</li> <li>• Do social protection programmes target service recipients by gender?</li> <li>• Are there other social protection programmes from which women and girls profit in particular?</li> <li>• How inclusive are social protection programmes for women and girls/men and boys? How inclusive are social protection programmes for PWDs?</li> <li>• What kind of access barriers do individuals face based on their gender and related cultural beliefs and practices?</li> <li>• What access barriers to social protection programmes exist for PWDs?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identification of SDC entry points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent can the support or strengthening of social protection measures strengthen gender-related impacts / impacts related to PWDs of social protection programmes?</li> <li>• To what extent can the SDC contribute to make social protection programmes and / or measures in other sector programmes more gender-responsive and transformative, also for PWDs?</li> <li>• Given existing gender programmes in place, how can they be expanded or adapted in order to strengthen gendered-outcomes of social protection programmes?</li> <li>• Given existing social protection programmes in place, how can they be expanded or adapted in order to strengthen outcomes for PWDs?</li> </ul>

<sup>114</sup>The term refers to national social protection programmes.

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# VII. Linking Social Protection to Emergency Relief

## Potential Entry Points and Food for Thought for Integrating Social Protection

**Table 14:** Entry Points and Food for Thought Linking Social Protection to Emergency Relief

<b>Policy Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is an adaptive or shock responsive social protection (ASP/SRSP) strategy currently in place? Is it a policy priority?</li> <li>• Does the social protection strategy contain an adaptive policy focus?</li> <li>• Is a disaster risk management plan or strategy currently in place?</li> <li>• Is a disaster coordination committee currently in place?</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the relevant partners that are engaged in ASP/SRSP, including disaster risk management agencies, etc.?</li> <li>• Is ASP/SRSP a donor priority? Do working groups exist?</li> <li>• Who is delivering ASP/SRSP? Who is responsible at local level?</li> <li>• Do platforms of coordination exist among different agencies and ministries, including humanitarian actors? How well are they working?</li> <li>• Who are the major international partners involved, including NGOs and other non-government actors?</li> </ul>
<b>Programme Level<sup>115</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of social protection programmes exist and which risks and life cycle needs do they cover? How many people do they cover? How well are they integrated?</li> <li>• Do data and information systems exist on groups at risk to be expanded in crisis situations (e.g., dynamic social registries)?</li> <li>• Are financial resources set apart to rapidly provide support during shocks?</li> <li>• How strong is the capacity of the operational systems to be able to adapt to sudden shocks?</li> <li>• In a crisis context, what role does humanitarian aid play in terms of designing interventions in such a way as to create building blocks for future national social protection systems (e.g., delivery systems, MIS or targeting schemes)?</li> </ul>
<b>Identification of SDC entry points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the support for ASP programmes and policies contribute to reducing the need for Swiss humanitarian aid in the future, in particular in existing fragile contexts?</li> <li>• Are programmes currently in place that could be extended to support existing ASP-initiatives in a county-context (e.g., governance or migration programmes)?</li> <li>• In a crisis context, to what extent can the SDC, in collaboration with other humanitarian organisations, design delivery mechanisms in such a way as to serve as building blocks for future systems / build capacity for long-term development of social protection in the future?</li> </ul>

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<sup>115</sup>The term refers to national social protection programmes.

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# VIII. Measuring and Monitoring Social Protection

## Why Monitor and Measure Social Protection?

Monitoring and evaluation are important in order to improve the quality of social protection programmes and systems. They ensure accountability and transparency and provide important feedback on the performance of a programme, including possible shortcomings and gaps.

Social protection indicators can increase the likelihood that shortcomings are addressed by policy makers and data is used for evidence-based decision making. Indicators are important for learning and accountability purposes and underline the relevance of development priority themes. This is of particular relevance for those left-behind. Making indicators LNOB-sensitive ensures that vulnerable groups are more often addressed.

A basic understanding of social protection is key in order to develop realistic result chains and select relevant social protection indicators. A range of documents provide guidance and support for the development of good indicators (Table 15). Borrowing social protection indicators and progress measurement from development partners can also be an option, especially in cases where the SDC works together with other development partners.

The Swiss cooperation in Albania has developed an internal assessment framework to determine the relevance of all projects within the cooperation's portfolio with regards to social protection and social inclusion. Based on a scale from 0 (no relevance) to 5 (highly relevant) each project is assessed. The scoring needs to be justified. This forces project officers to identify pathways, render social protection more visible and develop indicators.<sup>116</sup>

## Reflection Questions to Improve Measuring Social Protection

Table 15: Entry Points and Food for Thought for Measuring Social Protection

<b>Social Protection Relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the interventions concern social protection in a direct way (e.g., directly implementing a social protection measure)? If yes, what measure is it? What is the objective of the measure (e.g., increase coverage, improve quality, etc.)?</li> <li>• Does my project intervention indirectly impact on social protection, (e.g., system strengthening measures)? If yes, in what ways?</li> </ul>
<b>Impact Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do the pathways / impact chains look like between these interventions and the social protection impact?</li> <li>• How can they be put in a narrative and phrased as a realistic results chain?</li> </ul>
<b>Choice of Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the indicator measure what I intend to do?</li> <li>• What could be useful output indicators? What could be useful outcome indicators?</li> <li>• Do indicators exist in the country context (e.g., from other donors) that measure similar outputs / outcomes and could be taken over?</li> </ul>
<b>ARI/ TRI &amp; Social Protection Markers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can my project intervention make use of the SDC ARI/TRI Indicators for social protection, including those with explicit links to social protection?</li> <li>• Is my project intervention marked with the right social protection SAP sector code?</li> </ul>

<sup>116</sup> SDC Cooperation in Albania (2022) Reflection on Promoting Social Protection and Inclusion: Swiss Cooperation Portfolio in Albania. Third Edition – May 2022.

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## Toolbox 3: International Organisations and Their Approaches to Social Protection



## Approaches

### ILO Building Social Protection Floors for All:<sup>117</sup>

- i. Social protection floors are comprehensive sets of basic social security guarantees defined at the national level. Their primary purpose is to ensure that individuals in need have access to essential healthcare and basic income security throughout their lives. These guarantees enable effective access to goods and services deemed necessary within the country (Recommendation concerning National Floors of Social Protection No. 202). These include: essential health care for all residents
- ii. social protection for all children (family allowances),
- iii. support for all people of working age in case of unemployment, disability, maternity and work injury (e.g., unemployment benefits, disability benefits),
- iv. pensions for all older persons.

True to its mandate, the ILO aims at adopting social protection strategies based on tripartite national dialogue. The core objectives encompass designing and reforming existing social protection schemes, addressing both operational aspects as well as monitoring their impact in terms of coverage, benefits, adequacy and access.

### World Bank<sup>118</sup>

While for a long time World Bank was reluctant to embrace a universal approach to social protection, its most recent social protection strategy sets out a universal approach defined as "...a nationally defined system of integrated policies and programmes that provide equitable access to all people, protecting them throughout their lives against poverty and risks to their livelihoods and well-being and helping them access economic opportunity."

The recent strategy has three objectives:

- i. Equity: Ensuring that support is provided to the poor and vulnerable, enabling them to attain a basic minimum level of consumption and well-being. This objective fosters equality of opportunity.
- ii. Resilience: Preventing people from falling into poverty, or sinking further into poverty, thereby enhancing their ability to withstand economic shocks.
- iii. Opportunity: Building human capital and helping both men and women to access productive income-earning opportunities.

The approach aims at harmonising and integrating existing systems. It emphasises the economic dimension by linking social protection to human capital measures, skills training, and labour market integration measures as a way to contribute to poverty reduction. It emphasises the need for tailored instruments that include both contributory and non-contributory schemes and tailor-made solutions, since different countries will have a different trajectory based on the social contract, political economy and institutional context.

### UNICEF: Integrated Social Protection Systems: Enhancing Equity for Children

UNICEF understands social protection as a set of public and private measures aimed at preventing, reducing and eliminating economic and social vulnerabilities to poverty and deprivation.

Through child sensitive social protection, the resilience of children, families and communities are strengthened to help children realise their full potential on an individual and collective basis, contributing to the reduction of inter-generational poverty and exclusion.

UNICEF works towards a systemic approach that integrates different social protection mechanisms addressing both social and economic risks and taking a multi-sectoral approach being built on a whole-of-government vision identifying and maximising linkages between social protection and sector outcomes.

### FAO: From Protection to Production<sup>119</sup>

FAO's approach to social protection is to promote the role of social protection not only as a social policy tool, but also as a strategic investment to enhance the economic and productive potential of the poor. It emphasises the need to expand social protection to both men and women in the rural areas and promote linkages between social protection and agriculture, food security, nutrition, natural resource management, decent rural employment and resilience building. This also entails working towards embedding social protection systems in broader livelihood promotion and rural development strategies and promote social protection as a key element of just transition in agriculture.

### WFP: Strategy for Support to Social Protection<sup>120</sup>

WFP's approach to social protection aims at increasing the ability of social protection to help people meet their food security, nutrition and other essential needs, while managing risks and shocks by improving social protection systems for resilience-building, and for responding in contexts of disruption.

WFP supports the development of nationally led social protection systems. In its humanitarian response, WFP aims to enhance reliance on national systems for delivering humanitarian aid, complementing its own humanitarian aid efforts. The extent to which this approach is implemented is guided and limited by humanitarian aid principles, which take precedence over other considerations in emergency contexts.

<sup>117</sup> R202 – Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) Available from: [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:3065524](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:3065524) (14.02.2023).

<sup>118</sup> World Bank Group. 2022. Charting a Course Towards Universal Social Protection: Resilience, Equity, and Opportunity for All. World Bank Group, Washington, DC. Available from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/38031> (14.02.2023).

<sup>119</sup> FAO (2017) FAO Social Protection Framework. Available from: <https://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/87c92abf-466d-4b01-b8ec-57ca7317ed57/> (14.02.2023).

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3003 Bern

Specialist contact:

Peace Governance Equality Section

Freiburgstrasse 130

3003 Bern

Tel.: +41 58 462 34 75

deza-pge@eda.admin.ch

Authors:

The working aid was developed by the SDC Core Learning Group on Social Protection under coordination of Stephanie Guha.

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