Practitioner Note 3: Inclusive communication, case management and accountability in social protection[1]

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The strength of social protection systems in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and their ability to respond to shocks vary significantly from one country to the next, with some countries suffering from limited financing, inadequate coverage and a lack of coordination and digitised infrastructure. Generally, there was limited monitoring and evaluation of programmes or institutionalised grievance redress mechanisms (GRMs) prior to the pandemic, and considerable gaps in the communication strategies implemented to inform the public of available benefits across MENA countries. In some cases, existing GRMs and appeals committees were male-dominated, thereby restricting women's ability to comfortably make complaints. The COVID-19 crisis further exacerbated this situation by disrupting case management and GRM processes.

Considering this context, and the need to strengthen social protection systems generally and make them more shock-responsive, and more inclusive of vulnerable and marginalised groups, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), in partnership with the UNICEF MENA Regional Office, developed a Practitioner Note (Hammad 2022) on inclusive communication, case management and accountability in shock-responsive social protection. This is the third Practitioner Note in a series on shock-responsive social protection developed by the two agencies, which gathers examples of best practices on inclusive:

- targeting, identification and registration;

- transfer value, type and payment modality;

- communication, case management and accountability; and

- social protection for forcibly displaced populations.

The third note provides four identified best practices from existing literature and the practices of MENA countries in communication and case management. Next, it presents immediate and long-term recommendations for enhancing the inclusiveness of those best practices, along with illustrative country cases. Both government and humanitarian initiatives were considered. The four best practices identified and some of the main recommendations for how to achieve them are presented below. For country cases illustrating the different recommendations, please refer to the full Practitioner Note.

Best Practice 1: Increase people's access to information through multiple channels and facilitate the creation of enabling environments that encourage people to communicate

- Involve local actors to disseminate information, especially in rural communities, refugee camps and informal tented settlements, as they

are more likely to reduce the spread of misinformation and contribute to behaviour change.

- Invest in the preparation of communication strategies or information session guidelines (involving women's and disability rights organisations) ex ante, with the potential to target them at disaster-prone regions.

Best Practice 2: Include inclusive GRM in programme design from the outset

- Set up multiple channels to receive grievances and communicate responses, and complement digital ones with non-digital ones such as mobile teams, deploying a mobile grievance agent or engaging a local actor.

- Prepare contingency plans that address the continuity of GRM services in different crisis scenarios, with a particular focus on how vulnerable populations (e.g. nomadic populations) may continue to make complaints.

Best Practice 3: Adapt protection services, case management approaches and alert systems to activate gender-based violence and child protection service provision

- Set up helplines to report violence that are gender-sensitive, disability-inclusive and accessible to migrants—for example, ensuring that callers have a range of options for reporting (digital, face to face, phone; language; male or female service provider etc.).

- Adapt case management approaches according to the level of risk through remote or mobile service delivery.

Best Practice 4: Include monitoring mechanisms in programme design from the outset

- Ensure unified monitoring of both processes and outcomes of multiple emergency response programmes under the main national social protection entity, disaster risk management arm or social protection emergency response team wherever possible.

- Invest in the development of a standard monitoring and evaluation framework and data collection tools for shock-responsive programmes.

Reference:

Hammad, Maya. 2022. "Practitioner Note 3: Inclusive communication, case management and accountability". Research Report No. 72. Brasília and Amman: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and United Nations Children's Fund Middle East and North Africa Regional Office.

Note:

1. The full list of references is available in the full study. The other notes of the series can be found at: <https://www.ipcig.org/publications>.

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