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international policy centre for inclusive growth

The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) is a partnership between the United Nations and the Government of Brazil to promote learning on social policies. The Centre specialises in research-based policy recommendations to foster the reduction of poverty and inequality as well as promote inclusive growth. The IPC-IG is linked to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Brazil, the Ministry of Economy (ME) and the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea) of the Government of Brazil.

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FOREWORD

The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), a joint initiative between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Brazil, represented by the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea), is proud to present a new compendium of its One Pager publication series. This fifth volume collects One Pagers numbered 400 to 499. Since the series was first published in 2004, One Pagers have informed the work of policymakers, researchers, and development practitioners in over 180 countries.

One Pagers are short pieces that help familiarise readers with complex policy discussions. They represent an effective knowledge-sharing tool, calling on policymakers, researchers, and development practitioners to rethink inclusive growth, sustainable development, social protection policies, and poverty eradication strategies.

The past two years have been especially challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the IPC-IG was able to adapt and continue to provide technical and institutional capacities for the formulation and evaluation of development policies in the context of health and socioeconomic emergency while continuing to curate and disseminate knowledge. Several projects were adapted to focus on the pandemic response, with support from the UN system, bilateral cooperation agencies, and the Government of Brazil (through Ipea). In particular, the Centre continued to uphold its mission of fostering global discussions around crucial development issues. More than a quarter of the One Pagers featured in this compilation (starting with One Pager 438, from April 2020) discuss the (potential) impacts of the pandemic and/or the design and main features of government responses to contain its economic, social, and health consequences.

Despite the inescapable focus on COVID-19 responses and building back better, the compilation also features One Pagers addressing sustainable development challenges and related policies, such as: tackling climate change; strengthening social protection; food and nutrition security; poverty eradication; gender equality; monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); fiscal reforms to foster inclusive growth; livelihoods; the future of work; and many other topics.

These themes are central to the UNDP's new Strategic Plan (2022-2025) and Ipea's research agenda and advisory services to the government of Brazil. These evidence-based practices and development solutions can complement UNDP's vast body of knowledge around its six signature solutions and—more importantly—support countries in devising accelerated pathways to achieve the SDGs.

The IPC-IG would like to extend a special thanks to the remarkable authors of these One Pagers, including UNDP IPC-IG and Ipea researchers, in addition to individual researchers and those linked to partner institutions, for having so generously and graciously contributed to expanding the Centre's portfolio.

We hope that this volume helps readers reflect on sustainable development issues from fresh perspectives.

Happy reading!

Mansour Ndiaye
Head of Inclusive Growth, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support of the United Nations Development Programme (BPPS/UNDP)

Erik Figueiredo
President of the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea) of the Government of Brazil

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From income poverty to multidimensional poverty—An international comparison

Francesco Burchi, Nicole Rippin[1] and Claudio E. Montenegro[2]

The first Sustainable Development Goal of the 2030 Agenda calls for ending "poverty in all its forms everywhere", therefore recognising that poverty is more than just a lack of a sufficient income. Nevertheless, some scholars argue that an income-based measure of poverty is able to sufficiently capture poverty in other dimensions as well. This claim, however, has so far not been substantiated by any cross-country empirical evidence. Currently available international indicators of multidimensional poverty suffer from several weaknesses and cannot be directly compared with the existing monetary measures of poverty. This One Pager summarises the main findings of a broader study (Burchi, Rippin, and Montenegro 2018) on poverty measurement and analysis.

This study proposes an innovative indicator of multidimensional poverty, the Global Correlation Sensitive Poverty Index (G-CSPI), which addresses most of the problems in other poverty indicators, such as the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The main features of the new index are the following:

- It has a clear connection with a theoretical framework, which is Amartya Sen's capability approach. This approach is deemed to be the most adequate for measuring poverty.
- It encompasses three dimensions of poverty: education, decent work, and access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation (also as a proxy for health), which largely overlap with the list of ideal dimensions of poverty obtained by endorsing a recent approach for the selection of dimensions, called the Constitutional Approach.
- It identifies people suffering deprivation in each dimension as follows: individuals are considered deprived in the education dimension if they are illiterate, in the decent work dimension if they are either unemployed or employed in low-pay and low-qualification jobs, and in the safe drinking water and adequate sanitation dimension if they lack access to both safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.
- It aggregates deprivations in the three dimensions through the CSPI. This aggregation function does not require an arbitrary second cut-off to identify poor people. While it is as decomposable as the MPI (according to poverty dimensions as well as other attributes such as region, gender, social group, household size etc.), it is also distribution-sensitive, accounting not only for poverty incidence and intensity, as the MPI does, but for inequality among poor people as well.
- It is the first international poverty measure that uses the individual in the 15–65 age group as the unit of analysis instead of the household.

The paper used the World Bank's International Income Distribution Database (I2D2) to compute the G-CSPI for more than 500 surveys. Focusing only on the latest survey conducted in each country after 1999, it examined the G-CSPI value and the contribution of each dimension for 102 countries. The results highlight that, as expected, mostly fragile States are among those with highest multidimensional poverty. In the overall sample, deprivations in decent work, immediately followed by those in health, contributed the most to overall poverty. Moreover, the calculation of the lower and upper bounds of the CSPI—based on a bootstrapping procedure—and a sensitivity analysis highlighted that the index is stable and robust.

All previous international comparisons of income and multidimensional poverty were based on different surveys that, for the most part, were even conducted in different years. This paper is the first to calculate income and multidimensional poverty based on the very same surveys, thus providing for the first time reliable evidence for the differences between these two ways of measuring poverty. The analysis, based on 92 countries, shows that the headcount ratio of extreme monetary poverty (USD1.90/day purchasing power parity—PPP) is highly correlated with that of the G-CSPI, but that the relationship is clearly non-linear. There are several outliers: countries such as Uzbekistan, Lesotho and Zambia have a much larger proportion of their population living in monetary poverty than in multidimensional poverty. Conversely, countries such as Thailand, Cambodia and Pakistan experience much higher poverty rates in the multidimensional space than in the monetary space. This finding provides the first scientifically sound evidence that income poverty is not a sufficiently good proxy for multidimensional poverty.

In conclusion, we believe that this new index provides a substantial contribution to the literature on poverty measurement and assessment and that the considerable amount of information generated in the empirical exercise allows other important research questions to be answered. These range from verifying whether the trends in multidimensional poverty and income poverty follow similar patterns and reassessing the relationship between growth and poverty from a multidimensional perspective, to the analysis of horizontal inequalities in poverty. The latter is made possible by the extensive data on poverty disaggregated by rural and urban areas, gender, age, household size, and gender of the household head, calculated but not examined in this paper.

Reference:
Burchi, Francesco, Nicole Rippin, and Claudio Montenegro. 2018. "From Income Poverty to Multidimensional Poverty—an International Comparison." IPC-IG Working Paper 174. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

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1. Both from the German Development Institute (*Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik*—DIE).
2. The World Bank.

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Non-contributory social protection through a child and equity lens in Qatar[1]

International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

The State of Qatar has the highest per capita income in the Persian Gulf. Its territory is a peninsula in the east of Arabia, bordering Saudi Arabia to the south and the Gulf Sea to the east. The country has the highest Human Development Index in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, at 0.856. During the last decade, Qatar experienced rapid and unprecedent population growth, doubling its population from 1.2 million people in 2007 to 2.5 million in 2016. This growth is mostly due to the constant inflow of foreign workers, mostly male and lesser-skilled professionals attracted by employment opportunities in the infrastructure sector. In 2014, non-Qataris accounted for 88 per cent of the country's population. The proportion of children in the country's population is one of the smallest in the region: only 5 per cent of the population are under 5 years old, and 16 per cent are under 18.

Qatar's National Development Strategy 2011–2016 paved the way for establishing the country's first national relative poverty line. According to the 2012-2013 Household Expenditure and Income Survey (HEIS), 6.4 per cent of Qatari households are considered to have a low income (relatively poor). Families headed by divorced women and women with several children (five or more) are more likely to be among low-income Qatari households (12.1 and 16.2 per cent, respectively). In 2012-2013, 15 per cent of Qatari children lived in relatively poor households. Limited data are available for the non-Qatari population. According to official estimates, non-Qatari households receive, on average, a quarter of the monthly income of Qatari households.

Qatar's social protection system offers different types of universal subsidies for food, energy and water for Qatari nationals. Ration Cards include food products (cooking oil, milk, sugar etc.) as well as energy and water subsidies. Much like other oil exporters in the Gulf region, the country has taken important steps towards reforming its subsidies system. Qatar Vision 2030 revealed the government's plans to reduce water, energy and fuel subsidies and redirect resources to the social sector, mainly education and health care. Since 2011, fuel prices have been readjusted, and energy price subsidies dropped from 5.1 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2013 to 3.8 per cent in 2016.

The social protection system also comprises a social insurance system that offers pensions to Qatari citizens working in the public sector and to some categories in the private sector, and a set of non-contributory programmes is provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs under the 1995 Social Insurance Law. For instance, social insurance benefits are provided to families in need without sufficient income and certain vulnerable groups, especially widows, divorcees, people with disabilities, elderly people, orphans, families of prisoners and abandoned wives. For some categories, the benefit increases according to the number of household members, which is a positive child-sensitive feature. In 2014, benefit levels were readjusted, including higher benefits for orphans and children. Both non-contributory and contributory systems exclude non-Qatari families. Moreover, coverage levels are low, reaching only 4 per cent of Qatari families for pensions and 1 per cent for other social protection schemes. Primary health care centres offer services free of charge to all children and mothers, and a health card is issued to every newborn baby.

Another key component of social protection in Qatar is the Zakat Fund contributions that started in 1994. The Fund is managed by Qatar's public authorities through the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs and supports low-income families with cash and in-kind transfers. Additionally, part of the Fund's contributions is directed to Official Development Assistance (ODA) through civil society organisations providing aid to African and Asian countries. A school feeding programme is also available under the National Nutrition Programme, reaching 57,000 children in 2011.

Social protection is at the core of Qatar Vision 2030. While social service provision is considered a crucial mechanism to promote human development, challenges remain to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of Qatar's social assistance system, and a reliance on ad hoc programmes compromises the development of longer-term plans to reduce poverty. Children in low-income households remain at risk of suffering more from poverty and deprivation, especially those belonging to larger families. The situation of non-Qatari low-skilled workers and their families should be a matter of primary attention, as these segments of the population are deprived of access to Qatar's social security and social assistance systems and are, therefore, more prone to vulnerability at different stages of their lives.

Note:

1. This One Pager is taken from a comprehensive study developed in partnership between the IPC-IG and UNICEF MENARO. All data are thoroughly referenced in the full report:

Machado, A. C., C. Bilo, R. G. Osorio, and F.V. Soares. 2018. *Overview of Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region through a Child and Equity Lens*. Brasília and Amman: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa: <https://goo.gl/QfmKwK>.

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Non-contributory social protection through a child and equity lens in Saudi Arabia[1]

International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the largest Arab State in the Persian Gulf region. Along with other Member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Saudi Arabia's rapid economic growth contributed to significant social advancements. The country achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals and a very high Human Development Index of 0.847—the second highest in the region after Qatar. Despite considerable progress, regional and gender disparities are important social concerns that have yet to be addressed. Saudi Arabia's total population stands at 32.2 million, of whom 9.6 million (29.8 per cent) are under 18 and 2.9 million (9.2 per cent) are under the age of 5, according to estimates for 2016. In 2016, migrant workers and their families, as well as Syrian and Yemeni refugee communities, accounted for a third of the country's population (11.7 million people).

The recent drop in revenues from oil sales in the aftermath of the global financial crisis pushed Saudi Arabia towards a series of reforms. Saudi Vision 2030 introduced a set of plans to increase economic opportunities and improve social protection, aiming to alleviate the impact of energy subsidy reforms. However, limited data availability on poverty in Saudi Arabia is still a major barrier to developing schemes that respond to the needs of the population: the country has no official poverty line, which is crucial for the monitoring and evaluation of the pro-poor policies outlined in Saudi Vision 2030. Female migrant domestic workers and other immigrants are most likely to be among the most vulnerable groups in Saud Arabia's society, yet they are rarely considered in government interventions.

Saudi Arabia has a well-established social security system comprising two national insurance funds available to public- and private-sector employees. School education and health care are provided free of charge, although recent assessments showed that non-Saudi children or children without a residence permit have been facing challenges when it comes to access to free health care or education at public schools. For women, especially adolescents and young adults, challenges persist: low employment rates render access to social security more difficult, and youth unemployment rates are significantly higher among women (at 58 per cent) than among men (22 per cent). As the government aims to accelerate the phasing-out of energy and water subsidies, public authorities have identified the need to provide a more comprehensive social support system for Saudi low-income households.

In 2016 the Ministries of Labour and of Social Affairs were merged, and the newly established entity is the leading actor when it comes to social assistance in the country. Earlier, in 2006, a Social Security Law introduced the Supplementary Support Programme (SSP), a financial assistance programme for impoverished households as well as orphans, people with disabilities, elderly people (if not entitled to a retirement pension) and unsupported families. Only Saudi citizens with permanent residence in the country are eligible, and benefit levels are calculated based on household composition (wives and children). Benefit transfers are capped at SAR5,000 for a family with 15 members. Further, low-income households are also eligible for a one-time payment limited to SAR30,000. The cash transfers for both components of the programme currently benefit 877,000 Saudi households, reaching 2.4 million people in the country. According to the 2013 Household and Expenditure Household Survey, average monthly expenditure in the Riyadh administrative region amounts to SAR18,470 for a family of 6.9 members. Although data are not disaggregated by income, contrasting SSP benefit levels with the average expenditure levels in Riyadh suggests that SSP benefits might be insufficient to fulfil families' basic needs.

Saudi Vision 2030 aims to integrate Saudi Arabia's social assistance system into the Citizen's Account Programme, the country's new strategic approach to addressing poverty and vulnerability. In addition to the overall target of improving coordination between the health care, housing, education, social security and social development systems, the government announced the introduction of a Household Allowance to compensate for reductions in the universal energy and water subsidies planned for 2017–2020. All SSP beneficiaries are automatically eligible for the new allowance, while new members will be assessed according to household composition and income. The programme will be launched before price adjustments are made.

In 2009 the government established *Hafiz*, a monthly cash assistance programme to support job-seeking Saudi citizens aged 20–34. The support is provided for up to one year, conditional upon participating in training sessions and attending job interviews. In 2012 more than 1 million Saudis benefited from *Hafiz*, more than 80 per cent of whom were women. The National School Feeding Programme benefits children at public schools and reached 2.1 million pupils in 2011. Charity organisations supported by both public and private donations are also relevant providers of social assistance, covering both nationals and immigrants. In 2016 the Saudi government provided SAR500 million to non-governmental and religious institutions.

As outlined above, Saudi Vision 2030 proposes measures that, if implemented effectively, can improve the well-being of the most vulnerable members of society, including children. However, existing social protection and anti-poverty mechanisms face important challenges, such as limited data availability and in-depth knowledge about poverty rates, limiting the targeting efficiency of programmes. Lastly, fragmentation of different government initiatives, limited monitoring and evaluation instruments and restricted service provision for non-nationals are prominent issues that need to be addressed.

Note:

1. This One Pager is taken from a comprehensive study developed in partnership between the IPC-IG and UNICEF MENARO. All data are thoroughly referenced in the full report:

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Non-contributory social protection through a child and equity lens in Palestine[1]

International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

The State of Palestine (SOP) is situated in the Near East Region and has a fragmented territory, divided into two main areas: the Gaza strip, on the Mediterranean coast, and the West Bank, on the border with Jordan. The SOP has a total population of 4.5 million people, of whom 2.2 million (49 per cent) are under the age of 18 and 700,000 (15 per cent) are younger than 5. The SOP has the highest fertility rates in the MENA region: 4.11 births per woman, and had a Human Development Index of 0.684 in 2015, compared to an average of 0.704 in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. In 2011, 25.8 per cent of the Palestinian population was reported to live under the national poverty line, an income of ILS2,293 (USD637) per month for an average household. The situation in Gaza is particularly worrisome, with a poverty rate of 39 per cent, compared to 16 per cent in the West Bank in 2015.

Children are disproportionally affected by poverty; almost 40 per cent of children in Gaza were estimated to live below the national poverty line in 2010. They often have limited access to health care services and education, and may be subject to child labour and abuse. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF, 66 per cent of children under the age of 3 are deprived of proper nutrition, and 63 per cent of those aged 5–14 lack access to education.

The conflict-ridden environment in which the SOP is embedded contributes to deteriorating living conditions, leading to high numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons. The impact of mobility and trade restrictions have substantially affected the Palestinian economy and labour market, with youth unemployment reaching 58 per cent in Gaza in 2017. These limitations have also negatively affected access to consumer goods, and food insecurity remains a vital issue, as 27 per cent of all Palestinian households and 47 per cent of households in Gaza are considered food-insecure.

Social assistance is crucial for the subsistence of the country's most vulnerable population. The Socio-Economic and Food Security Survey 2014 showed that 40 per cent of all Palestinian households receive some form of social assistance, with a considerable difference between Gaza (84.2 per cent) and the West Bank (16.5 per cent).

Social protection in the SOP is administered by a range of governmental and non-governmental institutions. Within the government, the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) is the main implementing actor. It recently launched the Social Development Sector Strategy (2017–2022), which aims to mitigate monetary poverty, food insecurity and non-monetary dimensions of poverty in alignment with the National Policy Agenda (2017–2022).

The largest social protection initiative is the Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme (PNCTP). It is managed by the MoSD, and beneficiaries are selected based on a proxy means test (PMT) formula. Close to 115,000 poor households are supported with quarterly payments at an annual programme cost of USD110 million. Beneficiaries are also entitled to other schemes, such as health insurance, school fee waivers and cash grants for emergency needs. The programme reached an estimated 287,794 children in 2013.

A Food Assistance Programme is run by the MoSD in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), providing in-kind transfers and electronic vouchers to 503,221 food-insecure households in 2016. The same PMT formula used for the PNCTP is used to select beneficiaries. In addition, the Protection, Care and Rehabilitation of Marginalised and Vulnerable Groups programme offers in-kind transfers and vocational services to people with disabilities, orphans, female victims of violence and elderly people. In 2014, it provided assistance to 5,760 children under the age of 18.

Educational fee waivers are offered by the Ministry of Education for children of imprisoned parents, people living beyond the separation wall, disadvantaged students and beneficiaries of the PNCTP. The Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme (DEEP), supported by the United Nations Development Programme, offers microfinance, start-up grants and capacity development to households affected by illness, disability, poverty and unemployment. DEEP has supported 215,000 people, 60 per cent of whom are children.

An important non-governmental source of funding for social assistance are the *zakat* committees. Under the supervision of the Zakat Fund of the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs,[2] the *zakat* committees grant in-kind and cash transfers to cover costs of education and health care for orphans or children who have lost their fathers. This benefited approximately 20,505 orphans per year across the West Bank between 2007 and 2011. They also offer financial assistance to poor and vulnerable families, one-time emergency cash and in-kind transfers, such as food, clothing and school supplies.

Social protection programmes are indispensable for a large proportion of the Palestinian population to meet their basic needs. The MoSD has increasingly striven to integrate the targeting tools of existing programmes. However, given the large number of children suffering from violence at household and community levels, it remains essential to ensure that there is stronger coordination between social assistance and social protection, and other social services for children at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation.

Notes:

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2. *Zakat* in Gaza and East Jerusalem falls under a different system. Information provided here refers to the West Bank only.

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Non-contributory social protection through a child and equity lens in Sudan[1]

International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

The Republic of Sudan is a multi-ethnic country located in the north-eastern part of sub-Saharan Africa. In 2016 the country's population was estimated at 39.57 million, the fourth largest in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, with 66 per cent living in rural areas. Much like Iraq, Palestine, Syria and Yemen, nearly half of Sudan's population are under the age of 18, and 5.9 million are children under age 5. The country has one of the lowest Human Development Indexes in the world (0.490, ranked 165th out of 188 countries), placing it below the MENA regional average of 0.704. In 2009, 46.5 per cent of the population lived under the national poverty line. Regional disparities are severe, with rural areas experiencing the highest levels of poverty: 57.6 per cent of the rural population are classified as poor.

In 2017, Sudan had an estimated 2.3 million IDPs, and 4.8 million currently depend on humanitarian aid for survival. Continuous armed conflicts significantly affect the well-being of children, particularly in the regions of Darfur, South Kordofan and in the Blue Nile states. About 2.2 million children below the age of 5 suffer from acute malnutrition, and the country has the highest rate of out-of-school children in the region: approximately 3 million school-age children between 5 and 13 years old. According to 2014 estimates, under-5 mortality stands at 68 per 1,000 live births, one of the highest rates in the region, together with Djibouti and Yemen. Special attention needs to be paid to the well-being of girls, as there is a high prevalence of female genital mutilation and early marriage is a recurrent practice. It is estimated that 38 per cent of women get married before the age of 18.

A range of social protection programmes, policies and action plans exist in Sudan, although spending on social assistance is considered low, accounting for only 0.6 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2015. The main institution responsible for implementing social protection policies is the Ministry of Security and Social Development (MoSSD)—previously the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security—while 18 Poverty Reduction Centres are responsible for implementing the government's poverty reduction policies at the local level.

In 2016 the Sudanese government launched *Shamel*, an integrated programme for social support. The programme is financed by public funds, with technical assistance from the World Bank to improve efficiency in the targeting process. In 2011 the Higher Institute of Zakat Sciences partnered with the Central Bureau of Statistics to conduct a poverty census, creating a database to identify poor and vulnerable households, which serves as the main instrument to identify potential beneficiaries for *Shamel* and *zakat*-funded programmes. Previous initiatives, such as the Social Support Project, were incorporated into *Shamel*, which was designed to provide unconditional cash and in-kind transfers, water services, housing and nutritional support to Sudan's poorest households. As part of the initiative, a school feeding programme was implemented in states where poverty rates are highest. *Shamel* is currently in place in nine states, but it is expected to expand and cover all 18 Sudanese states.

The Zakat Fund is another important source of non-contributory social protection in Sudan, providing cash transfers, subsidies, services and productive support to poor households. The Zakat Fund operates as a semi-autonomous agency affiliated to the MoSSD, and its contributions are collected both in cash and in-kind (including agricultural products and livestock). It also provides education fee waivers and student support grants, supporting 82,691 students from poor households to pursue higher education in 2016. Total expenditure for the Zakat Fund amounted to SDG2.1 billion in 2016, covering 2.16 million households.

Since 1996, contributory health care insurance exists for those employed in the formal sector. The Zakat Fund and the Ministry of Finance and National Economy (MoFNE) work in partnership to increase coverage of the non-contributory National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) by sponsoring contribution fees for poor households. In 2016 the Fund covered 16.41 million individuals (approximately 43 per cent of the population), more than half of whom (8.78 million) were classified as poor. The government has set a target to increase the NHIF's coverage to 80 per cent of the population by 2020, still giving higher priority to the inclusion of poor people.

Despite increased efforts by the government, some challenges remain to ensure equitable childhood development for poor and vulnerable children in Sudan. Promoting equal access to and providing incentives for the completion of primary education, enhancing services related to child and maternal health and creating institutional arrangements to ensure the protection of girls are particularly important in this context. In terms of social protection, Sudan's progress towards improving its non-contributory social protection system through greater integration is noteworthy. While the recent creation of *Shamel* and the expansion of the NHIF are important attempts to improve support to Sudan's poorest families, alleviating poverty and improving children's well-being remain central to the government's efforts.

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How harmonised is Zimbabwe's Harmonized Social Cash Transfer Programme?

Pedro Arruda, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

Since 2010, Zimbabwe has been building up a National Case Management System (NCMS) to integrate the records of the many child care and social protection initiatives available in the country. This system is expected to automate the matching of available services to potential beneficiaries. This would be a major boon to case management at the local level, since there are many small-scale, fragmented initiatives. The automation of records, however, has not yet been developed to such an extent, though a pilot started in February 2017 is expected to promote great advances in that area. Nevertheless, up to 2016 the NCMS has allowed for the training and institutional strengthening of health and social workers at the local level, empowering them to improve case management even without the support of a fully functional monitoring and information system.

One of the shortcomings of the NCMS is that it is not particularly integrated with the other main component of Zimbabwe's social protection system: the Harmonized Social Cash Transfer Programme (HSCT). Both programmes were conceived as instrumental pillars of the country's social protection system, but they are not integrated with each other. Therefore, they each have their own monitoring and information system (the NCMS only has a pilot system, with coverage limited to six districts), and there is low convergence of coverage between the HSCT and the initiatives under the NCMS umbrella.

The HSCT is derived from previous cash transfer pilot experiences dating back to 2009. Unlike its predecessors, however, the HSCT (launched in 2011 and delivering payments since 2012) chose to define its eligibility criteria to cover households with high dependency ratios, rather than defining myriad household characteristics deemed to signify vulnerability (i.e. whether a household is headed by a child, a widow or an elderly person, whether it has orphans and vulnerable children, people with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses etc.). This not only simplified the programme and increased its legitimacy but also allowed it to work equally efficiently to cover these categories and, particularly, to cover households with members living with, affected by or vulnerable to HIV, including orphans and vulnerable children.

The HSCT is intended to cover households that are both food-poor and labour-constrained (with a dependency rate of 3:1, or 2:1 if the household has at least one member with a severe disability or chronic illness who requires intensive care). Food poverty is estimated through a proxy means test (PMT). The process for selecting beneficiaries consists of a census in districts covered by the HSCT to identify a first set of potentially eligible households, which are then subjected to a PMT. The results allow the programme's monitoring and information system to flag a list of households to be enrolled in the programme. This list is sent to district authorities, who verify a random sample of forms to validate the consistency of the PMT. In addition, since 2013, the list automatically generated by the PMT has been subjected to scrutiny by the community. The community cannot alter the list itself, but it can point to incorrect or missing information on certain households so that their PMTs can be recalculated.

The HSCT consists of a variable benefit, with increasing per capita grants—for up to four persons per household. Benefits start at USD10 per month, and increase by USD5 per person, up to a maximum of four per household. The bimonthly payments are preferably disbursed to women. In addition to the cash benefit, the HSCT also promotes the provision of social assistance and child protection services, which justifies the 'harmonised' moniker. However, the strategy of promoting such integration through an automated system, which flags HSCT beneficiaries as being eligible to benefit from other initiatives and vice versa, is not yet functional, since the monitoring and information systems of the HSCT and the NCMS are not integrated.

A possible immediate measure to ameliorate these limitations would be to link the HSCT with the country's flagship assistance programme, the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), to which HSCT beneficiaries were found to have less access than their counterfactual peers.

The HSCT could also consider increasing the value of its benefit, since most households have more than five members, therefore rendering the current per capita benefit too small to achieve the programme's goal of reducing poverty.

Reference:
Arruda, P. L. 2018. "Zimbabwe's Social Protection System and its Harmonized Social Cash Transfer Programme." *IPC-IG Working Paper* No. 175. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

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Non-contributory social protection through a child and equity lens in Syria[1]

International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

Syria shares borders with Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Israel and Lebanon. In 2016 the country had a population of 18.4 million, of whom almost half (8.2 million) were under 18 years old and 2 million were children under the age of 5. In 2010, Syria had a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.646, placing the country in the 'medium human development' category. Since the beginning of the civil war in 2011, however, living standards and the security situation have deteriorated steadily, with the HDI falling to 0.536 in 2015. Moreover, income levels have decreased drastically: 85.2 per cent of the population now live in poverty, and 69.3 per cent in extreme poverty, unable to secure the basic food and non-food items necessary for survival.

The war has caused more than 250,000 deaths (as of early 2017) and it is estimated that 1.2 million residents were injured, more than 6.3 million are internally displaced and more than 4.9 million were forced to flee the country. This has extended the humanitarian crisis to neighbouring countries such as Jordan and Lebanon. About 13.5 million people, including 5.8 million children, are in acute need of humanitarian aid. Many of them live in hard-to-reach or besieged areas, making the delivery of humanitarian assistance very challenging. Apart from physical and psychological suffering caused by widespread violence, children are affected by forced recruitment into armed groups, displacement, child marriage, child labour as well as lack of access to education and health services.

Prior to the war—between 2005 and 2010—Syria experienced rapid economic growth. Liberal reforms were conducted to shift from a State-dominated economy towards a social market economy. The 10th Five-Year Plan (2006–2010) called for a 'new social contract' and aimed to extend social insurance coverage and strengthen social safety nets. In addition to contributory schemes such as the Public-Sector Pension Fund (PSPF) and the General Establishment for Social Insurance (GESI), the government used to provide social assistance programmes through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour as well as several subsidy schemes. As military expenditures and the public deficit increased, spending on subsidy schemes decreased significantly, and a reduction in subsidies contributed to a rise in the prices of goods by more than 20 per cent in 2015 alone.

In 2007 the government announced the National Social Aid Fund (NSAF), a cash transfer programme aimed at protecting low-income families with periodic aid and advancing human capital. To select beneficiaries, proxy means-testing was combined with some geographical and categorical targeting. The programme envisaged the gradual introduction of child-related conditionalities to ensure school attendance and regular health check-ups and to improve literacy. The first payments were disbursed only in 2011, reaching 439,000 families. The programme was discontinued after the 2011 uprisings, and the entire social protection system in place was severely affected. Discussions are being conducted about adapting the NSAF to the post-crisis situation.

In addition, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour and the Directorate of Social Affairs operated a government-funded cash transfer programme for people with disabilities. Monthly allowances of SYP3,000 per person were paid to households with members with cerebral palsy, including children.

Due to their additional health care expenses, families with children with disabilities rank among the poorest in the country. To improve their situation, UNICEF introduced a cash transfer programme to support families with children with complex disabilities in selected areas in 2016. In addition to monthly cash transfers, social workers from both public services and specialised NGOs provide support to beneficiaries through case management and referral mechanisms to other existing services. As of mid-2017, 4,500 children with complex disabilities in Aleppo and 1,550 in Lattakia have been targeted. USD2.5 million has been allocated to Aleppo.

The duration and intensity of the Syrian conflict has emphasised the urgency for social protection to reach the most vulnerable people in the country. Most State-run programmes have been discontinued, and a large proportion of the population is now dependent on humanitarian assistance for survival. Children are especially affected by the war, as they face many challenges to their most basic rights. In addition to increasing immediate aid, it is vital to work towards reactivating pre-crisis schemes, such as the NSAF, and enhance its child-sensitive features through soft conditionalities, for example. It is also crucial to integrate humanitarian cash transfer programmes for children with existing social services, as in the case of the UNICEF-funded cash transfer programme, to guarantee a smooth transition to public ownership once conditions allow.

Note:

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Non-contributory social protection through a child and equity lens in Tunisia[1]

International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

Tunisia is a lower-middle-income country in Northern Africa bordering Libya, Algeria and the Mediterranean Sea. In 2016 the total population of Tunisia was 11.4 million people, of whom 28 per cent were younger than 18 years and 9 per cent were under the age of 5. With a Human Development Index of 0.725, which is above the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region's average of 0.704, Tunisia ranks 97th out of 188 countries. The country is characterised by a wide disparity between the coastal and the interior regions, reflected in significantly higher rates of poverty and food insecurity in the interior regions, rural zones and the east.

After the 2011 revolution, Tunisia started a process of state reconstruction and still faces major security and economic challenges. Conflicts in Libya and Syria have further jeopardised the country's stability. Social tension is also fuelled by income inequality.

The incidence of poverty is high among Tunisia's children, and other deprivations in child development or access to basic services prevail: child poverty rates of 21.7 per cent (in 2015) are significantly higher than the national average of 15.2 per cent. Moreover, 52.4 per cent of all children suffer from at least one deprivation. School enrolment for children at the age of 6 is almost universal (99.4 per cent). There are no significant gender gaps in primary enrolment. However, the risk of dropping out of secondary education is nearly twice as high for boys as for girls.

The Tunisian social protection system is one of the most comprehensive in the region. It comprises contributory and non-contributory benefits and active labour market policies. Social security has been a national priority in Tunisia. The government has supported discussions about social justice and a new social contract among workers, employers and the government. This agreement included the right to a minimum income for the most vulnerable people as well as a review of the contributory social security system, to make it more financially sustainable without compromising the benefits.

Tunisia's non-contributory system is under the purview of the Ministry of Social Affairs, but important social assistance programmes are implemented in cooperation with the Ministries of Education and Health. In total, there are five main non-contributory programmes, excluding the universal food and energy subsidies. They vary widely in their child-sensitive features and how targeting, benefit structure and conditionalities take the needs of families with children into account.

Tunisia's main cash transfer programme is the *Programme National d'Aide aux Familles Nécessiteuses* (PNAFN). Created in 1986 as a monthly unconditional cash transfer programme, it targets people who are unable to work due to old age, disability or chronic disease, and those who cannot be supported by their families. The programme also entails the allocation of free health care cards—*Assistance Médicale Gratuite* (AMG I). The PNAFN has increased the number of its beneficiaries by 70 per cent since the 2011 revolution, reaching approximately 230,000 families in 2015.

The Programme d'Allocations Scolaires, an additional monthly cash transfer for PNAFN households with school-age children, was introduced in 2007 and aims to support children's access to education. By the end of 2013 almost 80,000 received the school allowance.

The PNAFN's budget corresponds to 0.4 per cent of GDP—rather small compared to public expenditures on universal food and energy subsidies. Energy price subsidies accounted for 2.8 per cent of GDP in 2016; along with food subsidies, they have been in place since the 1970s. However, they have been criticised for being costly and inefficient poverty reduction instruments, disproportionally benefiting richer segments of society. Therefore, the World Bank has suggested replacing subsidies with targeted social assistance programmes.

The Ministry of Education implements the Back-to-School Education Benefit (BTS), a cash transfer programme that supports poor students at the beginning of the school year. In 2014-2015, approximately 373,000 pupils and university students benefited from this transfer.

The non-contributory social protection programme with the widest coverage in Tunisia is the *Assistance Médicale Gratuite* (AMG), which has granted reduced fees (AMG II) or total exemption of fees (AMG I) for the use of health services at public health centres since 1998. As of 2015 the AMG I covered all households benefiting from the PNAFN. The AMG II covered 620,000 Tunisian households in 2016. The targeting of the AMG II is based on a means test. The AMG II card provides access to reduced fees at public health centres for a fixed annual fee (stamp).

The National School Meals Programme was launched in 1997 and provides healthy food to improve the nutritional status of children, stabilise school attendance and prevent drop-out, particularly in rural areas. Moreover, the programme fosters links with local smallholder farmers' groups, and supports nutrition and environmental education. In 2016, 240,000 children were covered.

As in many MENA countries, one of the main issues of Tunisia's social protection system is its extensive universal food and energy subsidies, which disproportionally favour non-poor households. Other social protection programmes, however, are designed specifically for poor families with children. So far, the impact of these programmes on children's well-being has only been investigated by a few evaluations.

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Children's right to social protection in the Middle East and North Africa—An analysis of legal frameworks from a child rights perspective

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While increased attention is being paid to the role of social protection in improving human development indicators, especially among children, it is important to remember that access to social protection is not just a matter of policies but one of rights, as enshrined in several international human rights instruments, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child. A human rights-based approach to social protection envisions social protection programmes anchored in a system of rights, clearly establishing citizens' entitlements and corresponding obligations for the State. The analysis of whether and how such programmes are incorporated into national laws is an important entry point to advance children's rights.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has a long tradition of providing social support to the most vulnerable segments of society. However, social protection systems remain limited in many countries, largely relying on food and fuel subsidies. This situation has been changing gradually, and in recent years the region has seen a number of reforms, often involving the removal of universal subsidies and the introduction or scale-up of targeted cash transfer programmes. Considering this new landscape of social provisioning and the political changes in MENA since the events of 2011, the question arises of whether a shift towards a more rights-based approach to social protection can be observed in the region.

A recent study on the subject, conducted by a partnership between the IPC-IG and UNICEF (Bilo and Machado 2018) has two main objectives: first, to present an overview of the existing legal and regulatory frameworks promoting children's right to social protection in MENA (including constitutions, social protection laws and child rights acts); and, second, to assess whether the legal frameworks of the region's non-contributory social protection programmes comply with a human rights-based approach. In broad terms, they should: (i) set out the eligibility criteria; (ii) define the various responsibilities of those involved in the implementation of schemes; (iii) articulate long-term financial requirements; (iv) establish accessible grievance and appeals mechanisms; and (v) set the foundations for citizens' participation.

The study finds that, although most countries have legal guarantees to social protection or an adequate standard of living in their constitutions, only a few—namely, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq and Morocco—clearly extend these rights to all children. This study also emphasises that **macro policy documents**, such as social protection strategies, are crucial to **establishing social protection as a right—and not merely as charity—**thus helping enhance programmes' institutional legitimacy and coordination.

More than half (88) of 154 non-contributory social protection schemes mapped in the MENA region are anchored in a legal framework. However, the study also shows that several programmes that are particularly relevant for children are not (yet) enshrined in law. This includes the *Tayssir* programme in Morocco and the *Programme National d'Aide aux Familles Nécessiteuses* (PNAFN) in Tunisia. Also, while cash transfer and health protection programmes tend to be better embedded in legal frameworks, school feeding programmes and in-kind transfers are often lacking clear legal regulation.

A more detailed analysis of 22 legal frameworks reveals that while most of them define eligibility criteria, as well as roles and responsibilities (albeit with varying degrees of precision), few stipulate the long-term financial requirements or establish strong grievance and appeals mechanisms. Moreover, the participation of beneficiaries is rarely mentioned. A few programmes stand out for presenting a more comprehensive legal framework, such as Iraq's Social Protection Network (regulated by Law No. 11 of 2014) and Djibouti's *Programme National de Solidarité Famille (Décret n°2015-279/PR/SESN*, modified by *Décret n°2017-096/PR/SEAS)*. Yet the existence of a detailed legal framework does not necessarily mean that a programme is in fact implemented as such. The implementation of a law is particularly challenging in contexts of armed conflict, which can in the most extreme cases lead to a complete suspension of programmes, as in the case of Yemen's Social Welfare Fund.

By mapping and assessing the legal frameworks of social protection, the study aimed to identify regulatory gaps and raise awareness of the importance of enhancing national legal systems to comply with the standards established by international human rights laws. Embedding programmes in comprehensive legal frameworks and complementing existing legislation according to a human rights-based approach is a crucial step in consolidating the right to social protection for all children and, therefore, contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 1 ("End poverty in all its forms everywhere") and, more specifically, target 1.3, establishing "nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors".

Reference:

Bilo, Charlotte, and Anna Carolina Machado. 2018. *Children's right to social protection in the Middle East and North Africa Region—an analysis of legal frameworks from a child rights perspective*. Brasília and Amman: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office.

Note:

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Non-contributory social protection through a child and equity lens in the United Arab Emirates[1]

International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) comprises seven Emirates (Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah, Sharjah and Umm al-Quwain), bordering Oman to the east and Saudi Arabia to the south. In 2016 the total population was 9.2 million people, of whom 5 per cent under the age of 5 and 16.6 per cent under the age of 18. In 2013, immigrants constituted more than 83 per cent of the total population, with the majority of migrant workers being of South and South-East Asian descent. Children born to Emirati women married to non-Emirati men can only acquire citizenship when applying for it at the age of 18.

Classified as a high-income country, the UAE ranks equally high in terms of human development at both regional and global levels. The country's Human Development Index has been increasing constantly since the 1990s and reached a value of 0.840 in 2015, placing the country 42nd out of 188 countries. The UAE has not officially adopted a poverty line, and estimates on the prevalence of poverty are uncertain. Economic growth has been subject to great volatility over the past decade due to lower oil prices. Nevertheless, real gross domestic product (GDP) growth is expected to recover slowly and reach about 3 per cent in 2018.

Health and education indicators reveal low mortality ratios, and high rates of school enrolment and attendance. Evidence shows that over the past two decades, important improvements have been made to reduce maternal mortality, which fell from 17 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 6 in 2015. In 2015, net primary school enrolment reached 93 per cent; however, little information is available on enrolment and attendance rates in secondary education. Health care used to be free to all until the government introduced charges for non-nationals in 2001. Likewise, public schools are free for UAE nationals, while non-nationals are subjected to fees.

The UAE stands out among the oil-exporting countries in the region for its low levels of subsidies, mainly for food and energy products. In 2015 the Emirates introduced substantial subsidy reforms, including the termination of fuel subsidies and an upward adjustment of electricity tariffs.

The UAE's social protection system falls under the purview of the Ministry of Community Development. Only UAE nationals are eligible for social assistance. Moreover, the different Emirates offer additional welfare services for citizens under their respective jurisdiction. At the national level, the Monthly Cash Benefit targets specific groups, including widows, divorced and abandoned women, people with disabilities, elderly people, families of prisoners and orphans. This financial assistance is only available to nationals residing in one of the seven Emirates. As of 2012 about 40,100 families and 4,900 children benefited from the programme.

Access to modern housing is considered a right of every citizen. As of September 2011, more than 48,000 beneficiaries from low-income families received housing assistance through the Sheikh Zayed Housing Programme. In addition, the Social Welfare Against Disasters provides financial assistance, food and shelter to all citizens affected by a natural disaster. The amount paid covers up to 80 per cent of the total estimated financial and property losses.

In addition to UAE national programmes, Dubai offers a variety of financial assistance programmes that only Dubai residents can apply for. The Periodic Benefit Programme aims to support households whose income is lower than the benefit limit (ranging from AED10,700 to AED21,700 according to the number of family members). The benefit is available to divorced women and widows, and the amount depends on the number of household members. An Emergency Benefit is granted to low-income residents, including divorced women, widows and their dependent children, in the aftermath of an accident or other emergency situations. The One-Time Benefit offers financial support for specific predefined purposes, including financial support to furnish a house, a benefit to supply electricity and tuition costs for children with disabilities. As such, this benefit can be characterised as improving access to education for children with special needs. The Temporary Housing Benefit aims to support low-income households to pay for temporary housing in case of homelessness or property damage following an emergency.

Although living standards are relatively high in the UAE and a number of social protection schemes exist to cater to lower-income households, more information is needed to assess coverage rates and to glean a better understanding of the impact of these programmes on children's well-being. More importantly, however, evidence shows that the existing programmes are only available to UAE citizens, and no information exists about social assistance programmes for the vast number of migrant workers and their families who reside in the country. Children of non-UAE citizens may be more prone to vulnerability and poverty; hence improved data availability is crucial to determine the state of child-sensitive social protection in the country.

Note:

1. This One Pager is taken from a comprehensive study developed in partnership between the IPC-IG and UNICEF MENARO. All data are thoroughly referenced in the full report:

Machado, A. C., C. Bilo, R. G. Osorio, and F.V. Soares. 2018. *Overview of Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region through a Child and Equity Lens*. Brasília and Amman: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa: <https://goo.gl/QfmKwK>.

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Non-contributory social protection through a child and equity lens in Yemen[1]

International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

The Republic of Yemen is located at the tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Its estimated population in 2016 was 27.5 million people, of whom 47 per cent (12.9 million) were under 18 years old and 15 per cent (4 million) were under 5. Yemen's Human Development Index (0.482) is the second lowest in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, after Djibouti. Escalating conflict has driven the country into a severe humanitarian crisis. It is estimated that more than 20 million people need humanitarian assistance, including 11.3 million children.

Even before the conflict, Yemen was one of the poorest countries in the region. Recent data are difficult to obtain, but the World Bank estimates that national poverty levels doubled from 34.1 per cent in 2014 to 62 per cent in 2016. The country's gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have decreased by 40 per cent since the conflict started. Moreover, decreasing fiscal revenues are undermining the functioning of the State, including the operation of social protection programmes. Economic decline and import restrictions have resulted in rising prices and commodity shortages, leaving millions of children without or with only limited access to food, water and other basic needs. Nearly 3.3 million children and pregnant or lactating women are acutely malnourished, representing a 63 per cent increase since late 2015. Child malnutrition levels were already alarmingly high even before the conflict: the Yemen National Social Protection Monitoring Survey showed that about 45 per cent of children under 5 were stunted and that 33 per cent were suffering from underweight in 2013.

The need to strengthen the national social safety net system has been emphasised in several policy documents. The Yemen Strategic Vision 2025 envisages eliminating food insecurity and reducing relative poverty to 10 per cent by 2025. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour are responsible for the design and coordination of Yemen's social protection system. It is divided into social insurance and pension schemes for the public and private sectors, on the one hand, and non-contributory social assistance programmes, on the other. These include cash transfers, public works programmes and agricultural development schemes, introduced to help poor people cope with the removal of subsidies of food and basic services.

For many years, the government has been trying to introduce energy subsidy reforms. Subsidies accounted for 7.2 per cent of government spending (in percentage of GDP) in 2013, while the Social Welfare Fund (SWF), the country's main cash transfer programme, accounted for only 0.7.

The conflict has threatened the social protection system in place. Until its suspension in March 2015, the SWF was one of the largest cash transfer programmes in the region, benefiting vulnerable groups and households without a male breadwinner. In 2013, coverage reached 30 per cent of the population. Around 57 per cent of beneficiaries were estimated to be children.

According to the Child Budget Analysis, 26 per cent of total spending on cash transfers in 2012 comprised transfers to children. In May 2017 the World Bank—through the Emergency Crisis Response Project—started financing cash transfers using the SWF beneficiary database and pre-conflict benefit levels, although the interruption of civil servants' salary payments prevented international donors from continuing to support the financial transfers through the SWF's original features. The project is implemented by UNICEF. Even before the conflict, the SWF was an important way to ensure food security—more than 70 per cent of beneficiaries in 2013 reported using the transfers to purchase food.

The Disability Welfare and Rehabilitation Fund was established to provide individual support to people with disabilities through in-kind and financial aid, as well as institutional support to care and rehabilitation centres. By the end of 2012, 47,000 beneficiaries received individual support through the Fund. Children were estimated to make up 24.4 per cent of all beneficiaries. The programme was also discontinued due to the conflict.

The Social Fund for Development (SFD) was introduced in 1997 to increase access to basic services, enhance economic opportunities and reduce vulnerability among poor households. Before 2015 the SFD was financed by multiple donors, benefiting approximately 6.4 million individuals between 2011 and 2014. The SFD includes a cash-for-work programme which reached more than 1 million direct beneficiaries between 2011 and 2015. Resources were allocated using geographical targeting, prioritising the neediest areas. In 2014 the SFD began to implement a conditional cash transfer (CCT) and an integrated nutrition intervention targeting pregnant women and mothers with children under 5. The programme was severely affected by the conflict; since 2016 it has been supported through the Emergency Crisis Response Project.

Finally, the Public Works Project is a cash-for-work programme focusing on the poorest rural areas in the country. It experienced severe funding difficulties, which led to its discontinuation. In 2016 it was partly reactivated through the Emergency Crisis Response Project, which supports small community infrastructure projects.

Yemen is in a deep humanitarian crisis. Its social protection system has been severely affected, leaving millions of children in an even more vulnerable situation. In terms of child-sensitive social protection, components such as the nutrition-sensitive CCT within the SFD is a step towards addressing the rising levels of child malnutrition. A future reinstatement of the SWF would be crucial, and more attention should be paid to extremely poor families with children, by either facilitating their inclusion in the programme or by complementing it with more child-sensitive components.

Note:

1. This One Pager is taken from a comprehensive study developed in partnership between the IPC-IG and UNICEF MENARO. All data are thoroughly referenced in the full report:

Machado, A. C., C. Bilo, R. G. Osorio, and F.V. Soares. 2018. *Overview of Non-contributory Social Protection Programmes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region through a Child and Equity Lens*. Brasília and Amman: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa: <https://goo.gl/QfmKwK>.

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Public food procurement from smallholder farmers: Literature review and best practices

Ana Miranda, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Despite the expansion of public food procurement initiatives, research into outstanding challenges and lessons learned remains limited. The literature review in Miranda (2018) aimed to address some of the research gaps by pinpointing best practices to promote smallholder participation in public food procurement and foster synergies with food security and nutrition outcomes. This One Pager presents the key best practices identified in the paper.

Creating specific public procurement frameworks

1. Preferential treatment schemes. Farmers must be given competitive advantages through preferential treatment schemes. Given the gender constraints in most countries, women should receive additional preferences. Preferential treatment is only effective if governments are able to monitor and enforce compliance with preferential treatment rules.

2. Eligibility criteria. Preferential treatment schemes must have clear eligibility criteria and certification processes. Eligibility rules lessen doubts and ambiguity regarding procurement decisions. Governments must also decide if they wish to target particular subgroups of farmers. Public food procurement initiatives should always aim to specifically target women.

3. Procurement caps. In non-competitive processes, food procurement should establish procurement caps as to prevent governments from becoming the only buyers, create incentives for farmers to find other markets and ensure that the benefits of market access are spread across the largest possible number of smallholders.

4. Price mechanisms. Public food procurement should use market prices as a benchmark, as this promotes fiscal responsibility and lessens the risks of market distortions. Governments must establish effective price mechanisms to identify market prices and make procurement prices readily available to suppliers.

5. Registration requirements. These represent a key transaction cost in public procurement, as they usually involve bureaucracy and extra fees. Ideally farmers/farmers' organisations should be required to provide one type of registration which is the least onerous to them.

6. Bid securities and performance guarantees. Although these financial guarantees are a good practice in public procurement, they can also pose significant hurdles to smallholders because of limited liquidity and access to financial services. Requirements should be waived or reduced. Bid securities can be substituted by a bid declaration.

7. Food safety and quality standards. Governments should always ensure food safety and quality in food procurement. Although these standards should not be lowered, procuring entities should look to waive requirements that have no impact on food quality and safety. These requirements should also be simplified to the greatest extent possible without compromising safety.

8. Food procurement specifications. It can be difficult for smallholders to comply with overly specific food requirements. Food specifications should be focused on food groups, nutrient content and basic nutritional requirements rather than specific crop varieties, sizes, colour and appearance. Procuring entities should allow for variants that meet nutrition requirements and follow seasonality.

9. Timely payments. Payment delays in public procurement are common in all parts of the world. The recognised best practice is to pay suppliers within 30 calendar days. This timeframe could be too long for smallholders, especially more vulnerable producers. Ideally, farmers should receive payment within two weeks.

10. Access to information. Obtaining information on public procurement is also a key transaction cost. Public food procurement calls must be publicised through channels accessible to farmers and include all the necessary information for participation. Information should be provided well in advance so that interested producers can plan and make provisions for their participation in public procurement processes.

11. Forward contracts. Forward contracts offer many benefits to smallholders and procuring entities by reducing uncertainty. However, they also present a commercial risk. Contracts must establish effective price mechanisms and allow renegotiation before delivery.

12. Contract lotting. The size of food contracts can create obstacles to smallholders as they may have limited capacity to supply large quantities. More decentralised procurement models can potentially lead to smaller contracts. Governments should always seek to subdivide contracts into smaller lots in order to ensure that smallholders can meet the food demand.

Cross-sector coordination

13. Food baskets. These must be based on smallholder production. Governments should devise specific guidelines to incorporate smallholder crops, including food produced by women. The design of food baskets should also involve close collaboration between nutrition, agriculture and procurement stakeholders.

14. Capacity development. Governments and development partners should provide support to farmers to participate in public food procurement. Countries should capitalise on ongoing agricultural programmes as this simplifies implementation, reduces costs and fosters synergies with rural development efforts. Public food procurement initiatives must be integrated with agricultural development interventions through coordinated targeting mechanisms.

15. Multi-stakeholder arrangements. Public food procurement initiatives are multi-dimensional thus require concerted action among different sectors. Governments should establish a specific multisector arrangement with a clear mandate and decision-making powers. This should include all actors and sectors that have a stake in public food procurement, including communities and smallholders.

Reference:

Miranda, Ana. 2018. "Public food procurement from smallholder farmers: literature review and best practices". *IPC-IG Working Paper No. 176*. Brasília: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

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Public food procurement and the support of smallholder farming: The importance of a conducive regulatory framework

Luana F. J. Swensson, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Inclusive public food procurement initiatives are relevant policy instruments to support smallholder farmers and their integration into formal markets. They are based on the premise that public institutions, when using their procurement power to award contracts, can go beyond the immediate scope of simply responding to the state's procurement needs by addressing additional social, environment or economic policy goals. Their implementation, however, requires a conducive public procurement regulatory framework.

A key distinctive characteristic of public procurement is that the process whereby governments acquire goods, works and services to fulfil their public function is regulated by specific rules. In most countries, public procurement regulations govern each phase of the process and impose instruments to achieve traditional procurement objectives and principles, including: a default procurement method (i.e. the open tendering procedure) and specific criteria to award contracts. They also impose and/or shape specific administrative practices, including procedures for publishing tender opportunities; the size of contracts; payment terms; and eligibility requirements.

Legal mechanisms and their adoption within food procurement and school feeding contexts

Legal mechanism	Description	Country example
Reservation	Contracts or portions thereof are reserved for a certain category of contractors (target beneficiaries) who satisfy certain prescribed criteria.	Brazilian National School Feeding Programme (Law No. 11.947/2009).
Preferencing	Although all contractors who are qualified to undertake the contract are eligible to tender, competitive advantages are granted to those who satisfy prescribed criteria or commit to attain specific goals in the fulfilment of the contract.	United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Child Nutrition Programmes. (Public Law No. 110-246 of 18 June 2008).
Indirect	Although public institutions do not procure directly from target beneficiaries, procurement requirements are used to promote policy objectives by constraining contractors to attain specific goals (e.g. requiring contractors to supply at least a percentage of products from target beneficiaries).	Paraguay National School Feeding Programme (Decree No. 3000/2015 and Resolution DNCP 2915/2015).

Source: Author's elaboration and Watermeyer 2004.

Most often these standard procurement rules and practices do not tally with the characteristics and capacities of smallholders, which can represent a key entry barrier for smallholder farmers who are trying to tap into public markets and, as such, an impediment to the implementation of food procurement initiatives that seek to target them (Swensson 2018).

Analysis of public procurement literature and country experiences reveals that there are various types of mechanisms that can be used to build a conducive regulatory framework for supporting smallholder farming through public food procurement. These are widely discussed in the relevant legal literature (e.g. Watermeyer 2004). Nevertheless, there is still a lack of dialogue between this literature and the public food procurement debate within the context of rural development.

The Table provides a brief description of key legal mechanisms and their adoption within food procurement and school feeding contexts.

The analysis reveals that these legal mechanisms (i.e. preferential procurement schemes) play a key role in incorporating broader policy objectives—including the support of smallholder farmers—into the rules of public procurement. It also shows that the use of these mechanisms may create tensions with the traditional objectives and principles of the public procurement regime in that different rules aimed at achieving different objectives may conflict with each other (ibid).

Despite the differences between the various legal mechanisms, a common characteristic across all country experiences is the recognition that the use of public food procurement as an instrument to support smallholder farming cannot mean the simple overlaying of this objective—at any cost—upon all other goals and principles of public procurement. The application of preferential procurement schemes requires the management of trade-offs and the establishment of conditions and safeguards to ensure that it achieves an appropriate balance. It requires, therefore, careful regulatory design.

An analysis of the different country experiences demonstrates that it is possible to use preferential procurement schemes for supporting smallholder farming while maintaining an appropriate balance with the traditional principles of the public procurement regime. It also shows the importance of a well-designed regulatory framework and its key role in the implementation of public food procurement initiatives targeting those actors.

References:

Watermeyer, R. B. 2004. Facilitating sustainable development through public and donor regimes: Tools and techniques. *Public Procurement Law Review*, 1, 30–55.

Swensson, L.F.J. 2018. "Aligning policy and legal frameworks for supporting smallholder farming through public food procurement: The case of school feeding programmes." *Working Paper* No. 177. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

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How can cash transfer programmes work for women and children?

Charlotte Bilo, Anne Esser and Raquel Tebaldi, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

There is now growing consensus that gender- and child-sensitive design features can enhance the contribution of cash transfer programmes (CTPs) to gender equality and children's well-being. Yet there are no universally valid recommendations on how to make CTPs more gender- and child-sensitive. Every programme works within the constraints imposed by its own socio-cultural and institutional context. Nevertheless, the following considerations, drawn from international experience, should be taken into account for the different operational steps of CTPs:

Gender and situational analysis: Needs and vulnerabilities – Before implementing a CTP, a needs assessment and situational analysis should be conducted to better understand the realities in which children and women live, and to anticipate possible negative impacts of a programme. Such analysis is also key to assessing whether a proposed programme is appropriate in a given context, considering the economy and institutional capacity alongside social factors.

Targeting – The ultimate goal of child-sensitive social protection is the achievement of universal social protection floors, emphasising the need to work towards universal child allowances. In contexts of fiscal or other constraints, poverty targeting needs to be based on sound and reliable data. When community targeting is chosen, selection committees need to be as unbiased and diverse as possible. Whichever method is chosen, greater efforts should be made to reduce exclusion errors than to reduce inclusion errors. Attention also needs to be paid so that programme participation does not lead to stigmatisation.

Registration and enrolment – It is important that the language used to address potential beneficiaries is gender- and context-sensitive. Local (women's) organisations can assist in identifying and reaching out to potential beneficiaries. For enrolment, biometric identification, smart cards or photo identification provide an alternative to traditional documentation, in particular for people whose location often changes and who possess no civil identification.

Benefit recipient – The preference for transferring the money to women is generally based on the assumption that they are the primary caregivers and that they will spend the money in a more 'family-responsive' way. However, these assumptions are associated with gender essentialisms which equate parenthood with motherhood. Moreover, findings comparing women's and men's spending patterns remain mixed. One way in which to deal with this issue is to decouple the choice of benefit recipient from their sex, directing it to the 'main caregiver' instead of 'mother', for instance.

Benefit level – Research has shown that the impact of a programme increases with the value of the transfer. The benefit should be regularly adjusted, reflecting changing and regionally varying living costs. When indicators of interest, such as school enrolment, point to gender disparities, additional benefits can be considered for girls.

Payment modalities and delivery mechanisms – To increase the impact of CTPs, it is important that payments are predictable and regular. Furthermore, longer benefit duration is more likely to improve human development indicators. Whichever payment method is chosen, good coverage and availability of pick-up points close to recipients' homes need to be ensured. Methods that do not require long queuing are preferred, to reduce potential stigmatisation and women's time poverty.

Conditionalities, co-responsibilities and sensitisation campaigns – As there is no final consensus on whether they are really necessary to achieve a programme's objectives, the use of conditonalities remains highly debated. In addition, critics stress that conditionalities reinforce traditional gender roles and add to women's time poverty, considering that women are usually in charge of complying with them. For these and other reasons, many countries have started implementing 'soft conditonalities' instead. Sensitisation campaigns can further help achieve behavioural change.

Related care and referral services – The 'cash plus' approach addresses the need to complement CTPs with additional services to achieve long-term changes in human capital building and economic and social empowerment. The 'plus' can include, among others, psychosocial support and linkages to social services and training. Single registries help to facilitate the referral of beneficiaries to complementary services and programmes.

Beneficiary participation, audit and social accountability – To ensure that a programme takes beneficiaries' views into account, it is crucial to include women and children right from the start of programme design. Moreover, to enable citizens to complain about unjustified exclusion, poor quality or unfair treatment, it is key that programmes have comprehensive and culturally acceptable grievance mechanisms.

Monitoring and evaluation – For any monitoring and evaluation approach, it is important to collect gender- and age-disaggregated data. If possible, a programme's impact on empowerment, access to services and child welfare, including health, nutrition and education, should be assessed. It is, therefore, key to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches. Whichever research method is chosen, it needs to be ensured that it complies with ethical principles.

Reference:

Bilo, Charlotte, and Anne Esser. 2018. "How can cash transfer programmes work for women and children? A review of gender- and child-sensitive design features." IPC-IG *Working Paper*, No. 178. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

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Social protection in Asia and the Pacific: Inventory of non-contributory programmes

Raquel Tebaldi, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

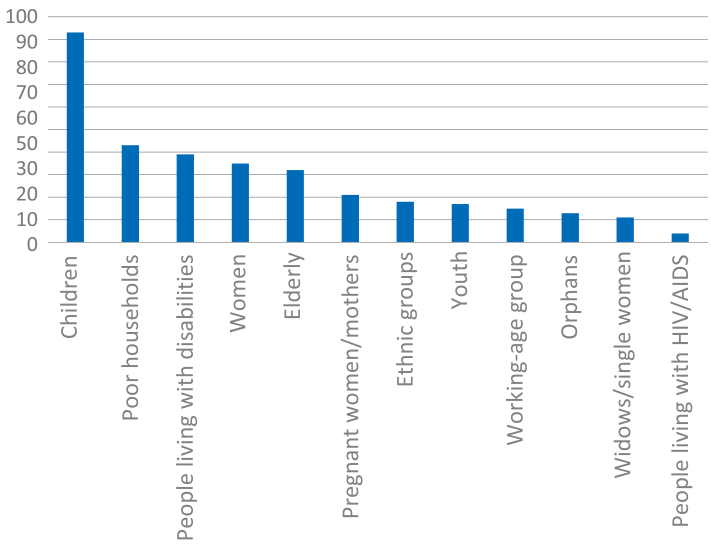
Social protection programmes are now widely recognised as key policy instruments used to combat poverty in developing countries. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has explicitly recognised the importance of implementing "nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors" as an explicit target under Sustainable Development Goal 1: "End poverty in all its forms everywhere."[1] However, information about specific programmes being implemented in developing countries can be fragmented or inaccessible. The study 'Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific: Inventory of Non-Contributory Programmes' (IPC-IG and UNICEF 2018) intends to contribute in addressing these gaps, providing an overview of non-contributory social protection programmes in selected regions of Asia and the Pacific. Moreover, the programme profiles presented will also be made available online, through the socialprotection.org platform.

The report was supported by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and the research was led by teams from the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) and UNICEF, with the former focusing on low- and middle-income countries in South and East Asia, and the latter on 11 Pacific Island countries. The research was based on a comprehensive literature review, complemented by consultations with local focal points, including UNICEF Country Offices and government representatives, who provided substantial inputs into the review of the programmes. Programme selection included those fully or partially financed, designed or implemented by governments, and about which there was sufficient available information. In total, 215 programmes from 30 countries were mapped, of which 141 have been profiled.

Some of the main trends among the programmes are as follows:

- Most profiled programmes started being implemented after the mid-1990s.
- Most of the mapped programmes are unconditional and conditional cash transfers. Among the 10 most prevalent programmes we also find educational fee waivers, school feeding programmes, unconditional in-kind transfers, fuel and electricity subsidies, training programmes, food subsidies, non-contributory health insurance and social support services.
- Overall, 135 programmes were found to provide cash benefits, while 37 provide food, and 66 offer other types of benefits, which may consist of services or other in-kind goods.
- Finally, children figure prominently among the target groups.

FIGURE 1
Population groups targeted in the mapped programmes



Source: Author's elaboration based on the mapped programmes.

Note: Categories are not mutually exclusive: some overlap, and some programmes may target more than one group.

Reference:
IPC-IG and UNICEF. 2019. *Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific: Inventory of Non-Contributory Programmes*. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth. See: <https://bit.ly/2Tn0bWO>.

Note:
1. See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg1>.

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Perspectives on tax reform in Brazil

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There is no question that the salience of tax reform in Brazil is high. It has become common to point out the country's low quality of public services and high level of taxes. In this context it would be desirable to introduce new ways of thinking about matters related to government policy generally, and tax policy more specifically. By understanding the function and potential of taxes, as well as their links to inequality and economic development, the seed can be planted for deep change. Once we conceptualise the potential of certain policies, momentum can be garnered to fully realise them if they are desirable to a majority of the population.

Taxation is an economic issue that is most often clouded by emotional thinking based on opaque reference points of judgement. Everyone is inclined to generalise from their personal situation without much regard for society as a whole. But regard for the whole is crucial to achieve some sense of equity.

In a new paper, Morgan (2019) attempts to examine the design of a tax system that would better serve the principles of equity and efficiency for Brazil and make the country a global leader in progressive tax policy.

Two broad purposes can be associated with taxes. The first is to redeem public spending already made by a currency-issuing government so that price stability is maintained. By taking money out of circulation, taxes can control inflation. The second function of taxes, by modifying prices, is to encourage or discourage particular behaviours of individuals, whether they be through income or wealth taxes, or consumption taxes. In relation to the former, they can regulate the amount of income received or property controlled by individuals. Thus, taxes can define the bounds of a socially acceptable and economically desirable schedule of income or wealth, making socially excessive and economically unproductive incomes or portfolios costly to sustain.

In the case of Brazil, the lack of tax neutrality between different categories of income is manifest, with income from capital gains and financial investments being subject to a separate, lower tax schedule than labour income, and in the case of dividends, no personal tax schedule at all. This partly explains the substantial income differences persisting in the country—a notable case of high income inequality coexisting with a weak regulatory personal income tax. The challenge is to design an income tax system that encourages real productive investment over profit withdrawals or financial asset purchases.

The link between inequality and taxation can also be made from a more macro perspective. The concentration of income at the top of the distribution can have adverse demand effects for the economy as a whole, since it increases savings (higher-income households have higher saving rates) and increases the volatility of expenditures (these savings will not be automatically channelled to real investment due to the lure of capital gains and returns in financial markets). Therefore, a more progressive tax system could tap into the high saving propensities of richer households to divert private resources to much-needed public investment projects, as well as incentivising private corporate investment.

By taxing more the individuals who consume a relatively small share of their income, and expanding the income of those who consume a higher fraction of their income (directly through transfers or indirectly through investment and more inclusive labour/corporate governance laws), the government could provide a dynamic stimulus to the economy. Otherwise, the excess savings will create a vicious cycle, going into financial markets, increasing the share of the financial sector and financial incomes, thereby increasing inequality further, which increases household saving further, and so on. A similar stimulus could come from taxing less the firms that reinvest a larger share of their profits into fixed or human capital formation.

The author presents a rough blueprint for a more progressive tax system for Brazil considering the taxation of income and the taxation of inherited property.

Regarding income tax, it is argued that the current personal income taxes (*Imposto de Renda de Pessoa Física*—IRPF) could be replaced with a new income tax, which would replace a number of existing ones including social contributions and other levies. This new tax would be levied at source on labour and capital incomes, according to a progressive scale. The author also argues for a greater link between the new personal income tax and a revised corporate income tax (*Imposto de Renda de Pessoa Jurídica*—IRPJ).

Conversely, given that much of private wealth is collectively determined, it makes sense to tax wealth, especially when it is passed through generations. Inheritance can be a powerful accelerator of unearned inequality and a destructor of meritocratic values. In Brazil, the inheritance and donations tax (*Imposto sobre Transmissão Causa Mortis e Doação*—ITCMD) derives from the 1988 constitution and is a state-level tax, levied by each state government according to distinct discretionary schedules. The only common feature is that the maximum marginal tax rate is around 8 per cent, which is very low by current and historical standards. The author argues for a reform of the ITCMD in the direction of a universally progressive lifetime capital receipts tax.

Ultimately, inequality depends on factors that are 'chosen', but the solution is by no means easy. The good news is that Brazil already has a relatively high degree of administrative capacity (a well-paid and knowledgeable civil service, counting on the latest tax assessment techniques). The issue going forward is to improve tax enforcement, by tackling tax avoidance and evasion, which have been a prevalent feature of economies such as Brazil's. A further factor inhibiting development on this front has been informality. Characteristic of the region, close to one third of the country's workforce is in the informal sector and, therefore, excluded from much of the tax and benefit system. However, the proposal made for the new personal income tax could entice more workers to enter formal jobs.

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Fiscal justice in Brazil: Taxation as an instrument for equality

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The debate around taxation in Brazil has long revolved around issues related to tax burden, efficiency, competitiveness and simplicity. Despite recent fiscal problems and a better understanding of the concentration of income and national wealth, the relevance of a progressive tax system as a tool to fight inequality still enjoys little space in mainstream media discussions. The traditional focus of the Brazilian debate on tax burden is due to the fact that the State absorbs a considerable proportion of gross domestic product (GDP)—approximately 32 per cent in 2016—as taxes. This sets Brazil apart from other countries with similar income levels: its tax burden is one of the highest in Latin America, even greater than in some developed countries, such as Spain and Canada.

Another issue related to the country's disproportionate tax burden compared to its income and development level is fiscal inequality. While the Brazilian tax system is regressive regarding revenue composition, it is neutral from a distributive viewpoint, considering other methodological aspects in the specialised literature. These factors reinforce the unambiguous conclusion that the tax system has limited potential to combat inequality, which is one of the country's biggest socio-economic problems.

The dynamics of the concentration of capital in the 20th century, as analysed by Piketty (2014), have rekindled the global debate surrounding the taxation of the richest people and the pressing need for the State to act to limit the concentration of income and wealth. In Brazil the themes of tax inequality and possible ways to reduce the concentration of wealth and income have gained even more traction. As a possible way to achieve social equity, a tax reform to lighten the burden on the poorest population and increase revenue by further taxing the richest seems necessary to achieve what we understand as 'fiscal justice'. Furthermore, the current deepening of the country's fiscal and economic crisis reinforces this demand, in light of its potential results.

Therefore, the objective of our paper (Passos, Guedes, and Silveira 2018) is to clarify the debate regarding the relevance of fiscal justice in promoting equity and the ways to achieve it. The study has undertaken extensive analysis of the Brazilian tax system and the existing literature about its efficiency and distributive capacity.

The questions raised in the paper point to many inequities in the Brazilian tax system, ranging from the greater weight of indirect taxation to the flaws in direct taxation—such as the tenuous attention paid to individuals' contributive capacity demonstrated by the low incidence on higher incomes, capital gains and accumulated wealth.

To increase efficiency and favour economic growth, we recommend changes in payroll taxes and the taxation of goods and services through the creation of a value-added tax (VAT). Five ways to promote fiscal justice and equity are: a reduction in indirect taxation; changes to the rates and thresholds for personal income tax; the reintroduction of taxes on profits and dividends; regulation of the tax on large fortunes; and increased social spending.

Services and benefits provided by social spending comprise a significant distributive initiative, both directly and indirectly. More immediately, social spending enables an increase in final household income, improving quality of life and overall welfare. By promoting the strengthening of capacities, it indirectly facilitates access to the labour market in a less fragile manner and with higher incomes.

In this light, social spending is understood as an instrument that can be used to address the myriad social asymmetries that characterise Brazil. By investing in social policies, the State can promote better income distribution and provide more opportunities, as well as access to a broad range of essential services to society.

Given the pressing scenario of Brazil's current economic and fiscal crisis, we must continue to shed light on the shortcomings and unjustified privileges embedded in fiscal policy and spur society towards demanding tax reform that promotes efficiency without losing sight of the equity of the system, if the overall objective is to improve the living standards of the vast majority of workers in the country.

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Building shock-responsive national social protection systems in MENA

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Social protection is typically recognised as an important policy instrument for addressing idiosyncratic shocks, but recently several studies have sought to investigate how social protection systems can also be resilient and respond to covariate shocks. Informed by this growing body of evidence, the main objective of this study is to identify opportunities and challenges for enhancing shock-responsiveness in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, by analysing the cases of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, State of Palestine, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

The analysis is based on a literature review complemented by results from a survey designed and administered by UNICEF Headquarters to the respective Country Offices in the first quarter of 2018. Follow-up remote interviews were also held with Country Offices in June and July 2018. Given its limited scope, while this study might provide insights into the trends of national programming choices that are relevant for shock-responsiveness, it does not in any way suggest that the programmes analysed should be used in shock response, nor does it replace a thorough feasibility assessment, should this be considered an option.

Main findings

- The social protection systems reviewed have different levels of institutionalisation. At one end of the spectrum, some countries still do not have a social protection strategy; at the other end, there are systems embedded in legislation. Well-established systems are more likely to be more responsive to shocks, and having clear policies is key in this sense.
- The literature on shock-responsive social protection highlights that emergency-preparedness measures can include: having emergency operational manuals and training staff on them; having contingency funds; establishing contingency agreements with service providers; and the use of early-warning systems. However, the review of the cases in this study found that such measures are still uncommon.
- The lack of comprehensive national social registries in the region is a key challenge to enhancing system responsiveness, and registry coverage varies significantly across the cases. Still, some countries have made significant strides in creating programme databases that include information on a significant proportion of the population and/or on both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, which is important to enable scalability. Furthermore, Egypt, Jordan and the State of Palestine are also taking steps to build social registries, which are important tools for extending coverage beyond the target group of a specific programme.
- Fiscal space is a key consideration in making systems more shock-responsive, as inadequate funding hinders system scalability. The programmes reviewed in this study have generally been expanding their coverage and expenditure over time, but they still need to expand further to reach all poor and vulnerable households. Moreover, explicit contingency funds that could be rapidly mobilised for shock response were not identified.
- The major refugee crisis and the large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region have underscored the coordination challenges between the humanitarian and social protection actors. Overall, challenges have arisen in terms of harmonising the provision of services across different interventions—a distinct concern for refugee-hosting countries. Iraq is the only country analysed where the right to national social protection initiatives is granted to non-nationals. However, this access is limited in practice.
- Monitoring and evaluation of regular programmes is not very robust in most cases, leading to a gap in evidence-based policymaking. These procedures could also benefit from stronger management and information systems.
- Implementation capacity is typically challenged by the precarious situation of programme staff, who in some cases are paid late or do not receive proper compensation for work-related expenses. These challenges can be particularly heightened at times of crisis.

Recommendations

- Investments in preparedness and coordination are needed to enhance system resilience and responsiveness: For countries that still have not devised a broad social protection strategy, establishing clear social protection policies should be the first priority. Moreover, factoring in scalability in policies during times of crisis can enhance their responsiveness. Furthermore, improving coordination between social protection, disaster management and humanitarian actors and strengthening emergency preparedness measures can boost system resilience and responsiveness.
- From programme databases to integrated social registries: The coverage of systems and registries should be expanded to all poor, near-poor and vulnerable people and beyond, and regular data assessments should be carried out during times of stability, to understand the extent to which social protection databases are current, complete and relevant.
- Ensuring the scalability of payment systems: Mapping potential alternative payment providers and having contingency agreements with them is key, as is investing in technology to facilitate payment processes.
- Towards sustainable public funding of rights-based and responsive systems: Governments should ensure public funding for the provision of regular social protection, and that these funds are ring-fenced—particularly during times of austerity. Contingency funding could also be secured by governments and/or donors, Zakat Funds or insurance mechanisms. Moreover, it is crucial to review the fiscal disbursement flows of social protection and to address bottlenecks, particularly where they impact the timeliness of payments to beneficiaries and programme staff.
- Developing monitoring and evaluation systems for evidence-based programming: During times of stability, it is necessary to invest in the development of robust monitoring and evaluation systems that deliver necessary data for evidence-based programming. These can also include resilience-related indicators at the beneficiary and system levels.
- Investing in implementation capacity to ensure system resilience and responsiveness: It is crucial to ensure that social workers and programme staff are valued, incentivised and able to carry out their services under both regular and extraordinary circumstances. A responsive system needs staff that are properly trained in emergency preparedness and response, as well as in the use of different mechanisms that enable it (e.g. the management information system, alternative payment providers), and in communicating programmatic decisions in potential responses to shocks.

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A universal child grant in Brazil: What must we do, and what can we expect from it?

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The idea of a universal child grant has considerable support. Since as far back as the 1942 Beveridge Report, a cash transfer to all children has been considered part of a global strategy for overcoming poverty and reducing inequality. They are widespread among wealthy nations, and 17 of the 28 countries in the European Union (60 per cent) have universal child grants (SSA-ISSA 2016). Notable exceptions are the Mediterranean countries such as Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain, which retain the logic of social security for children of formal workers and social assistance (usually less generous) for the children of poor people.

Universal child grants are not as common among middle-income and poor countries. The most inspiring case is Argentina, which created the *Asignación Universal por Hijo* (AUH) to provide child grants to all children not yet covered by other systems.

In Brazil, families can count on three monetary benefits for children. These are the variable benefits for children and adolescents linked to *Bolsa Família*, *Salário Família*, and the income tax deduction for dependent children. If thought of as a system, it does not work well. The values paid out vary from BRL52.14 to the richest children to close to zero to children of income tax recipients paying little income tax after deductions. The highest values are paid to the wealthiest families. Furthermore, the income tax deduction and *Salário Família* are hidden in other policies and as such are unlikely to affect behaviour. There about 2 million children receiving more than one benefit, and, most disturbing of all, 17 million children receiving nothing. Not a cent. Half of these forgotten children and youth are found in the lower third of the income distribution, and only 10 per cent in the upper third. If taken as a whole, Brazilian social protection for children is simply indefensible.

Fortunately, for the children, it is easy to make it much better. The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatstica—IBGE) estimates the number of children aged 0–17 in Brazil at 54.5 million. This means that a universal grant equal to the *Bolsa Família* child benefit (BRL41 per month) would cost about BRL26.6 billion per year. The present system costs about BRL19.1 billion per year—about BRL7.5 billion less. This is a relatively small sum as a percentage of public expenditures.

How would it work? All families with children would be included in the Single Registry (the registry currently used for *Bolsa Família* benefits) and would be paid according to *Bolsa Família* rules through a specific bank card. All existing programmes would be discontinued, and their budgets transferred to the universal child grant. All families in the Single Registry—the poorest children in Brazil—would automatically receive a card, and the remainder would be incorporated into the programme as the BRL7.5 billion additional funding needed for universality became available. This would, of course, depend on economic growth, but we estimate that a gradual four-year implementation period would allow for an experimental evaluation of the grant's impact and accommodate the difficult fiscal situation that Brazil currently faces.

A look at where families with children fall on the income distribution shows that a universal child grant would be the second most progressive transfer out of dozens that exist today in Brazil. Only the highly targeted *Bolsa Família* would be more pro-poor. Most of the new beneficiaries (i.e. those not currently covered) are poor and vulnerable children in the lower half of the income distribution. A universal child grant for Brazil is a no-brainer.

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Evaluation of the coverage and benefit incidences of food fortification in Mozambique

International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

A recent study (IPC-IG 2019) evaluates the coverage of Mozambique's National Food Fortification Programme (NFFP), its benefit reach across vulnerable groups and its contribution to the recommended nutrient intake (RNI) of micronutrients. The NFFP is a mandatory fortification programme of wheat and maize flour with iron, and of sugar and vegetable oil with vitamin A.

A survey of 1,500 households and laboratory tests of nutrient concentration in food samples of 50g of wheat flour, maize flour and sugar, and 50ml of vegetable oil collected at the households are the main sources of data.

Coverage is defined as potential and actual coverage. Potential coverage refers to the household consumption of vehicles from any source (availability coverage) and by industrialised vehicles that are fortifiable from a large or median-scale source (accessibility coverage). Actual coverage refers to households that consume vehicles that are fortified at any level (contact coverage) and fully fortified vehicles that meet or exceed the minimum level of micronutrients set by national standards of food fortification (effectiveness coverage).

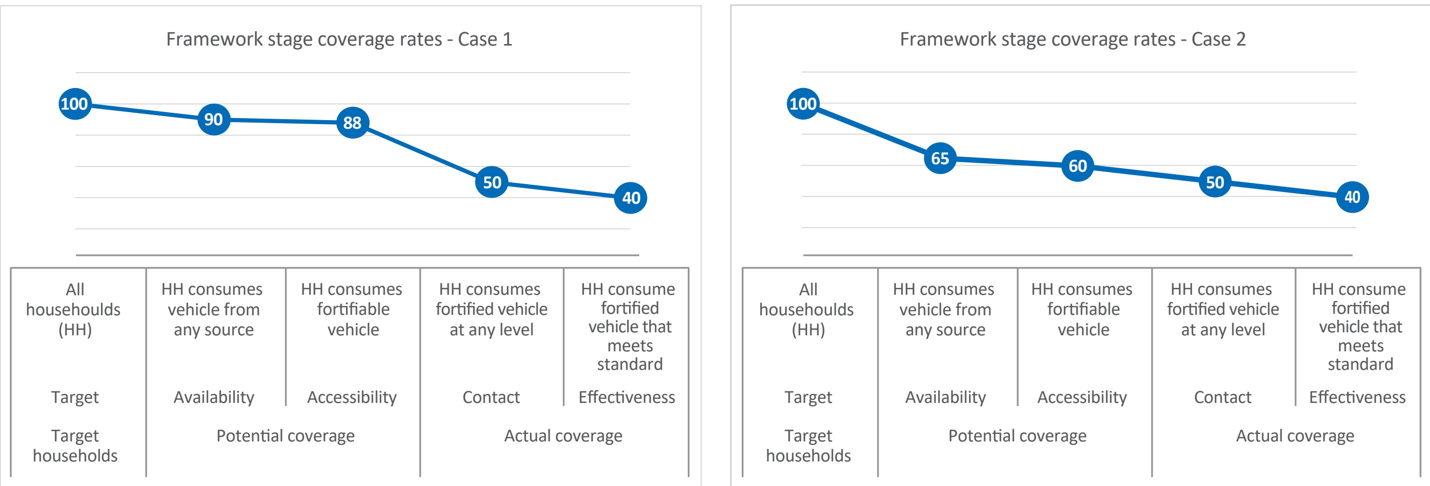
Figure 1 shows two hypothetical configurations of the potential and actual coverage (Case 1 and Case 2). The effectiveness in both cases is equal, but the paths of the other types of coverage are distinct.

To increase the effectiveness in Case 1, efforts should be directed to increasing the fortified vehicles' contact with the population and to ensuring fortification at the right level, whereas in Case 2, efforts should be directed to the right choice of the vehicles to be fortified.

The NFFP is well evaluated in terms of potential coverage rate or availability/accessibility (Case 1). The potential availability coverage and accessibility coverage are higher than 90 per cent. The NFFP has chosen the right vehicles with a high likelihood of benefiting the population at large. The contact coverage was lower, although, according to the results, the target of the proportion of the population with access to fortified food set by the NFFP was met by all the products except the wheat flour.[1] Effectiveness coverage is very low, mostly below 10 per cent. As for household intake of nutrients, about 30 per cent of households achieve at least 50 per cent of the RNI of vitamin A, while 22 per cent achieve at least 50 per cent of the RNI of iron.

The main findings indicate that the NFFP has no problem reaching the population with fortified food. The problem is to get there with the right concentration of nutrients. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the enforcement fortification system and production chain is recommended. The NFFP has so far predominantly been implemented in urban areas. Although it has demonstrated some coverage in rural areas and among all vulnerable groups, this indicates significant potential for the programme to reach universal coverage.

Figure 1: Hypothetical display of sequences of potential and actual coverage



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Note:

1. The wheat flour was an exception, possibly explained by the culture of consuming the vehicle through derived products such as bread and pasta.

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The need for tax reform in Brazil— Guidelines for moving forward

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The evaluation of a tax system is notoriously controversial in Brazil, as elsewhere. In the case of Brazil, the controversy is further fuelled by the fact that the country's tax burden has increased significantly since the enactment of the 1988 Federal Constitution, from 23.4 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1988 to 33.6 per cent of GDP in 2005. This increase came at the expense of the tax system's efficiency and equity, largely motivated by the imperative to increase revenues during episodes of short-term fiscal adjustments, while matters regarding quality were considered of lower priority. Since then, the tax burden has remained close to 33 per cent of GDP for over a decade. Even during this period of stability, the quality of taxation has still deteriorated, due to increasing tax benefits and badly calibrated special regimes, as well as little and erratic progress regarding the reform agenda.

For over two decades, tax reform efforts concentrated almost exclusively on the taxation of goods and services—either through broad proposals to merge the many federal and local taxes into a single value-added tax (VAT) or through more modest ones, such as the standardisation of the State Tax on the Circulation of Goods and Services (*Imposto sobre Circulação de Mercadorias e Serviços*—ICMS). These reforms were hampered by federative and distributive conflicts, which ended up legitimising the relative paralysis of the federal government in undertaking other structural changes, such as those of taxes levied on payroll and income.

The consequences are well known. The Brazilian tax system is often referred to as a 'tax madhouse' due to its complexity and lack of logical consistency. To change this scenario is no simple task, and depends on political agreements. However, a good starting point is to update the diagnosis about major problems to be faced and discuss potential alternative solutions.

We can envisage two paths for tax reform. The first is radical change, which would be difficult to implement. The second, more pragmatic, path is of gradual change or 'sliced reform'. However, it is necessary to distance this second alternative from mere superficial tweaks. Varsano (2014, 47–48) states that "superficial tweaks have often been wrongly referred to as a sliced reform. It is impossible to serve slices of a cake that does not exist." When we imagine that a reform is to be 'sliced', it is implied that a specific tax system design exists which is to be reached in the future but whose implementation is fragmented to allow for an easier transition and for some course corrections.

In other words, regardless of the pace of the reform, the most important thing is for there to be a common destination point—to bring Brazil's tax system closer to an ideal system, whereby the myriad elements are properly adjusted, and any unnecessary distortions are duly eliminated.

Orair and Gobetti (2019) present guidelines for a tax reform in Brazil that recognises the importance of modernising the taxation of goods and services but is not restricted by it. In their paper, the authors highlight the merits of a set of proposals designed to correct distortions of taxes on goods and services in Brazil.

They also diagnose distortions in income and payroll taxation in the country, and present a discussion of income tax models that are able to achieve horizontal and vertical equity with consistent integration of personal and corporate taxation—such as the dual income tax model and the adjusted comprehensive model. One of the main concerns is to envisage the conception of a model compatible with a reduction in income tax rates at the corporate level, while seizing the opportunity to thoroughly reassess tax benefits. Simultaneously, it seeks a counterbalance through personal income taxes, with a model that treats different sources of income more consistently and pursues a higher degree of progressivity.

The choice for each of the models ultimately depends on the balance of political forces, the ability to negotiate and social preferences. The paper does not attempt to provide answers to all these issues. Its sole purpose is to provide inputs to the debate.

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Ramifications of the internationalisation of Brazilian public policy instruments for the rural sector

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International organisations and agencies from Western countries are no longer the only ones formulating development standards and international best practices. The proliferation of movements for exporting and importing social, economic and policy management models means it is now more relevant than ever to consider the relationships between countries of the global South. Most recent studies have focused on the drivers and strategies of emerging countries to promote South–South cooperation, while analysis of the impact of such initiatives is still scarce. In her recent book, Milhorance (2019) analyses the content of, processes involved in and consequences of the internationalisation of Brazilian rural public policies since the early 2000s.

Brazil has gained broad international recognition in the early 21st century for its experiences in the modernisation of agriculture and the implementation of social policies. The broader context of Milhorance's book is the global financial and food crisis experienced since 2007. Brazilian policymakers have seized the opportunity created by material and symbolic changes in the international system to promote their own development models, driven by a revised South–South cooperation approach. The strengthening of bonds between Latin American and African countries has materialised as the main vehicle for these strategic interests.

In this context, the country has become an informal ambassador for part of the global South and has garnered the attention of Western leaders and international organisations. Given the uncertainties regarding the impact of the political and economic crises now facing Brazil, it is pressing to attain a more precise understanding of the patterns and consequences of this recent process. Therefore, based on extensive field research—including over 280 interviews—conducted in Brazil, Mozambique, South Africa, Malawi, France and Italy, the author analyses the effects of the internationalisation of Brazilian political solutions on multilateral organisations and on national and local political systems in host countries, focusing especially on the case of Mozambique.

One of the first elements addressed in the book is the strengthening of Brazil's 'soft power', based on the appreciation of its experience in development. However, the unifying aspect of this concept covers a breadth of policies and experiences promoted by different actors and often with conflicting goals. This highlights the need to look beyond conventional notions of international power, diving into networks of actors at multiple levels and considering the historical and political distinctions of South–South relations. The author shows how such networks can link international arenas for the translation and reinvention of political models.

The book also examines the influence of Brazilian instruments in the formulation of new international norms within the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa—CPLP), thanks to the mobilisation of legitimacy resources in a context of criticism of both these organisations and the solutions being offered in the fight against poverty. However, despite the South–South paradigm's ambition to develop international relations, its influence has proved more prominent in the multilateral system than in bilateral relations between countries of the South.

Initiatives in Mozambique are also examined, such as the Tripartite Cooperation Programme for the Agricultural Development of the Tropical Savannah (ProSavana), the investments of the mining company Vale, the More Food International programme, the Mozambican School Feeding Programme, and the Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA Africa) programme, in addition to initiatives promoting transnational coordination between civil society organisations. The intention was to provide a clear picture of the international projection of Brazilian development solutions and their translation by stakeholders at national and local levels.

Results show the participation of Brazilian organisations in an incremental consolidation of instruments aligned with the priorities and objectives of political and administrative elites in Mozambique, as well as the translation of programmatic objectives and the modes of operation of these instruments. At the local level, the reception and implementation of these models differs according to the territory considered and the institutions involved. This ensures, for example, the strengthening of school feeding initiatives at the local level, despite the lack of institutionalisation of and political support for this instrument in the Mozambican national scenario.

In the book's conclusion, the author provides a summary of theoretical and empirical contributions and discusses the fragility of debates that seek to assess the reproducibility of Brazilian rural development trajectories, as these do not take into consideration the socio-political dimension of these processes. In addition, she examines the economic and political crisis facing Brazil and how this context can affect Brazil's international positioning. Finally, she presents some of the lessons learned from this recent process of internationalisation and promotion of South–South cooperation.

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The impacts of social protection benefits on behaviours potentially related to inclusive growth: A literature review

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Social protection benefits could theoretically lead to a distortion in marginal incentives given by market prices and, therefore, could have negative impacts on microeconomic behaviours potentially related to economic growth, such as saving and labour supply. On the other hand, they could allow liquidity- and credit-constrained individuals and households to invest in education, in a new business or even in migrating to places where they could make better use of their skills.

Paiva and Varella (2019) surveyed the empirical literature about the effects of contributory and non-contributory social protection benefits on a set of microeconomic behaviours that are potentially related to economic growth: (i) consumption and saving; (ii) labour supply; (iii) education; (iv) fertility; (v) migration; and (vi) innovation and risk-taking.

This literature review suggests that there seems to be little space for deep concerns or high hopes regarding the possible effects of social protection benefits on economic growth through microeconomic channels. Pensions can have negative effects on savings and labour supply, but estimates vary considerably and are frequently of small magnitude. The saving behaviour of low-income, lesser-educated workers, potentially affected by liquidity and credit constraints, tends not to be affected in any way. Moreover, there are policy options to deal with these possible adverse effects. Actuarially fair benefit formulas, adequate pensionable ages, limited access to early retirement and close coordination between passive and active employment policies are believed to reduce or eliminate disincentives.

There is evidence of a positive impact of modest cash transfers (particularly when attached to conditionalities) on school enrolment and attendance, which is encouraging. However, evidence is far less clear regarding their effects on learning—a critical outcome. Contributory pensions and conditional cash transfers seem to have a modest negative impact on fertility, which is a source of concern for the sustainability of pay-as-you-go pension regimes and for economic growth. As other child-related benefits might have a positive impact, social protection reform that decreases pension expenditures and substantially increases child benefit outlays should be considered a policy option. Social security affiliation tends to be negatively related to migration (which enhances growth, given that the affiliated are the most productive part of the labour force). Cash transfers can finance migration—but they would also be enhancing growth if they were to finance domestic migration. Finally, there is some evidence that modest cash transfers enable small investments and improve risk-coping strategies.

The best news is that the relatively small magnitudes of negative effects of social protection benefits (on outcomes such as savings and labour supply, for instance) lead us to believe that they improve household welfare. The myriad policy alternatives to deal with possible negative impacts—together with small, but positive effects on outcomes such as education, migration and risk-taking—lead us to be modestly optimistic about their overall impact on economic growth through microeconomic channels.

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What makes economic empowerment programmes successful? Experimental evidence from Malawi

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Since the beginning of the 21st century we have witnessed a proliferation of social protection schemes in several countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Recent empirical evidence points to the effectiveness of these policies—in particular, cash transfers—in improving the ability of beneficiaries to meet their basic needs. However, it seems that cash transfers alone do not reduce poverty in a sustainable manner, and this is usually not even their explicit aim. Cash transfer beneficiaries do not manage to exit poverty by their own means; therefore, they remain dependent on social assistance.

For this reason, there have been a few attempts to build integrated, multisectoral interventions, such as the BRAC graduation scheme in Bangladesh, which have then been replicated in some African countries. These programmes typically include a cash transfer for consumption purposes, an asset transfer (or lump sum grant), various forms of training, mentorship, and community mobilisation for social integration. The empirical literature highlights their positive impacts on several outcomes; however, the magnitude of the effects is not large despite the high costs. Moreover, the available studies focus on the effects of the overall package; we do not know which of the various components really makes the difference. More empirical evidence is needed in this regard.

Against this background, the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ), in cooperation with the Government of Malawi and local partners, designed and implemented the Tingathe Economic Empowerment Pilot Project (EEP). It targets ultra-poor and labour-constrained households that are already beneficiaries of the countrywide social cash transfer programme. Designed as a cluster-randomised control trial, it provides to different village clusters: a) a lump sum transfer (~USD70); b) financial and business training; or c) both a lump sum transfer and training. The training was also meant to encourage beneficiaries to create savings groups. Furthermore, the project beneficiaries were allowed to appoint a proxy—i.e. a person who carries out project-related activities on their behalf. This was considered particularly important for beneficiary households with major labour impediments. The aim of the project is to put beneficiaries onto a 'graduation pathway'—i.e. to provide them with the resources necessary to improve their well-being and to lay a foundation with which to escape poverty in the long run.

A recent study conducted by the *Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik* (DIE—German Development Institute) provides evidence of the impacts of the Tingathe EEP about a year after implementation (Burchi and Strupat 2018). The study answers three central questions: 1) What are the impacts of the overall project and of each of the three project components on different outcomes? 2) Do project impacts differ between households that are labour-constrained and those that are non-labour-constrained, based on the project definition? 3) Is the proxy option useful? To answer these questions, the authors used an experimental design and surveyed about 800 households, comprising the different treatment groups and a control group, before and after implementation of the Tingathe EEP.

The empirical analysis reveals that the project had substantial positive impacts, in particular on financial literacy, savings, loans, livestock wealth, agricultural production and drought resilience. Impacts on the first three outcomes are entirely driven by the financial and business training. The training triggered in particular the creation of saving groups, to which the project beneficiaries had no access before. The lump sum enabled beneficiaries to accumulate livestock and build resilience to drought—measured by the number of months needed to recover from it—while the combination of training and the lump sum contributed to improve agricultural production. More generally, the training significantly increased the productive use of the lump sum transfer and supported the financial inclusion of the project beneficiaries. This conclusion is supported by the results of a qualitative analysis, previously conducted with 30 beneficiary households (Beierl, Burchi, and Strupat 2017).

With regard to the second and third objectives, the authors found no differences in the project's impacts on households that meet all the criteria to be defined as 'labour-constrained' and on those that do not. An in-depth investigation reveals that the presence of the proxy explains this result: it is, in fact, mainly labour-constrained households that benefited from this option. This shows that proxies can be an important part of more inclusive economic empowerment programmes and that labour-constrained households can indeed benefit from such programmes. These findings, therefore, cast some doubt on the common view that poor households with strong labour impediments will always need to depend on social assistance.

Overall, evidence from this project suggests that tailored training in combination with a lump sum and the involvement of a proxy can make economic empowerment projects successful. The results for the group receiving all project components are similar to those of graduation programmes and similar integrated projects that were evaluated after one or two years. While the impacts on savings—despite being very large—seem slightly smaller than those in graduation programmes and in two similar projects in Kenya and Uganda, the impacts on livestock wealth, household consumption and a consumption-based measure of poverty are larger. To verify whether the improvements generated by the Tingathe EEP will ensure beneficiaries' graduation out of poverty, and for how many, longer-term impact assessments are needed.

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The potential role of social transfers in the fight against HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa[1]

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For many years, poverty was largely accepted as a core driver of the HIV/AIDS epidemics in sub-Saharan African. This has served as the basic premise for many theories of change, which have posited that social transfer programmes could be specifically tailored to have positive impacts on the transmission and treatment of HIV and to mitigate the disease's poverty burden.

The main causal pathways through which social transfers are believed to contribute include:

- direct income effects: providing beneficiaries with basic means of consumption, therefore discouraging them from resorting to undesirable coping mechanisms against poverty and shocks, such as transactional sex and overall forms of disempowerment regarding sexual decision-making;
- indirect income effects: improving beneficiaries' access to 'social vaccines' such as health care and education, which provides them with prevention and treatment by means of biomedical services and dissemination of key messages and relevant information, and can even promote age-appropriate socialisation for children and adolescents (including delaying their sexual debut and having age-appropriate sexual partners); and
- behavioural practices: which can be further emphasised either by social assistants themselves after receiving training or by referring people to the appropriate services. Though the idea of using conditionalities to strengthen such protective habits might seem strategic, there are many cases in which this has proven too expensive and complex to monitor, while also violating privacy and ethical limits, and at times with the risk of subjecting beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries to stigma.

Although there are significant impact evaluation results showing that these outcomes can indeed affect programme beneficiaries, the relevance of these impacts on society or on the epidemic at large has yet to be better understood.

Most recent studies indicate that HIV/AIDS prevalence in sub-Saharan Africa tends to be higher among populations with higher socio-economic status. This African peculiarity mirrors the extent to which the epidemic is also driven by concurrent sexual partnerships in a generalised heterosexual environment. Wealth might be a driver of HIV, since better-off people have more mobility, time and resources to maintain concurrent partnerships.

In principle, this epidemiological profile could indicate that social transfers and the causality pathways through which they can tackle HIV are somewhat out of context for the epidemiology of sub-Saharan Africa. After all, social transfers target the poorest and most economically vulnerable populations, and in Eastern and Southern Africa most people who become infected are not the poorest and most vulnerable. Unlike socio-economic status, inequality is a less controversial driver of HIV epidemics. However, even though social transfers can reduce inequality, evidence indicates that this is often the case only for programmes with vast coverage and with large benefits, which is hardly ever the case in sub-Saharan Africa.

However, before discarding the impact of social transfers in the fight against HIV in Africa, one must consider Mann and Tarantola's (1996) proposition that HIV does not simply consist of one epidemic, but is, rather, the result of many epidemics, which are occurring in parallel, affecting different sectors of the population through different pathways and at different paces. There is no 'silver bullet' to address the issue. The dynamics of the epidemic among poor people might be very different from that among wealthy people—not to mention among those in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, people who inject drugs, sex workers and other social groups.

Therefore, even if most cases of HIV are not concentrated among the poorest population, this is nevertheless a relevant epidemiological niche. And just as initiatives to tackle the HIV epidemic among poor people might not tackle the epidemic among wealthy people, the opposite can be also be true. In a sense, what works for the many might not work for the few who are HIV-positive and poor, hence the need for specific actions to reach out to this population group. Social transfers must not be presented as a panacea for the HIV epidemic, but they remain a viable option to tackle its dissemination within a niche where traditional biomedical approaches struggle to produce positive impacts. Thus, experiments to curb the spread of HIV among poor people through social transfers should be incentivised, so long as they are designed to tackle specific causes, keeping due track of their outputs and outcomes and, most importantly, without causing disinvestments in traditional medicinal interventions.

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Note:

1. This One pager is based on: Arruda (2019). This study was undertaken between 2016 and 2017.

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Worried about the fourth industrial revolution's impact on jobs?
Scale up skills development and training!

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We have been living through the third industrial revolution—'digitalisation'—since 1980. However, the fourth industrial revolution (driven mainly by robotics and artificial intelligence) already appears to be fast approaching.

What will be its likely impacts on jobs, incomes and economic inequality? And, more importantly, what can be done about them? This One Pager focuses on this revolution's practical implications for social protection programmes.

So far, the dominant response has focused on scaling up income transfers—especially offering a universal basic income. But even if the value of this transfer were set to strictly match a given country's poverty line, it would still be quite expensive. It would also have no redistributive impact: those people who are economically better-off and those in the middle class would benefit from it as much as poor people would.

More importantly, would a universal basic income really solve any long-term problems, such as the widespread joblessness that is currently being projected as a result of the fourth industrial revolution? We do not believe so. We posit that it is necessary to place a higher priority on skills development and training. However, currently this is a woefully neglected dimension of social protection.

Skills development and training in Asia

In 2016 the Asian Development Bank (ADB) commissioned a study covering 25 Asian countries to update the estimates for its Social Protection Indicator (ADB 2016). The ADB aggregate indicator is divided into three major categories: social insurance, social assistance and labour market programmes.

In that year, social insurance accounted for 73 per cent of all forms of social protection, while social assistance accounted for 24 per cent. Labour market programmes accounted for the remaining 3 per cent; however, they were divided between cash-for-work programmes and skills development and training. Surprisingly, skills development and training accounted for a mere 1 per cent of all forms of social protection.

In other regions, as well as in both developed and developing economies, this pronounced neglect appears to be widespread. Why are skills development and training being so marginalised? When this marked neglect is considered against the backdrop of the job-displacing potential of the fourth industrial revolution, it can become deeply concerning.

Current projections

The McKinsey Global Institute (2017) has recently been doing a lot of work to assess the likely impact of the fourth industrial revolution. Its 'mid-point' scenario to 2030 (which contains neither its most pessimistic nor its most optimistic assumptions) still projects that the jobs of 14 per cent of the global workforce (almost half a billion workers) are likely to be affected. And 2030 is not that far away.

The impact is likely to be stronger in developed economies than in emerging and developing economies. Even so, McKinsey still projects that, for example, the work activities of 13 per cent of the workers in China and 10 per cent of the workers in Mexico would be impacted. These projected percentages rise to about 26 per cent in Japan and 23 per cent in the USA.

Regardless of how much time is devoted to debating issues of scale and timing, these projections nonetheless suggest that many workers worldwide might be searching for new jobs relatively soon, as well as having to develop new skills. Otherwise, they will be out of work—and not just in the short term.

Thus, social protection programmes face a major strategic choice. Do they treat people primarily as rightful—but essentially passive—recipients of income support, such as through a universal basic income? Or do they emphasise helping beneficiaries to actively expand and enhance their human capabilities? We believe that the latter, human development approach is a more viable long-term solution. However, if this option is chosen, various forms of skills development and training would have to be rapidly scaled up.

Table1
Social protection programmes in Asia (2016)

Programme type	Percentage of total
Social insurance	73%
Social assistance	24%
Labour market programmes	3%
- Cash-for-work	2%
- Skills development and training	1%

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ADB. 2016. *The Social Protection Indicator: Assessing Results for Asia*. Manila: Asian Development Bank.

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Country heterogeneity and the missing tier in the SDGs reporting

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Many countries have made significant strides in transitioning from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which expired in 2015, to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 17 interdependent SDGs cover social, economic and environmental development issues as well as governance and partnerships. Each goal has a list of targets that are measured with indicators.

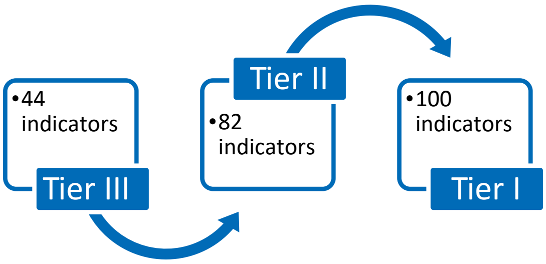
The global indicator framework developed by the United Nations Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) contains 232 **unique** indicators for measuring 169 targets for the 17 SDGs. The indicators are classified into three 'tiers':

- **Tier I** indicators are conceptually clear, have an internationally established methodology with available standards, and data are regularly produced by at least 50 per cent of countries in every region where the indicator is relevant.
- **Tier II** indicators are conceptually clear, have an internationally established methodology with available standards, but data are not regularly produced by countries.
- **Tier III** indicators currently have no internationally established methodology or standards, but they are being (or will be) developed or tested.

IAEG-SDGs has made vast progress on the data-gathering approach and methodology for most indicators, formally recognising them and allowing for a more comprehensive measurement of the indicator sets in the global SDG indicator framework.

The updated classification contains 93 Tier I indicators, 72 Tier II indicators and 62 Tier III indicators. In addition, there are five indicators that have multiple tiers (different components are classified into different tiers).

FIGURE 1
Tier classification of global SDG indicators, March 2019



Note: Six other indicators have components in different tiers.
Source: Authors' elaboration.

Many of the indicators have been reclassified from Tier III to Tier II, and from Tier II to Tier I. As of the end of April 2019, the classification comprises 100 Tier I indicators, 82 Tier II indicators and 44 Tier III indicators, with 6 indicators having multiple tiers. A comprehensive review will be conducted at the 51st session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, in March 2020. Tiers are regularly reviewed; ultimately, tiers II and III will vanish, and only a single tier will remain, comprising the entire set of indicators.

In the context of both voluntary national reviews (VNRs) presented at the high-level political forum as well as national reporting on SDGs, national statistical offices, custodian agencies and other partner agencies for certain indicators are doing their best to significantly increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable official data disaggregated by various characteristics, such as income, gender, age, ethnicity, geographic location etc., that are relevant to national contexts. The ongoing progress to localise and mobilise the resources required to implement the 17 SDGs is remarkable, considering the wide range of distinct national realities.

By reviewing and tracking the several rounds of VNRs worldwide from 2016 to 2018 regarding the implementation of the SDGs, we noted, for most countries, a set of indicators that—from the point of view of the respective country's authorities—does not apply to their national context. We call this set of indicators 'Tier 0'. They represent varying percentages that may exceed 50 per cent of the total of 232 indicators—for example, Malaysia 12 indicators (5 per cent), Netherlands 44 indicators (19 per cent), Moldova 70 indicators (30 per cent), Sweden 109 indicators (47 per cent) etc.

None of the VNRs explicitly state the number of Tier 0 indicators or explain why these indicators are not considered applicable to national contexts.

For the sake of better reporting and clarity, we recommend that both VNRs and national reporting cycles on the SDGs include Tier 0 as an additional tier of indicators.

Contrary to the North–South approach of the MDGs, the SDGs apply universally to all countries (developed, developing and least developed). Given this significant heterogeneity, it is important, when measuring performance according to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, that a country may additionally provide a valid (although brief), evidence-based explanation as to why the set of Tier 0 indicators is deemed irrelevant for its national context.

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Fiscal space for child-sensitive social protection in the MENA region

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Social protection policies can help address the multifaceted nature of child poverty and improve children's well-being, especially in the areas of education, health and nutrition. Providing adequate social protection to children is particularly relevant in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), as multidimensional child poverty remains a major concern in the region. Moreover, a large share of the population of MENA will soon transition into their most productive age, clearing the way for a demographic dividend. This demographic transition presents a unique opportunity for economic growth in the region, due to its larger-than-usual share of working-age adults.

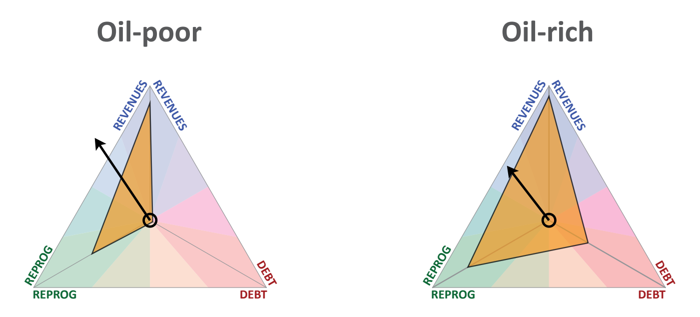
Today, the scope and adequacy of the region's social protection systems remain limited. MENA countries have traditionally relied on universal subsidies and contributory insurance schemes and despite recent reforms in the non-contributory sector, the schemes in place are far from reaching all children in need. Compared to other regions in the world, such as Latin America, public expenditure on social protection—especially for children—is very low in MENA.

Yet social protection requires funding. Therefore, the need to expand child-sensitive social protection leads to the question of how countries can finance such an expansion. The analysis of the different fiscal contexts and possibilities in the MENA region conducted in this study concluded that the potential fiscal space in MENA countries mainly results from switching expenditures (reprioritising social spending relative to subsidies and military expenditures), rethinking fiscal policy by moving more towards a progressive and efficient tax system, and, to a lesser extent, improving debt management.

Ideally, countries should favour options to create fiscal space that ensure both macroeconomic stability and continuous investment in social protection. However, given the diversity of macro-fiscal contexts in the region, some countries may rely more on one option than others. For example, low-income countries may find Official Development Assistance or deficit financing the only options available to finance social protection in the short term. Oil-rich countries, such as those of the Gulf Cooperation Council, could focus on the diversification of domestic resources as a way to increase fiscal space, since they rely heavily on oil rents. Other countries that already have high levels of taxation and debt could explore the reprioritisation of expenditures to free up resources for social protection. Each option should, therefore, be carefully considered and adapted to each country's specific context.

Figure 1 illustrates these findings. It shows the fiscal space triangles for oil-poor and oil-rich countries,[1] providing a visual representation of the extent to which these countries can finance child social protection through domestic revenue mobilisation, deficit financing and reprogramming of expenditures.[2]

FIGURE 1
Fiscal space triangles: examples of oil-poor and oil-rich countries



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Bloch, C., C. Bilo, I. Helmy, R. Osorio and F. V. Soares. 2019. *Fiscal space for child-sensitive social protection in the MENA region*. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and UNICEF.

Notes:
1. In the complete version of the report (Bloch et al. 2019), these figures are available for 17 MENA countries.
2. The indicator for each dimension of the triangle is a score set between 0 and 1 and is computed so as to give an idea of the country's potential to increase fiscal space through that particular option. The 'revenues' corner is measured using countries' tax revenues as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), the 'debt' corner uses the debt-to-GDP ratios and the 'reprogramming' dimension is based on countries' spending on energy subsidies as a percentage of GDP.

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Computing pre-conflict poverty figures and profile in Syria

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Although some recent reports point out that deteriorating living conditions were a key factor leading to the current violent conflict in Syria, none has sufficiently investigated pre-conflict poverty rates at the governorate level. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is the only entity that computed national poverty figures for 2009 (ESCWA 2017). It found that the national rates of food, extreme, and overall poverty rates in Syria decreased to 1.5 per cent, 10 per cent, and 24.8 per cent, respectively, in 2009. It is clear, however, that ESCWA's estimates are counter-intuitive due to two main reasons: first is the unprecedented waves of drought hitting the area in the years immediately preceding the conflict; second, cuts in energy subsidies in May 2008 had a strong negative effect on people who were just above the poverty line. Thus, this One Pager summarises findings in Hamati (2019), which computes poverty rates for Syria in 2009, using a sample from that year's household income and expenditure survey. We try to fill a gap and compute poverty figures and profiles at the governorate basis in a country which was on its way to being engulfed in a very violent civil conflict two years later.

We follow the same technique used in the previous poverty studies for Syria, by building the food poverty line (FPL) in every governorate. However, we could not follow the same approach since our subsample lacks the quantities of food consumed by each decile of households in 2009. Therefore, we use the reference food baskets, derived from El-Laithy and Abu-Ismail (2005) to find adjusted food consumer price indices (CPIs) for 2009. We then multiply each of these adjusted food CPIs by its regional FPL, which was computed by Abu-Ismail, Abdel-Gadir and El-Laithy (2011), to determine the 2009 FPL. In the next step, we estimate the lower and upper poverty lines. Finally, we assess the welfare status of every household, using expenditure instead of income as a welfare measure.

The results show that the percentage of people living under the lower poverty line increased from 12.3 per cent in 2007 to 14.85 per cent in 2009, while the percentage of people living under the upper poverty line decreased from 33.6 per cent in 2007 to 29.4 per cent in 2009. We find also that rural areas are poorer than urban areas, and the gap between extreme poverty in rural and urban areas has increased. The poorest rural areas in 2009 were in Hama, Deir Azzor and Daraa governorates, while the poorest urban area was in Hassakeh. These figures seem reasonable, given the drought taking place in eastern Syria between 2006 and 2009 and the subsequent displacement movement towards the south of the country, for example Daraa, the governorate where the civil movement started in March 2011.

The poverty profile in 2009 is similar to what was found in 2004. Poor households are bigger and younger than non-poor ones. The occupational profile indicates that the lack of work opportunities does not provide a sufficient explanation for the welfare status, since the employment rate among poor individuals is just two percentage points lower than for those who are not poor. Nevertheless, the findings show that poverty rate is lowest among people working in the public sector (12.8 per cent), and the highest among those working in the informal sector (18.6 per cent). It is also notable that poverty rates are the lowest among employers (8 per cent) and the highest among those who are unemployed and who never worked before (19 per cent).

The gap is clearer when it comes to educational attainment. 60.5 per cent of people living in poor families do not obtain any educational certificate, while this rate is 46.9 per cent among those living in non-poor families. The proportion of people with a secondary school certificate is twice as high in non-poor families as in poor families; the proportion with a university degree is six times higher. The situation is the same regarding the educational attainment of the heads of households: 16.8 per cent of non-poor households are headed by at least a secondary school certificate-holder, compared with 6 per cent of poor families.

The analysis is incomplete, however and there is room for future investigations. Exploring poverty correlates, for example, is key to understanding the reasons behind poverty and the dynamics of change among Syrian households. Further, one may build on these figures and link them geographically to the incidence and intensity of the current conflict either directly or indirectly. This may pave the way to solving the puzzle that the World Bank (2015) discussed regarding the coexistence of steady economic progress and consequent violence in many countries of the Middle East and North Africa.

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The effects of Brazil's *Bolsa Família* programme on poverty and inequality: An assessment of the first 15 years

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Brazil's *Bolsa Família* programme is a conditional cash transfer: cash, rather than in-kind, transfers are made to families (not to individuals), with specific targeting (seeking to reach the poorest people) and tied to specific conditions (families must meet certain commitments, generally related to health and education outcomes, to receive their benefits).

These specific characteristics give rise to the following questions: How well targeted is the programme? What is its impact on poverty reduction? How does it contribute to reduce inequality? These questions received significant attention in the past, but in the last few years studies on these specific points have become scarce.

The recent release of complete income data from the National Household Sample Survey (*Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios*—PNAD) suggests a good opportunity to re-examine such issues. Ferreira de Souza et al. (2019) cover a broad period, from 2001 to 2015 (using data from the regular PNAD) and from 2016 and 2017 (using data from the continuous PNAD). Conditional cash transfers evolved significantly between 2001 and 2017: in the first two years, pioneering programmes could already be seen, such as the *Bolsa Escola* (school grant) and *Bolsa Alimentação* (food stipend), both of which were unified in 2003 into *Bolsa Família*, which went on to become one of the main social policies of the federal government.

Although *Bolsa Família* became a relatively inexpensive programme over the course of the period analysed (its budget represented less than 0.5 per cent of gross domestic product—GDP), its effects on poverty and inequality are very significant. This is largely due to its effective targeting of the poorest population: an analysis of the regular PNADs between 2001 and 2015 and of the continuous PNADs in 2016 and 2017 reveals that it is the transfer operated by the federal government that reaches poor people the most. Although social security and social assistance transfers tied to the minimum wage are well targeted, *Bolsa Família* does an even better job.

The programme's coverage among the poorest 20 per cent of people in the country has increased over time, reaching 60 per cent over the past few years. Its incidence coefficients—which measure how redistributive the first Real disbursed by the programme really is—have also become the most negative, which indicates higher progressivity. About 70 per cent of its resources reach the poorest 20 per cent of people (computed before programme transfers).

A comparison between extreme poverty rates computed before and after programme transfers shows that, since its consolidation, *Bolsa Família* reduces these rates by something between 1 and 1.5 percentage point (p.p.), which, in 2017, meant a reduction of around 15 per cent in the number of poor people and of more than 25 per cent in the number of extremely poor people. In 2017, programme transfers were responsible for 3.4 million people climbing out of extreme poverty, and 3.2 million people climbing out of poverty.

PNAD results for income inequality with and without *Bolsa Família* benefits show that the programme reduces the Gini coefficient by around 1–1.5 per cent. Dynamic decompositions indicate that the programme was responsible for almost 10 per cent of the Gini decrease between 2001 and 2015. If we consider only the period between 2001 and 2006, this contribution reaches almost 17 per cent. These numbers become even more impressive if we keep in mind that *Bolsa Família* represents a minute share—less than 0.7 per cent—of total income in the PNAD. Transfers linked to the minimum wage move around 10 times as many resources but have yielded only slightly better results, answering for 18 per cent of the fall in the Gini coefficient between 2001 and 2015, and only 13 per cent—therefore, less than *Bolsa Família*—between 2001 and 2006.

It can be said that the conclusions drawn from this paper reinforce the previous findings in the literature: the expansion and consolidation of the programme did not hinder its targeting efforts or lessen its importance in the fight against poverty.

The results also serve as inputs for discussions about possible future directions for *Bolsa Família*. The verification work regarding the eligibility of families, which has been carried out since 2005, has been improved over the years, which helps explain that, despite its expansion, the programme has remained well targeted. It is unlikely, however, that targeting can be significantly improved, given the complexities of the real world. Given the income volatility of vulnerable families, it would be advisable to increase the number of beneficiaries, even if this possibly leads to somewhat worse targeting. After all, considering the programme's current level of targeting, increasing its effectiveness in reducing poverty should be its main goal. In effect, excessive attachment to increasing targeting might even hinder the programme's role in the fight against poverty if, for example, it leads to the tightening of conditionalities and/or a decrease in the number of families covered.

The results also suggest that what keeps *Bolsa Família* from being more effective in the fight against poverty and inequality is the modest value of the benefits. Today, each family receives around BRL188, which—although representing an advance compared to the first years of the programme—is still too little to ensure a minimum income to the poorest people. As the programme's budget is still far too small compared to the universe of expenditures of the federal government, the decision regarding readjustments reflects political priorities more than specific fiscal issues.

Reference:

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Education, cooperative conflicts and child malnutrition—A gender-sensitive analysis of the determinants of wasting in Sudan

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Gender inequality in education is a strong predictor for child health deprivation across countries. Household-level studies seem to corroborate cross-national research: they find a link between mothers' education and child health outcomes. Yet authors disagree on whether education is a proxy for a woman's economic capacity, her abilities or her status. Further, previous studies disregard the fact that the effect of maternal education may depend on the level of paternal education. For example, a mother's level of education may only decrease her child's vulnerability if it is at least equal to her partner's education.

In a new study, Smidt (2019) investigates four possible channels through which maternal education may affect children's risk of wasting:

1. Mothers' knowledge on nutrition (ability and skills)
2. Mothers' status in the household (freedom of decision)
3. Mothers' socio-economic status (economic capacity)
4. Mothers' power relative to the father ('dominance' hypothesis).

Drawing on a sample of nearly 8,000 Sudanese children aged between 0 and 36 months, the study examines these pathways by means of a multivariate two-stage model. Sudan has one of the highest wasting rates globally, with 15.8 per cent of children being wasted in 2014. At the same time, the country ranked 139th out of 160 countries on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index in 2017, reflecting strong discrimination against women in the areas of politics, education and health. While Sudan is an extreme case, the study's findings have implications for comparable contexts characterised by extreme gender inequalities, political instability and conflict as well as authoritarian rule, such as Central African Republic, Chad and South Sudan.

The empirical analyses reveal that maternal education decreases the likelihood of wasting directly and via the quality of a child's diet after controlling for household wealth and food security. By contrast, paternal education has no effect on a child's diet or nutritional status. Mothers' and fathers' relative levels of education do not influence their children's nutritional outcomes. This points to two possible transmission channels of maternal education:

- First, maternal education is associated with greater information and knowledge on the dietary needs of children (channel 1 confirmed).
- Second, independent from income and wealth, education raises a mother's status in the household. This positively affects her child, as she has greater access to resources and freedom to make decisions. The effect of a mother's status is independent from that of the child's father, suggesting that education is not associated with dominance but greater autonomy for mothers (channel 2 confirmed; channels 3 and 4 not confirmed).

Overall, mothers have a far greater impact on children's nutritional outcomes than fathers. This is most likely because they are the primary caregivers in nearly all households in Sudan. The findings suggest that policy interventions should focus on empowering women through capacity-building and material support, as well as by enhancing their legal and perceived status in society to ensure greater decision-making freedom. The transition from the authoritarian Al-Bashir regime to a civilian government in the aftermath of often women-led protests in 2018–2019 may open a window of opportunity for strengthening the role of women in decision-making processes at all levels of Sudanese society.

Reference:

Smidt, L. 2019. "Education, Cooperative Conflicts and Child Malnutrition—a Gender-Sensitive Analysis of the Determinants of Wasting in Sudan." *IPC-IG Working Paper*, No. 186. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

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Gender and social protection in South Asia: An assessment of non-contributory programmes

Charlotte Bilo, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

Social protection has received increased attention as a measure to reduce poverty and vulnerability and achieve social transformation, including the reduction of gender inequality. Although South Asia has made remarkable progress in terms of human development in recent years, the region still faces significant gender disparities. Discriminatory social norms and structural factors lead to the neglect of girls' and women's rights in all areas of life. As a result, girls and women continue to face serious challenges in terms of health, nutrition, education and employment. Social protection systems that respond to these risks are, therefore, of utmost importance in the region.

Against this background, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) and UNICEF's Regional Office for South Asia have partnered to analyse the extent to which South Asia's non-contributory social protection programmes have been designed in a gender-sensitive way (Tebaldi and Bilo 2019). A total of 50 programmes were reviewed across the eight countries in South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In addition, the study aims to review the evidence regarding the programmes' impact on gender outcomes.

Programme objectives generally did not include specific gender considerations. Where they did, they are commonly related to barriers to education, maternity health, income-related risks or the vulnerabilities of single and widowed women. However, only limited evidence of the follow-up on progress in these areas was found in the programmes' monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Most countries have programmes that either target or prioritise women in general or pregnant women, mothers, widows and single women specifically. Yet few programmes were found to explicitly target adolescent girls, which represents a major gap given the particular vulnerabilities of this group. There are also still barriers to be addressed to raise people's awareness of these programmes.

A variety of payment mechanisms are used to deliver social protection benefits in the region, including banks, mobile payments and post offices. Existing assessments have shown that multi-layered and complex payment mechanisms often increase women's time burden.

Regarding the provision of complementary services, it is important not to reinforce gender roles through them, by also including fathers in activities related to child nutrition, for instance. However, this has rarely been found to be the case in South Asia.

- Though most programmes were found to provide gender-disaggregated information on beneficiaries, monitoring and evaluation needs to be strengthened to understand the impact (whether positive or negative) that programmes have on gender outcomes, not only in terms of health, education and nutrition, but also in terms of women's empowerment and gender norms.
- Social accountability mechanisms, including social audits, community monitoring and grievance redress mechanisms also need to be improved, as there were many reports of malfunctioning. Moreover, little evidence was found on how complaints and suggestions actually feed back into programme reform.
- Looking specifically at cash transfers, it can be observed that many programmes focus on maternity-related outcomes. Here, it is important that these programmes are accompanied by robust grievance redress systems that can capture women's complaints and feed them back into the supply side.
- In terms of public works progammes, quotas for women and vulnerable groups, provisions for equal wages, child-care and breastfeeding facilities and breaks as well as flexible working hours are all measures that can be strengthened.
- School feeding programmes need to become more accountable in terms of women's involvement in programme implementation. The expectation that mothers will provide supervision in programme implementation without compensation risks putting more pressure on a group that is already overburdened with unpaid care work.

The review of impact evaluations of the programmes analysed showed that maternal health is an area where demand-side programmes have shown to increase service utilisation; however, service quality also needs to be improved. Regarding food security, nutrition, education and employment, findings point to rather heterogeneous impacts, which vary considerably depending on beneficiaries' age and gender. Furthermore, very few studies looked specifically at programmes' impacts on gender norms and attitudes. The inclusion of more qualitative evidence could help gain a more nuanced understanding of how gender inequalities play out in different contexts.

In summary, the review has shown that despite some positive examples, governments in the region still have to invest significantly to make their social protection systems more gender-sensitive, and in turn advance gender equality in the region. In particular, the lack of comprehensive grievance and complaints mechanisms as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms need to be addressed. The assessment has also highlighted the importance of conducting gender assessments prior to implementation, as they help ensure that context-specific vulnerabilities and needs are included in the design of programmes.

Reference:
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A proposal for the unification of social protection benefits for children, youth and those vulnerable to poverty[1]

Sergei Soares, Letícia Bartholo and Rafael Guerreiro Osorio, Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea) and International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

Social protection policy in Brazil is a historically built patchwork of programmes that pay different values to people in the same situation, leaves many unprotected (in particular, 17 million children) and is fraught with duplications and other inefficiencies. This incongruous patchwork as a whole is only slightly progressive and has very modest effects on the income distribution.

While a wholesale revision of the 15 of per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) that comprises social protection in Brazil is beyond what can be attempted now, it is possible to impart greater rationality to the 0.8 per cent of GDP addressed to children and those vulnerable to poverty. The budgets of the *Bolsa Família, Abono Salarial* and *Salário-Família* programmes and the child income tax deduction add up to BRL52 billion (about USD15 billion) combined. With these resources, we propose a new transfer framework based on a universal child benefit and a targeted extreme poverty grant (Soares, Bartholo and Osorio 2019).

This framework would have the following guiding principles: (i) fiscal and social responsibility—not to spend what is not available, but at the same time not requiring poor people to bear the burden of fiscal adjustment; (ii) flexibility regarding social and demographic change; (iii) need measured by per capita family income and family defined as a household; (iv) use of the *Cadastro Único* as the sole poverty identification mechanism; (v) a single eligibility threshold; (vi) a benefit structure with no discontinuities; and finally (vii) a rule in law on adjustment for inflation.

While these principles allow a variety of benefit designs, we discuss only one possibility, comprising three grants (when it comes to social protection, the simpler the better).

The first would be a BRL45 universal child grant for all children and youth younger than 18 (paid through their families). The second benefit would be a BRL90 targeted and means-tested grant for children up to four years old, whose eligibility line would be BRL250 with an implicit marginal tax rate of 50 per cent for incomes exceeding this line. Finally, we would have a similarly-targeted BRL44 anti-poverty grant for individuals of all ages.

Whether our new benefit structure works better than the old one will depend upon its impacts upon poverty and inequality, as shown in the table.

Table
Impacts on inequality and poverty

Benefit	Inequality		Extreme poverty (BRL115.36)		Poverty (BRL333.90)	
	Gini	Δ Gini	%	Δ %	%	Δ %
Net income	0.5484		7.4	-	22.9	-
Present system	0.5374	0.0110	5.9	1.5	20.6	2.2
Base proposal	0.5287	0.0197	4.4	3.0	18.5	4.4

Source: National Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) (n.d.).

Compared to what we have today (the second line of the table), the simulated results are very positive. While today's four benefits reduce inequality by 1.1 Gini point, the new proposed benefit structures does almost twice as well: 1.97 Gini point. For poverty, the results are even better: a 2.2 percentage points against 4.4 percentage points for poverty and 1.5 percentage points as opposed to 3 percentage points for extreme poverty.

This would eliminate duplications, coverage gaps and regressive designs, thus leading to twice the impact on poverty and inequality, covering all children in Brazil without spending another dime. This is called common sense.

Reference:

Soares, S.; Letícia B. and R. G. Osorio. 2019. "A proposal for the unification of social protection benefits for children, youth and those vulnerable to poverty." IPC-IG *Working Paper* 187. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

Note:

1. The authors would like to recognise the excellent comments made by Luis Henrique Paiva and Graziela Ansiliero. This work has also benefited from comments and suggestions from staff and managers at the Ministry of Citizenship in workshops where preliminary versions of this proposal were discussed.

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Can gender statistics fill large gaps in the monitoring and accountability of the Sustainable Development Goals?

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Equality between women and men as beneficiaries of development, women's empowerment and the elimination of discrimination against them are fundamental values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Achieving gender equality requires the availability of robust evidence to shed light on differences and inequalities between the situations of women and men in all areas of life.

Gender statistics are those that: (a) explicitly call for disaggregation by sex and other relevant characteristics; and (b) although not disaggregated by sex, reflect the specific needs and opportunities of women and girls and the contributions they make to society.

Gender data provide the building blocks from which various gender statistics are created. Producing and disseminating gender statistics creates evidence-based 'gender knowledge' that helps policymakers develop evidence-based policy and measure policy effectiveness, to achieve progress towards gender equality.

A significant part of gender statistics is provided by national statistical agencies, government ministries and other sources. These institutions are mindful of their data collection, verification and harmonisation methods and have developed best practices to minimise the likelihood of gender biases in economic and social activities.

One of the requirements of the global indicator framework (GIF) for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is disaggregating SDG indicators by sex—where applicable—in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (United Nations Statistics Division 2014).

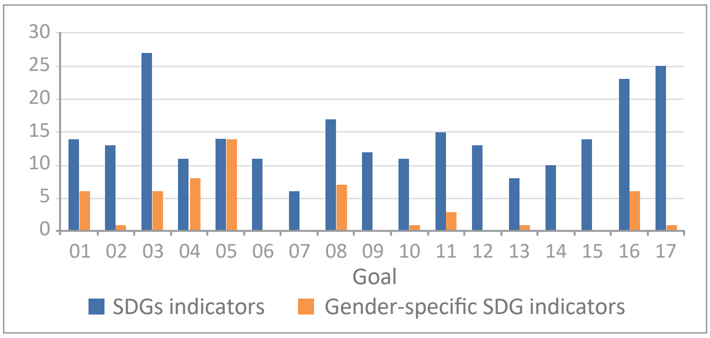
Disaggregating SDG indicators by sex covers many cross-cutting areas such as health, education, work, decision-making and access to resources and opportunities. Fifty-four of the 232 SDG indicators are gender-specific.

Unlike SDG 5 ("Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"), whose 14 indicators are all gender-specific, the number of gender-related indicators in the remaining 16 SDGs ranges from 0 to 8. In fact, six SDGs—6, 7, 9, 12, 14 and 15—have no gender-specific indicators.

The Inter-Agency Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS) has gone to great lengths in providing technical support to strengthen national statistical systems that measure, monitor and report on the gender-specific SDG indicators. Nevertheless, according to the 2019 refinement of the GIF for the SDGs, only 10 gender-specific indicators (less than 20 per cent of all gender-specific indicators regarding the SDGs) are classified as Tier I, 24 are Tier II, 17 are Tier III, and 3 indicators (namely, 4.1.1, 4.5.1 and 5.5.1) are multi-tier. Therefore, more than 80 per cent of the gender-specific SDG indicators have either: (a) a conceptually clear, well-established methodology and available standards, but data are not regularly produced by countries; or (b) no conceptually clear, well-established methodology or available standards, and data are not regularly produced by countries.

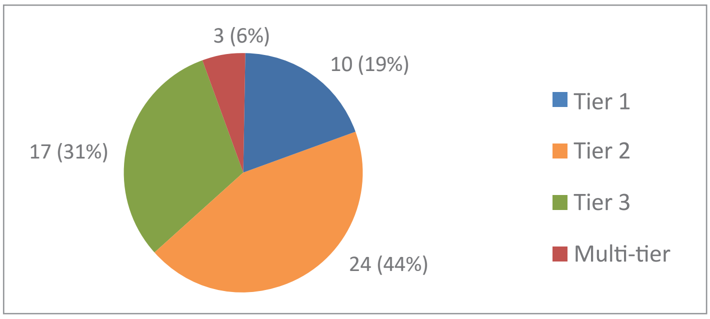
Developing, testing and establishing a solid methodology and standards for gender-specific SDG indicators will help fill significant gaps and contribute substantially to the improvement of the status of the GIF for the SDGs.

Figure 1
SDGs and gender-specific indicators



Source: United Nations (2019) and UN Women (2019).

Figure 2
Gender-specific SDG indicators, by tier



Source: UN Women (2019).

This calls for a dual-track approach. First, at the international level, prioritising the development, testing and establishment of a methodology/standards for gender-specific indicators. Second, at the national level, accelerating the production and dissemination of gender statistics. Fortunately, several countries have launched new, forward-looking national statistics strategies aligned with the 2030 Agenda, and national statistical offices are making significant efforts to identify gender data and statistics in their national contexts.

Sharing experiences is crucial to the success of ongoing efforts in gender statistics worldwide.

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Multidimensional poverty trends and horizontal inequalities: New insights from the G-CSPI database

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While poverty alleviation has always been at the heart of international development efforts, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development introduced two significant shifts. First, poverty is no longer defined strictly as a lack of sufficient income, but rather as deprivation in several life domains. Second, the Agenda looks beyond national averages, and calls for a reduction of poverty for different social groups. This requires broadening the perspective through which poverty is analysed, and tools that provide detailed information on the multiple deprivations suffered by men and women, in rural and urban contexts, as well as other groups.

This One Pager presents the main findings of a study conducted by the German Development Institute (*Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik*—DIE) (Burchi et al. 2019). The paper uses a new indicator of multidimensional poverty, the Global Correlation Sensitive Poverty Index (G-CSPI), which includes three dimensions: education, (decent) employment and health (Burchi et al. 2018). This indicator has various advantages compared with existing measures. Among them, it can be decomposed into the three components of poverty: incidence, intensity and inequality. The well-known Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is decomposable only into the first two. In addition, the G-CSPI is an individual-level, rather than household-level, measure of poverty; therefore, no assumptions have to be made with regard to the intra-household distribution of resources. The latter feature is crucial for a sound gender-disaggregated analysis.

The study by Burchi et al. (2019) had three main objectives: (1) to analyse aggregate and country-level trends in multidimensional poverty and compare them with those in income poverty; (2) to explore the evolution of differences in poverty between rural and urban areas over time; and (3) to assess gender disparities in poverty. The authors focus on the period starting from the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Their analysis relies on a total sample of 60 low- and middle-income countries for which data for multiple years are available. While the countries included in the study are located in different world regions, the largest coverage concerns sub-Saharan African, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

As for the first objective, both income poverty and multidimensional poverty, in aggregate terms, fell between 2000 and 2012. However, the decline in income poverty, in percentage terms, was twice as large as the decline in multidimensional poverty (-32 per cent vs. -15 per cent). There is also significant regional heterogeneity. Multidimensional poverty declined the most in Asia, which has been converging towards the relatively low levels of poverty witnessed in Latin America and Europe. In contrast, sub-Saharan Africa experienced very slow progress, which further distanced this region from the others. These findings point to the existence of poverty traps.

As for the second objective, the paper confirms that poverty is predominantly a rural phenomenon: all countries have higher levels of rural poverty than urban poverty. In aggregate terms, the rural G-CSPI is consistently more than four times higher than the urban G-CSPI. This shows that the urban bias theorised in the 1970s by Lipton (1977), according to which public resources are allocated disproportionally more in favour of urban compared to rural areas for political economy reasons, is still a major issue.

As for the third objective, no gender bias is found at the global level in 2000. This contrasts with the claim made at the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing that 70 per cent of poor people in the world were women. However, since 2000, multidimensional poverty declined more among men (-18.5 per cent) than among women (-15 per cent), indicating a minimal process of feminisation of poverty. This was triggered by the decline in employment poverty, which was much slower among women. Given that existing studies focusing on high-income or upper-middle-income countries concluded that there was no evidence for a feminisation of poverty, this finding provides a substantial contribution to the literature.

In summary, the study by Burchi et al. (2019) has shown the potential of the G-CSPI database to track country, regional and global progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1, to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. Furthermore, the findings have relevant policy implications. First, progress towards poverty eradication has not been as remarkable as suggested: poverty is still a big problem, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. This calls for renewed efforts in tackling the different forms of poverty, as policies successfully alleviating income poverty are not necessarily as effective in tackling multidimensional poverty. Second, the findings point to the need for new labour market policies in Africa, which could improve the quantity and the quality of employment, especially for women. Third, the study shows that most poor people still live in rural areas. Despite the current emphasis on urbanisation, a considerable part of poverty-alleviating efforts should still focus on improving the living conditions of rural households.

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Social protection preparedness and natural hazards: Latin America and the Caribbean

Rodolfo Beazley, Ana Solórzano, World Food Programme (WFP), and Valentina Barca

The policy interest in the use of social protection systems to respond to covariate shocks is on the rise in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and elsewhere. In the LAC region, the coverage and adequacy of social protection services and benefits varies from country to country, but, overall, systems have been expanded and strengthened in recent decades, and so has the administrative capacity behind them.

Social protection systems in LAC are intrinsically related to shock response, although they have been typically designed to deal with idiosyncratic shocks and economic crises (in addition to poverty reduction and support along the life cycle). Only more recently has social protection started to be used as a platform for providing support to people affected by natural hazards. Examples include Ecuador's response to the 2016 earthquake, Peru's response to the 2017 floods caused by the coastal *El Niño* phenomenon, Mexico's response to the 2017 earthquake, Dominica's response to Hurricane Maria in 2017, El Salvador's response to the protracted drought in 2018, and Chile's system for response to disasters which has been adopted frequently in recent years.

The premise is simple: social protection systems which provide support to people in need during normal times could also support those affected by covariate shocks.[1] However, this simple premise hides a number of important questions: Is social protection better placed than other sectors to provide assistance? Can social protection scale up in time? Would the support provided by social protection meet the needs of people affected by shocks? How does all this vary depending on the type and scale of the shock?

Recent experiences and studies (Beazley, Solórzano, and Barca 2019) have generated evidence and knowledge to start answering some of these (and other) questions. One of the key findings is that investment in preparedness is fundamental for timely and effective responses through social protection. Even simple response options such as giving top-ups to beneficiaries ('vertical expansions') are often delayed when protocols are not in place, when the legislation does not enable such responses, when programme staff are not properly trained, when the IT platforms are not adapted, when there are no data-sharing agreements, and when there is no political commitment to transfer funds through social protection.

The absence of preparatory measures tends to lead to slow decision-making processes in the aftermath of events, resulting in delays in the provision of support. For example, the recent social protection cash responses to the above-mentioned shocks in Ecuador, Peru and Dominica were almost entirely conceived and designed after the shocks. Despite the varying degrees of success, adequacy and timeliness of these experiences, responses could have been stronger with proper planning and preparedness.

Considering how important planning and preparedness is, even when using existing programmes and capacity, a few governments in the region have started investing in preparing their social protection systems.

In Peru, a ministerial resolution of August 2018 created an inter-ministerial working group sitting in the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS) to develop a national strategy for shock-responsive social protection. In addition, in February 2019 a decree modified the law that regulates the national risk management system (SINAGERD) and gave MIDIS the role of 'first responder' to emergencies.

In Ecuador, the government drafted a presidential decree establishing the role of social protection in emergency response and a manual of operations for humanitarian assistance. A registry of affected households with the related data collection mechanisms is also in the process of development.

In the Dominican Republic, a memorandum of understanding between the World Food Programme (WFP) and the government was signed in 2017 for capacity-strengthening and for channelling WFP's support through the government's social protection system in case of humanitarian crises. This is in addition to the use of social protection data from the *Sistema Único de Beneficiarios* (SIUBEN) for disaster risk preparedness (for more on the role of social assistance data for shock response, see Barca and Beazley (2019)).

In Colombia, the Department for Social Prosperity is currently developing a series of measures to make the protection system more responsive to natural disasters and also to provide support to the influx of Venezuelan migrants. These strategies include: the revision of programme protocols and guides, the implementation of a pilot of humanitarian assistance in cash (with the support of WFP), and the development of guidelines for the implementation of assistance programmes by international actors, which allows the sharing of common criteria and procedures.

In Dominica, WFP and UNICEF are currently supporting the government in the development of a management information system and standard operating procedures for the flagship cash transfer programme, taking into consideration the need for a flexible programme that can be used to respond to future shocks.

In the Caribbean, the first Regional Symposium on Shock-Responsive Social Protection[2] was convened by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency and WFP and hosted by the Government of Turks and Caicos Islands in June 2019. In this meeting, regional leaders, experts and practitioners emphasised the importance of preparing social protection systems to respond to and mitigate the impact of climate risks and shocks.

As evidence increasingly points to the benefits of using social protection systems to respond to shocks under certain circumstances and requisites, LAC governments and partners are starting to invest in preparing their policies and systems to ensure that such requisites are in place before an emergency occurs.

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Notes:

1. See a short video at: <https://youtu.be/rZY47LdSy_c>.
2. See: <shorturl.at/nKY09>.

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Targeting in the *Bolsa Família* programme from 2012 to 2018 based on data from the Continuous National Household Sample Survey

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Conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes are usually targeted—that is, they deliberately target the poorest members of the population. The evaluation of CCT targeting accuracy has always generated significant interest among researchers, policymakers and practitioners. Several studies from the early 2000s have found that the *Bolsa Família* programme is well targeted—compared to other national programmes and other CCTs worldwide—and contributes to reducing income inequality.

The recently released income data files from the Continuous National Household Sample Survey (*Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios Contínua*—PNAD) for the period between 2012 and 2018 allow us to assess whether the good performance observed in the early 2000s has endured over time, despite changes in management.

The main process to ensure the reliability of the means-testing approach adopted by the programme was established in 2005. In that year, the self-reported household income registered in the federal government's Single Registry for Social Programmes started being verified against other federal administrative records, especially the Annual Report of Social Information (*Relação Annual de Informações Sociais*—RAIS), an employer-informed database on formal-sector workers from the public and private sectors that includes individualised information on employee wages.

The results based on the new income data suggest that between 2012 and 2018, *Bolsa Família*'s share of beneficiaries in the first decile of net per capita household income (that is, those among the poorest 10 per cent in the country) increased by 6.3 percentage points (from 32.6 per cent to 38.9 per cent), and the share of beneficiaries among the poorest 20 per cent (between the first and second deciles of per capita household income) increased by 7.5 percentage points (from 58 per cent to 65.5 per cent). As the value of the benefit is higher for the poorest beneficiaries, the targeting of the majority of benefits is even better. This improvement seems to result from a continuous and incremental process, without significant fluctuations during the period analysed.

The capacity of *Bolsa Família* to reduce income inequality, which was already high at the start of the period, has also improved consistently. The programme's concentration coefficient had a non-trivial decrease of 6 percentage points between 2012 and 2018 (from -0.58 to -0.64), which demonstrates that additional investments in the programme will have a direct impact on the reduction of inequality in the country.

However, it is estimated that almost one in five of the poorest 10 per cent of people in Brazil are not receiving transfers from the programme.

The poorest regions of the country (Northeast and North) 'drive' the programme's good targeting performance, with the share of beneficiaries among the poorest population well above the national average. Interestingly, the poorest regions also present the fewest exclusion errors, suggesting that the trade-off between inclusion and exclusion errors does not happen at subnational levels. The result also challenges the hypothesis that state capacities (supposedly linked to their wealth) would improve results in the richer regions of the country, namely the South and Southeast regions.

A comparison of *Bolsa Família* outcomes against ASPIRE/World Bank indicators for selected countries in Latin America suggests that the programme not only has good targeting accuracy but is also a rare case in which that feature is combined with good coverage (a low exclusion rate).

Bolsa Família has some potential alternative routes to improve its design, depending on government priorities. Based on our findings and the past literature, we can say that if policymakers think it is still necessary to improve its targeting performance, adopting proxy means-testing as a targeting mechanism might be risky, ineffective and inefficient. Comparative analysis against other Latin American countries has shown that countries that adopt proxy means-testing for their CCTs do not achieve better targeting performance than *Bolsa Família*'s. Thus, maintaining the programme's current design and reinforcing its institutional apparatus may be a better option, particularly coupled with the regular adjustment of benefits and eligibility criteria (cut-off points) according to inflation rates. Finally, if exclusion errors are a concern, a third alternative could be the creation of a universal benefit for children with the inclusion of top-up benefits for poorer beneficiaries (Paiva, Sousa, and Nunes 2019).

Reference:

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The market value of public education

Sergei Soares, Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea) and International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

Public education is both an important public expenditure and a relevant in-kind transfer, often to the poorest households. It is usually provided free of cost to families. Therefore, it is important to evaluate this public effort adequately.

This One Pager is based on a paper (Soares 2019) that compares three methods to evaluate educational services and their distributive impact. For each method, the total value of public educational services was calculated by level, as well as their impact on income inequality, as measured by the Gini Index and Concentration Coefficient. Each method was then applied to Brazil, a country with good-quality, easily available educational, expenditure and income distribution data.

By far the most common approach in recent times has been to evaluate educational services according to their cost to the public sector—calculating how much it costs the State to provide them, and dividing that cost evenly among all families with children in the public education system.

The second method is to evaluate educational services using the labour market as the measure of their worth. The value of an additional year of education is calculated based on how much more individuals will earn if they study for an additional year.

The third method is to use the market for private educational services to measure the value of public education services. This involves matching private educational expenditures, paid for by students or their parents, with equivalent public educational services. The two are matched using test scores: this approach presupposes that test score data are a good proxy for quality of schooling.

All three approaches have conceptual problems. However, they are somewhat complementary, and looking at the results from all three may provide a reasonably complete picture of the distributive and welfare impacts of education.

First method: Schooling is worth what it costs the State to provide it—The advantages of this method are: (i) it is easy to do and understand; (ii) data requirements are modest—all that is needed is per student expenditures by level; and (iii) it does not change the size of the welfare budget: the benefits of public education are, by definition, equal to the taxes used to finance it.

However, there are several shortcomings. First, it assumes that all students are receiving the same public education, which is clearly not the case even if the State spends the same on each student, which is usually not the case. Second, it is not coherent with the theory of provision of public goods, according to which the welfare value of a public good is the sum of the marginal utilities of all its users.

Second method: Schooling is worth what the labour market says it is worth—The idea is to take the difference in present values of lifetime earnings of men and women with and without an additional year of schooling as the value of that year of schooling. The main advantage of this method is that it ties the value of schooling to its real-world impacts. This allows for welfare-enhancing public schooling, especially if labour market returns are elevated, as is still the case in Brazil.

The three main disadvantages of this method are: (i) results depend on an arbitrary parameter (discount rate): there is no controversy-free way to calculate what it should be for a given country or person; (ii) it reduces the impacts of education to its future income component—many educators maintain that education has intrinsic value, independent of its effect on other desirable outcomes; and (iii) it cannot be used to value pre-school education with present data, since household surveys contain only the highest educational level completed; therefore, we do not know how much additional income is generated from having attended pre-school.

Third method: Schooling is worth what the private education market says it is worth—The third method is to use the private education market to attribute a value to public education. One possibility is simply to attribute the value of private education of the same level and in the same area to public schooling; however, private schools are often considered better than public ones. In the absence of a better systematic method, we consider quality as being measured solely by standardised test scores.

The advantage of this method is that it is anchored in what people are willing to pay for education—it will work anywhere public and private schooling coexist. Its main disadvantage is the existence of private and public education conditional on test scores. The second disadvantage is empirical: many developing countries and even many developed ones do not have good standardised test data. Nevertheless, tests such as those developed by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and others allow this method to be applied in various countries, at least at some grade levels.

Results—The results from the three methods are not far from each other; however, the labour market approach requires high discount rates to yield similar results to the other two. The cost and education market methods yield similar estimated values, which should not come as a surprise, since the private system is heavily influenced by the public schooling supply, as they use many of the same inputs (especially teachers).

All methods provide similar distributive results ex ante because the beneficiary children are roughly in the same position in the income distribution.

Regardless of the valuation method used, our conclusion is that the value of public education in Brazil is close to 6 per cent of household income and is quite distributive, reducing inequality by between 3 and 4 Gini points.

Reference:
Soares, Sergei. 2019. "The Market Value of Public Education—a Comparison of Three Valuation Methods." *CEQ Working Paper*, No. 71. New Orleans, LA: Tulane University.

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Avoiding the poverty pandemic: The potential of the *Bolsa Família* programme and the Single Registry as answers to COVID-19[1]

Luis Henrique Paiva, Pedro H. G. Ferreira de Souza, Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea), Letícia Bartholo and Sergei Soares, Ipea and International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

The COVID-19 pandemic presents unprecedented challenges to the Brazilian social protection system. A new global recession is almost certain. We do not know how long the social isolation measures will last. We also do not know how much strain the country's Universal Health System (*Sistema Único de Saúde*—SUS) will come under.

Informal workers, unemployed people and poor households are particularly exposed to the combination of pandemic and recession. We understand the fiscal restrictions that haunt the Brazilian State, but given the probability of catastrophic consequences from the social point of view, our recommendation is to increase the coverage of both the country's flagship cash transfer programme, *Bolsa Família*, and the emergency benefit to protect vulnerable households (below half a minimum wage per capita—BRL522.50) who are not eligible for *Bolsa Família* but are registered in the Single Registry of Social Programmes (*Cadastro Único*). In the worst-case scenario, even if the social risks related to the consequences of the pandemic are overestimated, the additional expenditure would be almost entirely temporary and would not reach 1.5 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP)—a value that is lower than its annual social security deficit.

In this context, we recommend the following measures:

- Include all eligible households already enrolled in the Single Registry in the *Bolsa Família* programme (estimated at 1.7 million households), and suspend verification and recertification processes until the end of the health crisis.
- Adjust *Bolsa Família*'s eligibility thresholds and benefits by approximately 29 per cent, so that poverty and extreme poverty lines can recoup the same real value they had at the start of the programme, in January 2004.
- The government should create a temporary emergency benefit, with an expected duration of six months but with the possibility of extension, of BRL450 per household, to all households with up-to-date information in the Single Registry and per capita income under half a minimum wage. The emergency benefit would be paid to both households that already benefit from *Bolsa Família* (which would continue to receive the standard benefits) and to non-beneficiary households with an income below the threshold of half a minimum wage per capita.

With this emergency benefit, the poorest 30 per cent of the population of Brazil would receive a minimum monthly income of BRL450 per household. *Bolsa Família* beneficiary households, combining the basic benefit and the emergency benefit, would receive an income of almost BRL690 per month per household. After the end of the emergency benefit, beneficiary households would continue to receive, on average, something close to BRL240 per household (or BRL77 per capita), which is 27 per cent higher than what they currently receive.

These changes would involve an increase of BRL68.6 billion in welfare transfer expenditures in 2020. However, over 80 per cent of the additional costs would be due to the temporary emergency benefits; therefore, the budget impact for 2021 would be very modest—only BRL11.6 billion, or less than 0.2 per cent of Brazil's 2019 GDP.

If the crisis extends for longer than initially expected and/or the economic recovery after the pandemic is slow, we strongly recommend that the emergency benefit be extended for as long as necessary to overcome the social crisis.

Finally, even if these recommendations have tried to avoid the increased demand for registration at social assistance reference centres (CRAS) so as to avoid mass gatherings, the economic losses resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak will inevitably lead to an increase in poverty and greater demand from the population to be included in the Single Registry, and for the support of local social assistance services.

However, the plight of social assistance in the country is dramatic. The Ministry of Citizenship estimates that to keep services running under a normal health scenario, the annual resources needed would add up to around BRL1.7 billion for basic protection and BRL814 million for special protection. However, from 2019 to 2020, the funding for basic social protection decreased by about BRL800 million—from BRL1.8 billion to BRL1.03 billion. Considering the golden rule and funding conditioned on the approval of a draft bill, this value falls even further, to BRL687 million.

The same is occurring with the special protection provided by the Unified Social Assistance System (SUAS), which is also responsible for caring for people living on the street and in shelters, whose budget resources fell from BRL637 million in 2019 to BRL518 million in 2020. Given the same limitations noted above, the value is limited even further, to BRL345 million.

The social assistance sector is responsible for sheltering people living on the street, and even for paying for the burial of individuals whose families are unable to afford a proper service. It is important to highlight that successfully implementing the suggestions for emergency and increased benefits proposed here hinges on increasing the available budget for social assistance services.

Considering the lagging purchasing power of current *Bolsa Família* benefits and the economic and social risks resulting from the pandemic, it seems a small price to pay to ensure a minimum level of well-being for the country's poorest people.

Reference:

Paiva, L. H., P. H. G. Ferreira de Souza, L. Bartholo, and S. Soares. 2020 (forthcoming). "Avoiding the poverty pandemic: the potential of the *Bolsa Família* programme and the Single Registry as answers to COVID-19." IPC-IG Policy Research Brief, No. 67. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

Note:

1. This One Pager is based on a technical brief (Paiva et al. 2020). All data are fully referenced there <https://bit.ly/2Uy67yZ>.

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Review of national maternity and paternity policies and support for breastfeeding in the workplace in Latin America and the Caribbean

International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) and UNICEF—Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

Maternity, paternity and parental leave, as well as policies to support breastfeeding in the workplace, are a fundamental part of comprehensive social protection systems and early childhood development strategies. The positive effects of these policies in terms of children's health, socio-emotional and cognitive outcomes are well established in the literature. In addition, when involving both parents more equitably, these policies can play an important role in supporting gender equality in the workplace and at home. Finally, they contribute to the fulfilment of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[1]

One way in which these policies achieve their results is through their effect on breastfeeding, as they are crucial to enable women to breastfeed according to the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): six months of exclusive breastfeeding and, subsequently, complementary breastfeeding until the child reaches 2 years of age. The several benefits of breastfeeding are well known, including reducing the risk of acute and chronic diseases. In fact, it is estimated that breastfeeding can save the lives of 823,000 children under 5 years of age worldwide every year. Likewise, for every USD1 invested in breastfeeding, USD35 is generated in economic returns. Additionally, support for breastfeeding in the workplace is considered a 'business case', contributing to the reduction of absenteeism and retention of employed women.

In this context, UNICEF's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) have developed a study[2] which compares current leave policies and policies supporting breastfeeding in the workplace in 24 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, according to the standards established by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and international best practices. The analysis shows that there are still significant gaps in the region.

Main findings of the study:

- Parental leave and breastfeeding rooms generally only benefit formal workers, which means that only a small part of workers in the LAC region are covered. About 54.3 per cent of women and 52.3 per cent of men in LAC work in the informal sector.
- Only 15 countries in the region regulate a minimum of 14 weeks of maternity leave as established by ILO Convention 183, and only 5 countries reach the 18 weeks recommended by the ILO.
- Only Brazil,[3] Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela provide eight days or more of paternity leave. Parental leave is only offered in Chile, Cuba and Uruguay.
- Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Jamaica and Nicaragua still depend on the employer to finance maternity leave, which can lead to discrimination against women in the labour market.
- Almost all countries in the region offer paid daily breaks of a minimum of 60 minutes to breastfeed or express milk in the workplace during the first six months. However, only Chile allows mothers to take breaks for up to two years.
- On the other hand, Belize, Cuba, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica and Suriname have not yet enacted legislation regarding breastfeeding rooms in the workplace.
- The available figures show that the total number of breastfeeding rooms is still very limited, reaching an average of less than 100 rooms in the countries with information available, except for El Salvador and Peru (1,600 and 1,467, respectively).
- Few laws specify the financial support from the State to breastfeeding rooms, which may discourage hiring workers with family responsibilities.
- Likewise, low awareness of rights on the part of workers, and inspection and monitoring deficits of the State are important obstacles for these policies to reach greater coverage and improve in quality.

Recommendations for countries in LAC

Leave policies: (i) Expand the coverage of leave, and invest in non-contributory maternity benefits for those who are not yet covered by conventional leave policies; (ii) implement measures such as 'use it or lose it' quotas for paternity and parental leave to encourage men to participate in childcare; (iii) increase maternity leave to a minimum of 14 weeks in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras and Jamaica; (iv) increase advocacy efforts to extend maternity leave to 18 weeks in Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Uruguay, Peru, Panama and Suriname, accompanied by studies on possible financing options; and (v) ideally, leave should be financed through a mandatory social insurance system, so that employers do not assume financial risks exclusively.

Policies supporting breastfeeding in the workplace: (i) Legislate the right to breastfeeding breaks and rooms, and promote similar policies for women in the informal sector through, for example, a shared breastfeeding room for several establishments; (ii) extend the current period of entitlement to breastfeeding breaks to two years; and (iii) consider tax reductions or direct government contributions for companies that establish breastfeeding rooms.

Monitoring and evaluation: (i) Improve the reporting and consolidation of comparative data on the coverage of these policies; and (ii) strengthen inspection mechanisms through, for example, independent commissions that monitor compliance with the relevant law.

Notes:

1. Specifically, SDGs 1.3, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
2. IPC-IG and UNICEF LACRO. 2020. "*Maternidad y paternidad en el lugar de trabajo en América Latina y el Caribe — políticas para la licencia de maternidad y paternidad y apoyo a la lactancia materna*" Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.
3. This applies only to companies registered in the *Programa Empresa Cidadã* (*Corporate Citizenship Programme*) and the public sector.

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International trade, trade policy and foreign investment: Preliminary considerations on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis

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The world is facing a period of great tribulation as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, and international trade is an obvious target, whether as a result of decreased global demand for goods (and also the likely effects on the price of trade goods, especially commodities) or as a result of supply capacity restrictions in many sectors and countries due to social isolation and lockdown measures. In a globalised world, marked by the significance of global value chains in major industrial sectors, there is considerable interconnection between the productive structures of various countries, whose functioning depends on the free flow of goods (and people) across national borders, which are currently subject to strict control.

This One Pager aims to summarise the findings of Oliveira et al. (2020), which provides a preliminary assessment of the impacts of the current health crisis on international trade in goods and discusses its effects on trade policy and on direct foreign investments, including the issue of global value chains.

This exercise naturally has a rather speculative character—given that the current health emergency has characteristics that have not been seen for the last 100 years, and there is still much uncertainty regarding the duration of the crisis—and limited reach, given that there are no doubt a myriad other elements that merit analysis

Authors estimate a decrease in 20 per cent in global trade in 2020 in the basic scenario, with a 2 per cent degree in global GDP. In the optimistic scenario, the decrease would be of 15 per cent and in the pessimistic scenario, of 25 per cent. In 2021, the scenarios indicate that trade might grow by 4 per cent, 7 per cent or 10 per cent.

The combination of scenarios for 2020 and 2021 resulted in nine possible results for the evolution of global trade. In the best scenario, global trade would suffer a cumulative decrease of 6.5 per cent over the two-year period, and in the worst scenario, of 22 per cent. In most cases, the cumulative decrease would be somewhere between 11 per cent and 20 per cent.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic comes at a delicate time for trade relations between countries, marked by many kinds of trade disputes—such as the one between the United States and China. These disputes are, in truth, a reflection of structural movements associated with a growing lack of belief in the importance of multilateral institutions and in the benefits of globalisation, especially for important groups of workers and corporations.

It is possible to predict that, once the health crisis is over, the global economy—and Brazil in particular—will face an environment that is more prone to various kinds of restrictions to trade flows and perhaps also to direct foreign investment flows.

Reference:

Oliveira, I. H. Kume, F. Ribeiro, R. Baumann, G. A. Oliveira, L. F. Giesteira, L. F. Tironi and A. P. Alves. 2020. "International trade, trade policy and foreign investment: preliminary considerations on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis". IPC-IG Policy Research Brief No. 68. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

Notes:

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2. Coordinator of International Economic Studies at Ipea.
3. Researcher at Ipea.

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Overview of social protection systems in South Asia

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A recent study by Arruda et al. (2020) provides an analysis of 51 non-contributory social protection programmes led by central governments in the eight countries of South Asia. The sample captures the flagship initiatives of national systems, providing a broad overview of current relevant social protection programmes in the region.

Bangladesh has the most programmes (11), followed by Nepal (10), India (7), Maldives (7), Sri Lanka (6), Afghanistan (4), Pakistan (4) and Bhutan (2). The analysis indicates that the number of programmes does not necessarily represent the quality or reach of the protection.

Larger countries seem to cover more groups under each programme, while smaller countries cover fewer groups per programme. The evidence suggests that larger countries have the financial and administrative capacities to run comprehensive initiatives. They can leverage economies of scale by focusing on fewer and broader programmes, while small countries can coordinate multiple programmes comparatively easily, each targeting a different group.

The most common programme type are unconditional cash transfers, followed by conditional cash transfers, reflecting their overall popularity in policymaking and their simple set-up and complementarity (giving rise to Cash Plus initiatives). Training and sustainable livelihoods programmes are scarce: they could be combined with the more prevalent cash-for-work and food-for-work schemes. Social protection systems in South Asia might be neglecting the working-age population, which is expected to grow. This is relevant considering the concerning levels of unemployment and low participation in the labour market in the region.

Most programmes concentrate on a single target group and combine two targeting mechanisms. The most common targeting mechanism is categorical targeting, followed by direct or proxy means-testing or geographic criteria. Being poor or a child is most frequently considered a prerequisite for programme eligibility, while women and persons with disabilities are often only given priority in case demand for programme enrolment exceeds capacity.

Around a quarter of the programmes implement conditionalities. Notably, all conditional programmes in the sample employ categorical targeting, which makes sense, as most require compliance with conditionalities related to life-cycle-specific enablers (i.e: education and maternity).

Food distribution programmes reach the most beneficiaries, either directly or indirectly. However, cash is the predominant type of benefit, which reflects the popularity of unconditional and conditional cash transfers. Most frequently, the programmes found in the sample use banks or payment points.

The study provides some practical recommendations, including:

- Afghanistan, Maldives and Pakistan should roll out flagship school feeding programmes.
- Afghanistan should experiment with more specialised, streamlined and easier-to-manage interventions targeting individuals and households, in addition to already existing local development funds.
- Nepal could benefit from an institutionalised, permanent case management to issue missing documentation to applicants, or at least provide specific support.
- Afghanistan, Bhutan, Pakistan and, to a lesser extent, Maldives should consider launching flagship initiatives specifically targeting pregnant and lactating women.
- Programmes targeting unmarried women could supplement cash benefits with additional services to enable productive inclusion and overall social empowerment.
- India could emphasise national income-based poverty measures as a benchmark for the selection process of its programmes, preferably in combination with existing criteria and measures.
- Productive inclusion programmes should be further stimulated in the region.
- Conditional cash transfers aimed at improving educational outcomes, which are very common in Bangladesh, should supplement the cash benefit with additional training and services to better achieve desirable behavioural outcomes.
- Conditionalities that potentially compromise the agency of beneficiaries over their sexual and reproductive choices (or which hold them accountable for decisions over which they might not have much influence), such as Bangladesh's Secondary Education Stipend Programme (SESP), should be avoided if other, less invasive alternatives are available.
- The 'soft conditionality' approach used by Bangladesh's SESP could be a better approach than hard conditionalities if applied to less controversial requirements.
- Countries with good mobile phone and internet network coverage, such as India, should experiment further with mobile-based payment mechanisms.
- Nepal and other countries that deliver payments through scheduled pay points should systematically promote care and referral to other, complementary programmes. Nepal should also strive to expand the coverage of its universal child grant as quickly as possible.
- Sri Lanka should consider improving the benefit level of its flagship cash transfer, the *Divineguma* programme (*Samurdhi*), and should consider rolling out some kind of universal child benefit.

Reference:
Arruda, P., Y. Markhof, I. Franciscon, and C. Bilo. (Forthcoming). *Overview of non-contributory social protection programmes in South Asia from a child and equity perspective.* Brasilia and Kathmandu: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia.

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Child-sensitive social protection in South Asia—Assessing programmes' design features and coverage of children

Charlotte Bilo, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

An ever-growing body of research has been documenting the positive effects of social protection programmes, not only regarding the reduction and even prevention of monetary poverty and vulnerability, but also the improvement of other human development indicators, including children's health and education outcomes. However, to this end, it is essential that age- and gender-specific vulnerabilities are considered as early as at the design stage. For example, social protection policies can foster synergies with other basic services in the areas of health, nutrition and education, which are key in combating multidimensional child poverty.

Child poverty remains a critical issue in the South Asia region, calling for comprehensive social protection systems. A recent study by the IPC-IG and the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) (Arruda et al. 2020) has analysed the design features of 51 government-led programmes in the eight countries[1] of the region. The analysis included an assessment of the child-sensitivity of the programmes, as well as an estimation of the number of children covered by them. Regarding the child-sensitivity assessment, programmes were analysed regarding whether:

- they explicitly target children and pregnant/lactating women;
- they are designed to increase children's access to education, health and/or nutrition services; and
- benefits increase with the number of household members/children (in the case of cash transfer programmes).

The assessment found that more than half (55 per cent) of the programmes mapped have at least one of the abovementioned features. Afghanistan is the only country for which no child-sensitive programme was mapped. The most common child-sensitive design feature in the region is the direct targeting of children. However, most programmes target school-age children: children under the age of 6 are targeted less often. This is especially important, as early childhood is the period in life when the brain develops most rapidly, and the foundations are laid for health and well-being throughout the life cycle.

The second most common type of child-sensitive programmes are those that support children's access to education, such as scholarships, as well as cash transfer programmes whose benefits are paid per child or which increase with the number of children in the household (15 programmes each). Programmes that pay a fixed amount per household consider the higher expenditure levels of larger families (and of older children). Moreover, all countries in the region (except Afghanistan) also have at least one programme that supports children's access to health care, such as non-contributory health insurance or cash transfer programmes that offer health visits for mothers. Programmes with linkages to nutrition interventions are quite rare, except for some school feeding programmes. This is particularly concerning given the high malnutrition rates in the region.

Regarding the programmes' child coverage rates, it is important to keep in mind that programme coverage is often only reported in terms of households or total beneficiaries, and not disaggregated by age. Based on the coverage figures reported on average household size and the proportion of children relative to the population in the country, the authors estimated the number of children covered by the respective programmes.[2] Except for a few large-scale programmes, such as *Husnuvaa Aasandha* in the Maldives (a quasi-universal health insurance scheme) and India's Targeted Public Distribution System, which cover an estimated 68.4 per cent and 65.3 per cent of all children in the country, respectively, the large majority of programmes each cover less than 10 per cent of all children. This is particularly troublesome considering the large number of children living in multidimensional poverty and thus in need of social protection in the region.

Recommendations

Given the findings detailed above, countries in the region should consider the following:

- have more programmes focused on children under the age of 6;
- strengthen programmes' linkages to other services, especially nutrition interventions;
- conduct in-depth assessments of existing programmes to decide which have the most potential to be scaled up, and study the feasibility of new programmes;
- scale up existing programmes and/or introduce new ones; and
- enhance child/family allowances to reach all vulnerable children, as cash transfers have been proven critical to improving many indicators of children's well-being, including health and nutrition.

Reference:
Arruda, P., Y. Markhof, I. Franciscon, and C. Bilo. (Forthcoming). *Overview of non-contributory social protection programmes in South Asia from a child and equity perspective.* Brasilia and Kathmandu: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia.

Notes:
1. Countries include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
2. For a more detailed description of the methodology used, see Chapter 4 of Arruda et al. (Forthcoming).

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Simulating the impact on labour earnings and per capita household income of a Brazilian government programme to protect jobs from the COVID-19 pandemic

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Social distancing strategies to control the spread of COVID-19 are necessary to save lives but may have severe consequences for livelihoods. Many jobs are at risk either because they are not compatible with remote work or because they are directly affected by negative demand shocks. To protect jobs and incomes, countries are implementing wage subsidies and/or facilitating access to unemployment benefits.

To avoid the widespread destruction of jobs in the formal sector during the pandemic, the Brazilian government has introduced the Emergency Income and Jobs Maintenance Programme. It allows for individual agreements between employers and employees to temporarily reduce contractual working hours by 25 per cent, 50 per cent or 70 per cent or institute a furlough (temporary layoff). For workers who earn over three and under 11 minimum wages, individual agreements are limited to a 25 per cent reduction in working hours. Other arrangements are subject to a collective contract or convention.

In all cases, the government partially replaces the forgone monthly earnings. For reduced working hours, the employee receives a wage proportional to their working hours from the employer, plus a benefit from the government corresponding to an unemployment benefit proportional to the reduction in working hours. Furloughed workers receive the full unemployment benefit, regardless of fulfilling the usual eligibility criteria.

Reduced working hours can be adopted for two months, while furloughing can be adopted for three. After this period, the employer must retain the employee for the same time as the scheme lasted or pay a fine. One of the advantages of preserving jobs during a crisis is to avoid the costs of job-seeking and hiring and training new staff, so that the retention of existing matches and preservation of specific human capital can help accelerate economic and productivity recovery.

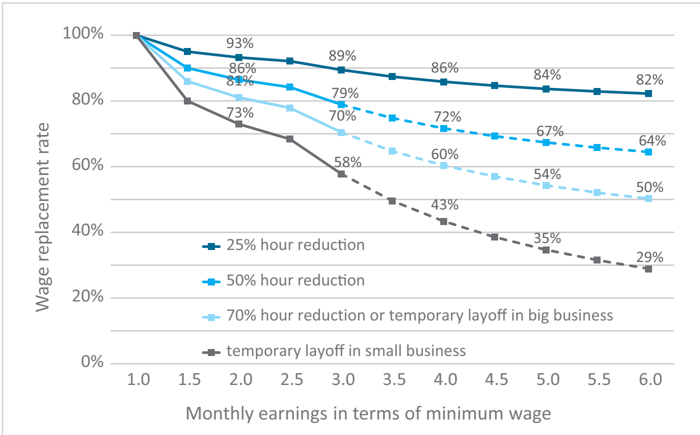
The programme is also important for preserving employees' monthly earnings during the pandemic. The eligibility criteria of the emergency programme are quite flexible, allowing some workers currently ineligible for regular unemployment insurance to have access to unemployment benefit in case of dismissal. Thus, the programme preserves not only jobs but also earnings. As the capped unemployment benefit is used to determine the benefit level, the share of forgone wages that is replaced is lower for those with higher wages, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Protecting more low-wage employees is important to guarantee resources to those in most need. Workers with higher wages will have to rely on other incomes and might be less likely to keep their job. About 70 per cent of formal employees earn two minimum wages or less. For these workers, Figure 1 shows that the wage replacement is always above 70 per cent in any scenario. However, for employees earning three minimum wages, the replacement rate might be as low as 58 per cent. Even lower replacement rates are possible above three minimum wages, although these scenarios would only happen under collective agreements, which might require an additional payment from the employer.

To assess the impact of the programme on household income, Costa and Reis (2020) simulate counterfactual household incomes considering that only formal wages change. As expected, the affected household incomes in the lowest quintile are maintained the most in any scenario. The largest decline among affected households is around 32 per cent and is observed in the richest quintile, in the most extreme scenario (temporary layoff from small firms). Changes in household income are not so pronounced among those at the bottom and the middle of the income distribution, because 70 per cent of formal employees receive less than two minimum wages, and the replacement rate is higher for them. For households in the top quintile, other incomes play an important role in the simulations. Nevertheless, these incomes might also be volatile during the crisis.

Thus, the Brazilian Emergency Income and Jobs Maintenance Programme is an important tool to preserve jobs, wages and household incomes, especially for low-wage employees.

FIGURE 1



Note: Solid lines represent schemes that might be established through individual agreements. Dashed lines represent situations that might be established through collective bargaining, with the participation of unions.

Source: Author's elaboration.

Reference:

Costa, J., and M. Reis. 2020 (forthcoming). "Uma análise da MP 936 sobre os rendimentos dos trabalhadores e a renda domiciliar per capita." Nota Técnica. Brasília: Institute for Applied Economic Research.

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Compliance with WTO rules in controversies involving public Health, environmental protection and other 'exceptions'

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When a World Trade Organization (WTO) member country is accused by another of implementing discriminatory trade measures, the affected country can ultimately trigger the WTO's Dispute Settlement Mechanism (DSM) to evaluate whether there was indeed a breach of multilateral trade rules. An example of a discriminatory trade measure is the imposition of unjustified tariffs on the importation of certain products made by a WTO member country. In certain cases, however, WTO members may bypass multilateral trade rules in a legitimate and justified manner. Those exceptions are indicated in Article XX of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT).

For instance, during the 1990s and 2000s, Brazil imposed restrictions on the importation of used and retreaded tyres[1] from the European Union (EU) based on the premise of protecting public health and the environment (tyres discarded inappropriately can accumulate rainwater and become a breeding ground for the reproduction of the mosquito that transmits dengue fever). When challenged at the WTO by the EU, Brazil invoked GATT's Article XX to try to justify its actions and establish compliance with WTO rules. The Article refers to an array of exceptional cases including, for instance, importation of gold and silver, and measures to protect public health, the environment and heritage of artistic, historical or archeological value, among others.

A recent scientific publication (Cezar 2020) explores the motives why certain disputes invoking GATT's Article XX take longer than others to be resolved. Certain controversies reach a conclusion in less than a year, while others drag on for a number of years. An analysis of the duration of trade disputes helps understands how defendants (countries challenged in the context of a WTO dispute) respond to DSM rulings. The publication is the first of its kind to explore, systematically and from a political perspective, disputes invoking GATT's Article XX. Another distinctive characteristic is that the publication uses set theory to explore the combination of conditions explaining the duration of 'exceptional' disputes: certain explanatory elements are useful only in association with other variables of interest.

From the standpoint of the international political economy literature on WTO compliance, the article explores the explanatory power of four variables. The first has to do with the mobilisation of civil society organisations (CSOs). The publication theorises that the greater the mobilisation of CSOs, the longer it takes until a country complies with WTO decisions involving GATT's Article XX. The second has to do with the domestic institutional framework: given that compliance with international rules can involve some measure of domestic policy change, the greater the number of institutional actors capable of vetoing such changes, the longer it takes until an agreement is reached among the interested parties.

These two elements are mostly domestic (from the perspective of the defendant country). There are, nevertheless, international variables that may help explain the duration of trade disputes. Therefore, the third explanatory variable concerns the bargaining power differentials among the disputant countries. Going back to the example provided in the first paragraph, to the extent that Brazil's trade is highly dependent on the EU, the Brazilian authorities may fear retaliation if European authorities disagree with the decisions taken in the framework of a trade dispute. Therefore, the Brazilian government may be prompted to take decisions in line with EU preferences.

The fourth element has to do with how serious a potential breach of multilateral rules is. The more serious the potential breach, the longer a dispute tends to last, given that the defendant needs to deal with a large number of accusations that may take years to be settled.

The results of the publication point to the complex and multifaceted character of disputes involving GATT's Article XX. There is no single explanatory element that individually determines the length of 'exceptional' trade disputes. In most cases, the length of disputes is explained by institutional characteristics associated with either the level of CSO mobilisation or the level of bargaining asymmetry of the disputants. The seriousness of the accusations (fourth explanatory variable) does not behave as expected and deserves more attention in future research. The analysis presents certain limitations, but the results are acceptable given the complexity of the topic.

One of the most interesting conclusions of the publication is associated with the mobilisation of CSOs. The results indicate that when CSOs are highly politically active, power asymmetries do not explain the length of a dispute involving GATT Article XX. Political actors may decide not to invest resources in certain fights when they consider that their chance of success is too slim. The results indicate that CSOs can influence WTO compliance, even when disputes are against powerful countries and even in the context of an organisation such as the WTO, one severely criticised for its democratic deficit. That influence depends, nonetheless, on the mobilisation of CSOs and on the institutional context at play in the defendant countries.

Reference:

Cezar, Rodrigo Fagundes. 2020. "Compliance in 'exceptional' disputes. A set-theoretical approach." Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional 63(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0034-7329202000103>. Accessed 11 May 2020.

Note:

1. Companies may decide to import used tyres at a relatively low price to retread and resell them domestically at a higher price.

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Building climate resilience through social protection in Brazil: The *Garantia Safra* public climate risk insurance programme

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Exacerbated climate risks disproportionately affect poor and vulnerable citizens in the global South. When left unprotected, they are likely to fall deeper into poverty. Rural populations engaged in smallholder agriculture are particularly affected as climate extremes become more frequent and severe. Due to their dependency on the climate, extreme events such as heavy rains and droughts have long-term impacts on their assets, income and food security. As recognised at global level, these long-term impacts need to be addressed by long-term measures to build climate resilience among the most vulnerable communities, ensuring they can prepare for, respond to and recover from shocks and stresses. Among existing tools, social protection stands out as a proven set of instruments when it comes to tackling risks in the context of poverty and vulnerability.

Against this backdrop, the public index-based climate risk insurance scheme *Garantia Safra* in Brazil offers an opportunity to assess the role of social protection in building longer-term climate resilience. Based on a survey conducted by Brazilian authorities and the World Bank in 2016, a quantitative analysis explored *Garantia Safra*'s potential to enhance the adaptive capacity of poor and vulnerable smallholder farmers in the state of Ceará (Kühne 2020). Adaptive capacity—a resilience capacity that represents the ability to adjust to changing climate patterns in the long term—is enhanced when smallholders are not only provided with protection during climate extremes but are also incentivised to engage in prevention beforehand. This perspective on resilience adds a preventive element to the current focus on short-term social protection interventions after shocks.

In recent years, index-based climate risk insurance has been advocated as an innovative tool to build resilience to climate extremes. Insurance can benefit poor and vulnerable smallholder farmers by serving as emergency support (protective function) and displaying a sense of security that incentivises positive risk-taking (preventive function). Within index-based schemes, crop losses are no longer assessed individually but collectively for all farmers within a predefined area (e.g. municipalities). Indices, based on weather parameters such as rainfall levels, are used to determine losses in case of an extreme event. Payouts occur when a certain threshold of estimated crop losses is reached. This approach, besides being cost-effective, reduces phenomena prevalent in traditional insurance schemes such as moral hazard.

In 2003, Brazil became one of the first countries in the world to establish a tax-funded, State-run index insurance scheme. *Garantia Safra* targets poor and vulnerable smallholder farmers in drought-prone regions, mostly in the states of the Northeast region, with a high incidence and depth of poverty. Working as an income guarantee scheme, *Garantia Safra* represents a crucial instrument within the region's social protection strategy.

When it comes to building resilience, the analysis found little proof that *Garantia Safra* contributes notably to the adaptive capacity of its beneficiaries. It revealed that the programme is a protective instrument providing relief after climate extremes but that it lacks a preventive function. In this light, the results suggest the following implications regarding public climate risk insurance:

- Only well-functioning schemes with timely and adequate payouts gain farmers trust and, therefore, incentivise prevention. To this end, data on actual losses are key and require investments in satellite and weather data.
- Public insurance solutions alone cannot be expected to build farmers' long-term resilience; nor can they replace more comprehensive social protection systems. Especially in regions with a high incidence of poverty, a holistic approach that interlinks complementary programmes with the same target groups is needed. This requires the use of information management systems (e.g. social registries).
- It needs to be clear what to expect from insurance and when other tools are more suitable. In a context of recurrent climate extremes, humanitarian cash transfers delivered through existing social protection programmes such as *Bolsa Família* can be more effective than a more complex, index-based insurance approach.
- There is a need to consider maladaptation. When public insurance schemes do not deliver sufficient positive results, they might promote unsustainable livelihoods without offering exit strategies. In the case of *Garantia Safra*, migration needs to be considered as a strategy to build resilience in the long term.

The results shed light on the importance of further assessing existing tools to enhance the climate resilience of the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. As the changing nature of climate extremes is already transforming the face of poverty and vulnerability, old and new types of social protection will inevitably need to prove their potential to combat climate challenges.

Reference:

Kühne, Elena. 2020. "Building climate resilience through social protection in Brazil: The *Garantia Safra* public climate risk insurance programme". IPC-IG Policy Research Brief no. 70. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

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Linkages between official development assistance and the Sustainable Development Goals: A scoping review

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At the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, financing is recognised as an essential means of implementation included in all 17 thematic Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 corresponding targets. In SDG 17 ("Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development"), which is entirely about the means of implementation, financing is at the top of the list. This is why SDG 17 is the only SDG reviewed at the United Nations High-level Political Forum every year.

Official development assistance (ODA) is considered one of the most important means of implementation in financing for development. ODA includes both debt-creating (i.e. concessional loans for projects) and non-debt-creating (i.e. grants) financial inflows. Since the 2030 Agenda came into effect on 1 January 2016, it has been at the centre of the debate about the theme—indeed, the current state of ODA paints a troublesome picture for the future of the 2030 Agenda and related SDGs.

This One Pager addresses two issues with ODA: donor performance and statistical methodology.

All developing low-income countries (LICs) and middle-income countries (MICs) are eligible for ODA, with special commitments made to least-developed countries (LDCs), including the long-standing commitment to achieve a target for ODA of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) to developing countries and between 0.15 per cent and 0.20 per cent of GNI to LDCs.

In a note released in April 2019, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2019) outlines some troubling facts. Combined 2018 ODA amounted to USD143.2 billion, representing only 0.31 per cent of GNI, compared to USD147.2 billion in 2017. This decrease reflected a downward trend that had been occurring since 2016 in donors' funding of costs for refugees from fragile and post-conflict countries. Loans extended to developing countries represented 17 per cent of gross bilateral ODA in 2018. Humanitarian aid fell by 8 per cent in real terms, to USD15.3 billion.

These findings reflect a worrying trend, that the world's major donors are failing to: (i) align their ODA with the priorities of receiving countries; (ii) meet the United Nations target to provide 0.7 per cent of their annual GNI in ODA and 0.15–0.20 per cent for LDCs in greatest need; and (iii) finance specific priority action areas where significant funding or investments are needed, such as infrastructure for energy, transport, water and sanitation.

In a broader context, the entire financing for development effort renders the multilateral development banks' 'billions to trillions' agenda of blended finance an aspirational—rather than successful—goal.

Since 1970, the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has been the international body tasked with setting the rules and conventions around ODA for its members, gathering the details and data on ODA transactions via its Credit Reporting System (CRS) database and publishing global monitoring and evaluation reports.

The DAC methodology and statistics have recently received heavy criticism due to serious issues, including failure to meet basic statistical quality standards. Currently, the CRS includes sector financing of ODA but does not include any linking to the SDGs targeted by ODA transactions. Additionally, the 2019 methodology shift by the DAC from a 'flow basis' to a 'grant-equivalent basis' has received significant attention. ODA figures fail to meet basic statistical quality standards and are thus an unfit statistical measure for monitoring and analysis.

Using fixed high discount rates of 6 per cent, 7 per cent and 9 per cent for upper MICs, lower MICs and LICs, respectively, the methodology calculates a grant-equivalent value of concessional ODA loans by calculating a level of benefit to the borrowing country compared to a loan at current market rates. This creates annual grant values out of thin air, rather than injecting new funds. In fact, the present low interest rate environment raises challenges to the use of those high discount rates. The methodology is more than some fuzzy mathematics, as it completely ignores private-sector instruments. Moreover, peer review of ODA reporting by DAC member countries is conducted every five years by other DAC member countries. This single-sided peer review process is insufficient because it pays no attention to the debtor's side of the coin.[1]

To maintain the relevance of ODA in the 2030 Agenda and related SDGs, the way forward is clear: donors need to take 'concrete' actions to deliver on their strong ODA commitments. Sensible ODA monitoring requires the DAC to: (i) upgrade the CSR to pay due attention to its linkages and contributions to the thematic SDGs; (ii) establish a broad-based consensus on the methodology for measuring ODA, to obtain comparable figures and to harmonise broken data series; and, finally, (iii) introduce a reporting system with double-sided peer review of ODA—i.e. combining both creditors and debtors. This would be a suggested integrated approach if it receives the right amount of political capital. Multiple prominent ODA experts recently suggested that the United Nations step in.

Reference:

OECD. 2019. *Development aid drops in 2018, especially to neediest countries.* Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. <https://clck.ru/Pn6DG>. Accessed 16 July 2020.

Note:

1. See OECD development cooperation peer reviews at: <https://clck.ru/Pn6DS>.

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COVID-19 and social protection in South Asia: Afghanistan[1]

Beatriz Burattini, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

COVID-19 is posing an unprecedented challenge to countries' social protection systems. Informal workers are particularly at risk, as they often represent the 'missing middle', covered by neither social assistance nor social insurance. In a recent policy brief, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and the United Nations Children's Fund Regional Office for South Asia (IPC-IG and UNICEF ROSA 2020) analyse the economic fallout from the crisis and the policy measures taken in eight South Asian countries, and advocate for the inclusion of the missing middle in mainstream social protection. This One Pager summarises the study's findings for Afghanistan.

As Afghanistan reported its first case of COVID-19 on 24 February 2020, the country was bracing for flood season while dealing with ongoing conflict. To mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the health care system, the Government of Afghanistan implemented a lockdown in major cities, although some measures to reopen the economy have been taken since the end of May. Afghanistan must also cope with the pandemic's economic shock, which is exacerbated by falling household income from remittances due to job losses affecting Afghan migrants abroad.

The International Labour Organization estimates that almost 95 per cent of the labour force work in the informal sector, predominantly in agriculture and construction. While the effect on the agriculture sector is medium to low, a large proportion of the workforce is vulnerable and not covered by social protection. These workers are now at acute risk of falling into poverty. The revised Humanitarian Response Plan report estimates that around 35 million people are expected to be living below a poverty line of approximately USD2 per day (at 2011 purchasing power parity) in 2020, requiring some form of social protection. Approximately 14 million of these poor people also face extreme food insecurity, and humanitarian assistance is planned for 11.1 million of them.

Prior to COVID-19, a significant proportion of Afghanistan's population was not covered by social protection. Social insurance only targeted formal workers in the public sector and was being extended to the private sector. Social assistance and labour market interventions mainly targeted the poorest people or public-sector workers. Non-humanitarian, non-contributory, flagship social assistance programmes targeting the individual or household level only covered an estimated 0.9 per cent of the population, with local initiatives lacking government support. Thus, unlike neighbouring countries, whose main challenges entail covering the missing middle, Afghanistan has the additional challenge of reaching poor people.

The Government of Afghanistan has implemented various monetary and fiscal policies to mitigate the impact of this crisis on livelihoods and incentivise social distancing. The former included deferring administrative penalties and fees by Da Afghanistan Bank, temporarily freezing loan classifications, and measures to maintain price stability and prevent exchange rate volatility. Fiscal responses included tax cuts, extensions of tax filing deadlines, and the allocation of 1.4 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) to the COVID-19 response. Varying sums have been allocated to provincial responses to the pandemic, reportedly ranging from AFN20 million to AFN500 million, according to various media.

Two existing programmes were adapted as part of the response to COVID-19: the Martyrs and Disabled Pension Programme was expanded to cover descendants of deceased health professionals, and the World Bank plans to repurpose USD100 million of its Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project for COVID-19 relief efforts, aiming to cover 90 per cent of households under the project. Additionally, the World Bank is planning to support the government's relief efforts through the REACH programme, aiming to provide in-kind and cash transfers to around 2.7 million households. The remaining government-led social protection response has entailed new labour market and social assistance initiatives, with no changes to social insurance. The government created the National Plan for the Distribution of Baked Bread, targeting poor families through bakeries and civil society, and other in-kind transfers, to around 290,000 households. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees have received emergency cash transfers offered through humanitarian organisations. Generally, new social assistance initiatives have targeted informal and formal workers, poor people, IDPs and returnees.

While humanitarian assistance is planned for people living in extreme food insecurity, and additional World Bank relief efforts will provide further temporary support to those who are not part of the humanitarian caseload, thus far the government has not put any long-term proposal in place to cover the poor people who were not benefiting from social assistance before the pandemic.

Given the low level of social protection coverage before and during the pandemic, the following is recommended for Afghanistan:

- Social protection floors should be expanded to secure broad coverage and a minimum amount of protection. Since most households in Afghanistan include children, social assistance coverage could be expanded via universal child benefits in the form of unconditional cash transfers to families with children. This can be implemented gradually, tolerating inclusion errors during the crisis. Programme design and benefit amounts can be adapted based on the funding available.

- For this, the Government of Afghanistan may use mass enrolment campaigns to enrol families in a simple registry and pay benefits as they are enrolled. In the medium and long term, this registry can evolve to inform multiple programmes and be used to respond to future shocks.

- Social insurance should be expanded to cover independent and informal workers. The government may consider expanding semi-contributory social insurance schemes covering self-employed people, day labourers and unpaid family workers to include them.

Reference:
IPC-IG and UNICEF ROSA. 2020 (forthcoming). *Socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, policy responses and the missing middle in South Asia.* Research Report. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

Note:
1. The author gratefully acknowledges the support and comments received from Freshta Ahrar, Nienke Voppen and Stanley Gwavuya (UNICEF Country Office for Afghanistan). Full references for the data cited in this One Pager can be found in the full report (IPC-IG and UNICEF ROSA 2020).

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COVID-19 and social protection in South Asia: Bangladesh[1]

Fabianna Bacil and Gabriel Soyer, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

The COVID-19 pandemic is posing an unprecedented challenge to the social protection systems of countries across the globe. Informal workers are particularly at risk, as they often represent the 'missing middle', covered by neither social assistance nor social insurance. In a recent policy brief, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and the United Nations Children's Fund Regional Office for South Asia (IPC-IG and UNICEF ROSA 2020) analyse the economic fallout from the crisis and the policy measures taken in eight South Asian countries, and advocate for the inclusion of the missing middle in mainstream social protection. This One Pager summarises the study's findings for Bangladesh.

The number of confirmed cases in Bangladesh is one of the highest in South Asia, with a notable increase in the second half of June. The characteristics of the health system pose a challenge, as the country has a ratio of 8 hospital beds per 10,000 persons and the lowest ratio of availability of critical care beds in the region (0.7 per 100,000 population).

As a result of the crisis, the World Bank estimates that Bangladesh's gross domestic product (GDP) will grow by only 1.6 per cent during financial year 2019-2020 as a consequence of demand and supply shocks caused by the containment measures. These negative economic impacts are due in particular to lower foreign remittances, as the income of emigrant workers falls, and decreased exports of ready-made garments, which account for approximately 80 per cent of Bangladesh's exports to foreign markets.

This economic hardship will lead to an increase in the number of people living in poverty. According to one projection from the International Food Policy Research Institute, extreme poverty is expected to increase from 20 million to 28 million people as a result of COVID-19. Moreover, an estimated 64.4 million Bangladeshis work in informal employment, which represents almost 95 per cent of total employment. The International Labour Organization estimates that almost all of them (63.5 million) have been significantly affected by the crisis and are at considerable risk of suffering losses to their livelihoods.

To protect livelihoods and the economy during the lockdown, the government has adopted a range of monetary and macro-fiscal policies.

Foremost, the Bangladesh Bank has adopted measures to ease the economic burden and increase credit and liquidity. The government has also implemented programmes to protect jobs and employment, such as a temporary interest-free loan to pay wages and allowances for workers in enterprises that export at least of 80 per cent of their production. The Bangladesh Bank has also implemented a BDT30 million refinance scheme for low-income groups, farmers, and marginal and small businesses through microcredit entities for income-driven activities.

Bangladesh has also expanded the social assistance system to provide additional coverage to vulnerable groups. As a consequence, the coverage of cash transfers has increased from 15 million to 39.8 million people. Additionally, the government has provided food assistance through different channels, including the Special Open Market Sales programme, which provides rice at BDT10/kg to vulnerable and jobless people (maximum of 20 kg per month) during the lockdown, and the Food Friendly Programme (FFP), which was extended to give additional support during this period. The FFP consists of the sale of 30 kg of rice at the price of BDT10 per kg monthly to each family and is granted to 5 million families.

Notwithstanding the efforts made to improve coverage during the pandemic, the crisis has also highlighted the limitations of Bangladesh's social protection system. The country should take steps to both expand existing programmes, such as the maternal and child benefit schemes, social pension schemes and the employment generation programme, and implement new initiatives to be able to provide a minimum level of protection to all citizens. In particular, social insurance programmes are currently very limited, hampering the construction of a comprehensive system that can effectively mitigate the population's vulnerability and reach the 'missing middle'. Taking such steps would not only help the country overcome the long-lasting effects of the COVID-19 crisis but also mitigate the potential impacts of future shocks on people's livelihoods.

Reference:

IPC-IG and UNICEF ROSA. 2020 (forthcoming). *Socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, policy responses and the missing middle in South Asia.* Research Report. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

Note:

1. The authors gratefully acknowledge comments received from Mekonnen Woldegorgis (UNICEF Country Office for Bangladesh). Full references for the data cited in this One Pager can be found in the full report (IPC-IG and UNICEF ROSA 2020).

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COVID-19 and social protection in South Asia: Bhutan[1]

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COVID-19 is posing an unprecedented challenge to countries' social protection systems. Informal workers are particularly at risk, as they often represent the 'missing middle', covered by neither social assistance nor social insurance. In a recent policy brief, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and the United Nations Children's Fund Regional Office for South Asia (IPC-IG and UNICEF ROSA 2020) analyse the economic fallout from the crisis and the policy measures taken in eight South Asian countries, and advocate for the inclusion of the missing middle in mainstream social protection. This One Pager summarises the study's findings for Bhutan.

Bhutan has dodged the weighty health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is the country with the lowest number of confirmed cases per head of population in South Asia. No nationwide lockdown was adopted, and many businesses, including restaurants, remained open; however, measures such as the suspension of tourism, school closures, closure of the border with India and a countrywide recommendation to avoid non-essential travel were adopted.

Due to these restrictions, the tourism sector has taken a considerable hit. Tourism and related sectors are estimated to employ 50,000 Bhutanese, representing about 16 per cent of the working population. This figure dismisses informal workers in entertainment, clothing retail and street vending sectors. A recent survey conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Statistics Bureau on the impacts of COVID-19 on the tourism sector highlights that two thirds of tour companies were completely closed and 92 per cent of tourist guides working as casual employees for tour firms have been laid off. These workers do not have access to social insurance (e.g. severance payments) and are not typically eligible for social assistance programmes, representing a typical case of the missing middle.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that informal labour constitutes 87.52 per cent of total employment in Bhutan. According to the ILO, at least 90 per cent of informal workers are expected to be significantly affected. According to World Bank estimates, an additional 5,503 people will fall into poverty based on the poverty line of USD3.20 per day, and 14,083 people based on USD5.50 per day. These represent many of the informal workers requiring social protection coverage.

Bhutan's social protection response has been relatively inclusive of the missing middle. The main social assistance measure adopted by the government is the Druk Gyalpo Relief Kidu (welfare system), providing hitherto monthly transfers of BTN8,000 or BTN12,000 to 23,000 people (these amounts for 3 months and thereafter phase-out amounts), with a top-up of BTN800 for 13,000 children, totalling a budget of BTN700 million. Most of the applicants to the Relief Kidu have been from the tourism sector, followed by transport, communications and other services sectors. The Relief Kidu is available and has been granted to self-employed people, workers with suspended contracts, unemployed people and returning Bhutanese.

An employment support scheme for the tourism and hospitality sector and jobless Bhutanese citizens is also provided by the Tourism Council of Bhutan. At least 2,436 individuals have benefited. Additionally, working capital credit at a 5 per cent interest rate is available to tourism-related firms to finance operational costs, especially payroll.

Bhutan has low social insurance coverage, comprising the Rural Insurance Scheme (semi-contributory compulsory housing and life insurance for about 60,000 rural households), the Group Insurance Scheme and the National Pension and Provident Fund (NPPF). Employees of firms with at least five employees and with labour contracts beyond one year must participate in the NPPF, while employees of firms with five or fewer employees must rely on voluntary coverage, guaranteeing social insurance instruments only to a subset of formal workers. Overall, only 9.1 per cent of the working-age population contribute to pension schemes for people aged 15 years and above, and only 3.2 per cent of the population beyond retirement age are covered by a pension scheme, making it important to start formalising informal work.

As for social assistance, His Majesty's Kidu Office manages a kidu comprising cash and in-kind transfers to Bhutanese citizens. Beneficiaries must be deemed needy or landless, have a disability or be a child without a source of income to attend school. The kidu under the prerogative of the Druk Gyalpo provides benefits in the form of land grants, monthly living allowances and scholarships.

Looking beyond the COVID-19 crisis and reflecting on the current social protection system, Bhutan could enact further social protection transformations, guaranteeing adequate coverage consistent with a rights-based, universal notion of social protection:

- To safeguard minimum social security in the face of idiosyncratic or covariant shocks, social protection floors must be expanded to cover the missing middle, mostly comprising non-poor informal workers. A universal child grant could help to reach the missing middle and be a key shock-responsive instrument in the context of a covariate shock such as the COVID-19 crisis.

- Social insurance is currently only accessible to a subset of formal workers in formal-sector enterprises. Semi-contributory social insurance accounts with public subsidisation could be opened up to self-employed people—i.e. extending the NPPF pension schemes or incentivising contributions towards unemployment or severance payments.

Reference:

IPC-IG and UNICEF ROSA. 2020 (forthcoming). *Socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, policy responses and the missing middle in South Asia.* Research Report. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

Note:

1. The authors gratefully acknowledge the support and comments received from Jigme Dorji (UNICEF Bhutan Country Office). Full references for the data cited in this One Pager can be found in the full report (IPC-IG and UNICEF ROSA 2020).

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COVID-19 and social protection in South Asia: India[1]

Fabianna Bacil and Gabriel Soyer, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

The COVID-19 pandemic is posing an unprecedented challenge to the social protection systems of countries across the globe. Informal workers are particularly at risk, as they often represent the 'missing middle', covered by neither social assistance nor social insurance. In a recent policy brief, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and the United Nations Children's Fund Regional Office for South Asia (IPC-IG and UNICEF ROSA 2020) analyse the economic fallout from the crisis and the policy measures taken in eight South Asian countries, and advocate for the inclusion of the missing middle in mainstream social protection. This One Pager summarises the study's findings for India.

India is the country with the most confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the region, with a significant increase in the number of cases during the second half of June, after lifting the national lockdown first imposed on 24 March. The health care capacity to deal with this surge is worrisome, as there were only 2.3 critical bed units per 100,000 people.

In addition to the pressure on the health sector, India is also suffering the socio-economic impacts caused by the pandemic. The economy is forecasted to contract by 3.2 per cent in financial year 2020-2021, which is 9 percentage points less than the estimates from January 2020. Moreover, the International Food Policy Research Institute projected in April a 13 per cent increase in extreme poverty (or 30 million people), while the World Bank forecasted in June that between 28 million and 36 million people would fall below the extreme poverty line (USD1.90/day at 2011 purchasing power parity). Additionally, 410 million of the approximately 420 million informal workers in India are considered highly affected by COVID-19.

In addition to macro-financial and monetary policies, the Government of India has announced the *Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana* (PMGKY), a INR1.70 trillion relief package to provide support to poor and vulnerable people and ensure that their basic needs are met. The package comprises both the implementation of new social protection interventions and the adaptation of pre-existing benefits. These initiatives include:

- Both anticipation of benefit payments and a top-up of INR2,000 to beneficiaries of *PM-Kisan*, a cash transfer scheme supplementing farmers' income and supporting agriculture-related expenses
- An increase of INR20 in the daily wages of workers registered under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the flagship public works programme, representing up to INR2,000 per worker per year
- Expansion of the Public Distribution System (PDS) to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, with beneficiaries of *Antyodaya Anna Yojana*—a programme providing highly subsidised food grains—receiving free food and additional food subsidies to mitigate food insecurity during the pandemic
- Temporary additional income support for elderly people, widows and divyang (people with disabilities) who are part of the National Social Assistance Programme
- Government payment of three months' worth of provident fund contributions for employees who earn less than INR15,000 per month and work in companies with less than 100 employees in which 90 per cent of employees' wages are below the INR15,000 threshold
- Financial support for 23 million construction workers from the Building and Construction Workers' Fund managed by state governments, with a one-time cash benefit ranging between INR1,000 and INR5,000
- Announcement of a measure expanding health insurance for health care workers
- Workers registered in the Employees' Provident Fund allowed to access either 75 per cent of the balance in their social insurance account in advance, or three months' worth of salary (whichever is lower).

While the government has responded to the challenges posed by COVID-19 through different interventions, the country could benefit from taking further steps to ensure universal social protection coverage, including the 'missing middle'. Potential policy strategies encompass the implementation of a universal child benefit, which would ensure that all households with children are able to meet their basic needs, and/or greater coverage and adequacy for India's elderly population through an old-age pension scheme, including through the existing Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme. Existing social insurance schemes administered by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation should be supported and strengthened to provide social insurance to workers in times of need. Furthermore, to guarantee greater coverage for future shocks, flagship programmes such as the PDS and MGNREGA could be expanded to provide security to all regions and to households in both urban and rural areas. Lastly, more needs to be done to reach and support internal migrant workers who are either temporarily or indefinitely living outside their home states and often lack access to social protection programmes.

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Note:

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COVID-19 and social protection in South Asia: Maldives[1]

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COVID-19 is posing an unprecedented challenge to countries' social protection systems. Informal workers are particularly at risk, as they often represent the 'missing middle', covered by neither social assistance nor social insurance. In a recent research report, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and the United Nations Children's Fund Regional Office for South Asia (IPC-IG and UNICEF ROSA 2020) analyse the economic fallout from the crisis and the policy measures taken in eight South Asian countries, and advocate for the inclusion of the missing middle in mainstream social protection. This One Pager summarises the study's findings for Maldives.

Maldives has the highest rate of confirmed cases relative to the population in South Asia. Migrant workers have been disproportionately affected, representing 65 per cent of the cases. The country's real gross domestic product (GDP) is predicted to contract by 13 per cent in 2020, the worst forecast in South Asia. This dire prospect is largely due to the tourism sector, which accounts for 60 per cent of the GDP. The sector has been drastically affected by the containment measures, including the suspension of on-arrival tourist visas and closure of resorts for over four months.

A rapid assessment by the United Nations Development Programme found that 45,000 resort employees, 23,000 of whom are foreigners, were directly impacted by the pandemic. Informal labour constitutes about 50 per cent of total employment. According to the International Labour Organization, at least 90 per cent of informal workers are expected to be significantly affected by COVID-19. The World Bank projects that an additional 1,600 people in Maldives will fall into poverty at the lower middle-income (USD3.20) and a further 20,000 at the upper middle-income (USD5.50) poverty lines.

Yet, Maldives has a slightly lower proportion of significantly affected workers than other countries in the region, as informal workers tend to work in larger enterprises in the tourism sector (e.g. resorts) that can benefit from the government's labour retention measures, such as the SME Development Finance Corporation (SDFC) loan capped at 6 per cent interest rate to pay the payroll and current expenses of large businesses.

Another SDFC loan (Viyafaari Ehee) has been provided to freelancers/self-employed people and small and medium-sized enterprises to meet their current operational costs. Furthermore, universal subsidies on fuel and food, and discounts of 40 per cent on electricity and 30 per cent on water bills have been provided.

A three-month Income Support Allowance dedicated to individuals laid off, forced to take unpaid leave or subjected to salary reductions due to COVID-19 is also available for freelancers, all of whom can apply for it on the new JobCenter website. As of 27 July, 6,638 people had received the allowance. Overall, the Maldives Economic Recovery Plan has channelled MVR2.5 billion (2.8 per cent of GDP) to combat the negative fallout of the pandemic.

Before COVID-19, social protection in Maldives included the Single Parent Allowance (5,062 children); Foster Parent Allowance (147 households); disability allowance (6,696 beneficiaries); universal non-contributory health insurance Husnuvaa Aasandha (325,387 Maldivian citizens); non-contributory social pension called Old Age Basic Pension (BP) (17,453 beneficiaries) and State Other Pension (7,192) to those not receiving the BP. The contributory Maldives Retirement Pension Scheme (MRPS) had 100,225 contributing members in 2019. Although open for voluntary contributions from the self-employed and fishermen, they must pay the 7 per cent of employer and 7 per cent of employee contribution. Furthermore, pension contributions are strongly correlated with the estimated share of formal employment in the country, employers are no longer required to enrol migrant workers in the MRPS and although migrant workers must enrol in mandatory health insurance, the undocumented workers (about 63,000) lack access to it.

As post-COVID-19 measures, Maldives could consider further transforming its social protection system to guarantee adequate coverage for informal workers and improve its shock-responsiveness as follows:

- To improve the shock-responsiveness of social protection mechanisms through the merging of registries and adaptation of shock-insensitive proxy means testing.
- Larger public contributions could be provided in the MRPS framework for the self-employed to incentivise voluntary contributions. Also, a contributory unemployment insurance scheme should be considered.
- Macroeconomic policies to protect jobs and incomes in the event of shocks should also cover informal workers.
- JobCenter digital registration efforts demonstrated the feasibility of on-demand processes to quickly expand social assistance coverage, but inclusive outreach strategies are required.
- Undocumented migrant workers stranded in Maldives require not only regulated repatriation procedures but also direct assistance and loosened eligibility criteria to benefit from the Income Support Allowance.
- Subsidies can benefit informal workers, but given their regressive nature, the resources could be spent on broader social assistance programmes, such as a universal child grant, covering the 'missing middle', providing an income to poor households while maximising the benefit to those in need.

Reference:
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COVID-19 and social protection in South Asia: Nepal[1]

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The COVID-19 pandemic and its ramifications are posing an unprecedented challenge to social safety nets globally. A group at particular risk are informal workers belonging to a 'missing middle' that is covered by neither social assistance nor social insurance. In a recent policy brief, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and the United Nations Children's Fund Regional Office for South Asia (IPC-IG and UNICEF ROSA 2020) analyse the economic fallout from the crisis and the policy measures taken in eight South Asian countries, and offer policy proposals for the inclusion of workers and households in the 'missing middle' in social protection frameworks. This One Pager summarises the study's findings for Nepal.

Nepal was the last country in South Asia to adopt heavy stringency measures. Its infection curve is still the steepest in the region, but since early June it has reduced its stringency by 30 per cent. Nepal's economy has been struggling not only due to domestic supply and demand shocks associated with social isolation measures, but also due to the expected 14 per cent decrease in remittances, which often account for a quarter of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Moreover, another 3.6 per cent of GDP, originating from tourism, is also at risk. The World Banks's GDP growth forecasts for 2020 and 2021, respectively, have shrunk—from 6.4 per cent and 6.5 per cent in January 2020 to 1.8 per cent and 2.1 per cent in June.

The International Labour Organization estimates that the hardest-hit work sectors comprise 34.4 per cent of all jobs in the country and that almost every informal worker in Nepal (i.e. over 94 per cent of the working population) will suffer significant income losses. According to the International Food Policy Research Institute, the crisis will lead to a 10 per cent increase in the prevalence of extreme poverty—one of the smallest in the region. Nevertheless, before the crisis, Nepal already had a high prevalence of extreme poverty; therefore, the impacts on the poverty gap are likely to be particularly catastrophic. Children, who are dependent on their caregivers, are also at great risk of impoverishment, as the dependency ratio tends to be higher among the poorer consumption quintiles in Nepal. Further, it is estimated that, due to the crisis, around 40 per cent of Nepalese households with children have suffered income losses.

Macroeconomic responses thus far include measures to enhance credit and liquidity, such as determining that banks extend loan deadlines and subsidising interest rates. Further, on 28 May the Budget Speech also promised rolling out credit lines to some critically affected sectors. Nepal remains, however, the sole country in South Asia that did not deploy any sound monetary policy in response to the crisis. Fiscal space efforts thus far consist of mobilising international funds, as illustrated by the fast-tracking of USD29 million granted by the World Bank's Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project.

Nepal has increased its public health expenditure significantly, announcing stimulus packages for sectors that could lead to rapid job creation—for example, construction, manufacturing and services. There are also electricity subsidies for companies, while individuals will receive subsidies and old-debt waivers on all sorts of public utilities, such as water, electricity, telephone and Internet. Publicly owned food companies are acting to provide price stability and to bring about a 10 per cent discount on basic food items.

In terms of social protection, Nepal has entered the crisis with a regressive contributory pillar, with much space to expand coverage among the poorest quintile, and with no initiatives fit to reach the 'missing middle'. Its contributory social insurance system consists mostly of pension schemes for public employees. Its incipient contributory scheme for the private sector, despite its small coverage, has nevertheless responded to the crisis by subsidising the contributions otherwise meant to be made by employers and employees.

Nepal has not based its social assistance response on adjusting its flagship programmes. The major initiative is the delivery of an in-kind relief package (food items and soap). The Government of Nepal has established a general eligibility criterion (informal workers and deprived people with no caregivers), to be adapted by local governments, which are also responsible for financing and distributing the benefit, and the national government will step up with additional funding when needed. As of 6 May, between 70 per cent and 95 per cent of the households identified as most affected in each province had received the package. This action relieves immediate food needs but, it should be noted, does not cover cash demands.

In view of the above, a few policy recommendations for Nepal could include:

- deploying monetary policies that could enable the expansion of fiscal space to fund health and social protection responses to the crisis;
- deploying the capacity of flagship programmes to deliver the province-level relief packages in a way that could promote the inclusion of vulnerable populations identified by province-level governments in a countrywide, integrated information system;
- topping up province-level relief packages with a horizontal and vertical expansion of cash-based flagship social assistance programmes, aiming to ease financial hardships and, hence, avoid impoverishment of the population. Expanding the Universal Child Grant would be particularly fruitful, as children under 5 years would be explicitly targeted; and
- fast-tracking the development of a multi-tiered social insurance system, including quasi-contributory alternatives for informal workers.

Reference:

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COVID-19 and social protection in South Asia: Pakistan[1]

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The COVID-19 pandemic and its economic ramifications are posing an unprecedented challenge to countries' social protection systems. Informal workers are particularly at risk during the current crisis, as they often represent the 'missing middle', covered by neither social assistance nor social insurance. In a recent policy brief, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and the United Nations Children's Fund Regional Office for South Asia (IPC-IG and UNICEF ROSA 2020) analyse the economic fallout from the crisis and the policy measures taken in eight South Asian countries, and advocate for the inclusion of the missing middle in the mainstream social protection landscape. This One Pager summarises the study's findings for Pakistan.

Pakistan has been hit hard by the pandemic. Insufficient medical capacity and a vulnerable economic starting position, with a structural adjustment programme under the International Monetary Fund's Extended Fund Facility undertaken as recently as 2019, have exacerbated the strain of the crisis. In response to surging infection rates, particularly in the urban slums of Karachi and Lahore, the government imposed a full lockdown in late March that has been gradually lifted since 9 May under the imperative of saving livelihoods. Due to ever-rising case numbers, this decision is contested, and lockdowns have been re-imposed locally.

Pakistan's large informal economy contributes almost a third of gross domestic product (GDP), and informal arrangements make up over 80 per cent of total employment. Wholesale and retail trade and the labour-intensive manufacturing sector are being hit by both supply and demand shocks and together comprise 18.5 million significantly affected informal workers. Due to the crisis, the Pakistani economy is forecasted to contract by 2.6 per cent in the financial year 2019-2020 and again by 0.2 per cent in the financial year commencing in July 2020, both significant downward revisions of pre-crisis estimates. Due to this economic downturn, extreme poverty could increase by as much as 1.47 percentage points. Most of these up to 3 million people newly living in poverty would be informal workers, many of whom are not covered by mainstream social protection, which either focuses on targeting the poorest quintile (social assistance schemes such as Ehsaas Kafaalat) or only covers a small, relatively well-off minority comprising those formal-sector employees entitled to social insurance. For example, only 3.5 per cent of people of working age contribute to a pension scheme in Pakistan.

To protect livelihoods and the economy during the lockdown, the government passed a policy package worth 3.5 per cent of GDP. On the monetary side, the central bank has cut the policy rate by a total of 5.25 percentage points and has put in place more flexible and expanded credit provisions for individuals and firms. On the fiscal side, Pakistan has introduced a number of interventions, many pertaining to social protection. Most notably, it has introduced the Ehsaas Emergency Cash (EEC) programme, covering 5 million existing *Ehsaas Kafaalat* beneficiaries and 11.9 million new, temporary beneficiaries who were either uncovered or ineligible before the pandemic. Identified through an SMS campaign, many of the new beneficiaries are daily labourers and informal workers who lost their livelihoods during the crisis. As such, many of them belong to the missing middle. All beneficiaries receive 4 months' worth of cash benefits upfront at biometric payment points, corresponding to 15 per cent of average household income of the poorest quintile.

Looking beyond the current crisis, it is clear that Pakistan's social protection system must change further to guarantee adequate coverage consistent with a rights-based, universal notion of social protection.

To safeguard minimum social security in the face of idiosyncratic or covariant shocks, Pakistan should consider expanding its social protection floors to cover the missing middle, mostly comprising non-poor informal workers. Universal child benefits and expanded social assistance to the (marginally) non-poor population are promising policy tools not yet employed.

As the poverty score card survey used for social assistance targeting sees its first update in 10 years in 2020, lessons from the crisis should be applied to allow for easy updating, shock-responsive enrolment and broad coverage of social assistance schemes. Registration for the EEC has shown that swift, demand-based and digital expansion of social assistance schemes is possible, and registries can be kept up to date irrespective of survey coverage and frequency.

The 11.9 million newly identified beneficiaries provide a unique opportunity to integrate large numbers of the missing middle into the social protection landscape. Their registration for the EEC should also provide the impetus for large-scale financial inclusion efforts.

Social insurance is currently only accessible to public servants or those in larger formal-sector enterprises. Resolving adverse incentives for employers to hire workers informally to avoid both Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) pension contributions and severance payments (in lieu of unemployment insurance) could make social insurance more inclusive and drive the formalisation of semi-dependent employment relationships.

There is promise in the expansion of pension schemes such as the EOBI to the informal sector and making voluntary schemes such as the Voluntary Pension System (more) inclusive of earners of lower or informal incomes. Promoting the easy uptake of these schemes could expand social insurance coverage, especially among self-employed people. Furthermore, their registries can be used for shock-responsive vertical expansion of benefits.

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COVID-19 and social protection in South Asia: Sri Lanka[1]

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The COVID-19 pandemic and its ramifications are posing an unprecedented challenge to social safety nets globally. Groups particularly at risk are children, older people, persons with disabilities, and informal workers belonging to a 'missing middle' that is covered by neither social assistance nor social insurance. In a recent policy brief, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and the United Nations Children's Fund Regional Office for South Asia (IPC-IG and UNICEF ROSA 2020) analyse the economic fallout from the crisis and the policy measures taken in eight South Asian countries, and offer policy proposals for the inclusion of workers and households in the 'missing middle' in social protection frameworks. This One Pager summarises the study's findings for Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka was one of the first countries in South Asia to deploy strong stringency measures. So far it has been largely successful at containing the pandemic's epidemiological impacts, which has allowed for a steady easing of measures and led to the country halving its Stringency Index measures by early June.

The crisis, however, continues to cause social and economic damage. The International Labour Organization has estimated an 87 per cent income reduction among informal workers following the initial lockdown. Between January and June, the World Bank's gross domestic product (GDP) growth projections for Sri Lanka decreased substantially from 3.3 per cent to -3.2 per cent for 2020, and from 3.7 per cent to 0 for 2021, despite taking the country's macroeconomic and epidemiological responses into consideration in the estimates. As a result, in June the institution still estimated that between 44,000 and 65,000 persons would fall below the extreme poverty line (USD1.90 at 2011 purchasing power parity) due to the crisis.

In addition to a broad set of monetary and fiscal responses, including a substantial increase in public health expenditures, Sri Lanka also undertook important social protection responses, using its existing social protection system.

Concerning contributory social insurance and labour market interventions, the Farmers' and Fishermen's Pension and Social Security Benefit Scheme, a scheme for fishermen and farmers, provided an LKR5,000 emergency grant in response to COVID-19. The National Insurance Trust Fund, a government insurance fund, doubled the value of its benefits to health care, police and civil security professionals. The government announced *ad hoc* relief on lease instalments for 1,500,000 self-employed people—such as owners of three-wheelers, school buses and vans—which corresponds to 16.8 per cent of the labour force.

Regarding non-contributory social assistance programmes, Sri Lanka had the highest pre-crisis coverage in South Asia (27 per cent of its population). Its main cash transfer programmes (*Samurdh*i; Senior Citizens Allowance—SCA; Disability Allowance—DA; and Kidney Disease Allowance—KDA) have all expanded horizontally, enrolling those on waiting lists, and entitling them to access the LKR5,000 emergency benefit under the SCA, the DA and the KDA. For *Samurdh*i, a massive horizontal expansion also incorporated almost 2 million self-employed people.

*Samurdh*i and the SCA also undertook vertical expansion. *Samurdh*i provided LKR5,000 in addition to the regular benefit value, as well as in-kind food items. The SCA provided an additional LKR3,000 on top of its regular benefit. These vertical and horizontal expansions took place in April and May, amounting to approximately 5.7 million cash transfers.

Finally, the *Triposha* programme continues to provide take-away nutritional supplements to pregnant and lactating women and undernourished children. Its delivery modality shifted during the curfew towards delivering these supplements to beneficiaries' homes, rather to public health centres.

UNICEF estimates that over 60 per cent of the population were covered by the measures described above. Coverage is particularly high for the poorest decile, at 97 per cent. Nonetheless, around 31 per cent of households in the third poorest decile were estimated to be excluded from these interventions, as are over 30 per cent of children and 30 per cent of people aged over 70. Furthermore, considering that the emergency transfers were only for two months, the increase in consumption is likely to be very limited.

As a consequence of the regular structure of Sri Lanka's social protection system, those belonging to the 'missing middle' are not targeted by non-contributory social assistance or contributory social insurance systems. Around 31 per cent of the households in the middle quintile are estimated to be excluded.

Important challenges remain to expand Sri Lanka's social protection floor and include informal and self-employed workers. Accordingly, some key policy recommendations include:

- registering beneficiaries of emergency responses into a comprehensive information system that could support a dynamic shock-responsive system in the near future;
- adding COVID-19-responsive features to the social insurance scheme for self-employed people—*Surekuma*—and overall expanding social insurance benefits to the recipients' families; and
- shifting social assistance responses from an *ad hoc* arrangement towards an institutionalised response better equipped to transition from a mitigation to a recovery strategy, which could include rolling out universal benefits for children, elderly people and persons with disabilities.

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Public spending on health, education and social assistance in South Asian countries

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As many South Asian countries experienced changes in government and strong economic growth since the early 2000s, poverty and social exclusion started to receive growing attention. Many governments in the region strengthened their commitments to ensure equal access to basic healthcare, education and an adequate income. However, the path towards concretising government promises into population well-being has been uneven across South Asia. Structural challenges such as those related to poverty, inequality, demography, security and environmental threats require sustained public investment. While government efforts have improved, they are hindered by gaps in budgetary and institutional capacity.

Compared to other regions, South Asian governments spend less on health, education and social assistance as a share of gross domestic product (GDP), but there is a great heterogeneity within the region. When adding up government GDP shares spent on these three sectors, Bhutan and Maldives have the highest public social spending. Bhutan devotes comparatively more public funds to education than other South Asian countries (7 per cent of GDP). Maldives spends relatively more than its peers on health (8 per cent of GDP) and India on social assistance (1.5 per cent). At the other end of the spectrum, Bangladesh has the lowest share of spending on both health (0.4 per cent) and education (2 per cent), and Bhutan spends the least on social assistance (0.3 per cent).

Universal health care, as described in the Sustainable Development Goals, has two important dimensions: service coverage and financial protection. Despite some improvement in health outcomes, government spending remains low in most South Asian countries. In Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan, the burden of health care financing is essentially borne by households: out-of-pocket spending corresponds to over half of total health expenditures. In contrast, the government is responsible for over 70 per cent of health care financing in Bhutan and Maldives, and 43 per cent in Sri Lanka (where out-of-pocket payments are mainly made by richer households). Life expectancy tends to be higher, and child and maternal mortality rates lower, in countries where the government spends more on health. Maldives and Sri Lanka are the only countries that have achieved the SDG mortality rate targets, while others (Afghanistan in particular) still have a long way to go, especially regarding investment in maternal and child health care.

To improve school intake, completion and learning, it is crucial that South Asian governments direct the appropriate funds to the education sector. Despite overall low public spending as a share of GDP, of the three social sectors considered in Bloch (2020), education is typically the one receiving the most public funding in the region.

However, similar shares of spending on education can lead to completely different outcomes. Afghanistan and Maldives both spend around 4 per cent of GDP on education, but while over half of the population of Afghanistan is illiterate and school enrolment remains low, the Maldives has one of the best outcomes in the region. Sri Lanka has the second lowest spending in the region (2.8 per cent of GDP), which contrasts against its outstanding outcomes. Pakistan, Bangladesh and India have some of the lowest shares of spending (2.9, 2 and 3.8 per cent of GDP, respectively), and there is much room for improvement. Pakistan's education indicators are the worse in the region—the country harbours around half of the over 20 million out-of-school children in South Asia of primary and lower secondary age. Finally, Bhutan and Nepal spend relatively more on education (6.6 and 5.2 per cent of GDP respectively), and their outcomes are encouraging.

Regarding expenditure on social assistance programmes, India, Nepal and the Maldives are the only countries in South Asia where public spending exceeds 1 per cent of GDP. Data also suggest that much needs to be done to expand coverage and adequacy of social assistance programmes in the region. Even in countries where legal coverage has expanded, a huge share of the population remains excluded from social safety nets, and informality remains an obstacle to contributory social protection. Except for Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka, social assistance programmes in South Asia do not always benefit the poorest deciles most. While social protection is crucial to protect the population from poverty and vulnerability, its impact on poverty reduction in most South Asian countries is estimated to be relatively low. Naturally, these findings should not overshadow the merits of specific programmes that might be more progressive and effective for poverty reduction, such as Pakistan's BISP.

Fiscal consolidation is a priority for all governments in South Asia, as the combination of low domestic revenue generation, inadequate spending and deterioration of economic conditions continues to lead to increasing fiscal deficits and weak macroeconomic buffers, which in turn affects the capacity of countries to allocate resources to social sectors. However, South Asia is the fastest-growing region in the world, and even countries with tight budgets have the potential to increase investment. This expansion should be carried out so that the allocation of funds is sustainable and frequent, and that the provision of services is not disrupted. There have been efforts to improve social spending, but tax collection remains underutilised as a financing mechanism in the region, and there is great scope for improvement and reprioritisation of expenditures.
These measures should be complemented by efforts to strengthen governance and accountability in the management of public resources.

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The role of social protection in young people's transition to work in the Middle East and North Africa

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Understanding the factors that limit transitions to decent work remains a central concern for policymakers, as changes in the world of work considerably affect the availability and distribution of quality jobs. In many parts of the world, youth employment outcomes have underwhelmed, despite increasing levels of education. Meanwhile, precariousness and long working hours are serious problems faced by a significant proportion of youths looking for decent work. To guarantee social, political and economic, cohesion international organisations have increasingly highlighted the importance of providing adequate work opportunities for youths, whose rising population presents "a historic opportunity to invest in human capital by improving access to education, health and protection and enhancing the prospects for inclusive employment" (UNICEF 2019).

Many of these global issues are mirrored in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA). The region continues to face many social and economic challenges, many of which—whether related to low economic growth, social rights issues, internal and external migration, or political stability—have had significant impacts on labour markets in MENA, either directly or indirectly. A key measure to improve socio-economic conditions in the region is creating and sustaining enough decent and quality jobs for the population. This is particularly true for young people, who often face greater barriers and discrimination to enter the labour force.

Ensuring that young people are provided with adequate knowledge, skills and support to successfully integrate into the labour market is a growing concern throughout the region. It is expected that during the first half of this century, a large proportion of the population will move into the their most productive years, thus creating a window of opportunity for a demographic dividend. However, such a dividend cannot be seized without an enabling environment in place to promote young people's transition to work (YPTW). Creating a stronger environment focusing on YPTW not only has the potential to improve labour market and economic outcomes, it can also lead to stronger ties for youth, thus improving the social fabric and lowering political unrest.

To complement education policy, social protection policies—including labour market policies—can play an important role in supporting YPTW. This can be done in different ways: some policies might protect youth by mitigating the effect of unemployment and providing resources for livelihood creation; meanwhile, labour market policies have the potential to increase young people's chances in the job market by building capacity and creating better conditions for youth employment.

A report by IPC-IG and UNICEF MENARO (Bird and Silva 2020) focuses on the role of social protection to promote transitions to work for young people in MENA, especially among vulnerable groups. Despite high levels of unemployment, especially among the youth, government spending across MENA countries in active labour market policies (ALMPs) tends to be low. Moreover, most the existing ALMPs, such as vocational and technical training, are intended for youths with higher educational backgrounds, while poorer groups and women tend to be under-represented.

Despite the limited attention in practice, evidence shows that labour market and livelihood programmes can lead to positive impacts on income and employment, especially when targeting poor and vulnerable youth. Country case studies covered in the report highlight how the administration of publicly-provided social protection programmes promoting employment tends to be fragmented from both education policy and existing social protection frameworks. However, there are interesting cases being developed in the region that create linkages between social assistance and activations programmes (such as *Forsa,* in Egypt). The case studies also find that advances have been made in recent years towards creating new, or expanding the role of existing, bodies in charge of institutionalising technical vocational education and training in MENA. Finally, policymakers in the region should consider taking steps to strengthen the role of social protection initiatives targeting young people to help lower youth unemployment and facilitate better transitions to work.

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Insights from an analysis of *Seguro-Defeso*'s legal framework

Luca Lazzarini, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

After almost 30 years since the enactment of the *Seguro-Defeso* programme, there is an urgent need to assess its impacts on the socioeconomic conditions of beneficiaries. This One Pager highlights key aspects of the programme's legal framework.

The *Seguro-Defeso* is a contributory social security measure conceived as an integral part of Brazil's unemployment insurance scheme, targeting artisanal fishers—the most vulnerable category in commercial fishing—as compensation for the application of the *Defeso*, a temporary fishing ban aiming at the preservation of species, established through a Normative Instrument published in the country's Official Gazette.

The *Defeso* ranks among the measures predisposed to sustainably manage fishery resources in Law 11959/2009, serving as an overall legal framework for the fishery sector in Brazil. However, the situation of artisanal fishers during the *Defeso* season is equated to involuntary unemployment. The *Seguro-Defeso* entails the payment of a monthly minimum wage during the ban period to artisanal fishers, provided that certain requirements are met. Therefore, it aims to ensure the effectiveness of the *Defeso* by addressing the economic vulnerability of artisanal fishers.

The link between the two measures is operationalised by a complex intersection of different branches of law and public bodies involved in programme management and implementation. Six different institutions are involved in the implementation of the programme, resulting in the enactment of a large volume of sub-statutory acts regulating its individual aspects. Their interrelation, particularly regarding their temporal application, results in a substantial degree of legal complexity from the beneficiary's point of view. The absence of coordination mechanisms also poses challenges to the programme's implementation.

It should also be considered that in the past two decades, the responsibility for the sustainable management of fishery resources has frequently shifted from one public institution to another, significantly impacting financial and human resources and hindering the continuity of related actions and programmes. Furthermore, the regulatory framework of the *Defeso* has been substantially amended by Decree 8967/2017. The amendment requires the competent public body to evaluate the adoption of other measures for the sustainable management of fishery resources prior to establishing *Defeso* periods, and to periodically assess the effectiveness of *Defeso* periods, with suspension or revocation of the underlying normative act in case of ineffectiveness. In both instances, fishery statistics are key in informing the decision of authorities. Yet, the latest Fishery Activities Bulletin, which features data on production, was published in 2011. Since then, fishery statistics have not been systematically gathered at the national level.

Finally, although a participatory approach in fishery is legally required, participatory channels are almost non-existent. In particular, the Permanent Management Committees were suspended by Decree 9759/2019, and the National Council for Aquaculture and Fishery is currently not operational. Given the lack of effective participation, fishery communities have become distrustful of public authorities, and legal instruments for the protection and preservation of fishery activities have been de-legitimised.

The degree of complexity is further increased by the fact that the legal framework of the *Seguro-Defeso* and associated legislation have been subject to numerous changes over time, including in relation to beneficiary definitions and criteria to access the benefit. Since the introduction of the current regulatory framework (Law 10779/2003), these have been amended several times with the effect of increasing or decreasing the number of beneficiaries. Moreover, in 2015 the number of beneficiaries decreased due to the suspension of 10 *Defeso* periods by Inter-ministerial Ordinance 192/2015, which were subsequently reinstated by Decree 293/2015. The study design for the impact evaluation of *Seguro-Defeso*, to be carried out by the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), takes into consideration this heterogeneity of the target population.

Two aspects related to the criteria adopted to access the benefit should be discussed. The General Registry of Fishing Activities (*Registro Geral de Pesca*—RGP), in which the artisanal fisher must be registered to access the benefit, allows individuals, legal entities and vessels to lawfully exercise fishing activities. In 2016, the Federal Comptroller General highlighted the ineffectiveness of the registration of fishers due to the unreliability of registered information, the lack of inspection by the competent authorities and the lack of penalties for presenting false information. New registrations have been suspended since 2015. The Federal Court of Accounts, through Ruling 1.999/2016, recommended several improvements to the system. This led to the development of a new version (SisRGP 4.0) in 2019.

Finally, eligibility requirements are partially fulfilled by a self-declaration, through which the applicant states that they have no income sources apart from fishery activities and their continuous engagement in fishing. This may hinder the ability of institutions to carry out internal audits, increasing the risks of fraud.

Reference:

Lazzarini, L. 2020. "The legal framework of the unemployment insurance for artisanal fishers", in IPC-IG and FAO (forthcoming): "Seguro-Defeso impact evaluation". Brasilia: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

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Social protection coverage toolkit

Fabianna Bacil, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

The implementation of nationally appropriate social protection systems for all has emerged as one of the key targets of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1, "End poverty in all its forms and everywhere", which calls for all countries to report on the coverage of social protection programmes. However, just as there are multiple definitions of social protection, the definition of coverage also differs. The concept of coverage by the World Bank (and also used in its ASPIRE database) reflects a 'population concept' of coverage: the share of a population or subpopulation that receives or contributes (as in the case of social insurance) to social protection. Meanwhile, the International Labour Organization differentiates between legal and effective coverage: the first refers to who, by law, is entitled to social protection, and the latter indicates who in fact contributes or receives.

Despite their differences, both take a 'participation' approach to social protection, meaning who participates (either directly or indirectly) in a social protection programme However, they do not tell much about the extent to which people's specific life-cycle risks are covered.

An alternative approach to measuring coverage

In partnership with the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (NENA) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the IPC-IG has developed a toolkit (Bacil et al. 2020) which proposes a complementary approach to measuring social protection coverage. The new approach includes a coverage function to measure the extent to which the different risks are covered, ranging from unprotected to protected, and taking into account the particular vulnerabilities of each population group. The steps to be taken can be summarised as follows:

Step 1. Setting the national definition of social protection: The importance of nationally adopted definitions is also reflected in SDG target 1.3. The objective of social protection and the types of programmes and their target groups largely depend on the socio-economic characteristics of the country.

Step 2. Risk mapping: After having defined social protection, the next step requires mapping the set of risks that affect the population.

- As outlined above, risks and vulnerabilities vary across different groups and are context-specific. Therefore, it is first necessary to identify the different social groups of a society that are subject to particular risks. For example, farmers are vulnerable to the risk of droughts, while working-age individuals are exposed to the risk of unemployment. The person's characteristics define their individual sum of risks (SR), which is equal to the totality of risks to which they are vulnerable.

- Each of these risks has an assigned weight (w_r). It might reflect the level of vulnerability of that person to such risk or how much the society values addressing it. For example, if child marriage has higher incidence in rural areas, the weight for this risk could be higher for rural children, while a government that prioritises eradicating hunger would assign it higher weight.

- Importantly, the sum of the weights of all risks that affect a person must be equal to 1.

Step 3. Programme mapping: Once the groups and their specific risks are identified, the existing social protection programmes need to be mapped to determine to what extent they address the mapped risks.

Step 4. Defining the coverage function and programme benchmarking: To analyse the extent to which the programmes respond to the risks, a coverage function must be defined for each of them.

- The coverage function reflects how much the risk is mitigated by the different programmes. It aims to indicate, for example, how much a food transfer scheme can protect against the risk of food insecurity. Thus, for every risk *r* a specific coverage function applies criteria to evaluate whether it is covered, returning a proportion between 1 (fully covered) and 0 (completely uncovered):

$$c = f(criteria)$$

- The individual social protection coverage rate SPC_i can be expressed as:

$$SPC_i = \sum_{r=1}^{K_i} c_r w_r$$

- The total social protection coverage rate (SPC) of a population composed of N people is the average of the individual rate, and the coverage gap is *1 – SPC*.

Conclusion

This new approach is based on the premise that social protection coverage should be measured by the extent to which programmes provide protection against the multiple risks to which people are exposed during each phase of the life cycle. Therefore, it focuses on risks and the particularities of each social group. By doing so, this approach highlights the specific needs of different groups and the existing protection gaps, enabling the implementation of evidence-based policies to strengthen the national social protection system.

Reference:
For all references, see the full report: Bacil, F., C. Bilo, and W. Silva. 2020. *Social protection coverage toolkit.* Brasilia and Cairo: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa.

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Social protection coverage—Sudan case study

Fabianna Bacil, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

Comprehensive social protection systems are key for mitigating poverty and promoting development. For this reason, the enhancement of social protection coverage is also one of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1: "End poverty in all its forms and everywhere". In partnership with the Regional Office for the Near East And North Africa (NENA) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the IPC-IG has developed a toolkit (Bacil et al., 2020) to calculate the extent to which the population is covered against the risks that affect them throughout their life cycle, going beyond the usual approaches to measuring social protection coverage, which tend to equate programme participation with social protection coverage. The toolkit was applied to the case of Sudan (Bacil and Silva, 2020), using the National Household Budget and Poverty Survey (NHBS) 2014-2015.

The National Household Budget and Poverty Survey 2014-2015

The exercise of estimating the coverage of social protection relies on the quality of the information available. The Sudanese Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) conducted the NHBS with the aim of gathering socio-economic information about the population of the country. The sample comprises 11,953 households across the 18 Sudanese states. The results are representative at the national level, the urban/rural level and the state level (CBS 2017). The NHBS enables the identification of social groups by age, gender and place of residence, and six risks: out of school, unemployment, insufficient earnings, crop failure and livestock issues, and natural disaster.

Social protection coverage

A total of 1,099,474 households were estimated to receive at least one of the six types of economic transfers covered by the 2014-2015 NHBS questionnaire, corresponding to 18 per cent of the total number of households in Sudan. This amounts to 6,405,377 people (19 per cent of the population) living in households assisted by at least one social protection scheme. The informal provision of social protection—namely, that provided by family members outside the household—is significant in Sudan, while the provision of benefits by the government remains relatively low. Based on national definitions of poverty, 21.8 per cent of people living in extreme poverty receive some type of economic support, as do 19.7 per cent of those living in poverty and 17.2 per cent of those not considered poor.

The coverage rate of the Sudanese formal social protection system is low regardless of the methodology used to measure it. If participation in a scheme is deemed enough for a person to be considered protected, government programmes reach less than 3 per cent of women and men in rural and urban areas.

Using the methodology proposed in the toolkit, which aims to measure the extent to which the diverse risks faced by different groups in a given society are covered, shows that government provision of social protection in Sudan makes the smallest contribution to mitigating risks, with an average protection coverage rate of only 0.4 per cent, compared to an average of 1.3 per cent for informal social protection and 42.4 per cent for what is termed 'individual coverage' (40.3 per cent being through a person's own income, and 2.1 per cent through access to credit).

The same pattern can be observed if the focus is placed solely on farmers. Considering all risks that affect them, the highest protection rate is achieved through individual coverage (29.9 per cent), followed by informal social protection (1.1 per cent) and, lastly, formal social protection schemes (0.3 per cent). Moreover, this is true for all age groups (0–5, 6–11, 18–60 and above 60 years) in both rural and urban places of residence.

Steps forward

The study indicates a significant social protection coverage gap in Sudan. In other words, the benefits currently provided by the government are insufficient to address the risks that affect the population throughout the life cycle, thus hampering people's livelihoods and the country's development.

In this sense, even though the expansion of social protection programme participation is crucial to enhance the Sudanese social protection coverage rate, it is important to keep in mind that this is not the only relevant aspect. The type and level of benefit need to be capable of addressing the risks that different groups face. Therefore, it is essential to comprehend the risks that affect each section of the population and design interventions suited to mitigate them.

The availability of reliable data is essential to enable an accurate measurement of the coverage rate and guide evidence-based policymaking. Therefore, it is important to overcome current NHBS limitations. Foremost, the questionnaire should include detailed questions on economic transfers, disaggregating their source and enquiring about their value and frequency. The text and order of questions also need to be reviewed, as the way they are framed can interfere with respondents' answers. The supporting documentation should also provide more information to allow the application of statistical inference. Another important improvement would be the inclusion of questions that provide more detail on social groups, such as the identification of respondents' employment sector (formal and informal).

References:

Bacil, F., and W. Silva. 2020. *Social protection coverage—Sudan case study.* Brasília and Cairo: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa.

Bacil, F., C. Bilo, and W. Silva. 2020. *Social protection coverage toolkit.* Brasília and Cairo: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa.

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Social protection in Sudan: System overview and programme mapping

Charlotte Bilo, Anna Carolina Machado and Fabianna Bacil, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

Sudan has been garnering increasing international attention over the past two years as it goes through considerable changes in its internal political settings. After the end of President Omar al-Bashir's regime in April 2019, as a result of a civil-led movement also referred to as the Sudanese Revolution, a new constitutional declaration was signed and an interim government (composed of a Sovereign Council, a Legislative Council and a Council of Ministers headed by a civilian Prime Minister) was established. Since the installation of the new administration, national expectations regarding the improvement of living conditions have increased and social protection is now, more than ever, recognised by national authorities as a key priority. The commitment of the interim government to social welfare is reflected in the Constitutional Declaration, which recognises the State's role in achieving social development through the provision of education, health care, housing and social insurance.

State-provided social protection schemes are not entirely new in Sudan. The country already had a tradition in providing income, consumption goods and other basic services, such as health and education, to poor and marginalised people. A report by Machado (2020) compiles information on these schemes, aiming to contribute to the literature by providing evidence on the state of social assistance and social insurance programmes in the country as of late 2019. It is divided into two parts: the first provides a quick overview of the main institutions in charge of social protection as well as the key policy and legal instruments that guide and regulate the system, while the second offers a detailed description of Sudan's main social protection programmes, including key information such as institutional set up, benefits provided, coverage, targeting mechanisms used to identify beneficiaries, financing structure, administrative databases, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

This mapping is the result of a joint effort between the International Policy Centre Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), Sudan's Ministry of Labour and Social Development (MoLSD), the Commission on Social Safety and Poverty Reduction (CSSPR), and UNICEF Sudan. MoLSD is the main institution responsible for social protection policies and programmes in the country. In total, 19 units (some being semi-autonomous agencies with a high level of independence) fall under the purview of the Ministry, including:

1) the CSSPR, which emerged from the Centre for Coordinating Poverty Reduction Projects (established in 2002) to conduct research related to poverty and poverty reduction efforts. The organisation was introduced in early 2018 and is now in charge of implementing the government's flagship programmes—Shamel and the national cash transfer scheme. Both programmes are provided technical support by international development agencies, such as the World Bank and UNICEF, as detailed in the report;

2) the Zakat Fund, which is the most comprehensive source of social protection in Sudan, reaching up to 3.7 million Sudanese families (as of 2018). Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam: it is considered a religious duty for the wealthy to help those in need. The Fund (established and organised the State) provides assistance in many forms, including unconditional cash transfers, payment of health insurance fees for poor people, micro-credit, livelihood programmes, and temporary assistance to families during Ramadan or emergencies;

3) the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF). Established in 1994, the NHIF is the main health insurance provider in Sudan, consisting of both non-contributory and contributory branches. In 1996, membership became compulsory for both government and private-sector employees. In 2008, the government started to include poor and vulnerable families, but it was only in 2016 that the Health Insurance Act established that every Sudanese should be covered by health insurance or have access to health care services; and

4) the National Pension and Social Insurance Fund, which is responsible for the provision of pensions and social insurance to the government, private and public sectors.

While the mapping highlights the diversity of social protection schemes available in the country, information collected also signals that, in several cases, their effective implementation has suffered significantly from the effects of Sudan's most recent fiscal and macroeconomic crisis. For example, cash transfer disbursements were hampered in April 2018 by a combination of insufficient budget allocation and the low amount of national currency in circulation.

It is important to note that this research was conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic (which has been a major shock to social protection in the country). Even so, by providing an overview of the situation of Sudan's social protection system in late 2019, the mapping provides an important starting point for any reform efforts and helps identify challenges and future areas of research. Moreover, it aims to serve as a reference document for international partners that wish to support the Government of Sudan in its efforts to enhance the provision of social protection in the country.

Reference:

Bilo, C., A. C. Machado, and F. Bacil. 2020. *Social Protection in Sudan: System overview and programme mapping.* Research Report No. 53. Brasília and Khartoum: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, Sudan's Ministry of Labour and Social Development and United Nations Children's Fund.

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Pakistan's social protection response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the road ahead

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The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic crisis severely impinge on the livelihoods of millions of households and threaten to leave lasting scars on countries' socio-economic landscapes. To combat the fallout on the most vulnerable people in society, Pakistan initiated one of the most widely cited social protection initiatives in South Asia and beyond: *Ehsaas Emergency Cash*. Markhof (2020) provides an in-depth look at the most pertinent features of this response, analyses its adequacy, and outlines key takeaways that can inform the path towards a new, better normal for social protection in Pakistan and beyond. This One Pager summarises the study's key findings, many of which generalise past the Pakistani context.

The crisis is adding further economic pressure to an already strenuous position in Pakistan and has led to significant downward estimates of growth by the World Bank. The 59 million workers in Pakistan earning informal livelihoods, many of whom cluster around the USD3.20 poverty line, are seeing their incomes slashed during the crisis and could account for up to 11.5 million additional people falling into poverty. The 2020/21 fiscal year budget must thus reconcile increases in social spending with considerations of fiscal sustainability. To do so, it hinges on swift recovery.

Social protection has been an integral component of Pakistan's response to the crisis. It fulfils four interrelated roles: (i) protecting critically threatened livelihoods; (ii) complementing non-pharmaceutical interventions; (iii) preserving and strengthening capacity for recovery; and (iv) building future resilience. The flagship social protection response has been *Ehsaas Emergency Cash* (EEC).

EEC was a cash transfer given to 16.9 million households (about 50 per cent of the population) from April to July 2020. The benefit was a lump sum of PKR12,000 (34 per cent of the average monthly household income), paid through biometric payment points. Beneficiaries belong to one of five categories: (i) existing Ehsaas Kafaalat (EK) unconditional cash transfer beneficiaries; (ii) those with a proxy means test score in the social registry of between 16.7 (the threshold for receipt of EK) and 38; (iii) those who are poor but not enrolled in the social registry, whose eligibility was verified through district lists and big-data-based exclusion criteria; (iv) informal workers who were laid off due to the lockdown; and (v) those formally eligible who applied for relief but could not get covered initially due to province quota restrictions. Beneficiaries who did not already receive the transfer were identified through an SMS campaign or online portal and had to undergo biometric registration before being prompted to pick up their benefit at their nearest payment point.

An adequate social protection response had to be large (vertical expansion of benefits), widespread (horizontal expansion of coverage), and long-lasting, with swift and safe action as governing imperatives. How does EEC compare to this benchmark?

For workers in sectors that were highly affected by the pandemic, EEC covered 56 per cent of estimated income losses during the 46-day general lockdown. It was sufficient to cover food expenditures for about three-quarters of this period if beneficiaries only spent as much as the poorest 20 per cent of households in Pakistan do in normal times. In terms of monthly household income covered, EEC ranks around the median in an international sample of emergency cash transfers.

EEC was able to cover 55 per cent of significantly impacted informal workers and 74 per cent of the population multidimensionally vulnerable to COVID-19. Coverage was spread across the country, with the highest share of vulnerable people covered in the provinces of Sindh and Punjab—which saw the largest increases in vulnerability—but somewhat lower coverage rates in more remote areas and where social registry coverage was incomplete.

Through its design, EEC took several precautions to avoid the spread of the disease and had provisions to cover significant portions of the 'missing middle' without previous access to social protection. Furthermore, it employed digital technologies for registration and payment that hold future promise but might ambivalently affect female applicants.

Finally, the next steps of the crisis response should be '**SMART'**:

Support the livelihoods of those who continue to be affected.

Make sure to foster the federal-provincial interplay and continuation of a 'whole of government' approach to social protection—during *and* after the crisis.

Adapt the response in length, coverage, and benefit values to the developments of the crisis.

Reap the benefits of what has already been achieved—the social registry can be expanded; enrolment can be made more flexible, on-demand, and digital; financial inclusion can be promoted; and the 'missing middle' can be integrated into the mainstream social protection landscape. These measures ultimately build future resilience.

Target universal access to social protection as the mid-term goal through a combination of broad social protection floors and an extension of social insurance to informal workers.

Reference:
Markhof, Y. 2020. "Pakistan's Social Protection Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic: The Adequacy of Ehsaas Emergency Cash and Road Ahead." *IPC-IG Working Paper* No. 188, Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

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The need for a concerted response to the debt crisis in developing countries during and after COVID-19

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The COVID-19 pandemic and its health, social and economic consequences are posing unprecedented global challenges, in particular to developing countries. A significant challenge that has arisen is financing for development during and after the health crisis, particularly the debt crisis of developing countries. Prior to the pandemic, given weak global economic circumstances and stagnant Official Development Assistance flows,[1] the debt crisis was already a focus of various multilateral financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, international organisations such as United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as concerned governments and researchers.

According to a study by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 2020) on developing country debt amid COVID-19, based on data from the World Bank and the IMF, developing countries will face a wall of external debt service repayments throughout the 2020s, during deep economic distress.

The G20's International Financial Architecture Working Group, in cooperation with the IMF, the World Bank, the OECD and various regional development banks, has explored ways to enhance global financial stability and resilience. On 15 April 2020 the G20 countries agreed to a time-bound Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), starting on 1 May 2020 and lasting for 6 months, to support the efforts of the poorest countries to protect lives and alleviate the devastating socio-economic consequences of the pandemic. The DSSI stands to benefit 73 countries, including the least developed countries as defined by the United Nations. As of 16 October 2020, the DSSI had received 44 applications, with potential DSSI savings estimated at USD12 billion (World Bank 2020), representing only about 1 per cent of the estimated USD1.1 trillion debt service repayments of middle- and low-income countries in 2020 and 2021. However, the DSSI does not guarantee the participation of all creditors.

Following an initial high-level dialogue in May at the United Nations that called for a solidary, multilateral response to global crises, six groups were formed to work on developing options to address issues related to: 1) external finance, remittances, jobs and inclusive growth; 2) recovering better for sustainability; 3) global liquidity and financial stability; 4) debt vulnerability; 5) engagement of private-sector creditors; and 6) illicit financial flows.

A high-level meeting of Heads of State and governments was convened by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at the United Nations headquarters in New York on 29 September 2020, aimed at assessing the work so far. The 'menu of options'[2] contained a set of key recommendations,[3] including:

- extending debt relief not only to least developed countries but also to all developing, middle-income countries;*
- extensive debt cancellations and multilateral approaches to sovereign debt restructuring under the auspices of the United Nations;
- new allocation of the Special Drawing Rights to meet the growing global need for liquidity;
- engagement with private creditors and credit-rating agencies;*
- paying specific attention to Africa's development financing needs;*
- meeting the existing commitments under the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, particularly those on illicit financial flows, tax evasion and corruption;* and
- organising an International Economic Reconstruction and Systemic Reform Summit, under the auspices of the United Nations, to move towards a new global economic governance architecture.

Given the rising debt burdens in developing countries, it is much more difficult to predict the economic downturn and evolution of the pandemic. The 2020 World Bank Group–IMF Annual Meetings were held on 12–18 October, revealing support programmes limited to providing finance in the form of loans instead of grants. On 14 October the G20 countries agreed to an extension of the DSSI until the end of June 2021. At the World Bank Group–IMF Spring Meetings in April 2021, the G20 will decide if the DSSI should be further extended for an additional 6 months.

It is clear that the pre-existing debt vulnerabilities of developing countries are worsening and that the overall financing gap is widening. Addressing these issues properly is critical for their recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and to ensure progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Moving forwards, high-level political leaderships must strive to translate these recommendations into concerted and urgent actions.

References:

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Notes:

1. More detailed discussions and recommendations on Official Development Assistance are available in Alsayyad (2020).

2. See: <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/part_ii-_detailed_menu_of_options_financing_for_development_covid19.pdf>.

3. Recommendations followed by * were strongly emphasised.

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Social protection legislative frameworks in South Asia from a children's rights perspective

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An important element of social protection systems are regulatory frameworks. The absence of a legal framework for social protection leaves individuals and communities in need exposed to arbitrary decision-making and political change—resulting in narrower and more difficult access to assistance. A strong statutory basis which recognises social protection as a right ensures accountable institutions (intended as duty-bearers) and enables individuals (as rights-holders) to make legitimate claims and enforce their rights, thus creating legal awareness, which is central to the legal empowerment of the most vulnerable members of society. Further, the enactment of social protection legislation is a precious occasion for setting long-term objectives for social protection systems and to foster coherence between programmes, financing and administration modalities.

The first objective of a recent study by the IPC-IG and the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) (Lazzarini 2020) was to assess the state of children's right to social protection by analysing the legal frameworks supporting national social protection systems.

Social protection is part of the wider human right to social security as enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which has been ratified by each country in South Asia, except for Bhutan. While the right to social security should be realised progressively, States, as duty-bearers, need to provide, at a minimum, access to essential health care, basic shelter and housing, water and sanitation, foodstuffs and basic education. Further, all countries in the region are State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). As a consequence, besides adopting the necessary measures to achieve the full realisation of children's right to benefit from social security in accordance with national law, State Parties are obliged to provide, in case of need, material assistance and support programmes to realise the right to an adequate standard of living.

From a national perspective, the firm commitment of South Asian countries to provide social protection to their populations can be inferred from their respective constitutional settings. Each constitution contains a provision related to social protection, excluding Afghanistan's, which, nevertheless, provides for the protection of certain vulnerable groups.

However, at the statutory level the analysis reveals that only Maldives and Nepal have a general regulatory framework for social protection. The other countries (i.e. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka) have opted for legislation regulating particular aspects of social protection, such as sectoral institutional arrangements, identification and payment modalities. India's National Food Security Act, which provides common normative grounds for the provision of food security, demonstrates how the realisation of other economic, social and cultural rights contribute to social protection. Finally, it should be also noted that most social protection legislation in South Asia has been enacted within the last 6 years. This trend can be interpreted as a step towards building social protection systems anchored in a rights-based approach.

In terms of child-focused legislation, the typical approach in the region is the regulation of single issues (e.g. child protection, education etc.) through a single set of legislation. This approach has generated a considerable amount of legislation over time, which occasionally results in conflicting provisions. Further, the CRC Committee, which oversees the implementation of the Convention, noted in its latest concluding observations that national legislation in most South Asian countries does not fully implement or comply with the CRC. Against this background, it is commendable that, between 2018 and 2019, Afghanistan, Maldives and Nepal adhered to the recommendations of the CRC Committee with statutes which, besides enshrining children's right to social protection, aim to systematise children's rights.

From a rights-monitoring perspective, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) have been set up in each country except for Bhutan. NHRIs represent a key guarantee in human rights monitoring, including those of the child as well as the right to social protection. The need for this control function appears to be even more fundamental, as no country in the region is a State Party to the ICESCR Optional Protocol, which allows potential victims to file a complaint before the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; moreover, South Asia is the only region without a regional human rights system (or a regional mechanism to address human rights violations).

At the programme level the analysis indicates that only 18 out of a total of 51 programmes are embedded in regulatory frameworks. The remaining 33 measures are, worryingly, not governed by any set of enforceable rules, thus hindering the implementation of a human rights-based approach to social protection.

The second objective of the study was to evaluate the compliance of regulatory frameworks in support of social protection programmes with different aspects of the human rights-based approach to social protection. The analysis reveals that the only criterion with which each of the 18 regulatory frameworks integrally complies relates to the definition of roles and responsibilities.

Regarding compliance with the other dimensions of the human rights-based approach, 78 per cent of the regulatory frameworks relating to social protection in the region define clear eligibility criteria; 68 per cent set out long-term financial requirements; 67 per cent define transparency mechanisms; 58 per cent regulate the predictability of benefits; 41 per cent provide accessible complaints/appeals mechanisms; and a mere 26 per cent define participatory channels.

It should be strongly emphasised that the lack of compliance in relation to complaints and appeals mechanisms poses an almost insurmountable obstacle to the implementation of a human rights-based approach to social protection, given that institutions cannot be held accountable if rights-holders are not in a position to enforce their rights.

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South Africa's social protection response to the COVID-19 pandemic

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The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic crisis severely impinge on the livelihoods of millions of households and threaten to leave lasting scars on countries' socio-economic landscapes. To combat the fallout for the most vulnerable people in society, South Africa initiated one of the largest social protection initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa. This One Pager summarises the key components of South Africa's social protection response to COVID-19, as well as the specific challenges posed by the pandemic.

After the first case of COVID-19 in South Africa was detected on 5 March 2020, the President announced a full nationwide lockdown starting on 26 March. The comparatively strict measures included the closure of all non-essential businesses, resulting in job losses in the formal sector. Further, citizens were not permitted to leave their homes, except for essential tasks, which shut down much of South Africa's informal economy. According to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates, the country's overall gross domestic product (GDP) could contract by up to 8 per cent in 2020, and up to 34 per cent of households are likely to exit South Africa's emerging middle class as a result of the pandemic (UNDP South Africa 2020).

Social protection has been an integral component of South Africa's response to the crisis. Building on the country's long-standing and well-developed social protection framework, the government adopted a two-pronged and largely cash-based approach, consisting of both social security and social assistance measures.

For workers in the formal sector, the existing Temporary Employee Employer Relief Scheme (TERS) was revised and extended to provide financial support to employees who had been laid off due to the pandemic. Initially launched in 2019 and administered by the Unemployment Insurance Fund, TERS permitted businesses in financial distress to lay off workers temporarily while they received professional training and were paid a training allowance. Under the new scheme, employers could claim financial support for their employees amounting to up to 60 per cent of their regular salary, calculated on a sliding scale. Initially disbursed through employers, payments were later made directly to employees in response to irregularities and delays in the payment process. As of October 2020, a total of ZAR51 billion (USD3.46 billion) had been disbursed to workers of over 1 million companies. In light of the prolonged impact of the pandemic, the scheme was extended until 31 December 2020.

As for social grants, South Africa's 11.3 million social grant recipients benefited from top-up payments, starting in May 2020. Recipients of the Child Support Grant received an additional ZAR300 (USD20) per child in the first month and ZAR500 (USD34) per caregiver for an additional five months, whereas recipients of other grants received a ZAR250 (USD17) monthly top-up for a period of six months. Using existing beneficiary lists and payment channels, the top-up payments were rolled out quickly and effectively.

Further, South Africa introduced a new temporary cash transfer for unemployed working-age individuals in response to the pandemic. The COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant, amounting to ZAR350 (USD24) per month, was implemented by South Africa's Social Security Agency, which also administers the country's other social grant programmes. The grant was paid to South African citizens, permanent residents and registered refugees over the age of 18 who were unemployed and not receiving unemployment benefits, social grants or any other form of government support. Announced on 21 April 2020 and set to run for six months, the programme was later extended until 31 January 2021. Initially, the scheme suffered from various 'teething problems' related to its online application portal, its complex verification process and its payment system, leading to payment delays and the rejection of eligible beneficiaries. However, by the end of October 2020, South Africa's first temporary basic income grant had successfully been rolled out to 6 million individuals.

Additional social protection measures included relief funds for artists, athletes, technical personnel and registered tourist guides, implemented through the respective government departments. Credit restructuring, payment relief and additional loans were made available to individuals and businesses through the banking sector, although take-up was lower than expected. Finally, food parcels were distributed by the South African Social Security Agency and the Department of Social Development to bridge the gap until the launch of the SRD grant. However, the country's overall food aid response was limited, especially in light of the suspension of the school feeding scheme (which provides daily meals to 12 million pupils) during several months of lockdown-related school closures.

In summary, South Africa's social protection response to COVID-19 was comprehensive in comparison to most other African countries, although it largely relied on cash-based measures. Unlike other African countries, in-kind aid and subsidies did not play a significant role in South Africa's pandemic response. By leveraging existing social protection structures, the government managed to reach a considerable number of vulnerable citizens with cash-based relief measures, some of which have already been extended beyond the initial emergency response.

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Mobile payment and application systems for COVID-19 emergency cash transfers in Africa

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The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic crisis severely impinge on the livelihoods of millions of households and threaten to leave lasting scars on countries' socio-economic landscapes. To combat the fallout for the most vulnerable people in society, at least 43 countries in sub-Saharan Africa adopted cash-based social assistance measures. In addition to reaching previously uncovered populations with cash transfers, various countries used digital tools for beneficiary registration and payments, in many cases for the first time. This One Pager provides a brief overview of the use of digital payment systems and mobile application platforms for emergency cash transfer programmes in sub-Saharan Africa in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the launch of Safaricom's M-Pesa service in 2007, the use of mobile money as an everyday payment instrument has spread rapidly across the African continent. In 2019 the number of registered mobile money accounts in sub-Saharan Africa reached 469 million, with East Africa accounting for more than half of all registered accounts (GSM Association 2020).

Yet an analysis of payment systems for national cash transfer schemes revealed that few programmes in sub-Saharan Africa had adopted mobile money as a payment instrument prior to the pandemic. Instead, most large, well-established schemes had opted for a payment model based on bank accounts and payment cards, in some cases in combination with biometric verification (Gronbach 2020). Further, most programmes relied at least partly on cash disbursements, either through local pay points or via private payment providers. Payments via mobile money were generally restricted to smaller cash transfer schemes and pilot programmes, as well as humanitarian transfers.

In response to the pandemic, however, governments across the continent called for a rapid shift towards digital payment methods, both for everyday transactions and for social cash transfers. This was largely a result of the widespread implementation of strict lockdown measures such as curfews, social distancing requirements and limitations on social gatherings and movement, as well as concerns over the handling of physical cash as a potential source of infection. Prior to the pandemic, payment digitisation had started in most countries but was progressing rather slowly. The reasons for this included connectivity and infrastructure limitations, concerns over beneficiaries' digital literacy, the high initial cost of digital solutions, and the failure of smaller programmes to benefit from economies of scale.

In March 2020 the Central Bank of West African States issued a directive to waive mobile money transaction fees in its member countries. Central banks and individual mobile network operators (MNOs) in various other African countries, including Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Lesotho, Malawi and Tanzania, followed suit. In addition to reducing or waiving transaction fees, several countries and MNOs raised daily transaction limits, simplified account opening requirements and increased account balance limits to promote the adoption and use of mobile payments (GSM Association 2020).

In this context, mobile money emerged as the preferred payment method for COVID-19 emergency cash transfers in sub-Saharan Africa. Examples include Togo's *Novissi* programme, Madagascar's *Tosika Fameno* cash transfer, as well as various emergency payments in countries such as Benin, Congo, Kenya and Zimbabwe. Overall, more than half of all new cash transfers launched in response to the pandemic used mobile money as their main payment instrument. In addition, existing cash transfer programmes in eSwatini, Lesotho, Malawi and Nigeria increased the use of mobile payments during the pandemic, thus accelerating the ongoing digitisation of cash transfers in these countries.

In terms of their application process, the vast majority of cash transfer programmes had relied on a manual, paper-based system prior to the emergence of COVID-19. During the pandemic, several countries piloted digital application platforms as part of their emergency response, such as the USSD-based application process for cash transfers in Namibia, South Africa and Togo. Other countries, such as Gabon, Mauritius and the Seychelles, used web-based application portals or accepted application documents via email. While it remains to be seen to what extent these digital application tools will be integrated into existing cash transfer programmes and sustained beyond the emergency phase, South Africa has already launched an online application portal for its regular social grant programme, and other countries may well follow suit.

In summary, the adoption of mobile money as a payment instrument for emergency cash transfers, as well as the use of digital application platforms, were two of the most salient and innovative features of the social protection response to COVID-19 in sub-Saharan Africa. Building on existing digitisation efforts, the pandemic has accelerated the shift towards mobile technologies for both applications and payments, at least during the emergency response phase. As countries move into the recovery phase, some of the digital tools used in the emergency response are likely to be incorporated into existing cash transfer programmes, thus accelerating the ongoing digitisation drive on the continent.

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The state of social insurance for agricultural workers in the Near East and North Africa and challenges for expansion

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Rural areas in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) are commonly characterised by high dependence on agriculture and natural resources, high levels of informality in employment arrangements, low productivity rates and high prevalence of poverty. Poor rural households are particularly exposed to risks during their life cycle and to covariate risks such as drought and armed conflict. Social protection policies have great potential to respond to these risks, reduce poverty and promote agricultural development. While non-contributory programmes can provide a basic level of income security and access to essential health care, and ensure food security and small-scale livelihood activity, contributory schemes can provide higher levels of protection, enabling rural populations to better manage risks and prevent impoverishment. However, agricultural workers are often excluded from social protection systems, especially from contributory schemes.

Against this background, the IPC-IG and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Regional NENA Office joined efforts to develop a working paper (Sato 2021) analysing the availability and main barriers of social insurance schemes for agricultural workers in the region. The aim
of the working paper is to contribute to fill the gap in the literature regarding the role of contributory schemes for workers in the agricultural sector.

Based on the International Social Security Association (ISSA) database, which provides details on the legal coverage of social insurance schemes, the paper sheds light on significant legal gaps and exclusionary mechanisms against agricultural workers. Countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen explicitly exclude certain agricultural workers from some or all contributory schemes, in most cases because these workers are excluded from the application of the countries' labour laws. Yemen, Syria and Lebanon exclude certain migrant workers, who often represent a large share of the labour force in agriculture. Moreover, except for Libya, all other countries have legal barriers that exclude self-employed workers from at least one social insurance scheme. Finally, several countries exclude workers in non-standard forms of employment, such as temporary, seasonal and casual employment, from some or all schemes, even though this represents one of the most common forms of employment in the agricultural sector. Even when inclusive legal frameworks exist, compliance can be poor regarding non-standard forms of employment—due to factors such as the limited capacity for labour and social security inspection; weak systems and incentives; and limited opportunities for information-sharing and cross-referencing across public institutions.

A lack of data is a significant limitation in analysing the effective social protection coverage of rural populations and poses a primary barrier to its expansion in NENA. However, considering the low effective social protection coverage of the overall population, the characteristics of agricultural workers in the region (e.g. high informality, seasonality etc.), and the additional barriers they face to enrol in social protection, it is possible to infer that coverage rates for rural families is minimal.

Yet there are indications that social insurance schemes can have a significant impact on poverty reduction. According to World Bank Atlas of Social Protection Indicators of Resilience and Equity (ASPIRE) data, social insurance schemes have significantly reduced the poverty headcount in the poorest quintile living in rural areas in Egypt, Jordan and Mauritania. Moreover, in Egypt and Jordan social insurance schemes have provided higher benefits and had larger impacts on poverty reduction than social assistance schemes for both rural and urban populations.

In addition, the report discusses some of the main barriers to the expansion of social insurance schemes in the NENA region and presents examples of policies that have been adopted to address them. Besides the lack of data and exclusionary legal frameworks, they include:

- Financial barriers: Social insurance schemes that require regular monthly contributions are not adapted to the income characteristics of agricultural workers, which is generally seasonal, low, irregular, unpredictable and primarily non-cash or in-kind. To overcome this issue, Morocco adapted its social insurance scheme for small-scale fishers by deducting their income-related contributions for social and health insurance at the point of catch sale.

- Administrative and institutional barriers encompass the lower levels of registration (identification) among rural workers and the limited number of physical offices that disburse benefits in rural areas. An important initiative led by FAO in partnership with the Government of Lebanon to overcome the lack of registration is the establishment of a farmers' registry, a web-based application that leverages agricultural and socio-economic data to gather key information on smallholder farmers and, indirectly, expand social protection coverage.

- Participation and information challenges include factors such as lack of access to the political decision-making process and political marginalisation faced by rural communities; limited awareness of social protection programmes; and widespread mistrust of public institutions and government agencies. To overcome information limitations, successful initiatives have adopted measures such as awareness-raising campaigns and specific strategies in rural contexts.

NENA countries are reforming their social policies to create more pro-poor social protection systems. This context of reform provides a window of opportunity to expand social protection floors and cover traditionally excluded groups, such as agricultural workers. This report shows the importance of adapting social insurance schemes for rural workers, given their great potential to mitigate poverty and reduce inequality in the region.

Reference:

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Improving social protection for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt: An overview of international practices

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Egypt is the leading country of origin of migrant workers in the Middle East and North Africa, and migration has been a central issue throughout its history. However, in addition to being a traditional country of origin and transit, the importance of Egypt as a country of destination has been growing over the last two decades, with the number of forcibly displaced persons living in the country increasing by more than 18 times and reaching a total of 324,712 at the end of 2019. Data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2020) show that these people face many risks and vulnerabilities, such as high rates of poverty, unemployment or informality, and food insecurity. Women and non-Arabic-speaking refugees are especially vulnerable, and children (aged 0–17 years) represent over 40 per cent of the total population of most of the main migrant groups living in Egypt.

The provision of social protection (SP) for these individuals is a human right. It can protect migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers and increase their chances of contributing to the national economy and society. However, SP is not always guaranteed for international migrants. UNICEF Egypt and the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) joined forces to gather evidence of experiences that can provide valuable insights for a new migration governance framework, a more inclusive SP system and sustainable socio-economic development in Egypt. The report (Andrade, Sato, and Hammad 2021) is guided by three main questions:

To what extent do national SP systems have the capacity to integrate migrants, refugees and asylum seekers? The report takes a human rights-based approach to debate the right to SP for non-nationals and highlights the importance of shock-responsive systems to combat covariate risks faced by families and individuals. Evidence shows that SP programmes can play a substantial role at all stages of the migration process. For instance, in the country of destination it is essential to guarantee non-discriminatory access to SP to ensure that migrants have the right to decent living standards and to work, and can increase access to documentation and public services. In this context, social assistance plays a crucial role in protecting the poorest and most vulnerable migrants and their families, while for migrant workers, social insurance and active labour market policies are central to the realisation of social rights and rights at work. When migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are successfully integrated into host communities and the labour market, they can contribute to national development, as they tend to pay more into contributory social security systems and overall SP systems in the form of taxes than they receive in terms of benefits.

How are other countries ensuring the right to SP for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, especially the most vulnerable? Case studies of countries from different regions across the globe, especially middle-income countries, were selected to illustrate how social assistance (in the cases of Turkey, Morocco and Brazil), social insurance (Philippines and in the case of social security agreements), labour market policies (Denmark and Colombia), basic health care services (Iran and Turkey) and education (Lebanon) can be more inclusive for non-nationals, especially for refugees.

Some of the main factors that favoured the expansion of coverage to non-nationals highlighted in these cases include: establishing a comprehensive legislative framework that guarantees fundamental rights and access to SP for all individuals; collaborating with international partners to increase the capacities of national systems; reforming migration policies towards a rights-based approach; capacitating social workers to deal with specific vulnerabilities faced by migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; guaranteeing legal status for undocumented individuals; and investing in infrastructure in places with high demand from migrant populations.

What are the opportunities for extending SP to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt? At the statutory level, Egypt has national laws and international obligations to protect migrants. In the Middle East and North Africa, Egypt is one of the countries that has ratified the most human rights conventions that guarantee the provision of SP to non-nationals. Moreover, the Egyptian Constitution (2019) affirms that all citizens have the right to social security and health insurance. Other national laws on access to the labour market, social insurance and social assistance establish rights for non-nationals. At the same time, these laws have limitations such as restrictions on non-nationals working in certain sectors; limited health insurance coverage for migrants working in the informal sector or who are undocumented; and the requirement of possessing/presenting a national identity document to receive benefits from social assistance programmes, such as *Takaful* (a conditional cash transfer) and *Karama* (an unconditional cash transfer).

Based on the findings on the status of access to SP for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt, and the enabling factors observed in other countries, the report ends with an advisory section of policies that aim to advance the agenda on SP for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt, contribute to the ongoing policy debate and promote a more inclusive model for development.

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Morocco's new Social Registry: Implementation and challenges

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Overview of Morocco's existing system and weaknesses

Morocco's Single Social Registry (*Registre Social Unifié*—RSU) is being lauded as a central tool for the future of social protection in the country; according to the King's Speech of 2020, the RSU will start operating in 2021. Today, Morocco has many systems used as registries, such as its Civil Registry and the Medical Assistance Registry (*Registre d'assistance médicale*—RAMED), which was notably used for the COVID-19 response for informal workers (Jaidi 2020) and expanded to contain information on households that had to take active steps to register for emergency aid.

However, these registries present some issues: although there are many of them, with much of the population registered, none are able to carry out the satisfactory selection and identification of beneficiaries for social programmes. The lack of a unified identifier is an issue that has been highlighted in the existing system, in addition to certain questions regarding data protection and the use of biometric data—even though Morocco has a robust legal framework and a National Control Commission for the Protection of Personal Data (*Commission nationale de protection des données personnelles*—CNDP).

The RSU's objectives

The RSU is being implemented as a solution to many of the existing weaknesses of Morocco's social protection system: it should harmonise data collection and concentrate data in one single place through a unique identification number and using biometric data. The selection and identification of beneficiaries will, therefore, be channelled through the RSU, which requires the creation of a new institutional structure: the RSU will use data from the newly formed National Population Registry (*Registre national de la population*—RNP), concentrating information on potential beneficiaries, and will be administered by the recently created National Registry Agency (*Agence nationale des registres*—ANR). These have already been instituted by law; however, they still need to be operationalised by 2021.

The primary goal of this institutional structure is to improve the efficiency of social spending through more precise identification mechanisms that could reduce exclusion errors—but they might focus on inclusion errors instead. It will probably use a proxy means-testing approach for the selection of beneficiaries, accompanying a revamp of the social protection landscape to expand access to family allowances and public medical insurance. Therefore, the RSU is conceived as a driver of the future of social protection in Morocco, allowing for a better understanding of social protection beneficiaries and the impacts of cash transfers.

The RSU's challenges and weaknesses

Following the adoption of Draft Law 72-18 (on the RSU), some important monitoring institutions have raised issues about its implementation. In its observations and recommendations sent to Morocco's Chamber of Representatives, the National Human Rights Council (*Conseil national des droits de l'Homme*—CNDH) has cast doubts on the practical advantages of targeting vulnerable groups for social protection. In particular, it indicated that the RSU should have the convergence of programmes into an integrated system of public policy as a goal.

For the CNDH, one of the most important aspects of an integrated social protection policy is to include and transform 'support programmes' into an integrated system—which might be outside the RSU's current scope. In this regard, there is a lack of inclusion of homeless people or those without a stable residence, since this information is needed for inclusion in the RSU. Similarly, according to the country's Economic, Social and Environmental Council (*Conseil Economique, Social et Environnement*al—CESE), the new law references parts of the Statut Personnel (the equivalent of Family Law), a text that has many issues on gender equality and contradicts rights guaranteed to women by the Moroccan Constitution.

Another important issue regarding the RSU's draft legislation is data protection for those registered. The CNDP's recommendations also focused on separating data for authentication from data to be used by programmes run by different entities—which might go against the ANR's rules. Similarly, the CNDH and the CESE cast doubts on the quality of data protection, and a mechanism for submitting complaints and obtaining legal redress for registered individuals would be required to safeguard individual rights.

The RSU's implementation is being considered by national actors as the next step for Morocco's social protection policy; it should be able to gather data on most of its potential beneficiaries. However, it is important not to lose sight of the importance of using it as a tool to improve the integration of programmes and sectors related to social protection, despite the imperfection of targeting mechanisms. Because it is a 'Single' Registry, the RSU needs to be inclusive, and it has to ensure the safety of its users' data as it rolls out in 2021.

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Brazilian labour market adjustment to two recessions: An analysis of the period 2015–2016 and the COVID-19 pandemic

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The coronavirus pandemic arrived in Brazil at a time when the labour market was still recovering from the effects of the 2015-2016 recession.[1] The adjustment in employment after the crisis of 2015 and 2016 occurred through an increase in informal work, characterised by greater flexibility and the absence of dismissal costs. This type of occupation was most severely affected by the social distancing measures and restriction of economic activities brought about by COVID-19.

To understand the current situation of the Brazilian labour market, it is necessary to look back and examine the consequences remaining from the 2015–2016 recession in the labour market that enhanced the negative effects of the pandemic in the country. To do this, we used data from the National Continuous Household Sample Survey (*Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios* (PNAD) *Contínua*).

The working-age population (aged 14 and over) can be divided into three states: i) employed; ii) unemployed; and iii) inactive. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the population in these three statuses from the first quarter of 2015 to the third quarter of 2020.

From 2015 to 2017, there was a decrease of 3 percentage points (p.p.) in the proportion of employed people, from 56.2 per cent to 53 per cent. During the pandemic, employment declined much more sharply in a short time, from 53.5 per cent in the first quarter of 2020 to 47.1 per cent in the third quarter.

The increase in the proportion of unemployed people of working age was more marked between the first quarter of 2015 and the first quarter of 2017, rising from 4.8 per cent to 8.5 per cent. When the pandemic arrived in Brazil, the proportion of unemployed people was already at a high level and showed only modest growth of 0.5 p.p. between the first and third quarters of 2020.

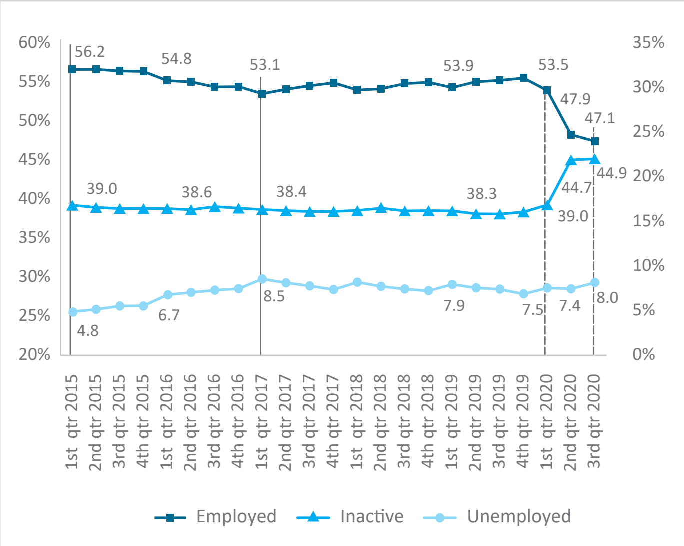
The striking difference between the two periods is the significant increase in the inactive population during the pandemic, which increased from 39 per cent in the first quarter of 2020 to 44.9 per cent in the third quarter of 2020. This increase of almost 6 p.p. in the proportion of the working-age population that left the labour force has important implications for the recovery of the economy. People who have given up looking for work due to low expectations of finding a job are classified as 'discouraged workers'. In both crises, there was an increase in the proportion of discouraged workers. In 2020, over 12 per cent of the working-age population was in this situation.

The most vulnerable groups of workers in Brazil—young people, black people, women, and people with a low level of education—who tend to be prevalent in the informal sector, were those most affected by the loss of livelihoods associated with the shock of 2020. Although the same trend was observed in the 2015–2016 recession, the extent of current losses is much greater.

Unlike the fall in the average regular income[2] observed during the 2015-2016 recession, the pandemic led to a large increase in regular income. This surprising result was due to the massive layoff of low-income workers, many of whom became inactive. However, the increase in average regular income was not observed for average actual labour income as the demand for work and actual hours worked had a sharp drop during the second quarter of 2020, which coincided with the adoption of containment measures.

FIGURE 1

Distribution of employed, unemployed and inactive people of working age, first quarter of 2015 to third quarter of 2020 (percentage)



Source: Authors' elaboration.

Reference:

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Notes:

1. Brazilian gross domestic product (GDP) fell for 11 consecutive quarters, from the second quarter of 2014 to the fourth quarter of 2016.

2. Regular labour income, defined as the usual monthly income received by the worker, as opposed to actual labour income, which is the income received in the last month by the worker.

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Public Food Procurement Benchmarking: Using a best practice approach to assess public food procurement from smallholder farmers

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Public Food Procurement (PFP) is used by governments all over the world as a strategy to advance social, economic and environmental goals. In the global South, it is often used to strengthen rural livelihoods and promote food security and nutrition outcomes. Given the growing importance of PFP programmes, it is crucial to develop evaluation tools to support better implementation and performance.

PFP Benchmarking is an evaluation methodology which assesses programmes against a set of international best practices. It determines how accessible public food markets are to smallholder farmers, and identifies any linkages between food procurement and food security and nutrition interventions. Furthermore, it determines the level of coordination with complementary strategies such as social protection and agricultural development programmes. The integrity of public procurement systems is a priority concern to most countries; therefore, PFP Benchmarking also incorporates this dimension, helping governments to ensure food purchases are also cost-effective, transparent and fair.

The foundation of PFP Benchmarking is a literature review that systematised the current knowledge on PFP from smallholder farmers (Miranda 2018). This review aimed at identifying evidence-based best practices to strengthen the participation of smallholder farmers in PFP markets and promote links with food security and nutrition goals. The review examined over 100 references, including empirical studies, to create a solid evidence base from which to develop the methodology.

Each best practice identified in the review was converted into benchmarking indicators. The indicators assess the extent to which a best practice has been adopted, and identify implementation features that could be improved to facilitate smallholder participation and promote food security and better nutrition among vulnerable groups. Importantly, they provide a standardised analytical framework that enables more objective analysis and cross-country comparisons.

The benchmarking indicators receive a score according to the level of implementation of a best practice. The scoring system ranges from 0 to 3, allowing stakeholders to visualise the level of implementation of a best practice—i.e. whether it is fully implemented, partially implemented or not implemented at all. PFP Benchmarking can thus offer a precise comparison of implementation features against best practice standards. This detailed evaluation not only provides actors with more information to inform decision-making but also highlights specific areas where change is needed to improve performance. The PFP Benchmarking scores, however, are not translated into country rankings. The focus is on identifying performance gaps and approaches to achieve benchmarks, and on sharing knowledge among countries.

Another key feature of PFP Benchmarking is that data are collected in a standardised manner. There are two different data collection tools—the desk review and a structured questionnaire—which are the same for every assessment. The desk review is guided by a set of predefined questions and aims to gather secondary data on PFP. These data are triangulated with the results from the structured questionnaire. The goal is to compare the results from both data sets, ensuring the validity and reliability of the data collected. The desk review also collects background information on PFP to establish the institutional and policy context in which it operates.

The benchmarking data collection uses focus groups comprising all stakeholders involved in designing and implementing the PFP programme. It includes farmers, community representatives and local governments. This approach allows for a larger sample size and reduces the time and cost involved in data collection. The exchanges between focus group participants also provide additional information on implementation features that may not be captured by the questionnaire. Crucially, the process stimulates active discussions on challenges and possible ways to achieve best practice standards.

PFP Benchmarking was first piloted in Guatemala in October 2018, where it was used to assess the national school feeding programme. It was subsequently used to assess public food procurement programmes in El Salvador (July 2019), Colombia (July 2019) and Honduras (November 2019). After each assessment, evaluators refined the methodology to ensure the practical applicability of the approach. The tool is thus able to evolve and respond to methodological challenges and include new best practices and thematic areas.

PFP Benchmarking is a novel approach that offers a number of benefits for programme and policy development. It is the first systematic attempt to collect cross-country data on PFP. The methodology provides a standardised approach to data collection and analysis that generates reliable data and allows cross-country comparisons. It also provides stakeholders with a useful evaluation tool that can clearly identify the level of implementation of a best practice and pinpoint very specific areas for improvement. The benchmarking process promotes knowledge-sharing among countries and supports stakeholders to find effective implementation features that can be adapted to their contexts.

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Social protection and the Venezuelan migration in Latin America and the Caribbean in the context of COVID-19

International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), UNICEF—Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and World Food Programme (WFP)

The COVID-19 pandemic represents an enormous challenge for all countries due to its public health consequences and socio-economic effects on families. In this difficult context, the Latin America and the Caribbean region is facing the largest displacement in its recent history, with approximately 4.2 million Venezuelans now living in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Panama and Trinidad and Tobago. This migrant[1] population faces various risks, whether linked to the migration process or their migratory status, or others that were aggravated by the health emergency. Their extreme vulnerability to the socioeconomic impacts of the measures adopted in response to COVID-19, given their overrepresentation in the informal sector of the economy, coupled with their low inclusion in social protection mechanisms, profoundly jeopardises their welfare and compromises public health as well as the overall well-being of local populations. Although virtually all countries have adopted at least one social protection measure in response to the pandemic, as of October 2020 there were few instances of government programmes that include the Venezuelan population.

A report developed by the IPC-IG, UNICEF LACRO and WFP (2021) presents an analysis of the inclusion of the Venezuelan migrant population in social protection as part of the response to the pandemic emergency in nine countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The document assesses the specific risks and vulnerabilities inherent to the migrant condition, highlights the main national and international normative frameworks that recognise their rights and analyses the effective access of migrants to social protection systems both prior to the pandemic and during the COVID-19 emergency.

The review highlighted key factors such as prior inclusion in regular programmes, legal or documentation barriers and political economy components common to the different contexts. Overall, the analysis notes that regular migration status is an essential condition for access to rights and especially to social protection. All of these factors influence the inclusion or exclusion of the migrant population in the social protection response to the pandemic.

One of the main strategies in response to COVID-19 consists of the creation of temporary cash transfer programmes that reached populations traditionally excluded from social protection (for example, informal or economically vulnerable self-employed workers). In the nine countries studied, the inclusion of the migrant population in this type of programme varied, with some countries, such as Ecuador or Peru, explicitly excluding migrants (both regular and undocumented). Even in countries which covered migrants in their response options, as in Argentina and Colombia, additional requirements, such as a minimum period of residence or being registered in the social registry of beneficiaries, led to the exclusion of many Venezuelan families.

In contrast, Brazil has allowed the migrant population to access emergency social protection programmes through the Emergency Grant (*Auxílio Emergencial*). The current crisis also demonstrated the potential complementary role of humanitarian assistance and international cooperation with national social protection systems, as well as the the importance of harmonising criteria and assistance mechanisms (as seen in the cases of Colombia and Guyana).

The response also recognised the migratory measures adopted to facilitate the regularisation and documentation of the migrant population, which is a key condition for access to social protection programmes and a gateway to the realisation of other rights. In the face of restrictions on movement and even full confinement, host countries offered protection mechanisms, alternatives for the provision of migration services, extension of permits and residency, and elimination of fees.

Finally, to move towards a medium- and long-term solution, countries must continue to develop strategies for the integration of the migrant population into their social protection systems. These should be built on broad political and social consensus and, given the limited nature of fiscal space, taking into account the gaps in care and protection still faced by the countries' own populations. The report thus aims to contribute to the literature with recent information about access of the Venezuelan migrant population to the main social protection programmes of host countries in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to inform the decision-making process of the actors working in the field of social protection.

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Note:
1. The term 'migrants' comprises regular migrants, undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in transit.

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Social and racial inequalities as contributing factors to COVID-19 vulnerability in São Paulo, Brazil

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While COVID-19 has significantly impacted the health of populations worldwide, there is still little evidence regarding its differential health effects on disadvantaged population groups. Understanding the magnitude of such health inequities is particularly important for developing countries like Brazil, which is marked by one of the highest levels of social inequalities in the world. To address this knowledge gap, Li et al. (2021) (i) estimated the social and racial inequalities in the risk of hospitalisation and death by COVID-19, and (ii) showed how vulnerability to COVID-19 is shaped by pre-existing social and health inequities in São Paulo, Brazil's most populous state. This analysis focuses on severe cases of acute respiratory infection (SARI), which characterises COVID-19, reported from March to August 2020. High resolution data were drawn from epidemiological surveillance records, serological and household surveys, information on non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI), and mobility data from mobile phone records.

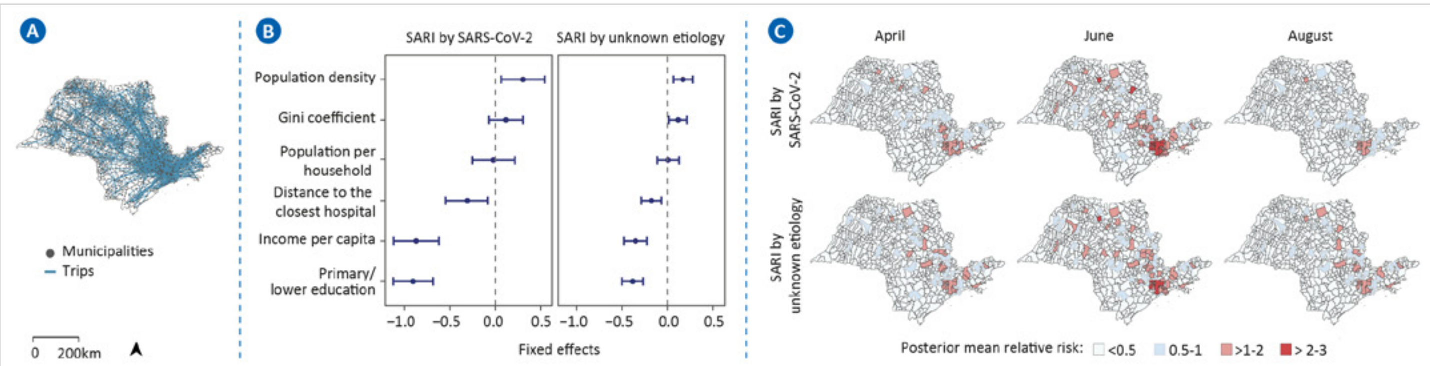
Results show that between April and July 2020, people from the poorest 40 per cent of census tracts had an 8 per cent higher risk of hospitalisation and were 60 per cent more likely to die from COVID-19 throughout the study period. Black and *Pardo* (mixed ethnicity) individuals were 37 per cent and 21 per cent more likely to be hospitalised, respectively, and 14 per cent and 21 per cent more likely to die from COVID-19 relative to White individuals. Furthermore, patients in public hospitals were 40 per cent more likely to die from COVID-19 than those in private hospitals. Uneven access to health services helps explain some of the inequality in the risk of death from COVID-19, but not all.

Similar results were also found when looking at mild cases. Serological data showed that anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies were highest in Black and *Pardo* blood donors and those with low educational attainment in the city of São Paulo. Black and *Pardo* populations, as well as those with low educational attainment, have higher prevalence of multiple comorbidities, including chronic respiratory and heart conditions known to aggravate COVID-19 severity. These populations are also more likely to have no access to social security and to be employed in precarious job positions that require working in person, thus hindering their ability to follow social isolation recommendations. These findings indicate that vulnerability to COVID-19 is strongly influenced by pre-existing health inequities, comorbidities, access to health care and socioeconomic conditions.

When looking at daily mobility figures using mobile phone data for the metropolitan area of São Paulo (which comprises 70 per cent of all cases reported in the state), it was observed that individuals in wealthier neighbourhoods and in those with predominantly White residents isolated to a greater extent, did so earlier, and sustained that isolation for a longer period. Findings also indicate that the risk of COVID-19 hospitalisation is higher in cities with higher population exchange with the city of São Paulo. These cities also tend to have lower socioeconomic status (Figure 1).

The key takeaway from the study is that disadvantaged groups (alongside healthcare workers) should be given priority in COVID-19 vaccination campaigns. This would help slow down and prevent community transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and help reduce health inequities. Finally, the study's findings highlight the need to further investigate how mortality in different hospital settings is influenced by unequal access to quality care within both public and private health care facilities.

FIGURE 1 — Risk of hospitalisation by municipality in the state of São Paulo



Notes: (A) Human movement between municipalities based on anonymised mobile phone data retrieved between March and August 2020. (B) Relationship between socioeconomic covariates and SARI risk (fixed effects) from regression model. (C) Relative risk of SARI hospitalisation at the municipality level.

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Reference:

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Notes:

1. University of Oxford; 2. Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea); 3. University of São Paulo (USP); 4. Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ); 5. Pró-Sangue Hemocentro de São Paulo Foundation; 6. University of Southampton; 7. Imperial College London

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Will the COVID-19 pandemic accelerate or slow global job displacement?

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Following up on McKinley (2019), this One Pager focuses on the likely global job repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic within the context of already expanding digitalisation, as well as automation and robotics, focusing on the implications of a recent thought-provoking report by the McKinsey Global Institute: "The Future of Work after COVID-19" (Lund et al. 2021). A central point that it addresses is whether the pandemic has slowed technological change or accelerated it.

To answer this question, the report highlights projected trends for 2030 in eight major economies: six developed economies (France, Germany, Japan, Spain, the UK, and the US) and two large developing economies (China and India).

About 70 per cent of the workforce in the six developed economies are likely to be impacted in some manner, while 60 per cent of the workforce in China and 40 per cent in India will also likely be affected. More importantly, the report projects an actual loss of 860 million jobs across all eight economies by 2030.

The report focuses on the projected substantial losses in employment across four broad economic sectors: 1) on-site customer interaction (retails stores, banks) 2) leisure and travel (restaurants and hotels), 3) indoor production and warehousing (factories and warehouses) and 4) computer-based office work (offices, corporate headquarters).

Table 1 illustrates the projected impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on these four economic sectors, in conjunction with increasing digitalisation (the spread of the third industrial revolution), as well as the accompanying intensification of automation and robotics (the onset of the fourth industrial revolution).

Table 1
Physical proximity scores across economic sectors

Economic sector	Physical proximity score
On-site customer interaction (retail stores, banks)	76
Leisure and travel (restaurants, hotels)	75
Indoor production and warehousing (factories, warehouses)	70
Computer-based office work (offices, corporate headquarters)	68

Source: Author's elaboration based on MGI (2021).

In projecting job losses, the McKinsey report focuses on its calculation of what it calls a 'physical proximity score'. The higher the score, the more likely that workers' employment will be adversely affected because of the projected adverse health consequences of close interaction between workers and customers, as well as among workers themselves. The scores are relatively high across all four economic sectors.

McKinsey projects that by 2030, e-commerce will likely have risen rapidly in importance, along with greater reliance on delivery services. Thus, 'main street' retail stores would likely suffer severe economic shocks. In addition, the retail and office centres of large cities could well be hollowed out, as both customers and workers would shun the associated close human interaction involved in such settings.

It is already obvious that digitalisation has progressively taken over in-person meetings in many businesses, as well as in schools and universities. Less widely known is that a significant number of companies have already proactively adopted automation and artificial intelligence to cope with the disruption of their workforces due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These technological innovations are bound to rise in importance, especially because they are not adversely affected by epidemics. The workers most likely to be adversely affected are those without a college education or technical training, especially women, ethnic minorities, and young people.

Hence, projected trends in inequality are likely to worsen substantially in the future. Low-wage jobs will decline over time, while high-skill, high-wage jobs such as those in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) will expand and prosper.

Priority policy responses to these developments must include broad and ambitious initiatives to scale up and expand skills development and training programmes. The sooner, the better.

Passive labour market programmes—such as unemployment benefits—will not solve these issues. Only *ambitiously* active labour market programmes, designed to proactively retrain and upskill workers, could respond adequately to such a daunting global challenge.

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Impacts of the *Fomento* Programme on family farmers in the Cerrado biome and its relevance to climate change: Preliminary findings

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Over the last two decades, Brazil has been recognised for its social protection strategies aimed at reducing the vulnerability of populations to hunger and food insecurity. One of those, the Programme for the Promotion of Rural Productive Activities (*Programa de Fomento*), was established by Law No. 12.512/2011 with the goals of stimulating job creation and income generation, promoting food and nutritional security, and encouraging the participation of beneficiaries (those living in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty) in social, educational, technical and vocational training, as well as promoting their participation in associations and cooperatives. Overall, the programme has been demonstrated to be effective in generating a multitude of impacts, derived from the technical assistance and rural extension provided for two years, and non-reimbursable financial aid applied to productive projects chosen by the producers based on their specific needs and context.

As observed in the literature, several positive impacts were identified, such as improvements in productive and non-productive resources, income and productive capacity, food and nutritional security, and access to other public programmes, among others, in the different regions of Brazil. The importance of the programme emerges even more for certain areas, such as the Cerrado, given that climate models have indicated that the biome will experience significant changes in temperature and precipitation due to climate change, impacting the most vulnerable populations. For this biome, projections indicate temperature increases of 1ºC up to 2040, 3–3.5ºC between 2041 and 2070, and 5–5.5ºC between 2071 and 2100, with decreases in precipitation of 10–20 per cent up to 2040, 20–35 per cent between 2041 and 2070, and 35–45% between 2071 and 2100 (PBMC 2014).

Thus, given the multitude of impacts attributed to the *Fomento* Programme and its potential positive impacts in the face of climate change, this research[1] aimed to understand the programme's impacts on productive and socio-economic characteristics that may favour family farmers' resilience in the long term. Interviews with beneficiaries were carried out between February and May 2018 in two of the administrative regions within the Federal District of Brazil (Sobradinho and Gama). A total of 10 beneficiaries were interviewed with a qualitative questionnaire, which was tabulated and treated quantitively for this discussion.

Before the introduction of the programme, most (80 per cent) of the interviewees had already developed some agricultural productive activity on their property, with half reporting that the programme had led to a change in their main productive activity, which mainly consisted of changing the relative importance of items produced, and/or the introduction of items not previously produced. All respondents reported that their income had increased through the sale of items and the decrease in the need to purchase certain foodstuffs (which were produced afterwards). Some beneficiaries also reported higher consumption of fruits and vegetables, and the generation of savings due to the production of meat and eggs. Only 30 per cent mentioned producing new food items due to the *Fomento* Programme. Technical knowledge was increased by the guidance provided by technicians and by the courses offered, which developed the beneficiaries' capacity to produce new items, use new ways of handling production and enhance productive capacity as a whole. The use of new techniques and equipment was cited by 90 per cent of respondents. Besides, 70 per cent cited improved community relations, and 90 per cent claimed greater confidence as a producer. The programme would have increased contact between members of the community and their social circle (reflected in sales opportunities), while the increased knowledge gained from agricultural extension services made farmers feel more capable of producing independently.

All respondents declared being able to sell part of their new produce to local markets (50 per cent), government programmes (10 per cent), other schemes (20 per cent) and neighbours (100 per cent). Despite being able to sell their produce, 60 per cent of respondents stated that there were difficulties selling, such as a lack of transport, points of sale, and machines to process production. Forty per cent stated that they noticed the influence of climate on production and climatic shifts over the years, more events of elevated precipitation, and the unpredictability of the climate, with impacts of rain on animals (such as diseases), droughts on crops, and forest fires affecting production. About 20 per cent did not know how to answer this question. The programme would also help farmers stay in their rural areas (according to 100 per cent of respondents), as it acted as an incentive, helping to develop projects, providing an occupation and improving income, food security and well-being. In a scenario of climate change and its related variables, the programme appears to be of great importance in improving farmers' lives and resilience in the face of future impacts. Moreover, further research is deemed necessary to understand the impacts of social protection programmes on vulnerable farmers in the Cerrado biome, as well as their interconnections with climate change.

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Note:
1. Developed during a partnership between the Climate Network (Rede CLIMA—Regional Development sub-network) at the Center for Sustainable Development (CDS) of the University of Brasília and the former Ministry of Social Development (MDS).

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Mining revenue, fiscal space and social policies: The case of Zambia

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Zambia is a landlocked country in central southern Africa, with a vast territory and a dispersed population (18,6 million in 2020). Its annual demographic growth has been approximately 3 per cent in recent years, one of the highest in sub-Saharan Africa. Zambia's Human Development Index has risen from 0.398 in 1990 to 0.584 in 2019 and is slightly above the average for sub-Saharan Africa of 0.547. Health and education indicators have improved since the turn of the century, but Zambia did not reach the Millenium Development Goal (MDG) 2015 targets in areas such as maternal and child mortality or access to drinking water.

Facilitated by mining expansion, the country experienced substantial macro-economic growth (annual average gross domestic product—GDP—growth of 6.2 per cent between 2006 and 2015), but this growth was far from being inclusive. Even though poverty reduction is officially proclaimed as a major priority in Zambian national policies, the proportion of people living in monetary poverty is still high: in 2015, 54.4 per cent of the population were living below the national poverty line. Zambia is among the African countries with the highest food insecurity indexes. According to the World Food Programme, 48 per cent of its population are unable to meet their minimum calorie requirements.

Mining resources (mainly copper), whose extraction and export were initiated during colonial times, have played an important role in the economy of Zambia. The country faces serious development challenges. The question arises as to what extent the mining of natural resources has facilitated public action regarding these challenges or whether, on the contrary, mining has had a neutral or even counterproductive impact.

The paper this One Pager is based on (Unceta 2021) refers to what Hirschman (1981) called 'fiscal linkage'. Extractive industries (mining, oil) often operate as 'enclaves', with weak direct links to other productive domestic sectors ('production linkages'), particularly in developing countries. Therefore, the 'fiscal linkage' of these industries may become more important as a way of increasing their budgetary capacity. However, intermediation by national authorities is an indirect channel that requires two conditions to be effective: 1) there must be an adequate and sustainable capture of the rent generated by extractive resources, and 2) the resulting revenue must be managed well and transparently to serve the general interest and respond to the country's needs. Hirschman expressed these conditions as follows: "For the fiscal linkage to be an effective development mechanism, the ability to tax must be combined with the ability to invest productively". The challenge is to avoid the scenario of rent-seeking or public inefficiency also evoked by Hirschman and by the 'resource curse' theory.

The mentioned two requisites are examined for Zambia in Unceta (2021). First, considering the evolution of financial flows from mining activities and their impact on global fiscal capacity. Then, assessing the budgetary and policy choices regarding key developmental needs, focusing especially on social sectors. The temporal coverage includes both the commodities 'boom' that started in 2008 and the period since 2012, when metal markets experienced a downward trend.

The legal and fiscal framework applicable to mining private activities still represents a major national issue for the Zambian government and public opinion. As in other developing countries, it is expected that these activities, extracting national natural resources, yield a benefit to the country and its population. One of the key potential benefits is their fiscal contribution. Even if this contribution has varied in Zambia in recent years, affected by fluctuations in the copper economy (production, prices) and by frequent changes in national mining regulations, taxes on the mining sector have had an overall non-negligible impact on national budgetary capacity. Over the last 10 years, total payments from the mining sector have fluctuated between 20 per cent and 35 per cent of the total public revenues.

However, beyond the adequate capture mining rents, the effective use and targeting of revenue involves critical political choices. One key question is how the government interprets and responds to national needs in a country such as Zambia, where poverty remains predominant and may increase because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Public spending rose significantly in the last decade, well above the additional revenue from mining, which forced the contraction of external and internal debts. Serving this debt has significantly constrained the fiscal space for key social spending. Insufficient funding and equity in the allocation of public spending has been observed in crucial areas (such as education, health and social protection). The COVID-19 pandemic has also drastically impacted the country's public finances.

The general conclusion is that development returns from mineral resources have been very modest in Zambia. Even though certain exogenous factors (such as the volatility of mining markets) may have influenced these mediocre results, domestic policy issues in different areas (such as fiscal soundness, budget spending priorities, insufficient equity criteria and public management capacities) have also played a significant role.

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Mapping geographic access to COVID-19 health care in Brazil

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At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a lack of preparedness of health systems in developing countries to cope with increased demand for hospitalisation was a cause for concern. Jensen and Molina (2020) estimated that the 20 most vulnerable countries in terms of availability of intensive care unit (ICU) beds would run out of beds if as little as 0.04 per cent of their population became actively infected. While it is important to consider aggregate figures at the country level, policy response occurs locally, at clinics, hospitals and vaccination sites. Thus, the distribution of health infrastructure within cities and ease of access, particularly for the most vulnerable groups, are crucial factors to develop informed and effective responses.

Pereira et al. (2021) examined the spatial, income and racial inequalities in geographic access to COVID-19 healthcare in Brazil's 20 largest cities, considering access to health care facilities with capacity for patient triage and referral of suspected cases to hospitals, as well as those equipped with ICU beds and mechanical ventilators.

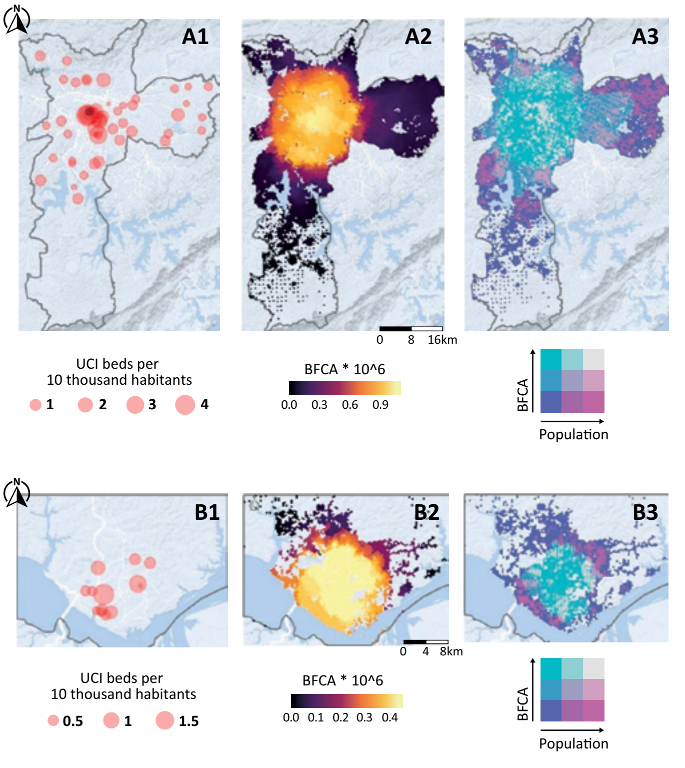
First, authors analysed the support capacity of the public health system, looking at the number of ICU beds/ventilators per person in the catchment area of each hospital. They found that 13 out of the 20 cities analysed had fewer ICU beds/ventilators than the minimum level recommended by national authorities (one adult bed per 10,000 people). This could be considered insufficient to cope with the increased demand for hospital admissions and has proved to be inadequate in coping with the rapid spread of COVID-19 in many cities. The situation is worse when we consider the spatial concentration of health care services and the history of segregation and mobility barriers faced by vulnerable communities in Brazil.

The study mapped approximately 228,000 vulnerable people (low-income and over 50 years old), who live farther than a 30 minute walk from primary and emergency care units. It also found around 1.6 million vulnerable people who live more than 5 km away from a hospital with ICU beds. Accessibility analysis using the balanced float catchment area (BFCA) methodology shows this scenario is particularly worrisome when accounting for the potential demand for ICU beds and ventilators. Estimates show large spatial inequalities, with substantially lower access to health services in low-income and black communities in urban peripheries as shown in Figure 1, which could easily be overwhelmed by hospitalisation demands in the near future. As patients suspected of COVID-19 might face mobility constraints, it is crucial to develop strategies to provide transport and health services to vulnerable communities.

Transport accessibility analyses can provide actionable information to help local governments improve access to health care during pandemic outbreaks. By placing disadvantaged communities with poor accessibility on the map, the study helps identify neighbourhoods where local authorities should prioritise building temporary hospitals and/or engaging mobile units. These analyses may also help identify which hospitals might face greater admission overload. The application of the novel BFCA methodology illustrates how competition effects in access to health care can have important but often overlooked implications for policy planning.

This type of research can be applied globally, particularly in larger cities—depending on data availability—to indicate areas where constructing makeshift hospitals would be more effective to improve health care accessibility, particularly for vulnerable groups. Future research should also consider the potential role of community health agents in improving accessibility in more remote areas.

FIGURE 1
Map of São Paulo (A) and Manaus (B) showing 1) The number of ICU beds per person in the catchment area of each hospital; 2) BFCA accessibility level; 3) the combined spatial distribution of population and accessibility. The bivariate choropleth map (3) helps draw attention to places that deserve more (or less) attention:



Note: Bright pink=large population areas underserved by health services.
Bright cyan=small population areas with high access to health services.
Dark purple=small population areas with the lowest access to health services.
Source: Authors' elaboration.

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Mortality from COVID-19 and the drop in employment rates in Brazil and around the world

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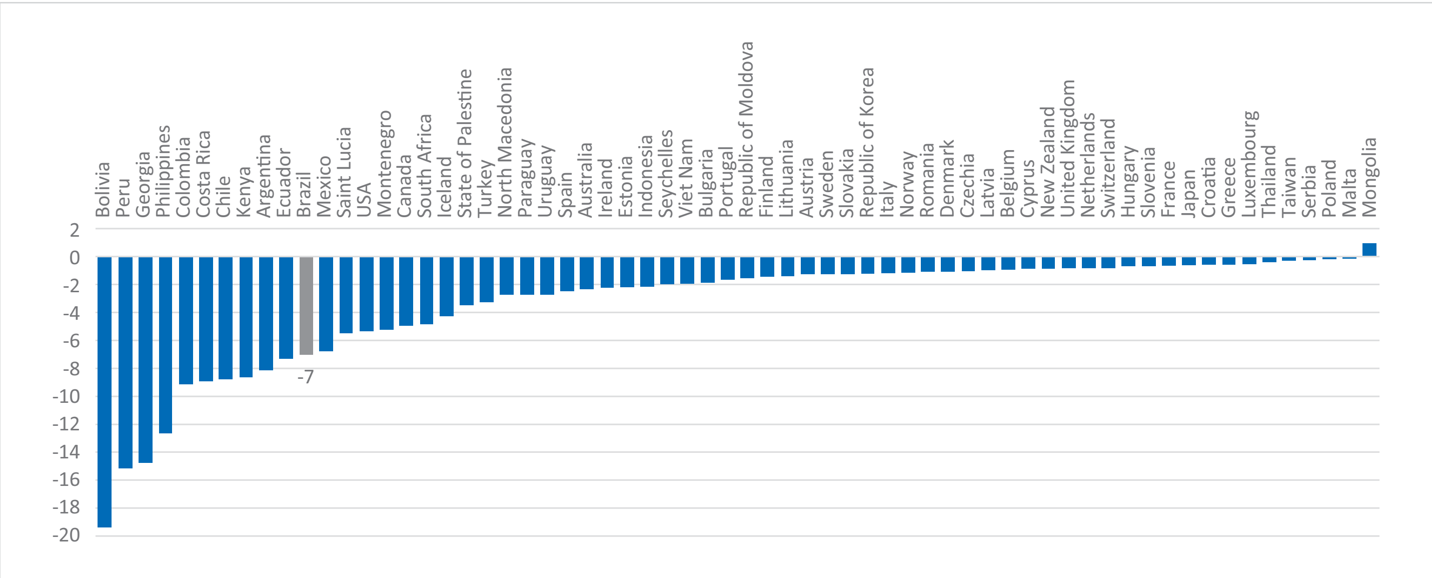
This One Pager seeks to situate the relative intensity of damages caused by COVID-19 in Brazil within the broader global context. Brazil recorded more deaths from COVID-19 in 2020, as a proportion of its total population, than 89.3 per cent of the other 178 countries with data compiled by the World Health Organization (WHO). When records are adjusted according to the population distribution by age group and sex in each country, the Brazilian result becomes worse than 94.9 per cent of those same countries. Furthermore, between the last three quarters of 2019 and 2020, Brazil had a more intense drop in employment rate than 84.1 per cent of the other 63 countries with data compiled by the International Labour Organization (ILO) (Figure 1).

Within the same set of 179 countries where Brazil placed 20th in crude mortality rate per 100,000 inhabitants, it moves to the 10th worst position in the ranking adjusted by demographic composition. Seven of the nine countries with worse rates than Brazil are in Latin America, most notably Peru and Mexico. Reported deaths in 2020 for these two countries surpassed what would have occurred if both had replicated Brazilian rates across each age group and sex—by 42.8 per cent in Peru and 33.9 per cent in Mexico. At the opposite extreme, Vietnam recorded only 0.05 per cent of the deaths it would have registered under the Brazilian mortality pattern. In other words, the risk of dying of COVID-19 in Brazil was 2,000 times higher than in Vietnam, according to both countries' records (Hecksher 2021).

In the rest of the world, the risk was 25.6 per cent of Brazil's, which means the risk of dying of COVID-19 in Brazil was 3.9 times the global average excluding Brazil. Latin America was the region with the worst adjusted mortality, although not as high as the Brazilian rate. The Brazilian adjusted mortality was worse than 80 per cent of the 35 remaining Latin American countries with available data.

The standardisation of national mortality rates is crucial for unbiased international comparisons. Six developed countries—US, UK, Belgium, Spain, France, and Italy—had worse crude COVID-19 mortality rates in 2020 than Brazil, but all had lower rates when controlled by age group and sex. This is explained by a higher share of elderly people in their populations (60 years old or older). The specific mortality rate among people aged 60 or older was higher in Brazil then in five of those developed countries (except for Belgium), and the Brazilian rate among people up to 59 years old was much worse than in all of them.

FIGURE 1
VARIATION IN THE EMPLOYMENT RATE BETWEEN THE LAST 3 QUARTERS OF 2019 AND 2020 (PERCENTAGE POINTS)



Source: Author's elaboration.

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Overview of human and physical resources of Social Assistance Services in Bahia

Karen Codazzi Pereira and Marília Rocha, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

Bahia's Unified Social Assistance System (*Sistema Unificado de Assistência Social*—SUAS) is currently undergoing a planning process. The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) and the Bahia Social Assistance Secretariat (SAS) prepared a study to explore the quality and supply of social assistance services in the state, supporting the formulation of the new State Social Assistance Plan (PEAS) and the SUAS Improvement Pact. The quality of services was analysed using infrastructure indicators and the profile of workers in basic and special social protection facilities. The study seeks to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the social protection system.

The indicators were based on the 2019 SUAS Census, which collects information on the standards of social assistance services. The physical structure and human resources indicators were determined according to the parameters described in official documents with the technical guidelines for the provision of services (such as IDCRAS/IDCREAS, NOB-RH/SUAS).

According to the Technical Guidance documentation, the physical structure of the Social Assistance Reference Centres (CRAS)—the main facilities for basic social protection services—should be sufficient to supply Protection and Comprehensive Family Care services (*Proteção e Atenção Integral à Familia*—PAIF). The Specialised Reference Centres for Social Assistance (CREAS), one of the main facilities of special social protection, must provide a welcoming physical space and ensure spaces for family, individual and group care. Therefore, both CRAS and CREAS units must be located in their own property and include a reception, individual and collective service rooms, kitchen and bathrooms. The CREAS must also have at least two bathrooms adapted for people with reduced mobility.

The census data show that around 70 per cent of CRAS and CREAS units meet most of the infrastructure requirements suggested by the Technical Guidance. When considering accessible bathrooms, this percentage drops to about 40 per cent of CREAS. Thus, in general terms, these facilities possess the necessary physical structure to offer their services, lacking only accessibility adjustments. More than 40 per cent of CRAS and CREAS units have accessible facilities, but not in accordance with the ABNT standard, and approximately 50 per cent only meet some accessibility criteria.

Another aspect that reflects the quality of social assistance services is the profile of social workers. From information gleaned from the employees' positions and professions, one of the main bottlenecks of social work is the lack of complete reference teams, as stipulated by NOB-RH SUAS.[1] Around 70 per cent of CRAS and CREAS units, and 90 per cent of POP Centres, Day Centres and similar facilities do not have a complete reference team, which can affect the quality of social protection services provided. In the case of Accommodation Facilities, the reference team depends on the presence of users with specific needs, which is not captured by the SUAS Census. However, it is possible to infer that a significant percentage of these units do not have social workers and/or psychologists, who are foreseen in the reference teams (about 30 per cent of the facilities do not have a social worker and 50 per cent do not have psychologists).

Regarding the profile of these social workers, we have observed that most employees of CRAS, CREAS, POP Centres and Day Centres have completed high school or tertiary education—between 65 and 80 per cent of workers. Approximately half of these workers have completed higher education. As for the employment relationship, most workers have temporary contracts; about 50 per cent are outsourced or have temporary employment relationships (except for Day Centres and similar facilities, which have a large percentage of formal workers in the private sector). This percentage of temporary contracts might influence turnover. Only 10 per cent of workers at CRAS, CREAS and POP Centres, have been working there for over five years. For Day Centres and similar facilities, this percentage is 45 per cent. Accommodation facility workers, in turn, are generally less educated, with more permanent ties (formal workers from the private sector) and with longer stays at the facilities.

Based on the human resources indicators, it is possible to conclude that the low adequacy of teams in the social protection system is one of the main issues regarding the quality of services. In addition, high worker turnover can lead to weaker community bonds, in addition to requiring repeated basic training. Increasing the number of permanent contracts could mitigate these effects.

Finally, it is important to note that the analysis of IDCRAS and IDCREAS indicate that, in general, the state of Bahia's CRAS and CREAS units have higher average indicators when compared to the Brazilian average; therefore, it is necessary to take into consideration specific state and country contexts when analysing results.

Reference:

Bloch, C. K. C. Pereira, and M. Rocha. 2021. "Produtos 6 e 7: Relatório Final sobre a análise da oferta e qualidade dos serviços proteção social básica e especial na Bahia." In: "Projeto BRA/16/006 Fortalecimento das Políticas de Proteção Social na Bahia". Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

Note:

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Overview of the supply and coverage of Social Assistance Services in Bahia

Karen Codazzi Pereira and Marília Rocha, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

In 2018, a partnership was signed between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) with the government of of the state of Bahia, Brazil, which was materialised in a letter of agreement within the scope of Project BRA/16/006 for the Strengthening of Social Protection Policies in Bahia. Among the products planned are Products 6 and 7, examining the supply and quality of social protection services in the state. This One Pager presents the main findings of the study.

Social assistance services in Brazil are subdivided by level of social protection: Basic Social Protection (PSB); Special Social Protection of Medium Complexity (PSE-M) and of High Complexity (PSE-A). The main PSB and PSE-M facilities are, respectively, the Reference Centres for Social Assistance (CRAS) and the Specialised Reference Centres for Social Assistance (CREAS). The PSE-A services are provided by accommodation care facilities, focusing exclusively on providing for individuals in vulnerable social contexts.

The indicators studied to analyse the supply and coverage of the social assistance network were based on data from the 2019 SUAS Census, the Monthly Registry of Social Assistance Services (RMA) and the Single Registry. As the demand for services was estimated using specific categories from the Single Registry, it was not possible to observe real demand for social assistance services, especially in cases where it is contingent upon social and demographic contingents that are not always linked to income, such as cases of violence, which are more common in special social protection.

The main outcomes of the study are presented in Table 1.

The analysis aims to support the Social Assistance Superintendency (*Superintendência de Assistência Social*—SAS) to obtain indicators that contribute to improving the monitoring and evaluation of social assistance policy in Bahia, in addition to helping establish priorities for the State Social Assistance Plan (PEAS) and the SUAS Management Improvement Pact.

TABLE 1
Main outcomes

	Supply	Coverage
PSB	▪ All municipalities in Bahia have at least one CRAS. ▪ The main activities foreseen in PAIF and SCFV are widely offered by the vast majority of CRAS in Bahia (about 95 per cent). ▪ The home PSB service has the most limited supply: Only 27 per cent of CRAS offer it. ▪ The IDCRAS average in the services dimension of the municipalities of Bahia (3.2) is higher than the average of the IDCRAS of all Brazilian municipalities (3.1).	▪ The referral capacity of CRAS covers practically all people enrolled in the Single Registry as well as *Bolsa Família* beneficiaries. ▪ However, the number of cases assisted by PAIF and the Service for Strengthening Linkages (SCFV) represents 10 per cent or less of those enrolled in the Single Registry and *Bolsa Família* beneficiaries, who are identified as the PSB's target population.
PSE-M	▪ All municipalities with a population over 20,000 have at least one CREAS. 20 per cent of municipalities of populations under 20,000 have at least one CREAS. ▪ The main activities provided for in the PAEFI are broadly offered by CREAS. ▪ The IDCREAS average in the services and benefits dimension of the municipalities of Bahia (3.2) is 10 per cent higher than the average of the IDCREAS of the Brazilian municipalities (2.9).	▪ One way to analyse PAEFI coverage is to assess programme coverage for specific target audiences, observable in Single Registry. The sum of families with children engaged in child labour that joined the PAEFI in 2019 (disregarding families that joined before 2019) represents 16 per cent of the average of families enrolled in the Single Registry with at least one member engaged child labour. ▪ Throughout 2019, there was an increase in the number of homeless families registered in the Single Registry (about 40 per cent), while the number of homeless people assisted by the SEPSR decreased (about 30per cent), resulting in a drop in service coverage for this population.
PSE-A	▪ 24 per cent of municipalities in Bahia have an accommodation facility, whereas large municipalities and the capital, in general, have more and more varied facilities.	▪ Due to the nature of the accommodation service for the vulnerable population, it was not possible to carry out a coverage analysis based on the data available from Single Registry.

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Reference:
Bloch, C., K. C. Pereira, and M. Rocha. 2021. "Produtos 6 e 7: Relatório Final sobre a análise da oferta e qualidade dos serviços proteção social básica e especial na Bahia." In: "Projeto BRA/16/006 Fortalecimento das Políticas de Proteção Social na Bahia". Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

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SUAS Bahia: Communication challenges and strategies to reach civil society

Victor Tarifa Lopes and Nicole Figueiredo, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

In 2018, a partnership was signed between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) with the government of the State of Bahia, Brazil, which was materialised in a letter of agreement within the scope of Project BRA/16/006 for the Strengthening of Social Protection Policies in Bahia. One of the products foreseen by the letter is Product 8, "Study on the SUAS forms of communication developed by the state and municipal administrations". It aims to identify weaknesses in the internal and external communication of Unified Social Assistance System (*Sistema Único de Assistência Social*—SUAS) and propose strategies to improve communication with society in general as well as across other public policies in the state of Bahia. This One Pager details the main findings related to this product and presents some recommendations for public policy.

Created in 2005 and enacted into law in 2011, SUAS is the system that organises social assistance services in Brazil. It is structured in a decentralised and participatory manner. According to Paragraph 2 of Article 6 of its enactment law, "the SUAS is integrated by the federal entities, by the respective social assistance councils and the social assistance entities and organisations covered by this Law" (Brazil 2011, freely translated by authors). Therefore, SUAS' responsibilities, including internal and external communication strategies, are shared between the Union, the Federal District, the state, and municipalities.

To conduct the study, 70 interviews were carried out in 39 municipalities (out of a total of 417). Of these interviews, 26 were with SUAS managers, 24 with workers and 20 with users or representatives of civil society/social assistance entities. Interviews with counsellors of the Municipal Social Assistance Councils (*Conselhos Municipais de Assistência Social*—CMAS), whose main objective is the social control of the policy, were prioritised.

All in-depth interviews were conducted via telephone, with an average duration of 40 minutes, including a set of 7 to 8 questions (for users and workers/managers, respectively) related to communication. The vast majority of interviewees were women, with an average age of 40 to 44 years old and who had been at SUAS for an average of 6 years (workers) and 7 years (managers). Users had mostly completed high school, while managers and workers had generally completed some form of higher education.

Table 1 summarises the respondents' answers regarding the main strategies and communication channels used by SUAS in 2021, the most cited barriers that hinder communication, and some suggestions that were collected during the interviews.

The main takeaway of the study is that SUAS Bahia should prioritise awareness campaigns that combine multiple communication channels to reach existing and potential users, leveraging new technologies such as social networks, but still prioritising in-person messaging.

In addition, one should not lose sight of the overall precarious situation of SUAS equipment and workers. Federative entities should consider increasing investment in social assistance policy, prioritising hiring professionals under the statutory regime and investing in better material working conditions.

Table 1
SUAS communications strategies

Main communication channels and strategies
▪ The most cited strategies were the use of a sound car, community radio, itinerant visits, and—more recently and deepened with the COVID-19 pandemic—social networks.
▪ There was a consensus that even though social networks are on the rise, physical presence in communities is still crucial for effective communication with the target population.
Main barriers
▪ From the point of view of managers and workers, the lack of knowledge about SUAS represents the main communication bottleneck. This barrier was also the most emphasised by users.
▪ Regarding the dialogue between state and municipality, the low level of human resources allocated to SUAS can lead to slow response times, with deleterious impacts on the social assistance work.
▪ The percentage of statutory employees working in the Reference Centres for Social Assistance (*Centros de Referência de Assistência Social*—CRAS) in Bahia (14.07 per cent) is below the national average of 30.48 per cent (Brazil 2020), which compromises linkages with the population and, therefore, hinders communication capacity.
Suggestions for SUAS communication efforts
▪ Respondents were unanimous in pointing out the need to carry out awareness campaigns regarding SUAS and its services. They also pointed out the need to understand social assistance as a right, rather than a benefit.
▪ SUAS budget increases were suggested, mainly by managers, including purchases of more material goods for work (own vehicles, for example).
▪ Other suggestions were made that do not necessarily imply greater expenses, such as strengthening the interconnection of SUAS with other institutions in the city (mainly with the CMAS), and improving the management of public policy (for example, organising a workers' chart in the secretariats in charge of the social assistance agenda and establishing a schedule for communication campaigns).

.*Source: Authors' elaboration*

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SUAS Bahia: Challenges and strategies for participation and social control

Nicole Figueiredo and Victor Tarifa Lopes, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

In 2018, a partnership was signed between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) with the government of the State of Bahia, Brazil, which was materialised in a letter of agreement within the scope of Project BRA/16/006 for the Strengthening of Social Protection Policies in Bahia. One of the products foreseen is Product 9, "Study on the social participation process of users and social assistance workers", which aims to analyse instances of social control to identify barriers to user access and identify ways to expand their representativity, thus expanding the role of users in strengthening the management of the Unified Social Assistance System (*Sistema Único de Assistência Social*—SUAS). Participation and social control are assessed through the perception of users and workers in these deliberative entities.

Created in 2005 and enacted into law in 2011, SUAS is the system that organises social assistance services in Brazil. It is structured in a decentralised and participatory manner. According to Paragraph 2 of Article 6 of its enactment law, "the SUAS is integrated by the federal entities, by the respective social assistance councils and the social assistance entities and organisations covered by this Law" (Brazil 2011, freely translated by authors). The Municipal Social Assistance Councils *(Conselhos Municipais de Assistência Social*—CMAS) are permanent deliberative entities of SUAS, which are linked to a municipality and whose composition is equally distributed among government and civil society representatives. Its activities include standardising, disciplining, monitoring, evaluating and inspecting "the management and execution of services, programmes, projects and social assistance benefits provided by the social assistance network" (Brazil 2012, freely translated by authors).

To conduct the study, 70 interviews were carried out in 39 municipalities in the state of Bahia between November 2020 and March 2021. Of these interviews, 26 were with SUAS managers, 24 with workers and 20 with users or representatives of civil society/social assistance entities. Interviews with counsellors of the Municipal Social Assistance Councils (*Conselhos Municipais de Assistência Social*—CMAS), whose main objective is the social control of the policy, were prioritised. All in-depth interviews were conducted via telephone, with an average duration of 40 minutes, with a set of 13 (to users) to 9 questions (to workers or managers) related to social participation.

The vast majority of interviewees were women, with an average age between 40 and 44 years old and who had been at SUAS for an average of 6 years (workers) and 7 years (managers). Users had mostly completed high school, while managers and workers had generally completed some form of higher education. The users or representatives of civil society/social assistance entities linked to the CMAS formed three groups: the largest was composed of beneficiaries of the *Bolsa Família* programme, a second group (civil society representatives) comprised people who do not participate in any programme, and the third was composed of people linked to SUAS through another programme or group (elderly, youth, Protection and Comprehensive Family Care (*Proteção e Atenção Integral à Familia*—PAIF, among others).

The responses indicated that several CMAS units exist merely with a 'notary function', that is, only to meet the bare minimum requirements for their continuation as established by law, which hinders the performance of their activities. The barriers faced by councils that led them to this situation include: i) difficulty in engaging people to be counsellors; ii) lack of knowledge regarding SUAS among the counsellors; iii) lack of qualification among the counsellors; and iv) lack of knowledge by the general population regarding their social assistance rights.

Nevertheless, Bahia has excellent CMAS units, and the dissemination of these experiences is essential for strengthening social control in the state. They all had something in common: the active participation of people who use the SUAS infrastructure: community leaders, elderly people, people living in rural areas, among other groups engaged in historical social struggles.

It was also frequently heard during the survey that users and workers alike enjoy making use of the CMAS space. Workers reported improved self-esteem and better performance as they recognised the importance of their work in the council. Furthermore, civil society representatives in the CMAS are potential disseminators of SUAS services, as they are perceived by their contact networks as a focal point regarding these matters. In addition, this space has great potential to break with the idea of social assistance as a favour, and to disseminate it as a right.

The main takeaway of the study was that the solution to avoiding irregularities in the CMAS involves raising awareness among the population (whether workers or members of civil society in general) regarding the importance of this institution. In addition, for the CMAS to be able to effectively inspect public authorities and contribute to the improvement of social assistance policies, it is necessary for people to properly understand their role, thus leading to well-informed counsellors and a population actively interested in occupying spaces of social control.

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Lessons learned from the impacts of climate change on a water infrastructure programme in the Brazilian semiarid[1]

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Climate models indicate that semiarid regions around the world are likely to experience increased rainfall variability and longer droughts in the coming years. The IPCC global scenarios (RCP4.5 and RCP8.5) suggested a warming of 0.5-2.0°C for the Brazilian Northeast region between 2016 and 2035 (IPC-IG 2016).

This One Pager reflects on the impacts of the longest drought of the last 50 years in the Brazilian semiarid on the implementation of the Cisterns Programme.

In 2013, Law No. 12.873/2013 instituted the National Programme to Promote Rainwater Harvesting and Other Social Technologies for Access to Water—known as the Cisterns Programme—to promote access to water for human and animal consumption and food production. The 'first water' cistern (consumption cistern) was the first social technology to emerge aiming to increase water availability for domestic consumption, storing 16,000 litres of water per household. The 'second water' cistern, storing 52,000 litres, aims to guarantee access to water for production in rural areas, specifically for populations in socially vulnerable situations, promoting food and water security.

Both technologies are implemented with the direct involvement of the beneficiaries, who offer financial contributions or labour towards the construction of water reservoirs. There are two capacity-building courses for the 'second water' cisterns: Water Management for Food Production (*Gestão da Água para Produção de Alimentos*—GAPA) and Simplified Water System for Production (*Sistema Simplificado de Água para Produção*—SISMA), in addition to the provision of production kits to foster the start of food production activities (e.g., seeds, seedlings, seed beds, etc.).

A study conducted in 2017/2018[2] evaluated the impacts of the 'second water' programme on the livelihoods of family farmers. Researchers interviewed 39 beneficiaries in the Brazilian states of Ceará, Pernambuco, and Bahia, as well as 10 local technicians and coordinators involved with programme implementation, and another 10 involved with programme coordination at the national level. The study found that cisterns play a significant role in beneficiaries' food production and security (Cavalcante, Mesquita and Rodrigues-Filho 2020).

The research observed that extreme weather events influence the programme in various ways. For example, cisterns should be combined with other infrastructure (such as stone tanks and mud pits) to store surplus water volume during heavy rainfall events, so that beneficiaries can have a supply of water during the dry season.

The timeline for programme implementation must also consider the region's weather patterns and forecasts, to try and mobilise, select and train farmers at more opportune times prior to droughts.

The production kits provided in tandem with the social technologies should also be reassessed. Cases of loss of animals, seeds, and seedlings, as well as delay and loss of construction materials due to extreme weather events (such as heavy rains) were observed.

Visits from agricultural extension agents during extreme weather events are crucial, as they present an opportunity to address other, less practical issues, such as the dissemination of climate knowledge. Building the capacities of all agents regarding climate risk education is essential.

Programme planning should consider worst-case scenarios so that the influence of climate variables on policy implementation strategies can be fully analysed. Moreover, programme courses and materials should have their language adapted to the specific audiences in climate change hotspots, aiming to expand climate knowledge to programme coordinators, agricultural extension agents and beneficiaries. Increased knowledge about climate change can influence beneficiaries' planning and early adaptation to future events, promoting better agroecological practices.

It is also important to include a margin in the programme's budget to provide water for the construction of the technologies themselves, to fill the dead storage capacity (the volume of water that must be maintained in the cisterns to avoid structural damage), or even to provide a certain amount of water to foster the start of production during the dry season. We believe that through these measures, social programmes involving the provision of water infrastructure for vulnerable rural populations will become better adapted to climate change in semiarid regions.

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Notes:

1. This work is part of the research activities of Rede CLIMA and INCT/Odisseia (Call INCT No. 16/2014). The authors would like to acknowledge Capes, CNPq, and FAP-DF for research funding, and the former Ministry of Social Development (*Ministério de Desenvolvimento Social*—MDS) for funding and partnership during data collection.

2. Developed in partnership between the Climate Network (*Rede CLIMA*—Regional Development sub-network) at the Centre for Sustainable Development (CDS) of UnB, and the former Brazilian MDS.

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What are the lessons learned from the social protection response to the COVID-19 pandemic?[1]

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The COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing and there is widespread uncertainty due to the global failure to ensure that vaccines are widely available, affordable, and effectively delivered worldwide. However, it does not seem premature to take stock of lessons regarding how social protection measures have been used by governments in the global South to respond to the health, social and economic crises triggered by the pandemic. This type of assessment can support reasoning and immediate actions to improve resilience and preparedness to similar shocks in the future, as part of the 'build back better' approach that will inspire and underpin global recovery.

The global social protection response to the COVID-19 crisis has shed new light on the importance of social protection as a social policy as well as an economic policy instrument. It was crucial not only in allowing micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, workers and families to comply with containment measures enacted by governments to try and contain the spread of the disease and attenuating their negative impact on incomes and livelihoods, but also in helping stabilise economies in general. Social protection measures were a key component of the unprecedent fiscal measures adopted by governments worldwide.

However, the response to the pandemic also revealed important gaps in social protection coverage and adequacy—particularly for workers in the informal sector, but also for those usually left behind in standard social protection schemes, such as migrant workers, refugees, and homeless people. Women suffered shocks across two simultaneous dimensions, as they are often disproportionately concentrated in lower-paying work without social security benefits, while also carrying the burden of unpaid care work—which increased even further because of the pandemic.

Countries had to quickly develop and implement innovative means to identify and reach out to these groups, with varying degrees of success. While almost universal efforts were made to reach informal workers in general, little was done to proactively consider the question of gender. According to the UN Women/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) gender tracker[2] for example, only 24 per cent of the measures took gender into account. Such efforts were also less successful for refugees and homeless people.

Looking at countries in the global South, the IPC-IG (2021), with support from the UNDP, the German Corporation for International Gooperation (GIZ) and the Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19—Expert advice helpline (SPACE), has mapped over 1,000 social protection measures. The mapping shows that low-income countries have adopted relatively fewer measures compared to both upper- and lower-middle income countries. Low-income countries also tended to rely relatively more on in-kind transfers and public works programmes, manual registration and manual cash payments when compared to other country income groups, which suggests limited digital inclusiveness in reaching those most in need, pointing to at least a moderate level of physical contact.

Nevertheless, social protection has gained significant relevance throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Most countries in the global South, including some low income ones, made significant progress not only by providing—often for the first time—(emergency) cash transfers to the so-called 'missing middle' (those not qualifying for poverty-targeted social assistance programmes nor covered by social insurance schemes) and hard-to-reach vulnerable groups, but also by introducing technological innovations such as digital registration and e-wallets, as well as quickly mobilising resources to finance such measures.

While online and mobile-based registration portals have been essential in allowing for the rapid identification of beneficiaries, the role of local actors, complementary mechanisms such as telephone registration, social workers and more inclusive legislation should not be overlooked in fostering social protection coverage for groups included in the 'leave no one behind' agenda (LNOB), during both normal times and future crises, as they facilitate the identification of the hardest-to-reach population, which is more likely to be digitally excluded, in terms of both access and literacy.

The health crisis has also demonstrated the need for social protection systems that are more gender-sensitive. In particular, quality care services need to be expanded to facilitate the re-entry of women into the labour market in a post-pandemic scenario, and facilitated access must be provided for social assistance programmes that require identification number in contexts where women are less likely to have access to this type of documentation.

Emergency cash support was short-lived in most countries of the global South, lasting an average of 4 months, but the feasibility of their implementation and the instruments used to deliver them, including new databases, payment systems and financing mechanisms, must be considered and used to inform a substantial, long overdue expansion of coverage, in the interest of accelerating the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal Target 1.3 ("implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable"), leaving no one behind.

Reference:

IPC-IG. 2021. "Social Protection Responses to COVID-19 in the Global South: Online Dashboard." socialprotection.org website. <t.ly/qmIF>. Accessed 5 August 2021.

Notes:

1. This One Pager is an extended version of the remarks delivered by Fabio Veras (IPC-IG Research Coordinator) in the session on "Ensuring that no one is left behind" of the High-Level Political Forum On Sustainable Development, which took place on 6 July 2021 <t.ly/LVxh>.

2. See: <https://data.undp.org/gendertracker/>.

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Do economics and political science scholars differ on public choice issues? Survey evidence from Brazil

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Public choice literature dates to the 1950s and 60s but started garnering widespread attention after James Buchanan was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics in 1986. Public choice theory applies economic concepts and assumptions to the study of how collective choices are made. Specifically, the subject matter of public choice is the same as of political science and public administration, while the methodology is that of economics.

The public choice perspective led to heated debates about the appropriateness of the roles of the State and government intervention. For example, economics scholars have argued for a long time that the way to address market failure in the economy, such as monopolies and externalities, is to introduce government intervention. However, public choice scholars challenged this argument and showed that there can also be government failure.

Nawar (2021) analyses the results of a survey carried out to examine and measure how Brazilian economics and political science scholars tend to agree or disagree on main public choice issues. Their level of agreement with various public choice issues was ranked on a scale from 1 to 5. The questionnaire consisted of 34 issues organised across 7 representative thematic areas (see Figure 1).

The survey sample was collected from various Brazilian universities in different regions. A questionnaire was sent to 124 faculty members at least a PhD degree in Economics, Political Science and Public Administration departments in universities and research institutes. There were 76 respondents

Brazilian economics scholars seemed, on average, less supportive of interpreting political issues through the reasoning of economics. In addition, they had divergent viewpoints within groups, as evidenced by the standard deviation being more than 1 in 23 Issues.

On the other hand, Brazilian political science scholars seem more supportive of interpreting political issues through the reasoning of economics. Both economics and political science scholars were often hazy about many public choice issues and there was a low level of consistency within groups.

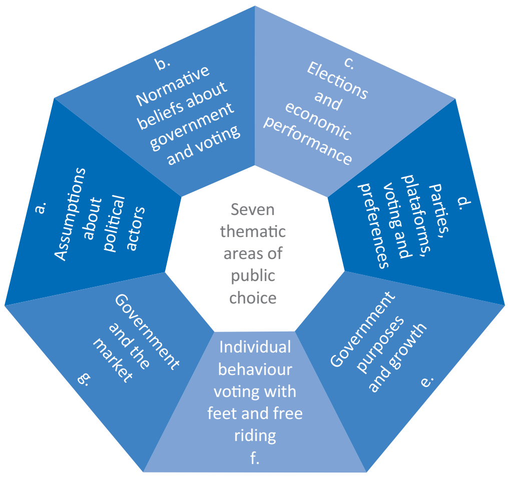
To compare economics and political science scholars, a two independent sample comparison of means t-test was conducted for each of the 34 public choice issues. On average, economics scholars reported higher mean scores than political science scholars in more than half of the issues. Both groups tend to agree to (strongly or somewhat) disagree on public choice issues.

A comparison with other similar survey studies carried out in South Korea and the US provides interesting findings. When looking at the statistically significant differences by thematic area, one can observe that South Korean economic and political science scholars achieved consensus on (a) "assumptions about political actors", an intriguing outcome that has not yet happened in Brazil or the US—the country where public choice theory was born.

The combined results and contributions of the survey can help galvanise the interest of Brazilian scholars in the public choice research agenda, especially in light of recent economic and political events taking place in Brazil, including fiscal politics, political corruption, presidential elections, competition laws, minimum wage, tax bills, subsidies, coal vs. gas energy and local content requirements in industry, stimulus packages and the bailout of failed public sector companies, etc.

Issues that might interest economic and political science scholars in the future, such as local content requirements, may be studied through an interdisciplinary approach to capture different aspects and improve results, going beyond the limited influence of typically considered economic factors. Broader perspectives that consider and analyse previously excluded or inadequately framed factors could enrich theoretical and empirical research as well as policy recommendations.

FIGURE 1
Thematic public choice issues



Source: Author's elaboration.

Reference:
Nawar, Abdel-Hameed. 2021. "Do economics and political science scholars differ on public choice issues? Survey evidence from Brazil". IPC-IG *Working Paper*, No. 192. Brasília: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

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Social protection profile: Afghanistan

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Since 2018, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) has partnered with the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia and its respective Country Offices to develop a series of comparative papers on social protection (SP) in the region, covering social expenditure, legal frameworks, design of flagship national non-contributory SP programmes—including their child- and gender-sensitive features—the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and the SP responses deployed, and findings from quasi-experimental impact evaluations. All the studies listed, except the last one, were published in 2020. This One Pager highlights key findings for Afghanistan.

After four decades of conflict, Afghanistan has been engaged in a process of state-building. Its institutional landscape has, therefore, been changing rapidly. Many SP features and initiatives registered in the comparative papers have been already replaced. Thus, the takeaways of the comparative studies are highlighted here with findings from the ongoing IPC-IG and UNICEF Afghanistan partnership.

From a legal perspective, constitutional provisions regarding SP are enshrined only as policy principles (i.e. not as enforceable rights), and other rights to support the provision of SP are not directly established by it. The SP legal framework is primarily shaped by obligations stemming from the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other ratified human rights instruments. Further, the country's Constitution explicitly includes support for certain vulnerable groups, including children, as the State's responsibility. An important landmark to promote the right to SP was the enactment of the Social Protection Law (2018). Given Afghanistan's ongoing process of state-building, this law focuses on the governance of the SP system, rather than creating SP entitlements or regulating programme operationalisation. Other guiding documents that are not statutory legislation play a major role in laying out guidelines for the SP programmes, including the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Frameworks (2017 and 2017–2021) and the Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals (2015). While a rights-based approach to SP is yet to be fully implemented, an important step in the right direction was the enactment of the Child Rights Protection Law (2019). It systematises children's rights overall and to SP, and prevails over other legislation in case of conflicting provisions.

Regarding social expenditure, Afghanistan has a structural gap between government revenue and expenditure of over 400 per cent and high public expenditure (nearly 60 per cent of its gross domestic product—GDP). The country is also highly dependent on aid, with more than 75 per cent of its expenditure financed by grants. Partly because of this, around a third of civilian expenditure is delivered off-budget (World Bank 2019). Based on Afghanistan's tentative budget for the fiscal year 2020-2021, 1.28 per cent of GDP was dedicated to SP, 0.75 per cent to health, and 3 per cent to education. Note that the 0.75 per cent planned for housing and community amenities may include SP activities (Ministry of Finance 2019).

In terms of the general characteristics of flagship national non-contributory SP programmes, cash-for-work, unconditional cash transfer and sustainable livelihoods interventions are the main programmes. Most initiatives are not solely focused on SP and are often entangled with institutional capacity-building, cutting across sectors such as infrastructure development and food security. Important programmes that operate in this format include the Citizens' Charter, which combines infrastructure development, capacity-building, public works and the distribution of seeds, and the Women's Economic Empowerment Rural Development Programme (WEE-RDP), which combines capacity-building with training and the distribution of rural assets.

Most initiatives encompassing SP components, including the Citizens' Charter and the WEE-RDP, tend to target communities rather than households. The Martyrs and Disabled Pension Programme (MDPP) is the only flagship non-contributory programme targeting individuals and households, offering cash as a form of non-contributory, inheritable disability and injury pension. Target groups include poor, working-age and elderly people and those with disabilities, using primarily geographical and categorical targeting. Coverage is hard to estimate, given the lack of fully functional administrative registries and integrated information systems for SP. The IPC-IG estimates that the non-contributory components of the three flagship programmes mentioned above cover around 1 per cent of the population. The coverage of the MDPP was expanded during the pandemic by including descendants of public-sector health professionals.

There is a lack of flagship non-contributory programmes specifically targeting children and pregnant and lactating women, although each programme shows some child- and gender-sensitive features. The Citizens' Charter has a food bank component that supports child nutrition, although children are not specifically targeted. The MDPP benefits children and women who inherit pensions. The most gender-sensitive initiative is the WEE-RDP, which primarily supports poor rural women.

Therefore, the following is recommended:

- Expand coverage of non-contributory SP with new initiatives for vulnerable groups, prioritising children, and pregnant and lactating women.
- Streamline SP by disentangling it from other development programmes, ideally rolling out a traditional social assistance programme such as a cash transfer.
- Amend or complement the Social Protection Law to include operational features of SP.
- Increase the amount of SP funding in the state budget.
- Improve data collection through administrative registries and integrated information systems.

References:

Alim, Abdul, Fabio Veras, Rafael Osório, and Pedro Arruda. 2020a. "UNICEF and IPC-IG paper series on Regular Social Protection Landscapes in South Asia." Social Protection blog post, 9 September. <https://bit.ly/3ftQDq2>. Accessed 22 October 2021.

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Social protection profile: Bangladesh[1]

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Since 2018, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) has partnered with the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia and its respective Country Offices to develop a series of comparative papers on social protection (SP) in the region, covering social expenditure, legal frameworks, design of flagship national non-contributory SP programmes—including their child- and gender-sensitive features—the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and the SP responses deployed, and findings from quasi-experimental impact evaluations. All the studies listed, except the last one, were published in 2020. This One Pager highlights key findings for Bangladesh.

From a legal perspective, the right to SP is enshrined in the country's Constitution, but only as a policy principle, not a judiciable right. Cross-cutting legislation on SP is limited to governing the main stakeholders and does not regulate specific programmes. Although Bangladesh has possessed a Children's Act since 2013, in 2015 the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended expediting the adoption of child-related laws, ensuring their full compatibility with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Worryingly, only one of the 11 national flagship programmes mapped by the IPC-IG is grounded in specific statutory legislation.

Concerning social expenditure, Bangladesh has the lowest government expenditure on health, education and SP in South Asia. While the country's literacy and school enrolment rates exceed the regional averages, the low level of social expenditure represents a heavy burden for households. Bangladesh's tax revenue in 2017 was below 15 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP)—considered the minimum required to provide basic public services. Increasing tax collection is needed to finance social policies, which the country could achieve through tax reform.

A total of 11 flagship national non-contributory SP programmes were mapped. They vary in their typology, with food distribution programmes playing a central role (such as the School Feeding Programme in Poverty-Prone Areas, and the umbrella Public Food Distribution System—PFDS). There are also cash transfers targeting different vulnerable groups, such as the Allowance for Financially Insolvent Persons with Disabilities, the Husband-Deserted, Widowed and Destitute Women's Allowance, the Maternity Allowance for Poor Lactating Mothers (MAPLM) and the Old-age Allowance Programme, an unconditional cash transfer benefiting poor elderly people. Furthermore, there are conditional cash transfers provided through the Primary, Secondary and Higher-Secondary Educational Stipend Programmes (respectively, PESP, SESP and HSSP). Finally, there is a cash-for-work programme, the Employment Generation Programme for the Poorest (EGPP). Many of these programmes are characterised by strong child- and gender-sensitive features, including the MAPLM, the EGPP's preferential quota for women, and the SESP and HSSP, which both have preferential coverage for girls.

Four of the programmes (EGPP, PESP, SESP and MAPLM) have been subjected to impact evaluations. The EGPP was found to be widely used as a cushion against adverse shocks, suggesting the need for more loan-based and shock-responsive mechanisms in the country. The MAPLM—although increasing ante- and post-natal care visits—was found not to affect institutional delivery rates, indicating a need to top up the cash transfer with behavioural components and to improve the overall supply of health-care services. The Female Secondary School Stipend Programme (FSSP) recorded desirable impacts on educational attainment and performance, as well as the type of employment pursued, while showing stronger impacts for girls exposed to the programme for longer periods. There was, however, no impact on actual labour force participation, suggesting the need to also introduce policies promoting it. While not demonstrating impacts on most education outcomes, the PESP was found to have an adverse effect on boys' grade progression, potentially due to the relative disincentive of the FSSP being only available to girls (however, in 2009, the FSSP changed into the SESP, which covers both boys and girls).

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, Bangladesh has expanded the coverage and benefit values distributed via the PFDS. A new database uniting the beneficiaries of five different PFDS components and potential beneficiaries has been developed to avoid duplications and mitigate corruption. Social insurance and labour market/employment protection benefits have also been introduced, including subsidised credit to pay the wages of workers of export-oriented industries, and subsidised credit for self-employed people.

Given this background, key policy recommendations include the following:

- Expand the legal coverage of SP and promote a human rights-based approach.
- Explore options to expand spending on SP, health and education. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of building a strong health-care system. Expand the system's coverage with a view to including the following groups: children who are not covered by newborn or educational benefits, informal workers (the 'missing middle') and the urban population, particularly those living in urban slums.
- Adapt the design of cash benefits, linking them with additional interventions and removing conditionalities that affect the agency of beneficiaries.

References:

Alim, Abdul, Fabio Veras, Rafael Osório, and Pedro Arruda. 2020a. "UNICEF and IPC-IG paper series on Regular Social Protection Landscapes in South Asia." Social Protection blog post, 9 September. <https://bit.ly/3ftQDq2>. Accessed 22 October 2021.

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Note:

1. Full references for the data cited in this One Pager can be found in the list of reports available in the blog posts listed above.

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Social protection profile: Bhutan

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Since 2018, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) has partnered with the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia and its respective Country Offices to develop a series of comparative papers on social protection (SP) in the region, covering social expenditure, legal frameworks, design of flagship national non-contributory SP programmes—including their child- and gender-sensitive features—the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and the SP responses deployed, and findings from quasi-experimental impact evaluations. All the studies listed, except the last one, were published in 2020. This One Pager highlights key findings for Bhutan.

From a legal perspective, a comprehensive, rights-based approach to SP is still to be achieved. Although the right to SP and to an adequate standard of living (including access to public health services) is defined as a policy principle in the country's Constitution, they are not enforceable rights. Similarly, Bhutan currently lacks a statutory legal framework for SP and specific regulatory frameworks in support of the social assistance programmes that the IPC-IG has mapped. However, this does not imply that the country is exempt from SP obligations. Bhutan is a State Party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and is, therefore, bound to adopt the necessary measures to achieve the full realisation of children's right to SP; and, in case of need, to assist their guardians by providing nutrition, clothing and housing support.

In terms of social expenditure (as a percentage of gross domestic product—GDP), despite noteworthy education expenditure (the highest in the South Asia region), the proportion of out-of-school children of primary school age is high, and only about 67 per cent of the adult population are literate, indicating the need to increase spending efficiency. The government's health expenditure, also above the regional average, covers 74 per cent of all the health care costs in the country, meaning that health spending directly paid by households represents about 20 per cent of all health expenditure. Yet some of the health indicators are suffering due to inequality of health service coverage and disparities between rural and urban areas. Social assistance expenditure is the lowest in the region, corresponding to less than 1 per cent of GDP in 2019.

Regarding the design features of flagship national non-contributory SP programmes, the School Feeding Programme (SFP) provides school meals to children, while the Rural Economy Advancement Programme is a sustainable livelihood initiative, providing agricultural machinery, housing improvements and/or training. Only the SFP was still an active national programme in 2020.[1] The SFP uses categorical targeting and gives further preference to students who live furthest from the school. Most of the social assistance expenditure is allocated to the SFP.

Although the SFP is a valuable step (as it supports children's access to education, health and nutrition), Bhutan still has much room for improvement concerning gender- and child-sensitivity. In part, this gap will be mitigated by the new conditional cash transfer programme announced in 2020, Accelerating Mother and Child Health Outcomes, to boost maternal and child health outcomes.

In terms of socio-economic impact evaluations, no experimental or quasi-experimental impact evaluations were identified for the SFP, which can be seen as an opportunity to undertake some to identify points for improvement and use the information for planning other programmes.

Finally, in response to the COVID-19 crisis, a new temporary cash transfer, the Druk Gyalpo's Relief Kidu, has been provided to tens of thousands of people, benefiting the working-age population but also children. Further, adaptation of the SFP provided 10,000 of the most vulnerable children with take-home rations of several food items.

Based on the above, the following is recommended:

- Roll out statutory legal frameworks for all SP programmes.
- Increase social spending efficiency.
- Increase resource allocations to the social sector. The Goods and Services Tax reform could contribute to expanding the tax base.
- Increase the coverage of social assistance programmes for poor and vulnerable people.
- Accelerate implementation of Accelerating Mother and Child Health Outcomes, as it will benefit pregnant and lactating mothers, and preschool-aged children.
- Increase efforts to systematically evaluate the socio-economic impacts of programmes. Investing in a routine monitoring system would facilitate this and lower the costs of periodic evaluations.
- The Government of Bhutan should extrapolate the learnings from the roll-out and implementation of the Relief Kidu to expand SP services to those who experience difficulties and uncertainties beyond COVID-19.

References:

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Note:

1. The Rural Economy Advancement Programme was not implemented in the 12th Five Year Plan (2018–2023) (Gross National Happiness Commission 2019).

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Social protection profile: Nepal

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Since 2018, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) has partnered with the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia and its respective Country Offices to develop a series of comparative papers on social protection (SP) in the region, covering social expenditure, legal frameworks, design of flagship national non-contributory SP programmes—including their child- and gender-sensitive features—the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and the SP responses deployed, and findings from quasi-experimental impact evaluations. All the studies listed, except the last one, were published in 2020. This One Pager highlights key findings for Nepal.

From a legal perspective, the country took two important steps in 2018: it moved towards building an SP system anchored on a rights-based approach, through constitutional provisions, and it launched the Social Security Act, which regulates operational features of SP programmes. Further, it is noteworthy that the Nepalese Constitution is the only fundamental law in South Asia which directly sets out children's rights. Moreover, the Constitution enshrines the right to SP as an enforceable entitlement reserved for vulnerable individuals and groups. On the other hand, 4 of the 10 national non-contributory flagship programmes mapped lack a specific regulatory framework.

In terms of social expenditure, taken together, Nepal's public expenditure on health, education and social assistance is the third highest in South Asia. Although health spending per capita has more than doubled since 2005, it is still worrying that health funding comes mainly from out-of-pocket spending, and 12 per cent comes from development assistance (2019). Regarding education spending, over half of the budget is allocated to primary education, which Nepal is close to universalising. However, participation rates in secondary and tertiary education are substantially lower, and the country's education spending per student is the lowest in South Asia.

Five of the country's 10 non-contributory flagship SP national programmes are cash transfers for specific vulnerable groups: the Old Age Allowance, Universal Child Grant (UCG), Disability Grant, Endangered Ethnicity Grant and Single Women's Allowance. Additionally, there are conditional cash transfers, scholarships, school feeding, sustainable livelihoods and public works initiatives. Combined categorical and geographical targeting is the most common targeting mechanism, whereas poverty measurement (which is more expensive to implement) is rarely used.

Regarding child- and gender-sensitivity, Nepal's SP system covers different vulnerabilities along women's life cycle. Besides the Single Women's Allowance, there is also the Aama Programme, which fosters antenatal care and institutional delivery, while the Karnali Employment Programme prioritises females. The country also possesses a UCG for children under 5 years old (capped at two children per household). It has not yet reached national coverage but is currently undergoing geographical expansion. It is noteworthy that two programmes support children's access to education: the National School Meals Programme, targeting children enrolled in primary education in selected districts, and scholarships, targeting girls, Dalit children, those with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

Impact evaluations have demonstrated the potential of SP programmes to boost Nepal's development. The Aama Programme led to an increase in health worker attendance at delivery, and, surprisingly, the Old Age Allowance had positive spillovers for child survival rates. However, research has also shown that the UCG's nutritional and educational results would be more consistent if the benefit amount were higher and delivered more regularly.[1] Likewise, the value of the scholarships is crucial to effectively decrease child labour rates.

In terms of SP responses to the COVID-19 crisis, the Government of Nepal adopted circumstantial SP measures; except for an increase in coverage of the Prime Minister's Employment Programme for Returnees, targeting Nepalese workers returning from abroad and prospective emigrant workers who could not leave the country (IPC-IG 2021), the major social assistance initiative was the distribution of relief packages (food items) to informal workers and people living in deprivation without a caregiver. Other initiatives with the potential to reach those most in need were fee waivers and the postponement of public utility bills. It is notable that no social assistance specifically targeted informal workers, who represent 94 per cent of the country's workforce.

Given this background, key policy recommendations are as follows:

- Roll out regulatory frameworks to the programmes lacking one.
- Promote greater government financial ownership of social policies, and enhance the efficiency and equity of social spending.
- Expand overall coverage of the SP system, notably towards informal workers.
- Expand the coverage of programmes supporting children's access to education beyond primary education (such as the National School Meals Programme) or the most vulnerable (scholarships).
- Increase the benefit amount of the scholarships when needed, since the cash value is crucial for spillover effects—i.e. decreased child labour and child marriage rates.
- Increase the benefit amount of the UCG to ensure sustainable improvements in children's well-being.
- Promote synergies among the programmes, considering the generalised use of scheduled pay points to deliver cash. Those opportunities could be used to systematically promote referral to other, complementary initiatives.
- Improve the shock-responsiveness of the country's SP system.

References:

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IPC-IG. 2021. "Social Protection Responses to COVID-19 in the Global South." Online Dashboard. Accessed 22 October 2021. <https://bit.ly/3lMjQ1L>.

Note:

1. Preliminary findings of an upcoming evaluation of the UCG commissioned by UNICEF Nepal indicated better results concerning nutrition—wasting and underweight—and increased agency of beneficiary mothers.

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Reformulation of income transfers in Brazil: Simulations and challenges

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The debate around the reformulation of the Brazilian federal government's cash transfers precedes the COVID-19 pandemic, but it has grown significantly in the wake of the health crisis and the creation of the Emergency Grant (*Auxílio Emergencial*). This One Pager provides an overview of a paper by Paiva et al. (2021), which presents simulations for the future of non-contributory transfers in Brazil, discussing the dilemmas of various designs, and estimating costs and possible impacts on poverty and inequality.

The recent experience with the COVID-19 pandemic provides important lessons. The first concerns inequality. The pandemic tends to be worse in more unequal societies and, crucially, the economic fallout of the pandemic is likely to magnify pre-existing inequalities. The second is that the magnitude of the shock has put great pressure on social protection systems, especially in developing countries. The third lesson is that emergency cash transfers were a quick, effective response to the crisis in most countries.

Brazil has proven the viability of repurposing the apparatus of targeted cash transfers to ensure regular incomes to a large share of the population. Even during a critical situation such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Emergency Grant was implemented in only a few weeks, largely thanks to the experience with *Bolsa Família* and the federal government's Single Registry for Social Programmes.

Although temporary, the Emergency Grant is a landmark for non-contributory social transfers in Brazil, having reached nearly 67 million beneficiaries across over 40 million households, comprising almost 130 million people. Over 60 per cent of the Brazilian population benefited from the scheme, either directly or indirectly. Further, it is remarkable not only for its coverage, but also for its benefit levels. The average Emergency Grant benefit was more than four times higher than the mean *Bolsa Família* benefit.

This is something entirely new in terms of non-contributory social protection for households with working-age members in Brazil, and demonstrates that, in adverse circumstances, extreme measures become a feasible option.

The Emergency Grant highlighted the importance of more generous non-contributory transfers, with broader coverage and budget guarantees. However, its main drawback is related to cost, which reached BRL45 billion per month. This is 1.3 times the entire annual budget reserved for *Bolsa Família*. Regardless of the effectiveness of the Grant in the short term in keeping millions of households from falling into poverty and the economy collapsing, the adoption of a permanent non-contributory model with such costs is not viable.

The challenge is designing a non-contributory social transfer model that has greater coverage, can ensure a minimum level of income that is higher than what is currently granted by *Bolsa Família* and protects the population that has no access to contributory benefits from negative shocks.

We simulated the distributive effects of three models of non-contributory transfers: a) targeted transfers, similar to the current *Bolsa Família* model, but with a per capita benefit and eligibility lines that are almost double the current values; b) universal transfers in the vein of a basic income; and c) hybrid transfers, combining a universal component for children with a targeted component.

Simulations were carried out for three budget scenarios: i) BRL 58 billion per year, which is fiscally neutral; ii) BRL 120 billion per year, which represent a halfway compromise between the extreme scenarios; and iii) BRL180 billion per year, which would bring the Brazilian expenditures with this type of programme closer to what is observed in OECD countries.

In all simulations, coverage would be significantly higher than what is currently observed. As expected, given a fixed budget, average benefits are highest in the targeted model and lowest in the universal model, while the hybrid model offers a middle road.

Results illustrate the trade-offs of a universal basic income. The targeted model and, to a lesser degree, the hybrid one, would entail reductions in poverty and inequality compared with the current *Bolsa Família* in all three budget scenarios, with increasing effects according to the availability of resources. However, the universal model would entail an increase in poverty in the most modest scenario and would only be more redistributive than the current *Bolsa Família* in the most expensive scenario.

Creating a new non-contributory income transfer programme that would significantly expand coverage imposes a myriad of operational challenges, such as the registration of new beneficiary households and updating information already recorded in the Single Registry. In addition, current payment methods could be supplemented with new digital strategies.

Financing difficulties are also worthy of note. Even the most modest scenario presents significant hurdles, which would be politically difficult to overcome. An alternative would be attaching the new social programme to the negotiation of the tax reform bill, currently under analysis in Congress. It already foresees an income transfer mechanism for the poorest people as compensation for the slow phasing out of current fiscal benefits. With some modifications, it could become one of the pillars for the reformulation of non-contributory transfers. Unfortunately, the current prospects for the approval of the tax reform are not good.

The transfer design, the level of benefits and coverage, the framing of operational issues and the conundrum of finding a robust financing solution during an adverse economic scenario are all issues that should be subjected to technical analysis. However, they will ultimately be answered in the political arena.

Reference:
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Social protection profile: India[1]

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Since 2018, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) has partnered with the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia and its respective Country Offices to develop a series of comparative papers on social protection (SP) in the region, covering: social expenditure, legal frameworks, design of flagship national non-contributory SP programmes— including their child- and gender-sensitive features—the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and the SP responses deployed, and findings from quasi-experimental impact evaluations. All of the studies listed, except the last one, were published in 2020. This One Pager highlights cross-cutting findings for India.

From a legal perspective, the country's Constitution enshrines SP as a policy principle, but not as a judiciable right. The constitutional allocation of competences allows both central and state governments to design and implement SP programmes, resulting in numerous schemes at central, state and local levels—albeit not always well coordinated with each other. Although a general legal framework for SP is missing, different sets of laws have been enacted. For example, while not formally framed as SP, the National Food Security Act has direct implications for the operation of all food distribution programmes in the country, as well as on the eligibility criteria adopted by most poverty reduction schemes. Equally important, the Aadhar Act aims to provide efficient, transparent and targeted delivery of subsidies, benefits and services through the assignment of a unique identity number to residents.

Regarding social expenditure, the central government spent 1 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) on health in 2016, 3.8 per cent on education in 2013, and 1.5 per cent on social assistance in 2016. There is a demand for higher spending considering the social issues the country faces, such as the high proportion of out-of-school children of lower secondary age and the high level of out-of-pocket spending on health.

In terms of general characteristics of flagship national non-contributory SP programmes, the typology of the seven programmes examined varies considerably. They include food (the Targeted Public Distribution System—TPDS—and the Mid-Day Meal scheme), cash transfer (*Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana*—PMMVY—and Janani Suraksha Yojana—JSY) and mixed (National Social Assistance Programme—NSAP) programmes that target different vulnerable groups; subsidised health care for the poorest individuals (the National Health Protection Scheme—NHPS); and a large-scale cash-for-work programme (the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act—MGNREGA).

Enrolment conditions and criteria also vary, but most programmes that target poor people assess poverty through multi-categorical assessments which also take into consideration vulnerable castes and tribes (TPDS, JSY, NSAP and NHPS). Most of these programmes feature gender- and child-sensitive designs: notably two cash transfers focused on maternal and newborn health (respectively, JSY and PMMVY), one stream of the NSAP targeted at widows and single women, and other schemes, such as the MGNREGA, adopting quotas and other measures to enhance women's participation.

Among the programmes evaluated in the meta-review of impact evaluations, the MGNREGA has been the subject of the most studies, with strong desirable findings in terms of equilibrium wages, female labour force participation and closing of the gender wage gap, especially in agriculture. Evidence also shows that the MGNREGA has greater impacts among poorer and more disadvantaged groups, while seasonal impacts show that the scheme is most effective during the agricultural off-season, when it works as a safety net to smoothen fluctuations in employment opportunities. Critical improvements needed for the programme include better implementation across regions and actions to mitigate small undesirable spillover effects, especially educational outcomes, and household work among adolescents.

The issue of implementation also featured as a limitation of the JSY, along with issues of inadequate economic incentives, and shortcomings related to public health services. Interestingly, the Mid-Day Meal scheme was found to be more efficient than its predecessor take-home grains initiatives in terms of educational outcomes and both intra-household and girl-sensitive food distribution. Studies assessing the TPDS found desirable impacts in reducing poverty and food insecurity, although a limited impact on nutritional outcomes. Finally, the old-age component of the NSAP evaluated found positive results on consumption and finances, with desirable spillover effects on other female household members, leading to a reduction in the burden of child care and greater labour force participation.

In terms of responses to COVID-19, India has both implemented new initiatives and expanded and adapted pre-existing schemes. The government announced in March 2020 an INR1.70 trillion relief package under the *Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana* to provide support to poor and vulnerable people and ensure their basic needs. It comprises policies targeting different groups, including elderly people, those with disabilities, students, farmers, poor people, widows, and specific categories of workers. The actions are equally varied, encompassing, for instance, cash and in-kind transfers, subsidies and health insurance, with the Aadhar—a biometric identification number—being key in identifying beneficiaries and avoiding duplication.

Given the considerations mentioned above, key policy recommendations are:

- Increase and improve the quality of expenditure on education, health and SP, and ensure the progressivity of SP programmes.
- Take further steps to strengthen implementation capacity across states, potentially creating better monitoring and incentive mechanisms, including earmarked funding to cover such disparities.
- Take further advantage of India's vast information technology expertise and mobile and Internet networks to develop more convenient delivery mechanisms, including mobile-based payment options.
- Shift from cash-only to cash-plus interventions.

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Social protection profile: Maldives[1]

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Since 2018, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) has partnered with the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia and its respective Country Offices to develop a series of comparative papers on social protection (SP) in the region, covering social expenditure, legal frameworks, design of flagship national non-contributory SP programmes—including their child- and gender-sensitive features—the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and the SP responses deployed, and findings from quasi-experimental impact evaluations. All the studies listed, except the last one, were published in 2020. This One Pager highlights key findings for Maldives.

From a legal perspective, the Maldivian framework for SP is largely anchored in a rights-based approach. In the first place, the country's Constitution enshrines SP as an enforceable right, to be realised progressively within the limits of the State's capacity and resources. The core statutory Maldivian laws regulating the SP sector are the National Social Health Insurance Act (2008) and the National Social Protection Act (2014). They are particularly commendable, as they seek to reduce institutional and programme fragmentation. It is also noteworthy that all seven of the national social assistance programmes mapped are legally grounded, while six are supported by regulatory frameworks, except Medical Welfare. Those regulatory frameworks can be improved, though, in relation to transparency and access to information, accessible complaints and appeals mechanisms and participatory channels. Another important document is the Child Rights Protection Act (2019), which systematises children's rights (e.g. birth registration, name and nationality), which are all fundamental preconditions for accessing SP.

In terms of social expenditure (health, education and social assistance), Maldives has the highest spending in South Asia, reaching 15 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019. Its spending on health only is also the highest in the region as a proportion of GDP. The country has universal health insurance, the *Husnuvaa Aasandha*, complemented by Medical Welfare, which covers additional costs of more complex health services for poor households. Out-of-pocket health expenditure represents 19 per cent of total health spending, the lowest in the region (2019). Health indicators for the country are good overall, with nearly universal immunisation and high life expectancy at birth. Regarding education, Maldives is close to universal basic education for primary and lower secondary levels and boasts nearly 100 per cent literacy rates. Most of the social assistance budget goes to the Old Age Basic Pension. Finally, there is scope for making taxation more progressive, expanding the fiscal space for social expenditure, by increasing direct taxation, which is relatively low compared to taxes on goods and services.

Regarding the design features of flagship national non-contributory SP programmes, just one of them has multiple components, the Disability Allowance Programme, which is an unconditional cash and in-kind transfer, and social care services. The Old Age Basic Pension is an unconditional cash transfer. There are two other cash transfers, the Foster Parent Allowance and the Single Parent Allowance, conditioned on children's school attendance. There is also a Food Subsidy Programme for poor households, and the two non-contributory health insurance programmes, *Husnuvaa Aasandha* and Medical Welfare. To select beneficiaries, categorical targeting, means-testing or a combination of both is used. With respect to gender- and child-sensitivity, the Foster Parent Allowance and Single Parent Allowance stand out, since the cash transfer varies according to the number and age of children in the household. Further, the Single Parent Allowance particularly targets orphans. However, there are no programmes specifically targeting or prioritising women, or programmes that explicitly target early childhood or support children's nutrition.

Concerning socio-economic impact evaluations, no experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation studies were identified for any of the seven programmes up to December 2020. Several impact evaluations were conducted in 2021 in the country, but they did not meet the requirements of an experimental or quasi-experimental impact evaluation. Therefore, Maldives is encouraged to carry out impact evaluations to estimate the causal impacts of SP programmes by differentiating between effects on recipients and non-recipients.

Finally, SP responses to the COVID-19 crisis include utility subsidies; an Income Support Allowance, which is a wage subsidy for those laid off or sent on unpaid leave, including self-employed people; and two different capped loans for companies, self-employed people and freelancers. However, most initiatives did not cover migrant workers.

Considering the above, the following is recommended for Maldives:

- Improve the regulatory frameworks of programmes where needed.
- Increase the fiscal space for social spending by making taxation more progressive (e.g. increasing individual and corporate income taxes).
- Consider launching women-targeted programmes or priority eligibility rules to enhance women's access to existing programmes.
- Consider launching a flagship programme that explicitly targets early childhood (such as programmes targeting pregnant and lactating mothers).
- Consider launching nutritional interventions for children, such as a flagship school feeding programme.
- Increase monitoring and evaluation of the socio-economic impacts of SP programmes. Establishing a routine monitoring system would lower the costs of periodic evaluations.
- Consider including migrant workers and their families in SP schemes, including the SP responses to COVID-19.

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Social protection profile: Pakistan[1]

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Since 2018, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) has partnered with the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia and its respective Country Offices to develop a series of comparative papers on social protection (SP) in the region, covering social expenditure, legal frameworks, design of flagship national non-contributory SP programmes—including their child- and gender-sensitive features—the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and the SP responses deployed, and findings from quasi-experimental impact evaluations. All of the studies listed, except the last one, were published in 2020. This One Pager highlights key findings for Pakistan.

From a legal perspective, Pakistan lacks a national statutory framework for SP, since the competence for SP law-making and delivery shifted from the federal government to the provinces in 2010. Nevertheless, at the federal level, the country's Constitution includes provisions related to the promotion of socio-economic well-being, adequate livelihoods and the fulfilment of basic needs. At the programme level, only two of the flagship social assistance initiatives mapped by the IPC-IG have their own statutory regulatory frameworks: the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and Pakistan *Bait-ul-Mal* (PBuM). The remaining two, the FATA Temporarily Displaced Persons Emergency Recovery Project (FATA-TDPER) and the Prime Minister's National Health Programme (PMNHP), lack such legislation.

In terms of social expenditure, Pakistan allocated 4.1 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) to social expenditure in 2019. Expenditure on education has steadily increased in recent years, and is channelled mainly towards primary education. However, educational outcomes are still among the lowest in South Asia. Meanwhile, almost two thirds of health expenditure in Pakistan are out-of-pocket payments, and health-related indicators are generally below average for the region, signalling the need for further investment. Pakistan spends less than 1 per cent of GDP on social assistance. The country's context is challenging though, requiring a balance between fiscal sustainability and increased spending.

Regarding the design features of flagship national non-contributory SP programmes, the IPC-IG analysed four programmes. PBuM stands out for delivering several integrated interventions, including unconditional cash transfers, housing subsidies, unconditional in-kind transfers, training and educational fee waivers. The BISP and the FATA-TDPER are cash transfers, while the PMNHP is a non-contributory health insurance scheme. Overall, the system has a strong focus on the poorest people in the country, identified mostly through means-testing and proxy means-testing methods.

Concerning gender- and child-sensitivity, Pakistan demonstrates commendable features. The BISP is complemented by *Waseela-e-Taleem*, a conditional cash transfer attached to enrolment and attendance in primary education, which varies according to the number of children in the household. Similarly, PBuM offers extra cash to households with children aged 5–14 who attend school. Further, the BISP's benefit is paid to female household heads, while PBuM prioritises widows and orphans, and offers vocational training for women. A flagship national school feeding programme could be considered.

It is important to note that in March 2019 Pakistan launched *Ehsaas*, an umbrella multisectoral strategy which also encompasses the BISP and PBuM (both are now administered by the same agency). Particularly significant, *Ehsaas* fills in former gaps—for example, it adds a sustainable livelihoods component, tertiary scholarships (half reserved for women), and health promotion initiatives for pregnant and lactating women, and children aged 0–2. Moreover, linked to the BISP's unconditional cash transfer component, *Ehsaas* employs additional technology for service delivery that fosters financial inclusion: biometric payments, bank account creation and mobile phone use.

Concerning the findings of impact evaluations, rigorous and coordinated assessments were identified for the BISP only. No rigorous impact evaluations were identified for the three other programmes mentioned above. The BISP was found to lead to increased consumption and asset ownership, hence decreasing poverty. Furthermore, desirable changes were observed for women: increased access to money, mobility and likelihood to vote. Effects on education, though, are rather limited due to supply-side constraints, such as a shortage of schools and qualified staff and a lack of adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities.

During the COVID-19 crisis, two national SP measures stood out. First, in March 2020, the government announced *Ehsaas* Emergency Cash—an expansion of *Ehsaas*—which was an unconditional cash transfer to safeguard food security. The initiative aimed to reach 16.9 million households (almost half the population), many of which contained informal workers who likely did not have access to SP. Second, the Rozgar scheme provided subsidised credit to cover firms' payroll in exchange for a commitment not to lay off any staff for up to six months.

Based on the specific findings for Pakistan, drawn from regional comparative reports, key policy recommendations are:

- Reconcile efforts towards streamlining and expanding the SP system with the devolution of responsibilities to the provincial level—for instance, by strengthening collaboration and building consensus for a single piece of legislation.
- Continue recent investments in social expenditure through long-term budgetary commitments while also addressing supply-side constraints.
- Continue efforts to achieve child- and gender-sensitive SP—for example, by instituting a flagship school feeding programme and further promoting women's productive and financial inclusion.
- Improve management information and monitoring and evaluation systems—including evidence generation around expenditure at federal and provincial levels—financial inclusion, and digitalisation of SP delivery to strengthen shock-responsiveness.

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Social protection profile: Sri Lanka

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Since 2018, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG has partnered with the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia and its respective Country Offices to develop a series of comparative papers on Social Protection (SP) in the region, covering social expenditure, legal frameworks, design of flagship national non-contributory SP programmes—including their child- and gender-sensitive features—the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and the SP responses deployed, and findings from quasi-experimental impact evaluations. All of the studies listed, except the last one, were published in 2020. This One Pager highlights key findings for Sri Lanka.

From a legal perspective, Sri Lanka is signatory to the nine most relevant human rights instruments that promote SP and children's rights. Further, the country's Constitution directly enshrines the right to SP, although as a policy principle rather than an enforceable right. In 2002, the country took an important step when launching the Welfare Benefit Act, a single regulation applicable to all SP programmes and governing aspects related to payment, termination and administrative responsibilities across central and local governments. Additionally, two thirds of the flagship national non-contributory programmes are legally grounded, although only half of those have specific regulatory frameworks administering operational features.

In terms of social expenditure (health, education and non-contributory SP), Sri Lanka is close to the average for South Asia. However, since it has higher income than other countries in the region, it could expand its fiscal space for SP. Nevertheless, the country demonstrates efficient spending, managing to harvest better outcomes than its regional peers with similar expenditure profiles. This seems to be the case for health outcomes, as Sri Lanka successfully concentrates most public resources on poor people. In addition, when it comes to education, it is important to bear in mind that the country is at a later stage of the demographic transition, which lowers the demand for basic education.

Concerning the general characteristics of flagship national non-contributory SP programmes and their child- and gender-sensitive features, it is noteworthy that the country has an SP system with main programmes dating back more than 20 years. Just before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the coverage of flagship social assistance programmes was the highest in South Asia, as estimated by the IPC-IG. The system comprises multiple types of programmes (mostly unconditional cash transfers combined with other modalities, such as in-kind transfers and subsidies). Most programmes combine poverty targeting with categorical targeting of elderly people and those with disabilities. It should be noted that there are concerns about exclusion errors due to the means test assessment used to select poor beneficiaries.

Child-sensitive programmes include initiatives supporting children's access to education, nutrition and health (e.g. the School Feeding Programme and the National Secretariat for Persons with Disability), as well as a cash transfer, the Public Welfare Assistance Allowance (PAMA), which targets households with orphans (among other groups). Moreover, the benefits paid by the PAMA and *Samurdhi* (another flagship cash transfer) vary according to the number of household members. Sri Lanka has no programmes specifically targeting women in general; however, some of its nutritional programmes target pregnant and lactating mothers, and malnourished children under 5 years old (e.g. *Thriposha* and the Pregnant Mother's Food Assistance Programme.[1] Further, the PAMA reaches out to widows and women separated from their husbands.

Regarding findings of impact evaluations, it is concerning that Sri Lanka's programmes have hardly ever been subjected to impact evaluations. *Samurdhi* and *Thriposha* were assessed by independent scholars, but concerning their health-related indicators only—thus missing the chance to identify points for improvement and a broader set of desirable impacts that could be further promoted by the country's SP system.

Finally, concerning the crisis sparked by COVID-19, the government has successfully deployed a vigorous response by temporarily expanding pre-existing programmes, increasing both coverage and benefit value (initially for two months). It is estimated that those initiatives more than doubled the country's SP coverage, although this could have been achieved at much lower administrative cost if the country had had a consolidated, integrated information system and more bank-based payment operations.

Given this background, key policy recommendations are as follows:

- Increase fiscal space for social spending—for example, by improving the efficiency of existing programmes or increasing tax-based revenues (preferably through individual and corporate income tax, both of which are relatively low).
- Roll out specific regulatory frameworks for the programmes currently lacking them.
- In the medium and long term, establish a universal child grant to reduce targeting costs and exclusion errors and have a greater poverty reduction impact.
- Increase the use of bank-based payments and roll out an integrated information system to enhance coordination and, hence, reduce administrative costs and improve the SP system's shock-responsiveness.
- Subject SP programmes to impact evaluations, which could be undertaken periodically and at lower cost by developing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system.
- Although our comparative papers do not address the Pregnant Mother's Food Assistance Programme directly, quickly expanding this programame could strengthen nutrition support to children during their first 1,000 days of life.

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Social assistance programmes in South Asia: An evaluation of socio-economic impacts

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Since 2018, the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) has partnered with the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia and its respective Country Offices to develop a series of comparative papers on social protection in the region. An overview study focusing on flagship non-contributory social protection programmes was developed, along with papers focused on social expenditure, legal frameworks, and gender- and child-sensitive features and designs, and a review of impact evaluation studies of the socio-economic outcomes of social protection programmes. This last paper is the focus of this One Pager.

The study assembles a sample of 63 rigorous impact evaluation studies—using quasi-experimental estimation strategies—for 17 different flagship social assistance programmes identified in the overview study. Countries covered include Afghanistan (Citizen's Charter/NSP), Bangladesh (PESP, SESP/FSSSP, MAPLM, EGPP), India (JSY, MDM, MGNREGA, NSAP/OAP, TPDS), Nepal (Child Grant, *Aama* Programme, Old Age Allowance, Scholarships), Pakistan (BISP, WeT) and Sri Lanka (*Samurdhi* and *Thriposha*). The programmes cover many interventions, including public works programmes (PWPs), conditional and unconditional cash transfers, scholarships for students, in-kind transfers (mainly food) and school feeding programmes.

An important range of socio-economic outcomes are assessed at the beneficiary and/or household level. A total of 126 disaggregated outcomes (proxies) identified in the literature were divided into 31 indicators, then grouped into 5 categories: poverty and finances, labour market, education, health and gender. By focusing on a wide range of outcomes, the review assesses more than just main programme objectives, but also records potential indirect (spillover) impacts either within households or at the meso level, which can be either desirable (e.g. improved educational outcomes for the siblings of beneficiaries) or undesirable (e.g. reduced school attendance among teenagers due to intra-household reallocations of time). Results are presented at different levels of aggregation: study-specific findings, evidence aggregated at the programme level, and country and regional results.

The literature surveyed is broad, fragmented and overrepresented by a few key programmes. However, the review offers important conclusions and implications for policy, such as the following.

- Large-scale interventions can greatly increase the demand for complementary social services, especially when interventions include either hard or soft conditionalities (MAPLM, JSY).
- Cash transfers that are regular and predictable enable beneficiaries to better allocate their time and resources (BISP, Child Grant).
- When successfully implemented, school feeding programmes show strong positive impacts on food adequacy. They also have the potential to improve educational performance, particularly among children exposed for longer periods.
- Scholarships (or free education) should be promoted throughout the education cycle, especially for children from poorer and more vulnerable backgrounds, who may face greater barriers to attainment and pressure to engage in child labour (SESP/FSSSP).
- PWPs that provide equal pay and complementary services for women and mothers can significantly reduce gender pay gaps (MGNREGA).
- Large-scale PWPs can have significant impacts on labour market dynamics at the local level. Results from the MGNREGA indicate that private agricultural wages increased in programme districts, providing support not only to the direct beneficiaries but also to the wider community.
- PWPs can act as safety nets, smoothing out seasonal and shock-related income fluctuations. This insurance effect is an important characteristic of PWPs, especially in rural areas (EGPP, MGNREGA).
- PWPs can potentially contribute to negative spillover effects on education and child labour, especially among older children and adolescents. Policymakers should carefully assess these potential impacts when designing PWPs. A higher quality of programme implementation can contribute to limit potential negative spillovers (EGPP, MGNREGA).
- Relaxing conditionalities and offering Cash Plus interventions and/or complementary social services, such as childcare, can help make programmes more gender- and child-sensitive (*Aama* Programme, JSY, MAPLM and *Thriposha*).

While better and more systematised information on social assistance is needed, this report offers a comprehensive overview of the evidence from the impact evaluation literature on flagship programmes in the region, which can be used by policymakers, practitioners and researchers alike. Summary tables in the annexes present study- and programme-aggregated findings across studies, which assess results found across outcome categories and countries, and provide an overview of evidence gaps. The study can inform policymakers about evidence of practices in comparable contexts—in accordance with life-cycle and rights-based approaches to social protection—to help generate even more effective, efficient and inclusive policies for the future.

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How did China adopt social protection responses to the COVID-19 pandemic so quickly?

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The COVID-19 epidemic broke out in Wuhan, capital of the Hubei Province in China in early 2020. The country acted quickly to contain the spread of the disease through targeted lockdowns: by 19 March, no new cases outside of Hubei Province had been recorded for a week. On 26 April, the last hospitalised COVID-19 patient in Wuhan was discharged. China was relatively quick to adopt social protection measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This One Pager discusses factors that enabled the country to support the affected groups in a timely manner and how this experience could inform social protection expansion efforts elsewhere.

On 11 February 2020, the Chinese central government determined that provincial governments should provide care for children whose guardians were self-isolating due to COVID-19, including services such as psychological counselling and remote schooling services, as well as financial aid, which reached those children by the end of the month. On 27 February, the central government also mandated provincial governments to assist the inhabitants of cities under lockdown. Five days later, the Wuhan government launched an online platform for people to apply for assistance. On 20 March, central government announced that unemployment insurance subsidies should be processed and paid without physical contact. By 10 April, 297 cities had developed online platforms to applying for unemployment subsidies. On 7 March, the central government announced that the benefit amounts and coverage of the *Dibao* cash transfer programme could be increased in areas affected by the pandemic, and on 1 April, provinces and cities—including Hubei—increased the benefit amount.

Which factors could explain China's rapid social protection response? The first contributor is the existence of a large information database. For example, the Department of Civil Affairs has an information system containing the personal details of monthly *Dibao* beneficiaries. When the benefit amount was increased, the Department was able to immediately process the payment. Similarly, the National Poverty Alleviation Development Information System, led by the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development collects information of impoverished people, including some who are not eligible for *Dibao*. When the central government gave instructions regarding the expansion of the programme's coverage during the pandemic, local government departments were able to automatically identify eligible persons through this same database.

The second factor was the use of an online application system and digital payment methods. With the prevalence of mobile devices, it is very convenient for people to access the Internet or pay via mobile phones. Therefore, those eligible for the Unemployment Insurance Subsidy and the Assistance to Stranded Persons programmes are able to upload the necessary information simply by scanning a QR code and filling out a form, to receive subsidies in digital form, such as bank transfers. Before the pandemic, the application for unemployment insurance was carried out through on-site registration, but during the pandemic 297 cities established online application platforms, and unemployment subsidies started being paid through bank transfers, which increased the efficiency of the system. In addition, in accordance with the Assistance to Stranded Persons programme, people who were stranded in Wuhan could also apply for assistance via scanning a QR code. This scheme provided 21,000 eligible people with cash or food items. Although the online application system and digital payment methods are convenient for people who own a smart phone and can read, write and access the Internet, illiterate and digitally excluded people have to walk to or call a local department for help. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the accessibility of online platforms and digital payment methods.

The last element is the role of a strong central government in ensuring the timeliness of China's social protection responses. Local government officials who did not enact measures to deal with the pandemic in a timely manner were held accountable, which further accelerated the pace of implementation. In addition, the central government can effectively mobilise and coordinate the social sector as a whole. For example, it dispatched more than 42,000 doctors from all over the country to Wuhan within a short period at the onset of the pandemic, which was highly conducive to protecting lives in a timely manner. Furthermore, the central government also mobilised local governments to allocate and transfer face masks from cities where they were abundant to those where they were scarce, which ensured a sufficient supply of masks in every city.

In conclusion, the timeliness of China's social protection response had three main contributing factors: the existing information database on beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries, the availability of an online application system and digital payment methods, and the strong role of the Chinese central government. They all played an important part in accelerating the country's implementation of social protection responses to COVID-19.

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Social protection and the response to COVID-19 in LAC: Innovation in registration and payment systems

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The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the foundations of the economy and provoked devastating social effects in all countries of the world, with Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) one of the most affected regions. The region is experiencing deteriorating levels of poverty and extreme poverty, most significantly affecting children and adolescents. According to projections from the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC 2021), 22 million more Latin Americans were living in income poverty and extreme poverty in 2020, meaning a total of 209 million people (37.3 per cent of the region's population, and 48.5 per cent of the child population).

Since the onset of the pandemic, the response of the region's social protection systems has been forceful and innovative in its task of mitigating the effects of containment measures on household incomes and the economy in general. Faced with the challenge of promoting a rapid and large-scale response, governments had to resort to creative solutions to reach the affected population while respecting social distancing measures in COVID-19 prevention. Countries not only activated existing social assistance, social insurance and labour market programmes but also created new programmes, adapting their targeting, registration and benefit delivery systems.

However, the real protagonists of the response to the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 were emergency cash transfers, which sought to reach informal workers and vulnerable populations not previously covered by the social protection system. These benefits vary in coverage, generosity and frequency of payments. Coverage ranged from 2 per cent to 96 per cent of the countries' populations, with higher levels of coverage for the benefits with the lowest number of payments. These programmes were able to cover on average of 49.4 per cent of people in LAC, an increase of 30.9 percentage points compared to conditional cash transfer programmes before the pandemic. The generosity of the vouchers was low overall, ranging from 1 per cent to 20 per cent of the average monthly household income (11.82 per cent on average, or USD202.13 in purchasing power parity—PPP).

With the prolongation of the crisis and consequent needs, several of the payment schemes designed for temporary transfers proved insufficient. Thus, several countries changed the coverage or generosity of their programmes, created second versions of the programmes (Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Paraguay) or simply extended the duration of their programmes (Colombia and the Dominican Republic).

As the main objective of the emergency cash transfers was to reach new beneficiaries not covered by the social protection system and suffering the economic effects of the pandemic, the adaptations made to the systems for identifying and registering beneficiaries and paying benefits are of greater importance. On the one hand, the use of social registries in countries where they were available allowed access to updated information on potential beneficiaries and cross-checking with other administrative registries to prioritise households targeted by the different emergency measures. On the other hand, in most countries the available data or registries were not sufficient to identify the most affected households. Thus, governments implemented new methods of application, mainly through digital channels such as mobile applications and forms on websites or by email. Countries that combined the use of social registries to identify beneficiaries and open registration achieved higher coverage of their benefits.

In terms of payment, to effectively reach new beneficiaries in a context of limited or no face-to-face interaction, digitalised payment systems were mainly used, through bank transfers or the creation of digital accounts or another type of measure that did not requite them to hold a bank account. However, digitalisation was hampered by the lack of infrastructure to support such payments in remote areas and by gaps in the level of access to banking services of people targeted by social assistance programmes. Thus, in many countries, face-to-face payments were maintained to facilitate access to benefits for unbanked people who did not have access to remote payment channels.

The adaptations made to the payment and registration systems of social protection programmes in response to the pandemic present an opportunity to permanently adapt these systems, increasing the inclusiveness and efficiency of social protection systems.

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Social protection response to COVID-19 in rural LAC: Social and economic double inclusion

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In partnership with the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO-RLC), the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) published three policy briefs on lessons learned from the social protection response to the COVID-19 pandemic in rural Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) to build social protection systems back better for rural populations.

The first policy brief in the series examines how social protection can ensure food security and social and economic 'double inclusion', and identifies good practices in LAC's rural social protection response during the pandemic. For this assessment, interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders of four programmes selected as good practices in the region.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative effect on food insecurity and poverty in LAC, which were already high in rural areas, and accentuated vulnerabilities of rural populations. Despite being fundamental for LAC's food security, rural populations are a traditionally marginalised social sector and one of the groups most exposed to some of the risks imposed by the pandemic. They face aggravated vulnerabilities caused by a lack of access to public services; a high level of informal, casual and seasonal employment, mostly in the agricultural sector; and a lack of access to social protection, particularly contributory schemes; among others.

LAC's social protection response to the COVID-19 pandemic addressed food insecurity by focusing primarily on food demand: 99 of the 413 responses mapped in the study related to cash transfers, and 62 to in-kind transfers. Only 10 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively, of these transfers explicitly targeted rural populations. In terms of food supply, only seven interventions focused on farmers or on food production, suggesting scarce attention to rural producers during the pandemic.

Four social protection programmes were identified as good practices addressing food security through social and economic 'double inclusion'— namely: Argentina's Critical and Direct Assistance Programme for Family, Peasant and Indigenous Agriculture (PACyD), Belize's Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC), Mexico's *Bienpesca* and Panama's *Plan Panamá Agro Solidario*. All measures were led by the countries' respective Ministry of Agriculture, highlighting its role in social protection for rural communities.

Argentina's PACyD was created and implemented during the pandemic to become a permanent emergency response programme. It provides financial or productive inputs to family farmers. This may promote their economic inclusion by maintaining their food production and their income and livelihood strategies during shocks. It also supports their social inclusion through the involvement of farmers' associations in programme design and its integration with other social protection and economic inclusion programmes through the National Family Agriculture Registry (RENAF).

Belize's CERC is the emergency component of the Climate Resilient Infrastructure Project (CRIP), funded by the World Bank. During the crisis, the ministries responsible for agriculture and social protection implemented a Cash+ intervention (CERC) and an emergency cash transfer, the Belize COVID-19 Cash Transfer Program (BCCAT). The combination of benefits and the engagement of these two ministries contributed to promote double inclusion.

Mexico's *Bienpesca* is one of the few social protection programmes in LAC that targets fishers. During the pandemic, it quadrupled its cash transfer coverage in comparison to 2019. It may contribute to double inclusion by being tailored to the specific characteristics of fishers' livelihoods in its design, while protecting fishers' incomes when they are unable to work. This may support fishers to invest in their well-being and productivity. *Bienpesca* can also promote fishers' financial inclusion through its distribution of bank cards.

The *Plan Panamá Agro Solidario* was implemented during COVID-19 to protect farmers from its socio-economic impacts. It comprises two programmes: the *Programa Agro Solidario*, offering credit to small and medium-sized producers; and the *Agro Vida*, offering productive inputs to family farmers. Further, its links with the *Plan Colmena*, Panama's strategy for delivering social services to poor rural populations, may promote their social inclusion.

The four case studies relied on pre-existing shock-response mechanisms or social protection programmes, used existing registries and received support from farmers' or fishers' associations and other non-state actors. This helped to build the basis for coordination between social protection and agriculture. However, the programmes faced challenges such as simultaneous climate-related shocks, barriers to social protection due to informality or limited data access, and a lack of access to digital technology or resources necessary for implementation or benefit delivery.

How can we build back better?

- Integrate social protection better with the agriculture sector. This includes strengthening national social registries and their synergies with productive registries.
- Enhance programmes' potential for rural double inclusion by providing different types of benefits within the same programme and including the Ministry of Agriculture in the implementation of social protection programmes, and line ministries responsible for social protection in agricultural programmes.
- Adapt current social protection systems to rural realities, considering the legal, financial, administrative and institutional barriers to access in their design, with a gender-sensitive and intercultural approach.

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Universal cash transfers in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Children and adolescents are exposed to a multitude of risks, which have worsened due to the socio-economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. This emphasises the need to improve the protection of children and adolescents, who already faced greater poverty rates than other age groups before the crisis: in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), child poverty stood at 8.1 per cent, compared to 4 per cent for adults (ILO-UNICEF 2019).

Social protection policies are important to mitigate the vulnerabilities of children and adolescents. Cash transfer programmes are a central mechanism for satisfying the needs of families with children and adolescents. In LAC, conditional cash transfer programmes in particular are widely used. Nevertheless, they have several limitations associated with the inclusion of only a limited share of children and adolescents, targeting errors, and costs and asymmetries stemming from conditionalities.

Universal child benefits (UCBs)—regular monetary transfers aimed at children and adolescents for at least 10 years (ibid.)—represent an alternative way to offer social protection in the region. The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) conducted a study alongside the United Nations Children's Fund Regional Office for Latin America and Caribbean (UNICEF-LACRO) to examine the advantages of introducing UCBs in the region and estimate their potential impact on the distribution of poverty and inequality across five LAC countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay) (Bacil et al. 2022).

UCBs can contribute to advancing the agenda of children's and adolescents' rights by guaranteeing their equal right to social protection, thus reducing the stigma associated with poverty. Furthermore, universal benefits jointly address different sectors of society, garnering the greatest support.

Notably, one of the main benefits of UCBs is related to the rapid expansion of viable coverage, given that a considerable gap in existing coverage for children and adolescents persists in some LAC countries. Overly specific eligibility criteria are one reason for such gaps, illustrated by the cases of Ecuador and Guatemala. Some subgroups tend to remain marginalised, such as indigenous children and adolescents, migrants, and children of marginalised non-poor informal workers. Accordingly, the unification of different transfers into a single UCB has the potential to promote improvements by embodying a benefit for which all children and adolescents are eligible.

To calculate the impact of a UCB in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay, this study uses recent household surveys (prior to COVID-19). Initially, principal benefits were identified which could be replaced by a UCB. The final UCB was designed according to the following principles:

- universality;
- increased progressiveness;
- no reduction in per capita income for households living under the poverty line; and
- fiscal responsibility: the budget for the UCB must be equal to the sums currently invested in existing monetary transfers.

Given the importance of targeted programmes in contexts of major poverty and inequality, this study proposes three scenarios for each country. The best targeted benefit in each is maintained in combination with the UCB. In Brazil and Colombia, other programmes which benefit children and adolescents indirectly but failed to prove progressiveness were included in the list of programmes to be replaced by the UCB.

In all cases and across the majority of scenarios, the system of cash transfers for children and adolescents became more progressive with the implementation of the UCB. Moreover, decreases in child poverty were observed, but their extent varied by country and depending on the poverty line used. Additionally, slight reductions in inequality among children and adolescents were observed. Using national poverty lines, the changes in child poverty in all countries except Brazil were not substantial.

In sum, the potential of UCBs to enhance the social protection of children and adolescents in LAC has been demonstrated, although it is worth considering a budget increase for this area. It is important to highlight the necessity of advancing this debate in the region to guarantee broader and sufficient coverage of this group.

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Social protection response to COVID-19 in rural LAC: Protection and promotion of employment in the agricultural sector

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In partnership with the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO-RLC), the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) published three policy briefs on lessons learned from the social protection response to the COVID-19 pandemic in rural Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) to build social protection systems back better for rural populations.

The second policy brief in the series examines how social protection can protect and promote rural employment. It identifies good practices in the social insurance (SI) and labour market (LM) responses targeting rural populations during the pandemic. For this assessment, interviews were conducted with stakeholders of three programmes selected as good practices in the region.

In 2017, primary agricultural production contributed to 14.3 per cent of employment in LAC, and an additional 10–15 per cent if employment in the larger food industry is considered. However, estimates from 2017 show that 76.8 per cent of rural workers were informal. Most rural workers, therefore, lack decent working arrangements and protection from work-related risks, which has made them vulnerable to the socio-economic and health consequences of the pandemic.

LAC countries created and/or adapted 163 LM and 42 SI programmes to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. The most common SI intervention consisted of adapting contributory pensions, while wage subsidies to protect employment were the most common LM intervention. Most LM and SI measures focused on formal workers. Thus, it is likely that rural informal workers were excluded from the SI and LM response and had to mostly rely on social assistance. It is concerning that only 5 per cent of SI and 12 per cent of LM responses explicitly targeted rural families and agricultural workers.

Against this background, the good practices analysed include programmes that underwent minor adaptations during the pandemic. Nevertheless, they may offer valuable lessons for the design and implementation of LM and SI interventions adapted to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of rural populations: Brazil's *Garantia Safra*, from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply; Mexico's *Sembrando Vida*, from the Secretariat of Welfare; and Peru's *Proyecto Noa Jayatai-Mujer Indígena* (NJMI), from the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion.

Brazil's *Garantia Safra* is a public index-based climate risk insurance scheme. It provides cash benefits to guarantee the livelihood of vulnerable family producers who face crop losses. During the COVID-19 crisis, *Garantia Safra* supported family producers affected by droughts or floods from the pandemic's socio-economic effects and production losses, through minor administrative changes, such as facilitated crop loss verification and registration, and single instalment payment. Most beneficiaries also received social assistance through links with Brazil's single registry, the *CadÚnico*.

Mexico's *Sembrando Vida* is a public works programme that aims to mitigate social and environmental degradation, promoting employment for poor rural families and vulnerable groups in agroforestry production systems. During the pandemic, *Sembrando Vida* underwent minor operational changes, which were fundamental to guaranteeing income for family producers. It was possible to maintain the programme because most of the producers had already been registered.

Peru's NJMI was created during the pandemic to preserve and promote agricultural employment by providing technical assistance and productive assets. The programme was innovative in targeting Amazonian indigenous women as benefit recipients. Building on pre-existing programmes and further innovating Peruvian social protection through organised collaboration with indigenous communities, NJMI supported poor rural households for one year. Like the original programme it was based on, it may present synergies with the cash transfer programme *Juntos*.

None of these programmes were created from scratch. In Brazil and Mexico, pre-existing infrastructure, including registries, was crucial to enable the identification of beneficiaries during the pandemic. In Peru, building on previous experience was fundamental for a swift response. Collaboration with farmers or indigenous organisations supported programme implementation in all three countries. All programmes also prioritised specific vulnerable groups within the rural population.

Regarding common challenges, interviewees from Brazil and Mexico highlighted rural populations' difficulties in accessing documents. Those from Mexico and Peru also emphasised difficulties in accessing indigenous communities due to the danger of spreading COVID-19. Cultural and land-ownership barriers also undermined some efforts in Mexico and Peru.

How can we build back better?

- Address legislative, administrative and financial barriers to contributory schemes by reforming labour legislation, facilitating registration and contribution payments, and subsidising insurance schemes.
- Involve unions and rural worker and indigenous associations in programme design and implementation. Community members familiar with the local languages and culture can contribute to this.
- Use LM schemes that incentivise agroforestry production models to prevent and mitigate the impacts of environmental degradation and the global climate crisis.
- Build smallholders' capacity to reduce the impacts of environmental shocks on their production by offering skills training and preventive agricultural practices tailored to local environments and cultures.

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