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Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in shock-sensitive social protection

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Key messages

- Crises can intensify existing gender inequalities; women and girls often face different risks to men and boys in crises and are often disproportionately affected by shocks.
- Despite the increased investment in shock-sensitive social protection in recent years, most programmes have been gender-blind, with little attention given to the specific needs of women and girls across the life cycle in the context of crises.
- Overlooking gender and inclusion issues risks exacerbating poverty, vulnerability and gender inequality, and misses opportunities for empowerment and transformative change.

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1 Introduction

The use of social protection in emergencies has increased rapidly over the past few years. Innovative programming, implementation and financing mechanisms have allowed social protection programmes to evolve and adapt to both prepare for, and respond to, large-scale emergencies.

Over the past two decades, growing attention has also been paid to the role that social protection can play in promoting gender equality and women and girls' empowerment throughout the course of their lives. At the same time, increased recognition of the gendered impacts of crises has led to more gender-responsive humanitarian interventions. However, to date, there has been limited use of systematic evidence to inform shock-sensitive social protection policy and programming with a gender lens, and the two sectors have remained siloed, despite the significant overlaps and potential for lesson-learning.

Gender issues should be central to social protection programming. Evidence shows that the careful design and implementation of social protection programmes can support gender equality and empowerment across the life cycle – and across a wide range of outcomes. These include increasing adolescent girls' access to education and health services, improving women's access to and control over income and assets, supporting social inclusion and enhancing community networks, increasing women's decision-making, and changing the unequal division of labour in the household. However, when gender and other intersecting vulnerabilities – such as disability, ethnicity, life-cycle risks – are not well considered or integrated into design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E), social protection programming may have unintended negative impacts on women and girls.

In emergency situations, and especially those in which local conditions may change rapidly, gender considerations in humanitarian interventions are arguably of even greater importance (Simon, 2018). Women tend to be more vulnerable than men to shocks and face heightened risks because of pre-existing gender inequalities – such as having fewer economic resources and fewer coping mechanisms at their disposal in a crisis. This is further exacerbated by life-cycle and other intersecting risks and vulnerabilities. An emerging body of evidence shows that using social protection tools in humanitarian programming – such as cash transfers, in-kind transfers and public works programmes – can have positive effects on gender equality and women's empowerment. But, as with routine social protection programmes, evidence also shows that if gender is not considered throughout the programme cycle, humanitarian interventions may reinforce inequality and discrimination (ibid.).

With the use of social protection in emergency responses increasing, there is an urgent need to inform the design and implementation of shock-sensitive approaches from a gender and intersectional perspective if programmes are to support the positive outcomes for women and girls across the life cycle and minimise any negative effects. Moreover, emergencies often provide windows of opportunity for supporting positive changes in gender relations. Social protection needs to be part of the system that harnesses these opportunities rather than ignoring them.

This working paper looks at the core components of gender-responsive social protection programming in non-crisis contexts. Using this, it then identifies key areas where gender equality could be better integrated in the design and implementation of shock-sensitive social protection programmes.

1.1 What is shock-sensitive social protection?

Evidence shows that having a social protection system or programme in place before a crisis reduces its negative impact, as the benefits of social protection help poor households to smooth consumption and income, and can also promote recovery once the crisis is over (Bastagli, 2014; Venton, 2018). But beyond the role of core social protection objectives – which aim to reduce poverty and vulnerability through regular cash or in-kind transfers, work opportunities or insurance – social protection programmes or systems are increasingly being used and adapted to support large-scale, climate-related emergency responses and in the context of protracted crises, including assistance for refugees and internally displaced persons.

Many terms are being used for this approach – shock-responsive, adaptive social protection, shock-sensitive. In this paper, we use 'shock-sensitive social protection', by which we mean the role that a social protection system – or social protection programmes – can play in dealing with the negative impacts of shocks, by both reducing and mitigating vulnerability to risk in advance of shocks as well as helping households to cope with the after-effects.

Recent examples of shock-sensitive social protection programming include:

- Temporarily increasing the value of cash transfers to existing beneficiaries – as in the Philippines in the aftermath of the 2013 typhoon and in Fiji in 2016 after the cyclone.
- Distributing emergency support through the social protection system – as in Nepal, which increased the value of cash transfers to existing beneficiaries and expanded coverage of the under-fives child grant after the 2015 Gorkha earthquakes.
- Pre-positioning financing mechanisms and 'scaleable' targeting systems to expand the coverage of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme and Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme.
- Sharing programming and administrative platforms between humanitarian responses and national social protection systems to support refugees and the poor national population in Jordan and Lebanon.

1.2 Why should shock-sensitive social protection policy integrate a gender lens?

There are four key reasons why it is important for policy-makers to use a gender lens when designing, implementing and measuring shock-sensitive social protection systems and programmes.

First, **crises can exacerbate existing gender inequalities.** Discriminatory social norms and women's roles and responsibilities – including their responsibility for domestic work and childcare and limited decision-making and bargaining power – mean that women and men often experience different levels of vulnerability to the same shocks and stresses (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2011). For example, working-age and elderly women tend to have less access to productive assets and resources, are concentrated in low-wage casual employment and access different social networks, and are less likely to have insurance (ibid.). These challenges may be compounded by other intersecting vulnerabilities, such as disability, social marginalisation or health status (WHO, 2011). As such, women typically have fewer coping strategies to draw on in times of crisis than men and may be less able to seek safety and access emergency response programmes, which undermines their ability to cope and capacity to respond to shocks (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2011; OECD, 2012; IASC, 2017).

Second, **women and men may face different risks, and the impacts of crises can be different for women and men.** For example, in the 2004 tsunami, which affected parts of Indonesia and Sri Lanka, up to 80% of those who died were women (IASC, 2006). Life-cycle and other factors also exacerbate these experiences. Children and the elderly, for example, are often disproportionately exposed to disasters (HelpAge International, 2014). Women with disabilities may face additional physical challenges to coping during a disaster as well as experiencing discrimination in accessing relief efforts (Sightsavers, 2015). Evidence also shows

that violence against women increases during crises: an estimated one in five female refugees or displaced women in complex humanitarian settings experience some form of sexual violence (IASC, 2006). Economically, women are also more likely to suffer losses in crises, as the sectors in which they are overrepresented – agricultural trade and the informal economy – are often most impacted by crises (Barclay et al., 2016).

Third, crises may also provide opportunities to **reverse pre-existing inequalities and promote women's and girls' empowerment**. Social and cultural structures change quickly in crisis contexts, providing opportunities to redefine gender norms and power relations (IASC, 2017). Such opportunities are often missed, but these contexts offer pivotal moments for change. Moreover, the specific skills, resources, knowledge and agency of women and marginalised groups more generally, are often overlooked in emergencies, but can be strategically utilised to reduce risk and support emergency response (Lord et al., 2016; UNISDR, 2017; Lindley-Jones, 2018).

Finally, **humanitarian and development actors have a responsibility to promote gender equality**. International and national regulations and policy commitments insist that gender equality is promoted. The ongoing discussions on the humanitarian–development nexus recognise that meaningful and sustainable impacts require complementary action by humanitarian and development actors. This means that the focus on gender equality and empowerment needs to be integrated in a crisis response as well as development assistance (IASC, 2017). National and international actors can use different strategies and approaches to promote gender equality. The role of local women and women's organisations in crisis situations, for example, should be supported, as they can be crucial catalysts for transformative change (Oxfam Canada, 2018).

1.2.1 Considerations for policy-makers

What does all of this mean for social protection actors who are designing and implementing routine social protection systems and programmes, and adapting them in crisis contexts?

First, **policy-makers must make sure that routine social protection programming is gender responsive.** This is needed to support gender-equitable outcomes to reduce poverty and vulnerability and build resilience to future shocks in non-crisis times. This will also help ensure that any adaptation of the programme in times of crisis will apply a gender lens, as the foundations for gender-responsive social protection programming will have been laid.

Second, **policy-makers should proactively promote gender equality and women's empowerment in shock-sensitive social protection design and implementation features.** This is needed to ensure that a crisis does not exacerbate existing gender inequalities and that programme responses take into account the fact that crisis impacts men and women differently. It will also enable programmes to take advantage of crises to promote women's empowerment.

These points are explored further in Chapter 2.

2 Key features of gender-responsive social protection programming

Many social protection programmes categorically target women on the basis that they may be highly represented in poverty and face specific vulnerabilities across the course of their life – notably female headed households, pregnant or nursing mothers and older women. Certainly, this is an important first step to addressing gender inequalities. But the focus on targeting women can overlook the importance of addressing the other dimensions of women's poverty, such as increased time poverty, limited mobility, inadequate financial inclusion, inequalities in the labour market, discriminatory sociocultural norms etc. With few exceptions, objectives to address gender inequality and promote women's and girls' empowerment are rarely at the forefront of social protection programming. However, when gender-responsive features are integrated into design, implementation and M&E we see positive outcomes. For example, women have increased access to and control over income and assets, increased bargaining power and confidence as a result of receiving social protection transfers, strengthened social networks through interaction with others in the community, and improved social status (Molyneux, 2007; Holmes and Jones, 2013; Bastagli et al., 2016). When social protection is not well designed from a gender or broader social inclusion perspective, social protection programmes risk creating new, or exacerbating existing, inequalities and discrimination, such as increased time burden on women, or increased violence and conflict within the household (Molyneux, 2007; Buller et al., 2018). Here we outline three key features which help ensure that social protection programmes are well-designed and implemented to promote gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment across the life cycle.

2.1 Using gendered poverty and vulnerability analysis to inform design and implementation

Programme design and implementation should be informed by a gendered poverty and vulnerability analysis. This is essential to understand the underlying drivers of gender inequality, their intersection with other risks and inequalities and their effect on poverty and vulnerability. Programmes also need to be monitored regularly throughout the programme cycle and evaluated. The collection of disaggregated data at the individual level is important – including by sex, age, disability, ethnicity status, sexual orientation and gender identity. Programme designers and implementers should also conduct a gender and inclusion *analysis*, which goes beyond comparing outcomes for men and women and looks at intra-household relations, social relations and allocation of resources. M&E should include both quantitative and qualitative indicators as well as measures to capture unintended effects.

2.2 Key design features to promote equitable and empowerment outcomes

Policy-makers should use gender data and analysis to inform programme design and implementation and invest in translating these design features into effective implementation strategies.

Programme features informed by a gender and inclusion analysis include, for example: ensuring equal access to programmes through appropriate communication channels and accessible application and registration processes; providing gender-, age- and ability-appropriate work and equal wages, flexible working hours and work opportunities close to home; and providing good quality childcare options.

For cash transfers, such features include targeting payments to women in the household to increase their bargaining power and control over resources, and providing bank accounts and banking payments for beneficiaries for financial inclusion. It could also include: ensuring time taken to adhere to transfer conditions does not add to women's time burdens; ensuring collecting transfers is safe; providing opportunities for women to take on community leadership roles or expand their networks through group meetings; and providing regular long-term cash transfers of sufficient value. Other in-kind programmes may, for example, target nutritionally-sensitive interventions at pregnant or nursing women.

Evidence demonstrates that such design features have been shown to support women's practical needs as well as supporting more transformative changes, such as delaying marriage and pregnancy in adolescent girls, increasing economic security and emotional well-being and reducing physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (Baird et al., 2013; Buller et al., 2018). Ensuring that these features are not lost between programme design and delivery and investing in programme staff to understand and deliver these programme features, is critical (Holmes and Jones, 2013).

2.3 Coordinating with complementary programmes to enhance empowerment

Women's and girls' empowerment is a long-term goal, and social protection alone cannot achieve it. However, ensuring core programming features are gender-responsive (as already outlined above) contributes significantly to such longer-term objectives. Moreover, linking beneficiaries to other relevant services and programmes can further promote women's and girls' empowerment across the economic, political and social spheres and tackle the structural inequalities that perpetuate inequality and discrimination.

For example, innovative programme linkages have been made to give social protection beneficiaries access to complementary programmes and services such as:

- sessions on citizenship and employment training to strengthen women's citizenship and agency (Sholkamy, 2011)
- HIV prevention care to reduce risk-taking behaviour (Cluver et al., 2014, in Simon, 2018)
- behaviour change communication interventions to increase women's self-esteem, social interaction and social capital (Buller et al., 2018)
- information and training on disaster risk reduction to reduce vulnerability to recurrent flooding and provide alternative economic opportunities for women in lean seasons (see Box 1 below) (Siddiki et al., 2004; Care International, 2016 in IASC, 2017).

Involving men and boys in complementary programmes, such as violence prevention, women's autonomy and decision-making and caregiving, has also resulted in more equal decision-making as well as fathers spending more time with children (Antonio, 2016 in Simon, 2018).

Box 1 Building resilience to future shocks in Niger

In response to repeated droughts in Niger over the past 10 years, CARE's Village Savings and Loan Association programmes have helped women to form collective saving groups to strengthen and diversify their livelihoods through the accumulation of productive assets, food stocks and increased adaptive knowledge. As a result, 'beneficiaries are better prepared for future shocks and ready to assume leadership roles in the community' (Care International, 2016 in IASC, 2017: 23).

3 Promoting gender in shock-sensitive social protection policy and programming

To date, there is little experience and evidence of integrating gender into shock-sensitive social protection in the context of crisis (O'Brien et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2008). Here, we outline the implications for consideration in future interventions, drawing on evidence from cash transfers in humanitarian response and social protection in development contexts.

3.1 Adapting social protection programmes in crises: implications for equality and empowerment

There are several ways in which policy-makers can adapt social protection systems or programmes to respond to large-scale shocks. Some of these adaptations may be relatively small, such as tweaking existing design or using the existing social protection system or programme but in a different context (e.g. 'piggy-backing' or 'aligning' programmes – see OPM, 2015: 6). More significant adaptations include expanding the caseload of existing beneficiaries to other households affected by the shock ('horizontal expansion') or raising the transfer value of the benefit ('vertical expansion'). In the context of gender-responsive programming, a third avenue to explore would be the potential for developing additional programme linkages or complementary programmes. We discuss the implications of these major changes in relation to gender-responsive programming in this section.[1]

3.1.1 Horizonal expansion: taking on a new caseload

Horizontal expansion refers to increasing the coverage of a social protection programme from its original list of beneficiaries to an additional caseload of people affected by a crisis event. As such, targeting issues are at the forefront of this discussion.

In many countries, social protection programmes are targeted based on poverty and often use multiple targeting mechanisms to identify and reach the intended target group (e.g. geographical, proxy means-testing, community-based targeting etc.).[2] Identifying target groups in a crisis often involves simplified mechanisms to identify quickly the groups most

1 Noting that these considerations are in addition to the key gender-responsive features built into the foundations of social protection in development contexts discussed in the previous chapter.

2 Geographical targeting uses geographical location as targeting criteria; proxy means testing uses information on household or individual characteristics correlated with welfare levels to proxy household income, welfare or need as targeting criteria; community-based targeting uses community members to identify beneficiaries eligible for the programme.

in need according to geographical location, and/or categorical characteristics to identify groups who are the most vulnerable (e.g. older people, female-headed households, households with orphans or vulnerable children).

Key considerations from a gender perspective

Possible exclusion of female-headed households and women within male-headed households. If a programme aims to reach an additional caseload of beneficiaries, care must be taken to ensure that women are able to access these schemes and efforts are made to overcome some of the key social and economic barriers that women face. Studies from social protection in development contexts and in emergency response interventions show that women may be disproportionately excluded from benefits (Ulrichs, 2016; IASC, 2017). Exclusion occurs for various reasons, including women's lower contributory capacity to enrol in schemes, limited awareness or knowledge of schemes and ability to apply, sociocultural constraints (such as restricted mobility or time constraints due to care responsibilities), and lack of correct documentation (ibid). For example, in Jordan's Za'atari refugee camp, cash-for-work programmes mainly targeted men (76% of cash-for-work opportunities were taken up by men), despite there being a high proportion of female-headed refugee households, and women and girls comprising half the population. A UN Women intervention sought to redress this imbalance by designing a women-focused cash-for-work programme as part of its Oasis safe spaces initiative. Approximately 83% of women participate in this cash-for-work programme. (UN Women, 2016).

These challenges highlight how important it is to undertake a gender assessment to understand the barriers that women might face in accessing interventions as well as the importance of establishing accessible grievance mechanisms to reduce the risks of exclusion.

Potential tensions and conflict arising from targeting. Several studies demonstrate how relations within both the community and the household may be negatively affected by a lack of understanding of eligibility criteria or of the rationale behind targeting decisions. For example, a number of studies in humanitarian contexts link increases in community and intra-household tensions associated with cash transfers to a failure to adequately communicate programme objectives and eligibility criteria to local staff and communities (Wallace and Chapman, 2010; Browne, 2014; Simon, 2018). There are also concerns that purposeful targeting of women in emergency contexts may lead to the marginalisation of men, which increases the risk of negative impacts on gender equality and sustainable social change (Wallace and Chapman, 2010). Indeed, there is also a need for programme designers and implementers to pay particular attention to complex household dynamics. In Somalia, for example, where polygamous households received a cash transfer programme in camps for internally displaced persons, households in which only one wife received cash were more likely to experience intra-household conflict (Wasilkowska, 2012).

These considerations highlight the importance of clearly communicating the targeting criteria, not only for criteria changes at the household level, which is commonly discussed in shock-responsive approaches (Holmes and Costella, 2017; O'Brien et al., 2018), but also at the intra-household level.

Appropriateness of programme design for a new caseload of beneficiaries. Another consideration when adapting the targeting criteria and taking on a new caseload of beneficiaries is the importance of ensuring that programme design is *appropriate* for the target groups in emergency contexts. While this might sound obvious, it is especially important if programmes have not conducted a poverty and vulnerability analysis to inform programme design for the 'additional' caseload. Where such horizontal expansion is pre-planned, this assessment can be conducted before an emergency. However, if expansion is unplanned, this is more difficult, though not impossible (see section on coordinating between development and humanitarian actors). For example, public works programmes should be tailored to provide appropriate work for women and men or offer alternative direct support to those who cannot or should not work (Bailey, 2013). Moreover, the

value of any cash transfer response should assess carefully any potential implications for intra-household relations. This will include monitoring the impacts on intimate partner violence and establishing procedures to follow where it occurs. While it is likely that temporarily expanded programmes will provide only short-term support to the additional new beneficiaries, these programmes can still be designed to contribute to longer-term objectives that support equality and empowerment. Examples include promoting women's decent employment in reconstruction and ensuring equal wages between men and women in public works schemes, and ensuring financial inclusion and civil registration by providing bank accounts and documentation in advance of interventions.

3.1.2 Vertical expansion: increasing the amount transferred

Vertical expansion refers to temporarily increasing the value of the social protection benefit for beneficiaries. The main reason for amending a transfer value is to reflect the impact of the shock on households and respond to household needs in an emergency – the new transfer value is often linked to food baskets, or to support savings or economic investment etc.

Key considerations from a gender perspective

Sensitivity of intra-household relations to the value of cash transfers. Evidence suggests that there is particular concern that higher values of transfers targeted to women may contribute to, or exacerbate, abuse or violence in the household (Buller et al., 2018). Evidence shows that smaller transfers tend not to constitute such a threat to existing relations and the status quo (Wasilkowska, 2012). In emergency contexts, intra-household tensions are likely to be heightened for numerous reasons, including increased pressure on household economies and/or changes in roles and opportunities, such as men's loss of livelihoods. This does not imply that consideration of larger transfers should be dismissed, but that it is even more important to consider the intra-household effects of increasing transfer values and to find ways to mitigate the potentially negative effects. Transfer value should be linked to objectives, and in some cases, small and frequent transfers in cash or in-kind might be most appropriate. But larger size transfers for longer durations can have important benefits for households, and for women's empowerment, even in the context of crises.

There are a number of ways in which these potential negative effects can be mitigated. For example, conducting a thorough gender and inclusion assessment including a specific gender-risk assessment in advance of targeting and developing a safety or safeguarding strategy and protocol. Engaging men and boys as partners within programme design and implementation is another mechanism, as is coupling transfers with complementary programmes to support equality, empowerment and inclusion. Moreover, clearly communicating the rationale behind the transfer value to programme beneficiaries is critical.

3.1.3 Supporting transformative change through complementary programming

Developing appropriate linkages in emergencies to complementary programmes and services may also help to reduce unintended negative effects of programme changes as well as actively contribute to longer-term objectives of empowerment and transformative change, even in times of crisis. While there is little evidence as yet on the role of social protection and programme linkages in such contexts, some studies do point to their potential. For instance, Simon (2018) suggests that using strong positive messages to beneficiaries and engaging men and boys might be effective tools to influence gender outcomes such as reduced intimate partner violence and increased joint decision-making. Depending on the context, there may also be opportunities to link transfers to vocational or financial training to promote women's economic skills and capacity while improving protection outcomes (Nesbitt-Ahmed, 2017). For example, a cash transfer programme in Lebanon targeted at Syrian refugees linked the transfer with training for recipients in budgeting, debt management and banking services. This allowed women to save money and better manage debts, reducing negative coping strategies and exposure to gender-based violence (Berg and Seferis, 2015). Linking programmes to safe

places and access to protection services – as done by UN Women in the Za'atari camp – as well as gender-based violence, health and reproductive health services, may also be beneficial given the heightened risks women face in emergencies. The type of programming chosen will need to be context-specific and should be informed by a gender and inclusion poverty and vulnerability assessment and availability of partners. These are discussed further in the following section.

3.2 Operationalising shock-sensitive social protection

O'Brien et al. (2018) identify a number of guiding principles to operationalise social protection in the context of shocks. These include: planning and preparing for shocks in advance, informed by a poverty and vulnerability assessment; ensuring there is implementation capacity, including staff capacity, delivery systems, and information and communication systems; coordination between actors and institutions; and monitoring interventions.

3.2.1 Planning and preparing: conducting gender assessments

A core aspect of shock-sensitive social protection programming is to be better prepared in advance of a shock happening. This preparation can include a wide range of activities, such as embedding risk financing mechanisms in the programme, pre-agreeing indicators to trigger the social protection response, putting in place standard operating procedures with pre-identified partners etc.

One key factor is to ensure that a risk and vulnerability assessment is carried out to inform this preparation in advance. The recently updated Gender handbook for humanitarian action (IASC, 2017) provides a guide to ensure that gender is adequately integrated into humanitarian planning and programming. This handbook suggests that emergency preparedness activities include summaries of key gender issues and statistics to understand the different needs during a crisis, and to understand pre-existing gender inequalities and how they affect crisis response (see Box 2). This is a useful tool to build on top of a gender and inclusion poverty and vulnerability assessment (as the handbook does not focus on the gendered patterns of poverty), which should be used to inform the social protection programme in development contexts. This assessment would identify, for example, the gender and intersectional dimensions of poverty and vulnerability, beyond income poverty. It would also include individual and household roles and responsibilities including in the care economy, intra-household relations and decision-making, wider social norms in the local community and relevant legal frameworks (Chant, 2003; World Bank, 2013; CARE International, 2016; 2017).

Gaining a better understanding of local gender dynamics is important to support programming that is appropriately tailored to women's and girls' needs and to potentially improve gender outcomes (Simon, 2018). For example, understanding women's time burden relating to collecting and managing cash could result in different payment options, such as mobile technology or more pay-points. Similarly, recognising intra-household dynamics might result in changing the transfer size or linking to complementary activities which could also strengthen the opportunity to transform social gender norms in the long-run (ibid.). Thus, a gender analysis can help to focus on long-term empowerment objectives, even if the interventions itself is only short-term (Concern Worldwide and Oxfam GB, 2011; Simon, 2018).

3.2.2 Implementation capacity

It is critical to consider gender in the implementation of shock-sensitive social protection, especially as local realities can change rapidly in a crisis.

Evidence shows that there are regularly several bottlenecks between the design and implementation of interventions. Staff capacity in terms of skills and knowledge on gender and inclusive programming is key to implementing gendered interventions. Often, however, staff members are not clear about what gender empowerment means or what aspects of gender equality should be promoted through programmes. This is the case even when programmes have

Box 2 Guiding questions to inform shock-sensitive social protection

On the assumption that this builds on a gender and inclusion poverty and vulnerability assessment for gender-responsive social protection in non-crisis times, key additional questions to be asked in anticipation of a crisis include:

- What risks are there in the community, household or for individuals?
- What lessons can be learnt from previous crises? How were men and women, boys and girls affected differently?
- What protection risks do different groups of women, girls, men and boys face? How do these differ according to age, disability, ethnicity etc.?
- What are the rates of domestic violence/intimate partner violence, and attitudes towards or tolerance of violence towards women and girls?
- What legislation on domestic violence is there, and what is the availability of violence-related services?
- What are the potential coping capacities of women, girls, men and boys, and how do these vary by age, disability, ethnicity, rural-urban locations etc.?
- Is there disaggregated data (by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity) from quantitative and qualitative sources available about the needs, capacities and/or preferences of the affected community?

Key questions during crisis:

- What information is available about protection risks since the crisis began or the programme started? How do legal frameworks affect gender and protection needs and access to justice?
- What has changed about the demographic profile of the affected population or group targeted by a specific programme?
- How have the opportunities that are available and accessible changed, such as access to education, employment, livelihoods, health services, legal rights and ownership/control of assets?
- How have the roles of women, girls, men and boys changed since the onset of the crisis or the programme? What are the new roles of women, girls, men and boys and how do they interact? How much time do these roles require?
- What structures are the community using to make decisions now? Who participates in decision-making spaces?
- What protection and domestic violence and intimate partner violence risks face women, girls, men and boys? How do legal frameworks affect gender and protection needs?
- What are the needs, capacities and preferences of women, girls, men and boys in the affected population and/or programme?

Source: adapted from IASC (2017).

strong gender design features, and has been identified as a challenge in both humanitarian interventions and social protection programming in development contexts (Wallace and Chapman, 2010; Holmes and Jones, 2013). Moreover, programme implementation can also be affected by local sociocultural norms, staff bias and own-interpretation of rules, which can impact the delivery of programmes and reduce attention to gender design features. These factors are of particular relevance when new staff are brought in at short notice (e.g. as 'surge' capacity) to respond to an emergency and deliver a social protection intervention at scale (O'Brien et al., 2018).

To build staff capacity, skills and knowledge on gender in anticipation of crisis response, institutions delivering shock-sensitive social protection programming should:

- carry out an analysis of internal gender capacities of staff to identify training needs, level of confidence in promoting gender equality, level of knowledge, identified gender skills
- train staff on:
  - the principles of gender equality, empowerment and inclusion
  - the importance of gender in humanitarian action, including protection issues
  - gendered programme design features and how to implement them in an emergency
- ensure a gender balance is achieved in the staffing
- continue to support and build the resources and technical capacity of national institutions, such as ministries of gender and/or women in their coordinating and convening power at the national and the subnational levels.

Two other critical implementation features are access to grievance mechanisms and clear communications. Access to grievance mechanisms is particularly important in the context of programme adaptation, and especially with regards to changes in targeting criteria. Having a functioning, accessible and safe grievance mechanism in place is one way to help reduce potential exclusion errors discussed in the case of horizontal expansion.

Clear communication about eligibility criteria and targeting procedures is also important to reduce the potential risk of tensions in the community and/or household. The humanitarian cash-based intervention literature highlights how gaps in communication around programme goals and eligibility criteria – especially how they relate to gender equality and the rationale for targeting women – can lead to negative outcomes including men feeling excluded (Simon, 2018). For example, studies from the humanitarian literature show that it is important that the community (and particularly men) are informed about the gender-specific features of a programme, including the targeting decisions, to avoid negative side-effects (Wasilkowska, 2012).

3.2.3 Delivery modality

The mode of delivery is also important, particularly in times of crisis when there are increased challenges to women's safety and mobility. For example, pregnant women faced difficulties when collecting payments in the aftermath of the typhoon in the Philippines (O'Brien et al., 2018) while a cash transfer programme in Mogadishu, Somalia indicated that 20% of female respondents reported threats of violence (Hedlund et al., 2013, in Smith and Mohidin, 2015). Practical solutions, such as providing authorisation letters for others to receive transfers on behalf of the recipient, and innovations in technology, offer opportunities to improve safety and access in receiving cash transfers in emergency contexts. For example, in a study of a cash transfer programme in the informal settlements of Nairobi, some beneficiaries reported improved safety and attributed this to receiving cash via SMS on mobile phones. As the amount and timing of the transfer was not 'advertised,' recipients could collect the funds on their own schedules (Smith and Mohidin, 2015). E-payments may also be an efficient way to transfer money quickly to men and women after an emergency (Mansur et al., 2018), potentially reducing the time women spend collecting benefits, and some indicative findings from Niger suggest that e-transfers may improve some aspects of women's decision-making and intra-household bargaining power (Aker et al., 2016).

However, innovative technology may also have less favourable consequences: it may exclude women and other vulnerable groups with lower literacy rates and those with less access and familiarity to such technology (Simon, 2018). An additional downside to consider is that the use of electronic payments requires less physical interaction with beneficiaries, reducing the opportunity to conduct risk assessments and to implement complementary programming or messaging. These challenges can, however, be overcome with attention to outreach, training and help-desk services (Berg, et al., 2013).

3.2.4 Coordination with organisations representing women and girls

Advancing shock-sensitive social protection requires strong collaboration between social protection, disaster risk management and humanitarian actors. Research suggests that improved coordination could be achieved by, for example, promoting common understandings of the different fields and improving policy engagement and coordination of programmes and delivery systems (Holmes and Costella, 2017; OPM, 2017).

To strengthen attention to gender in shock-sensitive social protection, policy-makers should also collaborate with gender-equality and feminist actors. Here, the importance of independent women's movements and collective action in creating and sustaining gender gains over time should not be underestimated (Domingo et al., 2016; O'Neil and Domingo, 2016; IASC, 2017). However, to date, this has largely been overlooked by both social protection actors and humanitarian respondents. As such – and with few exceptions – women's organisations, and female beneficiaries themselves, tend not to be involved in planning or wider debates and are underfunded by donor organisations as they are usually confined to feminist spaces (Holmes and Jones, 2013; Oxfam Canada, 2018). Moreover, social protection, gender, protection and humanitarian specialists continue to operate in siloes, often with limited understanding of each other's sectors and limited engagement between individuals. Changing this requires investment in, and support for, local women's organisations, and the establishment of a coalition of a broader set of actors promoting women's rights and empowerment across the social protection and humanitarian sectors. In practice, this could be supported in a number of ways. For example, both social protection and humanitarian actors developing common strategies to work towards common goals for addressing gender inequality and women's empowerment in shock-sensitive social protection, identifying actors' key strengths and how their activities fit into wider and longer-term objectives across the development and humanitarian nexus. The creation of common tools for gender analysis, assessment and evaluation would also help to build gender into existing procedures, guidance and standards for shock-sensitive social protection.

Another way to do this is to convene coordinating forums across actors to map out gender-responsive activities (IASC, 2017). Such meetings can not only help to raise awareness among stakeholders about the differential needs of women, girls, men and boys, but they also ensure that these perspectives are helping to inform and shape interventions in all sectors (ibid.).

Evidence- and knowledge-sharing on the intersections between gender, humanitarian response and social protection systems also need to be strengthened (CaLP, 2018). As already described, advanced planning and information gathering is vital to ensure that a shock-sensitive social protection approach is responsive to men and women's needs in an emergency context. When humanitarian actors develop preparedness plans, social protection data on the gendered patterns of poverty and vulnerability could be used together with other existing secondary data for analysis on gender roles and inequalities – such as data collected as part of the initial risk and vulnerability assessment for designing social protection (Box 2), as well as findings from programme impacts and evaluation. For social protection actors, data collected on poverty and vulnerability to inform programme design could also include information on available coping strategies at men and women's disposal in the event of a crisis and help identify the types of risks that women and men are most vulnerable to (see section 3.2: Box 2).

3.2.5 Monitoring and evaluation to measure gender equality and empowerment

Programme designers and evaluators also need to develop appropriately designed monitoring and evaluation indicators to measure the extent to which programme objectives are met. Understanding gender-related changes requires data disaggregated by sex, age, and disability, and therefore the development of indicators that capture individual-level, not only household-level, information. It also means conducting a gender and inclusion analysis, which requires

indicators that capture changes in relations between men and women, and girls and boys, and the intersecting risks and vulnerabilities they face (for example across the life cycle, disability etc.). Importantly, this also requires measuring less visible and unintentional changes, which may not be part of the programme's objectives, especially around protection and safety issues in the household and community.

While monitoring and evaluation indicators will be programme-specific, ideally programmes would coordinate and use some common indicators to harmonise data and fill gaps (McCord et al., 2017).

4 Conclusions and policy implications

It is vital that existing social protection programming is gender responsive to support gender-equitable outcomes to reduce poverty and vulnerability and build resilience to future shocks, and to provide a foundation in policy and programming that can then be adapted in the context of a crisis. There is equal need to proactively promote gender equality and women's empowerment in shock-sensitive social protection design and implementation features.

When adapting programmes in the context of responding to shocks, programme designers and implementers need to consider the following issues:

- potential higher rates of exclusion of women, paying particular attention to the intersectionality of other risks and vulnerability, for example across the life cycle, disability and other forms of marginalisation
- risk of increased tensions, violence and conflict within the household and community towards women and girls, arising from targeting women or increasing transfer values, or through other unintended programme features
- appropriateness of programme design for new caseload of beneficiaries
- potential for even short-term shock-sensitive social protection approaches to contribute to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment objectives through, for example, gender-responsive core programme design, and linkages to relevant services and programmes in the context of crises.

To minimise risks and maximise opportunities, policy-makers and programme designers should:

- Plan and prepare for shocks in advance by conducting gender and inclusion poverty and vulnerability assessments pre-crisis and asking relevant assessment questions in anticipation of a shock, in order to inform gender-responsive features into programme design and implementation. Gender-sensitive assessment data can be collected through primary research tools and/or through sharing existing data between organisations (including local women's organisations). It would need to include, for example, information about women's role in the care economy, differential access to economic resources, sexual and reproductive health needs, and protection issues including rates of domestic violence.
- Build staff capacity by increasing skills, knowledge and access to tools on gender and inclusion issues in emergencies and gender features of the programmes. This may include: involving gender advisors throughout the programme cycle; developing a network and learning platform between actors working on these issues to share knowledge and data on gender and inclusion; developing a safety or safeguarding strategy; establishing protocols for the protection of women and girls, and for referrals etc.; and training programme staff on gender, disability and inclusion.
- Ensure that women can access grievance mechanisms to minimise exclusion of beneficiaries and to provide feedback on the appropriateness of programmes.
- Clearly communicate information about programme eligibility criteria, targeting

procedures, among other things, to reduce the risk of increased tensions and conflict within households and communities.

- Consider the pros and cons of different delivery mechanisms, including how accessible they are to women, and whether the process of enrolling for and/or collecting benefits has implications for women's personal security.
- Link and refer beneficiaries to relevant programmes and services – for example awareness-raising activities on women's rights, gender relations, domestic violence, available local services and resources; projects providing men and boys, community members and leaders with information and training; providing linkages to services for people with disability; and initiatives providing safe spaces for women.
- Establish common strategies and information sharing across social protection, disaster risk management and humanitarian actors to support and promote gender equality and empowerment, and improve connections and coordination with local and national women's organisations to capitalise on creating and sustaining gender gains over time.
- establish baselines that disaggregate by sex, age, disability etc., and develop monitoring and evaluation systems that use quantitative and qualitative indicators that capture gender- and inclusion-related programme objectives – going beyond measuring the number of women included in a programme – as well as capturing less visible and unintended changes that may occur, including the increased risk of violence and tension that women and girls may face.

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