



UNICEF's Global Social Protection Programme Framework

Prepared by

Social Inclusion and Policy

United Nations Children's Fund

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New York, NY, 10017, USA

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October 2019

PD/GUIDANCE/2019/003

Visual Communication Design:

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The infographic on the inside front cover represents the life course infographic on page 5 and page 35.



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Foreword

We live in a world where 385 million children are struggling on less than \$1.90 a day and there are significant child poverty rates even in the world's richest countries. This leaves children and families facing financial barriers which can make accessing quality services impossible. Social vulnerability – resulting from the interaction of social dynamics and individual and family characteristics such as disability, gender, ethnicity or religion – compounds the impacts of a lack of income.

Consequently, hundreds of millions of children are living in multidimensional poverty and will struggle to reach their full potential. This is devastating for the children themselves, and has knock-on effects for the societies and economies to which they belong. Further, growing and interconnected global trends, ranging from climate change to forced migration, threaten to increase child poverty and vulnerability, making the challenges even greater.

This framework outlines the crucial role child-sensitive social protection has to play in responding to these current and emerging challenges. It provides a conceptual framework and shared definition, evidence on the impacts of social protection, and what a child-sensitive social protection system should include. Hopefully, this will provide clarity to understanding child-sensitive social protection and highlight the change it seeks to bring in children's daily lives. Put simply, social protection should ensure that every child:

- lives in a household with sufficient financial resources to develop and fulfil their potential.
- has access to quality basic services and the knowledge needed for development, regardless of income or personal characteristics.
- has direct contact with a social or outreach worker when needed, who can help understand the challenges children and their families may face and support the responses needed.

Providing this change for children requires a foundation of quality social services including comprehensive and integrated social protection systems. The countries that are expanding coverage are demonstrating what is possible, and the inclusion of social protection in the SDGs and the international partnership for Universal Social Protection 2030 underlines growing international commitment. However, despite these positive changes and the proven impacts of social protection, globally 2 out of 3 children are not covered by social protection at all.

This programme framework and the guidance that accompanies it outline UNICEF's commitment and contribution to social protection for children, including our key action areas and the activities we undertake. It also hopes to contribute to a global understanding of child-sensitive social protection and encourage national and international partners to work together to strengthen these systems. Social protection is the right of every child, it is the foundation of a country's social contract, and requires national and international collaboration and commitment to provide every child with coverage and give every child an equal chance.



Ted Chaiban

Director, Programme Division
UNICEF

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This social protection framework builds on UNICEF's extensive work on social protection over the past decades. It's research and writing was led by David Stewart and Atif Khurshid, with sections on child poverty analysis by Solrun Engilbertsdottir, impact evaluations and social protection impacts by Tia Palermo, and shock-responsive social protection by Nupur Kukrety. Keetie Roelen, from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), UK, provided tireless support throughout, including in development of the updated conceptual framework. The programme framework also received extensive technical support and inputs from Enkhzul Altangerel, Jenny Asman, Joanne Bosworth, Jingqing Chai, Mitchel Cook, Ruth Graham-Goulder, Ganna Iatsiuk, Sheila Murthy, Ian Orton, Ilija Talev, Marija Adrianna de Wijn and Alexandra Yuster in New York. Thanks also to Laura Evans for copy editing, and Shangning Wang and Jiayan He for design.

Many thanks also to UNICEF Social Policy colleagues from regional and country offices for sharing their expertise, comments and inputs, including at the framework advisory meeting, including: Abdul Alim, Buthaina Al-Iryani, Edward Archibald, Gildas Banda, Tinatin Baum, Joanne Bosworth, Samir Bouzekri, Ivana Brnovic, Serghei Buruiana, Jose Cuesta, Matthew Cummins, Pamela Dale, Louise Moreira Daniels, Enrique Delamonica, Arthur van Diesen, Maya Fachrani Faisal, Gaspar Fajth, Sarah Hague, Mahdi Halmi, Lyanna Harracksingh, Antara Lahiri, Louisa Lippi, Tia Maria Palermo, Wilbroad Ngambi, Qimti Paienjtton, Luigi Peter Ragno, Erna Ribar, Andrea Rossi, Monica Rubio, Gaby Guerrero Serdan, Thiecoura Sidibe, Benjamin Kakule Sivasima, Iraz Öykü Soyalp, Beatrice Targa, Samman Thapa, Chrystelle Temah Tsafack, Emre Uckardesler, Paul Quarles Van Ufford and Jennifer Yablonski.

Many thanks also to UNICEF colleagues across sectors and divisions who provided invaluable inputs including: Segolene Adam, Andaleeb Alam, Yarlini Balarajan, Rosangela Berman Bieler, Pia Britto, Matt Brossard, Sumaira Chowdhury, Enrique Delamonica, Kirsten Di Martino, Eri Dwivedi, Shaffiq Essajee, Jumana Haj, Kristine Hansen, David Hipgrave, Shreyasi Jha, Denis Jobin, Daniel Kelly, Aniruddha Kulkarni, Philimon Majwa, Claire Mariani, Chemba Raghavan, Nicholas Rees, Dominic Richardson, Lauren Rumble, Tamara Rusinow, Valentina Ruta, Soumi Saha, Sagri Singh, Abheet Solomon, Susanna Sottoli,

Damilola Walker, Nikita White and Gemma Wilson-Clark. UNICEF's work on social protection is founded on partnerships, and the framework benefited enormously from excellent comments and inputs from external expert partners, including: Valentina Barca; Francesca Bastagli (ODI); David Coady (IMF); Christina Dankmeyer (GIZ); Aidan Fitzpatrick (DFA Ireland); Luke Harman (Save the Children); Roopa Hinton (DFID); Juergen Hohmann (EU); Ulrika Lång (SIDA); Keetie Roelen (IDS Sussex); Michal Rutkowski, Anush Bezghanyan, Margaret Grosh, Luz Stella Rodriguez, Ugo Gentilini, Laura Rawlings, Mattias Lundberg, and Sandor Sipos (World Bank); Valérie Schmitt, Christina Behrendt and Veronika Wodsak (ILO); and Natalia Winder Rossi (FAO).

A special thanks to all those who worked on UNICEF's excellent 2012 *Social Protection Strategic Framework*. This updated framework hopes to build on the original, which established social protection as a core area of engagement for UNICEF and remains highly relevant for our work. We are delighted that both Jennifer Yablonski and Natalia Winder-Rossi, lead authors of the 2012 framework, were able to support the development of this update.

Finally, we would like to express deep appreciation to UNICEF's Director of Programme Division, Ted Chaiban, Associate Director, Social Policy, Alexandra Yuster, and Associate Director Vidhya Ganesh, who have supported, encouraged and nurtured not only this framework, but UNICEF's work in social protection.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank	OPHI	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
AfDB	African Development Bank	PAP	Public Assistance Programme
BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities	PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer	PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	PSSN	Productive Social Safety Net
CODI	Core Diagnostic Instrument	qUSB	Quasi-Universal Child Benefit
CPD	Country Programme Document	RAM	Results Assessment Module
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	RCT	Randomized Controlled Trial
CSP	Centre for Social Protection	SCT	Social Cash Transfer
CSSP	Child-Sensitive Social Protection	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	SIC	Specific Intervention Codes
DFID	Department for International Development	SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
DRM	Disaster Risk Management	SMQ	Strategic Monitoring Question
ECD	Early Childhood Development	SPIAC-B	Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board
EDAR	Executive Director's Annual Report	UCB	Universal Child Benefit
EU	European Union	UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Society for International Cooperation)	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
HCT	Humanitarian Cash Transfer	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank	USP	Universal Social Protection
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	WFP	World Food Programme
IDA	International Disability Alliance		
IDS	Institute of Development Studies		
IFI	International Financial Institutions		
ILO	International Labour Organization		
IMF	International Monetary Fund		
IPC	International Policy Center		
ISPA	Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessments		
ISSC	International Social Science Council		
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation		
MIS	Management Information Systems		
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training		
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization		
ODI	Overseas Development Institute		
ODID	Oxford Department of International Development		
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development		

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since UNICEF produced its first *Social Protection Strategic Framework* in 2012, social protection has expanded rapidly in low- and middle-income countries, and UNICEF's work has grown as well, covering far more countries and areas of support. A growing number of development partners, international financial institutions (IFIs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also increased their work in the area. With robust evidence clearly establishing the positive impact of social protection on people's lives and its inclusion in Sustainable Development Goal 1 on eradicating poverty, this momentum is likely to continue.

Against this backdrop, new threats for children are emerging which social protection can help to mitigate: climate breakdown; urbanization; demographic change; and humanitarian crises that create ongoing risks for children through protracted conflict and displacement within and across borders.

This updated framework takes these changes into account, refining UNICEF's approach to social protection to reflect this changing landscape, along with emerging good practice and innovation in the field. The framework is intended to outline our social protection priorities, and to foster ever stronger relationships with governments and international and national partners. It outlines how UNICEF sees social protection, why it's so vital for children, and provides clarity on the elements of a child-sensitive

social protection system. Finally, it outlines UNICEF's 10 key action areas on social protection, through which we are committed to working with partners to realize social protection for every child.

Why social protection matters: addressing economic and social vulnerability to give every child an equal chance

The conceptual foundations of UNICEF's approach to social protection remain unwavering: a rights-based approach towards universal social protection as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In line with our work supporting progressive realization of universal coverage, we prioritize the poorest and most vulnerable children and families, with the objective of breaking the cycle of disadvantage across generations and ultimately transforming the lives of children and families (see Box 1).

At the heart of child-sensitive social protection is the protection of children and families against economic vulnerability. Living in or being vulnerable to poverty fundamentally undermines children's futures, often with lifelong consequences, directly impacting their opportunity to access quality social services and, every bit as perniciously, undermining their dignity and confidence.



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Alongside economic vulnerability, social vulnerability also has profound impacts on children's life chances. Social vulnerability can stem from personal characteristics such as age, disability or chronic illness, as well as from social discrimination and exclusion due to identities such as gender, race, religion, disability, political affiliation or geographic location. Evidence consistently shows that socially vulnerable children and families are more likely to be in poverty and excluded from social services and, ultimately, opportunity.

Social protection is a sector dedicated to addressing these economic and social vulnerabilities. It cannot stand alone and must be part of an integrated approach of social services for children. But without it, the needs of children and families living in poverty and exclusion now, or vulnerable to it as life's risks unfold, will not be addressed.

This framing of child-sensitive social protection is in line with the inter-agency definition of social protection that UNICEF helped to develop and supports:¹

'a set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing or protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion throughout their life-course, with a particular emphasis towards vulnerable groups'



Box 1: Four key principles that guide UNICEF's approach to social protection

The best interests of the child – UNICEF supports a rights-based approach to social protection rooted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and all our work in social protection is informed by this core principle.

Progressive realization of universal coverage – UNICEF supports the progressive realization of universal coverage, which involves helping countries to identify and expand programmes while recognizing the different capacities, contexts and challenges that countries face.

National systems and leadership – UNICEF supports nationally-owned and led systems, and only in exceptional cases, including in some humanitarian contexts, would UNICEF consider supporting implementation of temporary social protection programmes outside of government collaboration.

Inclusive social protection - UNICEF is committed to inclusive social protection that is responsive to the needs of all children and sensitive to particular characteristics and identities which can increase the risk of exclusion, including gender, disability status, ethnicity, HIV status, and geographic location.

For full box, please see Box 3 on page 14.

The state of child poverty and vulnerability

The implications of child poverty and vulnerability are felt most immediately by children themselves, but they have profound implications for nations as a whole as children become the next generation of adults that build societies and drive economies. According to the World Bank, for example, improving health and education to significantly improve 'human capital' would bring an additional 1.4 per cent annual growth rate for 50 years'.²

While there has been progress in reducing poverty in recent decades, 385 million children, or 1 in 5, are still struggling to survive on less than PPP\$1.90 (see Figure 1). Put another way: children are more than twice as likely to be living in extreme income poverty as adults. For children, poverty is about much more than income, and 665 million children are estimated to be living in multidimensionally-poor households, again with poverty rates consistently higher than adults. These measures of poverty can obscure that child poverty is a truly global problem and so must be the social protection response: 27 OECD countries have child poverty rates above 10 per cent, with only two countries maintaining child poverty rates below 5 per cent.³

Poverty measures, while important for social protection policy design, are often static and can be blind to the range of vulnerabilities children face

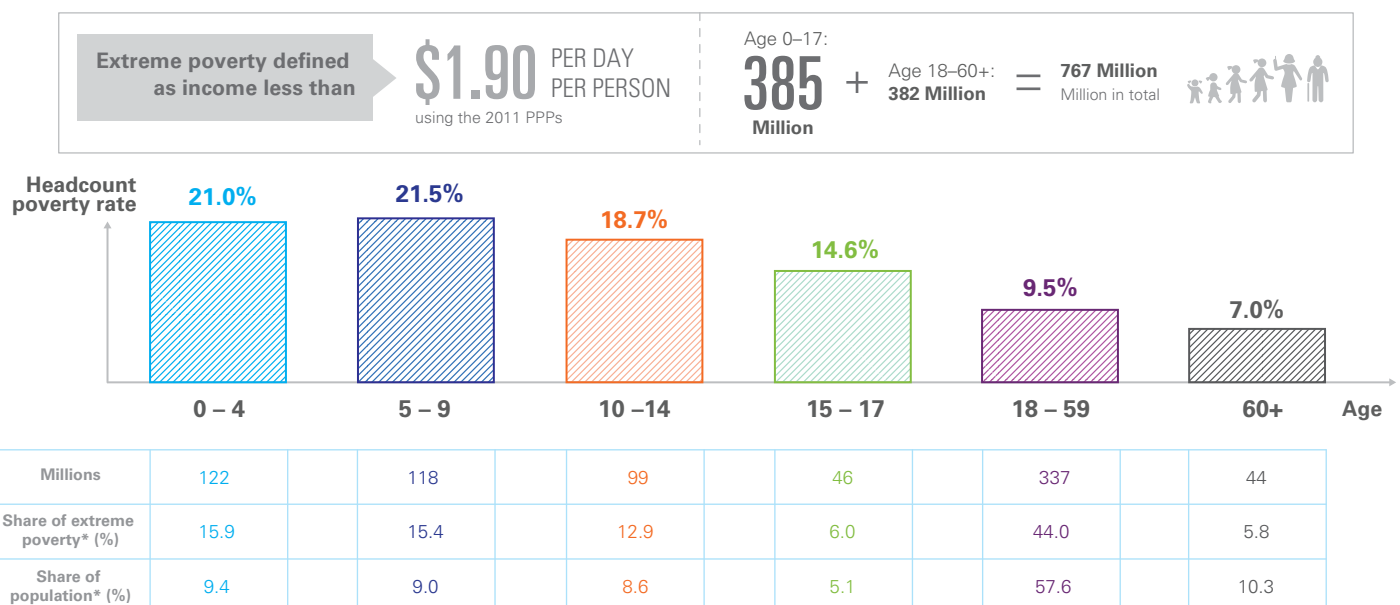
both at an individual and societal level. Looking slightly above this extreme poverty line underlines the scale of the challenge: about 45 per cent of children – over 1 billion children – are living in households subsisting on less than US\$3.10 a day compared to 27 per cent of adults,⁴ and in some middle-income countries people living on US\$6 a day face a 40 per cent probability of living in poverty in subsequent years.⁵

Social vulnerabilities impact on children's life chances. Evidence consistently shows that children in disadvantaged groups have higher rates of poverty and lower access to basic services, such as healthcare and education. For example, children with disabilities face extremely high poverty rates and challenges accessing services, while analysing poverty with a gender lens shows that women and girls are often disproportionately affected.

The framework also identifies four key 'macro' trends that are having, and will continue to have, profound impacts on children and families and to which social protection must be designed to respond:

- **Climate breakdown:** Climate breakdown is changing the world for children in unprecedented ways, resulting in both immediate effects and long-term implications for

Figure 1 Number of children and adults in extreme poverty



Source: GMD, UNDESA, WDI, PovcalNet
Note: *Reflecting the sample of 89 countries

which future generations will pay the heaviest price. Poorer households often also have less resources and capacity to cope with climate-induced shocks.

- **Demographic shifts:** The world population is increasing and is projected to reach 8.5 billion in 2050. Globally the number of adults and older people will increase more than the number of children, but there are stark regional differences, with Africa seeing by far the largest increase in the number of children by 2050.
- **Urbanization:** The urban population is expected to rise by an additional 1 billion people to 5 billion by 2030, when cities will contain 60 per cent of the world's population.⁶ While Asia is continuing to urbanize rapidly, Africa isn't far behind.
- **Conflict and forced displacement:** It is estimated that by 2030 nearly half of those living in extreme poverty will live in fragile and conflict-affected states with devastating impacts on children. Conflict is also a major driver forcing families to move, and there are now more children forcibly displaced by conflict and violence – an estimated 30 million – than at any other time since the Second World War.⁷

The role of social protection

Social protection is designed to address economic and social vulnerability and provide support to all that need it across the life course. It has long been established in higher-income countries as a foundation of social policy, and now a growing body of evidence shows the significant impacts social protection is having in addressing the multiple dimensions of child poverty and vulnerability in lower-income countries. Accordingly, while social protection has been explicitly recognized not only as a standalone target in SDG 1, it also acts as an accelerator in achieving results across sectors and SDGs (see Table 1) and provides a foundation to ensure no one is left behind.

While the evidence on social protection shows clear and positive sectoral outcomes, it also highlights that social protection programming alone cannot address the holistic needs of children and families, nor does it address information and knowledge gaps or the availability of quality services. This underlines that while social protection is a vital part of integrated programming for children, alone it is far from sufficient to fulfil child rights.

Table 1 – Impact of social protection on key sectoral outcomes

Poverty and productivity (SDG 1 and 8)	Social protection can address child monetary poverty directly, and where not sufficient to move children and families above the poverty line it can increase household expenditure. Social protection also increases household productivity and has positive multiplier effects on local economies. Aspects of social transfer design are crucial, including programme coverage, transfer size and frequency.
Nutrition (SDG 2)	Social protection programmes, including cash transfers, show significant impacts on food security, but alone do not always impact nutritional outcomes for children. In countries with high rates of undernutrition, integrated social protection interventions ('cash plus' programmes) are beginning to demonstrate impacts.
Health (SDG 3)	Social protection has a significant impact both on the usage of health services and in mitigating the financial impacts of a health crisis in a household. The evidence generally shows that transfers do not need to be conditional to benefit child health.
Education (SDG 4)	Social and economic barriers are a significant impediment to children's education. Social protection, including cash transfers, has a significant impact on enrolment and attendance, including strong results for girls. Evidence on impacts on educational outcomes is more limited.
Gender equality (SDG 5)	Social protection has significant potential to contribute to tackling gender inequality. For example, it can help to reduce physical abuse and increase women's decision-making power. However, social protection is not automatically supportive of gender equality and can even reinforce harmful gender norms and practices if not designed and implemented in a gender-sensitive way.
Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) (SDG 6)	WASH has generally received limited focus in social protection programmes and impact evaluations, and relatively little is known about how addressing economic and social vulnerabilities would affect key WASH indicators. Including relevant indicators in cash transfer evaluations could clarify the role of changing family income and WASH outcomes.
Child Protection (SDG 16)	The work of social protection to strengthen families economically and socially may have direct impacts on child protection results. The role of social service workers and family outreach is a crucial connection between social protection and child protection.
HIV/AIDS (Cross-cutting)	HIV-sensitive social protection measures, particularly cash transfer programmes, have a positive impact on mitigating the risky behaviours associated with HIV, and in supporting the treatment and income of households with HIV-positive members. 'Cash plus' approaches (a combination of cash and linkages to existing services) may be more effective to address HIV outcomes than cash alone.

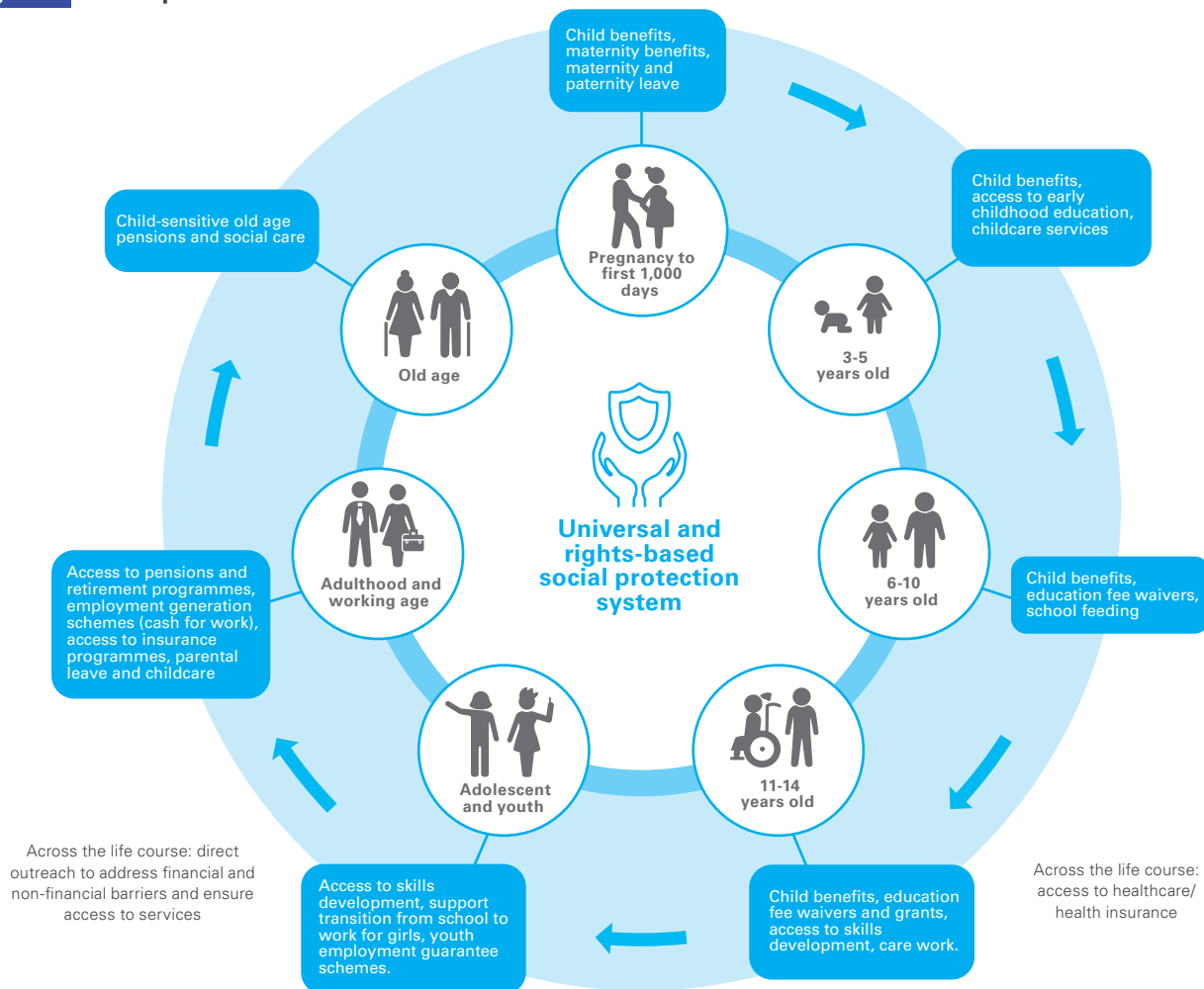
Gaps in social protection coverage for children and families

Despite the proven impacts of social protection programmes, coverage of children and families remains extremely low. Globally, 2 out of 3 children currently have no access to child or family benefits, and coverage is lowest where child poverty is highest. Looking at social protection more broadly, mapping suggests that 108 countries (out of 136 countries surveyed) either had an active social protection policy or strategy document in place or were in the process of planning such a document. Despite this, determining the child-sensitivity of these structures is extremely challenging. A qualitative assessment of UNICEF colleagues suggests children have received some consideration

in systems development, but in only a very small minority were they assessed as 'highly considered'.

Insufficient financing is a major barrier to comprehensive child-sensitive social protection systems. On average, countries spend only 1.1 per cent of GDP on social protection for children, although the amounts vary greatly across countries and regions: while Europe and Central Asia, as well as Oceania, spend more than 2 per cent of GDP on child benefits, regional estimates for Africa, the Arab States and Southern and South-East Asia show expenditure levels of less than 0.7 per cent of GDP.

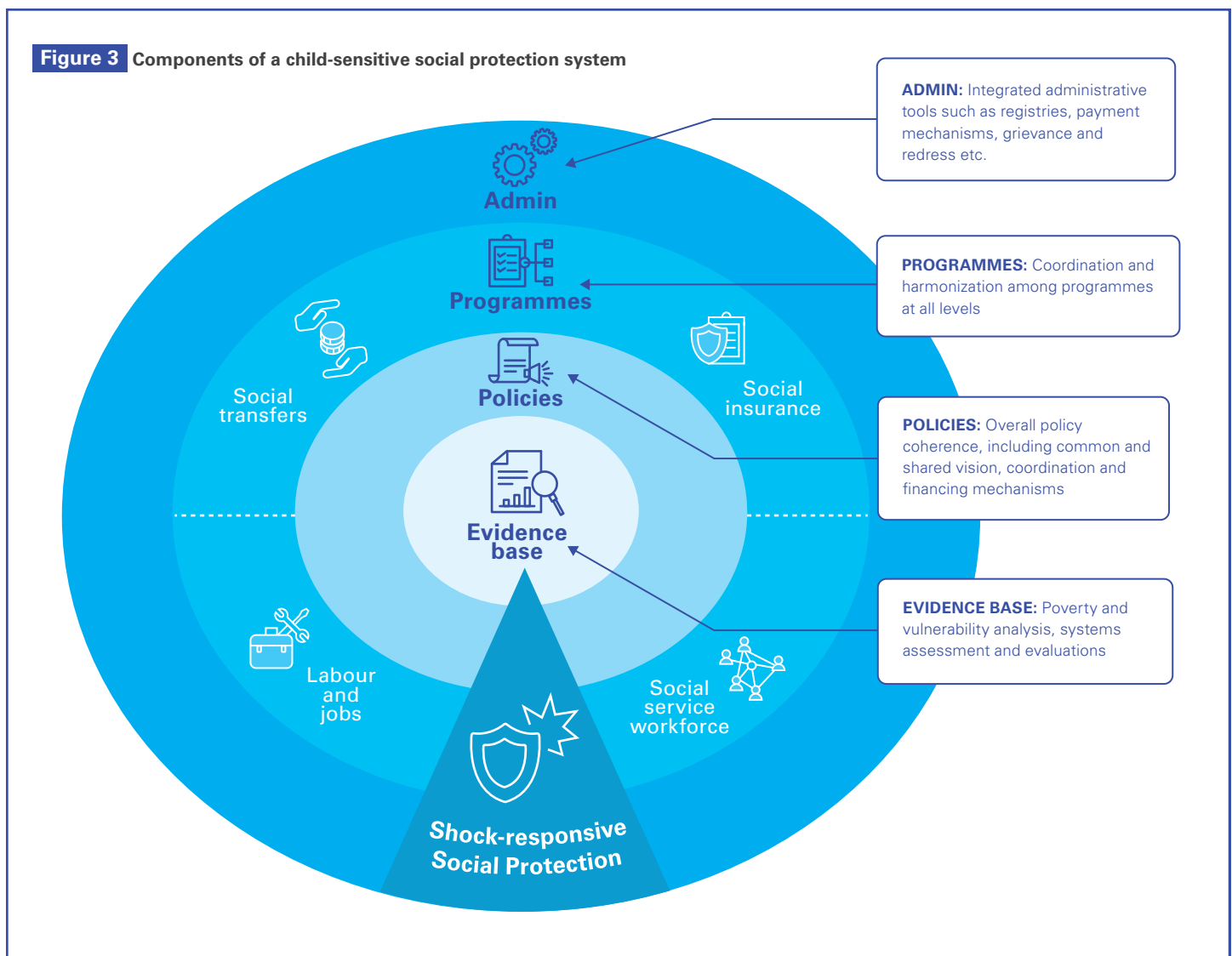
Figure 2 Social protection across the life course



The key elements of integrated social protection systems: protection across the life course

Social protection must provide support across the life course; an effective and comprehensive system will thus include different types programmes to address the varied needs of different population groups (see Figure 2). From the perspective of child-sensitive social protection, such a life-course approach is essential for children to be reached directly and to recognize their connections with adults at different stages of their lives (see also Box 2).

Building a comprehensive approach to social protection across the life course requires integrated systems. Social protection systems can be broken down into three constituent levels: policy, programme and administrative.⁸ UNICEF follows this approach, but adds one additional component that our experience suggests is essential: to be effective, child-sensitive social protection systems must be built on **a foundation of evidence** which highlights the situation of children, the impact of current social protection programming, and identifies remaining gaps (see Figure 3):



As outlined Figure 3, the four components of a child-sensitive social protection system include:

1. **A foundation of evidence.** A robust evidence base is a necessary foundation for all elements of a social protection system, including having a clear understanding of child poverty and vulnerability as well as of the effectiveness of existing social protection programmes and remaining gaps in programme areas and coverage.
2. **Policy, coordination and financing of social protection systems.** The policy level is the highest level of engagement, where a common vision is established, and the objectives and functions of the social protection system are defined in the context of national goals and parameters.⁹This includes social protection laws, policies, and strategic frameworks; national-level coordination mechanisms between ministries that oversee social protection; and appropriate financing for integrated social protection systems to function effectively.
3. **Programme areas of child-sensitive social protection systems.** The programme level is the operational heart of a social protection system. There are different ways to look at social protection systems including dividing programmes into contributory and non-contributory programmes. For clarity on the programmes that makes up a child-sensitive social protection system, this framework divides social protection programmes into four key areas:
 - **Social transfers** – This can include cash transfers and tax credits but also include in-kind transfers such as school feeding subsidies or fee waivers. Social transfers not targeted directly at children (such as social pensions or maternity or unemployment benefits) can also be crucial in temporarily replacing lost income. Of all social protection programmes, transfers are often the most important in responding to crises.
 - **Social insurance** – Social insurance refers to mechanisms that pool economic risks across the life-course and can prevent children and families from falling into poverty when shocks or unexpected life events occur. Common mechanisms of importance to children and families include health insurance and unemployment insurance.
 - **Labour and jobs** – This includes programmes and services that support employment and livelihoods and enable families to have sufficient income while ensuring provision and time for quality childcare. These may be broader labour market programmes, or more focused on children and families, including childcare services and family-friendly workplaces to facilitate employment, particularly of women.
 - **Social service workforce** – The social service workforce provides direct outreach, case management and referral services to children and families. While not always explicitly included in social protection frameworks, UNICEF considers this social care function as integral to effective child-sensitive social protection. They allow the range of needs of families to be understood and connect families to relevant services, including those such as violence prevention that may fall out of the social protection sphere.
4. **Administration and integrated service delivery.** The administrative level focuses on the core tools that facilitate the business processes of social protection programmes, and these components are often vital entry points for enhancing integration of social protection systems. Administrative components include integrated beneficiary and social registries; management information systems (MIS); delivery, grievance and redress mechanisms; human resources; and sub-national coordination mechanisms.

Shock-responsive social protection (cutting across all levels of the social protection system)

Social protection systems should be able to support children and families exposed to protracted, slow and sudden onset humanitarian crises, as well as economic crises. In order to become shock responsive and ready to respond in the event of a crisis, national social protection systems often require some adaptation in the areas of evidence, policy, programme and administration.



Box 2: What a child-sensitive social protection system should offer every child

Understanding what a social protection system should offer every child can help bring focus to what we are trying to achieve. The goal of child-sensitive social protection is for every child to:

1. **Live in a household with sufficient income to develop and fulfil their potential.** Sufficient household income can not only impact children access to services, but can increase children's sense of dignity and inclusion. Social protection response ranges from employment programmes to social transfers.
2. **Have access to quality basic social services regardless of income or personal characteristics.** Social protection programmes can include those that address financial accessibility such as fee abolition or waivers as well as programmes that support access to services of marginalized and excluded children.
3. **When needed, have direct contact with an outreach worker who can support families and empower them to access key services and information.** Direct outreach can be essential to understanding the vulnerabilities facing children as well as providing referral to enable access to appropriate services.

For full box, please see Box 11 on page 40.

UNICEF's 10 key action areas in supporting national child-sensitive social protection systems

UNICEF has a long and growing history of working on social protection with governments and partners, and currently works on strengthening national social protection systems in over 100 countries. Drawing from this experience, this programme framework identifies 10 action areas where we work in partnerships to contribute to integrated social protection systems.

As in all sectors, UNICEF country offices work with national governments to determine the areas of focus that would most benefit children and contribute to agreed results. Accordingly, different offices will work on different action areas, or indeed there may be situations where a focus outside these areas makes sense. Further, UNICEF's work on social protection has grown dramatically in the past 15 years, and the maturity of our work ranges from areas of deep experience within and across countries (such as child poverty analysis, building evidence and expanding and improving cash transfers), to areas that are relatively new but growing fast (such as shock-responsive social protection), to others that despite their importance remain relatively nascent (such as health insurance). Our 10 key action areas are presented in more detail in Table 2.

A vision of universal coverage, and a plan on the steps to get there

UNICEF, along with other members of the Universal Social Protection 2030 partnership, is committed to social protection coverage for all. While gaps in coverage are significant in many parts of the world, progress in many countries shows that incredible change is possible. These 10 action areas represent UNICEF's commitment to work with governments and international and national partners to increase the scale and scope of child-sensitive social protection systems towards achieving universality. They are integrated in our Strategic Plan as well as our monitoring, reporting and financial indicators.

While the vision is large, the practical experience of how to get there is significant. Each area is backed by extensive knowledge about how to make progress from a range of partners. UNICEF's key activities by action area are outlined in Table 2, and the Companion Guidance to this framework provides detailed activities, tools and resources for each action area drawing from UNICEF and our partners. Rapid progress towards universal coverage is within our grasp and has the potential to have a transformative impact on children's lives and the societies in which they live for generations to come.

Table 2 UNICEF's 10 key action areas

UNICEF's 10 key action areas in supporting social protection systems and their child-sensitivity



A FOUNDATION OF EVIDENCE

Action Area 1:

Child poverty analysis, impact evaluations and systems assessments

- **Child poverty measurement and analysis:** Routine national measurement analysis of child poverty and implications for social protection.
- **Impact evaluations:** Assess programme impacts using evaluation designs including randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and quasi-experimental designs to inform national programmes.
- **Social protection systems assessments:** Generate evidence on the strengths and weaknesses of how the social protection system works for children, including identifying gaps and options.



POLICY, LEGISLATION AND FINANCING FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS

Action Area 2:

Policy and strategy development, coordination and financing

- **Strategies and policy frameworks:** Supporting national dialogue on social protection laws/policies, supporting the drafting and development of social protection strategies.
- **Coordination:** Assessing and supporting development of national capacities and coordination mechanisms. Support strengthening of lead ministries, and coordination development partner coordination.
- **Domestic financing:** Sector expenditure reviews, costings of programmes, fiscal space analysis and working with governments to increase resource allocation for social protection.



PROGRAMME AREAS OF CHILD-SENSITIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS

Social transfers

Action Area 3:

Expanding and improving cash transfers for children

- **Building political support:** Advocacy and stakeholder engagement to build understanding, support and financing for cash transfer programmes.
- **Supporting programme design:** Including targeting, addressing exclusion, transfer size, frequency and links to other programmes.
- **Implementation:** Beneficiary identification, communication, payments systems, linkages to other services, programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and management information systems (MIS).

Action Area 4:

Connecting cash transfers to information, knowledge and services

- **Providing recipients with information, knowledge and connections to services:** Understanding the non-financial needs of beneficiaries, connecting cash transfer programmes to information, knowledge and relevant services, and building the evidence base on best practices.

Social insurance

Action Area 5:

Expanding and improving health insurance

- **Increasing coverage to poor and marginalized populations:** Advocacy for health insurance expansion, linking cash transfer beneficiaries with health insurance, and improving identification of poorest for non-contributory health insurance.
- **Defining health services included in health insurance:** Analysis of gaps in health coverage and defining minimum package of health services for child and maternal health to be included under universal health coverage.

<i>Labour and jobs</i>	
<p>Action Area 6: Supporting childcare and adolescent employability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare: Development of policy and normative frameworks, increasing convenience, affordability and quality of childcare and supporting family-friendly workplaces. • Adolescent learning and skills: Support systems-based approaches to adolescent learning and skills for employability, improving quality and relevance of programmes and flexible approaches to education.
<i>Social service workforce</i>	
<p>Action Area 7: Strengthening the social welfare workforce and direct outreach to families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and strengthening the social welfare workforce: Including clarifying roles and responsibilities, and expanding the workforce and training. • Family outreach and case management: Integrate family outreach and support into social protection programmes including case management approaches.



ADMINISTRATION AND INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY

<p>Action Area 8: Strengthening integrated administrative systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving integrated management information systems (MIS): Needs assessments, developing MIS, building technical capacity and developing grievance and redress mechanisms. • Improving coordination and service delivery at sub-national level: Improving overall capacity of sub-national social protection system to plan, coordinate and implement social protection programmes in an integrated way.
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SOCIAL PROTECTION IN HUMANITARIAN, FRAGILE AND RISK-PRONE CONTEXTS

<p>Action Area 9: Strengthening national shock-responsive social protection systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence and analysis: Inclusion of an analysis of risks and shocks in child poverty analysis, impact evaluations/ M&E/learning, social protection costing exercises and system assessments. • Policy, strategy, legislation, coordination and financing: Reviewing and adapting relevant policies for scale up; making budgetary provisions; contingency planning; and strengthening horizontal and vertical coordination between social protection, emergency response and other relevant local authorities. • Programmes and design features: Reviewing and adjusting the mix of programmes and their design features, such as eligibility criteria and transfer values, to enhance coverage and provide adequate levels of assistance in times of crisis; inter-linkages and complementary services. • Administration and delivery systems: Adjusting the administrative and delivery systems of routine social protection programmes so they can be leveraged fully, partially or in combination to respond to the needs of children and families affected by crisis.
<p>Action Area 10: Linking humanitarian cash transfers to social protection systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing humanitarian cash transfers to achieve sectoral outcomes: Context analysis including children's needs, transfer design and coordinating with stakeholders. • Determining the role of national systems in implementation of a humanitarian cash transfer programme: Ascertain the compatibility of the national system, assessing capacity and choosing the most appropriate delivery option. • Using the national social protection system to implement a humanitarian cash transfer: Delivery of humanitarian cash transfers through national or mixed (national/parallel systems). Building linkages with national approaches when using parallel systems.

The conceptual foundations of UNICEF's approach to social protection





Chapter overview

- UNICEF has a rights-based approach to social protection and promotes universal social protection for all. In working towards progressive realization of universal coverage, we prioritize the poorest and most vulnerable children.
- A key objective of UNICEF's approach is to address child poverty and vulnerability by breaking the cycle of disadvantage across generations and ultimately transforming the lives of children and families.
- The protection of families and children against a lack or loss of income as a result of shocks and removing financial barriers to access services is at the heart of child-sensitive social protection.
- Child-sensitive social protection must include a strong focus on social vulnerabilities – due to gender, disability, race and other social characteristics – with particular emphasis on children who are both socially and economically vulnerable.
- Social protection for children must fully consider the environments in which they live. This means that child-sensitive social protection does not always equate to child-targeted social protection.
- The most vulnerable children may not live in families and require particular attention in social protection and child protection approaches.

In 2012, UNICEF produced its *Social Protection Strategic Framework*,¹⁰ which outlined the conceptual underpinning of UNICEF's approach to social protection, identified key principles guiding its work and discussed key policy issues. Since then, social protection has expanded rapidly in low- and middle-income countries, highlighting new opportunities and challenges in realizing universal social protection. UNICEF's work has grown as well, covering far more countries and facets of social protection, and a growing number of UN agencies, international financial institutions (IFIs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become active in the field. Against this backdrop, new threats for children are emerging and accelerating – from climate change to humanitarian crises – which social protection can help to mitigate.

This updated framework refines UNICEF's approach to social protection to reflect this changing landscape and highlights key action areas of our work along with emerging good practice and innovation in the field. While our work and approach have changed over time, our conceptual approach to

social protection remains consistent: a rights-based approach that promotes universal coverage for all and prioritizes the poorest and most vulnerable children.

A rights-based approach to social protection¹¹

UNICEF's mandate is rooted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which guides our rights-based approach to social protection. In the CRC, social protection is most explicitly recognized in Article 26, 'States Parties shall recognize for every child the right to benefit from social security', and Article 27, 'States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development'. Beyond this, the CRC more broadly provides the foundation for UNICEF's key principles in our approach to social protection (see Box 3).

While the CRC focuses directly on children's right to social protection, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

provides more prominent protection of the right to social protection and is complemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) recommendation 202.¹² Thanks to these efforts, there is now an enhanced understanding of the scope and content of the right to social protection:

- **Universality:** All persons should enjoy the right to social protection (through contributory and non-contributory schemes), in particular individuals belonging to the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups.¹³
- **Equality and non-discrimination:** International human rights treaties as well as most national legal frameworks oblige all branches of the State to ensure equality and to take measures for levelling the playing field for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, ensuring that rights apply without discrimination of any kind (e.g. Article 2 of the CRC).
- **Progressive realization:** State parties are obliged to progressively ensure the right to social protection for all individuals within their territories using the maximum of available resources (including resources that could reasonably develop).¹⁴
- **Minimum essential level of benefits:** In line with progressive realization, States have an obligation to provide minimum benefits for all individuals that enable them to acquire at least essential healthcare, basic shelter and housing, water and sanitation, foodstuffs and the most basic forms of education.¹⁵
- **Prohibition of deliberate retrogressive measures:** There is a strong presumption that any measure implying a step back in the protection levels accorded to economic, social and cultural rights are incompatible with the obligations imposed by ICESCR.¹⁶

When looking at child-sensitive social protection specifically, a number of additional obligations emerge from the conventions:

- **The best interests of the child:** Children must be the primary concern in decisions that may affect them. This particularly applies to budget, policy and laws (Article 3 of the CRC).
- **Indivisibility, equal importance, and independence:** Rights are equally important, indivisible and independent and accordingly other rights should be respected in ensuring the right to social protection, and that to ensure the right to social protection, fulfilment of the others must also be ensured.
- **Participation:** Children are entitled to have a say in matters affecting their social, economic, religious, cultural and political life (Article 12 of the CRC). Thus, State parties must involve children, when they wish, in designing, implementing and evaluating the social protection policies and programmes that affect them.
- **Age requirement:** Under the CRC, a child is defined as being under the age of 18, and accordingly all children under 18 shall enjoy the right to social protection even if living in a country in which a child attains the status of adulthood below the age of 18.¹⁷
- **Legal status:** Under human rights treaties, rights are granted to 'all', and not only to nationals of the State parties. This means that States party to international treaties must ensure equal treatment in the enjoyment of all rights, including the right to social protection, both to nationals and non-national children, including refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, regardless of their legal status and the documentation they possess.¹⁸



Box 3: Four key principles that guide UNICEF's approach to social protection

The best interests of the child – UNICEF supports a rights-based approach to social protection rooted in the CRC, and all our work in social protection is informed by one of its core principles: devotion to the best interests of the child. This primary consideration underlies UNICEF's flexible approach to working with partners on social protection driven by the particular needs of children in different contexts, and integrated programming both within social protection and across sectors.

Progressive realization of universal coverage – UNICEF supports the progressive realization of universal coverage. This involves helping countries to identify and expand programmes, policies and financing options most conducive to achieving universality, while also recognizing countries' different capacities, contexts and challenges. Crucially, it also means the right to social protection for children everywhere, including the fragile and humanitarian contexts where children's needs are often greatest.

National systems and leadership – UNICEF supports nationally-owned and led systems, including the development of national financing strategies necessary for sustainable national systems. Only in exceptional cases where government capacity to implement or coordinate is weak, including in some humanitarian contexts, would UNICEF consider supporting implementation of temporary social protection programmes outside of government collaboration. This does not preclude UNICEF from supporting others – civil society, children, etc. – in their initiatives to influence, participate, and engage with social protection policy and programmes.

Inclusive social protection – Social vulnerabilities marked by characteristics and identities such as gender, ethnicity, HIV status, geographic location and disability status fundamentally shape an individual's exposure to risk as well as access to essential social services and secure livelihoods. Inclusive social protection is responsive and sensitive to the needs of all children by using specific social protection instruments that explicitly promote social inclusion and equity, and ensure that programme design and implementation is sensitive to the added vulnerabilities that stem from social exclusion.

Addressing economic and social vulnerabilities of children and families

UNICEF's approach to social protection is to support governments in addressing the economic and social vulnerability of children and families. UNICEF fundamentally believes in social protection as a right grounded in international treaties and conventions, and works with partners to achieve universal social protection along the life course (see Box 5 for more on achieving universal social protection (USP) by 2030). However, we also recognize the challenges in rapidly achieving universal social protection in many different contexts. Accordingly, our approach is one of progressive realization, starting with the poorest and most vulnerable.

Economic vulnerability is a key driver of poverty. A chronic lack of income or temporary loss of income due to shocks such as illness, unemployment or crop failure underpins monetary poverty and is strongly associated with multidimensional poverty. A child living in a monetarily-poor household is more

likely to be out of school, lack access to health services and adequate nutrition. Accordingly, and in line with the CRC, **the protection of families and children against lack or loss of income as a result of shocks and removing financial barriers to access to services is at the heart of social protection.**¹⁹

However, economic vulnerability does not stand on its own in undermining children's ability to reach their full potential. It interacts with *social vulnerability*, including intertwining vulnerabilities due to personal characteristics such as age and health status (e.g. disability and chronic illness), and vulnerabilities due to social dynamics (e.g. social discrimination and exclusion due to gender, race, religion, disability, political affiliation, social norms, geographic location and cultural practices). These vulnerabilities may intersect: for example, people living with disabilities experience vulnerability due to both physiological constraints and a lack of visibility and voice within society. As outlined in Chapter 2, children living in socially-excluded and marginalized households are less likely to attend schools and lack

nutrition and access to health services than those who aren't socially excluded.

UNICEF believes that removing financial barriers and addressing social inequalities need to go hand-in-hand to ensure that social protection is truly child-sensitive.²⁰ Economic vulnerability is all too often intertwined with social vulnerabilities. Families living in poverty that are also socially excluded face the greatest disadvantages and require special attention.

As such, **child-sensitive social protection must include a strong focus on social vulnerabilities and seek to address the additional risks faced by children who are socially and economically vulnerable at the same time.**

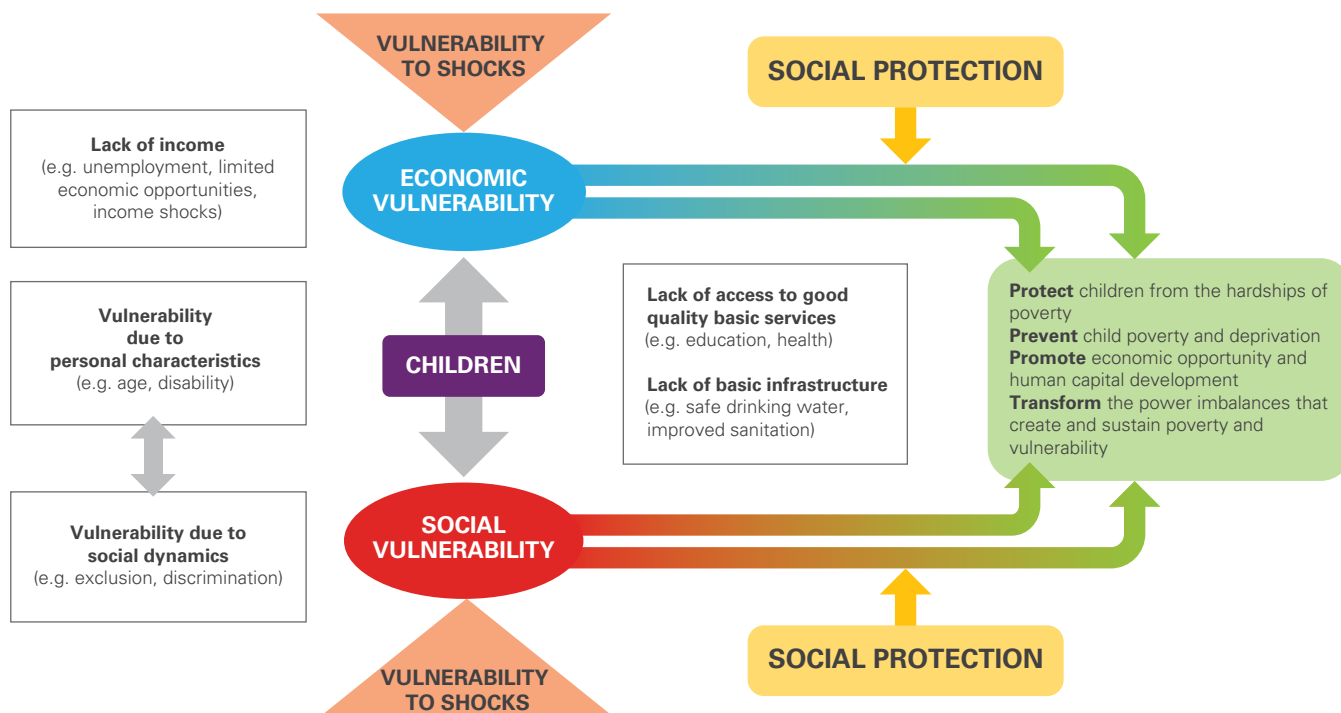
This framing of child-sensitive social protection is in line with the inter-agency definition of social protection that UNICEF helped to develop and supports:

'a set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing or protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion throughout their life-course, with a particular emphasis towards vulnerable groups'²¹

Figure 4 illustrates how social protection can address economic and social vulnerabilities (which may be exacerbated by shocks such as drought, flood and conflict), address both child monetary and multidimensional poverty, and have broader transformative impacts. It does so by following Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler's framework,²² which sets out four overarching objectives of social protection and frames them in relation to child-sensitive social protection:

- Protect** the poorest children and families against the hardship of poverty and deprivation;
- Prevent** poverty and deprivation for children and families that are vulnerable and at risk of falling into poverty;
- Promote** economic opportunities and human capital development to support families to progress economically in support of children's development;
- Transform** the power imbalances in society that create and sustain poverty and vulnerability for children and families.

Figure 4 Economic and social vulnerabilities to poverty and the role of social protection



The provision of both responsive and proactive responses to economic vulnerabilities constitute the protective, preventative and promotive components of child-sensitive social protection. An explicit focus on social vulnerabilities through principles such as acting in the best interest of the child and striving for inclusive social protection – underpinned by a rights-based approach – align child-sensitive

social protection with the more ambitious goal of transformation. This represents a continuation of the approach to social protection laid out in UNICEF's 2012 *Social Protection Strategic Framework*.



Box 4: Children living outside of households

While much of UNICEF's work on social protection is designed to address economic and social vulnerability of households, children living outside of family care are amongst the most vulnerable. These include children living in alternative care arrangements as well as children in detention, children living on the street, and domestic child workers. Although global estimates on children living outside of households are hard to establish, UNICEF estimates that at least 2.7 million children are in residential care worldwide, reiterating that the actual number is likely to be higher (Petrowski, Cappa and Gross, 2017).

A range of targeted child protection and social protection approaches are needed to reach these children. For example, the 2009 Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children call for an end to institutionalization and recommend prioritizing investments in child welfare and protection services that support families and communities to prevent family separation. This requires a systemic transformation of the childcare, welfare and protection system, including the establishment of a range of individualized support services, individualized plans for transition with budgets and time frames, as well as inclusive, community-based support services, and a coordinated, cross-government approach.

In 2018, UNICEF supported 106 countries to address institutionalization and promote family-based alternative care. The number of countries reporting availability of services to prevent unnecessary family separation has seen a moderate but steady increase, rising from 54 countries and territories in 2017 to 58 in 2018. Notable improvements include in Haiti, where 839 vulnerable families whose children were at risk of separation received assistance through cash transfers, income-generating activities, parental education and psychosocial support. In North Macedonia, UNICEF supported reforms to strengthen the design and quality of the country's foster care system for children with disabilities, preventive measures for early intervention, family support, and legal aid and assistance to families. In Viet Nam, UNICEF provided support to improve national legislation and develop innovative alternative care services for children without parental care and children with disabilities. Countries as diverse as Argentina, Bhutan, Georgia, India, Indonesia and Malawi are among 46 countries and territories that report having monitoring and inspection mechanisms in place for alternative care providers as part of efforts to strengthen quality of care. Notable advancements were also made in India where, as a result of social audits of childcare institutions in the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka, all districts are now developing indicators to monitor the quality and standard of care in childcare institutions. For more information on connecting child protection and social protection services, see Chapter 4 ([Action Area 7](#): Strengthening the social welfare workforce and direct outreach to families) and the Companion Guidance to this framework.

Sources: Petrowski, Nicole, Claudia Cappa and Peter Gross, 'Estimating the number of children in formal alternative care: Challenges and results', *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Volume 70, August 2017, pp. 388-398; Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, 'Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children', A/RES/64/142, 24 February 2010.

Implications of UNICEF's approach to social protection

This approach has important implications for how UNICEF works with governments and other partners in the design and implementation of social protection systems. In particular, UNICEF aims to support: (i) integrated social protection systems that provide support across the life course and address the range of social and economic vulnerabilities of children and families, connecting programmes and services across sectors; (ii) programmes that address economic vulnerability; (iii) social welfare services that can respond to the range of vulnerabilities children and families face, providing direct support as well as connections to relevant services; and (iv) measures to address structural vulnerability and exclusion, including through legislative or policy frameworks empowering and linking marginalized and excluded groups to access basic social services.

UNICEF's approach to social protection takes into account the different family and care arrangements in which children live. Since the majority of children live in families, **child-sensitive social protection does not always equate to child-targeted social protection**, as measures targeted at parents, grandparents, workers or those without employment are often equally beneficial to children in those households. As the bulk of global social protection spending goes towards such programmes, making them child-sensitive is essential. While noting this, however, it must never be forgotten that the most vulnerable children often live outside of family structures, and their range of needs requires a combination of carefully-tailored social and child protection responses (see Box 4 for more on children living outside of households).

The scope of social protection can sometimes be unclear and can vary across institutions, raising questions both about what constitutes social protection and how to work effectively across government and non-government partners. UNICEF takes a fundamentally pragmatic approach to the role that social protection can play in realizing children's rights, and supports the provision of coordinated and comprehensive responses. Many social protection programmes reach the poorest and most vulnerable children and create vital opportunities to connect children to a range of services. **UNICEF's approach to social protection is pragmatically focused on linkages and appropriate integrated programming in the best interest of the child.**

The following chapters build on this conceptual framework and its implications for our work. The next chapter looks at the positive impacts social protection can have on children's lives. Chapter 3 then outlines how UNICEF sees the overall scope of child-sensitive social protection systems, which we hope will provide clarity in our work with partners and governments. Following on from that, Chapter 4 then outlines UNICEF's key action areas of work with partners that contribute to the development of nationally-led child-sensitive social protection systems.



Box 5: Universal Social Protection 2030: A global partnership

As outlined in Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), access to social protection is a fundamental right, protecting people from economic and social vulnerability across their life course. Towards realizing this right, a range of global and national partners have come together to achieve Universal Social Protection (USP) by 2030. Launched initially by ILO and the World Bank, [USP2030](#) now has 30 international and regional governmental and non-governmental organizations and national governments as members.

The vision of USP2030 is 'A world where anyone who needs social protection can access it at any time'. Universal social protection refers to a nationally-defined system of policies and programmes that provide equitable access to all people and protect them throughout their lives against poverty and risks to their livelihoods and well-being. This protection can be provided through a range of mechanisms, including cash or in-kind benefits, contributory or non-contributory schemes, and programmes to enhance human capital, productive assets, and access to jobs. This includes adequate cash transfers for all who need it, especially children; benefits/support for people of working age in case of maternity, disability, work injury or for those without jobs; and pensions for all older persons.

USP 2030's call to action includes five action areas:

Action 1. Protection throughout the life course: Establish universal social protection systems, including floors, that provide adequate protection throughout the life course, combining social insurance, social assistance and other means, anchored in national strategies and legislation;

Action 2. Universal coverage: Provide universal access to social protection and ensure that social protection systems are rights-based, gender-sensitive and inclusive, leaving no one behind;

Action 3. National ownership: Develop social protection strategies and policies based on national priorities and circumstances in close cooperation with all relevant actors;

Action 4. Sustainable and equitable financing: Ensure the sustainability and fairness of social protection systems by prioritizing reliable and equitable forms of domestic financing, complemented by international cooperation and support where necessary;

Action 5. Participation and social dialogue: Strengthen governance of social protection systems through institutional leadership, multi-sector coordination and the participation of social partners and other relevant and representative organizations, to generate broad-based support and promote the effectiveness of services.

USP2030 and UNICEF's approach to universal child benefits

No child's potential should go unfulfilled due to the lack of a small amount of financial resources in the household. Yet despite the proven benefits of cash transfers for children, currently only around 35 per cent of children live in households that receive any form of family benefit. As part of UNICEF's commitment to universality and USP2030, we are exploring the pathways and possibilities of universal child benefits (UCBs) as an early foundation in establishing universal social protection systems, and as a step change in promoting child outcomes and achieving the SDGs. An [ILO-UNICEF report](#) showed that 21 countries have universal child benefits rooted in national legislation, with a further 12 countries having schemes that could be considered quasi-UCBs. UNICEF and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) are investigating some of the key considerations around universal child benefit including the potential in addressing exclusion errors to tackle child poverty and vulnerability; rights considerations; addressing stigma and promoting dignity of recipients; as well as the practicalities of affordability and exploring how universal benefits form part of a broader and appropriate social policy mix for children.

Sources: ILO, www.usp2030.org; ILO and UNICEF, Towards universal social protection for children: Achieving SDG 1.3, UNICEF and ILO, New York and Geneva, 2019; ODI and UNICEF, Universal Child Benefits: Potential and Challenges, London and New York, forthcoming in 2019.

Chapter 2

Child poverty and vulnerability and the impacts of social protection





Chapter overview

- Children are significantly overrepresented among those living in poverty and face additional vulnerabilities compared to adults. This translates into potential lifelong adverse implications for children and their futures, as well as societies and economies more broadly.
- Social protection systems must increasingly respond to key emerging trends that have significant implications for the situation of children, including climate breakdown, demographic changes, urbanization, and conflict and forced displacement.
- A growing body of evidence demonstrates the significance of social protection in addressing the dimensions of child poverty with impacts across sectors and SDGs.
- While the majority of this evidence currently comes from evaluations of cash transfers, these are only one aspect of comprehensive social protection systems that address child poverty and vulnerability.
- While social protection systems are vital, alone they are not sufficient. They require a foundation of quality services, which can be integrated with social protection systems where appropriate.

Social protection plays a crucial role in addressing economic and social vulnerability across the life course, including when unexpected shocks hit, by supporting distribution within groups as well as across generations. In this way, social protection can be a foundation of the social contract and plays an important role in building social cohesion. To support these goals, an urgent priority of UNICEF's work on social protection is reaching the poorest and most vulnerable children. For the majority of children that live within households and families, this requires comprehensive social protection systems which may need to be complemented by more child-targeted programmes.

This chapter discusses some of the foundational challenges of child poverty and vulnerability to which social protection must respond. It begins by reviewing the latest evidence on poverty and vulnerability and outlines key global trends affecting children and their implications for social protection. It ends with a review that underlines that by addressing child poverty and vulnerability, social protection can have a profound effect on children's lives, tackling multidimensional poverty with significant benefits for societies and economies, but to be effective social protection must be part of an overall approach towards social policy for children, founded on quality social services.

The state of child poverty and vulnerability

For children, living in monetary poverty or being close to it can mean facing insurmountable financial barriers to accessing crucial goods and services, and can be one of the factors driving multidimensional poverty and preventing children from fulfilling their potential.

In Goal 1 of the SDGs, Member States have committed to routinely reporting on child poverty, including ending extreme child poverty and halving child poverty by national definitions by 2030. While there has been progress in reducing poverty in recent decades, 385 million children, or 1 in 5 (19.7 per cent), are still struggling to survive on less than PPP\$1.90, meaning children are more than twice as likely to be living in extreme income poverty than adults (see Figure 5). Looking slightly above this extreme poverty line underlines the scale of the challenge: about 45 per cent of children – over 1 billion children – are living in households subsisting on less than \$3.10 a day compared to 27 per cent of adults.²³ The data also shows that child poverty is higher in the early years, linked in part to care responsibilities in the household often borne by mothers. Higher poverty rates for the youngest children are of particular concern as evidence

increasingly shows the importance of investing in early years for brain development and physical growth, particularly during first 1,000 days of a child's life.²⁴

These measures of poverty can obscure that child poverty is a truly global problem, as must be the social protection response. Data shows that 27 OECD countries that use relative poverty lines have child poverty rates above 10 per cent, with only two countries (Denmark and Finland) maintaining child poverty rates below 5 per cent.²⁵

While monetary poverty is a key driver in child outcomes, it doesn't capture children's true experience of poverty. The SDGs explicitly include multidimensional poverty, including for children, which can better capture these realities and is ultimately the challenge to which social protection must respond. Data on multidimensional child poverty has grown significantly since UNICEF's last social protection framework in 2012. The latest data shows that a total of 665 million children – around 2 in 5 – live in multidimensionally-poor households, and for all 105 lower and middle-income countries

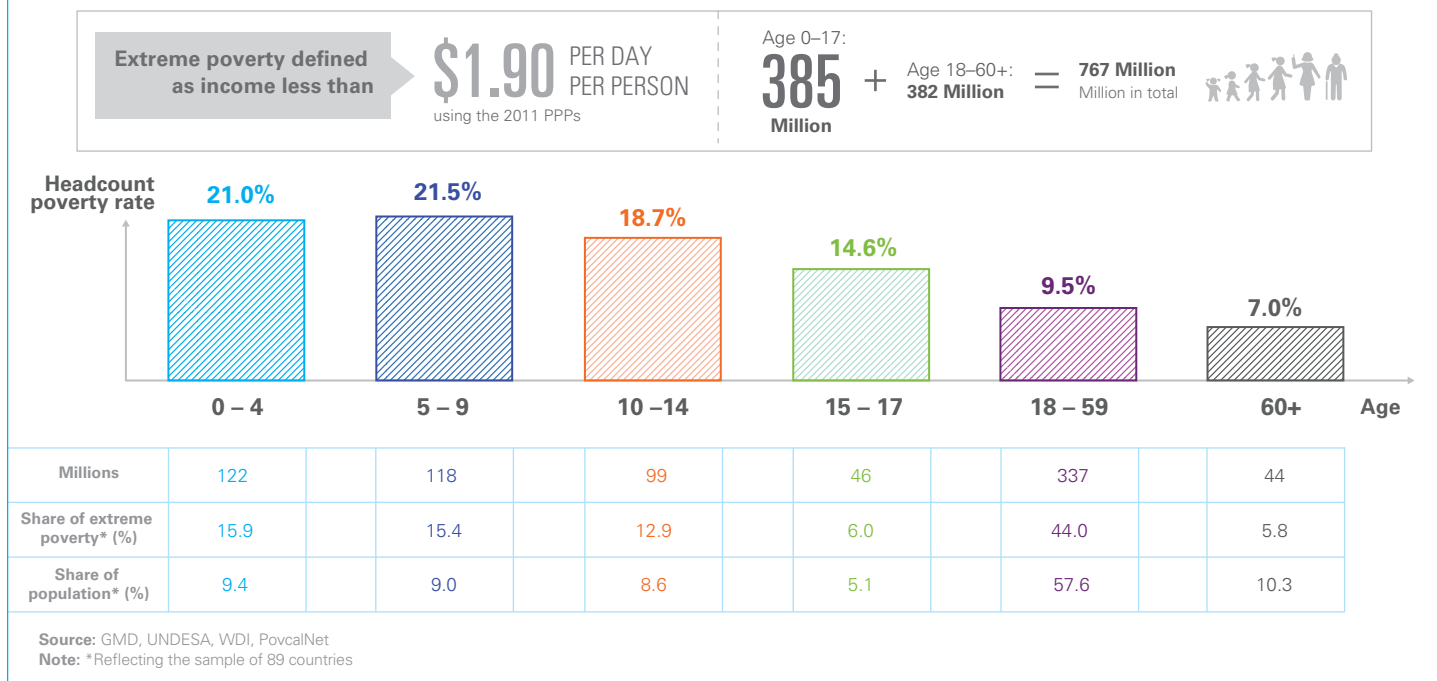
included in the analysis, multidimensional poverty rates are higher for children than for adults.²⁶ Assessments of poverty at individual level as opposed to household level are also growing. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, it is estimated that two thirds of children experience two or more deprivations of multidimensional poverty.²⁷

Children's economic and social vulnerability

Poverty measures, while important for social protection policy and programme design, are often static and can be blind to vulnerabilities children face both at an individual and societal level. At the core of the concept of vulnerability is the intention to protect individuals from the negative consequences of shocks – from illness to natural disasters – and thus expand the focus of intervention from those who are currently in poverty to all who are at risk of becoming poor or deprived in the future.²⁸

A key group of economically-vulnerable children are those that may not be captured under frugal national or international poverty lines. Using higher poverty lines (such as \$3.10 or \$5 line) may go some way to capturing economically-vulnerable children, but it

Figure 5 Number of children and adults in extreme poverty



is also important to recognize that for children and families living above the poverty line, the risks of falling into poverty remain. For example, in some middle-income countries, people living on \$6 a day face a 40 per cent probability of living in poverty in subsequent years.²⁹ In Africa, a third of the population is persistently poor, while another third moves in and out of poverty.³⁰

As outlined in Chapter 1, children and families can also face social vulnerabilities due to how personal characteristics ranging from age to gender to disability status interact with social dynamics and discrimination (see Box 6 for more information on social protection for children with disabilities). Analysing poverty with a gender lens generally shows that girls and women are disproportionately affected by poverty. These sex differences in poverty are largest during the reproductive years, the time when care and domestic responsibilities usually assigned to women, overlap and conflict with productive activities. This gendered aspect to poverty is most pronounced among the poorest countries and the poorest groups in societies. Social protection policy, programming and administrative design can have a significant and gender-differentiated impact on outcomes for girls, boys, women and men.³¹

Data on social vulnerabilities is often considered sensitive by governments and can be scarce. Available evidence, however, consistently shows that children of disadvantaged groups fare worse: for example, Roma children – one of Europe's largest and most disadvantaged minority groups – face significantly higher rates of poverty and lower access to basic services, from healthcare to education;³² and across income levels, indigenous households and children face glaring disparities in access to services and vulnerability to exploitation and poverty.³³

The implications of child poverty and vulnerability are felt most immediately by children themselves, but they have profound implications for nations as a whole as children become the next generation of adults that build societies and drive economies. According to the World Bank, for example, improving health and education sufficiently to lift countries from the 25th to the 75th percentile on the human capital index would bring an additional 1.4 per cent annual growth rate for 50 years.³⁴

The range of vulnerabilities that children face has profound implications for child-sensitive social protection. The breadth of children that may be economically and/or socially vulnerable and the technical challenges in identifying these vulnerabilities (such as exclusion errors in targeted programmes), universal approaches are needed to help ensure the children who most need social protection are reached. Further, to ensure that social protection systems fully consider social vulnerabilities, actions ranging from appropriate legislation to strengthening and integrating social service workforce outreach and case management are required to help understand and respond to the range of social and economic challenges children and families can face.



Box 6: Social protection for children with disabilities

Children with disabilities are one of the most marginalized and excluded groups in society. Estimates suggest that there are at least 93 million children with disabilities in the world, but data remains limited and numbers could be much higher. They are often among the poorest members of the population, and frequently face societal stigma, discrimination and exclusion. Furthermore, a lack of adequate policies and legislation limits their ability to access rights to healthcare, education, or have their voices heard in society. Their disabilities also place them at a higher risk of physical abuse, and often exclude them from receiving proper nutrition or humanitarian assistance in emergencies.

The importance of social protection for children with disabilities

Social protection has an essential role to play towards realizing UNICEF's vision of a world where every child reaches their full potential. Firstly, people with disabilities face greater exposure to risks and vulnerabilities. For children, this means significantly lower access to healthcare and education and greater exposure to violence. For parents or caregivers, people with disabilities – especially women – are much less likely to be in employment, resulting in higher rates of poverty and exclusion. Secondly, people with disabilities face additional barriers in accessing employment, education, healthcare and disability-related services both through a lack of disability-responsive service provision as well as stigma and discrimination. Essential assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, canes and braille readers, can help address exclusion and improve accessibility of public services. Effective and inclusive social protection is crucial in addressing these challenges, including addressing additional financial barriers faced by children and adults with disabilities.

Building inclusive social protection systems that foster inclusion and participation

To address the risks, inequalities and barriers faced by persons with disabilities, a comprehensive and inclusive social protection system should follow a 'twin track' approach: First, all social protection programmes should be designed, implemented and monitored in a way that ensures the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Secondly, disability-specific programmes should be developed to provide the support and benefits required by persons with disabilities that are not met through a mainstream programme.

All social protection programming should include the following considerations in line with the Joint Statement towards inclusive social protection systems supporting the full and effective participation of person with disabilities:

1. Non-discrimination and accessibility. While most social protection schemes do not purposefully exclude persons with disabilities, their design and delivery mechanisms may inadvertently prevent or limit their access to the relevant benefits, unless disability inclusion is considered in their design and implementation.
2. Respect for dignity and personal autonomy, choice and control over one's life and privacy. Social protection benefits, whether mainstream or disability-specific, should always be provided to persons with disabilities in a way that allows for their choice and control over benefits.
3. Full and effective participation and inclusion. Social protection programmes should always contribute to full and effective participation and inclusion. This calls for preventing the institutionalization of persons with disabilities. In the case of children with disabilities, support needs to be given to the family, and the separation of the child from the family must be prevented.
4. Consultation and involvement of persons with disabilities. Consultation with persons with disabilities is a right and necessary for quality programming. Particular attention should be paid to the participation of women with disabilities, caregivers and where possible children with disabilities themselves in non-disability specific programming.
5. Attitudes and awareness. Negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities and the lack of awareness of rights, laws, regulations and programmes can also create barriers to social protection. Programme staff should be fully versed in the rights of persons with disabilities and the provisions in their programmes guaranteeing inclusion.
6. Adequacy of benefits and support. Persons with disabilities, including children, often face significant additional costs, and accordingly benefits should be defined on the basis of the specific requirements of persons with disabilities in their diversity and not on a one-size-fits-all approach.
7. Eligibility criteria and disability assessments. Disability assessments can add significant exclusion errors to those already incurred in poverty-targeting approaches. Universal approaches to targeting can address these challenges, but where assessments are carried out particular attention should be paid to prevent the exclusion of people with disabilities and full consideration should be given to barriers faced by and the support requirements of people with disabilities.
8. Monitoring and evaluation. It is critical to ensure the disaggregation of administrative data to allow effective programme monitoring as well as support programme evaluations to assess the effectiveness of programmes for persons with disabilities.

Source: For more information, tools and examples please see the [Joint Statement towards inclusive social protection systems supporting full and effective participation of persons with disabilities](#) co-signed by UNICEF and a range of other partners. The Statement remains open for other partners to join.

Global trends and implications for child poverty, vulnerability and child-sensitive social protection

Beyond child- and family-level characteristics driving poverty and vulnerability, macro-level global trends also have profound implications for children. Among the most notable are climate breakdown, demographic changes, urbanization and conflict and forced displacement. These interconnected changes have a range of implications for the development and expansion of social protection systems. For example, with evidence suggesting that by 2030 half of those living in extreme poverty will live in fragile or conflict-affected states,³⁵ there is a need to strengthen the capacity of national systems to effectively respond to shocks and crises. Social characteristics such as gender, age and disability play an important role both in terms of the risks of being affected by a shock, and the capacity to cope during displacement or climate-induced shock. Recent data suggests that women make up 50 per cent of those who are displaced (refugees, internally displaced or stateless populations) exacerbating existing gender vulnerabilities.³⁶

Climate breakdown

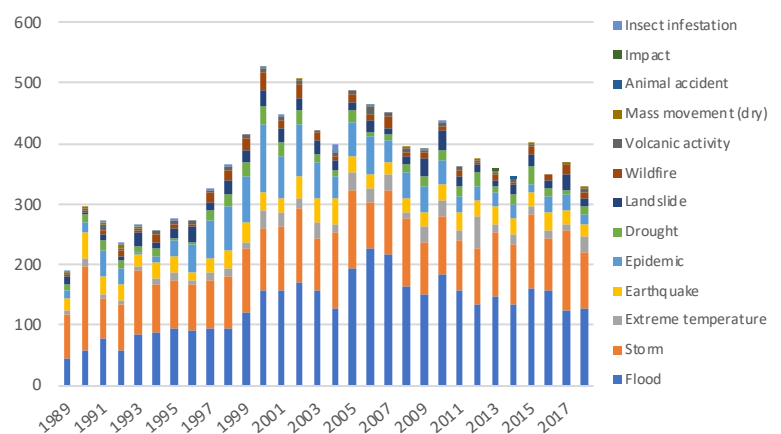
Climate breakdown is changing the world for children in unprecedented ways resulting in immediate effects and long-term implications for which future generations will pay the heaviest price. Increasingly frequent and severe climate-induced shocks such as floods, droughts and changes in precipitation as well as heat and water stress will continue to have a devastating impact on living conditions, particularly where many of the world's poorest and most vulnerable children live (see Figure 6 and Figure 7). Nearly 160 million children live in areas of high or extremely high drought severity and over half a billion children live in extremely high flood occurrence zones.³⁷ Poorer households often also have less resources and capacity to cope with climate-induced shocks as well as slow onset changes such as sea level rise.

Beyond the impacts of climate-related natural disasters, changes to the climate are altering disease prevalence and pollution, affecting children's health, impacting food security and increasing stress on often already stretched services. Climate breakdown is also forcing families and children to migrate, creating new challenges and risks. Social protection mechanisms (such as asset insurance, social pensions, social assistance, health insurance

programmes and labour market interventions) play a vital role in insuring vulnerable populations against natural disasters as well as protecting living conditions once a disaster hits. To address climate breakdown and its impact on children's social and economic vulnerabilities to poverty, the following should be considered:

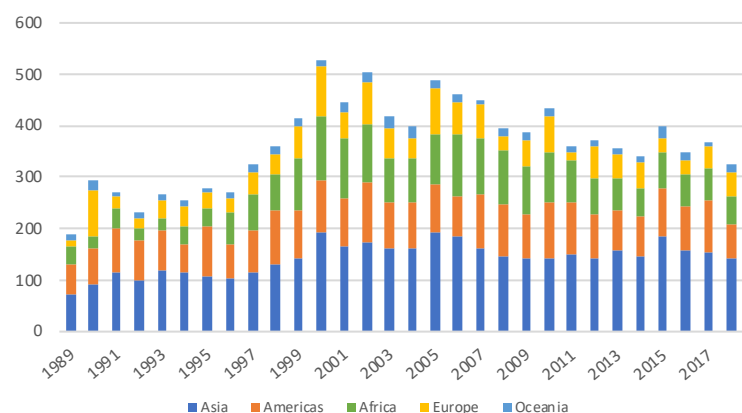
- Use risk analysis of populations living in areas prone to impacts of climate breakdown, poverty and food insecurity to inform social protection systems and disaster risk mitigation.
- Develop social protection programmes to be ready to respond to increased propensity for economic shocks, with a focus on addressing risk and vulnerability of children and families living in climate shock-prone areas.
- Ensure that all aspects of national social protection systems – from policies to operations – are shock responsive, so that social protection systems (including cash transfers) are ready to respond to climate-induced disasters.

Figure 6 Natural disasters by type of event and occurrence, 1989-2018



Source: EM-DAT: The Emergency Events Database - Université catholique de Louvain (UCL) - CRED, D. Guha-Sapir - www.emdat.be, Brussels, Belgium [accessed: 15 June 2019]

Figure 7 Number of natural disaster events by continent, 1989-2017



Source: EM-DAT: The Emergency Events Database - Université catholique de Louvain (UCL) - CRED, D. Guha-Sapir - www.emdat.be, Brussels, Belgium [accessed: 15 June 2019]

Demographic shifts

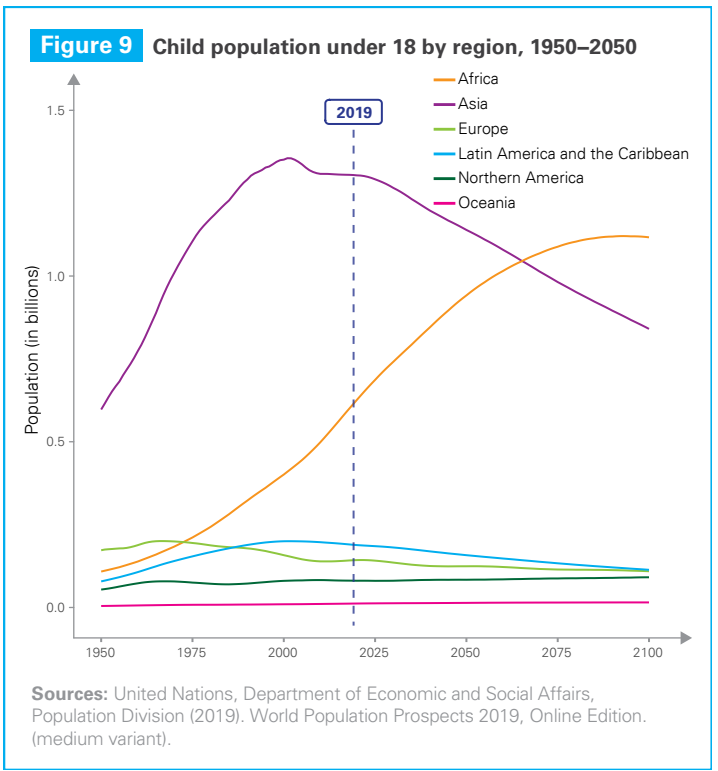
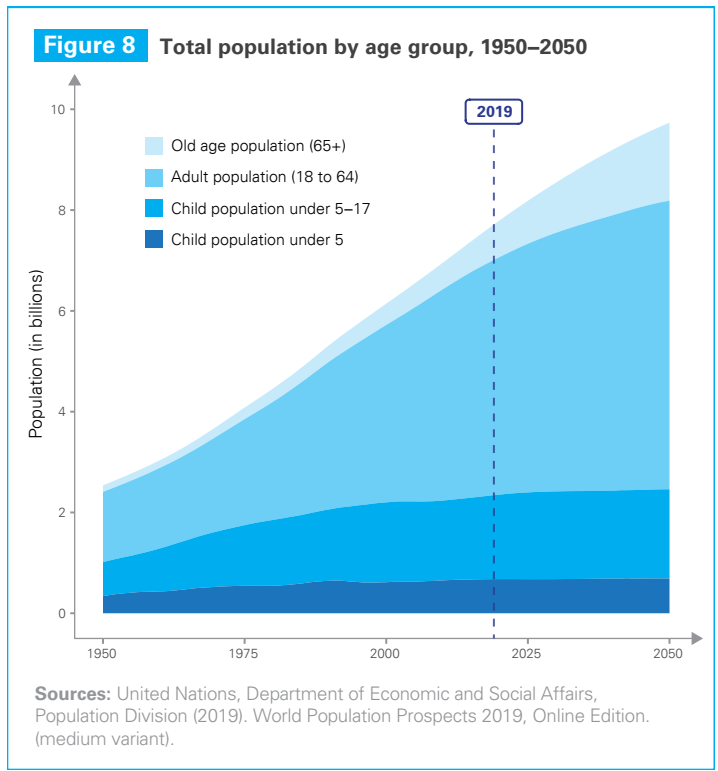
The world population is increasing and is projected to reach 8.5 billion in 2050. Globally, the number of adults and older people will increase more than the number of children (see Figure 8), but there are stark regional differences (see Figure 9). As Figure 6 shows, from 2019 to 2050, Africa will see the largest increase in the number of children in both relative (55 per cent) and absolute terms (340 million), while the increase in Northern America (7.2 million or 9 per cent) and Oceania (2.1 million or 18 per cent) will be much lower. In Asia, on the other hand, the number of children will decrease by 160 million (12 per cent), in Latin America and the Caribbean the numbers will decrease by 31 million (16 per cent), and in Europe by 13 million (9 per cent). Due to its rising number of children, Africa's share of the total world population and share of children under 18 will increase over the coming years.

These demographic changes have implications for what types of social protection systems countries should put in place and how these programmes should be financed to address social and economic vulnerabilities facing specific population groups. For example, in Africa, while child populations are increasing, overall fertility is going down.^{38,39} This will provide an unprecedented opportunity for

many African countries to reap the benefits of a demographic dividend over the next decades if there are sufficient early investments in human capital development.⁴⁰ While in Asia, investments in programmes that develop capabilities and productive capacities of adolescents and youth should be prioritized, in addition to early investment in children and protecting the older population.

The impact of demographic changes on children suggest the following considerations for social protection systems:

- A rising child population creates increasing demand for education, health, social protection, nutrition and water and sanitation services. Investing now will result in future demographic dividends.
- A rising adolescent, youth and adult population requires increases in jobs, skills development for employability and livelihood opportunities, and raises a counter-risk of rising unemployment. It is important that programmes are child-sensitive with appropriate policies for the full participation of women.
- A rising old-age population increases demand for social pensions, requiring efforts to ensure that social pensions are child-sensitive and investments in children aren't compromised.



Urbanization

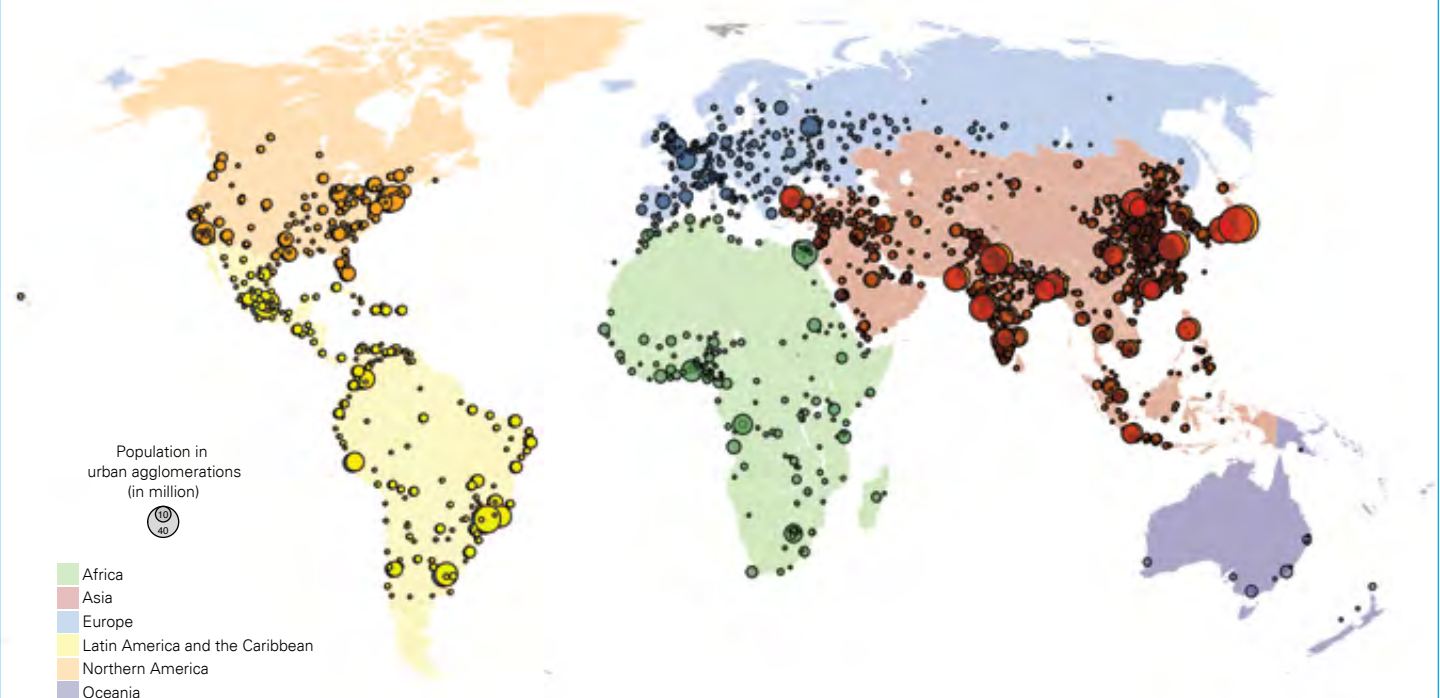
In 2015, 54 per cent of the world's population – close to 4 billion people – lived in cities (see Figure 10). The urban population is expected to rise by an additional 1 billion people by 2030, when cities will contain 60 per cent of the world's population (see Figure 11).⁴¹ While Asia is continuing to urbanize rapidly, Africa isn't far behind, making it imperative for countries to invest in a safe environment, social protection, and better services and infrastructure for the increasing number of families and children residing in urban centres. In Africa, urbanization is occurring at a lower level of income than in other regions and in sub-Saharan Africa in particular, urbanization has not coincided with economic growth: between 1970 and 2000 the urbanization level in sub-Saharan Africa increased from about 20 per cent to 30 per cent, while GDP per capita decreased over the same period. Urbanization without shared economic growth risks creating a class of people living in poverty in slums at the margins of urban centres, deprived of necessary services and security.

The social and economic vulnerabilities faced by urban poor children are often hidden, and can be perpetuated, by the statistical averages on which social protection programmes and decisions about resource allocation are based.⁴² Children living

in urban slums are often engaged in dangerous and exploitative work. Although they live close to services including health, electricity, education and water and sanitation, children often don't have means to access them, and they can be of lower quality than formal services.⁴³ In addition, many urban families work in the informal economy, without access to social protection mechanisms. With rapid urbanization happening in many African and Asian countries, these social and economic vulnerabilities will be further exacerbated, making urban centres potential hot spots for poverty, social unrest and epidemic outbreak if services, infrastructure and social protection investment not prioritized. In terms of urbanization and its impact on child socio-economic vulnerabilities to poverty, the following key actions are required:

- Conduct analysis of urban child poverty and its drivers to build a better understanding of specific social and economic vulnerabilities faced by children and their families.
- Develop social protection programmes for urban contexts that take into account specific vulnerabilities of children and their families.
- Expand social protection programmes to include informal workers in urban centres.

Figure 10 Population in urban agglomerations, 2015



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Figure 11 Global population by urban and rural, 1950-2050

Sources: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, Online Edition.

Conflict and forced displacement

It is estimated that by 2030 nearly half of the population living in extreme poverty will live in fragile and conflict-affected states with devastating impacts on children. Conflict is a major driver forcing families to move, and there are now more children – an estimated 30 million – forcibly displaced by conflict and violence than at any other time since the Second World War (see Figure 12).⁴⁴ Many of these children and their families live in a protracted

conflict environment, often being displaced in their own country or living as refugees in other countries for many years. In 2017, children below the age of 18 comprised more than half (52 per cent) of the global refugee population,⁴⁵ while women and girls comprised of around 50 per cent of all displaced populations.⁴⁶ People living with disabilities, especially children, can be particularly vulnerable. These numbers are even more alarming in light of the average duration of displacement in protracted refugee situations, which is an incredible 26 years.⁴⁷

These children are extremely vulnerable to poverty, homelessness, abuse, school drop-out, lack of access to health, proper nutrition, and adequate shelter. They also face the worst forms of child protection concerns including violence, exploitation and abuse, separation from families, being born in statelessness and risk to life. Armed conflict, one of the major reasons for the recent spike in forced displacement, is deeply rooted in social, environmental and economic contexts, and lack of inclusive social protection systems can contribute to the triggers for political unrest. Social protection systems can play a preventative role in both fostering social cohesion and trust among various heterogeneous communities as well as mitigating the impact of displacement on vulnerable populations, particularly children. The following are the key implications that should be considered in relation to conflict and displacement and its impact on child-sensitive social protection:

Figure 12 Number of displaced persons due to conflict and violence, 2000–2018 (in millions)

Year	Refugees and asylum seekers (millions)	Internally displaced persons (millions)	Total (millions)
2000	17	4	21
2001	17	8	25
2002	16	9	25
2003	15	10	25
2004	15	10	25
2005	14	9	23
2006	15	9	24
2007	17	9	26
2008	16	10	26
2009	16	9	25
2010	16	9	25
2011	16	6	22
2012	16	10	26
2013	18	15	33
2014	21	17	38
2015	25	16	41
2016	25	15	40
2017	28	12	40
2018	29	12	41

Source: United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018. UNHCR, Geneva, 2019, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), 2019, and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), 2019.

Note: The refugee numbers include refugees under UNHCR's mandate, Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and asylum seekers (whose applications has not been decided on yet).

- Develop a better understanding of triggers of conflict and political unrest and the role social protection can play in addressing some of the drivers, engaging a wide range of stakeholders in national dialogues to foster social cohesion.
- Improve planning and data management on food insecurity, climate change risk analysis and social and political context to address the drivers of conflict and forced displacement, and to be prepared to address the consequences of the displacement due to conflict.
- Strengthen national and sub-national social protection systems to be shock responsive, including in potential host locations, as well as designing humanitarian cash transfers and other social protection programmes to build on and/or strengthen national systems while providing immediate assistance.

The impact of social protection across sectors and the SDGs

Integrated social protection systems can have profound impacts on children's multidimensional poverty and vulnerability, both through programmes that directly address children's economic and social vulnerabilities, providing families the security and stability to make long-term decisions, and supporting integrated multisectoral programming for children. The prominence of social protection in the SDGs

recognizes the crucial role that social protection plays in achieving results across sectors (see Box 7).

This section summarises these impacts, which are reviewed in more detail in the Companion Guidance to this programme framework. While the preponderance of evidence generated draws from the growing number of high-quality impact evaluations on cash transfers,⁴⁸ it is important to stress cash transfers alone cannot fulfil social protection's potential to address child poverty and vulnerability.

Social protection, monetary poverty and productivity (SDG 1 and SDG 8)

A range of social protection programmes, including active labour market programmes, social insurance and social transfers, can directly address child monetary poverty and the financial barriers families face in accessing goods and services. Social protection programmes can have long-term impacts including increasing entrepreneurship, supporting longer-term economic decision-making and improving access to labour markets. Even where the impacts of programmes are not sufficient to move families out of poverty, they can still have a positive impact, for example there is overwhelming evidence that cash transfers increase household expenditure on education and food, and have a positive effect on



Box 7: Social protection in the SDGs

Social protection figures prominently in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The standalone target on social protection is included in Goal 1:

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

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.

Indicator 1.3.1: Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable.

Social protection policies are also explicitly mentioned as contributors under:

- Goal 3: Universal health coverage.
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, including addressing unpaid care work.
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, including addressing child labour.
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- Goal 16: Strengthening institutional frameworks.

Beyond the explicit mentions of social protection in the SDGs, other evidence outlined in this chapter demonstrates that social protection can support the achievement of a range of other goals, including SDGs 2-6 (ending hunger, healthy lives, education, gender equality, and access to water). Social protection is also a fundamental instrument for the achievement of pro-poor growth, employment and micro-, small- and medium-enterprise development (SDGs 8-9) as well as for social inclusion, social cohesion, state building, political stability and international co-operation (SDGs 16-17).

Source: Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', A/RES/70/1, 25 September 2015.

household productivity, including helping to facilitate parental employment, and young people's entry to the labour market. Overall, a review of the evidence suggests:

- Social protection, including cash transfers, can address child monetary poverty directly. Even where transfers are not sufficient to move children and families above the poverty line, they can increase household expenditure and address financial barriers across sectors. Social protection also increases household productivity and has positive multiplier effects in the local economy.
- Aspects of design including programme coverage, transfer size and frequency, are crucial to have an impact.
- Social protection programmes, including cash transfers, have an impact on women's economic empowerment, particularly when programmes are designed with gender outcomes in mind.
- With extreme poverty being increasingly concentrated in fragile and humanitarian settings, ensuring social protection is shock responsive is becoming ever more important.

Social protection and nutrition (SDG 2)

Direct interventions to address undernutrition, even when scaled up to 90 per cent coverage rates, have been estimated to address only 20 per cent of the stunting burden. Tackling the underlying drivers of undernutrition, including through social protection, is key to addressing the remaining 80 per cent.⁴⁹

There are strong links between social protection and improved nutrition, with food consumption and diet diversification a major focus of expenditure when families living in poverty receive cash transfers. By addressing poverty and underlying causes of malnutrition, social protection programmes focusing on first 1,000 days provide an unprecedented opportunity to support the physical and cognitive growth of children.⁵⁰ Overall, a review of the evidence suggests:

- Social protection programmes, including cash transfers, show significant impacts on food security, but alone do not always impact nutritional outcomes for children. This may reflect relatively short timeframes of many evaluations which prevent nutritional outcomes being picked up.
- In countries with high rates of undernutrition, integrated social protection interventions with nutrition support ('cash plus') could provide a breakthrough, but more evidence is needed on the best combination of packages.

Social protection and health (SDG 3)

Financial barriers contribute to food insecurity and insufficient diets, reduced access to health services, compromised hygiene environments, and inadequate care practices, all of which contribute to poor health outcomes. Loss of household income can also have wide-ranging impacts including on children's health, nutrition and education. By addressing economic security at the household level, including tackling dynamics of social exclusion and linking marginalized and vulnerable groups to health services, social protection can improve child and maternal health. Further, by many definitions, including the ILO's Social Protection floor, universal health coverage is a fundamental aspect of social protection. Overall, a review of the evidence suggests:

- Social protection has a significant impact both on the usage of health services and on mitigating the financial impact of a health crisis in a household.
- Evidence shows that cash transfers have a strong impact on uptake of health services, and do not need to be conditional to benefit child health (UNICEF's approach conditionality can be found [here](#)).⁵¹
- In many contexts, there may be opportunities to combine health and social protection programming, such as enrolment into health insurance schemes or supply-side strengthening to enhance the quality of services. More research is needed on this area.

Social protection and education (SDG 4)

Direct and opportunity costs of education are a significant impediment to educational enrolment and completion. Social protection interventions that increase family income can have a direct impact on education indicators and the education sector has been a leader in social protection through fee abolition and school meals (see Box 13 for more information). Cash transfers have a positive impact on enrolment and attendance, including strong results for girls, although the impact on educational outcomes is more limited. Overall, a review of the evidence suggests:

- Social protection including cash transfers have a significant impact on enrolment. Evidence on educational outcomes is less clear, perhaps due to the complex dynamics behind learning outcomes.
- Both conditional and unconditional transfers show impacts on enrolment, with some evidence suggesting that monitoring and enforcement can increase results, particularly for girls.
- Combining social protection interventions with support to adolescents in the form of additional

training and linkages to information and services is an emerging area that may improve adolescent transitions to adulthood.

working conditions including childcare, access to assets and links to the labour market.⁵² Overall, a review of the evidence suggests:

Social protection and gender equality (SDG 5)

Social protection systems which address gendered risks over the life-course and provide support in situations of poverty, vulnerability or crisis, can play a vital role in providing protection from poverty and insecurity, helping cope with risks and recover from shocks, and ultimately transform outcomes (for UNICEF's approach to gender and social protection, see Box 8). Gender-responsive social protection can play a crucial role in three areas: addressing gendered life-course risks, often compounded by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and harmful social norms; access to services, including health, education, the labour market and protection from violence and abuse; economic empowerment, voice and agency, including decent and equal

- Social protection has significant potential to contribute to tackling gender inequality, including through helping reduce physical abuse and increase decision-making power. However, social protection is not automatically supportive of gender equality and can even reinforce harmful gender norms and practices if not designed and implemented in a gender-sensitive way.
- Social protection can support the reduction of gender disparity between boys and girls, especially in education, as well as support equal access to opportunities in the labour market.
- Integrated approaches to social protection offer great potential in linking and strengthening a range of services to address the multidimensional nature of gender inequality.



Box 8: UNICEF's approach to gender and social protection

UNICEF is committed to gender equality and has integrated gender equality results across all areas of our strategic plan through (see UNICEF's Gender Action Plan 2018-2021). As poverty and vulnerability are inextricably linked to gender inequality, gender-responsive social protection is essential to achieve the results of the Action Plan, including crucially reaching equality in health, nutrition and education and addressing gender-based violence. Further addressing gender inequality is fundamental to achieving the transformational change which is the ultimate objective of social protection. Put simply, social protection can only be child-sensitive when it is also gender-responsive. Accordingly, UNICEF joined a range of partners in a Joint Statement stressing the vital importance of equitable access to gender-responsive social protection to further women and girl's empowerment and opportunities, and recognizing its wider positive effects for men, boys, their families and communities.

UNICEF's work on gender-responsive social protection recognizes that differential investments made in the development of boys and girls at an early age progressively widens gender gaps as children grow up. These gaps compound the limited access to information of women and the exposure, confidence and ability to engage in economic activities in labour markets which are often biased, restricting women's options for full and equal participation. While recognizing that women and girls often face greater disadvantage and exclusion boys may face particular challenges which must also be considered in social protection programming. Following a life course-based approach, UNICEF works with governments, non-governmental organizations and development partners to contribute to gender-responsive social protection at different stages of the life course with two clear objectives:

Reducing gender disparities in human capital development:

- Supporting provision of regular adequate transfers and services to households with children to tackle the intergenerational transmission of poverty;
- Linking social assistance and multi-sector humanitarian cash grants with equal access of boys and girls to nutrition, education, health, protection, WASH and skills;
- Encouraging equal opportunities for birth registration of boys and girls, including where appropriate through universal child benefits;
- Strengthening implementation structures (local governments/social workers) to support gender empowerment.

Enhancing opportunities for women's economic participation:

- Supporting ongoing efforts to advocate for inclusion of maternity and paternity benefits in policies/laws to ensure proper care of mothers and children;
- Supporting provision of childcare in work-linked social assistance programmes;
- Facilitating access to identity documentation for regular and humanitarian cash programmes;
- Increasing information and knowledge on issues of gender inequality through monitoring, evaluation and research around social protection.

Integrated approaches to social protection also enable and strengthen links to a range of other services that can address gender inequality. These include connections with the social welfare workforce that can extend support services to protect women from violence, and connecting social protection programming to activities to change social norms and practices, essential to address issues of gender inequality. Gender-responsiveness should be fully integrated across all of UNICEF's 10 action areas on social protection, based on a foundation of appropriate gender data, evidence and analysis. For further detail, please see Annex 4 of the *Companion Guidance* on 'Integrating gender into social protection programming: an emerging approach'.

Sources: [UNICEF Gender Action Plan](#) 2018-2021, July 2017; SPIAC-B, Joint Statement on [Social Protection to Promote Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment](#), 2019.

Social protection, water and sanitation (SDG 6)

Despite being integral to child health and development, WASH has generally received limited focus in social protection programmes and impact evaluations and relatively little is known about how addressing economic and social vulnerabilities would affect key WASH indicators. There is significant scope to increase focus and research on social protection and WASH, with behavior change through 'cash plus' approaches as a potential entry point. Overall, a review of the evidence suggests:

- There is significant scope to increase consideration of WASH outcomes in social protection programming.
- Including relevant indicators in cash transfer evaluations could clarify the role of changing family income on WASH outcomes.
- Including WASH components in 'cash plus' behaviour-change communication requires further research, including linkages to nutrition where there is extensive ongoing work.

Social protection and child protection (SDG 16)

Poverty can exacerbate children's vulnerability to violence, exploitation, and neglect, and financial stress in families can push children into risky coping mechanisms, such as child marriage and child labour (see Box 9), including in hazardous working conditions. Gender is an important moderator of the relationship between poverty, economic distress and adverse child protection outcomes. Child protection and social protection are different but complementary, and often work with similar partners. Social workers can play a key role, through offering families direct support and providing families with a link to existing social protection and child protection services. Overall, a review of the evidence suggests:

- The work of social protection to strengthen families economically and socially directly affects child protection results.
- The role of social service workers and family outreach is a crucial connection between social protection and child protection.
- Social protection and child protection must work closely together. Social worker outreach is integral to addressing social vulnerabilities by providing information and referring families to key basic social services.



Box 9: UNICEF's approach to social protection and child labour

UNICEF supports the achievement of SDG Target 8.7 which provides that States take "immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms". To support the achievement of Target 8.7, UNICEF pursues an integrated multisectoral approach to child labour, including legal reform, education, social protection, access to health services and data collection, and supports partnerships with UN agencies and other key stakeholders to mount a sustained effort to accelerate child labour reduction across regions.

Child labour is both a cause and a consequence of poverty, reinforcing social inequality and discrimination. Studies in Togo and Zambia show that households can respond to health shocks, such as the sudden illness of caregivers or primary wage earners, by sending children to work (UNICEF, 2018). Social protection can play an important role in addressing poverty – a key driver of child labour. While designing social protection programmes to address child labour, the following key considerations should be kept in mind:

- Link social protection programmes to support and promote birth registration and proper identification of household members.
- Use evidence on child poverty and child labour (overlapping deprivation analysis) and analysis of key risks factors of child labour to help design social protection programmes.
- Adopt an integrated approach to social protection by providing income security, access to healthcare through health insurance and by removing financial barriers to education. In addition, complimentary measures such as 'cash plus' approaches on behavioral communication could be tailored for specific needs.
- Ensure that social protection measures are 'child-sensitive to child labour' – addressing the unique social disadvantages, risks and vulnerabilities children may be born into or acquire later in childhood due to external circumstances.
- Develop tools and mechanisms for social protection systems to identify children protection cases who need additional support, particularly child labour concerns which may require specialized support.
- Develop further evidence and research on which social protection instruments help address child labour and how this varies by context.

For more information see UNICEF's Child Protection and Child Labour Policy Brief, 2018. https://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_child_labour.html

Social protection and HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS have a profound impact on children, including directly from infection and the economic and social impact on households in which children live. Poverty is one of the structural drivers of risk-seeking behaviour associated with HIV. Poverty also disproportionately impacts people living with HIV due to lost income and the increasing cost of accessing treatment and care and support services. Research has shown that social protection can help mitigate risky behaviors associated with HIV, although impacts can differ by gender, reinforcing the need for gender responsive programme design and implementation. There is also evidence on the positive impact of integrated HIV-sensitive social protection programmes on HIV prevention. Overall, a review of the evidence suggests:

- HIV-sensitive social protection, particularly cash transfer programmes, have a positive impact on mitigating the risky behaviors associated with HIV, and supporting treatment and income support of households with HIV-positive members.
- Moving forward, more HIV-sensitive social protection programming is needed, particularly in high burden countries.

- 'Cash plus' approaches (a combination of cash and linkages to existing services) may be more effective to address HIV outcomes than cash alone.

Social protection as part of a broader social policy mix

While the evidence on social protection generally shows clear and positive sectoral outcomes, it also highlights that social protection programming is not a silver bullet that alone can address the holistic needs of children and families. While many social protection programmes can address the economic and social vulnerabilities of children and families, they don't address information and knowledge gaps, the availability of quality services, or the challenges that vulnerable groups may face in accessing available services. This underlines that while social protection is a vital part of integrated programming for children, it is far from sufficient to fulfil child rights. There is a clear need for a foundation of quality and available services for children and families, as well as integrated social protection systems and inter-sectoral collaboration that include care and support services, address information and knowledge gaps, and enhance demand for services linking to other programme areas.



Box 10: Addressing the myths around cash transfers

While the evidence shows positive impacts across a range of positive outcomes for children, several myths remain regarding the perceived undesirable impacts of cash transfers on fertility rates, misuse of social transfers and increasing dependency of recipients. These myths have been disproven by the evidence.

Fertility

There are theoretical reasons to believe that cash transfers could either increase or decrease incentives to have children. On the one hand, where transfers are targeted to households with children, it can be argued they will give families an incentive to increase the number of children they have. Conversely, with poverty itself a factor underlying higher fertility rates, as cash transfers impact family incomes over time, fertility may fall. The evidence, however, is clear: the vast majority of studies show either no impact on fertility, reductions in fertility and/or changes in factors which can reduce fertility. Underneath this effect, evidence suggests that programme design that limits the size of transfers to larger families will not affect fertility, but may have negative outcomes on children by reducing the purchasing power of families.

Misuse

A frequent assumption around social transfer programmes is that a significant proportion of people living in poverty will waste the funds on products such as alcohol and tobacco. A significant body of research across Africa and Latin America consistently shows no evidence of these types spending of cash transfers. Indeed, as outlined in earlier in this section, resources are used with a focus on investing in the family, including child health and education.

Dependency

Concerns around dependency stem from the idea that those receiving cash transfers will be discouraged from working. Relatedly, some assume that transfers can create a dependency mentality in which people start to expect continued assistance, underlying their motivation and self-reliance. The evidence from a range of studies across contexts indicate that transfers are put to productive use, and rather than encouraging dependency cash transfers actually improve labour market participation and create opportunities for beneficiaries to become more self-sufficient by increasing productive investments.

Sources: The Transfer Project: a collaboration between UNICEF, FAO, and the University of North Carolina, with national governments and local research partners to assess how cash transfers are impacting on children's lives (<https://transfer.cpc.unc.edu/>). See also Peterman, Amber, Jennifer Yablonski and Silvio Daidone, 'Myth-busting? How research is refuting common perceptions about unconditional cash transfers', *Innocenti Research Briefs no. 2017-18*, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2017.

Chapter 3

The elements of an integrated child-sensitive social protection system





Chapter overview

- A child-sensitive social protection system responds to the range of social and economic vulnerabilities faced by children and their families across the life course and is integrated to avoid fragmentation and bring alignment across programmes.
- Effective social protection systems require essential foundations at policy, programme and administrative levels.
- UNICEF also recognizes the importance of evidence in shaping social protection systems to respond effectively to children's needs. Accordingly, there are four components to how UNICEF understands child-sensitive social protection systems:
 - A foundation of evidence;
 - The policy level: policy, legislation and financing;
 - The programme level: social transfers; social insurance; labour and jobs; social service workforce;
 - The administrative level: administration and integrated service delivery.
- With the poorest and most vulnerable children increasingly living in fragile and humanitarian contexts, all components of social protection should be built to be shock responsive.
- UNICEF works with a range of national and international partners in supporting governments to develop child-sensitive social protection systems. UNICEF's areas of contribution to building these systems is outlined in Chapter 4.

Drawing on agreed approaches to social protection,⁵³ this chapter outlines UNICEF's holistic understanding of the components of a child-sensitive social protection system. Developing and sustaining these systems is beyond the scope of any one actor and requires collaboration at national and often international level. UNICEF's key action areas that contribute to the development of child-sensitive social protection systems are laid out in the following chapter.

Social protection systems: protection across the life-course

There has been increasing recognition of the importance of social protection systems and clarity around their components since UNICEF's previous Social Protection Framework in 2012. The United Nations' vision is articulated in the UN Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPF-I), launched in 2009 in response to the financial crisis and adopted after wide consultation in 2012 by the UN General Assembly and further reflected in SDG 1.3 that calls for social protection systems, including floors.

Inherent to the social protection floor is the need for social protection across the life-course that addresses age-based vulnerabilities, and, as a minimum, ensures the social protection floor guarantees:⁵⁴ access to essential healthcare, including maternity care; basic income security for children; basic income security for persons in active age who are unable to earn a sufficient income; and basic income security for older persons.⁵⁵

As such, an effective and comprehensive social protection system will include different types of social protection programmes to address the varied needs of different population groups (children, adolescents, youth, working age, old age, disability, women) and to bring coherence and coordination to these interventions (see Figure 13). Such a life-course approach offers child-sensitive social protection in that it reaches children directly but also recognizes their connection with adults at different stages of their lives.

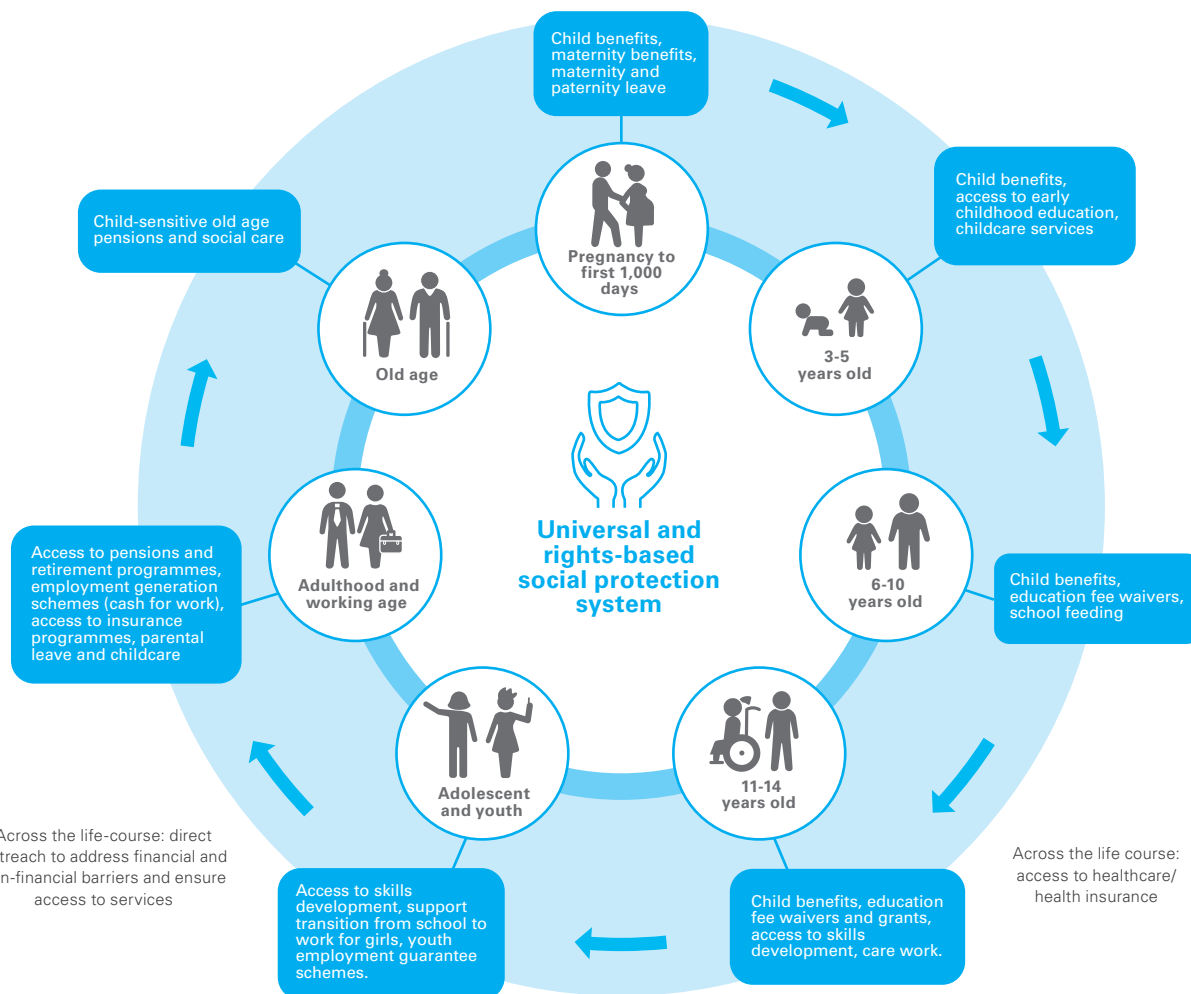
Life-course transitions of women and girls

In general, women receive less social protection coverage than other groups,⁵⁶ yet across the life course women and girls face particular life-course transitions and risks which are often compounded by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. At a young age, girls face barriers to quality education, especially through their involvement in domestic work. Adolescent girls are at risk of early pregnancy and school dropout. Women are more likely than men to work in precarious, informal jobs, shoulder a greater burden of unpaid care, and face interruptions and inequalities in paid work. These life-course vulnerabilities accumulate, increasing vulnerability in old age.⁵⁷ Social protection systems must also respond to address the life-course risks hindering female empowerment and opportunities, which impacts on families and communities (see Box 8 on UNICEF's approach to gender and social protection).

The components of an integrated child-sensitive social protection system

Social protection systems can be broken down into three constituent levels: policy, programme and administrative.⁵⁸ Building on UNICEF's conceptual framework and inter-agency approaches to social protection, UNICEF follows this approach, but adds one additional component that our experience suggests is essential: to be effective, child-sensitive social protection systems must be built on a foundation of evidence on the situation of children, impacts of current social protection programming and remaining gaps. Figure 14 highlights these four levels of the social protection system, which this chapter will discuss in more detail, as well as the cross-cutting importance of shock-responsive social protection (see Box 11 for what social protection should offer every child).

Figure 13 Social protection across the life course



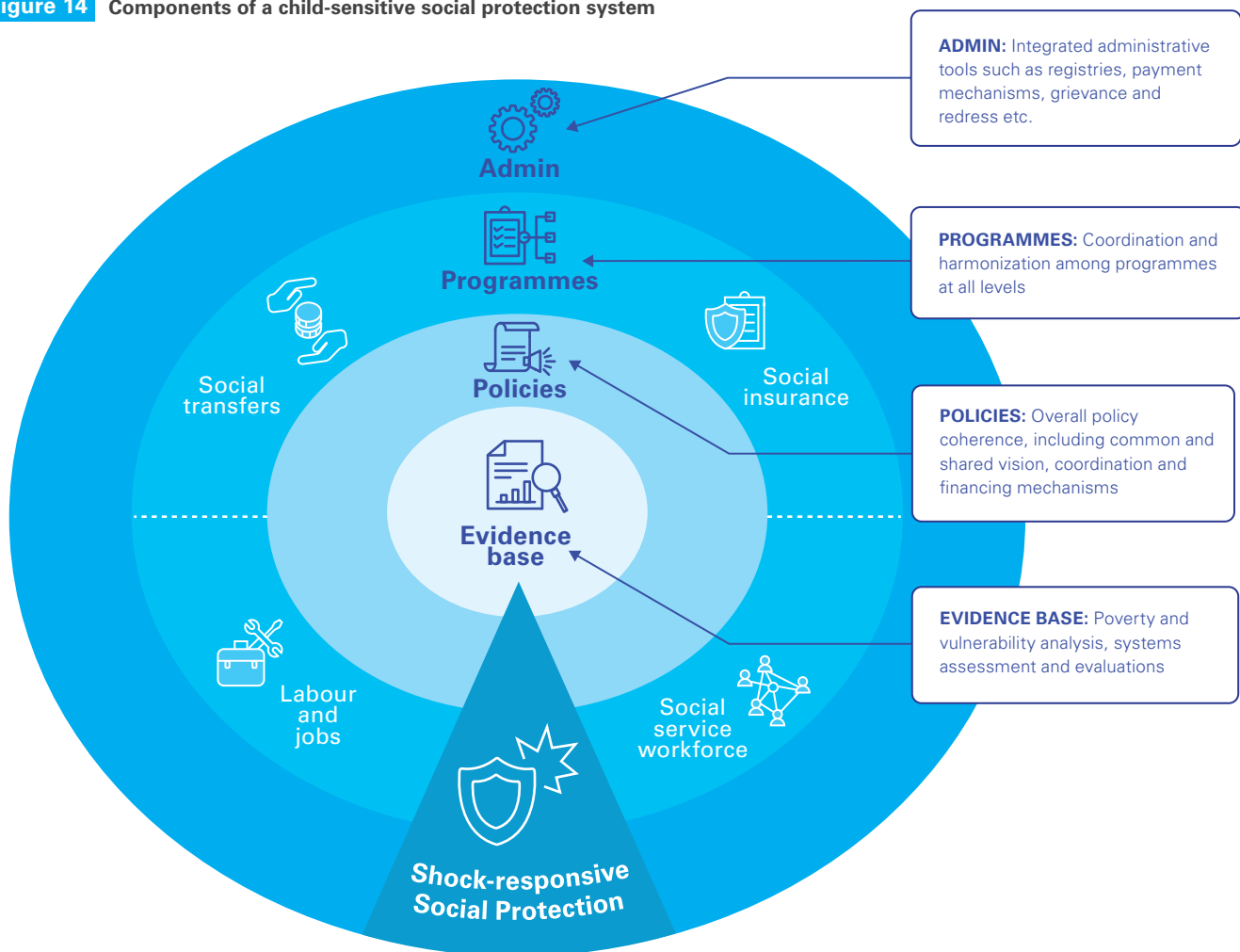
A foundation of evidence

A robust evidence base is a necessary foundation for all elements of a social protection system, particularly in a world that is rapidly changing due to urbanization, conflict and forced displacement and climate breakdown. Key areas of research and evidence that are needed are:

Evidence on child poverty and vulnerability for designing integrated social protection programmes. Understanding the social and economic vulnerabilities facing families and children and their impacts on child outcomes and multidimensional poverty is key to designing and implementing effective social protection systems. Evidence gathered should include gender analysis as well as an assessment of potential vulnerabilities resulting from shocks such as natural disasters and/or conflict that could require crisis response or resilience building.

Systems assessments, research and evaluation on the effectiveness of social protection programmes. While child poverty and vulnerability analysis identifies the challenges to which social protection needs to respond, it is also essential to understand the effectiveness and efficiency of programmes currently in place. This includes providing the basis for adapting social protection systems to support children and their families both before, during and after crises. Programme evaluations (including impact evaluations) and operational research can provide an assessment of the impact of programmes on desired outcomes and identify gaps and challenges. Social protection systems assessments are broader and analyze social protection system performance against national social protection objectives. They also map alignment of different programmes, relevance of programmes according to national objectives, and efficiency in coordination and overall management of social protection system.

Figure 14 Components of a child-sensitive social protection system



Policy, coordination and financing of social protection systems

The policy level is the highest level of engagement, where a common vision is established, and the objectives and functions of the social protection system are defined in the context of national goals and parameters.⁵⁹ Key areas at policy level include:

Social protection laws and social protection strategic frameworks. Grounding social protection systems in a strong legal and institutional framework is vital, as they provide both clarity of vision and direction as well as a legally-guaranteed foundation that supports programme sustainability and underpins the transformative power of social protection. Where the right to social protection is enshrined in national laws, beneficiaries are recognized as rights holders entitled to social protection provision, aligned with relevant Covenants and Conventions.⁶⁰ *Social protection strategic frameworks* then provide clear, actionable and accountable plans to guarantee that the rights of beneficiaries are realized and protected.

Coordination mechanisms. As social protection systems cover a range of programmes and ministries, effective coordination is essential. A strong lead government agency or ministry with political support and capacity is at the heart of effective coordination, as is a coordination mechanism that brings together and can hold accountable the various entities that manage different social protection programmes. This includes coordination across and within ministries (at national, regional and sub-regional level) in areas such as education, health, nutrition and disaster management. Such coordination is equally important at service delivery level, where local governments and local authorities play a critical role.

Financing social protection systems/ programmes. Even where social protection policies and strategies exist, adequate and sustainable financing and high quality public expenditure management is essential for the progressive realization of universal social protection. The

process of ensuring that social protection systems are financed begins with costing assessments of programmes guaranteed in law and identified in social protection strategic frameworks. It also requires engagement in the budgeting process and fiscal space analysis for identification and allocation of needed domestic resources including progressive taxation systems and appropriate financial controls. As national budgets represent national political processes, this requires political recognition of the value of social protection, and full integration of social protection into budgeting processes. For social protection to respond in times of crisis, provision of contingency funding in budgets is also essential.

Programme areas of child-sensitive social protection systems

The programme level is the operational heart of a social protection system. In an integrated system, social protection programmes should both cover the range of vulnerabilities across the life-course to provide adequate coverage to all who need social protection as well as work together through a shared policy framework and operating mechanisms. There are different ways to look at social protection systems, including dividing programmes into contributory and non-contributory programmes. For clarity on the programmes that makes up a child-sensitive social protection system, this framework divides social protection programmes into **four key areas**:

Social transfers

Social transfers can include cash transfers and tax credits but also include in-kind transfers such as school feeding subsidies or fee waivers (see Box 13), and can differ in how they are targeted and how they are delivered. Social transfers are the most direct way to protect children and families against poverty and address the financial constraints they face, including those related to the care burden often borne by women and girls. Of all social protection programmes they are often the most important in responding to crises. Transfers not targeted directly at children, such as social pensions

or maternity or unemployment benefits, can also be crucial in temporarily replacing lost income. Due to their broad reach and periodic contact with families, social transfer programmes also offer an excellent opportunity to connect families to vital information and access basic social services.

Social insurance

Social insurance refers to mechanisms that pool economic risks across the life-course and can prevent children and families from falling into poverty when shocks or life-events occur that either draw heavily on families' economic resources or have a negative effect on their livelihoods, such as ill health, old age, unemployment or broader risks such as droughts, floods or extreme weather events. Common mechanisms of importance to children and families include health insurance and unemployment insurance.

Labour and jobs

This area involves programmes and services that support employment and livelihoods and enable families to have sufficient income while ensuring provision and time for quality childcare. These may be broader labour market programmes, or initiatives focused on children and families including childcare services; family-friendly workplaces to facilitate employment, particularly of women; maternity and paternity leave; or skills-building for adolescent employability. Given the vital role of the private companies in employment, engaging with both public and private sectors is important (see Box 12).

Social service workforce: outreach, case management and referral services

While not explicitly included in the social protection frameworks of all organizations, UNICEF considers outreach, case management and referral services integral to effective child-sensitive social protection. They allow the needs of families to be understood and for families to be connected accordingly to relevant services, including those such as violence prevention and response. While these approaches may be undertaken by the social welfare workforce, they may also be implemented by or in

collaboration with community-based volunteers and paraprofessionals. The social services workforce also plays a critical role in the social protection response to humanitarian situations.

Administration and integrated service delivery

The administration level focuses on developing the core tools that facilitate the business processes of social protection programmes. These different administrative system components within a particular social protection programme are often useful entry points for enhancing integration of social protection systems, including facilitating linkages across sectors. Making operating mechanisms flexible and shock-responsive is also essential. The following are the key components of a robust administrative system for an integrated child-sensitive social protection system:

Integrated beneficiary registry and social

registry.⁶¹ Integrated beneficiary registries and social registries are part of broader MIS. Integrated beneficiary registries help in the enrolment and notification phases along the delivery chain for a social protection system, as well as the broader MIS on beneficiaries by supporting outreach, intake, registration, and determination of potential eligibility for one or more social protection programmes. Social registries serve for all 'potential' beneficiaries while beneficiary registries are only for those included in relevant programmes. An 'integrated' beneficiary registry supports multiple programmes, helping administrators avoid unintended duplication.^{62,63}

Management information systems (MIS):

Programme monitoring and implementation relies on MIS providing necessary data to implementers and decision makers to conduct payment appraisal and to identify the gaps, challenges and successes in programme implementation. A sound MIS supports the efficient administration and implementation of the programme. Information systems can also reduce errors and fraud and can speed up necessary steps in the implementation process. Integrated MIS used by multiple

programmes can promote efficiency and synergies across programmes.

Benefit delivery mechanisms:

There are different types of benefit delivery mechanisms depending on the type and nature of social protection interventions. For example, in-kind transfers might use local vendors/shops or other point of delivery while cash transfer or other benefit types may require banks, mobile wallets, tax credits and other forms of payments. Whatever the mechanisms, the underlying objective should be to make them efficient and inclusive and for beneficiaries to access the benefits without undue out of pocket expenditure or unnecessary loss of time. Data security, personal and life security and specific vulnerabilities facing beneficiaries must be considered while designing benefit delivery mechanisms. The global recognition of cash as a modality both in development and humanitarian settings is drawn from the fact that it could increase financial inclusion and exposure to technology by opening bank accounts or accessing mobile wallets or having a cell phone. There are many methods of cash payment, many of which are increasingly used in humanitarian response, but the most prevalent are: mobile money transfers, smart card payment systems, bank transfers and hawala or third-party vendor/local agents.^{64,65}

Grievance and redress mechanisms:

Mechanisms to report and respond to concerns and allow feedback to improve the delivery of social protection are an essential part of a good administrative system. There are different methods used for grievance and redress mechanism, the most notable being call centres, toll-free hotlines, community grievance committees and social audits. There is also a need for an appeal mechanism through the formal judicial appeal system to address exclusion from the programme if grievances aren't addressed by other mechanisms.⁶⁶

Human resources, including for social work and case management:

Effective integrated social protection relies on sufficient, qualified and trained professionals that may include qualified social workers, data managers, accountants, finance specialists, strategists, actuarial experts, planning and management specialists etc. For the purposes of children all of these functions are important, with a stronger emphasis on the social workforce to provide case referrals and management. Ensuring the system has capacity to provide social care and case identification and referrals to appropriate programmes is important in ensuring the effective integration of the social protection system, including addressing the social and economic vulnerabilities of families.

Sub-national coordination mechanisms:

Sub-national coordination mechanisms at governorate and/or district level play a vital role both in terms of implementation of social protection programmes but also ensuring sectoral coordination and policy coherence. Often capacity constraints, lack of resources, authority to make decisions and establishment of proper coordination mechanisms at sub-national level hinder programme implementation.

Shock-responsive social protection – cutting across all levels of the social protection system

In addition to addressing longer-term poverty and social vulnerability, social protection systems should be able to respond to crises and support children and families exposed to protracted, slow and sudden onset humanitarian crises, as well as economic crises. Government social protection systems can be highly effective mechanisms to support larger emergency response. Effective social protection systems already have measures in place that are essential for supporting people in times of crisis, however, in order to become shock responsive, national social protection systems often require some adaptation. As outlined in Figure 14, these changes cut across all areas of a social

protection system, at evidence, policy, programme and administrative level (for more details on UNICEF's approach to shock-responsive social protection, see Box 14). A shock-responsive social protection system includes:

Social protection system preparedness:

With the growing recognition of the role of cash in humanitarian response, this may involve a particular focus on the readiness of national social assistance programmes and how they link to national emergency response processes. However, this can and should include links to other important services, including case management services for vulnerable children and families, and connections to key services such as health and education.

The use of national social protection systems during a crisis:

Where possible, national social protection systems should be used as part of humanitarian response. Where government systems are not strong enough to be used in their entirety or where they are not an appropriate support option, parallel mechanisms should be aligned as closely as possible to support affected populations while also supporting the building of nascent national social protection systems for longer-term use and strengthening the humanitarian-development continuum.



Box 11: What a child-sensitive social protection system should offer every child

Understanding what a social protection system should offer every child can help bring focus to what we are trying to achieve. Child-sensitive social protection aims to ensure that poverty does not prevent children from realizing their rights and fulfilling their potential. As poverty is often caused or compounded by social discrimination (based on gender, disability, ethnicity, language groups and/or other identities), social protection must also address these compounding social vulnerabilities. Achieving this requires social protection interventions which go beyond financial support to ensure effective access to services.

Accordingly, the goal of child-sensitive social protection is for every child to:

1. **Live in a household with sufficient income to develop and fulfil their potential.** For many households, income can be provided through paid work, for others, programmes that support access to employment or income-generating activities can help. The quality of employment is also crucial, both in terms of income earned and in the provision of benefits and paid leave which can be crucial for children's development. In the event that household income is insufficient, social transfers or insurance to address economic barriers – based on progressive realization of universal coverage – can help. Sufficient household income can not only impact children access to services, but can increase children's sense of dignity and inclusion.
2. **Have access to quality basic social services regardless of income or personal characteristics.** Access to basic social services is key for ensuring child well-being. Sufficient income plays a crucial role in ensuring access, but additional programmes can help make critical services accessible, including addressing social marginalization and exclusion. These include programmes that address financial accessibility such as school feeding programmes, fee abolition or waivers, grants and scholarships, health insurance, as well as programmes that support marginalized and excluded children to access services.
3. **When needed, have direct contact with an outreach worker who can support families and empower them to access key services and information.** Direct outreach and contact with families can be essential to understanding the vulnerabilities facing children and families, and a focal point can act as advocate to help children and families realise their rights to access basic social services. Referral to and support with accessing appropriate services, ranging from cash transfers, knowledge and information to sectoral programmes, is vital. The role of focal point may be fulfilled by social workers, community workers or community volunteers.



Box 12: Social protection and the private sector

The private sector has an important role to play in the development of comprehensive child-sensitive social protection systems. Governments can draw on the private sector as service providers to support the delivery of government-led programmes. And while social protection is provided by the state, private sector employers play an important role in ensuring compliance with the national labour and social security legislation of their employees as well as providing additional benefits themselves. Companies can also promote extension of employment-linked social protection through their supply chains relationships. The private sector is also a crucial contributor to the tax base to ensure the sustainable financing of national systems.

Social protection also benefits business. Strong social protection systems provide a conducive environment for the private sector to thrive, ranging from boosting the local economy to supporting social and political stability. Accordingly, the private sector can play a crucial role in the policy-making process through employers and organizations contributing to national dialogues on social protection.

The private sector as service providers supporting the delivery of national social protection programmes

Provision of social protection is primarily the responsibility of the state and a foundation of the social contract. However, the private sector may play a role in supporting programme delivery, including through innovation and technology. For UNICEF, this support to delivery is currently the principle area of engagement with the private sector on social protection. An important example is the rapid expansion of cell phone infrastructure which is supporting the payment of cash transfers in many contexts, including some of the most challenging. Not only has this allowed programmes to expand, working with the private sector in payment delivery also offers the potential to promote the financial inclusion of recipients. The private sector can also support delivery in other areas, for example by providing the technology for management information systems (MIS) and biometric identification, and ensuring personal data protection and privacy. In many contexts, the private sector is also a provider of childcare services, and has a crucial role to play in supporting adolescents transition into work by offering apprenticeships, training schemes and internships.

In all engagements with the private sector, UNICEF follows its [principles of engagement](#). When supporting governments to develop social protection programmes, there are some specific considerations to take into account regarding the private sector:

- Accessibility and quality of provision are essential as the objectives of governments and private sector counterparts may not align (for example, in regulating and monitoring the quality of childcare provision).
- Work within certain areas of social protection programmes –such as payment systems, MIS development or biometric identification support – provides access to large quantities of sensitive individual data. Ensuring this data remains confidential and is used appropriately requires regulation and oversight by national governments.
- UNICEF has to be careful not to confer a competitive advantage to a private sector company and must ensure proper approaches to the procurement of services, including when working through government systems.
- Finally, as social protection is primarily a government responsibility, the involvement of the private sector should not erode the core service provision functions of government, including prioritising the most vulnerable groups whether as a result of gender, disability, geographic location or other personal or social characteristics.

Private sector enterprises as contributors to social protection as employers and as part of supply chains

The great majority of the world's economically-active population work in the private sector, ranging from large multinational corporations to small informal enterprises and entrepreneurs. The quality of that employment, and the benefits provided, play a fundamental role in ensuring social protection for workers and their families.

Private sector enterprises play an important role in social protection systems by ensuring full compliance with national labour and social security legislation, ensuring that employees, as well as their families, are covered by adequate social protection, including health insurance, maternity protection, unemployment protection, contributory family benefits, as well as old age, survivor and disability pensions.

Social protection benefits for employees and their families can ensure a high level of protection that contributes significantly to the overall social protection system in a country. A crucial consideration for children, especially those living in poverty, is that such employment-related provision is part of a strong and universal national social protection system, in addition to non-contributory (e.g. tax-financed) benefits, ensuring universal coverage with comprehensive and adequate benefits.

In addition, private sector enterprises can also play a key role in promoting social protection for their own workers by incorporating relevant criteria on social protection, decent work and core labour standards into their business operations and due diligence mechanisms. Social audits reveal that, in some cases, over 50 per cent of the workers of the first tier of the supply chain are not covered by any social protection mechanism.

As over 2 billion workers were in informal employment in 2016, accounting for 61 per cent of the world's workforce, non-contributory government-provided social protection provision remains essential to cover those workers who are not (yet) included in contributory mechanisms. While not currently an active area of engagement for UNICEF, partners such as the ILO support governments in their role in fostering the transition of enterprises and workers from the informal to the formal economy. This fosters the extension of social protection coverage and ensures the quality of benefit provision. As the coverage of contributory social protection schemes increases, social protection improves overall and the pressure on non-contributory approaches reduces.

Beyond provision of benefits, UNICEF's is working on a [family-friendly workplaces initiative](#) with the private sector. Collaboration ranges from ensuring access to breastfeeding rooms to teleworking, and can greatly facilitate the return to work of parents, particularly mothers, and is relevant to all families balancing employment and family responsibilities.

The benefits of social protection for the private sector

As much as the private sector can contribute to social protection, they can also benefit from it. Strong social protection systems help the private sector grow and are an important precondition of sustainable enterprises. Social protection is an important instrument of ensuring sustainable investments into a healthy and qualified workforce. In addition, social protection programmes can boost local economies: recipients of cash transfers, for example, spend transfers locally and estimates suggests the multiplier effects mean a dollar spent on a cash transfer, leads to \$2.5 dollars in local economic benefits. At a more macro level, social protection systems also contribute to stabilizing or boosting aggregate demand, especially during times of economic downturn.

More broadly, by strengthening the social contract social protection contributes to social and political stability, crucial foundations of a strong and expanding private sector. And evidence suggests that for multinational enterprises, social protection can increase productivity and market value: the provision of social protection benefits for workers and their families can help companies attract and retain talent, and by promoting social protection across the supply chain and broader communities, private sector enterprises can also convey a positive and socially-responsible image that can benefit them in the market-place.

The potential of the mutually reinforcing positive relationship between national social protection systems and the private sector can be supported through the important role of the private sector in national social protection dialogues through employer organizations. This is reflected in the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) and the Recommendation concerning the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy, 2015 (No. 204) to which organizations of employers contributed. Such forms of engagement at the national level can help the government, private sector and other stakeholders understand and realise the potential of working together to build strong and sustainable national social protection systems.

Sources: International Labour Organization (ILO), *World Social Protection Report: Universal social protection to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals 2017-19*, ILO, Geneva, 2017; *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2019*, ILO, Geneva, 2019; *Work for a Brighter Future – Global Commission on the Future of Work*, ILO, Geneva, 2019.

UNICEF's 10 key action areas in supporting child-sensitive social protection systems





Chapter overview

Building on the core strengths that guide our work, this chapter identifies 10 key action areas of UNICEF's work in supporting child-sensitive social protection systems. In all cases (except in some humanitarian contexts) UNICEF works together with governments on national priorities and in partnership with international and national partners.

The 10 action areas are:

At evidence level:

1. Child poverty analysis, impact evaluations and systems assessments

At policy level:

2. Policy and strategy development, coordination and financing

At programme level:

3. Expanding and improving cash transfers for children
4. Connecting cash transfers to information, knowledge and services
5. Expanding and improving health insurance
6. Supporting childcare and adolescent employability
7. Strengthening the social welfare workforce and direct outreach to families

At administrative level:

8. Strengthening integrated administrative systems

On shock-responsive social protection:

9. Strengthening national shock-responsive social protection systems
10. Linking humanitarian cash transfers to social protection systems

Different action areas are at different levels of maturity within UNICEF's work, and areas of focus will vary significantly by country according to national priorities.

With the goal of addressing child poverty and vulnerability and progressively realizing the universal right to social protection, building child-sensitive social protection systems is a long-term task that requires the coordination and collaboration of multiple national and often international partners. This chapter outlines the 10 key action areas that UNICEF works on together with governments and sister UN agencies, as well as other international and national partners (See Table 3 at the end of this chapter for a summary of UNICEF's Action Areas and key activities, and Annex 1 for more on the social protection approaches of partners). These have developed over the 15 plus years UNICEF has been working on social protection in over 100 countries in all development contexts. The action areas respond to the key gaps in child-sensitive social protection UNICEF has identified through our work and research, and that are outlined in each area.⁶⁷

Core strengths which guide the work we do

Drawing from our global experience on social protection, a number of UNICEF's core strengths guide both the areas in which we are and should be working, as well as the types of activities we undertake to contribute to the development of child-sensitive social protection systems. These are:

A clear and holistic focus on the best interests of the child, grounded in child rights. UNICEF's core mandate is based around child rights, which means a focus on equity and the most deprived, including those facing discrimination and disadvantage due to gender, disability, ethnicity, language, health status or location. UNICEF's key principles for our work in social protection stem from our focus on child rights and determination to progress the situation of children (see Box 3).

Support to integrated national social protection systems beyond a child focus. UNICEF's clear focus on children can sometimes be misinterpreted as working on child-focused social protection only. Effective child-sensitive social protection requires a focus beyond children, to integrated nationally-led systems of protection throughout the life-course. As UNICEF's work on social protection has grown over the past decade, national systems-building has become a major focus of our work.

Working in partnerships with government, sister UN agencies and other international and national partners. At the heart of UNICEF's work in all areas, including social protection, is working collaboratively with partners. We always work together with governments on their national priorities, except in

exceptional humanitarian contexts where this is not possible. We also work extremely closely with sister UN agencies, as part of the UN's commitment to deliver as one, as well as with NGOs and development partners. Based on these relationships and the trust of partners, UNICEF often plays a convening role in supporting governments in bringing partners together to reach consensus.

Extensive on the ground experience and presence.

UNICEF not only works with partners in over 100 countries on social protection, but we work deeply within these countries. Working across different sectors or ministries as well as different levels of government including local governments and communities at regional, district or sub-district level. Accordingly, our work is connected from the policy level to a detailed knowledge of the challenges and opportunities on the ground in strengthening social protection programming.

Experience and expertise in multisectoral programming.

UNICEF has extensive experience in multisectoral programming for children, including long-established relationships with government sectors as well as non-government institutions. This makes UNICEF extremely well placed to connect social protection and sectoral programming, and consider financial and non-financial barriers children and families face in holistic and practical ways.

Expertise on child poverty analysis, policy and programme research and evaluation. UNICEF is a global leader on child poverty measurement and analysis. Working with partners, UNICEF has extensive expertise and experience in researching and evaluating social protection programmes, identifying strengths and key gaps in social protection programmes and systems for children. As a result, we are able to work with governments and partners to create systematic assessments of child poverty, which identify how the social protection system is, and is not, responding.

Bridging the gap between fragile and humanitarian contexts. UNICEF is on the ground and working in all circumstances in over 190 countries and territories. We work across development, fragile and humanitarian contexts and are present before, during and after crises. Social protection has a crucial role to play in building readiness for crises and responding when a crisis hits, and UNICEF is well placed to support preparedness of social protection systems for children and the use of national systems in fragile and

humanitarian contexts. This is particularly important given the consensus around the use of cash transfers as a first line of response to support affected populations in emergencies

Four key caveats in understanding our action areas

A suggestion not a prescription. The independence of UNICEF country offices in working with national governments to determine areas of focus that would most benefit children – which is the heart of UNICEF's innovation, leadership and results – may lead to a focus on social protection by UNICEF country offices not included in these 'core' action areas. While this package hopefully provides useful direction for many contexts, it should of course not be at the expense of what is in the best interests of children.

It's not all or nothing. In many contexts, UNICEF country offices may focus on one or two action areas rather than all elements. In some contexts, work may be sequential (working with government and other partners to build a national cash transfer may make sense before focusing on integrating programmes), in others political opportunities or the reality of available capacity may make focusing on a single element most effective.

Different areas of work are at different stages of maturity. UNICEF's work on social protection has grown dramatically in the past 15 years. In some of the key action areas identified, such as child poverty analysis and expanding and improving cash transfers for children, our work is at scale within and across countries. In others, such as shock-responsive social protection, the work is relatively new, but growing fast. In others, such as health insurance, the work, despite its importance, remains nascent for the organization.

Social protection, and who works on it, can have blurry edges. Many of us working on social protection find ourselves in conversations about what's included in our understanding and definition of social protection – including the role of UNICEF and our Social Policy teams specifically. While this set of core work aims to articulate key areas where we often work in social protection, country approaches to structuring the work will vary depending on the needs of children and existing government and office structures. Globally, the package aims to outline key areas where we need to provide coordinated support – including working across sections and divisions.

Action Area 1 *Child poverty analysis, impact evaluations and systems assessments*

To build effective social protection systems, having an evidence-based understanding of the situation of children and child poverty and the effectiveness of the current social protection system and programmes, including a gender analysis, is essential. UNICEF, together with partners, has developed significant expertise in these areas and has become a leader in child poverty measurement and analysis, working in over 80 countries in the past few years and are doing extensive evaluations and programme assessments.

UNICEF has also undertaken systematic analysis of the overall social protection systems in some countries, and is working to address significant gaps in evidence on gender-responsive social protection. This work is undertaken with governments and UN and non-UN partners, for example the Transfer Project research initiative on cash transfers with FAO; DFID and the World Bank on gender responsive social protection; and with the ILO, World Bank and other partners in implementing Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessments (ISPA) tools.

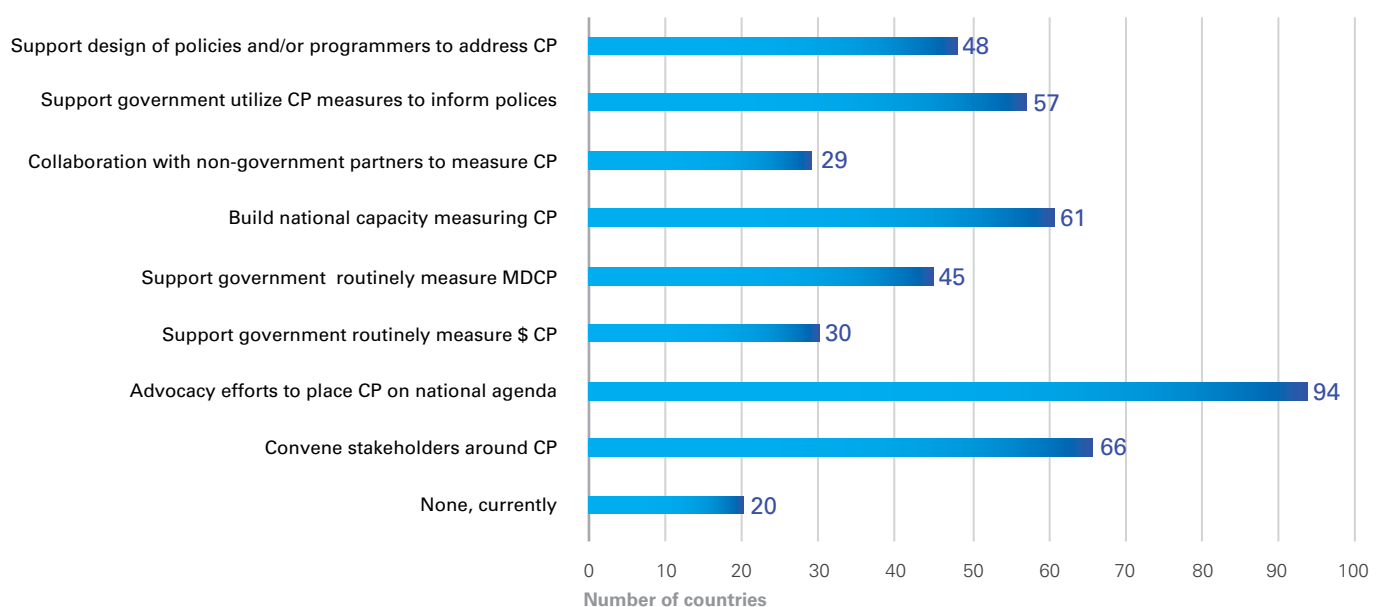
In this action area, UNICEF works with partners on the following issues:

Child poverty measurement and analysis

Despite the importance of child poverty measurement and analysis, many countries are not measuring child poverty at all, and many others are not doing so routinely (see Figure 15). Latest estimates suggest that 74 countries now measure and report on monetary child poverty and 55 countries measure and report on multidimensional child poverty (see Figure 16). In most countries gender considerations, although not always a full analysis, is included. Further, for many countries, linking child poverty evidence to social protection policies and programmes has been limited.

Addressing these gaps is a core area of strength for UNICEF with work ongoing in 137 countries. Work includes capacity building and technical support towards routine measurement of monetary and multidimensional child poverty as well as supporting policy and programme analysis and implications for social protection systems. Vulnerability analysis is more limited, particularly in the context of preparing national systems to respond to crisis, but will grow as our work on shock-responsive social protection develops.

Figure 15 UNICEF support measuring and/or addressing child poverty, 2018



Sources: UNICEF Strategic Monitoring Questions, 2018.

Impact evaluations

The need for impact assessments remains strong in many country contexts, while existing work and evidence may be sufficient in some cases. As is outlined throughout this framework, the world has made substantial progress in building evidence on the impacts of social protection. The largest body of work has focused on the evaluation of cash transfers. [The Transfer Project](#) has supported evaluations on cash transfers in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, while ODI's systematic review of cash transfers found 44 studies, covering 19 countries and 31 cash transfer programmes. Increasingly, reviews are looking beyond cash.

UNICEF has been leading the evaluation of social transfer programmes, including through its involvement in the Transfer project. Across countries our work varies, from direct management of evaluations to technical support and inputs to evaluations managed by others. Given the wealth of existing evidence, the need for new impact evaluations will vary by country, but evidence shows the policy impact national evaluations can have. Finally, UNICEF's evaluation work is increasingly looking beyond social transfers alone to 'cash plus' initiatives, including links with nutrition and adolescence programming.

Social protection systems assessments

Finally, significant knowledge gaps remain regarding overall assessments of national social protection systems and how they respond to child poverty and help in realizing universal social protection for all, starting from those who are not covered by any programme. Although UNICEF's social protection mapping indicates over 80 UNICEF country offices working on strengthening social protection systems, our knowledge of where systems mapping and assessments are being made remains limited. A major step forward has been the development of SPIAC-B's Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessments ([ISPA tools](#)), including the development of a Core Diagnostic Instrument (CODI) to provide an overall assessment of social protection programmes. CODI has been used by UNICEF and partners in Belize, Guatemala, Jordan, Lebanon, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe. While UNICEF always includes a strong child focused analysis, the assessments are holistic, reflecting the importance of the entire social protection system. As well as CODI, other assessment tools include Social Protection Public Works Programs, Identification (ID), and Social Protection Payments.



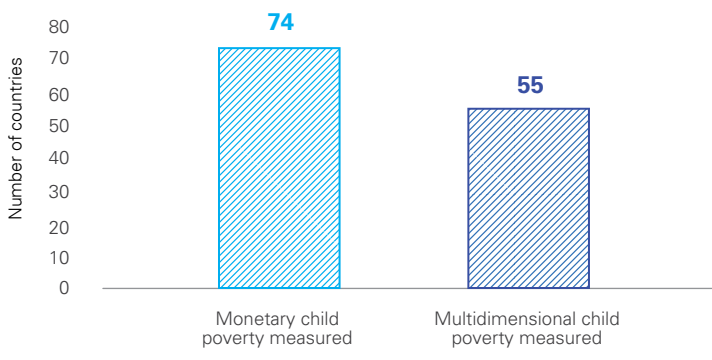
Country snapshot

Georgia: Child poverty analysis and the national cash transfer programme

In Georgia, a UNICEF-supported household panel survey was used to analyse poverty by age group and demonstrated higher poverty rates for children. Conversely the analysis revealed that coverage of the targeted social assistance programme was lowest for families with children. Working with the government and the World Bank throughout this process resulted in the introduction of a child benefit scheme as part of the social protection system, reaching around 260,000 in the poorest households in the country.

For a fuller case study, please see the Companion Guidance to this framework.

Figure 16 Number of countries measuring monetary or multidimensional child poverty, 2018



Sources: UNICEF Strategic Monitoring Questions, 2018.

Action Area 2 *Policy and strategy development, coordination and financing*

The overall social protection system determines both the direction of social protection in a country, and how well it addresses the needs of children. However, while policies and strategies are essential, they will only be effective if they are adequately financed and if effective coordination occurs between relevant government ministries and bodies. UNICEF works with government and development partners in over 80 countries to support national governance mechanisms, including strategies and policy frameworks and coordinating systems. Work on social protection financing has also grown significantly.

In this action area UNICEF works with partners on the following issues:

Social protection strategies and policy frameworks

Many, but not all, countries have some form of social protection policy or strategy, which is an essential foundation of strong and integrated social protection systems. A mapping of policy and strategy documents across low- and middle-income countries by the World Bank showed that 108 out of 136 countries either had an active social protection policy or strategy document in place or were in the process of planning such a document in 2014.⁶⁸ However, determining the child-sensitivity of these structures is extremely challenging. A qualitative assessment of UNICEF colleagues suggests children have received some consideration in systems development, but only in a very small minority were they assessed as 'highly considered'.

Supporting the development of strategies and policies has long been a core area of work for UNICEF and partners, working on this area in over 80 countries. Work includes supporting national dialogues with a range of stakeholders on social protection, strategy and policy development, including best practices from other countries, and developing social protection 'road maps' to guide progress.

National-level coordination of social protection

Coordination of social protection systems is not easily assessed and there is a limited evidence base on the extent of effective coordination at national level. Social protection policies, in place in many countries, are an important foundation in effective coordination and UNICEF's 2015 mapping identified over 80 countries in which we work on social protection with a clearly-identified coordinating ministry. These, however, are only indicative of the extent and effectiveness of cross-ministerial coordination on social protection. UNICEF works on both horizontal coordination (between departments and ministries) as well as vertical coordination (centralized and decentralized counterparts, captured in Action Area 8). Activities include organizational assessments reviews, capacity building and development of coordination systems including MIS.

Domestic financing

Financing for social protection is generally insufficient for comprehensive child-sensitive social protection systems. On average, countries spend only 1.1 per cent of GDP on social protection for children, although the amounts vary greatly across countries and regions. As shown in Figure 17, while Europe and Central Asia, as well as Oceania, spend more than 2 per cent of GDP on child benefits, regional estimates for Africa, the Arab States and Southern and South-East Asia show expenditure levels of less than 0.7 per cent of GDP. There is an urgent need to identify ways of increasing the fiscal space available for social protection, either through changes to taxation or by reallocating and making better use of existing social protection spending. This is particularly important for progressive realization of social protection for all and expanding the coverage to those who aren't included.

Financing for social protection is integral for systems that effectively reach children, and UNICEF's work with partners on public finance, including for social protection, has grown dramatically. This includes

supporting governments to cost and model the expansion of social protection programmes, and to develop fiscally-sustainable financing strategies based on fiscal space analysis, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of existing social protection spending, reducing fragmentation and therefore the costs of programmes, and redirecting spending from less efficient to more efficient forms of social protection.

UNICEF increasingly recognizes the effects of both taxation and transfers on children. UNICEF frequently supports the capacity of line ministries to manage social protection resources, improve the efficiency of programme systems such as payments mechanisms, and measures to improve the transparency and oversight of social protection expenditure.



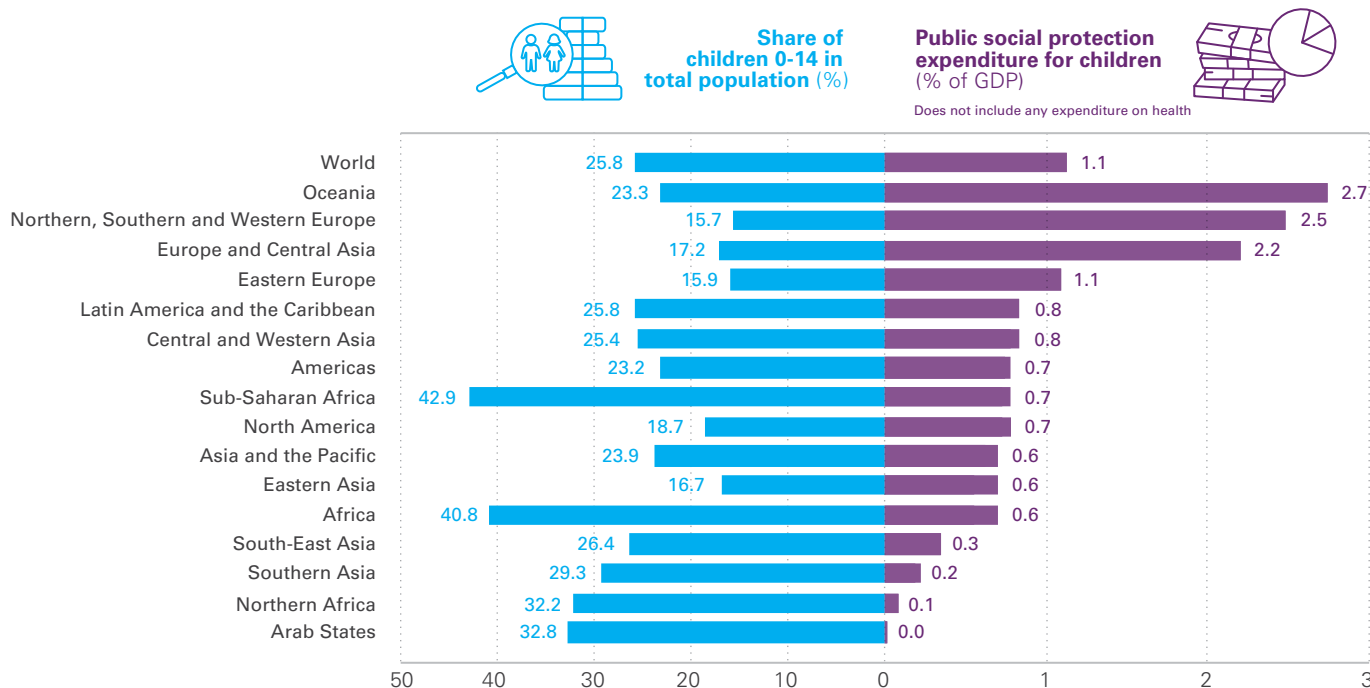
Country snapshot

Tunisia: Micro-simulation to demonstrate universal child benefit (UCB) cost-efficiency and impact on poverty

Since 2017, UNICEF has advocated for a universal child benefit in Tunisia to address the multidimensional poverty faced by children. A UCB is currently under consideration as a policy option by the Government of Tunisia to address a high child poverty rate of 21.1 per cent compared to an adult poverty rate of 12.8 per cent. Through its regional agreement with the International Policy Center (IPC), UNICEF Tunisia conducted a micro-simulation to assess the cost and impact on poverty of a UCB compared to fuel and food subsidies. Initial analysis by the IPC found that a UCB would be both more progressive and more efficient than subsidies.

For a fuller case study, please see the Companion Guidance to this framework.

Figure 17 Public social protection expenditure (excluding health) on children (% of GDP) and share of children aged 0-14 in total population (%), 2017



Sources: Based on ILO (2017a).

Link: <http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/RessourceDownload.action?ressource.ressourceId=54624>

Action Area 3 *Expanding and improving cash transfers for children*

UNICEF support for social transfer programmes, and cash transfers in particular, is highly developed, with extensive work underway with partners ranging from supporting nascent programmes, to strengthening and consolidating those in place, and helping develop new universal child benefits. While there are other social transfers for children, such as fee abolition and waivers, school feeding and public works (see Box 13), the majority of our work has developed around cash transfer programming, which can have crucial impacts on child outcomes.

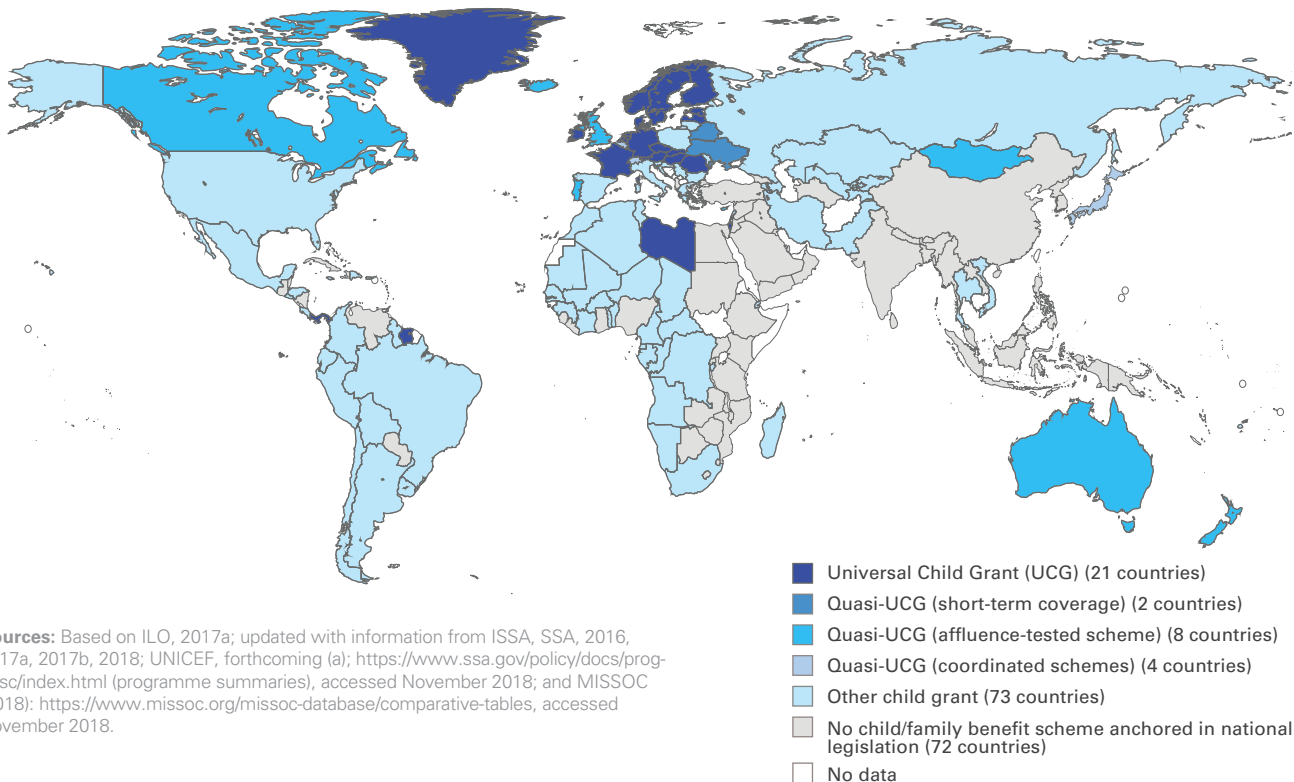
While 108 countries have some form of periodic child/family allowance anchored in national legislation, only 23 countries (mainly in Europe) provide any form of non-contributory universal child or family cash allowance, and a further 14 have some form of quasi-universal grant, either covering only a part of childhood, that include some form of affluence testing, or as part of mixed systems that

combine contributory and non-contributory schemes (see Figure 18). Legal coverage does not always mean that benefits are received, and estimates suggest that two thirds of children (1.3 billion globally) are not receiving any form of child or family benefit in this flagship area of social protection. Further, coverage is lower in parts of the world such as South Asia and Africa, where child poverty is higher.⁶⁹ Cash transfers are also becoming increasingly important in humanitarian response, as outlined in Action Area 10. In this action area UNICEF works with partners on the following issues:

Building political support

Political support is fundamental to building national programmes and, as limited coverage and limited financing in many parts of the world shows, this is a crucial foundational area of work. Building the knowledge of decision makers is important as the

Figure 18 Worldwide incidence of child benefit provision with a focus on UCBs and qUCBs



Sources: Based on ILO, 2017a; updated with information from ISSA, SSA, 2016, 2017a, 2017b, 2018; UNICEF, forthcoming (a); <https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/program-desc/index.html> (programme summaries), accessed November 2018; and MISSOC (2018): <https://www.missoc.org/missoc-database/comparative-tables>, accessed November 2018.

positive benefits of cash transfer programmes are particularly vulnerable to misunderstanding and concerns about misuse (see Box 10 on addressing the myths around cash transfers). UNICEF works to build political support for expanded cash transfer programmes as part of social protection system, to reach those who aren't covered by any programme, particularly children, including engaging in budget analysis and processes to identify funding for programmes.

Supporting programme design

Programme design is crucial to whether cash transfers programmes will make a difference to children, and the size of their impact. UNICEF provides technical assistance on the range of design questions that governments face in starting, consolidating or expanding a cash transfer programme. These include considerations of targeted versus universal approaches and issues of eligibility and exclusion, determining effective transfer size, conditionality,⁷⁰ frequency and design of implementation mechanisms such as for grievance and redressal, and gender-responsive design features. See Action Area 4 for more on integrating cash transfer recipients with other services and interventions.

Supporting implementation

UNICEF also works directly with governments on the implementation of cash transfers, including programme roll-out, communication with beneficiaries, registration, payment and MIS systems, and capacity building of those implementing the programme. Work on implementation is echoed in Action Area 8, which focuses on the administration required to build coherent and integrated social protection systems.



Country snapshot

Zambia: Engaging in budget frameworks to expand cash transfers

UNICEF and partners engaged in advocacy for an increased budget allocation for the Social Cash Transfer programme in Zambia. Work included the development of caseload and budget projections, social sector budget briefs and extensive engagement with government and non-government stakeholders. Underpinning this was an impact evaluation, which built confidence in the programme. These efforts contributed to the budget increase for the programme from US\$30.2 million in 2016 to US\$55.2 million per year in 2017. However, significant challenges remain, including reported irregularities in the programme that led to the suspension of support from DFID. The programme is responding through improved accountability processes including establishing grievance and redressal mechanisms to help highlight payment irregularities.

For a fuller case study, please see the Companion Guidance to this framework.



Box 13: Beyond cash: Fee abolition and waivers, public works and school feeding

Although UNICEF's work on social transfers focuses primarily on national cash transfer programmes, there are a number of other programme areas relevant to children where UNICEF offices may engage, including fee abolition and waivers, public works and school feeding.

Public works

Public works programmes have a long history and currently over 100 public work programmes exist in low- and middle-income countries, and are often considered the flagship social protection programme such as the Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme in India. The programmes have a dual objective of providing short-term employment and supporting labour-intensive infrastructure projects. While child well-being is not the primary objective of public work programmes, they address the income security/coping behaviours of households and so indirectly can impact child outcomes, although some innovative programmes have introduced linkages with complimentary services, including for children. Despite their popularity, the evidence base of public work programmes is quite limited, with some positive impacts documented on consumption smoothing and food security but little systematic evidence on the long-term welfare impacts of recipients. In general, UNICEF tends not to engage directly in public works programmes, although may provide support on child-related elements including in areas of childcare.

Fee abolition and waivers

Financial barriers to accessing services in crucial areas such as health and education can be hugely impactful on children's life chances. While cash transfers can support access, addressing fees at the point of delivery through fee abolition or fee waivers can be a crucial social protection intervention for poor and vulnerable children, particularly girls who often have higher dropout rates. Education has been through a wave of fee abolition and the Education 2030 agenda commits to providing inclusive and equitable education at all levels and provide lifelong learning, committing to giving every child 12 years of free education. The push to achieve universal health coverage for essential services is also seeing countries introduce essential services free at the point of delivery. Challenges in both areas remain, including issues of service quality as usage expands rapidly, often beyond financing and remaining out of pocket expenses such as travel costs and other school fees such as for uniforms. While health and education have received the most attention, user fees can also negatively affect children and families in poverty in areas ranging from early childhood development to access to water. Globally, UNICEF works at the country level towards achieving universal coverage including addressing fees and maintaining service quality, with work generally led by sectors rather than through social protection.

School feeding

An estimated 368 million children – about one in five – receive at least one meal at school daily. The large amounts of investment made by countries on school feeding programmes often from government budgets reflect the near universal recognition of its importance and political appeal. As a social protection instrument, school feeding programmes can be considered as explicit or implicit transfers to households of the value of the food transferred. There are two types: (i) in school feeding and (ii) take home rations. In most countries they are considered a social protection measure and as instruments that promote human capital in the long run by supporting families in securing education for their children. Evidence shows that these programmes mainly have the ability to improve education outcomes for children, with a systematic review of 216 education programmes in 52 low- and middle-income countries finding that school feeding programmes are one of the few education interventions that show positive impact in both school participation and learning. Recent trends in school feeding programmes show an increasing effort by policymakers in designing synergies with additional inputs to elicit nutritional impacts as well as an effort to use locally-produced foods. Traditionally, UNICEF hasn't engaged extensively on school feeding programmes which are often led by the World Food Programme, but areas of support and engagement are being considered in our forthcoming Education Strategy.

Sources: GIZ, *Do Public Works programmes Work? A systematic review of the evidence from programmes in low and lower-middle income countries in Africa and the MENA region* (2018); Lagarde, Mylene and Natasha Palmer, 'The impact of user fees on health service utilization in low- and middle-income countries: how strong is the evidence?' (2008); Langston, Ray, 'School fee abolition and changes in education indicators', *International Journal of Educational Development 2017* (2017); McCord, Anna, *Public Works and Social Protection in Sub-Saharan Africa: Do Public Works Work for the Poor?* (2012); McCord, Anna, 'The role of public works in addressing poverty: Lessons from recent developments in public works programming', ch. 9 in *What works for Africa's Poorest: Programmes and policies for the extreme poor* (2017); Snilstveit et al., 'Interventions for improving learning outcomes and access to education in low- and middle-income countries: a systematic review' (2015); Tafere, Yisak and Tassew Woldehanna, *Beyond Food Security: Transforming the Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia for the Well-being of Children* (2012); World Bank, *The State of Social Safety Nets 2018* (2018).

Action Area 4 *Connecting cash transfers to information, knowledge and services*

Although cash transfers can have huge impacts on children's lives, not all barriers families face are financial. Where families are unable to access quality services – for example, due to a lack of information or lack of knowledge on good practices in areas such as nutrition or sanitation – cash transfers alone may not be impactful. This is underlined empirically by the evidence that cash alone is not always sufficient to improve child outcomes. While UNICEF works extensively on cash transfers, work on connecting cash transfer programming with appropriate information and knowledge (often referred to as 'cash plus' which is part of an integrated social protection system)⁷¹ is at an earlier stage of development, but can be a crucial step towards integrated programming, particularly in contexts where cash transfers are a leading social protection programme. Given UNICEF's specialized knowledge and engagement across multiple sectors as well as extensive experience on communication for development, UNICEF is well-placed to work with partners to support these linkages, with a strong focus now emerging around nutrition.⁷²

This is an emerging area for UNICEF, with work with partners focusing on the following issues:



Country snapshot

Tanzania: 'Cash plus' (integrated social protection) model on adolescent transitions

Adolescents in Tanzania face many risks related to poverty, early pregnancy and marriage, violence, HIV, and lack of livelihood opportunities. UNICEF worked with the Government of Tanzania to complement the national Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) programme with a 'cash plus' model: a ten-week course, including livelihood skills and business concepts and planning. Following the training, adolescents have access to mentoring and coaching, access to vocational training and opportunities to apply for a productive grant. The baseline report has been finalized, with evaluation of initial data expected later in 2018.

For a fuller case study, please see the Companion Guidance to this framework.

Providing information and knowledge to beneficiaries and connections to services:

UNICEF works to build linkages between cash programmes by connecting recipients to information programmes and services. In East and Southern Africa, for example, programmes are adopting inclusive approaches ranging from nutrition counselling for cash beneficiaries and linking community 'influencers' to referral and case management. And in Ghana, cash transfer recipients are enrolled without fees in the national health insurance programme. Given the emerging area of this work, UNICEF also works actively to test and document 'cash plus' approaches through our work on impact evaluations to build knowledge on best practices in policy and programming.

Action Area 5 Expanding and improving health insurance

Social insurance includes contributory programmes such as those covering risks from sickness, old age and unemployment, all of which have very significant implications for children. For UNICEF, the main area of contribution to social insurance programmes is around health insurance.⁷³ While UNICEF's work in the area is limited, a review of UNICEF's work revealed significant examples, including work in the Philippines on insurance packages for children including premature newborns and children with disabilities.⁷⁴ Further, there has been a growing interest from partner governments on the potential of health insurance to support universal health coverage.

Although there is limited analysis on the coverage of health insurance for children, as well programme costs and the appropriateness of benefits, evidence does suggest that overall coverage of health insurance is limited in many areas. Health insurance coverage differs greatly across the globe; while almost 100 per cent of the population in Western Europe are covered, coverage amounts to only 37 per cent in Asia and the Pacific (excluding China) and 25 per cent in Africa.⁷⁵ A review of evidence finds that social health insurance does generally increase access to and use of services, but this may not always include the poorest or most vulnerable in society.⁷⁶

This is an emerging area for UNICEF, with work with partners focusing on the following issues:

Expanding coverage with a focus on vulnerable populations and those living in poverty

With health insurance emerging as a mechanism to increase coverage, including in lower-income countries, ensuring that the most vulnerable are eligible and receiving services is crucial. One of the emerging areas of UNICEF's work is increasing coverage by linking recipients of social protection programmes to health insurance, and addressing issues of exclusion in health insurance programmes.

Supporting governments to define the package of health services under universal health coverage

Universal health coverage includes a minimum package of healthcare services that should be provided free of charge. UNICEF is ideally placed to provide support and advise on the definition of the package of health services for children and mothers. As a new area of work, the direction of support is likely to evolve over time.



Country snapshot

Mali: Expansion of non-contributory health insurance for poor households

The Government of Mali runs a national non-contributory health insurance scheme, the *Régime d'Assistance Médicale* (RAMED). Eligibility for the programme is granted for three years to people who are considered the poorest and who have no one to assist them. In 2018, the number of beneficiaries in the UNICEF-supported regions of Mopti and Sikasso who received medical services through RAMED increased sharply to 49,217 compared to only 5,287 in 2015, including 15,289 children in the two regions in the last year. UNICEF also collaborated with the World Bank in 2018 to refer the poorest beneficiaries of *Jigisemejiri* (the Emergency Safety Nets programme funded by the World Bank) to the RAMED programme, so that they can benefit from an integrated social protection package.

For a fuller case study, please see the Companion Guidance to this framework.

Action Area 6 Supporting childcare and adolescent employability

While labour market interventions form a core aspect of social protection for many organizations, they have not typically been part of UNICEF social protection work. However, UNICEF's new Strategic Plan reflects significant organizational commitment to two areas with direct implications for the employment of vulnerable populations: (i) supporting quality accessible childcare which facilitates parental (often maternal) employment and benefits early childhood development; and (ii) employability skills-building for adolescents as they transition to adulthood. These are newer areas of UNICEF's work in supporting social protection, and notably are not generally led by social policy teams who lead the majority of UNICEF's work on social protection.

This is an emerging area for UNICEF, and includes work with partners focusing on the following issues:

Childcare

UNICEF is working on expanding quality and affordable care for young children in 51 countries worldwide, and in these countries it is estimated that more than 50 per cent of children had access to quality affordable care. UNICEF's work on childcare includes developing national frameworks that include a focus on convenient, affordable and quality care, including a focus on issues such as appropriate curriculum, facilities and quality teaching and appropriate ratios. We also support family-friendly workplaces. As financial barriers are often a common impediment to accessing childcare, there are close connections between our work on childcare and other aspects of social protection.

Adolescent learning and skills for employability

All children and adolescents should be able to complete primary and secondary education, gaining the learning and skills needed for life and work. But less than half of adolescents globally complete secondary school, with the poorest most excluded. Moreover, youth are three times as likely

as adults to be unemployed. A total of 22 per cent of young people aged 15–29 are not in employment, education or training (NEET), with a much higher female rate (36 per cent) than male (9 per cent). UNICEF will continue to develop the learning and skills of children and adolescents (aged 3–15 years) with a focus on foundational and transferrable skills, whilst also supporting older adolescents to gain skills needed as they reach adulthood. Strategies include promoting equity in access to skills development opportunities, developing adolescent skills for work via multiple pathways and modalities, strengthening the quality and relevance of skills provision, and connecting adolescents to productive work opportunities.



Country snapshot

Bangladesh: Quality informal apprenticeships for vulnerable out-of-school adolescents

Over four years, 18,900 out-of-school adolescent boys and girls in Bangladesh accessed informal apprenticeships. Apprenticeships were provided to include supervised training under a selected master craftsman using a competency-based training and assessment model, including on-the-job trade training, and off-the-job trade theory and soft skills classes. Adolescents were placed in trades that challenged gender stereotypes and those who completed the apprenticeship were supported with job placements. More than 95 per cent of learners (50 per cent girls) graduated and became wage-earners.

For a fuller case study, please see the Companion Guidance to this framework.

Action Area 7 *Strengthening the social welfare workforce and direct outreach to families*

Families that are economically and socially vulnerable often face a range of challenges beyond the level of family income. Support to improve child outcomes requires direct outreach to assess the challenges they may face and provide the required responses, ranging from psychosocial support to connections to needed services. Such referral services and case management are often linked to the social welfare workforce but may also be implemented by or in collaboration with community-based volunteers and paraprofessionals.

A review of evidence shows there is significant room for both expanding and strengthening the social welfare workforce as well as building connections with social protection programmes. In Eastern and Southern Africa, for example, a review highlighted the importance of strong case management and referral mechanisms for addressing the needs of vulnerable children, with the expansion of social cash transfer programmes in the region offering opportunities for establishing such mechanisms.⁷⁷ In Asia and the Pacific, case management is deemed important in supporting families as they transition out of cash transfer programmes.⁷⁸

Although social welfare systems are well developed in some parts of the world, such as Europe and Central Asia and OECD countries, in others they are much more nascent. Across parts of Africa and Asia, ratios can be as low as one government social worker for tens of thousands of people. This raw count itself can be misleading as non-governmental agencies can provide social work services and in many countries community level systems are in place, but often functioning on a volunteer basis. On the other hand, numbers alone can obscure other challenges such as issues of work load, appropriate qualifications, training and support to handle the range of issues which can be required when working with families. Further, links between social protection programmes and outreach services are often not in place.

Given UNICEF's experience in both social protection and child protection, we are uniquely placed to work with governments and other partners in strengthening systems to provide this outreach. In

this action area UNICEF works with partners on the following issues:

Building and strengthening the social welfare workforce

The social welfare workforce is the foundation of providing direct personal support to families facing a range of needs. UNICEF's work includes functional reviews of the social work system, including assessing gaps in capacity and numbers; national approaches to expanding the workforce, including roles and responsibilities; and providing increased training and support to facilitate social work, including the use of new technologies.

Family outreach and case management

The expansion of cash transfer programmes and a strengthened social welfare workforce provides an opportunity to build case management approaches to identify and follow up on the range of needs a family may have. This includes adjusting information systems with relevant indicators, mapping child specific services and referral, and supporting the development and implementation of a case management system.



Country snapshot

The State of Palestine: a case-management approach to multidimensional poverty

The State of Palestine's national framework on poverty incorporates both the economic and social dimensions of vulnerabilities. In 2016–2017, UNICEF and the WFP supported the Ministry of Social Development to design a new six-year Social Development Sector Strategy that incorporates the national guidelines. Consequently, the central focus of ministry reform was the introduction of a case management system – an approach advocated by UNICEF. Under this system, families classified as extremely poor are assigned a social worker who then conducts home visits to assess each client family's needs and establish a customized plan of care and support services.

For a fuller case study, please see the Companion Guidance to this framework.

Action Area 8 *Strengthening integrated administrative systems*

A strong administrative system is the backbone of an integrated social protection system. It enables coordination among different programmes and improves efficiency by simplifying processes, effort, time and resources. Different countries are at various stages of putting in place integrated administrative systems, but generally there is significant room for growth in this area. This is an established area of work for UNICEF and partners, although typically UNICEF focuses on administration of particular programmes. There are different components of a systems administration as discussed under the elements of child-sensitive social protection (CSSP). UNICEF's strong comparative advantage is ensuring that child-sensitive information is sufficiently and adequately collected, analyzed and reported, and that systems are disability- and gender-sensitive and shock responsive.

In this action area, UNICEF's work with partners includes:

Improving integrated information systems

Integrated data on social protection, including information on children, not only enables better programme monitoring but also provides information that policy makers can use to make decisions for planning, design and implementation. While many countries have programme MIS and associated beneficiary registries, integrated information systems that serve the sector as a whole are still lacking, particularly with gaps on child-specific information and crucial characteristics such as gender and disability. UNICEF has been engaged in supporting governments in establishing MIS for specific cash transfer programmes in many countries, and demand is increasing for support on integrated information systems and the registries that underpin them.

Improving coordination and service delivery at sub-national level

In general, human resource functions for social protection are underfunded and under-staffed, particularly in rural areas where child poverty rates tend to be higher. UNICEF is very active at local level not only in social protection, but in education, health, nutrition and child protection, making it well placed to support sub-national coordination and service delivery among different child-related departments. This includes building the capacity of the social workforce at local level, and increasing planning, monitoring and overall management and service delivery of social protection system.



Country snapshot

Iraq: Developing a Management Information System (MIS) to identify, monitor and follow-up beneficiaries as part of a government cash transfer programme

With support from UNICEF, in collaboration with the World Bank and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), the Government of Iraq are piloting a case identification and referral approach as part of a pilot cash transfer programme to improve school enrolment and retention, and improve health outcomes for children and women by increasing the number of prenatal and postnatal visits and vaccination for children under the age of 5. The pilot programme was launched by the Minister of MOLSA in March 2018 in Sadr-2 in the Baghdad Governorate of Iraq. The MIS provides beneficiaries, social workers, schools management staff and health centre officials with a user-friendly platform to follow up and identify cases that need additional support.

For a fuller case study, please see the Companion Guidance to this framework.

Action Area 9 *Strengthening national shock-responsive social protection systems*

Children and families need social protection systems to respond to shocks at the individual, household or community level, but also to respond when broader crises, including humanitarian crises, hit. A mapping exercise conducted by UNICEF revealed significant gaps in the ability of flagship cash transfer programmes to be scaled up by governments in response to a crisis. While the ability of social protection systems to play a role in a crisis varies across countries, there is tremendous scope to improve the speed of response and coverage of vulnerable populations and their needs by focusing on preparedness and strengthening different components of routine social protection systems, including increased coordination with the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and humanitarian sectors. With extensive experience in social protection as well as humanitarian response, UNICEF is extremely well placed to support governments and other partners in this rapidly-expanding area. Strengthening shock-responsive social protection systems is integral to all of the action areas outlined above, but with specific focus and activities:

Evidence and analysis

Routine areas of UNICEF expertise – such as conducting child poverty analysis, impact evaluations, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), costing exercises and system assessments – can better encompass a focus on risks and shocks, to feed into planning and programming.

Policy, strategy, legislation, coordination and financing

UNICEF works on adapting national policies, strategies and legislation to allow for the use of routine programmes and their underlying systems to support a comprehensive national response strategy, in coordination with the DRM and humanitarian sectors. This is complemented by work to ensure a financing strategy, clear roles and responsibilities and lines of accountability for eventual scale up.

Programmes and their design features

UNICEF works alongside governments to ensure that the mix of interventions – including linkages, objectives, targeting design, transfer value, timing and duration – respond to the needs of populations who are at risk of, or affected by, (covariate) shocks.

Administration and delivery systems

UNICEF supports preparedness measures so that programmes, and their underlying delivery systems, are ready to a) ensure continuity of service delivery and b) potentially flex or scale up in response to shocks. For an existing system to play a role in times of crisis, the 'nuts and bolts' of that system require minor adjustments so that they can respond to different objectives and timelines, aligned with changes in social protection policy and strategy.



Country snapshot

Malawi: Establishing a shock-responsive social protection system

Malawi is an agriculture-based economy that is exposed to climate and weather-related risks, and faces seasonal dry spells that have progressively eroded the livelihood systems of poor households. More than 50 per cent of the population lives below the national poverty line. UNICEF is working closely with the Ministry of Gender, Child, Disability and Social Welfare, the WFP and other stakeholders to: (i) support investment in shock-sensitive social protection; (ii) pilot vertical and horizontal expansion of the flagship Social Cash Transfer Programme; (iii) increase efficiency of payment systems; and (iv) build national capacity to support scale up.

For a fuller case study, please see the Companion Guidance to this framework.



Box 14: UNICEF's approach to social protection in fragile, humanitarian and other crisis contexts

Social protection systems should be able to respond to crises, in addition to addressing longer-term poverty and social vulnerability. Children and families need support not only to counter obstacles affecting individual households, but also to respond to shocks that affect large parts of the population simultaneously. These shocks can include protracted, slow and sudden onset humanitarian crises, as well as economic crises. The response to these shocks should also take into account the differentiated experience of individuals within the population affected, depending on different and often intersecting vulnerabilities.

Government social protection systems can be highly effective mechanisms for emergency response. Effective social protection systems already have measures in place to identify and reach the vulnerable as well as consultation and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that systems are working effectively; all of which are essential for supporting people in times of crisis. This is recognized in the international consensus that humanitarian response should, wherever feasible, take place through national systems, including social protection systems, reflecting the responsibility of the State in times of emergency as well as development contexts.

In order to become shock responsive, national social protection systems often need some design changes. These changes range from policy, financing and coordination mechanisms to developing shock-responsive operating mechanisms (such as adjusting the MIS/database, strengthening delivery mechanisms, and using technology to improve speed and transparency).

UNICEF has a strong comparative advantage in supporting the development and use of shock-responsive social protection systems. UNICEF already works extensively on supporting governments to strengthen national social protection systems, and we are present before, during and after a crisis working across development, fragile and humanitarian contexts. Key results outlined in UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2017-2021 reflect our commitment to extend our social protection support to helping governments strengthen these systems to be shock-responsive.

UNICEF's approach to this work focuses first on supporting social protection system preparedness. With the growing recognition of the role of cash in humanitarian response, this may involve a particular focus on the readiness of national social assistance programmes and how they link to national emergency response processes. However, this can and should include links to other important services, including case management services for vulnerable children and families, and connections to key services such as health and education. (This work is captured in *Action Area 9: Building and strengthening national shock-responsive social protection systems*.)

UNICEF also supports the use of national social protection systems during a crisis. Where government systems are not strong enough to be used in their entirety, UNICEF will support governments to use some aspects of the system (such as beneficiary and social registries or payment mechanisms), and work to ensure any parallel mechanisms are as closely aligned with government systems as possible. In some contexts, government systems may not be in place or appropriate to use and alternative delivery mechanisms may be needed. Where such non-government mechanisms are used, UNICEF will support building nascent national social protection systems for longer-term use and help strengthen the humanitarian-development continuum. (This work is captured in *Action Area 10: Linking humanitarian cash transfers to social protection systems*.)

For more information, see the [Outcome Document](#) from the International Conference on Social Protection in contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement (2017).

Action Area 10 *Linking humanitarian cash transfers to social protection systems*

The global community is increasingly focusing on the need to channel humanitarian response in the form of cash transfers wherever appropriate. The past decade has seen a significant increase in the use of cash transfers to assist populations affected by crisis with an estimated US\$2.8 billion disbursed worldwide as humanitarian cash transfers in 2016,⁷⁹ up by 40 per cent from 2015 and approximately 100 per cent from 2014. Despite the increase, humanitarian cash transfers (HCTs) comprised 10 per cent of the overall humanitarian aid.

As an agency with extensive experience in social transfers, and presence in countries before during and after crises hit, UNICEF is extremely well placed to support the delivery of cash during humanitarian response, including linking children and families to services and information. Wherever possible, our focus is to support the use of national systems in whole or in part for humanitarian cash transfers, and to integrate a focus on systems building into our work so that national social protection systems emerge strengthened.

In this action area UNICEF works with partners on the following issues:

Designing humanitarian cash transfers to achieve sectoral outcomes

Design elements include context analysis and assessments of children's needs, designing the transfer including any targeting approaches, transfer values and timing, and coordination with stakeholders.

Supporting identifying the role of national systems in implementation of a humanitarian cash transfer programme

UNICEF's first choice is to use national systems for delivery, and includes assessing system compatibility with humanitarian principles, capacity to deliver, and designing the best delivery approach with relevant partners.

Using the national social protection system to implement a humanitarian cash transfer

UNICEF's first choice is delivery of HCTs through the national system, however, where needed we also implement delivery through parallel or mixed systems. Where parallel systems are used, UNICEF works to build linkages to support national programmes in the future.



Country snapshot

Dominica: Delivering a multi-purpose child grant through the Public Assistance Programme

Following Hurricane Maria in Dominica in 2017, UNICEF partnered with the Government and WFP to design a humanitarian cash transfer programme to respond to the needs of affected households with children. It was decided to leverage the existing national Public Assistance Programme (PAP) system for the transfer. The programme provided unconditional cash transfers to almost 25,000 people (including 6,000 children) by scaling up the national programme both in terms of households reached and transfer amounts. UNICEF's contribution included financial and technical support, programme communication support and payment monitoring.

For a fuller case study, please see the Companion Guidance to this framework.

Table 3 A summary of UNICEF's activities to achieve results for children across action areas

A FOUNDATION OF EVIDENCE

Action Area 1:

Child poverty analysis, impact evaluations and systems assessments

- **Child poverty measurement and analysis:** Routine national measurement analysis of child poverty and implications for social protection.
- **Impact evaluations:** Assess programme impacts using evaluation designs including randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and quasi-experimental designs to inform national programmes.
- **Social protection systems assessments:** Generate evidence on the strengths and weaknesses of how the social protection system works for children, including identifying gaps and options.



POLICY, LEGISLATION AND FINANCING FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS

Action Area 2:

Policy and strategy development, coordination and financing

- **Strategies and policy frameworks:** Supporting national dialogue on social protection laws/policies, supporting the drafting and development of social protection strategies.
- **Coordination:** Assessing and supporting development of national capacities and coordination mechanisms. Support strengthening of lead ministries, and coordination development partner coordination.
- **Domestic financing:** Sector expenditure reviews, costings of programmes, fiscal space analysis and working with governments to increase resource allocation for social protection.



PROGRAMME AREAS OF CHILD-SENSITIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS

Social transfers

Action Area 3:

Expanding and improving cash transfers for children

- **Building political support:** Advocacy and stakeholder engagement to build understanding, support and financing for cash transfer programmes.
- **Supporting programme design:** Including targeting, addressing exclusion, transfer size, frequency and links to other programmes.
- **Implementation:** Beneficiary identification, communication, payments systems, linkages to other services, programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and management information systems (MIS).

Action Area 4:

Connecting cash transfers to information, knowledge and services

- **Providing recipients with information, knowledge and connections to services:** Understanding the non-financial needs of beneficiaries, connecting cash transfer programmes to information, knowledge and relevant services, and building the evidence base on best practices.

Social insurance

Action Area 5:

Expanding and improving health insurance

- **Increasing coverage to poor and marginalized populations:** Advocacy for health insurance expansion, linking cash transfer beneficiaries with health insurance, and improving identification of poorest for non-contributory health insurance.
- **Defining health services included in health insurance:** Analysis of gaps in health coverage and defining minimum package of health services for child and maternal health to be included under universal health coverage.

Labour and jobs**Action Area 6:**

Supporting childcare and adolescent employability

- **Childcare:** Development of policy and normative frameworks, increasing convenience, affordability and quality of childcare and supporting family-friendly workplaces.
- **Adolescent learning and skills:** Support systems-based approaches to adolescent learning and skills for employability, improving quality and relevance of programmes and flexible approaches to education.

Social service workforce**Action Area 7:**

Strengthening the social welfare workforce and direct outreach to families

- **Building and strengthening the social welfare workforce:** Including clarifying roles and responsibilities, and expanding the workforce and training.
- **Family outreach and case management:** Integrate family outreach and support into social protection programmes including case management approaches.

**ADMINISTRATION AND INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY****Action Area 8:**

Strengthening integrated administrative systems

- **Improving integrated management information systems (MIS):** Needs assessments, developing MIS, building technical capacity and developing grievance and redress mechanisms.
- **Improving coordination and service delivery at sub-national level:** Improving overall capacity of sub-national social protection system to plan, coordinate and implement social protection programmes in an integrated way.

**SOCIAL PROTECTION IN HUMANITARIAN, FRAGILE AND RISK-PRONE CONTEXTS****Action Area 9:**

Strengthening national shock-responsive social protection systems

- **Evidence and analysis:** Inclusion of an analysis of risks and shocks in child poverty analysis, impact evaluations/M&E/learning, social protection costing exercises and system assessments.
- **Policy, strategy, legislation, coordination and financing:** Reviewing and adapting relevant policies for scale up; making budgetary provisions; contingency planning; and strengthening horizontal and vertical coordination between social protection, emergency response and other relevant local authorities.
- **Programmes and design features:** Reviewing and adjusting the mix of programmes and their design features, such as eligibility criteria and transfer values, to enhance coverage and provide adequate levels of assistance in times of crisis; inter-linkages and complementary services.
- **Administration and delivery systems:** Adjusting the administrative and delivery systems of routine social protection programmes so they can be leveraged fully, partially or in combination to respond to the needs of children and families affected by crisis.

Action Area 10:

Linking humanitarian cash transfers to social protection systems

- **Designing humanitarian cash transfers to achieve sectoral outcomes:** Context analysis including children's needs, transfer design and coordinating with stakeholders.
- **Determining the role of national systems in implementation of a humanitarian cash transfer programme:** Ascertaining the compatibility of the national system, assessing capacity and choosing the most appropriate delivery option.
- **Using the national social protection system to implement a humanitarian cash transfer:** Delivery of humanitarian cash transfers through national or mixed (national/parallel systems). Building linkages with national approaches when using parallel systems.

Annex 1

Social protection approaches of UN agencies, international financial institutions, development and civil-society partners

AGENCY/ INSTITUTION	APPROACH/DEFINITION	COMPONENTS	WEBSITE	KEY DOCUMENTS
Inter-agency coordinating bodies				
SPIAC- B (Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board)	Social protection is a set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion throughout their life-course, placing a particular emphasis on vulnerable groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social insurance. • Tax-funded social benefits. • Social assistance services. • Public works programmes. • Other schemes guaranteeing basic income security and access to essential services. 	https://www.ilo.org/newyork/issues-at-work/social-protection/social-protection-inter-agency-cooperation-board/lang-en/index.htm	SPIAC-B – Terms of Reference (2012?) SPIAC-B – Brochure
United Nations				
UN (DESA)	<p>Social protection is defined as all measures providing cash or in-kind benefits to guarantee income security and access to healthcare.</p> <p>Comprehensive social protection systems secure protection from lack of work-related income caused by sickness, disability, maternity, employment injury, unemployment,</p> <p>old age or death of a family member, and general poverty and social exclusion; they also ensure access to basic healthcare, and provide family support, particularly for children and adult dependents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributory programmes (social insurance schemes, including unemployment and health insurance schemes. • Tax-financed (or non-contributory) programmes include many forms of social assistance, such as social pension schemes, unemployment assistance, and conditional cash transfer programmes, among others. 	https://www.un.org/development/desa/socialperspectiveondevelopment/issues/social-protection.html	2018 Report on the World Social Situation
ILO	Social protection, or social security is defined as the set of policies and programmes designed to reduce and prevent poverty and vulnerability throughout the life-course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits for children and families, maternity, unemployment, employment injury, sickness, old age, disability, survivors, as well as health protection. • Social protection systems address all these policy areas by a mix of contributory schemes (social insurance) and non-contributory tax-financed benefits, including social assistance. 	https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/social-security/lang-en/index.htm	World Social Protection Report 2017-2019

AGENCY/ INSTITUTION	APPROACH/DEFINITION	COMPONENTS	WEBSITE	KEY DOCUMENTS
UNDP	<p>A set of nationally-owned policies and instruments that provide income support and facilitate access to goods and services by all households and individuals at least at minimally-accepted levels, to protect them from deprivation and social exclusion,</p> <p>particularly during periods of insufficient income, incapacity or inability to work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social protection systems can include various schemes and programmes, including universal schemes, social assistance, social insurance, employment guarantees and other public employment programmes, and measures to facilitate access to education, health and care services. 	NA	Leaving No One Behind: A Social Protection Primer for Practitioners (2016)
WFP	<p>Social protection refers to a broad set of arrangements and instruments designed to protect members of society from shocks and stresses over the life-course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social assistance for the poor. • Social insurance for the vulnerable. • Labour market regulations and social justice for the marginalized. 	https://www1.wfp.org/social-protection-and-safety-nets	Social Protection and the World Food Programme (2018)
FAO	<p>Social protection is a set of interventions whose objective is to reduce social and economic risk and vulnerability, and to alleviate extreme poverty and deprivation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social assistance: publically-provided conditional or unconditional cash or in-kind transfers, or public works programmes; • Social insurance: contributory programmes that cover designated contingencies affecting the welfare or income of households; • Labour market protection: unemployment benefits, skills and training. 	http://www.fao.org/social-protection/overview/whatisssp/en/	FAO Social Protection Framework (2017)
UN Women	<p>Social protection programmes (ranging from cash and in-kind transfers to public works to social health insurance) aim to reduce vulnerability and promote individual, household and community resilience to shocks and stresses through improved</p> <p>household income and access to basic and social services</p>		http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/macroeconomics-policies-and-social-protection	<p>Gender and age-responsive social protection: The potential of cash transfers to advance adolescent rights and capabilities (2019)</p> <p>Making national social protection floors work for women</p>
International Financial Institutions/Development banks				
World Bank	<p>Social protection systems help the poor and vulnerable cope with crises and shocks, find jobs, invest in the health and education of their children, and protect the ageing population.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social assistance (social safety nets) such as cash transfers, school feeding programmes and targeted food assistance. • Social insurance such as old-age and disability pensions, and unemployment insurance. • Labour market programmes such as skillsbuilding programmes, jobsearch and matching programmes, and improved labour regulations. 	http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialprotection	The World Bank's Social Protection and Labor Strategy 2012–2022

AGENCY/ INSTITUTION	APPROACH/DEFINITION	COMPONENTS	WEBSITE	KEY DOCUMENTS
IMF	<p>Social protection aims at preventing or alleviating sharp reductions in well-being, particularly for the most vulnerable groups in society.</p> <p>Social protection policies assume particular importance during recessions or crises when a substantial share of the population may become unemployed and/or fall into poverty, or in the face of sharp movements in the prices of products consumed by lower-income groups.</p> <p>Social protection is also relevant in the face of longer-term trends such as population ageing and displacement of workers by new technologies.</p>	<p>Social protection encompasses a variety of policy instruments providing cash or in-kind benefits to vulnerable individuals or households, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social insurance (such as public pension schemes); • Social assistance (such as government transfers to the poor); and • Labour market interventions for the unemployed (such as unemployment insurance and active labour market policies). 	<p>https://www.imf.org/ieo/pages/EvaluationImages279.aspx</p>	<p>The IMF's Role in Social Protection: Fund Policy and Guidance (2017)</p> <p>The IMF and Social Protection (2017)</p> <p>A strategy for IMF engagement on social spending (2019)</p>
AfDB	<p>In many parts of Africa, the aged, children, internally-displaced people and pastoralists also face severe problems of poverty, and would benefit from social protection programmes, especially social safety nets.</p>	<p>The African Development Bank supports provision for the following social protection-related activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public works programmes that create employment for the able-bodied poor, particularly in rural areas; • Re-training of public employees retrenched as a result of adjustment programmes; • Child feeding programmes, especially for HIV/AIDS-related orphans; and • Emergency relief, including food aid in times of natural disaster. 	<p>https://www.afdb.org/en/topics-and-sectors/topics/poverty-reduction/</p>	<p>AfDB Group Policy on Poverty Reduction (2004)</p>
ADB	<p>A set of policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and interruption/loss of income.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour market policies and programmes designed to promote employment, the efficient operation of labour markets, and worker protection. • Social insurance programmes to cushion the risks associated with unemployment, catastrophic out-of-pocket health costs, disability, work injury, and the growing ageing population. • Social assistance and welfare service programmes for the most vulnerable with no means of support, including single mothers, the homeless, or physically or mentally challenged people. 	<p>https://www.adb.org/themes/social-development/social-protection</p>	<p>Social Protection Strategy (2001)</p>

AGENCY/ INSTITUTION	APPROACH/DEFINITION	COMPONENTS	WEBSITE	KEY DOCUMENTS
IADB	A set of policies and programmes that promote social inclusion—focusing on early childhood development, capacity-building for young people, and care for dependent persons—along with redistributive policies and programmes supporting minimum levels of consumption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redistributive programmes and policies focus on people in extreme poverty, whereas social inclusion programmes and policies target a broader population of poor and vulnerable people. • Social insurance and active labour market policy areas are NOT part of social protection but covered under the Health and Nutrition Sector Framework Document (health risk) and the Labour Sector Framework Document (protection against loss of employment income, active labour market policies, and old age pensions). 	https://www.iadb.org/en/socialprotection	Social Protection and Poverty Sector Framework (2017)
Development partners				
DFID	Social protection is a set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion throughout their life-course, placing particular emphasis on vulnerable groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social insurance. • Tax-funded social benefits. • Social assistance services. • Public works programmes. • Other schemes guaranteeing basic income security and access to essential services. 	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-international-development-single-departmental-plan/department-for-international-development-single-departmental-plan-december-2018	<i>DFID is a member of SPIAC-B and endorses the board's definition of social protection.</i>
SIDA	Social protection is a set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion throughout their life-course, placing particular emphasis on vulnerable groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social insurance. • Tax-funded social benefits. • Social assistance services. • Public works programmes. • Other schemes guaranteeing basic income security and access to essential services. 		<i>SIDA is a member of SPIAC-B and endorses the board's definition of social protection.</i>
EU	Social protection systems are designed to provide protection against the risks and needs associated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unemployment, - parental responsibilities, - sickness and healthcare, - invalidity, - loss of a spouse or parent, - old age, - housing, and - social exclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social insurance. • Tax-funded social benefits. • Social assistance services. • Public works programmes. • Other schemes guaranteeing basic income security and access to essential services. 	https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1063&langId=en	Europe 2020 Strategy (2010) The open method of coordination for social protection and social inclusion

AGENCY/ INSTITUTION	APPROACH/DEFINITION	COMPONENTS	WEBSITE	KEY DOCUMENTS
GIZ	Social protection is a set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion throughout their life-course, placing particular emphasis on vulnerable groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social insurance. • Tax-funded social benefits. • Social assistance services. • Public works programmes. • Other schemes guaranteeing basic income security and access to essential services. 	https://www.giz.de/expertise/html/60024.html	<i>GIZ is a member of SPIAC-B and endorses the board's definition of social protection.</i>
OECD	Social protection refers to policies and actions which enhance the capacity of poor and vulnerable people to escape from poverty and enable them to better manage risks and shocks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social protection measures include social insurance, social transfers and minimum labour standards. 	http://www.oecd.org/social/	https://www.oecd.org/greengrowth/green-development/43514554.pdf
USAID	Social protection systems play a crucial role in both raising incomes and providing a safety net in times of crisis.	Direct cash and asset transfers, including conditional cash transfers, alleviate extreme poverty directly while building resilience to future shocks and stresses.	https://www.usaid.gov/ending-extreme-poverty	Vision For Ending Extreme Poverty (2014)
Irish Aid	Social protection has been defined globally as all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-contributory systems and programmes, including public works and employment guarantee schemes. • Regular and predictable social transfers, both in cash and in kind, to poor and vulnerable individuals and households. 	https://www.irishaid.ie/news-publications/publications/publicationsarchive/2017/september/social-protection-strategy-2017/	Irish Aid Social Protection Strategy 2017
Australia DFAT	Social protection refers to programmes that address risk, vulnerability, inequality and poverty through a system of transfers to people in cash or in kind.	The transfers can take a variety of forms such as financial grants, food transfers, cash-for-work, and school feeding programmes; and can be funded by contributions from recipients (social insurance) or by government (social assistance).	https://dfat.gov.au/AID/TOPICS/INVESTMENT-PRIORITIES/BUILDING-RESILIENCE/SOCIAL-PROTECTION/Pages/social-protection.aspx	Strategy for Australia's aid investments in social protection (2015)
NGOs				
Save the Children	A set of public policies, programmes and systems that help poor and vulnerable individuals and households to reduce their economic and social vulnerabilities, improve their ability to cope with risks and shocks, and enhance their social status and human rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social assistance, including cash transfers, in-kind transfers, or a combination. • Social insurance such as unemployment benefits and health insurance. • Relevant national legislation, policies and regulations such as maternity policy. 	https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/child-sensitive-social-protection-position-paper	Child Sensitive Social Protection Position paper (2015)

AGENCY/ INSTITUTION	APPROACH/DEFINITION	COMPONENTS	WEBSITE	KEY DOCUMENTS
World Vision	Social protection refers to a range of formal and informal mechanisms that support the basic needs of the most vulnerable households by smoothing consumption, providing safety nets, and promoting positive coping strategies in the event of a crisis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social protection include government and NGO-provided mechanisms such as health centres, nutritious food for children, food distribution programmes, and cash-based interventions. • Other less formal types of social protection include support from religious institutions such as church or community groups or help from family members or neighbours. 	https://www.worldvision.org/our-work/economic-empowerment/#1470869887604-2b2a7064-3ed2	Ultra-Poor Graduation Handbook 2018
BRAC	Social protection generally encompasses social and economic transfers, access to services, social support and care services, and equity and non-discrimination legislation and policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and economic transfers. • Programmes that ensure access to services. • Social support and care services. • Legislation and policies to ensure equity and non-discrimination in access to services and employment/livelihoods. 	http://www.brac.net/program/ultra-poor-graduation/	Tackling Ultra-poverty through the Graduation Approach: Situating Sustainable Livelihoods in the Landscape of Social Protection and Safety Nets (2014)

Annex 2

Measuring progress: UNICEF's Strategic Plan goals and indicators for social protection

Social protection features prominently in UNICEF's latest Strategic Plan. This annex outlines the Strategic Plan goal areas and indicators for UNICEF's action areas in social protection. Progress against these indicators is measured annually by collecting country office responses to the [Strategic Monitoring Questions](#) (SMQs), which are reported in the Executive Director's Annual Report (EDAR), the Data Companion and the Goal Area 5 Annual

Reports. Further, [RAM⁸⁰ standard indicators](#) on social protection have been developed to support country offices in tracking progress in various areas of work under social protection as part of their Country Programme Documents (CPDs). Full details, including UNICEF's SMQs, RAM indicators and [Specific Intervention Codes](#) (SIC) by action area, are available in the Companion Guidance to this framework.

Action Area	Strategic Plan 2018-2021: Goal Area and Result Area	Strategic Plan indicators
Action Area 1. Child poverty analysis, impact evaluations and systems assessments	Goal Area 5 Result Area: Child Poverty	5.1. Percentage of children living in extreme poverty (SDG 1.1.1) (outcome indicator).
		5.a.1. Number of countries with nationally-owned measurement and reporting on child poverty.
		5.a.3. Number of countries where measurement, analysis or advocacy has led to policies and programmes to reduce child poverty.
		5.b.1. Number of countries with moderately strong or strong social protection systems.
Action Area 2. Policy and strategy development, coordination and financing	Goal Area 5 Result Area: Social Protection	5.b.1. Number of countries with moderately strong or strong social protection systems.
Action Area 3. Expanding and improving cash transfers for children	Goal Area 5 Result Area: Social Protection	5.4. Number of girls and boys reached by cash transfer programmes through UNICEF-supported programmes (outcome indicator).
		5.b.1. Number of countries with moderately strong or strong social protection systems.
Action Area 4. Connecting cash transfers to information, knowledge and services	Goal Area 5 Result Area: Social Protection	5.b.1. Number of countries with moderately strong or strong social protection systems.
Action Area 5. Expanding and improving health insurance	Goal Area 1 Result Areas: Maternal and newborn health; immunisation; child health. Goal Area 5 Result Area: Social Protection	Currently no health insurance indicators.

Action Area	Strategic Plan 2018-2021: Goal Area and Result Area	Strategic Plan indicators
Action Area 6. Supporting childcare and adolescent employability (Childcare)	Goal Area 1 Result Area: Early childhood development Goal Area 5 Result Area: Social Protection	1.20. Percentage of children receiving early stimulation and responsive care from their parents or caregivers (outcome indicator). 1.h.1. Number of countries that have adopted ECD packages for children at scale. 1.h.2. Number of countries with national ECD policy or implementation plans for scale-up. 1.h.3. Percentage of UNICEF-targeted girls and boys in humanitarian situations who participate in organized programmes with ECD kits through UNICEF-supported programmes.
Action Area 6. Supporting childcare and adolescent employability (Adolescent employability)	Goal Area 2 Result Area: Skills Development Goal Area 5 Result Area: Adolescent Empowerment	Percentage of 15-24 years old not in employment, education or training (NEET) (Outcome indicator). 2.c.2. Percentage of UNICEF-supported countries with systems that institutionalize gender-equitable skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and/or employability (available with disaggregation across 3 dimensions: i) mainstreaming of skills development within the national education/training system; ii) responsiveness to the demands of the labour market; and iii) gender-equitable skills development) 2.c.1 Number of girls and boys who have participated in skills development programmes for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and/or employability through UNICEF-supported programmes. 5.5 Number of adolescent girls and boys who participate in or lead civic engagement initiatives through UNICEF supported programmes (outcome indicator). 5.c.1 Number of countries with appropriate national policies and legislation supporting development of adolescent girls and boys.
Action Area 7. Strengthening the social welfare workforce and direct outreach to families	Goal Area 5 Result Area: Social Protection	5.b.1. Number of countries with moderately strong or strong social protection systems.
	Goal Area 3 Result Area: Prevention and Response to Violence	3.3. Core prevention and response interventions addressing violence against children through UNICEF supported programmes (a) number of mothers, fathers and caregivers reached through parenting programmes; and (b) number of girls and boys who have experienced violence who are reached by health, social work or justice/law enforcement services. (outcome indicator). 3.a.1. Number of countries with quality assurance system in place for social service work.
Action Area 8. Strengthening integrated administrative systems	Goal Area 5 Result Area: Social Protection	5.b.1. Number of countries with moderately strong or strong social protection systems.
Action Area 9. Strengthening national shock-responsive social protection systems	Goal Area 5 Result Area: Social Protection	5.b.2. Number of countries with national cash transfer programmes that are ready to respond to a crisis.
Action Area 10. Linking humanitarian cash transfers to social protection systems	Goal Area 5 Result Area: Social Protection	5.4. Number of girls and boys reached by cash transfer programmes through UNICEF-supported programmes – disaggregated for humanitarian contexts.

Annex 3

Glossary

This glossary hopes to provide clarity and, where possible, definitions for selected terms used throughout this document, noting that these terms can be interpreted differently by different agencies and stakeholders. References for terms are provided wherever possible.

Active labour market policies: Active labour market policies aim to reduce unemployment by: (i) matching jobseekers with current vacancies; (ii) upgrading and adapting jobseekers' skills; (iii) providing employment subsidies; and (iv) creating jobs either through public sector employment or the provision of subsidies for private sector work. They can be contrasted with passive labour market policies (PLMPs) which intends to provide replacement income during times of joblessness.⁸¹

Cash plus: 'Cash plus' programmes can be characterized as social protection interventions that provide regular transfers in combination with additional components or linkages that seek to augment income effects. This is done either by inducing further behavioural changes or by addressing supply-side constraints. Options for so doing include the provision of information (such as through behaviour-change communication or sensitization meetings), provision of additional benefits and support (such as supplementary feeding or psychosocial support), provision or facilitation of access to services (such as through health insurance or setting up village savings and loans associations) or implementation of case management (ensuring referrals to other sectors), or strengthening the quality of existing services and facilitating linkages to these.⁸² It is important to note that although the term 'cash plus' implies a social protection system with cash at its centre, in many countries and regions this is not how social protection systems are structured, so the term may not be useful in all contexts.

Cash transfers: Non-contributory scheme or programme providing cash benefits to individuals or households, usually financed out of taxation, other government revenue, or external grants or loans. Cash transfer programmes may or may not include a means test. Cash transfer programmes that provide cash to families subject to the condition that they fulfil specific behavioural requirements are referred to as conditional cash transfer programmes (CCTs). This may mean, for example, that beneficiaries must ensure their children attend school regularly, or that they utilize basic preventative nutrition and healthcare services.

Child-sensitive social protection (CSSP): CSSP encompasses programmes that aim to maximise positive

impacts on children and to minimise potential unintended side effects. This includes both *direct interventions* (i.e. child focused or targeted) and *indirect interventions*. CSSP can be implemented in both humanitarian and development contexts, and across sectoral areas, to advance the rights and well-being of children, especially the poorest and most deprived. In that regard, it is important that CSSP not only focuses on children living with their families, but also recognises and addresses the needs of children living outside of households, such as children without parental care.⁸³

Child protection: UNICEF uses the term 'child protection' to refer to prevention and response to violence, exploitation and abuse of children in all contexts. This includes reaching children who are especially vulnerable to these threats, such as those living without family care, on the streets or in situations of conflict or natural disasters.⁸⁴

Exclusion errors: The inadvertent exclusion of intended beneficiaries from a programme recipient pool as the result of a particular targeting practice.

Inclusion errors: The inadvertent inclusion of unintended beneficiaries in a programme recipient pool as the result of a particular targeting practice.

In-kind transfers: Predictable and regular transfers of food, fuel or other basic goods which are used to reduce the vulnerability of individuals or households.⁸⁵

Monetary poverty: Monetary poverty is most commonly defined as insufficient income to buy a minimum basket of goods and services.⁸⁶ Each country has its own threshold, which varies depending on country status. In high-income countries, poverty lines are often relative, i.e. defined in relation to the overall distribution of income. In low-income countries, poverty lines are often set by absolute standards, following the cost of basic needs method.⁸⁷

The international extreme poverty line is defined at PPP\$1.90 per day per person and is set with reference to the national poverty lines in a select number of the poorest countries, and must therefore be understood to represent a very low threshold standard of living. More recently the World Bank has used the PPP\$3.20 and PPP\$5.50 international poverty lines, in particularly for middle-income countries. The World Bank databases have an overview of poverty rates at national poverty lines as well as poverty rates at various international poverty lines.⁸⁸

Multidimensional poverty:⁸⁹ Multidimensional poverty encompasses the multiple deprivations experienced by people in their daily lives – such as poor access to health, inadequate education, poor nutrition, inadequate living standards, among others.

Multidimensional poverty is particularly relevant for children, as they experience poverty differently and more severely than adults, damaging their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual development. For children, living in poverty means being deprived in the immediate aspects of their lives, areas including nutrition, health, water, education, protection and shelter. Therefore, expanding the definition of child poverty beyond traditional conceptualizations, such as low household income or low levels of consumption, is important.

Public works: A transfer (usually cash or food) that is given on completion of a work requirement generally to increase workers' income. Public works are often for a short duration and produce a public good in the form of new infrastructure or improvements of existing infrastructure or delivery of services.

Shock-responsive social protection: The ability of the social protection system to anticipate shocks to maintain its regular programme/s, to scale up and/or flex to accommodate new populations and needs as a result of the shocks, and to contribute to resilience building of individuals, households, communities and systems against future shocks. The term 'scale up' refers to a range of options including but not limited to introduction of new governmental programmes; expansion of existing programmes; and use of some or all components of the programme operational system by other ministries (especially DRM) and/or other humanitarian actors such as UNICEF to deliver humanitarian assistance.

Social exclusion: A state in which individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life, as well as the process leading to and sustaining such a state. Participation may be hindered when people lack access to material resources, including income, employment, land and housing, or to such services as education and healthcare — essential foundations of well-being. Yet participation is also limited when people cannot exercise their voice or interact with each other, and when their rights and dignity are not accorded equal respect and protection. Thus, social exclusion entails not only material deprivation but also lack of agency or control over important decisions as well as feelings of alienation and inferiority. In nearly all countries, to varying degrees, age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, migration status, socioeconomic status, place of residence, and sexual orientation and gender identity have been grounds for social exclusion over time.

Social insurance: Refers to programmes such as health insurance, unemployment insurance and contributory pensions. This type of social protection relies on regular monetary contributions from citizens in order to help guarantee the income security of individuals and households as well as their access to essential social services.⁹⁰

Social pensions: Regular and predictable non-contributory payments made out to the elderly or to people with disabilities.

Social protection: A set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing or protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion throughout their life-course, with particular emphasis on vulnerable groups.⁹¹

Social protection floor: A nationally-defined set of basic social security guarantees comprising of: (a) access to essential healthcare, including maternity care; (b) basic income security for children; (c) basic income security for persons in active age who are unable to earn sufficient income, in particular in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability; and (d) basic income security for older persons.⁹²

Social transfers: Predictable direct transfers to individuals or households, both in-kind and cash (including cash for work and public work programmes) to protect and prevent individuals and households from being affected by shock and support the accumulation of human, productive and financial assets.

Vulnerability: Vulnerability captures the factors that make people likely to become poor or fall deeper into poverty over time. Vulnerability considers both an individual's current capabilities and the external factors that they face, and how likely it is that this combination will lead to changes in their status. Vulnerability captures the interaction between: (i) exposure of individuals and households to risk, i.e. the chances or threat of an adverse event or hazard; and (ii) their capacity to respond and cope, i.e. susceptibility or exposure to this event due to level of resources (physical, economic, social, political, etc.).

- Social vulnerabilities – The cultural, gendered, ethnic and other structural social factors that make individuals both more exposed and susceptible to risk.
- Economic vulnerabilities – The wealth and income-related factors that make individuals more exposed and susceptible to risk.





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Endnotes

1. Definition developed by SPIAC-B as part of Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessments (ISPA) tools development. SPIAC-B is an inter-agency coordination mechanism composed of representatives of international organizations and bilateral institutions to enhance global coordination and advocacy on social protection issues and to coordinate international cooperation in country demand-driven actions.
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DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT INFORMATION PAGE

Document Title	UNICEF's Global Social Protection Programme Framework
Document Number	PD/GUIDANCE/2019/003
Effective Date	2 October 2019
Mandatory Review Date	2 October 2024
Responsible Business Owner	Programme Division
Responsible Manager	Alexandra Yuster
Document Summary	UNICEF's new Global Social Protection Programme Framework outlines the role that child-sensitive social protection systems play in addressing child poverty and vulnerability. It provides UNICEF's conceptual approach to social protection, evidence of its impacts, and clarity on what constitutes a child sensitive social protection system. The framework also lays out UNICEF's ten action areas on social protection, through which UNICEF, together with partners, works with governments to progressively achieve universal social protection for children.
Regulatory content the Document Replaces	N/A
Topics Covered	Child sensitive social protection
Corporate Risk Area	Results-based Management and Reporting
Reference / Links to Enabling Legislation and Background	N/A
Links to Relevant Policy	N/A
Links to Relevant Procedure	N/A
Links to Relevant Guidance	A Companion Guidance to UNICEF's Global Social Protection Programme Framework: Activities, tools and resources to support implementation of UNICEF's 10 action areas in Social Protection (PD/GUIDANCE/2019/004)
Links to Relevant Training Materials	N/A
Links to Other Knowledge & Information Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A world free from child poverty: https://www.unicef.org/reports/world-free-child-poverty • Making cash transfers work for children and families http://www.endchildhoodpoverty.org/coalition-prod/2018/9/5/cash-transfers

