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Building shock-responsive national social protection systems in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region

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Building Shock-Responsive National Social Protection Systems in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region

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

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15 years international policy centre for inclusive growth

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BUILDING SHOCK-RESPONSIVE NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (MENA) REGION

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‘Building Shock-Responsive National Social Protection Systems in the MENA Region’ is the third in a series of four knowledge products about non-contributory social protection in the MENA region, which are being produced as part of a partnership between the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) and the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (MENARO).

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CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASP	Adaptive social protection
CMU	Central Management Unit (Lebanon)
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ECT	Emergency cash transfer
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
GDP	Gross domestic product
IDP	Internally displaced person
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INFORM	Index for Risk Management
IPC-IG	International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MENARO	United Nations Children's Fund Middle East and North Africa Regional Office
MIS	Management information system
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Iraq)
MoMD	Ministry of Migration and Displacement (Iraq)
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs (Lebanon)
MoSAL	Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (Syria, Yemen)
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development (Jordan, SOP)
MoSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity (Egypt)

MoSSD	Ministry of Security and Social Development (Sudan)
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
NAF	National Aid Fund (Jordan)
NCTP	National Cash Transfer Programme (State of Palestine)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPTP	National Poverty Targeting Programme (Lebanon)
NSAF	National Social Aid Fund (Syria)
NSPMS	National Social Protection Monitoring Survey (Yemen)
NUR	National Unified Registry (Jordan)
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
PDS	Public Distribution System (Iraq)
PMT	Proxy means test
SDC	Social Development Centre (Lebanon)
SNAP	Safety Nets Alert Platform
SOP	State of Palestine
SPN	Social Protection Network (Iraq)
SWF	Social Welfare Fund (Yemen)
TKP	Takaful and Karama Programme (Egypt)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is confronted by significant challenges resulting from multiple shocks and complex emergencies: countries in the region face various risks in terms of natural disasters, including earthquakes, floods and drought; violent conflicts, such as in Syria, pose unprecedented challenges related to the scale of human displacement; and the breakdown of service provision caused by conflict is leading to the increasing prevalence of malnutrition and communicable diseases in Yemen.

Furthermore, recent social assistance reforms are shifting the provision of social protection, from being largely based on subsidies to new programmes that have not yet necessarily matched them in terms of coverage. More specifically, non-contributory social protection in the region has been shown to have limited coverage of poor and vulnerable working families with children, with significant gaps in specific groups such as children of pre-school age.

Considering these significant challenges, and in light of recent reforms, this study aims to provide an initial general assessment of opportunities and challenges for shock-responsive social protection in the MENA region. It centres on the following research questions: 1) What are the key considerations in building the resilience and shock-responsiveness of national social protection systems in MENA?; 2) Are child-sensitive and equitable social protection mechanisms sufficiently equipped to face shocks?; and 3) How can national social protection systems be better equipped to implement a humanitarian response to covariate shocks?

Methodology and limitations

Social protection is typically recognised as an important policy instrument to address idiosyncratic shocks, but recently a number of studies have sought to investigate how social protection systems can also be resilient and respond to covariate shocks. In this sense, recent findings suggest that social protection systems are more likely to be able to contribute towards addressing a crisis situation when they are well-established government-funded systems that rely on clear policies (and clear coordination mechanisms, including actors involved in emergency response), available emergency funds (and contingency plans), high coverage of populations and needs, operating with comprehensive data systems, with multiple payment providers and with strong implementation capacity (O'Brien et al. 2018b). Informed by the growing body of evidence on shock-responsive social protection systems, the main objective of this study is to identify opportunities and challenges for enhancing shock-responsiveness in the MENA region, by analysing the cases of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, State of Palestine, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

The criteria used for analysing these cases included the following:

- **Fiscal space and policy frameworks:** trends in social protection expenditure and source of funding (e.g. government, donors, other); availability of contingency/emergency funding (if any); national social protection and disaster management/climate change adaptation policy frameworks/laws and linkages (if any)
- **Coordination and preparedness:** national social protection coordination mechanisms (if any), reported gaps and opportunities; known emergency preparedness measures (if any)
- **Targeting and management information systems:** targeting methods used by the main flagship programme (and other relevant interventions) and trends in coverage; consideration of particularly vulnerable groups (e.g. refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), children, elderly people, people with disabilities) and vulnerability to shocks in beneficiary selection processes; registry coverage (including non-beneficiaries); reported data accuracy, accessibility (including data-sharing arrangements), currency and quality

- **Delivery mechanisms:** mechanisms used by the flagship programme and other relevant interventions; reported payment regularity of the flagship programme; availability of multiple distribution points/providers and/or electronic/mobile modes of payment
- **Implementation capacities:** number of staff, reported capacities and implementation gaps (if any)
- **Monitoring and evaluation (M&E):** reported M&E procedures and feedback into programme design (if any).

The analysis is based on a literature review complemented by results from a survey titled 'Assessing the Readiness of Social Protection Systems to Deliver Cash Transfers during an Emergency and UNICEF's Use of Cash Responses' (see Annex I for the detailed questionnaire used in the survey), designed and administered by UNICEF Headquarters to the respective Country Offices in the first quarter of 2018. Follow-up remote interviews were also held with Country Offices in June and July 2018.

In terms of the study's limitations, the number of cases and the sources available allow for a general assessment of the readiness of the systems; for a more in-depth analysis, interviews with multiple stakeholders would need to be conducted. Moreover, the study focuses on technical aspects, leaving out broader political economy considerations. Finally, the focus is on national-level programmes; therefore, interventions at the local and regional levels were not considered in the analysis, though they may be just as important (or even more so) in terms of shock response.

Therefore, while this study might provide insights into the trends of national programming choices that are relevant for shock-responsiveness, it does not in any way suggest that the programmes analysed here should be used in shock response, nor does it replace a thorough feasibility assessment, should this be considered an option.

Report structure

The literature review encompasses Chapters 1, 2 and 3. Chapter 1 presents the study's overall conceptual framework and a background literature review on shock-responsive social protection. Chapter 2 reviews evidence on system resilience in relation to different types of shocks (conflict, economic crisis and natural disasters). Chapter 3 further unpacks the key system and programme features that are highlighted in the literature as enabling responses to shocks through social protection. Chapter 4 comprises case studies covering Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, State of Palestine, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Chapter 5 features the conclusion and recommendations. The annexes present the detailed questionnaire of the survey that was administered to UNICEF Country Offices and summarised overviews of the case studies.

Main findings

- The social protection systems reviewed have different levels of institutionalisation. At one end of the spectrum, some countries still do not rely on a social protection strategy, while at the other, there are systems embedded in legislation. Well-established systems are more likely to be more responsive to shocks, and having clear policies is key in this sense.
- The literature on shock-responsive social protection highlights that emergency-preparedness measures can include: having emergency operational manuals and training staff on them; having contingency funds; establishing contingency agreements with service providers; and the use of early-warning systems. However, the review of this study's cases found that such measures are still uncommon.
- The lack of comprehensive national social registries in the region is a key challenge in enhancing system responsiveness, and registry coverage varies significantly across cases. Still, some countries have made significant strides in creating programme databases that include information on a significant proportion of the population and/or on both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, which is important to enable scalability. Furthermore, Egypt, Jordan and the State of Palestine are also taking steps to build social registries, which are important tools for extending coverage beyond the target group of a specific programme.

- Fiscal space is a key consideration in making systems more shock-responsive, as inadequate funding hinders system scalability. The programmes reviewed in this study have generally been expanding their coverage and expenditure over time, but they still need to expand further to reach all poor and vulnerable people. Moreover, explicit contingency funds that could be rapidly mobilised for shock response were not identified.

- The major refugee crisis and huge numbers of IDPs in the region have highlighted the challenges to coordination between humanitarian and social protection actors. Overall, challenges have arisen in terms of harmonising the provision of services across different interventions, a distinct concern for refugee-hosting countries. Iraq is the only country analysed where the right to national social protection initiatives is granted to non-nationals. However, this access is limited in practice.

- Monitoring and evaluation of regular programmes is not very robust in most cases, leading to a gap in evidence-based policymaking. These procedures could also benefit from stronger management information systems.

- Implementation capacity is typically challenged by the precarious situation of programme staff, who in some cases are paid late or do not receive proper compensation for work-related expenses; these challenges can be particularly heightened at times of crisis.

Recommendations

- **Investments in preparedness and coordination are needed to enhance system resilience and responsiveness:** For countries that still do not have a broad social protection strategy, establishing clear social protection policies should be the first priority. Moreover, factoring in scalability in policies during times of crisis can enhance their responsiveness. Furthermore, improving coordination between social protection, disaster management and humanitarian actors, as well as strengthening emergency preparedness measures, can boost system resilience and responsiveness.

- **From programme databases to integrated social registries:** Countries need to expand the coverage of systems and registries to all poor, near-poor/vulnerable people and beyond, and carry out regular data assessments during times of stability, to understand the extent to which social protection databases are current, complete and relevant.

- **Ensuring the scalability of payment systems:** Mapping potential alternative payment providers and having contingency agreements with them is key, as is investing in technology to facilitate payment processes.

- **Towards sustainable public funding of rights-based and responsive systems:** Countries should provide public funding for the provision of regular social protection, and ensure that these funds are ring-fenced—particularly during times of austerity. Contingency funding could also be secured by governments and/or donors, Zakat Funds or insurance mechanisms. Moreover, it is crucial to review the fiscal disbursement flows of social protection and to address bottlenecks, particularly where they impact the timeliness of payments to beneficiaries and programme staff.

- **Developing M&E systems for evidence-based programming:** During times of stability, it is necessary to invest in the development of robust M&E systems that deliver necessary data for evidence-based programming. These can also include resilience-related indicators at the beneficiary and system levels.

- **Investing in implementation capacity to ensure system resilience and responsiveness:** It is crucial to ensure that social workers and programme staff are valued, incentivised and able to carry out their services under regular and extraordinary circumstances. A responsive system needs staff that are properly trained in: emergency preparedness and response, as well as in the use of different mechanisms that enable it (e.g. management information systems, alternative payment providers); and communicating programmatic decisions in potential responses to shocks.

1. INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Multiple human-induced and natural disasters, as well as economic crises, have affected the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region over recent years. In terms of conflict, the Index for Risk Management (INFORM) human risk[1] for 2019 is considered high or very high in seven countries in the region (INFORM 2019).

Though not necessarily new, large-scale conflicts currently pose unprecedented challenges due to the sheer scale of displacement they have caused, such as in the case of Syria. Moreover, the breakdown of service provision caused by conflict, as in the case of Yemen, is also leading to the increasing prevalence of malnutrition and communicable diseases. In addition to conflict, MENA countries face the risks of various natural disasters, including earthquakes, floods and drought.

The region has traditionally relied on universal subsidies for the provision of social assistance, but their recent phasing out has not necessarily been accompanied by a corresponding scale-up of other programmes to cover all poor and vulnerable people. More specifically, non-contributory social protection in the region has been shown to have limited coverage of poor and vulnerable working families with children, with significant gaps in specific groups such as children of pre-school age (Machado et al. 2018).

Considering these significant challenges, and in light of recent reforms that have taken place in MENA countries, this study aims to provide an initial general assessment of opportunities and challenges for shock-responsive social protection in the region. The literature review encompasses Chapters 1, 2 and 3. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of case studies, featuring Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, State of Palestine (SOP), Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Finally, Chapter 5 includes the conclusion and recommendations.

To provide greater clarity to the terminology, a review of the main concepts referred to throughout the study is presented below. This is followed by a background literature review on shock-responsive social protection and then by a more detailed presentation of the study's design and rationale, which concludes this first chapter.

Social protection systems comprise all programmes and instruments (including databases and payment mechanisms) that are employed to provide monetary or in-kind support to people throughout their life cycle in a given context. This support can be granted through various formats (cash or in-kind transfers, subsidies etc.) and may or may not require a direct monetary contribution from beneficiaries themselves. This contributory criterion is what differentiates social insurance from social assistance. This study focuses primarily on social protection systems, and more specifically on social assistance programmes with child-sensitive elements.

Oxford Policy Management (OPM 2017a) proposes that **shocks** can be understood as events that lead to losses in welfare. When they affect large groups simultaneously, they can be considered covariate. When they primarily affect people at the individual or household level, they can be considered idiosyncratic. They can be further distinguished by their speed (sudden or slower onset), duration and setting (natural, social, economic, legal or political).

Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that there is not necessarily consensus in the literature over these definitions. For instance, Wuermli et al. (2012b), focusing on examining the impact of the 2008 financial crisis, point out that terms such as 'shock', 'crisis' and 'recession' are used interchangeably, when in fact 'shock' does not carry the same negative connotation as the other two. Rather, it can be understood as positive or negative, as it can bring challenges and opportunities simultaneously. Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between climate shocks and vulnerability to **seasonality** to recognise the role of predictability in responding to seasonal food insecurity (Holmes et al. 2017, 8–9): "In recent years, in the context of policy debates about shock-responsive social protection, seasonality has often been conflated with climate-related 'shocks' such as floods and droughts (…) But seasonality cannot be considered a 'shock' as it has clear predictable annual patterns, whilst shocks often are difficult to anticipate, come at once or close together."

The definition of shock is made even more complex if one considers conflict itself as a shock. Akresh (2016) notes that conflict can be defined so broadly as to include events such as interpersonal or neighbourhood violence. Buvinić et al. (2013) argue that although the literature largely considers conflict a shock, it is better understood as a process that changes over time and recurs in cycles of violence. Maxwell et al. (2017) further affirm that although people need to be resilient to conflict, conflict itself should not be naturalised as a normal situation. The authors also question whether conflicts should be measured as shocks, and, if so, how. The current operationalisation of the concept—by assessing the extent to which households have experienced attacks, killings or displacement—does not fully capture other effects such as mobility restrictions, market failures and limitations imposed on livelihoods.

Risk can be understood as the probability of harmful consequences or losses stemming from the interaction between natural or human-induced shocks and vulnerable conditions (OPM 2017a).

Finally, the idea of **resilience**—which also has many definitions stemming from different fields—takes root in the "ability to deal with adverse changes and shocks (…) at multiple levels or scales: individual, household, community, system, society, etc." (Bené et al. 2012, 11).

This study focuses on covariate shocks. The terms 'crisis' and 'disaster' are also employed to stress the negative connotation of shocks. Large-scale conflict, where present, is an integral part of the understanding of a crisis situation, with direct and indirect impacts on the resilience of people and systems; as such, it is also included in this concept. However, it is important to highlight that different crisis situations present different challenges, which are addressed in more detail in Chapter 2. Finally, seasonality has been highlighted where relevant, as it plays an important role in the configuration of a shock scenario.

An overview of shock-responsive social protection

Social protection is typically recognised as an important policy instrument to address idiosyncratic shocks, but recently a number of studies have sought to investigate how social protection systems can also be resilient and respond to covariate shocks.

System resilience is challenged in different ways by different types of crisis. For instance, complex and slow-onset emergencies entail larger costs for transfer programmes (World Bank 2016e), while responses to natural disasters and pandemics tend to receive more funds than responses to economic crises (Marzo and Mori 2012). Furthermore, a context of conflict or fragility will likely limit the range of instruments available to deal with crisis, from social protection databases (which tend to become outdated in situations of large-scale displacement) to the implementing parties themselves—for example, if the existing national authority is one of the parties involved in the conflict (O'Brien et al. 2018b). Service provision in these contexts can be shaped by the need for external funding (determining the level of influence that donors might have in a given context) and by the existing political leadership (Ovadiya et al. 2015).

Looking at the specific enabling characteristics of shock response through social protection, authors highlight "timeliness, adaptability and adequacy" (Bastagli 2014) and "scalability and flexibility" (Kuriakose et al. 2013). Beyond the level of system maturity,[2] shock-responsiveness is linked to features of a social protection system such as: (i) available fiscal space and policy frameworks; (ii) the degree of coordination and preparedness of different actors involved in social protection and humanitarian programming; (iii) the targeting approaches of the national social protection system, and how well they match emergency-related needs, as well as the available management information system (MISs); (iv) the delivery mechanisms; and (v) implementation and communications capacities. Countries facing regular disasters may want to include indicators related to the effectiveness of shock response into their (vi) M&E mechanisms (O'Brien et al. 2018b). These attributes are summarised in Table 1 and further discussed in Chapter 3.

Table 1. Attributes related to the scalability of a social protection system

Fiscal space and policy frameworks	Source of funding (government, donors etc.), availability of emergency funding and degree of institutionalisation
Coordination and preparedness	Clarity on roles played by different actors, level of coordination and existence of preparedness instruments and measures (early-warning systems, standard procedures etc.)
Targeting and MIS	Degree of flexibility of targeting mechanisms in allowing for the consideration of vulnerability to shocks and appropriateness, completeness, currency, accessibility and accuracy of data records
Delivery mechanisms	Availability of alternative service providers, scale of reach, and use of electronic and mobile payments
Implementation capacities	Staff capacity to tend to an increased caseload and communicate programming changes
Monitoring and evaluation	Evidence that can inform programming on the effectiveness of shock response which measures the inputs needed, the outputs produced and the related outcomes and impacts

Source: Author's elaboration based on O'Brien et al. (2018b).

In contexts that have secured the fiscal space and political will to develop mature social protection systems, the adjustments needed to enhance their shock-responsiveness might be straightforward and uncontested. However, where systems are underdeveloped and underfunded, pressures for carrying out shock response through social protection might be justifiably viewed as a "premature load-bearing" (Ulrichs and Slater 2016, 55). Table 2 highlights the different strategies available for shock response through social protection systems and links these to the corresponding expected level of system maturity. In any case, an assessment of appropriateness needs to precede any concrete crisis response through social protection systems, which, in turn, needs to assess the system's level of maturity and the specific contextual vulnerabilities and needs to be addressed.

While this study is focused on shock-responsive social protection, it is important to recognise that a number of different terminologies and concepts have sought to address different aspects of the intersection between social protection and crisis response (Gentilini 2016). Among these, it is important to differentiate between the shock-responsive social protection approach as developed by O'Brien et al. (2018b) and the 'adaptive social protection' (ASP) approach as proposed by Béné et al. (2018). While ASP focuses on managing climate-related risks and promoting adaptation to climate changes in the long term, shock-responsive social protection is concerned with responses to specific crises, which might be natural or human-made.

Nonetheless, as the study by Ulrichs and Slater (2016) shows, promoting adaptive capacity through social protection is still a significant challenge. It is thus important to recognise that adaptive capacity will most likely not be built through social protection alone—linkages to other interventions addressing resilience and food security need to be in place—but knowledge of climate change risks needs to be embedded in programming to avoid promoting maladaptive practices.

Finally, another challenge is how to measure the success of social protection systems in terms of their results in addressing emergencies (O'Brien et al. 2018b). If resilience-building and improved shock-responsiveness are considered goals to be achieved by a particular system, these aspirations need to be properly reflected in M&E systems.

In conclusion, covariate shocks present significant challenges for social protection systems in two main ways. First, they may put the system itself at risk; and second, they may require programmatic changes and/or an additional investments to address their effects. Therefore, enhancing a system's shock-responsiveness is important for promoting resilience across many levels (system, community, household, individual). The range of options available to practitioners will depend on system features such as fiscal space, policy frameworks, the degree of coordination and preparedness, the targeting and delivery mechanisms available, and the implementation and communication capacities. Nonetheless, every alternative strategy has its own set of opportunities and challenges: decisions on the appropriateness of the use of social protection to carry out shock response need to be informed by an in-depth and comprehensive contextual analysis. Finally, while a system's shock-responsiveness might be enhanced to face specific crises, addressing longer-term challenges such as climate change might require additional and/or complementary measures beyond what can be provided through social protection.

Table 2. Opportunities and challenges related to different shock-response strategies in social protection

Strategy	Examples	Opportunities	Challenges	System maturity
Alignment	An emergency response that is designed deliberately to align with another (actual or emerging) programme or system may facilitate future integration between the two. It can seek to align: objectives; targeting method; transfer value; and delivery mechanism	May establish mechanisms that can be used in a post-crisis scenario Presents the opportunity of working with a long-term time horizon, even where no social protection systems are in place	Identifying which systems or programmes to align with; the programme's objectives are likely to be a primary determinant Maintaining relationships that are long enough for the eventual integration of the parallel systems, if this is intended The immediate impact on beneficiaries may be reduced if a humanitarian response is calibrated as a developmental one, as the support may be less adequate than crisis-related needs	Useful option given weak capacity or fragile areas
Design tweaks	Waiving conditionalities Changing the payment schedule Relaxing strict eligibility verification Developing protocols that allow people to receive an over-the-counter cash transfer if the usual electronic payment system is no longer functioning Prioritising areas vulnerable to shocks when expanding a programme	Introducing flexibility into a programme to ensure support for regular beneficiaries (e.g. waiving conditionalities in a crisis) Improving the core social protection system in a manner that is consciously designed to reduce the vulnerabilities of crisis-affected populations (such as expanding an intervention into geographical areas most at risk)	Harnessing political will and satisfying multiple developmental agendas If the design tweaks that improve shock-responsiveness divert the social protection programme from its core objective or if they prevent other opportunities from achieving greater impact, they may not be implemented	Feasible at any level of system maturity, provided they do not divert the underlying programme from its primary purpose
Piggybacking	Using a specific programme's beneficiary list or employing its staff Using a national database Using a specific payment mechanism A separate emergency programme—piggybacking on existing systems—could be designed in anticipation of a shock, to be triggered when needed	Allows for a cost-effective and 'pick and mix' approach Less likely to encounter some of the risks around 'brand dilution', beneficiary confusion and political obstacles that can hinder the vertical or horizontal expansion of a specific programme	Requires knowledge about components that are worth connecting to Requires coordination among different actors to: (i) establish data-sharing protocols; (ii) avoid duplicated efforts; and (iii) avoid overloading the piggybacked system Weaknesses in the piggybacked system (such as faulty data) will carry over to the shock response	Can be considered in a wider range of contexts than vertical or horizontal expansion May not be viable in weak systems or where the actors involved have not worked together previously

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Vertical expansion	Increasing the benefit level Increasing programme duration Giving extra food rations in school feeding programmes, including outside the school calendar	A readily identified set of beneficiaries and tried-and-true administrative systems reduce the uncertainty in shock response Vertical expansion of a programme should be less burdensome on existing capacity than horizontal expansion	Selecting an appropriate value and duration of assistance for the top-up might be difficult. Extra resources are likely to be needed. Might generate communication challenges to fully explain the conditions of the top-up to beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries	Feasible for more mature systems that reach a significant proportion of disaster-affected households
Horizontal expansion	Extending the programme's geographical coverage Enrolling additional beneficiaries in geographical areas that are already covered, provided they meet the programme's usual criteria Bringing in additional beneficiaries by modifying the eligibility criteria	Potential to reach a higher proportion of disaster-affected people than through vertical expansion alone, potentially more quickly than interventions designed and implemented from scratch	Diluting core objectives of the programme: This lack of clarity could also cause confusion among beneficiaries and communities Ease of implementation depends partly on whether new beneficiaries are pre-selected or whether they are identified only during the crisis The same communication challenges as the provision of top-ups might arise in terms of explaining to non-beneficiaries why they are not included	Feasible for more mature systems that can cope with expanding their coverage

Source: Adapted from O'Brien et al. (2018b).

Rationale and structure of the study

- Considering this conceptual framework, the relevance of shock-responsive social protection in the MENA region and the challenges in making social protection more child-sensitive, this study centres on the following research questions:
- What are the key considerations in building the resilience and shock-responsiveness of national social protection systems in MENA?
- Are child-sensitive and equitable social protection mechanisms sufficiently equipped to face shocks?
- How could national social protection systems be better equipped to implement a humanitarian response to covariate shocks?

Therefore, this study aims to provide a regional overview of the main opportunities and gaps in terms of child-sensitive and shock-responsive social protection in the MENA region. Eight countries were selected by UNICEF for case study analysis: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, SOP, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. This selection includes countries dealing with complex and protracted humanitarian situations, where there was UNICEF capacity on the ground to engage.

These cases represent multiple scenarios in terms of the level of maturity of different social protection systems and the crises faced in recent years. The analysis of each case centres on the following aspects of their social protection systems and national flagship social protection programmes: fiscal space and policy frameworks; coordination and preparedness; targeting and MISs; delivery mechanisms; implementation capacities; and M&E (see the detailed assessment framework in Chapter 4).

To address the research questions, a literature review was conducted and complemented by results from a survey titled 'Assessing the Readiness of Social Protection Systems to Deliver Cash Transfers During an Emergency and UNICEF's Use of Cash Responses' (see Annex I for the detailed questionnaire used in the survey), which was designed and administered by UNICEF Headquarters to the respective Country Offices in the first quarter of 2018. Follow-up remote interviews were also held with Country Offices in June and July 2018.

The survey was divided into four sections, with questions regarding:

- existing cash transfer programmes of significant scale, to understand their potential suitability for emergency response;
- UNICEF-run emergency cash transfer programmes with government involvement;
- government plans regarding emergency response and social protection, and how well integrated they are;
- UNICEF's engagement with government in social protection and emergency preparedness and response; and
- respondents' needs and feedback.

In terms of the study's limitations, the number of cases and the sources available only allow for a general assessment of the systems' readiness. For a more in-depth analysis, interviews with multiple stakeholders would need to be conducted. Moreover, the study focuses on technical aspects of these systems, leaving out broader political economy considerations. However, these warrant further research, as they are paramount to understanding a system's capacity and limitations to react to shocks. Finally, the study's focus on national-level programmes prevents a more comprehensive assessment of interventions at the local and regional levels, which may be just as important (or even more so) in terms of shock response. Therefore, while this study might provide insights into trends in national programming choices that are relevant for shock-responsiveness, it does not in any way suggest that the programmes analysed here should be used in shock response, nor does it replace a thorough feasibility assessment, should this be considered an option.

2. CONSIDERING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN TIMES OF CRISIS: HOW ARE SYSTEMS CHALLENGED BY NATURAL AND HUMAN-INDUCED DISASTERS?

This chapter reviews how different types of crisis affect social protection systems. Though different crisis scenarios are analysed separately here, they are often interrelated, even if available research has not yet fully gauged the mechanisms at play. For instance, the links between competition for natural resources, food price volatility and violence need to be studied in greater depth (Akresh 2016; Brück et al. 2017; Maxwell et al. 2017).[3] Each section closes with the main policy implications derived from the review.

Table 3. Components of the INFORM risk index

Hazard and exposure		Vulnerability		Lack of coping capacity	
Natural	Human	Socio-economic	Vulnerable groups	Institutional	Infrastructure
Earthquake Tsunami Drought Flood Tropical cyclone	Current conflict intensity Projected conflict risk	Development and deprivation Inequality Aid dependency	Uprooted people Other vulnerable groups	Disaster risk reduction Governance	Communication Physical infrastructure Access to health system

Source: INFORM (2018).

Table 4. INFORM 2019 risk index for MENA countries

	Natural	Human	HAZARD AND EXPOSURE	Socio-economic vulnerability	Vulnerable groups	VULNERABILITY	Institutional	Infrastructure	LACK OF COPING CAPACITY	INFORM RISK	RISK CLASS
Countries	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	(Very low to very high)
Yemen	2.9	10.0	8.1	6.9	8.0	7.5	8.5	7.1	7.9	7.8	Very high
Iraq	5.3	10.0	8.6	4.4	7.3	6.1	8.2	5.2	7.0	7.2	Very high
Sudan	4.1	9.0	7.3	5.7	7.9	6.9	6.5	7.4	7.0	7.1	Very high
Syria	5.3	10.0	8.6	6.7	8.0	7.4	6.6	4.6	5.7	7.1	Very high
Libya	4.5	10.0	8.4	2.5	5.1	3.9	8.6	4.0	6.9	6.1	High
Djibouti	6.0	2.5	4.5	6.1	4.7	5.4	6.2	6.6	6.4	5.4	High
Lebanon	4.1	7.0	5.7	4.2	7.7	6.3	5.7	2.2	4.2	5.3	High
Iran	7.0	5.5	6.3	2.6	5.5	4.2	5.3	3.5	4.5	4.9	Medium
Egypt	5.5	7.0	6.3	3.3	4.2	3.8	5.4	3.5	4.5	4.8	Medium
Algeria	4.1	6.7	5.5	3.1	3.4	3.3	5.0	4.2	4.6	4.4	Medium
Morocco	4.8	4.4	4.6	4.6	2.0	3.4	5.6	4.1	4.9	4.2	Medium
Jordan	3.8	1.3	2.6	4.3	7.7	6.3	5.6	2.4	4.2	4.1	Medium
State of Palestine	2.9	1.5	2.2	4.8	7.8	6.5	6.0	2.6	4.5	4.0	Medium
Tunisia	4.6	3.2	3.9	2.7	0.8	1.8	6.0	3.3	4.8	3.2	Low
Oman	6.0	0.1	3.6	2.2	0.9	1.6	5.1	2.5	3.9	2.8	Low
Saudi Arabia	2.3	4.1	3.3	1.7	0.3	1.0	4.8	2.0	3.5	2.3	Low
Kuwait	2.3	0.2	1.3	2.3	0.8	1.6	5.8	1.4	3.9	2.0	Low
United Arab Emirates	5.8	0.1	3.5	1.6	0.8	1.2	2.4	1.3	1.9	2.0	Low
Qatar	1.2	0.1	0.7	2.5	0.7	1.6	4.2	0.4	2.5	1.4	Very low
Bahrain	0.1	0.2	0.2	1.7	0.9	1.3	4.6	1.0	3.0	0.9	Very low

Source: INFORM (2019).

The INFORM risk index provides important insights into the dynamics between exposure to natural and human-induced hazards, vulnerability and lack of coping capacity, all of which are different dimensions that comprise the index. Table 3 provides an overview of the categories considered, and Table 4 presents the results for MENA countries.

Conflict and fragility

At the system level, conflict undermines institutions and puts the continuation of service delivery and social protection at risk. If the existing national authority is a party to the conflict, to ensure neutrality, it is not possible to provide direct funding to the existing national system. The possibility of social protection provision in these settings depends on a government's administrative capacity, its institutional strength and the extent to which the rule of law is upheld. Moreover, provision is also shaped by the need for external funding (determining the level of influence that donors might have in a given context), and the existing political leadership (Ovadiya et al. 2015). Furthermore, large-scale displacement has myriad effects on national systems and on host countries' systems that impact social protection provision. This section reviews these topics in more detail and concludes by presenting the main policy implications.

Large-scale conflicts are not new to the MENA region, but countries are currently facing unprecedented challenges due to increased armed conflict and the scale of the current refugee crisis (Rother et al. 2016). The full-scale wars and conflicts that are occurring simultaneously in Libya, Syria and Yemen have their origins in the 2011 uprisings (Devarajan and Mottaghi 2017), while the conflict in Iraq started before that. Syria's case, in particular, is characterised by widespread displacement and migration. Neighbouring countries are hosting most of the refugees, which impacts their economies, labour markets, public services and trade, tourism and security sectors (Ianchovichina 2018; Rother et al. 2016; Devarajan and Mottaghi 2017). Refugee-hosting countries have had to deal with immediate effects by stepping up social expenditures and delivery to cater to increased demands and promoting social cohesion among refugees and nationals. This also has impacts for donor countries—which have had to quickly mobilise funding—and for humanitarian agencies, which have been pushed to better coordinate interventions.

Conflict may affect the provision of social protection in numerous ways. O'Brien et al. (2018, v) stress that "Conflict can increase the need for shock-responsive social protection while changing the nature of the support required and undermining capacity for response. It can affect which actors can get involved in programme delivery. Displacement also makes shock-response more difficult, reducing the accuracy of data on beneficiaries." First, where the existing national authorities are parties to conflict, or where there are *de facto* authorities, it is usually not possible to work fully through the national systems, though some mechanisms can be used to deliver parallel, independent assistance. Moreover, maintaining up-to-date data on the beneficiaries of national systems is a significant challenge in contexts of large-scale displacement. Furthermore, in fragile contexts the objectives of social protection might include the mandate of simultaneously addressing state-building, social inequality and social cohesion, even though evidence is scant in terms of these programmes' actual impacts (whether positive or negative) on violence and social cohesion (Idris 2017; Ovadiya et al. 2015; Addison et al. 2015; Carpenter et al. 2012).

The education and health sectors are also affected by conflict through multiple channels. Negative health outcomes through increased exposure to infectious disease, poor sanitation, disruption of services, loss of income and lack of access to food are common in these settings (Addison et al. 2015; Buvinić et al. 2013). Conflict also disrupts schooling, due to the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, child labour, job scarcity and lack of prospects (which lowers the investment return from education), fear of attacks directed at students and school staff and because of displacement, and forced migration (Justino 2011). These impacts may be carried over to the next generation: health and education deficits are found for children of parents exposed to conflict (Akresh 2016; Brück et al. 2017).

Policymaking in the recovery phase should take into consideration not only the improvement of human development outcomes but also lasting peace and stability. Addison et al. (2015) pose the question of how to prioritise policymaking in post-conflict settings. They warn that if conflict-affected areas have also been previously discriminated against in terms of public investment, this needs to be considered a priority not only in terms of improving human development outcomes but also in securing peace. Devarajan and Mottaghi (2017) also argue that post-conflict reconstruction in the MENA region will need to focus on rebuilding infrastructure and institutions in a way that addresses people's exclusion, which led to their dissatisfaction in the first place.

People whose livelihoods are hit the hardest—particularly those who suffer from physical or mental health issues—usually do not benefit automatically from new infrastructure and economic opportunities. Therefore, a 'peace dividend' as conflict ceases should not be assumed to benefit the most vulnerable (Maxwell et al. 2017). The authors argue that during this phase the focus of interventions often shifts from the 'vulnerable' to the 'viable', as post-conflict assistance often targets those who can more easily benefit from new opportunities or who can prevent a return to conflict. There is also a risk of stigmatisation that can result from targeting specific groups, such as in the rehabilitation of children recruited and used in armed conflict. Current evidence indicates that livelihood interventions in conflict-affected areas fail to achieve sustainable peace not only due to operational and political limitations but also due to problems with the programming itself, which lacks a contextualised understanding of conflict dynamics, leading to unintended results (ibid.).

Ensuring the provision of health services, vaccination and disease control is an important first step in recovery and key in preventing epidemics in post-conflict settings (Addison et al. 2015; Buvinić et al. 2013). Furthermore, a focus on rebuilding schools and addressing literacy has shown positive results in attenuating the negative effects of conflict in the long term. Re-enrolment can be encouraged through the removal of economic barriers, such as the removal or reduction of tuition fees (Addison et al. 2015). In Mali, school feeding—a key social protection intervention—prioritises schools with low enrolment and retention rates, particularly of girls, also taking into consideration the local population's vulnerability, poverty and capacity to run school canteens. The World Food Programme (WFP) school feeding intervention operates in at-risk and crisis-affected areas. It also provides take-home rations for girls and mothers who work for the programme. During recovery from the 2012–2015 crisis in northern Mali, demand for the programme supported the reopening of schools, which in turn was perceived as preventing children from joining radical groups (O'Brien et al. 2018a).

In conclusion, conflicts affect the resilience of social protection systems and tend to limit the options available for its provision, including which actors can be involved. Where large-scale displacement follows, it poses serious challenges to the operational capacity of national systems and also tends to put pressures on host countries' systems. Policymaking in post-conflict scenarios must take stock of context-specific dynamics, rather than assuming an automatic 'peace dividend'.

Economic crises

The global economic crisis of 2008 highlighted the importance of having well-established systems prior to the emergence of a crisis and the benefits of establishing systems on inclusionary principles (such as enabling on-demand registration),[4] which have facilitated their expansion to cover those who have become newly poor. Many impacts have been studied at the household and individual levels. Child-sensitive social protection can achieve greatly improved outcomes by carefully considering different life-cycle stages (early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence), which entail particular vulnerabilities to disruptions such as economic crisis, and organising/prioritising their own developmental tasks according to particular contexts. The sections below review the literature in more detail.

In MENA, countries as diverse as Iran, Sudan and Tunisia are currently facing deep economic crises. Even though the region is broadly expected to benefit from higher oil prices and diminishing conflicts, it still faces the challenges of economic diversification and addressing youth unemployment, which is currently above 30 per cent (Arezki et al. 2018). The region has also proven to be vulnerable to food price volatility, particularly those countries with high food dependency ratios and limited fiscal space (Ianchovichina et al. 2012).

The 'triple-F' (food, finance and fuel) global crisis of 2008–2009 evidenced the important role of cash transfers as a buffer against its worst impacts. Of special concern to social protection researchers and practitioners were the effects on food price volatility, which affected the poorest populations globally. The role of existing programmes in cushioning these effects became a subject of intense interest, and it can be argued that this provided an extra push for social protection policies where they were incipient or non-existent. The politics behind programme choice also became an important issue of debate, particularly the cost-efficiency of social transfers versus subsidies to achieve food security (Slater et al. 2013). Despite the popularity of subsidies as crises response measures (mainly due to their political appeal and ease of implementation), growing evidence delineates their regressive character (Marzo and Mori 2012), thus providing a basis for arguing for social transfers as an alternative.

Mendoza (2009) distinguishes between macro (global economic slowdown, financial contagion, prices, capital flows, trade, tourism, remittances, official development assistance) and micro (diminishing incomes, coping strategies, intergenerational consequences) transmission channels of economic crises. These are mediated by the nature of the shock, a country's macroeconomic fundamentals, *ex ante* conditions of households and communities, and which policies are in place.

Regarding the effects of economic crises on children, two main 'transmission channels' stand out: (i) lower household income leading to lower investments in children; and (ii) lower public investment in services that are crucial for children (ibid.). In such contexts, social protection transfers have a key role to play in addressing the income gaps related to the first channel. Mendoza argues that as economic crises typically generate 'new poor' people, social protection programmes need to adapt their targeting mechanisms to target not only structurally poor people but also those who are vulnerable and near poverty, especially in developing countries, where "periods of stability are the exception rather than the rule" (ibid., 33).

The horizontal expansion of social protection programmes that target poverty can be particularly suited to deal with economic shocks, as crises will often render some previously ineligible households eligible. This is reflected in the facilitation of on-demand enrolment in programmes targeting poverty, prominently employed by mature social protection systems such as those in Latin America and the Caribbean, regions that were particularly successful in horizontally expanding their programmes as a response to the triple-F crisis (O'Brien et al. 2018b). Slater et al. (2013) also emphasised the role of transfer size and duration, as well as of their predictability and regularity, in improving people's resilience. Nonetheless, the authors also cautioned that in contexts of weak markets and/or those facing significant inflationary pressures, cash transfers would potentially need to be quickly readjusted to meet escalating food prices (by linking transfer values to specific indices, for instance) or be provided in combination with food or vouchers.

Regarding children's life-cycle vulnerabilities, Wuermli et al. (2012a) highlight that the household context is crucial for the personal development of children during early childhood. Therefore, programmes need to carefully consider not only children individually but also the dynamics of their environment. Transfer programmes seeking to enhance children's nutrition need to consider these dynamics—for instance, by ensuring that children participating in school feeding programmes do not receive less food at home as a result. Caregivers' stress and unhealthy household dynamics may be addressed through counselling services focused on parenting and conflict resolution skills. During middle childhood, breaking down economic barriers for access to and progression in school can include transfers, scholarships, fee waivers or school subsidies. Given the particular

challenges of adolescence, social protection programmes might consider how adolescents are particularly affected by psychosocial outcomes, including outlooks on education, work, family status and any possible stigma. How services are delivered might be key to promoting a message of respect and dignity. Finally, interventions can focus on promoting skills and social capital (such as through mentorship) to address youth employability. Table 5 presents a summary of policy recommendations.

Table 5. Policy focus considering life-cycle stages

	Early childhood	Middle childhood	Adolescence
Health and education	Maintain and expand public health service provision with a focus on pregnant women and young children	Sustain investment in education, including teachers' salaries and strengthening in- and after-school programmes that may buffer against stress at home	Provide adult-supervised extracurricular opportunities and programmes promoting continued education
Transfers	Smooth consumption and promote nutrition	Ensure investment in schooling	Support healthy family relations and promote productive messages
Social support	Provide protective physical and psychosocial services for pregnant women and caregiving guidance	Provide opportunities for cognitive stimulation	Establish mentoring relationships with adults in community, school and work settings
Labour market	Broaden public works to include the provision of relevant public services and facilitate access to child-care services		Facilitate connections to the labour market during the transition to work

Source: Adapted from Wuermli et al. (2012a).

In conclusion, acknowledging that economic crises emphasise the dynamic nature of poverty means that social protection systems need to be ready to expand coverage as needed. One way to work towards this goal is to operationalise on-demand registration, which allows the necessary data to be collected on potential beneficiaries so that horizontal expansion is carried out more swiftly at the onset of crisis. Finally, recognising the different development stages and needs of children requires an integrated approach to social protection, effectively linking its provision to other relevant sectors.

Climate change and natural disasters

This section reviews the elements that are highlighted in the ASP approach, which places a focus on climate change adaptation. Moreover, the evidence on children's vulnerability to natural disasters and intergenerational transmission of shocks is briefly discussed. The section concludes by emphasising that investments in preparedness—which are currently generally lacking in the MENA region—are needed to address the negative outcomes arising from large-scale natural disasters.

Climate change also poses significant challenges for MENA countries, especially considering other trends such as demographic change, globalisation and urbanisation. The region already experiences arid climates, droughts and water scarcity. Increased temperatures, less precipitation, shifting rainfall patterns, rising sea levels and changes in water supply will all contribute to aggravate the current scenario, with significant impacts on access to water, biodiversity, health, food production, land use, urban planning and tourism.

Within the region, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates are expected to suffer the most from rising sea levels (Göll 2017). North Africa has been found to be the second most vulnerable area in the world to emerging climate-related risks, as coastal cities are experiencing rapid population growth and an increase in informal settlements. A study focusing on Alexandria, Tunis and Casablanca found that each of these cities can expect losses of USD1 billion as a consequence of the risks they face, including floods, earthquakes, coastal erosion, ground instability, marine inundation, tsunamis and water scarcity (World Bank and CMI 2011).

Hotter temperatures may also lead to the spread of disease vectors such as mosquitoes, which in turn can increase the prevalence of malaria, especially in Egypt, Morocco and Sudan. Agricultural production is also set to be halved if no measures are taken to address current practices in irrigation, fertilisation and crop varieties. Furthermore, there are links between natural hazards and conflict which, though not yet fully elucidated in the research and policy realms, are already showing signs of growing relevance in the region: transboundary water scarcity is increasingly becoming a cause of conflict, provoking competition over water-irrigated pastures, such as happened in Darfur (Banerjee et al. 2014). Finally, Göll (2017) finds that MENA lacks preparedness measures to face these challenges and points to the gaps in records of climate patterns and data collection to fully gauge the effects of climate change.

Damages and losses resulting from natural disasters vary across countries depending on frequency, exposure and overall vulnerability and resilience. Whereas absolute economic losses are higher for high-income countries, relative economic losses (as a percentage of gross domestic product—GDP) are largest for low-income countries, which also tend to suffer the greatest death toll resulting from these events (Rentschler 2013). Caruso (2017), examining 100 years of natural disasters of various intensity levels in Latin America, noted that their impact in less developed countries is limited by already low levels of human capital accumulation, and in more developed countries by their better infrastructure and preparedness. The most intense effects are presented by the countries in the middle, which are still accumulating assets but have not yet achieved an optimal infrastructure level. Therefore, simplistic causal relations between (financial) resources and vulnerability to natural disasters cannot be assumed (at both individual/household and national levels of analysis): though wealth seems to matter in terms of capacity to recover, preparedness is also key.

The concept of ASP was jointly coined by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) to make the specific connection between social protection with 'climate-and-disaster-resilient' growth and development (Vincent and Cull 2012, 4), combining disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change adaptation, and social protection policy and practice (Béné et al. 2012). ASP recognises that there are challenges and opportunities involved in climate change adaptation, and that this process can either happen in anticipation of actual impacts or in a reactive way: dealing with the incertitude of future events is part of what makes its operationalisation difficult. Adaptive capacity hinges on a range of factors at multiple levels, and a broader understanding of vulnerability would be required to capture its future climate-related fluctuations (Vincent and Cull 2012). Béné et al. (2018) identify five principles of ASP: (i) promoting institutional coordination; (ii) ensuring programme scalability; (iii) targeting households that are vulnerable to shocks and disasters; (iv) fostering adaptive capacity; and (v) ensuring quick delivery of benefits. While most of these principles intersect with the literature on shock-responsive social protection, the key specificity of ASP is its focus on fostering adaptive capacity.

However, building people's anticipatory and adaptive capacity through social protection systems remains challenging. Ulrichs and Slater (2016), under the Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED)[5] initiative, looked at the cases of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda to investigate how social protection influences households' **absorptive**, **anticipatory** and **adaptive** capacities (the '3 As')[6]:

- Their findings point out that social protection is more enabling of the first of the '3 As', and that the key features to be considered in promoting this absorptive capacity are: the type of intervention (whether cash or asset transfers), the duration and timeliness of support, the regularity of the transfers and the quality of implementation.

- Anticipatory capacity was identified in savings and investments in informal networks by individuals and households, and in the implementation of early-warning systems, contingency plans, and contingency financing at the system level.

- Adaptive capacity was more elusive, as some cases have shown that even when not expressly intended, programmes could lead to different adaptation strategies, some of which considered maladaptive. While in Uganda the programme was linked to an increase in abstention from the extraction of natural resources, the opposite was found in Ethiopia, which may point to a need to steer communities to more preferable sustainable practices.

The authors conclude that adaptive capacity will most likely not be built through social protection alone—linkages to other interventions addressing resilience and food security need to be in place—but knowledge of climate change risks needs to be embedded in programming to avoid promoting maladaptive practices (ibid.).

Building robust early-warning systems, taking into consideration the hidden cost of the intergenerational transmission of shocks when costing interventions and targeting pregnant women and children in their first years of life and school age (depending on the type of natural disaster), are some of the policy recommendations proposed by Caruso (2017). In anticipation of disasters, crucial infrastructure, including health and education facilities, can be reinforced accordingly, and school curricula can be adapted to deal with disaster risks. In the aftermath of a disaster, social protection and access to credit policies can address families' immediate needs, and social support services geared towards child protection, such as reuniting children with caregivers and supporting caregivers themselves, can help prevent further negative outcomes (Kousky 2016).

Social workers may also have added responsibilities in recovery efforts. In the Philippines, social welfare officers had a key role in locating beneficiaries though door-to-door searches in evacuation camps and by holding assemblies in areas hosting displaced people. Public broadcasts about the validation exercise were conducted, and the programme's 'Parent Leaders' Network' also supported the effort of locating and informing these families. The programme facilitated the nomination of relatives or guardians of unaccompanied or separated children as new benefit recipients, supported by a system of case management and home visits to ensure child protection (Smith et al. 2017). Moreover, even though health-sector practices in post-disaster scenarios such as providing necessities for hygiene, water and vaccinations are well documented, there is a gap in best practices to protect children's mental health (Kousky 2016). Finally, Muttarak and Lutz (2014) argue that investing in education is key to reducing a country's vulnerability to natural disasters and in building adaptive capacity to climate change in the long term.

In conclusion, climate change is set to pose multiple risks in the future, and the MENA region is particularly vulnerable, with the possible aggravation of its arid climates, droughts and water scarcity. In the context of climate change adaptation, the concept of ASP highlights the importance of linking programmes to sustainable livelihood interventions. Finally, the decision to invest in preparedness to face large-scale climate disasters (such as building early-warning systems) should be informed by the hidden costs of the intergenerational transmission of shocks, which impact not only individuals but also countries as a whole.

3. KEY SYSTEM AND PROGRAMME FEATURES ENABLING THE SHOCK-RESPONSIVENESS OF SOCIAL PROTECTION

If chosen as an appropriate method for crisis response, the provision of timely and adequate benefits using existing social protection systems will hinge on the coordinated work of a range of institutional features. This chapter highlights the features that work towards enabling the shock-responsiveness of social protection. They relate to: (i) the available fiscal space and policy frameworks; (ii) the degree of coordination and preparedness of different actors involved in social protection, disaster management and humanitarian programming; (iii) the existing coverage and targeting approaches of the national system and how well they match emergency-related needs as well as the available MISs; (iv) the delivery mechanisms; and (v) the implementation capacities. Countries facing regular disasters may want to include indicators related to the effectiveness of shock response into their (vi) M&E mechanisms, which are discussed further in this chapter.

Fiscal space and policy frameworks

Highlights

- A system's degree of institutionalisation, including anchoring it in law, will also influence its funding and political commitment. However, if roles and mandates are rigidly defined in legislation, there might be less flexibility to swiftly add new responsibilities in times of crisis.
- Safeguarding social protection spending through periods of austerity is also important to ensure the continuation of programmes when people need them most.
- Securing emergency funding for shock response might translate into defining contingency budgets, having standby funds secured from donors, activating insurance mechanisms or accessing sovereign wealth funds, pension funds, Zakat Funds etc.
- Addressing financial disbursement bottlenecks is also key to enabling swift payments to beneficiaries.
- Early-warning systems and pre-agreed trigger points can help swiftly activate necessary funds.

The 2008 global economic crisis highlighted the need to protect social expenditures, as cash transfer programmes served as important buffers against negative effects (Marzo and Mori 2012). Moreover, **efficiently funding disaster management measures depends not only on anticipating and securing resources needed to deal with contingencies (which may be spread out across several ministries) but also on the swiftness of the disbursing procedures** (O'Brien et al. 2018b).The literature review carried out by OPM (2017a) highlighted that heavily bureaucratic financing mechanisms and mismanagement of funds earmarked for dealing with contingencies are two factors that can severely constrain shock response.

Kuriakose et al. (2013), focusing on climate change adaptability, propose addressing these financing needs by layering funds across the disaster frequency continuum (from the most recurrent events up to the rarest and most intense disasters), suggesting that national contingency funds or lines of credit can be used to address low- to medium-impact disasters and that the rarest and most severe disasters could be covered by parametric insurance or catastrophe bonds.[7] Rohwerder (2017), reviewing examples of flexible funding mechanisms for shock response, listed crisis modifiers (budgeted contingency funds built in development assistance grants); the Start Fund ("a multi-donor funded, NGO [non-governmental organisation] managed fund that provides fast and direct funding to other NGOs for

small scale, typically 'under the radar', crises within 72 hours"); forecast-based financing ("a mechanism that enables access to funding for pre-agreed activities for early action and preparedness for response based on in-depth forecast and risk analysis"); and shock-responsive social protection itself. O'Brien et al. (2018b) also point to the case of Pakistan, where Zakat Funds have been mobilised in cases of disasters to exemplify a case of funding through private sources, albeit with low coverage and not necessarily well targeted.

Finally, donors have a clear motivation to streamline funding to meet both development and humanitarian ends. Depending on the specific context, this might present new development funding opportunities for countries hosting refugees. The 'Jordan Compact' is indeed considered a "new approach to dealing with protracted displacement", consisting of an agreement brokered between the government and donors to shift the focus from short-term humanitarian aid to long-term development programming for both Jordanians and Syrians. However, it has also been criticised for not paying enough attention to the specific needs of the refugee population, which was not represented in the discussions (Barbelet et al. 2018).

Having programmes embedded in law can contribute to their stability and sustainability. However, legal constraints can also hinder their mandate beyond poverty reduction by reducing their flexibility. In the case studies analysed by O'Brien et al. (2018b), there was no conclusive stance as to whether legally framed social protection programmes were a constraining or enabling factor in shock responsiveness. Whereas the application of Lesotho's old-age pension was limited by its legal regulation, in the Philippines the lack of a stronger legal foundation for the country's flagship social protection programme was seen by some actors as a possible constraining factor in terms of planning long-term shock response based on the programme's structure. Nonetheless, regulations specifically touching on data-sharing enacted in advance of emergencies were found to be enabling for shock response. In this study, legal constraints in Iraq have also been highlighted. The country is currently discussing reforming the regulations related to the mandate of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) to allow for its engagement in shock response.

Coordination and preparedness

Highlights

- Having internally adjusted sectors with a clear strategy and mission is important before working towards intersectoral coordination.
- Clearly predefined roles, responsibilities and leadership among all actors (in the government or elsewhere) involved in shock response enhances response coordination.
- Establishing memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with key service providers, guidelines on emergency procedures, and continuity and contingency plans that can be activated for response are also best practices.
- Early-warning systems may enhance the speed of response by introducing a degree of automation to the process.

The absence of a clear coordinating unit is a key constraining factor for shock response. Placing this responsibility on a single agency *ex post* or relying on multiple agencies may be ineffective, overburdening existing administrative capacity (OPM 2017a). Ideally, under non-emergency circumstances, countries should work on creating or improving their institutional coordination framework by defining clear roles and processes for all agencies involved at all levels of governance (from national to local), which should also include those dedicated to disaster risk management and linkages between the coordinating agencies and financing sources. In countries where humanitarian actors are actively delivering assistance, the prior arrangement of MoUs and similar mechanisms should help deal with administrative issues in

periods of crisis. During the Ebola response in Liberia, for instance, the coordination of the cash working group led by the government was considered key in sharing experiences among the actors involved and in harmonising the technical aspects of cash programming (including targeting mechanisms, monitoring and benefit level). Moreover, they succeeded in negotiating a common transfer fee with the financial service providers (CaLP 2018).

Before improving interministerial coordination, it is important to ensure that each sector is internally adjusted, with its own strategy, policies and corresponding budgets. From there on, intersectoral policy can build on common areas of interest, enhancing their synergies. Nonetheless, O'Brien et al. (2018b) recognise that, in practice, actors from social protection, disaster risk management and humanitarian areas still have little knowledge about each other's fields. Coordination structures vary across countries, ranging from committees to working groups, alliances, forums, conferences etc. In the Sahel region, supranational organisations also have a mandate for shock-responsiveness. The authors emphasise the importance of ensuring wide membership, while considering the time and resource limitations of the different actors involved (ibid.). In this sense, they also highlight that pre-existing relationships with and engagement between humanitarian agencies and governments are key enabling factors in linking cash transfers to national social protection systems.

In terms of preparedness, contingency planning, active preparation and early delivery support enable timely responses. In practice, active preparation may translate into establishing guidelines and protocols for action in emergencies, communication channels for sharing early-warning information on potential crises, and corresponding arrangements with service providers (Beazley et al. 2016; O'Brien et al. 2018b). Some examples from Latin America include: Nicaragua's interministerial coordination unit (Sistema Nacional para la Prevención Mitigación y Atención de Desastres—SINAPRED); Mexico's Temporary Employment Programme (*Programa de Empleo Temporal*—PET) and its predetermined division of responsibilities between the ministries involved under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL); and Colombia's operation manuals for *Familias en Acción,* which clearly define emergency programme adjustments (Beazley et al. 2016). More specifically, preparedness to use cash transfers as an emergency response involves specific activities, including assessing the local market conditions and regulatory environments, as well as mapping potential service providers with which to draft pre-agreements. However, these activities are generally insufficiently funded and lack priority (World Bank 2016e).

Early-warning systems can be established to enable a more automated response. Bastagli and Harman (2015), in a review of selected index-based trigger mechanisms seeking to address weather shocks, highlight that these triggers can enable a timelier shock response through social protection programmes by relying on objective thresholds. However, finding the appropriate trigger points (and reliable data sources) to avoid a mismatch between the situation presented by the indices and people's actual needs (basis risk) can be challenging. An index should, therefore, be "easily measured, objective, transparent, independently verifiable and available in a timely manner" (p. 6) and complemented by other indicators and/or verification systems to counter this risk. Schnitzer (2018) highlights the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET),[8] which combines information on markets and trade, agricultural climatology, household livelihoods and nutrition, as a positive example, noting the caveat that there is insufficient evidence on how well these systems can identify populations in need.

Moreover, it is important to highlight that early-warning systems can also monitor relevant economic and conflict-related indicators. Considering MENA's specific regional context, it is worth highlighting the WFP's Safety Nets Alert Platform (SNAP). It was built for countries in the MENA and Central Asia regions as an innovative online platform that aims to present early-warning indicators on food security to enhance risk management and social protection.[9] Furthermore, as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA 2018a) monitors the protracted conflict situation in the SOP, a number of relevant indicators have been included in its early-warning system, such as: teacher absenteeism; shooting incidents in access-restricted areas (sea/land); reliance on coping mechanisms against food insecurity (reduced food quality and borrowed food/money from relatives or friends); and shelter cash assistance for eligible internally displaced persons (IDPs).[10]

Targeting and management information systems

Highlights

- Registries are key elements for identifying potential beneficiaries of shock-response interventions: the wider their coverage, the more likely they are to encompass disaster-affected groups, especially if they cover not only poor people but also those who are near-poor (and beyond, ideally).
- Regular audits of existing databases can help assess the appropriateness, completeness, currency and accuracy of data.
- Data accessibility can be ensured by establishing data-sharing agreements and business continuity/contingency plans for related IT systems.
- Where programmes rely on specific targeting mechanisms to identify beneficiaries, particularly in the case of poverty-based targeting, additional methods for directing support to disaster-affected people are likely to be needed.
- Standard guidelines and questionnaires can be drafted in advance where further needs assessments are likely to be needed.

Current social protection reforms underway in MENA have been criticised for their narrow targeting focus, which contrasts with the universal character of subsidy provision. Marzo and Mori (2012) argue that subsidies that were already implemented in the region, though costly, have had a buffering effect against the 2008 global financial crisis. The authors further argue that in Egypt, where food subsidies were expanded during the crisis, they had a significant impact on preventing its worst effects. However, the government could have doubled its impact by spending resources on targeted transfers instead (ibid.). Jawad (2017) argues that the arrival of non-contributory social protection is welcome considering the prevalence of biased systems that favour the interests of political and urban elites. However, she also criticises the narrow focus of transfer programmes, which fail to address universality, and sees a contradiction in their targeting of poverty *vis-à-vis* the imperative of consolidating political stability in the region. Moreover, a common challenge in the MENA region is that the registries used to identify beneficiaries are not comprehensive enough. Thus, a significant proportion of poor people are excluded, particularly among rural populations (FAO 2017).

The more comprehensive and universal a registry is, the more likely it is to be useful in shock response. Moreover, if a system's data are considered **appropriate, complete, current, accessible and accurate, and if data records have a large enough overlap with the disaster-affected population,** then it can potentially make an emergency response more efficient by avoiding duplicate efforts among agencies and by facilitating the identification of potential beneficiaries. While safeguarding data privacy standards, relevant actors should establish clear guidelines and/or regulations defining situations in which information can be accessed, who can access the data, how to avoid duplication of efforts, and potential synergies in data triangulation between different actors, using the same system to keep it up to date and complete (O'Brien et al. 2018b). Furthermore, establishing business continuity/contingency plans for the related IT systems might be necessary to ensure their resilience in the face of different types of crisis that might affect them.

Barca and O'Brien (2017) recommend carrying out assessments under regular conditions to understand how complete, relevant and up-to-date social protection data are, and the extent of their coverage of disaster-prone areas. Prioritising the expansion of registries and collecting extra information that might be relevant in crisis situations should also be considered. Finally, having protocols for accessing and using data in crisis situations and devising strategies for regular data updates, including during the post-emergency stage, are further advised.

A programme that is implemented in a specific area, or that targets a specific group, can be limited in its potential to respond to large-scale shocks affecting larger areas or groups. Conditional cash transfers can limit their operation to areas where there is service supply, thus limiting their reach (Beazley et al. 2016). For example, the use of the Child Grant Programme in Lesotho as a response to El Niño was limited by its geographical reach,

its categorical targeting of children and its static poverty data, captured years before. Preference for using the programme stemmed from the familiarity of international partners and donors with it. However, the authors estimated that, at best, the response reached 25 per cent of those in need (Kardan et al. 2017a). O'Brien et al. (2018b, 26) thus point out that "a programme's beneficiaries are most likely to include a high proportion of the shock-affected population if the absolute size of the programme is large, if it operates in locations known to be susceptible to shocks, or if the characteristics of those affected by a shock are associated with the programme's eligibility criteria".

Proxy means-testing, a common targeting method in social protection, is considered too static to capture rapid changes in welfare—such as the ones caused by disasters—as it is typically based on long-term household characteristics and aimed at identifying poverty, not vulnerability to shocks (O'Brien et al. 2018b; OPM 2017a; Beazley et al. 2016; Schnitzer 2018). Schnitzer (2018), comparing the performance of proxy means-testing, household economy analysis (HEA, commonly used by humanitarian actors to identify transitory food-insecure households), geographical targeting and combined methods in Niger, finds that proxy means-testing and HEA yield different results that are consistent with their different objectives. Proxy means-testing performs better in identifying chronically poor people, while HEA is better at identifying temporarily food-insecure people, with a limited overlap between households identified by either method.

Schnitzer (ibid.) also finds that in situations of food crisis and where food security patterns vary significantly across regions, but not within them, geographical targeting tends to be more effective. On the other hand, in terms of poverty, a geographical targeting approach applied before a proxy means test (PMT) performs no better than a PMT by itself, but significantly better than geographical targeting by itself. However, the choice of methods needs to be informed by their costs (including administrative, private, incentive, social and political costs). The author adds that "rather than focusing on identifying one optimal targeting method, actors trying to develop Adaptive Social Protection (ASP) systems may emphasize the consolidation of information across programmes through mechanisms such as a unified database. This could support better coordination and the effective application of alternative targeting methods" (p. 47).

Kuriakose et al. (2013) also stress that climate-smart targeting should include data on climate exposure to inform the selection of beneficiaries for social protection programmes, thus expanding the pool of potential beneficiaries by including those who are temporarily vulnerable. In this context, the authors argue that geographical targeting and community-based targeting can be useful and that proxies for vulnerability to climate events should be devised (such as having livelihoods that depend on climate-vulnerable activities). Moreover, having a geographical targeting process informed by climate vulnerability can yield better targeting results for these types of shocks. The Dominican Republic's Index of Vulnerability to Climate Shocks (IVACC) for households is one example of a tool that calculates households' potential exposure to natural disasters based on their socio-economic characteristics (Beazley et al. 2016).

Targeting disaster-affected populations in sudden-onset crises can be informed by a needs assessment that supports decisions on the type, scale and duration of the assistance to be provided. However, challenges typically arise regarding the timeliness of the intervention, political pressures and poor consideration of group-specific vulnerabilities (O'Brien et al. 2018b). For example, the World Bank's 2016 Strategic Note on humanitarian cash transfers pointed to donor concern about a possible conflict of interest arising when the same agency conducts the needs assessment and implements the programmes. The authors suggest that this could be addressed by involving the private sector (World Bank 2016e). Regarding government-led initiatives, Chile's *Ficha Básica de Emergencia* (Basic Emergency Form—FIBE) is considered a good practice in quick post-disaster needs assessment (Beazley et al. 2016). Finally, programmes can also temporarily relax their conditionalities and identity verification (in cases where large numbers of households lose their documentation) to ensure post-disaster coverage, as in the case of the Philippines (Smith et al. 2017).

Finally, in situations of tight fiscal space, practitioners might be inclined to end support provided for a specific group in order to free up resources for a another set of beneficiaries; "retargeting an intervention without expanding it" can be understood as "refocusing" (O'Brien et al. 2018b, iii). Nonetheless, O'Brien et al. (ibid.) highlight that refocusing is more of a financing strategy in contexts of constrained financial resources than an actual adaptation of systems or programmes towards shock-responsiveness. Depending on the quality of beneficiary recertification processes and

on the availability of alternative support programmes, it might go against the principles of rights-based social protection provision and prove unsustainable, as people who have their programme participation terminated might fall back into poverty. Regarding this point, and referring to programmes based on the graduation approach (which typically have a maximum participation period defined), Roelen et al. (2017) further argue in favour of conceptualising programmes as "revolving" rather than "one-way" doors, meaning that people should be able to reach them whenever they are eligible. They also stress that programmes should further link people to other support as needed.

Delivery mechanisms

Highlights

- Mapping alternative payment service providers and establishing contingency plans, MoUs and standard operating procedures to ensure that payments are provided during crisis.
- Investing in electronic payments, including mobile technology that can efficiently reach beneficiaries, including those in remote areas.
- Devising guidelines on how to deal with the loss of identification documents, including the use of biometric technology where appropriate.

International best practice in terms of payment methods for cash transfers highlights the importance of moving away from manual payments delivered by programme implementers towards outsourced e-payments and financially inclusive mechanisms. This is expected to improve transparency and access to financial services while reducing costs and the risk of leakages (ISPA n.d.).

Nonetheless, in emergencies, in addition to the usual challenges related to the coverage capacity and timeliness of payment providers, there is a possibility of disruption of systems and infrastructure, and of beneficiaries losing their documentation (O'Brien et al. 2018b; OPM 2017a). Having contingency plans that indicate alternative payment services and delivery approaches, and training staff accordingly are recommended measures. Regarding the use of technology such as biometrics data, it is important that potentially negative outcomes are taken into account through extensive economic and technical feasibility assessments that include rights- and dignity-related evaluations (Carmona 2018).

The level and type of benefit must be set according to the needs of the target audience of the emergency response (O'Brien et al. 2018b). Trade-offs between coverage and sufficiency are to be expected in scenarios of restricted fiscal space. Harmonising benefit values across different interventions, whether provided by governments or humanitarian agencies, is considered good practice, though it requires coordination and alignment between multiple actors. In Mali, humanitarian programmes have deliberately been aligned with the local social protection programme (*Jigisèmèjiri*) in the following areas: geographical targeting, household listing, ID code and selection, and setting the benefit level. This alignment is considered a useful step in a longer-term perspective of transitioning beneficiaries to a social protection system. However, different payment modalities and service providers were used to deliver benefits, depending on the local conditions of each area (O'Brien et al. 2018a).

Whether addressing food security, natural disasters or post-conflict situations, support sequencing can take multiple forms and lead to more complex and well-integrated strategies to tackle people's multidimensional needs (Slater et al. 2013; Addison et al. 2015; Hallegate et al. 2017). For natural disasters, Hallegate et al. (2017) argue that it makes (economic) sense to have a quick, wide-ranging initial response followed by a more targeted reconstruction effort. O'Brien et al. (2018b) also suggest that for rapid-onset disasters it might make sense to sequence the support in a way that addresses basic food and non-food necessities through standardised transfers in the early stages of the response and other specific needs in recovery stages. Addison et al. (2015) make the case for sequencing support so

as to promote predictable and broad-based social protection strategies in post-conflict settings, though in practice a project-based approach by donors might lead to multiple initiatives with little connection to a longer-term system-building mentality. As the trends in humanitarian contexts point to an increasing number of protracted crises, responses should also operate under a longer time-frame, working with a 'response continuum' that sequences and layers all available programmes and services, linking to national social protection systems where possible (World Bank 2016e).

Implementation capacities

Highlights

- Investing in implementation capacities and social workers is crucial to ensure that programmes can cope with an increased caseload in times of crisis.
- Preparedness measures include training on emergency guidelines and on communication strategies, which are fundamental to ensure that people understand the changes that might be made to programmes during periods of crisis.

There are widespread gaps in the implementation and communication capacities of social protection. Recent reports on the use of social protection programmes in emergency response highlight implementation/administrative capacity limitations and/or challenges in appropriately communicating with communities (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike) about decisions such as on targeting, benefit level and duration of support, even where grievance redressal and/or formal communications mechanisms are in place (Beazley 2017a; Beazley 2017b; HSNP 2016; Kardan et al. 2017a; Kardan et al. 2017b; O'Brien et al. 2017; O'Brien et al. 2018a; OPM 2017b; Smith et al. 2017; Solórzano 2017; Watson et al. 2017).

In addition to the disaster situation itself, implementation capacity may be hampered by staff shortages, frequent turnover—which affects institutional memory—and technical capacity. Some of these challenges can potentially be met in the short term by temporarily surging capacity from other regions, and in the medium to long term by incentivising staff to record emergency practices. However, many countries do not rely on the support of a professional staff for programme implementation, depending on the help of volunteers instead (O'Brien et al. 2018b).

Furthermore, as crises present an increasingly urban dimension (Gentilini 2016), it also becomes important to understand the specific dynamics of programme implementation in these contexts. Moreira and Gentilini (2016) found some implementation challenges arising in Benin, the Republic of the Congo and Mali: increased difficulty in monitoring beneficiaries due to their higher mobility; lack of integration between community committees and social workers; and difficulties in communicating with families about payments, requiring extra time in the field to spread the word prior to payment dates. The authors thus argue that social workers in these settings have a more fundamental role to play in programme implementation and M&E, and relying on volunteer work for these activities is unlikely to succeed due to the demanding nature of the workload.

Monitoring and evaluation

Highlights

- Establishing robust M&E systems prior to periods of crisis enables evidence-based programming.
- In times of crisis, third-party and/or post-distribution monitoring might be considered. Standby agreements with potential providers of these services can be established.

As with any other element in social protection systems, establishing a monitoring system during a crisis can be particularly challenging. Therefore, investing in robust M&E systems in times of stability is key to ensuring that

programming is based on sound data collection. For countries facing disasters regularly, it can be worth establishing a system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of shock response by measuring the inputs needed, the outputs produced and the related outcomes and impacts (O'Brien et al. 2018b).

Table 6. Monitoring and evaluating shock response by area: suggested criteria for analysis

Inputs	Resources allocated to the response
	Databases used
	Targeting mechanisms employed
	Contingency plans and funds activated
	Coordination mechanisms involved
Outputs	Number and proportion of households reached in response
	Timeliness in reaching beneficiaries
Outcomes	Targeting effectiveness
	Adequacy of benefit level
Impacts	Well-being and coping strategies
	Vulnerability and resilience

Source: Adapted from O'Brien et al. (2018b).

This might also include evidence of the impacts of different programme design features and individual instruments, as well as of different programme implementation processes (Slater et al. 2013). Indeed, as seen in the subsection above, implementation capacity limitations in social protection are highlighted in many cases, and as shock-responsiveness becomes an additional expectation from these systems, M&E efforts should consider how these challenges affect programme results, lending support to an evidence-based case for addressing bottlenecks and professionalising service delivery.

Third-party monitoring can also be employed to provide an unbiased perspective and recommendations on an institution's project, its compliance status and emerging issues (Khawaja et al. 2018). CaLP (n.d.) also highlights third-party and post-distribution monitoring as important instruments in monitoring emergency cash transfers, as the former can enable agencies to hire third parties to collect data where their own staff cannot (for safety reasons, for example), while the latter is a method that typically relies on household surveys and focus group discussions to ensure that programme objectives are being met.

In terms of health, education, shelter and multisectoral objectives, there is a lack of comparative evidence of the effectiveness of different transfer modalities. The World Bank (2016e) also finds that food security has been the most widely researched area in comparative studies, followed by livelihoods and nutrition. Priority should be given to generating evidence on cash transfers geared to address shelter needs, as there are concerns raised by shelter actors regarding the capacity of these schemes to ensure quality reconstruction. Moreover, cash transfers geared to improve access to services should also take their quality into consideration, and concerns have been voiced over funding being displaced from supply-side to demand-side interventions.

When comparing different transfer modalities, 'hidden costs' should be assessed. The World Bank (ibid.) also points out that there are knowledge gaps in terms of the particularities of in-kind transfers (such as whether goods are resold by beneficiaries) and that multiple factors need to be considered when investigating the comparative efficiency of different modalities, including a number of 'hidden' costs (e.g. time, forgone income and transportation costs): "In general, there appears to be a trade-off between costs for the implementer and those for beneficiaries: as payment or distribution points get closer to beneficiaries, costs for the implementer get higher, while the transaction costs for beneficiaries dwindle. In other words, programs that seem less expensive could be so because the cost of accessing transfers had been shifted from the implementer to the beneficiary" (p. 36).

4. ASSESSING THE READINESS OF SELECTED SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS IN THE MENA REGION

The cases of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, SOP, Sudan, Syria and Yemen have been analysed in this study. They present important insights into the main trends in social protection programming in the region that are relevant for shock-responsiveness. This chapter provides an overview of the social protection systems in the countries, highlighting their main opportunities and gaps, before further exploring each in greater detail.

The case studies relied on a literature review that was complemented by results from a survey titled 'Assessing the Readiness of Social Protection Systems to Deliver Cash Transfers during an Emergency and UNICEF's Use of Cash Responses', designed and administered by UNICEF Headquarters to the respective Country Offices in the first quarter of 2018. Follow-up remote interviews were also held with Country Offices in June and July 2018.

Table 7. Case study assessment framework

Section	Criteria	Rationale
Fiscal space and policy frameworks	• Trends in social protection expenditure and source of funding (e.g. government, donors, other) • Availability of contingency/emergency funding (if any) • National social protection and disaster management/ climate change adaptation policy frameworks/laws and linkages (if any)	Understanding the trends in government commitment to social protection in terms of its financing and institutionalisation and identifying whether preparedness for disasters has been considered in these processes
Coordination and preparedness	• National social protection coordination mechanisms (if any), reported gaps and opportunities • Known emergency preparedness measures (if any)	Describing the coordination set-up and identifying challenges and opportunities, as well as how emergency preparedness has been considered in these arrangements
Targeting and management information systems	• Targeting methods used by the main flagship programme (and other relevant interventions) and trends in coverage • Consideration of particularly vulnerable groups (e.g. refugees, IDPs, children, elderly people, people with disabilities) and vulnerability to shocks in beneficiary selection processes • Registry coverage (including non-beneficiaries) • Reported data accuracy, accessibility (including data-sharing arrangements), currency and quality	Determining the scale of flagship programmes, their degree of flexibility in considering vulnerability to shocks, and rights of specific groups Analysing the potential for expansion using existing data and identifying potential adequacy issues
Delivery mechanisms	• Mechanisms used by the flagship programme and other relevant interventions • Reported payment regularity of the flagship programme • Availability of multiple distribution points/providers and/or electronic/mobile modes of payment	Outlining the potential for scalability of existing payment systems
Implementation capacities	• Number of staff, reported capacities and implementation gaps (if any)	Assessing whether shock response is likely to place a burden on regular programme implementation
Monitoring and evaluation	• Reported M&E procedures and feedback into programme design (if any)	Understanding the degree to which programmes are informed by regular data collection

Source: Author's elaboration based on the literature review.

The analysis of each case centres on the following aspects of its systems and national flagship social protection programmes:

- fiscal space and policy frameworks;
- coordination and preparedness;
- targeting and MISs;
- delivery mechanisms;
- implementation capacities; and
- M&E.

Syria and Yemen are currently undergoing major conflict, and their cases are analysed based on the systems that were previously in place, as well as on the emergency interventions that have been implemented since. Moreover, the descriptive analysis of poverty and risk in each case is built on the latest available figures and on the latest results presented by the INFORM platform.[11] Specific criteria and rationale are presented in Table 7, based on the literature review presented in previous chapters. The set of chosen criteria also reflects the objective of the study—which is to provide a general assessment of multiple countries—and the study's limitations, as it relied mainly on a literature review complemented by a survey and interviews.

Overview of the selected cases[12]

The countries selected for analysis face distinct challenges at different capacity levels. The INFORM results for 2019 show that the INFORM risk class for the selected cases varies from medium (Egypt, Jordan and the SOP) to high (Lebanon) and very high (Iraq, Sudan, Syria and Yemen). Moreover, vulnerability (which considers national socio-economic vulnerability overall as well as the situation of vulnerable groups) is considered high or very high in all cases, except for Egypt. Nonetheless, the lack of coping capacity is considered very high in Yemen only and high in Iraq and Sudan (INFORM 2019). Table 8 presents these results in more detail.

Table 8. INFORM 2019 risk index for the selected countries

	Natural	Human	HAZARD AND EXPOSURE	Socio-economic vulnerability	Vulnerable groups	VULNERABILITY	Institutional	Infrastructure	LACK OF COPING CAPACITY	INFORM RISK	RISK CLASS
Countries	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	0–10	(Very low to Very high)
Egypt	5.5	2.0	6.3	3.3	4.2	3.8	5.4	3.5	4.5	4.8	Medium
Iraq	5.3	10.0	8.6	4.4	7.3	6.1	8.2	5.2	7.0	7.2	Very high
Jordan	3.8	1.3	2.6	4.3	7.7	6.3	5.6	2.4	4.2	4.1	Medium
Lebanon	4.1	2.0	5.7	4.2	7.7	6.3	5.7	2.2	4.2	5.3	High
State of Palestine	2.9	1.5	2.2	4.8	7.8	6.5	6.0	2.6	4.5	4.0	Medium
Sudan	4.1	9.0	7.3	5.7	7.9	6.9	6.5	7.4	7.0	7.1	Very high
Syria	5.3	10.0	8.6	6.7	8.0	7.4	6.6	4.6	5.7	7.1	Very high
Yemen	2.9	10.0	8.1	6.9	8.0	7.5	8.5	7.1	7.9	7.8	Very high

Source: INFORM (2019).

Note: INFORM risk with a score of 0–2 is considered very low, 2–3.5 low, 3.5–5 medium, 5–6.5 high, and 6.5–10 very high. The numeric thresholds for the risk class of the other components (Hazard and exposure, Vulnerability and Lack of coping capacity) are not the same.

In terms of fiscal space, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA 2017b)[13] reports that there is room to improve the efficiency of tax administration to fight evasion and avoidance, as well as the progressivity of tax collection in all countries. ESCWA underscores the importance of focusing on mobilising revenues rather than cutting productive expenditure. Its analysis shows that the tax-to-GDP ratio in Arab countries is lower than in other countries with similar development levels. Tax collection has tended to focus on indirect taxes, which are known to be regressive. ESCWA thus points to the potential for increasing direct tax collection: even in low-income countries (such as Yemen and Sudan), it could reach between 2 per cent and 4 per cent of GDP. Property tax collection could also be improved to mobilise revenue and address inequality (ibid.).

The shift in the provision of social assistance—from subsidies to targeted programmes—needs to ensure that the resulting savings are indeed invested in the new programmes. However, between 2012 and 2016, only 1 per cent of the 11 per cent of expenditure that was moved away from subsidies was channelled into social assistance and pensions in Jordan; in Egypt, only a fifth of savings from subsidies from 2013 to 2014 was invested in social benefits in 2015-2016 (ibid.).

Average expenditure on social protection in the region as a share of GDP has fluctuated with social turbulence, though it has been increasing in both oil-rich countries (from 2 per cent to 3 per cent between 2005 and 2014) and those without oil (from 3 per cent to 5 per cent between 2003 and 2014). However, around 70 per cent of people in the poorest quintiles in countries without oil still do not receive transfers. Finally, the region also presents high levels of out-of-pocket expenditures on health and education, taking up 8 per cent of the disposable income of poor people and 11 per cent of those in the middle class, which points to the need for more and improved expenditure on the public provision of these services (ibid.).

Moreover, in recognition that addressing the refugee crisis is a "global public good that goes beyond the responsibility of the hosting country" (Mottaghi 2018), donor countries and international organisations had to step up aid provision. The Syrian refugee crisis led to the creation of the MENA Concessional Financing Facility in 2016, between the World Bank Group, the United Nations and the Islamic Development Bank Group, to support middle-income countries affected by the influx of refugees.[14] Innovative financing agreements were also negotiated, such as the Jordan and Lebanon Compacts, pledging donor assistance and preferential trade agreements against guarantees in terms of refugees' access to the labour market and education services.

The cases present different levels of institutionalisation of their social protection systems. Sudan has just started creating the basis for a social protection system building on its *Zakat* system. Lebanon's National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) was also recently created and then scaled up in response to the pressures imposed on refugee-hosting communities. Both still lack a comprehensive social protection strategy. Conversely, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and the SOP have better-established social protection policy frameworks.

The analysis centres on the countries' flagship non-subsidy social assistance programmes, as described in Table 9. The study reviewed the pre-crisis systems of countries undergoing conflict. Yemen's Social Welfare Fund (SWF) covered a significant proportion of the population, and its database has been used by an emergency cash transfer (ECT) programme implemented by UNICEF with support from the World Bank. In Syria, the mechanisms of the National Social Aid Fund (NSAF) have not been used to provide humanitarian assistance throughout the crisis.

Coordination challenges between the humanitarian and social protection actors have stood out due to the refugee crisis in the region. Only Egypt, Sudan and Yemen are signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. Iraq is the only country to grant access to national social protection to non-nationals (including the 'first wave' of Palestinian refugees). However, in practice this access is

limited due to fiscal space limitations (UNICEF Iraq 2018). Nevertheless, Jordan and Lebanon are the countries hosting the largest numbers of Syrian refugees, and they have had to address coordination challenges between development and humanitarian actors in terms of harmonising the provision of assistance to refugees and host communities. The post-crisis future of Syria's and Yemen's systems can also benefit from increased coordination between organisations providing assistance and the government, to explore whether current interventions can be expanded further.

Table 9. Programmes considered in the analysis[15]

Country	Programme	Start date	Targeting	Coverage	Child-sensitive and other relevant features
Egypt	*Takaful and Karama* (Solidarity and Dignity)	2013	PMT; geographical targeting; categorical targeting	2,268,801 households nationwide (as of April 2018); over 10 million individuals or almost 10 per cent of the population[16]	*Takaful* supports children's access to health and education; benefit increases with number of household members/children; programme targets children *Karama* targets children (defined by the programme as 'orphans')
Iraq	Social Protection Network	2005	PMT	1 million households, around 6.1 million people or the equivalent of 16 per cent of the population[17]	Benefit increases with the number of household members/children; programme targets children
Jordan	National Aid Fund (NAF) (recurring cash assistance)	1986	Means-tested; categorical	91,804 households and 299,689 individuals (around 2.98 per cent of the population) received recurring cash assistance in 2017[18]	Supports children's access to education and health; benefit increases with the number of household members/children; programme targets children
Lebanon	National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP)	2011/2014[19]	PMT	41,369 households, 229,743 people or around 3.89 per cent of the population (2018)[20]	School fee waivers support children's access to education; programme targets children
State of Palestine	Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme (NCTP)	2010	PMT	633,000 individuals (2017), over 124,000 households or around 13.24 per cent of the total population[21]	Beneficiaries are also entitled to other State-provided assistance, including health insurance, food support, school fee waivers, and cash grants to address emergency needs
Sudan	*Shamel* (cash transfers)	2011/2016	PMT	600,000 households, around 3,540,000 people or around 8.9 per cent of the population[22]	Programme targets children
Syria	National Social Aid Fund (NSAF)	2007	PMT; geographical targeting; categorical targeting	439,000 households (2011), 2,195,000 people or around 9.2 per cent of the population before the crisis[23]	The programme design envisaged the gradual introduction of conditionalities regarding children's school attendance, vaccination and literacy level; however, these were not implemented
Yemen	Social Welfare Fund (SWF)	1996	PMT	1.5 million families and over 8 million individuals (around 35 per cent of the population) lived in a beneficiary household before the crisis (2013)	Benefit increases with the number of household members/children; programme targets children

Source: Machado et al (2018) and others (see endnotes).

All countries could improve the emergency preparedness of their social protection systems. Overall, the UNICEF Country Offices consulted in the survey are unaware of the existence of national mechanisms and resources such as emergency-trained staff (for implementing ECTs), contingency agreements with service providers, emergency operational manuals, early-warning systems and contingency funds. Some countries (including Egypt, Jordan and SOP) have ECTs provided by the government, as well as Zakat Funds in Jordan and SOP; however, these seem to be too small in scale to properly address large shocks. Though some countries in the region have started planning for DRR and climate change adaptation, existing strategies do not make explicit connections to social protection. Moreover, respondents to the survey believe that a lack of financial resources and technical capacity to tailor the programmes to an emergency context are key challenges to using the national flagship cash transfer in these situations. A lack of coordination between the social protection and emergency systems was another challenge that was highlighted. Respondents from Syria, Lebanon and Jordan believed that the national cash transfer was still too incipient to be used for such purposes (UNICEF 2018).

Targeting in most programmes is done via proxy means-testing, a method that typically intends to identify chronic poverty, and not necessarily vulnerability to shocks. In Iraq, the World Bank's technical assistance is seeking to include conflict-sensitive variables in the PMT and stratify it by displacement status to account for important differences due to this characteristic. Nonetheless, depending on the type of shock that these countries face, it is likely that complementary targeting methods and/or a needs assessment would need to be undertaken if the most vulnerable people are to be reached.

Beneficiary databases from most active programmes analysed in this study also tend to include information on both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, which is important in allowing scalability, but countries could benefit from evolving their databases from a programme-based model to a social registry model to cover all poor vulnerable people, with multiple registration points. Egypt and Jordan, for instance, are experimenting with a virtual social registry, whereby data are pulled from multiple databases. It remains to be seen if these systems will also rely on front office capacity in the future, allowing for on-demand registration[24] (Leite et al. 2017). It is unlikely that these registries will include information on non-citizens/non-nationals, except in the case of Iraq, whose social protection legislation offers this possibility. However, this functionality is not unprecedented: for instance, Brazil, Chile and Colombia have allowed non-nationals/refugees to register in their social registries to receive social assistance benefits.[25]

Payment methods vary from country to country. Outsourced e-payments and financially inclusive mechanisms, such as eFinance in Egypt, are an international trend (ISPA n.d.). Lebanon is the only country among the cases considered in this report whose flagship programme is based on a voucher system, in partnership with the WFP. Jordan relies on post offices, but UNICEF is working with the Central Bank of Jordan to develop the Jordan Mobile Payment Platform, which should provide the NAF with a new scalable payment mechanism (UNICEF Jordan 2018). In Yemen and Syria, whereas the pre-conflict SWF and NSAF relied on post offices, humanitarian assistance (the ECT and the benefit for children with complex disabilities, respectively) is now delivered through financial institutions. Post offices are a good option for reaching remote areas where the banking system is not well developed, but they are usually not functional and can even be targeted in attacks during large-scale conflict. Where they continue to operate, issues of neutrality might arise. Therefore, mobile payments represent an important development in the delivery of payments to remote locations. Payment timeliness is still an issue in some countries, not necessarily because of the choice of payment method but, rather, due to delays in budget disbursement processes.

Monitoring and evaluation for regular programmes is not very robust in most cases, leading to a gap in evidence-based policymaking. In developing these systems, the relations between vulnerability to shocks, seasonality and poverty—as well as issues faced by beneficiaries in access to services and challenges faced by programme implementers—might be considered factors to be investigated. Benefit adequacy could also be assessed, taking into account not only the programmes' regular poverty reduction goals but also their capacity to enhance households' resilience.

Implementation capacity is typically challenged by the precarious situation of staff, who are often paid late or do not receive compensation for work-related expenses, such as transportation costs. Moreover, in many cases, administrative work or data collection is given greater emphasis than other types of activities, such as case management. In terms of making child-sensitive social protection more shock-responsive, it is key to focus on strengthening the workforce and building its capacity to provide better-quality services. Furthermore, if workers engaged in regular social protection programmes are expected to carry out programme operations under extraordinary circumstances, such as during large covariate shocks, their compensation and training also need to reflect these circumstances, which should also be properly regulated to ensure their safety and appropriate working conditions.

This report provides an initial general mapping of opportunities for social protection in MENA to become more shock-responsive, along with challenges that the systems face. Coordination and preparedness are areas for further investment, and this should be based on sound evidence about the main risks that national systems are likely to encounter. The trend towards social registries is encouraging, as it is clear that the wider the coverage of databases, the more likely they are to be useful in crisis response, provided that data quality is also considered appropriate. Finally, implementation capacity is a key area for further investment, to ensure system resilience and responsiveness in the face of shocks. The cases are reviewed individually and in further detail below.

Egypt

The Egyptian government considers that population growth and unemployment (especially among youth and women), in addition to water scarcity, are some of the main challenges faced at the national level. Instability in the region and the global economic slowdown have also affected Egypt's economy (Arab Republic of Egypt 2016). The 2011 and 2013 revolutions led to the elaboration of the 2014 Constitution, catering to demands for inclusive growth, including the right to social protection (Art. 17) and the right to food, explicitly for children (Art. 79, 80), as well as the Egypt Vision 2030 strategy (Abdalla and Al-Shawarby 2017). Though unemployment rates in Egypt have been decreasing in recent years, they remain high (34 per cent) among youth aged 15–24 years.[26] Female labour force participation is still very modest (22 per cent in 2017).[27]

According to INFORM (2019), Egypt is considered to be at significant risk from earthquakes, floods and tsunamis, but its human risk (which includes measurements of projected conflict risk as well as current highly violent conflict intensity) is considered even higher than its exposure to natural hazards. Nonetheless, the country does not score high on the vulnerability or lack of coping capacity indices, which, combined with its hazard exposure index, places the country in the 'medium' INFORM risk class.

Nonetheless, climate change is expected to majorly impact agricultural activity through temperature increases and desertification. Coastal areas are also at risk due to a probable rise in sea level (Arab Republic of Egypt 2016; Göll 2017). The country's National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2030 regulates the country's DRR efforts; however, no explicit links to the social protection sector are specified. Nonetheless, it does foresee the allocation of a (non-specified) share of the national budget to DRR and the creation of a disaster risk fund (Arab Republic of Egypt 2017).

Egypt is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention (including the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees) and the 1969 Organization of African Union Convention on Refugees. In 2018, Egypt was hosting 233,045 registered refugees and asylum-seekers of 58 different nationalities, including 130,300 Syrians (UNHCR 2018a). The government considers these groups a strain on public resources, including subsidised goods and public services (Arab Republic of Egypt 2016). Refugees and asylum-seekers are eligible for humanitarian assistance provided by United Nations agencies and NGOs, and for accessing public primary health care and public schools. However, challenges remain in accessing secondary health services, especially for other non-Arabic-speaking nationalities due to the language barrier (UNICEF Egypt 2018a).

Persistent poverty rates remain high after the political shifts resulting from the Arab uprisings (World Bank 2015). At least one in every four Egyptians is poor, and half of the population is either poor or near-poor, according to household expenditure data from 2014-2015 (Abdalla and Al-Shawarby 2017). Extreme monetary poverty increased between 2013 and 2015, with approximately 10.4 million children (around 31 per cent of the total) living in extreme monetary poverty in 2016, and an additional 7.8 million children just slightly above this threshold and thus vulnerable to extreme poverty (UNICEF Egypt 2018b). Upper Egypt—the poorest region—also presents worrisome child malnutrition indicators and a significant education gender gap: girls are 2.3 times more likely not to have ever been to school than boys (World Bank 2015). SNAP (2018c) reports that although food prices have generally been stable over the past year, inflation in the price of the basic food basket (from EGP140 in March 2016 to EGP212 in March 2018) challenged people's purchasing power and their access to these food products.

Nonetheless, Egypt has made significant progress in the nationwide scale-up of the *Takaful* and *Karama* programme (TKP), its flagship cash transfer programme initiated in 2015. It is expected that the TKP will progressively replace the Social Solidarity Pension implemented since the 1980s. Egypt's social assistance system also includes: a Social Fund for Development, aimed at creating employment opportunities and improving access to basic services; a Social Pension Health Care Programme, aimed at covering the poorest 20–25 per cent of the population; a School Feeding Programme that reached 12.5 million children in 2016; a Social Housing Fund servicing around 830,000 households; and food and energy subsidies which are still an important component of the overall system (Machado et al. 2018).

Spending on social protection has significantly increased in recent years. However, health and education expenditures have tended to remain below the goals set in the 2014 Constitution (UNICEF Egypt 2018b). In terms of social protection, the May 2018 financial bulletin from the Arab Republic of Egypt's Ministry of Finance (2018) states that expenditures on subsidies, grants and social benefits rose by EGP67.8 billion (5.2 per cent of GDP) to a record EGP222.2 billion—compared to EGP154.4 billion during the same period in 2017. Included in this total, spending on the TKP and social insurance pensions reportedly grew by EGP5.9 billion (62.7 per cent), reaching EGP15.3 billion, compared to EGP9.4 billion between July 2016 and April 2017. Moreover, the 2018-2019 budget plan has also indicated the highest budgets ever allocated to the health and education sectors (Ministry of Finance 2018).

The World Bank (2015) points out that spending on energy subsidies surpassed 7 per cent of GDP in 2013-2014 (more than spending on health, education and public investment combined)—a regressive expenditure, as 68 per cent of subsidies tend to benefit the richest two quintiles of the population. Moreover, the food subsidy system (with an average expenditure of 1.7 per cent of GDP in recent years) is considered a deeply embedded citizens' right, in support of which governments need to uphold the provision of food and basic goods at affordable prices (Abdalla and Al-Shawarby 2017). Subsidies are currently being reformed gradually, which is expected to significantly free up fiscal space. The fiscal savings from these structural reforms are being directed to pro-poor interventions to protect vulnerable communities through different measures, such as the expansion of social safety nets (UNICEF Egypt 2018a). In 2015 and 2016, only a fifth of the savings resulting from reforms of subsidies in 2013 and 2014 were reinvested in social benefits, according to ESCWA (2017b).

The TKP reached 2,268,801 households nationwide as of April 2018 (World Bank 2018e). Currently, over 10 million individuals—almost 10 per cent of the population—are covered (UNICEF Egypt 2018a). Targeting is a contentious issue in a country whose social contract is based on the notion of universality; however, a number of measures have been adopted to improve both the efficiency and the quality of the food subsidy system. In tandem with these reforms, a PMT based on the 2012-2013 Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey was developed to target beneficiaries of the TKP (Abdalla and Al-Shawarby 2017; ESCWA 2017a).

Though Article 83 of the Constitution guarantees state provision of a social pension, *Takaful* (targeting families with children) and *Karama* (targeting poor elderly people, people with disabilities, and children defined by the programme as 'orphans') were established jointly by an administrative decree issued by

the Prime Minister and have not yet been embedded in a stronger legal framework (Bilo and Machado 2018). The programme is managed by the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS), in close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform (MoPMAR), the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), and the Ministry of Education. Cooperation has been strengthened by the programmatic aim to reduce long-term poverty through cash transfers that are conditional on beneficiaries sending their children to school and ensuring that they regularly attend health facilities. In terms of *Takaful* conditionality monitoring, MoUs have been signed by the MoSS, the MoHP and the Ministry of Education (ESCWA 2017a). In addition to the TKP, another unit in the MoSS social protection department is in charge of an emergency programme that provides assistance or compensation to those in need due to idiosyncratic or covariate shocks (including, for example, funeral expenses, injuries, disabilities and floods), based on a case-by-case analysis (UNICEF Egypt 2018a).

The TKP's registry stores information of all applicants (including beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries), achieving a very significant coverage of 22 million people, or approximately 22 per cent of the population (ibid.). The database is managed at the central level and hosted at the service provider's data centre as well as the MoSS headquarters. Applications to the TKP are open to citizens at the village level on a continuous, on-demand basis. The MIS designed by the MoSS has six modules: registration; back-office registry (cross-checking with other records to confirm eligibility); payment cycle; case management; conditionality compliance; and complaints management (World Bank 2015). The system has been operational since 2016, with the exception of the case management and conditionality compliance modules (World Bank 2018e).

The Unified National Registry (UNR) led by the Administrative Control Authority is considered key to wide-ranging social reforms, as it aims to establish a national database linked to the national ID system that coordinates social protection programmes and facilitates targeting and delivery processes by integrating several existing databases (at least five, including the Family/Food Smart Card—covering over 80 per cent of the population, the TKP, social pensions and social security, as well as the Ministry of Education). The registry links the data to other relevant records, such as electricity and phone bills (Leite et al. 2017; Machado et al. 2018). The UNR also has an offline connection to four additional databases: the MoSS's insurance and NGO databases, the Central Agency for Organization and Administration's database, the Ministry of Higher Education's database, and sample datasets from the income tax and commercial registry systems. It is expected that the UNR will thus also help programmes identify duplication, errors and fraud (World Bank 2015; ESCWA 2017a; Leite et al. 2017). A continued priority for the UNR has been to standardise and assure the quality of the data, since they vary across the different databases that comprise the system (UNICEF Egypt 2018a). It remains to be seen whether the UNR's intake of information will continue to be channelled through the various programmes that it serves, or whether it will develop front-office capacity to allow people to register in this wider database via a common application form (Leite et al. 2017).

All TKP beneficiaries receive benefits via electronic payments (World Bank 2018e), with cards supplied by the eFinance company, which allow them to withdraw money from post offices (ESCWA 2017a), and from automatic teller machines (ATMs) in the future (UNICEF Egypt 2018a). The level of TKP benefits has also been increased in the past as a result of economic crisis, such as the devaluation of the Egyptian pound after November 2016 (ibid.). Moreover, beneficiaries are eligible to participate in the Social Pension Health Care Programme (Machado et al. 2018). This is a very important linkage, particularly in Egypt,[28] as out-of-pocket health-care payments were estimated to cause a significant financial shock for more than one fifth of the population—and to push 3 per cent into extreme poverty—in 2011 (Rashad and Sharaf 2015).

Approximately 12,000 social workers and 10,000 outsourced researchers[29] were involved in the implementation of the TKP (World Bank 2017f). The daily management of the programme is centralised in the Central Unit for Social Pension of the MoSS's Social Protection Department. At the local level, NGOs and community development associations are also involved in programme implementation (ESCWA 2017a). However, to fully achieve the human development outcomes embedded in the programme's objectives, supply-side limitations and gaps in education and health-care services need to be addressed, including "irregularity of service delivery, distorted

distribution of service providers, low quality of inputs, and governance and accountability issues" (World Bank 2015, 3)—issues that might deepen in times of crisis. ESCWA (2017a) reports that these efforts are under way under the coordination of the Ministerial Committee for Social Justice. The programme has also deployed a communication campaign involving a broad range of stakeholders and channels, such as talk shows, debates, media conferences, printed and visual media, meetings with community and religious leaders, and public hearings. This campaign sought to emphasise the programme's link to the post-2011 social and economic reforms (World Bank 2015).

M&E systems need to be improved to inform regular poverty reduction policymaking. At the onset of the Social Safety Nets Project, the World Bank considered the MoSS's M&E capacity limited. The TKP's MIS was to form the basis of the M&E system; the MoSS was also placed in charge of undertaking spot checks to evaluate the performance of social workers, and an annual evaluation was to be carried out by an independent beneficiary verification agency (World Bank 2015). However, UNICEF Egypt (2018b, 9) reports that "...because data is difficult to access and evaluations are infrequently demanded and their results little used, Egypt's policy-making and programme design is not evidence-based. If routine monitoring systems are strengthened, evaluations become more effective and efficient, and data is promoted for effective use, then policies and programmes can become better designed and targeted."

Egypt has shown commitment to expanding social protection and building the basis of a DRR strategy, but both sectors could seek to strengthen their linkages and coordination, as the country recognises the significant risks that it could face from both climate change and regional instability. It is important that savings accrued from the reformulation or removal of subsidies are reinvested in social expenditures, as the country needs to not only expand social protection coverage to all poor and vulnerable people to be more effective in shielding them from shocks, but also improve service delivery, particularly of health care and education. Having multiple distribution points and efficient electronic payments are considered positive measures to ensure the programme's shock-responsiveness. To further strengthen these measures, the government might want to define in which extraordinary conditions regular payment providers may continue (and potentially scale up) operations and (if needed) under which circumstances alternative providers might be deployed. Finally, as part of its efforts to improve M&E mechanisms, it could also consider including resilience considerations.

Iraq

Iraq has faced a number of conflicts since 1980, and its dependency on oil revenues has left its economy highly vulnerable to price fluctuations. The recent twin crises of 2014, driven by the sharp decline in oil prices and the war against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), are estimated to have drastically eroded welfare gains from the past, with a 20 per cent increase in poverty rates meaning a return to 2007 levels (Krishnan and Olivieri 2016). At the onset of the armed conflict in 2014, more than 3 million Iraqis were displaced in 18 months, a level of displacement that persisted until the end of 2017, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM 2018).

This rapid displacement crisis overwhelmed the capacities of United Nations agencies and NGOs that were already working in Iraq, and their response was challenged by limited donor funding (which can be interpreted as a symptom of donor fatigue and also a shift in priorities towards other major crises), security threats preventing access to large areas, and a lack of coordination between the various actors involved. On the government side, decades-long involvement in conflict left a significant legacy of weak infrastructure and capacity (including several allegations of corruption and mismanagement), further compounded by deepening political divides (Redvers 2015). Iraq is currently considered to be at 'very high risk' by INFORM (2019). Conflict is by far the single largest factor in the country's human risk score—the highest possible in INFORM's scale (10.0)—but the country is also exposed to natural hazards such as earthquakes and floods. Vulnerability is considered high, as is the country's lack of coping capacity, which stems from its institutional setting in particular.

Though oil prices have increased since 2016, and progress has been made in fighting ISIS, the country's situation is still marked by high multidimensional vulnerability, ethnic and religious divisions, and a strong

tribal culture, which may challenge relations between the State and civil society. Service delivery is considered key to re-establishing trust in the government and containing extremism (World Bank 2018d; Schüring et al. 2017). As the country progresses in its reconstruction, it is important to expand climate change adaptation policies, programmes and financing, as drought and water scarcity have also proven to be significant push factors for internal displacement (Alzobaidee 2015; World Bank 2018d).

Approximately 22.5 per cent of the population were living in poverty in 2014, while recent estimates suggest that 11 million Iraqis are in need of humanitarian assistance (World Bank 2018d). Recent internal displacement is now mainly one of return: July 2018 registered 3,956,610 returnees and 1,953,984 IDPs[30] (IOM 2018). IDPs and returnees are in a particularly vulnerable situation, facing challenges to establish their legal identity and access services and livelihood opportunities (International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement 2017a).

A progressive law from 2014 addresses social protection provision to all residents living below the national poverty line[31] (including first-wave Palestinian refugees),[32] and the sector relies on the Social Protection Strategic Roadmap 2015–2019. Moreover, the Refugee Act (Law No. 51 of 1971) also grants refugees the right to access public employment, social services and welfare allowances and to engage in trade (Alkhoja et al. 2016; Khurshid 2017; International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement 2017a). In practice, however, due to fiscal space restrictions, most refugees have limited access to these services and benefits (UNICEF Iraq 2018). Though the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has progressed more in providing services to these groups (International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement 2017a) and has recently put in place a Joint Coordination Centre, it receives reduced transfers from the central government (UNICEF Iraq 2018). Discussions are under way to amend the Social Protection Law, to add an element of shock-responsiveness to the mandate of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), as it cannot engage in emergency response on its own. Moreover, though Article 1 broadens the law's scope to cover all residents (including other nationalities) living below the poverty line, the focus of Article 28 (ibid.) on Palestinian refugees is being revised, with considerations that it might be expanded to include all refugees.

Coordination between government ministries and international agencies could be improved. There is some overlap in the assistance provided by the MoLSA, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) and humanitarian agencies. Khurshid (2017) considers that the MoMD could take on a coordination role in crisis response in the long term. The MoLSA's capacity to respond to emergencies—*vis-à-vis* beneficiaries and its own staff—is considered rather reactive, and no significant preparedness measures are currently in place (UNICEF Iraq 2018). A social protection commission to manage social assistance in Iraq was established by the 2014 law, and in the operational guidelines for the new conditional cash transfer,[33] the MoLSA has initiated an interministerial steering committee, which should be represented by the Ministries of Health and Education. The roll-out of the new conditional cash transfer in different governorates is expected to require the collaboration of regional and local authorities so that the State can present a coherent approach. This aspect is considered key to ensuring its credibility as an important step towards social cohesion (World Bank 2018d).

Humanitarian agencies in Iraq provide one-off emergency cash transfers to IDPs (and additional transfers for the most vulnerable), who are afterwards linked to the government-provided social protection programmes. Nonetheless, these linkages are not yet systematic. Humanitarian organisations and the government are at the very early stages of sharing information between their respective programmes, and no specific referral pathways or draft protocols have been agreed (UNICEF Iraq 2018). A cash working group attended by over 30 members (NGOs, United Nations agencies and donors) coordinates humanitarian cash transfers in Iraq to ensure a consistent approach. The WFP's SCOPE, a beneficiary and transfer management platform, is used by humanitarian agencies, and the organisation is exploring possible synergies between its own digital solutions and the government's systems. The UNHCR also cooperates with governmental legal departments to help IDPs and returnees obtain documentation and access social services. Its ASSIST platform is also being used by other organisations, including UNICEF (UNICEF Iraq 2018; International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement 2017a).

In Iraq, UNICEF has also worked with the Department of Labour and Social Affairs and MoLSA social workers in the Dohuk and Erbil governorates to implement a humanitarian cash transfer. In 2018, this will be extended to the Ninewa governorate (UNICEF Iraq 2018). UNICEF considered the national poverty-targeting strategy to be inappropriate in the case of reaching vulnerable IDPs; therefore, a categorical vulnerability criterion was developed by the entire Cash Working Group in a collaborative effort, with inputs from UNICEF on specific child vulnerability issues. The social workers were trained accordingly. The organisation reported that working with national government staff enabled the involvement of the government's Education Department, which in turn promoted the intervention's timeliness regarding the school enrolment of the target population (Smith 2017c).

The Iraqi government's budget is typically based on projected oil exports at an estimated price, accounting for possible market fluctuations. Almost half of the economy encompasses oil-related activities, and only 15 per cent of the non-oil economy is subject to taxation, which, considering the country's widespread tax exemptions, weak legal basis and tax administration, makes for a rather anaemic total tax revenue[34] (IMF 2017a). The country has committed to a fiscal consolidation process backed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and while expenditure is now likely to focus on security and stabilisation efforts, the government has pledged to protect 'essential' social spending (World Bank 2018d; Khurshid 2017).

Social spending in general and social protection spending in particular are around twice as much as the regional average. However, much of the expenditure (including the public pension system, fuel subsidies and the Public Distribution System—PDS)[35] is considered to be poorly targeted and fiscally unsustainable, crowding out what could be more pro-poor investments (IMF 2017a). Nonetheless, the PDS is the only universal, non-contributory social transfer system in the world, withstanding decades of conflict and fragility and covering practically the entire poor and vulnerable population (reaching 90 per cent of all households—or 33 million people—in 2016), while other programmes reach at best 20 per cent of poor people (Krishnan et al. 2018; IMF 2017a). Reforming the PDS will undoubtedly be politically sensitive, though options started being considered after the fiscal crisis of 2014.[36] Alternate systems need to become well established and consolidated before any major reforms, considering the significant welfare losses that the population would incur with the phasing out of the PDS (Krishnan et al. 2018).[37]

The Social Protection Network (SPN), the country's flagship cash transfer programme, reaches over 1 million households—around 6.1 million people (16 per cent of the population), with an expenditure of 1.8 per cent of the government's budget in 2017 (World Bank 2018d; Machado et al. 2018; Khurshid 2017). The SPN's targeting has undergone significant modifications since the programme started in 2005, with the aim of making it more pro-poor. Alzobaidee (2015) reports that, in the past, a resource-constrained Social Welfare Department was pressured by the government to achieve nationwide coverage, prompting the SPN to randomly include new beneficiaries. Moreover, benefit provision displayed a tendency to focus on urban centres rather than remote rural areas. Since then, the SPN's eligibility criteria have undergone significant alterations, moving from a categorical to a PMT-based beneficiary selection process. From September to December 2015, all those who were beneficiaries before the 2014 law were surveyed, and 43 per cent of households were found ineligible and subsequently excluded from the programme (Alkhoja et al. 2016). Nonetheless, the SPN only covers governorates not constituted as regions, thus excluding the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which hosts overwhelming numbers of IDPs and refugees (UNICEF Iraq 2018).

Any citizen may apply to the programme online during specific registration windows (not on a rolling basis) (ibid.); applications are then assessed through the PMT, and a verification process cross-checks the applicants' tax, asset ownership and employment records (Khurshid 2017). If the applicant (due to displacement or other issues) does not have any proof of identification, there is a committee to which they can bring witnesses to testify for them (UNICEF Iraq 2018). The PMT formula is currently being reworked based on a nationally and regionally representative household survey collected at the end of 2017, which stratified information from IDPs and non-IDPs, thus accounting for changes in welfare caused by displacement. Moreover, the existing grievance redressal mechanism and the future incorporation of community-based targeting are expected to further reduce targeting errors (World Bank 2018d).

The SPN's beneficiary database contains a very large beneficiary 'waiting list' of over half a million households (almost half the size of the SPN's current coverage). If fiscal constraints are relaxed, these households would be prioritised in a horizontal scale-up (UNICEF Iraq 2018). In the past, there have been reports of inadequacy and incompleteness of the information collected in the social protection database, which—despite already being routinely being checked against other public records—still suffered from a lack of collaboration with other ministries that did not provide information on their own employees (Alzobaidee 2015).

Currently, the use of this system in emergency response could present challenges, as it would require more training to familiarise social workers with it (UNICEF Iraq 2018). In addition, the system does not yet receive data from health-care centres or schools; therefore, for the incentivised cash transfer pilot, another system had to be built and integrated into the SPN database (ibid.). Data requests (such as from NGOs) are analysed on a case-by-case basis by the MoLSA, which can grant access to parts of the data (ibid.). The MoLSA's MIS should be modernised with technical assistance from the World Bank (2018d), which will also improve the administrative infrastructure of social units at the governorates and provide capacity-strengthening for staff and social workers. The aim of the current technical assistance project is to include the PMT formula variables that capture conflict-related vulnerabilities into the database (IDP or returnee status, female-headed households, youth, and chronic poverty) (ibid.).

Benefits from the SPN are paid directly to beneficiaries via *QiCard* smart cards containing biometric signatures (UNICEF Iraq 2018). Therefore, IDPs and returnees who keep their smart cards will still benefit from the programme at their destination, as multiple points of service are available nationwide (Alzobaidee 2015).[38] While paying beneficiaries on time is a priority for the government, especially in newly retaken areas, delays in SPN payments are possible due to budgetary disbursement issues in the Ministry of Finance—just as could happen to salaries paid by ministries (UNICEF Iraq 2018). Moreover, even though the current payment method is widespread nationally, UNICEF Iraq chose another provider (a mobile payment system) when targeting a group of 10,000 refugees and IDP children for assistance. Precisely because *QiCard* has such a large client base, the company had other priorities and was unable to quickly put in place some of the systems that were required by UNICEF (such as a specific hotline system) for such a small caseload. UNICEF would also be unable to monitor the beneficiaries as closely, as the information on their small caseload would be mixed with all other *QiCard* subscribers (ibid.).

The MoLSA's hired staff include 1,300 social workers (Alkhoja et al 2016), but local United Nations agencies and/or NGOs should also be contracted for the implementation of subprojects, as there is a perceived need for 'quick wins' in post-conflict situations (World Bank 2018d). Social workers are currently being trained on a number of areas (including case management) under the World Bank technical assistance project. Their role is expected to go beyond data collection, as they are entrusted to address social cohesion and reinstate people's trust in the State (Alkhoja et al. 2016). However, limited operational costs might restrict the SPN's reach in remote areas. For example, social workers reportedly receive minimal support for transportation; therefore, processes of registration and verification may take longer in more remote parts of the country (UNICEF Iraq 2018). The number of social workers assigned to each governorate varies, as does their caseload; nevertheless, as this capacity cannot easily be transplanted from one area to another, the MoLSA is more likely to hire new staff to increase the size of the workforce, even if without significant institutional knowledge (ibid.). A specific component of the current World Bank technical assistance also aims to build the resilience of the SPN through investment in its implementation capacity to improve its flexibility during horizontal or vertical expansion. Finally, media kits, communal/group sessions, information centres, individual awareness-raising and information sessions, project ambassadors, a website, newspaper articles and TV/radio interviews will be employed as part of the programme's communications strategy (World Bank 2018d).

Severe rates of war-related trauma and psychosocial issues have been reported by United Nations agencies, which need to be prioritised in service delivery (DFAT 2017). Around 400,000 returnees and people from the governorates of Salahideen, Anbar, Diyala and Ninawa are being targeted for the provision of psychosocial services by Ministry of Health primary health-care centres, MoLSA centres, women and youth community centres, health workers, social workers and community volunteers, fostering coordination between the different sectors and their

relevant ministries (the MoLSA, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education). Moreover, five Integrated Mental Health Psychosocial Services (MHPSS) and centres specialised in gender-based violence are expected to be established. The MHPSS framework developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on MHPSS in emergency settings[39] is planned to be adopted (World Bank 2018d).

M&E systems and social accountability mechanisms are incipient. Innovative approaches with a post-conflict-sensitive monitoring arrangement (including the use of GPS technology, real-time data flows and third-party monitoring) are set to be incorporated into the programme. The SPN's grievance redressal mechanism is also expected to be further developed. The conditional cash transfer pilot will incorporate specific indicators involving the enrolment of beneficiaries and compliance with co-responsibilities (World Bank 2018d).

In terms of the country's overall resilience, its dependency on oil needs to be ameliorated by investing in economic diversification. While the country moves forward with fiscal consolidation measures, it is important to protect social spending. Reforms to the PDS should not come before the expansion of other systems (including the SPN) that can buffer the welfare losses that the population will inevitably face if the PDS is phased out. The country's social protection law is considered progressive for including non-citizens (albeit only first-wave Palestinian refugees at this time), but fiscal considerations prevent it from realising its full potential. As the country stands to revise the MoLSA's mandate to include elements of shock-responsiveness, it will be important to reflect on and operationalise the coordination with the MoMD, which is considered an eligible candidate for taking on a coordination role in crisis response.

The SPN still needs to expand its coverage to improve its shock-responsiveness. Though the PMT formula is currently being revised and stratified based on information from IDPs and non-IDPs, assessments can be carried out to ascertain whether this is enough to adjust targeting in such a dynamic situation. As the MoLSA's MIS is modernised, special attention must be given to ensuring data quality and interoperability with other sectors, and to adequate training of staff. Finally, as children's mental health is an important mechanism linking conflict and education outcomes, it is of paramount importance that quality psychosocial support services are enhanced and that they are made available to all those in need. Demand-side interventions designed to promote school attendance also need to carefully take this issue into account, while strengthening their case management approach and refraining from imposing strict and exclusionary conditionalities.

Jordan

Jordan, a lower-middle-income country of 10,053,000[40] people (of whom 2.9 million are non-citizens—including 1.3 million Syrians, of whom 670,429 were registered refugees as of September 2018 (UNHCR 2018b)—is an oil-poor country with a scarce water supply. According to the Jordan Department of Statistics (2018), unemployment rates reached 18.7 per cent in the second quarter of 2018 (16.6 per cent for men and 26.8 per cent for women), the highest level in decades, and recent subsidy cuts have led to an increase in food prices since the beginning of the year. The most recent poverty data (from 2010) peg the absolute poverty rate at 14.4 per cent, with 13.5 per cent of households either experiencing or being vulnerable to food insecurity. Most registered refugees from Syria (86 per cent) live below the national poverty line. Moreover, a third of the population is considered transient poor, with children being particularly affected by poverty (20 per cent of children are multidimensionally poor) (UNICEF 2017a). The incidence of poverty is higher in rural areas, though two thirds of the poor population live in urban areas (WFP 2018b; SNAP 2018a; UNICEF 2017b). INFORM (2019) places the country at medium overall risk, mainly due to its high vulnerability score, as its hazard exposure and lack of coping capacity risks rank low. In terms of natural hazards, earthquakes and drought are the biggest concerns.

Regional instability has affected growth, unemployment and government expenditure. Conflicts in Syria and Iraq have affected Jordan's trade routes and tourism, leading to losses in GDP growth of 1 per cent per year.

Government expenditure has also increased by at least 1 per cent since 2013, and unemployment has grown, mostly in regions hosting refugees (IMF 2017b). As the situation in Iraq stabilises, Jordan's economy stands to improve due to increasing exports (SNAP 2018a). In recent years, the country has been implementing a number of fiscal consolidation measures, including the elimination of subsidies of oil products[41] and reforms of water and electricity prices (World Bank 2016a; World Bank 2017c). Bread subsidies were also reformed in 2018. ESCWA (2017b) notes, however, that Jordan's tax system is very reliant on indirect taxes (which comprised around 71 per cent of total tax revenue in 2014), and that the major share of tax revenues come from the poorest 40 per cent of the population. Moreover, direct taxation has not expanded much since the 1990s.

Throughout this difficult period, however, Jordan has maintained a relatively high level of social expenditure: 12.48 per cent of recurrent expenditure on education (3.64 per cent of GDP), 14.44 per cent on health (4.11 per cent of GDP) and 3.6 per cent on social protection[42] (0.94 per cent of GDP). Moreover, the Jordan Compact agreed in February 2016 saw a commitment of GBP1.6 billion in donor assistance (and preferential trade agreements with the European Union) in exchange for the promotion of 200,000 work permits and the access of Syrians to education in Jordan (Barbelet et al. 2018; International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement 2017b). Though this fast-paced negotiation lacked representation from refugees, and progress was limited, it has managed to build a bridge between the humanitarian and developmental sectors, changing the nature of the refugee response by giving refugees most of the funding, which is attached to developmental plans with specific targets that unlock subsequent funding tranches (Barbelet et al. 2018).

Social protection for nationals is backed by law, but the country is not a signatory to either the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, rendering refugees vulnerable to a number of legal obstacles. Between January 2016 and June 2018, 105,404 work permits were issued (Ministry of Labour Syrian Refugee Unit 2018),[43] but some sectors and self-employment remained closed to refugees, and financial costs and poor service quality kept large numbers of children out of school (Barbelet et al. 2018; UNICEF 2017b; International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement 2017b). The Jordan Poverty Reduction Strategy 2013–2020 predates the refugee crisis, and a new National Social Protection and Poverty Reduction Strategy is expected to be finalised in the first quarter of 2019 (UNICEF Jordan 2018). Finally, the country relies on a National Comprehensive Plan for Encountering Emergencies and Disasters (Government of Jordan 2003) and on the Jordan Response Plan 2017–2019 for humanitarian response (International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement 2017b). The country's flagship cash transfer programme for citizens, the NAF, was established by Law No. 36 of 1986 and works as a semi-autonomous arm of the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) (UNDP 2013).

The NAF runs a recurring cash transfer—the largest of its programmes—along with care assistance for people with disabilities, cash assistance for physical rehabilitation, and an emergency cash transfer which amounted to JOD874,783 in the 2013 budget. A one-off payment of between JOD100 and JOD1,200 (decided on a case-by-case basis) is granted to individuals or families experiencing idiosyncratic or covariate shocks.

Zureiqat and Abu Shama (2015) note that the MoSD has implemented yet another programme amounting to JOD200,000 annually, though it was not clear why it was not linked to the NAF. Machado et al. (2018) also highlight that NAF beneficiaries are eligible for Health Insurance Cards granting free access to basic health services, which can be complemented by one-time payments covering medical expenses at the discretion of the Ministry of Health. Finally, the National Zakat Fund, under the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, also provides transfers and services to both nationals and non-nationals.

Beyond the programmes highlighted above, one of the most significant demonstrations of the government's capacity to quickly implement a large-scale nationwide cash transfer was given by the Income and Sales Tax Department in the aftermath of the removal of fuel subsidies in 2012, with the Fuel Compensation Cash Transfer Programme. At half the cost of the fuel subsidies, it reached 70 per cent of the population (targeting Jordanian

households earning less than JOD10,000 a year). The programme was terminated when the average international price of a barrel of oil fell below USD100 in December 2014; nevertheless, it demonstrated the country's capacity to quickly mobilise cash transfers[44] (World Bank 2013; World Bank 2016a; World Bank 2017c).

The NAF covers less than half of the poor population in Jordan. To cover all poor people, it is estimated that it would need to treble in size—an investment of at least JOD170 million (World Bank 2017c). In 2017, 91,804 households and 299,689 individuals benefited from the NAF's recurring cash assistance (Machado et al. 2018), an estimated 2.98 per cent of the population in 2017.[45]

The NAF's beneficiary registry contains data on both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries (UNICEF Jordan 2018). As part of the World Bank-supported assistance, the programme should include 85,000 new beneficiaries over a period of three years, beginning with 25,000 in 2019 (ibid.). It employs a mix of categorical targeting and means-testing to identify beneficiaries belonging to 16 vulnerable groups (including groups defined by the programme as 'widows', 'orphans', households with prisoners, and households with members with disabilities). The 2013 Report on the Poverty Reduction Strategy (UNDP 2013) noted that the means-testing relied on (irregular) household visits and information on asset ownership provided by associated institutions (including the Social Security Corporation, Zakat Funds and the Department of Land Registration, as well as the Ministry of Health for mental and physical health assessments and for processing Health Insurance Cards). However, the verification system suffered from poor coordination between these institutions.

UNICEF (2017a) thus notes that the social protection system requires better coordination and that fragmentation, limited resources and coverage gaps are still significant challenges. The systems being implemented by humanitarian actors represent a learning opportunity to improve the national system (International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement 2017b). As part of UNICEF's assistance to the NAF, discussions are being held in terms of shifting the targeting mechanism towards a PMT combined with a multidimensional child vulnerability index (with the eligibility threshold determined by the available budget). However, this process should start at the end of 2018, when preliminary data from the new Household Income Expenditure Survey (HIES) will be available.[46] The NAF's current targeting mechanism tends to miss poor households with children and working poor people (according to the 2010 HIES, households with children aged 0–4 have the highest poverty rate, after households with members with disabilities) (UNICEF Jordan 2018). Moreover, the current formula uses information on household demographics, income, assets, labour market status, and expenditures on education and health. However, the weights allocated to the different values for these variables are determined arbitrarily. In other words, the relative importance of each variable (the weights) is not considered evidence-based (ibid.).

Like Egypt, Jordan is currently developing a virtual social registry, pulling data from multiple agencies and databases without centralising it, which is considered "a more agile approach when a more centralized approach is not feasible for various reasons, such as time, total cost of ownership, challenges with collecting and centralizing bulk data from other government agencies" (Leite et al. 2017, 31). Support from the World Bank through the National Unified Registry (NUR) and Outreach Project initially established that the NUR would be implemented by the Income and Sales Tax Department, which had consolidated a large database of beneficiaries of compensation for the removal of fuel subsidies. The original project also expected an administrative order to be issued, whereby agencies would be mandated to submit specific data to the NUR Unit in a standardised format and following protection and confidentiality arrangements (World Bank 2013). However, the termination of this programme in 2014, together with the creation of an e-Government initiative to connect all government agencies through an information and communications technology platform, led to a restructuring of the project, placing implementation of the NUR at the end of 2016 (World Bank 2016b; World Bank 2016c). The NUR is envisioned to be used by multiple programmes—the NAF included—by 2020 (UNICEF Jordan 2018). However, as of April 2018, no NAF beneficiaries had been certified using the NUR platform, nor had the NUR system been developed, tested and piloted, and no institutions had been connected to the NUR system to provide data automatically to the NAF, even though all of these activities had targets for completion by December 2018. Procurement delays were reported to be holding the process back (World Bank 2018c).

UNICEF is working with the Central Bank of Jordan to develop the Jordan Mobile Payment Platform, which should provide the NAF with a new, scalable payment mechanism (UNICEF Jordan 2018).
The NAF currently relies on a network of 41 post office branches at governorate and sub-governorate levels, and 16 sub-branches in rural areas and deserts (Machado et al. 2018). Payments of the fuel compensation cash transfer were made automatically every four months via multiple channels (e.g. payroll for public-sector employees, a regular payment method—post offices—for NAF beneficiaries), including the Housing Bank, the second largest commercial bank in the country, for applicants other than those who were automatically eligible (World Bank 2013).

NAF staff capacity is limited and lacking in resources to conduct case management of beneficiaries (UNDP 2013; International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement 2017b).
A pilot 'Integrated Outreach Worker Programme' is being implemented with support from the World Bank, and an impact evaluation is expected to assess its potential scalability. Youth Foundation is responsible for recruiting outreach workers, initially focusing on urban areas; it was expected that each supervisor would work with 16 workers, who, in turn, would have a caseload of 25 households, spending from one to two hours per week to one hour per month with each of them (World Bank 2016c; World Bank 2013). AZ International trained the project staff, and a case management information system has also been created (World Bank 2016c). By April 2018, the programme had reached 23,471 beneficiaries; however, of the 512 previously recruited outreach workers, only 371 remained after December 2016 (World Bank 2018c).

UNICEF and the government have also partnered in expanding the *Makani* (My Space) platform of over 235 centres, located in host communities (114), refugee camps (22) and informal tented settlements (91) in all 12 governorates of Jordan, to tend to all vulnerable children (regardless of nationality). The centres provide a comprehensive package of social protection services, linking education (learning support services), child protection (psychosocial support services, including sports and recreational activities), and adolescent and youth participation (life skills and innovation lab). It also integrates health, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. Each *Makani* centre also has a community outreach component, as well as referral services to refer special cases to appropriate services. *Makani* has also been leveraged by UNICEF's *Hajati* cash transfer programme[47] to provide cash transfers complemented by linkages with education services and behaviour change communication projects, as well as home visits and case management activities. A pilot linking *Hajati* to the NAF, covering 1,000 households with 2,000 children, is also being conducted and should be scaled up when the NAF's targeting mechanism is reviewed (UNICEF Jordan 2018).

The government is also receiving assistance from UNICEF to enhance the NAF's capacity and its M&E systems, by implementing a real-time monitoring system (Rapid Pro) to produce robust and rigorous real-time monitoring data on dimensions of social accountability that can be used to improve programmes and achieve desired results. The Rapid Pro system was expected to start operations in September 2018. Also, under this component of the project, UNICEF is supporting the NAF to devise key performance indicators for the NAF's management and operations, and to develop a mixed-methods study on the effects of the NAF on children and adolescents in Jordan (ibid.).

The NAF still needs to significantly expand its coverage to reach all poor and vulnerable people, and to better protect them from shocks. As the country improves coordination between DRR and social protection, it could also aim to streamline the provision of emergency cash transfers, as there are multiple programmes in place, including *Zakat*-funded interventions. Moving forward, it is important to address the issues that have been holding back implementation of the NUR and to develop the new mobile payment system, which should provide the NAF with a scalable payment mechanism. Investing in strengthening staff capacity is also important to ensure that the case management approach is rolled out nationwide.

Lebanon

Lebanon is a small and densely populated country. It is an upper-middle-income country with a comparatively high human development status. However, between 27 per cent and 28.5 per cent of the population were estimated to be living in poverty, and 10 per cent in extreme poverty, prior to the Syrian crisis[48] (Government of Lebanon and United Nations 2018). Moreover, according to data from the NPTP, the incidence of poverty increased between 2011 and 2015, since the start of the conflict in Syria (ibid.). Lebanon ranks as a high-risk country according to INFORM (2019), mainly due to its exposure to human hazards and its vulnerability index.

The country hosts 1.5 million displaced Syrians (of whom 991,165 were registered refugees as of March 2018), in addition to 34,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria, 35,000 Lebanese returnees, and a pre-existing population of more than 277,985 Palestinian refugees, which together comprise around 30 per cent of the country's population and represent the highest per capita number of refugees in the world (O'Driscoll 2018; WFP 2018c; Government of Lebanon and United Nations 2018). Nearly half of these crisis-affected populations are children and adolescents, and most of the deprived Lebanese (67 per cent) and displaced Syrians (87 per cent) live in 251 of the country's most vulnerable *cadastres* (Government of Lebanon and United Nations 2018). Fifteen years of the Lebanese civil war worsened significant political and social divisions, which have been further exacerbated by the current strains on public service provision and infrastructure, with competition for jobs and resources leading to tensions in many communities (O'Driscoll 2018).

Lebanon's tax system is regressive, its investment in social assistance is the lowest in the MENA region, and the refugee crisis has impacted growth and government expenditure (ESCWA 2017b; World Bank 2014). An economic and social impact assessment found that, between 2012 and 2014, real GDP growth was constrained to 2.85 per cent per year. Moreover, a deficit of USD1.5 billion in revenue collection and an expenditure increase of USD1.1 billion have limited Lebanon's fiscal space. This additional expenditure has not been enough to address access to and the quality of services, which have both declined, with an estimated USD2.5 billion being needed to restore them to pre-crisis levels (World Bank 2014). Finally, donor financing has been fundamental for the establishment of key social assistance programmes such as the NPTP; however, over-reliance on external support is seen as jeopardising its institutional consolidation and national ownership (Bastagli et al. 2018).

Furthermore, the country does not have an updated national development plan, though ministries develop their own strategies. Historically, social protection provision in Lebanon has been ramped up in times of emergencies (including the 2006 Israeli invasion and the current refugee crisis). A national policy on social protection and a DRR strategy are yet to be established. Refugee response is managed under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) 2017–2020, agreed by the government and multiple international and national partners, to provide assistance to vulnerable populations (citizens and non-citizens alike), which in principle should link humanitarian and developmental support. One of the LCRP's expected outputs, led by UNICEF, is the development of a National Social Assistance Framework, which is now being detailed within a National Roadmap (Government of Lebanon and United Nations 2018; WFP 2017b; International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement 2017c; Kukrety 2016).

The Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) is in charge of social protection provision, mainly through its central social welfare programmes, Social Development Centres (SDCs) and partners (NGOs and welfare institutions) catering to 350,000 beneficiaries yearly (World Bank 2014; Kukrety 2016). With support from UNICEF and inputs from key partners such as the World Bank, the MoSA will help establish a Social Protection Committee, which is expected to move towards the development and roll-out of a national social protection system (Government of Lebanon and United Nations 2018).

The refugee crisis has put significant pressure on Lebanon's public services and limited social assistance provision. Lebanon is not a signatory to either the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol Relating to the

Status of Refugees. However, at the start of the Syrian crisis, an 'open-door' policy prevailed, backed by a 1993 bilateral agreement allowing for the free movement of people and goods, and freedom of work. Nevertheless, due to the massive inflow of people, the government started implementing movement restrictions in 2013, including the 2014 Policy Paper on Syrian Displacement, the official instruction to UNHCR not to register new refugees as of 2015, and the introduction of a USD200 fee for legal residency renewals and overstays.[49]. In February 2016, the Lebanon Compact was agreed, with a commitment of EUR400 million in exchange for the promotion of job and educational opportunities for both vulnerable Lebanese citizens and refugees. However, multi-year funding is extremely limited, and the disbursement of some donor funds has been challenged due to the politically contentious situation in Lebanon (O'Driscoll 2018).

Humanitarian assistance is provided through various donor-led humanitarian programmes for Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians. The MoSA co-chairs the LCRP Steering Committee with the United Nations Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator and is also in charge of leading and overseeing the government's response to the crisis by the Interministerial Committee on Displaced Persons. In 2016, multiple humanitarian agencies adopted a harmonised cash assistance delivery mechanism based on a common red card (Lebanon One Unified Inter-Organizational System for E-cards—LOUISE), currently reaching 70 per cent of registered Syrian refugee households receiving cash benefits.[50] The LOUISE system is led by UNICEF, the WFP and UNHCR.

A recent analysis of social assistance in Lebanon by Bastagli et al. (2018) has emphasised its low expenditure, low coverage, poor targeting, low levels (and inadequacy) of support, and the fragmented and uncoordinated nature of its provision. Social assistance spending in Lebanon is less than 1 per cent of GDP, which is considered a small amount by international standards. Moreover, because direct support is provided through subsidies or fee waivers for specific commodities or services, it does not provide the required levels of support to those who need it the most. The UNICEF winter cash transfers delivered to poor Lebanese people with children aimed to demonstrate that providing cash assistance in Lebanon is feasible, and also to promote equitable programming and social cohesion, as non-Lebanese routinely receive cash transfers (UNICEF Lebanon 2018). Whereas the NPTP's planned level of assistance for 2018 is a food voucher for USD27 per person per month (capped at six people per household), the 'multi-purpose cash assistance package' that is being provided to 61,000 severely vulnerable Syrian refugee households nationwide is for USD175 for a family of five per month (Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon 2018; Government of Lebanon and United Nations 2018; Machado et al. 2018).

Among the MoSA's programmes, three interventions are highlighted by Bastagli et al. (2018): disability assistance (providing access to services, tax exemptions and care and rehabilitation services to over 100,000 people with disabilities, or approximately 2.6 per cent of the population in 2017); institutional care for children (providing residential care/shelter, related services and transfers, including education, food and clothing, to approximately 35,000 children—3–4 per cent of the total population of children—from disadvantaged families); and the NPTP (providing health, education subsidies and e-vouchers to over 40,000 *Halla*[51] card holders).

The NPTP was launched in 2011 after being piloted in 2008-2009. Originally introduced and regulated by Cabinet Decree, it is also listed in the government's budget. However, it has not yet been enshrined in law (though Parliament has been discussing a legislative proposal since 2014). Its management is shared between the MoSA and the NPTP Central Management Unit (CMU, hosted at the Presidency of Council of Ministers), both of which jointly manage the programme's database (Bastagli et al. 2018). Initially, the NPTP focused on providing fee waivers for services (health and education), though food voucher transfers were also introduced using WFP shops.

The World Bank (2018b) reports that since 2016, 131,567 households have applied to the NPTP programme. However, it underwent a recertification process in 2018, reducing the number of eligible households to around 41,369 households—or 229,743 people[52]—based on the updated PMT. This would amount to a coverage of around 3.9 per cent of the population, based on a population estimate of 5.9 million people (Government of Lebanon and United Nations 2018). Moreover, only 20–30 per cent of food voucher beneficiaries were remained eligible for the transfer.

A 2017 targeting analysis based on a random sample of 10,000 recertified households and data from the Household Budget Survey in 2011-2012 revealed that 55 per cent of them are in the poorest quintile. A final assessment of the targeting performance of the database is currently being conducted (World Bank 2018b). Nonetheless, this reduction in the number of eligible households is considered very drastic, as over 100,000 households were considered extremely poor (under USD5.70 per capita per day) and 300,000 were considered to be living in poverty (under USD8.60 per capita per day) by previous national poverty assessments (Bastagli et al. 2018).

The choice of PMT for the NPTP is justified by the World Bank (2014) on the basis that the programme is not concentrated in specific geographical locations or on demographic categories (thus ruling out categorical and geographical targeting). Moreover, means-testing was rejected, as Lebanon has a high rate of informality, and income information is usually unreliable. Finally, community-based targeting was also considered inappropriate due to the post-conflict situation and the fragility of relations within communities. However, the previous PMT appeared to have a relatively high level of exclusion, demonstrating that groups such as elderly people can be omitted, although the bias against elderly people has reportedly been addressed in the revised PMT (Bastagli et al. 2018). Finally, another criticism of the programme's targeting method is that it precludes the introduction of universal grants such as child benefits for Lebanese children (UNICEF Lebanon 2018).

The NPTP relies on a computerised MIS, which is to be further developed through the World Bank Social Safety Net Project. Any Lebanese citizen may apply to the programme via the nearest SDC, although in practice there is no effective public communication regarding the programme, so new applicants are few and far between (ibid.). Social Inspectors visit applicants to collect their information, which is then entered into an Optical Marking Recognition form, scanned and fed into the database (Kukrety 2016). This system includes modules for beneficiary registration, eligibility assessment, utilisation of benefits and registration of complaints (World Bank 2014). Though the database is managed jointly by the CMU and the MoSA, there have reportedly been concerns about weak coordination and communication between the two, as well as about data management and sharing practices, as it is unclear how often the SDC-updated data are shared by the MoSA with the CMU (Bastagli et al 2018). Moreover, a data-sharing process is in place between the NPTP and the WFP, whereby the former provides a file of eligible beneficiaries (Household Registry Statement)[53] to the latter once or twice a month, which is then imported into the WFP's database (the WFP also provides the Banque Libano-Française with this information for card issuance). There have also been plans for the WFP's SCOPE platform to be made available to the government to support the management of beneficiaries (WFP 2017b). UNICEF also had access to an excerpt from the NPTP's database (over 30,000 households/70,000 children) to deliver the one-off winter cash transfers in partnership with the WFP (Smith 2017b). Data from this excerpt were verified to complete information gaps before the cash disbursement was conducted (UNICEF Lebanon 2018).

In principle, health and education waivers are granted to *Halla* cardholders, and e-cards are used for food voucher recipients. These are printed by the Banque Libano-Française and delivered to the WFP for distribution. Cards are sorted by the corresponding SDC and NPTP registration number (World Bank 2014; Kukrety 2016). The WFP's food vouchers have significantly impacted beneficiaries' food consumption, dietary diversity and coping strategies. However, due to challenges in the operationalisation of health subsidies (such as the low number of NPTP-contracted hospitals, a mismatch between needs and provision, and delays in reimbursement processes), there have been challenges to their uptake. Moreover, educational fee waivers have also not reached their full potential due to the low quality of participating public schools and high opportunity costs for households that rely on the income of their out-of-school children. Finally, women may experience barriers in accessing NPTP programmes, as male breadwinners are targeted to be the cardholders (Bastagli et al. 2018).

As seasonality has significant impacts on household consumption, which tends to be higher in winter months (Kukrety 2016), support is increased in the winter through one-off payments to a larger group of households, and previously through the UNICEF child-focused cash transfer programme (*Min Ila*) throughout the school year

(Government of Lebanon and United Nations 2018). Kukrety (2016, 23) highlights, however, that the "biggest and most under-acknowledged support mechanism" provided by the government is the wheat subsidy, which reduces the price of bread and buffers households against seasonal price fluctuations.

Implementation of social assistance and other social welfare programmes suffers from capacity deficits. In 2014, around 350 workers and inspectors were linked to the NPTP. However, they are often not civil servants, which creates some tension between them and the MoSA (Kukrety 2016). Moreover, Bastagli et al. (2018) have highlighted that NPTP staff have limited or no awareness of the programme's operations manual, which could be a symptom of its weak government ownership. Furthermore, support from the MoSA is considered 'barely enough' to cover salaries and office rent, and the challenging bureaucratic process of seeking approval for new projects has led some SDCs to raise funds and partner with other organisations. These factors led to a mismatch between expectations and their capacity, which was especially stretched in areas hosting the largest number of refugees, since health and education support was extended (Kukrety 2016). Higher wages offered by humanitarian agencies have also led many social workers to leave the programme after receiving training. Preventing this 'capacity drain' necessitated the provision of additional incentives, such as covering transportation costs and providing training (World Bank 2014). As of May 2017, 233 SDCs were operational in Lebanon (OCHA 2018b), and 483 Social Welfare Officers are currently working in the SDCs, down from a peak of 700 in previous years (UNICEF Lebanon 2018).

The NPTP's communication strategy has been revised, as the initial negative portrayal of poor people by the public relations campaign was found to create stigma and have detrimental effects on programme uptake (World Bank 2014). Moreover, interviews with poor households and local charities showed their lack of awareness regarding the programme, its benefits and the enrolment process. Access to information, therefore, can create a bias in the programme in favour of better-off people who are better informed. In addition to gaps in outreach, the NPTP's hotline numbers are usually unable to provide the expected support, leading beneficiaries to have to attend the SDCs in person (Kukrety 2016).

With technical assistance from the World Bank, the programme's M&E system is expected to include evaluations of its business processes, quantitative and qualitative surveys on beneficiary assessments, and opinion polls on awareness (World Bank 2014), **but many of these elements have yet to be designed or implemented** (UNICEF Lebanon 2018). The CMU team, which is charged with monitoring the NPTP, reportedly produces indicators needed for basic monitoring. For the food vouchers, baseline and post-distribution surveys were conducted, and licensed shops are visited regularly by WFP staff (Bastagli et al. 2018).

Social assistance as a whole in Lebanon is rather incipient. The system needs to be significantly scaled up in terms of its fiscal commitments and institutionalisation to sustainably address poverty and vulnerability. As the NPTP is the only programme providing direct support on a larger scale (even if still through vouchers, which limits the options available to beneficiaries), its implementation gaps and limited coverage need to be addressed. As there have reportedly been communication gaps and a lack of awareness about the NPTP in the past, it is important that the new recertification process, which excluded a significant proportion of the beneficiaries from the programme, is well communicated to communities to address tensions that may arise. As the M&E system develops, attention can also be paid to seasonality and how it can be better incorporated into programming.

State of Palestine

Protracted conflict, stagnant growth and high unemployment are some of the main challenges facing the SOP. GDP growth over recent years has been unable to improve the living standards of a growing population, resulting in a stagnant per capita income growth (WFP 2017d, World Bank 2017e), and current growth projections from the IMF (2018) remain at around 2.5 per cent. Geopolitical tensions have recently increased, with no agreement on a way forward in the peace process: expenditure cuts and uncertainty about future financial support from donor

countries (especially the United States) to the SOP and relief agencies are compounded by new laws proposed by Israel on withholding SOP revenue. The prospect of reunification[54] offers some expectation of economic improvement; however, progress has been slow (IMF 2018). Nonetheless, INFORM (2019) places the country at medium overall risk, though its vulnerability index is very high.

In 2017, unemployment stood at 27.7 per cent of the labour force, with significant regional disparities: 17.9 per cent in the West Bank and 43.9 per cent in the Gaza Strip (PCBS 2018b). Unemployment is particularly high among Gaza youth (60 per cent). Women are significantly disadvantaged, with a labour force participation rate of under 20 per cent, lower even than the already substandard regional average of 26 per cent; moreover, women educated at tertiary level comprise 91 per cent of unemployed females seeking work and 65 per cent of the total unemployed population (World Bank 2017e; IMF 2018). In the first quarter of 2018, the unemployment rate in Gaza reached 49.1 per cent (up from 41.1 in the first quarter of 2017), and the teacher absenteeism rate stood at 63 per cent in May 2018 (up from 32 per cent in May 2017)[55] (OCHA 2018a).

According to the latest Household Expenditure and Consumption Survey from 2017, poverty affects around 29 per cent of the population and has significantly increased since 2011, particularly in Gaza (PCBS 2018a). The geographical disparity in poverty rates is very marked: while 13.9 per cent of the West Bank population is considered poor, this number reaches 53 per cent in Gaza (ibid.). It is important to note that sustained poverty reduction efforts are continuously challenged by political shocks and conflict, which have been shown to push vulnerable people into poverty, as evidenced by the geographical disparity of poverty rates. Gaza is marked by volatile poverty trends, which fluctuate as a result of conflict-related shocks (World Bank 2017e).

Moreover, considering the unmet need for more and better work opportunities to achieve sustainable poverty reduction and the continuous shocks, it is not surprising that the implementation of the National Cash Transfer Programme (NCTP) has co-existed with increasing poverty rates, particularly in Gaza. This situation lends two distinctive features (and challenges) to the Palestinian social protection system: "(1) it operates in a context of political instability and conflict under Israeli control undermining effective system governance; and (2) its financial viability is severely constrained by its dependence on donor funding which is subject to fluctuations due to political considerations" (World Bank 2017e, 24–25). The Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (2017) adds that though the restrictive policy and economic space has led the SOP to rely on social protection to address poverty, the system still struggles to move towards a more developmental approach, constrained by recurring shocks that shift priorities towards humanitarian and emergency support.

Migration patterns have been shaped by long-standing conflict, which has displaced millions of people over decades. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) provides assistance to millions of refugees in Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the West Bank (Ameta 2015), and within the territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip UNRWA is in charge of meeting refugees' needs, while the SOP should address the needs of the non-refugee population (WFP 2017d). Finally, fluctuations in the global economy (and particularly weak growth in key economies such as Israel and donor countries), regional instability and climate change also pose serious risks to the SOP's growth and development (IMF 2018; Ameta 2015). The country's National Adaptation Plan to Climate Change dates from 2016 (State of Palestine 2016), but no explicit links to social protection are presented.

Stagnating growth projections (in a 'business as usual' scenario) mean that the SOP will have to deal with a limited fiscal space, compounded by declining external budget support from donors (by an average of 20 per cent per year since 2014), reaching 3.6 per cent of GDP in 2017, down from 4.5 per cent in 2016 (IMF 2018). The social protection sector (particularly in Gaza) relies heavily on donor aid, which hinders long-term strategic planning (UNICEF State of Palestine 2017). Indirect taxes make up the largest share of tax revenue, which could stand to be improved in terms of its efficiency and in collecting more from (progressive) direct taxation. However, the tax regime suffers from unique limitations laid out by the Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of

the State of Israel and the State of Palestine, representing the Palestinian people; the reunification process (resuming control over Gaza) is also expected to lead to significant fiscal costs (IMF 2018).

Preparedness measures have started to be considered in social protection planning. Social protection, placed under the mandate of the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD, formerly the Ministry of Social Affairs), is recognised as a fundamental right of citizens by the Palestinian Basic Law (UNICEF State of Palestine 2017). The latest United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2018–2022) seeks to "support the development of an integrated and shock-responsive social protection system, and work collectively towards the development of social protection referral mechanisms, standards and protocols; evidence generation and advocacy for social protection floors; the development of a unified and integrated M&E system; and integration of emergency preparedness and contingency planning in social protection policies, strategies and action plans" (United Nations 2017b). The Social Development Sector Strategy (2017–2022), in turn, placed under its "Strategic Objective One: Limiting poverty" the objective of developing "effective local and national social measures that protect the poor and vulnerable groups, men and women, against shocks, crises and disasters". An emergency fund is to be established by the MoSD, and another fund is to be established by other ministries to respond to disasters (State of Palestine 2017). In the strategy, however, cash assistance remains targeted at people living in extreme poverty, while services are to be extended to poor people (World Bank 2017e). Finally, a recently established National Centre for Disaster Risk Management is charged with coordinating grants and governmental and non-governmental actions in emergency response (Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute 2017).

Institutional capacity and fragmented provision are challenges for the Palestinian system, which relies on multiple providers (the MoSD, UNRWA, international agencies, local and international NGOs, religious associations and informal social protection). This situation leads to occasional duplication of efforts as well as "missed opportunities to reach those suffering from multiple forms of deprivation" (UNICEF State of Palestine 2017, 80) because of a lack of a robust system of linkages and referral mechanisms. A newly launched national portal for social assistance—a single gateway —is seeking to share beneficiary data among the multiple agencies involved (WFP 2017d; World Bank 2017e), which, in addition to the unified targeting system (World Bank 2017e), should work towards improving coordination. Even though MoUs had not yet been drafted among the multiple providers, NCTP beneficiaries were already linked to the WFP's Food Assistance and Voucher Programme, UNDP's DEEP Economic Empowerment for Deprived Families programme, health insurance provision in coordination with the Ministry of Health, and education and tuition waivers with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (World Bank 2017e).

According to the Socio-Economic and Food Security Survey 2014, 40 per cent of all Palestinian households receive some form of social assistance (84.2 per cent in Gaza and 16.5 per cent in the West Bank). The Palestinian NCTP is the country's flagship cash transfer programme, whose legal framework is currently being deliberated. Other programmes include: the Food Assistance Programme provided by the MoSD in partnership with the WFP, which uses the same PMT formula as the NCTP (covering 503,221 food-insecure households in 2016); protection, care and rehabilitation services, and transfers to specific groups (defined by the programme as people with disabilities, 'orphans', female victims of violence, and elderly people); educational fee waivers for vulnerable children and NCTP beneficiaries; and the UNDP-supported DEEP, providing microfinance and capacity development. Finally, the Zakat Fund, run by the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, provides various cash and in-kind grants, constituting an important source of non-governmental funding to the country's social assistance system (Machado et al. 2018).

The MoSD also provides emergency cash assistance to people suffering from idiosyncratic and/or covariate shocks, amounting from NIS1,000 to NIS3,000, with an estimated allocation of NIS7 million in 2016 (Afanah 2016). A committee overseeing this assistance should also coordinate with other relevant ministries in cases of beneficiaries needing medical treatment abroad. In 2011, however, the overwhelming majority of requests for assistance were justified based on poverty, followed by housing and medical needs (Awwad 2013). According to a presentation by

Barghouthi (2018), the priority for emergency assistance should be given to NCTP beneficiaries, and payment delivery should be prioritised by the gravity of the case (more serious cases are paid within one to five days, whereas others take one to three months). In response to the 2014 conflict in Gaza, the MoSD provided assistance particularly to direct victims and/or those who lost their homes; moreover, in 2015, NCTP beneficiaries were targeted by UNICEF to receive extra assistance (UNICEF State of Palestine 2018).

The NCTP reached 633,000 individuals in 2017, with expenditure amounting to around USD110 million (Machado et al. 2018). Based on data from the 2017 census, the NCTP's coverage can be estimated at around 13.24 per cent of the total population, or over 124,000 households[56] (PCBS 2018b). The NCTP's targeting system relies on a PMT formula, which is used by multiple agencies (with some variation). An eligibility reassessment is supposed to take place every two years (Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute 2017). However, UNICEF State of Palestine (2017) points out that the system's focus on monetary poverty has led to gaps in service provision coverage, particularly for children (especially adolescent girls) with disabilities. To address these shortcomings, data collection and eligibility assessments should be improved. The basis for the PMT formula is the Palestine Expenditure and Consumption Survey of 2011, but a new round of the survey was conducted in 2017 (World Bank 2017d), which used a multidimensional poverty methodology (World Bank 2017a) and should thus serve to update the formula. The Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (2017, 16) also suggests incorporating geographical targeting and composite indicators to identify people who are newly poor and vulnerable to or affected by crisis and conflict, because they are "unlikely to be targeted by the bi-annual PMTF [PMT formula] despite a collapse in incomes, as they often retain a good asset base."

The NCTP's current MIS connects the MoSD's 17 district (*Muderias*) offices to the central level. Social workers at the district level collect information on beneficiaries[57] using a standardised application form and input the data into the web-based MIS, whose PMT module subsequently ranks the households. The system also includes modules on including payments, case management, monitoring and grievance redressal (World Bank 2017e). The current registry has information on beneficiaries, and there is a 'waiting list' of people who could be reached in an eventual scale-up. Moreover, there is a process of information exchange whereby organisations such as the WFP may send a list of potential beneficiaries of a programme to be checked against the NCTP list, as well as the ministry's own employee list (UNICEF State of Palestine 2018).

The SOP is receiving technical assistance to move its beneficiary registry into a social registry format, with an aim to reach 150,000 households that are potential beneficiaries of social programmes via home visits, new cases identified by social workers, and through the integration of information from households benefiting from other donor programmes.[58] Cards with a unique household ID number and expiration date related to enrolment in the social registry will be distributed.[59] Improvements in the current citizen interface are also expected (via mobile teams, at local offices or via digital service windows). Based on international best practices, the social registry and the case management system will have their regulatory frameworks (with particular attention paid to the protection of personal data), operations manual, data exchange procedures, protocols for data validation, and the development of interoperability functions across programmes developed. This will require an adjustment in procedures, rules and benefit structures of participating social programmes and the improvement of the grievance redressal system (World Bank 2017e). These improvements to the MIS should address concerns regarding data quality that have been expressed by partners such as UNICEF (2017, 80 and 82): "Targeting is also hampered by weaknesses in the quality and scope of data in the computerized single registry system (…) Government capacity to maintain the computerized single registry system and to use data for improved targeting should be strengthened."

The NCTP's payment regularity has been affected by delays in budget disbursement. NCTP benefits are paid quarterly via banks (Machado et al. 2018), and the Ministry of Finance and Planning, which manages payments, has MoUs with all banks where beneficiaries have accounts.[60] A report on beneficiary views of the programme from 2013 notes that the reliability and regularity of the transfers were widely acknowledged, though a preference for more frequent payments was also expressed, as well as complaints about long queues and disorder during the first days of

disbursement (Abu Hamad et al. 2013). However, other reports have since pointed out that financing constraints and budget disbursement mechanisms may cause delays in payments to beneficiaries: "Recognising that MoSA payments are often late (like salaries), the sustainability of this programme depends on the wider sustainability of the SOP as a governance entity in Gaza, including how sustainable is the budget revenue" (DFID Palestinian Programme 2015, 79). Payment delays have also been reported by the World Bank (2017a, 13): "only half of the first quarter payment of the National Cash Transfer Programme (NCTP) was disbursed while the remainder is yet to be paid to poor households"; and (2018a, 11): "the first quarter payment of the National Cash Transfer Program (NCTP) was not fully disbursed to poor households."

NCTP transfers vary according to household size (up to a maximum threshold) but are supposed to cover the household poverty gap[61] by half. Beneficiaries have pointed out that the level of benefits is low, given the rising cost of living , and periodic adjustments aligned with price indices are required. Health and medication costs place particular burdens on some families, especially those caring for people with disabilities (Jones et al. 2016; Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute 2017). Furthermore, there is a reported lack of coherence in terms of benefit levels across interventions: "UNRWA monthly pay on its Job Creation Programme is above the minimum public sector salary within the PNA whilst the MoSD cash transfer is much lower than this under its National Cash Transfer Programme" (Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute 2017, 16).

The MoSD relies on a civil servant staff of around 300 social workers[62] spread across 17 governorates (12 in the West Bank and 5 in Gaza). However, they tend to spend most of their time on data collection instead of actual social work. Moreover, constraints in terms of transportation (as staff need to cover the costs), office space and IT equipment have also been reported. An assessment of the current complaints handling mechanism also demonstrated that informal complaint management still overburdened social workers, with only a few grievances addressed through the formal channel, indicating a need for capacity-strengthening in this area for MoSD staff (World Bank 2017e). Under the World Bank-supported Social Protection Enhancement Project, an online case management system is being piloted in selected areas of the West Bank, accompanied by a communications campaign targeting poor and vulnerable people (especially women and youth), training on the system's methodology, protocols and psychosocial support services, as well as support to the infrastructure, which should ultimately improve linkages and referral mechanisms (World Bank 2017e; UNICEF State of Palestine 2017). Furthermore, social protection networks comprising local civil society organisations and local government units have been created in all districts to support beneficiaries' access to social assistance and to improve targeting (Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute 2017; UNICEF State of Palestine 2017).

The NCTP is receiving assistance from multiple partners to improve its M&E system. The failure to develop a robust M&E system as laid out in the National Social Protection Strategy 2014–2016 has been recognised by the MoSD, and it has received technical support from the WFP and UNICEF to set up such a system (UNICEF State of Palestine 2018; Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute 2017). With support from the World Bank, a single M&E system is expected to be generated based on MIS data, which should be analysed at the local and central levels (World Bank 2017e). UNICEF's support focuses on ensuring the data security of all beneficiaries, as well as the system's child-sensitiveness (UNICEF State of Palestine 2018).

Though preparedness measures have started to be incorporated in social development planning, the budget disbursement issues inevitably constrain long-term planning and have even affected the regularity of NCTP payments. The move towards a social registry is important from a shock-responsiveness perspective, as is the incorporation of the case management approach. However, social workers have reportedly had difficulties engaging in actual social work due to the demands of data collection. These implementation capacity gaps and the trade-offs between time spent on different activities need to inform the priorities in programme administration, as the situation of protracted conflict requires that investment is made in the referral to and provision of psychosocial support services. As the M&E system develops, it could also include resilience considerations, as well as indicators on the NCTP's implementation processes that can point to good practices as well as bottlenecks.

Sudan[63]

Sudan has risen to lower-middle-income status in the last decade, backed by revenues from oil exports, despite the secession of South Sudan and long-lasting economic sanctions. High inflation and a contraction in the economy followed the 2011 secession of South Sudan, with positive (but still modest) growth rates rebounding after 2014 (World Bank 2016d). The United States lifted economic sanctions on the Sudanese government in October 2017 (Morello 2017), and recent developments in setting up a legal political system and ceasefires in conflict-prone regions are considered positive steps in terms of creating an enabling environment for economic growth and development (UNICEF 2017c).

However, poverty and inequality remain major challenges in the country, which is also experiencing rapid urbanisation and an emergent youth bulge in its demographic composition. The average poverty incidence[64] is estimated at 36.1 per cent (35.5 in rural areas and 37.3 per cent in urban areas), with 25.2 per cent of the population considered extremely poor (AFDB 2018). In-country regional disparities are significant, and inequality between states is considered a potential source of conflict and political instability. The country still faces humanitarian challenges (including internal displacement and incoming refugees) derived from internal armed and intertribal conflicts, climatic conditions and wider regional instabilities (World Bank 2016d; UNICEF 2017c).

Furthermore, recent fiscal adjustment measures have impacted spending on subsidies and basic service provision, leading an estimated 1.7 million people into poverty. The Social Initiatives Programme, later renamed *Shamel* (Machado et al. 2018), was created as the foundation of a social protection system, to curb the negative effects of these reforms (World Bank 2016d). The IMF (2017d) reported on the regressive nature of subsidies and tax exemptions, advising their phase-out while also recognising that the coverage of the government-provided cash transfers would need to be significantly scaled up to reach all poor people as a mitigating measure, from a caseload of 750,000 households to a population of 15.4 million individuals. Furthermore, there remains some unexplored potential in the collection of direct taxes: ESCWA (2017b) reports that revenues from this source could reach between 2 per cent and 4 per cent of GDP.

In 2018, a new round of reforms, including the removal of subsidies (such as wheat), currency devaluation and increased taxes, has led to sharp inflationary pressures threatening the food security of many people (SNAP 2018b). Consequently, severe fuel shortages have affected the distribution of humanitarian assistance and are expected to affect agricultural outputs. Moreover, the persistent increase in prices of staple foods has significantly eroded the purchasing power of poor households. Nevertheless, fuel availability has improved since May 2018, though diesel supply remains limited. FEWS NET (2018) further reports that the decreased pattern of conflict and new displacement since early 2017, following the unilateral ceasefire declaration by conflicting parties in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur and the collection of illegal weapons, is likely to be maintained in the near future, with the exception of Darfur's Jebel Marra area, where conflict is likely to continue causing internal displacement.

UNICEF (2018b) also reports on the negative impacts of heavy rainfall affecting over 7,000 households in July 2018, which has led to a joint response between government and humanitarian partners to respond to their WASH needs. Nationwide, 5.5 million people are estimated to need humanitarian assistance, including 2.6 million children. Two million people are internally displaced, almost half of whom are children (960,000). Finally, there are 768,125 South Sudanese refugees in Sudan, including 468,556 children (UNICEF 2018b).

The country has yet to devise its first social protection strategy. Available frameworks in terms of development policies are the National Strategic Development Plan (2017–2020) and the 25-Year National Strategy (2007–2031). The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the first Sudan Social Policy Document are also being prepared (UNICEF 2017c; International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement 2017d), but they have not yet been finalised (UNICEF Sudan 2018). The PRSP is expected to be finalised by the end of the first quarter of 2019, and a social protection module is expected to be included. The work on the strategy,

led by the Ministry of Finance, includes not only government stakeholders but also international organisations such as UNICEF (ibid.).

A National Adaptation Plan was created in 2016 (Republic of the Sudan 2016); however, it makes no explicit mention of social protection. Though Sudan is one of the only countries to have a multi-year humanitarian strategy (the Humanitarian Response Plan 2017–2019) geared to bridge the humanitarian and development agendas, the plan is severely underfunded—by as much as 80 per cent, according to the International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement (2017d). The Ministry of Security and Social Development (MoSSD) is now part of the Cash Working Core Group, which brings together social protection actors, United Nations agencies, NGOs and donors to consolidate efforts in social protection and humanitarian programming (WFP 2018d).

The social assistance system in Sudan is characterised by its reliance on *Zakat* funding and support from households' social networks. *Zakat* encompasses fee waivers for the National Health Insurance Fund (by far the most comprehensive intervention), education, cash and in-kind transfers, housing support and community development programmes, among others. The system comprises the following programmes: *Zakat*-funded education fee waivers and student support grants (covering 82,691 poor students with an expenditure of SDG77.2 million); fee waivers financed through *Zakat* and the Ministry of Finance and National Economy for health insurance for poor families (covering 14.8 million beneficiaries or 60.2 per cent of the total population—82 per cent of the poor population—by late 2017 (National Health Insurance Fund of Sudan 2018), with an expenditure of SDG1.41 billion in 2016); the cash and in-kind benefits provided by the Zakat Fund (covering 2,162,689 families with an expenditure of SDG2,076,492,314);[65] and *Shamel*, a comprehensive programme encompassing different components, such as unconditional cash transfers to extremely poor people, livelihood programmes, water supply, housing benefits and school feeding at the community level, aiming to provide integrated support to poor people. The programme is implemented in 69 localities across all 18 federal states. At the state level, Ministries of Welfare are responsible for implementation of the programme, under the national supervision of the Commission for Social Safety Nets (Machado et al. 2018; UNICEF Sudan 2018).

The Zakat Chamber's beneficiary registry served as the basis for *Shamel*, which is currently being reviewed to account for significant inclusion and exclusion errors. Efforts are under way to scale up an automated PMT formula to be included in an MIS and to recertify beneficiary households[66] (World Bank 2016d). The World Bank (2018f) reports that the MoSSD has approved the new PMT as the main targeting mechanism for the cash transfer recertification process (to be held in the states of White Nile, River Nile, Red Sea and Blue Nile) after the completion of pilots in Khartoum, White Nile and North Kordofan. A modular MIS is being set up (World Bank 2018f) with a centralised architecture relying on a web-based system that should be available at MoSSD offices and implementing agencies (for whom network connectivity should also be provided). The information collection process should use computer-assisted personal interviewing software as a replacement for paper records, with offline data synchronisation for information collected in remote areas (World Bank 2016d). In July 2018 the World Bank (2018g) further reported that payment system modules will be linked to a finalised beneficiary list of 58,500 households (to be expanded as the recertification process is ramped up), generated through the PMT. According to Sudan's Commission for Social Safety Nets (UNICEF Sudan 2018), 600,000 households (around 8.9 per cent of the total population)[67] currently receive cash benefits. It is also important to note that based on information from Sudan's 2014 National Household Baseline Survey, around 850,000 families live in extreme poverty in the country. Moreover, in principle, IDP status should not prevent someone from accessing cash transfers (UNICEF Sudan 2018).

Capacity and financial gaps have resulted in irregular payments. Financial reconciliation has also reportedly been a challenge, particularly for the payments made through the Zakat Committees[68] (World Bank 2016d). The World Bank (2018g) reports that a payment schedule is currently being developed. It should subsequently be endorsed by the MoSSD, and staff should be trained accordingly. Payments were made in 2018 during Ramadan; however, the current economic situation led to a government shortage of cash, further affecting the regularity of benefit delivery. Currently, according to the Commission for Social Safety Nets, cash disbursements are provided twice a year for those

classified as extremely poor (UNICEF Sudan 2018). Moreover, benefit levels do not vary according to household size; however, due to the economic situation, the amount is being revised to minimise the impacts of price inflation (ibid.).

Capacity-strengthening activities are focusing on documenting the programme's procedures, developing grievance redressal guidelines and an evaluation strategy and improving payment processes and the MoSSD's communications and advocacy strategies. The MoSSD's lack of M&E capacity has also been reported (World Bank 2016d; International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement 2017d).

Sudan has been eliminating subsidies without having a fully established social protection system that can buffer the resulting impacts, and it is important to ensure that the population can cope in their absence. In this sense, it is positive that the current benefit levels are being revised to minimise the impacts of inflation (UNICEF Sudan 2018); however, coverage still needs to be significantly expanded. The health fee waivers cover an impressive proportion of the country's population and represent a fundamental type of support. In terms of cash and in-kind transfers, *Shamel* would need to increase coverage while addressing the capacity gaps that have led to irregular payments (World Bank 2016d; World Bank 2018g).

To develop the country's poverty reduction strategy and its social protection system, it is crucial for fiscal provisions to be secured for the programme. In the medium to long term, fiscal space could be mobilised from improvements in the collection of direct taxes, as proposed by ESCWA (2017b). Moreover, to make the best use of currently available resources, it is important to coordinate the interventions run by the Zakat Chamber (which plays an important role in the country's social protection provision) and units within the MoSSD such as the Commission for Social Safety Nets (UNICEF Sudan 2018).

Syria

Starting with protests in 2011, the ensuing conflict in Syria has generated a huge forced displacement crisis, with 5.6 million refugees (WFP 2018e) and 6.3 million IDPs (WFP 2018a). INFORM (2019) identifies the country as being at very high risk. Although Syria's exposure to natural hazards is high, human risk evidently remains the highest concern. Syria also ranks very high in terms of vulnerability, but its coping capacity is currently ranked at medium risk, mainly driven by its institutions rather than its infrastructure (ibid.).

Decreased production capacity, inflation and subsidy removal measures have led to high food prices; the country is prone to natural hazards such as drought, which has affected the resilience of farmers (coupled with damage to irrigation infrastructure), which, in turn, has also compromised the availability of food (WFP 2017c; WFP 2018a). Moreover, with the disruption of social protection programmes, the main government-provided support during the conflict has been subsidised bread and medicine (WFP 2017c). Though the pre-crisis 10-year plan (from 2010) had prioritised social protection (defined as also including free education and free health services), there are currently no programmes in place that could assist returnees and the vulnerable population after the crisis (WFP 2018a). The unpredictability and uncertainty of donor funding means that humanitarian agencies working in Syria (such as the WFP) prioritise assistance to the most volatile and food-insecure areas (WFP 2017c).

Around 60 per cent of the Syrian population is estimated to be currently living in extreme poverty, and more than three quarters of working-age Syrians are not involved in any economic value generation (World Bank 2017g). Once a growing lower-middle-income country, Syria is now reclassified as an International Development Association-eligible country. Though pre-crisis socio-economic indicators were generally similar to other countries in the region, labour force participation (43.5 per cent) and female labour force participation rates were low by regional and global standards; levels of perceived corruption and trust in public institutions were also low (ibid.). The World Bank (ibid.) estimates that capital destruction accounts for a small share of the conflict's economic impact.

While casualties have had the most persistent economic impact, the disruption to economic organisation (preventing the connectivity of people and breaking networks and supply chains) has been the main factor. The analysis further highlights that the longevity of the crisis will have a detrimental impact on the speed of recovery. Recovery should not focus solely on recuperating lost capital, but needs to address the institutional and organisational challenges linked to rent-seeking and cronyism, marked features of the pre-crisis economic and political system (ibid.).

The United Nations and the Government of Syria have agreed on a United Nations Strategic Framework for Cooperation (2016–2017), placing a strong emphasis on building resilience and providing support to the most vulnerable people (WFP 2018a). In terms of existing coordination structures for crisis response, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MoSAL), which oversees the NSAF, is part of the country's Higher Relief Committee, which also includes the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Local Administration, Health, Water Resources, and Energy, and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (UNICEF 2018). Possible returnee movements will require the cooperation of agencies and governments in the region, and rehabilitating social protection delivery capacity will be key to addressing the various challenges that Syrians will face (WFP 2018a).

Prior to the crisis, 439,000 households had been selected to receive NSAF payments (UNDP 2012), corresponding to approximately 2,195,000 people or 9.2 per cent of the pre-crisis population.[69] The selection process started with a computerised PMT initially based on the 2006-2007 Household Income and Expenditure Survey. Eight different formulae were developed to take into account differences between regions and between urban and rural areas. A pilot survey conducted with 900 households at the end of 2008 was also used in calibrating the PMT formula (ibid.). The MoSAL allocated 63 temporary offices throughout Syria for receiving applications to the programme in 2008-2009, and field verification visits were conducted to 110,000 households (ibid.).

It is unlikely that the list of NSAF beneficiaries can form the basis of a new social protection programme in a post-crisis scenario, due to major population displacement and changes in welfare. An NSAF database containing data on beneficiary and applicant households had been developed with an electronic reference for the NSAF's main servers. Other than data processing and scoring, the system offered the following interfaces: social survey data entry; field verification entry; coverage extension entry; Falcon Optical Marking Recognition reading system; baseline interface; and a complaints interface (UNDP 2012). NSAF payments were conducted via the 300 post offices present in all governorates and districts—a method consistent with the geographical distribution of poverty, as most post offices were located in rural areas. Payment delays were already experienced in the third cycle of 2011 due to security disturbances and budget disbursement issues at the Ministry of Finance (ibid.).

An important cash transfer in the country is being implemented by UNICEF for children living with severe disabilities, expanding the scope of the previous national programme that targeted people with cerebral palsy, which has been disrupted by the conflict (Machado et al. 2018; UNICEF 2018). Since November 2016, the programme has reached over 13,400 children with severe disabilities in Aleppo, Lattakia, Rural Damascus, Tartous and Al Hasakeh. In 2018 alone, the programme has reached over 8,800 children with disabilities, and it continues to expand to reach 1,500 more (UNICEF Syria 2018). It is hoped that in a post-conflict scenario this programme can contribute to the re-establishment of the social protection system; though the government was not involved in its implementation, it was consulted for its design (ibid.). Cash is transferred via *Al Haram* money transfer facilities (Machado et al. 2018), and the programme has access to the governmental disability database, a record of people with disabilities that was not necessarily used for providing benefits and covered around 50 per cent of the target population in any given location. Beneficiaries of the cash grant are then referred for enrolment in this system as well (UNICEF Syria 2018). Syria's UNICEF Country Office partnered with the MoSAL and MoSAL-approved, specialised NGOs to run child protection and social protection services alongside its cash transfer programme. UNICEF covered the operational costs of targeting and provided support to case management addressing the specific needs of households with children with disabilities (Smith 2017c). Biannual post-distribution monitoring is scheduled to take place under UNICEF's cash transfer programme (Machado et al. 2018).

The current institutional capacity of the Syrian government is clearly being tested, though work continues in the capital and other regions in the country, even if not in a cohesive manner due to geographical fragmentation (WFP 2018a). Government civil servants should be receiving their salaries even during the crisis (UNICEF Syria 2018). The NSAF had a staff of 950 social workers, supervisors and administrators (UNDP 2012). A Case Management Directorate, expected to operate from local NSAF centres, was foreseen as a mechanism to monitor the future implementation of education- and health-related conditionalities. An NSAF media and communications strategy was also devised for its first years of implementation, including television advertisements and printed materials. The outline of an M&E system was also being built with UNDP technical assistance (ibid.).

The political considerations of post-conflict reconstruction cannot be understated, but they fall outside the scope of this study. Nonetheless, the technical features of the NSAF and the humanitarian programmes point to some of the challenges and opportunities that a potential resumption of the national social assistance system could give rise to. The NSAF list of beneficiaries has probably lost its accuracy due to the high level of displacement; therefore, it is unlikely that it can be the basis of a new social protection programme in a post-crisis scenario. However, it would be important to understand whether databases from the humanitarian interventions that have been implemented in the country could provide entry points to a new system. Delivery via post offices will depend on their reconstruction, but money transfer facilities could also be considered a potential delivery mechanism, as they have been used by humanitarian actors. UNICEF's cash transfer for children with complex disabilities and its implementation structure could inform the development of a specialised social work service in the country, as almost 3 million people have permanent disabilities (WFP 2018a).

Yemen

Already one of the poorest and most food-insecure countries in the region before 2015, Yemen's situation has rapidly deteriorated since then. Prior to the conflict, in 2014, the estimated poverty rate stood at 49 per cent, according to the Yemen Household Budget 2014 (World Bank 2017h), and chronic malnutrition of under-5 children stood at 47 per cent (WFP n.d.). The country was also encumbered by one of the worst gender inequality indices in the world and a maternal mortality rate of 200 deaths per 100,000 live births (ibid.). The ongoing conflict has led to an estimated 40 per cent decrease in the country's GDP and an unprecedented food crisis, with around 60 per cent of the population now being food-insecure—compared to 41 per cent before the current crisis (World Bank 2017b). Between 2 million and 3 million Yemenis have been displaced (WFP 2017a; OCHA 2018c), 2 million children are reportedly out of school (World Bank 2017b), and only 45 per cent of health facilities are functional (WFP 2017a; OCHA 2018c). The recent cholera outbreak, which began in April 2017, affected over 90 per cent of all districts and led to the deaths of over 2,300 people (OCHA 2018c). INFORM (2019) places the country at very high overall risk, due to very high scores in terms of human risk, vulnerability and lack of coping capacity.

Humanitarian agencies working in the country are also experiencing difficulties with the level and timing of funding, as the supply of commodities can take months. The WFP prevented interruptions in assistance by using the advance financing mechanism,[70] through which it was able to purchase commodities with advance contributions (WFP 2017a). Nonetheless, OCHA (2018c) reports that as of August 2018, food stocks were sufficient to cover national requirements for 70 days, and that food was available nationwide, with the exception of Hodeidah governorate due to ongoing conflict.

The SWF has been de-funded and suspended since the escalation of the conflict in March 2015. Its institutional capacity and governance have been compromised, as civil servants have not been paid adequately since September 2016 (World Bank 2017b). The programme, established in 1996 by Presidential Law and reformed by the 2008 Law on Social Welfare, was funded by the government, with additional financial support from the World Bank, the European Union and the United States. In 2014, the SWF had a budget of USD287.6 million; in 2013, it reached 1.5 million families and over 8 million individuals (Machado et al. 2018).

Yemen considered social protection a means of achieving social and political stability. The SWF's maximum benefit level was doubled in response to the 2008 food crisis (World Bank 2010b), and significantly scaled up after public unrest in 2011–2012 (Ovadiya et al. 2015). In addition to the SWF, the country also used to run the Disability Welfare and Rehabilitation Fund, which reached 47,000 beneficiaries in 2012; the Social Fund for Development, which reached 6.4 million people between 2011 and 2014; and the Public Works Project, with 7.7 million beneficiaries between 2004 and 2013 (Machado et al. 2018).

International partners have been able to use some of the SWF's mechanisms to carry out humanitarian and emergency cash transfer programmes. From 2015 to 2017, UNICEF designed and implemented a humanitarian cash transfer programme reaching about 110,000 people (more than 61,000 children) in two governorates, partnering with the SWF for coordination and grievance management and using one of its payment providers (International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement 2017e). To provide support to the millions of poor and vulnerable people who were enrolled in the SWF prior to its disruption, the Yemen Emergency Cash Transfer Project funded by the World Bank Group has also been implemented by UNICEF, as working directly through the government would not be possible (World Bank 2017b). The Social Protection Consultative Committee, co-chaired by the MoSAL and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, has been set up with technical assistance from UNICEF as a partnership between United Nations agencies, NGOs, the government and *de facto* authorities (International Conference on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement 2017e).

The humanitarian cash transfer programme previously implemented by UNICEF used categorical targeting based on demographic vulnerability criteria—a process which benefited from the SWF's strong connections at local levels to reach the most vulnerable communities (Smith 2017a; Smith 2017c). Food Security and Agriculture Cluster partners prioritise assistance based on the findings of a 2017 Emergency Food Security and Nutrition Assessment and the March 2017 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification of governorates. Household targeting criteria focus on: "1) households with pregnant and lactating women and/or children under five years of age registered in treatment activities for severe or moderate acute malnutrition; 2) internally displaced persons (IDPs) without sources of income and no means of accessing food; 3) households from socially and economically marginalized communities; 4) households headed by women who live independently and have no means of income; 5) vulnerable households headed by physically challenged persons; 6) elderly headed households; and 7) child-headed households to be identified through a community based targeting approach" (WFP 2017a, 13).

Yemen's National Social Protection Monitoring Survey (NSPMS), covering the period from 2012 to 2013, which aimed to document the SWF's impact, found that 35 per cent of the population belonged to a beneficiary household in 2013, and that the programme was pro-poor**.** Nonetheless, the SWF's targeting was also found to suffer from some inconsistencies regarding individual-based targeting criteria and a PMT that was based on household-level data, creating distortions in terms of both inclusion and exclusion from the programme. Moreover, families with children were underrepresented in the SWF relative to the national population (IPC-IG and UNICEF 2014).

A simple, though computerised, MIS was operated by the SWF. Data from the 2005-2006 Household Budget Survey was used to adjust the registry and determine eligibility for the programme. A mass registration process was carried out in specific areas in 2008, and data from beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries were updated on an ongoing basis via the programme's district offices. However, conflict prevented the realisation of a new mass registration wave planned for 2015 (Leite et al. 2017; World Bank 2017b).

The SWF still keeps its beneficiary registry and reports that it has tried to keep it updated with cases of people who have moved, migrated or passed away (UNICEF Yemen 2018). The SWF beneficiary list is used for the Yemen Emergency Cash Transfer Project, with all registered households considered eligible for the ECT (World Bank 2017b). UNICEF sent an official letter to the SWF in April 2017 requesting access to the list for the implementation of the ECT.

The list was updated throughout the three ECT payment cycles that had been completed by November 2018 (UNICEF Yemen 2018; Nyanti and Kweyu 2018).

The ECT project now employs private financial institutions to deliver benefits. Post offices were not considered a feasible option for delivering the ECT because some have been destroyed or are now affiliated with particular political groups (UNICEF Yemen 2018). Before the conflict, most SWF beneficiary households received cash via post offices, and a small number received benefits through the Al Amal Microfinance Bank (AMB) and other financial institutions (IPC-IG and UNICEF 2014). Though the nature of the conflict prevented UNICEF from transferring funds to the SWF, for the first ECT payment cycle, a partnership for the implementation of the programme was brokered with one of its payment providers, the AMB, which complied with the standards established by the organisation (such as being audited by international parties and having experience in working with the poorest population and with other governmental, local and international organisations). The AMB relied on a network of mobile banks and money dealers to distribute cash according to its own standard operating procedures (Smith 2017a; Smith 2017c).

Criteria set for choosing payment providers under the Yemen Emergency Cash Transfer Project included the ability to manage a large volume of transactions through a nationwide network of payment agencies operating with a sound internal control system (World Bank 2017b). For the second and third payment cycles, in addition to the AMB, the Al Kuraimi Microfinance Bank was also selected as a payment agency, as it also met all the criteria (UNICEF Yemen 2019). Uncollected benefits identified in payment reconciliation are to be made available to beneficiaries in the next round of payments. Benefits were set at the same level as the pre-crisis SWF (an average of YER5,000 per family per month, estimated to meet 46 per cent of the cost of a minimum food basket), which was considered important to prevent operational and communication challenges arising from the resumption of the SWF (World Bank 2017b). Furthermore, several strategies were anticipated to ensure security in distributing benefits, such as negotiating security and non-interference with *de facto* authorities, avoiding areas where security could not be guaranteed, and identifying problem areas through third-party monitoring. Finally, proxies were not to be allowed to collect benefits on behalf of recipients, and mobile banking was to be implemented were possible (ibid.).

The SWF had a head office in Sana'a, 22 branch offices and 210 district offices, employing around 1,775 staff in 2010 (World Bank 2010a). It was headed by a board of directors, and chaired by the Minister of Social Affairs and Labour. In terms of communications, the social workers had the SWF outreach network, also called the 'SWF Beneficiary Development Network', which was composed of staff and volunteers and served to communicate with beneficiaries and provide graduation opportunities such as microfinance loans (UNICEF Yemen 2018). SWF staff were trained and involved in managing the UNICEF-designed grievance redressal processes in the implementation of the humanitarian cash transfer programme. UNICEF reports that pre-existing knowledge and partnerships enabled the implementation of the humanitarian cash programme on this basis, and that technology improved the oversight of remotely managed programmes (Smith 2017a; Smith 2017c). The ECT project was designed to capitalise on UNICEF's experience while partnering with the SWF, and grievance redressal for the ECT project was designed to be carried out by local organisations contracted by UNICEF, allowing beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike to report complaints (World Bank 2017b).

The fact that the SWF's mechanisms are useful in delivering ECTs at the current scale is a testament to the system's previous maturity and reach. Moreover, the evidence generated by the SWF list of beneficiaries before the crisis, through the independent NSPMS, has helped build the confidence of donors and the World Bank in the system (Nyanti and Kweyu 2018). In a transition to a post-conflict scenario, the ECT can also provide a basis for resuming the SWF's operations. If the ECT's database is used in the future, it will be important to assess the extent to which it reproduced the SWF's old exclusion errors, as well as new ones due to changes in poverty and vulnerability that are to be expected as a consequence of the conflict. Yemen's case also demonstrates that post offices are not viable delivery mechanisms in large-scale conflict scenarios; therefore, when resuming its activities, the SWF might consider alternative payment providers such as the financial institutions that are currently delivering the ECT.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to identify opportunities and challenges for enhancing shock-responsiveness in the MENA region. To that end, eight countries facing different risks at different capacity levels were analysed: Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, SOP, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. The recommendations based on the analysis developed in the previous chapters are presented in the following sections.

Investments in preparedness and coordination are needed to enhance the resilience and responsiveness of social protection systems

Highlights

- Improving coordination between social protection, disaster management and humanitarian actors.
- Developing preparedness measures to boost system resilience and responsiveness in the face of shocks.

The systems reviewed present different levels of institutionalisation. At one end of the spectrum, some countries still do not have a social protection strategy; at the other end, there are systems embedded in legislation. For countries still without a social protection strategy, their first priority should be to establish clear policies. Moreover, factoring in scalability at times of crisis in existing or future policies can enhance their responsiveness. Improving coordination between the social protection and disaster management sectors and humanitarian actors can also boost system resilience and responsiveness, in addition to strengthening emergency preparedness measures.

In terms of preparedness, contingency planning, active preparation and early delivery support—if appropriate—serve as enablers for timely responses. In practice, active preparation may translate into establishing guidelines and protocols for action in emergencies, communication channels for sharing early-warning information on potential crises, and corresponding arrangements with service providers (Beazley et al. 2016; O'Brien et al. 2018b). More specifically, preparedness for using cash transfers as an emergency response involves specific activities, including assessing local market conditions and regulatory environments, as well as mapping potential service providers with which pre-agreements can also be drafted (World Bank 2016e).

Contingency funding and emergency preparedness are not explicit features of the programmes reviewed. Allocating contingency funds for the programmes and/or establishing national funds to be drawn from in times of crisis, with efficient pre-agreed disbursement processes, would be ideal in terms of ensuring liquidity for crisis response. However, in some of the cases, even regular social assistance provision (in terms of payments to both beneficiaries and programme staff) still suffers from funding shortages and disbursement delays. This is a crucial point that needs to be addressed for the sake of programmes' regular poverty reduction goals, but which also points to the recommendation that such contingency funds—if created to address crisis response—need to ensure that disbursement processes will be timely. Moreover, in some countries, the government provides ECTs in cases of both idiosyncratic and covariate shocks; however, these generally seem small in scale, as they are analysed and provided on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, it is unlikely that they would be able to quickly address large-scale emergencies.

Moving from programme databases towards social registries

Highlights

- Expanding the coverage of systems and registries to all poor and near-poor/vulnerable people (and beyond).
- Carrying out assessments and generating evidence during times of stability to understand the extent to which social protection data are complete, relevant and current.

The flagship programmes reviewed in this study all target poverty, which can be considered an impediment to their scalability. Moreover, narrow poverty-based targeting can be viewed as being in direct conflict with the imperative of political stability (Jawad 2017), and as precluding the option of establishing universal programmes. As all programmes use (or plan to use, as in the case of Jordan) proxy means-testing as the main targeting method, it is important to consider that additional methods might be needed for targeting crisis-affected populations, as PMTs tend to focus on longer-term variables and do not capture sudden changes in welfare. Targeting populations affected by sudden-onset crises can also be informed by a needs assessment that supports decisions on the type, scale and duration of the assistance to be provided; these types of instruments can be developed *ex ante* based on the most pressing risks facing the country.

Nevertheless, in the sense of moving beyond an exclusive focus on poverty to also consider vulnerability, the trend of working towards social registries is encouraging. Egypt and Jordan are experimenting with a virtual social registry where data are pulled from multiple databases. It remains to be seen whether these systems will also develop the necessary front-office capacity in the future (Leite et al. 2017). Under regular conditions, assessments can be carried out to understand the extent to which social protection data are complete, relevant and current, and to assess coverage of disaster-prone areas and populations (Barca and O'Brien 2017).

As social protection systems in the region tend to be challenged in covering rural populations (FAO 2017), particular attention should be paid in these assessments to the possible exclusion of people living in rural areas. When expanding registries, collecting extra information that may be relevant in crisis situations might also be considered. Finally, having protocols for data access and use in crisis situations and devising strategies for regular data updates, including during the post-emergency stage, are further advised (Barca and O'Brien 2017).

Ensuring the scalability of payment systems

Highlights

- Investing in technology, particularly where systems rely on physical payments.
- Mapping potential alternative payment providers and having contingency agreements with them.
- Safeguarding benefit levels against inflationary pressures.
- Embedding seasonality in cash transfer programming—for example, by including predictable top-ups during the winter.

Emergency preparedness in terms of payment methods might involve mapping potential alternative providers and having contingency agreements with them. Post offices are considered a good option for reaching remote

areas where the banking system is not well developed, but they are usually not functional during large-scale shocks such as conflicts. Yemen and Syria, both of which relied on post offices before the current conflicts, use financial services to deliver the ECT and the benefit for children with complex disabilities. Jordan relies on post offices, but UNICEF is working with the Central Bank of Jordan to develop the Jordan Mobile Payment Platform, which should provide the NAF with a new, scalable payment mechanism. Mobile payments represent an important development in providing payments in remote locations. Moreover, considering the widespread implementation of winterisation in programmes, embedding seasonality in cash transfer programming might translate into the provision of predictable seasonal top-ups. Furthermore, as price volatility is a concern in the region, periodically revising benefit levels to compensate for inflation in the prices of basic food products would be important to safeguard the purchasing power and food security of households.

Towards sustainable public funding of rights-based and responsive systems

Highlights

- Reviewing social protection's fiscal disbursement flows and addressing bottlenecks, particularly where these impact the timeliness of payments (to beneficiaries and programme staff).
- Ensuring that regular social protection provision funds are ring-fenced, particularly during times of austerity, and securing contingency funding.

The programmes reviewed in this study[71] do not cover all poor and vulnerable people but have, in general, been expanding their coverage over time along with the expenditure allocated to them. The low coverage of the systems and inadequate funding, as in the case of Lebanon, hinder longer-term planning and the ability to respond to shocks. Furthermore, the SOP presents a particular case in terms of its fiscal arrangements; the social sector's reliance on donor funding has been heavily tested over recent years, posing significant challenges for regular social protection provision and for its planned shock-responsiveness objectives.

Fiscal space in the region could benefit from mobilising national taxation, especially by improving direct tax progressivity and tax administration (ESCWA 2017b). As countries have been reforming their subsidy systems, it is of paramount importance that these savings are reinvested in social expenditures, as a significant proportion of the population are likely to need some form of support in lieu of subsidies. National emergency funding can be allocated specifically to the social protection and disaster risk management sectors or be sought in other sectors as well, such as agriculture and health (O'Brien et al. 2018b). Nevertheless, as seen in some cases, payments to both beneficiaries of social protection schemes and programme staff can suffer from delays in fiscal disbursement procedures; it is crucial to assess and address these bottlenecks.

In terms of mobilisation of funds, the cases of the Lebanon and Jordan Compacts constitute an important step in the recognition by donor countries of refugee welfare as a global common good. However, support has still been provided as stand-alone humanitarian assistance, and long-term developmental planning to address the situations of refugees in these countries is still a pressing challenge. Moreover, as the potential of *Zakat* has been mentioned for other countries (O'Brien et al. 2018a), this could also be potentially further investigated in the MENA region, where *Zakat* schemes are common. This could potentially be explored in terms of channelling Zakat Funds through social protection programmes or aligning both realms of intervention.

Developing monitoring and evaluation systems for evidence-based programming

Highlights

- In times of stability, investing in the development of robust M&E systems that deliver the data needed for evidence-based programming.
- Including resilience-related indicators in M&E systems.

For countries facing regular disasters, it can be worth establishing a system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of shock response by measuring the inputs needed, the outputs produced and the related outcomes and impacts. However, even regular social protection programming in the region suffers from a lack of evidence-based input that could be remedied through M&E systems. As these systems develop, the relations between vulnerability to shocks, seasonality and poverty— as well as issues faced by beneficiaries when accessing services and challenges faced by programme implementers—might be considered factors to be investigated. Benefit levels could also be assessed, taking into account not only programmes' regular poverty reduction goals but also their capacity to enhance the resilience of households.

Investing in implementation capacities to ensure the resilience and responsiveness of social protection systems

Highlights

- Ensuring that staff are properly trained in emergency preparedness and response, as well as in the use of the different mechanisms (e.g. MIS, alternative payment providers) that this may entail.
- Ensuring that staff are properly trained in communicating programmatic decisions in potential responses to shocks and other relevant messages.
- Ensuring that social workers and programme staff are valued, incentivised and able to carry out their services (in regular and extraordinary circumstances) .

Finally, ensuring that social workers and programme staff are valued, incentivised and able to carry out their services is key to the resilience and responsiveness of social protection systems. Implementation capacity is typically challenged by the precarious situation of social workers, who are often paid late or do not receive compensation for work-related expenses (such as transportation costs). Furthermore, if social workers engaged in regular social protection programmes are expected to carry out programme operations in extraordinary circumstances, such as during large-scale emergencies, their compensation and training also need to reflect these circumstances and should also be properly regulated to ensure their safety and working conditions.

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ANNEX 1. Survey questions—'Assessing the readiness of social protection systems to deliver cash transfers during an emergency and UNICEF's use of cash responses'[72]

SECTION 1: About existing, significant scale, cash transfer programme(s), toward understanding their potential suitability for emergency response.

1. What is/are the main shock(s) and stress(es) that may lead to humanitarian crises in the country?

2. In the last 3 years, have there been any shocks?

3. How many shocks, of what type, and approximately how many people were affected?

4. Does the country have (a) national cash transfer programme(s)? Is UNICEF supporting this programme(s)?

- Yes, with UNICEF support
- Yes, without UNICEF support
- No cash transfer programme available
- Not sure/don't know

5. What is the name and purpose of the most significant programme?

6. What is the annual budget of the programme?

7. What is the lead ministry or government department in charge of managing/coordinating this programme?

8. Which of the statements below best describes the coverage of the programme mentioned above? Here we are trying to get an approximate picture of coverage.

- The cash transfer has not been implemented yet
- The cash transfer is only a pilot or small-scale programme (for example, it reaches less than 2 per cent of the population)
- The cash transfer is somewhat expanded and reaches between 2 per cent and 10 per cent of the population
- The cash transfer is expanded and reaches more than 10 per cent of the population
- Not sure/don't know
- N/A

9. How many households are reached?

10. How many children are reached?

11. How does the programme target the beneficiaries?

- Proxy means-testing
- Community-based targeting
- Categorical targeting
- Geographical targeting
- Not sure/don't know
- Other

12. How would you summarise the inclusion criteria? (e.g. geographical, by age, labour- constrained etc.)

13. Can non-citizens, refugees or undocumented migrants be registered as beneficiaries?

14. Is targeting designed around participant residence? (Would displaced or nomadic/migratory groups without a fixed residence have difficulty registering?)

15. Can households receive/withdraw cash transfers from multiple distribution points, or are distributions geographically fixed per registration?

16. Is biometric registration included?

17. Is there a Management Information System (MIS) that links the list of beneficiaries with tracking of payments and programme monitoring?

18. Does the programme have a case management database to support targeting, administration and disbursement of payments?

19. Does this database include:

- Potential beneficiaries of cash transfers (such as a national registry)
- Financial account information for payments
- Information platform to monitor the operational status such as the payments made
- Grievance redressal
- None of the above
- Not sure/don't know

20. Who is/are the financial service provider(s)?

- Commercial banks
- Post offices
- Traders
- Mobile phones
- Government officials
- Not sure/don't know
- Other

21. What is the method of payment used in the distribution of the cash transfer?

- ATM
- Bank cheque/draft
- Direct transfer into bank accounts
- Local committee
- Mobile payment vans
- Mobile phone banking
- Physical distribution of cash (cash in an envelope)
- Post offices
- Retail stores
- Not sure/don't know
- Other

22. Would you say that, in the event of an emergency, there would be enough trained/skilled field staff on the ground who would be able to assist in the roll-out of humanitarian cash transfers?

23. Are emergency contingency agreements in place with these service providers to scale up cash programming for humanitarian situations?

24. Does the system have an emergency contingency operational manual or emergency procedures?

25. Is the system linked to an early-warning system? For example, are there defined emergency 'trigger' thresholds to initiate emergency cash programmes, as linked to the early-warning system?

26. Are contingency funds or financing arrangements in place to meet additional population needs following an emergency?

27. Approximately how much money can be drawn from these funds in the event of an emergency?

28. Has the national cash transfer programme been used to respond to emergencies in the past?

29. Please describe in brief (1–2 sentences) the crisis context, year(s), the affected population, and the main challenges.

30. How quickly did the programme respond to emergencies?

- Within 4 weeks after a crisis hit
- Between 4 and 8 weeks (2 months) after a crisis hit
- Beyond 8 weeks (over 2 months) after a crisis hit
- Other

31. Approximately what percentage of the AFFECTED population were covered by the programme?

- Less than 10 per cent
- Between 10 per cent and 30 per cent
- Between 30 per cent and 50 per cent
- Between 50 per cent and 70 per cent
- Between 70 per cent and 90 per cent
- More than 90 per cent

32. Approximately how many individuals or households were reached?

33. Are there any other large national cash transfer programmes (either universal, such as pensions, or others) that cover a significant percentage of the population? If there IS either notable coverage or a notable LACK of coverage in risk-prone areas, please note this.

34. Approximately what percentage of the population is covered by AT LEAST ONE cash transfer?

- No cash transfers have been implemented yet
- Cash transfer is only a pilot or a small-scale programme (for example, it reaches less than 2 per cent of the population)

- About 2 per cent to 10 per cent of the population is reached by at least one cash transfer
- Between 10 per cent and 20 per cent of the population is reached by at least one cash transfer
- More than 20 per cent of the population is reached by at least one cash transfer
- Not sure/don't know

35. In your opinion, how likely do you think it is that a national flagship cash transfer would be used for emergency response by the government or other international organisations?

- It is very unlikely that a national cash transfer would be used for emergency response
- It is possible that a national cash transfer would be used for emergency response
- It is likely that a national cash transfer would be used for emergency response
- It is highly likely that a national cash transfer would be used for emergency response
- Not sure/don't know
- Other

36. In your opinion, are the following components of the national cash transfer programme ready to be scaled up in the event of an emergency?

a. Coverage (targeting more people)

b. Payment mechanism (delivering to more people)

c. Timeliness of payment

d. Management Information System (MIS)

e. Communication

f. Grievance mechanism

g. Coordination mechanism between line ministries/departments

h. Link with early-warning systems

i. Donor interest

j. Others

37. In your opinion, what are the main challenges in using a national flagship cash transfer programme in response to an emergency?

- There is no cash transfer programme in place (or it is a weak one) that can be used as a basis for expansion
- The government has insufficient financial resources to use cash as a response
- The government has limited technical capacity to adjust the existing programme to the emergency context
- Coordination between the social protection system and the emergency response team is weak or non-existent
- The government does not consider cash an effective response to emergencies
- Humanitarian donors are unlikely to support the government or other humanitarian agencies to use the system
- None of the above
- Other

SECTION 2: About UNICEF-run emergency cash transfer programmes with government involvement

38. Is UNICEF implementing any humanitarian cash transfer programme outside of the national system?

39. What is the objective of the programme?

40. Is UNICEF implementing the programme with the following partners?

- Local NGO
- International NGO
- Private sector
- Other

41. What percentage of the affected population does the programme reach?

- Less than 10 per cent
- Between 10 per cent and 30 per cent
- Between 30 per cent and 50 per cent
- More than 50 per cent

42. How long has the programme been running?

43. Was the government involved/consulted in the design of the programme?

44. Is the programme linked in any way to the national system?

- Linked to national targeting
- Linked to national disbursements mechanisms
- Linked to national monitoring systems
- Use of national Management Information System (MIS)
- Use of national staff
- Use of local staff
- Don't know
- Other

45. Please describe any additional features or connections.

46. What were the reasons not to partially or fully implement the programme through the national system?

- Lack of willingness from UNICEF
- Lack of willingness from the national system
- System is too slow
- Not flexible enough to include new beneficiaries
- Increase level of benefits
- Political considerations
- Don't know
- Other

47. Please describe any additional features or connections.

48. How does the programme target the beneficiaries?

- Proxy means-testing
- Community-based targeting

- Categorical targeting
- Geographical targeting
- Not sure/don't know
- Other

49. How would you summarise the inclusion criteria?

50. Who in the UNICEF Country Office is leading the programme?

- Social policy section
- Emergency focal point
- Education section
- Health section
- WASH section
- Child protection section
- Nutrition section
- Deputy representative

51. Who in the UNICEF Country Office was involved in the design of the programme?

- Social policy section
- Emergency focal point
- Education section
- Health section
- WASH section
- Child protection section
- Nutrition section
- Deputy representative

SECTION 3: About government plans for emergency response and social protection, and how well integrated they are

52. Is there an active disaster management plan?

53. Which ministry manages emergency preparedness and response?

54. Does the government have a national policy on humanitarian/emergency cash transfers?

55. Is the leadership of humanitarian cash coordination across agencies at the country level established and clear?

56. Which entity is leading this humanitarian cash coordination?

57. Is emergency cash programming included in the government's disaster management plan?

58. How would you rate the government's primary social protection authority participation in the emergency planning process?

- Significant engagement of social protection authority
- Reasonable engagement of social protection authority
- Limited engagement of social protection authority
- No engagement of social protection authority
- Not sure/Don't know

59. Is there a history of the social protection and emergency national authorities working together/collaborating to respond to emergencies in the past?

60. Did the government's social protection authorities play a role in the implementation of the emergency response?

61. Does the social protection strategy/framework include any emergency prevention, preparedness and response components?

62. In your opinion, how well developed are these components?

- Strong integration of emergency prevention, preparedness and response
- Reasonable integration of emergency prevention, preparedness and response
- Limited integration of emergency prevention, preparedness and response
- No integration of emergency prevention, preparedness and response
- Not sure/don't know

SECTION 4: About UNICEF's engagement with governments in social protection and in emergency preparedness and response

63. Does UNICEF support the government-led cash transfer programme outlined in Section 1?

64. How does UNICEF support the government in the areas of situation analysis, policy and coordination?

a. Child poverty and vulnerability assessments

b. Social protection system assessments

c. Social protection policy design

d. Fiscal analysis for social protection

e. Coordination (actors/sectors)

65. How does UNICEF support the government in programme DESIGN?

a. Targeting

b. Value and frequency of transfers

c. Household/child outreach (including links to social welfare)

d. Programme communication

e. Cash plus (links to services)

f. Grievance redressal

g. MIS

h. M&E

i. Other/details (optional)

66. How does UNICEF support the government in programme IMPLEMENTATION?

a. Registration

b. Cash delivery to beneficiaries

c. Household/child outreach (including links to social welfare)

d. Programme communication

e. Cash plus (links to services)

f. Grievance redressal

g. MIS

h. M&E

i. Other/details (optional)

67. Has UNICEF provided support over the last 3 years to make national social protection systems shock responsive?

68. Is this work primarily intended to build readiness for any of the following responses?

- Recurrent seasonal humanitarian response (e.g. drought, climate change linked)
- Sudden-onset/acute humanitarian response
- Protracted conflict and forced displacement
- All of the above

69. On which aspects of policy, financing and coordination does UNICEF provide support?

a. Adapting social protection policies or strategies to allow flexibility for expansion when needed

b. Including budgeting contingencies to allow rapid increase in funding when needed

c. Supporting linkages between emergency/disaster management and social protection authorities

d. Supporting social protection counterparts to make use of existing early-warning systems

70. On which aspects of preparing programme operating mechanisms does UNICEF provide support?

a. Pre-identifying targeting options to be ready for rapid expansion

b. Pre-analysis of key design elements (e.g. transfer values and frequency) to be ready for rapid expansion

c. Developing an operational manual/standard operating procedures for roll-out of an expanded programme in times of crisis

d. Training of local government authorities to be ready for a rapid programme expansion

e. Training of local staff (including social workers) to be ready for a rapid programme expansion

f. Adaptation of MIS and/or M&E systems to be ready for a rapid programme expansion

71. Feel free to add more details if working in other areas.

72. Does UNICEF support the delivery of cash in emergencies or humanitarian response situations (or have we done so in the last 3 years?)

73. Please briefly describe the crisis.

74. Which of the following systems did the response use?

- Government system exclusively
- Mix of government and parallel, non-government system
- Parallel, non-government system

75. Is UNICEF funding the cash transfer?

- Fully
- Partially
- No
- Other

76. How does UNICEF support in situation analysis, market analysis and coordination?

a. Vulnerability assessments to support the design of emergency cash transfers

b. Shock response

c. Market analysis

d. Coordination (actors/sectors)

77. How does UNICEF support in emergency cash transfer DESIGN?

a. Targeting

b. Value and frequency of transfers

c. Emergency cash transfer design (household/child outreach, including links to social welfare)

d. Programme communication

e. Cash plus (links to services)

f. Grievance redressal

g. MIS

h. M&E

78. How does UNICEF support in emergency cash transfer IMPLEMENTATION?

a. Targeting

b. Value and frequency of transfers

c. Emergency cash transfer design (household/child outreach, including links to social welfare)

d. Programme communication

e. Cash plus (links to services)

f. Grievance redressal

g. MIS

h. M&E

79. Has UNICEF supported the government in emergency preparedness and response in the last 3 years?

80. Which of the following statements best describes the relationship between UNICEF and the government on emergency preparedness and response?

- UNICEF has very strong relationships with the government in emergency preparedness and response
- UNICEF has reasonably strong relationships with the government in emergency preparedness and response
- UNICEF has limited relationships with the government in emergency preparedness and response
- UNICEF has very little or no relationships with the government in emergency preparedness and response

81. Please briefly explain (2–3 sentences) the nature of UNICEF's support.

82. How much time of professional staff in the office is dedicated to social protection?

- Equivalent of 2 staff, full-time or more
- Equivalent of 1 staff, full-time
- Equivalent of 1 staff, 50 per cent of time
- Equivalent of 1 staff, 25 per cent time
- Equivalent of LESS than 1 staff, 25 per cent of time
- Other

83. How much time of the professional staff in the office is dedicated to emergencies?

- Equivalent of 2 staff, full-time or more
- Equivalent of 1 staff, full-time
- Equivalent of 1 staff, 50 per cent of time
- Equivalent of 1 staff, 25 per cent time
- Equivalent of LESS than 1 staff, 25 per cent of time
- Other

84. How would you assess the knowledge level of social protection colleagues at UNICEF on emergency response?

- Social protection colleagues have little or no knowledge of emergency response approaches
- Social protection colleagues have some knowledge of emergency response approaches
- Social protection colleagues have significant knowledge of emergency response approaches
- Social protection colleagues have strong knowledge and awareness of emergency response approaches
- Other

85. How would you assess the knowledge level of emergency colleagues at UNICEF on social protection and cash transfers?

- Emergency colleagues have little or no knowledge of social protection and cash transfers
- Emergency colleagues have some knowledge of social protection and cash transfers
- Emergency colleagues have significant knowledge of social protection and cash transfers
- Emergency colleagues have strong knowledge and awareness of social protection and cash transfers
- Other

86. How engaged are UNICEF emergency colleagues in UNICEF's support to government-led cash transfer programmes?

- No involvement or participation by emergency colleagues
- Limited involvement or participation by emergency colleagues
- Significant participation and involvement by emergency colleagues

- Extensive participation and involvement to integrate emergency preparedness as part of the design and implementation of government-led cash transfer programmes
- Other

87. How engaged are UNICEF social protection colleagues in articulating the use of cash transfer programmes in emergency response planning by UNICEF?

- No involvement or participation by emergency colleagues
- Limited involvement or participation by emergency colleagues
- Significant participation and involvement by emergency colleagues
- Extensive participation and involvement to integrate emergency preparedness as part of the design and implementation of government-led cash transfer programmes
- Other

88. Is emergency cash programming included in the UNICEF Country Office annual emergency preparedness plan?

89. Are cash transfer programmes considered in UNICEF's emergency preparedness plan (EPP) and/or Guidance for Risk Informed Programming (GRIP)?

90. Are the social protection colleagues aware of UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children?

SECTION 5: About you, your needs and feedback

Country _____

Region _____

Name of social protection colleague completing survey _____

Email _____

Name of emergency colleague completing survey _____

Email _____

Name of Deputy Representative or senior management officer reviewing the survey and questions around office capacity _____

E-mail _____

91. In what areas would you find support and guidance most useful in strengthening and using social protection systems in contexts of fragility and humanitarian response? Please rank.

a. How humanitarian cash transfers can be used by UNICEF to contribute to the well-being of children

b. How to make existing social protection systems shock responsive

c. Options and considerations for the use of existing social protection systems when they are not fully ready in humanitarian response

d. How to use humanitarian cash transfers to build and strengthen nascent social protection systems where they do not exist or are weak

Any other support you may need?

92. In what areas would you find support and guidance most useful in the use of cash in humanitarian contexts? Please rank.

a. Overall understanding of how humanitarian cash transfers can be used by UNICEF to contribute to the well-being of children

b. Context assessment, needs assessments and systems analysis

c. Considerations to design humanitarian cash-based programmes for sector-specific outcomes for children (such as WASH, education, protection, health and nutrition, and multisectoral)

d. Programme design (such as targeting, level of benefit, monitoring and evaluation etc.)

e. Operational tools (MIS, cash delivery mechanisms)

Any other support you may need?

93. What type of the following support is most useful?

- Written guidelines
- Standard terms of reference and consultant rosters
- Case studies and examples
- Community of practice
- In-country technical support mission
- Training
- Other

94. Please let us know any other thoughts on our strengths and weaknesses as an organisation in this area (optional).

95. Please let us know any feedback that you may have on the survey and how we could improve it—all aspects from content to how we rolled it out (optional).

ANNEX 2. Overview of case studies

Country	Fiscal space and policy frameworks	Coordination and preparedness	Targeting and management information systems	Delivery mechanisms	Implementation capacities	Monitoring and evaluation
Egypt	Increasing social protection expenditures in recent years Right to social protection stated in the 2014 constitution TKP is still to be embedded within a stronger legal framework	TKP beneficiaries are eligible to participate in the Social Pension Health Care Programme	TKP has been rapidly expanding its coverage, reaching around 10 per cent of the population TKP's registry keeps data on all applicants (22 per cent of the population), with on-demand applications open on a continuous basis UNR aims to establish a national database linked through the national ID	All TKP beneficiaries receive the benefits via electronic payments TKP benefit level has increased in economic crisis situations	TKP had 12,000 social workers plus 10,000 outsourced researchers and a broad communication campaign during the programme's national scale-up process	Evaluations are infrequently demanded, and their results rarely used
Iraq	High levels of spending on social protection Progressive social protection law from 2014 includes non-citizens	Overlaps in assistance provided by ministries and humanitarian agencies Early stages of data-sharing and coordination arrangements	SPN reaches over 16 per cent of the population Improvements in the PMT to capture conflict and displacement-based changes SPN's database keeps information on non-beneficiaries More training is needed for staff to operate the system	SPN benefits are paid via QiCard, with multiple points of service available nationwide	Technical assistance aims at building the resilience of the SPN through investment in its implementation capacity	M&E systems and social accountability mechanisms are incipient
Jordan	Levels of social expenditure are considered high Social assistance for nationals is backed by law	Demonstrated government capacity for rapidly mobilising cash transfers nationwide NAF beneficiaries are eligible for Health Insurance Cards, which grant free access to basic health services	NAF set to expand its coverage over the coming years NAF has information on both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries NUR should be used by multiple programmes	NAF uses an extensive network of post offices. A mobile payment platform should be developed	NAF's staff capacity is considered limited A pilot 'Integrated Outreach Worker Programme' is being implemented, and an impact evaluation is expected to assess its potential scalability	NAF's M&E capacity is being improved through technical assistance
Lebanon	The country spends little on social assistance Social protection and disaster risk management policies still need to be established	MoSA is involved in the refugee response and will lead a (yet to be established) Social Protection Committee	NPTP has been criticised for its high levels of exclusion NPTP relies on a computerised MIS co-managed by CMU and the MoSA; however, there have been reports of communication and coordination gaps between the two	Because support is provided through subsidies, benefit levels are not considered adequate	Implementation gaps have been reported for NPTP staff and SDCs	Basic monitoring is supposed to be functional and is to be improved through technical assistance

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Country	Fiscal space and policy frameworks	Coordination and preparedness	Targeting and management information systems	Delivery mechanisms	Implementation capacities	Monitoring and evaluation
SOP	Fiscal space is restricted, and external support is declining An emergency fund is planned to be established by the MoSD The Social Development Sector Strategy (2017–2022) prioritises shock-responsive social measures	The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2018–2022) seeks to support the development of a shock-responsive social protection system Institutional capacity and fragmented provision are challenges for the Palestinian system	NCTP covers around 13.24 per cent of the population NCTP's focus on monetary poverty has led to coverage gaps. The PMT formula should be updated based on 2017 data The current registry has a 'waiting list' of people who could be reached in a scale-up Technical assistance is being delivered to move its beneficiary registry into a social registry format	NCTP benefits are paid via banks Payment delays and low benefit levels have been reported	MoSD has a civil servant staff of around 300 social workers, but capacity gaps have been reported	NCTP is receiving assistance to develop its M&E system
Sudan	Recent fiscal adjustment measures have impacted spending on subsidies and basic service provision The country is yet to devise its first social protection strategy	Though Sudan is one of the only countries to have a multi-year humanitarian strategy (the Humanitarian Response Plan 2017–2019) geared to bridge the humanitarian and development agendas, the plan is severely underfunded MoSSD is part of the Cash Working Core Group, which brings together social protection and humanitarian actors to align efforts	The Shamel cash transfers cover an estimated 8.9 per cent of the population Efforts are under way to scale up an automated PMT formula to be included in an MIS and to recertify beneficiary households A modular MIS is also being set up, which should rely on a web-based system to be made available at MoSSD offices	Capacity and financial gaps have led to irregular payments Financial reconciliation has also reportedly been a challenge, particularly for the payments made through the Zakat Committees Benefit levels do not vary according to family size; however, due to the economic situation, the amount is being revised to minimise the impacts of price inflation	Capacity-strengthening activities are being centred on documenting the programme's procedures, developing grievance redressal guidelines and an evaluation strategy, as well as improving payment processes and the MoSSD's communications and advocacy strategies	MoSSD reportedly lacks capacity in terms of M&E

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Country	Fiscal space and policy frameworks	Coordination and preparedness	Targeting and management information systems	Delivery mechanisms	Implementation capacities	Monitoring and evaluation
Syria	The United Nations and the Government of Syria have agreed on a United Nations Strategic Framework for Cooperation (2016–2017), placing a strong emphasis on building resilience and providing support to the most vulnerable population	The MoSAL, which oversees the NSAF, is part of the Higher Relief Committee in the country	An important cash transfer for children with severe disabilities is being implemented by UNICEF in the country, expanding the scope of the previous national programme It is unlikely that the NSAF beneficiary list can form the basis for a new social protection programme in a post-crisis scenario, due to the major population displacement and changes in welfare	Delivery via post offices will depend on their reconstruction, but money transfer facilities used by humanitarian programmes could also be considered a potential delivery mechanism	Government civil servants should receive their salaries even during the crisis	The outline of an M&E system was being built with UNDP technical assistance before the crisis
Yemen	The Yemen Emergency Cash Transfer Project—funded by the World Bank Group—has also been implemented by UNICEF, since working directly through the government would not be possible	International partners have been able to use some of the SWF's mechanisms to carry out humanitarian and emergency cash transfer programmes	A simple, though computerised, MIS was operated by the SWF Around 35 per cent of the population (1.5 million households) were living in a beneficiary household in 2013 Under the Yemen Emergency Cash Transfer Project, the SWF beneficiary list is used, with all registered households considered eligible for the ECT	Post offices have been destroyed or are now affiliated with particular political groups. The ECT employs private financial institutions to deliver benefits	UNICEF reports that pre-existing knowledge and partnerships enabled the implementation of the humanitarian cash transfers, and that technology improved oversight for remotely managed programmes	Evidence generated on the SWF's beneficiary list before the crisis, through the NSPMS, helped to build the confidence of donors and the World Bank in the system

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ANNEX 3. Overview by country

Egypt

Egypt	Enabling factors	Constraining factors	Areas for further development/improvement
Fiscal space and policy frameworks	• Increasing fiscal commitment to social protection in recent years • Right to social protection is established in the 2014 Constitution • Egypt is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention (including the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees) and the 1969 Organization of African Union Convention on Refugees		• TKP is established by administrative decree and has still to be embedded in a stronger legal framework • The country's National Strategy for DRR 2030 regulates the country's DRR efforts, albeit with no explicit links to the social protection sector. It does, however, foresee the allocation of a (non-specified) share of the State's budget to DRR and the creation of a disaster risk fund
Coordination and preparedness	• TKP beneficiaries are eligible to participate in the Social Pension Health Care Programme		• TKP interministerial coordination focuses mostly on conditionality monitoring • MoSS is also in charge of an emergency assistance programme granted on a case-by-case basis; therefore, it is unlikely to cover all disaster-affected populations in a larger-scale disaster • Refugees and asylum-seekers are eligible for humanitarian assistance and for public primary health care and public schools; however, some challenges remain in service access • TKP's regular development objectives are hampered by supply-side limitations and gaps in terms of education and health services. Efforts are currently under way to address them, coordinated by the Ministerial Committee for Social Justice

Egypt	Enabling factors	Constraining factors	Areas for further development/improvement
Targeting and management information systems	• TKP has been rapidly expanding its coverage, reaching around 10 per cent of the population • TKP's registry records information on all applicants (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries), reaching approximately 22 per cent of the population • Applications to the TKP are open to citizens at the village level on a continuous, on-demand basis • A UNR aims to establish a national database linked through the national ID that coordinates social protection programmes and facilitates targeting and delivery processes		• A focus for the UNR lately has been ensuring the level of data quality, as this varies across the databases that are being used
Delivery mechanisms	• All TKP beneficiaries receive the benefits via electronic payments • TKP beneficiaries have also seen an increase in their benefit level in the past due to economic crises		
Implementation capacities	• During the programme's national scale-up process, 12,000 social workers plus 10,000 outsourced researchers were involved • The programme also undertook a communication campaign involving a broad range of stakeholders and channels		
Monitoring and evaluation			• TKP's MIS is to be the basis of the M&E system • Evaluations are considered to be infrequently demanded and their results little used

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Iraq

Iraq	Enabling factors	Constraining factors	Areas for further development/improvement
Fiscal space and policy frameworks	• Social spending in general and social protection spending in particular are around twice the regional average • Essential social spending is supposed to be protected while the government implements a fiscal consolidation process • A progressive social protection law from 2014 covers all residents living below the national poverty line, and the country has devised the Social Protection Strategic Roadmap 2015–2019 • The Refugee Act also grants refugees the right to access public employment, services and welfare, and to engage in trade	• Total tax revenue and tax collection are considered very feeble • In practice, fiscal space restrictions prevent most refugees from accessing services and benefits • Much of the social expenditure is considered to be poorly targeted and fiscally unsustainable	• A review of the MoLSA's mandate to add an element of shock-responsiveness is being discussed • Focus article 28 of the Social Protection Law on Palestinian Refugees is being revised, with considerations that it might be expanded to include all refugees • The Kurdistan Region of Iraq has progressed more in providing services to refugees, but it receives reduced transfers from the central government
Coordination and preparedness	• A Social Protection Commission to manage social assistance in Iraq has been established, and the MoLSA has initiated an Interministerial Steering Committee for the new conditional cash transfer • A cash working group attended by over 30 members coordinates humanitarian cash transfers	• MoLSA's capacity in relation to emergencies, *vis-à-vis* bot beneficiaries and its own staff, is more reactive, without any significant preparedness measures in place	• Overlap in assistance provided by the MoLSA, the MoMD and humanitarian agencies. The latter provide emergency support to IDPs, who are then linked to social protection programmes. Nonetheless, this link is not yet systematic. They are at the early stages of sharing information, and no specific referral pathways or draft protocols have been agreed

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Iraq	Enabling factors	Constraining factors	Areas for further development/improvement
Targeting and management information systems	• SPN reaches over 16 per cent of the population • The PMT formula is currently being reworked based on 2017 data, which stratified information from IDPs and non-IDPs • The existing grievance redressal mechanism and the future incorporation of community-based targeting are expected to reduce targeting errors • SPN's beneficiary database contains a 'waiting list' of over half a million households. If fiscal constraints are relaxed, they would be prioritised in a horizontal scale-up • If someone (due to displacement or other issues) does not have any proof of identification, there is a committee to which they can bring witnesses to testify on their behalf	• SPN only covers governorates not constituted as regions, thus excluding the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which hosts overwhelming numbers of IDPs and refugees • In the past, there were reports of inadequacy and incompleteness of data • Using this system in emergency response would be challenging, as it would require more training for staff and social workers to familiarise themselves with it • The system does not yet receive data from health centres or schools	• Any citizen may apply to the programme online during specific registration windows (not on a rolling basis) • The aim of the current World Bank technical assistance project is to include PMT formula variables that capture conflict-related vulnerabilities (IDP or returnee status, female-headed households, youth, and chronic poverty) • Data requests (from NGOs, for instance) are analysed on a case-by-case basis by the MoLSA, which can grant access to parts of the data • The MoLSA's MIS should be modernised with technical assistance from the World Bank, which will also provide capacity-strengthening for staff and social workers
Delivery mechanisms	• SPN benefits are paid directly to beneficiaries who use *QiCard* • IDPs and returnees who keep their smart cards still benefit from the programme at their destination, as multiple points of service are available nationwide	• As the process of budgetary disbursement is centralised in the Ministry of Finance, there is the possibility of delays in SPN payments due to budgetary disbursement issues, just as could happen to salaries paid by ministries	
Implementation capacities	• Social workers are currently being trained on several areas (including case management) • A specific component under the current World Bank-provided technical assistance also aims to build the resilience of the SPN through investment in its implementation capacity, to improve its flexibility in horizontal or vertical expansion		• Social workers expressed that what they receive for transportation is quite minimal, so registration and verification may take longer in remote areas • The number and capacity of social workers varies nationwide. They cannot easily be moved from one area to another; therefore, new staff are likely to be hired if needed, even if they have limited institutional knowledge
Monitoring and evaluation		• M&E systems and social accountability mechanisms are considered incipient	• Innovative approaches with a post-conflict-sensitive monitoring arrangement are to be incorporated into the SPN

Jordan

Jordan	Enabling factors	Constraining factors	Areas for further development/improvement
Fiscal space and policy frameworks	• Social protection for nationals is backed by law; the NAF was established by Law No. 36 of 1986 and works as a semi-autonomous arm of the MoSD • The country has devised a National Comprehensive Plan for Encountering Emergencies and Disasters and the Jordan Response Plan 2017–2019 for humanitarian response • The Jordan Compact saw a commitment of GBP1.6 billion in donor assistance in exchange for the promotion of work permits and access to education to Syrians by Jordan	• The country is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, rendering these groups vulnerable to a number of legal obstacles	• Jordan has maintained relatively high social expenditures, at around 0.94 per cent of GDP; however, additional investments are needed for the NAF to expand its coverage to all poor and vulnerable households
Coordination and preparedness	• The Jordan Compact has managed to build a bridge between the humanitarian and developmental sectors • The National Zakat Fund, under the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, also provides transfers and services to both nationals and non-nationals • NAF beneficiaries are eligible for Health Insurance Cards, which grant free access to basic health services • The country has already managed to quickly implement a large-scale, nationwide cash transfer through the Fuel Compensation Cash Transfer Programme	• The social protection system is considered to require better coordination, as fragmentation, limited resources and coverage gaps are still significant challenges	• NAF runs an emergency cash transfer granting a one-off payment (decided on a case-by-case basis) of between JOD100 and JOD1,200 to individuals or families experiencing idiosyncratic or covariate shocks

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Targeting and management information systems	• NAF should include 85,000 new beneficiaries over a period of three years, starting with 25,000 in 2019 • NAF's beneficiary registry contains data on both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries • Jordan is currently developing the NUR, a virtual social registry which is envisioned to be used by multiple programmes, including the NAF, by 2020	• NAF covers less than half of the poor people in Jordan; it is estimated that it would need to treble in size to cover all poor people • NAF's targeting has been criticised due to gaps in its implementation and verification systems • As of April 2018, development of the NUR was being held back by procurement delays	• As part of UNICEF-provided assistance to NAF, discussions are being held to shift the targeting mechanism towards a PMT, combined with a multidimensional child vulnerability index based on 2018 data
Delivery mechanisms	• NAF uses an extensive network of post offices • Payments of the Fuel Compensation Cash Transfer Programme were made via multiple channels (e.g. payroll for public-sector employees, regular payment method—post offices—for NAF beneficiaries)		• UNICEF is working with the Central Bank of Jordan to develop the Jordan Mobile Payment Platform, which should provide the NAF with a new scalable payment mechanism
Implementation capacities		• NAF staff's capacity is considered limited, and lacking in resources to conduct case management of beneficiaries	• A pilot 'Integrated Outreach Worker Programme' is being implemented, and an impact evaluation is expected to assess its potential scalability
Monitoring and evaluation			• NAF's capacity and its M&E systems should be improved with real-time monitoring systems (Rapid Pro) • UNICEF is supporting the NAF to develop key performance indicators (KPIs) for NAF management and operations

Lebanon

Lebanon	Enabling factors	Constraining factors	Areas for further development/improvement
Fiscal space and policy frameworks	• Donor financing has been fundamental for the establishment of key social assistance programmes such as the NPTP	• Social assistance spending is less than 1 per cent of GDP, and Lebanon's tax system is regressive • The refugee crisis has impacted growth and expenditure • Over-reliance on external support for the development of NPTP is seen as jeopardising institutional consolidation and national ownership of the programme • National policies on social protection and a DRR strategy are yet to be established • Lebanon is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees	• The Lebanon Compact has increased financing; however, multi-year funding is extremely limited, and the disbursement of some donor funds has been challenged due to the politically contentious situation in Lebanon • The NPTP was introduced and regulated by Cabinet Decree and is also listed in the government budget; however, to date it has not been enshrined in law (though since 2014 a legislative proposal has been discussed by Parliament)
Coordination and preparedness	• MoSA co-chairs the LCRP Steering Committee and is also in charge of leading the government's response to the crisis by the Interministerial Committee on Displaced People		• With UNICEF support and the inputs of key partners such as the World Bank, the MoSA will lead a (yet to be established) Social Protection Committee
Targeting and management information systems	• The NPTP has a computerised MIS, which is to be further developed with World Bank assistance • A data-sharing process is in place between the NPTP and the WFP	• The PMT has been criticised for its relatively high level of exclusion. Another criticism of the programme's targeting method is that it precludes the introduction of universal grants such as a child benefit for Lebanese citizens. The NPTP underwent a recertification process in 2018, reducing the number of beneficiaries significantly • Though the database is managed jointly by the CMU and the MoSA, there have reportedly been concerns about weak coordination and communication between the two, as well as about data management and sharing practices	• Any Lebanese citizen may apply to the NPTP via the nearest SDC, although, in practice, communication gaps have limited the number of new applicants

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Lebanon	Enabling factors	Constraining factors	Areas for further development/improvement
Delivery mechanisms		• Because direct support is provided through subsidies or fee waivers, it does not provide the required levels of support for those who need it the most	• WFP food vouchers have significantly impacted beneficiaries' food consumption, dietary diversity and coping strategies; however, due to challenges in the operationalisation of health and education subsidies and service quality, there have been challenges in their uptake and full utilisation
Implementation capacities	• NPTP's communication strategy has been revised, as the initial negative portrayal of poor people by the public relations campaign was found to create stigma and be detrimental to programme uptake	• NPTP staff have limited or no awareness of its operations manual, which could be a symptom of its weak governmental ownership • MoSA support to SDCs is considered inadequate, leading some SDCs to fundraise and partner with other organisations • The capacity of SDCs was especially stretched in areas hosting the largest number of refugees • NPTP hotline numbers are usually unable to provide the expected support, which then requires beneficiaries to attend SDCs in person • Higher wages offered by humanitarian agencies also led many social workers to leave the NPTP after being trained	
Monitoring and evaluation	• The CMU team, which is charged with monitoring the NPTP, reportedly produces indicators needed for basic monitoring. For the food vouchers, baseline and post-distribution surveys were conducted, and licensed shops are regularly visited by WFP staff		• With technical assistance from the World Bank, the programme's M&E system is expected to include evaluations of its business processes and quantitative and qualitative surveys on beneficiary assessments, as well as opinion polls on awareness, but many of these have yet to be designed or implemented

State of Palestine

SOP	Enabling factors	Constraining factors	Areas for further development/improvement
Fiscal space and policy frameworks	• An emergency fund is planned to be established by the MoSD, and another is to be established by other ministries to respond to disasters • The Social Development Sector Strategy (2017–2022) prioritises shock-responsive social measures	• Stagnating growth projections (in a 'business as usual' scenario) mean that the SOP will have to deal with a limited fiscal space, compounded by declining external budget support from donors • The tax regime suffers from unique limitations laid out by the Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of the State of Israel and the SOP	• NCTP's legal framework is currently being deliberated
Coordination and preparedness	• The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2018–2022) seeks to support the development of a shock-responsive social protection system • A recently established National Centre for Disaster Risk Management is charged with coordinating emergency response by governmental and non-governmental organisations • A newly launched national portal for social assistance/single gateway should work towards improving coordination among multiple partners	• Institutional capacity and fragmented provision are challenges for the Palestinian system, which uses multiple providers: duplication of efforts as well as missed opportunities to reach those suffering from multiple forms of deprivation due to the lack of a robust system of linkages and referral mechanisms	• Even though MoUs had not been drafted between the multiple providers, NCTP beneficiaries are linked to WFP and UNDP programmes, as well as to health insurance, and education and tuition waivers • MoSD also provides an emergency cash assistance. Priority should be given to NCTP beneficiaries, and payment delivery is prioritised by the seriousness of the case; however, the case-by-case basis of the assessment is likely to prevent rapid delivery in cases of large-scale shocks

SOP	Enabling factors	Constraining factors	Areas for further development/improvement
Targeting and management information systems	• 40 per cent of all Palestinian households receive some form of social assistance • Coverage of the NCTP can be approximated to around 13.24 per cent of the total population • NCTP's web-based MIS connects the MoSD's 17 district offices to the central level • The current registry has information on beneficiaries, and there is a waiting list of people who could be reached in a scale-up • Information exchange processes between organisations and the NCTP already exist	• Cash assistance remains targeted at extremely poor people • NCTP's focus on monetary poverty has led to coverage gaps, particularly for children (especially adolescent girls) with disabilities • Concerns regarding data quality and the government's capacity to maintain the system have been reported	• The PMT formula is based on 2011 data, but a new round of the Palestine Expenditure and Consumption Survey (2017)—which is considered to have a multidimensional poverty methodology—should serve to update the formula • The SOP is receiving technical assistance to move its beneficiary registry into a social registry format, with the aim of reaching 150,000 households • The new system will have regulatory frameworks, an operations manual, data exchange procedures, protocols for data validation, and the development of interoperability functions across programmes
Delivery mechanisms	• NCTP benefits are paid via banks and the Ministry of Finance and Planning, which manages payments and has MoUs with all banks where beneficiaries have accounts	• NCTP's payment regularity has been affected by delays in budget disbursement • Beneficiaries have pointed out that the level of benefits is low, given the rising cost of living, and periodic adjustments aligned with price indices are required • Furthermore, there is a reported lack of coherence in terms of benefit levels across programmes	

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SOP	Enabling factors	Constraining factors	Areas for further development/improvement
Implementation capacities	• MoSD has a civil servant staff of around 300 social workers spread across 17 governorates (12 in the West Bank and 5 in Gaza)	• Staff tend to spend most of their time on data collection instead of actual social work • Constraints in terms of transportation, office space and IT equipment have also been reported • Informal complaint management still overburdens social workers	• An online case management system is being piloted in selected areas of the West Bank, which should ultimately improve the linkages and referral mechanisms
Monitoring and evaluation		• The failure to develop a robust monitoring and evaluation system as laid out in the National Social Protection Strategy 20142016 has been recognised by the MoSD	• NCTP is receiving assistance from multiple partners to improve its M&E system

Sudan

Sudan	Enabling factors	Constraining factors	Areas for further development/improvement
Fiscal space and policy frameworks		• Recent fiscal adjustment measures have impacted spending on subsidies and basic service provision	• The country is yet to devise its first social protection strategy; however, efforts are under way, and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper is expected to be finalised in the first quarter of 2019
Coordination and preparedness	• The MoSSD is now part of the Cash Working Core Group, which brings together social protection actors, United Nations agencies, NGOs and donors to align efforts in social protection and humanitarian programming		• A National Adaptation Plan was created in 2016; however, no explicit mention of social protection is to be found • Though Sudan is one of the only countries to have a multi-year humanitarian strategy (the Humanitarian Response Plan 2017–2019) geared to bridge the humanitarian and development agendas, it is severely underfunded (by over 80 per cent)
Targeting and management information systems		• The Zakat Chamber's beneficiary registry served as the basis for *Shamel*, but significant inclusion and exclusion errors have been reported and are currently being revised	• Efforts are under way to recertify beneficiary households • A modular MIS is being set up with a centralised architecture, using a web-based system that should be available at MoSSD offices and implementing agencies (for whom network connectivity should also be provided)
Delivery mechanisms		• Payments are scheduled to be disbursed twice per year • Capacity and financial gaps have led to i rregular payments • Financial reconciliation has also reportedly been a challenge, particularly for the payments made through Zakat Committees	• Benefit levels do not vary according to household size; however, due to the economic situation, the amount is being revised to minimise the impacts of price inflation
Implementation capacities		• Implementation capacity gaps have been reported	• Capacity-strengthening activities are being centred on documenting the programme's procedures, developing grievance redressal guidelines and an evaluation strategy, and improving payment processes and the MoSSD's communications and advocacy strategies
Monitoring and evaluation		• MoSSD reportedly lacks capacity in terms of M&E	

Syria

Syria	Enabling Factors	Constraining factors	Areas for further development/improvement
Fiscal space and policy frameworks	• The United Nations and the Government of Syria have agreed on a United Nations' Strategic Framework for Cooperation (2016–2017), placing strong emphasis on resilience-building and support to the most vulnerable population		
Coordination and preparedness	• MoSAL, which oversees the NSAF, is part of the Higher Relief Committee in the country, which includes the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Local Administration, Health, Water Resources, and Energy, and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent		
Targeting and management information systems	• An important cash transfer for children with severe disabilities is being implemented by UNICEF in the country, expanding the scope of the previous national programme that targeted people with cerebral palsy. It is hoped that this programme can contribute to the re-establishment of the social protection system in a post-conflict scenario	• It is unlikely that the NSAF's beneficiary list can form the basis of a new social protection programme in a post-crisis scenario, due to the huge level of population displacement and changes in welfare	
Delivery mechanisms			• Delivery via post offices will depend on their reconstruction, but money transfer facilities could also be considered a potential delivery mechanism, as they have been used by humanitarian actors
Implementation capacities	• The current institutional capacity at the level of the Syrian government is clearly being tested, though work continues in the capital and other regions of the country, even if not in a cohesive manner due to geographical fragmentation. Government civil servants should receive their salaries even during the crisis		
Monitoring and evaluation			• The outline of an M&E system was being built with UNDP technical assistance before the crisis

Yemen

Yemen	Enabling factors	Constraining factors	Areas for further development/improvement
Fiscal space and policy frameworks		• Yemen's largest cash transfer to poor people, the SWF, has been de-funded and thus interrupted. The Yemen Emergency Cash Transfer Project funded by the World Bank Group has also been implemented by UNICEF, as working directly through the government would not be possible	
Coordination and preparedness	• International partners have been able to use some of the SWF's mechanisms to carry out humanitarian and emergency cash transfer programmes • The Social Protection Consultative Committee, co-chaired by the MoSAL and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, has been set up with technical assistance from UNICEF and in partnership between United Nations agencies, NGOs, government and *de facto* authorities • Several strategies were anticipated to ensure the distribution of ECT benefits, such as negotiating security and non-interference with *de facto* authorities, avoiding areas where security could not be guaranteed and identifying problem areas through third-party monitoring		
Targeting and management information systems	• Yemen's NSPMS, covering the period from 2012 to 2013, which aimed to document the SWF's impact, found that the programme was pro-poor, covering around one third of the population • A simple, though computerised, MIS was operated by the SWF • Around 35 per cent of the population (1.5 million households) were living in a beneficiary household in 2013 • Under the Yemen Emergency Cash Transfer Project, the SWF beneficiary list is used, with all registered households considered eligible for the ECT		

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Yemen	Enabling factors	Constraining factors	Areas for further development/improvement
Delivery mechanisms	• The ECT employs private financial institutions to deliver benefits • Benefits were set at the same level as the pre-crisis SWF, which was considered important to prevent operational and communication challenges arising from the resumption of the SWF	• Post offices were not considered a feasible option in delivering the ECT because some of them have been destroyed or are now affiliated with particular political groups	
Implementation capacities	• UNICEF reports that pre-existing knowledge and partnerships enabled the implementation of the humanitarian cash programme, and that technology improved oversight for remotely managed programmes		
Monitoring and evaluation	• Evidence generated on the SWF's beneficiary list prior to the crisis, through the independent NSPMS, helped build the confidence of donors and the World Bank in the system		

NOTES

1. The INFORM Human Hazard index includes measures of Projected Conflict Risk as well as Current Highly Violent Conflict Intensity (INFORM 2019).

2. System maturity relates to a social protection system's degree of ownership and financing by government and its level of articulation in policy frameworks and coverage, ranging from 'non-existent' to 'State-led mature' (O'Brien et al. 2018b, 7):

- Non-existent: no state interest in developing long-term social protection;
- Internationally led: no clear progress in state policy, but emerging foreign aid interventions shaping up to a system;
- State-led interest: Some state interest to expand social protection, including elements such as the outline of what could eventually become a national programme;
- State-led commitment: Commitment to expand social protection, with some flagship initiatives for poor and vulnerable people (co-)funded by the State;
- State-led expanding: Clear state policies/laws and a growing set of social protection schemes; and
- State-led mature: Well-established system with high coverage of populations and needs.

3. Akresh (2016) highlights that we still know little about the mechanisms that link climate variability to conflict (and what would be the best policy measures to address climate change-related violence affecting children), though there is evidence suggesting economic and psychological pathways. Brück et al. (2017) further underscore the link between food price volatility and violence, arguing for more analysis investigating the nexus between food security, climate change and conflict. In this sense, Maxwell et al. (2017) point to how competition for natural resources exacerbates people's vulnerability and food insecurity, which could be a factor increasing the likelihood of conflict.

4. On-demand registration in social protection databases "relies on households going to an office (or accessing an application/website) to apply" (Barca and O'Brien 2017, 8).

5. BRACED is an initiative funded by DFID, covering 15 projects in the Sahel and neighbouring countries as well as in South and Southeast Asia, aiming to "improve the integration of disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation methods into development approaches" (BRACED 2018).

6. "**Absorptive capacity** allows people or systems to absorb and cope with climate-related shocks and stresses during and after they occur. It enables people to reduce the immediate negative impact on livelihoods and basic needs (…) **Anticipatory capacity** enables people and systems to be better prepared for the eventuality of a specific shock through proactive action by avoiding or reducing exposure or by minimising vulnerability to it (…) **Adaptive capacity** is understood to be the ability to adapt to multiple and long-term climate risks, as well as to learn and adjust after a disaster to reduce vulnerability to similar shocks in the future" (Ulrichs and Slater 2016, 9).

7. **Catastrophe bonds** are a type of risk-linked security which diffuse the insurers' risk through financial markets and whose payout can be triggered by indemnity, industry loss, modelled and parametric index triggers (Hazime 2017). Mexico has used this approach in insuring against earthquake and hurricane risks (Navarro-Martin 2017). **Parametric insurance** is an index-based insurance instrument payable when the triggering event occurs (Kuriakose et al 2013).

The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility <https://www.ccrif.org/content/about-us> is an example of parametric insurance and the first multi-country risk pool in the world.

8. See more at: <http://fews.net/>.

9. "The platform: produces timely and high coverage market data; forecasts and warns about market volatility; recommends adjustments to the cash transfer value; analyses household data; builds scenarios." Countries included: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Oman, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Yemen. See <https://snap.vam.wfp.org> for more information.

10. Other indicators include: GDP per capita; unemployment rates; average hours of electricity supply per day; number of days of emergency fuel availability; access to piped water (litres per capita per day); the production capacity of desalination plants (cubic metres per day); pollution levels of wastewater flows into the sea—mg/litre of biological oxygen demand (BOD); patients' applications for exit permits via Israel (approved and denied/delayed); percentage of drugs at zero stock level (less than a month of stock); and waiting time (in months) for ear/nose/throat surgery at Al-Shifa hospital (OCHA 2018a).

11. Available at: <http://www.inform-index.org>.

12. See Annexes 2 and 3 for a summarised overview.

13. Countries included in ESCWA's analysis (2017b) were divided into oil-rich (Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates), oil-poor (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, SOP, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia) and low-income (Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen).

14. For more information, see <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/222001475547774765/FlyerGlobalCFF.pdf>.

15. Syria's National Social Aid Fund (NSAF) and Yemen's Social Welfare Fund (SWF) have been discontinued due to conflict (UNICEF 2018). This study reviewed their pre-crisis systems.

16. Source: World Bank (2018e); UNICEF Egypt (2018a).

17. Source: World Bank (2018d); Khurshid (2017).

18. Coverage based on Machado et al. (2018), and estimation of coverage as a percentage of the population based on a population figure of 10,053,000 in 2017 (Jordan Department of Statistics 2017).

19. The NPTP started as a pilot in 2007 and was scaled up nationally in 2011; the E-NPTP was introduced in 2014 with support from the Lebanon Trust Fund.

20. Household and individual coverage based on World Bank (2018b); estimated population coverage based on the total population figure of 5.9 million people according to the Government of Lebanon and United Nations (2018).

21. Household and population coverage estimated based on the average household size of 5.1 individuals and a total population of 4.78 million people (PCBS 2018b).

22. Coverage of households based on personal communication. Individual and percentage of the population estimated based on an average household size of 5.9 according to data from the 2014 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (CBS and UNICEF 2016) and a population of 39,578,828 in 2016 (World Bank 2019).

23. Individual and population coverage estimated based on an average household size of 5 members and a population of 23,695,000 people in 2010 (UNHCR 2013).

24. "Social Registries support outreach, intake and registration, and assessment of needs and conditions to determine potential eligibility for social programs (…) Some of these functions involve the 'front office'—such as outreach, intake and registration—whereas others are primarily 'back-office' functions—such as assessment of needs and conditions to determine potential eligibility for social programs" (Leite et al. 2017, 9–10).

25. See <https://bit.ly/2N7OIaZ>; and <https://bit.ly/2tlNrEn>.

26. Youth total unemployment (percentage of total labour force, ages 15–24; modelled International Labour Organization estimate). See <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=EG>.

27. Female labour force participation rate (percentage of the female population aged 15 and older; modelled International Labour Organization estimate). See <https://bit.ly/2TNmi8N>.

28. The authors compared Egypt to the SOP and Jordan, and found more severe effects of out-of-pocket expenditures in Egypt.

29. The use of outsourced researchers was needed in the early expansion of the programme to achieve nationwide coverage (UNICEF Egypt 2018a).

30. For the latest figures, see the IOM's Iraq Mission website at <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/>.

31. Article 1 reads (free translation): "The proceedings of the law are relevant to the following families and individuals, from Iraq and other nationalities, who fall under the poverty line and who are permanent and legal residents in Iraq."

32. Article 28 reads (free translation): "First, Palestinians residing in Iraq since 1948 shall receive similar treatment as Iraqi citizens with regard to the application of this law. Second, the provisions of this law shall be applied to Iraqi women who are married to a foreigner, as well as her daughters and sons, as well as to foreign women who are married to an Iraqi citizen, as well as her daughters and sons in case they are settled in Iraq and are among the categories mentioned in Article (1) of this law."

33. "To implement Law 11, the Government of Iraq, with technical support from the World Bank and UNICEF, is implementing a pilot project to develop the human capital of Iraqi society. The pilot incentivises SPN beneficiaries with additional cash assistance if their children are enrolled in schools, if pregnant women seek antenatal and post-natal visits, and if children between the ages of 0 and 5 follow an immunisation schedule. The pilot is being rolled out in Sadr City 2, the poorest neighbourhood in Baghdad Governorate, with plans to add additional areas as the programme takes off" (Khurshid 2017, 71).

34. "Total tax-to-GDP ratios in Iraq have historically not exceeded 1 percent, a low share of the economy compared to the average ratio in the MENAP region, where it is more than 10 times larger" (IMF 2017a, 16–17).

35. In addition to the Social Protection Network, Iraq's social assistance includes universal energy subsidies (with an expenditure of 2.2 per cent of GDP) and the PDS, which provides subsided food products to 90 per cent of Iraqi households, with an expenditure of 0.6 per cent of GDP or 3.2 per cent of government spending in 2017 (Machado et al. 2018).

36. For a review of possible options for reforms, see UNICEF Iraq's 2017 report on child poverty at <https://uni.cf/2hz5Rir>.

37. Krishnan et al. (2018) model different scenarios and propose: "One of the scenarios considered here limits eligibility to the bottom 60 per cent of the distribution in urban areas, a cut-off that was set in discussions with the Government because it was considered sufficiently above the poverty line to eliminate the risk of excluding the deserving. Such a reform could be implemented even in the current context, provided it is well managed and carefully communicated given that even more well-off households will experience a loss in welfare after the elimination of the PDS" (p. 24). In 2016 the PDS established an income threshold of IRD1.5 million for public- and private-sector workers to benefit from it; however, this did not have a significant impact on its fiscal cost and distribution (IMF 2017a).

38. There were some exceptions in Mosul, regarding people who did not receive benefits during ISIS rule, but the MoLSA is paying them retroactively (UNICEF Iraq 2018).

39. See <https://bit.ly/2tl3Qsv>.

40. Jordan's Department of Statistics estimates for 2017 (UNICEF Jordan 2018).

41. Excluding liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders.

42. Excluding pensions, compensation and subsidies (UNICEF Jordan 2018).

43. Eligible economic activities include the following sectors: agriculture, forestry and fishing; manufacturing; wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles; hospitality and food service activities; and construction.

44. The government also considered the possibility of introducing a temporary cash transfer through the same mechanisms to compensate for lifting the bread subsidy at the beginning of 2018. However, it decided to invest on the expansion of the NAF's coverage instead (UNICEF Jordan 2018).

45. Coverage as a percentage of the population based on a population figure of 10,053,000 in 2017 (Jordan Department of Statistics 2017).

46. Two rounds of data collection have already taken place in 2018, and a third one is currently being carried out. Preliminary results should be available in October or November 2018 (UNICEF Jordan 2018).

47. A labelled cash transfer for education programmes, with a 'cash plus' approach that is open to both nationals and non-nationals, currently covering 55,000 children in Jordan. For more information, see its baseline report at <https://www.unicef.org/jordan/UNICEF_Hajati_Baseline_Report_Final_3.2018.pdf>.

48. Estimations based on data from 2008 and 2011.

49. Although the overstay fee has been waived since March 2017 for displaced Syrians registered before 2015, serious legal obstacles remain for displaced populations, especially those falling outside the official waiver limitations (Government of Lebanon and United Nations 2018; IMF 2017c).

50. The humanitarian system targets beneficiaries based on a PMT that is informed by an assessment of refugees' socio-economic vulnerability (Vulnerability Assessments of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon—VASyR—carried out yearly), which is then calculated for households based on variables collected upon refugee registration/verification with UNHCR. Different agencies use the PMT to reach particular groups of concern. For instance, the UNRWA is responsible for the Palestinian refugees from Syria, and the IOM for the Lebanese returnees (Government of Lebanon and United Nations 2018).

51. Currently being renamed the *Haya* card (UNICEF Lebanon 2018).

52. These people should have started receiving benefits in April 2018 (World Bank 2018).

53. “The Household Registry statement includes the NPTP household registration number, the family size, the date of birth of the family head, gender of the household head, and relevant distribution SDC” (World Bank 2014, 28).

54. “Since the infighting that followed Hamas’ victory in the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections, the occupied Palestinian territories have been politically and geographically divided, with Hamas controlling the Gaza Strip while the Palestinian Authority (PA) based in Ramallah has continued to govern Palestinians in the West Bank” (Lovatt 2017).

55. Other indicators being monitored include the following: hours of electricity supply per day (on average); number of days of emergency fuel availability; access to piped water (litres per capita per day); desalination plants’ production (cubic metres/day); pollution levels of wastewater flows into the sea—mg/litre of BOD; patients’ applications for exit permits via Israel (approved or denied/delayed); percentage of drugs at zero stock level (less than a month of stock); waiting time for ear-nose-throat surgery at Shifa hospital (in months); shooting incidents in access-restricted areas (sea/land); reliance on food insecurity coping mechanisms (reduced food quality and borrowed food/money from relatives or friends); GDP per capita; and shelter cash assistance to eligible IDPs (from the 2014 hostilities, share of beneficiaries reached and not reached).

56. Considering the average household size of 5.1 individuals.

57. Including geographical location, household size, age, assets, health status and education level.

58. However, only households referred by social workers will be included in the social registry. In case of on-demand registration requests, the social workers will mediate access by conducting quick case assessments (World Bank 2017e).

59. The cards cost USD1 each, and field visits have an estimated cost of USD6 (World Bank 2017e).

60. Housing Bank, Palestine Islamic Bank, Arab Islamic Bank, Arab Bank, Egyptian Arab Land Bank, The National Bank, Bank of Jordan, Palestine Investment Bank, Cairo Amman Bank, Bank of Palestine and Al-Quds Bank (World Bank 2017e).

61. Calculated as the difference between household consumption level—estimated by the PMT formula—and the extreme poverty line.

62. For social work related to gender-based violence, the MoSD reported that 12 women’s counsellors worked with a caseload of around 874 survivors in 2016 (World Bank 2017e).

63. In addition to the remote interview with UNICEF Sudan, this case study also benefited from information received through personal communication with the IPC-IG team during a mission taking place in Khartoum in October 2018.

64. Based on data from the 2014 National Baseline Household Budget Survey.

65. Coverage and expenditure information refers to 2016 unless otherwise stated.

66. After the recertification conducted with support from the World Bank of around 15 per cent of the beneficiaries, the government should take charge of the process for the remaining 85 per cent.

67. This estimate is based on an average household size of 5.9 individuals, according to data from the 2014 MICS (CBS and UNICEF 2016) and a population of 39,578,828 in 2016 (World Bank 2019).

68. *Shamel* transfers are disbursed via the Saving and Social Development Bank (SSDB), post offices and Zakat Committees at state level (Machado et al. 2018).

69. Coverage as a percentage of the population based on an average household size of 5 members and a population of 23,695,000 people in 2010 (UNHCR 2013).

70. Internal loans guaranteed by confirmed unrestricted donations.

71. With the exception of those in Yemen and Syria, which are currently not operational.

72. Where multiple answer choices were not available, questions were answered with 'yes', 'no', 'not sure', 'don't know' or in writing.

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