

Shock Responsive Social Protection

Background

In contexts where the IFRC network is operating, large-scale shocks are becoming increasingly frequent, protracted and complex. Changes in climate are also eroding livelihood options and straining informal social protection practices. Social protection systems can be seen as a potentially effective mechanism in reducing the impacts of these risks on vulnerable households and in contributing to building resilience beyond short-term coping strategies. A system that is designed to better anticipate and respond to shocks, in coordination with other sectors, can play an important role to better prepare for, and cope with, the impacts of stresses and shocks.

Within the humanitarian sector, the role of cash in emergencies and slow onset disasters and its potential for reducing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change is emerging as a new frontier in social protection. This has given rise to the concepts of shock responsive social protection and adaptive social protection, which has gained substantial traction during the ongoing response to COVID-19.

The pandemic and the current energy crisis are making “it increasingly clear that social protection will be the dominant model of aid for the coming recession and climate crisis,”¹ while concurrently reinforcing burgeoning efforts to enhance the linkages between social protection and humanitarian cash and voucher assistance (CVA). Within the context of short-term emergency assistance to COVID-19, humanitarian CVA programmes “increasingly played a safety-net function.”² While standard social protection systems are designed to respond to household or individual level shocks, a shock responsive social protection system is equally prepared to respond to large-scale covariate shocks (e.g., droughts, floods, conflicts and pandemics) affecting a large number of households simultaneously. Shock responsive adaptation may take the form of design tweaks to an existing programme, by piggybacking on another programme, vertical expansion (topping up support to existing caseloads), horizontal expansion (temporarily extending support to new caseloads) or by aligning humanitarian systems with social protection.

It should be noted that the stark realities show discrepancies in response between high, middle and low-income countries, “in many of the world’s most affected countries, social protection systems are weak, underfunded and have limited coverage and the worst affected people – migrants, refugees and other marginalized groups – are often excluded.”³ Therefore, for social protection to be effective in the face of a growing threat of shocks, including those linked to climate change, core social protection systems need to be strengthened, and supported to work towards shock responsiveness – including achieving business continuity in the face of shocks, and the ability to scale up support.

The IFRC network therefore is prioritizing strengthening of social protection in fragile contexts and seeking cooperation with other actors working within the nexus – with the perspective that shock responsive social protection can be increasingly used as a tool to strengthen resilience. This includes investments in early warning systems, improved data sources and targeting mechanisms to identify who is most in need and what their needs

¹ Slim, Hugo. December 2020. It’s Time to Invest for the 21st Century and Repurpose Humanitarian Bureaucracies. ODI. Available at: www.odi.org/blogs/17727-it-s-time-invest-21st-century-and-repurpose-humanitarian-bureaucracies

² CALP, 2020. The State of the World’s Cash 2020 – Cash and Voucher Assistance in Humanitarian Aid. Available at: www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/SOWC2020_Full-report.pdf

³ CALP, 2020. The State of the World’s Cash 2020 – Cash and Voucher Assistance in Humanitarian Aid. Available at: www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/SOWC2020_Full-report.pdf

are when different shocks hit. It also allows for greater coordination with national, humanitarian and development actors.

IFRC network's role

In the context of growing demand to support national social protection systems, the IFRC network will grow its expertise in short- and long-term safety nets and the management of cash-based transfers. IFRC will increasingly assist governments in the development and implementation of national social protection systems, as appropriate, and provide the impetus for investment in the development of nascent safety nets or social assistance structures. Equally, the IFRC network will continue to focus on and prioritize areas identified by the Grand Bargain Cash Workstream Subgroup on Linking Social Protection and CVA:

- Supporting the most vulnerable and marginalized households to meet basic needs at times of crisis.
- Addressing long-term drivers of poverty and vulnerability to find better ways of responding to recurrent crisis.
- Building on crisis response to create long-term national solutions.⁴

With support through investment from the Global Climate Resilience Platform, the IFRC network will focus on the following areas where it has a distinct comparative advantage:

- Filling gaps in coverage and capacity – with particular emphasis on marginalized groups that are often outside of the remit of national social protection systems - thus aiming for improved databases and more equitable access. IFRC networks will help with:
 - a) pre-registration and identification of vulnerable households prone to climate risks
 - b) verification of beneficiaries and their data
 - c) conducting needs assessment of identified groups.
- Adapting and creating new programmes to complement national efforts or channel assistance with fewer delays. National Societies in many countries are working to make social protection systems shock responsive, by helping governments to use social protection databases and payment channels for anticipatory cash transfers as an early action.
- Helping to improve early warning systems, connecting with community preparedness initiatives, and increasing the use of forecast information in social protection systems. The IFRC network will also establish linkages with long-term programmes to define graduation models and build the bridge between emergency and resilience programmes.
- Conducting research to establish best practices within the shock responsive social protection community of practice, including the refinement of trigger models for scale up and developing an evidence base for addressing climate risks via social protection systems.

Top Ups for Veterans on Disability

The Ukrainian Red Cross and Ukrainian Ministry of Veterans Affairs signed a Memorandum on the provision of cash payments to veterans with disability.

The Memorandum provides for the provision of financial assistance (100 Swiss francs per month) for four months to veterans — persons with disabilities due to the war.

To make these payments, the IFRC intends to mobilize funds in the amount of up to CHF 40 million.

In order to receive financial assistance, veterans will be able to submit online applications through the "mobile application of the web portal of electronic services" (Portal Diia) using the ePidtrymka service.

Payments of funds will be made through the RedRose data management platform.

The COVID-19 pandemic ushered in a series of new programmes specifically designed to address pandemic-generated needs ranging from direct social assistance to labor force interventions. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies directly implemented pandemic social protection programmes in some cases, such as the British Red Cross [Hardship Fund](#) implemented domestically for people with no recourse to public funds, or the Netherlands Red Cross [COVID-19 CVA programme](#) in Aruba and St Maarten.

⁴ Ibid.

- The IFRC network is well placed to promote coordination between different in-country agencies which otherwise do not interact, as is often the case between emergency response agencies and social welfare or long-term resilience building actors. This may be done through forming specific working groups for social protection, or subgroups in existing clusters.

While the IFRC network has long-established experience with regard to operational aspects of social protection, such as cash transfer programming and grievance and redress mechanisms, the scope of safety net interventions is largely context specific and contingent on the levels of sophistication of existing systems. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies presence in countries and their ability to work across the continuum are well placed to create long-term impact. The following are areas where the IFRC network can contribute to strengthening shock responsive social protection systems:

- Vulnerability analysis and mapping
 - Supporting identification of priority areas and target groups for support
 - Strengthening national capacities to use quantitative and qualitative information
 - Supporting the design of triggers for pre and post disaster scale-up and contingency plans for specific hazards to maintain continuity of SP services during times of shocks and stresses.
- Targeting systems
 - Reviewing existing eligibility criteria and supporting development of context-specific targeting criteria
 - Analysis and review of pre-identified groups eligible for support
 - Supporting registration of new caseloads for temporary expansion of an existing or new programme
- Data and information management
 - Supporting developing of management information systems
 - Establishing data-sharing agreements with government institutions and other implementing stakeholders
 - Supporting and enhancing community engagement and accountability mechanisms
- Delivery mechanisms
 - Supporting the developing of strategies for different cash/in-kind delivery options
- Transfer Value
 - Analysing data (e.g., needs, markets, impacts) to estimate transfer value options and the most appropriate types of assistance (e.g., cash/voucher, in-kind, mixed approaches)
 - Supporting minimum expenditure basket calculation based on available data and assessments on poverty and population needs.

COVID-19: Top-Up Cash Assistance to Help Mitigate Socio-Economic Impact

COVID-19 has deepened pre-existing vulnerabilities of refugees in Türkiye across all sectors including education, health, basic needs/livelihoods and protection.

In order to address the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, the IFRC and the Turkish Red Crescent through Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) reallocated its resources to provide additional cash assistance to 1.7 million vulnerable refugees in Türkiye. Households received the first two instalments which were given over two months (June-July 2020), totaling 1,000 TRY (approximately EUR 133) in addition to regular monthly assistance.

This additional top-up provided refugee households with an additional source amid COVID-19.

IFRC network's value proposition

The IFRC network's value proposition in this space includes the following:

Be quicker
by being flexible, agile
and adaptive, present
and ready to respond.



- National Societies occupy a unique role as partner of choice for governments, humanitarian and development organizations and donors. As auxiliaries to their governments, National Societies are well-positioned to work with national and local authorities on efforts to articulate

and implement linkages between humanitarian safety nets and national social protection systems.

- National Societies will continue to fill gaps in coverage and capacity – with particular emphasis on marginalized groups that are often outside of the remit of national social protection systems thus enhancing equitable access.

Reach those in need

by using community engagement, reaching remote areas and advocating on behalf of vulnerable people.



Reduce duplication

by using community engagement, reaching remote areas and advocating on behalf of vulnerable people.



Be more cost effective

by using their existing networks of volunteers, existing national capacity and experience of creating agile mechanisms.



Be more predictable

by helping improve early warning systems, connecting with community preparedness initiatives and increasing the use of early action protocols.



Be more sustainable

by linking with longer-term programmes, drawing on other National Society experiences and drawing on existing relationships with community groups and other key stakeholders including local and national government structures



- The cross-sectoral scope of the National Societies' work integrates all aspects and systems of social protection, enabling delivery of multiple benefits and supporting strengthening of the humanitarian-development nexus.

- A trusted volunteer network remains a hallmark of National Societies and their unhindered access to communities ensures that the needs of the most vulnerable are identified and addressed whilst ensuring that their voices are represented.

- National Society programmes are more flexible and adaptive in countries affected by crisis and conflict, they can adapt or create new programmes to complement national efforts or channel assistance with fewer delays.

- National Societies will contribute with their experience using participatory approaches, community engagement and accountability, to improve the targeting and registration systems and define appropriate objectives for a social protection programme that responds to the needs.

- National Societies will contribute by helping to improve early warning systems, connecting with community preparedness initiatives, and increasing the use of early action protocols.

- National Societies long term presence and their extensive network of branches and volunteers will support programme implementation, the delivery of assistance, provide ongoing monitoring and identify new complementary activities that can promote graduation from the safety net support being provided.

- National Societies can establish linkages with their long-term programmes to define graduation models and build the bridge between emergency and resilience programmes.

- The IFRC's reference centre, the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre (RCCC), has extensive experience developing shock responsive social protection systems and are a preferred partner for institutions around the world to design and implement scalability mechanisms, building upon experience in instituting Anticipatory Action. RCCC will continue to provide support and advice to the IFRC to provide this key service and support the expansion of social protection engagement among National Societies.