



Collaborative  
Cash Delivery  
Network

# INCLUSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE: IS THERE A ROLE FOR CCD?

Social protection is increasingly entering the humanitarian conversation as a potentially faster, more efficient way to deliver assistance in certain contexts.<sup>1</sup> Whilst this has not been proven, donors are shifting in this direction and we must look at how the two intersect and understand what this means for national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other actors working along the cash and voucher value chain in national contexts globally. Collaborative Cash Delivery (CCD) Network is an appropriate platform to explore this because of its vision that greater collaboration will enable the humanitarian sector to deliver more timely and effective assistance to people affected by crises.

Agencies need to become better at applying both social protection and humanitarian response good practices. There is a clear role for humanitarian actors to ensure that the most marginalised are heard and included, to understand and utilise formal and informal systems, guarantee that humanitarian interventions do not disrupt these systems further, and embed consideration for social protection linkages throughout the project cycle.

CCD believes that this can be done most successfully by agencies and grassroots actors with long-term footprints in the field working together to pool resources and capacities and actively looking for opportunities to collaborate on cash programming. This will require social protection to be embedded into CCD activities and staff training, how it facilitates collaborations at the field level, and how it works with others to raise awareness in the humanitarian community. Collaboration will result in a better product and process and will also give CCD members an aligned approach, which in turn can create a groundswell to compel the rest of the humanitarian community to follow suit.

Engaging in social protection systems may reduce the footprint of agencies in the future. This is in line with some debates around localisation, power, and resource distribution in humanitarian aid. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but CCD wants to gather evidence that can inform cash actors about the impact social protection interventions could have. At the same time, CCD recognises it may not always be appropriate for humanitarian responses to engage in social protection and needs to reinforce those times. Where there is an increased use in social protection interventions, it should go hand in hand with enhanced monitoring and accountability to ensure that they are transparently governed.

## BACKGROUND

Social protection is entering the dialogue in the humanitarian sector, as one of the answers to an overburdened humanitarian system for several reasons. If done well, the hypothesis is:

1. It **could provide faster, more sustainable support to chronically poor and vulnerable households** over time, compared with the uncertainty of short-term humanitarian assistance.
2. It **could be a faster, more efficient way of delivering assistance**, as systems would be established and there would be no need to duplicate delivery systems as typically happens in humanitarian responses.
3. It **should help realise commitments to localisation**, as social protection responses should be more driven and managed by national and local governments.
4. It **should help realise the humanitarian-development-peace nexus** as it can provide continuity between humanitarian and development work and, in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, may help with upholding the demand for the state while ensuring the redistribution of resources meets basic needs and restores some equality.

In the context of the Grand Bargain and donor commitments around humanitarian cash and localisation, it is necessary for cash actors to articulate how they will engage in social protection. By applying learning and good practice from both “sides”, this will improve the performance and effectiveness of humanitarian responses and contribute to improved long-term effectiveness of local social protection systems. This will of course look different across countries and contexts, and success will rest in the details of the design and implementation. But, if this shift is happening, what does this mean for the future of NGOs, and what role should CCD play in this?

### Collaborative Cash Delivery Network

CCD Network is for all actors delivering last mile cash programming in the humanitarian sphere. The global network is currently comprised of its 15 founding members who envisioned an inclusive and efficient way to serve people affected by crises by delivering aid collaboratively. By design, CCD allows multiple actors (beyond NGOs) to assemble themselves in ways that acknowledge that the unique strengths and strategic priorities of each organisation are mutually beneficial for collaboration in humanitarian actions. The network’s aim is to develop cash responses tailored to each response’s needs in a way that avoids duplication; capitalises on the strengths of each actor, local knowledge, and global expertise; and ensures a community-focused approach.

<sup>1</sup> Note that this assumes that social protection mechanisms are established, well aligned, and ways to easily bring affected populations into the system to deliver assistance. This is certainly not the case in all contexts.

# WHAT IS SOCIAL PROTECTION?

There are many definitions of social protection corresponding to different interpretations by various agencies. CCD does not intend to reach a common description to define social protection across all agencies and actors, but the network broadly recognises that “social protection describes all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised; with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social vulnerability of poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups”.<sup>2</sup> Under this well-accepted definition, CCD includes the following:

1. **social assistance**: in kind or cash non-contributory interventions – these are also called “welfare” in the United Kingdom (UK), or “social security” in the United States (US) (e.g. Iraq’s General Food, Ethiopia’s Productive Safety Net Programme, the Food Stamps programme in the US, school feeding programmes, and non-contributory pensions)
2. **social insurance**: contributory interventions, such as health insurance – this is known as “social security” in the UK (e.g. weather-based livestock insurance, public health insurance schemes, contributory pensions from the workplace)
3. **labour market interventions** (e.g. employment creation programmes, labour market pay or workplace standards)
4. **access to social care services** (e.g. refuge centres or access to health care, justice, and legal support).

If persons could access all areas, when required, they would “have” social protection.

To further clarify what social protection is or is not, there are four important things to note: (i) terminology, (ii) distinguishing between the design and impact of an intervention, (iii) it can include cash or in kind transfers, as well as services and policies, and (iv) it is not just provided by the state, there are “informal” community-based social protection systems that are very important for households.

**On terminology:** The same term can confusingly refer to different interventions. In the UK, social security refers to contributory schemes; whereas in the US, it includes social assistance. The term social assistance is rejected by some as inappropriate for transfers that people are entitled to as a right. Others use the term “safety net” for non-contributory, poverty-targeted interventions; whereas others reject the term, arguing that it has been co-opted by the technocratic approach of the World Bank to poverty-targeted interventions.

**On design versus impact:** CCD recognises that there is no easy distinction between social protection and humanitarian response. A delayed, poorly targeted welfare payment may in fact, offer less “social protection” than a humanitarian-funded response’s regular food distributions during the lean season. The measure of social protection provided must not necessarily be in its design and objective but in the reality of the impact and experience of its recipients.

**On types of transfers:** Social protection transfers might be in cash (such as a pension), in kind (such as school feeding programmes or food stamps), via the provision of social services (as part of an overall social protection system), or even indirect transfers (such as subsidies intended to reach the poor).

**On informal social protection:**<sup>3</sup> Whilst the only way to ensure social protection for all is to institutionalise it in state policy, in reality, most people cannot access social protection. They may lack the means (documentation, funds, transport, capability) to apply for assistance, are unaware of their rights to social protection, or it does not exist in their context (the services are unavailable or underfunded). Most households rely on informal systems of reciprocity and support to sustain their consumption and economic welfare. Examples of this can be direct assistance, such as remittances or *zakat*; informal insurance schemes like burial societies (group savings to cover funeral expenses); and other casual rotating savings and loans groups.



Veronica and her daughter Zipporah hold the two goats they bought with money from a cash transfer programme operated by CCD member, Save the Children, that targets poor and vulnerable households in Turkana, Kenya.

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<sup>2</sup> Devereux, S. and Sabates-Wheeler, R. (2004). *Transformative social protection*. Institute of Development Studies. IDS Working Paper 232. Available from: [https://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Transformative\\_Social\\_Protection.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Transformative_Social_Protection.pdf). pp9.

<sup>3</sup> There are generally different opinions as to whether informal assistance can really be classified as social protection or not, given it is not predictable, accountable, nor enshrined in rights. Formal social protection is what is required to protect vulnerable households, but CCD recognises that informal assistance is an important safety net for many households.

# WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CASH ACTORS IN SOCIAL PROTECTION?

One of the challenges facing the humanitarian cash community regarding the potential relationship between social protection and humanitarian assistance is where the entry points are and how we influence the international and national processes. The CCD is exploring the advantages of collaborating to achieve this. These collaborative roles would apply differently according to the mandates of each agency.

1. **Understand formal and informal social protection** so we can recognise power dynamics and identify distribution processes in communities so our humanitarian programming can partner with and support, rather than undermine, positive reciprocity systems.
2. Recognising that most communities we work with experience chronic poverty which cannot be addressed by humanitarian response and require longer term support, we should **advocate for social protection systems** alongside our programming so households can access, reduce their vulnerability to shocks, and chronically vulnerable households can enter on exit from humanitarian assistance.
3. **Ensure that the voices of the excluded are heard and that the most vulnerable and marginalised are included** in social protection systems in general and when social protection systems engage with humanitarian responses. This can be both through advocacy for the rights of the most marginalised and by ensuring that targeting systems include the most vulnerable. Both need to explicitly pay attention to gender and include a focus on persons with disabilities.
4. **Pilot linkages between humanitarian programming and social protection** (e.g. where we respond annually with humanitarian aid, explore how the aid could be attached to or lay the foundation for social protection interventions), testing tools and technology that might be useful and adopted by government systems.
5. **Ensure that the people we work with have an opportunity to participate, their needs are heard, and programmes are accountable to them**, when linking social protection to humanitarian responses. This can be realised through effective appeals and complaints mechanisms and advocacy with humanitarian responders and state/non-state social protection service providers. Cash actors can help strengthen and build awareness and work with partners (e.g. governments and service providers) to build quality programmes and ensure that customer feedback is acted upon.
6. **Compile and apply the learnings from sectoral and organisational work** to improve our responses and question where there are opportunities to link to social protection. From preparedness to assessment to design, implementation, and evaluation, as good humanitarian programming, we must institutionalise whether there are existing informal or formal systems that we should either be cognisant of or could partner with in delivery to improve impact and provide faster, more efficient support.
7. **Be upfront about both the limitations and necessity of humanitarian programming and advocate for the essential long-term support and funding mechanisms and strategies to establish them.** There will always be cohorts that either temporarily or permanently require support, and we must acknowledge that the humanitarian system cannot sustainably meet their needs indefinitely. At the same time, we must recognise that life-saving humanitarian responses will always be needed for some large-scale shocks and upholding humanitarian principles may not be compatible with working through social protection mechanisms.
8. **Contribute to the "nexus".** By utilising social protection in humanitarian work, we are contributing to bridging the humanitarian-development divide. This requires whether it is feasible to leave a legacy of quality services by strengthening referral mechanisms and ensuring the quality and social accountability of social protection interventions when used in humanitarian settings and beyond.



Following the 2018 earthquake and tsunami in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, global CCD member, World Vision, in partnership with UNICEF, worked to address the needs of the affected communities. They provided multipurpose cash assistance, to support families in the process of rebuilding their lives, while helping meet their daily needs. This cash programming directly referred families to a government-led, child-sensitive social protection mechanism – "Family Hope". In collaboration with other agencies, the local government also helped establish the provincial cash working group.

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# WHAT IS CCD'S ADDED VALUE WITH ENGAGING IN SOCIAL PROTECTION IN ITS HUMANITARIAN RESPONSES?

1. Part of this is being achieved as part of CCD's mandate: **Establishing interoperable systems will enable cash actors, as a collective, to link more easily to social protection systems** in responses.
2. But **CCD's common approach to cash programming will give agencies and grassroots actors a platform to establish "good practices" in social protection and be a trailblazer** for other organisations and response communities to follow. By working together, CCD members can drive the agenda on what makes sense for the humanitarian community.
3. **CCD members can share resources, knowledge, and experiences to develop a joint approach**, which will be much more effective, as they are tried, tested, and already have buy-in based on collective evidence, will ensure more successful advocacy as a network, and may be used as a common support system in the face of limited resources as individual agencies.
4. CCD may be able to find opportunities to **pilot and test its approaches together within its membership** to build experience and evidence in contexts where member agencies operate so the network can advocate to donors and others about what is feasible and appropriate.
5. Based on evidence and best practices, **CCD can draw on members' advocacy teams** to see that the network's approach and critical considerations become standardised across the humanitarian sector.
6. CCD can build a **bridge across the divide between social protection and humanitarian action**, contributing to the nexus. This can help ensure uniformity between social support provided to different groups, mitigating potential tensions or conflict that can be created from unequal support provided between local and international support.
7. The network **can make the case for which type of intervention is best within certain contexts**, whether it be using existing social protection mechanisms or ensuring humanitarian response.
8. Through its social protection work, **CCD can contribute to the humanitarian-development nexus** in several ways: (i) engaging civil society to know their right to social protection and how to access available services, (ii) ensuring inclusive, quality accountability systems, (iii) strengthening referral services, and (iv) ensuring comprehensive processes and outcomes. Working on these with partners, governments, and service providers, CCD can contribute to building long-term, quality basic services.
9. **CCD needs to face up to what promoting social protection – where appropriate – instead of traditional humanitarian responses – might mean for its members** and reinforce the network's ongoing role in strengthening governance, innovating, applying new technologies, and persisting with humanitarian responses. Articulating this role and understanding the challenges and opportunities can best be achieved – and will be most valuable for the sector – through collaboration.

CCD's collective experiences and mandates allow the network to have a broader understanding of the role that agencies and grassroots actors need to play in promoting local social protection systems and services; thus, collaboration within CCD's network allows members to have a more well-rounded outlook on what support social protection should entail.

## NEXT STEPS?

1. CCD will identify countries and opportunities where cash actors in country can start working on both programming and advocacy together.
2. CCD will agree on an approach on how to consider inclusive social protection in the humanitarian project cycle, which will be built into CCD's ways of working, and can be cascaded throughout CCD's work and the in-country networks' programmes to the international community so that it becomes an established response approach.
3. CCD will build social protection into its ways of working (e.g. defining how to map ecosystems to include government agencies, outlining how to facilitate a collective assessment of opportunities to work within, support, and complement social protection interventions, and incorporating social protection interventions and awareness into training for CCD's Collaboration Managers).
4. CCD will link key aspects of its existing programming (particularly interoperability) to aspects which are fundamental to an effective social protection system, such as targeting and appeals/monitoring processes.
5. CCD will consider – and be upfront about – the future of international, national, and local cash actors and explore the financial and programmatic impact that social protection might have on agencies.



In July 2018, one of CCD's partner organisations, World Vision, commissioned a Cash and Protection Study to measure the impact of their Iraq humanitarian cash for food transfer programme on protection outcomes, particularly for women and children.

Based on this research, World Vision recommended a long-term strategy for cash as a social protection tool in Iraq. Donors are working less in northern Iraq than previously and there is pressure on government to restore reliable welfare services. All partners have accountability to current cash recipients to resolve social welfare responsibilities transparently

This photo reflects World Vision's work in the Kurdistan region of Iraq to support children and their families with longer term protection programmes to ensure they can start rebuilding their lives.

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