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Study on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean

Theoretical framework and literature review

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List of abbreviations

ADESS	<i>Administrador de Subsidios Sociales</i>
ATM	Automated teller machine
BDH	<i>Bono de Desarrollo Humano</i>
CCT	Conditional cash transfer
DRM	Disaster risk management
ECLAC	UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FIBE	<i>Ficha Básica de Emergencia</i>
GFC	Global financial crisis
HDVI	Haitian Deprivation and Vulnerability Index
IVACC	<i>Índice de Vulnerabilidad ante Choques Climáticos</i>
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MIES	<i>Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social</i>
MIS	Management Information System
MCDS	Ministry Coordinator of Social Development
MIS	Management information system
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
PAAZAP	<i>Programa de Apoyo Alimentario en Zonas de Atención Prioritaria</i>
PAL	<i>Programa de Asistencia Alimentaria</i>
PATH	Programme of Advancement through Health and Education
PATI	<i>Programa de Apoyo Temporal al Ingreso</i>
PESP	<i>Programa de Emergencia Social Productivo</i>
PET	<i>Programa de Empleo Temporal</i>
PINE	<i>Programa Integral de Nutrición Escolar</i>
PMT	Proxy means test
PWP	Public works programme
RIPS	Registry of Social Programmes

SEDESOL	Ministry of Social Development
SEGOB	Ministry of the Interior
SENPLADES	National Secretary for Planning
SIUBEN	<i>Sistema Único de Beneficiarios</i>
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WFP	World Food Programme

1 Introduction

There is an increasing global recognition within development and humanitarian spheres on the potential linkages between social protection, disaster risk management (DRM), climate change adaptation and humanitarian action in responding to and mitigating shocks. This recognition has been clearly expressed, for example, in the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit by SPIAC's¹ commitment to 'support the further expansion and strengthening of social protection systems to continue to address chronic vulnerabilities and to scale up the utilization of social protection as a means of responding to shocks and protracted crises.' In the same line, UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development clearly points towards the creation of social protection systems that allow all people to enjoy a basic standards of living.

In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) natural disasters have occurred increasingly frequently since the 1960s: 19 disasters per year in the 1960s and 68 per year in the first decade of the twenty-first century (UN Economic Commission for LAC (ECLAC), 2015). For this reason, the adoption of mitigation measures to reduce the population's exposure to natural disasters and to restore infrastructure, together with economic and social measures, is becoming increasingly essential.

Meanwhile, social protection systems in LAC have evolved and expanded substantially in the last few decades, with, for example, the percentage of GDP allocated to public social investment growing from 15% in 2000 to 19.1% in 2012 (ECLAC, 2015). Cash transfers have become part of virtually every social protection system in the developing world (World Bank, 2015b), and LAC was a pioneer in developing sophisticated programmes with multiple objectives, such as conditional cash transfers (CCTs), which have been replicated worldwide. The proportion of the population benefitting from CCTs in LAC, for example, increased from 5.7% to 21.1% between 2000 and 2012 (ECLAC, 2015). These programmes have shown to have positive effects on household consumption, access to health and education services, amongst other dimensions (UK Department for International Development (DFID), 2011). There is also evidence that these programmes have helped poor people to cope with shocks (Solórzano 2016; Coirolo *et al.* 2013; Heltberg, Siegel and Jørgensen 2009). Furthermore, some of the most innovative aspects of social protection systems have been promoted by Latin American countries, such as the so-called 'single registries', which are integrated databases used for targeting and monitoring (see Box 3), and the use of proxy means tests (PMTs) and multidimensional poverty indexes for beneficiary identification, among others.

In this light, fairly advanced social protection systems and large-scale safety nets seem to provide a unique opportunity to support shock response in LAC. However, social protection systems can involve conflicting objectives, target populations and operational processes when compared with humanitarian interventions, which can impede their ability to play a role in accommodating additional demand for assistance at the time of an emergency.

This literature review forms part of a wider ***Study on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean*** commissioned by the World Food Programme (WFP) and undertaken by Oxford Policy Management (OPM). The review will be complemented by three case studies: Ecuador, Guatemala and Haiti.

¹ The Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC) is an inter-agency coordination mechanism to enhance global coordination and advocacy on social protection issues and to coordinate international cooperation in country demand-driven actions. SPIAC's board is chaired by the World Bank and ILO and includes representatives of ADB, IFAD, IMF, ISSA, FAO, OECD, UN-DESA, UNDP, UNESCO, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO, WFP, and others.

The objective of this study is **to generate evidence and inform practice for improved emergency preparedness and response in LAC** linked to more flexible national social protection systems. The main research question for the study is: **‘What factors enable social protection systems to be more responsive to shocks’?**

Following this short introduction, the next section presents the methodology employed. Section 3 presents the theoretical framework considered for the study. Section 4 provides an analysis of LAC country experiences of shock-responsive social protection. In Section 5 a summary and conclusions are presented.

2 Methodology

This literature review focuses on identifying experiences in which social protection has been used in response to natural, economic or political shocks. The review will not cover other responses, like DRM or humanitarian assistance, if they do not have social protection components.

The methodology employed consists of a review of recent publications on social protection in LAC, with a particular focus on experiences in the 11 countries in which WFP has a regular presence and has country offices: Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Peru. Moreover, outstanding experiences elsewhere in the region will also be covered, like, for example, those in Brazil, Mexico, Chile, and Argentina.

The study is guided by our theoretical framework, which is described in Section 3.1. The table below presents the overarching research questions that guided the literature review.

Table 1: Overarching research questions

Code	Question
1.1	What relevant interventions are in place or have been implemented in relation to shock-responsive social protection? Describe their features in terms of programme design (target beneficiaries, value, duration etc.).
1.2	What design and implementation features of the different components of these interventions have elements of flexibility and adaptability that facilitate timely and adequate shock response?
1.3	What is the evidence of the effectiveness—in terms of timeliness and adequacy (e.g. coverage, transfer levels)—of social protection support in the event of each of the major shocks identified? Are some types of shock more easily alleviated by social protection systems than others? Have the interventions reached the most vulnerable populations? Have some elements of the design or implementation of interventions acted as an obstacle to effective response? Which ones, and in what way?
1.4	What evidence is there of whether specific interventions have responded to changes in need in the event of a shock? Were the changes timely and effective? If there was no change, why was this (e.g. design / implementation features / stakeholder influence)?
1.5	Are there examples of ways in which humanitarian interventions have piggybacked on social protection system components or existing policies? Are there examples of efforts to strengthen the coordination between humanitarian and social protection shock response?
1.6	Who were the institutions/actors engaged in emergency responses through social protection? How did these institutions/actors coordinate with others (e.g. humanitarian aid)?
1.7	What are the implications of these observations for the future design and implementation of shock-responsive interventions?

This literature review will be complemented by interviews with various key informants across the region and three case studies: Ecuador, Guatemala and Haiti. Three reports, which set out the findings of each of the three case studies and a consolidated report identifying the factors that would enable social protection systems in LAC to be more responsive to shocks will be produced as part of this research.

3 Conceptualising shock-responsive social protection

Ongoing debates about the role of social protection in humanitarian crises tend to use the term ‘**shock**’ to describe exogenous hazards affecting people’s wellbeing and ‘**responsive**’ to describe the reaction to such shock. In this research we follow ongoing trends in the use of language and we use terms like ‘shock’ and ‘responsive’ in order to avoid creating confusion. However, below we present some reflections on what we believe are the real issues behind these concepts.

A. Shocks, emergencies, chronic crises and humanitarian needs

Shocks can be **covariate** – those that affect large numbers of people and/or communities at once – or idiosyncratic (such as the death of a breadwinner) that may affect individual households or household members. In this research we are exclusively interested in the former type.

The specific challenge presented by covariate shocks is the implication that many individuals will be in need of social protection benefits simultaneously (and/or individuals who already receive support may need additional resources to meet their basic needs), while at the same time the consequences of the shock may limit the capacity of the system to deliver.

Covariate shocks may be natural, economic or political. They include, for instance, drought, floods, typhoons and earthquakes; locust invasions; high food prices internationally and economic downturns; political crises and armed conflicts; influxes of refugees; or outbreaks of disease. Features of shocks that will be more critical for framing our analysis include (OPM, 2015):

- **onset** (rapid vs. slow). Drought is the main slow-onset shock. These types of shock bring with them critical questions about when a gradually worsening situation can be classified as an emergency, and at what point humanitarian agencies are able to step in and authorise for funding to be disbursed. A social protection system designed to respond to slow-onset crises will face the same question as to when its emergency response mechanism should be triggered;
- **predictability.** Slow-onset shocks ought always to be predictable to some degree, though it is not always possible to predict whether or not the slowly developing situation (e.g. rain failing to arrive) will turn into a crisis. Rapid-onset shocks may appear to be less predictable, but there is still usually some indication when such shocks might be expected. From this perspective one might still expect to see activities that strengthen early warning systems and improve preparedness for a disaster;
- **duration** (short-, medium-term or protracted). Protracted crises are often associated with conflict, which will have an effect on the ability of systems to respond;
- their **political** profile, e.g. whether the shocks trigger a humanitarian response and/or access international funding (e.g. related to climate change); and
- their **geographical** distribution, including, e.g., urban vs. rural areas.

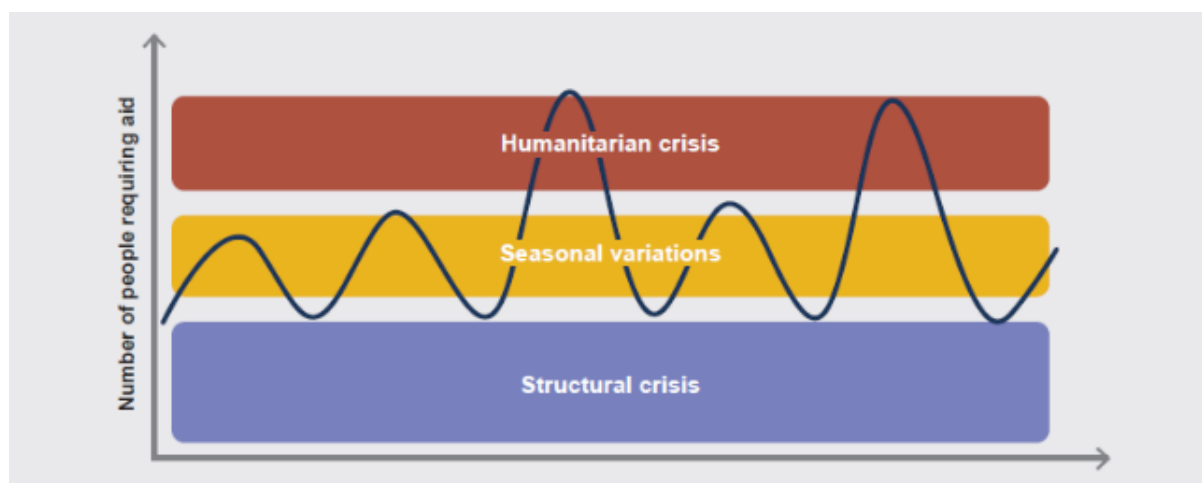
However, **not every shock leads to a crisis.** We are interested primarily in shocks that represent a critical threat to the health, food security and nutrition, safety and wellbeing of people. Following OPM (2015) and Cherrier (2014) we have divided social protection needs into three groups: **chronic, structural crisis needs; seasonal variations; and exceptional needs that give rise to a humanitarian crisis (see figure 1).**

- **'Structural crisis needs'** refers to the type of chronic poverty commonly addressed by long-term social protection programmes.

- **'Seasonal variations'** refers to cyclical crises whereby every year or so poor weather or other conditions push an additional number of households into requiring short-term assistance.
- **'Humanitarian crisis'** at the top of the diagram refers to those occasional exceptional years or events that cause communities that usually manage without any assistance to find themselves in need of support. In this sense, humanitarian crises are exceptional events that put at risk the wellbeing of communities.

Finally, in order to simplify the use of language and to rely on terms that are frequently used in Latin America, we will use the word **'emergencies'** instead of **'humanitarian crisis'** to refer to exceptional shocks that represent a critical threat to the health, food security and nutrition, safety and wellbeing of people. 'Emergencies' tend to be related to government-led interventions, while 'humanitarian crisis' are associated with external-aid and given that responses in the region are largely government-led and funded, the former concept seems more appropriate.

Figure 1: Fluctuations in the need for social protection



Source: Cherrier, C. (2014).

B. Readiness, responsiveness, preparedness, sensitivity

The words **'readiness'**, **'responsiveness'**, **'preparedness'**, and **'sensitivity'**, among others, have been used to conceptualise the role of social protection during emergencies.

- **'Responsiveness'** seems to imply an *ex-post* reaction to a shock.
- **'Preparedness'** and **'readiness'** are related to an *ex-ante* planning process to cope with extraordinary events.
- **'Sensitivity'** suggests the ability to react.

Regardless of the terminology, what is really important is to define what the nature of the role of social protection should be. It is clear that in order to be responsive, social protection also needs to invest in system preparedness prior to the emergency. Consequently, in our view, shock 'responsiveness' includes both system preparedness and the response itself.

C. Social protection

Despite the various different definitions, **social protection systems are intrinsically related to shock response**, at least from a conceptual view point. For example, according to WFP, ‘social protection consists of policies and programmes designed to protect people from shocks and stresses throughout their lives, and play a critical role in reducing poverty and inequality while supporting inclusive growth’ (WFP, 2015).

According to ECLAC (2015), the fundamental pillars of social protection provision are: basic welfare guarantees; insurance against risks arising from the context or the life-cycle; and moderation or repair of social harm that occurs when social problems or risks materialise. ECLAC emphasises the role of social protection in contributing to addressing structural problems such as poverty and inequality.

The massive expansion of cash transfer programmes in LAC in the recent decades have shifted, to some extent, the focus of social protection from the traditional contributory schemes to non-contributory ones, more associated with poverty reduction. This shift responded to persistent high levels of poverty and inequality and the limited coverage of contributory schemes due to high informality. Global economic shocks, like the Tequila Crisis in 1994 and the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) in 2008, propagated the use of cash transfers to support those in need, nowadays cornerstones of Latin American social protection systems.

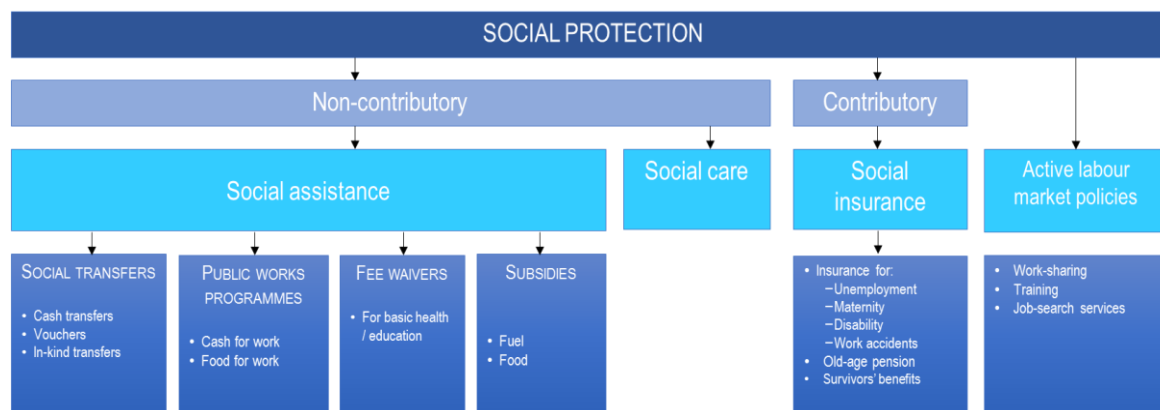
However, the crucial role of social protection in the reduction of chronic poverty should not lead to overlooking how intrinsically it is related to shock response. Social protection has conceptually and empirically being linked to shock response in the region, both in relation to covariate shocks, like the aforementioned Tequila Crisis and GFC, and to idiosyncratic shocks like unemployment, work accidents and others. To put it simply, **social protection is concerned with supporting those in need**, regardless of if this need is an established socio-economic condition (e.g. chronic poverty), part of the life cycle (e.g. elderly) or caused by a shock.

Social protection can play a role before, during and after the emergency. In this light, in order to be able to minimise the adverse effect of emergencies on people’s wellbeing, and to help affected populations cope with such effects it requires:

- Prior planning, development and preparation, in order to anticipate shocks and to be ready for a timely response.
- Provide support during the crisis – this is what it means to be responsive.
- Finally, it also needs to provide assistance in the aftermath since livelihoods, labour markets and infrastructure, among others, may be severely affected, with long-lasting effects.

In this vein, social protection systems include a number of different schemes, some of them more concerned with shock response (like, for example, social insurance), and others that aim to provide basic welfare guarantees (like, for example, child grants), or to reduce poverty and inequality (like poverty-targeted social transfers).

Social protection systems typically include schemes in the following areas: **social assistance, social care, social insurance and active labour market policies**. The figure below shows the wide range of kinds of social protection scheme.

Figure 2: Social protection schemes

Source: OPM (2015)

3.1 A framework for assessing social protection shock-responsiveness

In this section we present a framework that helps us to understand the preparedness and responsiveness of a social protection system.

3.1.1 System preparedness

As mentioned above, **planning and preparedness** are vital for a successful response. In principle, more mature social protection systems should be better placed to respond to shocks. However, systems can be quite mature in the sense that they are state-led and financed, well-established and have high coverage, but still not sufficiently prepared for emergencies.

In other words, **more mature systems are not necessarily more responsive**. McCord (2013a) indicates that social protection provision has three main first-order objectives: to meet immediate needs, to promote systems development, and to develop future shock-responsiveness. However, 'while some activity may be found at the intersection of these three different first-order social protection objectives, many of the activities under these three objectives are likely to require different approaches and instruments and may even entail support to different population.'

In this study we assess the level of preparedness of the social protection system based on three programme design and implementation aspects that are essential for a timely and effective response: **targeting system, delivery system and coordination**. Below we describe each of these in turn. Although these are not the only three processes involved in effective preparedness, international experience and literature highlight how crucial they are (Bastagli, 2004; OPM, 2016).

Figure 3: Typology of system preparedness for shock-responsive social protection

Source: Own.

Targeting system

Social protection programmes tend to rely on a variety of targeting mechanisms, including demographic, geographic and poverty targeting. Many of these mechanisms are designed to detect well-established conditions – like, for example, chronic poverty or belonging to a certain age group – and hence they are not conceived as tools to detect sudden changes to wellbeing and livelihoods. In this vein, the target populations of social protection, DRM and humanitarian aid are not always the same. Hence targeting methodologies used to identify beneficiaries of social protection schemes, for example, may not be suitable in response to an emergency. Probably the most emblematic example of this case is the use of PMTs, popular in Latin America, which are not suitable for capturing rapid changes in welfare (Bastagli, 2014).

Social protection targeting typically relies on the use of administrative registries and household surveys, although these have limited capacity to capture the effects of sudden crises and recertification is not common or regular. It is therefore necessary to be more creative and to explore new possibilities when it comes to emergency preparedness and response. It is not necessarily a matter of re-creating the whole targeting systems, but at least they should have mechanisms in place that make it possible to identify those affected by shocks, in order to have a timely intervention. Links with early warning systems commonly used in DRM and the use of crowd sourcing and telephones are some examples in this regard (Bastagli, 2014).

Delivery system

Delivery mechanisms implemented by social protection schemes typically include manual transfers, delivery through a banking system, mobile money and other types of e-payments. In terms of shock response, timely delivery of benefits, either cash or in-kind, is of course crucial for effective support.

During emergencies, the capacity to deliver faces challenges due to the urgency of the situation, the constraints imposed by the particular shock (such as infrastructure collapse) and the coordination of different actors (Bastagli, 2014).

Some of the delivery mechanisms for regular social protection programmes– like e-payments, for example – have the potential to be rapidly scaled up during emergencies. However, these systems need to be developed prior to the crisis. It is crucial to build flexible systems in good times in order to be able to respond in bad times.

Coordination

Preparedness should also include a significant level of planning and coordination among actors involved in emergency response. In general, in LAC countries strong government-led civil protection systems are put in place to deal with crises, in contrast to other regions of the world where the emergency response is largely managed by international humanitarian actors. Civil protection systems are in charge of coordinating and managing national disaster responses and often times do not coordinate enough (or at all) with social protection systems. In normal times civil protection and social protection systems rarely interact and are in practice two parallel systems with different institutional set-ups. As a result, during emergencies, civil protection entities lead the response and social protection systems either do not play any role at all, traditionally seen as dealing with chronic poverty, or respond in parallel.

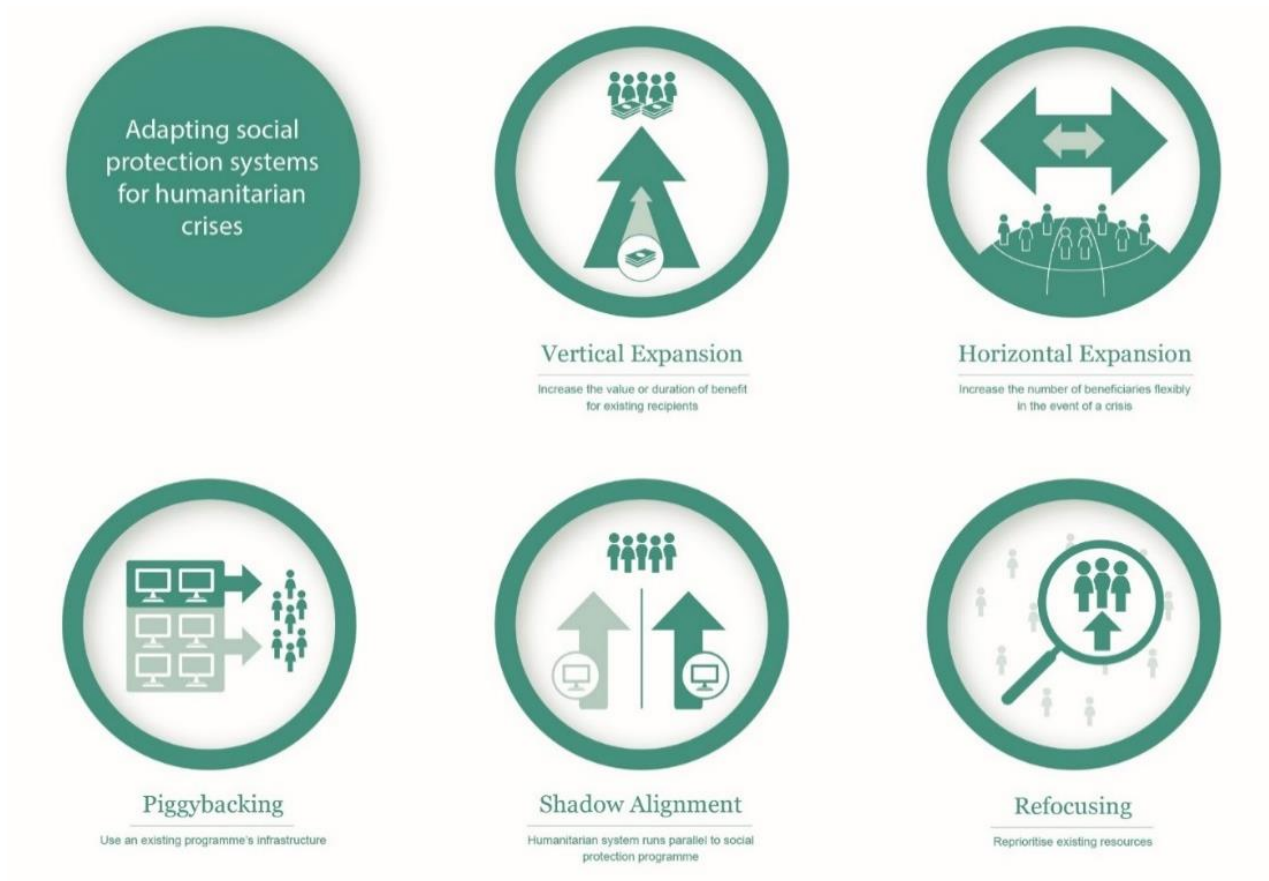
The challenge of achieving coordination among these different actors should not be underestimated. Social protection and civil protection systems have different objectives and target populations. There are some areas of intersection, though not all areas intersect, and sometimes even conflict. Likewise, they also have different methodologies and traditions, and they involve different actors and sources of funding. Finally, coordination for effective response entails coordinating at the international, national and subnational levels, and government and non-government organisations, increasing the challenge of this endeavour.

3.1.2 Type of response

When policy-makers consider the use of a social protection system to address emergency needs, there are a number of strategies that they may employ to scale up the overall level of support that the system provides to vulnerable people. Based on OPM (2015) we tentatively consider five main types of scale-up. These can be used in combination:

1. **vertical expansion:** increasing the benefit value or duration of an existing programme or system
 - adjustment of transfer amounts/values
 - introduction of extraordinary payments or transfers;
2. **horizontal expansion:** adding new beneficiaries to an existing programme or system
 - extension of the geographical coverage of an existing programme or system
 - extraordinary enrolment campaign
 - modifications of entitlement rules
 - relaxation of requirements/conditionality to facilitate more participation;
3. **piggybacking:** using a social protection intervention's administrative framework, but running the shock response programme separately
 - introduction of a new policy by the government, with or without support from humanitarian actors;
4. **shadow alignment:** developing a parallel humanitarian system that aligns as best as possible with a current or possible future social protection programme; and
5. **refocusing:** shifting a programme objective, priority or target group in order to address the basic needs of affected population.
 - in the case of budget cuts, for example, adjusting the social protection system to refocus assistance on groups most vulnerable to the shock.
 - relaxation of requirements/conditionality to facilitate participation of beneficiaries already served.

Figure 4: Typology of shock-responsive social protection



Source: OPM (2015)

4 Country experiences

In this section we review experiences and factors enabling social protection systems and programmes in the region to respond or contribute to emergency response. Following the theoretical framework we first present the experiences by reference to system preparedness (targeting, delivery and coordination) and then by reference to the type of response (vertical, horizontal, piggybacking, shadow alignment and refocusing).

4.1 Experiences by system preparedness

4.1.1 Targeting system

Although targeting effectiveness varies from programme to programme, there has been a wealth of successful experiences in LAC in relation to the targeting of social protection schemes. Having said this, **there are a number of reasons why targeting mechanisms, even when they successfully reach the target populations of social protection schemes, may not be suitable for an emergency response:**

- The targeting mechanisms used by most cash transfer programmes in LAC countries were designed to address chronic poverty and thus are not as flexible as they would need to be to address transient poverty resulting from a crisis. Grosh *et al.* (2014) highlight that most programmes use PMTs to predict welfare. However, these measures are designed to be relatively stable indicators of chronic poverty and they do not capture well fluctuations such as crisis-induced short-run income changes.
- Some programmes rely on geographical targeting (e.g., programmes in El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru), sometimes concentrated mostly or exclusively in rural areas, hence mostly limiting the capacity to respond to shocks to the catchment areas. For example, the CCT *Prospera* in **Mexico** (formerly *Oportunidades* and *Progresá*) operates only in locations where supply can meet the demand created by cash transfers, thus excluding areas that lack ‘purchasable’ key services, such as health and education. Depending on the coverage of the programme and where the shocks hit, those affected communities may be excluded. For example, in 2012 a heavy drought had a very strong impact on the indigenous communities in the north of the country. Whilst they had very high rates of chronic poverty, when *Prospera* scaled-up to support affected families, these communities were not targeted because they did not have the appropriate social infrastructure upon which conditionalities could be levied (Solórzano 2015). Likewise, during the GFC, layoffs happened in urban areas, which did not fit with the rural focus of many social transfer programmes.
- Many programmes rely on categorical targeting, which typically aims to support children, pregnant and lactating women or the elderly. However, when crises affect households with other demographics their capacity to respond is limited. One example are school meals programmes, which reach a large number of school-age children in most countries; however, when used to target responses to shocks like in **Honduras** and **Haiti** it excludes households with out-of-school children. It also excludes key vulnerable groups such as pregnant and lactating women, infants and young children.
- Most programmes are budget-rationed, rather than guaranteeing coverage to all who meet the eligibility criteria. These programmes are set up to allow households to benefit for multiple years, with re-examination of eligibility only every few years – and in several cases on an *ad hoc* basis rather than for predetermined cycles. Budget-rations limit the capacity of programmes to expand during emergencies.

As a result of the inadequacy of some targeting mechanisms to respond to shocks, programmes have adapted their approaches:

- **Mexico** greatly expanded its *Programa de Asistencia Alimentaria* (PAL), a food transfer programme, extending it beyond its usual ‘supply-ready’ areas so as to be able to enrol households who did not qualify for *Prospera* because of either their location or family situation. The programme was integrated with the programme *Programa de Apoyo Alimentario en Zonas de Atención Prioritaria* (PAAZAP) which was launched in 2008 with the objective of reaching the smallest and most dispersed areas of the countries not reached by PAL. In over two years the integrated programme went from being exclusively rural and small (125,000 families in 2008) to being slightly more urban and much larger (52% of its 825,000 beneficiary families lived in urban areas in 2010) (Grosh *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, *Prospera* can now be expanded to non-catchment areas to provide relief in a crisis, with no conditionalities attached to the transfers, provided that the programme coordination and the sector approve the request.
- Many LAC countries have embarked on developing targeting instruments for multiple programmes, usually referred to as ‘**single registries**’, ‘**integrated databases**’ or ‘**national registries**’ (e.g. Brazil’s *Cadastro Único*, **Chile’s** *Ficha CAS* (see Box 1), **Colombia’s** *SISBÉN*, the Dominican Republic’s *SIUBEN* (*Sistema Único de Beneficiarios*), etc.). In **Brazil**, the *Cadastro Único* administrative registry collects information on all those with a per capita household income below half the national minimum wage, although the income eligibility threshold of social programmes is lower. This means that the registry contains information on social protection programme beneficiaries and groups that do not qualify for such programmes but who can, nevertheless, be considered as vulnerable. Registry entry is open on a rolling basis and individuals can register at any time. Information on those registered is updated regularly, with a maximum time lapse of two years. This design allows the *Cadastro Único* to act as a useful source of information on rapid changes in circumstances and has been critical in facilitating social protection shock response in Brazil (Bastagli, 2014).
- In **Dominican Republic** the SIUBEN is the database used for targeting of social assistance programmes. A key tool of SIUBEN is the *Índice de Vulnerabilidad ante Choques Climáticos* (Index of Vulnerability to Climate Shocks, IVACC), which calculates the probability that a given household may be affected by climate shocks (see Box 2). This represents an innovative case of integrating social protection and shock response targeting.
- Integrated databases (see Box 3) increase coordination within social sectors (social protection, health, education, etc.) in countries like **Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Dominican Republic and Colombia**, although linkage with other sectors, like DRM, still needs to be strengthened.

Box 1: Chile's social protection targeting mechanisms for responding to shocks

The main lever that the *Chile Solidario* programme has established for catering to different vulnerability situations is the *Ficha de Protección Social*, which identifies vulnerable households. Specifically, in the event of an emergency, such as a disease that inhibits a person's full dedication to daily activities, a vulnerable household becomes eligible to benefits through the *Prestaciones Monetarias Garantizadas*, one of the components of *Chile Solidario*. Thus, among the objectives of *Solidario's Prestaciones Monetarias Garantizadas* a key element is to provide a timely cushion for the vulnerable in the case of a shock, to both prevent the depletion of assets and to guarantee a minimum subsistence level when labour income declines (Fernández *et al.*, 2011). Since September 2015, the Ministry of Social Development has championed the use of *Ficha Básica de Emergencia* (FIBE), as part of a system to collect data from the *Plan Nacional de Protección Civil* (National Plan for Civil Protection). FIBE is used during emergencies to identify households affected by natural or man-made disasters at the local, provincial, regional or national levels. Information collected with FIBE supports decision-making by the government on how to provide assistance to affected populations. Whilst, the current data collection process consists of paper-based collection in a triple format, archived on a database that is accessible to key public services, the feasibility of using digital media (such as smartphones and tablets) for online and offline access is being established. Recognising the need for speed in emergencies, the objective is to gather individually geo-referenced information on each affected household to allow for mapping based on different criteria (Faúndez, 2016).

Box 2: Linking social protection and DRM in Dominican Republic

In the Dominican Republic the pillars of the social protection strategy, overseen by the office of the Vice-President, are *Progresando con Solidaridad*, the social assistance programme, *Administrador de Subsidios Sociales* (ADESS) the social insurance programme, and SIUBEN, the targeting programme. A key tool of SIUBEN is the IVACC, created by the government with support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This index calculates the probability that a given household may become vulnerable to hurricanes, tornadoes and flooding based a range of socioeconomic characteristics. According to the Vice-Presidency, IVACC aims to make the Dominican Republic a world pioneer in the calculation and implementation of an index of vulnerability to climate shocks applied to households. IVACC includes such dimensions and variables as housing characteristics (walls, ceiling), earned income and dwelling proximity to a hazardous natural element (river, stream or ravine). IVACC helps map out the areas most at risk from natural disasters, thus making it possible to focus state action towards the more vulnerable households, optimise resources and avoid social investment loss. IVACC can be used by local governments and rescue authorities for the preparation of mitigation plans and responses to natural disasters. Combining IVACC and the socioeconomic information of SIUBEN serves as a strategic asset in the design of the national DRM plans. Vulnerability characteristics relevant to IVACC are being integrated into the SIUBEN questionnaire and the system was made interoperable with those of civil protection institutions and the Dominican search and rescue agency so that IVACC can be used effectively for DRM.

Source: Vice-Presidency of the Dominican Republic (2016)

Box 3: Integrating data and information management for social protection

Why is integrated information management important for social protection?

In recent years, global and national social protection policy has focused increasingly on systems, including integrating data and information management across programmes and beyond. Developing an **integrated system for information management** that enables the flow and management of information within the social protection sector and sometimes beyond has policy and operational advantages:

- **Policy advantages** can include a more equitable approach to distributing resources based on objective and comparable information, increased responsiveness and inclusiveness of interventions, increased transparency and accountability, increased links to complementary services and sectors, and increased knowledge of issues around poverty and vulnerability.
- **Operational advantages** can include: facilitated oversight of multiple schemes, reporting to policy-makers, and ability to plan, model and test policy changes; decreased burden on staff (e.g. less paperwork) and on potential applicants (e.g. streamlined access to services); increased efficiency of delivery by avoiding duplication of efforts, enabling economies of scale, and ensuring better management of error and fraud; and improved management – for example, enabling beneficiaries to

transition between schemes as their circumstances change and establishing more effective emergency responses.

Integrating what?

Three main and overlapping objectives of integration are:

- integrating in order to have an **overview** of who is receiving what, **coordinating** interventions, facilitating planning and more generally providing combined monitoring and evaluation (M&E) across programmes;
- integrating in order to **consolidate targeting** processes so they serve multiple social programmes. The rationale here—which has been increasingly emphasised internationally and has mainly been driven by the World Bank—is to minimise errors of exclusion and inclusion while increasing cost efficiency and transparency; and
- integrating data management in order to **integrate operations and services**. The strongest advocate of this approach is the International Labour Organization which has been promoting the concept of single window services within the social protection sector and beyond.

Three approaches to developing an integrated system for information management

Depending on the country context and the objectives pursued, there are three main (and potentially overlapping) approaches to developing an integrated system for information management. We define these approaches here:

1. **A social registry**: a database/registry which collects and houses comprehensive (i.e. not programme-specific) information on potential beneficiaries within the country. The primary function of social registries is to support the implementation phases of outreach, intake/registration, and assessment of needs and conditions for the purposes of determining potential eligibility for enrolment in selected social programmes.
2. **An integrated beneficiary registry**: a database/registry which is created by integrating programme management information systems (MISs) of several different existing schemes, meaning integration is only achieved across data and information on beneficiaries (programme recipients). The main objective of such integration is to provide coordination and oversight, and integrate selected operations and services. This approach is not suitable for targeting since it includes beneficiaries only.
3. **Virtual registry**: a registry (which is not necessarily physical) created by ensuring the interoperability of existing databases through web service access. When linked to a national ID and/or civil registry this approach can ensure a comprehensive (100% of the population), cross-sector and 'pro-active' (linked to life-cycle events) overview of a country's population that can be used for social protection purposes.

Using data for emergency response

However important the role of **social registries** may be in this context, it is important to stress that they are **not always fit for the role of supporting horizontal expansion or piggybacking**. This is because of the very nature of emergencies, which can affect households across the social spectrum and shake up the poverty profile of affected areas.

The key factors determining the usefulness of existing social registries for shock-responsive purposes include the following:

- Representing a **large enough snapshot of a country's population**. This is only the case where either a) a census-survey is applied to all households (not only those who have been pre-identified as poor, as for example in Indonesia); or b) where data-exchange from administrative data sources populates the registry with relevant information on all citizens.
- Including **information for both current beneficiaries** (e.g. those who have been ranked as poor and selected as eligible for social assistance programmes) **and potential beneficiaries** (e.g. the near poor). This is not the case for integrated beneficiary registries, for example.
- Containing data which are **useful and relevant for assessing contextual vulnerabilities after a shock**. For example, this may not be the case for those registries that primarily aggregate data from existing administrative sources (e.g. data on consumption levels, food security, asset ownership, etc.). On the other hand, geo-referenced data could be particularly useful. Collecting relevant information

may require early collaboration with the country's disaster management authority and humanitarian agencies.

- **Containing up-to-date information** – i.e. having a frequent, strong and valid data-updating strategy in place.

Source: Barca and Chirchir (2016).

4.1.2 Delivery system

A key condition for rapid emergency response is the pre-existence of effective delivery systems either as part of regular social protection programmes or built for future emergencies (McCord, 2013a). Effective delivery mechanisms are complex and difficult to design and implement and involve various actors (e.g. public and private) at different levels. It is hence for this reason that they need to be developed prior to the shock, either by adapting delivery mechanisms of programmes with other purposes than shock-response or by designing mechanisms to be scaled-up during emergencies (e.g. agreements with traders in high risk areas for voucher distribution).

E-payment systems are increasingly being introduced in cash transfer programmes in the region and elsewhere. Depending on the strength of their financial system, governments may have a plethora of payment mechanisms to transfer income, ranging from bank account transfers, to automated teller machine (ATM) cards, mobile money services, e-vouchers and over-the-counter transactions, etc. E-payment systems are a promising way to deliver support with speed, precision and flexibility, even in challenging environments (Smith *et al.*, 2012; Bastagli, 2014). However, the adoption of e-payment systems takes time and involves challenges, including the coverage of agents and vendors; liquidity; and failure of the technology.

Within e-payments, mobile money services are a promising due to high outreach and low costs and is possibly the technology many social protection programmes will use in the future. A few countries have already started using this technology, like for example in Colombia DaviPlata transfers payments through mobile phones to some beneficiaries of the CTT Familias en Acción. Ecuador is currently testing the use of this technology in the BdH programme. However the use and evaluation of mobile money services in large-scale social protection programmes in the region is still limited and so it is their role in emergency response.

In countries that have well established delivery mechanisms for their regular cash transfers, the systems can be used in times of crises if certain preparedness steps are taken. For instance, countries such as Brazil and Mexico, have made advances with regard to branchless banking (see Box 4). In fact, financial access in Latin America is on a par with eastern Europe and central Asia and the south Asia region².

It is not uncommon for social protection programmes to **combine various payment mechanisms**. For *Programa de Empleo Temporal*, the government of Mexico uses a mix of public, private and community-based modalities to make payments to beneficiaries, depending on the volume of transactions and the connectivity of the locality to intermediary institutions. In some rural and isolated localities, payments are made through community committees, which receive cash from the central agency. In other localities, cash is distributed to beneficiaries through the telecommunications agency's network of cash distribution facilities.

However, even well-established social protection delivery mechanisms can be challenged during emergencies. Following a crisis, social protection payments can be disrupted by the surge in

² <http://www.cgap.org/countries/latin-america-and-caribbean>.

demand for assistance as well as the potential damage to the financial system itself for example. In Haiti in the 2010 earthquake crisis, the banking system was not fully functioning and therefore international agencies had to distribute cash using alternative mechanisms such as remittance agents or direct cash envelope distribution (Christian Aid, 2012).

As with e-payments, **food transfers, either direct transfers of food or through vouchers, stamps or school meals**, rely to a large extent on existing distribution channels and agreements with regional and local traders. School meals are sometimes used in emergency response in poor countries outside the region precisely because it has an in-built delivery mechanism that allows responding even when prior planning was limited.

As it is described in the section below, most shock responses through social protection have entailed either vertical or horizontal expansions of existing schemes and hence relied on their delivery mechanisms. The experiences reviewed in this report suggest that, as opposed to targeting systems, there has been **little planning in relation to adapting existing delivery mechanisms or developing new ones prior to the shock**. In the case of targeting systems, as described above, there have been some initiatives with the objective of reaching those affected by shocks (FIBE in Chile, IVAAC in Dominican Republic and the integrated databases in a number of countries). However, in the case of delivery systems, responses have relied largely on existing mechanisms.

Box 4: Payment mechanisms in Brazil and Mexico

The two biggest social protection programmes in the LAC region are Brazil's *Bolsa Família* and Mexico's *Prospera*. *Bolsa Família* allows recipients to choose between receiving the cash transfer through the Social Card – a non-transactional virtual account that does not allow deposits and indefinite storage – or through deposits into *Caixa Fácil*, a basic current account at Caixa, a government bank historically focused on low-income clients. About 11 million recipients use the Social Card exclusively, while only 2 million (15.02%) rely on *Caixa Fácil*, although it allows recipients to access over 36,000 payment points at no cost and the account offers a debit card that can also be used at more than 50,000 shared ATMs and for debit purchases. In Mexico, the two payment mechanisms available use bank accounts held in *Bansefi*, a government bank. The prevailing payment method uses a pre-paid card (the Pink Card) linked to a basic non-interest-bearing bank account. The other (used by 20% of recipients) is a basic bank savings account (the Blue Card). With the Pink Card, recipients are required to withdraw the entire amount received within five weeks of deposit. However, they may then re-deposit part or all of it back into the account. This allows them to retain savings and to make deposits – albeit in a manner that may not be intuitive. Using pre-paid cards is popular because it is fast and easy to implement and does not rely on bank infrastructure, which is lacking in many rural communities where the grants are disbursed.

Sources: The Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) (2011a) and (2011b).

4.1.3 Coordination

Coordination prior to a crisis is essential for an effective response. Actors at various levels – international, national and subnational – and from different sectors – typically social protection and civil protection – need to coordinate their responses. As described in Section 3.1, in practice social protection and civil protection sector run in parallel, without much coordination, the former traditionally associated with helping the chronic poor and the latter leading emergency responses. Even though the coordination between both sectors is incipient in the region, there are a few experiences that are worth mentioning.

- Inter-ministerial committees have been established in order to increase coordination. In **Nicaragua**, for example, the *Sistema Nacional para la Prevención Mitigación y Atención de Desastres* (SINAPRED), the body in charge of prevention, mitigation and response to disasters, is led by the Presidency and integrated across every line ministry, showing the

multidimensional approach to shock response. Moreover, the SINAPRED has committees at every level, from national to local, in order to improve vertical coordination.

- In **Colombia**, the operation manuals of *Familias en Acción* spell out emergency-related programme adjustments and related implications for implementation. This includes defining the role of the programme within the framework of a disaster response plan or legislation, and linking it to the network of institutions involved in disaster response and contingency financing, as well as the specific regulation and procedures for particular programme adaptation, such as the waiving of conditionality (Bastagli, 2014).
- Similarly, **Mexico's** PET is overseen by the Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL) and implemented by several sectoral ministries (transportation, environment, labour). The Ministry of the Interior (SEGOB) is tasked with coordinating the institutional response to natural disasters and managing a major national disaster response contingency fund (the Fund for Natural Disasters (FONDEN)), to which all PET implementing ministries are required to allocate a percentage of PET funding. A parliamentary act stipulates the responsibilities of each party and mandates the coordination mechanism. It requires relevant ministries to use a common registry and information system. All implementing ministries receive data from the early warning system, which allows them to prepare an emergency response or scale up in affected localities through PET or other response channels. Each collaborating ministry is responsible for carrying out its portion of the public works programme (PWP) – from targeting to payments, to supervision and monitoring – within its own resource envelope.

4.2 Experiences by social protection instrument and type of response

This section describes the country experiences, classified by type of response (vertical expansion, horizontal expansion, piggybacking, shadow alignment, and refocusing) and by social protection component (social assistance, social insurance, and employment-related social protection).

Most of the experiences in LAC of the use of social protection in the face of a shock focus on economic shocks as opposed to natural disasters, with most examples stemming from the 2008–2009 GFC. This is probably due to the fact that social protection in the region is more frequently associated with providing support during economic shocks (e.g. unemployment). For instance, CCTs originated in LAC during the 1990s after the social fall-out of the Tequila Crisis (Fiszbein and Schady 2009). **Only in recent years has its role in response to natural disasters been gaining momentum.**

It is not uncommon to see **governments respond to shocks by employing a mix of responses combining vertical and horizontal expansion, which are also commonplace approaches on their own.** Piggybacking and shadow alignment are responses that describe the interventions of humanitarian actors, and are less predominant in the region.

Regarding **social assistance**, historically, the welfare model in LAC has been stratified with social insurance for formal sector workers and social assistance for the rest of the population which remain in informality (Lloyd-Sherlock 2008). In this light, **the prominence of cash transfers in social protection systems in the region illustrates their importance both as a mechanism for protecting households from shocks as well as a tool for crisis response.** This is linked to the fact that much administrative capacity has been built over the years for the management of cash transfers. In other cases, **school meals** have also been used in emergency responses, as second-best option. Furthermore, national social protection systems rarely use **vouchers and e-vouchers** in their regular large-scale programmes and consequently their role in emergency response has been very limited.

In contrast to social assistance, which in LAC is generally financed through general taxation and loans from financial institutions, social insurance is mainly financed through employer and employee contributions. In principle, **social insurance** is designed to act as an automatic stabiliser following a shock. In practice, however, revenue from contributions also shrinks in a crisis, as contributions and wages decline, and funding for increased expenditure is not guaranteed, beyond existing reserves held by social insurance systems (Bastagli, 2014). Moreover, due to the extent of informality in the region, coverage of social insurance is fairly low, excluding many people – typically the worse off. Despite this limitation, there are some experiences in the region of expanding social insurance vertically in response to emergencies.

Whereas employment-related social protection³ programmes are key component of social protection systems outside the region (India, Ethiopia, and South Africa, among many others) in LAC they are mostly used in emergency response. There are mainly three reasons why these programmes sometimes gain political traction. First, they appear attractive because they seem to resolve the targeting problem through **self-targeting**. It is assumed that work requirements, by only attracting the unemployed who are willing to work for a given wage, improve the poverty targeting (Beazley and Vaidya, 2015; Del Ninno *et al.*, 2009; Subbarao *et al.*, 2013). However, discretion in setting the wage rate to achieve self-selection is not always possible. In countries where the informal sector market wage rate is below the relevant statutory minimum wage, with which these programmes must comply, it will not be possible to set wage rates to self-target. Moreover, even if the self-selection of the poor could be induced by low wage rates, such low wage rates would reduce the impact of the programme, thus undermining its social protection function. From this perspective there seems to be a trade-off between impact and self-selection. Furthermore, there may be sound and economically rational reasons for questioning the validity of self-targeting through wage rates. Members of non-poor households may wish to participate in public works at low wage rates and members of poor households may wish to hold out for higher wages. Second, some governments are reluctant to give cash transfers to households with labour capacity without work requirements (Beazley and Vaidya, 2015). As in the case CCTs, **attaching conditions to the behaviour of beneficiaries helps make employment programmes more ‘palatable’ to society and to taxpayers.** Third, in many cases the work requirements consist of the **creation or rehabilitation of public infrastructure**. This could be particularly appealing in the response to a natural disaster, although admittedly there is little international evidence on the impact of these assets (Ludi, Levine and McCord 2016) and often times they are perceived as with very low quality.

Social care services are also very important in the aftermath of a shock, especially in the form of psychosocial support to victims who are in the process of overcoming the loss, pain and suffering experienced. These services are often combined with other types of response.

In the following section we will review some examples of these policy instruments in terms of the type of response.

4.2.1 Social assistance

Increasing benefits is often the ‘go-to’ measure, as it is fast and fairly administratively inexpensive to put in place. However, vertical expansion benefits only those already in a programme and often the population affected by a shock is not entirely the same as that which is supported by social protection schemes.

³ In this report we include Public Work Programmes in the ‘employment-related social protection’ type of scheme since these programmes are often combined with the provision of training, support for job searches, etc., which fall into this category.

4.2.1.1 Vertical expansion

Cash-based safety nets have been vertically expanded in many cases as a response to both economic and natural shocks. This type of response is administratively inexpensive, although in some cases (e.g. *Prospera* in Mexico) **once benefits have been increased it is difficult to reduce them again after the crisis**, and hence temporary increases become permanent ones. Other countries, however, have managed to introduce these benefits as a form of one-off support (e.g. Argentina – see Box 6).

In the case of in-kind vertical expansions, school meals are sometimes used in response due to coverage and in-built systems for delivery. On the one hand, school meals programmes display some advantages over other social protection measures as they rely on existing infrastructure and human resources. In times of food crisis, in addition to providing food directly to children and their families (if they incorporate take-home rations), these programmes may discourage parents from taking children out of school. They have the potential both to address short-term hunger and support the provision of nutritional food through micronutrient-fortified food, and they provide an incentive for poor families to send their children to school. On the other hand, school meals reach only households with school-age children who are attending school and hence they may not reach the poorest areas or households – those that are not covered by school services. Moreover, lack of infrastructure, possibly exacerbated by disruption in the event of a shock, may lead to the exclusion of vulnerable groups and affect the speed at which a programme is rolled out in the shock's aftermath. Finally, the challenges of this type of response in terms of logistics, signing agreements between different actors and the large-scale procurement of food stuffs, should not be underestimated, even in the case of a functioning school meals programme (Bastagli, 2014). A few examples of this type of response are listed below.

- In **Mexico** *Prospera* increased benefits and also expanded coverage through the *Vivir Mejor* (Living Better) component, which was effective in softening the blow in one of the countries hardest hit by the GFC. It is estimated that without the programme changes the incomes of people in the poorest decile would have fallen by about 8% (World Bank, 2015a). The component remained as part of the basic provision of the programme, even after the crisis.
- In **Chile**, a lump sum was paid to beneficiaries of the *Chile Solidario* programme affected by the 2010 earthquake.
- In **Guatemala**, *Bono de Calamidad* (Calamity Grant) is provided to recipients of the CCT *Bono Seguro* (Secure Grant) who inhabit areas that have been declared by the state as suffering from an emergency situation. The *Bono Seguro* transfer can be increased up to 50% through the *Bono de Calamidad*.
- In **Argentina**, the government gave additional benefits to beneficiaries of the child grant *Asignación Universal por Hijo* and of social pensions, in response to the flooding of 2015.
- In many LAC countries in 2009 after the GFC the benefit rates of many programmes actually increased because they are tied to the minimum wage, which itself increased considerably at this time. Real minimum wages in the LAC region were raised in 2008–09 in three-quarters of the countries, with five countries increasing the minimum wage by 10% or more (Argentina, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Uruguay), while Mexico and Venezuela allowed minimum wages to erode slightly, presumably to take the pressure off employment (Grosh *et al.*, 2014).
- In **Nicaragua, Honduras, and Haiti**, school meals have been expanded vertically (e.g. additional rations of food, provision of meals during school holidays) in response to climate shocks.
- In **Trinidad and Tobago** adult recipients of social pensions are entitled to a housing assistance subsidy to buy materials to repair their property following a disaster (Reyes and Bronfman, 2013).

Box 5: School Meals in Nicaragua and Honduras in response to the drought

In Nicaragua, Government responded to the prolonged drought through the national school meals programme, the largest social protection programme in the country. This type of vertical expansion was implemented in at least three consecutive years: from 2014 to 2016. The objective of this support was to reduce school dropout rates, prevent malnutrition and contribute to the physical and mental development of children.

This response was supported by WFP in 2016, providing one additional meal per day to boys and girls of schools in 51 municipalities in the dry corridor. The expanded programme reached a total of 126,482 children in 1,988 schools.

In Honduras in 2015, Government responded to the drought by expanding vertically the school meals programme and offering meals during the holiday season. Meals were provided to 1,799 students during 35 days in the municipalities of Alianza, Aramecina, Goascoran, Langué, San Francisco de Coray, and Nacaome.

4.2.1.2 Horizontal expansion

Expanding coverage can be administratively complex and may have implications for the long-term sustainability of the programme. Oftentimes the coverage rates in respect of the poorest are far from being comprehensive, and the people hit the hardest by a crisis may not be existing beneficiaries of a programme. The administrative capacity for new fieldwork to expand coverage is rarely in place and is often insufficient. Expansion may be particularly difficult in geographic areas previously not served. Horizontal expansion also raises the question of whether the larger coverage should be permanent, and, if not, how it will be reduced (Grosh *et al.*, 2014).

As a response to the GFC many countries in LAC extended the coverage of their cash transfer programmes. Belize's BOOST programme was launched in February 2011 and reached over 3,000 households (12.5% of all poor households). In **Costa Rica**, the programme *Avancemos* (Let's Advance Together) was established in 2006 with 8,000 beneficiaries. This number had risen to 151,000 by 2009. In **Colombia**, *Familias en Acción* (Families in Action) increased its number of beneficiaries by almost 50% in 2009, from 1.8 million families (7.9 million people) in 2008 to 2.6 million families (11.6 million people). In the **Dominican Republic**, the *Solidaridad* programme almost doubled, from 1.2 million individuals in 2007 to 2.1 million in 2008, and it has remained rather constant since. In **Jamaica**, the number of beneficiaries of the Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH), established in 2002, remained stable in 2008 and 2009, at about 355,000, but increased to 419,000 in 2010. Based on cash transfer programme experience dating back to the early 2000s, following the GFC **Honduras** launched a new national programme, *Bono 10,000*, which targeted 100,000 rural poor households in 2010. It now reaches 250,000 households (20% of the population) in both rural and urban areas. In **Peru**, the number of beneficiaries of *Juntos* climbed from 2.3 million in 2008 to 2.6 million in 2010. In **Paraguay**, the programme *Tekopora* increased coverage exponentially in 2009, from 14,000 families to over 80,000. In **Ecuador**, the coverage of the *BDH* (Human Development Grant) increased from 1 million to 1.2 million between 2008 and 2009 (Grosh *et al.*, 2014). In **Mexico**, following high food prices and the riots of 2007, the Mexican government increased the *Prospera* budget and the number of beneficiaries was increased by 1 million.

Some programmes have combined cash transfers and in-kind assistance. For example, in **Guatemala**, the government created the CCT programme *Mi Bono Seguro* (launched as *Mi Familia Progresiva*) in early 2008. This programme was scaled up in response to the GFC: by 2009 about 448,000 families (about 24% of the population) in the poorest areas of the country received

it. At the end of 2009, the government also applied vertical expansion in the programme by introducing an additional nutrition benefit to increase the transfer to families with young children (Grosh *et al.*, 2014).

The expansion of safety net programmes has also been used in humanitarian responses and natural disasters, although not as frequently as in the case of economic shocks. In **Brazil** poor foreign people, including refugees from Syria have received the *Bolsa Família* programme. By 2015, 15.707 families with at least one foreign person were receiving the programme. From these recipient families, 163 had at least one Syrian refugee⁴. In **Chile**, in addition to the lump sums given to beneficiaries of the *Solidario* programme affected by the 2010 earthquake (vertical expansion), non-beneficiary households were also supported if their monthly income was below US\$836. The programme also re-examined the eligibility of non-poor households seeking inclusion in the programme after having suffered a shock which caused a decline in their living standards (Fernández *et al.*, 2011).

The horizontal expansion of subsidies is sometimes seen as a useful response to economic shocks (e.g. an increase in fuel prices), however such subsidies are often quite regressive. In the **Dominican Republic** the government instituted the *Bonogas-household* and the *Bonogas-driver* programmes, in response to rising oil prices. *Bonogas-household* provided over 800,000 households with a monthly subsidy of RD\$228 (US\$7), calculated based on the average amount of gas consumed by the poor. About the same time, a means-tested electricity subsidy, *Bonoluz*, was also launched, but with a slower roll-out. During the first year of implementation, it reached some 150,000 families (Grosh *et al.*, 2014).

4.2.1.3 Piggybacking

As opposed to other regions in the developing world, in LAC governments are fairly strong and tend to lead the responses to shocks. It is therefore not surprising to find that most responses are either vertical or horizontal expansions. Piggybacking, however, could be a good way for international humanitarian assistance to channel support through government systems, and hence not only to respond to urgent needs but also to strengthen government systems. However, piggybacking also raises concerns about the role of the humanitarian system since some of the key principles may be challenged: humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. Although these principles are arguably less applicable when governments are not part of the conflict.

Following the magnitude-7.8 earthquake that hit **Ecuador** in April 2016, WFP supported the government with the provision of cash transfers to affected families, through the Bono AAA and Bono de Alimentación Rural, which are described below. These allowances piggybacked on existing systems, processes and human resources used by the government to deliver the BdH, the largest non-contributory scheme in the country.

⁴ <http://oglobo.globo.com/mundo/cresce-numero-de-refugiados-sirios-inscritos-no-bolsa-familia-17778740>

Box 6: Ecuador's cash response to the 2016 earthquake

Bono AAA

Requirements

- Only families registered in RUD are eligible.
- Families must apply and sign an agreement with the foster family or the tenant.

Benefits

- Foster families receiving affected families are entitled to USD135 per month for six months plus USD15 for utilities – Bono de Acogida (foster care allowance).
- Tenants receiving affected families are entitled to USD135 per month for six months – Bono de Alquiler (rental allowance).
- Affected families renting or with a foster family are entitled to USD100 per month for three months – Bono de Alimentación (food allowance).

Bono Alimentación Rural (rural food allowance)

Requirements

- Only families registered in RUD are eligible.

Benefits

- Eligible families are entitled to USD100 per month for three months.

Both Bonos de Alimentación (Rural and AAA) were largely financed by WFP⁵ and, more importantly, WFP supported the Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social (MIES) in their conceptualisation and design. The Government of Ecuador first responded with the Bono AAA, which was targeted to families leaving the official shelters. WFP advocated for the food assistance to reach households affected by the disaster but who were not with foster families or renting. This new cash allowance, the Bono de Alimentación Rural, was particularly significant for affected families in rural areas, who were unlikely to seek refuge in shelters or elsewhere.

Around 40,000 affected families were supported with cash transfers. As reported by MIES,⁶ 17,803 were entitled to the Bono de Acogida, 2,883 to the Bono de Alquiler and 21,103 to the Bono de Alimentación. Moreover, 19,815 were entitled to the Bono de Alimentación Rural.

This was an innovative response, in which the WFP piggybacked on existing government systems and programmes, and **one of the largest responses to natural disasters through social protection in the region**. Moreover, **piggybacking support led to horizontal and vertical expansions as well**, showing that when a shock hits, social protection systems may need to reach in different ways. Ecuador is one of the case studies for this research. Please refer to Beazley (forthcoming) for more information.

4.2.1.4 Shadow alignment

As part of a consortium, CARE, Action Contre la Faim (ACF), WFP and World Vision have been supporting the Government of **Haiti** in establishing a replicable safety net system to reduce food insecurity and vulnerability while building resilience. The Kore Lavi programme is implemented in 24 communes and revolves around four objectives: 1) the completion of household surveys and the establishment of a Management Information System (MIS) for targeting, monitoring and coordinating with other interventions, 2) the provision of food vouchers to around 18,000 households and their gradual inclusion in Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), 3) the provision of supplementary food rations to pregnant and lactating women, and children under two

⁵ As of November 9, WFP had supported 37,300 families through the Bono de Alimentación, for a total of USD 8.1 million.

⁶ Numbers correspond to the period up to 8 November 2016.

years of age, and, finally, 4) the institutionalisation of the program in Government and in local organizations.

Given how prone Haiti is to natural disasters, Kore Lavi aims to strengthen the country's capacity to respond to such disasters. This, together with the intention of establishing a programme that could be replicated by the government, makes it one of the few shadow alignment types of response in the region.

Haiti is one of the case studies in this research and therefore will be studied in detail in a separate report. It is also important to mention that WFP and CARE have recently commissioned a consultancy to explore strategies for making Kore Lavi more shock responsive (Zuodar, 2016).

4.2.1.5 Refocusing

There are very few examples of refocusing, which usually consists of bringing forward the date of payments, in order to respond to shocks. In **Brazil**, for instance, a law establishes that the payment of benefits from the National Institute of Social Security, such as pensions and social insurance, can be anticipated in the case of a crisis due to a natural disaster. In **Mexico**, the conditionalities of *Prospera* can be removed and the payments can be brought forward in order to respond to calamities such as hurricanes and droughts.

4.2.2 Social insurance

4.2.2.1 Vertical expansion

As with social assistance, vertical expansion of social insurance has been a fairly popular response to economic shocks. This response seems particularly appropriate in economic crises, in order to reduce the effects of unemployment for example. However, given the very high proportion of the labour force involved in informal activities and excluded from social insurance schemes this response benefits only a small group of people and is therefore usually complemented by additional strategies.

Following the GFC, many countries responded vertically through social insurance schemes. **The Bahamas** introduced a temporary financial measure under the National Insurance Scheme to pay up to 13 weeks of benefits at a rate just under minimum wage – US\$200 a week. **Brazil** temporarily extended by two months the duration of benefits for workers laid off in the months of December 2008 and January 2009 from jobs which the government had declared as being in the 'most affected sectors'. Similarly, **Costa Rica** extended the grace period from three to six months for health insurance coverage after loss of employment. **El Salvador** allowed workers to maintain social security coverage for six months after being fired, a provision which benefited 8,000 workers. In **Uruguay**, a 2008 reform to its unemployment insurance system led to the extension of benefit payments from six to eight months if/when the country experiences a recession. **The Dominican Republic**, on the other hand, allowed unemployed workers who had earned less than Dominican peso (DOP) 1,000 a month (about US\$285) to keep their health insurance for one year. (Grosh *et al.*, 2014 and Bastagli, 2014).

However, there are no experiences of vertical expansion of social insurance schemes in response to natural disasters. This is not surprising, given the fairly low coverage of these schemes and the fact that they reach somewhat better-off households.

Box 7: Integrated vertical expansions – the case of Argentina

In recent years Argentina has been exposed to a number of natural disasters, from rural and urban flooding to wildfires and volcanic ashes. Government responded by vertically expanding core social protection schemes.

The benefits of the following schemes were doubled during two or three months for people in the affected areas:

- family allowances received by active workers, retirees, pensioners and the unemployed;
- Universal Child Allowance and Pregnant Women Allowance;
- the Support Programme for Argentina's Students (PROGRESAR);
- unemployment benefit;
- contributory and non-contributory benefits for retirees and pensioners; and
- Malvinas war veterans benefits.

By integrating the response and relying not only on social assistance programmes but also on other schemes, government was able to reach most of those affected. A social protection system with high coverage, established delivery mechanisms and an integrated MIS allows government to respond quickly by increasing benefits on a temporary basis. The Argentinian government currently aims to expand the social protection system to achieve universal coverage, which would allow for immediate vertical responses through the provision of cash benefits.

4.2.2.2 Horizontal expansion

Due to the contributory nature of social insurance schemes, it is very uncommon to see governments expanding their coverage in response to emergencies. Changes in Chile's pension scheme could be only partially attributed to the GFC. In 2008, **Chile** launched the *Pensión Básica Solidaria de Invalidez* (Disability Basic Solidarity Pension), the spending for which doubled within the first year. The January 2009 reform sought to be even more comprehensive and allowed fixed-term workers to access the solidarity fund; relaxed the eligibility requirement for the solidarity fund by transforming it from a continuous contribution requirement (12 months) to a minimum density requirement (12 of the previous 24 months, with the last three months being continuous and with the same employer); raised the minimum and maximum solidarity fund benefits; changed the payment structure under the individual account; and allowed two additional payments during periods of high unemployment – that is, when the national unemployment rate is 1 percentage point higher than the four-year rolling average. The number of beneficiaries increased from about 10,000 per month by the end of 2008 to about 30,000 per month by the end of 2010, with an increase in the replacement rate as well (Grosh *et al.*, 2014).

4.2.3 Employment-related social protection

4.2.3.1 Horizontal expansion

Most examples of horizontal expansion of employment-related social protection concern short-term, labour-intensive PWP. It is not uncommon that, in addition to income support, these programmes include a training component.

Launched following the economic crisis of 1997, **Argentina's** *Trabajar* programme aimed to help low-skilled unemployed workers meet basic needs through small public works of a social value for 4.5 months. It targeted those not receiving unemployment insurance or training through the Ministry of Labour, and those not benefitting from any other safety net programmes, and paid wages of US\$160 and US\$200, equivalent to three-quarters of the mean salary of the poorest decile. In 2001, after having provided around 700,000 jobs, mostly to men (80%), with a net gain of

26% of household expenditure, the programme was transformed to *Jefes* and targeted heads of households. *Jefes* closed in 2009, having provided a net gain income of 22.7–17.7% (Berra, 2010).

Chile increased funding for its direct employment programmes under *Programa de Contingencia Contra el Desempleo* (Contingency Programme for Unemployment). This programme was set up under the Fiscal Responsibility Law in 2006. It is activated when the national quarterly unemployment rate exceeds the prior five-year average, or when that rate hits 10%. There is also a provision for local triggering of the contingency. In February and March 2009 the programme was triggered because the national unemployment rate exceeded the five-year average, and in April–July because the 10% threshold was met. The largest direct employment programme is *Programa de Inversión en la Comunidad* (Community Investment Programme), which provides employment for unemployed heads of household aged 18–65 for three to four months. The employment is usually half-time, at 50% of the minimum wage and with a pension contribution. Beneficiaries have to be registered with the *Ficha de Protección Social*, but they are not subject to a maximum cut-off score. The works carried out are proposed and supervised by the regional governments. Employment peaked in 2010 at 30,000 workers, nearly double the 2007 level of 17,000, and continued to rise as the effects of the crisis diminished, reaching 22,000 in 2012 (Grosh *et al.*, 2014).

El Salvador's *Programa de Apoyo Temporal al Ingreso* (PATI, Temporary Income Support Programme), launched in 2009 in response to the GFC, requires participation in labour-intensive community activities and offers income support and training, especially to youth aged 16–24 and female heads of households living in poor urban areas affected by violence. Most PATI community activities are related to social and community services (e.g., child care, sports and youth activities, improvement of public spaces) and do not involve any substantive infrastructure activities. Training activities are designed to increase the employability of the participants, who receive stipends of US\$100 per month for six months in exchange for six hours of work per day. This monthly grant is well below the minimum wage (US\$173 as at January 2009) and the urban poverty line (US\$165.70 in August 2009). The programme was intended to serve 60,000 young people over a three-year period, but after a small pilot in 2009 it was running at a rate of about 20,000 participants per cycle by the end of 2011, which is significantly more than its initial target population (Grosh *et al.*, 2014).

From 2008 to 2010 **Mexico** scaled up its PET, as one of several labour market measures. With the onset of the GFC, PET was scaled up, covering 285,000 beneficiaries in 2008, 682,000 in 2009, and 894,000 in 2010. PET targeted poor rural areas until 2010, when the criteria were changed to allow coverage in urban areas and some targeting based on areas of high unemployment. A minimum of 65% of the budget must be used for wages, no more than 28% for materials and equipment, and no more than 7% for administration. Designed in this way, it conforms reasonably well to standard best practices. No comprehensive evaluation of PET has been conducted recently, but it has been shown that even though PET's targeting has deteriorated over the decade, in 2006 it was still one of the best-targeted programmes in Mexico. However, because the wage paid is just under the official minimum wage an average rural household relying only on a single minimum wage would fall well short of the extreme poverty line and would be in the bottom 4% of income distribution.

In 2007, **Peru's** *A Trabajar Urbana* was reshaped into a national programme, *Construyendo Peru*, and a training scheme was incorporated. It increased coverage in 2007 and 2008, when the economy was growing strongly, and then saw its 2009 budget cut to a third of its 2008 budget. To soften the impact of this budget cut on the programme's ability to provide income support, the authorities refocused the programme on highly labour-intensive activities and discontinued the training component (Grosh *et al.*, 2014). *Trabaja Perú* (Peru is working) targets the unemployed

and underemployed population living in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty. It includes a component which pays 70% of the minimum wage to vulnerable population that have been rendered unemployed as a result of a catastrophic disaster.

In 2008 and 2009, **Uruguay's** *Trabaja* was able to provide between 3,100 and 3,600 people, mostly women, with temporary part-time employment and some related benefits, including counselling, dental care and a small amount of training. The programme is geared towards the long-term unemployed and socially vulnerable, and works are organised by civil society organisations (Grosh *et al.*, 2014).

4.2.3.2 Piggybacking

In the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in **Haiti**, the role of humanitarian actors in expanding social protection programmes was clearly visible. With funding from various United Nations agencies, the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development coordinated the implementation of a series of labour-intensive public works (cash-for-work), paid at minimum wage. This supported relief efforts in two ways: rubble was removed and precarious urban spaces were brought back into use, and income was transferred to help meet basic needs (Lamaute-Brisson, 2013).

4.2.3.3 Shadow alignment

In **Ecuador**, UNDP implemented PWP (*Trabajo Comunitario de Emergencia para la Gestión de Escombros*) in two localities affected by the earthquake in 2016. In this small scale experience local youth was employed to demolish dwellings severely damaged by the earthquake. The intention of UNDP was that government could adopt and scale up this experience.

4.2.4 Social care

4.2.4.1 Horizontal expansion

In **Colombia**, as a response to the more than 20,000 Venezuelan refugees that entered the country in 2015, the government established mobile units to provide psychosocial care for children and adolescents and legal advice, alongside the integration of workshops and recreational activities that promote cultural, artistic and sporting activities (Uribe, 2016).

4.2.4.2 Piggybacking

Social care services can actually work in coordination with other social protection measures in order to give support to victims of humanitarian crises. In **Mexico**, for example, the war on drugs, which has led to more than 150,000 people being killed and more than 27,000 disappeared, has left many victims unattended. The programme *Redes para la Vida* (Networks for Life), coordinated by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México is developing a protocol of therapeutic intervention for post-traumatic stress support to victims in the state of Guerrero, through the *pláticas* of the *Prospera* programme (the talks that the recipients are requested to attend on a bi-monthly basis). In **Uruguay**, after the hurricane in 2015 UNICEF prepared educational kits for psychosocial care of children for guides and educators in schools.

5 Summary and conclusion

Our theoretical framework guides an assessment of the **preparedness** and **responsiveness** of social protection systems to covariate shocks that represent threats to people's wellbeing, health, food security, and safety. In relation to the former, we focus on three aspects that are essential for a timely and effective response: targeting system, delivery system, and coordination. Although these are not the only three processes involved in effective preparedness, international experience and literature highlights how crucial they are. Regarding responsiveness, we follow the five different types identified by OPM (2015): vertical expansion, horizontal expansion, piggybacking, shadow alignment and refocusing.

Starting with **preparedness**, although there have been a wealth of successful experiences in LAC in relation to **targeting** mechanisms in social protection schemes, there are a number of reasons why targeting mechanisms, even when they successfully reach the target populations of regular social protection schemes, may not be suitable for emergency response. It is due to these reasons that some LAC countries have created or adapted existing targeting systems to suit the needs of emergencies (e.g. Chile, Dominican Republic). Despite these efforts, **in most cases targeting mechanisms still need to be further strengthened in order to enable timely and effective responses**.

Social registries, databases/registries which collect and house comprehensive information on potential beneficiaries within the country, are increasingly popular in the region and elsewhere. It is often claimed that these registries can enable governments to respond to shocks more effectively. However, in order to do so, social registries need to:

- **represent a large enough snapshot of a country's population;**
- **include information for both current and potential beneficiaries;** and
- **contain data which are useful and relevant in regard to assessing contextual vulnerabilities after a shock.** Although an in-depth assessment would be required, most cases in the region do not seem to meet all these requirements yet.

In relation to **delivery systems**, e-payment systems are increasingly being introduced in emergency responses in the region and elsewhere. These systems are also well-established in many social protection systems in the region, enabling governments to reach large segments of the poor and vulnerable. Two challenges remain: a) as with targeting, how to reach and deliver benefits to those who are not participating in any social protection programme and have no bank accounts?; b) despite the benefits of transferring cash, depending on the type of shock, the existence of and accessibility to markets and the objectives of the response, transfers of food and micronutrients (if food security and/or nutrition outcomes are pursued) or transfers of clothes, medicines and other items may be preferred. The experiences reviewed in this report suggest that, as opposed to targeting systems, there has been **little planning in relation to adapting existing delivery mechanisms or developing new ones prior to the shock**. In practice, most shock responses through social protection have entailed either vertical or horizontal expansions of existing schemes and hence relied on their delivery mechanisms.

Coordination prior to the crisis is essential for an effective response. Actors at various levels – international, national and subnational – and from different sectors – social protection and civil protection – need to coordinate their responses. **Despite an increased awareness of the importance of this coordination and certain initiatives, like inter-ministerial committees, this**

is still an incipient area. In practice, social protection and civil protection sectors run in parallel, with little interaction and planning.

When it comes to emergency **response**, **most of the experiences reviewed consisted of responses to economic shocks**, with most examples stemming from the 2008–2009 GFC. This is probably due to the fact that social protection is more frequently associated with providing support during economic shocks (e.g. unemployment) and only in recent years has its role in response to natural disasters been gaining momentum.

As opposed to other regions in the developing world, in LAC governments are strong and tend to lead and fund the response to shocks. It is therefore not surprising to find that **most responses are vertical or horizontal expansions, or a combination of both**. Piggybacking and shadow alignment could be good ways for international humanitarian assistance to not only respond to urgent needs but also to strengthen government systems. However, these approaches also raise concerns about the role of the humanitarian system, since some of its key principles may be challenged (e.g. independence). Although these principles are arguably less applicable when governments are not part of the conflict.

Regarding the different social protection schemes used for emergency responses, **cash-based social assistance is the most popular type**. This is linked to the fact that much administrative capacity has been built over the years for the management of cash transfers that reach the poor. In some other cases, **school meals** have also been used in emergency responses as well. **PWPs have also been fairly popular**, mostly due to three factors: self-targeting reduces administrative costs, work requirements make these programmes more palatable, and asset creation and rehabilitation components are particularly useful in responses to disasters. However, the extent to which these aspects are always in place is questionable, and effective PWPs are resources intensive and difficult to implement.

In principle, **social insurance** is designed to act as an automatic stabiliser following a shock. In practice, however, coverage is fairly low – particularly coverage of the poor – and revenue from contributions shrinks during crises, challenging this type of response. Despite these limitations, there are some experiences in the region of expanding social insurance vertically in response to emergencies.

Finally, it is important to highlight that there seems to be **a trend in the region towards the progressive construction of social citizenship**. In line with rights-based initiatives, like the International Labour Organization's Social Protection Floor or ECLAC's sister concept of inclusive social protection, there are ongoing debates in the region about a new approach to social protection: one that includes everyone and that eradicates the poor (non-contributory) vs. better-off (contributory) divide, that promotes equity and that provides effective support in times of needs. In the words of ECLAC (2015), 'it should be pointed out that conceiving social protection from a rights-based perspective as a universal policy providing all citizens with egalitarian access does not mean providing uniform services for a heterogeneous population, but adapting services to cover differentiated needs and guarantee the enjoyment of rights for all. The universalist orientation, then, is not at odds with targeting. Rather, the latter is placed at the service of the former, in recognition of the different situations people find themselves.' This approach and the development of systems, like targeting and delivery, which should follow it, hold out promises for the role of social protection in shock preparedness and response.

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