

# In summary

## Poverty and social protection

**About Oxford  
Policy Management's  
*In summary series***

Our *In summary* publications aim to give an introduction to a key area of our expertise and the capabilities we offer in supporting governments, funders, practitioners, and partners in achieving lasting, positive change through policy reform.

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# Poverty and social protection

**Social protection programmes are effective tools to reduce poverty and inequality, increase human capital, and protect families and individuals from the risks they face during their lives. Evidence also shows effective programmes can support aggregate demand and thus boost the broader economy.**

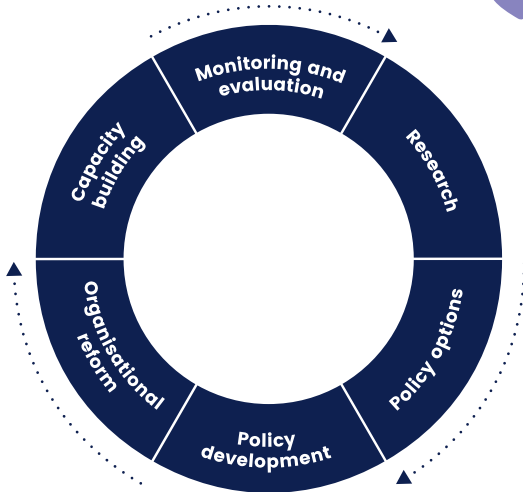
Our Poverty and Social Protection team supports donors and governments of low- and middle-income countries to develop social protection systems that are fair, inclusive, effective and efficient, nationally-owned, sustainable, and tailored to the local context.

# What we offer

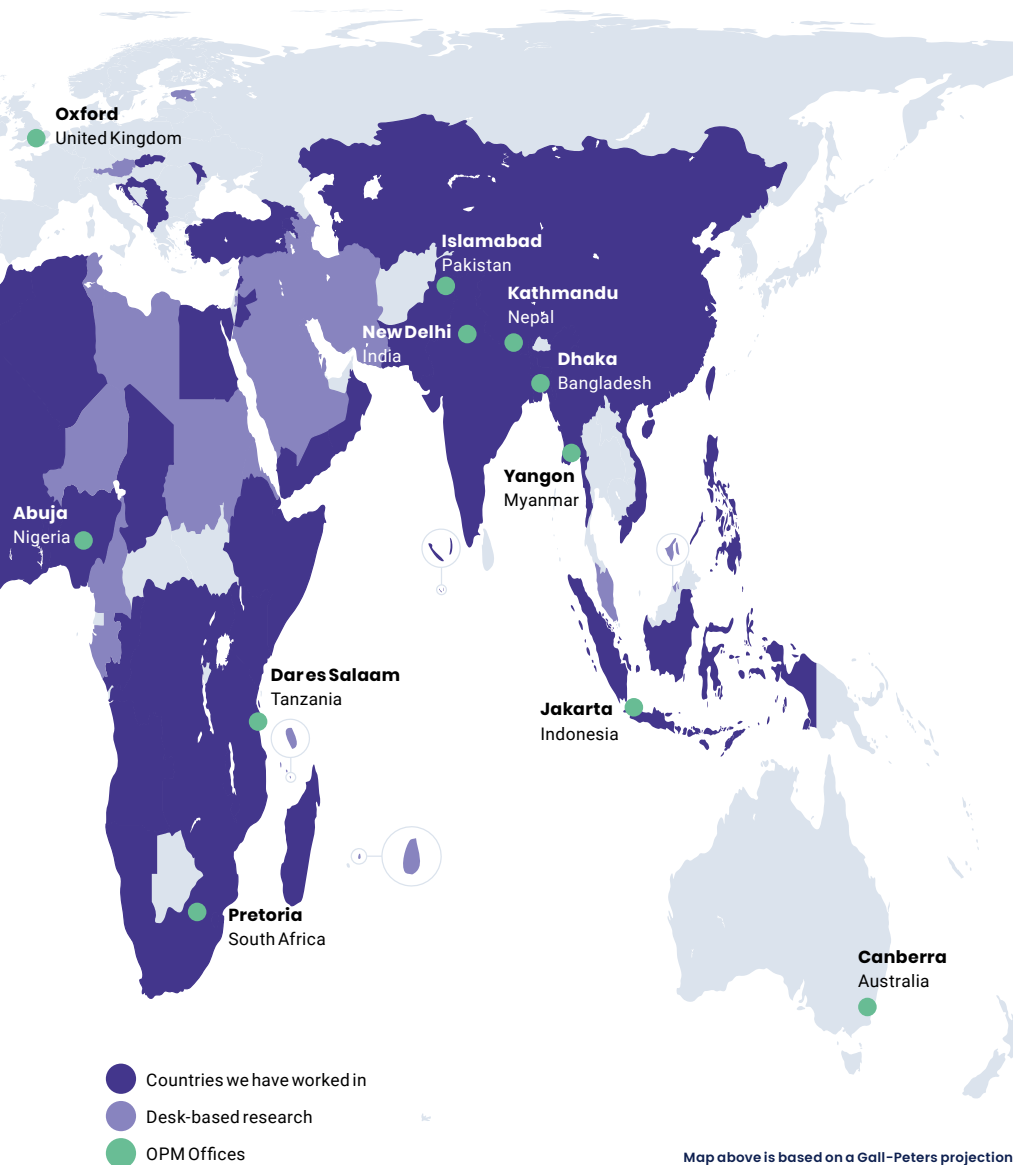
- Poverty, inequality, and vulnerability measurement and analysis
- Mapping and diagnostics of existing social protection policies and systems
- Supporting the development of financially and politically feasible social protection strategies, encompassing social assistance, social insurance, social services, and labour market policies
- Supporting the design of integrated national programmes and their delivery systems, while ensuring these work effectively alongside other social sectors
- Supporting programme implementation, including a focus on information systems, monitoring and evaluation, service standards and performance management, and institutional reform
- Supporting shock-responsive social protection including a focus on humanitarian linkages and building resilience
- Conducting independent monitoring and evaluation of impact, process, and costs
- Capacity building, via on-the-job training, mentoring, seminars, e-learning, tailored adult experiential learning curricula and online communities of practice



# We work globally across the policy cycle



**Above:** The OPM policy cycle. Our approach is firmly rooted in the policy cycle, from researching the key drivers of a problem through to implementing the chosen policy, and monitoring and evaluating progress.





## Research

**Our research and analysis bridge the gap between practitioners and academics, responding to policy-relevant questions and building on our experience designing, implementing, and evaluating social protection programmes.**

In leading an important DFID study on shock-responsive social protection systems, we have strengthened the evidence base on how systems can scale up in response to shocks in low-income, fragile, and conflict-affected states. We expanded the focus of our research by conducting further case studies in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, as well as in Southeast Asia, for WFP. To share key findings, we produced a series of policy briefs, videos, and infographics, and hosted various webinars and conferences. We are using a similar strategy to share our findings on integrated data and information systems for social protection, and the evidence base on cash transfers' impact and the role of delivery and implementation mechanisms, written together with ODI.







## **Policy design and implementation**

Over the past 10 years we have helped expand and operationalise comprehensive national social protection strategies, policies, and legislation in several countries, including Algeria, Angola, Benin, Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique, and Oman. We are currently developing the operational plan for the National Social Protection Strategy in Tanzania, as well as strengthening the Government of Kenya's capacity to implement the National Safety Nets Programme (NSNP). In Uzbekistan, we are supporting a reform of social assistance programmes aimed to improve horizontal equity in the country.

## **We support governments with:**

### **Conceptualisation**

We draw on our extensive political economy experience and the knowledge and insights of our in-country partners to understand local scenarios, actors, and institutions.

### **Diagnosis**

We conduct comprehensive research, including in-country workshops and data analysis, to assess demand for social protection and the existing services and resources. We use organisational capacity assessment, benefit-incidence analysis, and microsimulations of changes in policy, among other tools, to identify strengths and gaps in current programming and regulations.

### **Vision**

We work with governments to help orientate the policy process, producing a vision document that incorporates their key objectives and priorities.

### **Policy drafting**

We support ministries in drafting their social protection policies or strategies, outlining programmes of work that assign a clear budget, timetable for delivery, and institutional responsibility.

### **Medium-term planning**

We assist governments to draw up medium-term budgets and action plans that outline priority activities and identify implementers and associated costs.



## Support to programme design and implementation

We develop programmes based on rigorous assessment of country context, support drafting of legislation to translate policy into laws and regulations, and build capacity in administrative functions. Among others, we have supported the design and implementation of a minimum income benefit in Moldova, a food stamp programme in Mongolia, a public employment programme in Nepal, and a child support programme in Bihar, India. We have also advised the governments of Zambia and Lesotho in their approach to identifying households eligible for social cash transfers (targeting).

Our work on social protection administrative support systems includes a focus on:

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#### **Targeting**

We helped to improve targeting of beneficiaries in Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mongolia, and Serbia, among others.

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#### **Accountability, grievance, and redressal**

We incorporate voice and accountability into programme design and have experience analysing grievance practices, and supporting their revision.

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#### **Payment delivery**

We helped governments tackle the difficulties of developing and maintaining a timely and predictable payment schedule (e.g. in India, Malawi, Moldova, and Myanmar) and researched new technologies for enabling electronic cash transfers (e.g. in Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Congo).

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#### **Monitoring and evaluation systems**

Our approach is focused on ensuring useful information feeds back into programme management and reporting, with recent work in Ghana, Kenya, Moldova, Mongolia, Mozambique, and Zambia.

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#### **Information systems and data integration**

We designed, developed, and operationalised programme management information systems (MIS) and researched the use of information system integration to better deliver social protection.

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#### **Graduation**

We evaluate complex graduation programmes, such as the Chars Livelihood Programme in Bangladesh, and focus on sustainable graduation when designing and implementing programmes.

## Monitoring and evaluation

In coordination with our Monitoring and Evaluation team, we have considerable experience in carrying out independent evaluations for a variety of governments and development partners. These include independent assessments and live monitoring of social protection programme operations and performance, as well as process reviews and impact evaluations to assess impact on persons, households, communities, and the local economy. We incorporate a focus on both intended and unintended effects and are fluent with a wide range of evaluation methods, including experimental and quasi-experimental quantitative techniques. We often adopt a mixed-method approach, stressing the importance of combining quantitative analysis with qualitative research to help understand the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions that quantitative methods alone don’t answer. We also carry out standalone qualitative evaluations of social protection programmes.

Examples of our evaluations include:

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**Kenya’s Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP)**

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**Cash Transfer Programme for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC)**

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**Uganda’s Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE)**

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**Lesotho’s Child Grant Programme (CGP)**

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**Pakistan’s Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and flood relief cash transfer programmes (CDCP)**

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**Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN)**



Our spotlight project TRANSFORM is an innovative learning package on the administration of national social protection floors in Africa. Its prime objective is to build critical thinking and capacities of policymakers and practitioners at national and decentralised levels to improve the design, effectiveness, and efficiency of social protection systems. Working together with African experts and counterparts from EU-SPS, ILO, and UNDP, we helped to support the development of several thematic modules (administrative delivery systems, monitoring and evaluation, information systems, and governance), as well as design and roll-out the TRANSFORM adult experiential learning face-to-face curriculum and e-learning platform.

## About Oxford Policy Management

Oxford Policy Management is committed to helping low- and middle-income countries achieve growth and reduce poverty and disadvantage through public policy reform. We seek to bring about lasting positive change using analytical and practical policy expertise. Through our global network of offices, we work in partnership with national decision makers to research, design, implement, and evaluate impactful public policy. We work in all areas of social and economic policy and governance, including health, finance, education, climate change, and public sector management. We draw on our local and international sector experts to provide the very best evidence-based support.

### Contact us

If you would like to discuss our work on poverty and social protection, please contact:

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For further information about OPM, visit our website [www.opml.co.uk](http://www.opml.co.uk)



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