

TOPIC GUIDE ON

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Zoë Scott

Topic Guide on Social Protection

Zoë Scott

About this guide

This GSDRC resource guide provides a reference for policymakers and practitioners involved in social protection. It introduces some of the best literature on the understandings and types of social protection, the design and implementation problems to be considered, the potential for mainstreaming other development concerns into social protection programming, and the major debates both the donor and academic arenas. New publications and emerging issues will be incorporated on a quarterly basis.

This topic guide was prepared by Zoë Scott. The GSDRC appreciates the contributions of Stephen Devereux, IDS; Stephen Kidd, IDS; Rachel Slater, ODI; Catherine Arnold, DFID; and Tim Conway, DFID. Comments, questions or documents for consideration should be sent to enquiries@gsdrc.org.

About the GSDRC

The Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) provides cutting-edge knowledge services on demand and online. It aims to help reduce poverty by informing policy and practice in relation to governance, conflict and social development. The GSDRC receives core funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).
www.gsdrc.org

Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC)
International Development Department, College of Social Sciences
University of Birmingham, UK

This updated edition published February 2012
© University of Birmingham 2012

Contents

Understanding social protection	5
Conceptualising social protection	5
Current global issues.....	6
The politics of social protection	6
The global financial crisis	7
Climate Change	8
Fragile states	8
Regional perspectives on social protection	9
Social protection and poverty.....	10
Social protection and economic growth	10
Additional information.....	11
 Types of social protection	 12
Social assistance	12
Cash transfers	12
Programme examples and lessons learned	13
Cash transfers in emergencies	14
Social Pensions.....	14
Public works programmes	15
In-kind transfers.....	15
Food	15
Utility subsidies	16
Health fee waivers	16
Social insurance	17
Labour market interventions	17
Labour market interventions for informal workers	18
Community-based social protection	18
 Design and implementation	 20
Practical guidance	20
Lessons learned	20
Financing and affordability	20
Managing fiduciary risk.....	21
Targeting.....	21
Delivery	22
Donor coordination.....	23
Mainstreaming social protection	23
A response to social exclusion	23
Gender	23
Children.....	24

Agriculture	25
Evaluating social protection programmes	26
Donor approaches to social protection	27
Where is a good place to start?	27
Donor approaches	27
Asian Development Bank (ADB)	27
Department for International Development (DFID)	27
International Labour Organisation (ILO)	28
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)	29
Oxfam	29
World Bank	29

Understanding social protection

Social protection is defined by DFID as 'a sub-set of public actions that help address risk, vulnerability and chronic poverty'. It has become central to many policy discussions as both a conceptual approach and concrete set of policies. As a conceptual approach, social protection offers a way of thinking the requirements of groups and individuals to live a fulfilling life, the role of the state in facilitating this, and the vulnerabilities of particular groups or individuals. As a set of policies, social protection consists of interventions which address vulnerabilities and factors which hinder a group or individual's capacity to enjoy a fulfilling life.

Social protection originates from the idea of the state as a provider and protector of citizens, enjoying a rich history in Western Europe in the post-World War II period. Originally social protection was limited to supporting people in managing and mitigating shocks and heightened vulnerabilities, but in the last two decades social protection discussions have expanded to encompass four types of interventions: protective (recovery from shocks); preventative (mitigating risks in order to avoid shocks); promotive (promoting opportunities); and transformative (focusing on underlying structural inequalities which give rise to vulnerability).

The broadening of social protection can be attributed to increased awareness and concern about globalised risks such as economic shocks and other threats to livelihoods, the emergence of human security as unit of analysis, the global human rights discourse, and the centrality of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals. Social protection intersects with other cross-cutting development concerns such as poverty and vulnerability, pro-poor growth, agricultural development, humanitarian to development transitions, rights, exclusion and voicelessness, and the capacity of developing country states to fulfil essential functions.

Conceptualising social protection

Social protection is concerned with people who are vulnerable or at risk in some way, such as children, women, elderly, disabled, displaced, unemployed, and the sick, and with ways of transferring assets to these vulnerable groups.

Traditionally, social protection has focused on short-term protective safety nets: mechanisms to protect people from the impact of shocks such as flood, drought, unemployment or the death of a breadwinner, as well as insurance interventions linked to formal employment. This focus on short-term poverty mitigation has been criticised as an expensive, welfarist intervention and a disincentive for individual self-reliance.

As a result of concerns with supporting equitable growth, social protection has evolved to include longer-term preventative and promotive perspectives. These approaches highlight the structural causes of chronic poverty and attempt to address the social, economic and political barriers vulnerable people face in climbing out of poverty. Building upon the idea of promotive social protection, which seeks to strengthen the agency of vulnerable people, social protection has also been discussed in terms of its transformative character, through which social protection operates with a rights-based approach to transform the status and opportunities of marginalised groups. Instead of being understood only in terms of poverty reduction, social protection is now seen as making a significant contribution to the promotion of economic growth and stability.

Barrientos, A. and Hulme, D., 2008, 'Social Protection for the Poor and Poorest in Developing Countries: Reflections on a Quiet Revolution', BWPI Working Paper 30, Brooks World Poverty Institute, Manchester

The rapid rise of social protection can be considered a 'quiet revolution'. How has this happened and what is its future potential? This paper traces the contours of social protection, its diversity and the factors that constrain its expansion. It argues for the energetic continuation of this revolution to improve the prospects of the world's poor people and to strengthen national and international solidarity and security. Researchers and policymakers need to find ways of: (1) scaling up social protection coverage in low-income countries without turning it into an donor development fad which is later cast aside; and (2) extending social protection into fragile states and difficult environments.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3840>

Norton, A., Conway, T and Foster, M., 2001, 'Social Protection Concepts and Approaches: Implications for Policy and Practice in International Development', Working paper 143, CAPE, Overseas Development Institute, London

How can international agencies contribute to improving the coverage and effectiveness of social protection as a component of poverty reduction strategies? This paper reviews conceptual developments of the meaning and importance of social protection and looks at experience of different policy instruments. Improving co-ordination of social policy is a major priority, as is tackling growing insecurity and inequality and taking account of institutions outside the state that provide social protection.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1731>

Shepherd, A., Marcus, R. and Barrientos, A., 2004, 'Policy Paper on Social Protection', paper produced for UK Department for International Development (DFID), final draft, Overseas Development Institute, London

What is meant by social protection? In answering this question, this paper discusses safety nets, social assistance and social insurance, and mutual and informal risk management. It argues that well-designed social protection can have a positive impact on economic growth and can be affordable even in low-income countries.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1762>

Sabates-Wheeler, R. and Devereux, S., 2007, 'Social Protection for Transformation', IDS Bulletin, vol. 38, no. 3, pp. 23-28
<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/121649596/abstract>

Cook, S. and Kabeer, N., 2009, 'Socio-economic Security over the Life Course: A Global Review of Social Protection', Institute of Development Studies, Brighton

This paper draws on regional studies to provide an overview of the current field of social protection. It suggests that social protection needs to move beyond risk management and safety nets to support productive or developmental trajectories out of poverty that can strengthen citizenship rights and claims to security. Innovative, more developmental social protection approaches adapted to particular contexts are emerging around the world. However, greater attention should be paid to the political economy of redistributive policies, the challenge of financing such policies, and their implications for the social contract between state and citizens. The state has a key role in coordinating inclusive social protection provision.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3830>

Further information on the role of rights in development can be found in the GSDRC topic guides on [Human Rights](#) and [Social Exclusion](#).

Current global issues

Many current global issues and debates link with social protection. Four of the most significant are political analysis, the global financial crisis, climate change, and the special challenges of working in fragile states.

The politics of social protection

The technical nature of policy documents often belies the political underpinnings of social protection interventions, as well as the political nature of their impacts. There is a movement towards a greater appreciation of the role politics plays in social protection provision at the actor, institutional, national, global, and social levels. Political analysis helps explain the links between politics and social protection at each of these levels in three ways:

- It sheds light on the incentives and reasons why social protection interventions are implemented, both from the perspective of donors and from national governments.
- It helps explain bottlenecks and constraints within social protection interventions, as well as identifying the actors and institutions through which interventions can be delivered effectively
- It enables a more in-depth appreciation of the impact of social protection, not only upon poverty reduction or growth but upon the political context.

Political analysis reveals important factors related to power, ownership, and political will affecting social protection. The provision of public goods through social protection programmes can radically alter a government's power base and could therefore be used as a way of maintaining or increasing power. Another key issue is the 'ownership' of social protection programmes, with suggestions that interventions are donor-driven with little support from recipient country governments. There is debate over the extent to which social protection is supported by country ownership and political willingness, but it is generally agreed that the two are desirable objectives and that donors should work towards building the capacity and willingness of governments to manage social protection interventions.

McCord, A., 2009, 'Cash Transfers and Political Economy in Sub Saharan Africa', Project Briefing No. 31, Overseas Development Institute, London

<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/3509.pdf>

Hickey, S., 2011, 'The Politics of Social Protection: What do we get from a 'social contract' approach?', Working Paper 216, Chronic Poverty Research Centre, Manchester

There have been growing calls to reframe social protection in terms of extending the 'social contract' to the poorest groups. This is often understood as relocating social protection within a broader project politics of rights and justice as opposed to patronage. However, it is important to consider the significant differences within social contract theory and between their related forms of social protection. 'Contracts' are not unproblematically progressive, and it seems unlikely that international development agencies could promote progressive social contracts around social protection without significant shifts in practice.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4190>

Zucco C., 2010, 'Cash Transfers and Voting Behaviour: An Assessment of the Political Impacts of the Bolsa Família Program', Princeton University, Princeton

What was the political impact of the government's Bolsa Família conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme in the 2006 Brazilian elections? This study estimates the extent to which the programme increased the probability of voting for President Lula. It concludes that Bolsa Família undoubtedly helped to re-elect Lula. While there is still considerable debate over the long-term implications of CCTs, the significant pro-incumbent electoral effects identified suggest that CCTs could be both 'good policy' and 'good politics'. Knowledge among politicians of these electoral effects could increase political will for the implementation of CCTs and reduce reliance on clientelism.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3805>

Devereux, S., and White, P., 2007, 'Pilots, Principles or Patronage: What Makes Social Protection Succeed in Southern Africa?', Paper prepared for the workshop 'Social Protection and Ideologies of Welfare in Southern Africa', University of Oxford, 6 December 2007

In southern Africa, social protection is often used in response to growing livelihood vulnerabilities. Studies of 20 social transfer schemes indicate that the design, implementation, and success of social protection instruments are dictated by: (i) international (donor/NGO) ideologies; and (ii) national (government) political processes. Social protection programmes which arise as a result of domestic political agendas rather than 'imported' interventions are more likely to succeed in terms of coverage, fiscal sustainability, political institutionalisation and impacts.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3786>

The Global Financial Crisis

The global financial crisis has restricted government funds available for social protection programmes, while its impact on individuals has led to an increase in the number of people reliant on them. The financial crisis has had and will continue to have a significant impact upon poverty and economic growth and as a result there exist concerns about the appropriateness of the social protection response, and - due to a decline in funds - donor and government capacity and willingness to implement social protection interventions.

McCord, A., 2009, 'The Global Financial Crisis: Poverty and Social Protection - Evidence from 10 Country Case Studies', ODI Briefing Paper No. 51, Overseas Development Institute, London

<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/docs/4285.pdf>

Heltberg, R., et al., 2012, 'Anatomy of Coping: Evidence from People Living through the Crises of 2008–11', Policy Research Working Paper 5957, World Bank, Washington DC

[http://www-](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2012/01/23/000158349_20120123115915/Rendered/PDF/WPS5957.pdf)

[wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2012/01/23/000158349_20120123115915/Rendered/PDF/WPS5957.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2012/01/23/000158349_20120123115915/Rendered/PDF/WPS5957.pdf)

World Bank Human Development Network, 2009, 'Averting a Human Crisis during the Global Economic Downturn: Policy Options from the World Bank's Global Development Network', Conference Edition, World Bank, Washington DC

How should the world respond to the current economic crisis in order to avert a large-scale human crisis? This report assesses the implications of the current situation for poor and vulnerable populations. It argues that responses must be comprehensive and should involve many sectors of the economy. They should focus on young people, the low-skilled, women, older workers, and immigrants. Recommendations include demand-side education programmes, an emphasis on adequate nutrition and HIV-related funding, public works programmes in rural areas, and a comprehensive package of support for workers.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3815>

Somavia, J., 2009, 'The Global Financial Crisis and its Impact on the Work of the Global Financial System', UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, Geneva

What impact will the global financial crisis have on the UN's work and how can these effects be alleviated? This report, based on a meeting of senior managers from UN agencies in 2009, calls for rapid action to address both the immediate challenges of the crisis and long-term issues. A coherent, comprehensive and coordinated strategy is needed. Recommendations include the establishment of a social protection floor, to consist of: (1) access to essential services; and (2) social transfers in cash and in kind.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3808>

Parks, W. and Abbott, D., 2009, 'Protecting Pacific Island Women and Children During Economic and Food Crises', Working Edition One for Advocacy, Debate and Guidance, UNICEF Pacific and UNDP Pacific, Suva

This report provides a synopsis of the food price rise and global economic crises together with their known and potential impacts on children and women. In outlining lessons and recommendations it argues that now is a critical time for

government investment in social interventions, which when well-designed can boost economic growth and make growth more pro-poor. In particular, gender-based policies that build on women's roles as economic agents and their preference for investing resources in child well-being can help to mitigate the effects of economic crises. Child protection mechanisms should be integrated into expanded social protection programmes.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3812>

Fiszbein, A., Ringod, D. and Srinivasan, S., 2011, 'Cash Transfers, Children and the Crisis: Protecting Current and Future Investments', *Development Policy Review*, vol. 29, no.5, pp. 585-601

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-7679.2011.00548.x/abstract>

Climate Change

Social protection has a role to play in helping people withstand short-term livelihood threats from climate change and in facilitating long-term adaptation to climate change. Levels of vulnerability and risk are affected by climate change, and these considerations are increasingly being included in the design of social protection programmes in terms of response (e.g. cash transfers), compensation (e.g. crop insurance) and adaptation (e.g. crop diversification, irrigation systems).

Raworth, K, 2007, 'Adapting to Climate Change: What's Needed in Poor Countries and Who Should Pay', Oxfam Briefing Paper 104, Oxfam International, Oxford

<http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/adapting%20to%20climate%20change.pdf>

Davies, M. et al, 2008, 'Social Protection and Climate Change Adaptation', Commission on Climate Change, Stockholm

How can synergies between social protection and climate change adaptation be identified and maximised? Social protection initiatives are unlikely to succeed in reducing poverty if they do not consider both the short- and long-term shocks and stresses associated with climate change. Researchers at the Institute of Development Studies have therefore developed an 'adaptive social protection' framework. This helps to identify opportunities for social protection to enhance adaptation, and for social protection programmes to be made more climate-resilient.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3791>

Heltberg, R., Siegel, P. B. and Jorgensen, S. L., 2010, 'Social Policies for Adaptation to Climate Change', in *Social Dimensions of Climate Change: Equity and Vulnerability in a Warming World*, eds. R. Mearns and A. Norton, The World Bank, Washington, DC, ch. 10

How can interventions increase society's capacity to manage climate risks, reducing household vulnerability while maintaining or improving opportunities for development? This paper presents a social risk management and asset-based conceptual framework to help design such interventions. An integrated, multisectoral approach is needed to manage both direct and indirect climate risks. This requires greater collaboration among professionals working on disasters, climate change, and social policy, including shared platforms around definitions, data, monitoring, research, and capacity building. In terms of social protection, index-based insurance and combinations of insurance and safety net approaches hold promise, but the limits to what insurance can achieve need to be kept in mind.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3802>

GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report, 2008, 'Climate Change and Social Protection', GSDRC, Birmingham

<http://www.gsdr.org/docs/open/HD520.pdf>

Fragile states

Social protection interventions are seen as a way of protecting vulnerable populations during conflict, in situations of fragility where a government is unable to fulfil its core functions, and as a way of facilitating rehabilitation after conflict ceases. Although the objectives of social protection in fragile states and other developmental contexts are essentially the same, fragile states present special challenges. These include whether national governments should be involved in the delivery of social protection, the mitigation of corruption, and considerations of the social dynamics between groups.

There is concern in the literature about how viable cash transfers are in fragile contexts. Cash transfers are beginning to be viewed as an alternative to food aid: they have been seen to provide a short-term incentive for peace as well as an effective bridge between short-term humanitarian aid provision and a longer-term development perspective. Although there may be fears about the capacity of a national government taking responsibility for social protection, it has been argued that social protection has a positive effect on state-building, in that nationally-owned social protection systems can promote the strengthening of the state and building of legitimacy.

Darcy, J., 2004, 'Conflict and Social Protection: Social Protection in Situations of Violent Conflict and its Aftermath', Theme Paper 5, Overseas Development Institute, London

How can people's lives and livelihoods be protected during and after conflict? This paper examines a range of strategies and both state and non-state roles in social protection. In insecure environments, support to non-formal mechanisms provided by civil society may be most effective, as despite their limited capacity they have greater access than formal providers. Broad-based welfare provision in post-conflict environments might avoid the social and political tensions that targeted assistance could create.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3823>

Harvey, P, 2009, 'Social Protection in Fragile States: Lessons Learned' in OECD DAC, 2009, 'Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Social Protection', OECD DAC, Paris, pp.183-196

How can social protection best be achieved in situations of fragility? This paper argues that while the objectives for social protection in fragile states are essentially the same as in development contexts, social protection instruments, financing and delivery need to be adapted. In order to scale up social protection in fragile settings, it is important to use a wider range of social protection instruments; to provide longer-term, more harmonised and predictable funding; and to work with a broader range of actors.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3816>

Harvey, P. and Holmes, R., 2007, 'The Potential for Joint Programmes for Long-Term Cash Transfers in Unstable Situations', Overseas Development Institute, London

<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/218.pdf>

Regional perspectives on social protection

Recent regional reviews of social protection systems and programmes highlight poverty and vulnerability as the principal drivers of protective, preventative, promotive and transformative social protection interventions in developing countries. There are wide regional variations among vulnerable and at-risk groups, appropriate responses and success factors. For instance, in Sub-Saharan Africa the number of labour market interventions is lower than that of Latin America, due to the lower proportion of the population being engaged in formal sector work. There are also clear differences in the levels of national government commitment to existing social protection frameworks, with Latin American governments displaying an overall greater willingness than their African counterparts, although donors are keen to ensure that responsibility for delivery lies with central governments.

Barrientos, A., and Hinojosa-Valencia, L., 2009, 'A Review of Social Protection in Latin America', Institute of Development Studies, Brighton

This study reviews social protection trends and policy responses in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the last two decades, the region has seen reforms of social insurance pensions and health insurance and the rapid expansion of social assistance. These changes have re-shaped social protection in most countries in the region. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain. The implementation and delivery of social assistance programmes require long-term partnerships under the direction of secure and well-resourced public sector agencies.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3837>

Devereux, S. and Cipryk, R., 2009, 'Social Protection in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Regional Review', Institute of Development Studies, Brighton

How successfully is social protection being delivered in Africa? What challenges remain in the extension of social protection? This study explores how social protection strategies are being implemented by African governments, with support from bilateral and multilateral donors and international and local NGOs. The social protection debate in Africa now needs to move beyond social transfers to focus on social justice, including the mobilisation of civil society to claim entitlements and rights from the state.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3829>

Kohler, G., Cali, M. and Stirbu, M., 2009, 'Social Protection in South Asia: A Review', UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, Kathmandu

How can social protection interventions help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals with equity in South Asia? What are the recent trends and future orientations of social protection in the region? This review finds that social protection needs to be scaled up and made more systemic in South Asia. Social protection strategies must respond to the multidimensional and dynamic nature of poverty by focusing on risk, vulnerability, social exclusion and political voice. Children should be at the heart of social protection in order to break the inter-generational cycle of poverty.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3806>

Social protection, poverty and economic growth

Past research on social protection often considered programmes to be costly interventions that did not bring about long-term poverty reduction and diverted resources away from growth-enhancing activities. Nowadays social protection systems are justified by growing evidence about the effects of both short- and long-term vulnerability on chronic poverty and economic growth, and how social protection mechanisms can mitigate these negative effects. This page offers perspectives on how and why social protection plays an instrumental role in development by a) assisting both the transitory and the chronically poor and b) promoting pro-poor growth.

Social protection and poverty

For many years social protection was regarded as a safety net for those who dipped temporarily below the poverty line. However, research in recent years has indicated that there are strong links between transitory and chronic poverty and that social protection can have a significant effect on the latter as well as the former. The Chronic Poverty Centre, for instance, understands social protection as a way of both managing risk and overcoming deprivation. Many authorities argue that development policies have not reached the world's chronically poor and that chronic poverty can best be tackled by social protection mechanisms. However, one of the most pertinent critiques of social protection is that rather than aiding chronically poor people to rise out of poverty it encourages dependency on the state.

Barrientos, A., 2010, 'Social Protection and Poverty', Social Policy and Development Programme Paper, no. 42, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

What is the potential for social protection programmes to address poverty and vulnerability in developing countries? This comprehensive report provides an overview of social protection and an assessment of its impact in Latin America, South and East Asia, and Sub Saharan Africa. Countries with stronger social protection show lower levels of poverty and vulnerability and are more resilient in the face of social and economic change or shock. However, financial sustainability and capacity limitations are challenges that must be addressed. It is helpful to view social protection finance as a remix of public expenditure rather than a 'new' expense.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4020>

Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2007, 'Tackling Obstacles to Social Protection for Chronically Poor People', Policy Brief No. 3, Chronic Poverty Research Centre, Manchester

http://www.chronicpoverty.org/uploads/publication_files/CPRC_PB3.pdf

DFID, 2005, 'Social Transfers and Chronic Poverty: Emerging Evidence and the Challenge Ahead', Practice Paper, UK Department for International Development (DFID), London

Can social transfers play a role in tackling extreme poverty? This paper draws on evidence from existing schemes across the world to suggest that social transfers could have a direct impact on poverty and enhance pro-poor growth. When integrated within a wider national social protection system, social transfers could be an effective alternative to traditional humanitarian assistance.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1766>

Social protection and economic growth

Social protection mechanisms were previously thought to draw state resources away from other growth-promoting activities and to have an adverse effect on beneficiaries' incentives to work. However it is now argued that social protection can play a significant role in promoting both general and 'pro-poor' economic growth. Social protection measures are thought to potentially lead to long-term growth by encouraging capital accumulation and investment, increasing work capacity, and helping to manage risk, as well as offering potential advantages to non-beneficiaries ('multiplier effects'). In general there are four social protection-related approaches to encouraging growth at both national and household levels: investments in human capital, managing risks, addressing market failures, and general attempts to reduce poverty (e.g. by reducing inequality).

DFID, 2006, 'Social Protection and Economic Growth in Poor Countries', Social Protection Briefing Note Series no. 4, UK Department for International Development, London

<http://www.gsdr.org/docs/open/SP16.pdf>

OECD-DAC Network on Poverty Reduction (POVNET), 2009, 'Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Employment and Social Protection', Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/63/8/43514582.pdf>

Barrientos, A. and Scott, J., 2008, 'Social Transfers and Growth: A Review', BWPI Working Paper 51, Brooks World Poverty Institute, Manchester

What effects may social transfers be expected to have on household-level growth in developing countries? This analysis of the available evidence finds very little to support concerns that social transfers have a negative impact on growth. Instead, there is some evidence to indicate that well-designed and well-implemented social transfers can facilitate micro-level growth by increasing the ability of poor households to invest in their productive capacity. Policymakers need to incorporate growth objectives into social transfer programmes to help build packages of interventions that promote sustainable, long-term improvements in well-being.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3838>

Barrientos, A., and Sabates-Wheeler, R., 2006, 'Local Economy Effects of Social Transfers', Final Report, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex

How and to what extent have social cash transfer programmes affected the local economy? This paper reports on a study examining the incidence and significance of local economy effects of social transfers in rural Mexico. The study focused on changes in household consumption and asset holdings among households ineligible to participate in the PROGRESA targeted cash transfer programme. Evidence supports the presence of local economy effects.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3835>

Noble, R., Ntshongwana, P., and Surender, R., 2008, 'Attitudes to Work and Social Security in South Africa', Human Sciences Research Council, Johannesburg

In the media and the political arena, there is concern that social grants discourage the unemployed from seeking work and foster a culture of dependency. Is such concern justified in South Africa? This study examines people's views about paid work, social grants, and their relationship. Its findings refute theories of dependency among South Africans living in households that receive grants, and also suggest ways of helping the unemployed to find work.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3819>

Dercon, S., 2011, 'Social Protection, Efficiency and Growth', WPS/2011-17, Centre for the Study of African Economies, University of Oxford

This paper considers the evidence on the cost of social protection to reduce poverty, and its contribution to efficiency and growth. It finds that social protection is one mechanism for making growth pro-poor. It offers a direct and simple means of redistributing some of the gains from growth, and ways to ensure that shocks do not reverse gains. While it is not a driver of growth, it may contribute to growth when well designed. In particular, social protection could potentially provide high growth impacts when it is tailored and focuses on: 1) children, especially under-fives; 2) facilitating internal migration and inclusive city development, possibly via urban workfare schemes that emphasise urban community asset building; and 3) making adolescents and young adults more employable, including through transfers conditional on training relevant to urban labour market transitions.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4238>

Additional information

In 2005, the Institute for Development Policy and Management (IDPM), University of Manchester, held a conference on 'Social Protection for Chronic Poverty'. Conference papers and proceedings can be downloaded from their [website](#).

Please see the GSDRC's [Social Exclusion topic guide](#) for an explanation of how exclusion can be used as a unit of analysis to describe the social inequalities which often necessitate social protection interventions.

Types of social protection

The most common types of social protection are:

- *Social assistance* – resources, either cash or in-kind, are transferred to vulnerable individuals or households. These transfers can be unconditional (for example, social pensions or cash benefits) or conditional (given in exchange for work on public works programmes or attendance at school, for instance).
- *Social insurance* – the beneficiary makes contributions to a scheme to mitigate risk, such as health insurance or unemployment insurance schemes.
- *Labour market interventions* – programmes designed to protect workers, such as minimum wage legislation.
- *Community-based or 'informal' social protection* – mechanisms by which social safety nets and coping strategies are provided and sustained at community-level.

Social assistance

Social protection programmes are described as 'social assistance' when resources, either cash or in-kind (e.g. food transfers) are transferred to vulnerable individuals or households. Social assistance mechanisms have been used for many years in industrialised countries, and are now employed effectively in developing country contexts. Such programmes take many forms. This section of the guide covers cash transfers, social pensions, public works programmes, and in-kind transfers.

Howell, F., 2001, 'Social Assistance - Theoretical Background', in 'Social Protection in the Asia and Pacific', ed. I. Ortiz, Asian Development Bank, Manila, ch. 7

What is social assistance and how should such programmes be designed? This chapter defines social assistance as government and non-governmental action to transfer resources to people whose vulnerability warrants some form of entitlement. Social assistance should be seen as a means to reduce poverty and to develop the capabilities of the most vulnerable, increasing social and economic participation and equality of opportunity. Programme design needs to balance the goals of: a) preventing shocks which will have a negative impact on the poor; b) reducing the impact of shocks; and c) helping vulnerable groups to cope with shocks.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3809>

Cash transfers

There is a wealth of literature on the impact of cash transfers and the various programming options available. Although cash transfers are not a panacea, they have been demonstrably effective and are seen as a viable mechanism in both developmental and humanitarian contexts. Conditional Cash Transfer (CCTs), implemented in Latin America with great success, are seen to be a way of mitigating the risk of cash transfers being misused. CCTs yield rapid, positive impacts (poverty alleviation, improved health and education outcomes) and break the 'vicious cycle' of intergenerational poverty in the long-term. However, CCTs are criticised for having high administrative, monitoring and enforcement costs, being too reliant on targeting, having a disempowering effect on recipients and negatively affecting overall levels of consumption amongst both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

Experience indicates that in the case of CCTs, adequate needs assessments are crucial, and that integrating CCT interventions into wider social policies bring huge gains. In general, there is the need to convince national governments that cash transfers are social 'investments' rather than free handouts. The 'externality effect' – the impact of CCTs on non-beneficiary households – also needs to be measured and assessed more stringently.

Slater, R. et al, 2008, 'A Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Role of Cash Transfers in Social Protection', ODI Project Briefing, Overseas Development Institute, London

This note presents a conceptual framework outlining how cash transfers can promote and protect livelihoods in both development and humanitarian relief settings. The framework encompasses three spheres and the intersections between them: (1) institutions, politics and governance; (2) capacity and implementation; and (3) local economic and social impacts. Issues common to all three spheres include political context and acceptability, targeting and instrument choice, and beneficiaries' voice.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3807>

Hanlon, J., Barrientos, A., and Hulme, D., 2010, Just Give Money to the Poor: The Development Revolution from the Global South, Kumarian Press, Sterling, VA

Access partial text via Google Books

Arnold, C., with Conway, T. and Greenslade, M., 2011, 'Cash Transfers: Evidence Paper, Department for International Development, London

What impact do cash transfers have on reducing poverty and increasing the resilience of poor households? This paper assesses the evidence and looks at the extent to which it can be generalised. It shows how design and financing features help to maximise transfers' effectiveness in a range of circumstances. Ultimately, cash transfers work as part of a broader strategy to achieve economic and social development.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4104>

Fiszbien, A., and Schady, N., 2009, 'Conditional Cash Transfers: Reducing Present and Future Poverty', Policy Research Report, World Bank, Washington DC

Do conditional cash transfer programmes (CCTs) succeed in reducing inequality? Are they effective in producing better development outcomes in the countries where they have been implemented? This report argues that CCTs have been an effective way to redistribute income to the poor, while recognising that even the best-designed and best-managed programme cannot fulfil all of the needs of a comprehensive social protection system. Evidence from existing programmes suggests that to maximise their potential impact, CCTs should be complemented with other interventions, particularly those that focus on outcomes rather than on promoting the use of services alone.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3804>

Holmes, R. and Slater, R., 2007, 'Conditional Cash Transfers: What Implications for Equality and Social Cohesion? The Experience of Oportunidades in Mexico', Overseas Development Institute, London

The Oportunidades programme aims to increase the human capabilities of poor households and break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Oportunidades helps five million families to enhance their well-being through cash transfers to mothers and increased access to education, health and nutrition. The programme has increased both access to and equality of access to public services, but improved service quality may be needed. In order for the Oportunidades model to be transferable, there must be: (1) strong political commitment to the programme; (2) a high level of institutional capacity in terms of the number and skills of staff; and (3) a supply of accessible health and education services.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3820>

For further information on the impact of conditional and unconditional cash transfers, see:

GSDRC, 2007, 'The Impact of Cash Transfers', GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report, Birmingham

<http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD462.pdf>

Programme examples and lessons learned

Hilou, D., and Soares, F. V., 2008, 'Cash Transfers: Lessons from Africa and Latin America', Poverty in Focus Report No.15, International Poverty Centre, New York

<http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/IPCPovertyInFocus15.pdf>

Soares, S., 2007, 'Conditional Cash Transfers in Brazil, Chile and Mexico: Implications for Inequality', Working Paper No.35, International Poverty Centre, New York

What impact do conditional cash transfers (CCTs) have on inequality? This paper investigates the effects of CCTs in Brazil, Mexico and Chile. CCT programmes helped reduce inequality in all three countries between the mid-1990s and mid-2000s. They are a low-cost way of reducing inequality that can be replicated. However, the total amount transferred by these programmes is modest, and their expansion is limited by political, administrative and budget constraints.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3824>

Devereux, S. et al, 2005, 'Making Cash Count: Lessons from Cash Transfer Schemes in East and Southern Africa for Supporting the Most Vulnerable Children and Households', Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton

To what extent have unconditional cash transfers been used in East and Southern Africa, and what can be learnt from these schemes? This report was commissioned by the United Nations Children's Fund as part of a review of social protection measures reaching vulnerable children. It summarises findings from a survey across 15 countries, and from case studies in four countries, drawing out lessons learned with a particular focus on reaching the most vulnerable children (MVC).

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1723>

Schubert, B., and Huijbregts, M., 2006, 'The Malawi Social Cash Transfer Pilot Scheme: Preliminary Lessons Learned', UNICEF, New York
 Access full text: [available online](#)

Cash transfers in emergencies

Cash transfers have been found to be particularly effective in emergencies, offering a protective mechanism which can be administered relatively easily in a short time-frame, with immediate impact. They also offer an opportunity for testing innovative ways of delivering transfers in difficult environments where 'normal' systems have been disrupted, for instance through the use of mobile phones in Kenya.

Ensuring a mainstreamed gender policy in cash transfer programmes in emergencies is challenging for implementing organisations. While cash transfers may be targeted at female beneficiaries, there is as yet little evidence to show any positive long-term effect on gender equality in the household and the wider community.

Datta, D., Ejakait, A., with Scriven, K., 2009, 'Cash Transfers Through Mobile Phones: An Innovative Emergency Response in Kenya', ALNAP Innovations Case Study 1, Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action, London
<http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/innovationcasestudy1-concern.pdf>

Harvey, P. Et al., 2010, 'Delivering Money: Cash transfer mechanisms in emergencies', The Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) and Save the Children UK, London

This report offers guidance on assessing the different options for cash delivery. It also explores the potential for stronger partnerships with private sector providers and looks at developments in the payments industry. It argues that context-specific analysis is vital, as well as the integration of cash approaches into contingency planning. Clearly defined programme objectives help to guide the choice of payment systems.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4092>

Concern Worldwide and Oxfam GB, 2011, 'Walking the Talk: Cash Transfers and Gender Dynamics', Concern Worldwide and Oxfam GB, London

Do cash transfers (CTs) in emergency contexts currently benefit women and contribute to women's empowerment? How can NGOs and donors develop more gender-sensitive CT programmes that help to redress inequality and work towards empowerment? This report examines the impacts of cash transfers on gender dynamics within households and communities. It finds mixed impacts and insufficient consideration of gender inequality and gender analysis in programme processes. To realise the potential value of CTs for women, NGOs and donors need to ensure, for example, that all emergency responses include a gender and social analysis; that clear and attainable gender aims are specified for each stage of the intervention; and that more investment is made in staff training.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4089>

Social Pensions

Social pensions are non-contributory pensions, a form of cash transfer targeted by age. Research shows that they have a strong poverty reducing potential as the cash benefits tend to be shared within households. In general the literature suggests that social pensions have been employed particularly successfully in southern African contexts.

Palacios, R., and Sluchynsky, O., 2006, 'Social Pensions Part 1: Their role in the Overall Pension System', Social Protection Discussion Paper No. 0601, World Bank, Washington DC

Are social pension schemes (SP) an effective way of alleviating poverty among the elderly in developing and transition countries? What issues need to be considered in formulating pension policy in developing countries? This study for the World Bank reviews the global experience with social pensions, finding that coverage and cost of schemes varies widely. Policy formulation needs to take country specific contexts, extent of coverage, and the relative poverty status of the elderly. More research is needed on fiscal trade-offs, incentives, and comparative analyses of SP versus direct social expenditure.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/2004>

Public works programmes

Public works programmes are a form of conditional transfer whereby cash or food is given in return for work on public infrastructure projects, such as road building. They can be employed as both short and long-term measures, and there has been a recent resurgence of interest in such programmes as a consequence of the food and financial crisis. Public works programmes are popular with donors as they are seen to create assets, produce jobs and be self-targeting (unattractive to the non-poor as such low wages or rations are paid). However, it is also argued that such schemes create as much dependency on the state as cash transfers, prevent the poor from engaging in their normal cash-generating activities, and are not always well-targeted. Although only tentative conclusions can be offered thus far the available evidence indicates that whilst short-term public works programming can promote consumption smoothing during labour market disruptions, their long-term social protection function is likely to be limited unless guaranteed employment is introduced.

McCord, A., and Farrington, J., 2008, 'Digging Holes and Filling Them in Again? How Far do Public Works Enhance Livelihoods?', Natural Resource Perspectives No.120, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London
<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/2571.pdf>

Subbarao, K., 2003, 'Systemic Shocks and Social Protection: Role and Effectiveness of Public Works Programs', Social Protection Discussion Paper Series no. 0302, World Bank, Washington DC

Public works (workfare) programmes have been important counter-cyclical interventions in both developed and developing countries for many years. This paper from the World Bank discusses the rationale behind such programmes and gives an overview of experiences in a number of countries – many of them in Asia and Africa – focusing on design features and how the programmes were selected and implemented. The paper concludes that the success of each programme depends very much on its design features.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1803>

McCord, A., 2004, 'Policy Expectations and Programme Reality: The Poverty Reduction and Labour Market Impact of Two Public Works Programmes in South Africa', ESAU Working Paper No.8, Overseas Development Institute, London
How effective has South Africa been in reducing poverty and promoting employment through public works programmes (PWP)? This study explores the contribution of PWPs to social protection in South Africa by examining the Gundo Lashu programme in Limpopo and the Zibambebe programme in KwaZulu Natal. It argues that, for reasons of both design and scale, PWPs alone cannot adequately address the social protection gap facing the working-age unemployed. PWPs should be targeted to the poorest and linked to other development initiatives, such as microfinance.
See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3821>

McCord, A. with Slater, R., 2009, 'Overview of Public Works Programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa', Overseas Development Institute, London
<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/4700.pdf>

In-kind transfers

In-kind transfers are non-cash resources passed to vulnerable individuals and households, often with the aim of modifying or influencing the behaviour of recipients. There is considerable debate over whether in-kind transfers should be favoured over cash transfers, despite the latter being popular for providing beneficiaries with choice in accordance with needs, as well as providing an opportunity for investment.

Food

The debate over food vs. cash transfers dates back to the 1970s, with discussions questioning whether food transfers can be used as an alternative to cash, or whether the two are complimentary. There is debate over whether food transfers are a nutritional or economic intervention, i.e. whether they aim to only 'feed people' or aim to support livelihoods. Food transfers are generally thought to be preferable in situations where markets are not functioning and the food/income shortages stem from a lack of supply rather than demand.

Gentilini, U., 2007, 'Cash and Food Transfers: A Primer', Occasional Paper No. 18, World Food Programme (WFP), Rome
http://www.wfp.org/sites/default/files/OP18_Cash_and_Food_Transfers_Eng%2007.pdf

Ahmed, A., et al, 2009, 'Comparing Food and Cash Transfers to the Ultra Poor in Bangladesh', Research Monograph 163, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Washington DC
<http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/rr163.pdf>

Gentilini, U., 2007, 'Food Transfers and Food Security', Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Bulletin, vol. 38, no. 3, pp. 82-86
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2007.tb00384.x/abstract>

Utility subsidies

Utility subsidies such as housing, electricity and water are designed to remove the burden of utility expenditures. However, there exist concerns that utility subsidies are not well-targeted and often do not reach poor communities living in areas without water and electricity. They are also seen as more costly to implement than other forms of social assistance. Housing subsidies, whilst expensive, run less risk of excluding the most vulnerable.

Katsura, H. and Romanik, C., 2002, 'Ensuring Access to Essential Services: Demand-Side Housing Subsidies', Social Protection Discussion Paper no 232, World Bank, Washington DC

the World Bank examines the strengths and the weaknesses of demand-side subsidy approaches for improving access to housing for poor households. It suggests that different subsidies are appropriate in different situations. Moreover, the design of housing-related subsidy programmes varies in response to philosophical, political and resource considerations. See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1818>

Komives, K., et al., 2007, 'Utility Subsidies as Social Transfers: An Empirical Evaluation of Targeting Performance', Development Policy Review, Vol. 25, Issue 6, pp. 659-679

Do utility subsidies actually help the poor? This paper argues that the average targeting performance of water and electricity subsidies is similar to that of other social transfer mechanisms using the same targeting method. The most common utility subsidies are consumption-based. These aim to subsidise low-volume users but primarily benefit the non-poor. Many geographically-targeted and most means-tested utility subsidies are progressive, but still exclude many poor households. Connection subsidies are an attractive alternative in low coverage areas, but they will only reach the poor if utilities extend network access to poor households and if households choose to connect.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3267>

Health fee waivers

Health service fee waivers and exemptions are part of the debate on user fees, which are adopted formally and informally in a variety of developing countries. Despite often being central to the functioning of state-provided services, user fees face inevitable criticism over limiting equity of access to services. Health service fee waivers redress some of the access problems caused by the introduction of service fees. However, it has been suggested that health service waivers and exemptions will only be effective if they form part of a nationwide policy which is formally monitored and enforced at local and national (formal and informal) levels.

Bitrán, R., and Giedion, U., 2003, 'Waivers and Exemptions for Health Services in Developing Countries', Social Protection Discussion Paper Series, No. 308, World Bank, Washington DC

Can a system of user fees in health care be compatible with the goal of preserving equitable access to services? Is the use of waivers the way forward? This study assesses health care systems in Asia and Africa and argues that the key to success is in the design of waiver systems.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=749>

Kivumbi, G., and Kintu, F., 2002, 'Exemptions from Waivers and Cost-sharing: Ineffective Safety Nets in Decentralized District in Uganda', Health Policy and Planning, vol. 17, suppl. 1, pp 64-71

Are safety nets such as waivers and exemptions effective in tackling inequalities created by user-payment for health services? This article reports on exemption schemes in two districts of Uganda. It shows that poor and marginalised groups lack fair access to health care and not much has been done to address this. These safety nets will only be effective if they: are backed by national health financing policy; reconcile competing revenue demands of local government; and are strictly enforced and supervised by local and central governments.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3817>

Social insurance

Social insurance schemes are contributory programmes in which beneficiaries make regular financial contributions in order to join a scheme that will reduce risk in the event of a shock. Because health costs can be very high, health insurance schemes are a popular way of mitigating risk from illness. However, some people argue that they are too expensive for the poor and should be complemented with social assistance. Other types of social insurance schemes include contributory pensions, unemployment insurance, funeral assistance and disaster insurance. Social insurance is strongly linked to the formalised labour market, meaning that coverage is determined by number of formal workers in a country. The informal labour market therefore presents a strong challenge to the success of social insurance programmes.

Ranson, M., 2002, 'Reduction of Catastrophic Health Care Expenditures by a Community-Based Health Insurance Scheme in Gujarat, India: Current Experiences and Challenges', *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation*, vol. 80, no. 8

Spending on medical care can be a major financial burden on poor people in developing countries. Can community-based health insurance schemes reduce health care costs for the poor? This study published by the World Health Organisation investigates the impact of a community-based medical insurance scheme in Gujarat, India on the use of health care and the financial burden of medical expenses. Such community-based health insurance schemes can protect poor households from the uncertain risks of medical expenses.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1741>

Mesa-Lago, C., 2008, 'Social Insurance (Pensions and Health), Labour Markets and Coverage in Latin America', *Social Policy and Development Programme Paper No. 36, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development*

[http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/240da49ca467a53f80256b4f005ef245/6e08841ff30c8f83c125751200320b25/\\$FILE/Mesa-Lago-paper.pdf](http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/240da49ca467a53f80256b4f005ef245/6e08841ff30c8f83c125751200320b25/$FILE/Mesa-Lago-paper.pdf)

Labour market interventions

Labour market interventions provide protection for poor people who are able to work. Interventions can be both active and passive: active programmes include training and skills development and employment counselling, whilst passive interventions include unemployment insurance, income support and changes to labour legislation, for example in establishing a minimum wage or safe working conditions. Labour market interventions can run alongside various social assistance and cash transfer programmes and can be integrated into longer-term development strategies.

Lal, R., Miller, S., Lieuw-Kie-Song, M., and Kostzer, D., 2010, 'Public Works and Employment Programmes: Towards a Long-term Developmental Approach', *International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, United Nations Development Programme, Brazil*

How can public works programmes deliver longer-lasting development impact? This paper notes that few Public Employment Programmes (PEPs) have been implemented on a scale large enough to address structural poverty. However, large-scale PEPs were able to respond quickly to and mitigate the effects of the economic crisis, suggesting their relevance for inclusive growth strategies. Reconceiving PEPs as Employment Guarantee (EG) schemes could provide a more permanent complement to market-driven employment creation and to other types of social protection. In addition, the jobs created by governments through EGs could provide critical public goods and services, further enhancing the livelihood strategies of the poor.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4026>

DFID, 2004, 'Labour Standards and Poverty Reduction', *UK Department for International Development, London*

How can labour standards contribute to poverty reduction? This paper focuses on the nature and impact of labour standards in developing countries. Effective and well-judged implementation of labour standards can play an important role in reducing global poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A commitment to core labour standards is part of a broader rights-based approach to poverty reduction.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1591>

Betcherman, G., Olivas, K. and Dar, A., 2004, 'Impacts of Active Labor Market Programs: New Evidence from Evaluations with Particular Attention to Developing and Transition Countries', *Social Protection Discussion Paper Series no. 0402, World Bank, Washington DC*

What is the impact of active labour market programmes (ALMPs) on reducing the risk of unemployment and increasing the earning capacity of workers in developing and transition countries? This report claims that ALMPs generally have a positive impact on the employment prospects of participants, although there are mixed results in many cases. Successful interventions require a comprehensive package of services and carefully targeted programmes that are oriented towards labour demand and linked to real workplaces.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1758>

Labour market interventions for informal workers

One of the challenges in implementing successful labour market interventions is how to incorporate the informal economy, which comprises a significant portion of the workforce in developing countries.

Lund, F., 2009, 'Social Protection and the Informal Economy: Linkages and Good Practices for Poverty Reduction and Empowerment', in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 'Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Social Protection', OECD, Paris, pp.69-88

How can social protection in developing countries empower people to create employment-related ways out of poverty? This paper examines empowerment in the context of social protection for informal workers. It argues that social protection can help to improve the health and well-being of informal sector workers, especially poorer women, and build their capacity to organise and demand better working conditions. Interventions must consider the sector's diversity, its permanence, and the limited choices that drive people to work in it.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3811>

Barrientos, A. and Barrientos, S. W., 2002, 'Extending Social Protection to Informal Workers in the Horticulture Value Chain', Social Protection Discussion Paper Series 0216, World Bank, Washington DC

How can social protection mechanisms address the increasing informalisation of work in the global economy? How can the contribution of all potential stakeholders be harnessed to increase support for informal workers? This paper uses a value chain approach and a social responsibility matrix to examine fruit exports from Chile and South Africa to the United Kingdom. It finds that horticultural workers are largely excluded from existing coverage or benefits, which favour those in more stable employment with stronger attachment to an individual employer. Community-based provision, linked to state and market provision, is one avenue through which social protection could be developed.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3836>

Community-based social protection

Formal social protection systems do not offer complete coverage and inevitably exclude parts of a population. A variety of traditional or 'informal' ways of providing social protection within households, groups and networks fill some of the gaps left by formal social protection interventions and distribute risk within a community. Community-based mechanisms for providing social protection are becoming more popular as a research topic, with increasing calls for 'traditional' or informal social protection mechanisms to be carefully considered within programme design, and correspondingly supported. There is also considerable interest in the potential for community-based mechanisms to be scaled up in order to undertake wider development activities, and in how to create links between social security schemes and community-based approaches with the aim of extending coverage to meet the challenge of providing adequate health services to the developing world.

De Coninck, J., and Drani, E., 2009, 'Social Protection is Centuries Old! Culture and Social Protection for the Very Poor in Uganda: Evidence and Policy Implications', Working Paper No. 140, Chronic Poverty Research Centre, Manchester

Millions of Ugandans in chronic poverty are likely to continue being by-passed by the opportunities that economic growth offers, mostly to the 'active poor'. Development actors are therefore increasingly turning their attention to social protection. Viewing social protection as a transformative intervention that extends to the causes of extreme poverty, this paper argues that social protection initiatives borrow much from elsewhere, neglecting the local cultural context, and failing to build on existing indigenous protection mechanisms that could be strengthened.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3799>

du Toit, A. and Neves, D., 2009, 'Informal Social Protection in Post-Apartheid Migration Networks: Vulnerability, Social Networks and Reciprocal Exchange in the Eastern and Western Cape, South Africa', BWPI Working Paper 74, Brooks World Poverty Institute, Manchester

What systems of informal social protection exist amongst poor and marginalised African households in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, and in the rural Eastern Cape? This paper considers the dynamics of informal social protection in post-apartheid migrant networks. It argues that in poor and marginalised households in South Africa, the indirect impacts of social grants cannot be adequately understood by focusing on individual or household decision making. Elaborate and extensive networks of reciprocal exchange link rural and urban households, allowing costs and resources, opportunities and shocks to be shared and redistributed. However, these networks' entrenched power relations may reinforce the exclusion and vulnerability of some individuals. Additional formal social protection is therefore needed.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3798>

Coheur, A. et al, 2008, 'Linkages between Statutory Social Security Schemes and Community-Based Social Protection: A Promising New Approach', International Social Security Association, Geneva

How can policymakers meet the urgent need to extend social protection coverage? This paper discusses research findings

on innovative integrated strategies to extend social health protection by linking statutory social security and informal or community-based social protection schemes. It develops a typology of links that could strengthen schemes in the areas of finance, administration, governance, service delivery and policy planning, exploring the actual and potential impact of such links. Continuing to develop parallel mechanisms for extending coverage risks competition and duplication, but linking the different systems could fruitfully address these problems.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3797>

Mitlin, D., Satterthwaite, D. and Bartlett, S., 2011, 'Capital, Capacities and Collaboration: the Multiple Roles of Community Savings in Addressing Urban Poverty', Human Settlements Working Paper, IIED, London

Recent experiences demonstrate the significance of collective savings among low-income urban citizens in developing countries. Such practices have helped to raise incomes, consolidate and protect individual and collective assets, and reduce political exclusion. Some savings groups have evolved into substantive institutions. Not only can community savings initiatives trigger multiple reinforcing effects that help to move households out of poverty, they can also achieve changed relations with government agencies that support a more effective pro-poor and accountable state.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4187>

Habtom, G. M. K., and Ruys, P., 2006, 'Traditional Risk-sharing Arrangements and Informal Social Insurance in Eritrea', Health Policy, vol. 80, no. 1, pp. 218-235

In the absence of formal safety nets, can Eritrea's traditional system of voluntary mutual aid community associations ('Mahber') be extended to cover unexpected health costs and other related costs? This study examines the role of kinship networks and Mahber, and assesses the potential of Mahber-based health insurance schemes for the informal sector and rural poor. It finds that where the state no longer provides free public health services and access to private insurance is denied, Mahber-based health insurance is a viable way of providing modern health services.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3792>

Design and implementation

Designing and implementing social protection programmes in developing countries entails real challenges on both the demand and supply side. The presence of informal social protection mechanisms combined with a lack of prior government service provision means that there is often little demand for (or understanding of) social protection. On the supply side, governments often lack the will to support social protection programmes which they can ill-afford. In this context, reaching the most vulnerable presents problems, particularly where particular groups are marginalised and/or excluded. The resources below present some of the key considerations in social protection programming.

Practical guidance

Samson, M., van Niekirk, I. and Mac Quene, K., 2006, 'Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes', Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI), Cape Town
http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/designing_and_implementing_social_transfer_programmes.pdf

Grosh, M., et al., 2008, 'For Protection and Promotion: The Design and Implementation of Effective Safety Nets', World Bank, Washington DC
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SPLP/Resources/461653-1207162275268/For_Protection_and_Promotion908.pdf

Lessons learned

Lessons from past social protection interventions can be used to inform programme design and implementation. For instance, it is suggested that despite their popularity cash transfers are not always the most viable option, for example when markets are not functioning well, and/or goods are subject to price fluctuations. The potential for pensions are also highlighted, as is the use of technological innovation to distribute transfers (such as mobile phones). It is generally accepted that a successful social protection programme requires buy-in from beneficiaries, as well as political support (and active engagement/ownership) from the national government. The prominent role of donors in both financing and implementing social protection programmes raises questions about the long-term sustainability of an intervention designed to be a long-term process.

Jackson, C. et al., 2011, 'Lessons from Social Protection Programme Implementation in Kenya, Zambia and Mongolia', Research Report 69, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton

In what ways can social protection programming with its investments in human capital (through education, health and nutrition) stop the intergenerational transfer of poverty? This study examines social protection programmes in Kenya, Zambia and Mongolia to understand the factors (design and implementation) that account for success. It argues that agencies need to ensure that ground-level good practice is effectively brought into policy and programming.
See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4189>

Ellis, F., 2007, 'Regional Lesson Learning from the Case Studies', REBA Case Study Brief, Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme, Johannesburg
http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/casestudies/reba_case_study_brief_lessons.pdf

Barrientos, A., 2007, 'Introducing Basic Social Protection in Low-Income Countries: Lessons from Existing Programmes', BWPI Briefing Paper, Brooks World Poverty Institute, Manchester
<http://www.bwpi.manchester.ac.uk/resources/Working-Papers/bwpi-wp-0607.pdf>

For more examples of lesson-learning within cash transfer programmes please see the section on [Types of social protection](#).

Financing and affordability

Social protection mechanisms are financed by international donors, national governments, individuals, communities, the private sector and NGOs. Current research questions the previously-held belief that developing countries cannot afford social security programmes and that money spent on social transfers to the poor could be better spent promoting growth. However the affordability of projects in the long term is a major concern for national governments, as well as donors concerned with the sustainability aspect of aid interventions. These concerns are especially pertinent in resource-constrained environments with low potential for taxation, and in resource-rich countries which possess the administrative

capacity to finance social protection. In general the literature indicates that donor funding to social protection projects should be reliable, predictable and long-term in order to encourage national government support and ultimately build the recipient country capacity to deliver such programmes. Further, social protection interventions which are adequately targeted to prevent leakage help provide value-for-money.

Barrientos, A., 2007, 'Financing Social Protection', BWPI Working Paper 5, Brooks World Poverty Institute (BWPI), Manchester

<http://www.bwpi.manchester.ac.uk/resources/Working-Papers/bwpi-wp-0507.pdf>

Handley, J., 2009, 'Fiscal Space for Strengthened Social Protection: West and Central Africa', Regional Thematic Report 2, UNICEF, Dakar

http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/wcaro_UNICEF_ODI_2_Fiscal_Space.pdf

Holmes, R. and Jackson, A., 2008, 'Cash Transfers in Sierra Leone: Are They Appropriate, Affordable or Feasible?', Overseas Development Institute, London

Can cash transfers assist in Sierra Leone's post-conflict transition and contribute to reducing poverty levels? This project briefing finds that the political acceptability of cash transfers remains a challenge. To achieve political acceptability, particularly from donors, cash transfer programmes must be linked, programmatically and institutionally, to wider economic growth processes. Implementation challenges, including institutional capacity and physical infrastructure, are serious but not insurmountable.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3001>

Managing fiduciary risk

As an investment in the future, donors have an important role to play in managing fiduciary risks and thereby strengthening the affordability of social protection for the governments of developing countries. However, the possibility of eliminating such risks is thought to be low.

Department for International Development, 2006, 'Managing the Fiduciary Risk Associated with Social Cash Transfer Programmes: DFID How To Note', DFID, London

What fiduciary risks do social cash transfer programmes, like pensions or household allowances, carry? How can international donors limit the diversion of these funds away from their intended beneficiaries? This paper outlines methods for appraising, minimising and monitoring the fiduciary risk of a cash transfer initiative. It argues that, while such losses are almost impossible to eliminate, they can be reduced by assessing and recording the risks, designing programmes to mitigate these risk and regular monitoring and evaluations to ensure the objectives of the programme are being met.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1987>

O'Cleirigh, E., 2009, 'Affordability of Social Protection Measures in Poor Developing Countries', in Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Social Protection, OECD, Paris, pp. 111-127

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/26/40/43280766.pdf>

Targeting

Targeting refers to whether social protection mechanisms reach the poorest, or most vulnerable, households without experiencing significant leakage into the hands of less vulnerable or ineligible individuals ('errors of inclusion') or failing to provide coverage to needy sections of the population ('errors of exclusion'). Transfers can be targeted on the basis of geography, gender, age, disability, household size or other likely indicators of poverty or vulnerability.

Targeting has been shown to work in many instances. There are however three caveats: first, there are instances where targeting is not effective, such as regional targeting, which risks both leakage and under-coverage of the ultra-poor; second, there is a considerable trade-off within the programme design, as leakage to the ineligible is costly, but so is the administrative burden of means-testing for programme eligibility; third, it is argued that targeted interventions are highly political, particularly in the case of community-based targeting.

Slater, R. and Farrington, J., 2009, 'Targeting of Social Transfers: A Review for DFID', Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London

<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/4521.pdf>

Yoong, J., Rabinovich, L., and Diepeveen, S., 2012, 'The Impact of Economic Resource Transfers to Women Versus Men: A Systematic Review', Technical report, EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/PDF/Outputs/SystematicReviews/EconomicTransfer2012Yoong.pdf>

Slater, R., and Farrington, J., 2009, 'Making Social Transfers Appropriate, Achievable and Acceptable: A Practical Tool for Good Targeting', Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London

How can social transfers best be targeted to address financial poverty? How can decision-makers navigate trade-offs between different targeting choices? This note presents a 'targeting decision tree'. It outlines the minimum data and information requirements for good targeting and the questions requiring answers. Decisions should be based on whether targeting is appropriate, achievable and acceptable. Successful targeting is most likely if programmes have one realistic objective, and if they distinguish clearly between who should be eligible for support and how to identify the eligible.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3828>

Caeyers B. and Dercon S., 2008, 'Political Connections and Social Networks in Targeted Transfer Programmes: Evidence from Rural Ethiopia', Working Paper 313, Centre for the Study of African Economies, University of Oxford

Is the targeting carried out by community-based transfer programmes influenced by beneficiaries' political and social connections? This paper investigates how targeted transfers are allocated in Ethiopia under a highly bureaucratised and decentralised administrative system. It finds strong evidence of favouritism and the influence of political connections; families in need without connections to local political elites are significantly less likely to receive food aid transfers. This illustrates the importance of political economy in the delivery of even basic aid.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3818>

To read more on the politics of targeting, see the section on [The politics of social protection](#).

Delivery

In areas with poor financial infrastructure, social assistance, such as cash or food transfers, has conventionally been delivered using 'pull' mechanisms. Under this approach, recipients are required to report to a specified location at a particular date and time to collect their transfers. In contrast, 'push' mechanisms allow for transfers to be made to recipients using technology, for example, the use of mobile phones or bank accounts to transfer money. Strong, context-specific analysis is crucial to understand how technology can best be used and the effects of using new technologies on the most vulnerable beneficiaries.

The development of new technologies has allowed for greater efficiency, cost-effectiveness and flexibility in accessing funds. It has also resulted in other benefits, such as empowering recipients through gaining capacity in the use of information and communications technology.

Devereux, S., 2010, 'Using Technology to Deliver Social Protection: Exploring Opportunities and Risks', Development in Practice, vol. 20, no. 3, pp.367-379

What are the opportunities and risks of using information and communications technology (ICT) to deliver social protection? This article considers experiences from southern Africa, focusing on pilot projects in Malawi. It finds that using ICT to deliver social protection increases project efficiency and cost-effectiveness (particularly at large scale), increases flexibility and broader access to banking facilities for beneficiaries, and can especially empower women. It can also bring wider benefits to the national economy. With effective strategies in place to address risks such as information regulations and data security, the opportunities of ICT use can significantly outweigh the risks.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4027>

Datta, D., Ejakait, A., with Scriven, K., 2009, 'Cash Transfers Through Mobile Phones: An Innovative Emergency Response in Kenya', ALNAP Innovations Case Study 1, Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action, London

<http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/innovationcasestudy1-concern.pdf>

Harvey, P. et al., 2010, 'Delivering Money: Cash transfer mechanisms in emergencies', The Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) and Save the Children, London

This report offers guidance on assessing the different options for cash delivery. It also explores the potential for stronger partnerships with private sector providers and looks at developments in the payments industry. It argues that context-specific analysis is vital, as well as the integration of cash approaches into contingency planning. Clearly defined programme objectives help to guide the choice of payment systems.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4092>

Donor coordination

The influence of the aid effectiveness agenda upon donor approaches to social assistance has meant that there is an emphasis on the need for donors to not only encourage recipient country ownership but also harmonise aid interventions in order to avoid duplication and promote the accountability of donors, national governments and service providers.

Waterhouse, R., 2007, 'Coordination and Coverage of Social Protection Initiatives in Mozambique', REBA Briefing Paper, International Poverty Centre, New York

<http://www.ipc-undp.org/publications/cct/africa/REBABriefingPaperSPCoordCoverageJuly07.pdf>

Mainstreaming social protection

This section discusses the various ways in which social protection can be mainstreamed with other policy concerns.

A response to social exclusion

In targeting particularly vulnerable groups, social protection is a way of responding to the existence of social exclusion. The process of identifying those most in need of social protection interventions entails undertaking poverty and vulnerability analyses which help illuminate social exclusion from a life-cycle perspective. 'Life-cycle analysis' within the design of social protection programmes identifies sources of social exclusion at different stages in the life-cycle through the use of disaggregated data, enabling programmers to allocate resources and focus their attentions on addressing social, as well as economic, risks. Although there are problems in involving local communities in social protection programmes due to the risk of existing levels of exclusion being exacerbated through community-targeting approaches, there exist a number of guidelines for involving local organisations in order to promote social inclusion, specifically in employment programmes.

Cain, E., 2009, 'Social Protection and Vulnerability, Risk and Exclusion across the Life Cycle', in Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Social Protection, OECD DAC, Paris, pp. 129-144

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/63/10/43514563.pdf>

Henriques, J.M., 2008, 'Social Protection, Employment and Local Development: Guidelines to Help Partners to Consult Local Organisations in the Social Economy in the Area of Social Exclusion', Bridges for Inclusion, International Labour Office (ILO), Geneva

http://www.ciaris.org/workspace_files/474/Guidelines_-_Social_protection__Employment__Local_Development_and_Inclusion_041208_Bridges.pdf

For detailed information on social exclusion, please see the GSDRC's [Social Exclusion topic guide](#).

Gender

Gender roles and social norms play key roles in determining an individual's vulnerability, exposure to shocks and access to social protection mechanisms. Men and women often face different risks and vulnerabilities and can also be affected by the same risks differently. There is a need to conduct gender-focused baseline studies in order to determine where particular pockets of vulnerability lie.

It is often women who face the greatest vulnerabilities due to lack of capital, high wage differentials and gendered work norms, bearing the responsibility for childcare, and exclusion from basic services. Therefore it is often women who require the benefits of social protection interventions. This implies that a level of targeting is required in order to reach marginalised women who are likely not to benefit from existing programmes (e.g. labour market interventions for formal sector workers). In relation to this, the recognition that social transfers directed at women may not always stay in the possession of women at household level suggests that conditionality is useful in ensuring that transfers do directly benefit women.

Although gender-sensitive policy and programme design has the potential to increase the effectiveness of social protection, gender has not been integrated well into social protection approaches. Gender equality and women's empowerment are considered secondary goals, resulting in a substantial disconnect between these goals on the one hand and social protection objectives on the other. Explicit attention to empowerment in the design of social protection programmes is necessary in order to broaden the view of gendered vulnerabilities beyond a narrow focus on support for women's domestic roles and participation in traditional low growth sectors.

Holmes, R. and Jones, N., 2010, 'Rethinking Social Protection Using a Gender Lens', ODI Working Paper, no. 320, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London

To what extent is social protection programming reinforcing women's traditional roles and responsibilities, or helping to transform gender relations in economic and social spheres? How can policy and programme design and evaluations better address gender-specific risks and vulnerability? This paper synthesises multi-country research, finding that the integration of gender into social protection approaches has so far been uneven at best. However, all the programmes studied had both intended and unintended effects on women and gender relations. Attention to dynamics within the household can help to maximise positive programme impacts and reduce potentially negative ones. Relatively simple design changes and investment in more strategic implementation practices are needed.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4015>

Thakur, S. G., Arnold, C., and Johnson, T., 2009, 'Gender and Social Protection', in Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Social Protection, OECD, Paris, pp. 167-182

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/26/34/43280899.pdf>

Luttrell, C. and Moser, C., 2004, 'Gender and Social Protection', Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London

How is gender relevant to social protection programmes? This paper discusses the role of gender issues in social protection policies, programmes and strategies. Vulnerabilities to risk vary significantly by gender, and shocks affect men and women differently. These differences need to be taken into account when developing social protection policies and programmes.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1808>

Ezemenari, K., Chaudhury, N. and Owens, J., 2002, 'Gender and Risk in the Design of Social Protection Interventions', Social Protection Discussion Paper Series 0231, World Bank, Washington DC

What are the gender dimensions of risk and its effects on individuals, households and vulnerable groups? How can gender considerations be incorporated in the design of social protection programmes? This paper documents the gender disaggregated impact of shocks, based on available empirical evidence, and reviews the gender issues specific to safety nets, pensions and unemployment programmes. It concludes that undue focus on the household or family when designing social protection programmes compromises their efficiency, equity and effectiveness.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1806>

Holmes, R and Jones, N., 2010, 'How to Design and Implement Gender-sensitive Social Protection Programmes: A Toolkit' Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London

<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/5093.pdf>

Gender & Development special issue on Social Protection, Volume 19, Issue 2, 2011

<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cgde20/19/2>

Children

Ensuring that social protection has a strong child focus is an objective shared by leading organisations, particularly where addressing vulnerability and risk are seen as the cornerstones of social protection. However existing social protection frameworks do not always take into account the particular vulnerabilities of children (such as early marriage, child soldiering and orphanhood). It is therefore argued that the needs of children must be accommodated within social protection interventions by identifying child-specific risks and vulnerabilities and attempting to synergise child protection with wider social protection design and implementation through the use of instruments such as conditional cash transfers (e.g. Brazil's Bolsa Escola), social health insurance and accessible social services for children.

Sabates-Wheeler, R., Devereux, S. and Hodges, A., 2009, 'Taking the Long View: What Does a Child Focus Add to Social Protection?', IDS Bulletin, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 109-119

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2009.00015.x/abstract>

Joint Statement on Child Sensitive Child Protection, 2009, DFID, HelpAge International, Hope & Homes for Children, Institute of Development Studies, International Labour Organisation, Overseas Development Institute, Save the Children UK, UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank, London/New York/Washington DC

http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/CSSP_joint_statement_9.13.10.pdf

Jones, N., 2009, 'Promoting Synergies between Child Protection and Social Protection: West and Central Africa', Regional Thematic Report 5, UNICEF, Dakar

http://www.crin.org/docs/Doc5_Child_Protection_and_social_protection_in_WCA.pdf

Jones, N. and Holmes, R., 2010, 'Tackling Child Vulnerabilities through Social Protection: Lessons from West and Central Africa', Background Note, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London

This report synthesises learning from child-sensitive social protection programmes in Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Congo, and Senegal. A child-sensitive approach to social protection needs to be informed by the specific vulnerabilities and risks that children and their carers face. Challenges to such an approach in West and Central Africa are political instability, lack of fiscal space, hostile socio-cultural attitudes, and lack of an evidence-based political culture. Social protection design and implementation must be gender- and child-sensitive, and linked to broader reforms to create fiscal space.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4014>

Greenberg, A., 2007, 'Enhanced Protection for Children Affected by AIDS', UNICEF, New York

How can children affected by AIDS be protected from increased vulnerability, exploitation and neglect? This report finds that it is important to strengthen national and community-level responses for all vulnerable children by enhancing social protection, legal protection and justice, and alternative care. This work must be underpinned by efforts to address the silence and stigma that allow HIV-related discrimination, abuse and exploitation of children to continue.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3789>

Marcus, R. and Pereznieta, P., with Cullen, E. and Jones, N., 2011, 'Children and Social Protection in the Middle East and North Africa: A Mapping Exercise', ODI Working Paper 335, London

This study maps child-sensitive social protection initiatives in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), where children are typically overrepresented among the poor. It also considers the main actors involved in social protection provision, their strategies and programme limitations, and provides recommendations for improved child social protection. Challenges to more effective and child-sensitive social protection in the region include financial barriers, the fragmentation of provision, local-level difficulties in obtaining the correct documentation to obtain benefits, and citizens' lack of knowledge of their entitlements.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4188>

Agriculture

Agriculture and pro-poor growth have an established connection. Whilst the connection between pro-poor growth and social protection as a mechanism to both promote pro-poor growth and protect vulnerable populations from shocks is also well-established, attempts to make direct links between agricultural policy and social protection are not yet systematic. However social protection and agricultural policies are intricately linked: agriculture generates the conditions through which social protection interventions can succeed (e.g. stable food prices, livelihoods), whilst social protection promotes agricultural growth (e.g. protecting farmers from price fluctuations, increasing productivity and providing insurance against weather-related losses). A perspective on the needs of those whose livelihoods depends on agriculture is particularly pertinent when there is a strong preference for market-based interventions, which often exclude rural populations where formal markets are not yet fully developed.

Farrington, J., Holmes, R., and Slater, R., 2007, 'Linking Agriculture and Social Protection: Conceptual Framework', Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London

How can social protection reduce shocks and stresses in productive environments as well as for households? What are the connections between social protection and agriculture in terms of concepts, approaches and contexts? This paper argues that in relation to agricultural production, a well-managed social protection programme will seek to reduce both actual shocks and stresses, and agriculturists' and labourers' perceptions of likely shocks and stresses. It can thus minimise the loss of productive assets and encourage farmers' engagement in new, potentially more productive, enterprises.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3831>

Sabates-Wheeler, R., Devereux, S. and Guenther, B., 2009, 'Promoting Synergies between Social Protection and Smallholder Agricultural Policies', FAC Working Paper No. SP01, Futures Agricultural Consortium (FAC), Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Brighton

How do social protection and agricultural policies interact? What are the synergies or conflicts between them? This study examines the situation in poor communities in Africa and explores how social and agricultural policies can complement each other. Social protection can promote food security and agricultural production directly. However, the mix of policies and instruments needed to achieve both 'livelihood protection' and 'livelihood promotion' must be determined by levels of economic activity, infrastructure and market development.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3790>

Evaluating social protection programmes

Monitoring and evaluating impact are crucial parts of development programming. Whilst monitoring involves the collection of data in accordance with specific indicators relating to a programme's objectives, evaluation techniques use this information in order to make informed judgements about how successful a programme is during or at the programme's completion. Due to the diverse nature of social protection instruments, available guidance focuses on individual instruments rather than addressing social protection as a whole. Impact evaluations are ideal but have large data collection and analysis requirements.

International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2007, 'Health Microinsurance Schemes: Monitoring and Evaluation Guide, Volume 1: Methodology', Strategies and Tools against Exclusion and Poverty Programme (STEP), International Labour Organisation (ILO), Geneva

What are the required capacities and key indicators of a viable health microinsurance scheme (HMIS)? This guide provides a tool to help in overcoming the lack of evaluation data on health microinsurance schemes. In countries with low levels of health insurance coverage, many health microinsurance schemes designed to reach the poor are emerging. There is growing recognition that health microinsurance schemes constitute a complementary and valuable strategy in extending social security.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3832>

Robalino, D., et al., 2009, 'Ex-Ante Methods to Assess the Impact of Social Insurance Policies on Labor Supply with an Application to Brazil', Social Protection Discussion Paper No. 0929, World Bank, Washington DC

This study has developed a behavioural model to assess how changes in the rules of pensions and unemployment benefit systems could affect savings rates, the share of time that individuals spend outside of the formal sector, retirement decisions, and system costs. Key parameters are: (1) preferences regarding consumption and leisure; (2) preferences regarding formal versus informal work; (3) attitudes towards risks; (4) the rate of time preference; and (5) the distribution of an outside shock that affects movements in and out of the social insurance system, given individual decisions. Simulations suggest, among other findings, the importance of joint policy analysis of unemployment benefits and pension systems.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3825>

Paes-Sousa, R. and Santos, L. M. P., 2009, 'Measuring the Impact of Bolsa Familia Program Based on Data from Health and Nutrition Days (Brazil)', Working Paper No.7, Iniciativa Latina y Caribe Sin Hambre, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Santiago

Does Brazil's Bolsa Familia conditional cash transfer programme reduce children's malnutrition and food insecurity? This study assesses the programme's impact on the nutritional status of zero to five year olds. Data on 22,375 children's height/age, weight/age and weight/height shows that the PBF does improve child nutrition. To ensure an increase in beneficiaries' health levels, families need greater access to goods and services which interact with improved nutrition. The provision of more and better basic services and initiatives for inclusion in the labour market would ensure the PBF's effectiveness.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3826>

Card, D., Ibarrarán, P. and Villa, J. M., 2011, Building in an Evaluation Component for Active Labor Market Programs: a Practitioner's Guide', Inter-American Development Bank, Washington DC

<http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=36479813>

See more detailed information on [types of social protection interventions](#).

Donor approaches to social protection

Donors have become increasingly interested in funding social protection programmes, having moved away from narrow approaches to social protection that just focus on the provision of safety nets in the event of economic shocks. The World Bank and the ILO are the major donors in this area. Below are links to resources that explain more about the different approaches taken by key players in the field of social protection. As this guide indicates, social protection has become mainstreamed into everyday policy discourse and is therefore treated by all major donors.

Where is a good place to start?

Conway, T., de Haan, A. and Norton, A., 2000, 'Social Protection: New Directions of Donor Agencies', Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London

Social protection is receiving renewed attention from development agencies. This report from the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) was commissioned by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The aim was to promote dialogue between international agencies as a basis for coordination and consistency in global donor policy on social protection issues. The report presents edited versions of papers from ODI, the World Bank (WB), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), as well as a summary of discussions at a related workshop. It argues that collaboration between agencies is essential for effective social protection.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1804>

Barrientos, A., and Hulme, D., 2008, 'The Future of Social Protection in the Developing World: Actors, Bottlenecks and Politics', in 'Social Protection for the Poor and Poorest: Reflections on a Quiet Revolution', Brooks World Poverty Institute, Manchester, pp.13-19

This section of a broader paper examines three important factors in the future of social protection: the role of external actors, the bottlenecks of sustainable finance and delivery capacity, and politics. It argues that the role of national governments in formulating and coordinating policies is important, and emphasises the need for political conditions that are conducive both to the initiation of social protection programmes and their sustainability. Donors should prioritise governments' capacity to fund social protection programmes and focus on creating a domestic political constituency to support social protection.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3839>

Donor approaches

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

The ADB includes a wide variety of projects under its definition of social protection: labour market programmes, social assistance, social insurance, micro and area based schemes and child protection. For more information see:

<http://beta.adb.org/themes/social-protection/>

Handanyani, W., and Burkley, C., (eds), 2009, 'Social Assistance and Conditional Cash Transfers: Proceedings of the Regional Workshop', Asian Development Bank (ADB), Manila

<http://www.adb.org/documents/conference/social-assistance-cct/proceedings-social-assistance-cct.pdf>

Department for International Development (DFID)

DFID has produced a number of short briefing papers outlining their position on and work relating to social protection. These papers are listed below and, in general, they focus on social assistance, particularly social transfers. A number of other papers published by DFID can be found throughout this topic guide.

Davies, M. et al., 2009, 'DFID Social Transfers Evaluation Summary Report', IDS Research Report 60, Centre for Social Protection, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton

What can be learned from DFID-supported social protection and social transfer programmes? This review of 24 programmes in 16 countries across Africa, Asia and Europe finds that outcomes and impacts vary greatly relative to the unique conditions applied in specific contexts. A set of generalised findings can be identified, but these are not prescriptive policy options, and should be examined further in specific contexts. The effectiveness of social transfers is largely

dependent on their level and regularity.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3833>

DFID, 2006, 'Social Protection in Poor Countries', Social Protection Briefing Note Series no.1, UK Department for International Development, UK

<http://www.gsdr.org/docs/open/SP17.pdf>

DFID, 2005, 'Can Low-Income Countries in Africa Afford Social Transfers', Social Protection Briefing Note Series no. 2, UK Department for International Development, UK

<http://www.gsdr.org/docs/open/SP18.pdf>

DFID, 2006, 'Using Social Transfers to Improve Human Development', Social Protection Briefing Note Series no. 3, UK Department for International Development, UK

http://www.sarpn.org/documents/d0001961/DFID_Social-transfers_Feb2006.pdf

DFID, 2006, 'Social Protection and Economic Growth in Poor Countries', Social Protection Briefing Note Series no. 4, UK Department for International Development, UK

<http://www.gsdr.org/docs/open/SP16.pdf>

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The ILO's work on social protection covers both issues of social security and labour protection, taking its cue from the 1952 International Labour Standards Convention. They emphasise that social security is a basic human right. The ILO organise their agenda around the concept of 'Decent Work' which covers rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue. For more information see: <http://www.ilo.org/protection/lang--en/>

Bonilla Garcia, A. and Gruat, J., 2003, 'Social Protection: A Life Cycle Continuum Investment for Social Justice, Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development', International Labour Organisation, Geneva

Globalisation and trends like changing employment patterns are leading to greater risk, insecurity and vulnerability. To address these changes, the scope of social protection needs to be expanded. This paper by the International Labour Organisation (ILO's) presents a broader concept of social protection within the framework of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1798>

ILO, 2008, 'Setting Social Security Standards in a Global Society: An Analysis of Present State and Future Practice and of Future Options for Global Social Security Standard in the International Labour Organization', Consultation Paper, ILO, Geneva

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/secsoc/downloads/policy/policy2e.pdf>

ILO, 'Social Health Protection: an ILO Strategy Towards Universal Access to Healthcare', Draft for Consultation Issues in Social Protection, Discussion Paper, 19, ILO, Geneva

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/secsoc/downloads/healthpolicy.pdf>

In the wake of the financial crisis the ILO, along with the WHO, have been at the forefront of discussions about the need to establish a 'social protection floor'. The ILO has articulated its support for a 'social floor' consisting of the provision of both essential services and social transfers as a requirement in order to 'safeguard the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals'.

Social Protection Floor Advisory Group, 2011, 'Social Protection Floor for a Fair and Inclusive Globalization', International Labour Organization, Geneva

This report outlines recommendations on how to extend social protection coverage through the social protection floor approach. A social protection floor involves an integrated set of nationally-driven and tailored policies designed to guarantee a) income security (through social transfers in cash or in kind); and b) universal access to essential, affordable social services. The successful phasing-in of a social protection floor will require political will, fiscal space and effective institutions. Where low-income countries require some initial assistance for social protection floor initiatives, donors need to improve aid coordination and provide multi-year, direct budgetary support and capacity building.

See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4184>

ILO/WHO, 2009, 'Social Protection Floor Initiative', Joint Crisis Initiative of the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination on the Social Protection Floor, ILO/WHO, Geneva

<http://www.un.org/ga/second/64/socialprotection.pdf>

ILO/WHO, 2009, 'Social Protection Floor Initiative: Manual and Strategic Framework for Joint UN Country Operations', ILO/WHO, Geneva
<http://www.ilo.org/gimi/gess/RessShowRessource.do?ressourceId=14484>

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

The use of the multi-dimensional poverty framework by the OECD/DAC's Poverty Network (POVNET) has been very influential. This framework highlights pro-poor growth as an area of crucial importance, and supports social protection as a way to achieve equitable and efficient economic growth.

Voipio, T., 2007, 'Social Protection for Poverty Reduction: The OECD/DAC/POVNET View', IDS Bulletin, vol. 38, no. 3, pp.45-50
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2007.tb00374.x/abstract>

OECD, 2009, 'Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Social Protection', OECD, Paris
Various chapters of this text appear in previous sections of the topic guide.
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/63/10/43514563.pdf>

Oxfam

Oxfam's 2009 policy statement on social protection defines it both as a basic right and an 'action', emphasising its role in mitigating risk and vulnerability, promoting the rights of the marginalised, and supporting the chronic poor.

Oxfam International, 2009, 'Policy Compendium Note on Social Protection', Oxfam International, Oxford
http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/conflict_disasters/downloads/oi_hum_policy_social_protection.pdf

World Bank

The World Bank has developed an analytical tool called 'Social Risk Management' (SRM) in order to identify social risks and potential responses. There are three main areas of SRM: risk management strategies, risk management arrangements and actors in risk management. Whilst it links social protection to broader poverty reduction aims and shifts the focus from risk coping to risk reduction and assessing vulnerability the approach has been criticised for not recognising that the chronically poor are continuously subjected to stresses (continual risk) which leads to an erosion of assets. For the latest information see: <http://go.worldbank.org/FJ6LLR2LU0>

Holzmann, R., and Jorgensen, S., 2000, 'Social Risk Management: A New Conceptual Framework for Social Protection and Beyond', Social Protection Discussion Paper No. 6, World Bank, Washington DC
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SOCIALPROTECTION/Resources/SP-Discussion-papers/Social-Risk-Management-DP/0006.pdf>

Holzmann, R., Sherburne-Benz, L., and Tuislic, E., 2003, 'Social Risk Management: The World Bank's Approach to Social Protection in a Globalising World', Social Protection Department, World Bank, Washington DC
The World Bank's rethinking of traditional Social Protection approaches has inspired a new conceptual framework named Social Risk Management (SRM). The focus of SRM is to replace unproductive coping strategies with advance planning and mechanisms to help households anticipate and insure against shocks. This requires redesigning traditional public interventions and substantial future work at the conceptual, empirical and policy level.
See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1814>

Holzmann, R., (ed.), 2009, 'Social Protection and Labor at the World Bank 2000-2008', World Bank, Washington DC
This report examines the World Bank's social protection and labour (SP&L) strategy, its implementation and achievements. It finds that the strategy has led to social protection being mainstreamed at the World Bank. Further, the social risk management (SRM) concept it incorporates highlights the importance of: (1) multiple strategies for dealing with risks (prevention, mitigation, and coping); and (2) multiple arrangements - traditional and informal systems, market-based systems, and public sector policies and programmes. Other lessons include the importance of a clear conceptual framework to guide policy work, implementation according to country contexts, and partnership and harmonisation among international agencies.
See one-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3814>