Better Assistance in Crises (BASIC) Research (funded by UK Aid) aims to inform policy and programming on how to help poor and vulnerable people cope better with crises and meet their basic needs through more effective social assistance. All costs related to BASIC Research are covered by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Accountability + Social Assistance in Protracted Crises: E-Discussion Guide

**Date:** Wed 22 – Thurs 23 June 2022

**Facilitators:**
- Paul Harvey, Partner (Humanitarian Outcomes), Co-Director of BASIC Research
- Louisa Seferis, Independent Consultant and BASIC Researcher

Join the Discussion forum on socialprotection.org

**Overview of Accountability E-Discussion**

Join us for an interactive and provocative e-discussion about accountability and social assistance in protracted crises, where we seek to bring together practitioners, policymakers and researchers interested in the interface between humanitarian aid and social protection.

In protracted crises there is often a complex mix of humanitarian assistance and social protection programmes, with donor and aid agencies committed to trying to strengthen links between approaches and instruments. How social protection and humanitarian actors talk about and approach accountability is different – humanitarian actors use “accountability for affected populations” (AAP) and social protection systems centre around social accountability. In practice, the accountability mechanisms and communication channels (information campaigns, hotlines, complaint, and feedback mechanisms) are often similar, although they are designed and analysed separately. This e-discussion will dig into the disconnects, challenges and opportunities to deliver more accountable social assistance in crises.

Moderators will share a questions and provocations to prompt discussion, reflection and debate over the week. We’ll build on the discussion from a one-hour informal webinar (or ‘hangout’) that was held on 15 June 2022 and focused on politics and accountability, hosted by socialprotection.org.

The e-discussion aims to introduce this specific area of BASIC Research, encourage critical reflection around research issues and questions, while also identifying how the positions, attitudes and interests
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Key Questions

This e-discussion will focus on approaches to accountability for social assistance in protracted crises.

Overall themes and questions prompting this e-discussion are as follows:

1. **Accountability pathways** are a ‘blueprint’ for how accountability is expected to function. If understood and mapped, these pathways can enhance knowledge of how accountability works in practice – and influence broader considerations of power, social contract, inclusion.
   a. How do humanitarian and social protection approaches to accountability intersect in different contexts - who is accountable to whom (representation), and how do different actors participate?
   b. To what extent are accountability approaches linked to governance and protection challenges?
   c. What role do local actors play in accountability processes for social assistance?

2. **Participation and people-centred assistance** are the current “buzzwords” in the accountability space, yet programmes providing social assistance in crises generally struggle to demonstrate the connection between feedback, participation, and improved outcomes.
   a. Do communities define their level of engagement in social assistance – or is this determined by programme decision-makers?
   b. What do people see as key issues in navigating safe access to assistance?
   c. Who do they rely on to resolve problems with eligibility for or receipt of assistance?

3. **“Accountability to whom”** remains a key question in many crises, where accountability to aid recipients is often considered differently and separately to aid providers’ accountability to their funders.
   a. What are the relationships between accountability to communities affected by crises or aid recipients and broader accountability to donors: where are the tensions and contradictions?
   b. What are the trade-offs for social assistance?
**Key Readings**


**Registration Instructions**

1. Log in to the [socialprotection.org platform](http://socialprotection.org). If you are not a member yet, please [create an account](http://socialprotection.org) first;
2. While logged into your account, access the [Social Protection in Crisis Contexts](http://socialprotection.org) online community;
3. To participate in the discussions, click [here](http://socialprotection.org) to access the Discussion Forum area.

**How to comment, edit and reply in a thread?**

- Click on the 'Discussions' area of the community and select a discussion topic to comment on.
- To **reply** to a post, scroll down and click 'Add new comment';
- To **edit** your comment, simply click the 'Edit' button below your post;
- Note that when uploading a document, you must wait for the document to load. You can add multiple documents if you wish. Supported formats: txt, pdf, doc, docx;
- Click 'Send' to post your comment.

*Kind reminder: Discussion content must comply with socialprotection.org** [Terms of Use](http://socialprotection.org): spam, disrespect for other members or offensive language is not tolerated.

Key Contact: t.nelis@ids.ac.uk (Tina Nelis, Moderator)