Ep. 21 | Looking Back at Social Protection in 2022

Jo Sharpe: Hello, and welcome to the Social Protection Podcast. I'm your host, Jo Sharpe. It's December, we made it to the end of 2022. And in this episode, we are looking back on the year that was. After the last two years of Covid dominated headlines, this year, global inflation and climate shocks took center stage. Today, I'm speaking with Ugo Gentilini from the World Bank about how social protection programs have responded to these crises. We also talk about subsidies, pathways towards universality, social protection myths, and more. Plus, Ugo gives us his top three picks for the most interesting papers published on social protection this year.

So, stay tuned for that. And for something a bit different, throughout this interview, we'll also be hearing from members of the Social Protection Community with their reflections on the big themes for the year, their highlights and their resolutions for 2023. With me today is Ugo Gentilini, Global Lead for Social Assistance at the World Bank. Welcome Ugo!

Ugo Gentilini: Hi Jo, thanks for having me.

Jo Sharpe: Thanks for making the time, Ugo. Let's start by touching on some of the global challenges of 2022 and how social protection has been called to respond to those. One of the big ones, big by definition, let's start with inflation. Can you give us a quick recap on what's driving global inflation, its impacts on poverty, food security, and tell us a little bit about how social protection is responding?

Ugo Gentilini: So, inflation is having some very concrete effects as we speak. Covid-19 has increased by 71 million the number of people living on less than 2.15 dollars a day, and an additional 18 million people are now below that line due to inflation. And if we look at the trends and you take January 2021 as a base, food prices for wheat, for example, almost doubled by April 2022, but then they declined before landing on a plateau and remain relatively high. So, wheat prices are now at the level of 25 to 30% higher than in January 2021. And there is, of course, significant uncertainty around inflation formation and projections into the future.

For example, an IMF brief for Europe estimated a nearly half of inflation cannot be explained by its useful drivers. If you unbundle the particular factors that one could attribute and that, or generating inflation, they're usually in those components of energy, food exchange rates, et cetera. A downturn in economic activities. But there is something more to it. And it's something that truly belong to uncertainty. And this is because of the events that we see unfolding: the war, the future of grains. And it's probably here to stay for some time. So, being able to cope with that uncertainty is gonna be part of the reason why it's so important to ensure against it and social protection does provide that sort of insurance.
Jo Sharpe: Coming after two years of Covid, and your team at the World Bank, of course, led a big effort to track Covid responses just as you have with inflation and the related crises. So, from your vantage point, can you tell us, are the lessons of the Covid social protection response being applied to this latest wave of crisis? How are the responses similar or different?

Ugo Gentilini: First of all, we need to acknowledge that the pandemic was different in the kind of the nature of the crisis. Governments embarked in an implicit social contract, if you wish, of shutting down activities and compensating for that shutdown. So, in a way it was compelled to respond to the extent that they did. And here with inflation, the situation is probably closer to a more classic case of crisis response. What we see now, it’s a wider use of subsidies compared to the Covid responses, subsidies for fuel, for food, for fertilizers, various forms of fees. They account for 36% of those responses. They did account for about 16%, 20 percentage points less for the pandemic response.

So, more subsidies. The second is that coverage is high at the moment for social assistance. But it's about half the level that we estimated for Covid. So, it's 720 million versus 1.3 billion people. The duration though, is longer. It's a little over five months on average versus 4.5 in Covid. And the adequacy or the size of the transfers for cash that are provided are currently about one fourth of daily median income versus about 40% in the case of Covid, so in a way more subsidies, less coverage duration, but less money to people.

Let me mention though something also that the two crisis have in common, like during the pandemic, most inflation social assistance programs are new. This raises the question whether Covid measures were institutionalized enough. Having those back-to-back initiatives, main principles suggest that perhaps some of the programs used for Covid could have been kept dormant and then reactivated the inflation. We see just a new wave of new programs which supplement the existing systems to protect people.

Tomoo: Hi, I'm Tomoo Okubo, I work on social Protection for Children as Policy Specialist at UNICEF's New York headquarters. It's hard to pick one highlight, but I want to share a key decision that was made in Tunisia this year. I think it is an excellent example where the government and partners turned a challenge into an opportunity to improve social protection in the long term. On 31st of January, a law was adopted to institutionalize child benefit, which offers cash transfer to poor and vulnerable families with young children under five years of age.

This scheme was originally introduced at the end of 2020 in response to Covid with support from UNICEF and Germany through the state-owned bank KFW, and was extended through a loan from the World Bank. As we know, across the world, there were many supports introduced during Covid, but majority of them were made temporary. However, Tunisia took a different choice. A
recognition of the continued risk and vulnerabilities, as well as the impressive impact of the child grant in many areas, including better access to quality food, preschool and health services, as well as better wellbeing of caregivers.

**Jo Sharpe:** There's a rich vein of thinking within social protection about subsidies, often when subsidies come up in the context of social protection; we're actually talking about how to reduce wasteful subsidies that reach everybody and disproportionately benefit wealthy people, perhaps more so than poorer people. You know, we think that social protection measures, social assistance can be more targeted, more effective, more progressive. And yet, you know, during times of this kind of inflationary crisis where what you're seeing are the prices of goods, food, fuel, electricity going up, subsidies are obviously a really natural response.

**Ugo Gentilini:** So, the issue, it may appear simple, but it's not. Of course, the moment that we look at the distribution, the incidents of subsidies, they tend to be regressive, as you said, Jo. And so why not to convert it into cash? Sounds like a good idea and I think, it is a good idea. Subsidies though, if we look at their entirety, and why they were introduced in the first place, and the sort of ramifications they have in the system. I sometimes fear that we haven't understood them well enough. For example, just take food subsidies. So, countries have them for a multiplicity of goals. They have them to provide a floor price to farmers and provide a steady stream of income for them. They use them for price risk management and keeping food prices stable through the use of strategic grain reserves. And they use them for income support. So, there is that element of providing a transfer by distributing the commodities that you have purchased and you have stored. But that's one of the goals. So, when we look at the conversion of subsidies into transfers, we are looking at that final goal in particular. But we need to tackle the issue in its entirety, and that means that we gotta tackle this in a multi-sectoral fashion. And, of course, there is a relevant political economy conversation, underpinning it all.

**Jo Sharpe:** I think that's a great point, particularly when we're talking about financing for expanded social protection, there's often this sort of analysis that you can just kind of raid the subsidies and convert it all into social assistance and as we see through this crisis, it's not that simple. And that there are reasons that these remain tools that states are using, for better or worse, I guess. Let's turn to climate change. 2022 of course, was a year of record-breaking weather events, extreme heat across the northern hemisphere, wildfires in Europe, drought in China, flooding, rain, a third of Pakistan underwater. The list goes on. I think it feels for many of us that the impacts of climate change are really accelerating. As a field, we've been talking about adaptive and shock-responsive social protection for some time, of course. But as these shocks are becoming more frequent and more intense, how well established are those systems? Are they working?
**Ugo Gentilini:** So, you know, when we talk about shock responsiveness, there are actually many different agendas at play. For example, on one hand, there are all those linkages to domestic institutions that deal with, disaster risk management and how social protection intersects with them. And on the other hand, there is a whole issue of coordination with external actors for humanitarian assistance, for example. I think that the good news is that the contours of a common framework is there, is being established recognition that there are institutions, programs, delivery systems and financing that need to come together organically. And I think at the heart of the agenda is the calibration of how much is the core level of coverage and how much is the additional based on particular needs that may arise. But in a context, as you said Jo, of back-to-back crisis and the fluid mobility in and outta poverty, those two agendas, one on the core, and one on flexing systems are increasingly converging and actually becoming one.

So, this suggests that there is a lot of value in investing in preparedness. Early warning systems triggers, protocols for scale up, financial instruments that can be activated. And this need to be devised according to parameters, like considering the frequency and the severity of risks. So, building a risk profile of a country, having a layered approach. There are many different options that you can consider from risk transfer to use of reserves. And I think all of this may help countries find a better balance between what are called automatic stabilizers and discretionary spending. The question is: what can we learn, for example, in the climate space that could be relevant for health crisis? And I sometimes talk about a particular tiny example in the Covid response that actually had this sort of risk financing framework around it. And that's Sierra Leone, which learning from the Ebola crisis, learning from the floods that happened in 2017 in Freetown, had devised a risk financing framework with particular triggers and the early warnings and about 4 million dollars, so not much. But it has, I think, an important demonstration effect. We're activated during Covid was part of the response you helped accelerate the response, and I think that's the sort of practices that we could look at moving forward.

**Christina Dankmeyer:** This is Christina Dankmeyer, Social Protection and Climate Change Specialist at the ILO. At the COP-27 Climate Conference this year that just ended in Egypt, we saw a lot more attention being paid to social protection with various site events on its role in adaptation, including climate resilience and food security. As discussed at the FAO and World Bank pavilions, the role of social protection in the transition towards net zero. So, making the transition just by protecting people and enabling their participation as at the ILO, just transition pavilion supported by the European Commission or financing the social protection dimension of climate policies as at the International Development Finance Club Pavilion. And, the final text of the cover decision, so the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan following extended negotiations recognizes social protection for mitigating potential negative impacts of the transition, and highlights the important role of
instruments related to social solidarity protection in mitigating the impacts of applied measures.

**Jo Sharpe:** So, to the point about convergence and the need, you know, increasingly to look at dynamic poverty plus the increasing, incidents of shocks. We get very quickly into the territory of universality. This year, the ILO published a new edition, an updated edition of the World Social Protection Report. It found that 4 billion people, 53% of the global population still aren't covered by any form of social protection. Coverage is expanding. But at this rate, we're a long way off achieving the goal of universal social protection coverage by 2030. We put a call out to our audience for questions to put to you today, Ugo. And one of the questions came back from at Gunnel A Nycander, and she asks, do you see a credible pathway to universal social protection via narrow poverty targeting? So, just to put you on the spot, how do we do it? How do we achieve universal social protection? And what are the roles that the different instruments are gonna need to play?

**Ugo Gentilini:** Well, thanks for the question. You know, Jo, a few years ago, I estimated that, at the prevailing increases in coverage rates, we'll get to universal social protection globally by 2084. And that if we just look at fragile states, they will reach it in about 240 years. Or by the year 2259 or so. So, you know, to some extent, we are already on a journey toward universality. I think the world is likely better covered today than it was a decade or two ago. But as higher coverage levels are pursued, we should be mindful that coverage is only means to an end, that there are many other factors that shape the quality of programs and design. A focus on coverage is welcome, but we shouldn't lose sight of dimensions like adequacy or comprehensiveness in interventions, for example. And there are some factors that I think make the conversation an universality in a way tricky. There are, for example, differences in defining what actually universal is. Some define universal the non-contributory interventions that don't require eligibility criteria other than age or disabilities. Either see those programs as targeted categorically. What is coverage is also sometimes unclear. Is it the promise to get a transfer? If a condition materializes, like for insurance? Or is it the actual received, like, for assistance? And in the latter case, whether a person receives one transfer for $1 a year? Or gets $50 a month? They're equally counter that's covered. But of course, such support is qualitatively different. And I think that while universality provides a very precious direction of travel, we also see that some countries may be interested in significant expansion and coverage. But without going all the way to universality, especially in the short and median term. And I think we need to understand why that's the case. And here, attitudes towards redistribution, history, war views, evolving notions of deservingness and poverty narratives, the principles and values with which we approach this, you... all shape what a desirable level of coverage might be, and that may vary over time and space.
But assuming that universality is indeed the goal, I think that the dynamic story, on how to get there, is a hugely underexplored issue, and we should do more work to devise some concrete trajectories toward universality, how to practically get there in 10 or 20 years. And as countries progress there is a lot that we could learn from, for example, the experience of countries in universal health coverage. What happened when they faced those? Where do you start from? What kind of trade-offs and choices did you face as you expand coverage, as you calibrate adequacy, if you look at some institutional choices at financing devices. And I think we should learn a look at what happened in other sectors much more than we currently do. I do sometimes feel that we lose sight of the bigger picture and that direction of travel. I think that it's something that offers the opportunity for collectively thinking on how to get there. It's not just a static debate on that method or that intervention as we speak. It's also on locating the particular choice within the broader trajectory, and that's hard work. So, I think that we need to keep debating those issues while also looking longer term.

**Vania Budianto:** Hello, my name is Vania. I'm currently a PhD candidate at the Australian National University, and my research is on social protection reform in Indonesia. So, the dominant theme for me this year on social protection is around the issues of exclusion and gender, especially around women in Indonesia even though poor woman seems to have access to social assistance program because of CCT, but women are only entitled in their capacity as mothers, and there are other groups of women who are vulnerable, but they're not entitled to receive program like elderly women or women in formal sector or women who face domestic violence.

My highlight for me this year, I think that recently I heard the Social protection Podcast on the topic of trade of targeting with Rachel Sabates-Wheeler and Matthew Wai-Poi, where Rachel pointed out that most importantly for targeting, it needs to be a system that citizens or community can understand. And I think this is a great point because, in my field work, when I was at Indonesia, I talked to community, a group of women, and most of the time they don't understand why there are two families that are both poor and one receive social assistance program and the other family doesn't despite meeting the criteria. So, I think the key thing for me is criteria for targeting it to be simple and it to be understood by community and by citizens.

**Jo Sharpe:** This next question is my burning question. This is the privilege I have as the host of this podcast. And thinking back to the 11 episodes, actually 12 that we've put to air before this one this year. Speaking with a wide variety of social protection experts, practitioners from international institutions, partner governments, civil society, what's really struck me is the way that social protection is being called on to do so much. I mean, this is the Social Protection Podcast, so you'd expect to hear that here and yet. You know, we had Nenad Rava from the UNSDG Fund talking about how social protection was viewed as a potential accelerator for the achievement of just about all of the SDGs.
In our last episode, we've just also talked about the role of social protection in climate change. Not just adapting and responding to shocks, but also in mitigation and even the just transition to a decarbonized society that's on top of the continued need for broad-based social protection coverage to help address poverty, human development outcomes, livelihoods, and so on. Amidst all of this enthusiasm and demand, do we need to be wary about overstating what social protection can do?

**Ugo Gentilini:** You know, you are so right Jo. Do you know how many publications there have been on cash transfers over the past 40 years?

**Jo Sharpe:** Please tell us. If anyone will know it's you.

**Ugo Gentilini:** It's 1.3 million. And it was about a hundred thousand just last year. Look, I think that the rising interest in social protection is, of course, much welcome and it stems in part from the very concrete, immediate, tangible nature of programs like cash transfers. It’s now, it’s for today. It can make you better off tomorrow, but at times it does feel that the expectations are overwhelming and perhaps unrealistic. And I think we need to be very careful in articulating the role of social protection. And I see at least three issues here. One is that when presenting evidence, we need to fully disclose and nuance the caveats, the limits of the findings.

And perhaps we are not always discussing the alternatives and comparative cost effectiveness of other interventions that produce similar goals. Childcare comes to mind. The second is that evidence is not enough. And this means considering economic and political ecosystem within which policy makers operate, being their shoes and understanding their war views. What we think is a fundamental issue might be one among the many fundamental issues that governments face, and history, culture, politics, affect the way in which priorities are made and decisions taken. And you can have, as a certain point, the best design programming formed by the best evidence, and yet if you don't address some structural issues, its effects can be muted. If we look at the net effects of tax and transfer systems in poor economies, poorer households are more likely to be left with less money. After taxes have been paid and transfers received, in high-income countries, the bottom 40% of the income distribution, they’re net receivers, they receive more than they pay.

In low-income countries, even the poorest 10% is a net payer, and this is the result of the kind of toxic combination of low coverage and also taxation that is mostly indirect. And indirect taxation tends to be more aggressive than direct taxation. And so when you have that sort of tax system and you don't compensate enough for it, you end up having a very aggressive system and you can have whatever program you'd like, that, but those bigger structural issues are likely to affect the outcome of that program. So, it's not just about the micro effect of a program, it's also this larger system-wide issues that really
needs to be tackled and that are important to set the expectations, what you can achieve outta social protection.

**Jo Sharpe:** Yes. I mean, I've been reflecting on a couple of the conversations I've had this year. We did a two-part series on the universal basic income. This idea that you could provide some kind of basic income to absolutely everybody, it's almost entirely hypothetical, of course, at this stage. And yet, in that discussion, we talked a lot about the role of something like a UBI versus you know, funding basic services and the economies of scale that, that go along with properly funding health and education, for example. Recently also we've been talking about nutrition and this sort of a really stark fact that cash transfers are generally inadequate or, you know, just not up to the task of funding even a tiny percentage of the cost of actually a nutritious food basket for a family of people.

So, I think it's really important, as you say, as we are having these conversations to really look at, you know, where is social protection really making significant inroads. Why is that happening? Why are those programs working? And then as you say, what else is out there? What are the alternatives? So, we've talked through some pretty big themes there. For my next question I'd really like to ask you, you know, beyond the headlines, beyond those big things, what else happened this year in social protection that you think deserves more attention than perhaps it's had so far?

**Ugo Gentilini:** So much happened I think in 2022 or perhaps over the past 18 months. Hard to prioritize, but let me just say that one thing that happened that really represents a major break with the past, involves the provision, large-scale of unconditional cash to workers, including for over 200 million workers during Covid and over 80 million workers, as part of inflation responses. So, that is major because cash was either not given to workers or was given historically, in highly conditioned forms, and the provision of cash, no questions asked to the working age population, I think it's kind of a remarkable fact that we have witnessed over the past month. Another key development is the discovery of cash transfers by central banks as sort of an unconventional monetary policy under particular micro context, including in crisis and low interest rates. And under those circumstances, I think cash, maybe less and less unconventional moving forward, and perhaps you may become a somewhat default option.

Another development is, this is quite fascinating, it's a little perhaps more subtle, but, and it's about how social protection increasingly intersects with the big questions in development narratives. If we look at the evolution in thinking about development, I think that social protection wasn't really there in a number of development theories. And then it gradually became part of the picture, and now we see some emerging thinking on how cash is actually redefining how development happens.
And this it’s very much related to the idea that, if you have programs that operate a significant scale, and that scale is large enough to have multipliers, maybe those multipliers might be potent enough to enable the take-off entire economies. That's a big bet. But I think that it kind of feeds into the conversation on how development happens in a very explicit manner. And what is fascinating is that these kinds of examples, whether you agree with them or not, kind of connect you to how to think about the poverty problem. On one end, there is, you know, this kind of narratives, there are structural drivers of inequities and kind of causing a distraction.

The real drivers or the tax code, equal pay, the education system focus on those. Just making the point, okay? I'm exaggerating, but, and on the other end, you have that poverty is just a lack of cash. Poor people are poor because they lack money, so just give them money and problem solved. Or is there something in between these narratives? And I think so much of the attitudes towards social protection are shaped by where people are coming from in terms of their vision on the origins and narratives of poverty. I think we need to consider those scenarios more fully and not just frame our conversations in terms of delivery and impact.

**Safdhar:** Well, this is Safdhar Sohail. I've been a career civil servant of Pakistan origin. So, we established Social Protection Research Center as a think-tank dedicated to the universalization of social protection. So, one thing which I noted in 2022, particularly after Covid, that was the salience of social protection as a concept, which brought a lot of international attention in the form of webinars and national programs.

So, this was good in that sense that social protection brought mainstream, but at the same time, I was rather worried, one could see. But in this mainstreaming process, they started bringing almost everything under social protection. So, what used to be covered in case of developing countries under the poverty induction strategies, was all brought under social protection. So, there, the relationship between the traditional employees, social security, which was work based, which was partly contributory, that, was the mainstream of social security all over the world. So, at a certain level, I could see that influenced by the dual narratives. We have adopted this term rather uncritically without a due care to the local environment. So, we definitely need social protection because of the legacy of poverty and increasing fragility, which is coming due to the system that we had. But I did not expect that we would just replace the poverty narrative. So, that's what was my major concern also during 2022.

**Jo Sharpe:** Coming back to audience questions, we had another listener, João Pedro Dytz, write in to suggest that we do an episode on common misperceptions regarding social protection and tips on how to answer them. We'll take that on board as a great suggestion. But while I have you here, what do you think is the biggest myth that persists in social protection and how do you counter it when required?
Ugo Gentilini: Well, let me thank João Pedro for his question. And, I think there is a very persistent one, and that's the, that's a dependency argument and, that is often framed in terms of labor supply disincentives. The reality is that most low-income people work and with all the efforts that you can put into work, a job is sometimes not enough to pay the bills. In some cases, it's not even two jobs. The question we should be asking is not where the transfers affect work ethics, but why jobs don't pay enough despite the work ethic.

And that's the whole notion of the working poor people that remain poor despite working, and a little extra cash. and I say little because transfers tend to be modest in amount. That little extra cash has been shown not to affect labor supply at the extensive margin or basically whether people choose to work. So, the fears of labor supply disincentives are often grossly exaggerated, but we should also be mindful that depending on design, there are some possible mixed effects on labor supplies, intensive margin, or the amount of time spent working on child labor and on informality. So, I basically, would approach the issue based on the very nature of the labor market before us. Understand the nature of the reservation of the policy makers, and try to separate what are some, let's say, mischaracterizations or misunderstandings and what are instead, some really substantive issues and try to have an informed conversation on the ladder.

Jo Sharpe: You of course publish a widely red weekly roundup of social protection links covering a huge range of studies and publications, and we can link to that in the show notes for people who aren't otherwise looking at it already. If I was to ask you to choose, let's say, three of the most important or perhaps the most interesting or intriguing publications you've highlighted this year, what would they be?

Ugo Gentilini: Oh, I knew you would ask this question. Before this podcast, I went back and looked at, at this year and, I think. I featured 592 materials this year. It's so hard to get on the top three and at the beginning I thought that maybe I can avoid this question. I can, kind of give you my top 10, but then, you know, I'm gonna give you my top three. And, so, one paper that was really fascinating was the one by Troller-Renfree and others that show the positive effects in the brain of infants at one year of age, when their mothers receive relatively more generous cash transfers. I mean, it's even visually striking, so kind of how the brain works, when something as materials, as cash is provided. So, it's really fascinating how something external can influence something that internal as a brain. Another paper that I, actually is a book, that. I learned a lot from, and, I was really intrigued by is, Tom Lavers' six case study volume that has, I think, illuminated how political forces can, determine both if and how cash transfers pan out in practice.

So, really discussing the politics and the electoral politics associated with those transfers. And then, my third choice would probably be Jaroszewicz and others, because they highlighted while cash transfers can improve outcomes in some
objective sense, recipients can sometimes feel worse. And this is because transfers operate within a web of hopes, dynamic needs, pressures, expectations, some beneficiaries from families and extended networks. And these just don't often receive full attention, and yet they do matter for outcomes.

Jo Sharpe: Thank you. We'll link to those, resources in the show notes as well. So, Ugo, this, episode will, come out towards the end of December. The new year is looming. What are your New Year's resolutions for social protection in 2023?

Ugo Gentilini: I think that there is a need for radical balance. So many debates in social protection can get very polarizing, whether it's technology, or data, or targeting on informality, or financing. And there is, I think, a need for a more balanced treatment of these issues, including based on facts, but also on a willingness to understand and listen to each other and not just trying to convince one another. I hope that also social protection will keep becoming a global issue where all countries can interact on the matter and not kind of a south-south issue on one hand and high-income countries on the other. I think that the pandemic has shown that also high-income countries can have big delivery hurdles and, there are a number of shared labor market challenges in reaching workers that have fallen through the cracks of the system across country income groups. Whether it is because of people in gig jobs or in non-standard employment or the self-employed that have a different level of protection from, wager employees or because of the level of informality.

So, the starting points are different, but the challenges seem to land in a similar spot. And I hope that this convergence in challenges can help in enhancing corporation and learning across the globe. And also, let's more explicitly connect the narratives on poverty on how development happens with social protection. This is not just a technocratic agenda. Is one of upward mobility and how you improve the living standards for all. And you can't really tell the story without, anchoring it to a framework on what causes poverty and how you ignite development. And then maybe I can just say that there would be some news in 2023 on a personal project, but I cannot announce it yet, and I'll leave it at that.

Jo Sharpe: Okay, we'll stay tuned for that. And of course, we, on the Social Protection Podcast will do our best to contribute to some of those projects around bringing together different perspectives, that idea of radical balance. And of course, what we do here at socialprotection.org is all about bringing together that learning and cooperation within the sector. So, with that, thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me on the Social Protection Podcast today.

Ugo Gentilini: Thank you so much, Jo. I think that, socialprotection.org is a public good. I think the entire community and beyond is incredibly grateful for
the work that you all do and, and really look forward to come next time if I'm invited.

**Vania Budianto:** So, my social protection resolution for next year, besides trying to finish my dissertation, I think for the sector, especially social protection in Indonesia, I wish that next year there will be more social assistance for the vulnerable population in Indonesia, such as for the elderly and people with disability as these are the two groups that actually have been excluded and have like legal entitlement to receive social assistance in Indonesia. So, I hope next year there will be more coverage for these particular target population groups.

**Safdhar:** I personally feel for the persons with disabilities, and I think that the care for the older people and the care for the person with disability is a very robust indicator of the health of social protection system in any country. So, in two-minutes time, you can know that if a country is taking care of its person with disabilities and older people, that means they have a good system in place, which unfortunately is not the case in Pakistan. So, person with disabilities suffer a lot in silence. They're not even counted properly. So, I would personally like to give a lot of time to the issues, to the care, a person with disability in 2023.

**Tomoo:** One trend that I would like to see continue and accelerate in 2023 is for social protection to become everyone's agenda, where it's not only the social protection experts or responsible agency and ministries to talk about social protection, but policy makers and thinkers from different background are recognizing the role of social protection. For example, nutrition experts understanding and supporting social protection as one of the key ways to tackle malnutrition or education experts looking at the role of social protection in supporting children. Our highest level of decision makers are discussing how social protection can support children and young people to reach their full potential, when we can eliminate child poverty and enable them to access key services.

**Christina Dankmeyer:** Next year, in 2023, I think it'll be important to build on what we've learned throughout the Covid-19 recovery and tackling various shocks and stresses, in particular for social protection systems to systematically take into account climate change and for all of us to also help operationalize high-level commitments for funds and work programs this year. A year ago, an interagency working group took up work on social protection and climate change under the global partnership for universal social protection with different subgroups now looking at social protection, supporting climate change, adaptation, adjust transition, including climate change mitigation, as well as financing.
In this group, but also the field more broadly, I'm hoping we'll see more collaboration again, as also under new initiatives such as the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for just transitions or the global shield against climate risks. And for next year, the ILO governing body has also put just transition as an item on the agenda of the International Labor Conference for standard setting, taking into account the urgency of the issue. So, something else to look out for.

**Jo Sharpe:** Thank you to Vania Budianto, Christina Dankmeyer and Tomoo Okubo for sending in these contributions, and to Dr. Safdhar Souhail for speaking with me earlier this year, at the UN South-South Corporation Expo in Bangkok. And a big thank you for joining us for the Social Protection Podcast this year! We are a production of socialprotection.org from the International Policy Center for Inclusive Growth. Follow us on Twitter at SP_Gateway and find us on Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Subscribe to this podcast via Apple Podcast and Spotify and leave a review. Back next year. See you then.