

Using Social Protection to respond to COVID-19 and other shocks in Somalia

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List of abbreviations

BRCiS	Building Resilient Communities in Somalia
CBT	Community-Based Targeting
CSSP	Child Sensitive Social Protection
DWG	Donor Working Group
EWEA	Early Warning Early Action
EWS	Early Warning Systems
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FSNAU	Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDP	Internally Displaced People
ILED	Inclusive Local and Economic Development
HPG	Humanitarian Policy Group
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
MESAF	Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family
MEB	Minimum Expenditure Basket
MIS	Management Information System
MoHADM	Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management
NADFOR	National Disaster Preparedness & Food Reserve Authority
NDRA	National Displacement and Refugee Agency
SCC	Somalia Cash Consortium
SCI	Save the Children International
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SNLRP	Shock Responsive Safety Net for Locust Response Project
SSPP	Somalia Social Protection Policy
SWALIM	Somalia Water and Land Information Management
TAF	Technical Assistance Facility
TPM	Third-party monitoring
USN	Urban Safety Nets
USR	Unified Social Registry
FMS	Federal Member States

1. Introduction background

This case study on Somalia forms part of a series of papers produced by SPACE which document and analyse the social protection responses to COVID-19 in several countries, including Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia, Nigeria and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

This case study differs from the other case studies in that it seeks to take a broader lens, as follows. It recognises that Somalia has been affected by multiple crises in recent years, and that COVID-19 is just one more layer of crisis that has compounded the current 'triple crisis' of floods, a locust invasion of historical proportions, and ongoing conflict in some areas. There was a limited social protection response to the pandemic itself, and the main scale-up of social protection over the last two years was to cover the additional needs caused by floods and the locust infestation: arguably of greater importance, especially in rural areas. The paper therefore includes information on how the flagship and pilot shock responsive social protection programmes have responded to both the locust crisis and the COVID-19 crisis.

1.1 Overview

The remainder of this section describes the current situation in Somalia, focussing on the historical context of state collapse and civil war that has shaped the country's development since the early 1990s. This includes a highly resilient private sector, the importance of remittance flows and adaptive traditional leadership and clan structure filling some state functions. Recently, a more stable environment has allowed for a degree of economic recovery, although this needs to be seen in a context of multiple hazards, frequently occurring simultaneously.

1.1.1 Country context

After sustained periods of conflict and insecurity, Somalia has experienced a new phase of political and institutional progress. Southern parts of Somalia have faced conflict and instability since the collapse of the Somali state in 1991.¹ The country has however experienced relative stability since 2012 when the Provincial Constitution was adopted which established the Federal Republic of Somalia and granted the power to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS).² The FGS constituted the first national government since the start of the civil war in the 1980s. The federal republic consists of a Federal Government, the five-member states of Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Jubaland, Puntland, and South West, and the self-declared Republic of Somaliland. The States are further sub-divided into 18 administrative regions, which is divided into 90 districts. The institutional reform process has been embroiled in disputes over representation, power and resource sharing.³

The government was unable to adequately support its population during the civil war and clan structures filled various state functions, including the provision of social safety nets and dispute resolution. In many respects this re-assertion of traditional leadership was a pragmatic and effective adaptation to the new reality. Conflicts around power and resource sharing are articulated through inter-clan tensions which constitute the most common form of violent dispute across the country. Armed groups such as Al Shabaab exploit local disputes to fuel their campaign against formal institutions (see also Box 1 on the political economy of aid).⁴

1.1.2 Socioeconomic overview

Despite modest economic improvements, the nation still suffers from significant challenges, including recurrent shock exposure, high population growth, a large informal sector, and a heavy

¹ World Bank (2019) IDA Project Appraisal Document: Shock Responsive Safety Net for Human Capital Project.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ World Bank (2018) *Federal Republic of Somalia Systematic Country Diagnostic*. Available at <https://bit.ly/3yf0Wpv>

dependence on agriculture. The economy has proven resilient and grew moderately by 2.9% in 2019.⁵ Somalia has a rapidly growing population of 16 million people - over two-thirds of whom are under the age of 25 - and the lowest labour force participation rate in sub-Saharan Africa.⁶ Somalia's economy is also highly informal, offering little in the form of labour protection. Despite a shift away from traditional rural pastoralism and agro-pastoralism, agriculture remains the backbone of the economy, accounting for about 65% of GDP and 93% of total exports.⁷ Given its high dependency on agriculture, the economy is highly vulnerable to the increasing impacts of climate change and variability. As productive land is lost to drought, floods, and overgrazing, competition over scarce public and private resources are increasing.⁸

National poverty rates vary significantly across the country, with rural areas particularly affected.⁹ Whereas two-thirds of urban households have access to basic water services, only 20% of rural households do.¹⁰ Developmental imbalances also persist between the more stable northern regions and those in the south affected by cycles of conflict.¹¹ Children, youth and internally displaced people (IDPs) are among the poorest in the country.

Gender disparities persist as social and cultural norms, unfavourable recruitment practices, and lack of skills limit women's engagement in economic activities and public forums.¹² Only 22% of women engage in wage-generating activities.¹³ Gender-based violence (GBV) is also widespread, with 17% and 36% of women experiencing physical or sexual violence from a non-partner or intimate partner respectively.¹⁴

International remittances are foundational to the Somali economy and contribute significantly to household income for the poorest 40%.¹⁵ In 2018 remittances averaged at approximately US\$1.3 billion per year, near the value of total grants and official aid, and three times higher than foreign direct investment (FDI).¹⁶ According to the African Development Bank, remittances constitute approximately 31% of GDP.¹⁷ Remittances provide vital safety nets to millions of Somalis in the face of increasingly frequent shocks.

1.1.3 Multi-dimensional exposure to shocks

Somalia is highly vulnerable to drought and floods, compounded by recurrent conflict and displacement. In 2011, Somalia faced a famine caused by a combination of poor rains, production failure and high food prices, resulting in 258,000 deaths. In 2017, Somalia experienced another major drought but averted famine, in part due to the scale-up of multi-purpose cash delivered electronically.¹⁸ In the last two years, substantial flooding along the Shabelle and Juba rivers (2019/20), *Deyr* flash floods and rainfall (October 2020), and Cyclone Gati (2020), collectively affected approximately 847,000 people and displaced 485,000.¹⁹ As of January 2021, many parts of Somalia face critical water shortages,

⁵ World Bank (2020) Somalia Economic Update, June 2020: Impact of COVID-19. Available at <https://bit.ly/3flf48g>

⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019) *World Population Prospects 2019*, custom data acquired via <https://population.un.org/wpp/DataQuery/>

⁷ World Bank (2018) Country Partnership Framework for the Federal Republic of Somalia. p. 13. Available at <https://bit.ly/3fueANc>

⁸ World Bank (2018) *Federal Republic of Somalia Systematic Country Diagnostic*. Available at <https://bit.ly/3yf0Wpv>

⁹ World Bank (2019) Shock Responsive Safety Net for Human Capital Project, Project Appraisal Document

¹⁰ UNICEF and WHO (2019) *Joint Monitoring Program*. Available at <https://washdata.org/data/household#!/som>

¹¹ World Bank (2021) *The World Bank in Somalia*. Available at

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/somalia/overview>

¹² World Bank (2019) Shock Responsive Safety Net for Human Capital Project, Project Appraisal Document

¹³ World Bank (2021) 'Labour Force Participation Rate, female (% population ages 15+)', *World Bank Open Data*. Available at <https://bit.ly/2SNrZbe>

¹⁴ World Bank (2018) Country Partnership Framework for the Federal Republic of Somalia. Available at <https://bit.ly/3fueANc>

¹⁵ World Bank (2019) Shock Responsive Safety Net for Human Capital Project, Project Appraisal Document

¹⁶ Karamba, W (2021) Improving Access to Jobs for the Poor and Vulnerable in Somalia. p.5. Available at <https://bit.ly/3ypyWjl>; World Bank (2019) Somali Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment: Findings from Wave 2 of the Somali High Frequency Survey. Available at <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/32323>

¹⁷ African Development Bank Group (2020) African Economic Outlook 2020. Available at <https://bit.ly/2S3NI3C>

¹⁸ Cash Working Group (2018) Evaluation of the 2017 Somalia Humanitarian Cash-Based Response. <https://bit.ly/3wdzM0A>

¹⁹ OCHA (2019) 'Humanitarian Bulletin Somalia: 1 October- 5 November'. Available at <https://bit.ly/3eSOOTx>;

OCHA (2020) 'Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin November 2020'. Available at <https://bit.ly/33SR5b7>

particularly Somaliland, Puntland, Galmudug and Jubaland, where drought conditions have already been reported.²⁰

A recent locust invasion compounded the already precarious socioeconomic situation in Somalia. In the second quarter of 2020, locust swarms had spread across 44 districts, affecting approximately 180,000 hectares of rangelands.²¹ As of February 2021, control operations have treated approximately 53,000 hectares although swarms continue to spread, particularly in regions with good rains.²² The surge threatens crops and food security, with the country already suffering from below-average season rains in 2019 which had caused increasing food consumption gaps and acute malnutrition.²³

Armed conflict further exacerbates socioeconomic impacts multiple crises in the country. Conflict is the primary cause of internal displacement in 2021, with over 2.9 million people displaced by conflict and natural disasters throughout the country as of April 2021.²⁴

2. The socio-economic impact of COVID-19

This section outlines the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 in Somalia. In some respects, the pandemic can be seen as just another layer of stress on top of a permanent state of crisis in the country. Any analysis of the impact and response therefore has to be placed in this context. It is nonetheless a compounding shock with significant economic and social impact.

2.1 Primary Impact of COVID-19

The government acted early to contain transmissions. Before recording its first case which occurred on 16th March 2020, FGS imposed an international commercial flight ban from 5 March which lasted until August 2020. Land and sea borders were also closed and remain so as of January 2021. After recording its first death in early April 2020, the government enforced additional measures to contain the virus, including a night-time curfew from 8pm to 5am in the capital, imposing social distancing measures, and banning large gatherings.²⁵ Several member states responded accordingly, with Puntland authorities imposing a curfew in three major cities – restricting night-time movement and ordering businesses to close by 7pm.²⁶ Somaliland authorities closed land borders, imposed a 14-day quarantine for travellers arriving through Egal International Airport, and banned public gatherings.²⁷

²⁰ OCHA (2021) 'Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin January 2021'. Available at <https://bit.ly/3eQQCwc>

²¹ World Bank (2020) Impact of COVID-19: Policies to Manage the Crisis and Strengthen Economic Recovery. Available at <https://bit.ly/2QuwJSw>

²² Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (2021) 'Desert Locust Bulletin'. Available at <https://bit.ly/3yhoaeM>

²³ Bareisaitegemechu, A., Aga, G.A., & Ahad, A. (2021) 'Coronavirus and fragility: The impact of COVID-19 on Somalia's private sector', *World Bank Blogs*. Available at <https://bit.ly/3bzxWF>

²⁴ OCHA (2021) *Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin April 2021*. Available at <https://bit.ly/3yglGx3>

²⁵ CRISIS24 (2020) Somalia: Authorities to impose nightly curfew in Mogadishu from April 15 due to COVID-19. Available at <https://bit.ly/2S3NI3C>

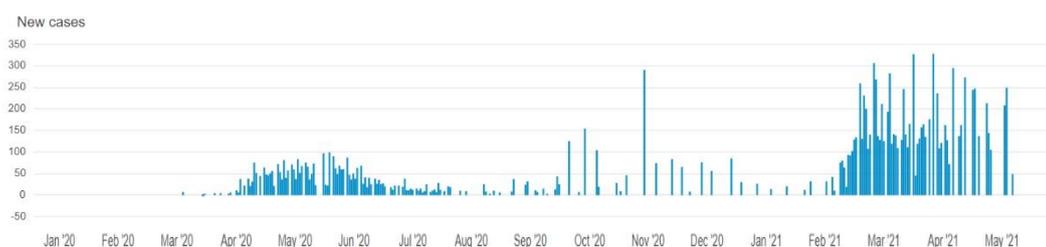
²⁶ Majid, N., Hassan, S., Koshin, S.A., Musa, A.M. and Abdirahman, K. (2020) *Puntland and COVID-19: Local Responses and Economic Impact*. Available at <https://bit.ly/3tUCl6a>

²⁷ Ibid.

Despite few cases recorded throughout 2020, COVID-19 cases have increased in 2021 amid concern about the strength of the health system. Somalia experienced a significant surge in infections as of February 2021 (see Figure 1 below).²⁸ Moreover, the healthcare infrastructure is constrained and at risk of being overwhelmed, particularly in urban centres, with only 850 healthcare workers trained to handle COVID-19 as of July 2020.²⁹ Ranking last out of 195 countries according to the 2019 Infectious Disease Vulnerability Index, Somalia is considered “the worst-equipped country to respond to a major infectious disease outbreak”.³⁰

Figure 1. Overview of COVID-19 in Somalia by date (source WHO)

Overview of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) by date



2.2 Secondary/ Socioeconomic Impacts of COVID-19

While the primary impacts of the pandemic are so far relatively limited, the secondary impacts have the potential to be high and longer-lasting.

Disruptions of trade and financial flows caused by global shutdowns affected economic growth in Somalia. Estimates indicate that GDP growth contracted from 2.9% in 2019 to a negative 1.5% in 2020.³¹ Economic recovery is forecast to return to 2.9% in 2021, although this will be dependent on increasing demand for commodities such as livestock.³²

The pandemic also severely affected government resource mobilisation, which is largely dependent on trade taxes. Trade taxes account for approximately 87% of total revenue. In April 2020, Somalia’s seaport reported revenue losses of 60-80% caused by disruptions in global supply chains.³³ Large reductions in state revenue reversed years of improved domestic revenue mobilisation.

Government restrictions on businesses have strongly impacted urban areas and created particular challenges for the poor, many of whom work in the retail, hospitality, and transport sectors.³⁴ A World Bank survey conducted in June 2020 found that restrictions had reduced sales and employment by approximately 30% compared to 2019, causing 90% of firms to face liquidity and cash flow challenges.³⁵ The lack of subsequent data collection means there is no indication whether the private sector (generally considered to be highly resilient through years of conflict and instability) has recovered.

Many Somali households have struggled to meet basic needs. A July 2020 study found that 46% of respondents indicated they were not able to provide basic needs for their children due to loss of income.³⁶ Half of the respondents reported their main source of food supplies had changed, with 62% not able to access paid productive and income-generating activities to fulfil nutritional needs. As a result, 50% adopted various coping strategies, of which 75% reduced food consumption in both quantity and

²⁸ WHO (2021) *Health Emergency Dashboard (COVID-19) Somalia*. Available at <https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/so>

²⁹ African Development Bank Group (2020) *African Economic Outlook 2020*. Available at <https://bit.ly/2S3NI3C>

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ African Development Bank Group (2021) *African Economic Outlook 2021*. Available at <https://bit.ly/3hKt12r>

³² African Development Bank Group (2020) *African Economic Outlook 2020*. Available at <https://bit.ly/2S3NI3C>

³³ African Development Bank Group (2020) *African Economic Outlook 2020*. Available at <https://bit.ly/2S3NI3C>

³⁴ World Bank (2020) *Impact of COVID-19: Policies to Manage the Crisis and Strengthen Economic Recovery*. Available at <https://bit.ly/2QuwJSw>

³⁵ Bareisaitegemechu, A., Aga, G.A., & Ahad, A. (2021) *Coronavirus and fragility: The impact of COVID-19 on Somalia’s private sector*. Available at <https://bit.ly/3bzxWF>

³⁶ Save the Children (2020) *Impact of Covid19 Outbreak on Women and Children in Somalia*. Available at <https://bit.ly/3bqMi50>

quality.³⁷ The study also found that families in IDP centres were 54% and 31% more likely to change eating habits compared to urban and rural families.³⁸

Women in Somalia have faced specific challenges relating to increased abuse and sexual violence as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Reports indicate a spike in Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) due to lockdowns and school closures that have forced girls to stay at home.³⁹ According to the WHO, in a rapid assessment conducted in July 2020 of 318 service providers and 756 community members, 67% of service providers reported that incidents of GBV had increased during the pandemic, while 38% of community members reported increased of physical violence, sexual abuse and harassment, IPV, rape, and FGM.⁴⁰

Informal safety nets in Somalia have come under particular strain in the face of COVID-19. Global shutdowns and reductions in economic activity are causing many Somalis in the diaspora to lose income which could have negative impacts on remittance flows into the country. In June 2020, the World Bank projected a 17% decline in remittances for the year due to reduced incomes of the diaspora and difficulties in transferring funds.⁴¹ However, recent data from the Central Bank of Somalia indicates that remittance inflows were not as badly affected as initially predicted, declining less than expected in Q2 of 2020 and had recovered by October 2020.⁴² Although remittances contribute to consumption for many households, they are concentrated in urban households, therefore often not reaching marginalised and minority rural groups who are most in need.⁴³ Moreover, social assistance provided to households through clan structures in the form of “religious tithing and alms mechanisms” including *zaqat* and *sadaqah* (voluntary offering) often fails to reach those most in need.⁴⁴

3. The emerging social protection sector in Somalia

3.1 Overview

While humanitarian assistance has been the dominant form of external social assistance in Somalia since the collapse of the state, that situation is starting to change in two key dimensions. Firstly, given their protracted duration, many humanitarian programmes have essentially transitioned into social assistance by default. Secondly, there is an emerging social protection sector, with the introduction of several programmes which are largely derived from humanitarian responses but have been established independently; many also have shock responsive components embedded in them.

The social assistance landscape is therefore characterised by a mixture of approaches: continued conventional humanitarian responses (such as in areas of conflict and displacement); humanitarian programmes that have morphed into social assistance; social protection programmes providing routine assistance; and social protection programmes with shock responsive elements. There are also crisis modifiers in ongoing resilience-building programmes. These formal approaches also sit alongside informal systems referred to earlier in the paper. The result is a complex web of various approaches, many of which have characteristics in common.

The remainder of this section focuses on a description of the key dimensions of the social protection system in Somalia, including: the enabling environment for both routine and shock-

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ OCHA (2021) Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin Somalia January 2021. Available at <https://bit.ly/3eQQCwc>

⁴⁰ WHO (2020) Covid-19 information note 8: COVID-19 in Somalia: the gender Gap. Available at <https://bit.ly/3tYzBEK>

⁴¹ United Nations (2020) *Security Council: Situation in Somalia*. P. 52. Available at <https://bit.ly/3hycTk8>

⁴² World Bank (2020) Phase II COVID-19 Crisis Through a Migration Lens. Data taken and available at <https://bit.ly/342G7jv>

⁴³ Rift Valley Institution (2017) *Remittances and Vulnerability in Somalia*. Available at <https://bit.ly/3eTKXph>

⁴⁴ World Bank (2018) *Federal Republic of Somalia Systematic Country Diagnostic*. Available at <https://bit.ly/3yf0Wpv>

responsive social protection; key programmes – both routine and shock-responsive; and selected aspects of the delivery chain for shock responsive social protection (including early warning, payments, and information systems).

3.2 Humanitarian assistance

Before turning to social protection, we give a brief overview of some important characteristics of humanitarian assistance. Part of the reason for highlighting these issues is that they are also likely to be of continuing significance to the emerging social protection system.

There has been increasing and improved use of humanitarian cash in recent years. Since 2017, multi-purpose cash transfers have in most cases been delivered by the largest NGO consortia: the Somalia Cash Consortium (DG ECHO funded) and BRiCS (FCDO funded). Over 3 million people were reached with humanitarian cash transfers through the consortia during the drought of 2017 within the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). Several donors (namely ECHO, FCDO and USAID) have coordinated to harmonise transfer values according to a standard percentage contribution to the Minimum Expenditure Basket, which was a major step towards more harmonised cash programming in the country.

The recent analysis points to some important areas of reform. A joint evaluation of Cash-Based Assistance in 2017 recommended *inter alia* to expand the use of multi-purpose (unrestricted) cash transfers; reduce the restrictions on transfers by limiting the use of vouchers for specific purposes; expand the use of mobile money where possible; link cash to social protection; and work towards interoperable or common registries.

Box 1: The Political Economy of Aid in Somalia

Humanitarian aid has become embedded in the wider political economy of the country due to its prolonged use. This is likely to continue with the emerging social protection system.

Somalia ranks at the bottom of the 2015 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index which closely links to the more political dynamics described above (Transparency International, n.d.). A study by Transparency International found that corruption risks exist across the programme cycle, particularly during the following processes: the identification of local 'partners', the awarding of contracts (to private contractors and humanitarian agencies), the pricing of contracts (inflating contract values), the negotiation of conditions for access, the recruitment of staff (and subsequent staff composition), the selection and targeting of aid recipients, the selection of monitoring mechanisms, and the approach to monitoring programmes. The inter-agency dialogue has not been active on addressing systematic corruption (as compared to risk-management which tends to be focused on local NGO partners); nor has the Somali government or international humanitarian leadership.¹

With humanitarian assistance being a constant source of resources since the collapse of the Somali state in 1991, it is not surprising that social assistance – including the more recent modality of cash and the rise of social protection – has become an important element in the political economy.

The delivery of humanitarian assistance faces significant constraints in some areas. The continued presence of Al Shabaab in the south and central Somalia poses operational issues to access. Most productive areas in southern Somalia are under Al Shabaab control, including the rural areas of Bay and Bakool and along the Juba and Shebelle rivers, where many of the most marginalised live. In these areas humanitarian assistance is limited and social protection systems are unable to operate.

The delivery of humanitarian assistance is also affected by counter-terrorism laws and other measures. Such laws restrict who humanitarian agencies can partner with, especially financial service providers. Research by the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) suggests that such laws have increased operating costs, slowed down administrative functions and operational response, curtailed funding and undermined humanitarian partnerships.⁴⁵ They have also prevented access and altered the quality and coordination of assistance, making it more difficult for humanitarian actors to operate in accordance with

⁴⁵ Pantuliano, S., Metcalfe, V., Haysom, S. & Davey, E. (2012) (Pantuliano and Metcalfe, 2012).

the principles of neutrality and impartiality. This would also be a consideration with social protection transfers.

3.3 Enabling environment for social protection

The initial momentum to transition from humanitarian (cash) assistance to longer-term social protection began in 2018-19. It was driven by a humanitarian donor (DG ECHO) who worked in collaboration with others – including the EU Delegation – and established a Donor Working Group (DWG) in 2017-18. This initiated the process of moving humanitarian cash programming towards a longer-term social protection approach.

Shortly after, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) developed a [Somalia Social Protection Policy](#) (SSPP), which was published in March 2019. An implementation plan followed in August 2020. The implementation plan divides the SSPP into 7 priorities, with priority 5 relating to social assistance: "Unconditional assistance for the poorest and neediest". The SSPP also lays the foundations for a policy framework on shock responsive social protection. It includes a seasonal / shock-responsive element for extremely vulnerable rural communities (Priority 5.2).

The growing momentum for a coherent and informed approach on shock responsive social protection led to the establishment of a Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) in 2019. The TAF was established by the DWG in response to the emerging policy framework for social protection. The purpose of the TAF was to help design and implement pilot social assistance programmes – with a specific focus on shock responsiveness – and liaise with the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS).

The TAF developed a protocol for shock responsive components of social protection systems. The protocol was applied by several nascent/ pilot social protection approaches which were funded by DG ECHO. These pilots (which are explained below – BRCiS, CSSP, USN) were established to learn about the implementation of the protocol, including the creation of evidence and lessons on the incorporation of shock-responsiveness into social assistance programmes.

The TAF has helped to strengthen the linkages between humanitarian cash assistance and social protection, but it is not fully utilised. It was intended that the TAF would inform and/or support all social protection programmes. However, not all international actors have engaged fully in the process, and some programmes – such as the Baxnaano, which is described in the following sub-section – have proceeded on a parallel route. This meant the TAF had a difficult start and has not been used optimally by the Donor Working Group to facilitate coordination and technical support to the FGS.

A coordination structure for shock responsive social protection is also emerging. At the federal level, a coordination structure is helping to provide structure to the enabling environment. A Steering Committee has been established, co-chaired by MoHADM and DG ECHO with donors (FCDO and World Bank), MoLSA, SCC, TAF and implementing agencies as members. The Steering Committee has oversight of the Technical Committees at FMS and district level that make decisions on whether programmes should respond to shocks. It will increasingly focus beyond these with the evolution of the social protection system over time. Good coordination between MoLSA and programmes (such as Baxnaano and SAGAL, as described below) will be a critical test of the coordination structure.

3.4 Programmes

3.4.1 Flagship social protection programmes providing routine assistance

There are currently two flagship social assistance programmes in Somalia.

The **Baxnaano** programme is easily the largest social protection initiative in Somalia, reaching **1.2 million chronically poor rural people across 21 districts**⁴⁶. This flagship programme was initiated in April 2020 under the auspices of the FGS Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), under the Ministry of Planning Investment and Economic Development (MoPIED). It seeks to build “a bridge beyond the humanitarian approach, addressing Somalia’s immediate food security issues, while also laying the foundations for human capital investment over the longer-term.” Baxnaano is funded by the World Bank through a US\$65 million grant over three years, with additional funding secured to extend from 2021 to 2024. The programme provides households with cash transfers valuing US\$ 20/ household/ month, which are delivered by WFP; UNICEF has developed and managed the programme’s MIS. Where possible, the principal recipients of the transfer are women, and beneficiaries are linked to complementary nutritional support programmes. The Baxnaano transfer level equates to 20% of the average Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) amount⁴⁷; in contrast, the average humanitarian transfer in Somalia is US\$ 70, which contributes to approximately 70% of the average MEB. Baxnaano is also designed to be shock-responsive/ scalable, as described in the following section.

Household eligibility for Baxnaano is based on a three-stage system, as follows:

- **District eligibility:** guided by Stress Index, security, access by partners, capacity to implement and territorial dynamics;
- **Community eligibility:** guided by access to nutrition services, and vulnerability ranking – with priority given to households with malnourished pregnant women and children, persons with disability (amongst others), accessibility, meeting the assigned number of households to be covered; and
- **Household eligibility,** selected through community-based targeting: poor and vulnerable households with children under 5 years of age, vulnerability assessed by assets, debt burden, family size and coping strategies and additional filters in case of oversubscription (disability, nutrition status etc.).

The second flagship social protection programme is SAGAL, which will support 265,000 Somalis with routine social assistance. The €27M programme is funded by the European Union, Sweden, and Denmark and will be implemented in collaboration with the MoLSA.⁴⁸ The Somali Cash Consortium will provide systems building support and distribution of mobile money cash transfers. SAGAL is currently in the very first stages of implementation.

In addition to these flagship programmes, some smaller initiatives are providing routine assistance.

- The **Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCiS)** consortium was formed in 2013 and is comprised of seven partner NGOs (NRC is the lead agency). BRCiS has a social assistance programme providing routine cash transfers to 2,066 households, and all consortium members are involved in this. (This programme also has a shock-responsive element, as described in the following section.)
- The **Urban Safety Nets (USN)** programme is implemented by the Banadir Regional Authority, WFP and DRC. This programme has been running for two years and reaches 10,000 households of chronically vulnerable people, the majority being long term IDPs. A cash transfer of \$US35 per month is provided every quarter, in addition to complementary programming such as livelihoods, literacy and numeracy training. (This programme also has a shock-responsive element, as described in the following section.)

3.4.2 Shock responsive social protection programming

There are currently four main initiatives in Somalia that can be considered as shock responsive social programmes. The first three are pilot programmes – run by INGOs and NGO consortia and funded by DG ECHO – that involve both routine provision and a capacity to respond to shocks (adapting

⁴⁶ Somalia is officially divided into eighteen administrative regions, which in turn are subdivided into ninety districts. At the political level, there are five Federal Member States (FMS): Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Jubaland, Puntland and South West. Somaliland is effectively autonomous, though still lacking international recognition as an independent sovereign state.

⁴⁷ The MEB value changes according to area, as well as periodically inline with prices.

⁴⁸ SAGAL is a component within the EU Trust Fund’s €98M Inclusive Local and Economic Development (ILED) programme.

existing crisis modifiers). When the shock response is triggered, funds from DG ECHO are channelled through the Somalia Cash Consortium (SCC) to allow the scale-up of these three programmes. The fourth programme is funded by the World Bank, which is a specific programme focused on responding to the locust infestation while using the delivery systems of Baxnaano (it is referred to as the shock responsive component of the Baxnaano program).

The four programmes are as follows:

BRCiS

The shock responsive element of this programme involves three consortium members (Concern Worldwide, NRC and SCI) who together reach 2,066 households across 16 districts. The routine transfers are set at US\$ 20/ household/ month for 24 months, with a vertical expansion to US\$ 40/ month in the case of a shock. The objective of the transfer is to support households to resist and absorb minor shocks without undermining their ability to move out of poverty. The consortium has developed a community-based early warning system that works on a 'red flagging' basis. Data is collected by communities and project staff and triangulated with higher-level data from the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) and the Somalia Water and Land Information Management (SWALIM).

Save the Children International (SCI) Child Sensitive Social Protection (CSSP), Hargeisa, Somaliland

This is a small-scale child grant project reaching around 300 households in three IDP camps. Households with vulnerable children are eligible for the program, which has a transfer level of US\$ 20/ month. There is an early warning system in place using data from FSNAU and SWALIM. If triggered, a vertical expansion of an additional US\$50 is provided every month for three months to the existing core caseload (resulting in a total transfer of US\$70, equivalent to the standard humanitarian transfer value). The programme can also expand horizontally, with the scope to provide a monthly transfer of US\$70 to temporary beneficiaries who are residents in the pilot IDP camp, also for three months. National Disaster Preparedness & Food Reserve Authority (NADFOR) is the government ministry responsible for the shock-responsive element. The National Displacement and Refugee Agency (NDRA) and Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family (MESAF) are also involved.

USN

The shock responsive element of this programme focuses on IDPs and vulnerable people in the urban centres of Banadir (including the capital Mogadishu). The approach to eligibility follows community-based targeting norms, with the guidance set by the Cash Working Group⁴⁹, most beneficiaries of the programme were identified through attendance at 'wet feeding centres' provided by WFP. Further details of the programme are documented in section 5, which also outlines how the programme provided support to people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (the only social assistance programme to do so).

Baxnaano / Shock Responsive Safety Net for Locust Response Project (SNLRP)⁵⁰

The SNLRP is a USD 40M project under the World Bank's regional locust response programme⁵¹. The approach to eligibility follows community-based targeting norms, with the guidance set by the Cash Working Group⁵². To address the gender gap, particularly in terms of access to income, the direct beneficiary of the SNLRP transfer in eligible households will be women (unless women are not present). Note that while the assistance is funded under SNLRP, the initiative is widely referred to as the Baxnaano shock response component (rather than SNLRP) as it provides transfers using the delivery system and procedures of the routine Baxnaano programme.

The shock responsive aspects of this programme are overseen by the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MoHADM). In Somaliland, The National Disaster Preparedness & Food Reserve Authority (NADFOR) – the equivalent of MoHADM – is responsible for the shock-responsive

⁴⁹ Somalia Food Security Cluster (2018) *Community Based Targeting Guidelines for Somalia*. Available at <https://bit.ly/2RhWlm4>

⁵⁰ World Bank (2020) *Project Information Document*. Available at <https://bit.ly/3hsbs70>

⁵¹ World Bank (2020) World Bank Announces \$500 Million to Fight Locusts, Preserve Food Security and Protect Livelihoods. Available at <https://bit.ly/3eRMhcc>

⁵² Somalia Food Security Cluster (2018) *Community Based Targeting Guidelines for Somalia*. Available at <https://bit.ly/2RhWlm4>

element. The National Displacement and Refugee Agency (NDRA) and Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family (MESAF) also play a part in the Technical Committee at the local level.

Eligibility criteria for the Baxnaano shock responsive component (the locust response) is a combination of geographic targeting combined with some eligibility criteria, as follows. First, households already registered under Baxnaano and residing in severely locust-affected districts (14 districts) will automatically become eligible for an emergency cash transfer. Households that are not part of Baxnaano and reside in severely locust-affected districts (29 districts) will have to meet the eligibility criteria, namely those whose livelihoods depend on activities related to agriculture (small crop) or livestock either as subsistence farmers or as farm labourers, and those assessed to be at risk of food insecurity. These new households will be selected through Baxnaano’s participatory and community-based targeting (CBT) process (described earlier), which specifically aims to include representation from a diverse group of community members, including persons with disabilities, older persons and minority groups. Such a complex system is difficult to operationalise and could to some extent account for the slow roll-out of Baxnaano in the country.

3.4.3 Delivery chain for shock responsive social protection

This sub-section documents and analyses key elements of the delivery chain for shock responsive social protection in Somalia, including early warning systems, payment systems, and information systems.

Early warning systems to inform triggers

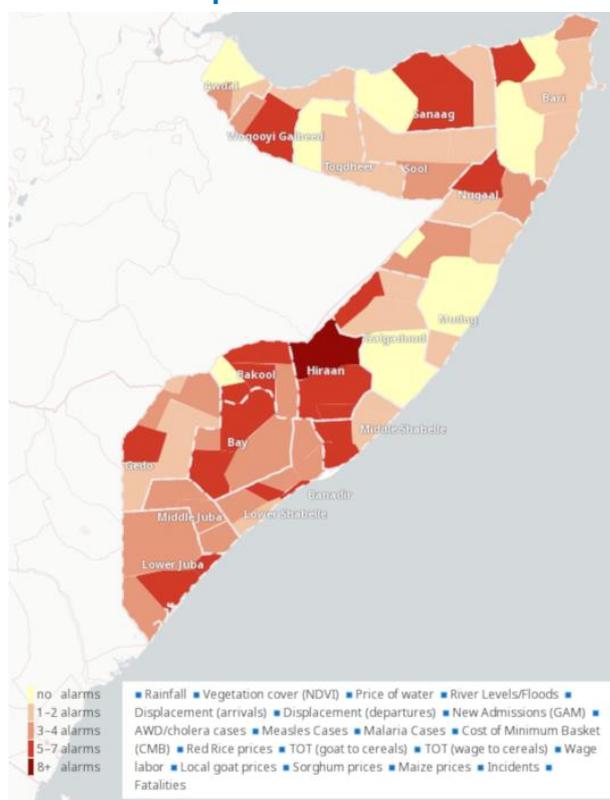
Somalia’s shock responsive social protection programmes are using early warning systems (EWS) to trigger their responses. An EWS aims to detect a shock with enough lead-time to activate a process that can trigger and lead to a social protection response, such as a vertical and/ or horizontal expansion.⁵³

The data being used by Baxnaano and other shocks responsive social protection programmes in Somalia is the monthly Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) dashboard. This is prepared by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), having been established after the famine declaration during the 2011 drought as a ‘never again’ action⁵⁴. The dashboard has an early warning function, providing data at the district level, and an early action accountability framework. Although the EWEA dashboard was not designed for shock responsive social protection programmes, it is being used by Baxnaano and others as the basis for triggering a scale-up. That said, there may be a change in future. MoHADM has designed and is currently testing its multi-hazard early warning system, and it may choose to replace the use of the FSNAU dashboard for triggering shock responsive social protection scale-ups in the future.

In addition, the BRCiS shock responsive component has a similar early warning system.

However, it is more complex, is community-based, and is more specific to communities in which BRCiS is working. The process is twinned with a ‘red flagging’ trigger system that was designed for the

Figure 2. Example of the FSNAU EWEA dashboard map



⁵³ Food and nutrition security information systems also collect data systematically and conduct analysis on a monthly basis, although this data is not used by the shock responsive social protection programmes. Indeed, the Integrated food security Phase Classification (IPC) system was developed in Somalia before being exported elsewhere.

⁵⁴ Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit Somalia (2016) *A Dashboard for Linking Early Warning to Early Action in Somalia*. Available at <https://dashboard.fsnau.org/index/about-us>

program's previous crisis modifier and is now used as a trigger for the shock response process in some districts.

In the DG ECHO funded programmes, a governance framework has been established to determine whether a shock response should be triggered. Technical Committees have been established at the district level to inform the decision whether to trigger a scale-up of DG ECHO supported programmes in pilot areas. The committees include the district level representatives of MoLSA, MoHADM and the implementing agency. When the early warning system is triggered, the data is presented and analysed by the Technical Committee and a decision to scale up or not is taken, and for which area.

Payment systems

Payment systems in Somalia are generally considered to be advanced, a result of the extensive use of cash in humanitarian assistance over many years. The early cash transfer programmes used the informal banking network (Halawa) to deliver cash even to remote rural locations. The shift from using the Halawa system to mobile money took place around 2017 pioneered by the two large NGO consortia, which greatly improved the electronic delivery of cash with associated efficiency gains.

Mobile money has become the default payment system for shock responsive social protection programmes in Somalia. This includes Baxnaano, which has resulted in WFP shifting away from using e-vouchers in rural areas and the formal banking system in Mogadishu. With person to business (P2B) capability, mobile money generally avoids the need to cash out with an agent as clients can purchase items directly with their mobile money accounts.

Information systems

To date, the management of data across programmes in Somalia has been highly fragmented. Due to the history of humanitarian cash assistance, beneficiary identities are held in several databases that are not interoperable, raising issues over duplication and efficiency. At present, the USN, BRICS and SCC consortia use a different database for registration (ONA), which is open source but still not interoperable with WFP's SCOPE currently used for Baxnaano. This indicates the fragmentation of data management systems in place. While technically possible to make the databases interoperable, data protection protocols and political will is lacking, meaning that registries cannot be de-duplicated with possible efficiency issues as multiple registrations is possible. It also makes it difficult to strategically layer assistance such that the most vulnerable could receive support in addition to the basic social protection transfers.

The emergence of social protection programmes has helped to catalyse a reform agenda in database management. UNICEF has been tasked by the government to develop the MIS and Unified Social Registry (USR). The latter will serve as a tool for the identification of beneficiaries for Baxnaano and potentially all social protection programmes going forward. The USR or interoperable databases with common unique identifiers can technically enable de-duplication of lists to avoid multiple registrations, as well as improve the coordination of programming.

When fully functioning, the USR should be instrumental for the shock responsive social protection agenda in Somalia. Its features should include the ability to: (i) identify potential beneficiaries for social protection programmes⁵⁵; (ii) report and track assistance to beneficiaries across programmes; and (iii) facilitate the scale-up of programmes in response to a shock, by enabling partners to identify most affected people, including for horizontal expansion of programmes.

The agenda is not without challenges, however. For instance, a common data registration form has been designed to help standardise information fields for interoperability, but this will require agreement by users. Interoperability and data sharing is likely to raise data protection concerns (especially for humanitarian actors to share with government-held databases), and issues around proprietary systems such as WFP's SCOPE (that is being used for both humanitarian programming and Baxnaano). In addition, the USR is being developed alongside the National ID programme (with the Ministry of the Interior, also World Bank funded). This would ideally have been operational before the USR and provided the unique identifier system.

⁵⁵ Note: There are concerns that targeting using the USR could result in significant exclusion errors, and this should be considered.

4. Social Protection responses to recent shocks in Somalia

This section sets out the responses to recent shocks in Somalia, including from both humanitarian assistance and social protection.

4.1 Humanitarian assistance

There was a substantial humanitarian response in 2020. (Humanitarian assistance here is understood to include cash, food, and voucher assistance by humanitarian actors.) The HRP 2020 was one of the best-funded appeals in recent history, appealing for USD 1.05 Bn and 82% funded. A total of 5.2 million people were considered in need (42% of the population or 12.3 million people) with an operational target to reach 3.5 million people, of which 2.1 million are non-IDPs and 1.4 million IDPs. Within the HRP, WFP implements the biggest humanitarian social assistance programme in Somalia. In 2020, WFP appealed for nearly USD 240 million, which was more than met with a total of USD 255 million.⁵⁶ 1.9 million people are reported to have been assisted with a mixture of in-kind food (4,333 Metric Tonnes of food) and cash-based transfers (cash and vouchers are not differentiated in WFP) (USD 15 million).

4.2 Shock responsive social protection

4.2.1 Response to locusts and floods

As alluded to at the outset of this case study, the core focus of shock responsive social protection in 2020-21 has been floods and locusts, rather than COVID-19.

All four of Somalia's shock responsive social protection programmes scaled up in 2020 to address the impacts of floods and locusts in the south. Their responses are depicted in Figures 2 and 3.

Most of the ECHO-funded shock responsive social protection pilots only scaled up vertically. This meant there were no additional targeting processes given the projects' existing beneficiaries. The exception was the CSSP in Hargeisa that scaled up both horizontally and vertically in response to flooding, which was possible by including the entire population of the IDP camp that it targets for the duration of the scale-up.

The most substantial shock response in 2020 was the scale-up of Baxnaano to respond to desert locust infestation, but not COVID-19. Over 2.6 million people are currently located in areas affected by the desert locust outbreak. Of those, 246,000 people are already considered to be in acute food insecurity, with the food security of households that were previously only in the "Stressed" category rapidly worsening. To help address the impacts of this shock, the SNLRP is delivering Emergency Cash Transfers (US\$ 39 million equivalent) through the Baxnaano delivery system. The programme is providing cash transfers to approximately 100,000 poor and vulnerable rural locust-affected households (equivalent to about 600,000 people) across 43 districts for six months. The transfers will be delivered using the delivery system and procedures of the Baxnaano programme. MoLSA will partner with WFP to support the implementation, and in 2021 the World Bank secured additional IDA funding to extend the SNLRP.

BRCiS scaled up both horizontally and vertically for its initial social safety net transfer in response. This rapid scaling of the programme highlights the pressures and needs for flexible and shock responsive social protection programming in a context like Somalia.

⁵⁶ OCHA Services (2020) *Humanitarian aid contributions*. Available at <https://fts.unocha.org/>

Figure 3: Map of SRSN pilots and Baxnaano

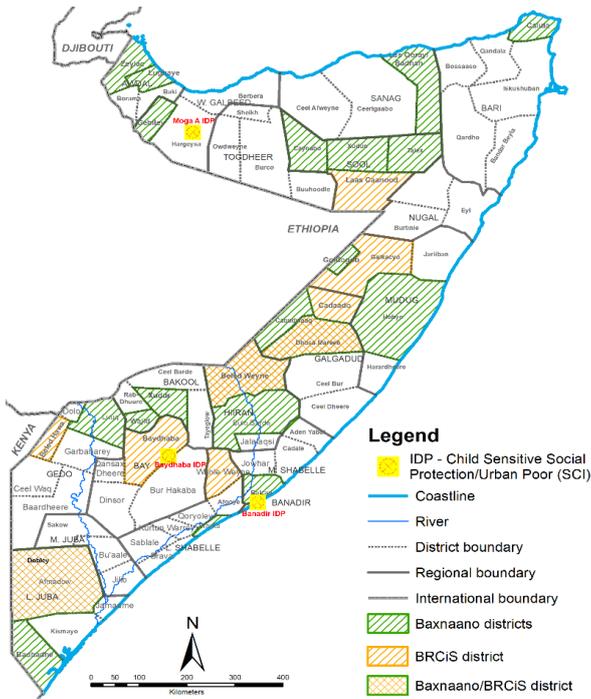
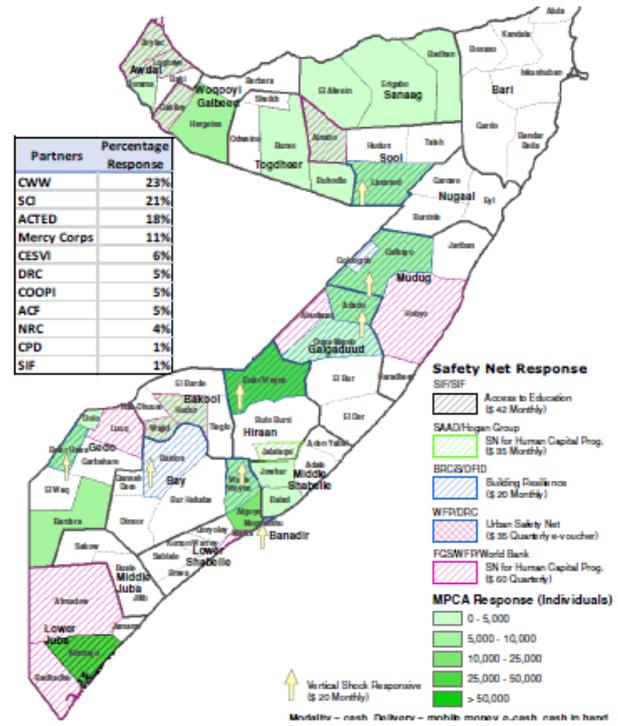


Figure 4. Scale-up of SRSNs by July 2020



4.2.2 Response to COVID-19

The only shock responsive social protection programme that responded to COVID-19 was in the urban areas of Banadir through the USN program. The USN scaled up in November 2020 (with DG ECHO and FCDO funding through the Somali Cash Consortium) to target people vulnerable to COVID-19 in 14 locations in and around Mogadishu. A two-month scale-up was considered and approved by the BRA technical committee and implemented in December and January 2020/21 targeting a total of 19,564 households vulnerable to COVID-19: some already recipients of the regular USN payments, and a horizontal expansion to reach out to other households.

Targeting the new temporary recipients for USN was carried out by community committees and verified by the BRA and DRC: this process could take 10-15 days and be considered onerous considering the short duration of the programme.

5. Analysis

Based on the foregoing, this section provides an analysis of various aspects of the social protection system in Somalia. The analysis focuses on the shock responsive aspects of the system, including the responses to floods, locusts and COVID-19, but – for comprehensiveness – we also make observations on broader aspects beyond what is known about those responses. The basis for our analysis is a selection of the dimensions that have been used in other SPACE case studies and the tools used by SPACE to advise on social protection responses to COVID.

5.1 Coverage

The coverage of responses to locusts and floods has generally been strong. Nascent shock responsive safety nets have scaled up in response to floods and locusts in the rural areas that they focus on.

However, the coverage of social protection responses to COVID-19 in Somalia has – unsurprisingly - been less encouraging. The exception has been in the urban areas of Banadir (including Mogadishu). A key reason behind the lack of social protection response to COVID-19 is the disconnect between the presence of shock responsive social protection programmes and the geographic

areas where the main impacts of the pandemic have been felt (i.e. urban areas). The shock responsive programmes have a rural focus, as this is where shocks have been most prevalent in the past (e.g. floods, droughts). These programmes were therefore largely unable to scale up in response to the pandemic, which is largely affecting urban populations in Somalia. The low coverage means that, while COVID-19 has not had a large primary impact and can be seen as another layer of the crisis on top of existing stresses that are arguably more severe (such as floods and the largest locust infestation in years), the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 are still being felt in urban areas – even if aspects such as remittances are not as hard-hit as predicted.

Some positive examples of urban coverage particularly for IDP settlements, are however evident through humanitarian cash programming. BRCiS for example specifically focused on urban areas for humanitarian cash (MPCA) and rural areas for safety nets to avoid the potential duplication and confusion which could result from implementing both types of programmes in the same community.

5.2 Harmonisation and adequacy of transfer levels

The lack of harmonisation in transfer values between shock responsive social protection and humanitarian assistance remains an ongoing issue. While transfer values vary slightly for the social protection programmes, there is, broadly speaking, a good degree of harmonisation. A consensus has been reached that the routine transfer should be USD 20/ household/ month, with a top-up of a further USD 40 during a vertical scale up for a shock for a duration normally fixed at 3 months with possible extension, although discrepancies across programmes mean that in some cases there is only an additional USD 20 provided (e.g. BRCiS and Cash consortium programmes). In contrast, humanitarian cash transfers in Somalia are calculated based on the MEB. Donors in Somalia agreed to provide approximately 70% of the MEB as a transfer value on the understanding that affected populations can meet some of their needs.

This means the typical humanitarian transfer value is at times significantly higher than that of shock responsive social protection programmes. A humanitarian transfer is approximately USD 70/ household/ month, nearly double the regular social protection transfer plus the top-up being provided in response to a shock. This raises questions concerning the potential for inequity between social protection clients and those receiving humanitarian cash assistance, which may create risks for social cohesion. Humanitarian programmes need to be mindful of not undermining the long-term fiscal sustainability of social protection through high transfer values.

There are also concerns regarding the adequacy of social protection transfers during an emergency. Transfer values during a shock need to be adequate to meet basic needs and comply with humanitarian principles during the duration of the crisis; to align in some way with humanitarian transfers operating elsewhere; and be possible to scale down when the acute phase of a crisis is past. There were concerns from beneficiaries about the adequacy of USN's response to COVID-19. Third-party monitoring (TPM) was already in place for the regular programme, and post-distribution monitoring suggests that most recipients felt that the transfer value was insufficient (40%) or the duration of the scale-up was not long enough (31%).

5.3 Timeliness

The responses of the ECHO-funded programmes were generally timely. The shock responsive pilots demonstrated that the early warning triggering system and subsequent decision-making process was adequate for eliciting a timely response to the shocks encountered.

Actively learning from the pilots should help to improve the system for larger-scale programmes. While neither the locust nor the COVID-19 scale-ups was triggered by the conventional early warning systems – which are more tailored for climate events and forced displacements – the responses nevertheless demonstrate health flexibility in the approach that should be maintained.

5.4 Delivery systems

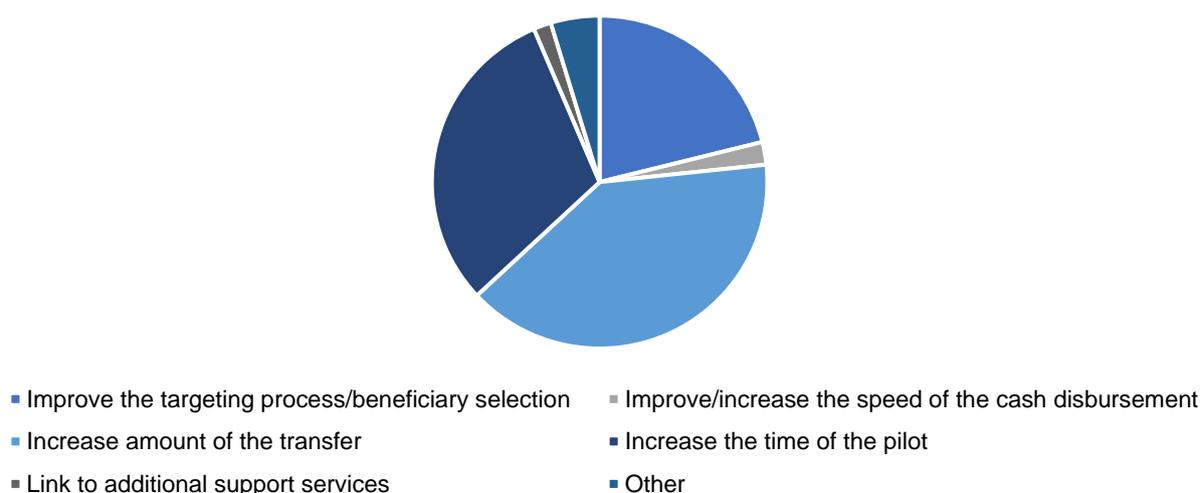
The payment systems also showed good adaptability, but the modality is still affected by challenges. As COVID-19 started to have an impact in the urban areas of Banadir, the cash delivery system for USN was changed from a card/ ATM system to mobile money to reduce transmission, reduce fiduciary risk and enhance accountability, particularly in the context of the pandemic. However, there have also been challenges in the shift to mobile money, particularly as a high proportion of women, who are the main recipients of Baxnaano, many of whom do not own mobile phones. SIM cards have been distributed to beneficiaries to ensure that they have direct access to the payments, rather than relying on access via other family members with phones.

The programmes also showed a good ability of the programmes to adapt concerning early warning systems. Neither the locust nor the COVID-19 scale-ups were triggered by the conventional EW systems which are more tailored for climate events and forced displacements. Nevertheless, the responses were mounted – thus demonstrating healthy flexibility in approach.

Implementation of the USN faced several challenges in implementing its shock response and scaling up to a higher number of beneficiaries. These include: (i) the time and opportunity costs of targeting; (ii) the risks associated with a ‘quick and dirty’ targeting process for a short-term scale-up and possible consequences during scale-down; (iii) issues with misinformation spread around by gatekeepers from the local community; and (iv) some challenges of working with the BRA local authorities and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MoHADM) at the Federal level of government. USN: Over 20% of respondents suggested improvements in the targeting/ selection of beneficiaries (see Figure 4 below).

The challenges facing the USN stem from both political and administrative issues. They are partly a result of political economy and patronage interests as well as the consequences of a rather rushed response involving a horizontal scale-up that entailed targeting in a compressed time frame.

Figure 5. USN scale-up improvements feedback



5.5 Governance structures

The role of local actors in some governance structures is encouraging. The responses are evidence of a shock responsive social protection decision-making system that is locally-led and based on local government participation.

There was also a willingness and capacity to follow and adapt the shock-responsive social protection protocols as needed. For instance, the USN responded to COVID-19 within the framework of its design parameters and broader framework, using the overall protocol for the shock responsive social protection pilots that were adapted somewhat due to the nature of the crisis (COVID-19) that was not foreseen and included in the early warning triggering system.

That said, the responses to shocks have highlighted some of the challenges with the decision-making processes. This was demonstrated by the BRCiS shock responsive social protection pilot, where the district Technical Committees always agree to a recommended scale-up. This is because they have been faced with pressure to provide resources to their communities and to a perception that the

funding will disappear if it is not used. This is symptomatic partly of the long duration of humanitarian assistance and the reality of short funding cycles, but also demonstrates the need for longer-term funding and more empowerment of the local government and communities to decide on whether a response is required.

5.6 Information systems

The state of information systems for social protection is heading in the right direction but needs sustained momentum. The current context of fragmented data registries does not allow any level of data sharing, identifying duplication, or tracking beneficiary information. The development of a Unified Social Registry linked to a future national registry is a positive vision, and there are opportunities for the USR to become the single registry for social protection programmes in the future.

5.7 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Mechanisms to mitigate concerns around gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) have been integrated into Baxnaano. These issues are a key risk in Somalia, and it is encouraging that steps have been taken to address them, for example, through clearly communicating the decision to register women as the main recipients of the transfer to communities to mitigate any potential backlash on women, and establishing multiple referral pathways for reporting incidences of GBV. This also included working closely across several actors to identify appropriate GBV services in local areas which beneficiaries could potentially access, providing information on how to report GBV cases and raising awareness of recipient's rights, and establishing referral pathways through hotlines and access to services.

Exclusion remains an ongoing concern, however. Vulnerability is closely linked to clan or group affiliations. Minority groups (including non-ethnic Somali groups) lack the extended social network in the Diaspora that often forms an informal safety net for the majority tribes. The communities from the regions most affected by the 2011 famine, the Rahanweyn and Bantu, were particularly vulnerable (Dunn and Brewin, 2014). While social protection programmes are aware of the risks of exclusion and actively try to mitigate these, it is important to understand the potential actions of gatekeepers frequently found to manipulate humanitarian assistance.

5.8 Accountability and M&E

There is limited information available on this important issue. On the knowledge to hand, we are not able to give a considered appraisal of the extent to which the shock responsive social protection programmes in Somalia are implementing a robust approach to accountability and monitoring and evaluation. The implementation of Baxnaano is at an early stage. However, it is encouraging that the DG ECHO-funded shock responsive social protection pilots have commissioned a 'learning partnership'.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Looking at the shock responsive social protection system more broadly, some key characteristics are extremely encouraging for the future. These include (i) humanitarian-development coordination; (ii) proactive shock responsive design of programmes; (iii) EWEA systems are designed and functioning (although may be adapted based on learning); and (iv) the reform agenda and policy ambition to establish a USR.

Notwithstanding the successes to date, the road ahead presents a range of challenging issues for the capacity of the social protection system to respond to shocks. Somalia is a complex context for nascent

social safety nets to be established successfully, not least due to the multi-hazard environment and ongoing active conflict, driving both forced displacement and access issues.

With this context in mind, we put forward several recommendations which seek to help establish a robust and successful shock responsive social protection system in Somalia:

1. Finalise an early warning and triggering system that is both functional and acceptable to all

A defined and recognised role for government is crucial. There is a perception in government that although functional, the early warning systems are predicated to foster a humanitarian style response, rather than a government-led and controlled process. Impartial and objective indicators, such as remotely sensed data, should be an important part of the emergent system, perhaps in combination with more community-sourced data. The FGS/ MoHADM must find the early warning system to be acceptable. MoHADM is developing a new multi-hazard early warning system at the current time, which is seen as a positive way for the government to have more ownership and adopt a 'humanitarian' system along social protection lines. It will be important for MoHADM to retain the highly functional data collection system that has been in place for many years (FSNAU for food and nutrition security and SWALIM for flood warnings). FSNAU is currently in the process of transitioning its system to meet the needs of MoHADM and build the necessary capacity.

Cross-country learning could be valuable. Lessons from elsewhere in the region such as Kenya and Ethiopia where systems have already been up and running for several years would be important. MoHADM could usefully learn from the experience of the HSNP in neighbouring Kenya for some aspects.

The system should also take account of the needs of urban areas. In this regard, remotely sensed data may be a very early warning of factors such as market prices that may impact the wellbeing of urban livelihoods (also understanding that 'urban' and 'rural' livelihoods and families are closely linked) and could be complemented by other data, such as casual labour rates. As above, learning from other experiences in the region and beyond may be instrumental in designing a system adapted for Somalia's urban contexts.

Early warning for conflict and mass displacement is notoriously difficult and continuing to rely on community-based reports through local organisations may be the only option. It is also a limitation of the learning in that the existing social assistance system and the pilots are situated outside of active conflict areas and not designed to respond to forced displacement from within the area. The wider application of shock responsive social protection in Somalia will either need to integrate conflict indicators and response or rely on other response options where conflict displacement is an issue. Equally, the issue of access to Al Shabaab-controlled areas needs to be considered. The latter is a long-term issue and of course affects programming overall and not just social assistance.

2. Enhanced coordination and harmonisation across modalities

Cohesion and coordination in the choice of modalities could bring strong rewards. The spectrum of responses to shock, including anticipatory action, regular humanitarian response, crisis modifiers and shock responsive social protection, all have comparative advantages. Enhanced coordination and harmonisation of tools, especially for cash transfers, would provide a more cohesive approach and an analysis of what works best in different contexts, according to types of shocks, and levels of access, would be instrumental to optimise impact and value for money.

3. Strengthen governance structures and broaden their uptake

There is a need to empower local decision-makers regarding triggers and the release of funds. The lessons derived from responses of programmes to recent shocks should be considered and in particular for an appropriate funding instrument to be established with clear release criteria and decision-making protocols. The Technical Committees is a good model, but more empowerment of this structure could see more strategic decisions over scale-ups. Relationships, roles and responsibilities between the communities and traditional leaders, international actors, local authorities and regional/ federal authorities could be better clarified for the current situation and the future.

Instituting a more locally held funding mechanism (such as contingency funds) may be helpful. If there were more opportunities for communities to take greater responsibility for triggering responses, including managing contingency funds at the local level, this may resolve the observed

patterns of the past – namely that local actors agree to a scale-up to bring resources to their communities for fear of losing the opportunity to access support. A locally held funding mechanism could be a way to reduce the tendency of Technical Committees to approve scale-ups. It would also help encourage decisions to respond to be more closely related to the severity of a shock with a longer-term perspective.

Within shock responsive social protection, there is scope for greater uptake of the agreed protocols. While the protocols are not binding, programmes not currently using them – including Baxnaano – can benefit from using the protocols (that have now been tested in the field) such as the decision-making process that involves Technical Committees.

4. Create a common and harmonised agenda on information management

The current use of proprietary systems like SCOPE and the NGO consortia system hinders interoperability. Data protection protocols, especially for humanitarian agencies working in areas of active conflict makes interoperability even more difficult to achieve. Issues over data protection and willingness to share data or adopt common unique identifiers will need to be overcome if interoperability is to become a medium-term reality. Data management needs to work towards a future Unified Social Registry in the longer term.

With political will, however, there are technical solutions that avoid disclosing the personally identifiable data of data subjects. The key to this will be assigning common unique identifiers to all those registered that can be used across all systems. Interoperable systems based on identifiers would both allow de-duplication of databases (with attendant efficiency gains) and allow more strategic layering of programming to enhance outcomes across the nexus.

5. Decisions on transfer values should be informed by evidence and subject to discussion

Shock responsive social protection programmes should ideally seek to inform the debate on what are appropriate transfer values for a safety net responding to shocks. Disparities in transfer values in SRSN, regular social assistance transfers and humanitarian cash leads to equity issues and potential social tensions (including possible movements of populations). Transfer values during a shock need to be adequate to meet basic needs and comply with humanitarian principles during the duration of the crisis; to align in some way with humanitarian transfers operating elsewhere; and be possible to scale down when the acute phase of a crisis is past.

Equally, there is a role for humanitarian actors. Lowering humanitarian transfer values to some extent does not necessarily lead to unacceptable erosion of impact (and humanitarian principles): layering programmes targeted at especially vulnerable groups on top of a more blanket baseline transfer value could be one possible solution. However, this would require excellent coordination across the nexus and interoperable systems.

Fundamentally, decisions on transfer levels need to be informed by evidence and should be discussed/coordinated among actors. An upcoming study using the Household Economy Approach may also help to add an evidence base to setting transfer values in the Somalia context.

6. Enhance the approach to Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

There are good foundations in place for GESI. The current approaches to integrating gender equality and social inclusion into shock responsive social protection in Somalia has largely focused on targeting processes, eligibility criteria, and to some extent, safeguarding and protection. These are important foundations to ensure the participation and protection of the poorest and marginalised individuals.

However, there are also significant gaps that remain. For example, programmes are not adequately informed or monitored by a gender and inclusion analysis, meaning that the design and implementation decisions are based on assumptions of the experiences of women, persons with disabilities, IDPs, minority groups etc., rather than informed by a context-relevant assessment. This means that issues such as intra-household dynamics, decision-making, control over the transfers, for example, are not adequately considered, even though they are factors that mediate the outcomes of interventions.

Moreover, there is little engagement with local actors representing diverse groups – more engagement with local actors across programme planning and implementation could help to ensure a more equitable and inclusive SRSN approach. Social exclusion of minority clans and especially

minority ethnicities such as the Jareer Bantu run through all aspects of Somali society, with humanitarian assistance included. Safety Nets need to pay particular care to ensure that such groups are included systematically, including working around gatekeepers.

7. Think and work politically

There is a crucial need for social protection actors to think and work in a politically informed manner, including learning lessons from the humanitarian sector. The protracted crisis and humanitarian response have become deeply embedded in the political economy of Somalia, including the ongoing dynamics of conflict between Al Shabaab and the FGS/ FMS. Political and cultural patronage systems are also powerful ways that are used to manipulate resources. Social protection systems are likely to fall into the same relationship unless the complexities of power and resources are fully understood and, as far as possible, mitigated against.

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