

STAAR Evidence Digest

Curated by the STAAR Technical Senior Leadership Team

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i Hello and welcome to the STAAR Evidence Digest for February 2024

The STAAR Digest is a collection of articles that our Technical Leadership Team finds interesting – related to both social protection in crises and gender-responsive social protection. We aim to publish the Digest each month. We have curated the content by **themes** which relate closely to our work on STAAR and the content is by no means exhaustive. Any feedback on the content, format, etc is welcome. Email us at STAAR@STAARfacility.org

Gender and Social Inclusion

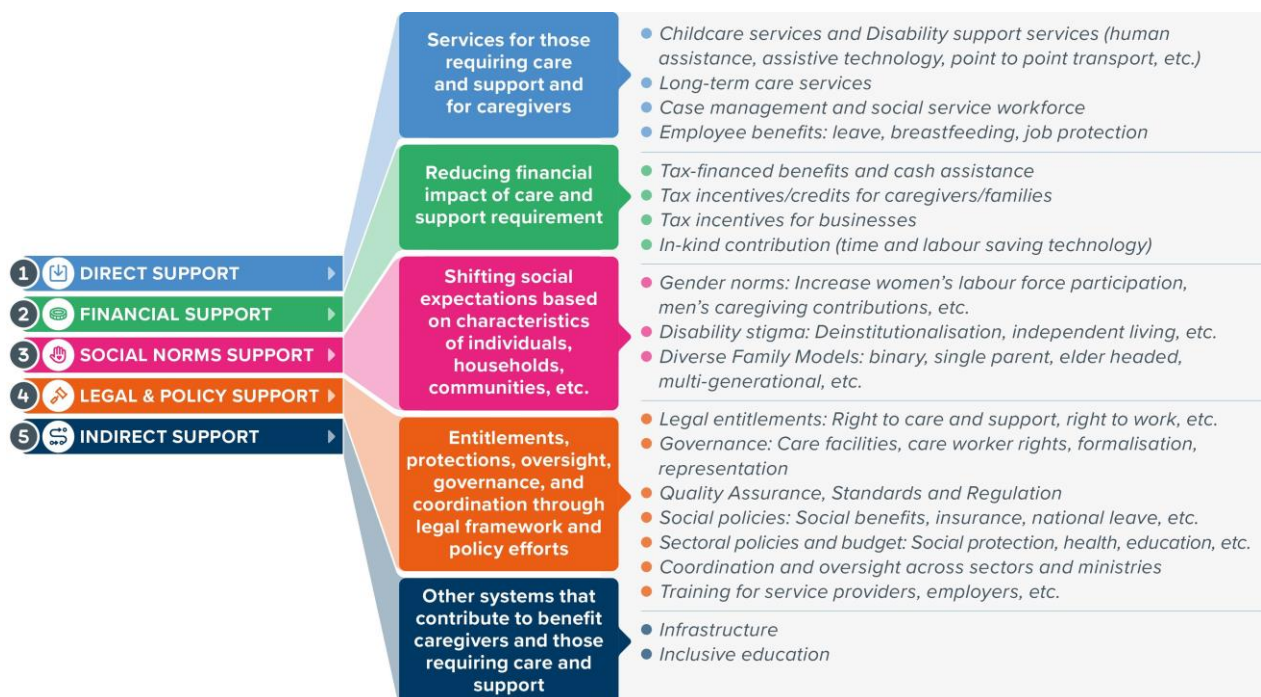


Figure 1: Building blocks of inclusive care and support systems, *Age Sensitive, Disability Inclusive, and Gender Responsive Care and Support Systems Evidence Note*

» In 2023, FCDO, UNICEF, and STAAR initiated a collaboration to examine the challenges and strategies for developing inclusive care and support systems in low- and middle-income settings. This work included the development of an evidence paper as well as hosting the Inclusive Care and Support Systems Strengthening Global Technical Workshop in London on 28-29 November 2023 to answer the question “How can governments in different contexts develop systems that provide more and better care and support across the life cycle to those who need it, in their communities, in ways that are disability-inclusive, gender-responsive, contextually relevant, and fiscally sustainable?” High-level takeaways from the meeting were: 1) the importance of acknowledging, on equal footing, the needs, rights and dignity of both those requiring and providing care and support throughout the life cycle, recognising that many people are both users and providers, 2) the need for comprehensive multisectoral systems approaches leveraging expansion of social protection alongside other critical sectors, 3) the necessary role of diverse stakeholders including public, private, and community actors, 4) discourse on the human rights and economic basis for care and support systems, and 5) the urgency to advance a global agenda for inclusive systems of care and support by seeking greater convergence of the care economy, gender equality, child rights, disability inclusion and ageing agendas on the matter.

- » Every five years the [World Survey on the Role of Women in Development](#) is published, and the 2024 edition will focus on how integrated gender-responsive social protection systems can harness gender equality, resilience and transformation in the context of frequent disasters and chronic crises. Several expert group papers and meeting reports are now online which will serve to inform the report now online, including financing social protection from a feminist perspective, the use of digital tools for delivering social protection and integrated approaches to social protection, care and employment.
- » A new book “[Young People in the Global South: Voice, Agency and Citizenship](#)” explores adolescents’ and young people’s civic engagement and political participation. The book includes reflective accounts by adolescents and young people themselves and examines how structural inequalities and marginalisation, as well as social norms and attitudes, shape how voice, agency and participation are expressed by diverse young people in lower- and middle-income contexts.
- » As part of a new series on gender-responsive and age-sensitive social protection, this podcast from the GRASSP Research Team at UNICEF Innocenti discusses the ways in which [social protection can support gender equality and poverty reduction across the life-course](#), as well as supporting people during shocks from childhood through to old age.

COVID-19 evidence

- » A [policy brief](#) from UNICEF Innocenti on a COVID-19 initiative in the DRC provides a cautionary tale for programme implementers and development partners. The initiative involved the delivery of cash transfers in peri-urban areas of Kinshasa, with a cash-plus intervention of training for local associations and communities in women’s leadership, women’s rights, gender-based violence and positive masculinity, and financial management of income-generating activities. The policy brief of the impact evaluation shows that the intervention did not deliver strong results on the outcomes of interest and outlines an array of implementation challenges across many aspects of the delivery chain – including targeting, grievance redress, communication, coordination, and payment mechanisms.
- » A [multi-country study](#) which looked at COVID-19 responses in Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia and Uganda had some familiar-sounding findings about the significance of well-developed social protection systems in launching rapid and effective responses to the pandemic. However, what is perhaps most interesting is the emphasis on the plight of **migrants**. The report describes how many migrants lacked access to social protection during COVID-19 lockdowns, and notes that assistance to forcibly displaced populations is complex socially and politically for national governments. The paper is a salient reminder of the significant challenges that migration poses for social protection systems, something that will likely become an increasingly prominent issue in the face of our changing climate.
- » A recent [journal article](#) uses a World Bank COVID-19 national longitudinal baseline phone survey to examine the impact of COVID-19 on poor and vulnerable households in **Nigeria**. The authors find that social protection aids in the development of household resilience to shocks and the prevention of future shocks, and that social protection is a significant driver of food security in Nigeria.
- » A recent [blog](#) looks at new crisis response tools to build resilience and enhance crisis preparedness. In particular, the blog discusses a new [crisis preparedness and response toolkit](#) developed by the World Bank. The toolkit has been designed to help governments better prepare for and respond to crises, without trading off between their development priorities and emergency financing needs.

Social protection & humanitarian linkages in Ukraine

- » A recent [report](#) published by STAAR presents an updated analysis of the Unified Information System of the Social Sphere (UISSS). At the core of Ukraine’s social protection reforms is the UISSS, the central hub for consolidating critical national welfare data including detailed information about beneficiaries’ social histories. With the shift away from universal child grants, the UISSS must integrate various databases to verify applicant income, assets, tax payments and other credentials versus defined thresholds to establish Basic Subsistence Allowance eligibility. This categorical filtering entails advanced data warehousing, analytics and interfaces to avoid exclusions or delays, made worse by wartime uncertainties.

- » STAAR consultant Thomas Byrnes has shared a 4-part blog series on the UISSS: [Part One: UISSS - Shaping Ukraine's Social Safety Net for the Digital Age](#), [Part Two: UISSS's 2023 Leap - Shaping the Future of Social Care Through Digital Innovation](#), [Part Three: UISSS in 2023 - Illuminating Change Through Citizen Stories](#) and [Part 4: Unveiling Global Insights: UISSS in the World of Social Welfare](#). The blog series is based on the report published by STAAR. The 4-part series shares highlights from the full report and sheds light on how these strategic developments are promoting the inclusivity, responsiveness and resilience of Ukraine's social safety net.

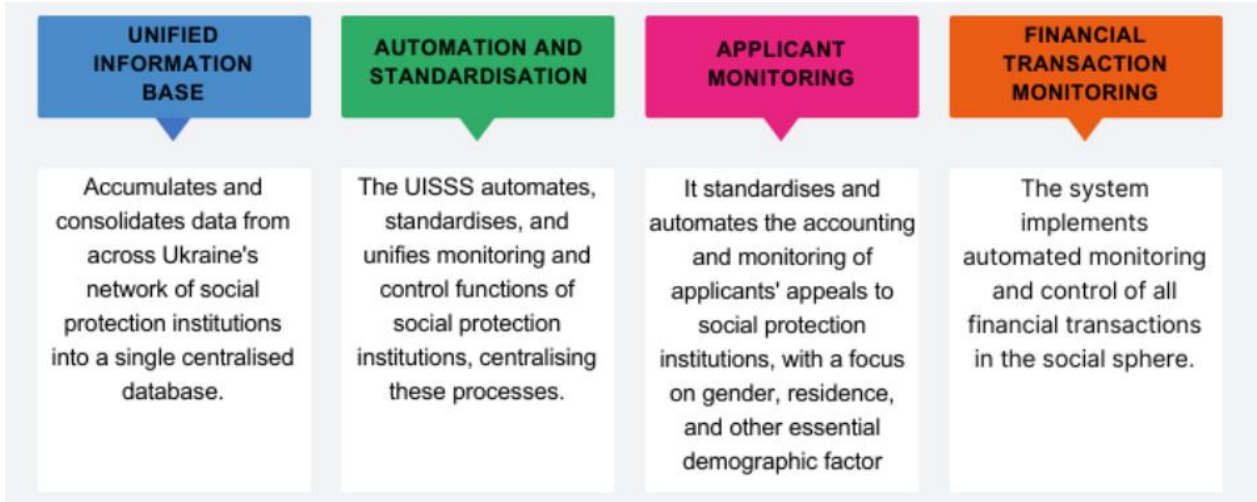



Figure 2: UISSS, STAAR (2024) *Unified Information System of the Social Sphere (UISSS): Reinforcing Ukraine's Social Protection Infrastructure Amid Crisis in 2023*

- » Our own TSLT member, Louisa Lippi, co-authored a [report](#) on the extent to which humanitarian Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) in Ukraine has been able to leverage different elements of the delivery chain of national social protection programming. The paper uses the **unbundled** framework from [Seyfert et al, 2019](#) which unpacks the delivery chain for cash assistance into individual components to assess the degree to which humanitarian cash assistance programmes leverage the social protection system. Some of the key findings from the report include:
 - Despite the maturity of the social protection system in Ukraine, very little of the MPCA response is nationally-led or piggybacks on existing systems. The majority of delivery chain elements are designed as standalone components or somewhat aligned with the national system.
 - While there are significant similarities between humanitarian cash assistance and social protection, there are also key differences. As these differences may impede leveraging the social protection system to deliver assistance, it is just as important to understand the differences as it is to understand the context in which linkages could occur.
 - Reflections on how future responses could be improved are grouped into two pillars: **preparedness** (e.g. an assessment of the entire national social protection system to identify entry points and bottlenecks in the design and operations of cash programmes or development of procedures for how to leverage the social protection system) and **coordination** (e.g. encourage the government to lead cash coordination mechanisms and establish data-sharing agreements).



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SHOCK RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS

STAAR has kicked off a cross-country comparative analysis focusing on Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Mauritania. The assignment aims to understand the policy, programme and implementation barriers that face SRSP in supporting vulnerable people in managing the impact of shocks.

The study aims to compare the respective challenges and solutions of recent climate, health and economic shocks and will examine whether these systems are effectively responding to the needs of those affected. Moreover, an analysis will be conducted as part of the study, to probe how to encourage more investment and use of government social protection systems, from development, climate-related and humanitarian sources.

The assignment will consider:

- The duplication between humanitarian and development financing for social protection systems
- The suitability and application of early warning systems
- The use of data to hinder or improve response to the quality of these systems

The assignment will use a combination of qualitative and quantitative data from desk-based research and interviews with key informants in the four case study countries. It will also host country-level workshops with key stakeholders, including KII to inform the overall analysis.

The findings of this study will be used to inform FCDO's future work on shock responsive social protection systems in these contexts, as well as inform programmes on social protection at the global level.

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