

STAAR Evidence Digest

Curated by the **STAAR Technical Senior Leadership Team**

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Hello and welcome to the STAAR Evidence Digest for April 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.**

Social protection, climate and resilience

- » STAAR has published a [report](#) on the realities of climate finance for social protection. The report outlines the status of international public climate finance going to social protection and focuses on three categories of climate finance providers: bilateral, multilateral development banks and climate funds. It reviews existing literature on climate finance for social protection and assesses the climate finance strategies and portfolios of the major international public climate finance providers. An overview of the key findings include:
 - There is a growing body of evidence showing that climate strategies that include social protection offer more effective adaptation and mitigation, both in terms of managing climate risks and enhancing adaptive capacities.
 - There is broad consensus among the social protection community that integrating social protection into climate change adaptation, mitigation, insurance and loss and damage strategies is fundamental to achieving climate justice and transitions to greener economies.
 - The authors reviewed how international public climate finance providers have approached social protection within their climate finance expenditure.

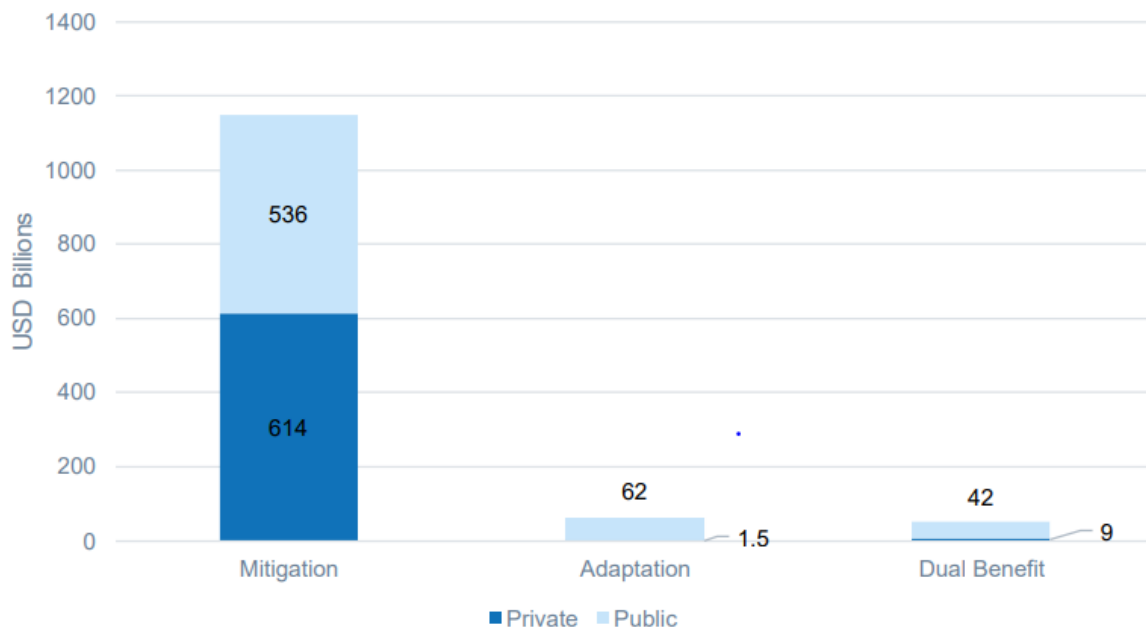


Figure 1: Uses of climate finance with public private splits 2021/22 (Source: Buchner, et al., 2023)

- » **A Social Protection and Resilience Policy Brief** from WFP has drawn our attention for providing a really useful framework to help understand the complementarities of social protection and resilience interventions. Too often, we expect one to deliver on the objectives of the other or are not clear on

how and why they cannot achieve all the objectives we are trying to cram into the programmes. Table 1. on building resilient people and systems is particularly useful (one to always keep in your back pocket).

- The paper concludes that: “Delivering a holistic package that includes social assistance to meet immediate basic needs, as well as insurance or safety nets to protect against shocks, while strengthening livelihoods in ways that build resilience for individuals, households, and communities, requires a coordinated systems approach, with each component playing its role, jointly and separately.”

Linking social protection and humanitarian assistance

- » We were interested in this [report from Ground Truth Solutions](#) showing the views of Ukrainians on the delivery of cash transfers. Amongst the variety of rich information, three key findings stood out
 1. Humanitarian cash assistance has been essential when state payments are delayed or insufficient, but it should more intentionally complement social protection by targeting those who are excluded from existing social protection schemes and other humanitarian cash programmes.
 2. Local councils are instrumental in reaching people at every stage of a cash assistance programme. There is trust in the information they distribute, and they often ensure that eligible people register by reaching out to them directly.
 3. Communication needs to be contextually appropriate. For instance, members of the Roma community are often marginalised in part because they may not access the same channels of information as non-Roma and limited literacy for some can hinder administrative matters such as registration.
- » Turning to MENA, a [recent report](#) from CALP Network looks at the opportunities to strengthen linkages between humanitarian cash and voucher assistance and social protection programmes in Iraq, Libya and Yemen. The report focuses on three potential levers: political willingness to engage; coordination, planning, and long-term vision; and alignment and capacity on data, tools, and access.
 - While the findings of the report are certainly interesting and useful, we would have liked to see the authors use the analytical framework first set out by [Seyfert et al \(2019\)](#) and applied in the Sahel by [Kreidler et al \(2022\)](#).
- » The [SPIAC-B Common Principles](#) on Linking Humanitarian Assistance and Social Protection – that STAAR helped to draft – have now been translated into [Spanish](#) and [French](#). The nine principles were showcased during [Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Weeks 2024](#).

Working with local actors

- » This [blog on the work undertaken by local actors in Sudan](#) references some important principles and gives examples of roles that local NGOs have played in designing and implementing cash assistance. We were struck by some particularly interesting comments regarding (i) the risk of losing lives without a greater donor appetite for risk and risk-sharing, and (ii) local customs where assistance is targeted to those deemed “most vulnerable” in a prolonged crisis:
 - Donors and many international actors continue to be stuck in the quicksand of compliance...
 - [Local NGOs] knew the importance of blanket targeting to mitigate risks for cash recipients and humanitarian staff alike. Trying to target based on vulnerability is not only tone-deaf but ineffective...What’s more, cultural and religious norms of mutual aid would have meant assistance would have been redistributed in any case, to make sure that all had some.
- » Staying with Sudan and non-governmental actors, IDS published a Working Paper in February on [Effective Social Protection in Conflict: Findings from Sudan](#). What struck us most is how big the role of community-based systems of mutual aid and solidarity is. We need to learn a lot about how to provide conflict-sensitive support to this critically important community-led response in Sudan and elsewhere.

GESI

- » BASIC Research’s new Working Paper “**Power, Trust, and Pre-Cooked Programmes: The Accountability of Social Assistance in Somalia**” offers important insights into how and why accountability outcomes and pathways are not adequately working for people, particularly for marginalised groups.
- » A related blog “**Building trust: Community solutions for social assistance accountability in Somalia**”, highlights how local communities have suggested four areas of improvement for assistance to be fairer and more accountable in Somalia. These suggestions include:
 - Involve communities, local authorities and government in design.
 - Prioritise public information sharing on social assistance.
 - Ensure existing accountability mechanisms can excavate feedback for decision-making.
 - Expand the concept of representation.
- » STAAR’s Technical Lead for Gender and Social Inclusion has authored an important new ODI briefing note on **Feminist responses to ‘norm-spoiling’ at the United Nations**. The short paper is a must-read for all of us working on promoting gender equality and women’s rights including through gender-responsive social protection. It clearly sets out the ways in which threats to progress on these agendas are gaining traction as anti-gender actors formalise well-organised and well-funded alliances to oppose the rights of women and LGBTQI+ people. The paper offers practical insights on what’s needed to support the feminist movement in its efforts to challenge norm-spoiling. Not least:
 - Increased and improved funding for feminist organisations to work at transnational levels;
 - Support for inclusive alliances and networks for collective action;
 - Investment in research, evidence and data to monitor norm-spoiling and identify successful counter strategies;
 - Greater convening and communication around the rights and norms for women and LGBTQI+ people; and
 - Support for strategic advocacy at the UN.
- » A recent **report** from CGIAR looks at leveraging social protection to support women’s and girls’ climate resilience in low-and middle-income countries. There is a lack of information on effective approaches to developing social protection programmes that are responsive to both climate risk and gender inequality. Therefore, alongside a review of existing evidence around knowledge gaps, the authors develop a conceptual framework for how social assistance can operate through multiple pathways to reduce women and girls’ vulnerability, strengthen their ability to respond to climate hazards and reduce adverse impacts on their well-being.

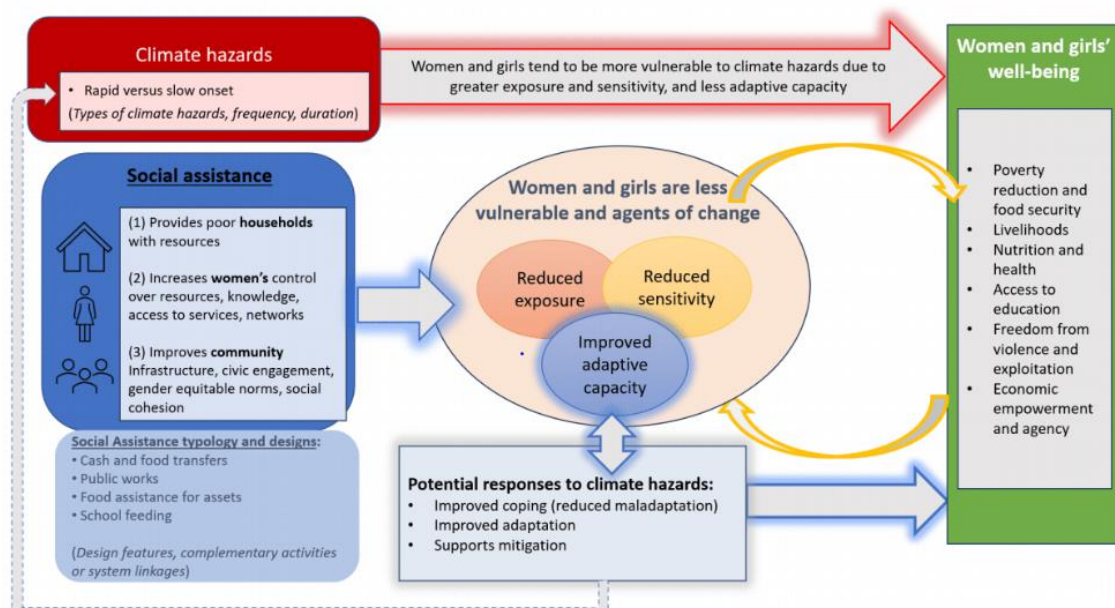


Figure 2: How social assistance can affect women’s and girls’ exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity to climate hazards, thus shaping their responses and well-being outcomes

- The paper finds that two key knowledge gaps remain:
 - While we have limited knowledge of SA’s effect on women and girls’ resilience against rapid-onset climate hazards, we know even less about slow-onset climate hazards and
 - We know little about tradeoffs across economic development, environmental sustainability and gender equality and what these imply for designing SA.
- The paper concludes that well-designed SA holds great potential for increasing women’s and girls’ climate resilience at a large scale and is a promising direction to direct climate financing. However, it is important for SA stakeholders to integrate the research and inclusion of women’s and girls’ perspectives.
- » Socialprotection.org held a **webinar** about how Presto - Policy Research Solutions updated their TRANSFORM training platform to address gender-and disability-sensitive social protection in Africa.



GENDER RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION RESEARCH – WHAT’S NEXT?

The STAAR Facility on behalf of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, will convene a workshop on 1st and 2nd May in London, to understand the current evidence and research gaps in gender-responsive and inclusive social protection. The workshop will inform the future of FCDO-funded research in this field.

The workshop aims to build on critical issues that were raised at the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (#CSW68) last month and on emerging insights through the Gender Responsive Age Sensitive Social Protection research programme, a key component of the UKAid-funded Gender Responsive Social Protection Programme (GSP).

30 leading researchers representing 25 institutions will collaborate to gather views and share insights on opportunities for policy influence, impact and priorities for future research.

The session will consider:

- Emerging gaps;
- Regional and country data evidence gaps;
- Research methodologies;
- Defining a research agenda;
- Themes are expected to include: the care sector, informal workers, adolescents, gender based-violence, climate and crisis.

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