

# Rethinking social protection using a gender lens

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Rebecca Holmes and Nicola Jones

**Working Paper 320**

Results of ODI research presented  
in preliminary form for discussion  
and critical comment

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**Rethinking social protection  
using a gender lens**

**Synthesis paper**

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## Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party (India)
BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CEMA	Committee for Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Area Affairs
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPRC	Chronic Poverty Research Centre
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DOLISA	Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (Viet Nam)
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GTZ	German Development Cooperation
HH	Household
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (Viet Nam)
NAWO	National Alliance of Women (India)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PPO	Pakistan Post Office
SAC	Social Affairs Committee (Viet Nam)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNIFEM	UN Development Fund for Women
WFP	World Food Programme

## Case study social protection programmes

BISP	Benazir Bhutto Income Support Programme (Pakistan)
<i>Bolsa Família</i>	Family Grant (Brazil)
CFPR	Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction (Bangladesh)
<i>Chile Solidario</i>	Chile Solidarity (Chile)
<i>Estancias</i>	<i>Programa Estancias Infantiles para Apoyar a Madres Trabajadoras</i> (Child Care Programme to Support Working Mothers) (Mexico)
<i>Familias en Acción</i>	Families in Action (Colombia)
<i>Fome Zero</i>	Zero Hunger (Brazil)
<i>Juntos</i>	<i>Red Juntos para la Superación de la Pobreza Extrema Social Protection</i> (Network for Overcoming Extreme Poverty) (Colombia)
<i>Juntos</i>	<i>Programa de Apoyo a los Más Pobres – Juntos</i> (Programme of Support to the Poorest – Together) (Peru)
LEAP	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (Ghana)
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (India)
NTPPR	National Targeted Programme for Poverty Reduction (Vietnam)
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme (Ethiopia)
<i>Puente</i>	Bridge (Chile)
<i>Raskin</i>	<i>Beras untuk Rumah Tangga Miskin</i> (Rice for the Poor) (Indonesia)



## Executive summary

The role of gender in social protection is complex, shaping the types of risks tackled, how they are tackled, public buy-in and programme implementation practices. However, the extent to which gender has been integrated into social protection approaches has been uneven at best. This paper synthesises findings from a multi-country research project on gender and social protection effectiveness. The project aimed to examine the extent to which existing social protection programming approaches are reinforcing women's traditional roles and responsibilities, or harnessing the potential for social protection to contribute to a transformation of gender relations in economic and social spheres. It did this by assessing how far gender has been incorporated into the design and implementation of: cash transfers in Ghana and Peru; asset transfers in Bangladesh; public works in Ethiopia and India; and subsidised food and services in Indonesia, Mexico and Viet Nam. The methodology employed a mixed methods approach, including a review of secondary sources, key informant interviews, household surveys, focus group discussions and life histories from poor men, women and children across different stages of the lifecycle.

Men and women are not only affected by the same risks differently but also can face different types of risks. In particular, in relation to economic vulnerabilities, women face: high wage differentials; employment insecurity because of culturally specific gendered work norms; constraints in balancing income-generating opportunities outside the home with domestic demands; and mobility constraints and language barriers. Women usually have to make the greatest sacrifices in terms of reduced quantity and quality of food consumption in times of economic difficulty, and also often disproportionately shoulder the burden of ill-health.

In terms of social vulnerabilities, time poverty is a significant concern for women and girls. Household decision-making power is often concentrated in a husband's hands, and this is sometimes reinforced by physical violence. Limited reproductive health rights are a significant concern, especially for young women in Latin America. In cases of male abandonment, single women are vulnerable, especially to labour shortages, social stigma and lack of access to assets. Women may also suffer from limited opportunities to exercise meaningful voice and agency at community level. This may intersect with other forms of social exclusion, for example of minority groups, marginalised castes and displaced populations from linkages to political elites and access to identification documents.

Economic and social gender-specific vulnerabilities are often multiple and interlinked, resulting in chronic poverty and vulnerability. In the absence of formal mechanisms to mitigate risks, traditional systems of reciprocity and social solidarity are an important source of support for rural households. However, in many contexts these mechanisms are under increasing strain and are losing efficacy, meaning that households are resorting to negative coping strategies with long-term detrimental effects. These include indebtedness, migration, reduction of the quality of food particularly by women in female-headed households and distress sales of assets which limit livelihood options, with households unlikely to build up such capital again quickly.

Despite broader commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in the country case studies at the policy level, in most cases, there is a substantial disconnect between gender equality and empowerment goals on the one hand and social protection objectives on the other. Only the programmes in Bangladesh and Mexico have been designed explicitly with a primary objective of empowering women. In other cases (Ethiopia, Ghana, India and Peru), there has been little attention to the transformation of gender relations: often, the only consideration of gender has been the inclusion of women as a target beneficiary group. Sometimes gender dimensions are ignored altogether, as in the programmes in Indonesia and Viet Nam. Such sidelining of gender equality goals has resulted in a narrow conceptualisation of gendered vulnerabilities and a focus on supporting women's care and domestic roles and responsibilities in the household. It has also limited women's economic skills and participation to sectors with low growth and remuneration potential rather than supporting gains to



promote girls' and women's strategic interests. Explicit attention to empowerment in design features is needed in order to see significant change in relation to gender inequality.

Although there is considerable variation in the gender-related design features of social protection programmes, all programmes have had intended and unintended effects on women and gender relations. At the individual level, programmes have resulted in: increased opportunities for women to engage in economic activities; enhanced knowledge, skills and confidence among women; greater mobility for women; and, in some contexts, subtle changes in men's attitudes. However, even where gender-sensitive design features exist, these are often not effectively implemented, are misinterpreted by programme implementers or are overridden by strong socio-cultural norms. In public works, for example, assumptions about the type of work appropriate for women, and payments which are based on male productivity norms, simply serve to reinforce inequality in the labour market. Public works programmes rarely provide child care facilities, despite their inclusion in the design.

At household and intra-household levels, increased income and access to loans and credit have helped smooth income and consumption patterns and increased household expenditure on food, health and education. This has had particularly positive impacts on children and youth, although the extent to which interventions – through programme linkages and awareness-raising initiatives – have addressed other risks facing children and youth has been limited, for example, early marriage in Ethiopia or high rates of teenage pregnancy in Peru. The impact of social protection programmes on intra-household relations between women and men has been more complex. In some contexts, social protection has reduced tensions in the household (e.g. Viet Nam). In others, programmes either have had no impact or have exacerbated tensions (e.g. in India). In addition, despite a noticeable increase in their status, confidence and self-esteem, overall there is little evidence to suggest that women's decision-making power in the household has increased or that significant changes in gender relations, roles and responsibilities have emerged. Peru's *Juntos* programme is the only example where there has been some change to existing unequal power imbalances and division of labour within the household. Importantly, this has come about as a result not of the cash transfer as such, but of linkages to complementary programmes and services.

At the community level, access to informal credit from neighbours and family has increased, as programme participation is seen as a guarantee that loans will be repaid. Social networks have also strengthened, as has participation in informal community activities and events. However, participating households remain largely unable to articulate and voice their demands at local level, even when awareness raising is explicitly included within the social protection programme. Some programmes have tried to promote women's participation in programme governance structures, but this has not been well enforced. Cultural and social norms which prevent women's active engagement in decision making at the community level persist, and women are also excluded when meetings are held at times when they cannot attend because of their domestic responsibilities. Even when women are represented, quality of participation is often an issue. As noted above, the exception is the *Juntos* programme in Peru.

Understanding the reasons as to why some programmes have taken a more explicit approach to promoting gender equality in social protection policy and programming has been an important part of the project's research. We looked at the way gender norms and relations shape the so-called '3 I's' (institutions, interests and ideas) of social protection. In relation to *institutions*, as we have seen, most initiatives relegate gender-related goals to a secondary status. This is often because of an institutional disconnect between the growing body of evidence on the gendered nature of poverty and vulnerability and social protection design, in part because of weak linkages between governmental gender focal points and programme designers. These coordination challenges are exacerbated by the uneven rollout of political and fiscal decentralisation in a number of countries. A largely technocratic approach to gender mainstreaming is another important obstacle, reflected in a general underinvestment in capacity building for programme implementers, especially on the gendered rationale behind provisions. There has also been insufficient investment in tackling language barriers, particularly in relation to gender, so as to ensure effective outreach to ethnic minority populations (e.g. in Viet Nam).

The general absence of gender-sensitive indicators in programme monitoring, evaluation and learning systems is another critical institutional shortcoming (with the partial exception of Bangladesh). Without gender-disaggregated knowledge, our collective understanding of the effectiveness of social protection investments will remain partial. An emphasis on the role of informal institutions and, for instance, patterns of patron–client relations, is also important, as these also are often gendered.

Not surprisingly, the different clusters of actors involved in social protection have a range of different *interests* in promoting social protection, and exercise differing degrees of influence and capacity in particular contexts. First, political elites often initiate social protection programmes and may seek to harness positive programme outcomes, including on gender, to advance their own interests. Second, where ministries of social welfare, women and children lead on social protection, there is generally more scope for attention to gender inequalities, but the ability to operationalise this can be limited by the capacity constraints that these agencies typically face. How bureaucratic agencies interact with other players, such as political parties and the legislature, may also matter. Third, civil society interests play an important role in influencing social protection discourse, although, for the most part, gender equality activists have been markedly less prominent in discussions on social protection than in other areas of public debate. Finally, gender dynamics have not received a great deal of attention to date among donor agencies working on social protection, reflecting a general weakness in gender mainstreaming outside a few key sectors in the donor community.

The divergent contours of national social protection systems reflect a wide range of *ideas* about poverty and its causes, the purpose of social protection and the role of the state in shaping gender relations. Generally, however, support for a more comprehensive approach to tackling gender-specific vulnerabilities has been not very forthcoming, as gender relations are often seen as the purview of individual families and/or cultural/religious groups, and therefore not an area in which the state should intervene. In other cases, although prevailing ideas about gender relations do not conflict with the implementation of programme innovations per se, there is nevertheless an absence of a proactive approach to supporting a transformation of the status quo. Meanwhile, expecting women in communities to be able to formulate and voice an independent vision for programme management is quite unrealistic in the absence of more concerted awareness-raising initiatives. These constraints are further reinforced in some contexts, especially in Ethiopia and Viet Nam, by a strong pro-government orientation and/or the absence of a rights-based approach to programme implementation, such that benefits are seen as a ‘gift’ from the government. In other contexts, culturally specific ideas about poverty and the state further limit the space and potential for constructive community criticism of design and implementation practices (e.g. in communities in Ghana articulate the cash transfer as a sign of ‘God’s grace’ rather than as part of their rights as citizens). In ethnic minority communities in Viet Nam, ideas about the state representing the ‘other’ mean that local communities are often reluctant to make demands to authorities, even if this could see their needs better served, and they instead seek support from other community members.

In sum, gender-sensitive policy and programme design and implementation have the potential to reduce gendered poverty and vulnerability and to increase the effectiveness of social protection. To date, though, gender equality objectives have mostly been secondary goals – at times not even that – although important intended and unintended gendered impacts have emerged. Where programmes are cognisant of intra-household dynamics, however, they can better support the maximisation of positive impacts and reduce potentially negative ones, with relatively simple design changes combined with an investment in more strategic implementation practices. These are needed to enhance the potential of social protection to contribute to a transformation of gender relations at the individual, intra-household and community levels.

Within this, overarching policy recommendations include the following: strengthen gender-sensitive policy and programme design; invest in implementation capacity; improve coordination between actors; maximise the potential of the community–programme interface; ensure gender-related monitoring, evaluation and learning; and strengthen women’s agency, advocacy and representation. More specific recommendations as to how best to ensure that specific social protection instruments (public works programmes; cash and asset transfer programmes; subsidies) are gender sensitive in design and implementation can be found in the main report.



## 1. Introduction

Despite decades of evidence on the gendered patterns of poverty and vulnerability, and the knowledge that progress on women's empowerment and gender equality contributes to the achievement of social and economic development goals, all too often poverty reduction programmes fail to adequately integrate gender dimensions into their design and implementation. Social protection has been no exception in this regard. Social protection mechanisms have become an increasingly popular response to poverty and vulnerability in recent years, reaching millions of poor and near poor households, but the extent to which gender has been integrated into social protection policy and programmes has been uneven at best. A common assumption is that, simply by targeting women, programmes are automatically addressing gender inequality. However, although this is an important first step, the role that gender dynamics play in social protection is more complex. They shape the types of risks that are tackled, how they are tackled, political and public buy-in and implementation practices. We therefore need to examine the extent to which social protection approaches are reinforcing women's traditional roles and responsibilities, or harnessing the potential for a transformation of gender relations in both economic (e.g. opportunities for work) and social (e.g. voice and agency in the household and community) spheres. A more transformative approach would improve the effectiveness of programme objectives, that is, reducing poverty and vulnerability.

This synthesis paper presents the findings from a multi-country research project which assesses the extent to which gender has been incorporated into the design and implementation of a wide range of social protection instruments, with a focus on social assistance (see Table 1). It aims to inform both international and national policy debates and practice.

Our key questions include:

- How can policy and programme design and evaluations better address gender-specific economic and social risks and vulnerability to improve the effectiveness of social protection programming?
- What types of social protection instruments are more effective for this purpose in different politico-institutional and socio-cultural contexts?

The research was funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), and undertaken by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) with national partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It was carried out through primary and secondary data collection, employing a mixed methods approach. The approach included key informant interviews, household surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs) and life histories from poor men, women and children across different stages of the lifecycle (see Table 2).

**Table 1: Case study social protection programmes**

Type of social assistance	Description	Example	Coverage
Cash transfers	Conditional and non-conditional regular cash payments to poor households, often caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ghana's Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) quasi-conditional cash transfer</li> <li>• Peru's <i>Juntos</i> conditional cash transfer</li> <li>• Pakistan's Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP)</li> </ul>	131,000 hhs  431,974 hhs
Asset transfers	Transfers of productive assets (e.g. small livestock) to support income generation activities of poor households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bangladesh's Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction (CFPR)</li> </ul>	272,000 women
Public works programmes	Provision of cash or food payments in return for labour to build community assets, typically physical infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA)</li> <li>• Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)</li> </ul>	45 million hhs  Over 7 million individuals
Subsidies	Subsidised or free services (e.g. health, education, legal aid, agricultural extension) and/or food (e.g. rice rations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mexico's community child crèche system, <i>Estancias</i></li> <li>• Viet Nam's National Targeted Programme for Poverty Reduction (NTPPR)</li> <li>• Indonesia's <i>Raskin</i> Rice Subsidy Programme</li> </ul>	250,000 parents  Up to 1.3 million hhs  15.8 million hhs

**Table 2: Study methodology by country**

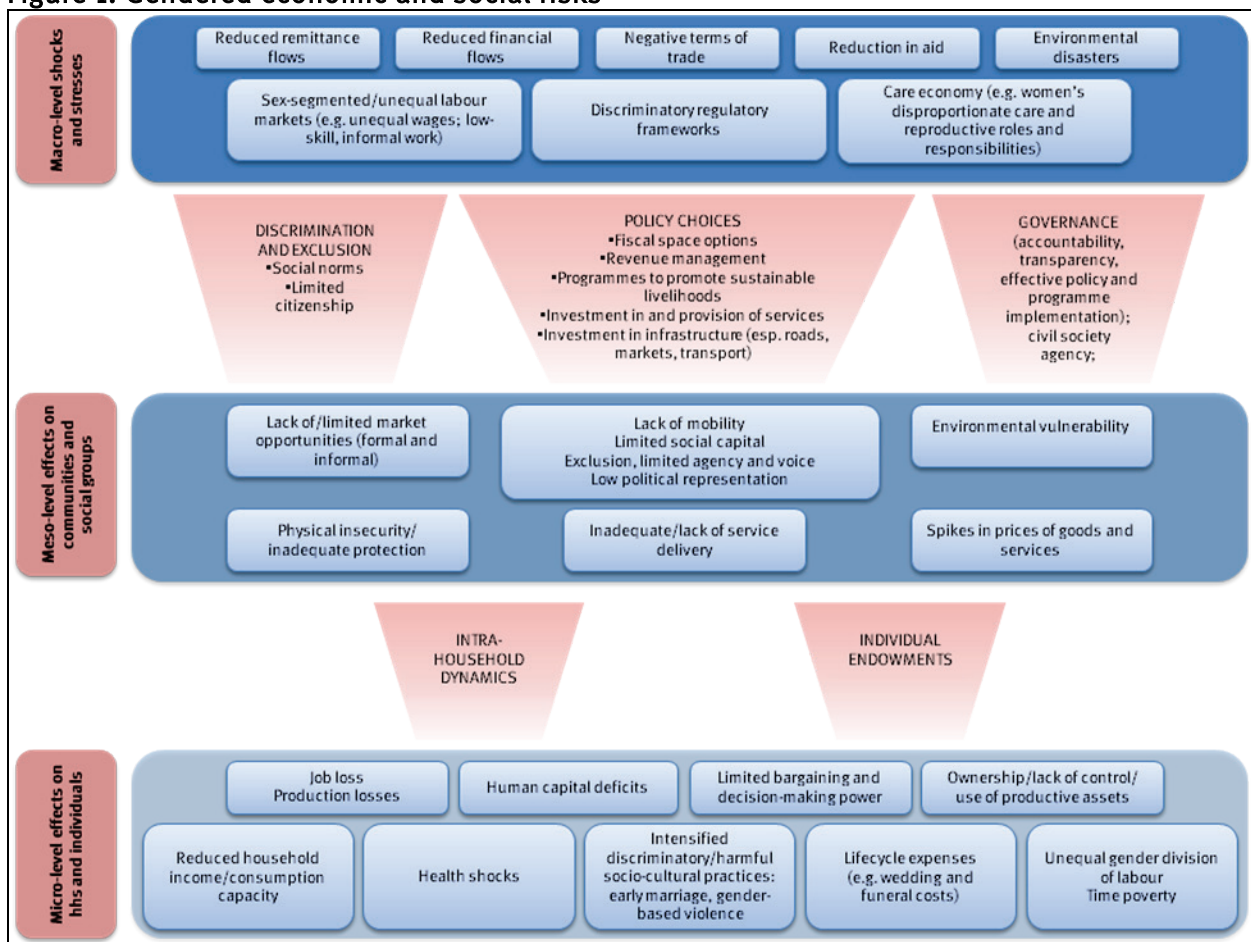
Methodology	Details	Countries
Desk review	Secondary data and programme document analysis	Bangladesh; Brazil; Chile; Colombia; Ethiopia; Ghana; India; Indonesia; Mexico; Pakistan; Peru; Viet Nam
Key informant interviews	National (policymakers, donors, international agencies, civil society, researchers); sub-national (government and non-government implementers)	Bangladesh; Ethiopia; Ghana; India; Indonesia; Mexico; Pakistan; Peru; Viet Nam
Household questionnaire	Total of 100 households	Ethiopia; Ghana; India; Indonesia; Peru; Viet Nam
FGDs	Eight FGDs with beneficiaries (two male and two female groups per block)	Bangladesh; Ethiopia; Ghana; India; Indonesia; Mexico; Peru; Viet Nam
Life histories	16 life histories (eight men and eight women) at different life/social stages: adolescence; married; single household heads (divorced, abandoned or widowed); elderly	Bangladesh; Ethiopia; Ghana; India; Indonesia; Mexico; Peru; Viet Nam

The paper is organised as follows. The following section presents the conceptual framework that guides the paper's research and analysis. Drawing on this framework, Section 3 discusses the key gendered economic and social risks and vulnerabilities facing men and women in our research sites. Section 4 analyses the case study social protection instruments from a gender perspective, and Section 5 discusses the impacts of social protection on gender equality and women's empowerment. Section 6 identifies the main drivers of effective programme design for optimal impacts. The final section concludes and offers key policy recommendations.

## 2. Conceptual framework

Despite its name, social protection has to date focused predominantly on addressing economic risk and vulnerability, such as income and consumption shocks and stresses. Approaches have generally paid only limited attention to social risks, such as gender inequality, social discrimination, unequal distribution of resources and power at intra-household level and limited citizenship (see Holmes and Jones, 2009). However, these factors are often as important in pushing and trapping households in poverty (CPRC, 2008). Our analysis takes as its starting point that economic and social risks are gendered: men and women not only are affected by the same risks differently, but also can face different types of risks. As Figure 1 demonstrates, there are a number of often intertwined economic and social risks, from the macro through to the micro level. These risks can be reinforced or mediated through: policy interventions; discriminatory practices embedded in institutions; and/or community, household and individual capacity and agency. Opportunities to enhance gender equality at each level are highly context specific. They depend on the balance between governmental, non-governmental and informal mechanisms within a country, as well as the profile of the government agencies responsible for the design and implementation of formal mechanisms (see Holmes and Jones, 2009).

Figure 1: Gendered economic and social risks

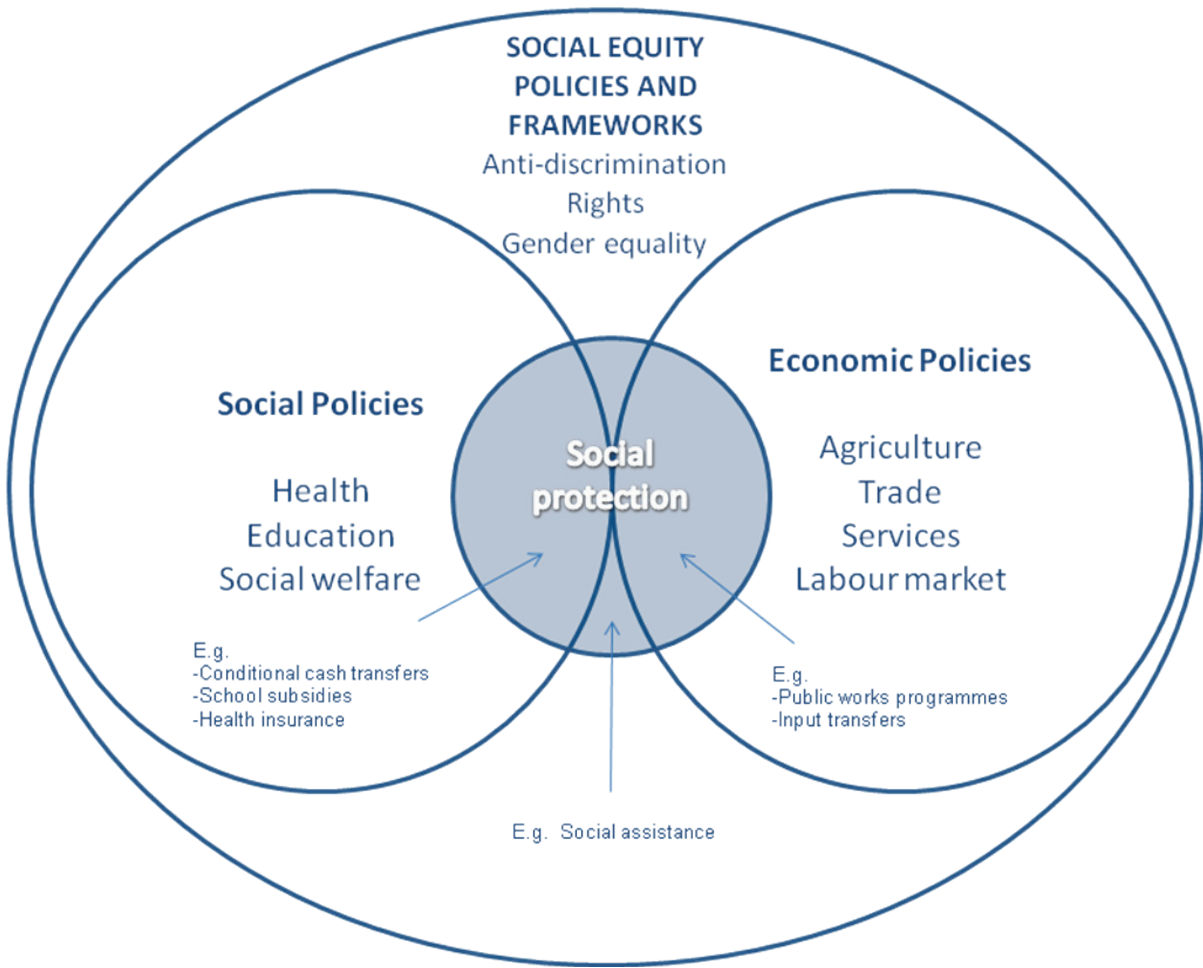


Existing social protection initiatives in low- and middle-income contexts have addressed gendered risks to varying degrees, mainly through targeting women. In general, however, social protection mechanisms are too often informed by uneven and narrow understandings of gender relations. As we argue in this paper, the role that gender plays in the effectiveness of social protection policy and practice not only influences the type of risk tackled, but also shapes programme delivery and impacts at community and household levels.

We adopt Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler's (2004) transformative social protection conceptual framework, which argues that, in addition to being *protective* (providing relief), *preventive* (averting deprivation) and/or *promotive* (enhancing incomes and capabilities), social protection interventions may be *transformative*. Transformative objectives aim to address concerns of social equity and exclusion which often underpin people's experiences of chronic poverty and vulnerability. Importantly, the 'political' or 'transformative' view extends social protection to arenas such as equity, empowerment and economic, social and cultural rights, rather than confining its scope to economic risks (which translates to narrow responses based on targeted income and consumption transfers). The critical features of this conceptual framework include a recognition that economic and social risks are intertwined and often mutually reinforcing, and of the need to address the structural causes of poverty, including power relations, in order to provide a sustainable exit strategy from poverty (see Figure 2). In line with Kabeer's (1999) definition of women's empowerment, this entails enabling women to make *strategic* life choices in three interrelated dimensions: resources (defined broadly to include not only access but also future claims, both to material resources and to human and social resources); agency (including processes of decision making, as well as less measurable manifestations of agency such as negotiation, deception and manipulation); and achievements (well-being outcomes).

The transformative elements in social protection might be embedded in the design of core social protection policy and programmes, or take the form of explicit linkages to complementary interventions, such as microcredit services, rights awareness campaigns and skills training. In the three subsets of social protection interventions that are our focus in this study – public works; cash and asset transfers; and subsidies – we reflect on the actual and potential mechanisms to better support progress towards gender equality and a transformatory approach to poverty reduction in Kabeer's three interrelated domains. Public works programmes, for instance, have the potential to increase access to productive assets and resources and to encourage women's participation in community decision making on appropriate community assets. In the case of cash transfers and service subsidies, well-designed programmes can enhance the potential for increased human capital assets and women's leadership role in the community.

Figure 2: Equity and social protection





### 3. The gendered patterning of vulnerability and risk

To assess the extent to which social protection policies and programmes are addressing gender-specific experiences of poverty and vulnerability, it is critical to understand the gendered patterning of vulnerabilities at the individual, intra-household and community levels in different contexts. Not surprisingly, the nature and intensity of gendered economic and social risks and vulnerabilities in our case study countries reflect diverse sources and patterns of inequality, as follows.

#### 3.1 Economic vulnerabilities and risks

There is longstanding recognition that incidence of male and female poverty and vulnerability is different, as underscored by the oft-quoted statistic that women constitute 70% of the world's poor (OHCHR, 2008). However, as Box 1 below highlights, the reality is considerably more complex. In terms of economic vulnerabilities, our survey and qualitative data highlight a number of gender-specific experiences. For example, owing to limited land ownership among the poor, **employment and income** tend to be highly seasonal, with many respondents noting a lack of employment during the 'scarce months.' In Bangladesh, for instance, while men are often able to find agricultural and non-agricultural day wage labour work, women are more likely to find work as domestic employees. But women either receive only a fraction of the daily wage of their male counterparts or are given in-kind (usually food-based) payment. Indeed, gendered wage differentials were a common feature across all of our country case studies, and were sometimes as high as a ratio of 1:3 (e.g. in parts of Tigray in Ethiopia).

Women's employment opportunities tend to be more insecure also because of culturally specific gendered work norms. For instance, in Ethiopia and northern Ghana, women can take on only a narrow range of agricultural tasks. In Indonesia, even in dry land areas, rubber extraction is deemed male work and rice cultivation female, thus women's employment opportunities tend to be limited. In the same vein, households in Bangladesh that rely on remittances from their grown children suggest that remittance payments from daughters tend to be less reliable because of the generally more unstable nature of female employment there:

*'That job [in a garment factory] has no future; she could lose that job anytime. If we could ensure better education, my daughter could get a better job. She is earning little'* (Elderly woman, Magura, Bangladesh).

These differences are often exacerbated by the constraints women face in balancing income-generating opportunities outside the home with child care and other domestic and care work demands.

*'As a single mother, I have to work to support my daughter ... Sometimes there is no work or the pay is little. I have to leave my daughter with my mother, and my brothers argue with me because of this. To be alone is difficult because a single woman cannot sow large plots – she can only herd animals and sow in small plots, so food rapidly finishes'* (Single mother, Motoy, Peru).

Mobility constraints and language barriers can also constrain women's livelihood options. Meanwhile, in post-conflict contexts, such as Peru and Pakistan, years of political violence have undermined economic investment, furthering limiting productive opportunities.

### Box 1: Poverty and vulnerability as a gendered experience

The gendered patterning of poverty and vulnerability across different countries is highly varied and much more complex than is often first assumed, as these statistics illustrate:

- **Chile:** According to the Feminisation Index of Indigence and Poverty, 123.9 women for every 100 men are living in poverty, and 132.2 when using the extreme poverty line (Veras and Silva, 2010).
- **Colombia:** Poor rural female-headed households command only 40% of the total income of male-headed households (Veras and Silva, 2010).
- **Ethiopia:** Data from the early 2000s suggest that, whereas male-headed households have greater consumption expenditure capacity, female-headed households score more highly in terms of per capita food energy consumption (Lampiettyt and Stalker, 2000).
- **Ghana:** Female-headed households, which represent 30% of the population, have significantly lower levels of poverty (19.2% vs. 31.4%) (IFAD, 1999).
- **India:** Women in India receive up to 30% lower wages than men in casual labour – and 20% lower for the same task (World Bank, 2009).
- **Kenya:** Although women's rural unemployment is lower than men's, women's urban unemployment rate is 37.6% vs. 13% for men (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

**Environment-related shocks** also play a major role in perpetuating economic vulnerability. Common problems identified include droughts and accompanying food insecurity, floods, pollution, deforestation, plant and animal diseases and pests, as well as death of livestock. A number of families in our Ghana case study, for example, reported being able to eat only once a day or having to consume leaves during the lean season. Women usually have to make the greatest sacrifices in terms of reduced quantity and quality of food consumption. However, in Ethiopia, many more male-headed than female-headed households identified livestock shocks (60.9% vs. 27.6%) and unaffordable veterinary services (24.6% vs. 11.1%) as significant risks. Female-headed households were more concerned about inadequate pay (75.9% vs. 64.3%), lack of access to affordable education services (41.4% vs. 33.8%) and death or chronic illness of family members. This reflects the way in which different household configurations can mediate experiences of vulnerability.

**Ill-health** emerged as a significant risk in many case study research sites, with a significant number of respondents claiming sickness or death of a family member as one of the most important risks they had faced in recent years. Families reported frequently being compelled to sell household assets (e.g. small livestock) or to take on extra paid work to cover health expenses (both medical fees and related transportation costs, especially to access main hospitals in urban centres for treatment of serious illnesses), because of a lack of health insurance or other means to finance health care. As one respondent in Viet Nam noted:

*'My youngest was born in 2006 and fell sick in 2007 – he was in a lot of pain but we didn't have money so we had to pawn our paddy field for 3 to 4 million dong [\$152.39 to \$203.19].<sup>1</sup> We spent about 1 million dong [\$50.81] on the medical expenses but then we also had to pay for meals, then transportation expenses to the hospital – so there was no money left' (Married man, Co To, Viet Nam).*

Although men and women alike highlighted ill-health as a key concern, the burden of ill-health often appears to be shouldered disproportionately by women:

*'Women get sicker ... They are responsible for household chores and take care of lots of things. Husbands and children get food first when supplies are limited – wives don't eat if the husband is uncaring and he doesn't share what he is eating' (Married woman, Shibhta, Ethiopia).*

**Expenses related to lifecycle events** such as funerals and weddings are another key source of vulnerability. In Ghana, for instance, Kokomba communities identified significant outlays for funerals and also for gifts from mothers to daughters on the occasion of the birth of their first child. In Bangladesh and India, dowry payments, especially among Hindu households, represent a major challenge, and many poor households often have to start saving from when their daughters are young,

<sup>1</sup> Currency conversions in this report use [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com) as of 14 September 2010.

as well as relying on support from neighbours and family members. Although the government in Bangladesh has established initiatives to stop the dowry, such practices are deeply engrained in society, with devastating consequences for some households:

*'After my daughter's marriage I had to face a problem. I had to spend all I had in hand, and now I am penniless. I provided gold, 10,000 taka [\$141.18], clothes and a feast for the guests. I could arrange my daughter's marriage only with everybody's help in my village'* (Single mother, Magura, Bangladesh).

### 3.2 Social vulnerabilities and risks

Study respondents identified a range of social risks and vulnerabilities. For women in particular, these were often as, or even more, important than economic sources of vulnerability. At the intra-household level, women's time poverty emerged as a significant concern in all case studies. In Indonesia, for instance, although 85% of women respondents in Tapanuli Tengah reported economic activities as their main daily activity, traditional gender norms dictate that household chores and child care are women's responsibility. This means that most women are shouldering a double burden of productive and care work, with only minimal support from their male partners on domestic matters. Similarly, in Peru there are significant gendered differences in time use, not only among adults but also among children.

*'Girls are different. Boys play but girls help their mothers. Cooking, washing ... boys are not the same'* (Married woman, 30, Chanquil, Peru).

*'Older brothers help less but parents hold daughters tightly ... Girls help mothers with housework; boys help fathers'* (Adolescent female, Chanquil, Peru).

*'Women are dedicated to cooking and men work on the farm. Men play football when they rest, while we remain at home with house chores'* (Adolescent female, Liriopata, Peru).

Intra-household tensions regarding control over resources, including land and food, as well as decision making around mobility and participation in activities outside the home, emerged as another critical social vulnerability. In many cases, decision-making power is concentrated in a husband's hands, as this 19-year-old Vietnamese woman's reflection highlights:

*'Husbands are the ones who take care of great matters [such as loans], so I can't say much ... He didn't tell me anything about the loan. He thinks a wife knows nothing. I didn't talk to him about the [loan repayment] deadline or the interest because it would make my husband's family worry too, and I was afraid it would upset him. He says I don't know anything so I couldn't ask. I was too afraid to ask him'* (Married woman, Coc Cot, Viet Nam).

In a number of cases, male decision-making power is reinforced by physical violence and the acceptance thereof by family and/or community members:

*'We were not living well; we were always fighting ... Once when he hit me very hard I went to my parents' home to stay but my godparents came and made me come back'* (Married woman, Motoy, Peru).

Limited reproductive health rights emerged especially in the Latin American context as a significant source of social vulnerability, especially for adolescent girls and young women. Here, the high teenage fertility rate is concerning because: i) it represents greater health risks for both mother and child; ii) it can lead to lower levels of schooling and training for teenage girls; iii) it tends to be higher among poorer teenagers, a factor that can contribute to the intergenerational transmission of poverty; iv) it reveals gender inequities, since most teenage mothers are single mothers who have to bear the responsibility for childbearing in the absence of the father; and v) it indicates that teenage reproductive rights are not effective, as most of these pregnancies are unwanted and girls in most cases did not have access to contraceptives (ECLAC, 2007). Cultural attitudes (see Box 2), religious resistance and health system failures underpin and perpetuate this vulnerability.

### **Box 2: Tensions between traditional and modern gender norms reinforcing social vulnerability**

High rates of teenage motherhood in Latin America stem in part from cultural ambivalence represented by a more liberal attitude regarding sexuality colliding with a denial of the sexual autonomy of adolescents (ECLAC, 2007). In this regard, Latin American society presents an interesting mix of 'practices that reproduce traditional hierarchies in spaces such as the family and religion' and modern rationality promoted through law and formal education, which emphasises individual freedom and equality. As such, 'the gap between a legitimate egalitarian order and discriminatory practices tinges the subjectivity of social actors' (Fuller, 1998).

While intra-household tensions between husbands and wives can be difficult, the risk of abandonment by a male partner is also very serious, because of the highly vulnerable economic and social position in which this leaves single women. Male abandonment – be it real or resulting from an effective absence owing to problems such as alcoholism – generally leads to women assuming full responsibility for children and reflects women's very limited control over their reproductive life. The effects on girls can also be especially negative, including exposure to gender- and sexual-based violence (see Box 3).

### **Box 3: Reproductive health vulnerabilities and life-course and intergenerational poverty**

*'It is sad that my daughter is a single mother, the man has forgotten his children, this is why my daughter is sick and cannot work well ... Men deceive and leave young women, they don't take them seriously ... They leave town and don't come back ... Only once he sent her 100 soles [\$35.49], that was the only time'* (Mother of a single mother, Liriopata, Peru).

*'When my father started drinking he abandoned us. We are 10 living siblings and my mother had to sacrifice herself– she went to the farm to work alone to wash the clothes of wealthier people ... [My father] was there but he contributed little or nothing'* (Married man, Manzanayoc, Peru).

*'When I was a little girl, my parents left me and this caused me a great deal of pain. I was sent to the jungle and I didn't have anyone to call mother or father by my side ... My father used to drink and his mistress lived far away. He fell from a high hill [on his way to see her] and was found dead. My mother said how can I have eight children? This was her concern so she took me to the jungle to work when I was six .... My uncle and aunt forced me to cook for the agricultural workers ... I was like a slave ... In addition, my uncle tried to abuse me so I decided to leave. I didn't have a safe home'* (Married woman, Chanquil, Peru).

*'Well, I was studying, I finished second year of secondary and I gave birth just after I finished. After a few months I started the third year but I was unable to finish because it was very difficult to leave the baby with someone all the time. Back then the Estancias programme hadn't yet started'* (Single adolescent mother, Chapulhuacanito, Mexico).

*'[Most people in the community] ... think it's wrong for women to work outside the home and that if you go to work it's because you like another man or something'* (Married adolescent mother, La Esperanza, Mexico).

Single parenthood means that women typically suffer from household labour shortages, limiting their livelihood options. As one elderly Ghanaian man explained:

*'Ah, do women have any role on the farm? Women can help harvest and sow but that is it. They have their own food plots but only help their men at harvest time ... Women don't farm, they depend on men for their sustenance'* (Elderly man, Gushiegu, Ghana).

It can also result in social pressure and stigma vis-à-vis women who remain alone across the life-course:

*'Now I leave early in the morning and come back in the evening ... People come to my father with gossip and problems start ... I guess out of envy: as I am still alone and work they talk behind my back and tell my father. If someone goes from one place to another they think this is not right'* (Adolescent female, Liriopata, Peru).

*'Even agricultural labourers fail to work well ... They don't pay any attention to me as they do to men ... My son is not recognised by his father ... I was a fool. I wanted an engagement because I was alone and suffered'* (Single mother, Chanquil, Peru).

At the community level, women may also suffer from limited opportunities to exercise meaningful voice and agency. In all of the country case studies reviewed, women have low representation in decision-making processes within both formal and informal institutions. Even in contexts where there are quotas for women in local government, such as in South Asia and Latin America, this quantitative representation is seldom supported by capacity-strengthening initiatives to ensure a qualitative shift in women's community participation. In the Indonesian research sites, for example, female FGDs noted that male villagers typically made community decisions without involving female villagers. They explained that this resulted from a culture which places women in a mere complementary role to that of men – so, if they are involved in community meetings, their role is usually limited to food preparation rather than decision making. In any case, meetings are often held at night, thereby effectively excluding women. In post-conflict contexts such as Peru, communities also often suffer from a fragile social fabric, making community dialogue more challenging.

At the community level, gender discrimination may also intersect with other forms of social exclusion (see Box 4). In particular, indigenous and ethnic minority groups, marginalised castes and displaced populations are likely to suffer additional barriers to overcoming poverty and vulnerability. These can include social discrimination, limited access to vertical forms of social capital, i.e. an absence of effective linkages to political elites, and a lack of identification documents such as birth certification, which excludes individuals from access to basic services and from voting.

#### **Box 4: Gender and older people: understanding specific vulnerabilities**

Livelihood opportunities are scarce for older people (both men and women) as a result of limited opportunities to participate in remunerated agricultural work (because of health problems and limited mobility), which is the main source of labour in the area. In many contexts, older people are particularly vulnerable because of a lack of social protection mechanisms specifically targeted at them, as access to social security and pensions is almost non-existent in rural areas. Greater life expectancy and responsibility for dependants in the family pose additional risks for women. As in the case of female-headed households, the elderly rely strongly on family networks (both within and outside the community). Those who lack these networks are in a situation of great vulnerability, frequently depending on the charity of neighbours.

*'I live with my daughter. She works and I sometimes look after the livestock and they pay me a little. My children also help me – they buy me cloth ... Sometimes children forget the elderly – they leave them and they suffer. I still have strength but I don't know what will happen when I grow older ... The oldest suffer the most'* (Elderly woman, Liriopata, Peru).

*'We have difficulties because we can't find work. Sometimes we walk for nothing, looking for a job. We find nothing ... money is hard to find'* (Elderly woman, Manzanayoc, Peru).

*'Given how much I suffered and how much I struggled, I say [to my daughter-in-law]: "I don't want you to suffer as much as I did. Since you have the possibility of your husband letting you work, you should take advantage of it so your children can get further in life"'* (Widowed elderly woman, Zaragoza, Mexico).

In some contexts, social risks are also especially acute for older women. In the north of Ghana, for instance, the phenomenon of social marginalisation of older women, usually widows, through their labelling as witches is a serious concern. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (such as World Vision and ActionAid) and increasingly the government have been providing support to 'witch camps,' which have been set up by communities as a place to cast these stigmatised women away, abandoned owing to alleged involvement with the occult. NGO and government initiatives to support these women include: provision of basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter; opportunities for wage labour work on farms or construction sites; or training and support for them to set up microenterprises to help provide some level of financial security. Part of the problem, however, is that the belief in witchcraft is widespread; efforts have often focused on freeing women wrongly accused of being 'witches' rather than seeking to deconstruct such categorisation more generally. Interestingly, in Kpatinga, in one of our research sites, the community selected six women among a total of 34 in a local witch camp as beneficiaries for social protection. It is not clear, however, whether other communities have similarly identified witches as a vulnerable group needing social protection.

It is important to note that young girls are also negatively affected by the phenomenon of witch camps. Families send young girls to take care of older female relatives, frequently at the expense of their education. This is not just because of time poverty but also because of the risk of social stigmatisation, which may result from being associated with witches and make integration into mainstream schools difficult. In some camps that have grown large, such as Kukuo, girls providing support have grown older and have had children of their own (married or out of wedlock). Their children in turn face a similar fate of poverty, marginalisation and no access to education.

Finally, our findings highlight that gender-specific vulnerabilities are often multiple and interlinked, resulting in chronic poverty and vulnerability. In the absence of adequate coping mechanisms and support structures, individuals often suffer from a series of shocks at the individual, intra-household and community levels. In the singular, these might be surmountable. Because they are multilayered (including ill-health, threats of sexual violence, parental and spousal abandonment, social discrimination and stigma, limited income generation opportunities and lack of physical security), they serve to perpetuate long-term poverty traps. An example from one community in Ethiopia illustrates this trend well:

*'When I was four years old my parents sent me to my aunt in town who had no children and lived there for years. But when my father died, my aunt took to the burial and left me there. I had to make ends meet for my siblings and so I accepted an offer of a man to live with his family. He made me his servant and exploited me heavily. After that I had three unsuccessful marriages ... During the past five years, my house was burnt down and I lost many assets. My husband's brother gave us birr to construct a house but my husband is a drunken man and as a result he wasted some of the money. I did not benefit from the proceeds ... At the end of 2007 I came to know my positive status of HIV/AIDS. Now my interaction with community members is decreasing because of their attitude towards me and the safety net administrators have refused to give me a loan for oxen since they know my status. My son suffers from mental illness. I planned to take him to get holy water, but I cannot because I do not have enough money ... I try to sell wood, grass, and use other sources of income to feed and buy second-hand clothes for my children. Now my hope is only to see the success of my children. Mine is already gone! I advise my children to focus on their education to save them from the challenges associated with dropping out, which I face' (Married woman, Wolayta, Ethiopia).*

### 3.3 Coping strategies

Given the limited formal mechanisms to mitigate social and economic risks in the poorest areas of our case study countries, **traditional systems of reciprocity and social solidarity** are an important source of support for rural households. Reciprocity, or mutual aid, is a traditional institution in the Andes, for instance, in the form of *ayni* or *minka*. The first of these provides support in activities such as building a house, farming or harvesting, as well as in social events such as marriage or distressing events such as death. Social solidarity refers to collective work building and preserving communal assets. Similar social support systems are also found in Bangladesh, as the following examples illustrate:

*[Who provides the cost of your education?] From the poor fund in our Madrasa [educational institution]. Furthermore, my private tutors know my economic condition and they always give me concessions. Sometimes neighbours help me, for example a Union Parishad [Council] member gave me a guide book last year' (Adolescent male, Narail, Bangladesh).*

*'I always borrow from one of my friends. He has a small shop. He is Muslim but he always gives me a loan. Sometimes I borrow 5,000 taka [\$70.59] at a time from him' (Married man, Magura, Bangladesh).*

However, these mechanisms, although still in place in rural communities, may be losing efficacy as a result of a more individualistic approach and limited communal cohesion, as well as the competing demands posed by the need to be involved in remunerated work.

*'There are troubles, there is no mutual support, you can even die because of a lack of aid ... Only around 50% [of the people in the community] help ... You have to turn to the communal authorities, you ask for help, how could it be otherwise?' (Married man, Liriopata, Peru).*

As a result of often declining levels of social capital, **indebtedness** was identified as a key coping mechanism. In our research sites in India, for instance, male- and female-headed households alike are resorting to debt and also migration as key coping strategies. In female-headed households, reducing the quality of food consumption of adult women in particular is a common complementary strategy. Distress sale of assets, such as livestock, furniture and shops, is an important coping strategy in many of the case study countries, especially in response to sudden shocks such as ill-health. These coping mechanisms tend to be short term, however, as selling productive assets limits livelihood options, and households are unlikely to build up such capital again quickly. Finally, in Ghana and Ethiopia in particular, **faith** is a popular approach, with many respondents referring to divine intervention as a way to understand their life trajectories. Religious faith helped respondents accept their circumstances better but also appeared to lessen their impetus to seek to change their lot.

## 4. Assessing the integration of gender in social protection design

This section assesses the extent to which the design of public works, cash and asset transfers as well as food and service subsidy programmes has informed the gendered dimensions of poverty and vulnerability discussed above. Overall, despite the considerable evidence base on the ways that gender inequality shapes people's experiences of poverty and vulnerability, this has varied significantly. In all the case study countries, commitment to gender equality through national laws and policies has increased significantly since the late 1990s. Gendered experiences of poverty and vulnerability in national development and in some cases in social protection plans and policies have often been relatively well articulated. However, in general there is a substantial disconnect between gender equality and empowerment goals on the one hand and social protection objectives and design on the other.

As a result, only two of the programmes under consideration (Bangladesh's Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction (CFPR) and Mexico's *Estancias*) have been explicitly designed with a primary objective of empowering women. Others, such as in Ethiopia, Ghana, India and Peru, pay little attention to the transformation of gender relations. In most cases, the only consideration of gender has been the inclusion of women as a target beneficiary group. Sometimes they are ignored altogether, as is the case in Indonesia and Viet Nam. Such sidelining of gender equality goals has resulted in a narrow conceptualisation of gendered vulnerabilities and a focus on supporting women's care and domestic roles and responsibilities in the household (e.g. as household managers in receipt of cash or in-kind transfers). It has also limited women's economic skills and participation to sectors with low growth and remuneration potential rather than supporting gains to promote women's strategic interests.

Targeting women and supporting their existing roles and responsibilities is important, but is only the first step towards addressing poverty and vulnerability. The rationale behind targeting women is driven by the evidence that this will accrue economic benefits to the household, for example by improving expenditure on consumption, health and education. There is also an implicit assumption that targeting women will indirectly increase women's social status within and outside the household, for instance by improving their bargaining or decision-making power, contributing to more equitable intra-household relations and improving women's self-esteem. As we discuss in the impacts section below, however, explicit attention to empowerment in design features is needed in order to see significant change in relation to gender inequality.

### 4.1 Public works programmes

Public works programmes are generally defined as public labour-intensive infrastructure development initiatives which provide cash-, food- or input-based payments. Such programmes have a number of technical and political benefits. They: provide income transfers to the poor and are often designed to smooth income during 'slack' or 'hungry' periods of the year; address shortages of infrastructure (rural roads, irrigation, water harvest facilities, tree plantation, school and health clinic facilities); are typically self-targeting, owing to the low benefit levels and heavy physical labour requirements (Subbarao, 2003);<sup>2</sup> and, as such, entail more limited administrative costs than many other social protection interventions. They are also politically popular, as they require that programme beneficiaries work and are seen to be helping themselves (Bloom, 2009; McCord and Slater, 2009). Additional benefits lie in programmes which involve community involvement in the selection of projects undertaken using public works labour. These include the creation of infrastructure that is most needed

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<sup>2</sup> Other targeting methods include self-selection in combination with other approaches and geographic targeting (World Bank, 2009).



by the community, which entails a sense of community ownership of the asset, as well as a greater likelihood of the maintenance of that asset (World Bank, 2009).

India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) are both large-scale public works programmes, reaching almost 45 million households and 8 million individuals, respectively (see Box 5 for programme details). At the national level, both these programmes recognise women's role in agriculture and food security and, importantly, aim to address women's lower representation in paid work and gender wage disparities in the rural sector. They promote women's participation through the provision of a quota which requires the employment of one-third of women in each state under MGNREGA. In Ethiopia, female-headed households typically constitute around 50% of programme beneficiaries at the village level, in light of their concentration among the poorest households.

### **Box 5: India and Ethiopia's public works programmes**

**In India, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act** was passed into the Indian Constitution in 2005: every rural household is *entitled* to 100 days of employment each year. The Act is demand driven and households must apply and request employment from the local government (the *Panchayat*); if the local government is unable to supply jobs, it must pay an unemployment allowance. The government of India (rather than by state governments) fully finance and implement MGNREGA, which aims to address seasonal unemployment as well to support agricultural productivity through the creation of rural community assets.

**In Ethiopia, the Productive Safety Net Programme** was launched in 2005 and is financed heavily by the donor community and implemented through the government of Ethiopia, in some cases in collaboration with local NGOs. The PSNP represented a significant conceptual shift away from years of emergency food aid to a largely cash-based safety net public works intervention. It is one of the main components of Ethiopia's Food Security Strategy and aims to smooth consumption, prevent the depletion of assets and create community agricultural and infrastructure assets.

Both MGNREGA and the PSNP also recognise the importance of gendered social risks – most notably in terms of women's child care and domestic responsibilities and time poverty. The design of both programmes provides for crèche facilities. In India, MGNREGA gives preference to women, especially single women, working close to their residence (5km). The design of Ethiopia's PSNP goes even further and provides important insights into how the design of public works programmes can recognise gendered economic and social risks with regard to family composition, socio-cultural norms and the lifecycle. Flexible working hours are available to women in recognition of their domestic responsibilities, and there is the provision of direct support (cash transfers with no work requirement) for women in the late stages of pregnancy and nursing if there is inadequate substitute labour within the household. Special consideration is also given to creating community assets which reduce women's time poverty (e.g. fuelwood and water collection sources in closer proximity to the village) and/or which compensate for the labour shortage typically characteristic of female-headed households, by utilising public works labour to support agricultural work on privately owned female-headed households' land.

Another important feature in both programmes is the promotion of the participation of women in ensuring the effectiveness of programme implementation. In India, one of the key goals of MGNREGA is to strengthen grassroots processes of democracy through transparent and accountable governance. This includes mechanisms for communities to monitor and demand the effective implementation of the scheme. Design guidelines recommend, for example, that women are represented in community meetings and specific grassroots monitoring mechanisms such as the social audit forum. Similarly, in Ethiopia there is a provision for 30% of women's participation in community discussions about community assets for construction with public works labour.

However, despite these progressive design features, there is room to improve both programmes, particularly the PSNP, to better link economic and social risks to support economic productivity. The next phase of the PSNP (2010-2014), for instance, has broadened the definition of community assets to include health extension work, adult literacy and HIV/AIDS awareness promotion. This is particularly

important, as a key criticism of public works has related to their narrow focus on appropriate work (in terms of both benefits but also appropriateness of hard manual labour for both men and women) (Antonopoulos, 2007) and the limited opportunities for women to take up new and more remunerative opportunities in the agriculture sector.

There is also a need to better ensure equal access to agricultural extension services and financial services. To date, public works interventions have focused largely on the household as an entity, excluding intra-household dynamics and socio-cultural norms. These influence decisions on how income is distributed and paid and how unpaid labour is allocated within the household. Independent access to finances remains a key constraint for women, who typically have less access to credit and other financial services. In India, women can open bank accounts to receive MGNREGA payments in their own name only at the discretion of the local government or bank. In the case of Ethiopia's PSNP, the household head receives the payment directly, which in male-headed households creates problems for women accessing income, even if they have been working in the programme. Moreover, female-headed households are often more risk averse<sup>3</sup> and, even where the PSNP offers programme linkages to credit packages, these may not be suited to their needs (Pankhurst, 2009). It is therefore critical to think through other types of programme linkages, for example social insurance (human and animal health), and to remove institutional barriers to women's access to productive inputs, credit and markets, in order to give female-headed households the chance of go beyond meeting basic survival needs towards moving out of absolute poverty (ibid).

## 4.2 Transfer programmes

Social transfers, particularly cash transfers, are an increasingly popular response to poverty and vulnerability. Transferring cash directly to the poorest households not only supports income, consumption and human capital development but also has wider empowerment benefits, as recipients are able to choose and prioritise their own expenditure.

Our case studies on transfer programmes fall broadly into three categories: i) conditional (or quasi-conditional) cash transfer schemes which address poverty mainly through a focus on human capital development; ii) an asset transfer programme which transfers mainly livestock to the extreme poor in rural areas in Bangladesh; and iii) a cash transfer directed at subsidising child care costs to support women's participation in the labour force in Mexico (see Box 6 for details).

The extent to which the first category, CCTs, has incorporated gender into programme design has been variable. The most explicit gender-sensitive design feature of many CCTs lies in targeting the cash transfer to the caregiver – normally the mother. In the case of *Bolsa Família* in Brazil, for instance, 94% of the recipients are women. This is intended to compensate mothers in their traditional role and to ensure that programme co-responsibilities are met, in recognition of the fact that they are most likely to ensure that increased household income benefits children. Transferring cash to women is also seen as a way to promote their control over household resources and to increase their bargaining power at home. However, some authors have disputed the 'CCT's gendered empowerment effect,' arguing that the main limitation of CCTs is that they reinforce a utilitarian approach to women's traditional role within the household. Women are 'empowered' only as guardians of children and as channels for child-centred policies, rather than being the focus of interventions to ensure well-being across the lifecycle (Jenson, 2009; Molyneux, 2007). Moreover, there is a general assumption that economic independence will have positive spill-over effects on other dimensions of social exclusion, rather than any attempt to think through and address causal pathways more systematically.

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<sup>3</sup> Female-headed households are often more vulnerable to shocks and have less access to knowledge about the technologies needed to maximise the value of loans (Pankhurst, 2009).

### Box 6: Transfer programme details

Transferring assets is relatively less common than public works or direct cash transfers, yet **Bangladesh's Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction** provides an innovative example of an asset transfer programme. This programme is entirely funded and implemented by an NGO, Building Resources Across Communities (BRAC), with the aim of reducing extreme poverty in rural areas. Initiated in 2002, it aims to improve both the economic and the social capabilities of ultra poor households in Bangladesh, primarily targeting women as recipients of the asset. In December 2009, 272,000 women received a productive asset transfer worth between 8,000 and 13,000 taka (between \$112.94 and \$183.54). In addition to the transfer, CRPR provides intensive training and support in managing the assets; a daily stipend until income is generated from the assets (approximately 300 taka (\$4.24) per month for approximately 18 months); subsidised health and legal services; social development training; water and sanitation; and the development of supportive community networks through Village Poverty Reduction Committees.

**Brazil's Bolsa Família** (Family Grant), part of the government's *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger) welfare programme, was created in October 2003, consolidating existing programmes on education, health and energy. By 2009, the programme was reaching 12.5 million beneficiary families. Bolsa Família targets households based on self-reported income, transferring a maximum of \$112 per month to families, conditional on children's schooling and family members' utilisation of health care services.

In Colombia, **Red Juntos para la Superación de la Pobreza Extrema Social Protection** (Network for Overcoming Extreme Poverty), known as *Juntos* (Together), started in 2006, brings together line ministries and social programmes in an integrated social protection network. *Familias en Acción* (Families in Action), created in 2001, is the entry point to the Juntos network, transferring income to 2.9 million families in 2009, including households displaced by political violence. Co-responsibilities focus on education and health.

**Chile Solidario** (Chile Solidarity) also takes an integrated approach to poverty eradication through three main interventions: psychosocial support (family support), monetary transfers and priority access to social programmes. Created in 2002, the programme was benefiting over 300,000 households in 2009.

**Ghana's Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty**, a quasi-conditional cash transfer programme, was launched in March 2008. It is financed mainly by donors and implemented through the government of Ghana (Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment). By 2009, LEAP was reaching over 26,000 households and 131,000 individuals, transferring approximately \$8 to \$15 monthly. LEAP aims to use cash transfers to 'cushion' the poor and 'encourage them to seek capacity development and other empowering' objectives. LEAP sets both positive conditions (school enrolment and retention, registration at birth, accessing postnatal care, immunisations for young children) and negative ones (ensuring children are neither trafficked nor engaged in the worst forms of child labour). The provisions against child labour in particular set the programme apart from other CCTs.

**Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto Income Support Programme**, an unconditional cash transfer programme, was launched in 2008 primarily as a response to the food, fuel and financial crisis. The BISP programme receives support and assistance largely from multilateral and bilateral donor agencies and currently provides monthly transfers to 2.2 million families.

In Peru, the government-led **Programa de Apoyo a los Más Pobres – Juntos** (Programme of Support to the Poorest – Together) was launched in April 2005, inspired by similar CCTs in Mexico and Brazil. In August 2009, the *Juntos* programme reached 431,974 households across 14 regions. *Juntos* gives a cash subsidy (approximately \$33 a month) to the poorest households to promote access to basic health, education and nutrition services to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty through investments in human capital. Targeted to households with children under 14 or pregnant women, the transfer is given to mothers on the assumption that they are likely to be more accountable for their children's well-being. Families must fulfil various commitments, including obtaining civic identification documents for women and children, attendance of children at primary school and utilisation of various health-related services.

Targeting women is also a key feature in Bangladesh's CFPR, but this programme differs from CCTs in that it articulates women's empowerment as central to achieving the programme's objectives: 'The status of poor rural women can thus be improved by creating entrepreneurial ability among them, one of the key means of graduating the ultra poor in CFPR program. However, this can only be achieved if their ability to make decisions in the household is increased, if they are more able to move and communicate in the public domain and have increased knowledge and skills to reduce their vulnerability' (BRAC, 2009).

In Pakistan, targeting women as recipients of the Benazir Bhutto Income Support Programme (BISP) has necessitated additional measures to ensure that the delivery of benefits to women is sensitive to prevailing socio-cultural norms (see Box 7).

#### **Box 7: Delivery mechanisms in Pakistan**

During the initial design phase of BISP, policymakers recognised that, to make females cash transfer recipients, the programme delivery mechanism had to reach out to them in an innovative way. Pakistan women are subject to restricted mobility (especially in rural areas, and *purdah* in some areas), time poverty for rural women who are heavily engaged in household labour and accessibility issues in some remote areas. As such, BISP could not achieve its desired coverage if female recipients had to collect the money from a central disbursement point, such as a bank or regional BISP office. Instead, BISP delivers the money orders to female recipients on their doorsteps through the Pakistan Post Office (PPO). BISP has provided training to the PPO management to emphasise the need to deliver money orders to the female head of household. District supervisors extended this training to the postmen in their jurisdiction, and, in particular, the agency underscored the link between the cash transfers and empowerment of women.

Our analysis of transfer programmes goes beyond women as recipients of transfers and finds a number of progressive features but also shortfalls in promoting gender equality in programme design.

Bangladesh's CFPR is well informed by a gendered assessment of poverty and vulnerability, and this is reflected in its programme objectives. For instance, CFPR is particularly cognisant of the fact that female-headed households are often more labour constrained – because of fewer income earners in the house as well as care responsibilities – and have made provisions accordingly. These include a thorough assessment of each household's capacity to ensure the transfer of the most appropriate productive asset; often, these are less labour-intensive activities such as rearing poultry.

CFPR also aims to increase women's skills and knowledge by increasing women's economic skills through intensive training and supervision to support new livelihood activities.

Programme conditions are an important feature of social cash transfers, and the extent to which these seek to address gender inequality varies across the case studies. In the case of Ghana's Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP), specific attention is given to adolescent girls by identifying girls engaged in the worst forms of child labour, such as hired domestic work. CCTs in Latin America sometimes include the provision of higher transfers for school-age girls who are more likely to drop out, particularly from secondary education. They also often integrate the provision of free health care for pregnant adolescents and women in the core programme design. In Peru's *Juntos*, the requirement to register children is positive for women who may have struggled to gain access to services and public programmes owing to a lack of identity papers.

Another important design feature in the development of Latin American CCTs in particular has been to introduce and institutionalise a single registry which enables beneficiaries of one programme to be linked to other programmes. This is based on an understanding that an integrated approach is needed to support households to move out of poverty (see Box 8). In Ghana, the LEAP programme also incorporates a single registry to support beneficiary access to supplementary feeding, agricultural inputs and skills training programmes.

### **Box 8: Cross-sectoral linkages from social protection to social policy**

In Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Peru, there is an explicit commitment to inter-sectoral working through the CCTs, facilitated through a single registry system tracking all services and programmes with which an individual interacts, as well as to strengthening linkages between different levels of government. The unification of beneficiaries under a single registry supports the integration of households into programmes such as food security, housing, banking and credit and judicial services. In Chile's *Solidario* programme, for example, the CCT fits within an integrated approach to eradicate extreme poverty through interventions in three main areas: psychosocial support (family support), monetary transfers and priority access to social programmes.

The extent to which these linkages address gender inequality varies, and in some countries remains much weaker and more ad hoc than in others. Colombia's *Familias en Acción* articulates a general commitment to women's empowerment through fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), empowering women and protecting them from domestic and sexual violence. The others seek to address a more limited range of gender-specific vulnerabilities. *Bolsa Familia* includes support for ante and postnatal care but has no specific programme objective around gender equality; Chile's *Solidario* pillar on psychosocial support includes tackling intra-household violence; and Peru's *Juntos* aims to provide ante and postnatal support, as well as awareness raising on women's reproductive and sexual health rights.

There are also efforts to link to complementary NGO programmes and services to address gender equality and empowerment, through, for instance, programmes offering legal advice and raising consciousness on women's rights and violence against women. Although these remain ad hoc and are not embedded within the programmes, they represent important opportunities to tackle gendered risks and vulnerability. In Peru, where *Juntos* beneficiaries must attend weekly training sessions, women highlight the fact that they have learned to sign their names, and can now recognise their civic identification number and name in the register of the *Juntos* programme, aspects that are highly valued and diminish their sense of exclusion.

Bangladesh, Ghana and Peru also capitalise on additional linkages by utilising the interface between community and programme officers to raise awareness in the community on social development issues and gendered social risks, including gender-based violence and early marriage, as well as on the importance of a more egalitarian distribution of domestic and care work responsibilities (in the case of *Juntos*). In Bangladesh, for example, CFPR incorporates social development training sessions at the same time that weekly stipends are disbursed to beneficiaries, in order to raise awareness and train women on women's rights. In Ghana, LEAP's design guidelines promote the importance of girls' school completion (especially among traditional leaders), highlight the risks of child marriage and early childbearing and include initiatives to develop women's self-esteem and tackle family violence.

Finally, the Bangladesh and Peru programmes have put in place mechanisms aimed at improving women's participation in community activities and programme governance. In Bangladesh, women are expected to participate in the specially created Village Poverty Reduction Committees, which include local village elites and BRAC staff. The main objective of this is to increase women's social capital in the village area and for the committees to provide security and protection to the beneficiaries. The *Juntos* programme in Peru goes even further towards promoting and strengthening women's participation and leadership at the community level, through the election of women as community facilitators to serve as a link between the programme and the beneficiaries.

## **4.3 Subsidised goods and services**

The final set of social protection interventions our study focuses on includes subsidised food and services in Indonesia, Mexico and Viet Nam (see Box 9 for programme details). Subsidised goods and services are a subset of social protection interventions which include a wide range of objectives, such as improving the real purchasing power of consumers, addressing calorie and nutrient deficiencies and assuring social and political stability. Subsidies can be costly: although they are potentially important for mitigating the impact of economic shocks (particularly seen in the context of the recent crises) on

### Box 9: Subsidies in Indonesia and Viet Nam

In Indonesia, the food subsidy programme, *Beras untuk Rumah Tangga Miskin* (Rice for the Poor), or *Raskin*, was initially part of the Special Market Programme (OPK) put in place by the government in 1998 in response to the 1997/98 financial crises. Since then, the *Raskin* programme has evolved but remains an important part of the social protection and poverty programme approach in the country. It transfers 20kg per month per household to approximately 15 million poor households.

Mexico's *Programa Estancias Infantiles para Apoyar a Madres Trabajadoras* (Child Care Programme to Support Working Mothers) supports mothers who are working (mostly in the informal sector), or *Estancias*, looking for a job or studying, as well as single fathers responsible for the care of children. The *Estancias* programme provides a subsidy to access child care services for young children aged between 1 year and 3 years 11 months (one day before turning four, when they can be admitted to preschool), or between 1 year and 5 years 11 months in the case of a child with a disability. The programme is targeted to households with a monthly income up to 1.5 times the minimum wage per capita, which is just above the national income poverty threshold.

In Viet Nam, the **National Targeted Programme for Poverty Reduction** is a comprehensive programme which seeks to address a range of deprivations among poor households and communities. It focuses on improving the productive capacity of the poor, primarily through credit and housing loan schemes and improving access to basic services (health, education, vocational training and agricultural extension) and legal aid through subsidised services.

the poor, expenditure on public services may be the first to be cut as a result of decreased government revenues. In Southeast Asia, for instance, after structural adjustment-induced government cutbacks in the 1990s, subsidies re-emerged in response to the economic crisis in the region in the late 1990s.

With the exception of Mexico's *Estancias* programme, it is this last set of social protection interventions which pays very little attention to gender dynamics in programme design, despite broader progress towards the integration of gender dimensions into national development initiatives in both countries, and despite the visibility of the gendered impacts of the 1997 crisis. Neither the Indonesia nor Viet Nam programmes contains gender-specific targets or measurable outcomes. Viet Nam's NTPPR includes female-headed households as one of the targeted beneficiary groups and pays some attention to ensuring access to credit for women. However, the programme's delivery mechanism overlooks gender-specific barriers, which may hinder uptake of services by women and girls in general. It also sidelines the language barriers and social discrimination that ethnic minority girls and women in particular may face in accessing human capital and income generation opportunities. In Indonesia, the subsidised food security programme *Raskin* does not consider the differential nutrition needs within the household. These are of particular concern during different stages of the lifecycle (especially for children (especially under fives) and pregnant and nursing women). It also ignores the potential for unequal distribution of food within the household.

Mexico's *Estancias* programme however is well informed by a gendered assessment of poverty and vulnerability, and aims to address barriers in the labour market. It promotes both women's and single fathers' engagement in economic activities by providing subsidised child care and also aims to increase women's skills and knowledge by providing subsidies to mothers – often young single women – who want to continue studying.

## 5. Impacts of social protection programmes on gender equality

In this section, we look at the impacts of our case study social protection programmes, paying particular attention to their effects on gendered risks and vulnerability at the individual, household, intra-household and community level, as presented in Section 3 and Figure 1. We find that the gender-sensitive design features (and their absence) discussed in Section 4 have both intended and unintended effects as a result of divergent implementation practices. Overall, we find that these social protection interventions have focused largely on the first of Kabeer's three interrelated dimensions of empowerment – access to resources – with only limited impacts in relation to supporting poor women's agency and broader well-being outcomes. This is a result of both gaps in design features (Section 4) and implementation challenges (Section 6 below), which vary across country contexts.

In Latin America, for instance, institutional capacity is much higher than in sub-Saharan Africa, partly as a result of decades of implementing social policy programmes, which has facilitated the rollout of social protection programmes. India also has a long history of implementing public works programmes (since Independence), and Ethiopia's institutional experience in delivering humanitarian aid programmes has provided a robust foundation for the PSNP public works programme; even so, institutional capacity remains a considerable hurdle in the implementation of the programmes in these two countries. Institutional challenges are arguably more acute still in Southeast Asia: institutions to deliver even relatively narrow social protection programmes were set up only in the late 1990s (in the case of Indonesia after the 1997/98 East Asian financial crisis). They have only recently started developing into more comprehensive social protection systems.

### 5.1 Individual-level impacts

Our analysis identifies four positive effects at the individual level: increased opportunities for women to engage in economic activities; enhanced knowledge, skills and confidence among women; greater mobility for women; and subtle changes in men's attitudes.

First, both our survey and qualitative data findings highlight women's greater economic participation as an important outcome of social protection interventions. Public works programmes have successfully included a relatively high proportion of women as participants: women represent approximately 40% of workers in India's and Ethiopia's public works programmes, in part addressing women's generally lower economic participation rates (especially for cash wages).<sup>4</sup> With the provision of equal wages, public works programmes have also tried to tackle gendered wage disparities in the rural sector. This has had an important impact in India, for instance, where in private agricultural employment women receive approximately Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 a day (\$0.43 to \$0.65) (men receive up to Rs. 45 a day (\$0.97)), whereas under MGNREGA both women and men receive approximately Rs. 90 (\$1.94).

In Ethiopia, and also in Bangladesh, our findings suggested a small but positive shift for some female programme participants into better remunerated and less abusive forms of work. For instance, in Ethiopia, teenage girls and young women suggested that the programme had reduced their need to work as domestic employees in nearby towns, roles that are often subject to low remuneration and abuse by employers. In Mexico, the subsidised child care scheme, *Estancias*, has promoted greater labour market participation among urban women, who are now able to work more hours on a regular basis and thereby to secure more stable and better paying jobs.

Second, our findings also point to improved skills and knowledge in a number of programmes. Bangladesh's CFPR programme, which includes intensive income generation training for women on

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<sup>4</sup> In Madhya Pradesh, for example, 56% (of currently married women aged 15-49) are employed (compared with 99% of men in the same age group), but women are less likely to be paid in cash for their work.

their assets, has increased women's skills and knowledge, mainly in livestock. It also has enhanced their confidence in their ability to provide for their families. As one female FGD in Shamukkhola in Bangladesh noted, even though the women belong to the poor community, they feel that they can design their own future and their poverty should not be an obstacle. The *Estancias* programme in Mexico has enabled beneficiaries to enter into tertiary education – a particular benefit especially for young single women, who would normally not be able to continue schooling.

Third, important unintended benefits have also emerged. In Peru, women's independent mobility has increased as a result of the requirement for women to travel to attend meetings and collect their income transfers from urban areas. Men were initially reluctant for women to go alone, but their attitudes started to change as they saw the benefits accruing to the family as a result of women's participation in the programme. This finding was echoed by programme participants in Bangladesh and Ethiopia. In Bangladesh, a patriarchal society where women's mobility and their interaction with men other than immediate family members are highly restricted, the CFPR programme explicitly liaised with men as the programme started. It did this in order to avoid a conflict of interests and to promote acceptance of women's engagement with programme officers (mostly men) and women's participation in the programme. Men's attitudes are also changing regarding their assessment of women's work. In Ethiopia, FGD participants in Shibhta pointed out that some men had revised their attitudes about women's work capabilities as a result of regular joint work on public works sites. Examples from Ethiopia and Peru also suggest some limited shifts in the division of labour in the household (see Section 5.2 below).

However, gender-sensitive design features are often not effectively implemented, are misinterpreted by programme implementers or are overridden by strong socio-cultural norms. These can have detrimental effects for women in particular, but potentially also for other household members. In many cases, assumptions about the type of work appropriate for women and for men, and payments which are based on male productivity norms, simply serve to reinforce inequality in the labour market, where men receive higher wages than women and women are given fewer days of work. In Ethiopia, for example, according to female FGD participants in Meremeti, in public works sites located relatively close to towns with daily labouring work opportunities, in order to get men to participate, programme implementers were reportedly resorting to significantly higher payments to men than to women. This sometimes meant giving men four days of pay (four times 10 birr (\$0.60) for one day's work, especially when semi-skilled construction inputs (e.g. masonry skills) were required. In India, women are often given 'soft' work, such as throwing out the soil that comes from digging wells, which requires fewer days. Moreover, single women are often particularly excluded, especially when earthwork depends on family-based couples working together:

*'Men are always preferred to women. Single women are excluded as some works demanded the participation of both men and women as a pair'* (Female FGD, Bhagwanpura Village 1, India).

In Ethiopia, despite formal provisions for equal payment, men's labour remains more highly valued – both in remunerative terms as well as conceptually:

*'There is a perception among community members that females cannot match the performance of males'* (PSNP Foreman, Shibhta, Ethiopia).

In both Ethiopia and India, child care facilities are rarely provided, despite their inclusion in programme design. This puts pressure on women's time or possibly excludes them from participation altogether. Limited knowledge and capacity among programme officers and the community mean that, even in Ethiopia, where gender-sensitive design features are well conceived at the policy level, they are not well prioritised or demanded on the ground. There has been considerable variation, for example in terms of whether the provision of direct support for pregnant and nursing women is interpreted as a right (or whether other family members are expected to step in), the length of time for which this support is provided (compared to the official norm of 10 months) and the level of comfort women have



in exercising their right to this programme entitlement. Few community members or programme implementers were aware of the range of community assets aimed at reducing women's time burden.

It is not just ineffective implementation that has negative impacts, however. Without explicit attention in programme design to some of the key economic barriers that women face, programmes will not be able to overcome inequitable outcomes. In Bangladesh, Ethiopia and India, many women remain dependent on men to earn an income, either from their labour or from transferred assets. In India and Ethiopia, where bank accounts are not opened in women's names, income can be accessed only through husbands. In Bangladesh, cultural attitudes restrict women's mobility to go to the market, leaving them dependent on men to put their income-generating skills and knowledge into practice in terms of generating an income from their assets. In other programmes, gender-blind design is a double-edged sword, with both positive and negative effects. For example, in Peru, although women's mobility has increased as a result of programme participation, their time poverty has also been exacerbated. Women are the ones responsible for adhering to programme conditionalities, attending meetings and participating in complementary activities.

## 5.2 Household- and intra-household-level impacts

Given that women's roles and responsibilities lie mainly in the domestic sphere, important benefits in supporting women's practical needs result from all the social protection programmes. Increased income and access to loans and credit (both informal and formal) have helped smooth income and consumption, particularly in the face of seasonal risks and vulnerability to natural events. They have also increased household expenditure on food, health, education and immediate household items.

At the intra-household level, impacts along generational lines are apparent, as social protection interventions have positive impacts on children and youth by supporting household expenditures on education and health. Under the *Raskin* programme in Indonesia, for instance, not only is the income saved as a result of the rice subsidy spent largely on school fees, but also families in receipt of *Raskin* prioritise children's consumption needs. In the case of Peru's CCT, increasing women's knowledge through complementary training on nutrition has had beneficial impacts on health and food security in the household, as one woman explains:

*'We didn't know how to take care of our children, we had them unattended, children and adults ate similarly ... We didn't give children balanced nutrition, we mainly ate cereals ... Now we give them milk, meat, eggs ... previously we had to sell milk and cheese to buy other things'* (Female FGD, Motoy, Peru).

However, the extent to which social protection interventions – through programme linkages and awareness raising – have addressed other risks and vulnerabilities facing children and youth has been limited. For example, in Ethiopia, linkages with other initiatives that seek to address a broader range of social risks and vulnerabilities to which girls are subject, such as early marriage, are relatively weak. In Peru, despite the high rates of teenage pregnancy, little attention has been given to interventions which focus on addressing the barriers which lead to teenage pregnancy and male abandonment, such as gender stereotypes regarding sexuality and the lack of timely and sound information on contraceptives.

Impacts at the intra-household level between men and women are much more complex, however, and it is here that social protection programmes have paid arguably the least attention in design and monitoring. Our research shows that the effects of programmes are very mixed (see also Box 10, below). First, in some contexts social protection has reduced tensions in the household. In Viet Nam, for instance, with pressure on overstretched household resources relieved, couples were reportedly happier and less likely to quarrel. In households where women had taken out loans to engage in petty trade and/or had participated in vocational training, women reported greater respect and less violence from their husbands as a result of their economic contribution and new knowledge:

### Box 10: Social protection targeting and intra-household dynamics

Most social protection programmes assume that programme benefits will automatically be distributed equally between household members. In the case of transfer programmes, income is directed at women, on the assumption that they will spend the additional income for the good of the household, especially children. However, intra-household dynamics are complex, and gender as well as generational relations play a role in determining programme impacts, making the targeting of ‘households’ problematic.

In India, for example, household demography has important implications for the distribution of MGNREGA benefits. On the one hand, larger households (e.g. joint families with a higher number of adults) are better able to demand employment in the programme because of labour availability in the household. On the other hand, the benefits are diluted among a larger number of household members, as each household receives only 100 days. In our research sites, men and women suggested different targeting approaches and preferences. Men suggested that, in extended families, each brother’s family should receive a job card. Women suggested that each individual adult should receive a job card. Many single women in extended families are unable to claim their entitlements to MGNREGA independently. Female-headed households with limited labour availability (because of permanent female headship or because of transitory female headship resulting from seasonal migration) are often not able to take full advantage of employment opportunities, especially when the type of work requires men and women to work together in teams, or the provision of work depends on contact with the *Panchayat* (local government) within the community – of which poor women tend to have very little.

In Ethiopia, the PSNP’s impact on intra-household dynamics appears to be especially problematic in polygamous households, yet little attention has been paid to the particular circumstances of women living in polygamous relationships. Typically, when a husband has two or more wives, the household members belonging to the first wife are registered as the ‘main beneficiaries,’ whereas those from second and subsequent wives are listed as ‘additional beneficiaries’ below the first wife’s list. This effectively renders second wives and their children dependent on the first wife. While they may undertake public works activities, involvement in the PSNP is on a household basis, as is payment, irrespective of who in the family does the work. Therefore, second or subsequent wives typically will not receive direct payment for their contribution. This is despite often having to cover basic consumption costs for themselves and their offspring relatively independently, further exacerbating their pre-existing social vulnerability.

Pakistan’s BISP has sought to overcome these targeting challenges by redefining entitlements from the ‘household’ to the ‘family’ and identifying the female as the head of the unit: other individuals in the unit are defined in relation to her. In all other safety net programmes in Pakistan, the primary unit for consideration is the household, as defined by nationwide surveys: ‘one housing structure and shares a common kitchen (*choola*).’ However, BISP targeting is based on a woman’s presence in the unit, which determines whether the family unit is considered eligible for the programme or not. By considering families as beneficiary units, BISP has the potential to reach multiple families within a household.

*‘When the husband gets drunk, he may talk nonsense but no longer beats his wife and children’* (Male FGD, Chi Sang, Viet Nam).

In other contexts, however, programmes either have had no impact on existing conflict or violence or, in some cases, have exacerbated it. In India, for example, violence in the home is often associated with drinking alcohol. Women from our FGDs and life histories suggested that, in a number of instances, women’s income from MGNREGA had no effect on the regular domestic violence and abuse they faced, often fuelled by husband’s alcohol consumption. As one woman stated:

*‘Most of the men spend money on drinking. They beat their wives and snatch money away from them’* (Female FGD, Bhagwanpura Village 2, India).

FGD participants also stated that women’s employment in MGNREGA had exacerbated household tensions in some cases, where women’s work had put pressure on time supposed to be allocated to household duties.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Neglect of the house or children is one of the main causes of domestic disputes in India, even though women work more hours than men combining domestic and productive work (women work 457 minutes per day compared to men, who work 391 (NAWO, 2008).

Second, despite a noticeable increase in status, individual confidence and self-esteem, especially where women are direct recipients of programme transfers, overall there is little evidence to suggest that women's decision-making power in the household has increased or that significant changes in gender relations, roles and responsibilities have emerged.

In many cases, women perceived that they received better status and greater respect within the household and in the community. In Ethiopia, for instance, some women noted that they now received more respect from their husbands as a result of their participation in public works activities (Female FGD, Sidama, Ethiopia). In some cases, men had also started to consult women on selling livestock in the market and to help women with traditional 'female' chores such as fetching water and grinding grain (Male FGD, Shibhta, Ethiopia).

However, these changes are gradual and still small in scale at best. Households tend to maintain their traditional gender roles and responsibilities, challenging the assumption that simply transferring income to women (often relatively small amounts of money) will transform gender relations and improve women's bargaining power and empowerment within the household. As non-beneficiary FGD discussants in Ethiopia noted, belonging to the PSNP is *'good for household consumption on a daily basis but not for transforming lives'* (Female FGD, Shibhta, Ethiopia). Similarly, in Ghana, the LEAP transfer has tended to be managed in line with existing gender roles and responsibilities, whereby decision making rests with husbands, brothers and sons:

*'The LEAP money is given to our husband who tells everyone what the money should be used for. He consults his wives and seeks a consensus but he decides'* (Married woman, Gushiegu, Ghana).

*'When my husband was alive he consulted me about decisions. I now receive LEAP money and give it to my son who decides how to use it. He gives me some of it back'* (Elderly widow, Gushiegu, Ghana).

In contrast, Peru's *Juntos* programme is the only case study example that shows some progress on changing the existing unequal power imbalances and division of labour within the household. Importantly, it is not the cash transfer as such that has brought about the changes, but the linkages to complementary programmes and services. Women maintained that *Juntos* had enabled them to have greater decision-making power in the household and to gain greater respect from men. It is mainly women who decide what to do with the transfer, and this situation has contributed to an increase in self-confidence. This has tangible impacts, as women feel in a better position to confront situations of violence or devaluation by their partners and in a sense to be less dependent on men. The interventions of several public and private institutions, and also the *Juntos* programme, have supported a reduction in violence and changes in the division of labour in the household. *Juntos* facilitators explicitly address the issue of violence in meetings, particularly in the event of men's opposition to women's participation in programme activities. One man interviewed mentioned that violence was publicly discussed, and that the fear of being confronted by facilitators had a dissuasive effect on men, thus becoming a mechanism of social control:

*'Before it was different, there were no training sessions. We didn't know, so when we argued with our wives we even kicked them or punched them. But with Juntos they always tell us we must live in harmony. Before, women were not aware of their rights, even men weren't, which is why there was violence ... Now it has diminished, we talk more'* (Male FGD, Motoy, Peru).

Testimonies also revealed a transition process as a result of participation in *Juntos'* additional programmes and meetings, from more traditional roles to a gradual greater equity in the distribution of care responsibilities, particularly in younger couples. Men mentioned greater participation in tasks such as looking after children and domestic chores, particularly when women attended meetings (although older children and particularly girls continue to have an important role in this regard), and highlighted that this meant a learning process that enabled them to be more involved with children:

*'We dialogue, sometimes we take turns to do things. And women go out to attend several training sessions ... We prepare children to go to school, help in the kitchen, look after livestock. [Did you perform this kind of activity before?]* *Some men, but mainly mothers did'* (Male FGD, Chanquil, Peru).

### 5.3 Community-level impacts

One of the most important findings emerging from across the country studies is the impact of the programmes on increasing social capital. Both economic and social benefits are particularly important for women, given their relatively low pre-existing levels of social capital. For instance, access to informal credit from neighbours and family has increased, as participation in the programme is seen as a guarantee that loans will be repaid. Moreover, even as recipients of small transfers, as in the case of Ghana's LEAP, beneficiaries are able to loan each other small amounts of cash. Social networks have also strengthened. In India, for instance, women's employment on MGNREGA has led to an improvement in relationships, whereby men and women work together as well as supporting/strengthening informal safety nets by borrowing small amounts of money from each other. In Ethiopia, gains in social capital also emerged as an important unintended benefit of programme participation. Men and women highlighted that, as a result of increased livelihood security, they had greater opportunities to become involved in social networks, especially through participation in religious and traditional festivals and celebrations, and traditional savings groups such as *edir* and *ekub*, from which they were previously excluded. Similarly, in Bangladesh – one of the only programmes where building social capital is a specific programme goal – CFPR beneficiaries emphasised the importance of increased access to social networks among themselves and their neighbours, but also with BRAC and elite village members, who offer them financial support as well as advice.

Another important unintended benefit has been increased participation in informal community activities and events (such as contributing to funerals or supporting neighbours). For instance, in Ghana's LEAP, although the value of the transfer is low, there was a general consensus that LEAP enhances beneficiaries' abilities to contribute to community projects, including repairing boreholes, renovating a local dam and contributing to paying community teachers in order to improve children's school retention (Female FGD, Tanbo, Ghana).

Despite opportunities to capitalise on and enhance the benefits of the interface between the community and programme providers, in order to promote broader awareness on women's rights and empowerment as well as broader programme aims, our findings suggest that participating households remain largely unable to articulate and voice their demands at the local level. This is the case even when awareness raising has been included explicitly alongside the social protection programme. In India, for example, although women know their rights relating to the MGNREGA provision of 100 days and child care facilities, they feel unable to demand them, as the following quotes illustrate:

*'If they fight with the sarpanch [elected local government leader] there will be no work. They know that they should have it [100 days of work]'* (Married woman (Scheduled Tribe), Bhagwanpura Village 2, India).

*'Yes we know that government has a provision [for child care] but this is not provided. [Do you try to demand it before the sarpanch?] No one listens to poor people. After elections, no one hears, be this sarpanch or ministers'* (Married woman (Scheduled Tribe), Bhagwanpura Village 2, India).

In Bangladesh, where women receive training on social development and rights, we found no evidence that they were able yet to effectively demand their rights from local government officials, or to translate their social development and rights knowledge into practice. As one woman in Bangladesh says:

*'The chairman is supposed to give us cards [government safety net programme cards]. So if we the women, who are BRAC beneficiaries, are together and go to them; if we could force them, saying "why are you are not giving them to us?"; this way we can make our voice strong if we are together. This is what they [BRAC] made us understand. For instance, my daughter is married now, if she is facing violence in her family, if we*

*the women go to the police station together, then the police will help us; these kinds of issues they have taught us; they also suggested to us where to go if we have problems like this. If we are all together nobody causes harm to us. However, the truth is we hardly do whatever we have learnt'* (Single elderly woman, Daljitpur, Bangladesh).

Promoting participation in programme governance is increasingly seen as an important mechanism to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of programmes for the poor. Some programmes have tried to promote women's participation in programme governance structures but, even where there is awareness of the provision for women's representation on committees, this has not been well enforced. Cultural and social norms which prevent women's active engagement in decision making at the community level persist, and women are also excluded when meetings are held at times when they cannot attend because of their domestic responsibilities. Even when women are represented, the quality of participation is often an issue:

*'Lots of women aren't aware of the opportunities or of the issues being discussed if they do attend meetings'* (Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Gender Expert, Ethiopia).

Although women may be invited to programme-related village meetings, their participation has not yet translated into an effective voice, as women from Ghana and Viet Nam explain:

*'Women are invited to meetings but they have nothing to say, so they don't really participate'* (Widow, Chereponi, Ghana).

*'Poor women at meetings rarely express their ideas as they are afraid of being wrong and think that others will expect too much'* (Female FGD, Soc Triet, Viet Nam).

The experience of the *Juntos* programme illustrates the investment needed in building institutional structures and women's capacity to support their participation and leadership in community and programme activities more effectively. Women attend frequent meetings, and *Juntos* actively delivers messages regarding women's right to participation in the public sphere and leadership in synergy with other local interventions. Access to training opportunities is highly valued as a space for socialisation and learning, as is its effect on improving women's abilities to communicate and become 'more liberal' (overcoming traditional barriers to expressing themselves).

## 6. The politics of gender-sensitive social protection design and implementation

As discussed in the introduction, there is growing international support for investing in social protection infrastructure in order to cushion the poor and vulnerable from the potential economic and social fallout of macroeconomic shocks, natural shocks and chronic poverty. The way in which these broad international trends play out at the national and local levels, however, is often highly political (Hickey, 2007), and this is especially so when one applies a gender lens (Kabeer, 2008; Molyneux, 2007). This section discusses our findings on the political economy of social protection and its effects on gender relations at the individual, intra-household and community levels, so as to better understand not only why social protection debates and approaches to date have been largely gender blind, but also the gendered dynamics of programme implementation.

### 6.1 Conceptualising gendered political economy

In contrast with scholarship on the welfare state in the developed world, which has long paid attention to the politics underpinning choices about redistribution (e.g. Esping-Andersen, 1990; Rueschemeyer et al., 1992), discussions about social protection in developing countries have tended to be more technical in nature until recently. However, in an effort to account for different levels of elite and public buy-in, social protection programme design choices and especially modes of implementation at the grassroots level, analysts have begun to interrogate the political economy challenges that face rollout of progressive social protection strategies (Hickey, 2007; McCord, 2009). Political economy approaches focus on the so-called ‘3 I’s’ of social protection:

- *Institutions* (e.g. elections, political party systems, informal politics such as patron–client relations, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems) and the opportunities or constraints they present for social protection policy and programme development;
- *Interests* of key actors (e.g. political elites, bureaucratic agencies, donors and civil society champions) and how these are mediated through varying levels of capacity and influence;
- *Ideas* held by elites and the public about poverty and its causes, the social contract between the state and its citizens and the merits of particular forms of state support to tackle vulnerability, including gender-specific vulnerabilities.

The ways in which gender norms and relations shape these institutions, interests and ideas, however, has received scant attention from mainstream development actors and analysts. In order to address this, our analysis is informed by a framework which integrates gender at multiple levels: international influences; national politics; social protection strategy and implementation choices; and policy and programme impacts (see Figure 3).<sup>6</sup> We argue that, in order to incorporate gender into such debates, at least three key questions need to be asked:

1. In what way is the nature of the social contract between the state and its citizens – so pivotal in defining the parameters of social protection debates in different contexts – also gendered? To what extent are notions of citizenship gender specific and what implications does this have for socio-cultural understandings of the role of social protection?
2. How do the politics around social protection design choices and broader policy objectives – whether these be overcoming food insecurity, reducing poverty or promoting environmental rehabilitation – shape the types of gender issues considered? Are gender-related objectives

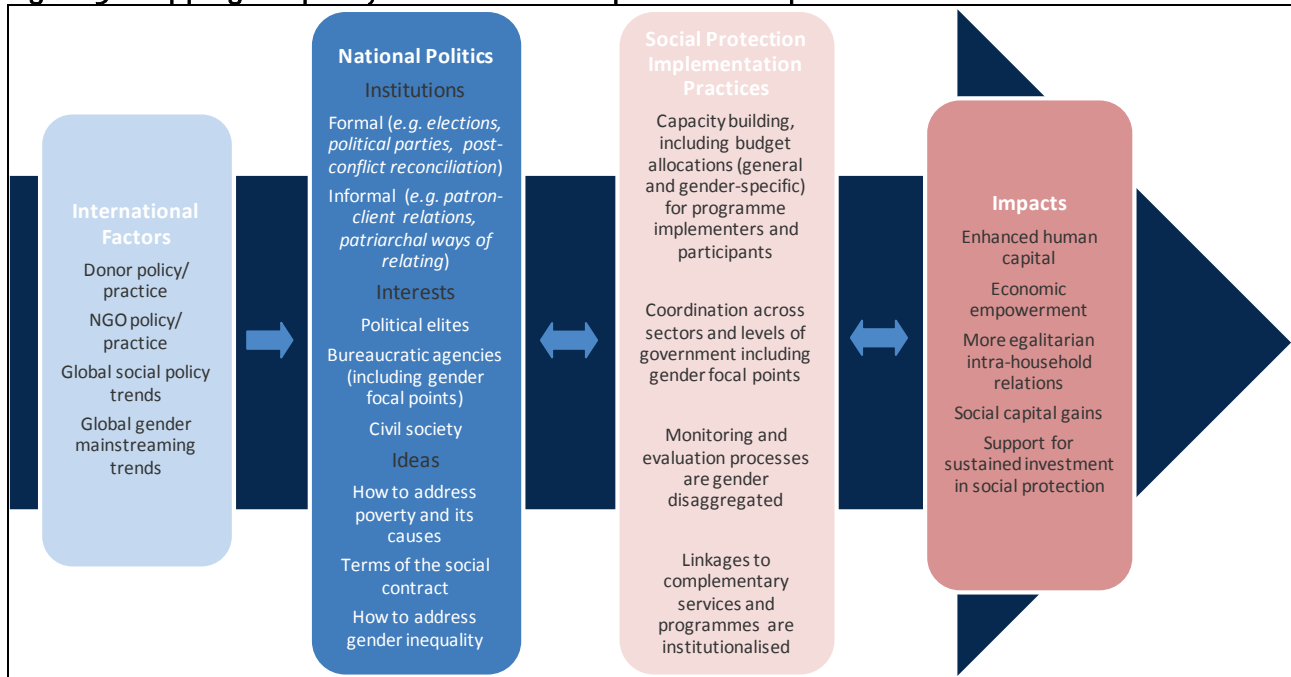
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<sup>6</sup> Here we draw on Hickey (2007)’s consideration of politics at three different junctures: the initial decision to embark on a social protection strategy; the choice of particular social protection instruments; and programme impacts.

limited to supporting women's and girls' practical gender needs or is there scope for them to be more transformative for adults and children alike?

3. To what extent do political actors seek to capitalise on their role in cementing or reshaping existing gender norms in order to further wider political goals, such as enhancing the popularity and legitimacy of a new government, fostering social cohesion and promoting reconciliation in fragile and/or post-conflict settings?

**Figure 3: Mapping the policy context of social protection implementation**



## 6.2 Institutional motivations for social protection

Our study found that a range of institutional drivers or motivations are influential in shaping different social protection policy choices across the country case studies. These include:

- Redressing a legacy of political violence among impoverished communities in the case of Peru's CCT programme, *Juntos*;
- Attempting to stave off the worst effects of macroeconomic crises in Indonesia's *Raskin* rice subsidy programme;
- Harnessing public works labour to promote environmental rehabilitation in Ethiopia's combined public works/social transfer PSNP;
- Responding to civil society pressures for the state to realise its duty to ensure the right of all citizens to a liveable wage in the case of India's MGNREGA;
- Shoring up religious credibility on the part of the Zia-ul-Haq government in the case of Pakistan's *Zakat* cash transfer programme, which levied a tax on specified financial assets in order to finance a fund for 'deserving needy Muslims or "Mustahqieen" who require assistance, especially widows, orphans, the disabled and the unemployed.'
- Leveraging the popularity of deceased party leader, Benazir Bhutto, to shore up political support in the case of Pakistan's BISP;
- Demonstrating a commitment to poverty reduction and the achievement of middle-income status in the run-up to elections in the case of Ghana's LEAP cash transfer;<sup>7</sup> and

<sup>7</sup> Ghana's Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy II argues, for example, that: 'The Strategy is founded on the philosophy that all Ghanaians, if afforded the opportunity, can contribute towards the process of transforming Ghana into a middle-income

- Promoting women's economic empowerment and in turn decision-making power within the household in the case of Bangladesh's CFPR and Mexico's subsidised crèche scheme, *Estancias*.

However, only in the last two cases (Bangladesh and Mexico) does tackling gender inequalities feature as a primary programme objective. It is also worth pointing out that the Bangladesh example is exceptional in that it is run by a large NGO with a strong commitment to tackling social inequalities, including gender discrimination, rather than by a national government. Other initiatives frequently relegate gender-related goals to a secondary status. As highlighted in our discussion on programme design, cash transfer programmes typically target women so that they can play a greater role in supporting their children's human capital development, rather than out of a concern to enhance adult women's well-being. Brazilian President Lula's support for *Bolsa Família*, for instance, emerged out of a concern to ensure that no citizen would go hungry; gender empowerment dividends were derivative. Similarly, public works programmes promote women's participation through numerical quotas but assume male work norms, including a reliance on heavy physical labour and inadequate consideration of the double burden of productive and care work responsibilities that women have to shoulder.

Other programmes neglect to tackle the gendered dimensions of poverty and vulnerability altogether, as evidenced by a dearth of gender-disaggregated M&E indicators. Viet Nam's flagship integrated poverty reduction programme, the NTPPR, has no gender-specific provisions, despite a robust body of evidence on the gender-specific patterns of poverty and vulnerability in the country. Indonesia's *Raskin* rice subsidy programme similarly fails to tackle the gender dynamics of food insecurity, despite nutritional biases against women in particular.

Key informant interviews suggest that there are a number of explanations for this low prioritisation of gender inequalities. These include an institutional disconnect between the growing body of evidence on the gendered nature of poverty and vulnerability and social protection policy and programme design, in part because of the weak linkages between governmental gender focal points and policy and programme designers. For instance, in explaining the lack of attention to gender dimensions in the rollout of the LEAP cash transfer programme in Ghana, a local authority in northern Ghana lamented that:

*'There is no coordination between social sector actors. There are education and health officers in the district but the assembly doesn't coordinate with them and, although there should be a position of gender desk officer, we don't even have one in Chereponi'* (Assemblywoman, Chereponi, Ghana).

Uneven rollout of political and fiscal decentralisation tends to exacerbate these coordination challenges in a number of the case study countries, as emphasised by Indonesian key informants, for example.

A largely technocratic approach to gender mainstreaming, which does not support tailored and operational approaches to the systematic integration of gender, is another important obstacle. This is reflected in a general underinvestment in capacity building for programme implementers, especially regarding the gendered rationale for programme provisions (see also Box 11). In the case of Viet Nam's NTPPR, although some gender training has been provided, there are serious deficits in terms of quality:

*'We don't have experts but staff whose responsibilities are not clearly assigned and trained on'* (Head of Social Protection Unit, Department of Labour, Invalid and Social Affairs (DOLISA), Ha Giang, Viet Nam).

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country by the year 2015. Vulnerable and excluded segments of the population potentially reverse the gains of overall developmental efforts because of their tendency to take away rather than contribute to national economic activity ... The misconception that Social Protection represents wasteful handouts to undeserving poor people has been overtaken by recent research and thinking, which indicates that it contributes to development and growth in several ways. It facilitates investment in human and physical assets thereby reducing the risk of future poverty. It enhances risk-taking livelihood strategies. It provides safety nets and facilitates social and economic cohesion, reducing the likelihood of conflict. Finally, it helps correct market failures such as imperfect credit and insurance markets. It is therefore an indispensable element of economic growth and, ultimately, an effective development strategy' (Government of Ghana, 2007).



Capacity building is typically activity based, not strategic (e.g. there is insufficient practical guidance for local leaders, many of whom have only low levels of education), and is lacking in follow-up.

*'It is critical to have detailed guidelines for each ministry – not just generic gender training, which we have again and again'* (Head of Department of Labour, Cultural and Social Affairs, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Viet Nam).

There has also been insufficient investment in tackling language barriers so as to ensure effective outreach to ethnic minority populations. This is particularly acute in the case of gender sensitivity: even when there are efforts to recruit and support bilingual extension workers, gender awareness training has yet to be integrated into the curriculum (Programme Officer, Poverty and Social Development Cluster, UN Development Programme (UNDP), Viet Nam).

### **Box 11: Gender sensitivity must be honed not assumed**

There is a growing realisation among state and non-state actors at the federal and sub-national levels in Ethiopia that capacity strengthening needs to be strategic and well tailored if PSNP programme provisions to tackle gender vulnerabilities are to be effective:

*'Gender training and awareness-raising programmes are not intensive and are inadequate. There are also some misperceptions in the community about the programme, as it was identified as an aid programme where the work should be done only by very poor women (not as a work programme where men could participate)'* (Head of Women's Affairs Bureau, Enderta, Ethiopia).

*'Sensitisation activities for implementers on gender are not adequate (not formal nor intensive). There is also no formal communication channel to involve women representatives in decision-making processes. The unfair selection process and low quota level in the village has been a great obstacle to women's enrolment'* (Women's Association Chairperson, Shibhta, Ethiopia).

*'Although the Programme Implementation Manual provides for training on gender to beneficiaries before or after the public works, it has not materialised. Women are prescribed work regardless of their specific challenges (health and personal problems owing to their role in the household). There is a lack of will by some implementers to make the work suitable to women'* (Programme Officer and Focal Person for PSNP, World Food Programme (WFP), Tigray, Ethiopia).

*'Decision making is very challenging as government officials are predominantly male. Getting women's perspectives heard in political struggles is a continuous struggle ... There is lots of mischief by men – deliberately excluding women from committees'* (Director of the Women's Association (quasi-NGO), Mekele, Ethiopia).

The general absence of gender-sensitive indicators in programme M&E and learning systems is another critical institutional shortcoming (see Holmes and Jones, 2010 for a checklist on suggested gender-sensitive M&E indicators). For example, despite the passage of a high-profile Law on Gender Equality in 2007, a UNDP and Ministry of Labour, Invalid and Social Affairs (MOLISA) mid-term evaluation of Viet Nam's NTPPR was largely gender blind, ignoring potentially differential programme impacts on men, women, boys and girls, and their underlying causes. Some programmes, including some Latin American cash transfer programmes and Ethiopia's PSNP, are starting to make headway in developing more gender-sensitive monitoring tools, as evidenced by recent gender audits (Government of Ethiopia, 2008; Suarez et al., 2006). However, the gendered impacts of these social protection interventions are neither routinely reported nor embedded within mainstream M&E systems.<sup>8</sup> As a result (with the partial exception of BRAC's CFPR, which includes a range of gender-related indicators in its M&E system), we still know very little, for instance about:

<sup>8</sup> MGNREGA has developed a robust M&E system, but has paid only limited attention to the collection and reporting of gender-disaggregated statistics. Similarly, at the global level, the World Bank has invested heavily in impact evaluations of social assistance programmes, but has paid scant attention to gender. This was highlighted, for instance, in its 2009 review of conditional cash transfer programmes across the globe, which held little discussion on gender empowerment and equality impacts on adults and children.

- The effects of different forms of social assistance on intra-household gender relations, including the time use implications of public works compared to direct cash transfers (whether conditional or unconditional) or subsidy schemes for the poor;
- The impact of different social protection interventions on men's and women's social capital formation; or
- The relative importance of complementary programme linkages for men, women, boys and girls.

Without this knowledge, our collective understanding of the effectiveness of different types of social protection investments will remain partial.

In addition to these formal 'rules of the game,' political economy frameworks emphasise the important role of informal institutions and the need to pay attention to, for instance, patterns of patron–client relations. Although some social protection programmes in our study (e.g. Peru's *Juntos* programme and Pakistan's BISP) were established specifically to correct historical tendencies towards clientelism in the social sector, and to establish more transparent and accountable modalities of social protection programming, implementation practices often continue to be shaped by informal politics. In Indonesia, targeting of the *Raskin* programme has been uneven, as village heads have faced and often succumbed to pressures from villagers to provide subsidised rice to a much broader sector of the population. In India, although MGNREGA allows citizens to demand that local authorities provide them with waged work, our research found a limited ability to claim these rights.

The challenge from a gender perspective in attempts to tackle informal politics is that clientelistic ways of working are typically overlaid by patriarchal ways of relating. As one programme staff in northern Ghana noted, for instance:

*'It is not easy identifying women as beneficiaries – in some cases husbands won't allow women to be interviewed to determine programme eligibility and in other cases women are only allowed to receive the benefit if there are no male household members or if male family members are disabled and unable to receive the transfer directly'* (Social Welfare Officer, Chereponi, Ghana).

Similarly, as one female FGD in Madhya Pradesh, India, pointed out, in the context of MGNREGA's focus on heavy physical labour activities such as earthworks, gender bias is often overt:

*'Men are always preferred over women. Single women are excluded as some works demanded the participation of both men and women as a pair'* (Female FGD, Bhagwanpura Village 1, India).

And in the case of Bangladesh's CFPR programme, staff actively sought men's acceptance to ensure that women would be able to participate, underscoring the entrenched nature of patriarchal practices and attitudes. Accordingly, without investing in awareness-raising initiatives for programme participants about the gendered rationale for programme provisions, these types of political economy challenges are likely to remain unresolved.

### 6.3 Key actors' interests

The constellation of actors involved in social protection debates is diverse, including:

- *Political, social and economic elites*, which play a key role in setting the agenda;
- *Administrative bureaucratic agencies* with responsibility for delivering social protection objectives (typically spanning a range of ministries: social welfare, women's and children's affairs, health, food security and rural development);
- *Civil society actors* working with or acting on behalf of the poor – both international (e.g. INGOs such as ActionAid, HelpAge, Save the Children, Oxfam) and national (e.g. BRAC in Bangladesh, Manuela Ramos in Peru); and

- *Bilateral donors* (e.g. DFID, German Development Cooperation (GTZ)) and *multilateral agencies* (especially the World Bank and UN agencies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNDP, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)).

Increasingly, there are good practice examples of cross-agency cooperation (as evidenced, for instance, by the OECD DAC PovNet Joint Statement on Advancing Child-Sensitive Social Protection (DFID et al., 2009) and the Joint Statement on Social Protection in Africa: Where Next? (IDS et al., 2010). However, not surprisingly, clusters of actors have a range of different interests in promoting social protection and exercise differing degrees of influence and capacity in particular contexts. A careful mapping of this complex landscape, including a recognition that these different actors are themselves not homogeneous and may have varying interests, is critical in assessing both the opportunities for and the potential obstacles to the integration of gender into the social protection agenda.<sup>9</sup>

First, as discussed above, political elites often initiate social protection programmes to further their own institutional aims, such as demonstrating a commitment to a strengthened social contract between the state and the citizenry and promoting social cohesion, especially in times of political flux. This was the case, for example, with Peru’s *Juntos* programme, which represents a commitment by the state to undertaking a social programme. This not only entails extending citizenship rights to the poorest and most vulnerable (including by ensuring that all adult and child participants have birth registration papers) but also allows for programme governance by a cross-institutional committee spanning civil society representatives and officials across key ministries from national and local levels.

In addition to the gains elites can secure by launching a new social protection programme, elites may equally seek to harness positive programme outcomes to advance their own interests (Hickey, 2007). In Ethiopia, for instance, the ruling party has been able to shore up popularity among the rural poor as a result of the highly visible PSNP. Brazil’s successful *Bolsa Família* programme has helped the Workers’ Party government to cement its role as an emerging global power by providing a platform from which to lead an initiative on South–South learning. Furthermore, even though gender equality concerns are typically secondary to overall programme aims, governments have often been happy to claim responsibility for progressive gender outcomes, whether these be women’s increased economic participation in Ethiopia and India as a result of public works programmes; female caregivers’ enhanced capacities to support their children’s development in Latin American cash transfer programmes or household consumption in the case of Indonesia’s *Raskin* programme; or women’s increased access to microcredit in the case of Viet Nam’s NTPPR.

Second, the interests of bureaucratic agencies also influence social protection trajectories to a significant extent, with the lead agency for social protection strategies often playing a key role in shaping the relative priorities accorded to different social protection goals. Where ministries of social welfare, women and children lead, there is generally more scope for attention to gender inequalities; however, the ability to operationalise this can be limited by the capacity constraints that these agencies typically face in coordinating other more powerful government agencies. This dynamic has been evident in the case of Ghana’s LEAP cash transfer programme. On the one hand, with the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare coordinating programme design and rollout, there has been a stronger focus on tackling social vulnerabilities, including girls’ heightened vulnerability to harmful forms of labour, such as that often encountered by domestic servants, and to trafficking. On the other hand, the ministry’s resource and capacity constraints have meant that it has struggled to command a meaningful cross-agency coordinating role. This has limited possible synergies with other ministries involved in social protection initiatives, such as ministries of education, health and agriculture. Provincial-level authorities in Viet Nam underscored similar coordination challenges, as discussed in Box 12.

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<sup>9</sup> Sam Hickey (2007) has done interesting work on mapping actors involved in social protection in Africa. Here, we expand this framework to consider social protection programmes in multiple regions, and also introduce an important focus on civil society actors, which is largely absent from Hickey’s work.

### Box 12: Cross-agency coordination challenges

Given the multipronged approach of an increasing number of social protection programmes, cross-agency coordination is of critical importance, promising real opportunities for synergies and resource maximisation. However, such coordination requires a strategic approach, which is too often absent from many developing country social protection systems, as these key informant interviews from Viet Nam highlight:

*'There is not enough coordination between DOLISA and the Departments of Finance and Planning. The needs of the poor, from literacy to agricultural technology, are vast – it is hard to coordinate. It's really hard to get the results if each policy is to be implemented on its own separately'* (Head of Social Protection Unit, DOLISA, Ha Giang, Viet Nam).

*'There are too many groups taking care of the same things – the state cannot keep track of it all – women's groups, farmer groups, etc. We also have a lot of social security programmes and poverty reduction programmes as well as other policies, but they are not focusing enough. The less focus the greater the overlap'* (DOLISA Official, An Giang, Viet Nam).

Where ministries of rural development are the lead agency, gender dynamics tend to be a lower order priority. This is typically exacerbated by the limited integration of a gender perspective into ways of working, weak linkages with gender focal points and a general dearth of funding for capacity building for programme implementers around these issues (as in Ethiopia, India and Indonesia, for instance).

How bureaucratic agencies interact with other political players, such as political parties and the legislature, may also matter, especially in cases where social protection policies and/or gender equality commitments become enshrined in law (as with India's MGNREGA). In the case of Viet Nam, for example, the National Assembly Social Affairs Committee (SAC) has become increasingly proactive in tackling gender inequalities, as highlighted by the recent passage of the 2007 Gender Equality Law. However, a recent document by the Prime Minister on the NTPPR which made no mention of men or women and used only gender-neutral terminology – 'poor people' – underscored the constraints SAC faces in shaping the integration of gender into social protection programmes. Not only does the legislative branch lack its own enforcement power, but also endorsements by senior decision makers of the importance of embedding gender-disaggregated impact assessments within broader poverty reduction monitoring initiatives have been limited. In India, the rollout of MGNREGA has also differed markedly across states, although it appears to have been most effective in states where the opposition party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is in power, such as in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Moreover, the BJP's approach in Madhya Pradesh has also been quite gender sensitive, including the implementation of the *Ladmi Laxmi* programme, which promotes girls and aims to reduce the biased sex ratio.

The third key group of actors to consider is civil society. In the African and Southeast Asian contexts, INGOs have played an important role in influencing social protection discourse. However, efforts to spotlight the role that social protection can play in addressing gender-specific vulnerabilities and risks have been sparse, in large part because of the primary focus on age-based (Save the Children, HelpAge) and spatial (e.g. Oxfam's work on pastoral communities) exclusion and vulnerability. In Latin America and South Asia, domestic civil society actors have had relatively more influence on gender-sensitive social protection, especially in Bangladesh, where BRAC has undertaken path-breaking work in social protection programming aimed at supporting women's productive and social capital.

Some gender equality champions (e.g. in Manuela Ramos, a Peruvian NGO with a strong focus on women's reproductive health rights and gender-based violence) have played a part in ensuring sensitivity to women's time poverty, for instance, and have highlighted the importance of forging linkages with complementary programmes that tackle socio-cultural forms of gender discrimination. However, gender equality activists have been markedly less prominent than in other areas of public debate (such as political participation, human and labour rights). This is perhaps because women's movements have not been sufficiently adept at moving away from their more traditional policy strongholds (e.g. women's economic empowerment, gender-based violence, political representation) to strategically influence new programme areas, such as social protection. Possible reasons include a

general tendency for gender equality movements to pay relatively less attention to issues affecting the poorest; the often overly narrow focus of social protection programmes on income and consumption issues; and funding pressures, which have served to limit the potential impact of women's movements, NGOs and civil society, and to keep them siloed rather than facilitating their capacity to engage effectively with cross-sectoral issues such as social protection.

Finally, donors, especially in the sub-Saharan African context, have become critical actors in the social protection field. The general focus has been on social protection as a tool to help the poor and vulnerable harness the benefits of economic growth (e.g. DFID, GTZ, ILO, World Bank), although UNICEF and UNIFEM have sought to highlight the importance of equity and social inclusion considerations. However, with the exception of UNIFEM, which remains a very small player in the field, gender dynamics have not received a great deal of attention to date among donor agencies working on social protection. This reflects a general weakness in gender mainstreaming outside a few key sectors in the donor community. This is gradually changing, especially with regard to exploring the potential of social protection instruments to enhance girls' educational achievement and girls' and women's reproductive health in the context of the broader MDG agenda. However, the integration of a gender lens has yet to receive the resourcing a more systematic approach would demand.

### **Box 13: Balancing universal gender rights with local gender norms and practices**

A careful balance also needs to be forged between promoting gender-sensitive programme approaches supported by donor resources and encouraging home-grown, nationally funded programmes that reflect local priorities.<sup>10</sup> Although gender rights are universal, gender norms and practices are historically and socially constructed and, as such, programmes ideally need to be sensitive to both. In the case of Ethiopia's PSNP, where donors have played a pivotal role in shaping programme design, there has been considerable attention to innovative gender-specific features, encouraged by a joint donor–government gender working group. Key informant interviews with government gender focal points at the national and sub-national levels suggested that there was considerable support for these provisions by gender champions working within government, although it is true that their inclusion has been donor rather than civil society driven. However, the evolution of programme gender-related components has been an iterative one, with programme designers further refining the context-appropriate nature of these provisions in response to successive rounds of feedback.

## **6.4 The centrality of ideas**

Political economy analysts emphasise the importance of ideas in shaping policy trajectories (e.g. Hickey and Bracking, 2005). This is certainly the case with social protection, where the divergent contours of national social protection systems reflect a wide range of ideas about poverty and its causes, the purpose of social protection and the role of the state in shaping gender relations. In Ethiopia and India, large-scale public works schemes have been informed by public distrust of social protection interventions that 'create dependence,' but also by support to the right of all, including female-headed households, often believed to be especially vulnerable, to access work to support their families. In Viet Nam, given a strong socialist ethos, a high premium is typically attached to ensuring that programmes benefit all equally, even though this does not always result in the most effective poverty reduction solutions. A 2008 evaluation of the Hunger Eradication Poverty Reduction Programme found that, rather than investing block grants in productive activities, villagers frequently opted to invest funds in building a communal house, based on the perception that all would benefit equally (Researcher, Department of Rural Sociology Institute of Sociology, Viet Nam).

Generally, however, support for a more comprehensive approach to tackling gender-specific vulnerabilities has been less forthcoming, as gender relations are often seen as the purview of individual families and/or cultural/religious groups, and therefore not an area in which the state should intervene. For instance, in India, national and state-level MGNREGA programme designers have

<sup>10</sup> Devereux and White (2010) argue that 'initiatives that emerge out of domestic political agendas and respond to local conceptualizations and prioritizations of need are more likely to succeed than those based on imported "projectized" models.'

sought to encourage women to open bank accounts in their own names in order to promote financial independence, including through financial incentives. However, local authorities are sometimes less than supportive, owing to traditional views about women's roles and rights within the household. In Ethiopia, there is a provision in the PNSP to use public works labour to support the development of female-headed households' private landholdings (in recognition of the labour constraints they often face and a cultural ban on women's involvement in ploughing). However, this is seldom practised, in large part because of ideas about public works and the creation of community rather than private assets.

In other cases, although prevailing ideas about gender relations do not conflict with the implementation of programme innovations per se, there is nevertheless an absence of a proactive approach to supporting a transformation of the status quo. In many of the communities in which our fieldwork was carried out, programme participants were overwhelmingly illiterate or semi-literate, and women in particular had often had very limited exposure beyond their village and to opportunities to articulate their views. Expecting women in such communities to be able to formulate and voice an independent vision for programme management (e.g. suggestions for community assets from which they could equally benefit) therefore appears quite unrealistic in the absence of more concerted awareness-raising initiatives among men and women alike. These constraints are further reinforced in some contexts, especially in Ethiopia and Viet Nam, by a strong pro-government orientation among many rural citizens and/or the absence of a rights-based approach to programme implementation, such programme participants see benefits as a 'gift' from the government. In other contexts, culturally specific ideas about poverty and the state further limit the space and potential for constructive criticism of programme design and implementation practices on the part of the community. For example, in Ghana, communities expressed a strong reliance on divine intervention. Rather than viewing the LEAP cash transfer as part of their rights as citizens, they often articulated it as a sign of 'God's grace.' In ethnic minority communities in Viet Nam, ideas about the state representing the 'other' have also meant that local communities are often reluctant to make demands to authorities, even if this could see their needs better served. They instead seek support from other community members (Deputy Head, Programme 135, Committee for Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Area Affairs (CEMA), 2009).

## 7. Conclusions and policy implications

Gender-sensitive policy and programme design and implementation have the potential to reduce gendered poverty and vulnerability and to increase the effectiveness of different social protection interventions. To date, though, gender equality objectives have mostly been secondary goals – at times not even that – yet important intended and unintended gendered impacts have emerged. Where programmes are cognisant of intra-household dynamics, however, they can better support the maximisation of positive impacts and reduce potentially negative ones, with relatively simple design changes combined with an investment in more strategic implementation practices. These are needed to enhance the potential of social protection to contribute to a transformation of gender relations at the individual, intra-household and community levels.

Overarching policy recommendations include the following:

- **Strengthen gender-sensitive policy and programme design:** A clear analysis of economic and social vulnerabilities across the lifecycle needs to inform policies and programmes, as does recognition that addressing gender dimensions is critical to programme effectiveness and providing sustainable exit strategies from poverty. As such, social protection programmes which incorporate a transformatory approach are critical, with strong and well-coordinated linkages with complementary programmes and services appropriate not only to women's reproductive years but also to the specific vulnerabilities facing girls and older women. When social protection instruments are situated within a broader package of social and economic policy objectives, they are more likely to have a notable impact, not only on women's practical gender needs but also on transforming gender relations among men, women, boys and girls more broadly at the household and community levels. Strong linkages are needed, for example, across health and reproductive health services; social development and rights awareness training; credit access and employment training; school allowances; and elderly benefits.
- **Invest in implementation capacity:** The implementation of gender-related programme aims has been identified as a significant weak link, undermining the potential of gender-sensitive programme design. Tackling this requires the development of tailored and ongoing capacity building for programme implementers and male and female programme participants alike on gender-related programme objectives. These may include reducing women's time poverty, finding collective solutions to care work responsibilities and improving girls' nutrition and school enrolment.
- **Improve coordination between actors:** To achieve real change, programme designers need to ensure strong political commitment, strategic coordination across implementing agencies and service providers and sufficient funding over the medium to long term. It will be critical to forge better linkages between implementing agencies and women's government agencies or gender focal points to strengthen their role at the national and sub-national levels in both the design and implementation of social protection.
- **Maximise the potential of the community–programme interface:** In the case of public works and asset and cash transfer programmes, there is scope to make better use of the regular interactions that social welfare officers/local implementation officers have with local communities on payment days. These create opportunities to initiate community dialogue on ways to address gender inequalities such as gender-based violence, early marriage, the costs of child labour (especially for girls' human capital development) and gendered forms of social stigmatisation. At the same time, raising community awareness and capacity of the community can enhance understanding and demand for gender-related social protection programme provisions.
- **Ensure gender-related M&E and learning:** The collection, analysis and dissemination of gender- and age-disaggregated data are essential to ensure that gender considerations inform programmes. Such indicators could include, for example, impacts on girls' health, nutrition and education, women's income, labour market participation, mobility, decision-making power,

control over resources and participation in programme governance structures. Governments should be encouraged to support regular independent evaluations of social protection programmes, including monitoring of gender impacts. Institutionally, linkages and lesson learning between government- and NGO-implemented programmes should be promoted through frequent knowledge exchange activities and lesson learning among donors and international agencies, to identify opportunities to strengthen gender-sensitive social protection programming.

- **Strengthen women's agency, advocacy and representation:** In order to promote greater attention to gender-related dimensions of social protection, it is critical not only to enhance women's departments or units in government but also to support the establishment of formal mechanisms of consultation and collaboration with women's NGOs and civil society organisations. Without such efforts, broader national ownership of gender-sensitive programme provisions, which in some cases donors have led, may be limited. In turn, the potential for holding governments and their donor partners accountable for integrating a gender perspective into social protection design, implementation and M&E is likely to be circumscribed.

More specific recommendations as to how best to ensure that specific social protection instruments are gender sensitive in design and implementation include the following:

*Public works programmes need to:*

- Ensure sensitivity to lifecycle demands and productive work responsibilities, including: alternative direct support for nursing/pregnant women; child care facilities that are culturally sensitive; and flexible working hours to help women manage domestic responsibilities and employment activities.
- Commit to equal wages between men and women and ensure that women have access to this income.
- Provide appropriate types of work in accordance with men's and women's skills sets as well as household labour availability.
- Invest in community assets which reduce gendered vulnerabilities such as time poverty.
- Encourage the involvement of women in programme governance, especially in terms of defining community assets to be undertaken through public works labour.
- Promote institutional linkages, e.g. access to agricultural extension programmes and rural financial services.
- Embed sex-disaggregated M&E indicators within programme design.

*Cash and asset transfer programmes need to:*

- Ensure links with complementary programmes (e.g. vocational, extension and financial services, awareness-raising programmes) to leverage gains from cash targeted at women. Opportunities to enhance women's capacities for and access to adequately remunerated paid work require particular attention, so as to strengthen women's economic empowerment. A single registry database system can facilitate such linkages.
- Capitalise on regular community interactions to provide valuable awareness-raising opportunities on rights and entitlements to state services and programmes.
- Carefully assess the strengths and weaknesses of conditional transfers. Conditions designed to overcome girls' specific vulnerabilities to lower human capital development opportunities and protection deficits can be positive, even if only in terms of raising public awareness, as can programme activities aimed at promoting women's community participation and skills. However, such conditions may also exacerbate women's disproportionate time burdens, and therefore need careful monitoring.
- Promote men's active involvement if a conditional approach is adopted.
- Involve women in programme governance decision-making structures, supported by mentoring and capacity-strengthening opportunities to ensure that such participation is meaningful.



*Subsidy programmes need to:*

- Have a design informed by a clear gendered vulnerability assessment. For example, given the gendered patterning of disease burdens, gender barriers to accessing health care and reliance on women's assets to cover the costs of health shocks, health care subsidies can be especially important for women.
- Be combined with complementary initiatives to tackle non-financial barriers to services, including addressing language and literacy barriers.
- Invest in M&E of gendered programme impacts, which to date have been especially limited, so as to strengthen programme effectiveness.
- Ensure that, if they include productive work linkages (e.g. provision of vocational training), they invest in high-quality trainers and offer participants skills building in areas on which there has been solid market analysis.

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### List of case studies

- Amuzu, C., Jones, N. and Perezniето, P. (2010) 'Gendered Risks, Poverty and Vulnerability in Ghana: To What Extent is the LEAP Cash Transfer Programme Making a Difference?'
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## Annex 1: Secondary quantitative evaluations of case study programmes

Country	Programme	Cite	Findings related to gender
Bangladesh	CFPR	<p>Rabbani, Prakash and Sulaiman (2006) Impact Assessment of CFPR/TUP: A Descriptive Analysis Based on 2002-2005 Panel Data. CFPR/TUP Working Paper Series 12. RED BRAC, Aga Khan Foundation Canada and CIDA</p> <p>Ahmed (2009)  <a href="http://www.banglajol.info/index.php/JHPN/article/viewFile/3399/2846">http://www.banglajol.info/index.php/JHPN/article/viewFile/3399/2846</a></p>	<p>The target of this programme is gender explicit – only households with no adult males are eligible.</p> <p>A first phase evaluation of CFPR beneficiaries found significant improvements in five asset indicators (physical, financial, human, natural and social). The programme had broad positive impacts for women, ranging from economic improvement to better health.</p>
Brazil	<i>Bolsa Família</i>	<p>Cunha. Entitlement to Income in Brazil: The Experience of the <i>Bolsa Família</i> Programme  <a href="http://www.ipc-undp.org/doc_africa_brazil/ARTIGO_ROSANICUNHA_English.pdf">http://www.ipc-undp.org/doc_africa_brazil/ARTIGO_ROSANICUNHA_English.pdf</a></p> <p>Teixeira (2010) A Heterogeneity Analysis of the <i>Bolsa Família</i> Programme Effect on Men And Women's Work Supply</p> <p>Soares, Ribas and Osório (2007)  <a href="http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/IPCEvaluationNotes1.pdf">http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/IPCEvaluationNotes1.pdf</a></p> <p>Thakur, Sarojini, Arnold and Johnson (2009) Gender and Social Protection OECD  <a href="http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/26/34/43280899.pdf">http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/26/34/43280899.pdf</a></p>	<p>Preliminary research indicates that the programme improves women's self-esteem and reduces not only their dependency, but also domestic conflict.</p> <p>The analysis indicates that the programme reinforces the domestic roles played by women.</p> <p>The study found that adults enrolled in the programme were more likely than non-enrolled adults to participate in the labour market. While the overall effect was only 2.6%, for women it was higher: 4.3%.</p> <p><i>Bolsa Família</i>, by 'linking to services such as pre-schools and day-care, encouraging girls to continue their education and otherwise easing the time burdens placed on women ... offers women more opportunity to seek and continue employment.' (p167) Women enrolled in the programme were found to be 16% more likely to participate in the labour market than women not enrolled in the programme.</p> <p>On the other hand, some argue that CCTs reinforce gender stereotypes. Many programmes assume that women are available to carry out the care-related obligations associated with conditional transfers without consideration of their breadwinning responsibilities or need for</p>

Country	Programme	Cite	Findings related to gender
		<p>Centro de Desenvolvimento e Planejamento Regional (CEDEPLAR) (2006). Projeto de Avaliação do Impacto do Programa Bolsa Família – Relatório Analítico Final</p> <p>Suarez et al. (2006) The <i>Bolsa Família</i> Programme and the Tackling of Gender Inequalities, Report to Brazilian Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger (MDS) and DFID, Brasilia</p> <p>Veras, Ribas and Osorio (2007) Evaluating the Impact of Brazil's <i>Bolsa Família</i>: Cash Transfer Programmes in Comparative Perspective, Evaluation Note 1, IPC, Brasilia</p>	<p>paid work, and to the neglect of any recognition of fathering responsibilities. Some Brazilian experts have commented that Bolsa Família utilises the 'culture of mothering without necessarily supporting the personal progress of women as active citizens' (p174).</p> <p>The results of the impact assessment of <i>Bolsa Família</i> show a positive impact of the programme on the supply of labour. According to the survey data, the participation rate in the labour market for adults in beneficiary households is 3% higher than adults on similar non-beneficiary families. Moreover, this impact is higher for women (4%) than men (3%). The programme also lowers by 6% the chances that an employed woman will quit her job.</p> <p>Participation in the programme increased women's status in the family, as their incomes became more certain on a regular basis.</p> <p>The evaluation found that the programme increased the stability of women's employment; it reduced the probability of employed women leaving their jobs by 8%.</p>
Colombia	<i>Familias en Acción</i>	<p>Econometría (2006) Informe Final de la Evaluación de Impacto de Familias en Acción</p> <p>Nunez and Cuesta (2006) 'Colombia: Familias en Acción' in Cohen and Franco (eds) Transferencias con Corresponsabilidad. Una Mirada Latinoamericana. Mexico City: FLACSO-SEDESOL</p>	<p><i>Familias en Acción</i> had an impact evaluation with a baseline and two follow-up surveys. The main results of the evaluation are reported in Econometría (2006) and show a variety of positive effects. Gendered programme impacts were not considered.</p>
Chile	<i>Chile Solidario</i>	<p>Gallaso, Carneiro and Ginja (2009) El Impacto de Proveer Apoyo Psico-Social a Familias en Extrema Pobreza y Aumentar Su Acceso a Servicios Sociales: Evaluando Chile Solidario. PowerPoint</p>	<p><i>Chile Solidario</i> beneficiaries were more likely to access cash/subsidies than non-participants. This effect was stronger for households headed by women.</p>

Country	Programme	Cite	Findings related to gender
		<p>Larrañaga, Contreras and Tagle (2009) Evaluación de Impacto de Chile Solidario para la Primera Cohorte de Participantes. UNDP</p> <p>Larrañaga, Huepe and Marinho (2009b) Chile Solidario y Género. UNDP</p>	<p><i>Chile Solidario</i> may have important impacts on women's perceptions of themselves and their roles. First, it may give them confidence to see themselves as more than mothers and wives. Second, it may provide them with more opportunities to be in public, rather than domestic, spaces. Finally, the programme may empower women to see themselves as agents of change in charge of their futures.</p>
Ethiopia	PSNP	<p>Sharp (2006) Targeting Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)  <a href="http://www.theidlgrou.com/documents/TargetingEthiopiaasPublicSafetyNetProgramme.pdf">www.theidlgrou.com/documents/TargetingEthiopiaasPublicSafetyNetProgramme.pdf</a></p> <p>GoE (2008) Contextual Gender Analytical Study Of The Ethiopia Productive Safety Nets Programme. PSNP Gender Study. Final</p> <p>Gilligan and Hoddinott (2008) The Impact of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme and its Linkages. IFPRI  <a href="http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/ifpri00839.pdf">http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/ifpri00839.pdf</a></p>	<p>While half of the participants in PSNP are female, concerns remain about the programme's gender sensitivity. This evaluation found few women leaders; women are less likely to win their appeals if they are denied access to the programme; labour poor households, most of which are headed by women, find it difficult to get their days in; and pregnant and nursing mothers often do not receive called for accommodations.</p> <p>Identified several key requirements for ensuring that women have equitable access to the programme's benefits. Avoiding the months of heaviest agricultural work is important, as is acknowledging the constraints that women face in the appeals process. Women often lack the time, transport and public speaking practice required to successfully appeal their cases.</p> <p>No consideration of gender.</p>
Ghana	LEAP	<p><a href="http://www.evd.nl/zoeken/shouwbouwsteen.asp?bstnum=263715&amp;location=&amp;highlight=Ghana">http://www.evd.nl/zoeken/shouwbouwsteen.asp?bstnum=263715&amp;location=&amp;highlight=Ghana</a></p>	<p>Evaluation scheduled for 2010.</p>
India	MGNREGA	<p>Monitoring and Evaluation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme with Special Focus on Gender Issues (2006)  <a href="http://www.nrega.net/pin/reports-and.../ISWDS%20Final%20Report.doc">www.nrega.net/pin/reports-and.../ISWDS%20Final%20Report.doc</a></p> <p>All India Report on Evaluation of NREGA: Survey of 20 Districts.  <a href="http://planningcommission.gov.in/reports/genrep/rep_NREGA.pdf">http://planningcommission.gov.in/reports/genrep/rep_NREGA.pdf</a></p>	<p>Women are more likely to participate in the programme. Wages are very low and men prefer to migrate for higher wages, which, owing to family responsibilities, women can not do. There are concerns that women are being underpaid for their labour, particularly in comparison to men. There is also a need for child care so that women are better able to combine family responsibilities with work.</p> <p>Female-headed household participation in the works is very encouraging – ranging from 12% to 52%.</p>

Country	Programme	Cite	Findings related to gender
		Gupta (2009) 'Women in India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme,' in Ravazi (ed.) (2009) The Gendered Impacts of Liberalization. Towards 'Embedded Liberalism'? Routledge: London, New York	Gendered evidence almost entirely a simple headcount of women's participation.
Indonesia	Raskin	<p>Hastuti et al. (2008). The Effectiveness of the Raskin Program, SMERU Research Report. SMERU Research Institute  <a href="http://www.smeru.or.id/reports/research/raskin2007/raskin2007_eng.pdf">http://www.smeru.or.id/reports/research/raskin2007/raskin2007_eng.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTINDONESIA/Resources/Publication/280016-1106130305439/617331-1110769011447/810296-1110769045002/Feeding.pdf">http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTINDONESIA/Resources/Publication/280016-1106130305439/617331-1110769011447/810296-1110769045002/Feeding.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.adb.org/Documents/GAR/INO/41059-INO-GAR.pdf">www.adb.org/Documents/GAR/INO/41059-INO-GAR.pdf</a></p>	<p>Female beneficiaries of Raskin rate the programme higher than male participants. Women are most satisfied with the price of rice and least satisfied with the complaints mechanism.</p> <p>No consideration of gender.</p> <p>ADB provided a new grant in 2009 to fortify rice to reduce anaemia. Attention is being paid to women's role: 'Women must be willing to feed the fortified rice to their families and especially their children. Consumer acceptance trials and advocacy are at the core of the program. The consumer acceptance trials are needed to develop a product suited to local rice preparation methods and taste. Women who are Raskin recipients will be involved in the trials. The advocacy interventions will address their concerns including product safety and adherence to religious dietary laws' (p28)</p>
Mexico	<i>Estancias</i>	Pereznieta and Campos (2010) Gendered Risks, Poverty and Vulnerability in Mexico: Contributions of the Childcare for Working Mothers Programme. London: ODI	<i>Estancias</i> was explicitly designed to fulfil a gender equality objective – more so than a child development objective, although in practice it has been doing both.
Pakistan	BISP	<p>World Bank (2009) Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Credit to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for a Social Safety Net Technical Assistance Project. Report 47288-PK  <a href="http://www.wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2009/05/18/000333038_20090518000159/Rendered/PDF/472880PADoP103101OfficialUseOnly1.pdf">www.wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2009/05/18/000333038_20090518000159/Rendered/PDF/472880PADoP103101OfficialUseOnly1.pdf</a></p>	<p>Launched in 2008, the programme provides monthly cash transfers of Rs. 1000 (\$12) to eligible families. The transfer is provided to female heads of eligible families and is expected to primarily benefit women and children.</p> <p>Bids being taken for evaluation in 2010.</p>

Country	Programme	Cite	Findings related to gender
	Zakat	World Bank (2007) Social Protection in Pakistan: Managing Household Risks and Vulnerability	Administered by Ministry of Religious Affairs, the programme is extremely underfunded and not well targeted.
Peru	<i>Juntos</i>	Perova and Vakis (2009) Welfare Impacts of the Juntos Program in Peru: Evidence from a Non-Experimental Evaluation <a href="http://www.juntos.gob.pe/bolletin/eval_juntos/Evaluacion_Cuasi-Experimental.pdf">http://www.juntos.gob.pe/bolletin/eval_juntos/Evaluacion_Cuasi-Experimental.pdf</a>	This study, which represents the first quantitative evaluation of <i>Juntos</i> , found that the programme increases the uptake of health care services for both women and children. Gendered programme impacts were not included in the design, however.
Viet Nam	NTPPR	MOLISA and UNDP (2009) Support for the Improvement and Implementation of the National Targeted Programme for Poverty Reduction. Mid-Term Evaluation Report TA Project VIE/o2/001 <a href="http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/downloaddocument.html?docid=2624">erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/downloaddocument.html?docid=2624</a>	The mid-term evaluation paid limited attention to gender variables but noted that consideration of gender in the first phase of the programme had been less than ideal.





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