

Call for Papers

Special Issue on Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement

April 2017

1. Background

Humanitarian challenges of protracted fragility and conflict-related crises, and the recent unprecedented migration and refugee movement around the globe, underscore the need to break down the barriers between humanitarian and development work. In fragile contexts and protracted crises, such as in Afghanistan and Somalia, responsive long-term systems are needed to reach affected vulnerable populations consistently. Acute and extended crises such as in Syria, have contributed to migration flows, which also highlight the need for long-term solutions in countries of destination. Over 65 million individuals were estimated to have been forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of prosecution, conflict, generalized violence, or other human rights violations in 2015, representing an increase of almost six million compared to the previous year.¹

Social protection is increasingly considered a policy response in contexts of fragility and displacement. In non-fragile contexts, extensive evidence demonstrates that social protection helps reduce poverty and inequality, enhances livelihoods, and has long-term positive impacts on human capital development.² As part of the commitments under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1, the global community pledges to expand the coverage of social protection measures for all, and achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable by 2030. This expansion must include scale up of social protection in contexts of fragility and forced displacement, to ensure no one is left behind. Concomitantly, development actors recognized the importance of social protection at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), and committed through the Grand Bargain to “increase social protection programmes and strengthen national and local systems and coping mechanisms in order to build resilience in fragile contexts.”³

While establishing effective social protection in the context of protracted instability and displaced populations is more complex, it is also increasingly viewed as an essential mechanism to bridge the humanitarian-developmental divide. However, despite the increasing use of social protection in these settings, we know comparatively little from rigorous research regarding what works, and why. Within acute crises, actors have an increased responsibility to ensure that evidence-based learning is followed such that aid is delivered in a way that not only maximize benefits to affected populations, but also at the same time minimizes risks. As sources of conflict and instability are likely to be context specific, an increased investment is needed to produce evidence filling these gaps. For example, Doocy and Tappis (2016) carry out a systematic review of cash-based approaches in humanitarian and emergency settings with the primary objective of synthesizing evidence of impacts on individual and household-level outcomes, and a secondary objective of identifying program factors that hinder and facilitate programme implementation.⁴ For the first objective, out of over 4,000 studies identified in a first search, only five studies were identified which rigorously measured impact of cash-based schemes,

¹ UNHCR, 2016, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015*.

² ODI, 2016, *Cash Transfers: What Does the Evidence Say? A Rigorous Review of Programme Impact and of the Role of Design and Implementation Features*; UNICEF, 2015, *Social Cash Transfers and Children’s Outcomes: A Review of Evidence from Africa*, UNICEF Eastern and Southern African Regional Office and the Transfer Project. Nairobi: UNICEF. Davis et al (UNICEF/FAO). 2016. *From Evidence to Action: The Story of Cash transfers and Impact evaluation in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Oxford University Press.

³ World Humanitarian Summit, 2016, *the Grand Bargain*, Commitment 10(3).

⁴ Doocy, S and Tappis, H, 2016, *Cash-based approaches in humanitarian emergencies: a systematic review*, *3ie Systematic Review Report 28*. London: International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie).

while ten studies measured efficiency and 108 operational components. Of the five studies identified, the majority assessed outcomes of household-level food security, poverty and other economic outcomes, leaving large gaps in terms of human capital, child protection and other social or psychological well-being outcomes. The conclusion of large geographic and sectoral gaps is also shared by a review completed by the World Bank for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in 2016, focused on scaling up cash transfers in humanitarian settings.⁵

While significant challenges arise in conducting research in fragile contexts, and among mobile and marginalized groups, there are increasing examples of how ethical and rigorous research can be done - often utilizing creative research designs and technology to facilitate data collection in safe modalities. Where achieved, this research should be made accessible within a short time frame to fill knowledge gaps to increase informed decision making for policymakers and practitioners.

2. Call for papers: themes and research questions

This call for papers aims to assemble high quality papers that will increase our understanding of: 1) the role of social protection in fragile contexts and settings of forced displacement and migration; and 2) synergies across the humanitarian and development divide in both contexts. The aim is to assemble 8 to 10 papers of sufficient quality to be jointly submitted for a special issue to the *Journal of Development Studies*, or featured in an edited book. An introduction to the special issue or book will summarize the volume, draw out policy implications and lay out key areas of future research. Reviewed and approved papers will also be featured in the UNICEF Office of Research–Innocenti working paper series.

Some submissions are expected to draw on evidence presented at an International Conference focusing on the same themes organized by UNICEF, the European Commission and partners (Finland, Germany, the World Bank, the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and others) to take place in July 2017 in Brussels, Belgium. It is expected that these papers and others coming from outside the conference will include quantitative and mixed methods work, focusing on diverse social protection research resulting in policy-relevant lessons for governments, humanitarian and development actors, and the larger donor and stakeholder communities.

Examples of research questions to be addressed in paper submission include (but are not limited to):

- What are the relative impacts and cost-effectiveness of diverse social protection designs in fragile contexts (e.g. cash versus in-kind or vouchers; use of mobile transfer technology) on dimensions of well-being of families and children, including over the long-term, to build resiliency?
- What role can social protection play in preventing forcibly displaced children from becoming a ‘lost generation’?
- What are the conflict, political stability, local economy and governance implications of government and NGO provision of social protection in the context of fragility?
- How can social protection facilitate access to larger social systems for refugees and protect against discrimination, marginalization and impoverishment?
- Does social protection mitigate against forced displacement, or address drivers of migration and inequalities in countries of origin, transit, and host countries?

⁵ World Bank Group. 2016. Strategic Note: Cash Transfers in Humanitarian Contexts. Prepared for the Principles of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. World Bank: Washington D.C.

3. Expected timeline and process

Below is the proposed timeline for submitting the assembled papers as a potential Special Issue.

- **7 April 2017:** Call for papers announced through the UNICEF Innocenti website, alongside announcement of International Conference on the same thematic topics, through multiple channels
- **15 July 2017:** Deadline to submit extended abstract to Guest Editors (proposed length of 1,000 words) by email: jdehoop@unicef.org
- **15 August 2017:** Decision on papers communicated. Shortlisted authors requested to prepare their full-length draft papers
- **15 November 2017:** First draft of papers due to Guest Editors. Papers to undergo rapid feedback and requests for essential revisions returned to authors
- **15 December 2017:** Final drafts of papers alongside Introduction of Special Issue submitted to journal for review

4. UNICEF Innocenti and Guest Editors

The [UNICEF Office of Research—Innocenti](#) is UNICEF’s dedicated research arm. The office is a small group of interdisciplinary researchers, of which the Social and Economic Policy (SEP) Unit makes up the largest research cluster (15 individuals). Under the umbrella of the [Transfer Project](#), SEP has engaged in over a dozen mixed-method evaluations of government social protection programmes, primarily in Sub-Saharan Africa, and is expanding its focus to encompass fragile contexts. UNICEF works on social protection programmes in over 100 countries, and is one of the only large international actors with presence bridging both the humanitarian and development divide. As part of the Grand Bargain, UNICEF has committed to scaling up the use of cash in emergencies and is committed to systems building to improve lives of children and families. Thus, the UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti is well positioned to convene and to disseminate policy-relevant research on this topic.

The special issue will be edited by a team of social policy and migration specialists at the UNICEF Office of Research—Innocenti composed of Drs. [Jose Cuesta](#), [Bina D’Costa](#), [Jacob de Hoop](#) and [Amber Peterman](#). Dr. Cuesta is the Social and Economic Policy Unit Chief, Drs. de Hoop and Peterman are Social Policy Specialists, and Dr. D’Costa is a Child Migration Specialist. Shortlisted papers will be reviewed by Professor Tilman Brück and Dr. Ugo Gentilini. Professor Brück is Director of the International Security and Development Centre (ISDC) and group leader at Leibniz-Institut für Gemüse- und Zierpflanzenbau (IGZ). Dr Ugo Gentilini is a Senior Economist at the World Bank.