

# Pension watch

*Social protection in older age*



## Strengthening state-citizen relations in fragile contexts

*The role of cash transfers*

**HelpAge  
International**

*age helps*



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## Acronyms

ASAL	Arid and Semi Arid Lands
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CDF	Community Development Fund
DFID	UK AID – Department for International Development
EU	European Union
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
HSNP	Hunger Safety Net Programme
IDS	International Development Studies
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
NASSIT	National Social Security Investment Trust
NPF	National Pensions Fund
NFI	Non-Food items
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPCT	Older Persons Cash Transfer
OVC-CT	Orphan and Vulnerable Children Cash Transfer
PA	Pastoralist Association
PCRR	Programme Charter of Rights and Responsibility
RCs	Rights Committees
SAGE	Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment
SPR	Social Protection Rights
SRM	Social Risk Management
SSN	Social Safety Net
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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## Executive summary

HelpAge International has been working on social protection and cash transfers for older people for a number of years. Our experience in fragile states and situations<sup>1</sup> has shown that cash transfers have a number of benefits, both for older people and their households, and for broader developmental objectives.

HelpAge International's interest in fragile states and situations is also informed by the fact that they account for a sixth of the world's population and a third of all people surviving on less than US\$1 a day. Fragile states have poverty rates averaging 54 per cent, compared with 22 per cent in other low-income countries.<sup>2</sup> Older people – particularly older women and their households – are more vulnerable because they are severely affected by the scarcity of state-provided support systems, ranging from lack of access to basic health and education services to lack of access to basic income support.

There is increasing acknowledgement within the international development community that the world's most vulnerable and chronically poor people who live in fragile states and situations need to be supported by social protection mechanisms, including cash transfers.<sup>3</sup> These mechanisms can reduce risk, vulnerability and poverty.

This report examines the role of cash transfers in strengthening state-citizen relations in the context of long-term development in fragile states and situations. Cash transfers as part of a wider social protection system have the potential to strengthen state-citizen relations and by extension the legitimacy of the state. However, the current development debate on cash transfers focuses predominantly on the narrow objective of poverty reduction. In the context of fragility, however, it is important to move the debate on cash transfers beyond vulnerability, risk and poverty to using them as a tool to address a central underlying manifestation of fragility – the absence of a functioning state-citizen relationship.

The potential gains from this approach include raising the living standards of vulnerable groups, and providing the opportunities to exercise their rights as citizens. For the state, the benefit of implementing sustainable cash transfer programmes is to increase its legitimacy and popular support, and strengthen state institutions, which are critical to conflict prevention, recovery from conflict and state resilience.

State fragility can be seen as a continuum. At one end of the spectrum, a state can be fragile to the point where internal or external forces are able to challenge its authority in all or part of its territory through violence. At the other end are states that are unable or unwilling to cater for the welfare of a particular group of citizens or certain regions within the country but have no significant challenges to their authority in the form of violence.

A key manifestation of fragility is the absence of a functioning state-citizen relationship, and fragile states share certain common features:

- high levels of poverty
- poor access to basic services
- infrastructural deficiency – poor road networks and low telecommunication coverage
- lack of social trust in divided societies
- fragmented and competing elites
- weak state bureaucracies
- prone to violent conflict or are currently in violent conflict.

## Social protection and state fragility

There are differing approaches to social protection, which are particularly significant when applied to fragile states.

- In the instrumental view, the aim of social protection is essentially risk management – to minimise the impact of exposure to risk, and to change the behaviour of the poor in ways that help them lower their vulnerability and move out of poverty. The activist view, on the other hand, takes a transformative approach, arguing that policy should be directed at changing the structural context that makes people vulnerable in the first place.
- There are differing views on how cash transfers should be implemented. Is it more efficient to target those identified as the poorest; or are universal benefits, which avoid the problems associated with targeting, more effective and simpler to administer?
- What institutions are best placed to implement these measures – states or NGOs, or some combination of both? Are external actors appropriate as donors or implementers?
- Finally, when these debates focus on fragile or conflict states, a further dimension has to be considered – whether and at what point social protection measures in the form of cash transfers can be applied. Can they be effective in short-term emergency responses; if so, is it also possible to extend and develop them for longer-term recovery and development?

## The case studies

Using examples based on research undertaken in Sierra Leone, northern Kenya and Sudan, this report argues that social protection programmes in the form of cash transfers, if well designed, could play a significant role in strengthening state-citizen relations. The nature of programme design and programme ownership is critical to shaping this relationship, which is of crucial importance in fragile contexts.

In each area, field research focused on discussions with communities, while semi-structured interviews were conducted with local and central government officials, UN and NGO personnel.

Research in the three case study areas addressed the following specific questions:

- To what extent does Sierra Leone's poverty-targeted Social Safety Net (SSN) cash transfer programme strengthen state-citizen relations?
- To what extent does the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) in northern Kenya and its "rights component" in particular, strengthen state-citizen relations?
- To what extent can a cash transfer programme contribute to bridging the gap between humanitarian relief and recovery in areas prone to conflict such as west Darfur, Sudan?

The choice of the three case studies is informed by the fact that there are different types of fragility with unique features and characteristics. By exploring the efficacy of two cash transfer programmes – one delivered by the government in a post-conflict situation (Sierra Leone), and one delivered by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in a fragile and food-insecure environment (northern Kenya) – the research findings highlight the factors that influence the nature of state-citizen relations in context-specific, cash transfer programmes. In west Darfur, Sudan, it explores the potential of cash transfers to contribute to peacebuilding, rural development and local institution building, at a time when the UN and NGOs are beginning the transition from emergency relief to recovery and development.



## Conclusions

### Emerging issues and implications for state-citizen relations

**Programme design** The Sierra Leone and northern Kenya case studies indicate that the nature and type of programme design affects the ability of cash transfer programmes to strengthen the relationship between the state and its citizens.

A state-led programme such as the SSN in Sierra Leone demonstrates the severe limitations of a poorly designed poverty-targeted programme in a context where institutional capacity is weak. Anomalies associated with programme design and poor implementation, including institutional and infrastructural constraints, did have an adverse effect on state-citizen relations. Trust in public institutions was further eroded and state actors – in this case local chiefs – used the programme for clientelism and patronage purposes, creating mistrust between the communities and the state.

In contrast, a donor-financed and NGO-implemented programme (HSNP) in northern Kenya suggests how a social protection rights component can add value and have an unintended positive impact on state-citizen relations. However, issues of ownership limit the long term impact of the programme on state-citizen relations on a wider scale and sustainable basis. The poverty-targeted nature of the main HSNP programme highlights the tensions between a poverty-targeted programme and a rights-based approach to social protection programming. The outcome was very high levels of reported grievances, with many still remaining unresolved. The findings also showed that, where almost everyone is vulnerable and poor, targeting based on vulnerability creates rifts in and between communities in fragile situations.

It is clear from these studies that poverty-targeted cash transfers are a huge challenge to implement in fragile states and situations with high levels of poverty, low institutional capacity and lack of reliable data.

**Programme ownership** Cash transfers can be used in the context of emergencies and as a tool for longer-term development. For the latter, government ownership is critical both to sustain cash transfer programmes and to develop state-citizen relations over the long term. Donors and NGOs can play a complementary role in providing technical assistance in programme design, developing the institutional capacity of the state and building in transparency and accountability mechanisms that strongly link relevant state institutions with the citizens (for example, national and local human rights bodies).

The Sierra Leone SSN cash transfer programme was fully owned by the government, while the HSNP in Kenya is largely donor-owned with only limited engagement of state institutions. Even if NGOs are implementing cash transfers, they should be part of the overall national development agenda and not an isolated programme. NGOs should complement governments and not replace them.

Sudan does not currently have a cash transfer programme. Therefore, a normative but cautious case can be made for cash transfer schemes, because they are potential instruments for strengthening state-citizen relations, and by extension the legitimacy of the state in conflict affected areas. Lessons can be learnt from the Sierra Leone and northern Kenya case studies on what not to do and how to go about designing and implementing cash transfers in the Sudanese context.

## Recommendations

### Principles and good practices for cash transfer in fragile contexts

Based on the findings of this study and a validation workshop held in Nairobi with senior policy makers from Sudan, Sierra Leone and northern Kenya, the following principles and good practices for cash transfer in the context of long-term development in fragile states and situations have been identified. While the majority of these principles are concurrent with principles in non-fragile states or situations, they are paramount in order to reduce fragility and its root causes.

**Government ownership** Government ownership or at least government involvement in cash transfer programmes is the key to their success in fragile contexts. Government should be involved not just in programme design and implementation but also in financing, monitoring, and evaluating programme performance. Government must also be the decision maker in the elements of cash transfer design that affect the long-term sustainability of the schemes. Beyond the issue of sustainability, government-owned programmes, if appropriately designed, have the potential to strengthen state-citizen relations, which is critical to nation building, peacebuilding and social cohesion.

**Appropriate design and implementation** In fragile contexts, programme design should include simple and transparent/understandable selection criteria that identify beneficiaries using very clear categories – for example, older people, people with disabilities, and orphans and vulnerable children. Programmes should include effective grievance mechanisms linked to existing accountability and ombudsman structures, particularly at the local government level where implementation takes place. These mechanisms will promote citizen participation, voice, empowerment and ownership. Design and implementation should be based on a broad consultation process involving all the relevant stakeholders. The programme must be seen by the wider community and society to be fair.

**Legal and policy framework** A legal and policy framework for social protection/ cash transfers is essential. Involving all the sectoral ministries, departments and agencies with social protection mandates during policy formulation creates buy-in and limits the potential for turf battles between government agencies.

**Evidence based on context** Programmes should be based on detailed research evidence that can guide the design and implementation of programmes. Policy advisers should present decision makers with policy options and scenarios based on the context in which fragility occurs.

**Relationship building** A multi-stakeholder approach will help to build relationships to develop social protection champions in key ministries, government departments and agencies. South-South learning workshops, trainings and field visits to existing programmes in other countries should be organised for relevant policy makers and programme staff in key agencies. These are important platforms and processes for bringing together and building a joint understanding amongst staff from different government departments with social protection mandates.

**Effective communication** Investment in communication mechanisms using effective information, education and communication strategies ensures that relevant information about programmes is well disseminated and presented in simple language that citizens understand. There should be transparency about who will be involved in the programmes and where they are being implemented. This is critical to ensuring the credibility and acceptance of programmes.

**Innovative delivery systems** Innovative ways of delivering cash through the private sector can play a significant role in fragile environments, especially where functioning state structures are non-existent. Using mobile phone technology and mobile banking to deliver cash transfers also has the potential to extend other financial services to remote rural communities. Development partners can play an important role in ensuring that procurement of private services is in the longer-term national interest and capacities are in place in relevant ministries to ensure transparent procurement processes.

**Learning from existing social protection/cash transfer schemes** Where programmes already exist, it is important to ensure that revisions to design and implementation are based on mutual learning from existing schemes. Social protection/cash transfer programmes should be refined and improved to address effectively public grievances and problems with implementation.

**Linkages to other programmes** Cash transfers, in particular broad-based schemes, provide opportunities for outreach to other social services. Efforts should be made to link cash transfer programmes to other complementary social protection services such as health, education and agricultural outreach. Transfers implemented on the basis of citizenship entitlements also provide an opportunity to reinforce citizenship infrastructure, such as national registration systems based on civil registration (births, deaths and marriages) and national identity card programmes.



# 1. Introduction and methodology

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## 1.1 Introduction

In recent years there has been a considerable amount of interest in fragile states and environments. This is partly as a result of the security threat such states pose to wider global peace and security and partly because of concerns for the protection of human rights and wellbeing of people living in these states.

Leading international development institutions such as the World Bank, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the European Union, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have shown considerable interest in fragile states. Their aim is to transform them into stable and resilient political entities that provide for the security and welfare of their citizens. However, the complexities of delivering effective aid and development assistance in fragile contexts require innovation and much improved multi-stakeholder engagement.

The international development community recognises that very large numbers of chronically poor, vulnerable populations live in fragile states and environments. The need to focus on human development in these states cannot be over-emphasised because they constitute a significant proportion of the world's poorest and most vulnerable.

There is an increasing acknowledgement and consensus that the world's most vulnerable and chronically poor people who are living in fragile states and environments need to be supported with social protection mechanisms, including cash transfers. These mechanisms are known to reduce risk, vulnerability and poverty.

Over the last few years, a solid evidence base has been built which shows that cash transfers, as part of a wider social protection system, are effective instruments to improve human development and food security outcomes. However, further research is needed on the potential role of cash transfers to strengthen state-citizen relations and, by extension, the legitimacy of the state. Research is also needed on the complex issue of using short term cash transfers in emergencies – often unpredictable and subject to donor fatigue – and implementing them to support the transition to recovery and longer-term development initiatives in conflict-affected states.

In the context of longer-term development, the current debate on cash transfers focuses predominantly on the narrow objective of poverty reduction. In the context of fragility, however, it is important to move the debate on cash transfers beyond vulnerability, risk and poverty to using them as a tool to address a central underlying manifestation of fragility – the absence of a functioning state-citizen relationship. Too often the debate on cash transfers assumes that poverty-targeted “safety nets” are the only feasible option in fragile states. Yet this approach pre-determines the nature and design of cash transfer programmes and tends to overlook other options that could be more relevant in fragile contexts.

There is now a critical opportunity to influence developments, not only in the three case study countries covered by this research (Kenya, Sierra Leone and Sudan) but in many other fragile contexts/states. A more context-specific, innovative and visionary approach to cash transfers can be achieved through dialogue, by breaking down barriers between states and the international aid community. Such an approach would deliver not only better human development outcomes for millions of chronically poor people but also help to make states more accountable and responsive to their citizens.

The report is organised into four main sections:

- **Section 1** presents the introduction, research objective, research questions and methodology, and the limitations of the study.
- **Section 2** addresses the conceptual definitions of fragility, social protection and state-citizen relations. It goes on to examine three key debates related to social protection – and, by extension, cash transfers – which are relevant to fragile states/ contexts. It also presents a conceptual framework for understanding the role of cash transfers in fragile states.
- **Section 3** is the core of the study, which identifies the attributes of fragility in each of the case study countries and their impact on the population. The situation of older women and their households is used as an example to illustrate the particular challenges they face in fragile contexts. The section outlines the existing social protection mechanisms in each country and the gaps in coverage. It then examines the impact of cash transfers on state-citizen relations in Sierra Leone and northern Kenya; and the relevance of cash transfers in bridging the gap between relief and recovery in west Darfur, Sudan.
- **Section 4** concludes by identifying two emerging issues – programme design and ownership – and their implications for state-citizen relations. Finally, it recommends some principles and good practices in cash transfer programming in fragile contexts, and areas for future research.

## 1.2 Research objectives

The general objective of this research is to understand the extent to which cash transfers can contribute to improving state-citizen relations in fragile states and fragile situations. The findings will contribute to the debate on cash transfers and develop a nuanced understanding on how best to deliver cash transfers in fragile states and situations.

## 1.3 Research questions

The research aims to answer the following questions relating to the three case studies:

- To what extent does **Sierra Leone's** poverty-targeted Social Safety Net (SSN) cash transfer programme strengthen state-citizen relations?
- To what extent does the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) in **northern Kenya**, and its “rights component” in particular, strengthen state-citizen relations?
- To what extent can a cash transfer programme contribute to bridging the gap between humanitarian relief and recovery in areas prone to conflict such as **west Darfur, Sudan**?

## 1.4 Rationale for choice of field research locations

The choice of the three different case studies is informed by the fact that there are different types of fragility with unique features and characteristics. By exploring the efficacy of two cash transfer programmes – one delivered by the government in a post-conflict situation (Sierra Leone), and one delivered by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in a fragile and food-insecure environment (northern Kenya) – the research findings highlight the factors that influence the nature of state-citizen relations in context-specific, cash transfer programmes. The west Darfur (Sudan) case study explores the potential of cash transfers to contribute to peacebuilding, rural development and local institution building at a time when the government, the UN and INGOs are beginning the transition from emergency relief to recovery and development.



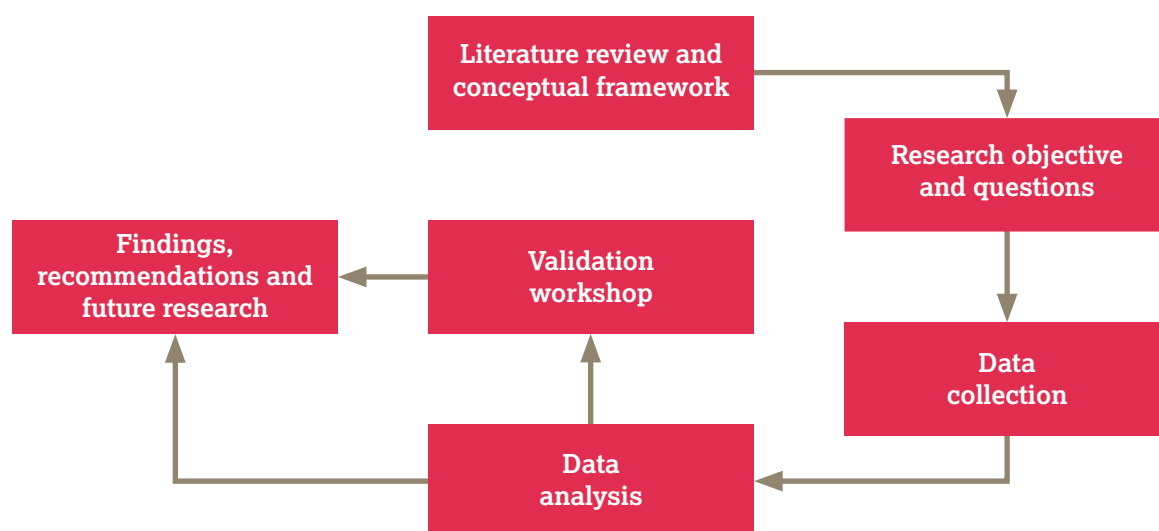
## 1.5 Research methodology

This section describes the research process and the methodology adopted. It outlines the sampling and data collection techniques used for each case study and highlights the limitations of the study.

### 1.5.1 The research process

For each case study, a logical structure and procedure was followed in order to answer the research questions. The model is illustrated in the diagram below:

**Figure 1: The research process**



Equal attention was paid at each step to ensure that the research was conducted properly and the findings are as valid as possible under unpredictable research conditions. The research process is not a clear-cut sequence of procedures following a neat pattern but a complex interaction between the conceptual and empirical world, with deduction and induction occurring at the same time.

### 1.5.2 Qualitative methods

The methodology employed is primarily qualitative using documentary reviews to complement data gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. For a study of this kind, which needed to focus on the perceptions of stakeholders, a qualitative method of research proved to be a better option than quantitative methods of data collection. A reflective approach provided the best answers to the research questions because it focuses on the people, policy processes and programmes being studied. It helped to capture explanations of people's actions and situations as well as the factors constraining their behaviour. In the course of this research, efforts were made to elicit the subjective interpretations of the respondents. This approach suggested a course of action, which was less formalised but more inductive.

### 1.5.3 Data collection techniques

A desk study review of literature on the concepts of state fragility and social protection was carried out and relevant documents on social protection in each country were also reviewed. These included Sierra Leone's and Kenya's draft policy documents on social protection, and various reports on the Social Safety Net (SSN) programme and the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP).

Semi-structured interviews with key policy makers were conducted in Freetown, Nairobi, Khartoum and El Geneina (Darfur) and field visits were made to existing cash transfer programmes targeting older people in Sierra Leone and northern Kenya. These visits involved semi-structured interviews with local government officials including local chiefs. Focus group discussions were conducted with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in 12 chiefdoms in the northern and southern regions of Sierra Leone and three districts in the arid and semi-arid lands of northern Kenya.

In the conflict-affected area of Sudan, west Darfur, semi-structured interviews were conducted with officials of UN agencies, NGOs and the West Darfur State Ministry of Social Welfare. Field visits were made to four Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in west Darfur and focus group discussions conducted with Older People's Committee members in each IDP camp. Finally, a two-day strategic research validation workshop was organised in Nairobi with key policy makers from Sierra Leone, Sudan and Kenya.

#### **1.5.4 Sampling technique for focus group discussions**

Samples for the focus group discussions in Sierra Leone were selected on the basis of statistical data containing the number of beneficiaries in each chiefdom, district and region. The discussions were carried out in the four districts with the highest number of beneficiaries: the three northern districts of Port Loko, Bombali and Tonkolili and the southern district of Bo.

Within each district, the three chiefdoms with the highest number of beneficiaries were selected as geographical areas from which to draw samples. This provided a total of 12 chiefdoms (three chiefdoms each in four districts). In each of the chiefdoms, four beneficiaries (two men and two women) and four non-beneficiaries (two men and two women) were randomly selected at the community *Barre*<sup>4</sup>, where hundreds of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries were in attendance.

In northern Kenya, only three of the four districts where the HSNP is being implemented were sampled: Turkana, Wajir and Mandera districts. There were no available flights to Marsabit – the fourth district – at the time the field trips took place. The samples were randomly selected from two sub-locations in each district (Turkana, Wajir and Mandera): one sub-location where Social Pension methodology was piloted; and a nearby sub-location where the HSNP had yet to be implemented. The selection of a beneficiary sub-location and a non-beneficiary sub-location allows for comparisons to be made with regard to the impact of the HSNP Rights Component on state-citizen relations (see 3.4.3).

In the pilot areas, focus group discussions were conducted with members of the HSNP “Rights Committees” which comprises beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries (five men and four women). In the non-pilot areas, discussions were conducted with socially active members of the community.

In Sudan, focus group discussions were conducted in four selected camps located in west Darfur state: Krindig I, Krindig II, Medinat Hujaj and Kerenik. The four selected IDP camps were based on the researcher's access and security issues in a very difficult environment. HelpAge International has been operating in these camps since 2005.

The focus groups comprised five older men and five older women in each camp. The discussions were held in the Older People's Social Centres, which are ‘age-friendly spaces’ constructed by UNHCR and HelpAge International. They aimed to identify the challenges facing older IDPs in particular, and the role cash transfers could play in the transition from emergency relief to recovery and long-term development.

### **1.5.5 Study period**

The study began in November 2009 and the field trips were completed during 2010. The dates were:

- Sierra Leone: 7 to 21 March
- Kenya: 20 June to 2 July
- Sudan: 27 July to 12 August
- Sierra Leone: 20 October to 10 November
- Kenya: 28 November to 10 December

### **1.5.6 Limitations of the study**

A major limitation of using qualitative methods is the small number of samples used for data collection. However, the samples were representative of the target groups and only relevant social protection policy makers, programme managers and heads of local government departments, including local chiefs, were selected for semi-structured interviews. The focus group discussions included both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of cash transfer programmes in Sierra Leone and northern Kenya, and older men and women resident in the four west Darfur IDP camps selected.

In Sierra Leone, the time lag of over two years since implementation of the SSN raised the possibility that there would be difficulties in tracking ex-beneficiaries, who might have moved or died. In addition, it was anticipated that many beneficiaries might not be willing to share their experiences of a project that they had benefited from two years before. However, the small and manageable samples in each chiefdom (see 1.5.4) meant that tracking ex-beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries did not prove too challenging.

In northern Kenya and Sudan, the language barrier was an inhibiting factor, as the researcher had to rely on local translators. Sudan proved the most challenging in accessing relevant information on the extent to which cash transfer programmes could contribute to bridging the gap between humanitarian relief and recovery in areas prone to conflict. Some respondents (government and UN agency staff) were reluctant to talk about issues relating to cash transfers and to the return of IDPs to their original homes.





## 2. Fragility and social protection

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### 2.1 State fragility

There is no consensus on the definition of fragile states. This study adopts the definitions given by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

BMZ defines fragile states as “those in which state institutions are very weak or at risk of collapse, and whose populations suffer from widespread poverty, violence and arbitrary rule. It also correlates with lack of legitimacy and often it is women, children and ethnic or religious minorities that are mostly adversely affected”.<sup>5</sup> DFID defines fragile states as “states where the government cannot or will not deliver what citizens need to live decent, secure lives. They cannot or will not tackle poverty”.<sup>6</sup>

Taking into account both these definitions and those of other international development agencies such as the World Bank, OECD and the EU, the common feature identified in all fragile states is the absence of a functioning state-citizen relationship – the lack of effective political processes to influence the state to meet societal expectations. In operational terms, the concept of “fragility” helps us focus on the specific dimensions of a state or society that can cause instability.

All states have aspects of fragility, and most stable states can also go through situations of fragility, or have pockets of fragility within specific regions or communities. State fragility is therefore a continuum. At one end of the spectrum, a state can be fragile to the point where internal or external forces are able to challenge its authority in parts of its territory through violence. At the other end are states that are unable or unwilling to cater for the welfare of a particular group of citizens or certain regions within the country but have no significant challenges to their authority in the form of violence. Categorising fragile states may be useful in drawing important distinctions between different attributes and characteristics, but these distinctions should be seen as fluid phenomena rather than absolutes.

Most fragile states are characterised by some or all of the following:

- High levels of poverty
- Poor access to basic services
- Infrastructural deficiency, such as poor road networks and low telecommunication density
- Lack of social trust underpinning the social contract between the state and its citizens
- Fragmented and competing elites often manifested along ethnic, regional or religious lines
- Prone to violent conflict, are currently in conflict or recovering from conflict
- “Rentier states” and weak tax/fiscal states.<sup>7</sup>

States can also be considered fragile when they are unable to perform their basic functions. These functions are captured in the literature on state-building and failing states.<sup>8</sup> The “functions of the state” framework can be used to elucidate the complex concept of state fragility. This report focuses on two interrelated functions. These are service delivery to the state’s citizens, especially the poor and in return, the degree to which the state has legitimacy in the eyes of its people. In most fragile contexts, weaknesses in state capacity or its failure to perform these functions, together with the weak nature of its relationship with its citizens are the underlying causes of its fragility.

### **2.1.1 State-citizen relations**

In this report, the term “state-citizen relations” refers to a form of social contract that gives the state its legitimacy provided it serves the will of its citizens. In practical terms, it involves the ability of citizens to demand services and hold state actors to account; and the extent of the state’s responsiveness to their demands and needs. It also includes citizens’ rights and responsibilities towards the state and the level of trust they have in the state. State-citizen relationship is multi-dimensional, touching on the political, economic, social and civil spheres. In states currently or previously affected by conflict, or prone to conflict in parts of their territory, rebuilding public trust in state institutions and managing public expectations is essential to achieving peace and stability.

## **2.2 Social protection**

Social protection can be broadly defined as a set of public actions that provide direct support to people to help address risk, vulnerability and poverty. For the purpose of this report, it is defined more narrowly as an alternative term to social security, referring to the system of cash transfers, usually provided by the state, that offer income security in the event of poverty, unemployment, sickness, disability, old age or loss of the breadwinner.

## **2.3 Key debates and trends in social protection**

This report does not aim to cover the extensive and important debates on delivering cash transfers as part of a wider social protection package, but focuses on three interconnected debates which are particularly relevant in fragile states and situations:

- the instrumentalist and activist perspectives which may influence programme design
- the impact of poverty-targeted safety nets and universal approaches
- the balance between programme delivery by state and non-state actors.

### **2.3.1 Instrumentalist and activist perspectives<sup>9</sup>**

Collaborative research from the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) on social protection from a global perspective suggests that approaches fall into two broad categories. These can be characterised as instrumentalist and activist.

The instrumentalist approach argues that “extreme poverty, inequality and vulnerability are impediments to the achievement of development targets such as the MDGs. In this view social protection is about putting in place risk management mechanisms that will compensate for incomplete or weak insurance mechanisms until a time that private insurance can play a more prominent role in society”.<sup>10</sup>

This approach is mainly associated with the World Bank’s Social Risk Management (SRM) framework, which explores how societies manage risk. It argues that all individuals, households and communities are exposed to multiple risks from different sources. SRM aims to provide instruments that enable the poor (as well as those who are not poor) to minimise the impact of exposure to risk, and to change their behaviour in ways that help them lower their vulnerability and move out of poverty.

In the SRM framework vulnerability is attributed to agency – the individual or group and the events affecting them at a point in their life cycle. Vulnerability is classified according to a range of risks that may affect a variety of livelihood assets. This analysis informs policy and programme work which prioritises short-term poverty-targeted safety nets that aim to cushion risks and shocks that may affect specific vulnerable groups.

The activists, on the other hand, take a transformative approach. They argue that the persistence of extreme poverty, inequality and vulnerability is a symptom of social injustice and structural inequality. Social protection is therefore viewed as a citizen’s right.



The activist approach extends the debate on social protection “to arenas such as equity, empowerment and economic, social and cultural rights, rather than confining [its] scope... to targeted income and consumption transfers.”<sup>11</sup> The rationale for social protection is informed by the ideal of a “guaranteed social minimum”, where entitlement extends beyond cash or food transfers and is based on citizenship, not philanthropy.

According to this analysis, policy should be directed at changing the structural context that makes people vulnerable in the first place. There is the need to “pursue policies that relate to power imbalances in society that encourage, create and sustain vulnerabilities”.<sup>12</sup> This contrasts with the instrumentalist approach of designing policy instruments that protect people when they face short-run shocks and livelihood risks in a specific context.

The importance of this debate is that it has a direct impact on programme design. Should social protection programmes, such as unconditional cash transfers, be poverty-targeted or universal? What are the arguments for and against each approach?

### **2.3.2 Poverty-targeted safety nets or universal approaches?**

The arguments supporting either poverty targeting or a universal approach to cash transfers frequently focus on efficient resource allocation, which is subject to budgetary and fiscal constraints.

Poverty-targeted safety net programmes gained influence with the Washington Consensus<sup>13</sup> in the late 1980s and 1990s. Their acceptance was, and still is based on the notion that it is better to concentrate limited resources on schemes targeting the poorest and the most vulnerable in the society. These schemes have been regarded as more effective in transferring resources to the poor while simultaneously ensuring cost efficiency, especially in situations where resources are extremely limited.

Although the logic behind this approach seems tenable, numerous studies have highlighted key problems. For example, a study in high- and middle-income countries in the Americas found that poverty targeting is a very costly and complicated exercise, which involves high administrative cost. Many means-tested and poverty-targeted programmes also experience high exclusion and inclusion errors so that the non-poor end up constituting a significant proportion of the beneficiaries, while a large proportion of the poor are excluded.<sup>14</sup>

FIAN International’s analysis of poverty-targeted cash transfer programmes in two low-income African countries – Zambia’s Kalomo pilot project and Malawi’s Mchinji pilot project – illustrates the shortcomings in the design of both projects. FIAN argues that “in the hands of a corrupt or politicised implementing bureaucracy these programmes (poverty targeted) can otherwise turn into a tool for oppression. The best way to overcome such risks would be to get away from narrow and little transparent selective targeting and to strengthen the transfers to the recipients as human beings, rather than as being poor.”<sup>15</sup> This study strongly recommends a universal rights-based approach to transfers. This would make the recipients rights-holders who are independent of local elites in both the selection and distribution process.

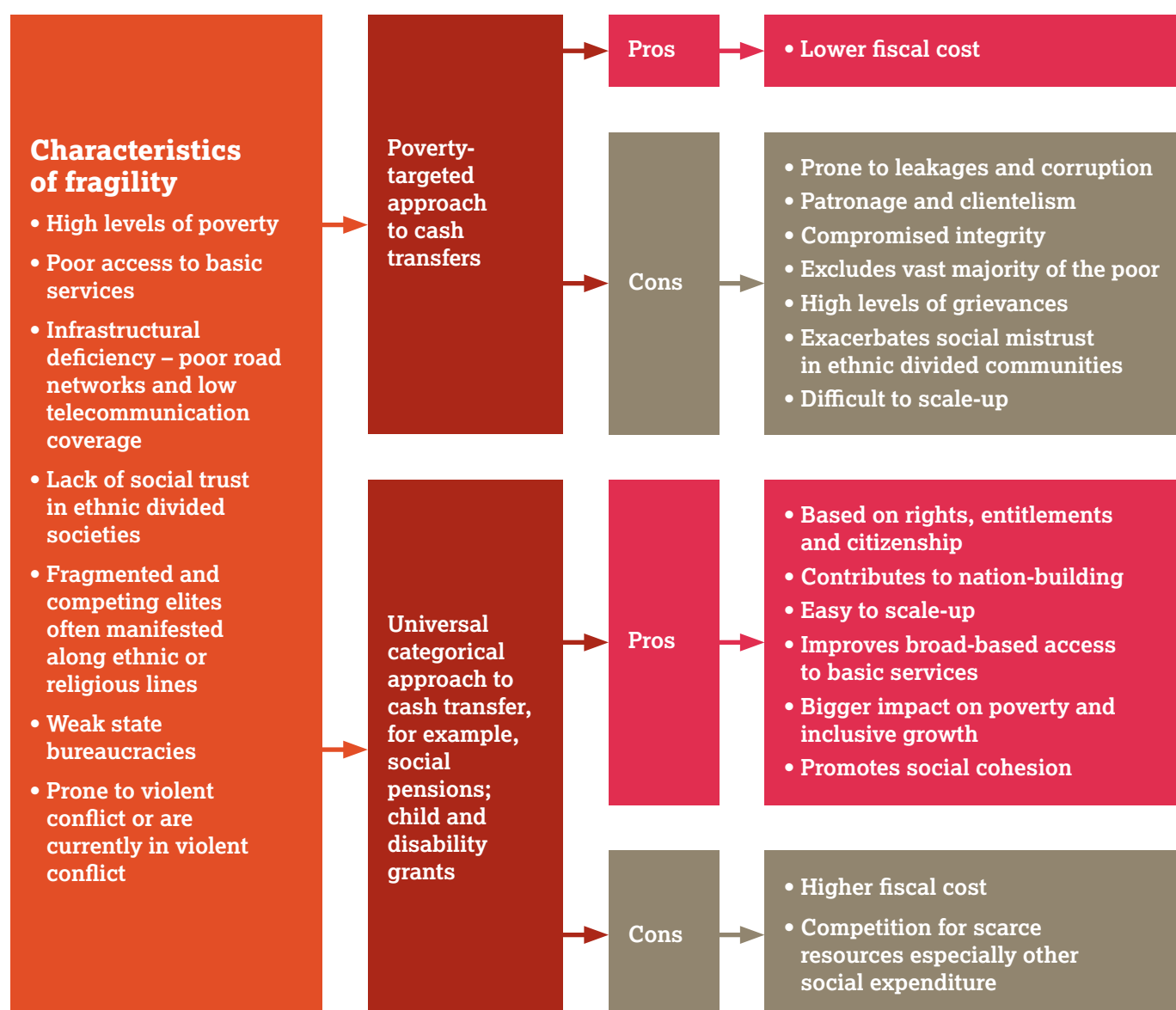
In addition to the shortcomings of poverty-targeted programmes in countries with high levels of poverty and low administrative capacities, the argument in favour of universal programmes supports social policy objectives based on the concepts of solidarity, citizenship and nation building. In line with the activist ideological perspective, the argument for universalism is based on equity and social justice. Universal programmes are also known to be administratively easier to implement because they do not require sophisticated and complex techniques in selecting beneficiaries. They may not be completely free from abuse and leakages but they are less prone to elite capture and manipulation.

The main argument against adopting a universal approach focuses on the fiscal implications where resources are limited and governments have competing priorities. This is clearly a political decision – research by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and HelpAge International, using costing tools, shows that universal programmes are affordable even in low-income countries.<sup>16</sup>

Given the high levels of poverty in fragile states and situations and the limited resources available, the rationale for targeting the poorest may seem persuasive. However, as already noted, this is a very difficult, expensive and complicated exercise. Extremely high levels of error, both of inclusion and exclusion, are well documented.

Programmes designed to foster solidarity and strengthen the concept of citizenship are critical to fragile contexts in which the state is not seen to have any positive impact on the lives of its citizens. Programmes based on citizenship and social justice, not philanthropy, are required.

**Figure 2: Pros and cons of poverty targeting and universal approaches to cash transfers**



### 2.3.3 Government or non-government delivery?

The third critical aspect to consider is which actors should be involved in delivering cash transfers in fragile states and contexts. The key question is: should cash transfers be strictly state-led, or are smaller scale non-state programmes also likely to improve state-citizen relations?

An OECD report illustrates the tensions between the principles in two key documents that guide international intervention in developing countries and, by extension, in fragile states. On the one hand, the *Good Humanitarian Donorship* (GHD) initiative is associated with humanitarian aid and its principles of neutrality and independence. On the other hand, the OECD Principles of engagement in fragile states focus on building the capacity of state institutions and their relationship with the wider society. The report argues that the principles guiding these two instruments should not be seen as contradictory but mutually complementary.<sup>17</sup>

GHD provides a forum for donors to discuss good practice in Humanitarian Financing<sup>18</sup> and other shared concerns. By defining principles and standards, it provides both a framework to guide official humanitarian aid and a mechanism for encouraging greater donor accountability. Its primary objectives focus on meeting the immediate needs of people affected during and after man-made crises and natural disasters; preventing the occurrence of such situations; and strengthening disaster preparedness.

Its key principles are:

- Humanity – saving human lives and alleviating suffering wherever it is found
- Impartiality – implementing actions solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected populations
- Neutrality – humanitarian action must not favour any side in an armed conflict or other dispute where such action is carried out
- Independence – autonomy of humanitarian objectives from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.

In contrast, the OECD principles of engagement in fragile states focus on a longer-term vision for international engagement. Their main objective is “to help national reformers to build effective, legitimate, and resilient state institutions”.<sup>19</sup> The focus is on a key element of state building – enhancing the capacity of the state to deliver basic services to its citizens.

The principles are as follows:

- Take context as the starting point
- Do no harm
- Focus on state building as the central objective
- Prioritise prevention
- Recognise the links between political, security and development objectives
- Promote non-discrimination as a basis for inclusive and stable societies
- Align with local priorities in different ways in different contexts
- Agree on practical coordination mechanisms between international actors
- Act fast but stay engaged long enough to give success a chance
- Avoid pockets of exclusion.



Both sets of principles are useful in guiding external intervention in fragile states, whether the state is in conflict or recovering from conflict. Humanitarian actors rightly argue that non-state actors should not just focus on the delivery of immediate relief materials, such as food and non-food items (NFIs), but also be involved in the delivery of cash transfers to the affected and vulnerable population.

The main objectives are to save the lives of people at risk in a non-discriminatory, unbiased and impartial manner as well as improving coping mechanisms, strengthening resilience to cope with future shocks and vulnerabilities. Thus NGOs have recently added cash transfers to the range of instruments they use in assisting people during emergencies.

The key issue is whether or not it is possible to design short-term, humanitarian-led cash transfer programmes in a way that can contribute to or at least inform the design of state-led programmes. In the continuum between humanitarian relief and longer-term development, cash transfers in emergency interventions could support the development of longer-term social protection programmes where they have not existed before.<sup>20</sup> These programmes need to be developed not in isolation from government and they also need to proactively build an evidence base to inform national policy debate and formulation.

For example, HelpAge International is currently piloting a six-month cash transfer programme targeting older people in 93 IDP camps in Haiti. One of the aims is to use the learning and work with the Haitian government to develop a longer-term social pension programme. Only state-owned programmes have the potential – in the longer-term – to strengthen state-citizen relations, so the goal is to ensure that the state is the primary actor in delivering services, including cash transfers, to its own citizens.

The Grow up Free from Poverty Coalition (GUFFP) – a network of UK NGOs working on social protection – also believes that for cash transfers to be sustainable and institutionalised, the state should be the main actor in financing, delivering and administering such programmes.<sup>21</sup>

## **2.4 Conceptual framework: the role of cash transfers in fragile contexts**

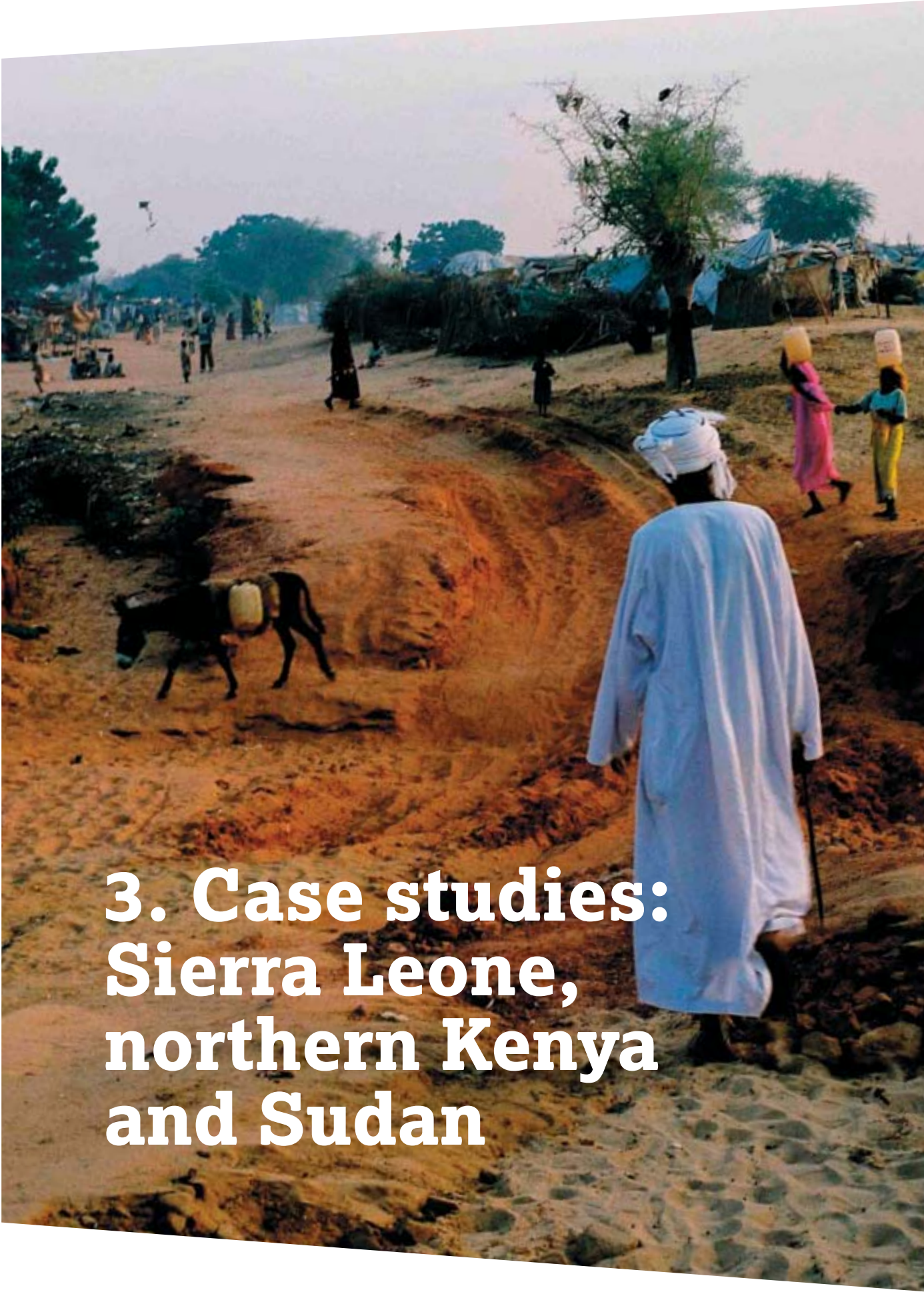
This study is premised on the notion that a well-designed cash transfer programme can play a vital role in addressing chronic poverty and vulnerabilities in fragile contexts; tackling some of the underlying causes and manifestations of fragility; and strengthening the relationship between the state and its citizens. A state that caters for the welfare of all of its citizens irrespective of social class is bound to be seen as more legitimate. Regular cash transfer programmes such as universal non-contributory social pensions in Nepal, Kosovo and Timor Leste are an integral part of wider social policies put in place to foster social cohesion and re-establish public trust in state institutions in the aftermath of crisis.

Governments generally include cash transfer schemes in broader social protection strategies, partly because a range of studies indicates that such programmes are effective in increasing poor people's demand for services and improving their education and health outcomes, thereby contributing to meeting the MDGs.<sup>22</sup> These schemes are also politically popular and have the potential to enhance the legitimacy of the state.

In the African context, most of this evidence on the impact of cash transfers is based on findings in low- and middle-income non-fragile states, particularly in Southern Africa. Countries such as Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa have put in place state-funded cash transfer programmes, including social pensions in the form of unconditional cash transfers targeted at older people. Other state-owned programmes include disability grants in South Africa and Namibia; poverty-targeted social assistance schemes in Botswana; and the Child Support Grant in South Africa. While South Africa is classified as a middle-income country, it increased the scale of its non-contributory pension in the immediate post-apartheid period to counteract social tensions and the vast gap between the rich and the poor.

In Kenya, Zambia and Uganda, donors have played active roles in financing and providing technical support to cash transfer pilot projects – in Kenya, the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP); in Zambia, a number of pilot “social cash transfer” programmes; and in Uganda, the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE). The small-scale nature of these pilots allows for manageable monitoring and evaluation systems, which have been very positive. However, there are legitimate concerns about the long-term viability and sustainability of such pilots, especially when they are scaled up to the national level.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, these governments have been reluctant to take responsibility for the financing and long-term sustainability of these programmes.<sup>24</sup>

There is very consistent evidence that captures rising living standards of the poor; a growing body of positive evidence that captures human development/human capital; and a strong logic to date with limited evidence with regards to the economic impact and growth inclusiveness of cash transfer programmes. However, there is extremely little evidence that captures the impact of cash transfer programmes on state-building in fragile states.<sup>25</sup> The next section looks beyond living standards, human capital development and economic impacts of cash transfer programmes but focuses on their potential role in strengthening state-citizen relations – an important element of state-building. This is a critical imperative in most, if not all fragile states. The main focus is on two existing cash transfer programmes that include older people as beneficiaries, in Sierra Leone and northern Kenya, and the potential of a cash transfer scheme to bridge the gap between relief and recovery in west Darfur, Sudan.



### 3. Case studies: Sierra Leone, northern Kenya and Sudan



### 3. Case Studies: Sierra Leone, northern Kenya and Sudan

#### 3.1 Contexts: categories and attributes of fragility

The three case studies have been selected to reflect different types of state fragility. It is difficult to place states experiencing elements of fragility into neat and rigid categories. Fragility is a complex and fluid concept and states can move from one category to the other depending on unpredictable circumstances. While there are striking differences between the three case studies, there are also revealing similarities in the forms of fragility they exhibit.

#### Differences

- Sierra Leone is a post-conflict state that is working towards delivering services to its citizens but the capacity of state institutions to deliver basic services still needs further strengthening. Public expectations of “peace dividends” are still quite high as many are still rebuilding their lives in the aftermath of a devastating civil war, which finally ended in 2002.
- Kenya is a relatively strong state with significant challenges particularly in the northern parts of the country. The violence that erupted after the 2008 elections also exposed the underlying tensions and fragilities beneath the apparently peaceful surface. Kenya is the sub-regional power in East Africa but a vast area of arid and semi-arid land (ASAL) lags behind the rest of the country in socio-economic and infrastructural development. This area is considered fragile due to its topography, food insecurity and vulnerability to violent conflicts particularly in Turkana in the northwest, bordering South Sudan and northern Uganda. The border town of Mandera, overlooking Somalia and Ethiopia to the northeast also experiences periodic outbreaks of violent conflict.
- Sudan is a conflict-affected state in which the North has been in and out of conflict with the South for decades. The South will soon become a new country as a result of the recent referendum. In recent years, conflict has also erupted in Darfur, western Sudan. Much of the population remains at or below the poverty line. Following two decades of civil war in the South and the Darfur conflict, large areas of the country lack basic infrastructure, and much of the population relies on subsistence agriculture.

The three countries are at different levels of infrastructural development. While many areas in northern Kenya and in Darfur town centres have electricity, in Sierra Leone only the capital city, Freetown currently has electricity, though plans are underway to supply other parts of the country. At present, the rest of the country relies on generators (for those that can afford them) to power their homes, offices and businesses. Compared to northern Kenya and Darfur, mobile phone coverage in rural communities in Sierra Leone is extremely low.

The conflict in Darfur and instability in northern Kenya that border on Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan and northern Uganda have generated large numbers of displaced persons. These are either refugees, who have managed to cross borders or internally displaced persons (IDPs), who remain displaced within Kenya or Sudan. For example thousands of IDPs were displaced during the 2008 post-election violence in Kenya. In contrast, as a post-conflict developing state, Sierra Leone no longer has a serious problem with internal displacement.

## **Similarities**

There are also regional inequities in socio-economic development. For example, northern Kenya and Darfur, Sudan lag behind other parts of their respective two countries in both socio-economic and infrastructural development. Some areas in eastern Sudan are in fact poorer than the south and the west (Darfur) and they also experience outbreaks of violent conflict. In Sierra Leone, poverty levels are higher in the east (where the civil war began and ended) and in the north compared to the west and south. There appears to be a correlation between low levels of development and susceptibility to eruption of violent conflicts, particularly in areas with the lowest economic and infrastructural development.

The three countries all depend on primary commodities and their natural resources to generate external revenue. Kenya relies on several primary products (tea, coffee, etc) whose prices remain low in the international commodity market. 75 per cent of its labour force works in the agricultural sector.

Sierra Leone relies on alluvial diamond and other mineral resources as the major source of hard currency earnings, accounting for nearly half of Sierra Leone's exports. 50 per cent of the working-age population is engaged in subsistence agriculture.

Sudan began exporting crude oil in the last quarter of 1999 and the economy boomed on the back of increases in oil production, high oil prices, and significant inflows of foreign direct investment until the second half of 2008. 80 per cent of the population relies on subsistence agriculture.

Service delivery in northern Kenya, west Darfur and many rural areas in Sierra Leone is mainly carried out with the support of local and international non-governmental organisations. Another significant similarity between the three case study countries that affects social provision is poor record keeping in civil registration systems, particularly at local government level. For example, there is lack of reliable data on the number of older people at the chiefdom level in Sierra Leone, and in remote communities in northern Kenya and west Darfur.

## **3.2 The impact of fragility on citizens: the example of older women and their households**

Based on observation during the field work for this study, older women and children constitute the majority in the rural areas. The impacts of fragility on older women and their households vary in degree according to the nature and context of fragility. The common challenges facing older women in the three case studies are similar to those found in many other low-income African countries.

### **Challenges facing older women**

- **Lack of a regular source of income**
- **Declining health and physical strength**
- **Lack of access to free medical services**
- **Food insecurity**
- **Lack of productive assets**
- **Intensive rural-urban migration of able-bodied members of the household**

*“I have six grandchildren under my care because my two sons have abandoned us in the village. I have difficulties providing for them [grandchildren]. Two have dropped out of school because they need to support the rest of us. I am also not feeling too well and can’t afford to buy medicine because I don’t have money.”*

Aishatu Bangura, 80, older woman in Sierra Leone

Poverty, ill health and food insecurity among older women greatly impede their role as caregivers for their grandchildren. Many older women, especially in rural areas, are responsible for their grandchildren because most male and middle-aged family members tend to migrate to urban centres and in many cases struggle to remit cash to their families in the rural areas.

Older women generally work to support their families but the prevailing insecurity in fragile situations, such as the border areas of northern Kenya, restricts their ability to continue working as farmers and pastoralists. As a result, they do not have a regular source of income to support themselves and their grandchildren. They also lack productive assets, which many have lost as a result of on-going conflict or previous conflicts.

Although they are a vulnerable group, older people are not included in government-run programmes providing free access to health services. In Sierra Leone, for example, older women are not included in the free access to healthcare, unlike pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under five years old. Similarly, Sudan provides free drugs for children but not for older people. In the three case study areas, many older people, including older women in rural areas, suffer from issues related to mobility, non-communicable diseases and poor eyesight – all of which can be treated at low cost.

In the conflict-affected areas of west Darfur, older women in IDP camps face significant challenges in returning to their original communities. Some find it difficult to return due to frailty and failing health. Many would like to return but are worried that they would lose the benefits and services they currently receive as camp residents. For example, their grandchildren would not have access to schools and primary healthcare in the rural areas, if they returned to areas where basic social services are poor or non-existent. Apart from the general reluctance to return, many older women in IDP camps in west Darfur see the Older People’s Social Centres, (‘age-friendly spaces’ in the camps) as an important part of their lives because they play a critical psycho-social role.

### **3.3 Existing social protection measures targeting older people**

Within their wider social protection frameworks all three countries have social insurance schemes which mainly cover workers in formal employment. However, the majority of workers, including older people, operate in the informal sector. There are, therefore, huge gaps in coverage.

Kenya and Sierra Leone have cash transfer social assistance programmes while Sudan relies on *Zakat funds* to assist the poor and needy. The cash transfer programmes in Kenya (OPCT and HSNP) and Sierra Leone (SSN) are poverty-targeted and apply a form of means testing to select beneficiaries. The only exception is the HSNP’s social pension methodology. While the OPCT and SSN are fully funded and implemented by the government, the HSNP is a donor-funded and NGO-implemented programme. The HSNP secretariat, located in the Ministry of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands, is responsible for the overall coordination of the programme, but is not directly involved in implementation.



*“We don’t really want to be here but we can’t go home because we fear for our lives. There is no security back there. We are happy that HelpAge has built this social centre for us and is helping us with other items.”*

Aminat, 76, older woman,  
Medinat Hujaj IDP Camp

### 3.3.1 Sudan<sup>26</sup>

The main social protection system in Sudan is the National Pension Fund (NPF) which covers public service employees. Apart from collecting contributions and paying pensions, the NPF performs two other functions to assist pensioners and their families. These are the Pensioners Social Development Scheme and Pensioners Social Aid Directorate.

The Islamic system of *Zakat* – whereby Muslims earning over 10,000 Sudanese pounds (US\$3,575.26) per annum are obligated by Islamic law to pay 2.5 per cent of their annual income into the fund – provides social assistance. This fund caters for the needs of the poor, which includes poor older people, people with disabilities and those in dire need of help. The *Zakat* is administered through the *Zakat* Chamber and is based on Islamic law.

#### **Pensioners Social Development Scheme**

- to alleviate poverty among pensioners through the provision of interest-free long term loans to establish small businesses
- number of beneficiaries in the period 2001-2009 amounted to around 43,000 pensioners

#### **Pensioners Social Aid Directorate**

- to provide pensioners with financial support to alleviate the rising
- cost of living
- to subsidise cost of medication and education for their children

#### ***Zakat***

- based on the Islamic code
- the wealthy contribute to assist the poor

Apart from the current role played by the NPF and *Zakat* Chamber, the Government of Sudan has the overall responsibility for older people in the country through the Federal Ministry of Welfare and Social Security. It also offers some form of support to “special categories” such as orphaned and vulnerable children, people living with disability and very frail older people. It has developed a comprehensive national strategy on ageing and established a National Committee for Old Age. The Federal Ministry in Khartoum formulates and regulates general policies. However, the Ministry of Social Welfare in each state government can also articulate and implement policies at the state level.

### 3.3.2 Sierra Leone

A social protection policy framework prepared by a Technical Steering Committee was recently approved by the Cabinet. A key objective of the policy framework is to promote a stronger state-citizen relationship. In this policy framework, older people are prioritised as among the most vulnerable group, next to children and people with disabilities. The document recognises social protection as an effective mechanism to address childhood poverty and to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty within families.

#### **NASSIT**

- compulsory for all employees in the formal sector
- covers less than 5 per cent of the working population

#### **SSN (pilot phase 2007 to 2008)**

- non-contributory scheme
- 100 per cent government funded
- targeted 16,291 beneficiaries
- based on poverty targeting
- age criteria: 60 and above
- one-off payment SLL200,000 (US\$47)

The Government of Sierra Leone is also committed to working with non-state actors to strengthen existing social assistance schemes by increasing coverage and improving outcomes.

The system comprises a social insurance system managed by the National Social Security Investment Trust (NASSIT). Membership of this scheme is compulsory for all formally employed workers. The NASSIT is trying to extend the benefits of the scheme to a greater number of self-employed workers, in order to increase the number of individuals and families protected from the consequences of loss of employment through death, injury or business failure.

The Social Safety Net (SSN) programme (analysed in Section 3.4.1) is an example of a social assistance scheme designed to target “the poorest of the poor” older people. Between 2007 and 2008, over 16,000 older people received a one-off or two-cycle payment of SLL200,000 (US\$47).

### 3.3.3 Kenya

In Kenya, social insurance schemes consist of the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), the Civil Service Pension Scheme and the Occupational Pension Scheme. As a result of inadequate social security provision, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development (MGCSD) has been leading policy development that would cater for the protection of vulnerable groups excluded from the above schemes. The Orphan and Vulnerable Children Cash Transfer (OVC-CT) – supported by the World Bank and UNICEF – and the Older Persons Cash Transfer (OPCT) – a 100 per cent government-funded programme – are implemented by this ministry.

The OPCT specifically targets older people. Launched in 2009, it targets 32,250 poor and vulnerable older persons aged 65 years and above in 44 districts, covering 750 households per district. The beneficiaries receive KShs1,500 (US\$18) per month. During the year 2009/2010, the Government allocated KShs550m (US\$6.6m) to this programme, which was rolled out in all the targeted districts.

#### **NSSF**

- approximately 800,000 members
- Civil Pension Scheme estimated approximately 125,000 persons (2003)
- Occupational Pension Scheme covering approximately 1,352 persons

#### **OPCT**

- 100 per cent government-funded
- targets 32,250 poor and vulnerable older people
- covers 44 districts
- 750 households per district
- age criteria 65 and above
- KShs1,500 (US\$18) per month

#### **HSNP (phase I 2007-2011)**

- donor-funded/NGO-implemented pilot project
- the three methodologies combined targeted 35,000 older people
- 13 districts across northern Kenya
- age criteria 55 and above
- KShs2,150 (US\$25.90) every two months

Apart from the OPCT, there is the HSNP – a joint Government of Kenya/DFID initiative (analysed in Section 3.4.3). The programme is being implemented in two phases. The objective of Phase I (April 2007-March 2011) is to design and pilot cost-effective mechanisms for beneficiary targeting, payment delivery and grievance management in 13 districts across northern Kenya, targeting 60,000 beneficiaries. The focus of this phase will be a comparison of the cost-effectiveness of three different types of targeting methodology: a universal social pension (for people aged over 55 years); community-based targeting; and targeting based on a household “dependency ratio”.

Phase II (2012-2017) is expected to select one or more of these targeting approaches (based on evidence of cost-effectiveness and impact) and roll it out, along with the processes for payments and grievance management, to 300,000 households.

### 3.4 Cash transfers and state-citizen relations

Cash transfer programmes can contribute to strengthening the relationship between the state and its citizens and, in the process, enhancing the legitimacy of the state. The next sections examine the impact of the SSN programme in Sierra Leone and the HSNP programme in Kenya on state-citizen relations. What are the factors that influence the nature of state-citizen relations in the context of a cash transfer programme? What are the limitations and challenges? In the Sudanese context, what role can cash transfers play in a region like west Darfur, where the government and donors are keen to shift from emergency relief to recovery and longer-term development?

#### 3.4.1 Impact of the SSN on state-citizen relations in Sierra Leone

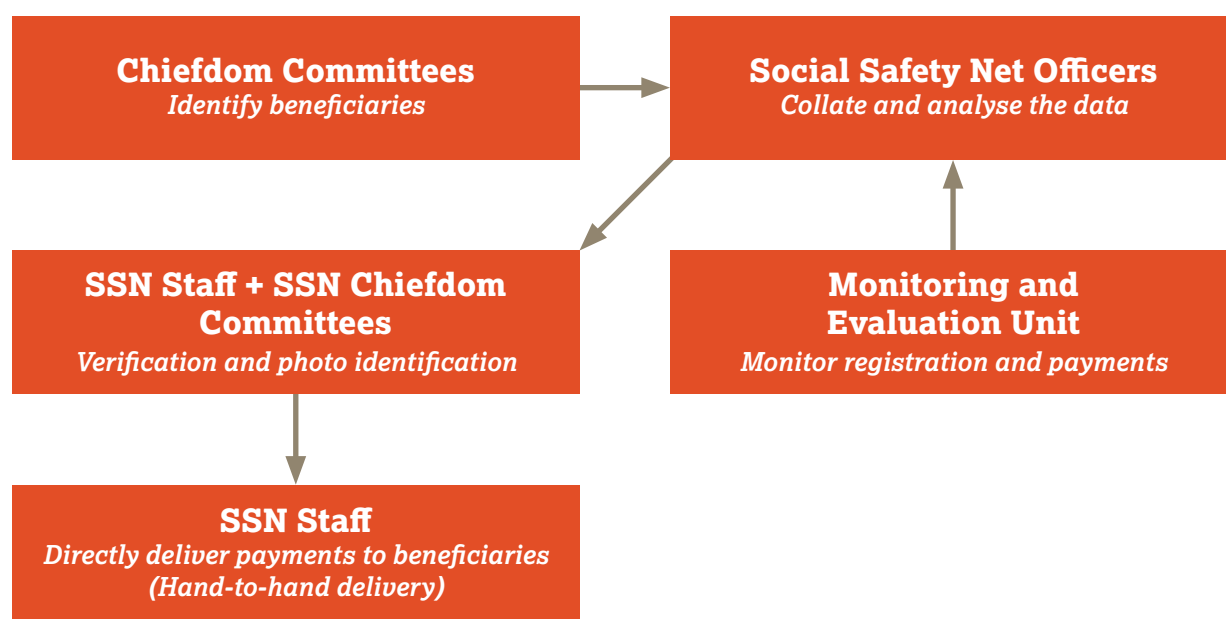
A central objective of the SSN in Sierra Leone was “to assist the old and needy in such a way that it increases their sense of citizenship participation and reintegration into community life”.<sup>27</sup> The programme covered 65 chiefdoms out of 149 chiefdoms in the provinces, with a total of 16,291 older beneficiaries (60 years and above) between 2007/2008. The concept paper for the SSN scheme identified the most vulnerable in society as intended beneficiaries. The basic idea was not to give handouts, but “a hand up”. It defined a social safety net for older people and the needy as a scheme for people with no means of support, who have no regular income and are unable to work. The scheme is described as non-contributory and fully funded by Government.

#### Implementation

In terms of implementation, a community-based targeting approach was seen as the best way to identify those meeting the criteria for eligibility. The beneficiaries must:

- have no regular income
- have no other means of support
- be unable to work
- aged 60 years old and above.

**Figure 3: SSN delivery flowchart**



Although the lack of viable organisational structures in the community was identified as a major constraint in implementing the programme, “the establishment of a committee in each community became an absolute necessity”.<sup>28</sup> Those living in particular local government units (chiefdoms) were considered collectively to have good knowledge of the circumstances of persons in the community. Each committee was headed by the paramount chief or his designated representative, and the committee members were to carry out their duties (identifying beneficiaries) voluntarily and free of charge.

The study examined the impact of the programme on state-citizen relations – how far it contributed to enhancing citizens’ trust of the state, and whether the programme was viewed as empowering or disempowering. Focus group discussions with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries and semi-structured interviews with paramount chiefs and their designated representatives, including section chiefs, were conducted in 12 selected chiefdoms.

**Table 1: List of districts, chiefdoms and towns surveyed**

Districts	Chiefdoms	Towns
Port Loko	Maforki Dibia Marampa	Port Loko Town Gbinti Lunsar
Tonkolili	Kholifa Rowallah Gbonkolenken Gbonkolenken	Magburaka Yele Mayepo
Bombali	Gbendembu Ngowahun Gbendembu Ngowahun Bombali Sheborah	Gbendembu Kalangba Makeni
Bo	Bumpe Ngao Bumpe Ngao Bumpe Ngao	Bumpe town Borgo Serabu

*“Those who got the money were lucky and we that didn’t get the money were unlucky”.*

Mohammed Bangura, 65,  
older man (non-beneficiary)

### **Beneficiary and non-beneficiaries responses**

While the beneficiaries of the programme experienced a positive change in their economic and material wellbeing as a result of the cash transfer, findings from the focus group discussions showed that almost every respondent expressed the belief that the way the actual selection of beneficiaries was carried out was unfair.

For example, there was a consensus in 7 chiefdoms that the members of the local committee, including the paramount chief, selected most of the beneficiaries without recourse to the criteria for eligibility. In chiefdoms where the criteria were used, some beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries did not understand the questions they were asked. In some instances, committee members were said to have been given money before putting people’s names forward as beneficiaries.

In 10 chiefdoms, beneficiaries said they did not receive the exact amount of money they were entitled to receive. In some chiefdoms, committee members were said to have deducted between 2.5 and 25 per cent from the sum each beneficiary was entitled to receive.<sup>29</sup> For example in Gbinti, focus groups reported that each beneficiary was taken to a separate room after receiving payment and was asked give SLL20,000 (US\$4.70) as their “contribution” to the work done by

local committee members. It was not clear whether these “side” payments to local committee members in Gbinti were made voluntarily or not, as there was no consensus among the beneficiaries that participated in the focus group discussion. Two beneficiaries said they were happy to part with the money while two others said they had no choice but to pay the committee members as requested.

In all 12 chiefdoms, the focus group discussants believed that the government had very good intentions in introducing the programme but unfortunately local political elites hijacked it during implementation.

Several beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries believed that the selection process was fraught with irregularities, as the majority of beneficiaries were not selected based on the vulnerability criteria set by the government. Rather, respondents claimed selection was based on favouritism. For example, in Magburuka town, respondents reported that each section chief presented ten persons without reference to the selection criteria and no explanation was given to the wider community.

*“During registration I was asked whether I had anyone supporting me in the house and I said yes. I was later told that I did not qualify to receive the money because I have someone supporting me. I say they are wrong. When I was asked the question, I thought they were referring to my grandchildren who I send on errands. I am the one looking after them and we can’t afford to even eat a good meal every day. How can they say that because I have little children under my care that I don’t deserve the money? It is very unfair but I will keep praying to God who is bigger than everyone.”*

Amina Sesay, 70, older woman

A few people below the age criteria (60 and above) also benefited from the programme. For instance, in Bumpe town, Borgo and Serabu (in Bo district) beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries said that a few persons below 60 years old received the cash because they were selected by their section chiefs.

A few non-beneficiaries also believed that their exclusion from the programme was the result of bad luck and lack of timely information regarding the programme. Many said they were not aware of the registration exercise. Several hoped that they would be able to benefit from the programme when next it came to their community.

Problems were also identified with payment of benefits. Registration often took place between 8am and 5pm and local committee members worked on a first come first serve basis. In many cases those who were registered did not receive the money. They were told that the officials from Freetown had run out of money and would return in the near future to continue the exercise.

*“I believe I didn’t benefit from the programme because the people that did the selection accused me of supporting the wrong political party. It was obvious that they were rewarding those who support their preferred candidate.”*

Adama Koroma, 80, older woman



*“The chiefs were responsible because they influenced the people that came from Freetown in order to favour some people who are related to them or people they like but they are still our brothers and sisters. I hope next time I will be lucky to receive the money. I will keep praying.”*

Musa Sesay, 67, older man

In an extreme case in Kalangba town, local committee members were said to have completely disregarded the previous registration list and were selecting beneficiaries based on who was willing and able to part with money. For example, three of the non-beneficiaries who participated in the focus group discussion in Kalangba town were registered but did not receive the money because they were unable to meet the demands of some of the local committee members. In addition, over 300 people who paid SLL5,000 (US\$1.16) upfront during registration did not receive the cash transfer on the day payments were made. Yet they were not refunded. Youths believed to be representing some powerful local elites were said to have hijacked the process without the knowledge of programme staff from Freetown.

In a few chiefdoms, many poor and vulnerable older people who live in extremely remote villages far from the main town of the chiefdom were unable to participate during registration. They either could not afford to make the journey to the registration centre, or they were completely unaware of the exercise. The section chiefs who represented a group of villages were blamed for not informing their constituencies, despite the fact that officials in Freetown sent representatives in advance – at least two weeks prior to registration and payment – to inform the communities about the programme.

*“On the day they distributed the money, the people in charge demanded that we pay them before they give us the money. These people are here in this town. One of them is the former councillor. He said we had to pay for the paper they are using and they also need the money to entertain the officials from Freetown. So those of us that could not pay were unable to receive the money.”*

Older woman, Kalangba town

For those who were able to benefit from the programme, the time and effort spent trying to register and subsequently receive payment was described as “de-humanising”. Payment days were particularly chaotic and poorly organised. Several frail older men and women spent the whole day in overcrowded community centres because as many people as possible were determined to benefit from the cash transfer. On payment day, beneficiaries also had to pay for security when returning to their villages as they feared being attacked on the way home. In fact, there were no incidents of robbery or attacks reported in any of the 12 chiefdoms surveyed.

In terms of design, the programme had no grievance mechanisms in place so that individuals could register complaints. Many felt powerless and frustrated. They could only voice these frustrations to their local chiefs, whom many people believed were responsible for their exclusion. In response to these allegations, a few chiefs mentioned during interviews that they were put in a very difficult position, because the local committees found it extremely challenging to select the most vulnerable in a situation where they believed practically everyone was vulnerable and deserved to receive the money. A few chiefs were also unhappy that the programme initiators did not see fit to compensate them for taking part in the process.

*“When I went to plead with my section chief to add my name as a beneficiary he asked me to bring two chickens. I asked him where he expected me to get them from, considering that I am very poor and blind for that matter.”*

Joe, 65, older man, Bumpe Town, Bumpe Ngao Chiefdom

In terms of social cohesion, the programme rarely caused conflict. In the areas where it was implemented, the ethnic configuration in many of the chiefdoms is fairly homogenous. For example, in several northern chiefdoms the population is mainly Temne, while in southern chiefdoms, the Mende people predominate.

However, in Biriwa chiefdom in the northwest<sup>30</sup>, there are two ethnic groups and the paramount chief is from the minority Mandingo tribe. He was never accepted as the legitimate leader by the Limbas who constitute the majority in the chiefdom. The programme was severely disrupted because the majority Limba tribe refused to accept the chief as head of the local committee. As a result of the dispute, only 77 older people benefited instead of the 450 allocated to Biriwa. Several vulnerable Limbas refused to turn up for registration because they did not trust the Mandingo chief.

The lesson is that poverty-targeted programmes in a homogenous community are less likely to lead to social tensions but this is probably not the case in a heterogeneous and divided community.

*“As the head of the Chiefdom, the people always blame us (the paramount chief and the section chiefs) irrespective of what we do in such circumstances. Those that didn’t receive the money hold us responsible for their exclusion. It will make life much easier for us if everyone benefits from the programme.”*

A paramount chief, Sierra Leone

These findings demonstrate that poverty-targeted programmes cannot be guaranteed to be transparent and fair. Furthermore, it is very challenging to rely on community power structures for credible implementation, particularly where members of the local committees are also poor and desperate to benefit from the cash transfer. It inevitably subjects the programme to the risk of local elite capture and patronage.

Thus a potentially good programme ended up losing credibility and support from the wider community. Even within remote rural communities, there are and will always be power relations at play and these needed to be taken into consideration. Though some of the beneficiaries of the programme experienced a change in their economic and material wellbeing as a result of the transfer, many non-beneficiaries felt cheated and powerless.

It was also believed within the chiefdoms where the programmes were implemented that the local elites used the programme as a political tool. There were allegations, but no consensus, that the government in power at that time (2007-2008) used the programme to gather support from certain areas of the country (in the north, which was the stronghold of the then opposition and now the ruling party).

The way the programme was implemented further undermined the already weak relationship between the local chiefs and the people at the chiefdom level. It reaffirmed many respondents' belief that local leaders manipulated criteria to dispense favours to their family members, friends and cronies. This brings into question the programme's credibility and legitimacy and its ability to have a positive impact on state-citizen relations. It further eroded citizens' trust in state institutions in a fragile setting.

### **3.4.2 Limitations and challenges of the SSN**

The SSN is a 100 per cent government-funded pilot programme which demonstrates its commitment to tackling old-age vulnerability and poverty and enhancing citizen participation and reintegration into community life in a post-conflict period. However, the design and implementation of the programme in fact further undermined the relationship between the state and its citizens. In many cases it may have exacerbated suspicion and mistrust between citizens and public authorities.

With the resources available, the designers of the programme decided to target extremely vulnerable older people but this created serious distortions and significant inclusion and exclusion errors during implementation. The following factors limited the ability of the programme to contribute to strengthening state-citizen relations:

- No thorough research or feasibility study was conducted to develop an understanding of the social, political and economic dynamics in the chiefdoms prior to the programme design. The design process itself was hurried, with little time allowed to ensure wider community participation. Effective mechanisms to deliver the cash were not agreed, and the country had no previous experience of managing and delivering cash transfers.
- Targeting the “most vulnerable” in a context where poverty and vulnerability is widespread limited coverage and exposed the programme to high rates of leakage and abuse. Paramount chiefs and section chiefs were also determined to benefit from the cash transfer. The transfer/benefit level of SLL200,000 (US\$47) is a significant amount of money in many rural communities in Sierra Leone. Discretionary and subjective selection of beneficiaries based on a form of means testing (using reported income levels, in situations where no reliable or credible data exists in the informal sector) creates room for manipulation and abuse of the process by local administrative and political authorities.
- Instead of empowering communities, the programme actually disempowered them because its objectives and criteria for selecting beneficiaries were not clear. The absence of a functioning grievance and accountability mechanism left many feeling powerless and cheated. The programme lacked an effective communication mechanism, so that communities did not understand clearly whom the cash transfer was meant to target. Furthermore, older people in remote villages were unaware of the programme.
- A key element of fragility – weak institutional capacity – constrained the ability of state officials from Freetown to implement and monitor effectively a poverty-targeted programme on a national scale. Staffing and resource limitations at the government agency implementing the programme proved to be a major constraint. For instance, only one member of staff had received training on cash transfer programming. The Monitoring and Evaluation unit relied on two motor bikes to cover the programme work in the entire northern region and just one motor bike to cover the entire southern region. A 40-mile journey between Bumpé town and Serabu town can take up to two hours depending on the state of the road and the weather, especially if it rains. Many of the poorest communities are only accessible on foot.

- From an infrastructural point of view – another element of fragility – Sierra Leone has poor road networks, which limit access to the poor; zero telephone coverage in majority of the rural areas; and an absence of pay points, such as banks and post offices, which makes it difficult to deliver cash to beneficiaries in remote areas. Limited mobile phone coverage in Sierra Leone reduces the feasibility of using this technology to deliver cash transfers in rural areas. Despite these difficulties there are lessons from elsewhere with regards to using innovative delivery mechanisms such as mobile banking and local business agents etc.
- The country is about 95 per cent rural. Government officials are seldom in close contact with the poorest and most vulnerable older people who tend to live in the remotest areas. Registration and payment took place in the headquarters town of the chiefdom, so that the most vulnerable and chronically poor older people were systematically excluded from benefiting from the cash transfer.
- In terms of sustainability, the programme did not receive an adequate budgetary allocation to deliver regular and predictable cash to the beneficiaries. The SSN secretariat was only able to implement the programme for one year (2007-2008). Since then, subsequent requests to continue the programme have received little support. The programme requested SLL16bn (US\$3.7m) in 2009 to scale up from 16,000+ to 35,000 beneficiaries but was only allocated SLL370m (US\$86,046), less than 2.5 per cent of their request. The fact that the programme was introduced and then came to an abrupt end further undermined state-citizen relations. The people's expectations were raised and then dashed. However, for the 2011 fiscal year, SLL2.5bn (US\$625,000) has been earmarked for the programme and the present administration is working towards redesigning and strengthening the programme.<sup>31</sup>

There are still concerns, particularly among senior government officials, that handouts during the emergency relief phase have created a dependency culture in a post-conflict environment. The government is therefore concerned to avoid creating dependency so they tend to prioritise Cash for Work (CFW) programmes for productive activities, rather than social assistance programmes. This is a defensible argument provided that older people, particularly older women and children are not placed in the same category as those who are able to provide productive labour. This underlines the importance of adopting a life-cycle approach to social assistance, which takes into consideration the risks and vulnerabilities facing citizens at various stages of their life cycle.

The case for cash transfers targeting older people (particularly older women) and their households is even more powerful in Sierra Leone if one takes into account the fact that majority of households in the rural areas are headed by poor older women looking after children under the age of 14.

### **3.4.3 Impact of the HSNP on state-citizen relations in northern Kenya**

A key objective of Phase I of the HSNP is to contribute to the establishment of a National Social Protection system which delivers long-term guaranteed cash transfers to extremely poor and vulnerable members of the society using the most convenient and reliable methodology. Phase I covers technical issues focusing on inclusion and exclusion errors in relation to the cost effectiveness of targeting, registration and enrolment, and their efficacy in tackling chronic poverty. The three targeting methodologies used in this phase are: a universal social pension for people aged over 55 years; community-based targeting and targeting based on household “dependency ratio”.

#### **National identity cards**

The HSNP programme has had some unintended positive impacts on state-citizen relations, in particular the incentive the programme creates to apply for national ID cards. These are required in order for beneficiaries to receive cash directly. Prior to the introduction of the programme, community members, especially older women,



did not see the value of having a national identity card. A key implication for state-citizen relations is that older women with national ID cards can now participate in the electoral process. In Kenya, an ID card is needed in order to vote.

In Turkana, Wajir and Mandera there has been a significant increase both in registration for national ID cards and also requests for corrections on previous cards. In El Das Location, for example, several older people lost their ID cards during the Wagalla massacre in 1984, tribal conflicts in 1994 and the Bagala massacre in 1998. Many did not see the need to replace them until the HSNP social pension programme was introduced in El Das. Records from the local chief's book showed that 505 people over 55 years old had applied for new ID cards and approximately 100 had received new cards.

*“It is obvious that the number of older people registering for national ID cards has dramatically increased in recent times. In the past, many did not see the value of having a national ID card but now the cash transfer programme has created the incentive for them to either apply for the first time or seek to correct the misinformation on their current cards.”*

Benson Leparmorijo, District Commissioner, Mandera

Records from the Mandera district Register of Persons showed that 342 older persons from Shafshafey Location applied for a national ID card between 3 and 11 November 2010, while 104 applied from Bulla Jamhuri Location within two days (1-2 November 2010).

There are also numerous cases where the date of birth on older people's ID cards was inaccurate. HSNP project staff encountered several cards with dates of birth in the 1980s and 1990s, even though it was quite clear that the cardholder was over 55 years old. Prior to the HSNP, there was no reason to return the cards for correction but the inability of many older people to access the programme has created the incentive to correct these errors.

### **Implementing the Social Protection Rights component**

The HSNP was designed to include a Social Protection Rights (SPR) component. The aim of the SPR is to promote beneficiary accountability in the HSNP through a five-pillared strategy:

1. Delivery of a rights education programme based on the HSNP's Programme Charter of Rights and Responsibilities (PCRR) and associated Service Charter – a document which sets out eight service-level commitments made by the agencies and companies responsible for implementing the HSNP
2. Management of an accessible complaints mechanism for monitoring observance of the HSNP Service Charter. This includes training elected community members to act as Rights Committees (RCs) charged with identifying rights infringements or deficiencies in service delivery, and flagging these cases to SPR component staff or directly to concerned service providers. The complaints mechanism made provision for both individual and collective “community complaints”
3. Provision of an independent appeals process and dispute resolution service
4. Beneficiary advocacy at programme management fora both at district and national level, as well as training community members to engage with service providers themselves
5. Capacity building of local civil society organisations on social protection and accountability mechanisms.

The RCs role is to empower the community to advocate and demand their rights within the programme. This process of *Haki Yangu* (“My Right”) at the grassroots, for instance in Turkana, has encouraged beneficiaries to demand efficient service and challenge problems such as delayed cards and questionable behaviour by agents responsible for payment. Beyond the programme, RCs are also intervening in food distributions by other humanitarian agencies, which were often carried out in ways that communities consider unfair and lacking in transparency. World Vision and the OPCT programme have recently shown a keen interest in learning from the HSNP SPR component.<sup>32</sup>

While the programme was being implemented, the three methodologies outlined earlier did create serious challenges for the SPR component as it was flooded with numerous complaints and grievances. The universal social pension for people aged over 55 years caused discontent among those under 55. This pension was designed to be universal in selected communities (also known as sub-locations). Initially, the inclusion of less poor and vulnerable older people led to anger in these communities which had previously only been familiar with community-based targeting during food and non-food item (NFI) relief distribution. However, with time and the perseverance of programme staff in explaining the methodology to the communities, understanding and acceptance of its rationale has increased.

Implementing community-based targeting methodology also proved to be challenging because there was no standard definition of who is poor and, according to information from the national poverty analysis, the majority of people in these communities are below the poverty line. For example, 92 per cent of the people in Turkana district are below the poverty line.<sup>33</sup> Sub-locations (comprising of villages) were allocated quotas based on figures derived from national statistics but each village insisted that programme staff fully exhaust the quota for the entire sub-location in their village despite differences in vulnerability across villages’ within the sub-location. This became more complicated when the figures derived from national statistics did not tally with the number of vulnerable persons that turned up in each village during the targeting process.

The dependency ratio was the most difficult to implement as programme staff found it hard to communicate the methodology effectively to the communities in the local dialect. Verifying the actual number of dependants in each household was also a problem. Therefore, project staff felt the need to withhold information on the eligibility criteria till the validation exercise had been completed, which led to a perception that the programme team was dishonest and not open to members of the community, thus violating their right to information.

*“At first people feared to ask things from the government, but since we received the ‘rights education’ the community is now asking for a number of things. We always ask in a respectful way and not in a rude way. Even the chiefs are now fearful because we are asking questions without fear. We need more training so that we can continue to demand and monitor what our leaders are doing with our resources”*

David Edoket, 57, Chair RC Nawoitorong sub-location, Turkana central

### **Enhancing citizen-state relations at local level**

On a positive note and in contrast to the SSN, the HSNP SPR component has managed to enhance state-citizen relations at the local level. Apart from the role they played within the parameters of the programme, there is evidence of spill-over effects and indirect impact in areas related to citizen participation, empowerment and engagement with local authorities.

The work of the RCs also extends, not by design but by default, to educating the people about their rights to engage with their local authorities to demand services. Findings in Turkana, Wajir and Mandera districts showed that communities with active RC members were successful in securing services from their local government authorities. This was never the case prior to the introduction of a “rights discourse” as a result of the HSNP programme.

**Table 2: ASAL districts, beneficiary and non-beneficiary sub-locations**

Districts	Beneficiary sub-locations	Non-beneficiary sub-locations
Turkana	Nawaitorong and Kalokol	Kanamkermer
Wajir	El Das and Tarbaj	–
Mandera	Shashafey	Novei

For example, in Nawoitorong sub-location in Turkana central district, RC members succeeded in persuading their local authority to construct water boreholes in villages which had a very high incidence of cholera. They demanded an alternative source of water that would make them less reliant on the seasonal river. Through collective action by the community, organised by the RCs, the Arid Lands project constructed five water boreholes in villages in the sub-location.

In Kalokol sub-location, RCs mobilised the community and influenced the District Officer to provide them with boats and fishing nets instead of the rafts they normally used for fishing. They also secured funds from the Community Development Funds (CDF) to buy equipment. As a result of the RC’s work in Kalokol many households now have proper fishing boats and fishing gear. Prior to this development, the community had relied heavily on food relief, but now they are gradually becoming more self reliant, because they are able to fish further out in the river and increase their catch. The RCs also succeeded in getting the government to construct a medical facility in Lolupe which previously had none. The nearest primary healthcare facility was 20km away in Lodwar.<sup>34</sup>

This contrasts with the neighbouring sub-location of Kanamkermer, which has yet to benefit from the HSNP. This community was unable to demand provision of services and is not able to monitor implementation. For instance, they were informed that a contractor had been given the contract from the CDF to sink a borehole in the community but nothing has been done to date and there is no collective action to follow up and monitor progress.

The RCs are also playing a very active role in dispute resolution. In the past, local authorities in Nawoitorong sub-location often resolved disputes in favour of powerful local elites. Now the powerless and weaker parties to disputes take their grievances to the RCs, which ensure that the chiefs resolve disputes in ways that are seen by the wider community to be fair and acceptable.

In Wajir district, in the northeast of the arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) in northern Kenya, membership of the HSNP Rights Committee overlaps with membership of the Pastoral Associations (PAs) which were in existence before the implementation of the HSNP. The PAs in Wajir are based at the locational and sub-locational levels. They were established in 1994 to provide a link between the communities and the government. Therefore community demands for services from their local authorities predate the HSNP programme. However, the HSNP rights education further complements and strengthens the ability of the RCs/PAs

to hold to account local authority representatives. For instance, prior to the implementation of the HSNP in Tarbaj town, very few members of the PA had received any formal education on rights-based issues.

In Shashafey sub-location in Mandera district, RC members were active in mobilising village elders and local chiefs to demand the extension of electricity to their respective villages. The project is ongoing and for the first time, two villages now have electricity. The road leading to the villages has also been expanded and graded. They have also succeeded in getting the Water Ministry to repair their water generator, which had been faulty for several years.

These examples illustrate some of the unintended benefits of designing cash transfer programmes with grievance mechanisms based on a rights discourse. While it remains true that improving state-citizen relations is basically an endogenous process, programmes funded and implemented by external actors can play a significant role in the short to medium term. Through the SPR component managed by HelpAge International and the administration component managed by Oxfam there is evidence that the HSNP in northern Kenya has some unintended spill-over effect and some positive albeit limited impact on state-citizen relations.

#### **3.4.4 Limitations and challenges of the HSNP**

Despite the contributions of the RCs established through the SPR component, there are certain limitations on the HSNP's ability to build longer-term institutionalised state-citizen relations:

- The fundamental limitation of the programme is the fact that it is a donor-funded and NGO-implemented programme with minimal involvement of state institutions. Although the HSNP secretariat is located in the Ministry of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands, it was not actively engaged in programme design and nor is it directly involved in implementation. Beneficiary communities are aware that the programme is donor-financed and they did not participate in the design of the programme. This raises questions of national and local ownership of the programme and its sustainability in the longer term.
- The nature of the programme design inevitably subjected the SPR component to substantial beneficiary grievances, many of which remain unresolved. Two and a half years after implementation commenced, a total of 4,088 complaints have been received by the SPR component and 1,700 (42 per cent) have been dealt with, while 2,388 (58 per cent) are yet to be addressed.<sup>35</sup> This is also due to the tensions between a poverty-targeted programme and a rights-based approach to social protection. For example, during the implementation of the “dependency ratio” targeting methodology, project staff felt the need to withhold information from beneficiaries on the eligibility criteria in order to avoid manipulation. These led to a perception that the programme team was dishonest and not open to members of the community, thus violating their right to information.
- It is difficult to envisage the applicability and efficacy of the SPR model if replicated at a national scale if it remains within the parameters of a poverty targeted programme. It will be extremely challenging to scale up to 300,000 households in northern Kenya. Apart from the administrative cost of a targeting exercise on a national scale, the number of grievances would inevitably increase because a poverty-targeted programme is more likely to generate discontent in communities where majority of the people are poor and vulnerable. Poverty targeting is very difficult to implement in situations where the majority are poor and vulnerable. They do have unintended consequences in environments with entrenched group interests because of the potential for existing patronage and kinship networks to affect beneficiary selection. This is particularly pertinent in Somali communities in northern Kenya where there are very strong clan-based patronage networks.



Finally, the HSNP also has a research component which is designed to show evidence that cash transfers are effective. There are non beneficiary sub-locations (control group) that were intentionally excluded from receiving cash while their neighbours with similar demographic and socio economic indicators are beneficiary communities (treatment group). Even though the former will be included in Phase II, questions and complaints are often raised by the excluded communities as to why they are not benefiting from Phase I of the programme. Local political representatives of these communities find themselves vulnerable to accusations of neglect even though the programme is not government funded and state owned. The HSNP secretariat in Nairobi has received a number of politicians demanding explanations for the exclusion of their communities.

In summary, the HSNP had an indirect unintended benefit on state-citizen relations not as a direct result of the cash transfer itself but as a result of programme design which includes a social protection rights component. The design of the programme with a rights component contributed to empowering beneficiary communities beyond the parameters of the programme. However, issues of ownership limits the long term impact of the programme on state-citizen relations on a wider scale and sustainable basis.

#### **3.4.5 The relevance of cash transfers in bridging the gap between relief and recovery in west Darfur, Sudan**

Sudan does not currently have a cash transfer programme targeting older people. Therefore, a normative but cautious case is made for cash transfers as a potential instrument for strengthening state citizen relations, and by extension the legitimacy of the state in the conflict affected areas of west Darfur.

The United Nations and non-governmental organisations including HelpAge International have been providing relief materials to IDPs in several camps in the wider Darfur region. There is acknowledgement that emergency relief materials are needed as millions of Sudanese continue to live in very fragile and vulnerable situations with acute humanitarian needs. However, it has also emerged that the Sudanese government as well as donors are no longer willing simply to support and run never ending emergency operations which deliver services to millions of Sudanese who are chronically food insecure, affected by displacement and violent conflict.

Plans are currently underway to move away from traditional food aid to recovery and rebuilding livelihoods. All key stakeholders, including the Sudanese government, have developed strategies, announced investment in a recovery response, while maintaining capacity to respond to any emerging humanitarian needs. There are challenges involved in the process of developing a clear transition from humanitarian relief to recovery, and deciding where to prioritise investments in a country which has been devastated by decades of violent conflict and poverty. In this context, a long term cash transfer, if designed appropriately, could play a critical role, not only as a poverty-reduction instrument but also as a tool to build state-citizen relations and state legitimacy.

In the context of west Darfur, a cash transfer programme is among a series of interventions that could be used to support IDPs and host communities and it can also contribute to the process of peacebuilding. A fundamental grievance of many Darfurians – including the IDPs who took part in focus group discussions – towards the Sudanese state is the feeling that they are marginalised, oppressed and neglected. For instance, none of the camp residents that participated in focus groups discussions had ever benefitted from the *Zakat* fund – even though they are Muslims. Neither have they benefited from any other form of social assistance provided by the Sudanese government either at the national or state level.

Moreover, there is consensus amongst all of the older women IDPs that participated in the focus groups that, apart from concerns for their physical security, lack of money is the main problem they face. However, they also acknowledge that possession of cash could also make them susceptible to attacks from other camp residents. The conflicts plaguing the region will certainly be a key challenge to implementing cash transfer programmes since security can hardly be guaranteed in many parts of Darfur. In addition, cash is more attractive than relief materials so it is particularly prone to elite capture or diversion to armed groups if not properly managed.

The introduction of a cash transfer programme in Darfur would need to be carefully planned and managed taking into account the political economy of the Darfur conflict. It will also be imperative to embark on very broad based consultations and feasibility study that would lead to buy-in and ownership from various actors – especially the IDPs, host communities, local, state and national governments.

In this connection, HelpAge International is currently working on developing a proposal with government and other key development partners such as Save the Children, and the UN system to undertake two feasibility studies: one in North Sudan (which may include west Darfur) and one in South Sudan. These studies will serve two main purposes. The first will be to provide an empirical evidence base for the design, implementation and role of a cash transfer in the context of a post-conflict/peacebuilding programme and an instrument to move from large scale emergency operations to recovery and developmental programming in North and South Sudan. The second purpose of the study will be to build both Northern and Southern governments' ownership and donor support through a process of broad-based consultations and joint analysis/planning, which places the cash transfer programmes firmly within the wider international and national development efforts and strategies.

In South Sudan, the study will analyse the options of how to move from food aid to some longer term sustainable social investment programme such as cash transfers. Concretely, the study will provide different cash transfer options including indicative costing over a mid to long term horizon. The study will outline implementation challenges and opportunities. The options will be designed to deliver a national social transfer mechanism. This will include microsimulations of the impact of the suggested transfer options and an analysis of the complementary investments and enabling environment needed. The study will provide information on the necessary systems development needed in terms of civil registration, financing/tax, implementation and monitoring as well as explore possible roles of different donors in the start-up period and phasing of funding. The studies will provide relevant information with regards to areas where capacity needs to be built at all levels of government and a concise and clear exit strategy for development partners.

Donors, the UN and NGOs certainly have a role to play, particularly in providing technical and financial assistance to the government, provided the latter is committed to the programme in the long term. The relationship between many vulnerable displaced and conflict-affected Sudanese on the one hand, and the government at both state and national levels on the other, could be improved if the former perceive that the latter is genuinely catering for their security and general wellbeing. The cash transfer programme could take various forms, such as unconditional categorical cash transfers, and cash for work programmes designed to rebuild local infrastructure such as roads, schools, health centres etc, which are lacking in many areas in Darfur.

## 4. Conclusion and recommendations



## 4. Conclusion and recommendations

### 4.1 Conclusions: Emerging issues and implications for state-citizen relations

#### 4.1.1 The nature of state fragility and the role of cash transfers

State fragility is a continuum which is subject to time, geography and level of severity. Although there are differences in characteristics, fragile states and environments share common features including high levels of poverty, poor access to basic services, and weak institutional and infrastructural capacities that in turn limit the reach and penetration of state institutions. A key manifestation of fragility is the absence of a functioning state-citizen relationship.

Using examples based on research undertaken in Sierra Leone, northern Kenya and Sudan, this report argues that social protection programmes in form of cash transfers, if well designed, could play a significant role in strengthening state-citizen relations. The nature of programme design and programme ownership is critical to shaping this relationship, which is of crucial importance in fragile contexts.

#### 4.1.2 The nature of programme design

A key issue is the nature of cash transfer programme design, which has implications for state-citizen relations in a fragile context. A state-led programme such as the SSN in Sierra Leone demonstrates the severe limitations of a poorly designed poverty-targeted programme in a context where institutional capacity is weak. In contrast, a donor-financed and NGO-implemented programme (HSNP) in northern Kenya suggests how a social protection rights component can add value and have an unintended positive impact on state-citizen relations. Nevertheless, it is clear from these studies that poverty-targeted cash transfers are a huge challenge to implement in fragile states and environments with high levels of poverty, a low institutional capacity and unreliable data.

In the case of Sierra Leone, anomalies associated with programme design and poor implementation, including institutional and infrastructural constraints, did have an adverse effect on state-citizen relations. Trust in public institutions was further eroded and state actors – in this case local chiefs – used the programme for clientelism and patronage purposes, creating mistrust between the communities and the state.

In northern Kenya, the rights-based approach included in the HSNP programme showed how spill-over effects empowered citizens to voice their needs and demands, with relatively positive impacts on state-citizen relations at the local level. However, state institutions had limited involvement in both the design and implementation of the programme. Furthermore, the poverty-targeted nature of the main HSNP programme highlights the tensions between a poverty-targeted programme and a rights-based approach to social protection programming. The outcome was very high levels of reported grievances, with many still remaining unresolved. Where almost everyone is vulnerable and poor, targeting based on vulnerability creates rifts in and between communities in fragile situations.

The Sierra Leone and northern Kenya case studies indicate that the nature and type of programme design affects the ability of cash transfer programmes to strengthen the relationship between the state and its citizens. Sudan does not currently have a cash transfer programme. Therefore, a normative but cautious case can be made for cash transfer schemes, because they are potential instruments for strengthening state-citizen relations, and by extension the legitimacy of the state in the conflict affected areas of west Darfur. Lessons can be learnt from the Sierra Leone and northern Kenya case studies on what not to do and how to go about designing and implementing cash transfers in the Sudanese context.



### **4.1.3 The nature of programme ownership**

Cash transfers can be used in the context of emergencies and as a tool for longer-term development. For the longer term, the state should be the lead actor in cash transfers. Government ownership is critical both to sustain the programme and to develop state-citizen relations over the long term. Donors and NGOs can play a complementary role in providing technical assistance in programme design. This may include assisting governments in developing relevant infrastructures such as Management Information Systems (MIS) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems as well as strengthening accountability and transparency mechanisms. Donors and NGOs can also assist in developing the institutional capacity of the state and building in transparency and accountability mechanisms that strongly link relevant state institutions with the citizens (for example, national and local human rights bodies).

The positive aspect of the Sierra Leone SSN cash transfer programme is that it was 100 per cent owned by the government, while the HSNP in Kenya is largely owned by a donor with only limited engagement of state institutions. Even if NGOs are implementing cash transfers in post emergency situations, these should be part of the overall national development agenda, not an isolated programme. NGOs should complement governments and not replace them. Programmes owned and seen to be run by governments rather than donors and NGOs have the potential to contribute to state-citizen relations, provided they are appropriately designed.

## **4.2 Recommendations: Principles and good practices for cash transfer in fragile contexts**

Based on the findings of this study and a validation workshop held in Nairobi with senior policy makers from Sudan, Sierra Leone and northern Kenya, the following principles and good practices for cash transfer in the context of long-term development in fragile states and situations have been identified. While the majority of these principles are concurrent with principles in non-fragile states or situations, they are paramount in order to reduce fragility and its root causes.

### **4.2.1 Government ownership**

Government ownership or at least government involvement in cash transfer programmes is the key to their success in fragile contexts. Government should be involved not just in programme design and implementation but also in financing, monitoring, and evaluating programme performance. Government must also be the decision maker in the elements of cash transfer design that affect the long-term sustainability of the schemes. Beyond the issue of sustainability, government-owned programmes, if appropriately designed, have the potential to strengthen state-citizen relations, which is critical to nation building, peacebuilding and social cohesion.

### **4.2.2 Appropriate design and implementation**

In fragile contexts, programme design should include simple and transparent/understandable selection criteria that identify beneficiaries using very clear categories – for example, older people, people with disabilities, and orphans and vulnerable children. Programmes should include effective grievance mechanisms linked to existing accountability and ombudsman structures, particularly at the local government level where implementation takes place. These mechanisms will promote citizen participation, voice, empowerment and ownership. Design and implementation should be based on a broad consultation process involving all the relevant stakeholders. The programme must be seen by the wider community and society to be fair.

### **4.2.3 Legal and policy framework**

A legal and policy framework for social protection/cash transfers is essential. Involving all the sectoral ministries, departments and agencies with social protection mandates during policy formulation creates buy-in and limits the potential for turf battles between government agencies.

#### **4.2.4 Evidence based on context**

Programmes should be based on detailed research evidence that can guide the design and implementation of programmes. Policy advisers should present decision makers with policy options and scenarios based on the context in which fragility occurs.

#### **4.2.5 Relationship building**

A multi-stakeholder approach will help to build relationships to develop social protection champions in key ministries, government departments and agencies. South-South learning workshops, trainings and field visits to existing programmes in other countries should be organised for relevant policy makers and programme staff in key agencies. These are important platforms and processes for bringing together and building a joint understanding amongst staff from different government departments with social protection mandates.

#### **4.2.6 Effective communication**

Investment in communication mechanisms using effective information, education and communication strategies ensures that relevant information about programmes is well disseminated and presented in simple language that citizens understand. There should be transparency about who will be involved in the programmes and where they are being implemented. This is critical to ensuring the credibility and acceptance of programmes.

#### **4.2.7 Innovative delivery systems**

Innovative ways of delivering cash through the private sector can play a significant role in fragile environments, especially where functioning state structures are non-existent. Using mobile phone technology and mobile banking to deliver cash transfers also has the potential to extend other financial services to remote rural communities. Development partners can play an important role in ensuring that procurement of private services is in the longer-term national interest and capacities are in place in relevant ministries to ensure transparent procurement processes.

#### **4.2.8 Learning from existing social protection/cash transfer schemes**

Where programmes already exist, it is important to ensure that revisions to design and implementation are based on mutual learning from existing schemes. Social protection/cash transfer programmes should be refined and improved to address effectively public grievances and problems with implementation.

#### **4.2.9 Linkages to other programmes**

Cash transfers, in particular broad-based schemes, provide opportunities for outreach to other social services. Efforts should be made to link cash transfer programmes to other complementary social protection services such as health, education and agricultural outreach. Transfers implemented on the basis of citizenship entitlements also provide an opportunity to reinforce citizenship infrastructure, such as national registration systems based on civil registration (births, deaths and marriages) and national identity card programmes.

### **4.3 Areas for future research**

A number of areas of research are worth considering for future studies:

- Strengthening state capacity at the local level through the development of civil registration and record-keeping systems – an area that needs further attention in fragile contexts
- Linking cash transfer programmes to other complementary service provision, particularly in access to healthcare and education programmes in fragile states
- Financing and mobilising domestic revenue through a fair and redistributive tax system that incorporates the informal sector, to provide sustainable funding of social protection/cash transfer programmes
- Learning key lessons and experience from other fragile states (for example, Nepal, Kosovo and Timor-Leste).

## Endnotes

1. The terms “fragile states and situations”, “fragile contexts”, “fragile environments”, and ‘state fragility’ are used interchangeably throughout the report depending on the context.
2. World Bank – International Development Association ‘Fragile and Conflict Affected States’, 2011
3. Cash transfers aim directly to increase or protect the incomes of those living in poverty or at risk of falling into poverty. Typical cash transfer programmes include social pensions, child benefits and disability benefits.
4. A “Barre” is a community centre which is often located at the chieftdom headquarters town.
5. German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, 2009  
[www.bmz.de/en/issues/Peacebuilding/fragile\\_states/german\\_commitment.html](http://www.bmz.de/en/issues/Peacebuilding/fragile_states/german_commitment.html) (15 January 2010)
6. DFID, *Why we need to work more effectively in fragile states*, London, DFID, 2005
7. A “rentier state” is a state that depends on unearned income, usually from a natural resource, for example, oil while a “tax state” or “fiscal state” is one that raises the bulk of its revenue from taxes, and therefore is heavily dependent on its citizens.
8. For a comprehensive list of functions of the state, see Ghani A, and Lockhart C, *Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008
9. The debate presented in this sub-section is derived from an IDS bulletin authored by Devereux S and Sabates-Wheeler R, “Debating Social Protection”, *IDS Bulletin* 38:3, Brighton, Institute of Development Studies, 2007
10. Ibid Devereux S and Sabates-Wheeler R “Debating Social Protection”, 2007
11. Devereux S and Sabates-Wheeler R “Transformative Social Protection”, *IDS Working Paper* 232, October 2004, p.3
12. Devereux S and Sabates-Wheeler R “Transformative Social Protection: The Currency of Justice”, in A Barrientos and D Hulme (eds.), *Social Protection for the Poor and the Poorest: Concepts, Policies and Politics*, Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2008, p.67
13. The term Washington Consensus commonly refers to an orientation towards neoliberal policies that are market friendly. This is a set of economic reforms prescribed specifically for developing nations, which included advice to reduce government deficits, to liberalise and deregulate international trade and cross-border investment, and to pursue export-led growth
14. For more on targeting, see Mkandawire T “Targeting and universalism in poverty reduction” in J A Ocampo, K S Jomo and Sarbuland Khan (eds), *Policy Matters: Economic and Social Policies to Sustain Equitable Development*, London, Zed Books, 2007; Coady D, Grosh M and Hoddinott J *Targeting of Transfers in Developing Countries: Review of Lessons and Experience*, Washington, DC, World Bank, 2004; Ellis F “‘We are all poor here’: Economic difference, social divisiveness and targeting cash transfers in sub-Saharan Africa”, Paper presented at the conference Social Protection for the poorest in Africa: Learning from experience, Entebbe, Uganda, 8-10 September 2008; McCord A “Cash transfers and political economy in Sub-Saharan Africa”, Project Briefing 31, London, ODI, 2009; and Slater R, Farrington J, Vigneri M, Samson M, Akter, S ‘Targeting of Social Transfers: A Review for DFID’, London, ODI, 2009
15. Künemann R and Leonhard R “A human rights view of social cash transfers for achieving the millennium development goals”, In cooperation with the Working Group *Social Cash Transfers*, Brot für die Welt, Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, FIAN International, medico international, 2008
16. International Labour Office, Can low-income countries afford basic social security?, International Labour Office, Geneva, 2008; Knox C ‘The cost of income security in old age: costings of a universal pension in 50 low and middle income countries’, HelpAge International, 2011. For information on costing scenarios for a social pension, see [www.pension-watch.net/pensions/about-social-pensions/about-social-pensions/pensions-calculator/](http://www.pension-watch.net/pensions/about-social-pensions/about-social-pensions/pensions-calculator/)
17. Harvey P “Social Protection in Fragile States: Lessons Learned”, in OECD, *Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Social Protection*, OECD, 2009, pp.183-199
18. A recent study by HelpAge International found that there is a significant disparity between the needs of older people as a vulnerable group and the humanitarian assistance funded to meet that need. In financial terms, the CAP and Flash appeals raised a total of US\$4.2 billion in the 12 crises studied. Of this, US\$8.2 million (0.2 per cent) was allocated to projects that included an activity that specifically targeted older people. For more information see *A Study of Humanitarian Financing for Older People*, p.3 [www.helpage.org/newsroom/latest-news/huge-gap-in-emergencies-funding-for-older-people/](http://www.helpage.org/newsroom/latest-news/huge-gap-in-emergencies-funding-for-older-people/)
19. OECD *Principles for good international engagement in fragile states and situations*, 2007, p.1
20. Harvey P and Holmes R *The Potential for Joint Programmes for Long-term Cash Transfers in Unstable Situations*, London, Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute, 2007
21. GUPP recommends the Social Protection Floor as the basis for engagement and support on social protection, as this approach supports nationally-owned social protection systems, and the clear advantages of universal and categorical approaches to social protection.
22. Chapman K *Using social transfers to scale up equitable access to education and health services*, Background Paper, Scaling up Services team, DFID Policy Division, January 2006
23. See Ellis F, Devereux S and White P *Social Protection in Africa*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2009
24. See McCord A “Differing government and donor perspectives on cash transfer-based social protection in sub-Saharan Africa: The implications for EU Social Protection Programming”, Background Papers, *European Report on Development*, 2010
25. DFID “Cash transfer: evidence paper”, Policy Division, 2011, pg. 16
26. This study was conducted before the referendum took place in January 2011.
27. Government of Sierra Leone *Concept paper for the formation of the Social Safety Net (SSN) scheme*, 2004, p.4
28. Ibid p.5
29. Beneficiaries were meant to receive SLL200,000 (US\$47).
30. This information is based on discussions with the SSN Senior M&E officer and the coordinator of the programme in the northern region. Biriwa chieftdom was not included as a sample for this study.
31. The Government of Sierra Leone has requested technical support from HelpAge International to assist in conducting the impact assessment of the Social Safety Net Programme with a view to redesigning the programme.
32. See report “HSNP and Forward Planning Workshop” 2nd to 4th November 2010. This report highlights key achievements of each of the implementing HSNP partners, their challenges and proposed way forward in the design of HSNP phase II. It also captures crucial group work discussions and plenary feedback not only from the national but also the district field teams who gave the workshop an essential grassroots perspective.
33. HSNP News “Ending Hunger, Protecting Assets”, January-April 2011
34. A dispensary was being constructed in Lolupe at the time the focus group discussion took place.
35. See Barrett S and Munavu M. ‘In search of accountability in social protection programming’ HelpAge International, London 2011 (forthcoming)



Kate Holt/HelpAge International

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### **Strengthening state-citizen relations in fragile contexts** ***The role of cash transfers***

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