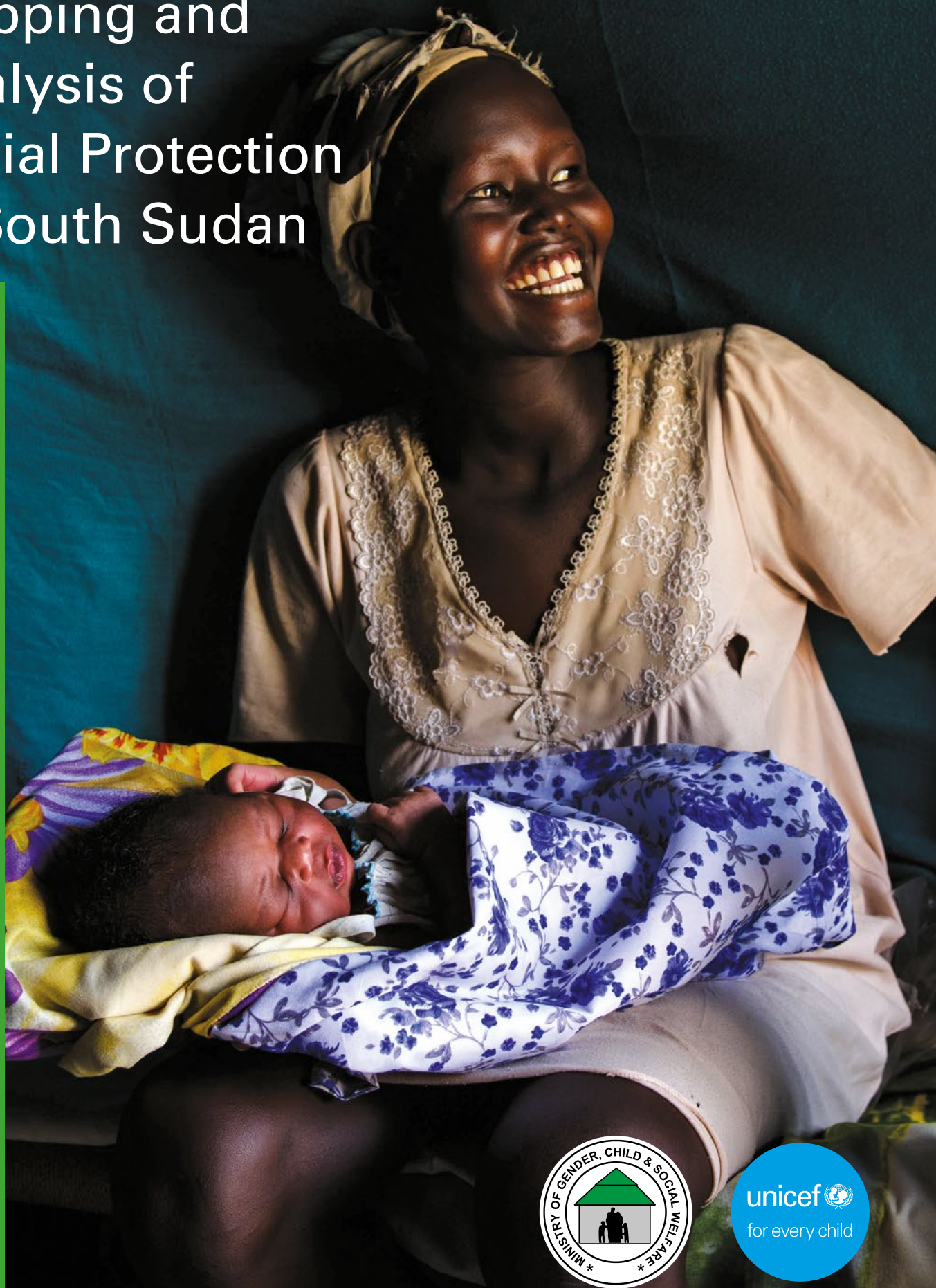


Mapping and Analysis of Social Protection in South Sudan



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the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

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Acronyms

BRACE II	Building Resilience through Asset Creation Phase II
CODI	Core Diagnostic Tool
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
GESS	Girls Education South Sudan
SNSDP	Safety Net and Skills Development Project
SSSNP	South Sudan Safety Nets Project
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive summary

The Government of South Sudan is strengthening its policies and structures for social protection. Despite ongoing peace processes, the country remains volatile and its population highly vulnerable. The basic needs of the population remain largely unmet. In early 2019, the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare commissioned mapping of the social protection system, based on the Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessments Core Diagnostic Instrument (CODI).

The mapping examines the enabling environment for South Sudan's social protection system. The National Social Protection Policy Framework is primarily focused on non-contributory social protection, with an emphasis on lifecycle stages (childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age) and poor and vulnerable people. The National Social Protection Policy Framework outlines a role for all levels of government, with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare being responsible for strategic planning and coordination of social protection. Social protection activities are almost exclusively financed by donors.

The mapping covered seven non-contributory social protection programmes: the Safety Net and Skills Development Project and the upcoming South Sudan Safety Nets Project, both funded by the World Bank; the Building Resilience through Asset Creation Phase II initiative, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID); Food for Assets, funded and implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP); the Urban Safety Nets programme, implemented by WFP; the Girls Education South Sudan (GESS) Programme, funded by DFID; and the School Feeding Programme, implemented by WFP.

The CODI report makes eight pragmatic recommendations, recognizing the challenging context. The first four are higher priority (Tier 1) than the remainder (Tier 2).

1. **Coordination:** There has been limited coordination to date, although the future holds promise. Ongoing efforts are required to ensure the revitalized National Social Protection Working Group becomes a respected social protection platform for coordination of stakeholders, information-sharing, policy implementation, programme management and systems development.
2. **Public works:** Transfer levels currently vary by at least 10–15 per cent for similar work in similar circumstances, and it would be preferable and feasible to harmonize them.
3. **Management information systems:** Ongoing discussions regarding compatibility of management information systems used by different programmes should be



formalized and expanded. This includes developing linkages between programmes funded by the WFP and World Bank, and potentially across the GESS Programme and the School Feeding Programme in relation to school attendance.

4. **Monitoring and evaluation:** An overarching monitoring and evaluation framework would be a beneficial addition to the system, allowing the wealth of data currently being collected on a regular basis to be shared in a structured format with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare and other stakeholders.
5. **Differentiation:** Emerging efforts to vary the level, frequency and timing of benefits according to lifecycle and abilities should be encouraged and scaled up if successful.
6. **Local governance:** Opportunities should be considered to harmonize and streamline local-level committees involved in social protection, before there is proliferation of such committees.
7. **Evidence:** Notwithstanding the challenges of prolonged conflict, there is a clear need to invest more strongly in evidence and to use it to inform decisions.
8. **Complaints and grievance mechanisms:** It would be beneficial for the cash/food transfer programmes to adopt a common approach to responding to complaints and grievances. The World Bank model appears to represent the most advanced approach to date, and may provide a foundation for a harmonized model across all programmes.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and rationale

Despite ongoing peace processes, South Sudan remains volatile and its population highly vulnerable. In this young, resource-rich and largely agricultural country, 63 per cent of the population live below the national poverty line, 70 per cent are under 30 years of age, and around 85 per cent engage in subsistence agriculture. Since 2015, rapid currency devaluation and basic commodity shortages have caused hyperinflation, compounding the economic hardships faced by most. In much of South Sudan, conflict and drought have halted agricultural production and other economic activities, contributing to the estimated 82 per cent of the population experiencing food insecurity, 25 per cent severely.

The basic needs of the population remain largely unmet. The essential social services that should help build the potential for people to live decent lives and be protected from the impacts of crises are mostly lacking. Children and women suffer from extremely high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition and are subject to pervasive violence. Although the need for social services has increased substantially, government expenditure on social sectors is minimal. Allocations have



been undermined by the failing economy and de-prioritization of spending on social sectors in favour of spending on security. The inability of the government to pay salaries has caused an exodus from the civil service.

Against this backdrop, the government has strengthened its policies in relation to social protection. Social protection is defined in South Sudan as “the set of private and public mechanisms that protect and prevent individuals and households from suffering the adverse effects of shocks and stresses.” At a macro level, the South Sudan Development Plan 2013–2017 and the National Development Strategy 2018–2021 identify social protection as a national priority to combat poverty and social exclusion. In 2015, the government approved the National Social Protection Policy Framework, which envisages a national social protection system with strong coordination and a range of social protection programmes for the most vulnerable. The government also committed to allocating 1 per cent of its annual budget to finance the National Social Protection Policy Framework through the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare.

In January 2019, the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare proposed to the National Social Protection Working Group that mapping of the social protection system be undertaken. Although the National Social Protection Policy Framework does not have a timeframe or action plan, its implementation requires a robust understanding of the extent and nature of the policies, programmes and administrative arrangements of the social protection system. Comprehensive mapping can provide a strong foundation for the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare’s efforts to coordinate, design, implement, monitor and evaluate social protection activities. The proposal was endorsed by National Social Protection Working Group members. The ministry requested the support of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in undertaking the mapping, and the process was led by an international consultant working with UNICEF.

1.2 Methodology and process

The methodology for the mapping was based on the Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessments CODI. The CODI has been designed to map the key elements of a social protection system in a given country, including national objectives, strategies, policies, programmes and schemes. It is a standardized approach that has been agreed to by international agencies. Using CODI means that future mapping/assessment of social protection in South Sudan can be compared easily to the recent exercise.

The CODI tool was tailored to ensure the mapping was carried out with a light touch and was appropriate for the context in South Sudan. Around 80 questions were selected out of the approximately 400 in the CODI questionnaire. The selected questions related to information regarding three key issues:



- The *policy and legal framework* for social protection;
- *Design features* of social protection programmes, including eligibility criteria, duration of benefits, exit rules, conditions and financing; and
- *Implementation features* of each social protection programme, including identification of beneficiaries, verification of eligibility, enrolment, delivery mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation, complaint and appeal mechanisms, and information dissemination and raising awareness.

The mapping was undertaken with the close cooperation of key stakeholders in South Sudan. An inventory of seven social protection programmes was developed, containing all available details, including business cases, concept notes, proposals, operational manuals, annual reports and evaluations, among other relevant documentation. (The methodology for determining which programmes to include is outlined in Section 3.) The inventory was presented to and endorsed by the National Social Protection Working Group in March 2019. The tailored questionnaire was then applied to the seven selected programmes, including consultation over Skype and email with key programme personnel from implementing partners. The draft report was shared with the National Social Protection Working Group in June 2019, and then validated after a presentation and discussion in Juba on 12 June 2019. This final version of the report incorporates revisions in the light of that discussion and comments received on the draft document.

2 | The social protection sector

This section summarizes the key components of the social protection system in South Sudan.

2.1 Policy and legal framework

Social protection has various legal foundations in South Sudan. The concept of social protection is enshrined in the Bill of Rights provided for within the transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan (protection for the vulnerable, including orphans, the elderly, the disabled, pregnant and lactating women; and access to education and health). Support for a social protection system also exists in the Child Act (2009); the Local Government Act (2009); and the War Disabled, Widows and Orphans Commission Act (2011). That said, although there is support for the concept of social protection in these laws, there is no explicit reference to a social protection system as such.

The social protection objectives of South Sudan are set out in the National Social Protection Policy Framework. The goal of social protection is to safeguard the dignity of South Sudanese in an inclusive manner while expanding livelihood opportunities and improving employment returns. The specific policy objectives of the National Social Protection Policy Framework are:

1. To safeguard and promote human development through increasing the reach and coverage of essential social services in an inclusive manner.
2. To equitably expand livelihood opportunities and improve employment returns for all, including the poor and vulnerable.
3. To improve social protection beneficiary identification and targeting.
4. To establish and strengthen systemic synergies across the national social protection system.
5. To expand the coverage of physical rehabilitation services.

The National Social Protection Policy Framework explicitly identifies a need to focus on a number of different population groups. These include various stages of the lifecycle (childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age) and other categories such as persons with disabilities, ex-combatants, girls and women. Poor and vulnerable people are also specifically identified as a target group; there is no distinction regarding the degree of poverty (e.g., extreme poverty) nor geographic location (e.g.,

rural or urban). The Framework also envisages social protection for certain groups according to their labour market status, including low-skilled workers, unemployed people, smallholder farmers, unskilled youths and civil servants.

The National Social Protection Policy Framework is primarily focused on non-contributory social protection. It outlines a social protection system with unconditional cash transfers (children, the elderly, people with disabilities, ex-combatants); in-kind benefits (school feeding); fee waivers (scholarships for girls); subsidies (agricultural inputs); and conditional cash transfers (public works). The Framework also foresees the introduction of contributory schemes over the longer term, including a pension for civil servants and community-based insurance.

2.2 Institutional framework

The National Social Protection Policy Framework outlines a role for all levels of government in social protection. At the national level, the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare is responsible for strategic planning and coordination of social protection, and designing and implementing social protection programmes. Line ministries, in particular the Ministry of General Education and Instruction and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, are mandated to mainstream social protection into existing programmes and budgets, in addition to the design and implementation of social protection programmes for their respective sectors. The same applies to national commissions. At a regional level, the state ministries of gender are responsible for coordinating state-level stakeholders of the national social protection system, service delivery, and the identification, monitoring and reporting of activities. Local authorities also have a number of important roles, including the sensitization of communities on social protection programmes, identification of beneficiaries and delivery of local services.

In practice, efforts to coordinate social protection activities have been mixed, although the future holds promise. Over recent years, a number of coordination platforms have been established, with various objectives, including providing an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss technical and policy aspects of social protection; building consensus on policy and programmatic issues; and coordination to avoid duplication of efforts. While previous platforms were somewhat ad hoc, the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare sought in July 2018 to institutionalize and unify coordination efforts through revitalization of the National Social Protection Working Group. Plans are under way to develop a joint action plan for this working group that would outline improved coordination efforts between social protection initiatives through sharing of knowledge and experience among partners and practitioners. This could help support improved harmonization between components of the social protection system, such as monitoring and evaluation, management information systems and complaint and appeals mechanisms.



There is limited data on the social protection needs and vulnerability profile of the population. Comprehensive and up-to-date data – an important source of information for social protection policymakers and stakeholders – is difficult to obtain in the current context. A range of information is nonetheless available to provide guidance. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification is conducted twice a year, and the National Bureau of Statistics undertook high frequency surveys on poverty in 2015 and 2017. Humanitarian needs are regularly assessed and updated by international and national agencies. A multiple indicator cluster survey was undertaken in 2010.

Social protection activities are almost exclusively financed by donors. The government allocated approximately US\$376,000 to the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare in 2018, representing 0.06 per cent of the 2018–2019 national budget. Current annual expenditure on social protection activities in South Sudan is approximately US\$117 million, 99.7 per cent of which is provided by donor funding. Table 2 (in Section 3.1.3 below) provides further detail.

3

Social protection programmes: design and implementation

Seven programmes were selected for inclusion in the mapping. Each are within the categories of non-contributory social protection outlined in the National Social Protection Policy Framework.

- Conditional cash transfers (public works programmes): the *Safety Net and Skills Development Project* (SNSDP) and parts of the upcoming *South Sudan Safety Nets Project* (SSSNP), both funded by the World Bank; the *Building Resilience through Asset Creation Phase II* (BRACE II) funded by DFID, which is implemented by a partnership between the WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and a consortium led by World Vision; *Food for Assets*, funded and implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP); and the *Urban Safety Nets* programme, implemented by WFP with funding from various sources;
- Fee waivers (education scholarships): the *Girls Education South Sudan* (GESS) Programme, funded by DFID;
- In-kind (school feeding): the *School Feeding Programme* implemented by WFP with funding from various sources; and
- Unconditional cash transfers: elements of the proposed SSSNP, funded by the World Bank.

While inclusion of these seven programmes reflected the consensus of social protection stakeholders in South Sudan, it is acknowledged that the parameters of social protection are not always clear cut. The national definition of social protection (“the set of private and public mechanisms that protect and prevent individuals and households from suffering the adverse effects of shocks and stresses”) is open to a broad interpretation. And the continuum between social protection and humanitarian action is not always easily defined, particularly in a situation of conflict or protracted crisis such as that in South Sudan. Programmes that are state-led are common reference points for what constitutes social protection.¹ While some of the programmes operate predominantly outside national systems – for instance BRACE II, Food for Assets and Urban Safety Nets – these programmes could

¹ Kukrety, N. 2016. *Working with Cash Based Safety Nets in Humanitarian Contexts*. Page 9. Accessible at <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-humanitarian-practitioners-guidance-notes-en-web-.pdf>.

plausibly transition to national leadership and/or government systems at a point when there is sufficient capacity to do so. Furthermore, the systems work being developed to underpin these three programmes can provide both important lessons and contributions to a national social protection system. In addition, these three programmes represent a somewhat predictable approach (albeit only for a total of six months in the case of Urban Safety Nets) and aim to support livelihoods rather than save lives; the latter is often regarded as a key feature of humanitarian assistance.² Initiatives that focus on saving lives, such as WFP’s General Food Distribution, were therefore excluded from the mapping. Overall, the seven programmes were viewed as representing the most significant and important social protection programmes in the country, and not extending the mapping further would ensure it was kept ‘light’. Table 1 below provides a snapshot of some of the key features of the seven programmes.

Table 1: Brief overview of social protection programmes in the mapping

PROGRAMME AND FUNDER	DURATION	PROGRAMME TYPE	BENEFIT LEVEL	# BENEFICIARIES
SSSNP – World Bank	2019–2021 (anticipated)	Public works and unconditional cash transfer	US\$3 per day (urban); US\$2.40 per day (rural) for 90 days per year	390,000 individuals (anticipated)
SNSDP – World Bank	2017–2019 (closed)	Public works	US\$3 per day (urban); US\$2.40 per day (rural) for 90 days per year	48,507 households (approx. 291,000 individuals)
GESS – DFID	2014–2019 (second phase 2019–2024)	Cash transfer to schoolgirls	£20 per year per girl	355,457 girls
BRACE II – DFID	2016–2020	Cash-based transfer for asset creation (public works)	US\$40.50 per month per household for 6 months	268,304 individuals
Food for Assets – WFP	Ongoing	Cash/food-based transfer for asset creation (public works) ³	US\$40.50 per month per household for 6 months, or 34 kg per month per household	520,150 individuals
Urban Safety Nets – WFP	Ongoing	Cash-based transfer for training	US\$10–60 per month per household for 6 months (according to household size)	80,112 individuals
School Feeding Programme – WFP	Ongoing	School meals	One third of nutritional requirements	412,118 children

2 Ulrichs, M. and Sabates-Wheeler, R. 2018. *Social Protection and Humanitarian Response: What is the scope for integration?* Page 9. Accessible at <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/ds2/stream/?#/documents/3664817/page/7>.

3 It is acknowledged that WFP refers to programmes such as Food for Assets as ‘asset creation’ programmes rather than ‘public works’ programmes, to help emphasize the importance of the result and not the process. The use of the phrase ‘public works’ should be interpreted as including WFP’s asset creation programmes. Efforts have been made to include references to ‘asset creation’ where it does not otherwise complicate the text. The notion that work undertaken in public works schemes should always be productive and meaningful is fully endorsed. Note that ‘public works’ is also used interchangeably with ‘conditional cash/food transfer programmes’.

3.1 Programme design

3.1.1 Eligibility criteria

There is strong commonality in eligibility criteria across the conditional cash/food transfer programmes. SNSDP, SSSNP, BRACE II, Food for Assets and Urban Safety Nets focus on poor and vulnerable households, including those headed by women, those with chronically ill or disabled members, and returnees. The eligibility criteria for BRACE II, Food for Assets and Urban Safety Nets also include households where children are acutely malnourished. Households must have an able-bodied individual who can comply with the conditions of the programme. A notable variation is the direct income support component of the SSSNP: households lacking able-bodied members but otherwise meeting the eligibility criteria of the programme will receive an unconditional cash transfer. (Attendance at training will be encouraged.) Across all programmes, eligibility is determined at the start of a project cycle and continues for the duration of the programme without re-targeting. There is scope, however, for new beneficiaries to join BRACE II or Food for Assets if additional resources are acquired which would facilitate enrolment of new beneficiary households. Although there are no constraints to potential beneficiaries enrolling in more than one social protection programme at the same time, the World Bank, WFP and DFID communicate their plans with each other so as to avoid duplication of geographic location.



The school-based programmes – GESS and the School Feeding Programme – have small variations in their eligibility criteria. GESS is focused on girls enrolled in the last four years of primary school and all four years of secondary school, whereas the School Feeding Programme is solely for primary schools, and both boys and girls are eligible.

Food insecurity is a common criterion for the geographic prioritization of most programmes. SNSDP and SSSNP also include other development indicators such as poverty and infant mortality in their geographic criteria. Programmes also give consideration to geographic representation in selecting locations for implementation; for example, SSSNP will include a focus on opposition-held areas in three new counties. Selection criteria for the School Feeding Programme includes food insecurity and availability of basic infrastructure to enable cooking and food safety as a public health measure. GESS is the only programme which has full national coverage: it covers every government school and low-cost private school in every state.

Quantitative analysis regarding eligibility has not been undertaken by any of the conditional cash/food transfer programmes. Calculations on the cost per beneficiary of determining eligibility are not available. Similarly, there is no quantitative evidence on inclusion and/or exclusion errors. Anecdotally, however, exclusion has been a significant challenge; this reflects the very high levels of poverty in targeted areas and the limited financial resources available. (Inclusion/exclusion errors are not applicable to GESS; similarly, all children enrolled in a School Feeding Programme school are eligible to benefit from the programme.)

3.1.2 Benefit design

Transfer levels for the public works programmes are somewhat aligned but not homogeneous. The implementers of SNSDP, Food for Assets and BRACE II provide transfers of similar (but not identical) values. In return for beneficiaries contributing 15 days of labour over the course of one month, Food for Assets and BRACE II provide US\$40.50, whereas SNSDP provides US\$45 per month for the same amount of labour in urban areas and US\$36 per month in rural areas. (SSSNP is expected to match the transfer levels of SNSDP in both its conditional and unconditional components.) The transfer level for Food for Assets and BRACE II were designed by reference to a survey of food needs undertaken by the Food Security Cluster. The transfer level for SNSDP was designed with regard to both market-based wages and the practices of WFP and other implementers of similar programmes.

The implementers of some public works programmes are considering indexing transfer levels to the prevailing cost of commodities. The transfer level for Urban Safety Nets already represents 70 per cent of the minimum expenditure basket.

In 2018, WFP proposed that the transfer levels for Food for Assets and BRACE II be adjusted in 2019 to equal 50 per cent of the minimum expenditure basket, with monthly variation according to the cost of commodities in local markets. This variation in transfer level was intended to align with the consumption needs of beneficiaries more effectively in comparison with a transfer level that remains static across the project cycle. (The proposed indexing has not yet been introduced as the delivery systems of other implementers of BRACE II are not yet able to make regular adjustments to their transfer levels.) WFP is also interested in harmonizing transfer values with World Bank-funded projects, in addition to BRACE II partners.

Transfer delivery occurs at different times of the year in different public works programmes. Under Food for Assets and BRACE II, asset creation is intended to be conducted during the lean season from March to August, when food is scarcer and prices are higher. (In practice, implementation challenges have sometimes caused delays; in 2018, for instance, six months of payments were delivered between March and November.) In contrast, SSSNP will operate on a rolling basis with one cycle of 120 days over a two-and-a-half-year timeframe. Urban Safety Nets has yet another variation: it also does not distinguish between seasons and consists of rolling six-month cycles throughout the calendar year.

GESS provides a uniform one-off annual transfer, although this will likely be adjusted in the upcoming second phase of the programme (GESS 2). The £20 (US\$25) benefit for GESS in Phase 1 was determined by reference to the estimated 8 per cent of annual per capita consumption that is incurred to enrol a girl in school (e.g., for fees and uniforms). In designing the programme DFID was conscious that a low-cost cash transfer would have greater prospects of sustainability given limited domestic revenue in South Sudan. Transfers are made in the middle of the school year. In GESS 2, however, DFID will place a stronger focus on educational outcomes and accordingly expects to introduce enhanced transfer levels for certain groups, in recognition of the particular challenges faced by some girls. This will likely see an increased transfer level to girls in secondary school (possibly at an earlier stage of the school year) and for girls with disabilities, although amounts and timing are yet to be determined.

The amount of food provided in the School Feeding Programme is one third of daily nutritional requirements. This is provided throughout the school term, either as a daily meal prepared at the school, or as a monthly take-home ration (designed for a household of six). The cost per child varies according to market prices and has increased from US\$50 per child in 2018 to an anticipated US\$70 per child in 2019.

Most of the programmes contain an element of conditionality, but there is an increasing profile for unconditional transfers. The public works schemes (SNSDP, SSSNP, Food for Assets, BRACE II) are conditional on a contribution to asset



creation. Urban Safety Nets is conditional on attendance at training, although a small proportion of the beneficiaries in Wau are vulnerable households with no able-bodied individual, and the transfer for these households is therefore unconditional. These conditions are routinely enforced by implementing partners, with less than 100 per cent attendance in a particular cycle leading to a proportionate reduction in the transfer level. Eligibility for the take-home ration in the School Feeding Programme requires over 80 per cent attendance during the previous month. The primary condition for GESS is for a girl to register in school; her attendance is monitored but this does not determine eligibility for the annual transfer. As noted earlier, SSSNP will include an unconditional cash transfer to poor and vulnerable households without able-bodied members.

3.1.3 Programme financing

All seven programmes are financed through various funding channels and are exclusively funded by development partners. Further detail on programme expenditure is outlined in Table 2 below.

- WFP implements over US\$80 million of funding per year across BRACE II, Food for Assets, Urban Safety Nets and the School Feeding Programme. Funds are transferred directly from WFP to implementing non-governmental organizations (e.g., supervision of operations), although almost all partners also contribute financially to the partnership.

- DFID provides an average of US\$21 million grant funding each year to GESS and BRACE II. In GESS, DFID channels funds for cash transfers via a contractor and payment agency which provides the funding directly to girls. DFID’s funding for BRACE II is provided to WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Component 1) and World Vision (Component 2) for subsequent implementation of respective components.
- World Bank expenditure is expected to average about US\$13 million per year for the duration of its new project, SSSNP. The Bank is expected to sub-contract the United Nations Office for Project Services to oversee implementation of the project, including provision of transfers to beneficiaries. Some funding to support strengthening of systems may be provided to the government for implementation.

Table 2: Financing of social protection in South Sudan

AGENCY	NAME OF PROGRAMME	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	DURATION OF THIS EXPENDITURE	AVERAGE YEARLY EXPENDITURE (US\$)
World Bank (funder)	SSSNP	US\$40 million	2019–2021	13.3 million
DFID (funder)	GESS 2	US\$80.2 million	2019–2024 (5.5 years)	14.6 million
DFID (funder)	BRACE II	US\$40.75 million	2016–2020	6.4 million
WFP (implementer)	Food for Assets (excluding BRACE II)	US\$35.6 million	2018	35.6 million
WFP (implementer)	Urban Safety Nets	US\$22 million	3 years	7.3 million
WFP (implementer)	School Feeding Programme	US\$40 million	2018	40 million
Government of South Sudan	Budget allocation to Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare	US\$376,580	2018–2019 (1 year)	376,580
Total				117.4 million

3.2 Programme implementation

3.2.1 Beneficiary identification and registration

Local level committees play a prominent role in identifying beneficiaries in public works and training programmes. In SNSDP and SSSNP, *boma* and/or *payam* development committees have diverse community representation. These committees are responsible for identifying eligible households based on information collected by community members who have been trained as enumerators. A community meeting is subsequently held to validate the list of proposed beneficiary households. (This meeting plays an important role in verification of identity given the dearth of personal documentation.) Independent consultants conduct an annual verification exercise to measure the accuracy of the targeting mechanism for the public works beneficiaries; a beneficiary perception survey found 79 per cent of respondents were satisfied

with the selection of beneficiaries in SNSDP. The process in Food for Assets, BRACE II and Urban Safety Nets is similar, with the creation of *boma* targeting committees to identify a list of eligible beneficiaries, supported by implementing partners. This is followed by community validation, although not in Urban Safety Nets. Local committees are not established for the School Feeding Programme; the choice of participating schools is determined through consultation between WFP, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction and implementing partners.

At least four different management information systems are used to enrol and monitor beneficiaries in social protection programmes. The SNSDP established a management information system to register and pay beneficiaries. It records data such as biometrics and household level information. The SSSNP intends to strengthen this system to improve functionality, particularly in relation to payment reconciliation, and monitoring and reporting on project implementation. WFP is progressively using SCOPE⁴ as a platform to register, monitor and pay beneficiaries. SCOPE currently has almost 1 million beneficiaries enrolled, and is already being used for Urban Safety Nets. It is being rolled out gradually for all beneficiaries in Food for Assets and the WFP and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations components of BRACE II, and WFP hopes to enrol 5 million beneficiaries in the coming few years. World Vision uses a separate management information system for its component within BRACE II, known as Last Mile Mobile Solutions, and currently has 76,000 individuals enrolled. The fourth management information system is the South Sudan Schools' Attendance Monitoring System being used in GESS, with approximately 350,000 girls enrolled.⁵ This records attendance data and individual information. With regard to the School Feeding Programme, WFP presently records school-level information. Individual schools maintain data on children as part of normal registration and enrolment processes. Discussions are under way regarding the rollout of SCOPE for children benefiting from the School Feeding Programme.

3.2.2 Delivery mechanisms

Benefits are delivered through similar mechanisms across the cash transfer programmes. Cash is provided directly to the beneficiary via a payment agent (no bank accounts are provided or used). Delivery of cash under SNSDP involved a partnership between implementers and commercial banks. The system was based on two-factor authentication and biometrics (identity card and fingerprint). Payments were GPS-tagged so that the location of the transfer could be identified to within 1 metre. The transfer fees paid by implementers to the payment agent for SNSDP were between 1 to 3 per cent, depending on the volume of transactions. It is expected that the large volume of transactions in SSSNP, to be channelled through

4 The SCOPE platform is a web-based application used for beneficiary registrations, intervention setups, distribution planning, transfers and distribution reporting.

5 Accessible at <https://sssams.org/>.

one implementing partner only, will facilitate a competitive rate. WFP and World Vision also use payment agents in Food for Assets, BRACE II and Urban Safety Nets, although the transaction fees for those programmes have not been disclosed. GESS also transfers payments to beneficiaries through a payment agent. Implementing partners also conduct in-kind transfers, for instance in Food for Assets.

3.2.3 *Monitoring and evaluation*

While each of the seven programmes have their own monitoring and evaluation framework, there is no overarching approach to monitoring and evaluation of social protection. An extensive array of disaggregated data is gathered for individual programmes. However, these are not reported to an overarching monitoring and evaluation framework that has a set of common indicators or reporting timeframes for the social protection system as a whole. Data is usually gathered at the local level by implementing partners and reported to programme-specific central-level units for monitoring and review. For example, registration and cash transfer data for GESS is reported to the Electronic Transfers Monitoring Committee, which is chaired by the Ministry of General Education and Instruction and meets on a monthly basis. In GESS 2, third-party monitoring will be introduced, to be undertaken by UNICEF. In SNSDP, the Project Management Unit receives data from implementing partners and also conducts its own monitoring visits of project sites. WFP's dedicated monitoring and evaluation team plays a prominent role in the monitoring of WFP-implemented programmes (BRACE II, Food for Assets, Urban Safety Nets): post-distribution monitoring surveys are conducted twice a year to review progress against outcomes, and approximately 10 per cent of all sites are subject to monthly process monitoring to assess the progress of operations. School Feeding Programme data on school attendance and commodity distribution are reported by implementing partners on a monthly basis for recording in WFP's central-level database and subsequent monitoring.

GESS is the only social protection programme in South Sudan which has undergone a robust evaluation process. A wide-ranging evaluation of GESS was conducted between 2015 and 2018 with baseline, midline and endline surveys. Planned evaluation of SNSDP was postponed in the light of contextual challenges, although an independent beneficiary perception survey and independent assessment of payment mechanisms were conducted. WFP is planning substantive evaluation of Food for Assets in 2019 to complement the progress against outcomes reported through post-distribution monitoring twice a year. An evaluation of Urban Safety Nets in Juba is ongoing and will inform the design of a new phase and programme expansion. The School Feeding Programme has been part of WFP's emergency portfolio but is expected to move increasingly to the resilience portfolio in 2019; this is expected to facilitate the design of an impact evaluation.



3.2.4 Complaints and appeal mechanisms

Most programmes provide a mechanism for complaints or grievances, although there is no common approach. WFP provides a national hotline which is available for any complaints by beneficiaries or non-beneficiaries of its programmes (including Food for Assets, BRACE II, Urban Safety Nets and the School Feeding Programme). Complaints can also be made at help desks stationed at cash or food distribution points. Improvements to this mechanism are planned. There is no complaints or grievance mechanism in GESS. The World Bank has established a grievance redress mechanism for SNSDP. Complaints can be made in writing, or orally if the complainant cannot write (oral complaints were the predominant mode during SNSDP). The World Bank intends to enhance the grievance response mechanism in SSSNP to expand its scope and improve citizen engagement and mitigate risks, including threats and incidents of violence.

The different complaints mechanisms have varied operating procedures and administrative practices. In SNSDP, the Boma Appeals Committee was mandated to review a grievance or complaint within seven days to decide whether further action was required. For the most part this occurred within the specified time. The Secretary of the Appeals Committee recorded the result of the grievance and whether it required follow-up, etc. These outcomes were included as an annex to the progress reports provided to the Project Management Unit. Detailed examination of these records has not been undertaken but it would be feasible to conduct quantitative analysis, for instance on the proportion of adjudicated complaints that have been decided in favour of beneficiaries. In relation to Food for Assets, BRACE II, Urban Safety Nets and the School Feeding Programme, information communicated to WFP's hotline is forwarded to programme staff responsible for resolution prior to the next distribution or within a month. Statistics are not recorded on how complaints are resolved.

4 Analysis and recommendations

This section provides analysis, observations and recommendations based on the results of the CODI mapping described in the earlier sections of this report. The many areas of encouraging progress on social protection are noted. It is also recognized that the social protection system in South Sudan is nascent and that the context is deeply challenging. The recommendations do not attempt to propose any 'best practice' initiatives. Based on the findings of the mapping, eight suggestions are proffered for programme reforms and systems-strengthening initiatives, divided into high priority (Tier 1) and second order priority (Tier 2). These proposals are not intended to be exhaustive, but are instead put forward as a contribution from an external observer to ongoing discussions in-country.

Tier 1 recommendations

4.1 Redouble existing coordination efforts

Ongoing efforts are required to ensure the revitalized National Social Protection Working Group becomes a respected social protection platform for coordination of stakeholders, information-sharing, policy implementation, programme management and systems development. Determined efforts will strengthen the prospects of significant returns over the long term. The Working Group should develop and maintain a prioritized workplan. For 2019, this should focus purely on the three other Tier 1 recommendations: public works transfer levels, a roadmap for harmonized management information systems and an overarching monitoring and evaluation framework. The Working Group membership list should be reviewed and updated to ensure it is relevant, and the terms of reference for the Group may also need updating. Sub-groups of the National Social Protection Working Group should be formed to address priority technical issues and to ensure the right people are in attendance. Consultations also revealed a strong preference for programme designs to be shared with the Group.

4.2 Transfer levels and labour requirements in public works and asset creation programmes

It would be preferable and feasible for the large public works programmes to harmonize their transfer levels. Work requirements are aligned across the major public works and asset creation programmes. It is encouraging to see that the large

programmes (SNSDP, Food for Assets and BRACE II) have all adopted a 15-day work cycle. Implementing partners also report that conditions are enforced across all programmes. However, transfer levels vary by at least 10–15 per cent for similar work in similar circumstances. Although it is positive that WFP and the World Bank consult with each other regarding transfer levels, there remains a small but potentially significant difference in the value of benefits between the various programmes: SNSDP provides US\$3 per day in urban areas and US\$2.40 per day in rural areas, whereas WFP pays US\$2.70 per day in Food for Assets and BRACE II. (The monthly transfer for Urban Safety Nets equates to US\$6–12 per day for a household of six people.) The willingness and capacity of BRACE II’s implementing partners to reach agreement on alignment has been demonstrated. But the broader approach across all public works programmes is less clear, and there are risks inherent in having similar programmes offering different benefits in return for the same activities, particularly in the South Sudan context. Harmonization on transfer levels could be discussed and agreed within the parameters of the National Social Protection Working Group. Consultation with the Inter-Agency Cash Working Group would be of crucial importance, and a member of the Inter-Agency Cash Working Group should participate in the harmonization discussions held by social protection stakeholders. During government consultations on this report, it was also proposed that transfer levels be differentiated by household composition.

4.3 Towards compatible management information systems

Ongoing discussions regarding compatibility of management information systems used by different social protection programmes should be formalized and expanded.

The most significant of these systems among the programmes mapped are the SNSDP/SSSNP management information system (World Bank), SCOPE (WFP) and the South Sudan Schools’ Attendance Monitoring System (GESS, funded by DFID). As yet, none of these systems are able to communicate with each other – for instance, to help prevent duplication or verify eligibility criteria by securely sharing information about beneficiaries. That said, the SNSDP management information system was designed with the intention and capability of communicating with other systems, and the World Bank has been in discussions with WFP about creating linkages between SCOPE and the SNSDP/SSSNP management information system. SCOPE also has the capacity for interoperability, as demonstrated by its capacity to communicate with the International Organization for Migration’s Displacement Tracking Mechanism. Within the school-based initiatives, there may be opportunities to harmonize data needs across GESS and the WFP in relation to school attendance. At present, the South Sudan Schools’ Attendance Monitoring System records attendance and payment data for each of the 355,000 girls who are beneficiaries of GESS. There are discussions under way to register the School Feeding Programme’s 410,000 children in SCOPE; if this proceeds, it will involve some children being registered in two separate management information systems. It would help strengthen the social

protection system if the systems used by GESS and the School Feeding Programme could be designed and developed to interact and share information.

4.4 Overarching social protection monitoring and evaluation framework

As indicated in the National Social Protection Policy Framework, an overarching monitoring and evaluation framework would be a beneficial addition to the South Sudan social protection system. The mapping revealed that a wealth of data is being collected on a regular basis by implementing partners and collated at national level, yet there is no structured format for sharing this data with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare and other social protection stakeholders. While reporting capacity at the local level is often a challenge for monitoring and evaluation frameworks, no such concerns were raised during the mapping. An overarching monitoring and evaluation framework in a simple format which follows the structure of the National Social Protection Policy Framework would support oversight by the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare and coordination by the National Social Protection Working Group.

Tier 2 recommendations

4.5 Differentiation based on lifecycle stage and abilities

Differentiation of benefits based on lifecycle stage and abilities should be encouraged and scaled up if successful. The second phase of GESS is expected to include reforms that aim to improve learning outcomes. The programme will likely adjust the benefit level for secondary-school-aged girls in recognition of the particular challenges involved in transferring from primary to secondary school. Although not yet determined, changes could involve bringing forward the transfer to an earlier point in the school year, and/or increasing the transfer level in recognition of the higher costs of secondary school. GESS 2 is also expected to help support girls with disabilities, potentially through a higher-level transfer in acknowledgement of the increased costs for a child with disabilities to attend school (e.g., for transport or assistive devices). The World Bank is adopting a similar approach in SSSNP through the provision of an unconditional cash transfer to households that do not have an able-bodied member to participate in public works activities. SNSDP also introduced an increasingly common practice in public works programmes of making allowances where a pregnant and lactating woman was the nominated household participant. These diverse and commendable initiatives recognize the important role that a social protection programme can play in protecting some of the most vulnerable members of society. (Cross-referencing the mapping with the National Social Protection Policy Framework also revealed that a key proposed component of the Framework – the Child Grant – has not yet been introduced. Opportunities to introduce this measure, which would support citizens at a critical stage of their lifecycle, should be given close consideration.)

4.6 Harmonized local governance structures

As the social protection system grows in scale, it is worth considering opportunities to harmonize and streamline the local-level committees involved in social protection. This may be viewed as a lower-order priority in some respects; the current arrangements appear to be working smoothly and there are many challenges to address across the sector, some of which are more immediate. The risk is in not planning for the future while there is an opportunity to do so. The potential exists for social protection programmes to grow in size and number, accompanied by an equivalent proliferation in community committees to identify beneficiaries and oversee implementation. This can lead in due course to delays and duplication of human and financial resources. Looking ahead, a single social protection committee could be considered at *boma* and *payam* levels to oversee current and future social protection programmes. Although local committees do not appear to play a prominent role at present in GESS or the School Feeding Programme, there is no reason to consider a local social protection committee could not add value, given the important correlations between GESS, the School Feeding Programme, BRACE II, Food for Assets, Urban Safety Nets and SSSNP.

4.7 Investing in evidence and using it to inform decisions

Notwithstanding the challenges of prolonged conflict, there is a clear need for a stronger evidence base on social protection in South Sudan. There is a noticeable lack of impact evaluations for the volume of funding channelled through the programmes each year. The evidence generated by robust evaluations can deliver valuable insights for both decision-makers and implementing agencies. Programmes that may have originated as humanitarian interventions are being conceptualized and implemented as longer-term safety nets and this underlines the importance of investing in evaluations. GESS demonstrates that robust generation of evidence is feasible in the local context. The mapping also revealed a limited evidence base supporting the use of conditions; this warrants further consideration and research.

4.8 Harmonized approach to complaints and grievance mechanisms

It would be beneficial for the cash/food transfer programmes to adopt a common approach to responding to complaints and grievances. The World Bank model appears to represent the most advanced approach to date (although as noted earlier it will be strengthened through SSSNP) and may provide a foundation for a harmonized model across all social protection programmes. Commendable aspects of the model include multiple channels for raising grievances; clear and short timeframes for resolution of issues; allocation of responsibility in the form of an appeals secretary; and solid documentation and record-keeping of outcomes.

