

# **Social Protection Evaluation Synthesis Management Response and Proposed Actions**



**Executive Board Meeting Informal Briefing  
August 18, 2015**

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# Why does Social Protection matter for children?

## Poverty, inequality and exclusion contribute to multiple deprivations for children.

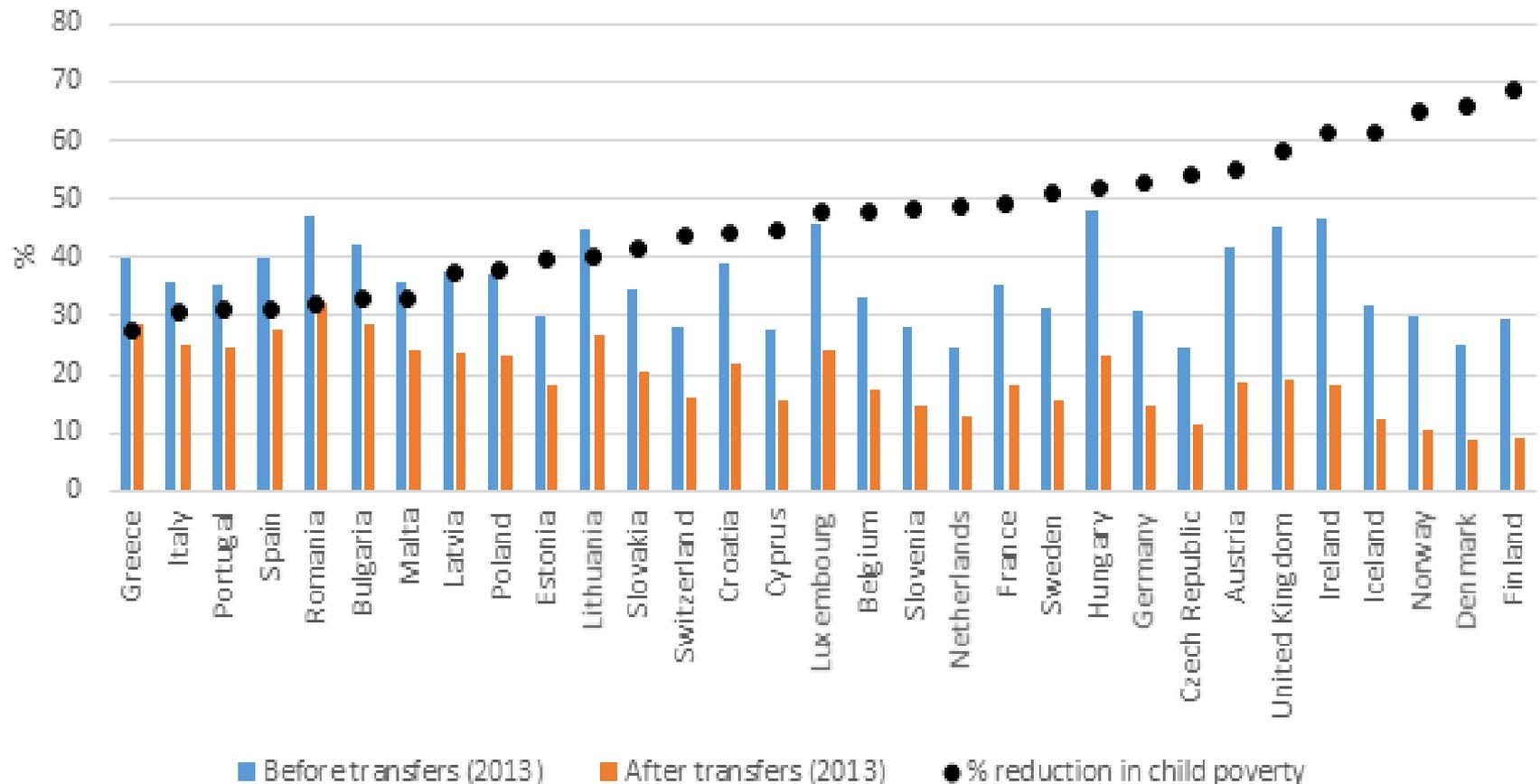
- Services and basic necessities forgone in childhood can and do result in long term or permanent deficits in children's growth, development and opportunities.

## Social protection helps to remove financial and social barriers to accessing services and basic necessities

- Social protection measures like cash transfers, health insurance or subsidies help people bridge the gap so that they can access food, shelter, clothing, health and education services, water and sanitation.
- Research from poor and rich countries alike underscore the impacts of social protection measures on child wellbeing – from health and nutrition to education to interrupting inter-generational cycles of poverty.

# Cash transfers proven to reduce child poverty

Child poverty before and after transfers (2013)



# Main components of UNICEF's work on social protection

- ✓ **Social transfers:** e.g. cash or in-kind transfers.
- ✓ **Programmes that enhance access to services,** e.g. health insurance or fee abolition.
- ✓ **Social support and care services,** including family support and counselling and referrals.
- ✓ **Legislation and policies that reinforce equity and non-discrimination** in children's and families' access to services and employment / livelihoods, e.g. maternity/paternity leave, equal pay legislation.

# Context of Evaluation Synthesis: UNICEF's work on Social Protection globally

- **Externally, large expansion of social protection as a policy and programme tool in developing countries over the past 15 years.**
  - ✓ 146 million children reached by social cash transfers alone in 2014.
- **UNICEF now works on social protection in 104 countries, covering all regions and diverse contexts.**
- **UNICEF focus is to expand the number of children and families reached by social protection, and to ensure these programmes maximize positive impacts for children.**
  - ✓ Technical and advocacy support to national strategy and policy development, national capacity-building and programme implementation, south-south learning, and evaluation and evidence generation.
  - ✓ Includes moving from single approaches to more integrated approaches in order to increase impacts.

# Social Protection Evaluation Synthesis

## Management Response

### The evaluation confirms:

#### ➤ **Social protection works for children**

- ✓ Positive impacts on health, nutrition, education, ECD, HIV & child protection outcomes.
- ✓ Enhances equity & reaches the most disadvantaged children.

### Building on the findings and recommendations we should:

- ✓ **Communicate the evidence widely** – to promote further investment in child sensitive social protection among governments and development partners.
- ✓ **Strengthen our programming** - to use cash transfers and other social protection measures to enhance results and equity in all sectors, including in emergencies.
- ✓ **Enhance our capacity** – strengthen our technical know-how and mobilise financial resources to support child sensitive social protection via Social Inclusion and all PD sectors at national, regional and global levels.
- ✓ **Continue evaluating** – to strengthen evidence around the further potential of SP to enhance child well-being.

# Social Protection Evaluation Synthesis

## Management Response

### **Recommendation 1 & 5: Increase programme and evaluation attention to “Cash Plus” interventions and other areas of social protection programming**

- ✓ **Agree.** We need to learn more about effects of cash transfers combined with other complementary interventions, as well as other types of social protection.

### **Proposed actions:**

1. Identify Country Offices already supporting combined social protection interventions. Select good practices and evaluate outcomes on child wellbeing. Underway; Completion date June 2016.
2. Review external evidence and work with partners on the evidence of “Cash Plus” and non-cash social protection interventions on health, education, nutrition, child protection, HIV outcomes. Completion date: March 2016.

# Social Protection Evaluation Synthesis

## Management Response

**Recommendation 2: Consider integrating the cash transfer (or Cash Plus) modality into programming, addressing each of the outcome areas articulated in UNICEF's Strategic Plan**

- ✓ **Agree.** Beyond programming, we can further enhance UNICEF's global advocacy, communications and partnerships on social protection.

### **Proposed actions:**

1. Highlight evaluation findings on the broad cross-sector impacts among UNICEF's global leadership - Regional Management Team, Senior Staff Global Management Team meetings.
2. Develop a communication plan to profile the positive impacts for children of social protection, including cash transfers. Completion date: January 2016.
3. Lead process with sectors to develop guidance on: (i) utilizing cash transfers and "Cash Plus" to support sector and multi-sector outcomes; and (ii) linking sectoral work with social protection. Underway; Completion date: September 2016.

# Social Protection Evaluation Synthesis

## Management Response

### **Recommendation 3: Update the technical guidance on evidence of impact to be measured through evaluation and research, and on implementation measurement**

- ✓ **Agree.** We need updated guidance to highlight the sectors influenced by cash transfers. We also need guidance on designing and implementing impact evaluations.

#### **Proposed actions:**

1. Development of guidance and web-resource page on impact evaluation methodology including applications to social protection interventions. Underway; Completion date: January 2016.
2. Further disseminate findings and lessons from the Transfer Project and other social protection evaluations. Completion date: March 2016.

# Social Protection Evaluation Synthesis

## Management Response

### **Recommendation 4: Make technical support available for an evidence-based approach early in the process**

- ✓ **Agree.** Many Country Offices do have technical capacity to support government in design and evidence generation. Nonetheless, increasing demand for UNICEF support from governments challenges existing capacities.

### **Proposed actions:**

1. Identify key internal technical capacity gaps and expertise on social protection and plan to strengthen internal capacities. Completion date March 2016.
2. Expand partnerships with policy think tanks and research institutions to improve access to high-level expertise and promote horizontal cooperation. Completion date September 2016.

# Social Protection Evaluation Synthesis

## Management Response

### **Recommendation 6: Develop the evidence base on effectiveness of cash transfer programmes in humanitarian action**

- ❖ **Partially agree.** Although we need to continue to monitor and evaluate this area of work, we recommend to focus on technical support, capacity building and internal operational learning rather than on developing the evidence base.

#### **Proposed actions:**

1. Systematically incorporate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in all cash and other social protection interventions in emergency contexts. Underway; Completion date: January 2016 to begin implementation.
2. Develop joint guidance, technical support and internal community of practice to support cash-based programming in humanitarian action, focused on scaling up and strengthening existing structures. Underway; Completion date: March 2016.