



Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean Handbook

November 2021



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This handbook benefits from a rich body of experience, evidence and training materials. It draws from a regional research programme on [Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean](#) (2018-2020) conducted by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and Oxford Policy Management (OPM) in collaboration with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and Participating States. The overarching conceptual framework builds on OPM's [Shock-Responsive Social Protection Toolkit: Appraising the use of social protection in addressing large-scale shocks](#) (2018). Chapter 3 draws from the [TRANSFORM Curriculum on Shock Responsive Social Protection](#) developed in collaboration with a wide variety of development partners, including WFP, UNICEF, ILO and DFID (2020)¹. Chapter 4 is informed by [WFP's guidance and tools](#) on social protection and cash-based programming and policy, operational and technical expertise in analysis, assessment, programme design, delivery systems and accountability, as well as other key resources.

The handbook is the foundation of the **WFP/CDEMA regional training** on shock-responsive social protection and a component of the [EnGenDER](#) project. The EnGender project seeks to integrate gender equality and human rights-based approaches into disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and environmental management frameworks and interventions.

The regional training aims to:

- develop and enhance capacities to strengthen social protection systems through preparedness measures, and
- build technical competencies to design and implement shock-responsive social protection programmes to support individuals, households and communities affected by shocks.

The training stems from a collaboration between WFP and CDEMA to strengthen emergency preparedness and response capacities in the Caribbean. It aims to help build a regional cadre of skilled professionals who can support regional and national preparedness, response and mitigation measures to lessen the impact of shocks on vulnerable populations through strengthened linkages between social protection and disaster risk management.

The handbook was prepared by the WFP Caribbean Multi-Country Office in collaboration with Oxford Policy Management. It includes inputs from Francesca Ciardi, Madhumitha Hebbar, Valentina Barca, Daniel Longhurst, Elisaveta Gouretskaia, Sarah Bailey, Sara Netzer, Sarah Lionel and research led by Rodolfo Beazley. The handbook was finalised with the support of the University of Wolverhampton.

This publication was made possible thanks to the generous support of the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, Global Affairs Canada, the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.



1. The TRANSFORM Curriculum was developed drawing on existing research and guidance on the topic, most importantly: the [OPM research on shock responsive social protection](#), [WFP-OPM research on shock responsive social protection in Latin American and Caribbean](#), [WFP-OPM research on shock responsive social protection in the ASEAN region](#), the [European Commission's Guidance on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus](#) and [UNICEF's Programming Guidance on Shock Responsive Social Protection](#).

FOREWORD

In 2018, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) launched an innovative learning initiative on shock-responsive social protection in the Caribbean. With CDEMA Participating States increasingly turning to social protection to reach people impacted by disasters and shocks, capturing and sharing lessons was essential to seize the opportunities offered by social protection. The 2019 CDEMA/WFP Regional Symposium on Shock-Responsive Social Protection and other events brought together disaster risk management agencies and social protection ministries to strengthen links and share experiences. A regional literature review and eight country case studies built a strong evidence base and identified ways to better prepare social protection systems in the Caribbean to play this critical role.

The Caribbean, and indeed the world, has changed significantly since the research first began. COVID-19 has dealt a severe blow to lives, livelihoods and economies. Every CDEMA Participating State turned to social protection to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic – often through cash transfers and income support. A growing evidence base has contributed to a growing operational base and while the case for shock-responsive social protection as a strategy within the Caribbean has been made, many operational challenges persist. COVID-19 and recent climatic and other shocks have not only provided a greater regional experience in linking social protection and disaster management, but more critically these efforts are now leading to a more robust response to the needs of vulnerable populations most impacted by these events.

Shock-responsive social protection has an important role to play in taking forward the 2014-2024 Comprehensive Disaster Management strategy and the Caribbean Pathway for Disaster Resilience, whose first pillar is ‘social protection for the marginal and most vulnerable’. It is well recognized that disasters have particularly damaging effects on the most vulnerable members of the community. External shocks will often result in persons on the margins of poverty falling below the poverty line and those who were already living in poverty, falling further. Disasters also affect women and girls differently due to gender inequalities. Children and persons with disabilities are also likely to be affected to a greater degree by natural disasters.

Building on regional experiences and WFP’s operational expertise, this Handbook on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean outlines pragmatic steps that governments and their partners can take to design and implement response measures through social protection. It is part of a wider training programme to further equip professionals from both the social protection and disaster risk management sectors with the knowledge and skills to leverage social protection when shocks hit.

The eruption of La Soufriere in April 2021 and active hurricane seasons in 2020 and 2021 are stark reminders that the next disaster is a question of when and not if. Together we can ensure that those most impacted receive the assistance they need.



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HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

Purpose

The purpose of the handbook is to provide decision-makers, technical and operational staff from ministries and agencies responsible for social protection and disaster risk management (DRM), and their partners, with practical tools and guidance on how to leverage social protection programmes and systems to support people vulnerable to and impacted by shocks. More specifically, it aims to develop:

- an understanding of the **conceptual, strategic and practical issues** on linking social protection to DRM to prepare for, respond to and mitigate the impact of shocks
- practical measures to **strengthen social protection systems and their scalability** in response to shocks through preparedness measures, and
- strategic and technical competencies to **design and implement assistance in response to shocks through social protection and its linkages with DRM.**

Scope

The handbook focuses on social assistance programmes and particularly on cash transfers. Social assistance programmes are explicitly designed to support poorer and more vulnerable people, who have fewer capacities to handle shocks and typically bear the brunt of their impacts. Governments in the Caribbean have also utilized cash transfer programmes to respond to different types of shocks². At the same time, social protection includes a range of instruments that can contribute to responding to shocks, including social insurance, which is common in the Caribbean. While the handbook references such measures, it does not cover them in detail.

The handbook explores how social protection can complement and support other sectors in responding effectively to emergencies and the preparedness measures needed to strengthen systems and programmes in advance of shocks. However, there may be times and circumstances when social protection has a limited or no role to play beyond its usual functions. There are always many actors involved across different sectors in supporting people in times of disasters and shocks. This handbook recognizes this diverse picture of different stakeholders and efforts but does not cover what other actors can do to prepare and respond effectively.

Strengthening social protection systems to perform their routine functions is essential to make them better placed to respond to shocks. This handbook does not cover general social protection strengthening. However, the preparedness measures discussed in Chapter 3 can contribute towards improving the overall performance of social protection programmes.

2. An overview of responses to shocks in the Caribbean through social assistance and social insurance programmes is available in the annex.

Content overview

The handbook has a modular structure, comprising interrelated topics and resources that readers can use flexibly according to their specific roles and information needs. The handbook has four chapters.

Each chapter includes:

- information boxes that provide contextual information on shock-responsive social protection in the Caribbean; and
- a selection of additional resources from regional and global evidence, research and good practices.

Chapter 1

The Case for Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean

Read this chapter to understand the relevance of shock-responsive social protection for the Caribbean. Look at why there is strong potential for a more prominent and expanded role for social protection in responding to shocks as part of a comprehensive approach to emergency preparedness and response.

Chapter 2

Social Protection, DRM and Their Linkages to Prepare for and Respond to Shocks

Read this chapter to find out about the mandates and functions of social protection and DRM and how these sectors are mutually reinforcing to plan for and respond to the needs of populations affected by shocks.

Chapter 3

Preparing and Making the Social Protection System Risk-Informed

Read this chapter for recommendations on preparedness measures to strengthen social protection's role in responding to shocks and how such measures can also benefit the routine functions of social protection programmes, systems and services.

Chapter 4

Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Practice

Read this chapter for practical guidance for designing and implementing responses to shocks through social protection, including decisions and actions concerning whom to support, what type of assistance they should receive, how much and for how long.

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2. Regional Approach to DRM in the Caribbean
3. Humanitarian Principles
4. UN System in the Caribbean
5. Overview of Types of Shocks in the Caribbean
6. Enabling and Constraining Factors for Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean
7. Steps for Adapting Social Protection Systems
8. Social Protection Rapid Assessment Matrix
9. Shock-Responsive Social Protection Measures in the Caribbean
10. Incorporating DRM into Social Protection Strategies in the Caribbean
11. Social Registries to Inform Responses to Shocks and Their Limitations
12. Social Protection and Relief Programmes Targeting Approaches
13. Country Examples of Targeting Systems for Shock-Responsive Social Protection
14. Delivery Mechanisms for Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean
15. Country Example of Existing Coordination Mechanisms and Linkages Between Social Protection and DRM
16. Consumer-Centric Approach to Support Risk Financing
17. Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility Segregated Portfolio Company (CCRIF SPC)
18. Social Protection Responses to COVID-19 in the Caribbean
19. The '5 Rs' to Help Design a Quality and Appropriate Response
20. CDEMA's Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (DANA) Continuum
21. Jamaica's Household Damage, Impact, and Needs Assessment Form
22. Disaster Risk Financing in the Caribbean
23. Linking Social Protection with Climate Resilience and Adaptation: The Role of Weather-Based Insurance and Microinsurance
24. Joint Cash Platform: The Example of the British Virgin Islands
25. Calculating In-Kind Food Ration
26. Supporting Recovery and Addressing Vulnerability in the Longer-Term
27. Checklist: Beneficiary external communications
28. Registration and Enrolment of Social Protection Beneficiaries Following Shocks
29. Delivery of Post-Disaster Social Protection Benefits in the Region
30. What to Monitor – Process
31. Sample Data That Can Be Captured Through a Monitoring Questionnaire
32. Examples of Post-Distribution Monitoring
33. Shock-Responsive Social Protection Learning and Training Events in the Caribbean

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2. System Response
3. Information Systems: Clarifying the Terminology
4. Disaster Risk Financing Instruments in the Caribbean
5. Cash Transfers Values Adaptation Approaches
6. Checklist for Delivery Mechanism Selection
7. Feedback and Complaints Modalities – Strengths and Weaknesses

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2. Building Blocks of a National Social Protection System
3. Overlap Between Social Protection and DRM Frameworks
4. Social Protection Alignment Along the DRM Cycle
5. Risks and Shocks Along the Lifecycle, Compounded by Covariate Shocks
6. Most Common Indicators in Vulnerability Profiling
7. Criteria and Response Options for Shock-Responsive Social Protection
8. Steps for the Design and Implementation of Shock-Responsive Social Protection Intervention
9. Options for Responding Through Social Protection
10. Feedback and Complaints Solutions
11. The Complaints and Feedback Gap Cycle



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