
The effectiveness of social protection interventions in low- and middle-income countries: an evidence and gap map

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Title of the EGM

Full name: The effectiveness of social protection interventions in low- and middle-income countries: an evidence and gap map

Short name: Social protection in low- and middle-income countries: an evidence and gap map

Background

Social protection is concerned with protecting and helping those who are poor and vulnerable, such as children, women, older people, people living with disabilities, the displaced, the unemployed, and the sick. The social protection overlaps with a number of livelihoods, human capital and food security interventions (Harvey, Holmes, Slater, & Martin, 2007). Social protection vary widely, from reducing poverty and vulnerability, building human capital, empowering women and girls, improving livelihoods, and responding to economic and other shocks.

The map will cover broad range of intervention for social protection among children, adults and geriatric population described for social protection and it will have a major focus on persons with social protection in LMICs

LMICs are defined by World Bank as low income economies - those with a Gross National Income (GNI) less than \$995; lower middle-income economies – those with a GNI per capita between \$996 and \$3,895; and upper middle-income economies – those with a GNI per capita between \$3,896 and \$12,055 (2018).

The World Bank estimates that more than 1 billion people in developing countries participate in at least one social assistance programme. (Gentilini, Maddalena, & Ruslan, 2014). The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that only 27% of the world's population has access to comprehensive social security systems (ILO, 2014). There is wide variation in coverage, with most programmes only reaching the middle poor and middle-income countries, not the extreme poor (Gentilini, Maddalena, & Ruslan, 2014). In recent years, the success of social protection interventions in middle income countries (MICs) such as Brazil and Mexico, along with the series of food, fuel, and financial crises, has prompted policymakers in low income countries (LICs) and fragile situations (FSs) to examine the possibility of introducing such programs in their own countries (Andrews, Das, Elder, Ovadiya, & Zampaglione, 2012).

Social protection systems help individuals and families, especially the poor and vulnerable, cope with crises and shocks, find jobs, improve productivity, invest in the health and education of their children, and protect the aging population. The World Bank Group supports universal access to social protection, and is central to its goals of ending poverty and

boosting shared prosperity. Universal social protection coverage includes: providing social assistance through cash transfers to those who need them, especially children; benefits and support for people of working age in case of maternity, disability, work injury or for those without jobs; and pension coverage for the elderly. Assistance is provided through social insurance, tax-funded social benefits, social assistance services, public works programs and other schemes guaranteeing basic income security (World Bank).

As accelerating progress on social protection requires governments and development partners to have the best available data on what works and where the gaps in implementing social protection measures are.

Evidence and gap maps provide a visual overview of the availability of evidence for a particular sector - in this case will include people in Low and middle income countries benefiting from social protection interventions. The EGM will consolidate what we know and do not know about 'what works' by mapping out existing and ongoing systematic reviews and impact evaluations in this field; and by providing a graphical display of areas with strong, weak or non-existent evidence on the effect of interventions or initiatives.

The objectives will be:

1. Develop a clear framework of types of interventions and outcomes related to effectiveness of interventions on social protection for people in LMICs,
2. Map available systematic reviews and primary studies on the effectiveness of interventions on social protection for people in LMICs in this framework, with an overview provided in a summary report,
3. Provide database entries of included studies which summarises the interventions content study design and main findings.

Existing EGMs

There is no EGM available in Campbell Collaboration and 3ie. However, a good number of systematic reviews and impact evaluation studies are accessible.

Systematic reviews

1. Interventions to improve the labour market for adults living with physical and/or sensory disabilities in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review September 2017. (3ie)
2. Vocational and business training to improve women's labour market outcomes in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review. June 2018. (3ie)

3. Interventions to improve the labour market outcomes of youth: A systematic review of training, entrepreneurship promotion, employment services and subsidized employment interventions. 2017 (3ie)
4. Child protection training for professionals required to report child abuse and neglect. 2015 (Campbell)

Suggested dimensions

The following are suggested dimensions for elaboration, depending on the scope of the EGM. In addition to intervention and outcomes, the following filters will be coded:

1. Population age group: children (under 18 years), adults (18-60 years), elderly (above 60 years)
Population sub-groups: vulnerable children (e.g. child labourers), men, women, ethnic minorities, conflict-affected, people living with disabilities, the displaced, and the unemployed.

The rationale for the study is to focus on the poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups, who are deprived of basic needs and exposed to economic and social vulnerability. For instance women are disproportionately vulnerable to high wage differentials and gendered work norms, bearing the responsibility for childcare, on other hand children are more vulnerable to malnutrition, disease and abuse than adults, and are over-represented among the poor, whereas older aged people have limited contributory pensions so they have to rely on formal employment, and coverage rates which are low in low- and middle-income countries (ILO, 2014)

2. Study designs: The EGM will include randomized controlled trials (RCTs), non-randomised controlled trials and systematic reviews of effects of interventions. Non-randomised controlled trials (NRCTs) are prospective studies where two or more groups of participants receive different interventions (Higgins & Green, 2011). Also, in NRCTs, participants are allocated to groups by some action of researchers and will also include systematic reviews of effectiveness studies.
3. Region: LMICs are defined by World Bank as low income economies - those with a Gross National Income (GNI) less than \$1,006995; lower middle-income economies – those with a GNI per capita between \$9961,006 and \$3,895955; and upper middle-income economies – those with a GNI per capita between \$3,896956 and \$12,055235 (2018 <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>)
4. Country: All the LMICs as per World Bank reference (Annexure 1)

Intervention(s) or problem

The intervention categories are based on the World Bank’s Group 10-year social protection and labor strategy (2012-22). The broad intervention categories are:

1. Social assistance (social safety nets)
2. Social issuance
3. Labour marketing

Interventions	Sub-categories
Social assistance (Social safety nets)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social/Cash transfer/In-kind transfers ○ Child Welfare Programs ○ Targeted food assistance
Social insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pensions (old age/disability) ○ Health Insurance ○ Other Social Insurance (passive labor market programs, e.g., unemployment insurance and disability insurance, maternity benefits; and provident funds)
Labour marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Active labour market (job centres, training, and policies to promote small and medium sized enterprises) ○ Passive labour market (maternity benefits, injury compensation, and sickness benefits, minimum wage etc.)

Population

This map will include all the people residing in LMIC: : LMICs are defined by World Bank as low income economies - those with a Gross National Income (GNI) less than \$1,006995; lower middle-income economies – those with a GNI per capita between \$9961,006 and \$3,895955; and upper middle-income economies – those with a GNI per capita between \$3,896956 and \$12,055235 (2018)

The population subgroups are: children (under 18 years), adults (18-60 years), elderly (above 60 years), vulnerable children (e.g. child labourers), men, women, ethnic minorities, conflict-affected.

Outcomes

Universal social protection is likely to advance progress on a host of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including on reducing poverty and inequalities, the promotion of

decent work, inclusive growth, and improvements to health and education outcomes (ILO, 2014). The outcomes included in the map would be based on these SDGs.

Outcomes
Social inclusion and gender equity (SDG5 &10)
Nutrition (SDG2)
Employment (SDG8)
Education (SDG4)
Health and nutrition (SDG3)
Economic (SDG 1)

Study designs

The EGM will include randomized controlled trials (RCTs), non-randomised controlled trials and systematic reviews of effects of interventions. Non-randomised controlled trials (NRCTs) are prospective studies where two or more groups of participants receive different interventions (Higgins & Green, 2011). Also, in NRCTs, participants are allocated to groups by some action of researchers.

The map will also include systematic reviews of effectiveness studies which include studies from LMICs. The key characteristics for a review to be included as a 'systematic review':

1. A clearly stated set of objectives with pre-defined eligibility criteria for studies.
2. An explicit, reproducible methodology.
3. A systematic search that attempts to identify all studies that would meet the eligibility criteria.
4. An assessment of the validity of the findings of the included studies, for example through the assessment of risk of bias.
5. A systematic presentation, and synthesis, of the characteristics and findings of the included studies.

Studies will be from low- and middle-income countries. Systematic reviews that have a global focus will be excluded if their focus is solely on high-income countries. Those which contain information on high-, middle- or low-income countries, but where the findings are clearly disaggregated by region or country and where the findings for low- or middle-income regions or countries are presented separately will be included.

We will not include qualitative study designs or case studies.

Stakeholder engagement

An advisory group was formed at the inception stage of this EGM. The advisory group members involved in the preparation of this EGM are experts working in the area of social and child welfare, health and wellbeing. Feedback from the group members was received and assimilated in the framework plan at the title registration stage. The stakeholders will be

engaged at all stages of the EGM to review and comment on interventions, studies, outputs, map findings and provide advice on dissemination channels.

References

- Andrews, C., Das, M., Elder, J., Ovadiya, M., & Zampaglione, G. (2012). *Social protection in low income countries and fragile situations: challenges and future directions*.
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Roles and responsibilities

Please note that this is the *recommended optimal* EGM team composition.

- **Content:** Dr Latha holds masters in Medical surgical nursing and has been extensively involved in areas of oncology, nursing Education and Research. She also published various research articles on nursing and medical research.
- **EGM methods:** All the authors have previous experience of working on various stages of systematic reviews as screening, coding, drafting search strategy.
- **Information retrieval:** All the authors have previous experience of drafting search strategy and have performed systematic review searches.

Funding

None

Potential conflicts of interest

No conflict of interest.

Preliminary timeframe

1. Draft protocol: February 2019
2. Search and screening: February-March 2019
3. Draft EGM: April 2019
4. Report and briefs: April-May 2019

Annexure 1

**Lower-middle-income economies
(Gross national capita income \$996 to \$3,895)**

Angola	Indonesia	Papua New Guinea
Bangladesh	Kenya	Philippines
Bhutan	Kiribati	São Tomé and Príncipe
Bolivia	Kosovo	Solomon Islands
Cabo Verde	Kyrgyz Republic	Sri Lanka
Cambodia	Lao PDR	Sudan
Cameroon	Lesotho	Swaziland
Congo, Rep.	Mauritania	Timor-Leste
Côte d'Ivoire	Micronesia, Fed. Sts.	Tunisia
Djibouti	Moldova	Ukraine
Egypt, Arab Rep.	Mongolia	Uzbekistan
El Salvador	Morocco	Vanuatu
Georgia	Myanmar	Vietnam
Ghana	Nicaragua	West Bank and Gaza
Honduras	Nigeria	Zambia
India	Pakistan	