

# Gender-Responsive Age-Sensitive Social Protection:

## A conceptual framework

UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti

UNICEF Office of Research | Innocenti Working Paper

WP-2020-10 | August 2020

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This Innocenti Working Paper has been published without undergoing layout, copyediting or proofreading. It is being released to rapidly share results of our work with the wider research and practitioner communities, and to encourage discussion of methods and findings.

## KEY WORDS

gender; social protection; life course

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper is an output of the inception phase of *Gender-Responsive Age-Sensitive Social Protection (GRASSP)*, a research programme (2018-23) led by UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti and generously funded by the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) and other partners. The aim of the research programme is to examine how gender-responsive and age-sensitive social protection can sustainably reduce poverty and achieve gender equality, by building a robust evidence base focused on ‘what works’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ in social protection to contribute to enhanced gender equality outcomes. See more at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/gender-responsive-and-age-sensitive-social-protection/>.

This paper presents a conceptual framework that will guide the development of the research approach and methodology for GRASSP. The conceptual framework was developed via an iterative collaborative process at UNICEF Innocenti during several months in the first half of 2019.

The following UNICEF Innocenti researchers contributed to the development of the GRASSP conceptual framework (in alphabetical order): Prerna Banati; Elena Camilletti; Maja Gavrilovic; Roselyn Kapungu; Tia Palermo; Amber Peterman; and Elsa Valli.

The following UNICEF Innocenti colleagues contributed with comments and inputs during the development of the framework (in alphabetical order): Emanuela Bianchera; Michelle Godwin; Alessandra Ipince; Camille Neyhouser and Ewa Zgrzywa.

UNICEF Innocenti gratefully acknowledges the useful comments and feedback received by participants at the GRASSP Inception Workshop, held at UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti premises in Florence, Italy, on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

This paper was further reviewed by Zahrah Nesbitt-Ahmed, Gunilla Olsson, Ramya Subrahmanian and Nyasha Tirivayi at UNICEF Innocenti, and Ruth Graham-Goulder at UNICEF HQ prior to publication.

The contribution of Ivana Joksimovic to the development of the Conceptual Framework graphic is gratefully acknowledged.

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CODI	Core Diagnostic Instrument
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GRASSP	Gender-Responsive Age-Sensitive Social Protection
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISPA	Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessments
LDC	Least Developed Country
LMIC	Low and Middle-Income Country
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PWP	Public Works Programme
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
UCT	Unconditional Cash Transfer
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNICEF Innocenti	UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti
WHO	World Health Organization

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## BACKGROUND

There is significant potential for social protection systems (including policies, programmes and institutions) to promote gender equality and transformative change as a core pre-condition for long-term and sustainable poverty reduction. There is also the potential of poverty reduction to promote long-term and sustained gender equality and transformative change. Recognising this, the Gender-Responsive Age-Sensitive Social Protection (GRASSP) research programme, led by UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti (hereafter UNICEF Innocenti) seeks to strengthen the gender-responsiveness of social protection systems in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), and support shifts long-term towards gender-transformational social protection work, by building a robust evidence base focused on ‘what works’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ to contribute to enhanced gender equality outcomes across the life course.

This working paper provides a concise narrative behind the graphic representation of the GRASSP conceptual framework. The framework delineates the conceptual linkages between gender (including gender risks, vulnerabilities, discrimination and inequalities, multidimensional deprivations affecting women and girls), and social protection. It proposes a systematic, holistic and integrated approach for conceptualising the intersections between gender and social protection, to achieve SDG1 (‘end poverty in all its forms everywhere’) and SDG5 (‘achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’)<sup>1</sup> through careful planning, design, implementation and evaluation of a gender-responsive social protection system.

The GRASSP conceptual framework builds on and expands existing conceptual and theoretical efforts focused on integrating a gender lens into public policy (see for instance Holmes and Jones 2013, GAGE Consortium 2017). Building on these earlier efforts, the GRASSP conceptual framework brings together several integrated aspects related to gender, social protection, and the life course.

First, the framework specifically acknowledges that poverty, risks and vulnerabilities are gendered, which can change at different transitions and turning points throughout the life course, as well as accumulate over time. It reflects structural and individual-level drivers of gender inequality that result in unequal outcomes for girls and women relative to boys and men, with long-term negative impacts for them, and for sustainably reducing poverty and enhancing gender equality. Integrating analysis by age and gender allows for a life course lens on gendered inequalities in relation to poverty and vulnerability.

Second, the framework maps out the opportunities and mechanisms through which social protection programmes, policies and systems may address gendered risks and vulnerabilities through specific programmes across the social protection delivery cycle, including the legal and policy framework, programme design, implementation, governance and financing. The conceptual framework deliberately takes a macro-view, acknowledging the importance of a systems and institutional perspective, beyond project or programme level pathways.

Third, the framework applies a ‘gender integration continuum’ (GIC), a diagnostic tool to distinguish different degrees of integration of gender considerations across the social protection delivery cycle, ranging from gender-discriminatory to gender-transformative. The GIC helps assess the extent to which social protection systems and programmes are designed and delivered in a way that explicitly addresses gender inequality. It is based on a recognition that programmatic or

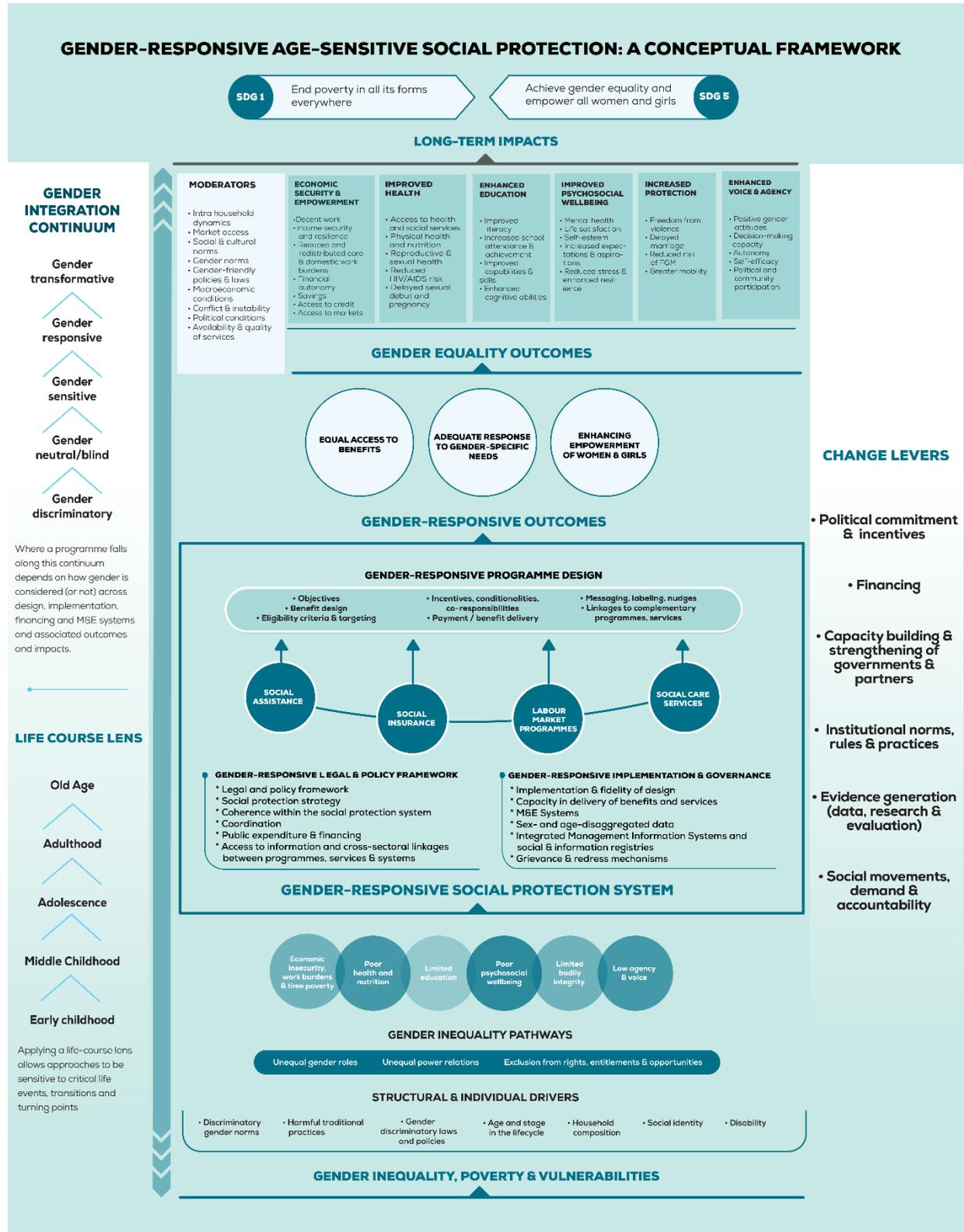
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<sup>1</sup>Social protection contributes to the achievement of multiple SDGs, however SDG1 and SDG5 have been prioritised here because they are the most relevant to the GRASPP research focus on gender-responsive social protection.

policy attention to addressing or transforming gender inequality depends to a great extent on the prior understanding of prevailing gender inequalities and norms that need to be transformed through purposive actions. It thus shows how gender-responsive social protection, by specifically addressing gendered poverty, risks and vulnerabilities, can strengthen social protection system-level outcomes, such as improved coverage and adequacy of social protection systems, as well as individual programme results, and thereby contribute to a range of gender equality outcomes, including economic security and empowerment, improved health and enhanced education.

The remaining sections provide more detail on each element of the conceptual framework and the Annex discusses terms and definitions for each of these elements in more detail.

# GENDER-RESPONSIVE AGE-SENSITIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

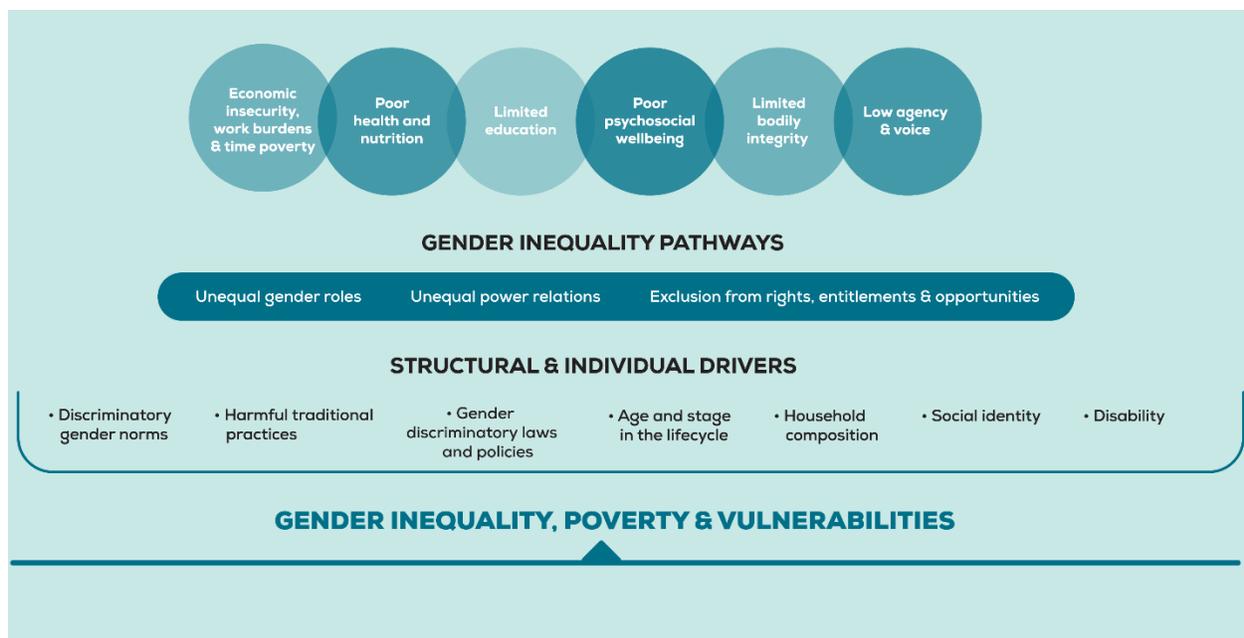


## Element 1. Gender Inequality, Poverty and Vulnerability: Structural and Individual Drivers

Structural drivers, such as discriminatory gender norms, harmful traditional practices and gender-blind laws and policies lie at the root of women’s and girls’ vulnerability to poverty and deprivation. These factors expose women and girls to different inequality pathways and intersect with the other characteristics and identities that they hold. The GRASSP research proposes to group these into three mutually reinforcing inequality pathways:

- 1) Unequal gender roles in the reproductive and economic domains;
- 2) Unequal power relations, and
- 3) Exclusion from rights, entitlements and opportunities.

*Element 1: Gender inequality, poverty and vulnerability*



These inequality pathways lead to negative effects across important well-being domains, with adverse outcomes on education, health and nutrition, economic security and work burdens, psychosocial well-being, bodily integrity, and voice and agency of women and girls. While a diverse set of risks also accrue to men and boys, the burden of unequal structural poverty-related vulnerabilities still falls on average disproportionately to women and girls, globally but especially in LMICs where poverty is widespread and access to goods and services is limited. Individual and household-level moderating factors, such as age and stage in the life course, disability and social identity, among others, may further aggravate adverse well-being outcomes, and diminish the strength and resilience of women and girls. Therefore, sustainable poverty reduction cannot be achieved without addressing gender inequalities, and poverty reduction and social protection strategies must take context-specific and relational gender dynamics into account.

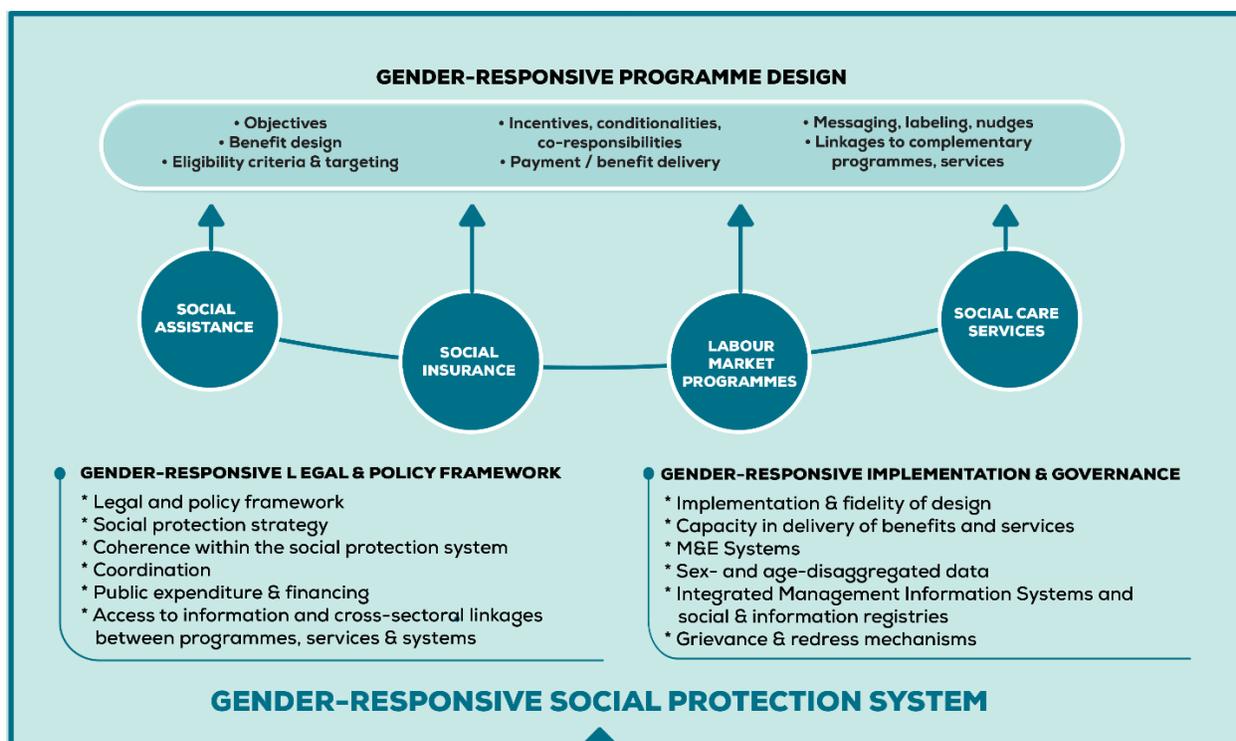
The conceptual framework calls for the establishment of a gender-responsive social protection system to respond to contextually specific needs of women and girls. This includes the integration of gender considerations into the different stages of the social protection delivery cycle – from its

planning and legal and policy frameworks, to its design, to its implementation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and to its governance and financing. An important first step in making social protection systems (including programmes) gender-responsive is to explicitly work towards gender equality, reflected in core objectives and through the integration of gender analysis into all stages of the delivery cycle.

## Element 2. Dimensions of a gender-responsive social protection system

A gender-responsive social protection system comprises three key dimensions. **Legal and policy frameworks** must be established defining and supporting a common vision and a coherent strategy, as well as facilitate coordination and linkages between different social protection programmes, and institutions. Further, this coordination goes beyond social protection to other services, programmes and systems, to ensure explicit acknowledgement and support for addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women and girls. Gender-responsive financing is also required to extend social protection coverage and improve its adequacy in a way that is redistributive and supports long-term investments in gender equality.

Element 2: Gender-responsive social protection system



**Implementation and governance** mechanisms and structures must employ a gender-responsive approach to delivering benefits and services, establishing grievance mechanisms that are both accessible to women and girls and responsive to their needs and experiences, and collecting sex- and age-disaggregated data, as well as ensuring gender-responsive M&E efforts to improve programme effectiveness. Understanding the political and social incentive structures that may shape or shift the perspectives and actions of programme implementers, and impact the translation of design into implementation strategies and outcomes, is a critical and often

overlooked aspect, as is the wider political economy context in which implementation and governance of programmes are nested.

Further, the framework acknowledges that different types of **social protection programming** have distinct needs for gender-responsive design. The framework focuses on four key types of social protection programming: 1) social assistance, or more broadly non-contributory social protection programmes, 2) social insurance, or more broadly contributory social protection programmes, 3) labour market programmes and 4) social care services (see further definitions in Annex). A gender lens is critical at all stages of programme design, from analysis to planning and strategy development, to core design features (including benefit type, eligibility criteria and targeting, incentives, co-responsibilities, payment/benefit delivery mechanisms, messaging and linkages to complementary services), in order to promote gender equality outcomes and minimise unintended risks.

### Element 3. A gender integration continuum

Element 3: Gender integration continuum

#### GENDER INTEGRATION CONTINUUM

Gender transformative



Gender responsive



Gender sensitive



Gender neutral/blind



Gender discriminatory

Where a programme falls along this continuum depends on how gender is considered (or not) across design, implementation, financing and M&E systems and associated outcomes and impacts.

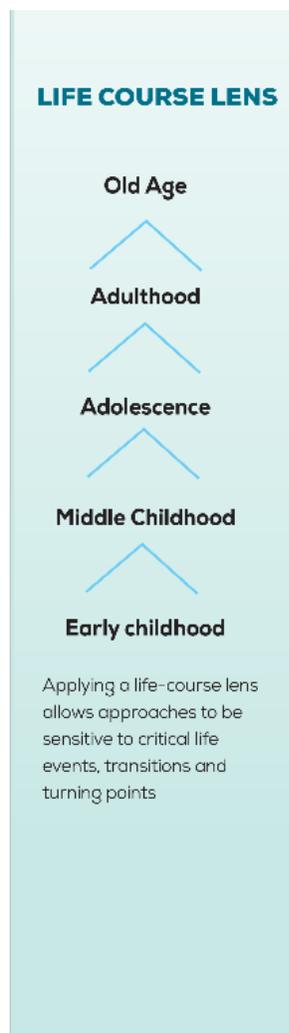
Efforts to integrate gender into social protection policy or programmes can be conceptualised along a 'gender integration continuum', ranging from gender discriminatory to gender transformative. Specifically, where a social protection policy or programme is assessed to fall along this continuum depends on how gender is considered (or not) across its social protection delivery cycle – across components in Element 2 – from its design, to its implementation, to its governance, financing and M&E systems, as well as across the associated outcomes and impacts.

Programmes that actively exclude women or their gendered needs from consideration are considered **gender-discriminatory**. Some may be unintentionally so, resulting in the lack of application of a gender lens to the design of the problem, rendering women and their gendered needs invisible. These may be categorised as **gender-neutral** or **gender-blind** (if they do no further harm beyond upholding an unequal gender status quo).

At a minimum, social protection systems should strive to 'do no harm' and employ a basic level of gender sensitivity (even where gender equality is not a primary objective). **Gender-sensitive** programmes may opt to conform to existing gender norms in order to enhance specific programme outcomes. However, the ultimate goal of the social protection system should be to gradually move towards more **gender-responsive** (whereby programmes explicitly respond to women's and men's needs) and **transformative** (whereby programmes seek to tackle the root causes of gender inequality and transform harmful gender norms) programming. Without transformative programming, the objectives of reducing poverty, addressing risks and vulnerabilities – which are gendered - and providing equitably distributed income security against risks and vulnerabilities are unlikely to be met. This means that social protection programmes should not only aim to deliberately **respond** to specific gender needs but also strive to **transform** discriminatory and harmful social and gender norms that affect women's and girls' capabilities and empower them to exercise their agency and live to their full potential.

## Element 4. Adopting a life course lens

### Element 4: Life course lens



The integration of gender into social protection must also take into account that women and girls also face specific risks at different ages and stages of their lives – from birth and early childhood, ‘middle’ childhood and adolescence to adulthood and old age<sup>2</sup> – that are related to their biological sex as well as to entrenched social and gender norms that are reproduced through gender roles and practices. Critical life events, transitions and turning points, such as childbirth, entry into schooling and the labour force, marriage, maternity and retirement, intersect with ‘biological’ stages and pose specific risks and opportunities for women and girls across different ages and stages in the life course.

Moreover, at each stage in the life course (for instance adolescence, pregnancy and childbirth), risks and vulnerabilities differ by gender. Some operate more at the individual level, and others are socially constructed, hence the differences between women, men, girls and boys by gender and age, are related to their biological sex as well as to entrenched social and gender norms that discriminate women and girls in many aspects of their lives. For instance, risks such as childbearing, divorce and widowhood are more prevalent or have specific consequences for women and girls, due to these norms that make them particularly vulnerable such as stigma for widows, separated women or divorcees, and lack of or limited economic resources, labour market opportunities or land rights.

This results in disadvantages for women and girls compared to men and boys across well-being outcomes such as education, health and nutrition, facing limited resources and assets including land and finance; and limited economic, social and political opportunities. The gender roles and responsibilities that men and women carry out within their home and outside impact the type and extent of their vulnerabilities that they face, how shocks and stresses are experienced, and the resources and coping strategies they can resort to.

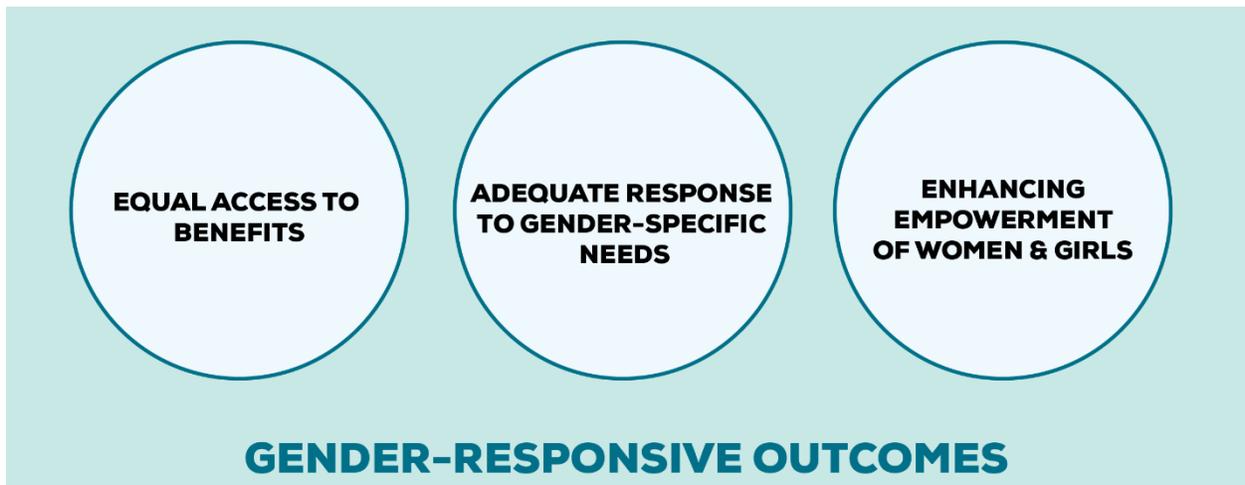
Applying a **life course lens** throughout the social protection delivery cycle, from the identification of risks and vulnerabilities in different ages and stages in the life course, to the design of specific social protection programmes for different ages and stages in the life course, allows social protection to be sensitive to critical life events and transitions, such as childbirth, entry into schooling and the labour force, marriage, maternity and retirement, and support individuals to manage the vulnerabilities that they face during these transitions.

<sup>2</sup> The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognises children as those under 18 years of age. However, in recognition of the diversity of experiences by age, this Conceptual Framework further distinguishes early childhood (up until age 5), ‘middle’ childhood (up until age 10) (see for instance DelGiudice 2018) and adolescents (from age 10 to 19) for analytic purposes.

## Element 5. Gender-responsive outcomes

Gender-responsive social protection systems, including programmes, can have the potential – if appropriately designed and implemented – to positively influence gender equality via contributing towards three gender-responsive social protection outcomes: 1) promoting equal access to benefits/entitlements, 2) ensuring adequate responses to gender-specific needs and 3) enhancing women’s and girls’ empowerment. These three gender-responsive outcomes were selected to highlight their relevance and centrality for the achievement of gender equality outcomes.

*Element 5: Gender-responsive outcomes*

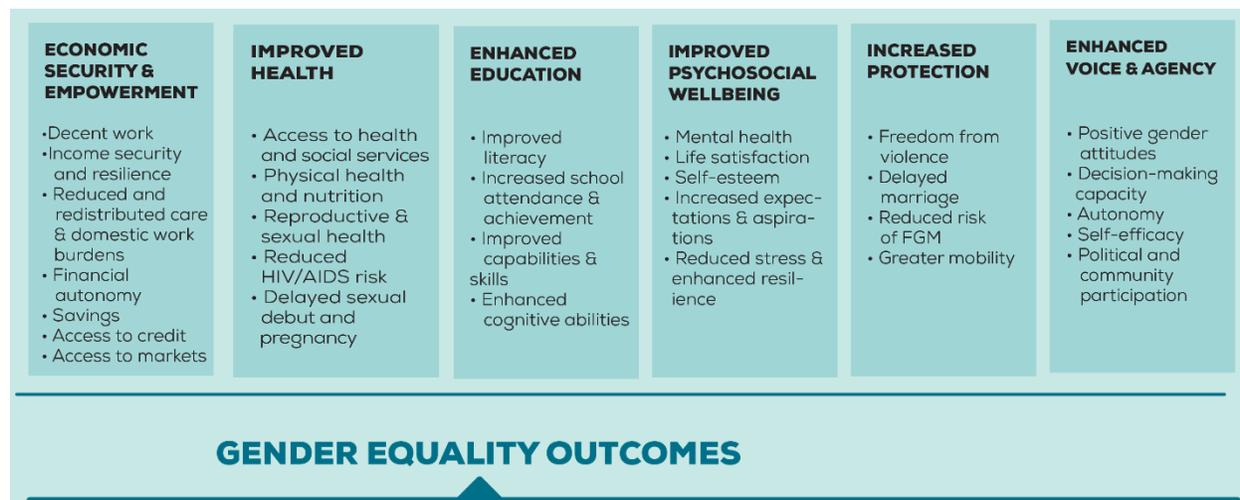


First, increased and equal access to social protection benefits and entitlements for women and girls (and other vulnerable groups) is a critical precondition if gender equality is to be achieved. Evidence shows that some forms of social protection can be explicitly or implicitly biased towards men. Examples include contributory programmes that tend to favour formal sectors workers, who in many contexts are typically and predominantly men (ILO 2017). Second, social protection should not only be accessible but also effective and adequate for women and girls to meet their practical and strategic needs, if they are to have a meaningful impact on their lives (ILO 2017). Third, enhancing the empowerment of women and girls is an outcome of increased and improved investments in gender-responsive social protection, for instance via an increase in resources for women and girls, and it is a critical precondition if gender equality is to be achieved.

## Element 6. Gender equality outcome areas

The gender-responsive outcomes (Element 5), achieved through a series of hypothesised gender-responsive transmission mechanisms and change pathways, can lead to a series of gender equality outcomes. These gender equality outcome areas include, but are not restricted to, greater economic security and empowerment, improved health, enhanced education, improved psychosocial well-being, greater protection, and enhanced voice and agency.

*Element 6: Six gender equality outcome areas*



Gender-responsive and age-sensitive social protection systems can deliver transformative change through the following pathways:

- changing household decision-making dynamics and re-balancing power relationships, via a reduction of women's income insecurity and poverty or reducing household poverty and economic stress;
- changing social and gender norms, including around gender roles, such as unpaid care and domestic work, including incentivising increased involvement of boys and men in unpaid and domestic work, increased and gender-responsive availability of care services and increased female labour force participation rates;
- encouraging investments in households' human development, including that of children and adolescents, via increased disposable income (reduced poverty and increased income security), incentives or signaling effects;
- enabling service providers to be more gender-responsive by strengthening their capacity to address gender biases, provide empowerment-focused responses (for example, to gender-based violence), and ensure gender equality in programme implementation
- addressing autonomy, confidence and self-efficacy including through reducing mental stress and domestic conflict arising from the burden of poverty.

## Element 7. Moderators

### Element 7: Moderators

#### MODERATORS

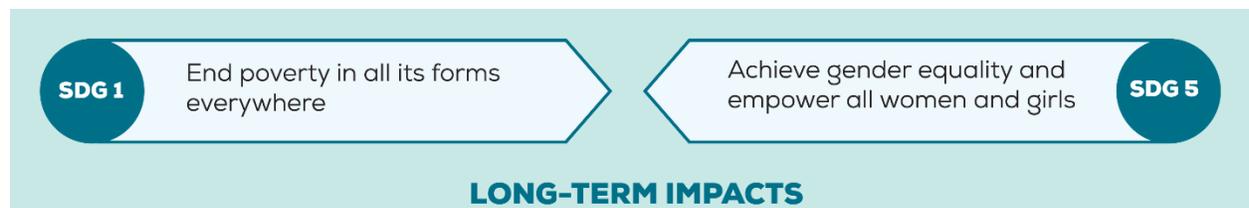
- Intra household dynamics
- Market access
- Social & cultural norms
- Gender norms
- Gender-friendly policies & laws
- Macroeconomic conditions
- Conflict & instability
- Political conditions
- Availability & quality of services

There are numerous moderating factors of these gender equality outcomes, which will depend on context, and if operating on a programme level, programme design components. However, these factors may also influence every level of this conceptual framework and therefore the achievement of the long-term impacts. Moderators include gender-responsive policies and laws, macroeconomic conditions, conflict and instability and political conditions. Local dynamics also play a role in maintaining or eroding gender-responsive achievements, and include, among others, gender norms, intra-household dynamics, market access, and the availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of services.

## Element 8. Long-term impacts: end poverty and achieve gender equality

The conceptual framework builds on these potential contributions and achievements of social protection towards longer-term impacts as articulated in SDG 1 ('end poverty in all its forms everywhere') and SDG5 ('achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'). These goals are mutually reinforcing, and social protection can play an important role in contributing toward their realisation, in particular when they are embedded in broader sectoral strategies and systems beyond social protection.

### Element 8: Long-term impacts



## Element 9. Change levers

Change levers are critical factors to transform the design and delivery of gender-responsive social protection.

### *Element 9: Change levers*

CHANGE LEVERS	
• Political commitment & incentives	First, <b>political commitment</b> is needed to tackle gender inequalities and promote women’s and girls’ empowerment through social protection programmes and systems. This includes support at national and subnational levels of the public administration and political leadership, including at community level. When there is political commitment to gender-responsive social protection, the right to social protection including for women and girls is protected and upheld, for instance through effective implementation and gender-responsive sustainable financing. This includes consistent support from and championing by government, donor agencies and development partners, civil society organisations and research institutions.
• Financing	Second, if progressive universal coverage and adequate social protection is to be achieved, adequate, sustainable and gender-responsive <b>financing</b> must be in place to achieve these outcomes. The financial sustainability of social protection systems must be discussed not only in the context of demographic trends affecting the country (such as ageing, declining fertility rates, in and out-migration) but also labour market trends (such as labour force participation rates, the structure of employment, the levels of informality) as well as the changing needs of the country’s population (UNRISD et al. 2015). These changes are deeply influenced by – and impact on – the gendered distribution of roles and resources, and prevailing gender norms, which in turn influence the nature and quality of poverty reduction.
• Capacity building & strengthening of governments & partners	In terms of social protection programmes, sustainable financing requires transparent, accountable and sound financial management with clear rules and regulations as well record-keeping, in line with international accounting and actuarial standards (UNRISD et al. 2015). At the system level, the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (2011, pp. 180-199, cited in UNRISD et al. 2015) set that in addition to ensuring sustainable financing, member States must also protect social security funds from mismanagement, cyclical fluctuations and market failures. In addition, the purchasing power of benefits in payment should be maintained by adjusting them to the costs of living, and financial deficits in social security should be obviated in the long term, through the establishment by the State of a funding plan to assure such solvency (UNRISD et al. 2015). Moreover, in addition to being sustainable, financing must be gender-responsive, which must include an understanding of the distributional effects of gender-blind financing policy, for instance, tax-transfer policies can be regressive and have gendered implications in terms of generating (dis)incentives for women to work.
• Institutional norms, rules & practices	
• Evidence generation (data, research & evaluation)	
• Social movements, demand & accountability	

An understanding of prevailing gender norms in a given context is crucial, shaping assumptions and expectations on how (and by whom) financing gaps are to be filled (for instance through unpaid time and effort or personal savings of individuals), especially in the context of insufficient financing and availability of public and universal social services. Often women are expected to fill such service gaps through their unpaid care and domestic work. Moreover, when public financing and investments in these services are cut, this also typically tends to affect services women rely on

most, such as family planning, services to address gender-based violence, and social care, amongst others.

Third, governments and partners, including implementers, must have adequate **capacity** and skills to understand gender issues across the life course in their country or context, and design and deliver gender-responsive social protection systems accordingly. Civil society organisations must have the capacity and skills, as well as resources, to independently review and monitor change, and hold governments to account, and donor partners need to be strong champions for a rigorous approach to design and implementation of gender-responsive social protection.

Fourth, gender-responsive **institutional norms, rules and practices** are needed to deliver gender-responsive social protection. Institutions are “relatively enduring features of political and social life (rules, norms and procedures) that structure behaviour” (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010: 4, cited in Holmes, Jones and Domingo 2019). Institutions are both formal, for example laws and codes of conduct, and informal, such as norms and values that guide or constrain behaviours (Branisa et al. 2013). Institutional norms, rules and practices are critical factors that can enable or hinder the capacities of social protection systems to be gender-responsive, as they present opportunities (or barriers) for negotiating policy change between different actors and stakeholders.

Fifth, **evidence – data, research and evaluation** – is critical at all stages of the policy cycle<sup>3</sup>. The evidence base needs to capture intra-household inequalities in the distribution of resources, bargaining power, and unpaid care and domestic work. Specifically, governments and development partners should (i) conduct gendered poverty and vulnerability assessments to inform programming and policy design; (ii) improve and regularise data collection, disaggregation, quality and analysis; and (iii) carry out research on policy design features to improve the effectiveness of gender-responsive social protection, and (iv) evaluate social protection programmes and systems. Efforts must be undertaken to ensure data is collected at individual, in addition to household, level. This enables intra-household inequalities and vulnerabilities to be investigated, as well as differential impacts and pathways of change of social protection systems on individuals (both positive and negative, intended or unintended). This is important as household-level data typically mask intra-household differences resulting from power imbalances and unequal distributions of resources. Data must also be collected in a sex-disaggregated manner to unpack differences between individuals. Evaluations should also take on similar gendered approaches and adopt different research methods as appropriate to the research question. This includes the use of mixed and participatory methods, to further unveil dynamics and factors that come into play to enhance or impede the effectiveness and impacts of social protection programmes and systems.

Finally, **social movements** such as those initiated by national and international women’s rights organisations must be supported, and accountability mechanisms strengthened, to articulate and support demand for improved design and delivery of social protection for all women and girls. Social movements that support women’s and children’s rights can play a critical role in supporting change for gender equality by providing resources to women and girls in their communities, promoting women’s rights at all levels, and monitoring and advocating for greater accountability of laws, policies, programmes and delivery systems.

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<sup>3</sup> The policy cycle process consists of six steps (see for example Sutcliffe and Court 2005): (1) problem identification and articulation to reduce poverty, vulnerability and support inclusive and pro-poor economic growth, (2) agenda setting to phase and document measurable steps, (3) policy design and formulation involving ongoing policy and political analysis, (4) policy decisions and implementation through a range of governmental bodies, (5) impact evaluation to measure if policy objectives are met, and (6) policy reassessment and change to address and correct inefficiencies or changing social, political and economic context. In this way, social protection policies adapt in tandem with country-specific contexts.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has provided a visual and textual articulation of the GRASSP conceptual framework, which maps out the intersections and interlinkages between gender, social protection and the life course. The objective of the framework is to guide the development and implementation of the GRASSP research programme over the next few years and will be updated and revised to reflect ongoing analysis and learning through the programme. It thus lays out the ambition for the GRASSP research programme, linking together the importance of gender, social protection and life course as a core contribution to meeting the SDGs and ensuring sustainable progress towards both poverty reduction and gender equality.

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## ANNEX: GENDER-RESPONSIVE AGE-SENSITIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION: TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

This Annex accompanies the (graphic) conceptual framework and its narrative. The overarching objective of the conceptual framework was to graphically show how gender-responsive social protection leads to gender equality outcomes and impacts, also to draw from that the hypothesis and pathways that the GRASSP research programme will test. The objective of this Annex is to define relevant terms and definitions so as to aid the reader and ensure clarity and consistency. It is organised by elements of the conceptual framework, thus mirroring the graphical conceptual framework – starting with the left-hand column, moving to the middle section (bottom to top) and ending with the right-hand column.

### Gender integration continuum (left-hand side column)

**Gender** is a social construct referring to what a given society at a given time considers appropriate for female or male. It thus refers to the socially constructed, culturally appropriate and context-specific roles and responsibilities, qualities or characteristics, attributes and opportunities that each society ascribes to and expects depending on them being female or male (FAO 2018a; WHO 1998 cited in Luttrell and Moser 2004; UN Women undated).

**Sex** refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women. It may not always be possible to define sex along the dichotomous lines of male-female only, as is made evident by inter-sexed individuals." (Medical Women's International Association 2013).

**Gender equality** refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys, and chances or opportunities for women, men, boys and girls to access and control social, economic and political resources, including protection under the law (such as health services, education and voting rights) (UN Women Training Centre undated; Rogers and Neyhouser 2017). Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. (UN Women Training Centre, undated). It implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men (UN Women Training Centre undated). It is the equal value by society of the similarities and differences of men and women and of the roles they play (UNICEF undated). Gender equality is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development (UN Women Training Centre undated).

**Gender norms** refer to "the informal rules and shared social expectations that define socially acceptable roles and responsibilities of men and women, their expected behaviour and the power relations between them" (FAO 2018a: 6). Norms are thus actions that are deemed acceptable and 'normal' for females or males by individuals in a specific context maintained by social approval or disapproval – ranging from covert attitudes to overt positive appreciation or negative sanctions. (Mackie et al. 2015; Bicchieri et al. 2016). Gender norms are maintained through the rules of behavior in everyday life and internalised through interaction with key agents of socialisation, such as their family, social networks and other institutions (John et al. 2017).

**Gender integration continuum** is a spectrum that reflects the extent to which different features of a programme or system embed gender, i.e. it is a diagnostic tool to examine the level of 'gender-

awareness' in programmes and systems, and it can also be applied to define and assess outcomes and impacts. Where a programme falls along this continuum depends on how gender is considered or not across design features, implementation (fidelity to design), financing and M&E systems, and associated outcomes (FAO, 2018).

**Gender-discriminatory** interventions (systems) are those that intentionally or unintentionally take advantage of gender stereotypes in pursuit of programme outcomes and may reinforce gender inequalities (FAO 2018; Gavrilovic, 2019).

**Gender-neutral/blind** interventions (systems) are those ignore gender roles, norms and relations and how these might affect women's and men's specific needs (FAO 2018). Gender-blind interventions are not aimed specifically at either women or men, and they often assume that the programme or intervention will affect them equally (FAO 2018).

**Gender-sensitive** interventions (systems) acknowledge and address insofar as it is needed to reach programme objectives (FAO 2018). This type of interventions may benefit women specifically but do not tackle causes that contribute to gender inequalities (FAO 2018; Gavrilovic, 2019).

Gender-responsive interventions (systems) are those that acknowledge gender dynamics and deliberately respond to women's and men's specific needs (FAO 2018). In these interventions, gender is central to achieve set development goals (not just a means to achieve them) (Camilletti et al. 2020 forthcoming). Changing gender norms, roles and access to resources is also a key component of these interventions' outcomes (Camilletti et al. 2020 forthcoming). These interventions may target specific groups of women/men to achieve certain gender equality goals (FAO 2018; Gavrilovic, 2019).

**Gender-transformative** interventions (systems) are those that address the causes of gender-based inequalities and work to transform harmful gender roles, norms and relations. They adopt gender equality and women's empowerment as a deliberate and primary objective (FAO 2018; Gavrilovic, 2019). Gender-transformative interventions (systems) 'actively strive to examine, question, and change rigid gender norms and imbalances of power as a means of reaching gender equality objectives; encourage critical awareness among men and women of gender roles and norms; promote the position of women; challenge the distribution of resources and allocation of duties between men and women; and/or address the power relationships between women and others in the community, such as service providers or traditional leaders' (Rottach, Schuler & Hardee, 2009 in John et al., 2017).

**Gender mainstreaming** and **gender affirmative action** are two key strategies for promotion of gender equality through social protection. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) gender mainstreaming is defined as "a long-term strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and needs an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated" (ECOSOC, 1997, p. 27).

However, equal treatment in policies and programmes may not necessarily lead to equal outcomes for both sexes. In cases of significant and systemic gender inequality, affirmative action consisting of women- (or men-) specific interventions and design modifications may be necessary to maximise gender equality outcomes for women and/or men.

## Life course lens: (left-hand side column)

**Life course** refers to the transitions and turning points in an individual's life and is characterised by different age categories, ranging from the first 1000 days and early childhood (up to age 5), to middle and late childhood (up to age 10), to adolescence (up to age 19), to adulthood and old age. In addition to linear age categories based primarily on biological determinants, individuals experience transitions and turning points including maternity and paternity and marriage/unions, in different ages of the life course. These transitions are often overlapping and sometimes experienced simultaneously, which puts individuals at greater risk to vulnerabilities, including economic vulnerabilities, disability, sickness or other intersecting inequalities.

## Gender inequality, poverty and vulnerabilities (bottom center)

**Poverty** can be measured in terms of 1) monetary poverty (benchmarked to the international poverty lines of below the per-capita rate of \$USD 1.90 per day, or in terms of national poverty lines) or 2) multidimensional poverty, which reflects a lack of access to goods and services and experiences of deprivation – such as poor health, lack of education, lack of income, disempowerment, poor quality of work and threat from violence, often exacerbated by political and social exclusion, among other factors.

**Vulnerability** reflects likelihood of experiencing adverse outcomes, including those related to adverse events (shock or a stress). Vulnerability will vary among individuals and households, according to their protective factors and capacity to prevent, mitigate or cope with such events. Vulnerabilities can be economic, social, political or environmental. Economic vulnerabilities include unemployment or lack of access to assets, while social vulnerabilities refer to those related to personal characteristics such as age, gender, health status, or to socio/political dynamics such as exclusions due to race, religion, political affiliation, social norms and cultural practices (UNICEF, 2019).

A common understanding of **resilience** refers to the capacity of an individual, household and/or a broader system to respond to, and recover from adverse events (FAO, 2018). In addition to economic resilience that relates to income security, resilience is a key concept in understanding psychosocial well-being. Much of the broader literature on developmental risk and resilience has identified a range of factors contributing to positive adaptation, including individual resources (e.g. optimism about the future) and social connections (e.g., Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001; Werner & Smith, 2001). Because resilience occurs even in the presence of numerous risk factors, emphasis needs to be placed on the role of wider social environments on positive developmental outcomes when individuals experience high levels of stress (Ungar 2011, UNICEF 2014). Related concepts include self-esteem, self-efficacy, hopes, aspirations, self-awareness, motivation and empathy.

**Empowerment** refers to the interrelationship between agency, resources and achievements, whereby agency refers to the processes by which choices are made and implemented, resources the means through which agency is exercised, and achievements the outcomes gained through these processes (Kabeer 2005). Empowerment is thus about “expanding people’s ability to make strategic life choices, particularly in contexts where this ability had been denied to them” (Kabeer 2001 cited in FAO 2018a).

A concept related to empowerment is that of **power**, which is recognised as a critical factor in the creation of societal inequities, operating at the macro, meso, household, interpersonal and individual levels; and has significant bearing on outcomes in the micro environment, such as in the case of inter-personal violence. In contrast, power can also impact the ‘transformative capacity of

human agency' to be a driver of positive change (e.g. power to, power within, power over and power with) (Stewart, 2001).

**Power over** (someone or something) refer to taking it from those who do not have it, for instance in politics those who control resources and decision-making have power over those who do not (IDS undated). At the interpersonal level, in the absence of alternative models and relationships, individuals sometimes repeat the 'power over' pattern in their personal relationships (IDS undated).

**Power with** refers to findings common ground among different interests, based on mutual support and collaboration (IDS undated). By 'building bridges' it can transform conflicts (IDS undated) Power to refers to the potential of every person to shape one's own life, and when based on mutual support it opens the possibilities of joint action i.e. power with (IDS, undated) Power within refers to an individual's sense of self-worth and self-knowledge, the ability to recognise individual differences while respecting others (IDS, undated).

**Gender discrimination** refers to "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." [United Nations, 1979. 'Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women'. Article 1]. It can stem from both the law (de jure discrimination) or from practice (de facto discrimination).

Multiple or intersecting discriminations and inequalities refers to the complexity of discrimination implicating more than one ground, also known as "additive," "accumulative," "compound," "intersectional," "complex bias" or "multi-dimensional inequalities." (UN Women, undated). It refers to (1) a situation where an individual is faced with more than one form of grounds-based discrimination (i.e. sex plus disability discrimination, or gender plus sexual orientation), or (2) a situation where discrimination affects only those who are members of more than one group, also known as intersectional discrimination (UN Women, undated).

### Gender-responsive social protection system (middle center)

**Social protection** refers to a set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing or protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion throughout their life course, and at helping people address long-term risks and short-term stressors and shocks that can draw them into poverty by preventing and/or protecting people against vulnerabilities related to their living conditions (UNICEF, 2019). Social protection comprises non-contributory such as social assistance programmes, contributory programmes such as social insurance, labour market policies and programmes and social care services (UNICEF 2019; ISPA CODI, undated).

### *Gender-responsive legal and policy framework*

**Legal and policy frameworks** can be defined as gender-responsive if they specifically identify and acknowledge gender differentials and seek to accommodate and respond to these different needs and priorities for men and women, including for instance through national strategies with gender equality and/or women's empowerment at their core (Camilletti et al. 2020, forthcoming).

**National legal frameworks** can consist of: (a) the Constitution; (b) laws adopted by the legislative branch (such as labour laws and social security framework laws); and (c) regulations and policy documents adopted by the executive branch (such as regulations governing the implementation, ministerial decrees, circulars, government strategies, action plans, and operations manuals) (Behrendt et al. 2016). When the law is clear it reduces the risk of rules being interpreted and applied in an arbitrary manner (Behrendt et al. 2016).

**Social protection policy** refers to the system of laws, rights, legislative, normative and regulatory measures and courses of action adopted and pursued by the executive (i.e. the government) and the corresponding funding priorities supporting the establishment, development and/or maintenance of a national social protection system (Behrendt et al. 2016).

**Social protection strategies** are the next level of detail, providing detailed plans to achieve and guarantee that the right to access social protection is realised and protected (UNICEF 2019).

### Coherence within the social protection system

**Coherence** refers to ensuring that different social protection programmes complement each other (for instance, in terms of target population) to avoid duplication and inefficiencies (Behrendt et al. 2016).

On the contrary, **fragmentation** refers to the existence of multiple programmes with overlapping objectives and targets, leading to high administrative and delivery costs (Behrendt et al. 2016).

### Public expenditure and financing

**Financing** refers to the mix of resources allocated to social protection systems and programmes, including public resources and private contributions – such as general revenues, earmarked taxation, social insurance contributions and co-payment of services (Behrendt et al. 2016). As national budgets represent national political processes, social protection adequate financing requires political recognition of the value of social protection, and full integration into budgeting processes (UNICEF 2019). See Change levers (Right-hand side column) for further details on the definition of gender-responsive and sustainable financing.

**Coordination** refers the process through which different stakeholders collaborate on social protection system. At the national level, a strong lead government agency or ministry with political support and capacity is at the heart of effective coordination, and across ministries in areas such as education, health, nutrition as well as emergency response authorities to be held accountable. At the sub-national level, i.e. at governorate level and/or district level refers to structured mechanisms among stakeholders in the implementation of social protection programme but also ensuring sectoral coordination and policy coherence.

**Access to information and cross-sectoral linkages between programmes, services and systems** refers to the process of systematically connecting recipients/beneficiaries to information, and to other social protection programmes and services, as well as to other social or economic policies and systems.

## *Gender-responsive social protection design*

### Types of social protection programmes

**Social assistance** programmes are a type of non-contributory social protection programmes<sup>4</sup> that provide benefits (cash or in-kind) designed to provide regular and predictable support to vulnerable groups of the population, especially households living in extreme or chronic poverty (UNICEF 2019; World Bank, 2015; ILO 2017). They may also be referred to as safety nets or social transfers. Examples include conditional cash transfers, unconditional cash transfers, school feeding programmes, unconditional in-kind transfers, public works, and fee waivers (World Bank, 2015). Most social assistance schemes are poverty targeted. (ILO 2017; FAO 2018).

**Social insurance** is a form of contributory social protection programme<sup>5</sup> that guarantees protection through contributions from beneficiaries. It usually covers workers in formal wage employment, where it can be wholly financed through contributions by workers and employers but often partly financed from taxation or other sources, such as the State or other public entity, and in some countries the self-employed (ILO 2017). Social insurance is based on: (1) the prior payment of contributions, i.e. before the occurrence of the insured contingency; (2) risk-sharing or “pooling”; and (3) the notion of a guarantee (ILO 2017). Examples include contributory old-age pensions, contributory maternity benefits, health insurance and unemployment insurance.

**Labour market programmes** are measures that promote and provide assistance in securing decent work, including self-employment. Examples include trainings and skills development, employment services, wage and employment subsidies, asset transfer schemes and microfinance; and actions aimed at securing basic employment rights (e.g. legislation related to the establishment of a minimum wage or safe working conditions).

**Social care services** are those services provided to care for specific population groups, such as childcare services, care services for the family (for instance preservation and reunification counselling services, domestic violence victims' basic and specialised social care services), for the vulnerable working age (such as for the homeless or substance abusers), for the disabled (ISPA CODI undated).

### Design and delivery features

**Objectives** refers to the social protection programme's objectives, including but not limited to the risks it seeks to tackle (e.g. old age). With regards to gender-responsive social protection, gender-responsive objectives of social protection include recognising that the impacts of social protection programmes are not gender neutral, that women experience multiple forms of discriminations, and respecting and acknowledging the role of women as care providers without reinforcing patterns of discrimination and negative stereotyping (UNRISD et al. 2015)

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<sup>4</sup> Non-contributory programmes include non-means-tested and means-tested schemes and normally require no direct contribution from beneficiaries or their employers as a condition of entitlement to receive relevant benefits (ILO 2017). Examples of non-contributory programmes include universal schemes for all residents such as national health services, categorical schemes for specific population groups such as programmes for children below a certain age, or social assistance schemes (ILO 2017). Non-contributory programmes are usually financed through taxes or other public revenues, or through external grants or loans (ILO 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Contributory social protection programmes are schemes where contributions made by protected persons directly determine entitlement to benefits (acquired rights). Other forms of contributory social protection programmes are national provident funds – which usually pay a lump sum to beneficiaries when particular contingencies occur.

**Benefit design** refers to key design feature of the benefit or the service, including the benefit level/transfer size, its minimum and maximum duration if any, its recipients (vis-à-vis beneficiaries).

### Targeting strategies, eligibility criteria and targeting methods

**Targeting** of social protection programmes is the subject of much debate. **Universal benefits** are available to all members of a population, and **targeted benefits**, on the other hand, use different mechanisms to identify and distribute transfers to the poor and/or vulnerable segments of population. As social protection programmes are first introduced, budget and political feasibility constraints often lead to narrow targeting, such as to the poorest segments of the population, or those whose vulnerability is widely recognised (for example, the elderly). Universal child grants, for instance, are a type of universal benefit that is provided to all members of a population group, namely households with children, regardless of their socio-economic status, residence within the country, or other stratifiers (see ILO-UNICEF 2019).

**Eligibility criteria** refers to the range of conditions and criteria that determine which individuals and/or households are eligible for receiving the social protection benefit or accessing the social protection services. Social protection programmes can define eligibility based on demographic characteristics (such as age, disability, etc.) or poverty and vulnerability (such as below the poverty line, extreme food-poor households, or households that experiences shocks or natural disasters). For eligibility criteria to be gender-responsive, they must take into account intra-household dynamics and distribution of resources and not impose requirements that disproportionately disadvantage women (UNRISD et al. 2015). For instance, they must also ensure that women do not have to rely on male family members for accessing the programme benefits (World Bank 2019). Another example is when eligibility criteria to access social protection benefits and services allow more flexibility in the requirements for official documents, for instance birth and marriage certificates, which in certain settings with a low capacity in public administration might be difficult to have/get (World Bank 2019).

**Targeting methods** refer to specific approaches used to identify and select programme beneficiaries, including means testing and proxy means testing, community-based targeting and categorical targeting, to name a few.

### Incentives, conditionalities, co-responsibilities

**Incentives** refer to the nature and type of positive and negative incentives (i.e. insurance subsidies, tax exemptions etc.) programmes can provide, for example, to eligible beneficiaries to become a member of a social protection scheme and take up benefits, or social protection service providers to enrol all eligible beneficiaries and provide good quality services (Behrendt et. al, 2016).

**Conditionalities** refer to specific behavioral requirements that are required from clients to claim social protection benefits, generally with the objective to encourage investments in human capital (such as school attendance, immunisations, and health check-ups) (World Bank, 2015).

Gender-responsive conditionalities entail that women are not the only responsible for fulfilling them nor that they are punitive/lead to sanctions when such conditionalities are not met, for instance when service centers where these conditionalities are supposed to be met are not conveniently located for women to gain access to them.

The term “**co-responsibilities**” is increasingly used instead of “conditionalities” to reflect the mutual responsibility of programme beneficiaries involved in compliance with programme requirements, and service providers responsible to facilitate access to, and or deliver social services (Cookson, 2018).

Soft conditions include ‘**labeling**’, ‘**nudges**’ and ‘**messaging**’ and are conditions which are either not enforced or for which there are no penalties for failure to comply. Programmes are increasingly starting to use these features to promote certain programme objectives, provide information, or influence the behavior of beneficiaries but without imposing any kind of explicit or ‘hard’ conditionality (Pace et.al, 2018), as hard conditionalities may further exclude and/or overburden the most marginalised populations.

**Payment/benefit delivery** refer to the mechanisms through which beneficiaries receive the social protection benefit, generally in the case of income transfer (UNICEF 2019). Payment mechanisms that are efficient and easy to access enables beneficiaries to receive cash without any out of pocket expenditure and unnecessary loss of time (UNICEF 2019).

**Gender-responsive payment/benefit delivery mechanisms** can be defined as those mechanisms that considers and respond to gender inequalities, gaps and barriers in access to and uptake of social protection benefits and services.

**Access to information and cross-sectoral linkages between programmes, services and systems** refers to the process of systematically connecting recipients/beneficiaries to information, and to other social protection programmes and services.

**Gender-responsive access to information and cross-sectoral linkages between programmes, services and systems** can be defined as mechanisms that link beneficiaries of one social protection programme to other information and complementary programmes and services to address specific gendered risks and vulnerabilities that would not be possible to address with access to and uptake of one single social protection programme.

### *Gender-responsive social protection implementation and governance* Implementation

**Implementation and fidelity to design** refers to the extent to which a social protection programme accurately identify all potentially eligible individuals or households and have a robust way of determining their eligibility, facilitate low cost ways to access and sign up for programmes while still preserving the dignity of beneficiaries and their families; ensure that the goods, cash or in-kind care services are reaching in need households; and monitor and evaluate results in a timely manner that allows all stakeholders to track and improve the performance and preserve the sustainability and credibility of the social protection programme (ISPA CODI undated). It includes the identification of beneficiaries, the eligibility verification, the enrollment, the delivery of the benefit (the transfer of cash, food, training or other services), the monitoring and evaluation, the complaint and appeal mechanisms, and the information dissemination and raising awareness, as well as the capacity of the implementers to deliver social protection.

**Gender-responsive implementation features and processes** in social protection can entail provision that women beneficiaries are aware of programme requirements, eligibility criteria and other relevant information, and that outreach activities to ensure access to and uptake of social protection benefits and services, to promote women’s participation in social protection

programmes, to ensure that programme measures are acknowledging and addressing existing gender discrimination specific to the context (World Bank 2019).

## Governance, administration and M&E

### Capacity in delivery of benefits and services

**Human resources for social work and case management** refers to professionals that are sufficient, qualified and trained to provide social care and case identification and referrals to appropriate programmes, which ensures the effective integration of the social protection system, including addressing the social and economic vulnerabilities of families.

**Gender-responsive capacity in delivery and administration** entail gender training for human resources involved in the delivery, administration and implementation of social protection benefits and services, as well as in M&E.

**M&E systems** refers to the systems of mechanisms and processes set in place to monitor the delivery of benefits and services and evaluate their performance. The ILO's Recommendation R202 on social protection floors adopted in 2012 establishes that member States should monitor progress in the implementation of social protection floors through appropriate monitoring mechanisms, "including tripartite participation with representative organizations of employers and workers, as well as consultation with other relevant and representative organizations of persons concerned [... and] convene national consultations to assess progress and discuss policies for the further horizontal and vertical extension of social security".

**Sex- and age-disaggregated data** refers to the rigorous and regular collection of data on social protection beneficiaries, benefits and services, disaggregated by sex, age and other individual-level variables, to support the monitoring and evaluation processes. As per the Recommendation No. R202 on social protection floors adopted in 2012, member States "should regularly collect, compile, analyse and publish an appropriate range of social security data, statistics and indicators, disaggregated, in particular, by gender." (Section IV. Monitoring, comma 21).

**Integrated information management systems** refer to systems that provide necessary information to implementers and decision makers to identify gaps, challenges and successes of programme implementation (UNICEF 2019). Integrated information management systems used by multiple programmes can promote efficiency, avoid duplication and bring synergies across programmes (UNICEF 2019). Information management systems can include social and information registry systems which are a tool to identify and register individuals as potential beneficiaries of one or more social protection programmes (UNICEF 2019). These systems can be particularly helpful in contexts with more than one social protection programme, to assess and register beneficiaries in appropriate programmes and avoid duplication (UNICEF 2019). As with all data systems and architecture, social security data systems must be appropriately stored and protected against inappropriate use. The Recommendation No. 202 on social protection floors adopted in 2012 recommends the establishment of a "legal framework to secure and protect private individual information contained in their social security data system.

**Gender-responsive M&E systems** include the collection and reporting of sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific indicators, to ensure that impacts are captured separately for women and men, and that gender-specific outcomes (intended and unintended) are understood, for instance fertility, maternal health, domestic violence, intra-household bargaining power (World Bank 2019).

**Grievance and redress mechanisms** report and respond to beneficiary concerns and allow feedback to improve the delivery of the social protection programme. Examples include call center/toll free hotline, community grievance committees and formal judicial appeal system to address exclusion from programme. Grievance and redress mechanisms, also called complaint and appeal procedures, provide individuals with the ability to appeal in case of refusal of a social protection benefit or to complain as to its quality and quantity (UNRISD et al. 2015). The Recommendation No. 202 provides that they should be impartial and independent; fair; respect due process; transparent (e.g. decisions should be duly motivated); effective in answering complaints and appeals and providing remedies; simple; and rapid (UNRISD et al. 2015). These mechanisms should be financially and geographically accessible and have due regard for obstacles and limitations persons may face, which also means providing flexible channels to submit complaints and that access to complaint and appeal procedures should be free of charge to the applicant (UNRISD et al. 2015).

**Gender-responsive grievance and redress mechanisms** entail incorporating additional dimensions to ensure that women's grievances are captured, such as ensuring that women can access the systems to lodge their grievances, and that the system is made suitable for female users, including having specific mechanisms to report cases of gender-based violence (World Bank 2019).

## Gender-responsive outcomes (top-half center, lower section)

### *Equal access to benefits*

**Social protection coverage** refers to the share of the population covered by any social protection programme or system. International commitments have highlighted the responsibilities of States parties to provide for the progressive realisation of universal coverage through the expansion of programmes, policies and financing options most conducive to achieve universality (UNICEF 2019).

According to the ILO (2017) social protection's effective coverage is a multidimensional concept with at least three dimensions. First, the scope, measured by the range and type of social security/protection areas to which the population of a certain country has access. Second, the extent of the coverage refers to the percentage of persons covered within the whole population or the target group (as defined by gender, age, etc.) by social security/protection programmes in each area. Third, the level of social protection coverage refers to the adequacy of coverage by a specific area of social security/protection, e.g. the benefit level.

**Social protection's legal coverage** refers to the areas of the social security/protection areas by which according to the existing national legislation a population or its specific groups are covered (ILO 2017).

**Access to benefits** can be gender-responsive when individuals regardless of their gender can access social protection benefits and services that effectively protect them against the risks and vulnerabilities they face.

### *Adequate response to gender-specific needs*

**Adequacy of benefits** refers to the appropriate level of social protection benefits so that benefits can guarantee at least a basic level of social protection to ensure income security and effective access to healthcare. It must be set by considering the costs of living (to purchase essential goods and services) and it must be regularly adjusted to offset increases in the cost of living (ILO 2017).

Adequacy of benefits can be gender-responsive if the benefit value or transfer size is appropriate for women and girls/men and boys to meet needs and face risks and vulnerabilities without falling into poverty.

### *Enhancing empowerment of women and girls*

*See empowerment*

## Long-term impacts: end poverty and achieve gender equality (center top)

The ultimate goals of gender-responsive age-sensitive social protection is to end poverty and achieve gender equality, which are two mutually reinforcing goals in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda:

SDG1: End Poverty in all its forms everywhere:

**Target 1.3.** Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.

**Indicator 1.3.1.** Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable.

Social protection is identified as one mechanism through which to contribute to achieve the SDG 1, by protecting the whole population against risks across the life course, and specific population groups that have specific needs.

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls:

**Target 5.4.** Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

**Indicator 5.4.1.** Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location

Social protection is identified as one mechanism through which States can achieve goal 5, specifically by recognising and valuing unpaid care and domestic work.

## Change levers (Right-hand side column)

### *Political commitment and incentives*

**Political commitment** can be defined as the political consensus or support of a broad range of civil and community leaders at all levels of the society, more than just senior government leaders and civil servants (The POLICY project, 2000). According to the POLICY project, political commitment can be measured through statements made by leaders (although this indicator suffers from some methodological problems due to for instance political statements often made in occasion of special events), or through quantifiable indicators of action that result from political commitment, such as the existence of a national policy, strategic plan or government programmes, adequate funding for the issue at stake, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (The POLICY project 2000). In terms of gender-responsive social protection, it entails tackling gender inequalities and

promoting all women's and girls' empowerment through social protection programmes and systems (SPIAC-B 2019).

### *Financing*

See Gender-responsive social protection system (middle center). Gender-responsive social protection financing implies extending social protection coverage and improve adequacy as well as understanding the distributional effects of gender-blind financing policy, for instance, tax-transfer policies can be regressive and have gendered implications in terms of generating (dis)incentives for women to work.

### *Capacity building and strengthening of governments and partners*

**Adequate capacities and resources** are critical for any public administration to respect the principles of a rights-based approach in social protection, which includes well-trained staff, to ensure the coherent and efficient delivery of social protection (UNRISD et al. 2015). Gender-responsive capacity building and strengthening implies building and strengthening the capacity of governments and partners at national and local level to be aware and understand gender issues, and to design and deliver gender-responsive social protection systems (UNRISD et al. 2015).

### *Institutional norms, rules and practices*

Gender-responsive **institutional norms, rules and practices** are needed to deliver gender-responsive social protection. Institutions are "relatively enduring features of political and social life (rules, norms and procedures) that structure behaviour" (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010: 4, cited in Holmes, Jones and Domingo 2019). Institutions are both formal, for example laws and codes of conduct, and informal, such as norms and values that guide or constrain behaviours (Branisa et al. 2013). Institutional norms, rules and practices are critical factors that can enable or hinder the capacities of social protection systems to be gender-responsive, as they present opportunities (or barriers) for negotiating policy change between different actors and stakeholders.

### *Evidence generation, including data, research and evaluation*

Invest in (i) gendered poverty and vulnerability assessments; (ii) improved data disaggregation, collection, quality and analysis; and (iii) research and evidence on policy design features to improve social protection effectiveness.

**Data** can refer to primary or secondary data. Primary data refers to the creation of new data via first-hand collection, while secondary data refers to information gathered from pre-existing sources or databases.

**Research** is the systematic process of the collection and analysis of data and information, to generate new knowledge, to answer a specific question or to test a hypothesis. Its methodology must be sufficiently documented to permit assessment and replication. Research at UNICEF should examine relevant issues and yield evidence for better programme and policy advice.

**Evaluation** is a systematic and objective effort to determine the relevance, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of development efforts, based on agreed criteria and benchmarks among key partners and stakeholders (UNICEF Innocenti 2014). It involves a

rigorous, systematic and objective process in the design, analysis and interpretation of information to answer specific questions (UNICEF Innocenti 2014). It provides assessments of what works and why, highlights intended and unintended results, and provides strategic lessons to guide decision-makers and inform stakeholders (UNICEF Innocenti 2014). “It focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, to understand achievements or the lack thereof.” (UN evaluation Group definition, referenced in the revised UNICEF Evaluation Policy 2013, cited in UNICEF Policy in Research 2016).

### *Social movements demand and accountability*

**Accountability** is the principle by which an entity is responsible towards an individual or a group of people for the provision or omission thereof of goods and services. States have the legal obligation to protect and promote human rights, including the right to social security, and to ensure that individuals can realise their rights without discrimination (UNRISD 2015).

**Participation** refers to the effective involvement of stakeholders in all stages of the decision-making process about social security programmes, from policy design, over implementation to the monitoring of policies. Effective participation allows for greater transparency and accountability, the sharing of information and knowledge, the exchange of opinions. It is one of the prerequisites for ensuring good governance of social protection schemes. From a human rights perspective, participation is a right: “the right of individuals and groups to participate in decision-making processes that may affect their exercise of the right to social security should be an integral part of any policy, programme or strategy concerning social security.” (CESCR General Comment 19 para. 69).

**Gender-responsive participation** requires the effective participation of women in the administration of social protection programmes, for example by establishing quotas in the governance structures of programmes and ensuring a gender balance to all levels of social protection programmes (UNRISD et al. 2015).

Gender-responsive participation and accountability mechanisms must be designed and implemented with gendered power relations in mind in order to facilitate the meaningful and effective participation of all women in all programme stages and policy cycles, bearing in mind and addressing the unequal gender roles both within the household and the community (UNRISD et al. 2015). States should support local, national and international women’s rights organisations and movements to be able to articulate demand for improved design and delivery of social protection for all women and girls, and to strengthen accountability mechanisms. There are several social protection programmes into which participatory mechanisms have been incorporated, with varying degrees of success (UNRISD et al. 2015). For example, the successful implementation of the Universal Health Coverage Scheme in Thailand has been attributed also to the critical role played by civil society and social movements in the formulation and design of the programme (UNRISD et al. 2015). Brazil’s Bolsa Familia programme requires municipal Governments to establish supervisory bodies composed of representatives of both local government and civil society, who jointly make decisions on how best to implement the programme within their community (UNRISD et al. 2015).