# K4D

Knowledge, evidence and learning for development

**Learning Journey on Inclusion in Crises Briefing Note**

# Monitoring inclusion in crises

## ① Introduction

This Briefing Note responds to key challenges articulated by Foreign, Commonwealth & Development (FCDO) staff in monitoring how, and the extent to which, programming, policy and humanitarian interventions in crisis contexts support inclusion. It provides an overview of how to monitor inclusion, focusing on ongoing monitoring during the implementation of interventions. However, there is some crossover with evaluation and learning processes, especially in complex crisis contexts.

The information provided is relevant to people working within and across a range of sectors that seek to address the diverse needs that emerge during crises, including social protection; climate resilience and food security; health; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); education; livelihoods; infrastructure and economic growth; mental health and psychosocial support; protection; and governance or peacebuilding initiatives.

The briefing is informed by the perspectives of FCDO humanitarian and social development advisors gathered through the Inclusion in Crises Learning Journey, as well as through a rapid scoping of literature. It does not claim to present an institutional position or to have reviewed all existing guidance available; nor does it explore in detail guidance related to specific sectors. Instead, this note seeks to highlight key issues and considerations related to monitoring inclusion which are broadly relevant to different types of interventions in crisis contexts.

## ② Why monitor inclusion in crises?

**Barriers to inclusion are real and life-threatening.** Inclusion is both a process and an objective for development interventions and humanitarian response during crises. Processes of inclusion and exclusion exist at societal, community and household levels, and shape both pre-crisis resilience and the disproportionate impact of violence and trauma on certain groups and individuals. Crises create dynamic and uncertain conditions where power imbalances shift and intersect with characteristics including age, gender, disability, class or clan, ethnicity, religious identity and sexual identity, which themselves intersect and overlap. These dynamics are rarely properly understood or addressed by humanitarian interventions.

The barriers to inclusion that result from these are not theoretical or abstract to those who experience them. They are real, life-threatening and need to be addressed.[1] Monitoring is crucial for compliance with

[1] *FCDO participant, Inclusion in Crises Learning Journey workshop, June 2022*

---

**Reading time:**

🕐 20 minutes

**Who is this for:**

FCDO Advisors and Programme Managers in the humanitarian, development, and conflict cadres; others inside or outside FCDO working to address the diverse needs that emerge during crises, including but not limited to social protection, climate resilience, food and agriculture, livelihoods, health, WASH, infrastructure and economic growth, education, mental health and psychosocial support, governance and peacebuilding.

**What you can find:**

① The 'Introduction' and 'Why monitor inclusion in crises?' sections explain the rationale behind this briefing note and why it is important to examine and monitor processes of inclusion within humanitarian and development programmes or interventions.

② The 'Considerations when developing monitoring systems to support inclusion in crisis contexts' section explains the purpose of programme monitoring, and sets out the main considerations, trade-offs and institutional challenges faced in developing monitoring systems to support inclusion in crisis contexts.

③ The 'What works effectively to monitor inclusion in crises' and 'Recommendations' sections summarise approaches that address challenges to monitoring inclusion in crisis contexts, and provides practical recommendations.

humanitarian standards such as the 'do no harm' principle. It can play a key role in mitigating the significant risk of interventions exacerbating the vulnerability of certain groups or individuals, either intentionally or unintentionally. Within the humanitarian sector, in particular, the rush to 'save lives' often produces inclusion-blind responses that misunderstand or overlook needs and create risks, further endangering and excluding particular groups or individuals.[2]

---

**BOX 1**

## Lack of attention to minorities in data collection, disaggregation and analysis[3]

Minority clans in Somalia and Somaliland suffer disproportionately from the effects of climate and environmental disaster. Analysis of the 2011 famine and 2016/17 drought showed that they suffered the worst health outcomes (malnutrition and morbidity),[4] with impacts exacerbated by patterns of clan dominance directly contributing to exclusion of minority clans from humanitarian assistance. In 2021, the Somalia Protection Monitoring System showed that minority clan informants consistently reported higher levels of exclusion from aid, and diversion of aid, with little access to redress. Aid was being redirected from specific locations with minorities present to nearby majority clan communities.

This pattern of exclusion highlights how critical it is that implementing agencies and partners ask questions on minority clan identity in needs assessments, through regular monitoring and third-party monitoring mechanisms. Reliable data is fundamental to understanding the dynamics that contribute to exclusion, identifying risks and occurrences of exclusion, developing mitigation measures and measuring the impact of interventions. Currently, the near total absence of data collected on minorities, means data and analysis on minority communities does not inform humanitarian planning, with exclusion from humanitarian interventions becoming a foregone conclusion.

**Inclusion sits at the heart of tensions that impact the effectiveness of interventions.** The process of monitoring the effectiveness of development and humanitarian interventions demands the management of intrinsic tensions that are amplified in crisis contexts. The concept of inclusion sits at the heart of these tensions, manifested in differing perspectives of what successful inclusion should look like, and underscoring that monitoring (and evaluation and learning) is a political activity which involves making choices about what is valued or prioritised, how evidence is measured, what forms of knowledge and assessment are privileged, and who is involved in deciding this.

Power over monitoring data is affected by historical and epistemic injustice, and power imbalances between people affected by crisisand those who seek to 'assist' them. Donors, humanitarian agencies, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), are increasingly acknowledging concerns around 'decolonising data' (e.g. requiring that communities affected by crises are able to access and understand monitoring data generated).[5] However, definitions and interpretations of inclusion vary across different institutions and sectors, and often clash with how affected populations view crises.

Where communities play a significant role in mutual support, inclusion is understood as a dynamic process over time, beginning with triage of the most urgent cases and branching out to encompass entire neighbourhoods, and subject to local processes of negotiation and representation.[6] This is at odds with humanitarian approaches based on understanding inclusion through standard, often homogeneous, categories of vulnerability.

Within the humanitarian sector, common interpretations include four linked elements: impartiality, equitable access, addressing specific and diverse needs, and participation.[7] However, realising these elements needs to be situated within a clear analysis of power dynamics.[8] In crises, the effectiveness of interventions in supporting inclusion is dependent on a real-time understanding of the shifting power imbalances that play out, and processes of negotiation and representation. This requires ongoing inclusive and participatory assessment to identify potentially excluded groups.

Such analysis needs to consider how power imbalances result from both pre-crisis and new forms of structural discrimination, as well as existing social and cultural

---

[2] Lough, O.; Barbelet, V. and Njeri, S. (2022) Inclusion and Exclusion in Humanitarian Action: Findings From a Three-year Study (Draft)

[3] FCDO-commissioned internal GESI technical assistance.

[4] Majid, N. and McDowell, S. (2012) 'Hidden Dimensions of the Somalia Famine', *Global Food Security* 1.1: 36–42; Maxwell, D. and Majid, N. (2014) *Another Humanitarian Crisis in Somalia? Learning from the 2011 Famine*

[5] Alozie, M.T., Squire, V. (2022) *Coloniality and Frictions in Data-driven Humanitarianism: Epistemic Injustices and the Provision of Assistance to IDPs in North-Eastern Nigeria and South Sudan*, Conference Paper, 6th International Humanitarian Studies Conference, November 2021.

[6] Lough, O., Barbelet, V. and Njeri, S. (2022) Inclusion and Exclusion in Humanitarian Action: Findings from a Three-year study (Draft)

[7] (*Ibid.*)

[8] Barbelet, V. and Wake, C. (2020) *Inclusion and Exclusion in Humanitarian Action: The State of Play*, HPG Working Paper, London: ODI

mores. Monitoring inclusion against an understanding of who is being excluded increases the chances that interventions identify and ensure the participation of vulnerable or marginalised groups and individuals so they can prepare for, respond to and recover from crises more effectively. It also enables identification of who is excluding whom and why, so that interventions can reach both parties to address root drivers of inequality.

**Monitoring inclusion requires individual and organisational self-reflection.** Unintentional bias and power dynamics between donor agencies, programme budget holders, local stakeholderspeople affected by crises means that monitoring processes supporting critical self-reflection by donors and implementing organisations (e.g. FCDO, the United Nations, international NGOs, NGOs and civil society organisations) are vital to prevent 'dampening of local voices' and forfeiting crucial information, knowledge and perspectives vital to effective programme adaptation, even when there is an explicit programme focus on inclusion.[9]

Literature from the education sector defines 'critical' self-reflection as the ongoing process of reflecting on the power that you hold; understanding your position in wider structures; and questioning your assumptions about approaches and practices that are likely to have embedded within them the struggle between unequal interests.[10] Monitoring and learning systems that encourage critical self-reflection can support donors and implementing organisations to explore and overcome the power dynamics that frame and potentially derail practices designed to support inclusion.

**Compliance with key humanitarian principles and ethical practice.** Inclusion has wide relevance across a range of policy and programming work, and should be seen as the operationalisation of one of the most fundamental components of humanitarian response: the core principle of impartiality, or the idea that aid should be guided by where the evidenced need is most urgent. This requires non-discriminatory prioritisation of the most urgent cases, which by definition actively questions who is not being seen or heard.[11] Any intervention or response that seeks to reach specific beneficiaries, particularly those who are *most vulnerable*, should track where funding is allocated, and monitor access to and uptake of services and other benefits.

---

BOX 2

## The impact of unexamined organisational practice on the use of GESI analysis to support inclusion

Gender exclusion and social inequality (GESI) analysis examines the relationship between males and females, and uses inter-generational analysis to explore relationships among and across age groups. GESI analysis further employs intersectional analysis to understand how exclusion manifests in light of other protected characteristics. These analyses can be combined to build a robust understanding of the power dynamics that shape cultural behavioural expectations throughout the life cycle, as well as building an understanding of differing access to resources.

GESI findings directly support the collection of sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data (SADD) by agencies, authorities and groups close to crisis-affected communities. GESI analysis can potentially raise awareness of organisational biases and practices that affect the analytical process and reinforce power structures and exclusion – for example, through team composition, favouring certain types and sources of information, and the way differences of opinion (or struggles) within the team are resolved.[12]

Moreover, unexamined practices of donor and implementing organisations often result in potentially useful SADD data being incorporated into larger datasets, or being overlooked altogether, which prevents it from being used to shape programme and higher-level strategic decision-making.[13] FCDO feedback on the use of GESI analysis to inform policy and programming highlighted that generating senior buy-in, and ensuring the participation of country offices in the GESI process at an early stage, were critical to ensuring the data informed programme and strategic decision-making.[14]

---

[9] Denney, J.M. *et al.* (2018) '[Power in Participatory Processes: Reflections From Multi-stakeholder Workshops in the Horn of Africa](#)', *Sustain Sci* 13: 879–93

[10] Brookfield, S. (2009) '[The Concept of Critical Reflection: Promises and Contradictions](#)', *European Journal of Social Work* 12.3: 293–304

[11] Barbelet, V. and Lough, O. (2021) *[In Search of Inclusive Humanitarian Responses](#)*, 6 January, IASC Accountability & Inclusion Portal

[12] Thorley, L., and Henrion, E. (2019) *[DFID Ethical Guidance for Research, Evaluation, and Monitoring Activities](#)*, Sheffield: IOD PARC

[13] SADD in Humanitarian Contexts – WASH, UNHCR. [https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/46166](https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/46166)

[14] Carter, B. (2021) *Inclusion in Crisis Response, Recovery and Resilience*, K4D Helpdesk Report, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, DOI: [10.19088/K4D.2021.079](#)

# ❸ Considerations when developing monitoring systems to support inclusion in crisis contexts

## What exactly is monitoring and how do crises affect it?

Monitoring is the regular and repeated collection of information on the results, processes and experiences within a programme or intervention. Monitoring data should tell us whether we have achieved what we had planned, how others experienced this, and whether we need to make adjustments. The results and milestones that we monitor against are normally articulated through logframes, key performance indicators (KPIs) and third-party monitoring dashboards. Processes and experiences can be harder to track. They require the development and use of indicators to capture how intended beneficiaries and other key stakeholders perceive and experience the intervention.

In contrast to monitoring, evaluation is normally more reflective, and seeks to determine the extent to which interventions are relevant to the context, re-check goals and strategies, and investigate unintended impacts. However, in crisis contexts often characterised by great uncertainty and rapid evolution, monitoring data that supports operational and strategic decision-making has a more important role to play than in more stable contexts. The distinction between monitoring and evaluation blurs in crises as it becomes necessary to stop and appraise interventions more frequently in terms of changes in context, efficiency and effectiveness, relevance of goals and strategies, and unintended impacts.

## Key considerations when establishing monitoring systems to track and support inclusion in crises

**Participation and accountability.** Programme and monitoring systems should support participation in the design of interventions by both vulnerable people affected by crises and organisations that represent them, to ensure that critical information and perspectives they hold inform responses, and to ensure that their diverse needs, contributions and capacities are represented. The knowledge of vulnerable groups describes the exclusion they face, supports interventions to develop accountable relationships between these groups and decision makers or budget holders, and has the potential to play a role in breaking down discriminatory norms and silences around injustices and inappropriately targeted interventions.

**The most difficult and sensitive issues are the hardest to measure through conventional monitoring methods such as surveys – dialogue between those who hold the power over programme decisions and beneficiaries living with profound exclusion is** vital to tracking the effectiveness of programming in reaching excluded groups. This challenging and sensitive work is often best done by, or at the very least in partnership with, a committed organisation close to the affected groups.[15]

**Visibility in the data and sensitivity of data.** Monitoring data needs to do more than identify specific needs of different categories of individuals. Rather, it should reflect the diversity of their needs and barriers to access for large segments of the population who are hard to reach because of geographical location, or because they may limit their engagement with development or aid actors, or be limited by others.[16] Invisibility of vulnerable groups due to incomplete and inaccurate data remains a key driver of unintended discrimination and exclusion. But monitoring exclusion in crisis contexts also needs to surface issues around deliberate discrimination against groups that are the target of violence in some way (e.g. people from a specific ethnic or religious group, who others see as to blame for a conflict). Deliberate discrimination is instrumental within conflicts, not an unintended consequence of it, and monitoring data needs to be sensitive to this.

**Mapping and profiling exercises can provide a means to better identify potentially hidden populations, as well as access populations that some stakeholders may want to keep hidden.**[17] Vulnerability assessment frameworks can strengthen common agreement around how to prioritise scarce resources and meet the most urgent needs at the household level. Asking questions using the Washington Group on Disability Statistics question set on disability,[18] or about minority languages, is important. However, there are limitations around who these tools can identify, and how far they address the dynamics of inclusion, which can only be resolved through mechanisms that increase the participation of excluded groups (as noted above).

**Intersectional approaches.** Vulnerability is not fixed, innate or homogenous (e.g. being a woman or a specific ethnic minority does not mean that you have the same level of vulnerability as all other women or all people of the same ethnic group). As we have seen above, vulnerability shifts across the life cycle and with experience of conflict, and is contingent on an individual's position in their community, family and wider society. Furthermore, intersections of marginalised identifies can be compounded, meaning that some individuals will experience spiralling disadvantage. Within a conflict or a crisis, this is amplified further. Monitoring at the household or the community level,

---

[15] Howard, J.; Lopez-Franco, E.; Wheeler, J. and Wilson, E. (2007) *Using Knowledge From the Margins to Meet the SDGs: The Real Data Revolution*, IDS Policy Briefing, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies

[16] Lough, O.; Barbelet, V. and Njeri, S. (2022) Inclusion and Exclusion in Humanitarian Action: Findings From a Three-year Study (Draft)

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] *Question sets*

rather than individual level, misses the dynamics of exclusion within households or communities.[19]

Good practice in crisis contexts means using an intersectional lens, while avoiding listing every possible vulnerability and intersection to create an unwieldy predefined list of vulnerable categories.[20] **Good practice means asking open-ended questions (e.g. Who has been left behind? Why?) and identifying *contextualised* vulnerabilities and patterns of exclusion, both deliberate and unintended.** For instance, an inclusion analysis in Iraq focusing on age, gender and disability used these categories as an entry point to understand exclusion, yet it overlooked important contextualised intersections of exclusion including faith and tribal affiliation. This could have resulted in some ethnic and faith groups having less favourable access to resources.[21]

**Scale versus quality.** Any monitoring plan should be based on **a clear definition of what you are trying to achieve and where inclusion sits within that.** There are likely to be differences of opinion around how inclusion is defined, especially when humanitarian and development actors find themselves under pressure to demonstrate effectiveness and value for money (VfM). The tensions that exist between reaching large numbers of people and reaching the 'right' people – those most acutely in need – can distort programme monitoring, moving it away from tracking inclusion and towards a focus on outputs and beneficiary target numbers.

**Setting up logframes and KPIs to incentivise inclusion of those in greatest need is a critical step towards ensuring that monitoring data both supports inclusion and is operationally useful.** Inclusion is a qualitative outcome, so monitoring should focus on the number of quality outcomes, rather than the numbers alone. This will require focusing on inclusion at outcome level and developing outcome indicators that articulate processes of inclusion (rather than exclusively using outputs that track aggregate beneficiary numbers). VfM approaches can support thinking around this, and an understanding of trade-offs between the scale of impact and the ability of an intervention to reach the most vulnerable groups (see VfM box below).

**Potential sources of data.** In monitoring inclusion in crises, it is necessary to build on what is already known about who is left behind. Initial rapid desk-based problem analysis can be used to identify systemic issues, blockages and entry points, structural divides and inequalities, and influential social norms and behaviours.[22] Alongside this, it is useful to explore what monitoring data around access to existing services exists, and who is missing in that data based on your contextualised understanding of vulnerabilities and exclusion.

In crisis settings, collecting data on group-based identities such as migrant status, ethnicity and religion (and sexual identity) is politically sensitive. Analysis and triangulation of existing data being collected by other organisations that provide services to affected communities may be preferable to collecting new primary data through surveys and interviews. Besides, 'knowledge at the margins' (e.g. the knowledge of excluded groups) is difficult to capture through surveys and interviews since people often refuse to answer or give misleading responses about sensitive issues (often for their own protection), leaving the realities of their lives invisible.[23]

Many working in the participatory research sector argue for a more holistic and open approach to data sources in contexts where it is difficult or dangerous for certain people or groups to speak up. During both crises and in *normal* times it is unrealistic to presume that a single source of data such as a technical needs or vulnerability assessment will provide all the monitoring data needed to understand and track complex processes of exclusion.

**A more holistic picture is needed that captures information and knowledge that technocratic approaches cannot. Creative approaches may be required** such as monitoring local media or radio phone-ins, social media and online groups, or social networking apps (e.g. Grindr). Information from human rights and peacebuilding organisations or journalists should also not be overlooked.[24] Information generated by people living with exclusion outside the framing of one specific intervention communicates the complexity of their situation, rather than reducing their problems to one dimension of their identity.

### Key barriers to monitoring inclusion in crises for FCDO and similar institutions

Effective monitoring of inclusion in crises is often inhibited by lack of time, money, knowledge, expertise and will. Monitoring can be a burden if it is used only for accountability purposes, resulting in lack of motivation of those responsible for monitoring interventions, and therefore a lack of useful, high-quality monitoring data. Other challenges identified by FCDO Inclusion in Crises

[19] Oosterhoff, P. and Yunus, R.M. (2022) *The Effects of Social Assistance Interventions on Gender, Familial, and Household Relations Among Refugees and Displaced Populations: A Review of the Literature on Interventions in Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon*, BASIC Research Working Paper 11, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies

[20] George *et al.* (2021), in B. Carter (2022) Inclusion in Crisis Response, Recovery and Resilience, K4D Helpdesk Report, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, DOI: 10.19088/K4D.2021.079

[21] Brigden, S. and Ahluwalia, K. (2020) *Towards more inclusive practices: A Disability, Gender and Age Intersectional Resource*, Lyon/Paris: Humanity & Inclusion/F3E

[22] Christian Aid and Social Development Direct (2021) *GIPP: Gender, Inclusion, Power & Politics Analysis Toolkit, Part 1– Guide*

[23] Howard, J.; Lopez-Franco, E.; Wheeler, J. and Wilson, E. (2007) *Using Knowledge From the Margins to Meet the SDGs: The Real Data Revolution*, IDS Policy Briefing, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies

[24] Daigle, M. (2022) *Gender, Power and Principles in Humanitarian Action*, HPG report. London: ODI

Learning Journey participants,[25] which reflect key considerations found in the literature, are:

> Lack of baseline understanding of vulnerability, leading to untested assumptions being made about which groups are vulnerable and excluded;

> Unconscious bias and power dynamics between implementers and local stakeholders;

> Capture of processes by those that are the best connected, resulting in difficulties reaching excluded groups and accessing knowledge or information from excluded groups);

> Reduced institutional capacity to reflect on what has worked well historically and for other donors, institutions or sectors (e.g. one workshop participant mentioned learning from the agricultural sector held within organisations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization).

> Existing FCDO KPIs disincentivise equity and quality by focusing on quantitative indicators of scale and reach.

## ❹ What works to effectively monitor inclusion in crises?

*Embrace complexity* **by being flexible.** Interventions responding to crises and working with uncertainty are less likely to generate baseline data or have an up-to-date baseline understanding of vulnerability in the community. Instead of getting tied into linear monitoring systems that are often labour intensive and assess progress against a set baseline, collect useful and responsive monitoring data that enables rapid analysis and feedback, and open engagement with a plurality of sources and perspectives.[26] This will inform the programme and provide an analytical basis for decision-making and operational improvement that helps focus attention on excluded groups.[27]

*Embed monitoring* **of inclusion within the intervention design.** Do not let responsibility fall to just one person or subgroup in a team. Rather, embed monitoring as a system that everyone is responsible for and engaged in. Monitoring in crises should not become an imposed instrument of control or an optional extra, and it should do much more than just identifying success stories. Monitoring of inclusion needs to be an embedded and indispensable part of every intervention design. It should support a dialogue between all programme stakeholders that leads to a participatory and creative approach to measuring change in the specific crisis context the programme is working in, using indicators that incentivise inclusion.[28]

*Enable local engagement* **through reflective and participatory processes.** Monitoring that supports inclusion should be generated in as participatory a way as possible. This process needs to be supported by critical self-reflection by those who hold decision-making power over what data is needed and why, and who holds the data and where sources of data might be. The monitoring data collected should benefit affected people more directly; for example, through the process of its collection, in addition to its use in promoting programme effectiveness through improved inclusion. Local engagement in holding to account those collecting and using data also supports making inclusive data collection processes less extractive.[29]

*Engage with adaptive management* **practices that help international development organisations to become more learning oriented** and more effective in addressing complex development challenges, such as supporting inclusion in crises. Adaptive management practices have been applied for decades within other sectors as varied as logistics, manufacturing, product design, military strategy and software development. At its core, adaptive management takes a common-sense approach that recognises that solutions to complex and dynamic problems cannot be identified at the outset of an intervention – they need to emerge through the process of implementation, as a result of systematic and intentional monitoring and learning.[30]

## ❺ Developing indicators that incentivise inclusion in crises

Identifying indicators to incentivise inclusion and ensure that interventions reach those most in need will require consultation with people, groups and communities who represent the interests of excluded groups, to unpack the factors that will lead to their active and meaningful inclusion. Factors that lead to inclusion can be developed into indicators to monitor against, based on evidence of need and obstacles to inclusion specific groups face.

Increased participation and local engagement, knowledge of the context and adaptive management practices are all factors that can lead to greater inclusion with interventions working in crisis contexts. Intermediate or leading indicators can be developed on this basis. At the outcome level, indicators can explore which processes support inclusion, and the way the programme is perceived by the different groups it seeks to reach. At output level, indicators tend to be more quantitative but can still focus on counting 'quality' interactions and the quality of intervention impact.

25 K4D *Inclusion in Crises Learning Journey*, Theory of Change Workshop, April 2022.

26 Apgar, M. (2022) *Innovating for Inclusive Rigour in Peacebuilding Evaluation*, Opinion, 22 April, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies

27 PwC (2018) KPIs for Diversity and Inclusion

28 Meier, M. (2012) *Monitoring and Evaluation of Psycho-social Sport Programmes*, presentation given at Communities and Crisis: Inclusive Development Through Sport, 27–31 October, Rheinsberg

29 Alozie, M.T. and Squire, V. (2022) *Coloniality and Frictions in Data-Driven Humanitarianism: Epistemic Injustices and the Provision of Assistance to IDPs in North-Eastern Nigeria and South Sudan*, Conference Paper

30 Prieto Martin, P.; Apgar, M. and Hernandez, K. (2020) *Adaptive Management in SDC: Challenges and Opportunities*, Bern: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

***Indicators of flexibility and the extent to which adaptive management practices are used*** are factors that lead to increased inclusion. Related indicators could include the extent to which community feedback that is used to support adaptive management practices is useful; the number and type of activities modified; or the percentage of frontline workers reporting improved capacity to use adaptive management practices. In monitoring against such indicators, it is important to establish feedback loops or mechanisms for learning from mistakes that are inclusive of diverse perspectives, and ensure that feedback processes are accessible to all.

***Indicators that assess participation and local engagement*** include: evidence of directed or targeted action with representative community members or vulnerable groups; quality of involvement of crisis-affected communities in monitoring data collection (e.g. collection of personal stories); number of frontline programme staff routinely asked for their assessment of intervention activities; and number of actioned interventions arising from dialogue meetings with a diversity of programme stakeholders, or diversified and transparent local partnerships or partner contracting processes.

***Contextual indicators around knowledge of the implementation context*** can also be useful, as evidence shows that in uncertain contexts understanding of the context supports inclusion. These indicators might include programme staff's knowledge of the implementation context, evidenced by collecting data on the number and type of unexpected outcomes identified by stakeholders (to provide information about how well the context might be understood) and documenting the number of programme adaptations made due to the shifting context.

***Indicators that explore perceptions*** might include the extent of stakeholder consensus that the most vulnerable are being reached and that the intervention is responding to priority needs; or the percentage of participants who can – or perceive that they can – access relevant services or benefits the intervention provides.

***Testing assumptions by identifying which indicators lead to more inclusive outcomes***
If an intervention's indicators and milestones do not result in the disaggregated monitoring data on showing increased inclusion, then interventions need to reassess and address the assumptions underlying these indicators. This can be done through conducting interviews and consulting with stakeholders to identify other leading factors, or actions that were needed that did not take place, and then devising new indicators related to these. To identify which leading (or intermediate) indicators accelerate, or actually lead to progress and change, interventions need to work with relevant groups, using a trial-and-error approach over time.

**BOX 3**

## Value for money – understanding crisis context-specific cost drivers and supporting inclusion through nuanced assessments of equity

VfM is an essential tool for balancing difficult policy and programme decisions and the trade-offs between the '5 Es' of economy, efficiency, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and equity. What is distinct in crisis contexts is the impact crisis has on the costs of delivery, State will and capacity, the role of local actors in improving efficiency and equity, and the implications of forced displacement and short-term financing. A lack of cost and basic programme implementation data often hinders understanding of economy and efficiency, while gaps in robust evidence on outcomes and impacts further impede an analysis of effectiveness and crucially the trade-offs mentioned above, such as those between equity and economy. There is a huge value for work in crises contexts in building evidence on both costs and benefits and in using VfM more intentionally for adaptive management of programmes and policy interventions.

More nuanced and accurate VfM assessments of equity and the implications for potential trade-offs with efficiency and effectiveness are needed, explicitly exploring who participates, who benefits, why and how? There are gaps in understanding the ways in which programme design and implementation can achieve better outcomes for women, people with disabilities, socially marginalised groups, and the extreme poor. To address this, VfM assessments need to be delinked from the demands of project cycles and business case development and become integrated into adaptive management of interventions by: articulating different feasible options and setting out trade-offs across the '5 Es'; documenting assumptions where concrete evidence is lacking; and modelling potential implications.

Increasing understanding of context-specific cost drivers and benefit streams for different groups can be achieved through monitoring how conflict and complex crises affects different groups in different ways. Good VfM reporting can support interventions in crises contexts to think through whom they should be targeting, using which mechanisms, and with what kind of support packages to have the greatest impact.

*Source: Emily Wylde (2022)* Value for Money of Social Assistance in FCAS

## ❻ Recommendations for FCDO advisors on monitoring inclusion in crises

> When looking for sources of monitoring data to understand exclusion and progress towards inclusion, ask: 'How was this data generated and by whom?', 'Who was excluded from this data?', 'What gaps does this data have and how can they be filled?'

> Open up dialogue with diverse groups of crisis-affected people to support participatory monitoring of inclusion – in particular, with organisations that reach groups that are unlikely, or unable, to speak up or take part in surveys and other forms of technical assessment.

> Recognise and value the capacity of marginalised people and communities, and ensure monitoring systems reflect a diversity of perspectives and ways of understanding crises – reflect on the power relationships at play that privilege one form of knowledge and understanding of inclusion over others.

> To understand how, where, when and why certain individuals and communities are excluded, go beyond superficial forms of data collection that inaccurately focus on standard homogeneous categories of vulnerability – use holistic sources of monitoring information, including data generated by and with affected communities, groups and individuals affected by crises, and from sources outside of a specific intervention (e.g. journalism, human rights reports).

> Establish internal processes for self-reflection and organisational learning, drawing on critical self-reflection approaches and adaptive management practices – these processes can support continuous individual and organisational learning around solving complex problems, such as how to support inclusion in crisis contexts.