



RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE PAPER 3

SOCIAL PROTECTION INTERVENTION: EVALUATION RESEARCH DESIGN

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ABOUT THIS RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE PAPER

This paper describes the research design for investigating and evaluating the Child Labour: Action-Research-Innovation in South and South-Eastern Asia (CLARISSA) social protection cash-plus intervention in a slum in Dhaka, Bangladesh. After an introductory section, the second section elaborates on contribution analysis – the methodological approach underpinning the research design. The third section provides an overview of the intervention, and the fourth explores the overall design of the evaluation, its guiding framework, and the timeline of the intervention rollout and data collection. The fifth and sixth sections address the project's suite of quantitative and qualitative methods, and the approach to data analysis. Using four panel surveys, bi-monthly monitoring, in-depth interviews, group discussions and direct observations, the research will zoom in on specific behaviours. First, at the individual level, we want to learn how people adopt alternative livelihoods in response to the intervention. Second, at the household level, we consider how community mobilisation and cash transfers help households to resolve intra-household problems. Third, at the group level, we consider how groups manage collective action in response to community mobilisation. For each of these behaviour change outcomes, we want to understand the realist evaluation question, 'Why does the intervention work, for whom, and under what conditions?' We also want to assess whether these new behaviours change the propensity for children to be involved in the worst forms of child labour.

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The **Child Labour: Action-Research-Innovation in South and South-Eastern Asia (CLARISSA)** is a consortium of organisations committed to building a participatory evidence base and generating innovative solutions to the worst forms of child labour in Bangladesh and Nepal.

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ACRONYMS

AAR after action review

COM-B capability, opportunity and motivation for behaviour

M&E monitoring and evaluation

MEL monitoring, evaluation and learning

NBCO needs-based community organising

PAR Participatory Action Research

SAR Systemic Action Research

WFCL worst forms of child labour

Section 1:

INTRODUCTION

1 INTRODUCTION

Child Labour: Action-Research-Innovation in South and South-Eastern Asia (CLARISSA) is a multi-year programme in Bangladesh and Nepal led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). It aims to build a strong evidence base around, and generate innovative solutions to, the difficult, dangerous and exploitative work that children in the global South often find themselves in, and which is labelled with terms like ‘the worst forms of child labour’ (WFCL). According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) (ILO-IPEC 2013), hazardous work by children includes: exposure to physical, psychological or sexual abuse; work underground, underwater, in confined spaces or at dangerous heights; use of dangerous machinery, equipment or tools, or heavy loads; use of hazardous substances, temperatures, noise levels or vibrations; and long hours or night work (Aked 2021: 8). The main interventions in CLARISSA are the Systemic Action Research (SAR) and the social protection pilots.

The purpose of the CLARISSA social protection intervention is to trial and evidence an innovative social policy intervention for tackling social ills, with a focus on WFCL. The CLARISSA social protection intervention is implemented in Bangladesh in collaboration with partner Terre des hommes (Tdh). Its objective is to support people in building their individual, household and group capacities to meet their needs. Our hypothesis is that this increase in capacities will lead to a corresponding decrease in deprivation and community-identified social issues that negatively affect wellbeing, including WFCL. We anticipate that participation in the intervention will enhance people’s freedom to choose alternatives to hazardous or exploitative child work.

The intervention will take place in a slum community in Dhaka with widespread hazardous working conditions (especially in the leather industry) and relatively high prevalence of WFCL (Aked 2021). It has two components. First, a relational component, which will involve a group of community mobilisers placed at participants’ service for a two-year period. Their goal will be to collaborate with participants at the individual, household and group levels to help identify needs, mobilise resources to attend to those needs, and support people to develop agency and capacity in the process. Second, a cash component, providing one year of unconditional cash transfers to

all households in the slum community, recognising that cash is a vital resource and can augment the process of building agency and capacity.

The overall monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for CLARISSA is outlined in Apgar *et al.* (2022). Both the SAR and social protection interventions use theory-based evaluation – more specifically contribution analysis – for an iterative reflection on the theory of change. This explores whether the interventions translate into anticipated outcomes or create new unanticipated outcomes, and reflects on whether the interventions can be refined to become more effective in achieving outcomes that may reduce WFCL. Common across the evaluation design of these two main intervention modalities, therefore, is the use of realist evaluation.

Realist evaluation analyses effectiveness based on the question: ‘What works for whom and under what conditions?’ Realist evaluation is not interested solely in whether an intervention works or not, but in its ability to trigger specific mechanisms (chains of resources and reasoning) in specific contexts to generate the desired outcomes (change). Realist thinking posits that ‘social regularities’ (e.g. societal problems like WFCL) are driven by underlying mechanisms (i.e. underlying causal forces) that are contingent on a specific context. Interventions aim to change these social regularities (e.g. to reduce the number of children in WFCL) by activating new mechanisms within the specific context or deactivating old ones. The goal of realist evaluation is to uncover these context-specific mechanisms of social change to understand how the intervention can be made more effective and beneficial.

This report describes the research design used to investigate and evaluate the CLARISSA social protection intervention. It is divided into five sections. The first section elaborates on contribution analysis, the methodological approach underpinning the research design. The second section provides an overview of the intervention, and the third explores the overall design, its guiding framework and timeline. The fourth section addresses the project’s suite of quantitative and qualitative methods. The final section discusses our approach to data analysis.

Section 2:

CONTRIBUTION ANALYSIS

2 CONTRIBUTION ANALYSIS

In line with the theory-based evaluation approach used in CLARISSA, evaluation of the social protection intervention is premised on contribution analysis. At its centre lies a strong theory of change and, by extension, the programme's monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system. In this approach, the theory of change is not just a product (i.e. a diagram with a narrative), but rather a facilitated and critical thinking process, through which programme assumptions are made explicit, investigated and evaluated. See Figure 1 for a fuller representation of this process.

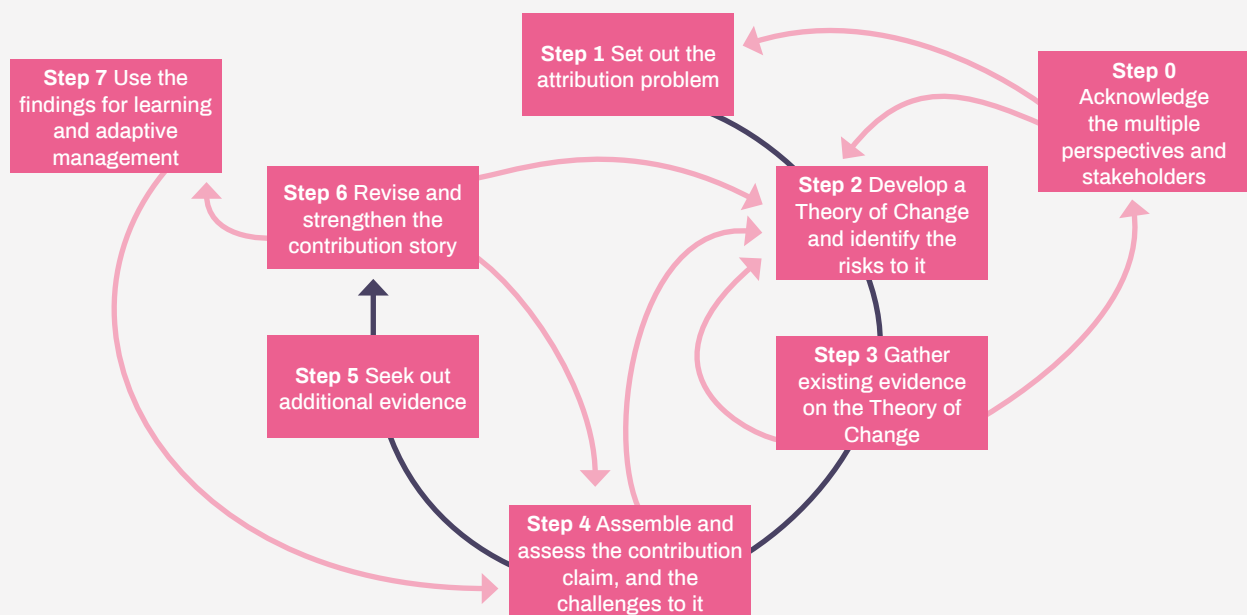
Contribution analysis needs a logical and plausible theory of change with so-called 'nested impact pathway diagrams' that show how the type of activity is expected to lead to the intended outcomes. These include causal links between planned activities and intended outcomes of the intervention, and a discussion of the critical causal assumptions that need to be in place for the cause–effect relation to take place. Theories of change are the visual representation of how social change is likely to happen in response to support activities. These may differ between stakeholders, but we try to converge them into one model that captures the intended change process 'good enough' and has consent of all stakeholders involved

(e.g. funders, implementers, researchers and participants/beneficiaries).

For the purposes of this contribution analysis, we visualise the theory of change as a 'causal map' of the intended change process where outcomes have a sequence, from immediate outcomes that are within the sphere of direct influence, to ultimate outcomes where the project only has an indirect influence. This linearity indicates the intentions or expectations of change over time, acknowledging that dynamics of change are often non-linear and contingent on many other factors and actors. To visualise the non-linear dynamics of change, we introduce several 'system maps' that are nested in the theory of change and provide more detail about the complex causation involved. Most of these system maps depict 'behaviour systems'. This is especially relevant for the social protection intervention as the pilot seeks to understand and address the behaviour of children, households and the wider community that contributes to WFCL.

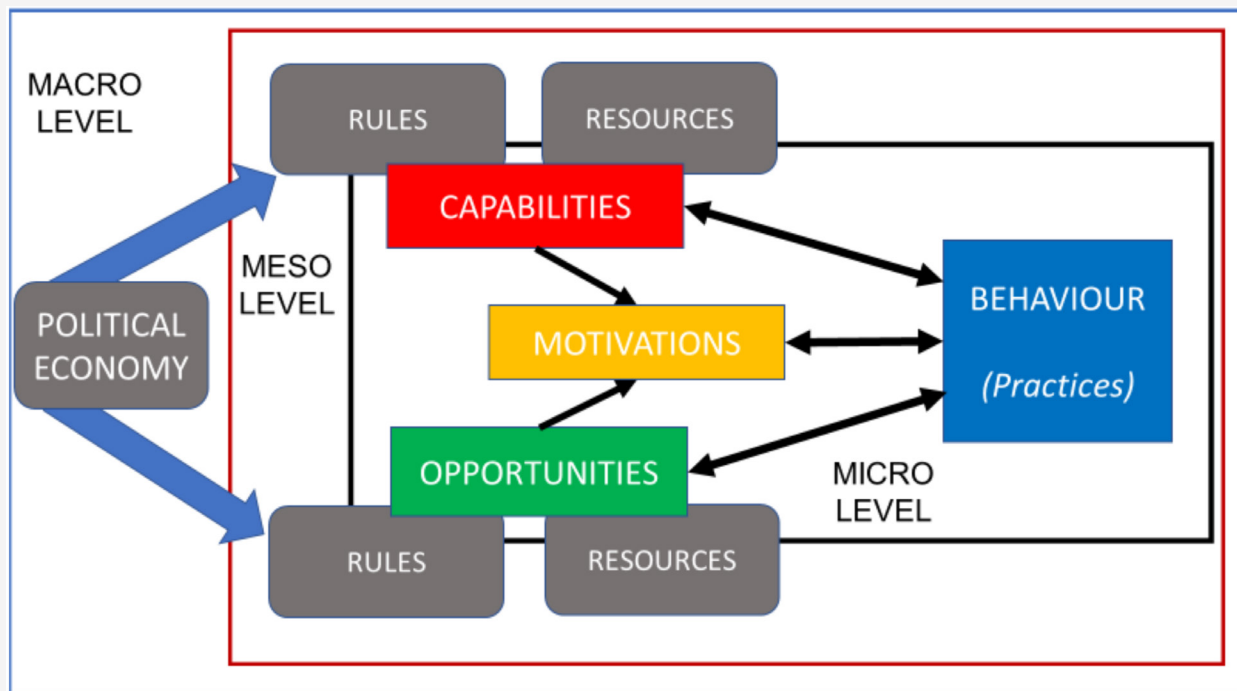
Underpinning behaviour system maps, as a 'grammar' of sorts, we use the capability, opportunity and motivation (COM-B) model of behaviour change (see Figure 2)

Figure 1: Enhanced contribution analysis with feedback loops



Source: Authors' own. Adapted from Ton (2021) with permission.

Figure 2: The capability, opportunity and motivation for behaviour (COM-B) model



Source: Ton (2021). Reproduced with permission.

to detail immediate outcomes of the intervention components (Michie, Van Stralen and West 2011).

The intervention – and therefore the research – focuses on behaviour change at the individual, household and group levels. At each level, the research focus will vary and zoom in on specific behaviours. First, at the individual level, we want to learn how people **adopt alternative livelihoods** in response to the intervention. Second, at the household level, we consider how the intervention helps them in their **ability to resolve intra-household problems**. Third, at group level, we consider **how groups manage collective action**. For each of these behaviour change outcomes, we want to understand the realist evaluation question: **‘Why does the intervention work, for whom, and under what conditions?’** The realist analyses are iterative cycles of refinement. As the specificity of the intervention unfolds in context, data collection will show new realities and unexpected emergent changes to explore and understand.

It is important to note that the reality of the change process will always deviate from the processes depicted in a theory of change. A theory of change is always imperfect, being the result of the imperfect knowledge and aspirations of the stakeholders involved in drafting it and the need to agree on a version that is ‘good

enough’. Nevertheless, in contribution analysis, the theory of change is meant to be the best approximation of the process. When the reality clearly deviates from the theory of change, the latter needs to be refined to again reflect the most plausible way that outcomes and impact are realised by an intervention. Therefore, once the intervention has started, these causal links will be regularly revisited and refined in view of evidence about the real change processes taking place. CLARISSA acknowledges that the theory of change evolves over time as the programme takes advantage of opportunities and learns from difficulties that might emerge, rather than being forced to follow the pre-set programme logic (Apgar, Hernandez and Ton 2020).

The research approach we describe here intends to gather useful data that allows causal inference and verification in a so-called sense-making process. The data will likely show heterogeneity and contradictions, and the inferences from the data will be explorative and in need of triangulation. Sense-making events are moments during which data is presented for discussion and refinement to a knowledgeable group of people, in a way that seeks to distil lessons for adaptive management of CLARISSA’s social protection intervention, and future programming of similar interventions.

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Section 3:

INTERVENTION

3 INTERVENTION

The social protection pilot has two components: the relational component, which involves needs-based community organising (NBCO); and the cash component, which involves a universal, household-level cash transfer. The NBCO activities will begin before and extend beyond the timescale for the cash component, thereby constituting the foundation of this intervention.

THE RELATIONAL COMPONENT

The relational component is underpinned by three principles and is implemented at three levels.

Principles

This relational component (also referred to as needs-based community organising) is based on three fundamental principles:

- 1 **It is needs-centred:** Every human has needs and experiences, and suffers when those needs are unmet. Acknowledging the importance of human needs, being attentive to those needs and finding ways of meeting them are foundational to the rollout of the intervention. The work of community mobilisers will focus on identifying needs at the individual, household and group levels and, collaboratively and creatively, formulating (new) ways of meeting people's needs.
- 2 **It is people-led:** The work of the relational component will build on and be led by the needs and desires expressed by the people we work with. Following critical histories of both development and social policy, we anticipate this approach leading to greater participation, appropriateness, ownership and effectiveness. Community mobilisers will act as facilitators to guide community members to express and prioritise the needs they want to address and to initiate action to do so.
- 3 **It is open-ended and emergent:** Instead of pushing participants in any specific direction (towards, for example, 'child issues' like labour or schooling), the community mobilisers will remain relatively open as to which issues are focused on and with whom. Following research on complexity and the multidimensionality of poverty (Fischer 2018), we recognise that desirable and undesirable

social phenomena have interlinking and overlapping causes (Lister 2004), and that change happens in often unanticipated ways, with the most effective route not always the most obvious or direct (Crivello and Morrow 2020).

Levels

The component operates at three levels, with activities that propose to create positive, mutually reinforcing feedback loops.

First, at the individual level, community mobilisers will operate akin to case workers in supporting activities such as safeguarding interventions, life coaching or service referrals. The fact that their work will be participant-led and needs-focused should ensure the development of tailored collaborations between these individuals and external support networks or public services that are suited to their individual requirements.

Second, at the level of the household, community mobilisers will again operate like case workers, working with families (within and beyond the confines of the household) to prioritise their needs and discuss how to address them. Activities could include needs analysis, response planning, mediation, coaching or referral to services. Critically, their offerings will be responsive to needs and requests (to the best extent possible), rather than directive interventions based on risk profiling or an assumed 'norm' against which deviance is measured.

Third, at the group level, we anticipate that the community mobilisers will work as community organisers who seek to weave threads of collective power and catalyse change. The issues that will be tackled will emerge from the community-wide needs analysis and/or be proposed by community members, with mobilisers taking the role of group facilitator. Skills in mediation and convergent decision-making are likely to be vital for this strand of work. In addition, integration and harmonisation across other participatory components of the CLARISSA programme is vital for ensuring complementarity rather than duplication of efforts.

Scope

The social protection intervention is implemented in North Gojmohol, a slum area in Dhaka. This area was selected

based on various criteria, including size, prevalence of hazardous work and WFCL, and ability to geographically demarcate the area. Following a large-scale survey of WFCL across slum areas in Dhaka in December 2018 and January 2019 (Maksud, Reaz Hossain and Arulanantham 2022) and site visits to selected slums in April 2019, North Gojmohol was deemed the most appropriate area for the intervention. It has a long history with the leather processing industry, now largely taking place in small- to medium-sized workshops and factories. This means there are a range of hazardous working conditions (such as working with chemicals), including for children. It is also an area of widespread poverty, with its residents subject to hazards associated with living in informal urban settlements, such as poor sanitation, insecure living conditions, limited access to schooling and lack of health care provision (Roelen *et al.* 2020b). A census survey undertaken in November 2020 indicates a population of approximately 1,650 households and 2,450 children.

The intervention is implemented by a team of 20 community mobilisers. The size of the team implementing the relational component (needs-based community organising) is smaller than would be typical for social work or social protection-focused case work, but larger than usual for community organising. Self-selection is inevitable by the nature of the support provided. First, not everyone will need or want to participate. It is unlikely that group work will appeal to all community members or that all families will require or desire support in the form of case work. Second, willingness to participate is a vital prerequisite for effectiveness in changing livelihoods or participation in collective action. In addition, with a ratio of roughly 1 community mobiliser to 83 households, it would not be possible to implement the relational component directly with all 1,650 households taking part in the intervention. This necessitates a dynamic process of self-selection into relational work at all three levels. Some may not be interested or willing to engage with such work at any time; others will join later; and some will disappear or indicate that they do not want to continue the relationship with the community mobiliser(s).

The process of self-selection is primarily guided by **willingness to engage**, and considered in conjunction with considerations of **team capacity** and **potential impact**. That is to say, in the event that more North Gojmohol residents want to collaborate with the community mobilisers than the team can handle, the team itself will have to make decisions over what to do based on a realistic assessment of its capacity and the likely potential impact of any given action. For example,

in adherence to safeguarding principles and CLARISSA's safeguarding policy, the highest priority for household visits will be given to those where child protection violations appear to be present. Likewise, a group process that could impact an entire block will take precedence over group action that would only impact a small number of households, except when these are directly linked to CLARISSA's advocacy strategy. The social protection team will remain in constant contact over these decisions.

In practice, until May 2022, and after having selected the slum area in 2020, there has been no need for a criteria-focused method of selection by the community mobilisers, with self-selection the main process. Community mobilisers were able to manage and respond to requests for case work or other types of engagement at individual and household levels. Group-level activities were being established at the time of writing this report.

The self-selection process will obviously affect the answer to the question: 'What works for whom, under what conditions?' Fortunately, various surveys (including a sample baseline survey and multiple rounds of monitoring surveys – see more below) have captured some basic characteristics on all households, including those that do not want to be involved with the community mobilisers or other social protection activities. We anticipate that the provisioning of a cash transfer later in the process will generate more data that can be used to compare the main characteristics of participating and non-participating households.

The process of self-selection also implies that any inference about effectiveness will need to carefully specify the generalisation domain – that is, the conditions or characteristics of the households for which the intervention seems to work (or not). In the terminology of mainstream impact evaluation, this research will infer the 'effect of the treatment on the treated' and analyse with the information that becomes available why the treated have characteristics that are different from the non-treated, and how this can inform or prepare for future replication or scaling of this type of intervention. It is now widely acknowledged that evaluations of social interventions such as this social protection pilot benefit from methodologies that foreground the complex and dynamic nature of change (de Haan, Dowie and Mariara 2020). Realist evaluation approaches and theory-based evaluation methodologies such as contribution analysis are increasingly considered sound and valuable alternatives to evaluations based on experimental design (Mayne 2011; 2012).

THE CASH COMPONENT

Cash is such a vital resource in capitalist societies that it is almost a prerequisite for satisfying needs and developing capacity, especially in urban areas. We also know that cash and access to it are inextricably linked to poverty and child labour (Dammert *et al.* 2017; ILO and UNICEF Office of Research 2022). As such, and with a view to exploring whether and to what extent cash enables poor households to resist their children engaging in WFCL, the second component of the social protection intervention involves the rollout of unconditional cash transfers to all households within our target community, delivered via a mobile money provider. The key design principles for this component are as follows.

Principles

- 1 **Universality:** The social protection pilot will take place across an entire community, with every household receiving cash transfers. There will be no proxy mean test or other mechanism to select beneficiaries based on their current income, assets or living conditions. This decision is motivated by several factors (see Howard 2020 for an extensive discussion). First, to avoid the ethical and practical pitfalls associated with targeting. Second, to set the conditions for unanticipated change that may emerge when all community members participate in a shared experience (especially in a context of widespread income and other challenges sustaining livelihoods across the community – see Roelen *et al.* 2020b). Third, to enable the social protection pilot to meaningfully and empirically speak to debates about universality within social protection, including those touching on a basic income.
- 2 **Unconditionality:** Many cash transfer programmes that aim to reduce child labour are conditional – on school attendance, for example. Yet evidence about the effectiveness of conditionality within cash transfer programming is mixed, thereby compounding existing ethical concerns about the enforcement of behavioural requirements (Baird *et al.* 2014; Dornan and Porter 2013; Roelen 2014). CLARISSA's social protection intervention will

explicitly roll out its cash component with 'no strings attached'. Operational aspects that could undermine the universality principle, such as having access to a bank account or mobile phone, will be addressed with the help of the community mobilisers.

Amounts

There will be a basic transfer amount of 15 British pounds (GBP) per month for all households, topped up with 2 GBP for each additional child under 21 years of age (note that these are provisional figures at the time of writing). This approach to determining transfer amounts recognises the greater levels of vulnerability linked to the greater number of children in the household.

Main recipient

The cash will be transferred to a designated person within the household on behalf of all members. While individual transfers (including to children) could have powerful effects on individuals' intra-household bargaining position, they could also put individuals (and particularly children) at risk. Qualitative background research, as presented in Roelen *et al.* (2020b), suggests that there is a considerable degree of pooling of resources at household level, with many children handing over their earnings to their mother or father entirely or in part. Furthermore, in most cases, only one mobile phone is available within the household, which largely defeats the point of individual transfers (assuming that transfers are made via mobile phone). The suggestion is therefore to make transfers to one representative within the household. Households are free to designate their representative themselves following a conversation with community mobilisers, striving to challenge intra-household gender norms and unequal power dynamics to the best extent possible.

TIMELINE

The social protection intervention started in October 2021, with community mobilisers starting their work on the relational component. The cash component is scheduled to start in September 2022 and will be implemented alongside the ongoing relational component.

Section 4:

EVALUATION APPROACH

4 EVALUATION APPROACH

UNDERPINNING FRAMEWORKS

The proposed intervention – and especially its innovative relational component – is grounded in several frameworks (such as relational needs-based ontology; capability approach; and agency theory) that have underpinned relational work in other contexts, and served to understand ways of how people in poverty leverage their agency to cope, and eventually escape poverty. It also builds on what we know about what works (or does not work) from existing interventions in the fields of child protection, child labour and social protection.

First, the social protection intervention is explicitly rooted in a **relational, needs-based ontology**. Following developments in fields as diverse as psychology (Rogoff 2014), sociology (Guillen-Royo 2018), economics (Raworth 2017), neuroscience (Siegel 2012), anthropology (Klein and Morreo 2019), development studies (White 2015) and management (Cottam 2018), this ontology is founded on two premises. First, that humans are ‘essentially needing-beings’ (Howard 2020: 17) who all share the same universal and trans-historical needs (Max-Neef, Hevia and Hopenhayn 1991; Gough 2017), which can be understood as ‘the basic unit of life itself’ (Kashtan 2015: 169). Second, that human wellbeing is irredeemably relational (White 2015), with our needs only satisfiable in and through relationships with other beings and the environment. From a change perspective, this is vital, since nurturing relationships have been shown both to grow individual and collective capabilities (Kashtan 2015; Cottam 2018) and to generate the positive, unplanned collective change known by systems thinkers as ‘the magic of emergence’ (Margalit 2017).

Second, the intervention seeks to build the capacity of individuals, households and groups to meet their needs. This thinking is grounded in the **capability approach**, with its core characteristic being ‘... its focus on what people are effectively able to do and to be’ (Robeyns 2005: 94). The founder of the approach, Amartya Sen, argued that policies should be focused ‘on the quality of... life, and on removing obstacles in their lives so that they have more freedom to live the kind of life that, upon reflection, they have reason to value’ (*ibid.*: 94). The capability approach emphasises elements of agency and action, while at the same time compelling us to

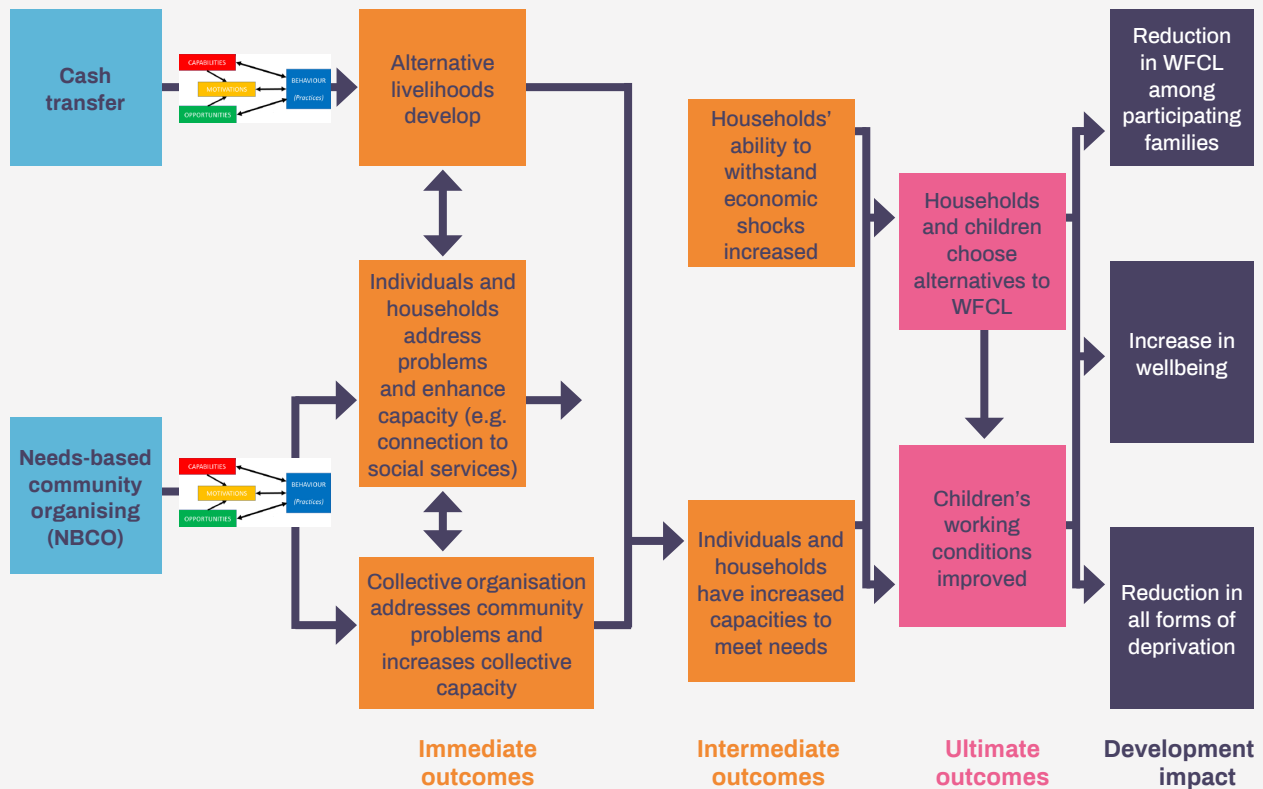
stay mindful of the structural constraints that require more fundamental change. In order to avoid conceptual confusion with the term ‘capability’ as used in the COM-B model, discussed previously, we adopt the term **‘capacity to meet needs’** instead of ‘capabilities to meet needs’, as used in the literature on the capability approach. We refer to ‘capabilities’ as used in the COM-B model (see below), denoting individual resources such as knowledge or skills. We use the concepts ‘capacity to change’ and ‘capacity to meet needs’ interchangeably and to denote change processes at the individual, household and group levels.

Third, we ground the intervention in an understanding of **agency** that recognises people’s everyday actions in getting by and being strategic about creating freedom to meet needs. Ruth Lister (2004) proposes four forms of agency exercised by people in poverty, considering actions along the spectrums of ‘everyday’ and ‘strategic’ as well as ‘personal’ and ‘political’. On the political end of the spectrum, everyday agency encapsulates defiant acts to ‘get back at’ while strategic actions refer to ‘getting organised to’, to challenge systems of inequality and oppression. On the personal end of the spectrum, everyday forms of agency are geared towards ‘getting by’ and making ends meet while strategic activities serve to ‘get out’ and make positive change. Meeting needs will benefit from integrating the ‘everyday’ with the ‘strategic’. We do not merely consider an individual concept but also consider collective agency, and how people can come together to meet their needs in recognition that they might not be able to do this individually (Chiappero-Martinetti, Houghton Budd and Ziegler 2017; Ibrahim 2017).

THEORY OF CHANGE

The considerations outlined above are incorporated in the theory of change (Figure 3). The two intervention components are depicted on the left-hand side and the sequence of expected outcomes moves from immediate outcomes on livelihoods and capacity to meet needs, to intermediate and ultimate outcomes, including, hopefully, a reduction in WFCL. Note that we consider intermediate outcomes to be within the intervention’s direct sphere of influence but ultimate outcomes and development impacts to lie outside of such direct influence.

Figure 3: Social protection theory of change



Source: Authors' own.

CONTRIBUTION CLAIMS

The impact evaluation will reflect on the theory of change outlined in Figure 3 and monitor whether it adequately corresponds to the reality that unfolds. Contribution analysis is a process whereby the main assumptions in the theory of change are reflected upon and contribution claims are critically assessed (as was outlined in Figure 1).

We assume that the social protection intervention will generate measurable changes in some outcomes, such as the ability to withstand economic setbacks, choosing alternative livelihood options or the capacity to organise at

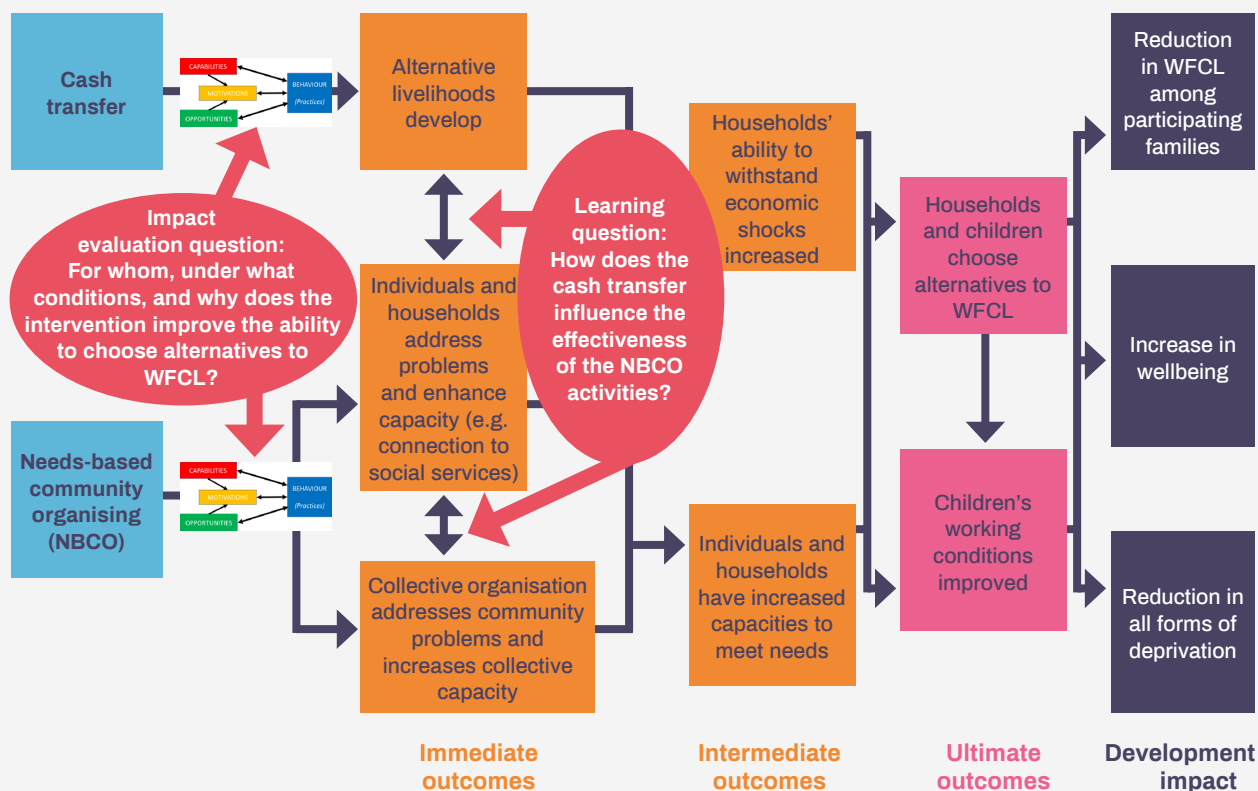
community level. However, it will be clear from the detailed impact pathways presented in Figure 3 that CLARISSA does not consider the social protection intervention to directly cause outcomes but rather acknowledges that intervention components work within certain conditions that enable or constrain their effectiveness. The social protection intervention components are so-called 'INUS conditions' – 'an insufficient but necessary part of a condition which is itself unnecessary but sufficient for the result' (Mackie 1974: 62). That is, they are, in themselves, not sufficient to cause the change documented but – we hope! – they may be a contributory factor to (one of the many possible) processes that cause the shift in outcomes.

Box 1: INUS conditions explained

- Insufficient condition (alone it does not work)
- Non-redundant condition (but it cannot be left out) in an
- Unnecessary configuration (there are other causal process that could cause the outcome)
- Sufficient configuration (but it is one of them)

Source: Authors' own. Created with inspiration from Mackie (1974).

Figure 4: Social protection theory of change, including key learning and evaluation questions



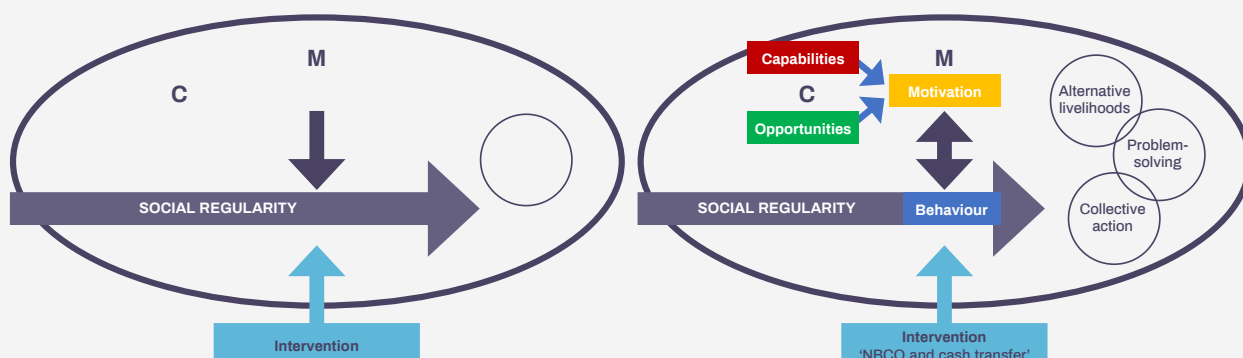
Source: Authors' own.

A key element of the quantitative component of this research (see below) is a set of perception questions asked at regular intervals. They ask respondents about changes in outcomes that are targeted by the relational activities and the perceived influence of CLARISSA support activities on these perceived changes. We argue that the advantages of this flexible and straightforward data collection instrument far outweigh the disadvantages of the data being based on perceptions instead of observations. It allows us to observe trends in outcome indicators, which can then be compared to the period when the cash component was introduced or withdrawn. We anticipate that – on average – we will see a shift in trends at key moments during programme implementation, namely when the cash component starts and when it is withdrawn. This information will not result in a numerical effect size, but be sufficiently informative to answer the question, ‘What works for whom and under what conditions?’

Thinking critically, including a reflection on the situation if the intervention had not taken place (i.e. counterfactual reasoning), it may be possible to identify hypotheses

about other factors or configurations that could have resulted in the desired outcomes, and – importantly – where the social protection intervention played no role at all (i.e. the support is ‘redundant’). Subsequently, the most relevant alternative explanations need to be explored and either discarded or confirmed. However, our assumption in the theory of change and impact pathways is that the intervention will play a critical role in the change processes depicted in Figure 3. As exact outcomes will emerge during implementation of the social protection components, we need to scope for those outcomes, using processes like outcome harvesting and reflections with the community mobilisers. The evaluation needs to identify those outcomes for which the social protection interventions seem to have a non-redundant role and that are important enough to influence the ultimate outcomes in the theory of change, related to children’s work. And, once identified, we need to collect data to evidence and critically verify that role. When the contribution claim cannot be falsified, the related impact pathways will be proven to be working, under certain conditions, and for some types of individuals, households or groups.

Figure 5: Realist evaluation of behaviour change processes



Source: Authors' own. Based on Ton and Vellema (2022).

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

To evaluate CLARISSA's social protection intervention, we use the overarching theory of change (Figure 3) as our starting point but focus on two 'causal hotspots' that lead to two main research questions:

- 1 **Impact evaluation question:** For whom, under what conditions and why does the intervention improve the ability of households or children to choose alternatives to WFCL?
- 2 **Learning question:** How does the cash transfer influence the effectiveness of the needs-based community organising activities?

Figure 4 illustrates how both questions sit within the theory of change. The impact evaluation question zooms in on the effect of the two programme components on behaviour change, with these effects underpinned by capabilities, opportunities and motivation (as captured in the COM-B model), where specific configurations of capabilities, opportunities and motivations define whether a behaviour changes. The learning question asks about the interaction between programme components and their effects in changing participants' capacity to meet their needs.

IMPACT EVALUATION QUESTION

In the theory of change for the social protection intervention (Figure 3), COM-B models link its two components with their immediate outcomes. Each model represents multiple behaviour change systems at different

levels. They incorporate the factors that may explain why some individuals, households or groups have or do not have the opportunity, capability or motivation to change. Groups may also have varied 'causal configurations' of capabilities, opportunities and motivations that make the intervention work for some but not for all. At this level, the application of COM-B allows us to zoom in on the conditions and mechanisms that result in some groups being less able and other groups better able to benefit from the intervention, and to improve their capacity to act and meet needs.

COM-B system maps are helpful for exploring answers to the realist evaluation question, 'What works for whom and under what conditions?' (Mayne 2019; Ton and Vellema 2022). In realist evaluation, social change outcome (O) occurs because certain mechanisms (M) are triggered by a change in the context (C) that underpins the pre-existing 'social regularity'. The COM-B lens points to the capabilities and opportunities that are needed (the context) for a motivated person to change pre-existing patterns of behaviour – that is, the social regularity (see Figure 5). Exploring the intricate relationship between the COM-B components also helps to consider the realist notion of context being in a dynamic interaction with mechanisms. It can be used to understand how interventions might be targeted at broadly similar contextual conditions or adapted to fit with different contextual conditions (Greenhalgh and Manzano 2021).

We analyse behaviour change resulting from the intervention at three levels (see Figure 4), zooming in on behaviour change that is deemed plausible and desirable. First, at the individual level, we consider adoption of

Box 2: How we searched for relevant factors in the COM-B models

Capabilities of individuals/households/groups to do the behaviour/agency

- **'These (type of stakeholders) have the opportunity but do not know how to do the improvements' – Why?**

Opportunities of individuals/households/groups to do the behaviour/agency

- **'These (type of stakeholders) are capable but face barriers to implementing the improvements' – Why?**

Motivation of individuals/households/groups to do the behaviour/agency

- **'These (type of stakeholders) know what to do and have the possibilities to do it but they still choose not to do it' – Why?**

Source: Authors' own.

alternative livelihoods. Second, at the household level, we consider the ability to resolve intra-household problems or tensions. Third, at the group level, we consider participation in collective action. For each of these, we answer the question, 'Why does the intervention work, for whom, and under what conditions?'

The COM-B models look for factors related to the capabilities space, opportunity space and motivation space that create heterogeneous effects. Many capabilities, opportunities and motivations are defined at a higher level by norms, institution or rules. Within CLARISSA, we are especially interested in these higher-level determinants. As such, we need to explore factors that are not merely the result of individual choices (motivation) and knowledge or skills (capabilities) but are derived from structural elements. Opportunities in particular are largely a reflection of the political economy and the rules and resources that are in place. These are structural elements reproduced (and modified) in social life (Giddens 1984). Therefore, we have included in Figure 2 – alongside capabilities, opportunities and motivations – the different scales on which these rules and resources are defined (Ton 2021).

The behaviour system is also underpinned by notions of agency, serving as the background against which individuals, households and groups can use their capabilities and seize the opportunities available to them. The motivation element in the COM-B model in Figure 2 shows that one can have the agency to change behaviour (for example, stop working for a certain employer) but decide not to because the incentives are lacking.

As our starting point, we developed four impact pathway diagrams that link participation in the various components of the social protection intervention – namely, the relational component (needs-based community organising) at individual, household and community level, and the cash component at household level – to the immediate outcomes in the theory of change. We refer to these as initial programme theories. Each impact pathway diagram centres on the ultimate outcome of children's reduced involvement in WFCL, via a series of intermediate outcomes. The diagrams reflect our current knowledge about the unfolding intervention. This 'best guess' has shaped the data collection methods that are discussed in detail below.

A: Individual-level needs-based community organising

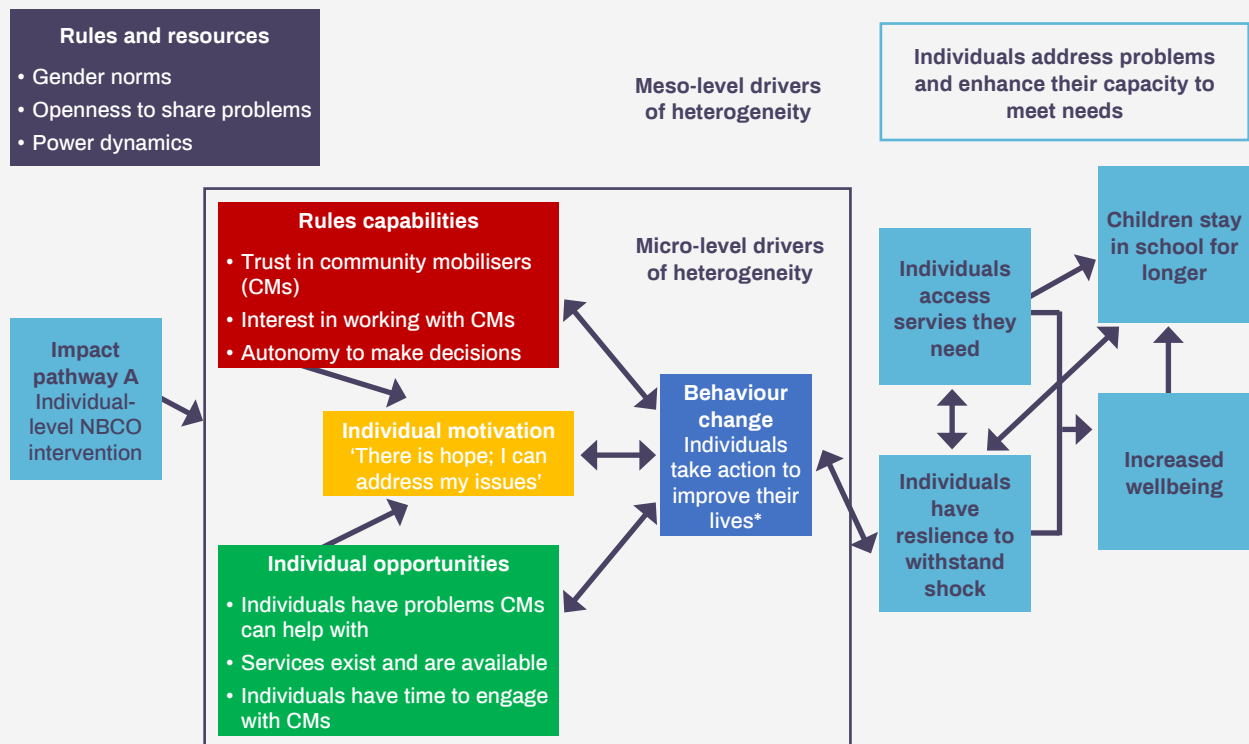
Impact pathway diagram A (Figure 6) shows a detailed COM-B systems map for the individual-level needs-based community organising intervention, and details the drivers of heterogeneity to unpick the differential impact of this component. Individual-level needs-based community organising refers to the intervention's relational component, which works with individuals (children and adults) to take action to improve their lives. The component aims to create strategic agency of individuals (away from more reactive everyday forms of agency) and to strengthen their capabilities, opportunities and motivation to address problems and ultimately enhance their capacity to meet needs. We expect that not all individuals will be willing and able to engage with the support provided under this component.

A range of factors at the meso and macro levels can lead to differential impact. Gender norms can define why men and women, and girls and boys, may have different capabilities, opportunities and motivations. There are also differences that build on other cultural norms that will differ between social strata, among people with different upbringings, and with unique lived experiences (such as the (socialised)

openness to share problems with others). And, last but not least, there are meso-level power relations in the slum area that influence individuals' agency (and COM-B system), be it based on political, economic, criminal or other relations.

At the micro level, there are differences in individuals' capabilities that influence their capacity to make use of the intervention component. Some people will trust the community mobilisers while others may be less interested in working with them. Participation in this component is also influenced by the autonomy or individual agency that people have in making decisions to take action. For example, children may need authorisation from their parents, and women may have to ask permission from the man in the household. These factors may cause them not to participate even though they may have the opportunity and motivation to take part. Also, some people may have the capabilities but not the opportunity to act. We anticipate that some people simply do not have the kind of needs that the community mobilisers can help them with, or the services that could have helped them to resolve their needs may simply not exist in the area. Moreover, some people will not have the time to engage with the community mobiliser due to their multiple other commitments in or outside the house or the slum.

Figure 6: Impact pathway A: individual-level change due to needs-based community organising intervention



* For example, improve literacy, reduce work-related risks, increase income
Source: Authors' own.

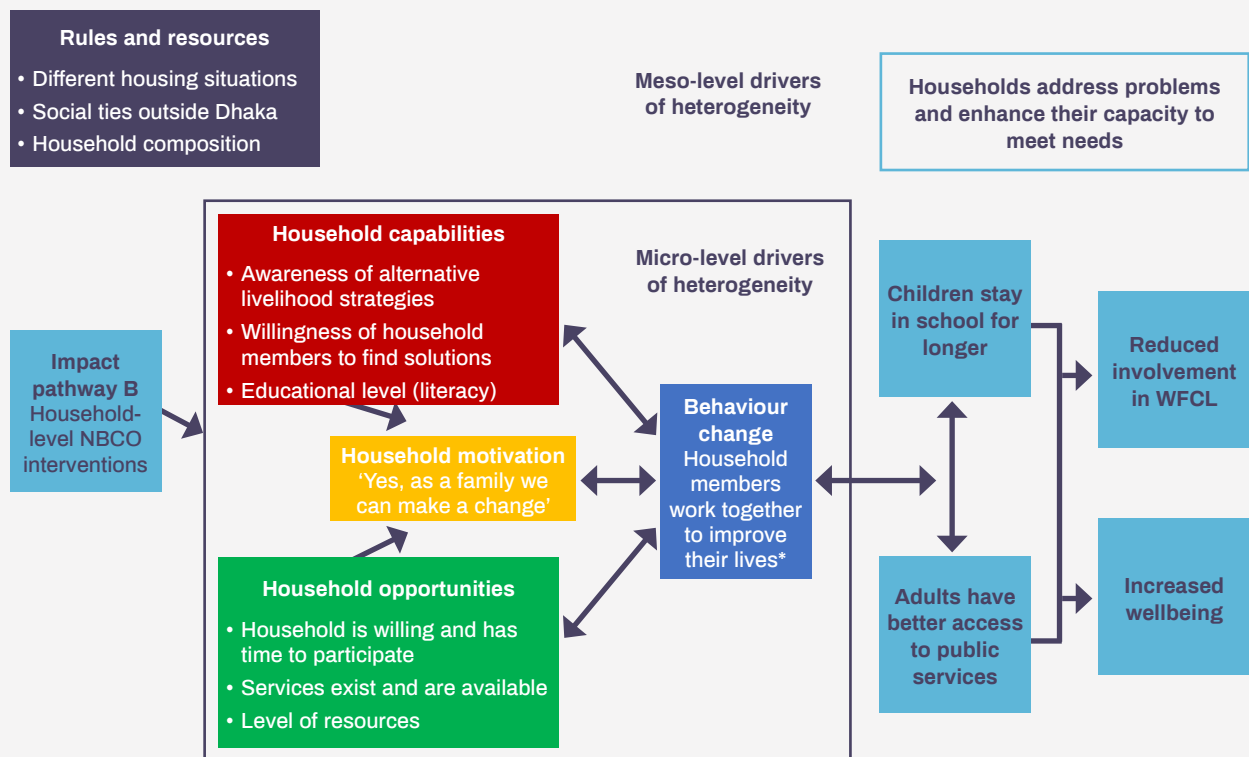
B: Household-level needs-based community organising

Impact pathway diagram B (Figure 7) shows a detailed COM-B systems map for the household-level needs-based community organising intervention, and details potential drivers of heterogeneity. Household-level needs-based community organising refers to community mobilisers working with households to work together to improve their lives. This is part of the intervention’s relational component, which aims to enhance the overall household’s capacity to meet needs.

Households will have different capacities to act in response to the intervention. At the meso level, we

assume that there will be differences according to the housing situation of the households (e.g. living with their employer or renting their own dwelling) and the strength of the household’s social ties to places outside Dhaka, especially with their districts of origin. At the micro level, drivers of heterogeneity in the effects of the needs-based community organising in the opportunity space are similar to those at the individual level, including having time to participate. In the capability space, the awareness of alternative livelihood options is considered a differentiating factor, as is educational level (literacy) and the willingness/openness of members of the household to take up the options that become apparent due to the needs-based community organising activities.

Figure 7: Impact pathway B: household-level change due to needs-based community organising intervention



* For example, joint decision-making within household, invest in economic activities, use financial services, apply for public services, cope with shocks.
Source: Authors' own.

C: Group-level needs-based community organising

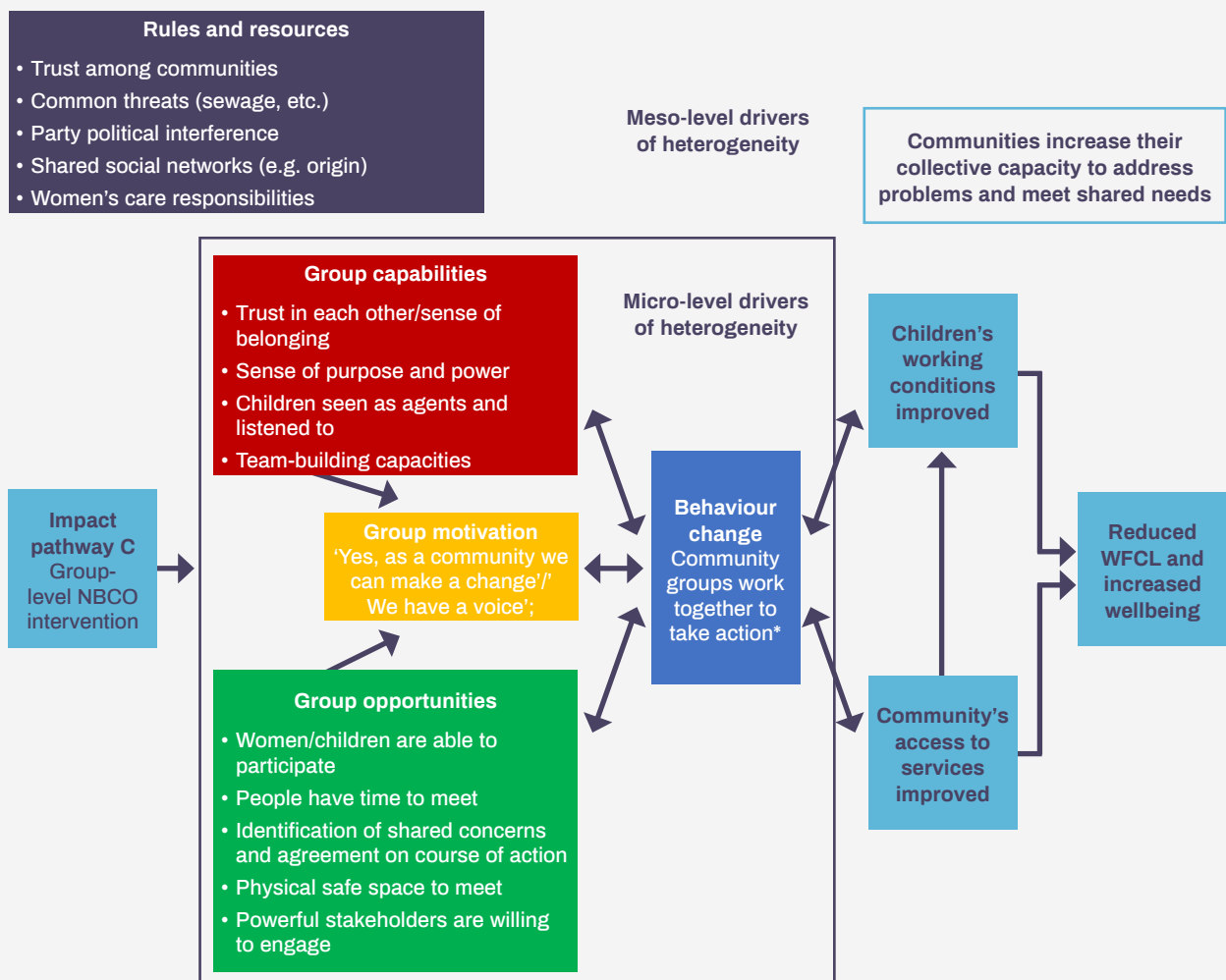
Impact pathway diagram C (Figure 8) shows the COM-B systems map for the group-level needs-based community organising intervention and potential drivers of heterogeneity. At this level, needs-based community organising refers to community mobilisers working with groups of individuals from households across the community to work together to take action. This is also part of the intervention's relational component.

Some community groups will respond more to the support provided than others. At the meso level, the level of trust within the slum can be an important mediator. Also, when there are common threats or problems, such as with sewage, water or electricity, the chances that community organising results in actions will be greater. Party political

interference might play a positive role in some change processes but a negative role in others. Women's care responsibilities might affect the group dynamics, such that more male-dominated groups might emerge in the process than groups that focus on women's needs.

At the group (micro) level, considering their opportunity space, the assumption is that to become effective participants, people will need time and autonomy to participate and the groups need to have a safe space to meet. Moreover, the group may need some powerful stakeholders ('leaders') to be involved in order to effectively work together. In the capability space, the level of trust within the group is important, next to the sense of purpose and power. Groups will also differ in the level of team-building capabilities and whether children are considered as knowledgeable agents.

Figure 8: Impact pathway C: group-level change due to needs-based community organising intervention



* For example, community groups formed and action identified/taken, increased engagement in social activities. Source: Authors' own.

D: Cash transfer

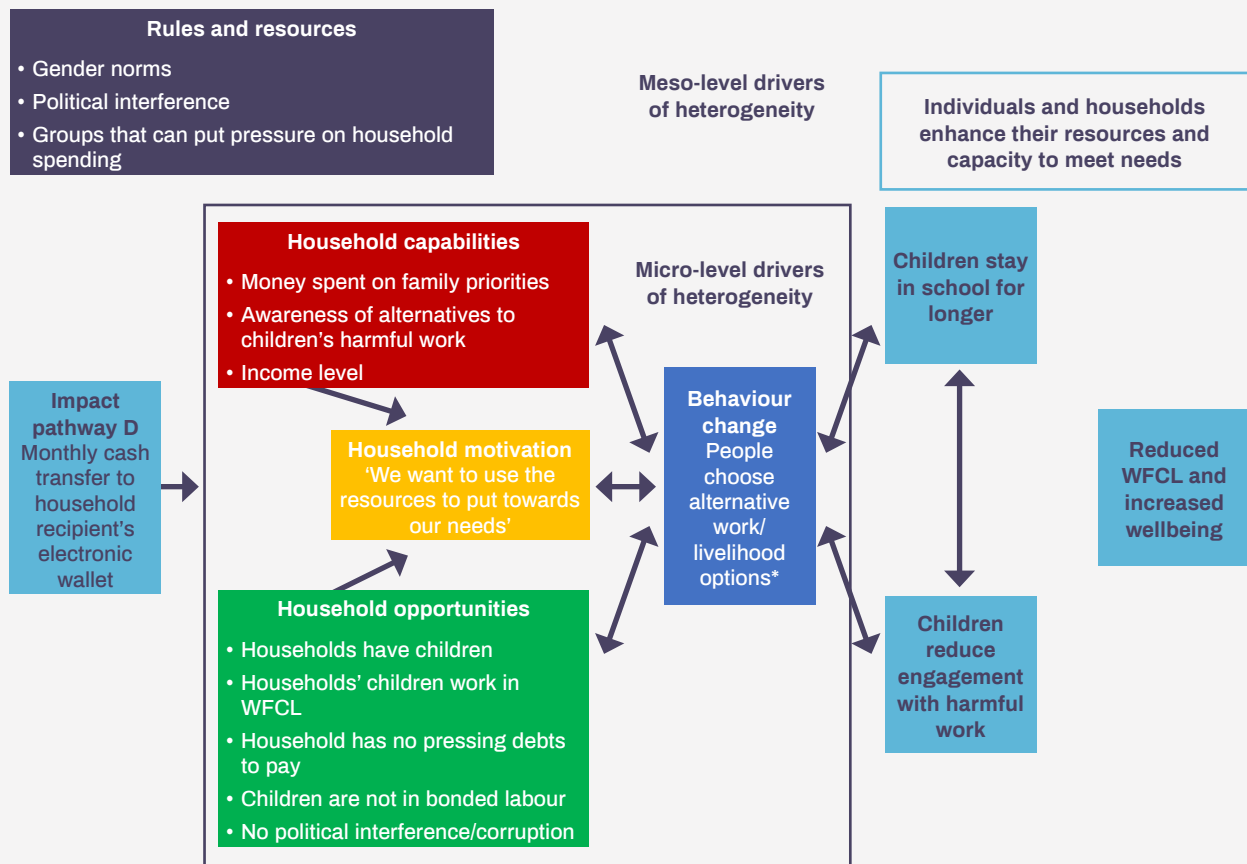
Impact pathway D (Figure 9) refers to the intervention’s cash component, again detailing the COM-B systems map and factors of heterogeneity. We expect the availability of cash to change households’ livelihood options, allowing them to diversify away from hazardous or harmful work. The cash transfer will affect households differentially, with some able to make more effective choices towards alternative livelihoods with the money that is received, and, in doing so, enhance their resources and capacity to meet needs.

We consider several drivers of heterogeneity in the effectiveness of this component. At the meso level, social norms about gender, party-political influences and

other (power) groups may put pressure on households to do things with the money that prevents them making ‘autonomous’ decisions about how to spend it. These groups might be connected to illegal activities or money-lenders that might put pressure on certain households.

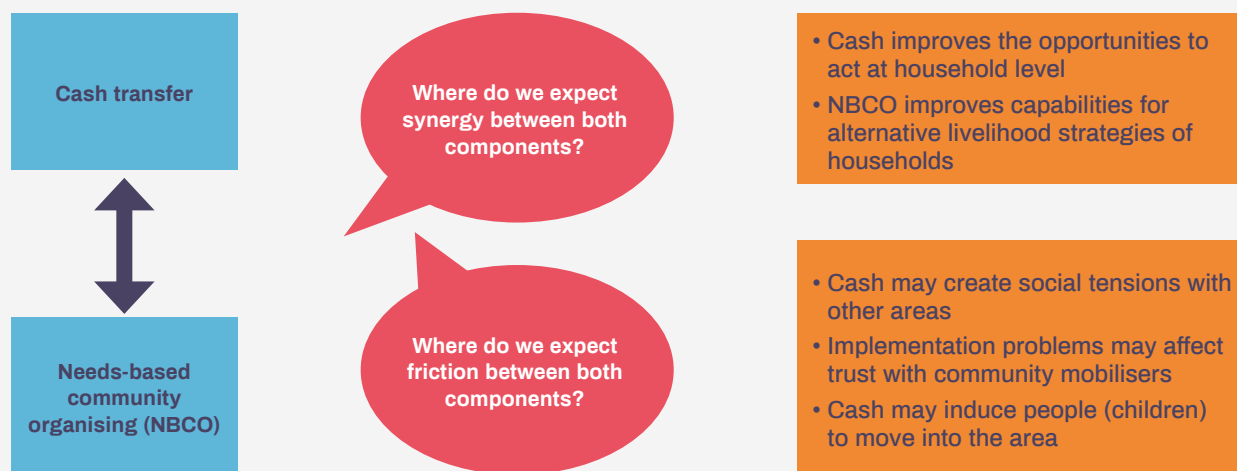
At the micro level, we assume that households will respond differently depending on whether they have children or not, or whether their children work in WFCL. Also, the debt situation will influence their capacity to choose other livelihood options. In the capability space, the level of current expenses (e.g. rent and transport) and income level matters. Some households will be more aware of the negative aspects of the work that their children are involved in.

Figure 9: Impact pathway D: household-level change due to cash transfer



* For example, invest in economic activities, use financial services, apply for public services, cope with shocks. Source: Authors' own.

Figure 10: Focus on synergy or frictions between intervention components



Source: Authors' own.

LEARNING QUESTION

As well as the impact evaluation question, we identified another question that merits our focus. It relates to the two-directional arrows in the theory of change (Figure 10), denoting the interaction between programme components. It points to a causal hotspot for which the evidence is still scarce.

The logic for combining the relational component (needs-based community organising) and the cash component is that they are mutually reinforcing (Roelen *et al.* 2017). Needs-based community organising could help households to consider alternatives that a cash transfer alone would not have achieved (e.g. enhance capabilities and strengthen motivation towards alternative livelihoods). In turn, cash gives people resources to take action on issues emerging from community organising, especially at the individual and household levels. Cash may free up time for individuals to engage in community organising at all levels, but perhaps mostly at the community level. Cash may change the outcomes of people's 'cost-benefit' analysis when weighing up advantages and disadvantages of hazardous work (including for children); it can reduce the advantage of the income gained from such work, and community organising may highlight the disadvantages even more. Universal provision of cash may enhance a sense of community – 'we're all in this together' – and motivate

people to self-select to participate in the needs-based community organising component, providing momentum for organising at the community level.

However, there are also potential frictions that can result from the combination of these two intervention components. People living close to North Gojmohol may feel unfairly excluded, and the size of the cash transfer or the way it is distributed may create tensions between households/individuals and community mobilisers, possibly undermining trust. The cash transfer could also result in children or other household members migrating from other areas to North Gojmohol. It is not clear, however, whether this would be positive or negative for the children involved in relation to WFCL.

The reality of the intervention does not allow us to quantify the synergy as net effect of the combination of two separate treatments. However, the experience will help us learn what type of mechanisms are activated by the combination of the two intervention components that make it easier or more difficult to reach the outcomes, and how these result in some participants benefiting more than others from the support provided. We will look especially at how it helps to achieve the anticipated intended outcomes but also scope for unanticipated positive or negative outcomes that seem to be linked to the combination of needs-based community organising and cash transfers.

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Section 5:

MIXED METHODS

5 MIXED METHODS

The CLARISSA social protection intervention is complex, with many stakeholder groups, multiple impact pathways and many critical assumptions. Some of these are intervention-specific, others relate to wider issues relevant to the CLARISSA programme as a whole. For example, CLARISSA implements Participatory Action Research (PAR) processes in the same community at the same time. This might create confusion or tensions, or reinforce positive dynamics. Nevertheless, the evaluation focus is described above – with our best guess of the key factors that need to be monitored. Each of these needs an appropriate operationalisation and combination of methods to answer the question of effectiveness. Therefore, the impact evaluation question and the learning question in the social protection intervention will be answered using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative tools are likely to be most relevant for pathways B and D (household level), and somewhat relevant to pathway A (individual level), but least relevant for pathway C (community level). Qualitative tools will be relevant across all four pathways.

Mixed-methods approaches have become commonplace within research on all aspects of poverty and vulnerability (Roelen and Camfield 2015), including in relation to child work (Roelen *et al.* 2020a). The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods started to take hold in the early 2000s with the so-called ‘Q-squared’ approach gaining traction in studies that sought to understand both breadth and depth of poverty (Shaffer 2013). Some have dubbed mixed-methods research the ‘platinum standard’ (Khagram and Thomas 2010), thereby positing that such research can overcome the shortcomings of using either method in isolation. With respect to evaluation research that considers the effects or impacts of social policy, the mixing of methods allows us to gain insights into whether change happened, and why change happened (or did not happen) (Bamberger, Rao and Woolcock 2010; Devereux *et al.* 2013). In the book *Rethinking Social Inquiry* (Brady and Collier 2004), the words ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ are substituted by the more generic concepts of ‘data-set observations’ and ‘causal process observations’, where both types are needed to make a generalisable causal inference.

Methods can be mixed in a variety of ways, ranging from simple triangulation of findings towards the end of the research process to full integration of methods throughout the research process (see Brannen 2005; Creswell and

Plano Clark 2011). Triangulation, for example, consists of mapping and comparing findings from both methods to corroborate, expand or complement the findings of each. Within sequential approaches, methods are developed and implemented so that they build on each other. For example, qualitative research may inform survey design or findings from quantitative investigation may form the basis for further qualitative inquiry. Integrated approaches combine methods and keep them in conversation with each other, from research design through to analysis and write-up. Bryman (2014) sets out some key considerations to take into account when planning mixed-methods research. They include: the need for all methods to be carried out in a technically competent manner; the need to be transparent about choices regarding research design and mixing of methods; the need for mixed methods to be linked to research questions; and the need for integration.

In relation to impact evaluation, Ton (2012) refers to this process as the ‘mixing of methods’ and proposes to do so in response to the known strengths and weaknesses (validity threats) associated with a causal inference that result from a peculiar method. Most studies on child work that have employed mixed-methods designs tend to sit at the less integrated end of the spectrum, having adopted largely sequential designs (Roelen *et al.* 2020a). Studies that seek to integrate methods in more innovative and intertwined ways are rare (*ibid.*). It follows that the CLARISSA social protection intervention offers an opportunity to seek innovative programmatic solutions but also to undertake innovative mixed-methods evaluation research within the field of child work. The proposed set of methods will jointly respond to the evaluation’s main research questions, gaining insights into change, the mechanisms that led to change, and the context in which such change occurs.

The qualitative and quantitative research components include data to answer both questions using a mixed-methods design. Following Brady, Collier and Seawright (2006), to permit causal inference (are the intervention components indeed an important contributory cause to the process?), we collect both causal process observations (detecting plausible mechanisms that explain the change process) and data set observations (detecting patterns to assess the importance of the change process). The causal process observations are collected primarily through qualitative interviews, focus

Table 1: Overview of social protection intervention components and research methods

	Social protection intervention components	2020				2021				2022				2023				2024			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16
	Community mobilising																				
	Cash transfer																				
Household-centred data collection (quantitative)	Census on all households																				
	Bi-monthly data on all households for trend analysis through case managers																				
	Periodic surveys on the subsample of 750 household to complement/check the data of the case managers																				
Community, household and individual data collection (qualitative)	Life stories and selected case studies for in-depth knowledge of children’s lives																				
	Key informant interviews, about dynamics and processes																				
	Focus group discussions																				
	Community mobilising sense-making, around needs articulation and action																				
	PAR research by children and community groups																				
	Ethnography, e.g. participative observation																				
Learning and reflection	Reflection workshops to discuss and refine emerging insights																				
	Big AAR – Annual reflection moments to discuss all emerging data and insights																				
	Written research synthesis and publications																				

Source: Authors’ own.

group discussions, ethnography and PAR, while the data set observations are largely derived from bi-monthly monitoring surveys (led by the community mobilisers) and periodic sample survey data, triangulated with focus group discussions and after action reviews (AARs).

We sketch the tools briefly here, and discuss these different tools in more detail in the subsequent paragraphs. Table 1 shows the sequencing of the methods. On the quantitative side, we combine an **initial census** with multiple rounds of **periodic surveys** with a subset of beneficiaries. We also use **bi-monthly monitoring data** gathered by the community mobilisers with all beneficiary households. On the qualitative side, we combine **life stories and case studies** to offer an in-depth picture of children's working lives, household decision-making, and intervention impact. These are supported by multiple rounds of **key informant interviews** and subject-specific **focus group discussions**. Targeting of and focus for these tools will be emergent and will depend on analysis and discussion of the emerging information. The **sense-making by community mobilisers** will provide a rich resource of critical self-reflection around their work and its impacts. **PAR processes** will also be conducted in each community, with dedicated documenters to track their evolution. These will be significant for understanding and assessing the nature and impact of community-led and facilitated change actions. Last but not least, we will use **ethnography** in each participant community, with an ethnographer dedicated to obtaining the rich, thick description characteristic of a method so rarely used to examine social protection interventions.

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

As already noted, the quantitative research component consists of three main tools, which we discuss in further detail below.

Initial census

An initial census exercise was undertaken in two areas – Balurmath and North Gojmohol – in November 2020 to map participant communities. It collected basic information about all households in the two slum areas in order to identify beneficiaries. Information about household size, presence of young children, living conditions and diversity of income sources – in conjunction with information and experiences held by

community mobilisers – served as input into selection decisions about the location of the intervention. More than 4,000 households were interviewed across two slum areas.

The feasibility of data collection in these two areas – with one serving as a 'treatment area' and another as the 'comparison area' – was considered ethically questionable. This led to the decision to only collect information in the area (North Gojmohol) where the intervention is being implemented. We therefore adopt trend analysis ('single interrupted time series'), which does not necessarily rely on a comparison group (even though it would allow stronger causal inference). We expect sufficient heterogeneity within the slum to feed counterfactual evaluative thinking and learn about the effectiveness of the intervention, even when the data is from one site only.

The census was undertaken using mobile phones, collecting information through a tailored interface developed by mPower in Bangladesh. The questionnaire was administered to the main adult present in the household at the time (we did not specify this had to be the household head). We acknowledge that this may have led to incomplete and biased information about the reality of children's activities, and is therefore a threat to the validity of our inferences. We aim to overcome this by using other data collection tools and by phrasing our conclusions cautiously (Ton 2012).

Periodic surveys

Sample-based surveys are undertaken at critical junctures in the implementation modalities of the social protection pilot to evaluate change over time (see Table 1). The longitudinal sample for each survey round includes 750 households from North Gojmohol, representing a meaningful sample that is feasible to collect data from in light of budget and practical constraints.

We envisaged four rounds of data collection:

- **The first survey (baseline) was undertaken in February 2021, after the census was completed but before the start of the intervention as originally scheduled.**
- **A second survey (midline I) is planned for August 2022, after the first period of the needs-based community organising but before the start of the cash transfer in September 2022.**

- **A third survey round (midline II) is planned midway through the cash transfer period, in the first half of 2023 (if resources allow).**
- **A fourth survey (endline) is scheduled for the end of the intervention, in September 2023.**

Periodic surveys will collect information about key outcome indicators that are within the sphere of influence of the intervention, such as children's engagement with different forms of work and working conditions, their engagement with schooling and other activities, household living conditions and sources of income, and respondents' perceptions of change. More specifically, the surveys will provide information in relation to impact pathways A, B and D, which refer to change at the individual and household levels. Questions will refer to elements of the COM-B systems (education, assets, etc.), and the outcomes that are embedded within the theory of change (e.g. collaboration with other community members, coping with shocks, household decision-making, hope for the future). The impact on WFCL is unlikely to be measurable using a quantitative survey (Roelen *et al.* 2020a), at least within the time frame of the programme. The causal links between the measured outcomes and the ultimate outcomes and development impact, as depicted in the theory of change, are less contested in the literature. The plausibility of the causal links between an increased ability to withstand economic shocks and an increased capacity to meet needs will be regularly updated by the review of emerging literature.

Surveys are led by the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) and implemented using digital devices. During baseline, as already explained, questionnaires were administered to the main adult present in the household at the time of data collection. For future rounds, we aim to include the same respondent or the main programme beneficiary (once beneficiaries are aware of the cash transfer). Preliminary findings emerging from these surveys will also be used to inform the sample that is included in the qualitative research.

Bi-monthly monitoring

Monitoring data will be collected from beneficiary households on a bi-monthly basis. This mode of data collection has two objectives: first, to collect basic information about the household and its members on a regular basis to support the provision of individual- and household-level relational support; and second, to track

changes over time in relation to key indicators of interest. The latter will be used for the trend analysis. The data will not only collect the status of outcomes to compare the status at two or more moments in time, but also ask participants directly for any perceived change in key indicators over the past six months to make them useful for cross-section analyses.

The data collected by the community mobilisers during these bi-monthly visits will track changes in areas such as household composition, children's participation in school and work, occurrence of shocks, and perceptions of change in key outcome areas. It will also capture the rate of participation in and/or awareness of CLARISSA activities in the slum. With respect to the theory of change, this provides information about: immediate outcomes, including the development of alternative livelihoods and access to services; intermediate outcomes, regarding the ability to withstand shocks (i.e. coping mechanisms) and perceptions about the ability to earn income and feel in control of one's own life; and ultimate outcomes regarding children's activities. Finally, in terms of development impact, the survey also asks about perceived wellbeing and the hazardous nature of children's work.

Data is collected by community mobilisers using mobile phones and the tailored survey/case management tool as developed by mPower. The sample for the bi-monthly monitoring survey is under review. During the first round of the monitoring survey (November–December 2021), the team interviewed everyone who was part of the census and was willing to participate (roughly 1,250 households). Households that have arrived in the community since the census will be included in subsequent rounds of the monitoring survey. The feasibility and necessity of including all households in the sample will be reviewed over time.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The qualitative component of the research consists of a range of methods, as detailed in Table 2. Several of these tools build on the case management and periodic visits described in the previous section, and are designed to exploit the qualitative insights of the community mobilisers during these visits. Based on the budget available for qualitative research, Table 2 indicates the approximate number of interviews or group sessions we expect to employ during 2022 and 2023.

Table 2: Overview of qualitative research methods

Tool	Details
Community mobiliser needs analysis	Community mobilisers will use multiple methods to examine individual and community problems and aspirations. This data will also be used by researchers.
Life stories and case studies	20 case studies across 3 rounds, based on initial life stories. With children, to include research with 2 other members of their household (e.g. parent and sibling)
Key informant interviews	12 in total, spread across 3 rounds. Possible extra data gathered by PhD ethnographer.
Focus group discussions	12 in total, spread across 3 rounds of data collection, with breakdown by age and gender. Possible extra data gathered by PhD ethnographer.
Community mobiliser sense-making	Ongoing , including through diaries; shared with research team in reflection workshops.
PAR	Led by PAR team ; data to be shared with social protection research team in sense-maker meetings.
Ethnography	Conducted over 18 months by PhD student.

Source: Authors' own.

Community mobiliser needs analysis phase

An in-depth 'needs analysis' was part of phase 1 of the relational component and is also a component of the qualitative research (October 2021). Community mobilisers worked with individuals and groups to understand people's perceptions of the challenges they face, their aspirations, and their hopes for change. This information forms the basis for community mobilisers to begin initiating actions with community members towards increasing their capabilities. This material is relevant for understanding initial conditions and potential change across all four impact pathways (A, B, C and D).

Life stories and case studies

Life story collection is one of the approaches that the wider CLARISSA programme uses to develop a deeper understanding of children's lives. This involves children telling stories of their lives and/or telling the story of any major incident(s). Life stories will help us to understand children's lived experiences and to hear their opinions on what matters in their everyday lives. From participatory narrative analysis of the life stories, we will identify several cases for further exploration, most likely focusing

on cases that speak to why some children experience difficult or dangerous work and some do not. Cases will also be identified on the basis of emerging findings from survey and monitoring data, as well as from the work of the community mobilisers. This component will be a vital link between the quantitative and qualitative elements of the study, and again will provide empirics that speak to all four impact pathways.

Case studies are a useful tool for developing a richer, deeper picture of children's lives and they can help to understand the trajectory of change over time. Out of the 100 initial life stories we gather, 20 will be chosen to develop into case studies. Case studies will be enriched using a combination of data from various methods, including interviews, participant observation and survey data.

Key informant interviews

Interviews will take place in multiple rounds with the specific content of each round likely to vary based on the stories emerging from the quantitative data and the work of the community mobilisers. All interviews, particularly ones with children and young people, will start with an ice-breaking activity to build trust and

openness, and set the tone of the interview as a relaxed and stress-free activity. Researchers will choose from a list of trust-building activities appropriate to gender and age group. Interviews will be conducted with a variety of stakeholders, including children and young people, parents, knowledgeable or influential members of the community (such as religious leaders), and community mobilisers. Interviews are expected to last for around 60–90 minutes. They will be fairly structured at first, though later rounds of data collection will see a move towards semi-structured and unstructured interviewing. Depending on the selected participants, interviews will look at different variables of interest, such as collaboration with the community mobilisers or household impacts of cash on perceived opportunity sets and children's work. The team will keep a close eye on potential overload of beneficiaries, especially if they are included in multiple qualitative research activities.

Focus group discussions

As with the interviews, focus group discussions will be conducted with a variety of stakeholders, primarily identified by their positionality within the change processes triggered by the social protection intervention. Focus groups are especially useful for discussing collective perceptions and experiences, since they can reveal shared or dissonant understandings. We anticipate using them to triangulate our findings and to elicit perspectives on children's work, on 'exploitation', and on the effectiveness of the CLARISSA intervention, at a minimum. Later rounds will discuss emergent issues and will depend on prior rounds of data analysis. Each focus group discussion will last up to two hours.

Community mobiliser sense-making

Community mobilisers will engage in continuous sense-making and reflection. This includes the use of individual diaries and coming together in full-team processing meetings with the wider social protection team and associated researchers. These gatherings will assess the extent to which needs-based community organising is indeed 'working' and responding to felt needs. They will also identify what further support the team requires. These meetings are also likely to provide useful information about impact pathways A, B and C.

Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) combines evidence-gathering and learning from action. It is a core part of the wider CLARISSA programme, and PAR interventions will take place within the community where the social protection intervention is implemented. The data generated from this process will be available to the social protection evaluation team and may provide material that is particularly relevant to impact pathways B and C, and vice versa.

Ethnography

One of the unique elements of this research design is that it incorporates ethnography. Ethnography is rarely used with cash or cash-plus interventions, despite the depth it can provide. In this case, CLARISSA is fortunate to have a PhD student whose project will involve ethnographic examination of working children's constructions of work and experiences of intervention. Fieldwork will take place over 18 months and shed light on all four impact pathways.

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Section 6:

DATA ANALYSIS AND SENSE-MAKING

6 DATA ANALYSIS AND SENSE-MAKING

The process for data analysis and sense-making aims to be as participatory and multi-method as the intervention as a whole. Full-team meetings will be held regularly to review findings from qualitative and quantitative methods. At these meetings, the qualitative and quantitative research sub-teams, who will have been meeting separately in the intervening period to analyse their data, will present key findings and cross-check them with the full team. Emergent findings will inform subsequent rounds of data collection. Along with this more structured way of capturing learning, we will also record discussions through informal and unstructured conversations. This may include monthly meetings and reflexive conversations among the community mobilisers, as well as more informal chats/conversations in 'safe spaces' like a hub in the neighbourhood.

REFLECTION WORKSHOPS

Every four months we will host a sense-making workshop between the research and community mobiliser team. This will enable the community mobiliser team to share their insights into their work, its successes and failures, and its impact on participants' capacities. The workshops will involve a mixture of presentations, diary reflections, group discussions and other activities. These will be organised specifically around the four impact pathways examined earlier.

DATA SYNTHESIS

Coding for the project will be shared across the entire team and a master coding book will be managed by a designated team member. The coding framework will be developed initially during a full-team workshop after the first round of qualitative data is collected. During this, the entire research team will work together to read through

selected transcripts (with all transcripts read by at least two people) and to identify key issues or patterns within identified themes (for example, around perceptions of work or experiences with case management). Given the volume of data to be processed and the many research themes, pairs of team members will take responsibility for specific meta-themes. Once an initial round of codes emerges, these will be shared and discussed among the entire team, before being tested on a set of transcripts (because codes are often assigned and interpreted differently by different people). At the end of this process the coding book will be agreed and used going forward by the qualitative and quantitative teams. It will likely evolve with each round of data analysis, as key themes are added when they emerge. Regular coding harmonisation meetings will be held to refine the overall coding book. Data will be analysed in NVivo, and all codes will have detailed top nodes and low nodes. Each piece of data will be coded by at least two researchers. All of the data will first be transcribed into Bangla and then translated into English, with both languages used for analysis.

AFTER ACTION REVIEW

The learning derived from the teams will be reviewed regularly using after action review (AAR) workshops to reflect on anything new that requires plans and activities to be adjusted. These take place in addition to CLARISSA's periodic programme AARs. This process may include reviewing progress made or roadblocks encountered in previous months. It will discuss any changes needed to the plan, identify the contextual factors that require alterations, and overall develop a shared understanding of the pilot as a way of making sense of various information. This will bring together a larger group of stakeholders to generate, share and record learning.

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CLARISSA works by co-developing with stakeholders practical options for children to avoid engagement in the worst forms of child labour in Bangladesh and Nepal.

The participatory processes which underpin the programme are designed to generate innovation from the ground which can sustainably improve the lives of children and their families.

The programme's outputs are similarly co-designed and collaboratively produced to enhance local ownership of the knowledge, and to ensure that our research uptake and engagement strategy is rooted in the direct experience of the people most affected on the ground.