



# IDS WORKING PAPER

Volume **2019** No **528**

## **Malawi Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) Case Study**

Daniel Longhurst and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler

June 2019

Malawi Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) Case Study  
Daniel Longhurst and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler  
IDS Working Paper 528  
© Institute of Development Studies 2019  
ISSN: 2040-0209 ISBN: 978-1-78118-563-6  
A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.



This is an Open Access paper distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial 4.0 International licence (CC BY-NC), which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original authors and source are credited, any modifications or adaptations are indicated, and the work is not used for commercial purposes.  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/legalcode>

Available from:  
Communications and Engagement Unit, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton BN1 9RE, UK  
Tel: +44 (0) 1273 915637  
Web: [www.ids.ac.uk/research/publications/](http://www.ids.ac.uk/research/publications/)

IDS is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England  
Charity Registration Number 306371  
Charitable Company Number 877338

# Malawi Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) Case Study

Daniel Longhurst and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler

## Summary

Shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) is increasingly being explored by a range of actors to link humanitarian assistance and longer-term development interventions and build the capacity of governments to manage the full spectrum of shocks that people face through integrated and aligned systems and programmes. To date, however, evidence of what has been tested and learned is limited. Malawi faces cyclical natural disasters including droughts, dry spells, flooding and pest infestations, with consistently high humanitarian caseloads including 6.7 million people affected by El Niño in 2015/16. Meanwhile, the government and development partners have made significant progress in developing social protection systems and programmes, and since 2015 have looked to tailor and align them to humanitarian processes to better manage and respond to climate shocks, through trialling a diverse range of SRSP activities. This paper provides an overview of the Malawi context as it relates to SRSP, the key efforts undertaken to date, and summarises the rich learning and reflections from policy to systems and programmes. By so doing, the paper aims to inform the future trajectory of SRSP in Malawi, as well as in other countries and contexts in Africa and beyond.

**Keywords:** shock-responsive social protection; Malawi; humanitarian assistance; social protection; disasters; shock-response; climate change; food security; humanitarian–development nexus.

**Daniel Longhurst** is an independent consultant working with multilateral and research institutions on policy and programmatic issues relating to the nexus of social protection, resilience, climate change adaptation and humanitarianism. He spent ten years in the development sector, mostly with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) of the United Nations. He has worked in Burkina Faso, Sudan, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Mali, Haiti, Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

**Rachel Sabates-Wheeler** is a co-Director of the Centre for Social Protection at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Brighton, UK. She has published influential research work in areas of social policy, migration, and poverty analysis. Rachel has substantial experience leading large-scale multi-stakeholder and multi-country research. Her recent work focuses on tracing and measuring pathways for livelihood change and sustainability for different population groups (migrants, pastoralists, older people) using qualitative and quantitative data from countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Ghana.

# Contents

	Summary, keywords and author notes	3
	Acknowledgements	5
	Acronyms	6
<b>1</b>	<b>Case study rationale/definitions</b>	<b>7</b>
	1.1 Case study rationale	7
	1.2 Definitions	7
<b>2</b>	<b>Malawi overview</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Relevant policy environment for SRSP</b>	<b>9</b>
	3.1 Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III)	9
	3.2 Malawi National Social Support Programme II	10
	3.3 National Resilience Strategy (NRS)	10
	3.4 The United Nations Development Assistance Framework	10
	3.5 The National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP)	10
	3.6 The National Disaster Risk Management Policy	11
	3.7 Towards a Shock Sensitive Social Protection System in Malawi	11
<b>4</b>	<b>Coordination and implementation of humanitarian response</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Coordination and implementation of social protection</b>	<b>13</b>
	5.1 The Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP)	13
	5.2 Public works and asset creation programmes	14
	5.3 Schools meals programmes (SMP)	15
<b>6</b>	<b>Overview of SRSP activities in Malawi</b>	<b>15</b>
	6.1 Single delivery mechanism/Mchinji trial ('Piggybacking')	15
	6.2 Automatic inclusion ('shadow alignment')	16
	6.3 Shock-responsive asset creation and school meals programmes during El Niño	16
	6.4 Vertical Expansion (VE) trial	17
	6.5 Predictive targeting ('horizontal expansion')	17
	6.6 UBR/national ID/MVAC database	18
	6.6.1 The UBR/MVAC trial	18
	6.6.2 Linking the UBR to national ID	18
	6.7 Weather index-based insurance (WII)/forecast-based action (FBA)	19
	6.8 Other donors efforts around SRSP	20
<b>7</b>	<b>Summary of lessons learned</b>	<b>20</b>
	7.1 Policy coherence and political economy for SRSP	20
	7.2 SRSP and basic social assistance programme functionality	21
	7.3 Next steps for scaling expandable social assistance programmes and systems	21
	7.4 Viewing vulnerability through the lens of seasonality	22
	7.5 Flexible financing, financing mechanisms, and financial sustainability	23
	7.6 Cost-benefit analysis for SRSP	23
	7.7 Harmonised support systems	24
	7.8 Community perceptions strong on 'double dipping'	25
	7.9 Review targeting criteria for SRSP	26
	7.10 Enhanced coordination from national to local level is essential	26
	7.11 Improved communication and advocacy of SRSP	27

7.12	Develop SRSP standard operating procedures (SOPs)	27
7.13	Vulnerable groups need differentiated support and more research for SRSP	27
	Annexe Mission interviewee details	28
	References	29

## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Aidan Fitzpatrick (Senior Development Specialist) and Mary McCarthy (Policy Lead – Research) of Irish Aid, as well as Columba O’Dowd (Deputy Head of Mission) and Phina Rocha-Rebello (Vulnerability Advisor) of Irish Aid Malawi for their review and valuable additions to this working paper.

# Acronyms

ARC	Africa Risk Capacity
CSSCs	Community Social Support Committees
DoDMA	Department of Disaster Management Affairs
DRM	disaster risk management
EP+D	Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
ESMP	Emergency School Meals Programme
FBA	forecast-based action
FFA	Food Assistance for Assets
FISP	Farm Input Subsidy Programme
FMB	First Merchant Bank
FSP	financial service provider
GDP	gross domestic product
GoM	Government of Malawi
GRM	grievance referral mechanism
INGO	international non-governmental organisation
IPC	Integrated Phase Classification
JEFAP	Joint Emergency Food Assistance Programme
LDF	Local Development Fund
LTF	Learning Task Force
MASAF	Malawi Social Action Fund
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MIS	management information system
MNSSP	Malawi National Social Support Programme
MoAIWD	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development
MoGCDSW	Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability, and Social Welfare
MVAC	Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee
MWK	Malawi kwacha
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NRS	National Resilience Strategy
NSSP	National Social Support Policy
OPC	Office of the President
PMT	proxy means test
PRSP	Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Department
PWP	public works programme
SCT	social cash transfer
SCTP	Social Cash Transfer Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMP	School Meals Programme
SOPs	standard operating procedures
SP	social protection
SRSP	Shock-Responsive Social Protection
SRSP LTF	Shock-Responsive Social Protection Learning Task Force
SSF	Social Support Fund
TA	traditional authority
3SP	Shock-Sensitive Social Protection (SSSP)
UBR	Unified Beneficiary Register
VE	Vertical Expansion
WFP	World Food Programme
WII	Weather Index-Based Insurance

# 1 Case study rationale/definitions

## 1.1 Case study rationale

Under the framework of a wider partnership between the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and Irish Aid on social protection, a research theme on shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) is being developed. To date, this includes two framing documents, the first on the humanitarian–development continuum (Ulrichs and Sabates-Wheeler 2018), and the second on the role of cash in social protection, humanitarian response and SRSP contexts (Roelen, Longhurst and Sabates-Wheeler 2018).<sup>1</sup> These framing papers are complemented by three case studies – in Ethiopia, Uganda and Malawi. This paper presents the Malawi case study. By reviewing common thinking, lessons learned and country-specific approaches towards SRSP in different contexts, the research aims to understand the constraints and opportunities to putting in place social protection systems that are able to flex and respond to shocks, and to help Irish Aid as well as national and international policymakers to better understand how to operationalise the humanitarian–development nexus.

Under the Malawi component, IDS was asked to undertake a short country visit and provide a case study of the main shock-responsive social protection efforts that have taken place in the country since 2016.<sup>2</sup> The case study presented here looks at both the policy and programme level, and reflects on lessons learned, barriers, successes, and future priorities for the SRSP agenda in Malawi. The case study methodology centred on a series of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders working on social protection and humanitarian assistance based in the capital, Lilongwe, and was complemented by a desk study/literature review. A synthesis report on all three country case studies will be published in 2019.

## 1.2 Definitions

Whilst a commonly agreed global definition of SRSP does not exist, the work of Oxford Policy Management (OPM) describes SRSP as ‘the potential role for long-term social protection systems in the response to large-scale shocks, either before or after the crisis occurs; and... opportunities for coordination (and possible integration) of humanitarian interventions, disaster risk management (DRM) and social protection’ (O’Brien *et al.* 2018: ii). SRSP consists of one or more of the following features or functions:

- **Vertical expansion** – Increase the duration or value of benefit for existing recipients;
- **Horizontal expansion** – Increase the number of beneficiaries in the event of a crisis;
- **Piggybacking** – Use an existing programme’s infrastructure;
- **Shadow alignment** – Alignment or parallel implementation of social protection and/or humanitarian interventions: a combination of these may be most appropriate; and
- **Refocusing** – Reprioritising existing resources.

Poor and vulnerable communities in Malawi are exposed to an increasingly complex and interlinked array of hazards, many driven by climate variability and climate change, but also macroeconomic shocks (e.g. food price volatility) and idiosyncratic shocks (e.g. deaths, asset loss). Therefore, the discussion in Malawi began by focusing on what was defined more broadly as ‘shock-sensitive social protection’ (3SP). The 3SP model assumes that helping vulnerable households (who are more likely to live in shock-prone and degraded environments in Malawi) reduce and address climate and other risks requires a combination

---

<sup>1</sup> Both papers can be found at: [www.ids.ac.uk/projects/programme-partnership-between-irish-aid-and-ids-on-social-protection-and-food-security-and-nutrition/](http://www.ids.ac.uk/projects/programme-partnership-between-irish-aid-and-ids-on-social-protection-and-food-security-and-nutrition/).

<sup>2</sup> The visit was undertaken by Daniel Longhurst between 22 September and 4 October 2018. The consultant would like to thank all those who supported the visit and agreed to be interviewed for the case study.

of short- and long-term interventions as well as creating systems that can ‘flex’ in response to shocks. It also necessitates ensuring that the core protection and consumption functions of social assistance programmes and service provision are sufficient (Holmes *et al.* 2017; Government of Malawi 2018d). The model recognises that combining interventions and systems also has the potential to increase efficiency and effectiveness, and promote adaptive, absorptive and transformative capacity – in short, to build resilience (Browne 2014). In practice, as SRSP also has a focus on longer-term and *ex ante* measures, it shares many similarities to the concept of shock-sensitive social protection and to those of adaptive social protection (IDS 2018; O’Brien *et al.* 2018).

At the global level, SRSP forms part of the policy and programmatic response to the priorities set out in the Grand Bargain, the World Humanitarian Summit and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These agendas highlight the need to build national government capacity to respond to (increasingly protracted) crises, reduce programmatic fragmentation and growing humanitarian need,<sup>3</sup> and achieve wider resilience outcomes for people, communities and institutions (Agenda for Humanity 2016; World Humanitarian Summit 2016).

## 2 Malawi overview

Malawi is a low-income landlocked country in Southern Africa, bordered by Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania. It has an estimated population of 18.6 million people in 2017 and an annual growth rate of 2.9 per cent, ranking eighteenth highest in the world (World Bank 2018h, 2018a). A largely peaceful country, since transitioning to a democratic system in 1993 Malawi has held five elections, the next scheduled for May 2019 (the timing of which is relevant for the advancement of the SRSP agenda, discussed in Section 3). Despite significant progress towards select Millennium Development Goals,<sup>4</sup> including life expectancy increasing by 17 years since 1990 and fertility rates decreasing from 6.7 to 4.4 children per woman (UNDP 2018; World Bank 2018b), Malawi faces key development challenges. It is positioned 171 out of 189 on the Human Development Index (HDI),<sup>5</sup> and has a gini coefficient of 43.9, ranking it 174 out of 187 in the world in terms of income equality (UNDP 2013). Likewise, Malawi’s economy is largely unequal, undiversified, and centred predominantly on rain-fed agriculture which accounts for 80 per cent of livelihoods, 64 per cent of the formal work force, and around 28 per cent of the country’s GDP (Government of Malawi 2017a; World Bank 2018c). Poverty levels remain high, with 69.8 per cent of the population living below the international poverty line and one in every five Malawians living in ultra poverty on less than US\$0.20 a day (World Bank 2016).

Malawi has a temperate climate with good growing conditions, centred around two main seasons, the hot-wet season from October to March (which aligns with the lean season) and the cool-dry season for the rest of the year (FEWSNET 2018). However, the over-reliance on rain-fed subsistence farming makes the economy especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and leaves the poorest particularly exposed to climate change, shocks and variability, as well as prevailing market conditions (United Nations in Malawi/Government of Malawi 2018). Cyclical lean seasons and unanticipated shocks also drive food insecurity and

---

<sup>3</sup> This discussion is clearly also linked to donor fatigue at the size of humanitarian appeals worldwide, with the gap between purported need and available resources widening year on year, from US\$5.5 billion in 2007 to US\$20.5 billion in 2016 (an increase of 272 per cent), whilst the percentage of unmet needs steadily increased from 32 per cent to 40 per cent (Development Initiatives 2017).

<sup>4</sup> In reducing child mortality, combating HIV, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and global partnerships for development (United Nations in Malawi/Government of Malawi 2018).

<sup>5</sup> With a value of 0.47, Malawi is below the average for countries in the low human development group (0.504), and for countries in sub-Saharan Africa (0.537) (UNDP 2018).



can cause significant physical and economic damage.<sup>6</sup> Trend analysis between 2003 and 2014 showed that 20 out of 28 districts in Malawi experienced moderate to high recurrence of shocks (floods and drought), which is expected to increase in frequency and severity in the context of a changing climate (WFP 2014a), leading to profound impacts on food security and malnutrition. Thirty-seven per cent of children under five in Malawi are stunted, and for the last nine years an average of 1.73 million people have required humanitarian food assistance (in the form of in-kind or cash) during the lean season, from October to March. A historic peak of 6.7 million people (approximately 36 per cent of the population) required support following the effects of El Niño in 2016/17 (Government of Malawi 2017b). Circumstances are further exacerbated by accelerating deforestation and land degradation, resulting in the increased depletion of the natural resource base that impacts directly on human health, agriculture, and food and water security, and greater vulnerability of communities to natural hazards and calamities (Government of Malawi 2011).

This combination of chronic and seasonal vulnerability, whilst complex, is nevertheless mostly known and predictable in Malawi. The fact that the country has consistently high annual humanitarian need during the lean season implies that *a chronic problem is being addressed through an acute mechanism – the humanitarian response*. This not only puts pressure on limited humanitarian resources, but also suggests the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of using an *ad hoc* and temporary year-on-year response to address the root causes of multidimensional poverty and food insecurity, which arguably should be being addressed through longer-term programming. The context underlines the need for multisector, risk-informed approaches to the humanitarian–development nexus that build resilience at different levels and reduce the humanitarian caseload and cost over time, whilst gradually transferring capacity and responsibility to government-led systems and budget lines wherever possible, both for social protection and humanitarian delivery.

This situation has led to the ‘Breaking the Cycle of Hunger’ agenda in Malawi since 2015. It has involved a discussion between the Government of Malawi (hereafter GoM) and development partners<sup>7</sup> on how to address defining issues such as the distortions of the maize economy, the fragmented approach to resilience building and the lack of coordination across different partners, and building national capacity to respond to both chronic and acute food insecurity and poverty. This led to discussions around 3SP and SRSP, which then gained prominence in the Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSP II) and humanitarian response processes (the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) and Joint Emergency Food Assistance Programme (JEFAP)). The pressure to innovate and address need at scale during the El Niño response of 2016/17 also gave rise to a large number of SRSP trials, though some had started prior to this response.

## 3 Relevant policy environment for SRSP

### 3.1 Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III)

Malawi enjoys a reasonably coherent policy environment for development within which the aims and strategic direction of SRSP are outlined. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III) (2017–22) outlines the overall development vision for the country and its links to international and regional commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Social protection and social assistance programmes are referenced under different pillars of the MGDS III, related

---

<sup>6</sup> For example, the historic flooding of 2015/16 affected 1,101,364 people, displaced 230,000 and killed 106, whilst causing approximately US\$335 million of loss and damage (Government of Malawi/World Bank 2015).

<sup>7</sup> Development partners refers to all national and international partners outside of government – donors, UN agencies, (I)NGOs, academia, etc.

to improving nutrition and food security, building resilience and reducing disaster risk, supporting vulnerable populations, and enhancing social services (Government of Malawi 2017a). However, prominence to social protection in the MGDS III as compared to the MGDS II appears to have diminished.

### **3.2 Malawi National Social Support Programme II**

In Malawi, social protection is framed under the National Social Support Policy (NSSP) and the National Social Support Programme; the current iteration (MNSSP II) covers the period 2018–23. The MNSSP II moves from a focus on individual programmes<sup>8</sup> to a more coherent approach to achieving integrated coverage and building systems and resilience, and is the main vehicle for achieving Target 1.3 of the SDGs focused on the implementation of nationally appropriate social assistance programmes and systems for all by 2030 (World Bank 2018c). The MNSSP II is structured around three main pillars – consumption support; resilient livelihoods; and shock-sensitive social protection (3SP) – with two cross-cutting pillars on linkages and systems strengthening. Shock-sensitive social protection is defined in the MNSSP II as the ‘development of a... system that meets seasonal needs, prepares for and responds to unpredictable shocks in cooperation with the humanitarian sector and supports recovery and the return to regular programming’ (Government of Malawi 2018d: iii). The 3SP pillar is designed to interlink with the other pillars of the strategy and is now being operationalised through a work plan and a SRSP Learning Task Force (SRSP LTF), comprised of humanitarian and development actors and various departments of government.

### **3.3 National Resilience Strategy (NRS)**

In 2016, the GoM (managed by the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA)) with support from development partners began the drafting of the National Resilience Strategy (NRS), in recognition of the fact that a multisectoral/ministerial strategy for resilience building was needed and could aid coordination of effort and investment from donors (Government of Malawi 2018b). The NRS provides a summary of the main programmes that contribute to resilience in Malawi, as well as a framework for improved coordination and implementation of activities (at the time of writing, a draft implementation plan was with the GoM for review.) The NRS includes reference to scalable social assistance programmes for shock response, and has two key pillars relevant to SRSP, namely Pillar 2 (Risk Reduction, Flood Control, and Early Warning and Response Systems) and Pillar 3 (Human Capacity, Livelihoods, and Social Protection). The linkage of these pillars for effective SRSP remains hypothetical until the NRS implementation plan is approved and the coordination structures mentioned therein are created.

### **3.4 The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF: 2019–23)**

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Malawi focuses on three interlinked areas aligned to the SDGs: (1) Peace, Inclusion and Effective Institutions; (2) Population Management and Inclusive Human Development; and (3) Inclusive and Resilient Growth. It is under the third pillar that SRSP sits, with outcome seven focused on household resilience and healthy ecosystems, and ‘intervention areas’ dedicated to disaster risk managed and the MNSSP II, with a specific aim for the UN to ‘interlink these two to advance 3SP’ (United Nations in Malawi/Government of Malawi 2018: 33).

### **3.5 The National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP)**

The National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP) acts as the medium-term investment framework for the agricultural sector, building from the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp) and overarching National Agricultural Policy (NAP), covering the period 2018–22.

---

<sup>8</sup> The traditional programmes of the NSSP were the Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP), the public works programme (PWP), the school meals programmes (SMP), village savings and loans (VSL), and microfinance (MF).

It has four main programmes including Resilient Livelihoods and Agricultural Systems, and 16 'investment areas' including several areas related to SRSP such as 'Food and Nutrition Security', 'Disaster Risk Management', 'Pest and Disease Management', and 'Natural Resource Management and Climate Change' (Government of Malawi 2018c). However, despite the dominance and importance of agriculture in Malawi, it is unclear to what degree these priorities are coordinated within themselves or with other efforts in SRSP and DRM, and the role of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD) in social protection is less clear still. A consistent reflection from stakeholder discussions was the noted absence of MoAIWD in social protection, despite agricultural livelihoods and diversification being the key factor in building the resilience for the poorest and most vulnerable in face of climate change and shocks.<sup>9</sup> The recent naming of MoAIWD as the deputy chair for the resilience and 3SP pillars under MNSSP II is therefore welcomed.

### **3.6 The National Disaster Risk Management Policy**

Passed into law in 2015 (in part due to the wide-ranging effects of historic flooding at the beginning of the year), the National Disaster Risk Management Policy aims to move from a culture of disaster response to mainstream DRM into development planning and policies across sectors in order to reduce the impact of disasters, as well as enhance coordination and generate adequate budgetary allocations to DRM. As a top-line policy document, its implementation relies on other programmes (Government of Malawi 2016).

### **3.7 Towards a Shock Sensitive Social Protection System in Malawi<sup>10</sup>**

Although not a national policy, the Overseas Development Institute/Red Cross Climate Centre study *Towards a Shock Sensitive Social Protection System in Malawi* (Holmes *et al.* 2017) helped frame the discourse around shock-sensitive/responsive social protection and provided guidance on where to take policy and programme discussions in Malawi, including the shaping of the MNSSP II. It underlined that Malawi's social assistance programmes had to address the effects of climate change and seasonality as a central priority to help the poorest and most vulnerable face consistent and predictable spikes in food and nutrition insecurity. Therefore, a form of scaling support had to be taken into the core design, planning and financing of social assistance programmes for the lean season, in addition to working on scalability measures for year-on-year emergency response caseloads, to reduce the scale of demand on emergency systems, complemented by prevention, preparedness, and resilience-building activities. To enable this, the study made several recommendations, such as to focus on strengthening core social protection systems (in part by integrating seasonal and shock-based scalability and response capacity into them), to agree on a vision as well as leadership and coordination and capacity requirements for the GoM, building up support systems to provide the backbone for 3SP, and to focus on increased financing and improved financing mechanisms for 3SP (Holmes *et al.* 2017).

---

<sup>9</sup> The Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP) is a good example of a potential social protection mechanism whose accountability, delivery, and targeting processes are nevertheless not sufficiently clear to harness its potential to become a viable SRSP mechanism.

<sup>10</sup> The study was overseen by the GoM and co-commissioned by GIZ, the World Bank and WFP.

## 4 Coordination and implementation of humanitarian response

The Department of Disaster Risk Management Affairs (DoDMA), formerly under the Office of the President (OPC) but now moved to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, is responsible for coordinating the response to natural disasters. DoDMA coordinates with other ministries and international partners through the National Disaster Preparedness and Relief Committee, and then at Lilongwe (capital) level through the UN cluster system. At district level, depending on the size of response, clusters are also established, led and supported by their District Civil Protection Committees.

The agricultural lean season (October to March, which coincides with the rains) dominates the humanitarian planning and response architecture in Malawi. It should be noted here that a discussion has begun in Malawi, as in other countries, as to how to term the lean season response – should it be called ‘humanitarian’ if it is predictable and seasonal? Can it be called otherwise if the need is so high that it demands a humanitarian intervention, regardless of its predictability? Other shocks such as flooding, pest infestations and strong winds can also have a significant impact and trigger *ad hoc* interventions. For instance, production of maize, the staple food for over 90 per cent of the population in Malawi and principle source of livelihood for the majority of farmers, is currently under threat by the invasion of Fall Armyworm (FAW), a pest that spread from West Africa in 2016/17 and has now infested almost the entire country, leading the GoM in 2017 to declare a state of disaster in 20 out of 28 districts (Reuters 2017; FAO 2018).

The Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) is charged with collecting primary data to assess food and nutrition insecurity on a yearly basis to provide overall figures of need for the lean season response and the duration of the response. A little confusingly, MVAC is also the name given to the lean season response itself. In 2017, the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) system was introduced to Malawi, as it has been to other countries in Africa. The IPC is a secondary data ‘meta-analysis’ that incorporates primary data from the MVAC, SMART (nutrition) and market surveys, and provides a standardised estimation of food-insecure households in Malawi comparable across countries and classified into five phases: (1) None/Minimal, (2) Stressed, (3) Crisis, (4) Emergency, and (5) Humanitarian Catastrophe/Famine) (IPC 2012). Once the IPC has provided its estimation of food-insecure households per district (normally those in Phases 3–5 are targeted for humanitarian assistance depending on resources, available programmatic tools, etc.), the Joint Emergency Food Assistance Programme (JEFAP) guidelines provide the community-based targeting framework to drill down figures and obtain final household details for those to receive assistance. Amongst practitioners there has been ongoing debate regarding the consistent application, accuracy and degree of manipulation applied to the JEFAP methodology, which has been recently re-drafted and standardised but not formally released.

The lean season response is usually split between the GoM, an INGO consortium, and the World Food Programme (WFP) and its NGO partners. Whilst there is a general push towards cash-based transfers and the ‘cash first’ principle, the majority of Malawi’s MVAC responses have been historically in-kind (food), though the use of cash is growing. MVAC beneficiaries receive rations calculated to the majority of food and nutrition needs for a family of 5.5 for a month, which currently can vary between US\$20 and US\$32 per month based on commodity prices (and which are monitored monthly). The MVAC humanitarian response is predominantly funded by international partners (although historically the government has provided sizeable in-kind contributions through the provision of maize).

## 5 Coordination and implementation of social protection

Social protection is coordinated through a National Steering Committee, comprised of Principle Secretaries of GoM ministries, development partner Heads of Missions, and civil society and private sector representatives, chaired by the Chief Secretary of the OPC with the Poverty Reduction and Social Protection (PRSP) department of the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (EP+D) providing secretariat functions. The National Steering Committee reports to the Parliamentary Committee on Social and Community Affairs. Under this committee sits a National Technical Committee that produces technical guidance and policy recommendations, followed by individual technical working groups (TWGs) for each pillar of the MNSSP, which are in the process of being reviewed. Alongside this is a SP donor coordination group. Aspects of this coordination structure are also being rethought with the finalisation and launch of the MNSSP II given its reformulation of the priority pillars (consumption support, resilience, 3SP, with cross-cutting pillars on strengthening systems and improving linkages), as well as a more general push to try to combine or streamline the number of coordination groups and committees at national and district levels in Malawi.<sup>11</sup> Such coordination structures have helped advance a unified GoM/international partner agenda for SP.

A 3SP Learning Task Force (SSSP LTF) has been created, co-chaired by PRSP and DoDMA with technical support from UNICEF and financial support from Irish Aid. Working with a consultant until November 2019, and building off the recommendations of the MNSSP II, its objectives are *inter alia* to reach consensus on how to operationalise 3SP (including shock response) with agreed division of roles, to institutionalise a government-led mechanism to coordinate humanitarian and social protection actors, and to identify GoM capacity requirements.

In terms of implementation, whilst a large and diverse array of programmes could technically qualify as social protection in Malawi, the five main recognised programmatic pillars under the MNSSP are the Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP), the public works programme (PWP), village savings and loans, microfinance and the school meals programme (SMP). Each has government-run and development partner-run versions. Only those that have trialled an activity related to SRSP are mentioned below. IFPRI also includes the FISP and humanitarian aid (food security and nutrition) in its summary of social assistance programmes in Malawi, which with 37 per cent and 32 per cent coverage respectively in 2016/17 were very sizeable programmes (IFPRI 2018b), but given neither are designed to *consistently, adequately and predictably* target and protect the poorest and most vulnerable against shocks, they are not included in analysis here.

### 5.1 The Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP)

The SCTP (known in Malawi as Mtukula Pakhomo) assists ultra-poor and labour-constrained households through monthly or bi-monthly cash transfers. The programme is run by the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability, and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW) with technical support from partners including UNICEF and Ayala Consulting Group and financial support

---

<sup>11</sup> It was recently announced that the new pillars of the MNSSP II would be coordinated as follows: Pillar 1 – Ministry of Gender (lead), Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (deputy-lead); Pillars 2 and 3 – DoDMA (lead), Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (deputy-lead); Pillars 4 and 5 – EP&D (lead), Ministry of Civic Education, Culture and Community Development (deputy-lead).

from four principle donors who each fund separate SCTP districts<sup>12</sup> – Irish Aid, the World Bank, the EU (through KFW), and KFW (the German development bank).

The SCTP currently reaches 210,000 households in 26 districts, with the aim of reaching 319,000 households or 1,754,500 beneficiaries by end-2018, totalling 12 per cent of the population and 40 per cent of the ultra-poor (World Bank 2018c; Government of Malawi 2018c). On average, a household on SCTP receives 7,000 Malawi kwacha (MWK) per month (currently just over US\$9.5), aimed at reducing poverty and smoothing consumption amongst ultra-poor and labour-constrained households, increasing school enrolment for children, and improving nutrition (Government of Malawi 2018a). The SCTP is one of the most thoroughly researched social assistance programmes of its kind, which indicates very significant impacts on consumption, livelihoods, schooling outcomes and local economy multipliers<sup>13</sup> (World Bank 2018c; Government of Malawi *et al.* 2018c).

## 5.2 Public works and asset creation programmes

Malawi's principle public works programme (PWP) has operated under the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF), funded by the World Bank and implemented by the Local Development Fund (LDF) since 1998, with a principle focus on labour-intensive public works. Its latest iteration, MASAF IV, focuses on an integrated package of public works, livelihoods and savings programmes, supporting the SCTP in 11 districts, and simultaneously rolling out the Unified Beneficiary Register (UBR), Malawi's social registry, in the same 11 SCTP districts (World Bank 2018d, 2018e).

At the time of writing, the MASAF IV was reaching 950,000 households (approximately 5.2 million people) with the last round of payments expected in the last quarter of 2018. Participants currently undertake two cycles of 24 days per year over three years (October–December and April–July), and receive 600 MWK per day for a total of 14,400 MWK per cycle (although wages have recently been raised to 900 MWK per working day). Whilst having had generally broad support in Malawi, the public works component has met with difficulties including addressing food security (Beegle, Galasso and Goldberg 2015), and having to substantially cut targets for emergency public works (from 902,000 to 450,000 beneficiaries) due to implementation issues (World Bank 2018f). The World Bank has also noted that the public works component would be drastically scaled back at the end of 2018 to a smaller pilot across ten districts and approximately 10,000 households with GIZ in 2019, focused on watershed management (the project is still under design). Meanwhile the Local Development Fund (LDF) has been merged into the Local Government Financial Committee under the Ministry of Local Government. This clearly will leave a very large gap in Malawi's social assistance programme coverage, and require a rethink in terms of provision for the poorest.

The other major asset creation programme is WFP's Food Assistance for Assets (FFA), which currently reaches 131,000 households (723,000 beneficiaries) across ten districts, with plans to scale to 170,000 households by end 2018. Beneficiaries currently work for 12 days in a month over six months (outside of the lean season and harvest periods, from July to December), receiving an equivalent of US\$20 per month (the daily/monthly dollar rate is taken from the total food basket requirements for an average family of 5.5, divided by the number of days worked). With a focus on building resilience over multiple years through different interventions, the FFA approach is much more intensive and costly than the PWP of

<sup>12</sup> Irish Aid (Balaka/Ntcheu), the World Bank (Nkhata Bay/Dedza/Lilongwe/Dowa/Nchisi/Kasungu/Nkotakota/Rumphi/Karonga/Blantyre/Chiradzulu), the EU (through KFW) (Nsanje/Chikwawa/Mulanje/Zomba/Neno/Mwanza/Mzimba), and KFW (Chitipa/Likoma/Mchinji/Salima/Mangochi/Machinga/Phalombe).

<sup>13</sup> An FAO evaluation showed that for each cent transferred to a household as a cash transfer there was a multiplier effect of 50 per cent in the local community (Government of Malawi *et al.* 2018).

the government, and there are not yet external evaluations of FFA in Malawi, although wider global evaluations of FFA have shown positive results in building resilience though mixed results for achieving food security (WFP 2014b). This shows a diverse picture for asset creation programme coverage in Malawi, with different objectives, work norms, and transfer values. The PRSP, with the support of GIZ and WFP, is currently attempting to harmonise approaches through a joint task force.

### 5.3 Schools meals programmes (SMP)

There are currently two main SMP providers in Malawi – Mary’s Meals, which reaches around a million children (Mary’s Meals 2018), and WFP that also reaches a million children nationwide in 786 primary schools, with WFP also providing a home ration to some schools programme (WFP 2018b). The SMP is the only social assistance programme in Malawi that is required by government directive to have universal coverage.

## 6 Overview of SRSP activities in Malawi

Utilising or running parallel to the above-mentioned programmes, Malawi has trialled various SRSP mechanisms from 2015 to date. These are outlined below, presented in chronological sequence. Instead of providing individual findings for each trial, details of summary findings and reflections both from the studies and from the mission follow in Section 7.

### 6.1 Single delivery mechanism/Mchinji trial (‘Piggybacking’)

Efforts to harmonise approaches to cash transfers for social protection and humanitarian purposes began in the 2015/16 lean season in Mchinji district through ‘the single delivery mechanism’ trial (hereafter referred to as the Mchinji trial) (Concern Worldwide, 2016). The aim was to assess the systemic bottlenecks, incentive challenges, delays or time-savings of using a joint delivery process for social cash transfer (SCT) and MVAC payments as part of an integrated social protection system. Six traditional authorities (TAs – a sub-district administrative unit) in Mchinji were chosen where the financial service provider was the same for both SCT and MVAC (in this case Airtel Mobile Money).

The intention was for SCT households to continue to receive their SCT payment (delivered every two months in Mchinji), whilst also receiving a monthly MVAC cash transfer,<sup>14</sup> with the aim of aligning delivery dates when they occurred in the same month. SCT resources would be channelled as normal through the MoGCDSW to Airtel, whilst MVAC resources would be sent from the lead NGO of the NGO consortium for MVAC (Save the Children) directly to Airtel and through them to the SCT e-payment beneficiaries. Non-SCTP beneficiaries eligible for MVAC support would receive their MVAC cash transfer also through Airtel. Concern Worldwide was the implementing NGO in Mchinji and led on targeting and monitoring, with support from WFP’s real time mobile technology survey for remote food security (MVAM) system, which provided information on household food coping strategies, prices and market behaviour and perceptions/sentiments (Concern Worldwide, 2016).

Only a small number of sample households<sup>15</sup> participated in the trial (56 out of a possible 2,353) due to: (1) technological difficulties reconciling databases and removing duplications, and (2) targeting to receive both SCTP/MVAC was voluntary and there is a strong principle in Malawi around ‘no double dipping’ (meaning no one should benefit from two programmes simultaneously, an issue revisited again in Section 7) (Concern Worldwide, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> The MVAC payment at that time was 16,950 Malawi kwacha (MWK) per month, against an average of approximately 3,500–4,000 MWK for SCTP, a significant difference in values which can be potentially disruptive for the objectives of social assistance programmes and the perceptions of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

<sup>15</sup> Findings for the trial were summarised by Concern World Wide but not made public.

## **6.2 Automatic inclusion ('shadow alignment')**

The 2016/17 effects of El Niño hit Malawi hardest in the Southern Africa region, and came on the back of compound crises in 2014/15 and 2015/16 (poor harvests and historic flooding) that led to a national maize deficit of one million metric tons and a rise in domestic maize prices of 60 per cent above the three-year average (Government of Malawi 2017b; IFPRI 2018a). This led the GoM in April 2016 to declare a State of National Disaster: 6.7 million people (36 per cent of the population) in 24 of 28 districts were identified as needing humanitarian support from July 2016 to June 2017, making the El Niño response the largest and longest in Malawi's history. The pressure to address large-scale need and align systems more effectively also drove several SRSP innovations.

For the 2016/17 response, the decision was jointly taken between the social protection actors and the Humanitarian Response Committee, the highest decision-making group in Malawi, comprised of government and international partner representatives, to 'automatically include' all SCTP beneficiaries in the MVAC response in drought-affected areas. Jointly implemented by DoDMA, MoGCDSW, WFP and the INGO consortium, with the overall coordination support and learning agenda led by UNICEF, all shock-affected SCTP households were integrated into the MVAC targeting and distribution processes nationwide to also receive the MVAC ration, leading to 132,916 SCTP households being included in the MVAC caseload. The process was closely followed through a range of monitoring mechanisms including key informant interviews and focus group discussions, an e-survey and monitoring at distribution points (Government of Malawi/UNICEF 2017).

## **6.3 Shock-responsive asset creation and school meals programmes during El Niño**

In addition to automatic inclusion, other key efforts were made by the humanitarian community in response to El Niño to make their programmes shock responsive.

WFP's FFA programme, as well as asset creation and input programmes organised by the INGO consortium, both expanded to reach additional participants. Learning from previous MVAC responses, WFP implemented Complementary Productive Asset Creation (CPAC) activities, expanding them both in duration for existing participants and through the adoption of new participants under MVAC, tailoring work norms and activities accordingly. The INGO consortium meanwhile began activities further in advance of the start of the lean season, focused on enhancing agricultural productivity. This approach from WFP and the INGO consortium reached 235,235 MVAC households in 20 districts and 9,848 MVAC households in ten districts respectively, undertaking activities including backyard gardening, contour ridging, tree planting, and providing agricultural inputs (WFP/INGO Consortium 2017a).

In addition, an expanded emergency school meals programme (ESMP) was coordinated through the Education Cluster, led by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and implemented by WFP, which scaled WFP's existing programme to reach an additional 61,892 beneficiaries in 71 schools across four districts for the duration of the response, providing in-kind take home rations (THRs) (WFP/INGO Consortium 2017b; Government of Malawi 2017b). Monitoring showed that school enrolment increased by 20 per cent (compared to a decrease of 12 per cent in control groups) and attendance exceeded 90 per cent (compared to the control group that remained at 60–70 per cent) (WFP/INGO Consortium 2017b). However, since the trial, there has not been institutionalisation of the ESMP approach.



## 6.4 Vertical Expansion (VE) trial

Based on a review of evidence from both the Mchinji and automatic inclusion trials, in 2017/18 the GoM tested vertical expansion (VE) of the SCTP, providing emergency top-ups for 3,073 SCTP households (approximately 16,594 individuals) in drought-affected Balaka district, which was identified by MVAC<sup>16</sup> using the regular SCTP payment method and provider. Balaka was chosen because it was one of only two SCTP districts utilising e-payments (through the financial service provider First Merchant Bank (FMB)), meaning beneficiaries received payments on a monthly basis (as opposed to bi-monthly for manual payments). Top-up transfer values mirrored those for the humanitarian response, meaning in addition to SCTP payments (the average at that point was around 7,000 MWK per month per household), they received for the four-month MVAC period an additional 13,500 MWK (approximately US\$18.5) per month (UNICEF/WFP 2018a).

The VE trial was managed at national level by PRSP together with DoDMA (which guided the design of the operational trial and coordinated communications from national to district level), with the support of UNICEF and WFP (for technical backstopping on the SP and humanitarian sides respectively). The MoGCDSW drove implementation, with GoM extension workers and Community Social Support Committees (CSSCs) undertaking activities on the ground, whilst training, targeting and monitoring support was provided by CARE (on the SP side) and United Purpose (on the MVAC side). Financial support for the transfers/top-ups and partners was provided by Irish Aid and for the learning process by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). FMB transferred the top-ups to households with their regular SCTP payments, which beneficiaries could access from either an ATM or a mobile bank van once a month (UNICEF/WFP 2018a). At the end of the process, UNICEF/WFP also produced with the GoM detailed operational guidance for implementing future VE.

## 6.5 Predictive targeting ('horizontal expansion')

To develop the thinking around horizontal expansion, starting in 2017 Concern Worldwide in partnership with CARD, CADECOM and WFP, and with the financial support of ECHO, explored a combination of activities. The project registered 41,209 households in disaster-prone areas of Mangochi and Nsanje districts (22,166 and 19,043 households in Mangochi and Nsanje respectively) and entered them onto WFP's digitised management information system (MIS) and delivery platform SCOPE. 'At risk' households were pre-targeted through an adjusted targeting methodology using a combination of elements from the UBR, JEFAP, and SCTP targeting tools, plus Concern Worldwide's own door-to-door wealth ranking exercise. This was then combined with a hazard mapping exercise to identify shock-prone 'hotspots' with the support of District Civil Protection Committees (DCPCs), cross-compared with drone footage and GIS mapping of the households, creating a final list ranking households from one to five in terms of poverty and food insecurity in the highest risk areas for flooding. In the end, the approach was not tested as a flood did not take place during the pilot period, although Concern Worldwide is finalising a counterfactual assessment to ascertain if the process would have achieved efficiency gains.

From a SRSP perspective, the end goal would be to integrate this learning and humanitarian DRM experience into the targeting and systems development for social protection, such as the UBR, to enable future horizontal expansion. The poorest and most food insecure households in shock-prone 'hotspots' can be pre-identified and 'tagged' in the UBR, then when a shock hits, either automatically or after a post-shock rapid assessment, households can be provided assistance. As the UBR is not an end-to-end delivery system, a separate

---

<sup>16</sup> The total MVAC caseload for Balaka for the 2016/17 lean season was 15,144 households in IPC Phase 3 or worse; however given VE was a trial, those SCTP households receiving VE support were not deducted from the humanitarian caseload as per MVAC, although this would be the intention in the future.

MIS and delivery partner is required (in this case SCOPE for the MIS and a pre-identified security firm) (Concern Worldwide/COOPI 2018).

## **6.6 UBR/national ID/MVAC database**

The GoM as part of its system strengthening agenda for social protection has been investing in the development of beneficiary management systems. To this end it began piloting the Unified Beneficiary Registry (UBR), a social registry designed to support and harmonise outreach, targeting, eligibility and registration processes using its beneficiary list, therefore reducing duplication of effort and providing an overall picture as to who is benefiting from which programmes and where. Programmes can apply targeting criteria to the UBR or use its poverty list (ranked using a proxy means test (PMT)) to identify eligible households. As in other countries, the UBR is not designed to replace the operational processes and MIS systems of each programme, which would still apply different targeting criteria and require their own beneficiary information, case management and payroll systems, etc.

Piloting of the UBR began in two districts in 2015 (Dedza and Nkhata Bay), capturing the demographic and socioeconomic data for the poorest 50 per cent of households, to be updated every four years in a census-style format. This expanded to 13 districts in 2016, then to 28 as part of the concurrent expansion of the SCTP. A harmonised data collection tool with approximately 50 questions was developed after consultation with development partners and programmes in Malawi to ensure sufficient information was gathered to enable different actors to use the UBR in the future. One point appears pertinent for SRSP: the UBR is the only social registry in the world aiming to register 100 per cent of its population. Although certainly useful (as shocks can affect rich and poor alike), this could become costly to maintain if information is updated yearly – as needed for the purposes of shock response.

### **6.6.1 The UBR/MVAC trial**

Given that there is no central humanitarian database, with registration and case management undertaken by individual humanitarian actors year on year, in 2017 a trial aimed to assess the potential operational benefits of using the UBR to support the humanitarian response targeting processes and beneficiary management. It was conducted in Dedza district in two TAs over the course of the 2016/17 humanitarian response by a multi-partner technical team which worked with the government's UBR task force, supported on the ground by WFP and United Purpose. In one of the selected TAs the list provided by the UBR was ranked using the PMT, and in the other, the list was left unranked. Then the regular JEFAP community targeting process was followed, but first reading the names off the list (either ranked or unranked), and then asking the communities whether people should be included for MVAC or not, and whether additional names should be added (WFP/United Purpose 2017).

### **6.6.2 Linking the UBR to national ID**

The GoM with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2017 rolled out national ID, registering every adult over 16 and providing them with photo ID and a unique identification number as well as recording core demographic information in coordination with the National Registration Bureau, held on an e-wallet. Registration will continue yearly, and the first linkage of the ID with voter registration is being tested for this year's national elections. The beneficiary unique identification number will be used to populate the UBR to help ensure, once MISs are aligned in the future, that a consistent record is kept of who is receiving what across different programmes. This relies on other SP programmes to capture and record the national ID number in their registration processes, whether or not they use the UBR.

However, the lack of a common database for MVAC leaves a systems and knowledge gap for SRSP, as it will not be possible to know who has received humanitarian support year on year. Even after the UBR has hopefully moved to 100 per cent registration of households in approximately four years (if plans stay on track), as noted there is no plan or funds as yet allocated for the regular updating of this information. In any case, every programme still requires its own MIS for operations (case management, reporting/reconciliation, payments) independent from the UBR, and because this does not exist for MVAC it makes future SRSP efforts potentially more cumbersome.

## **6.7 Weather index-based insurance (WII)/forecast-based action (FBA)**

In terms of 'risk layering' (identifying the risks populations face in a given context and matching these to programmatic coverage and capacity), insurance plays a theoretically important role in the wider landscape of SRSP, albeit with several caveats. For instance, insurance can be expensive, complex, does not come prior to a shock, and insurance providers are often reluctant to cover poorer individuals (and poorer households are reluctant to invest hard-earned income in something that does not provide a guaranteed return). However, given that SRSP must sit within a broader landscape of prevention, adaptation and risk reduction strategies to be truly effective, insurance has a clear role to play by transferring risk for large-scale events to an insurance provider. Weather index-based insurance (WII) is designed to reduce some of the complexities around insurance provision by using satellite observational data, such as for rainfall, as a proxy for losses in production, with automatic payouts triggered if rainfall dips below pre-agreed thresholds during key periods of the cropping calendar. WII systems have the advantage of lower administrative costs and are less technically complex than traditional crop insurance, but are nevertheless exposed to various weaknesses such as basis risk (a mismatch between actual loss and that of the insurance policy (indemnity)) (World Bank 2012; Churchill and Matul 2012). Malawi has dabbled with different forms of WII from the small scale, such as the World Bank working with the National Association of Small Farmers (World Bank 2012), through to the large scale when the GoM signed up for a sovereign WII scheme under Africa Risk Capacity (ARC) for the 2015/16 agricultural season.<sup>17</sup> At medium scale, WFP's Rural Resilience (R4) programme has slowly grown, combining asset creation, village savings and loans, credit and index-based insurance for 39,000 participants for the 2018/19 season (WFP 2018a). Whilst combining WII with other social assistance programmes could prove part of an effective risk layering exercise, the long-term evidence of WII's contribution to resilience building for the most vulnerable, as well as its sustainability, still needs to be provided in this highly innovative area.

Alongside WII, WFP and the GoM (DoDMA, PRSP, and the Department for Climate Change and Meteorological Services (DCCMS)), DFID and external partners are looking to integrate forecast-based action (FBA) to social assistance programmes and humanitarian response design. FBA is defined as 'the use of climate or other forecasts to trigger funding and action prior to a shock or before acute impacts are felt' (Wilkinson *et al.* 2018). In Malawi, work has begun on building a FBA system and working with partners to establish criteria to objectively trigger different actions ahead of shocks. The advantage of FBA in the context of SRSP is the ability to link scalable social assistance programmes to climate forecasting, and define objective triggers to respond in advance of shocks, saving time and money as well as potentially changing beneficiary behaviour and investments. As the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) notes, FBA is an area of significant growth in disaster risk management that includes the private sector (*ibid.*). This in turn requires improving the quality and timing of climate information and services to support impact analysis by sector and triggers for action

---

<sup>17</sup> The ARC experience was not deemed particularly successful for Malawi, as the model developed under the policy did not initially trigger a payout. This fell during the El Niño humanitarian response when need was particularly high. After an investigation, ARC provided Malawi with a one-off 'humanitarian' payment of US\$8.1 million (Africa Risk Capacity 2016), but the GoM to date has not reapplied for an ARC policy.

prior to a lean season linked to early warning systems. Climate services are being supported by several partners at national and local level including UNDP, WFP and FAO.

## **6.8 Other donors efforts around SRSP**

EU PROACT – Pro-Resilience Action (Pro-ACT) is a three-year programme funded by the European Union until 2020. It is led by United Purpose (UP) in a consortium with Save the Children and Concern Worldwide and targets all SCT beneficiaries in Mulanje, Zomba and Nsanje (35,461 households) with resilience-building interventions, including trialling a lean season ‘top-up’ and a crisis modifier mechanism. The seasonal top-up between November and February will be provided to those SCT beneficiaries who are identified as extremely labour constrained within the SCT cohort and cannot participate in income generating activities, with an average total transfer cost of approximately 10 euros per household per month, made in two double payments (PRO-ACT 2018a; 2018bT). After the first lean season 2018/19, the approach will be re-assessed and hopefully aligned and standardised with others in Malawi, as currently it does not sit within systems and structures of government.

DFID is also in the process of defining a multi-year resilience programme with the UN and various partners that will have significant components on social assistance programmes and shock response. Likewise USAID and DFID, as part of its multi-year resilience support to WFP, have previously supported scaling their resilience interventions in the face of shocks, most notably for the El Niño response (see Section 6.3). Both DFID and USAID are also principle donors for the MVAC humanitarian response.

# **7 Summary of lessons learned**

The various SRSP trials in Malawi have generated a lot of evidence and lessons learned that are relevant to national and international SRSP discussions. These 13 key lessons are summarised below.

## **7.1 Policy coherence and political economy for SRSP**

The link between climate change adaptation, disaster risk management, humanitarian response, and social protection (SP) are consistently referenced across all the major policy frameworks in Malawi, providing good anchorage and rationale for SRSP. As has been shown above, this is being mirrored by several concrete on-the-ground initiatives. However, it could be argued that a more definitive indication of where SP sits in the GoM’s wider development priorities is reflected in overall expenditure, where, according to the World Bank, the government spent an average of 0.6 per cent of GDP on SP programmes between 2011 and 2016, very low even by comparison to the rest of Africa which stands at 1.2 per cent (World Bank 2018c). The vast majority of SP funding is provided by the international community, as is the case for the humanitarian response.

Despite advances in an enabling policy environment for SRSP, its potential for success should be seen within the broader political economy of Malawi which is still predominantly maize-based and which is built around various structural and seasonal characteristics that favour key powerbrokers. These characteristics include yearly peaks and troughs in maize prices linked to (i) seasonality and supply and demand (such as MVAC and the Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC) requirements); (ii) the downward pressure effect of the Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP) on farm-gate prices; and (iii) the select application of export bans through the Control of Goods Act, etc. (Chinsinga 2012; Said and Singini 2014). Although more research is needed, these factors no doubt influence GoM budgetary allocations to development programmes, possibly made more complex by the fact that SRSP favours a move towards harmonised and ideally cash-based approaches

as opposed to in-kind. Partners in Malawi also noted that with national elections due in May 2019, the MVAC response for 2018/19 ran the risk of becoming a highly politicised and instrumentalised process, and it was unclear to what degree the official assessments of need (MVAC/IPC) would be followed, or to what extent international donors would provide support.

Likewise, a comprehensive policy environment does not automatically lead to coordinated programmatic effort, and one constant observation from discussions for this study was the difficulty of ensuring a coherent programmatic response on the ground for a variety of different multisectoral initiatives, including SRSP. There is a risk that SRSP's aim to create greater harmonisation and convergence between humanitarian and development initiatives clearly has the potential in a context of limited coordination capacity to drive further fragmentation, especially at field level, as an increasingly diverse set of partners promote their programmes as 'shock responsive'.

## **7.2 SRSP and basic social assistance programme functionality**

A common issue raised in SRSP discussions is whether the topic distracts from ensuring the basic functionality of social assistance programmes. This is consistently raised in discussions in Malawi; however, there appears to be widespread acceptance of SRSP as a national priority. Discussions during the mission highlighted that nationwide delivery of SCTP now appears on track, with the focus moving to consider whether the basic transfer is sufficient when considered against seasonal fluctuations in need, prices, etc. Hence, a distinction is being made between (predictable) seasonal top-ups and (unpredictable) shock-based top-ups. Likewise the principal donors in Malawi are becoming much more reluctant to fund two separate systems (humanitarian and SP) for mostly predictable need, given the duplication of cost, effort and potential for diversion or fraud that it may entail.

That said, the effort required to coordinate and align humanitarian and SP systems with different principles, operating procedures, accountability measures, geographic coverage, operating systems, and resourcing is considerable. The 3SP Learning Task Force is a welcome process in Malawi and will require broad-based support from ministries and principal international partners if it is to move from a learning to a coordination body. The fact that most government programmes under the MNSSP II are cash-based, and that the humanitarian response still uses considerable in-kind resources, requires a strategy to bridge the two for the short to medium term.

## **7.3 Next steps for scaling expandable social assistance programmes and systems**

The VE trial of 2017/18, along with other trials mentioned herein, have noted some of the strengths and weaknesses of scaling SCTP vertically in the face of shocks. There is clear potential to scale SCTP in the future, whilst noting certain caveats. These include: (i) the need to adapt the SCTP MIS to capture disaggregated information on SCTP households receiving VE top-ups; (ii) expanding SCTP e-payment architecture (which currently only covers two of the 28 districts); and (iii) linking to a wider disaster risk financing strategy and system (such as the Social Support Fund (SSF), and the previewed disaster risk financing work between the World Bank and EP+D). On the mechanics of the VE process, including linking the IPC assessment to trigger VE, substantial detail is contained in the VE operational guidance created by the GoM, UNICEF and WFP (UNICEF/WFP 2018c).

Until now, discussions have focused on VE for slow onset shocks. Further steps could involve understanding the range of shocks faced by Malawi, as well as which mechanisms are best suited to respond to them (for instance, looking at horizontal expansion for floods or covariate shocks, considering other financial instruments such as World Bank catastrophe bonds (CAT-DDOs) or insurance mechanisms, etc.). Whilst Malawi may have limited capacity or desire to address all of these at present, mapping them out to provide a vision for

all stakeholders (sometimes referred to as risk layering), then addressing each over time, could help further with coherence and coordination.

#### 7.4 Viewing vulnerability through the lens of seasonality

Climate shocks in Malawi are largely predictable (although the pattern is different between shocks). As noted in the ODI 3SP study, the majority of ‘humanitarian’ responses are not for unanticipated humanitarian crises, but rather addressing chronic vulnerability that peaks during the lean season (Holmes *et al.* 2017). This has raised anew the discussion in Malawi around what terms to give to the response, and how to address need efficiently and effectively. A humanitarian response can do much to bridge the divide with longer-term programming (IFPRI 2018a), but reframing the context around seasonality also reconsiders which programmatic response is most appropriate, with greater emphasis on looking at entry points multi-annually (Devereux, Sabates-Wheeler and Longhurst (2013).

As crises occur over two-year cycles (at a minimum), with a poor agricultural season (which is also the lean season in Malawi) driving up need for the next lean season response, anticipatory action has two windows – one related to improving the current agricultural production season (actions up to 12 months in advance of the next shock), the other related to anticipatory interventions employed in the months or weeks leading up to a lean season. Currently, most attention is focused on the latter, linked to the MVAC/IPC results released in August/September for a response that can start in October/November, driving up the cost of response and leading to actions which arguably only help to provide basic consumption support and buffer against the worst impacts of the lean season. However, a seasonal top-up could be designed with different criteria in mind, with smaller values and earlier timings not tied to a humanitarian response, or larger one-off transfers provided for agricultural investment prior to the growing season (or the school terms, or other household priorities).<sup>18</sup> Then *potentially additional* vertical (or horizontal) expansion could be provided during the peak of the lean season for food and nutrition security needs, the MVAC architecture only being employed when this capacity is exceeded.<sup>19</sup>

Thinking seasonally, therefore, interrogates definitions of efficiency versus effectiveness. The Mchinji/VE trials showed that using one delivery mechanism for two different types of transfer during a lean season response can be efficient (saving time and money), but the effectiveness of this approach in terms of outcomes for recipients is less clear<sup>20</sup> (and in any case would need longer-term evaluation). Providing top-ups aligned to the seasonal calendar (in terms of timing and value) could move the discussion towards effectiveness, linking to one of the higher-level outcomes of SRSP, reducing the humanitarian burden over time by reducing the drivers of poverty and food insecurity. More research into seasonally appropriate top-ups is recommended (UNICEF has work underway), taking into account important periods such as agricultural investment, school terms, the start of negative coping, annual inflation rates for key commodities, peaks in clinic admissions for communicable diseases, and peaks in food and nutrition insecurity, etc.

---

<sup>18</sup> Beneficiaries in the VE trial noted top-ups during the lean season helped them stay in their fields and not look for piecemeal work elsewhere, but they noted that earlier transfers would have helped with improved investment options and reduced negative coping strategies. The trial showed that negative coping reaches a peak one month before the recommended start date of MVAC (UNICEF/WFP 2018a).

<sup>19</sup> The top-up for VE was not nutrition sensitive, whereas the MVAC transfer provides additional cash or in-kind support for pregnant and lactating women.

<sup>20</sup> The VE trial showed that aside from the food consumption score (FCS), other key indicators (dietary diversity (DDS), emergency livelihood strategies (iCSI), etc.) showed less positive distinctions between sample and control groups. However, VE households did show a higher tendency to invest, for instance in livestock or repaying debts, than those only receiving MVAC support (UNICEF/WFP/018a).

## 7.5 Flexible financing, financing mechanisms, and financial sustainability

Resourcing SRSP touches on two key issues – who pays, and how do they pay? Should humanitarian donors pay for VE top-ups, or should regular SP donors create contingency funds? Discussions during the mission tended to show that each ‘side’ thought the other should pick up the bill.<sup>21</sup> Using *ad hoc* humanitarian funding to provide shock-based top-ups through SP structures may seem feasible, but given both humanitarian donor conditionality and very limited and unreliable resources, this may prove unsustainable. More research is recommended as to donor requirements (both SP and humanitarian) for the use of their funds in both contexts, in terms of public financial management, reporting, timeliness and accountability. A likely double solution of contingent funding under the regular SCT programme, with aligned humanitarian funding for unpredictable additional shocks, may prove most viable.

Likewise, combining funding sources in the same financial service provider (FSP) has proven feasible and efficient; albeit at small scale and only where the FSP has coverage. In terms of financing mechanisms, the preferred avenue identified under the NSSP and MNSSP II is the SSF, which is only in concept stage, but is proposed to act as a pooled fund for social assistance programmes and to include a contingent financing window (O’Neill and Hall 2016). To advance the SSF, SCTP donors would need to agree to pool their resources (reporting against different districts for different donors could be retained), with an appropriate fund management and reporting mechanism designed.

What was clear from both the Mchinji and VE trials in Malawi was that Irish Aid’s flexibility as a donor was unique in a few key ways:

- Irish Aid provided funds for both the regular transfers and the top-ups, and in addition was willing to channel both forms of support through government systems. The regular transfers were channelled through the GoM centralised holding account, whereas the top-ups were sent straight to the GoM-managed district account for the FSP, which delivered both at the same time.
- When faced with difficulties providing exact budget figures for VE in September (owing to the time it takes to process IPC figures (released in September) into confirmed MVAC participants in November, an issue that will likely arise every year), Irish Aid accepted a much higher global budget and reduced it later, and tentatively proposed using the roll-over budget for an expanded VE trial in 2019. This demonstrated the advantages of multi-year planning not usually open to humanitarian donors and implementing partners.

Funding SRSP also raises the question of sustainability. Currently, the GoM is responsible for SCT payments in only one district of Malawi (Thyolo). Adding seasonal or unanticipated shock-based top-ups to the basic payment structure potentially adds further demands of the GoM which it will not be in a position to adopt financially. Linking to a wider disaster risk financing strategy, such as the one currently being discussed by the World Bank, could provide the coherence for guiding regular and shock-based payments, as well as hopefully move forward fiscal space discussions with the GoM around SP.

## 7.6 Cost–benefit analysis for SRSP

Whilst some literature investigates the cost of early versus late response to shocks (work which started with DFID analysis in Ethiopia (DFID 2016)), and some work is emerging around the use of scalable social assistance programmes for shocks (several are collected for instance in World Bank 2018g), generally international SRSP literature emphasises that

---

<sup>21</sup> Especially around SCTP. Other proposed approaches, such as the upcoming DFID resilience programme, may implement both regular and top-up payments through the same provider/partner from the same source.

there is a big cost–benefit evidence gap (O’Brien *et al.* 2018). In Malawi, UNICEF and WFP undertook a Return on Investment (RoI) analysis that looked at the current capacity of the SCTP system to scale-up to shocks as compared with the same system after certain capacity enhancing investments (UNICEF/WFP 2018b). The model did not assess or compare the costs of current SCTP and MVAC responses, as it did not have comparable data at the stage of modelling to do so. The report found that across a range of measures there could be cost savings over a ten-year period ranging from US\$290,000 to US\$1.3 million. Whilst important for decision-making, the range of caveats required for these forms of cost–benefit analysis indicate that caution is required in interpreting results (different variables for modelling include the type of shock, the maturity of a SP system, the overheads for different modality types, the infrastructure required to deliver effectively, the availability and timing of financing, etc.).

## 7.7 Harmonised support systems

All the Malawi trials reported high technical backstopping requirements, time delays and support costs often as a result of non-aligned (or non-existent) databases. Since SRSP hinges on harmonisation, harmonising support systems is a crucial learning from Malawi.

- *Harmonised delivery mechanisms and coverage* – the Mchinji and VE trials have proved that it is possible to use one platform to deliver two forms of support, without incurring extra delays or costs, helping streamline programmatic response and therefore enabling systemic efficiency gains. The VE trial was seen as a test of whether long-term SRSP was viable, and it worked – top-ups were delivered on time, the FSP had sufficient liquidity and managed the additional transfers and disaggregated reporting requirements, and communications and perceptions were managed. Information from the humanitarian response was effectively integrated into the VE/SCTP process, and the evidence provision was clear and coherent.<sup>22</sup> However, coverage is critical, with the need to significantly expand the e-payment strategy and architecture in Malawi under the SCTP (which is currently only operating in two of 28 districts), potentially as part of a wider GoM/donor agreement with key FSPs. It is noteworthy that when Irish Aid originally tendered for e-payment FSPs in Balaka in 2013 it had one interested party, but when they re-tendered for Ntcheu and Balaka in 2017, 13 banks applied, showing a clear increase in interest from FSPs to engage in social protection programmes. Further, in negotiating the FSP contract, Irish Aid integrated a clause that stated the FSP would execute VE at no extra cost, which is important to include from the outset to avoid negotiation and implementation delays later.
- *Harmonised and digitised databases and management information systems (MISs)*. Beyond harmonising delivery channels, MISs need to be designed for interoperability around common criteria (programming code, common geographic zoning,<sup>23</sup> modules/fields, data collection tools, and common identifiers such as the national ID). This will help to avoid significant duplication of effort, potential fraud, and excessive inclusion/exclusion errors. Findings from the UBR/MVAC trial showed that using the UBR to pre-populate the beneficiary list for the MVAC humanitarian response minimised the influence of traditional authorities (which was sometimes perceived negatively) and saved time at critical stages such as registration and data entry, while also enhancing coordination amongst partners. The study also noted that an important step to improve interoperability would be designing a digitised MVAC database that ‘pushes’ data back to the UBR (WFP/United Purpose 2017). Relying on the UBR for

<sup>22</sup> Current plans to test paying PWP and SCTP beneficiaries through the same delivery system (an upcoming GIZ/WB pilot) are also welcomed.

<sup>23</sup> For instance, the SCTP MIS uses clusters whilst MVAC uses traditional administrative units of Extension Planning Areas (EPAs), Traditional Authorities (TAs) and Group Village Headman administrative (GVH).



MVAC misses the fact that individual programmes still need their own databases/MISs for routine programme management, coordination and transfers, and the lack of plans to create a MVAC database/MIS risks making future SRSP efforts more cumbersome and costly at operational level. In the spirit of building on what exists, WFP's SCOPE or World Vision's LMS systems could be used as the basis for a MVAC MIS, assuming they are used by everyone and key programming criteria and fields could be made compatible with the UBR, and the national ID unique identifier could be integrated. A common MVAC database/MIS would also require robust data protection and privacy regulations with firewalls when used alongside the UBR.

As noted in the VE trial, the SCTP MIS in particular needs further adaptation for SRSP, meaning its geographic zoning could to be aligned to that of MVAC (as MVAC follows regular administrative areas), and it has to be able to track which SCTP households are receiving top-ups. Without this, it cannot provide automatically disaggregating lists and reports to facilitate case management and payroll. The design of a dedicated module or adaptation of the 'linkages and referrals' module, as was suggested during the mission, could be explored.

- *Harmonising grievance referral mechanisms (GRMs)*. The SRSP trials in Malawi all found that, in general, there was a lack of awareness around the available GRMs for SCTP and MVAC. GRMs are critical for SRSP for several reasons: (a) inclusion errors are compounded if a technically ineligible household receives multiple forms of assistance, and the potential for inclusion and exclusion can potentially become greater when the targeting criteria are blended across SP and humanitarian programmes; (b) well-functioning GRMs help with the reallocation of resources (e.g. if contingent funding is not used on a shock, it can be used to address exclusion errors (as in Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) (Government of Ethiopia 2014)); and (c) blending systems for SRSP requires heightened transparency and accountability to build recipient confidence. Combining two separate GRMs (such as one for the regular SCTP and one for MVAC response, with the former incorporating the latter and scaling during the MVAC response with extra capacity) is an underexplored area for SRSP.

## **7.8 Community perceptions strong on 'double dipping'**

Whilst beneficiaries themselves do not seem to object to the principle that the most needy can receive top-ups, strong objections remain around 'double dipping' (the rule that no one should benefit from two programmes simultaneously). This is due to a few factors such as widespread poverty distribution in Malawi, concern over the influence of chiefs and other community members in the targeting processes, and a general sense of community justice (everyone should get a little, as someone considered 'better off' today could be 'worse off' tomorrow). VE reduces this influence and perception (presumably as it is harder to know who is receiving two forms of support through e-payment), but does not eradicate it. The wider issues of whether social assistance programmes are sufficient in terms of breadth (number of people covered), depth (amount transferred), or longer-term graduation potential remain, albeit whilst noting that taken together public works, SCTP, school feeding and WFP's FFA programme cover over 7 million people.<sup>24</sup> The 'no double dipping' rule impacts on wider strategies of graduation that precisely rely on a combination of interventions to the same household level to succeed.

When combining SCTP and MVAC, a zero sum game is at play. Using humanitarian resources to 'top-up' SCTP recipients during the lean season means either that other eligible households miss out, or that the total needs and fundraising requirements for humanitarian

---

<sup>24</sup> Noting that in 2019 the World Bank-funded PWP component withdraws almost entirely.

partners have to increase. This provides some of the rationale for regular social assistance programmes creating contingency budget lines for lean season or shock-based top-ups into their multi-year budgetary planning as a complementary measure.

## **7.9 Review targeting criteria for SRSP**

The VE report (UNICEF/WFP 2018a) underlines that targeting in Malawi is tricky, as poverty levels are widespread and relatively homogenous, meaning no one targeting method can adequately identify 'the need within need', programme coverage is limited, and exclusion errors by definition are high. Separating out chronic poverty from climate vulnerability or food insecurity is often a fine point. Communities, therefore, also find it hard to apply targeting criteria and distinguish between relatively minor differences, with the added pressure of social scrutiny and hierarchy.<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, the UBR/MVAC trial noted that the UBR could not be used to pre-rank households for a food security-based emergency response, as the PMT poverty rankings do not adequately reflect (especially shorter-term) vulnerability to food insecurity – a fact being acknowledged in other SRSP contexts such as the Sahel (Schnitzer 2016). Likewise, some key data in the UBR has a short shelf-life and requires regular updating, and community perceptions of fairness through the generation of predefined lists from the UBR (ranked or not) were divided – some felt it a top-down imposition, others that it provided more objectivity and left less room for external influence (WFP/United Purpose 2017).

The VE trial recommended looking at categorical indicators (such as who heads the household, dependency ratios, the age of recipients), coupled with indicators assessing medium-term food insecurity and coping capacity as a potentially more effective combination for identifying common eligibility across the SCTP and MVAC programmes for lean season support. This is currently in the process of being explored through a study by WFP supported by ECHO, and is part of a wider discussion taking place in other contexts such as the Sahel, where World Bank research is looking at combining indicators from the PMT and Household Economy Analysis (HEA) (see again Schnitzer 2016).

## **7.10 Enhanced coordination from national to local level is essential**

Malawi is making slow but steady progress in trialling different approaches and building the evidence base for SRSP. Alongside the various trials, some big pieces of the systems puzzle have been or are being put into place, such as the introduction of the IPC, the review of JEFAP, and the roll-out of national ID and its linkage to the UBR. The challenge is in systematising and coordinating what has been trialled into coherent approaches. Otherwise, SRSP risks introducing further fragmentation, as everyone creates their own shock-responsive mechanism, making on-the-ground coordination during the lean season especially hard.

Continued coordination across SP and humanitarian actors will be needed at central and decentralised levels. This has begun with the SRSP Learning Task Force (SRSP LTF), which for now coordinates learning, with a question over how joint coordination of operations could function in the future. Improved alignment of coordination structures is being investigated in Malawi, relating to the district level Civil Protection Committees that support humanitarian functions, and the Community Social Support Committees that support SP functions, amongst many others. These committees manage different programmes but often include many similar members. Likewise, collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government could be considered to integrate SP/SRSP concepts and activities into the Socio-Economic Profiles

---

<sup>25</sup> Whilst 86 per cent of SCTP households in the MVAC-affected areas were eligible for MVAC support, during the VE trial only 19 per cent were registered for MVAC by the communities using the JEFAP process (UNICEF/WFP 2018a). Forty-four per cent of those surveyed admitted that SCTP households were being excluded from MVAC despite meeting the criteria and being in need.

(SEPs), the District Development Plans (DDPs), and the Village Action Plans (VAPs). Without this, social protection priorities are not taken into consideration at district level, and centralised government resources are not earmarked. The timing of information provision is also critical – for instance, MVAC needs to provide information on areas and numbers affected with sufficient time to plan for VE (e.g. ideally eight to ten weeks before the MVAC response begins), and SP partners need to provide information, aligned to MVAC geographic zoning, of VE coverage in shock-affected areas to avoid double targeting.

### **7.11 Improved communication and advocacy of SRSP**

As SRSP is a new concept, continuous effort will be needed to ensure it is understood right down to the local level. It needs to be discussed and accepted by district authorities and implementers as well as beneficiaries, with investments in clear and joint communication packages for all involved (implementers, recipients and the wider public) required (UNICEF/WFP 2018a). Likewise, Malawi is following a thorough learning agenda around SRSP with very useful outputs (the ODI 3SP study, the MNSSP II, the AI/VE/UBR+MVAC reports and guidance) that other countries could learn from. Meanwhile, there are several areas where Malawi could learn from other countries trialling SRSP, such as defining triggers, designing risk financing, researching the best targeting methodologies (see O'Brien *et al.* (2018), the World Bank (2018g), and forthcoming work from the European Commission).

### **7.12 Develop SRSP standard operating procedures (SOPs)**

Whilst the VE trial led to the development of VE guidance, there is likely still the need to develop wider standard operating procedures (SOPs) for SRSP, starting with VE, but open to adaptation should other SRSP mechanisms be taken forward. SOPs would outline which actors do what and when, within what time frame, for all aspects of a SRSP mechanism. The SOP can be updated for every response, and could be a key output for the SRSP LTF, although currently the LTF has only considered slow-onset shocks, with fast-onset shocks also requiring a similar process of elaboration and coordination.

### **7.13 Vulnerable groups need differentiated support and more research for SRSP**

The VE report (UNICEF/WFP 2018a) noted that during the trial, most core food insecurity indicators for very vulnerable categories of household (especially child-headed) actually got worse during the lean season, even with the top-up (their coping strategy index score worsened by 100 per cent over the intervention period). The report showed not only that, as a category, child-headed households are more consistently food insecure, but that (more) cash assistance alone may not be the answer, and has to be potentially accompanied by other activities (links to services, livelihood activities, community outreach groups). It is an area that potentially deserves further research to ensure VE and other SRSP mechanisms adhere to 'do no harm' principles.

## Annexe Mission interviewee details

Organisation	Name	Title
Ayala Consulting	Francisco Ayala	Director
CARE	Matthew Pickard	Country Director
Concern Worldwide	Caoimhe Debarra	Former Country Director
	Emilie Vonck	Programme Director
	Chris Mjima	Head of Resilient Livelihoods
	Kennedy Nyirenda	Focal point for Predictive Targeting Trial
DFID	Christina Connolly	Climate and Environment Advisor
Department of Disaster Risk Management Affairs (DoDMA)	James Chiusiwa	Director of Disaster Risk Management
	Paul Kalilombe	Director of Response and Recovery, DoDMA
	Dyce Nkhoma	Deputy Director
EU	Carlota Rego	JPD (DEVCO, EEAS)
FAO	Luis Amaya Ortiz	Deputy Head of Office
GIZ	Ralf Radermacher	Head of Sector Initiative Social Protection
	Selvi Vikan	Team Leader, Social Protection
	Tom Mtenje	Deputy Team Leader, Social Protection
Government of Flanders	Nikolas Bosscher	Deputy General Representative
IFPRI Malawi	Bob Baulk	Leader of IFPRI's Country Strategy Support Program
	Jan Duchoslav, PhD	Associate Research Fellow
Irish Aid	Phina Rocha Rebello	Vulnerability Advisor
	Columba O'Dowd	Deputy Head of Mission
	Aidan Fitzpatrick	Senior Development Specialist
Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development	Harry Mwamlima	Director of the Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Division
	Bessie Msusa	Principal Economist
Ministry of Gender	Brighton Ndambo	SCTP Officer
Ministry of Local Government	Lukes Kalilombe	Director
UBR	McNeil Mhango	Senior National Technical Advisor (UBR focal point)
UNDP	Andrew Spezowka	Portfolio Manager – Resilience and Sustainable Growth
UNICEF	Ed Archibald	Former Head of Social Policy
	Celine Felix	Social Protection Specialist
	George Juwawo	Focal point – e-payments
USAID	Fenton Sands	Senior Agricultural Advisor
WFP	Benoit Thiry	Country Director
	Diana King	SRSP focal point
World Bank	Chipo Msowoya	Social Protection and Jobs

# References

- Africa Risk Capacity (2016) 'Press Release – Malawi to Receive USD 8M Insurance Payout to Support Drought-Affected Families', 14 November, [www.africanriskcapacity.org/2016/11/14/press-release-malawi-to-receive-usd-8m-insurance-payout-to-support-drought-affected-families/](http://www.africanriskcapacity.org/2016/11/14/press-release-malawi-to-receive-usd-8m-insurance-payout-to-support-drought-affected-families/) (accessed 30 April 2019)
- Agenda for Humanity (2016) *The Grand Bargain – A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need*, 23 May, Istanbul, Turkey
- Beegle, K.; Galasso, E. and Goldberg, J. (2015) *Direct and Indirect Effects of Malawi's Public Works Program on Food Security*, Policy Research Working Paper, Washington DC: World Bank
- Browne, E. (2014) *Social Protection, Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction*, Rapid Literature Review, Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham
- Chinsinga, B. (2012) *The Political Economy of Agricultural Policy Processes in Malawi: A Case Study of the Fertilizer Subsidy Programme*, FAC Working Paper 39, Brighton: Future Agricultures Consortium
- Churchill, C. and Matul, M. (2012) *Protecting the Poor – A Microinsurance Compendium Volume II*, 2nd ed., Geneva: International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Concern Worldwide (2016) 'Mchinji MVAC Cash Distribution Site Visit and Focus Group Discussions', Malawi, unpublished
- Concern Worldwide/COOPI (2018) 'COOPI and CWW ECHO Funded DRR Project Brief Update on the Implementation of Predictive Targeting – Nsanje and Mangochi Districts', Malawi, unpublished
- Development Initiatives (2017) *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017*, <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/GHA-Report-2017-Full-report.pdf> (accessed 30 April 2019)
- Devereux, S.; Sabates-Wheeler, R. and Longhurst, R. (2013) *Seasonality, Rural Livelihoods and Development*, London: Routledge
- DFID (2016) *The Economic Case for Early Humanitarian Response to the Ethiopia 2015/2016 Drought*, Department for International Development, [www.gov.uk/dfid-research-outputs/the-economic-case-for-early-humanitarian-response-to-the-ethiopia-2015-2016-drought](http://www.gov.uk/dfid-research-outputs/the-economic-case-for-early-humanitarian-response-to-the-ethiopia-2015-2016-drought) (accessed 30 April 2019)
- FAO (2018) *Due to Poor Rains Fall Armyworm Leaves Southern Africa Vulnerable*, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, [www.fao.org/resilience/news-events/detail/en/c/1099963/](http://www.fao.org/resilience/news-events/detail/en/c/1099963/) (accessed 30 April 2019)
- FEWSNET (2018) *Malawi*, <http://fews.net/southern-africa/malawi> (accessed 30 April 2019)
- FSIN (2018) *Resilience Measurement*, Food Security Information Network, [www.fsincop.net/topics/resilience-measurement/en/](http://www.fsincop.net/topics/resilience-measurement/en/) (accessed 30 April 2019)
- Government of Ethiopia (2014) *Productive Safety Net Programme Phase IV Programme Implementation Manual*, Ethiopia: Government of Ethiopia

- Government of Malawi (2018a) *Social Cash Transfer Programme*, [www.gender.gov.mw/index.php/2013-08-19-17-29-14/social-cash-transfer-programme](http://www.gender.gov.mw/index.php/2013-08-19-17-29-14/social-cash-transfer-programme) (accessed 30 April 2019)
- Government of Malawi (2018b) *National Resilience Strategy (2018–2030) – Breaking the Cycle of Food Insecurity in Malawi*, Malawi: Government of Malawi
- Government of Malawi (2018c) *National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP) Prioritised and Coordinated Agricultural Transformation Plan for Malawi: FY 2017/18–2022/23*, Malawi: Government of Malawi
- Government of Malawi (2018d) *Malawi National Social Support Programme II (MNSSP II) 2018–2023*, Malawi: Government of Malawi
- Government of Malawi (2017a) *The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III*, Malawi: Government of Malawi
- Government of Malawi (2017b) 'The 2016/17 Relief Response to Lean Season Food Insecurity Results and Lessons Learned', Food Security Cluster, Malawi, unpublished
- Government of Malawi (2016) *National Disaster Risk Management Policy 2015*, Malawi: Government of Malawi
- Government of Malawi (2011) *The Second National Communication of the Republic of Malawi under the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)*, Malawi: Government of Malawi
- Government of Malawi; Kagin, J.; Taylor, J.; Pellerano, L.; Daidone, S.; Juergens, F.; Pace, N. and Knowles, M. (2018) *Local Economy Impacts and Cost–Benefit Analysis of Social Protection and Agricultural Interventions in Malawi*, Malawi: Government of Malawi
- Government of Malawi/UNICEF (2017) *Review of a Policy Decision – The Automatic Inclusion of Social Cash Transfer Programme Beneficiaries into the Food Emergency Response Caseload*, Lilongwe: Malawi
- Government of Malawi/World Bank (2015) *Malawi 2015 Floods Post Disaster Needs Assessment Report*, Malawi: Government of Malawi
- Holmes, R.; Costella, C.; Bailey, M.; Kruczkiewicz, A.; Poulter, R.; Sharp, K. and Scott, L. (2017) *Towards a Shock Sensitive Social Protection System for Malawi*, London: Overseas Development Institute and The Hague: Red Cross Climate Centre
- IDS (2018) *Adaptive Social Protection*, [www.ids.ac.uk/projects/adaptive-social-protection/](http://www.ids.ac.uk/projects/adaptive-social-protection/) (accessed 30 April 2019)
- IFPRI (2018a) *Assessment of the 2016/17 Food Insecurity Response Programme in Malawi*, IFPRI Discussion Paper 01713, Malawi: International Food Policy Research Institute
- IFPRI (2018b) *IFPRI Key Facts Series: Social Safety Nets*, Washington DC: International Food Policy Research Institute, <http://ebrary.ifpri.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15738coll2/id/132797> (accessed 30 April 2019)

IPC (2012) *Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Technical Manual Version 2.0. Evidence and Standards for Better Food Security Decisions*, Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Mary's Meals (2018) *Malawi*, [www.marysmeals.org.uk/what-we-do/where-we-work/malawi/](http://www.marysmeals.org.uk/what-we-do/where-we-work/malawi/) (accessed 30 April 2019)

O'Brien, C.; Scott, Z.; Smith, G.; Barca, V.; Kardan, A.; Holmes, R.; Watson, C. and Congrave, J. (2018) *Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research – Synthesis Report*, Oxford: Oxford Policy Management

O'Neill, L. and Hall, N. (2016) 'Feasibility Study on a Social Support Fund for the Malawi National Social Support Programme', September, Government of Malawi, unpublished

PRO-ACT (2018a) 'PRO-ACT Proposed Changes to Tiered Targeting Model, Associated Interventions, and Cash Transfer Top-Up System Following Inception Design Review Period – September 2018', Malawi, unpublished

PRO-ACT (2018b) 'PRO-ACT Handout', Malawi, unpublished

Reuters (2017) *Malawi Declares 20 Districts Disaster Areas after Armyworm Outbreak*, [www.reuters.com/article/us-malawi-armyworm/malawi-declares-20-districts-disaster-areas-after-armyworm-outbreak-idUSKBN1EC161](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-malawi-armyworm/malawi-declares-20-districts-disaster-areas-after-armyworm-outbreak-idUSKBN1EC161) (accessed 30 April 2019)

Roelen, K.; Longhurst, D. and Sabates-Wheeler, R. (2018) *The Role of Cash Transfers in Social Protection, Humanitarian Response and Shock-Responsive Social Protection*, IDS Working Paper 517, Brighton: IDS, [www.ids.ac.uk/publications/the-role-of-cash-transfers-in-social-protection-humanitarian-response-and-shock-responsive-social-protection/](http://www.ids.ac.uk/publications/the-role-of-cash-transfers-in-social-protection-humanitarian-response-and-shock-responsive-social-protection/) (accessed 30 April 2019)

Said, J. and Singini, K. (2014) *The Political Economy Determinants of Economic Growth in Malawi*, ESID Working Paper 40, Manchester, UK: Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a089d4e5274a31e00002b2/esid\\_wp\\_40\\_sa\\_id\\_singini.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a089d4e5274a31e00002b2/esid_wp_40_sa_id_singini.pdf) (accessed 30 April 2019)

Schnitzer, P. (2016) *How to Target Households in Adaptive Social Protection Systems? Relative Efficiency of Proxy Means Test and Household Economy Analysis in Niger*, Social Protection and Labour Discussion Paper 1612, Washington DC: World Bank

Ulrichs, M. and Sabates-Wheeler, R. (2018) *Social Protection and Humanitarian Response: What is the Scope for Integration?*, IDS Working Paper 516, Brighton: IDS, [www.ids.ac.uk/publications/social-protection-and-humanitarian-response-what-is-the-scope-for-integration/](http://www.ids.ac.uk/publications/social-protection-and-humanitarian-response-what-is-the-scope-for-integration/) (accessed 30 April 2019)

UNDP (2018) *Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update Briefing Note for Countries on the 2018 Statistical Update*, United Nations Development Programme, [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr\\_theme/country-notes/MWI.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/MWI.pdf) (accessed 30 April 2019)

UNDP (2013) *Human Development Reports – Income Gini Coefficient*, United Nations Development Programme, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/income-gini-coefficient> (accessed 30 April 2019)

UNICEF/WFP (2018a) *Operational Trial of a Vertical Expansion Malawi Social Cash Transfer Programme – Case Study*, Malawi: UNICEF/WFP

UNICEF/WFP (2018b) *Return on Investment – Shock-Responsive Social Protection – Assessing the Cost and Timeliness Gains of Using Malawi’s National Social Support Programme in Response to Crisis*, Malawi: UNICEF/WFP

UNICEF/WFP (2018c) *Operational Guidance – Vertical Expansion of the Malawi Social Cash Transfer Programme*, Malawi: UNICEF/WFP

United Nations in Malawi/Government of Malawi (2018) *The United Nations Development Assistance Framework Malawi 2019–2023*, Malawi: Government of Malawi/United Nations in Malawi

WFP (2018a) *WFP Malawi Country Brief July 2018*, World Food Programme, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP-0000073745.pdf> (accessed 30 April 2019)

WFP (2018b) *Operational Overview WFP Malawi*, World Food Programme, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP-0000073216.pdf> (accessed 30 April 2019)

WFP (2014a) ‘Integrated Context Analysis Malawi’, World Food Programme, Malawi, unpublished

WFP (2014b) *Synthesis Report of the Evaluation Series on the Impact of Food for Assets (2002–2011)*, World Food Programme, [https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/eb/wfpdoc063220.pdf?\\_ga=2.251694601.1401965326.1539706034-1779001091.1412018370](https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/eb/wfpdoc063220.pdf?_ga=2.251694601.1401965326.1539706034-1779001091.1412018370) (accessed 30 April 2019)

WFP/United Purpose (2017) ‘UBR MVAC Trial: Assessing the Feasibility of Using a Social Registry for Targeting a Humanitarian Response in Malawi’, Malawi, unpublished

WFP/INGO Consortium (2017a) ‘WFP–INGO Case Study on Complementary Productive Asset Creation Activities in the 2016/17 MVAC Response’, Malawi, unpublished

WFP/INGO Consortium (2017b) ‘Case Study Emergency School Meals Programme: Key Findings Brief’, Malawi, unpublished

Wilkinson, E.; Weingärtner, L.; Choularton, R.; Bailey, M.; Todd, M.; Kniveton, D. and Cabot Venton, C. (2018) *Forecasting Hazards, Averting Disasters – Implementing Forecast-Based Early Action at Scale*, [www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12104.pdf](http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12104.pdf) (accessed 30 April 2019)

World Bank (2018a) *Global Population Growth*, [https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW?year\\_high\\_desc=true](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW?year_high_desc=true) (accessed 30 April 2019)

World Bank (2018b) *The World Bank in Malawi*, [www.worldbank.org/en/country/malawi/overview](http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/malawi/overview) (accessed 30 April 2019)

World Bank (2018c) *Malawi Economic Monitor – Realising Safety Nets’ Potential*, Malawi: World Bank



World Bank (2018d) *Malawi – Strengthening Safety Nets Systems Project: Additional Financing* (English), <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/435011468299660793/pdf/PAD12910PAD0P1010Box385443B00OUO090.pdf> (accessed 30 April 2019)

World Bank (2018e) *Disclosable Version of the ISR – Strengthening Safety Nets Systems – MASAF IV – P133620 – Sequence No: 09* (English), <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/309971530152618281/Disclosable-Version-of-the-ISR-Strengthening-Safety-Nets-Systems-MASAF-IV-P133620-Sequence-No-09/> (accessed 30 April 2019)

World Bank (2018f) *Restructuring Paper on a Proposed Project Restructuring of Strengthening Safety Nets Systems – MASAF IV Approved on December 18, 2013 and Additional Financing to Strengthening Safety Nets Systems – MASAF IV Approved on March 26, 2015 to Government of Malawi*, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/429811529586513777/pdf/Disclosable-Restructuring-Paper-Strengthening-Safety-Nets-Systems-MASAF-IV-P133620.pdf> (accessed 30 April 2019)

World Bank (2018g) *The State of Social Safety Nets 2018*, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/427871521040513398/pdf/124300-PUB-PUBLIC.pdf> (accessed 30 April 2019)

World Bank (2018h) *Population Growth (Annual %) Malawi*, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW?locations=MW> (accessed 30 April 2019)

World Bank (2016) *Malawi Economic Monitor – Absorbing Shocks, Building Resilience*, Malawi: World Bank

World Bank (2012) *Weather Index-Based Crop Insurance in Malawi*, [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDISASTER/Resources/Malawi\\_WeatherInsurance\\_Final.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDISASTER/Resources/Malawi_WeatherInsurance_Final.pdf) (accessed 30 April 2019)

World Humanitarian Summit (2016) *Commitments to Action, 23–24 May 2016*, Istanbul, Turkey