BETTER ASSISTANCE IN CRISES RESEARCH

What is known about capacity and coordination of social assistance programmes in crisis situations?

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Summary

This paper reviews the literature and documented evidence on capacity and coordination issues in crisis situations, where social protection and humanitarian assistance intersect. The paper finds that while there is a burgeoning literature that mentions capacity and coordination, very little of this focuses on crisis situations. Although both terms are mentioned frequently, they are rarely defined or robustly and systematically assessed. The little literature that does exist points to a substantial knowledge gap on both the ways in which capacity and coordination deficits undermine the delivery of social assistance in crisis situations and what can be done to overcome these deficits. Frameworks that could be useful in exploring these questions in crisis situations are identified including those that differentiate between technical and functional elements of capacity, and between technical, political, social and behavioural aspects of coordination.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

BASIC	Better Assistance in Crises
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
FCAS	fragile and conflict-affected settings
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	international non-governmental organisation
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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1. Introduction

The terms ‘capacity’ and ‘coordination’ feature consistently in the literature on humanitarian cash transfers and social protection. The importance of both capacity and coordination are cited frequently and there are multiple international agency projects and initiatives that seek to build or strengthen both. This paper explores how much is known about capacity and coordination of social assistance by humanitarian, development and national actors' capacity for and coordination of social assistance, with an explicit focus on situations of crisis – for example violent conflict, environmental disasters or political and economic shocks. The paper is based on the hypothesis that while the terms ‘capacity’ and ‘coordination’ are commonly used – and commonly identified as deficits that represent an obstacle to improved programming in crisis situations – there is in fact relatively little understanding of what levels of capacity and coordination exist in fragile and conflict-affected settings (FCAS), and how the dimensions of both capacity and coordination might vary in crisis situations compared to more stable and secure situations. Furthermore, an additional hypothesis is that, across the social protection and humanitarian sectors, frameworks for assessing and addressing capacity and coordination are fledgling at best, with little guidance available to those trying to improve capacity and coordination, apart from guidance for cash working groups. The paper seeks to assess if there is a knowledge gap on capacity and coordination; and to develop a framework identifying what and how capacity and coordination might be better understood through research. The paper is based on a substantial literature search, outlined in Annexe 1. Assessment of the literature sought to assess:

1. What is known about capacity and coordination of social assistance in crisis situations and what the knowledge gaps are.
2. The main frameworks used to understand capacity and coordination of social assistance and how appropriate they are for application in FCAS.
3. Knowledge gaps that Better Assistance in Crises (BASIC) Research could contribute to filling.

The paper focuses on: (1) humanitarian assistance, especially cash and voucher assistance; (2) social assistance delivered through governments and their development partners; and (3) assistance that spans the humanitarian and social protection sectors. The term ‘social assistance’ will be used to cover support delivered in all three of these areas for the remainder of the paper. Where the literature refers to social protection rather than social assistance, the term social protection is used to describe findings.

The paper focuses on two main ‘crisis’ situations: those related to climate shocks and stresses; and those related to fragility, weak governance and conflict settings. In both cases, a crisis could be the outcome that social assistance is directly responding to or a context in which programming takes place. So, for example, a social assistance programme in Somalia might directly respond to the impacts of locust swarms on food security but do so in the context of violent insurgency. Similarly, a programme might seek to directly support people displaced by conflict from South Sudan into Uganda, but in areas where drought and flood events are increasingly common and programming must be sensitive to the implications these climate-related shocks have; for example, their implications for local food prices.

Rather than begin with statements of definition – notably for capacity and coordination – the paper instead reviews how capacity and coordination are defined in the existing literature and evidence base, exploring how each is conceptualised and applied in real life rather than establishing a theoretical definition that the evidence is then judged against.

2. Capacity

2.1. Introduction to capacity and social assistance in crisis situations

It is difficult to read any work on social protection systems, particularly in crisis situations, without absorbing repeated concerns about capacity constraints on design and delivery. While capacity is widely acknowledged as important, substantial evidence and analysis about how to improve it are limited. There is little differentiation of capacity of what, for what and by whom; and little differentiation between whether it is the capacity of systems, structures, and/or personnel, for example. This section of the paper seeks to assess what is currently known about capacity deficits in social assistance programming and systems in crisis settings, and to identify knowledge gaps that, if filled, might contribute to better assistance in crisis situations.

2.2. What does the existing literature look like and what does it tell us about capacity to deliver social assistance in crisis situations?

Overall, there is not an established or systematic use of language or terminology around the term 'capacity', and by inference, capacity strengthening or capacity development. Literature searches produced varying quantities of results – ranging from very few to several thousand – and screening found little relevant or serious treatment of capacity within the literature. Annexe 1 shows the search terms used and indicates some of the problems found in identifying sources.

Overall, the literature search suggests that very few research outputs focus explicitly on the question covered in this paper, though it is possible that there are findings in thousands of papers that are at least implicitly or indirectly relevant. Hundreds of papers call for capacity (without specifying what exactly is being referred to) to be developed across a raft of areas – from individual technical competence to information systems and architecture, to ministries' or often national capacity.

For the purposes of this paper, the results here focus on: (1) evidence from the literature searches that explicitly relates to capacity strengthening (which are few); (2) evidence from the literature that indirectly touches on 'capacity', using the term in ways that are relevant to this paper; and (3) research and analysis already known to staff in the BASIC Research team or which has been identified by peer reviewers.

Most of the literature used to inform this paper is classified within the second group (with tangential links to capacity). Forward and backward citation searches were used to both follow up references cited in specific reports and carry out a citation search on each report to identify subsequent research. Findings show that the term 'capacity' is used generically and to mean a multitude of things. The term is commonly used to allude to 'capacity gaps' or 'capacity strengthening', without specific details about what this entails. The literature is sometimes seen to be detailing the 'what': describing the situation, but not necessarily explicitly providing guidance on answering the 'so what' or the 'how', which allows advances to be made in addressing capacity-strengthening deficits. In many cases, even descriptions of capacity gaps are not explored in any meaningful way.

Further challenges with the literature search include the term capacity being used interchangeably to refer to the capacity of social protection implementers and systems, but also capacities of recipients to absorb shocks or adapt livelihoods (at individual, community, subnational and national levels). Searches focused on climate pick out articles about the 'political climate', while searching for 'conflict' yields all manner of results unrelated to violent conflict and war that are not relevant.

So, while capacity (and coordination) might be winning cards in a game of 'social assistance bingo', that does not get researchers very far with developing a solid understanding of what the main knowledge gaps are on capacity and coordination deficits in delivering social assistance in fragile, conflict-affected and climate shock-/stress-affected situations.

What is known about capacity to deliver social assistance in crisis situations? While references to capacity are common, explicit and considered conceptual frameworks for understanding are generally either absent or not clearly substantiated. This makes it really challenging to explore what is really known about capacity – both existing and desired – for social assistance. For this reason, our exploration of capacity takes as its starting point the concepts and framings used.

In the vast majority of literature, capacity is not defined nor is its deployment accompanied by an explanation of what it means. Among the few more substantial analyses, there are reports that take a supply chain approach, breaking down the elements of programming cycles and seeking to identify capacity deficits within each stage. World Food Programme Haiti (WFP 2017) refers to five essential areas for institutionalised and sustainable national programmes: (1) policy frameworks; (2) financial capacities; (3) institutional capacities and intersectoral coordination; (4) programme design and implementation – targeting and registration systems, cash/food modalities and delivery platforms, supply chain, monitoring and evaluation, and information management systems; and (5) community participation – systems to ensure active role and feedback mechanisms. Similarly, the EU-SPS (2018) *Social Protection Systems Review*

(SPSR) flags up capacities to assess needs, coverage, effectiveness, sustainability and systems. The challenge is that these are both articulations of specific elements of the system, rather than offering much depth on what capacity actually means within that element. In turn, this leads to a focus on technical elements of systems at the expense of more functional and behavioural elements. An example is apparent in Ethiopia's lowland regions, where Lind *et al*. (2021) question the limits of 'technocratic' approaches to targeting, and stress the need to understand social norms and preferences in the design and implementation of social assistance programmes – and by extension the capacities of programme staff to absorb this understanding.

Capacity is often treated with a narrow focus. The identification of capacity deficits for functional or soft skills is frequently overlooked in favour of technical or hard skills. In response to a concern about a narrow focus on individual technical capacities, Longhurst *et al*. (2020: 2) stress that: 'In considering social protection systems and how these interact with humanitarian cash it is clearly important to look beyond individual skills and knowledge and consider the capacity of systems and the ability of different networks of actors to engage with each other'. They also stress the importance of differentiating between diverse audiences across social protection and humanitarian actors, and the distinct capacity-strengthening needs of various groups (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Capacities and needs of various groups

Actors	Capacity and knowledge needs
Disaster-affected people	Knowledge of rights and entitlements to social assistance and humanitarian support. Awareness of how to access those rights, and how to participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of assistance. Capacities to complain, feed back to and hold to account governments, national and international aid agencies involved in humanitarian cash and social protection.
Governments – both ministries heading disaster response and social protection	Development of the policy, legislative and governance frameworks for social protection to be more shock responsive and humanitarian cash to link to social protection when appropriate. Knowledge and awareness of how efforts to link cash voucher assistance and social protection can be aligned with core humanitarian principles, global humanitarian agreements (e.g. Grand Bargain) and standards (e.g. Sphere). Scope for peer-to-peer learning through sharing case studies and precedents, secondments, training, etc. from within regions and other comparable contexts. Capacities to strengthen networks between governments, civil society, including academia, and the private sector working on humanitarian cash and shock-responsive social protection. Knowledge and capacities to develop financing solutions for shock-responsive social protection and disaster risk management, including understanding of risk financing options and taxation, and public financial management issues.
National civil society in disaster- and conflict-affected places	Stronger knowledge of social protection and humanitarian systems, and the technical details of design and implementation of shock-responsive social protection and humanitarian cash. Capacities to advocate for rights- and needs-based approaches to social protection, and lobby for accountability and grievance systems, and transparency in humanitarian cash and shock-responsive social protection. Capacities to enable humanitarian cash and social protection to be more locally led, designed and implemented in line with global commitments to national ownership and localisation.

Actors	Capacity and knowledge needs
International humanitarian actors (UN agencies, INGOs) involved as senior decision makers (e.g. country directors)	Mindset and attitudinal shifts towards working with governments and designing systems that can build the blocks for future nationally owned mechanisms, while maintaining a principled humanitarian approach. Knowledge about social protection systems and better coordination and networking with social protection actors (knowing who to talk to), and making space for that to happen in the right forums. Capacities and skills at response analysis and design levels to ensure the right questions are asked and entry points identified for using or building national systems. Capacities to navigate ethical challenges in tensions between humanitarian and development principles, and working with governments that are both sovereign and responsible for social protection, but are also parties to conflicts and responsible for human rights abuses. Technical skills (sector specialisms, data protection expertise) to address key issues such as gender sensitivity, data protection and sectoral linkages, and identify entry points, opportunities and challenges to engage with government systems.
International development actors (UN agencies, INGOs): senior decision makers (e.g. country directors)	Understanding of humanitarian action including principles, standards and how the system works in practice (clusters, assessments, appeals, etc.). Capacities to coordinate and network with humanitarian actors (knowing who to talk to), and making space for that to happen in the right forums. Capacities and technical skills to understand and analyse risk, and embed shock responsiveness into national social protection systems. Capacities to navigate ethical challenges in tensions between humanitarian and development principles, and working with governments that are both sovereign and responsible for social protection, but are also parties to conflicts and responsible for human rights abuses.
Donor governments (OECD and non-OECD) responsible for development and humanitarian aid	Knowledge and skills to enable more focus on risks and shocks relating to disasters, conflicts and climate change in development policy and funding approaches. Understanding of the impact of anti-terrorism legislation on how social assistance can be provided, the exclusion challenges it creates and how these can be mitigated. Learning between donors on how they are addressing silos internally, including across funding streams (humanitarian and development) with different management and approval processes, and the challenge of multi-year funding. Knowledge of new opportunities arising from innovative disaster risk-financing mechanisms and ways of bringing in development financing for chronic needs, protracted crises and long-term displacement. Capacities to engage with new actors in FCAS, including the World Bank and other international financial institutions.
Global policy decision-makers	Awareness of field-level developments and of the economic case for linking humanitarian cash and social protection. Capacities to further linkages between shock-responsive social protection and other key global policy initiatives such as the localisation agenda, climate change adaptation and financing, and the Global Refugee compact.
Multilateral financial institutions	Need for greater knowledge of the humanitarian system and how it operates, given relatively limited experience in FCAS. Capacities to operate successfully and have more of a presence in insecure places.
Private sector	Capacities to coordinate and network with humanitarian and social protection actors (knowing who to talk to), and being invited to and making space for that to happen in the right forums. Space and knowledge on how to bring particular areas of expertise such as financing approaches, insurance mechanisms, payment and data management systems and, 'know your customer' and other regulatory frameworks into design and implementation processes. Knowledge and respect for humanitarian principles and ethics.

Source: Authors' own. Adapted from Longhurst et al. (2020).

The focus on the broad range of groups that may have capacity-strengthening needs also leads to an unnecessarily broad view of capacity, instead of focusing solely on 'developing operational skills, training needs to focus on equipping people with the right soft tools and skills to navigate dilemmas/trade-offs and make informed judgments to develop context-specific approaches to social protection in crises,' (*ibid*: 11).

Working in crisis settings might also require the inclusion of informal authorities, rebel or insurgent groups, and other groups that may be hard to reach or engage with.

This broadening of approach to 'soft skills' aligns with capacity guidelines of the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, which differentiates between functional and technical capacities, and hard and soft skills. Technical capacities include skills associated with subject matter and expertise (e.g. knowing how to target in practice, what payment modalities to use, and how to establish and maintain registries). Functional capacities include skills associated with leadership, negotiation, stakeholder engagement, communication, mainstreaming and coordination. Overall, the finding from Longhurst *et al.* (2020) is that the identification of capacity deficits is articulated clearly for technical or hard skills, but far less so for functional or soft skills. In FCAS, where there are significant fractures – by gender, age, political affiliation, ethnicity, religion, etc. – and where misunderstandings about programmes can have serious negative consequences for the safety and wellbeing of both staff and communities, soft skills such as communication, consultation and cooperation matter.

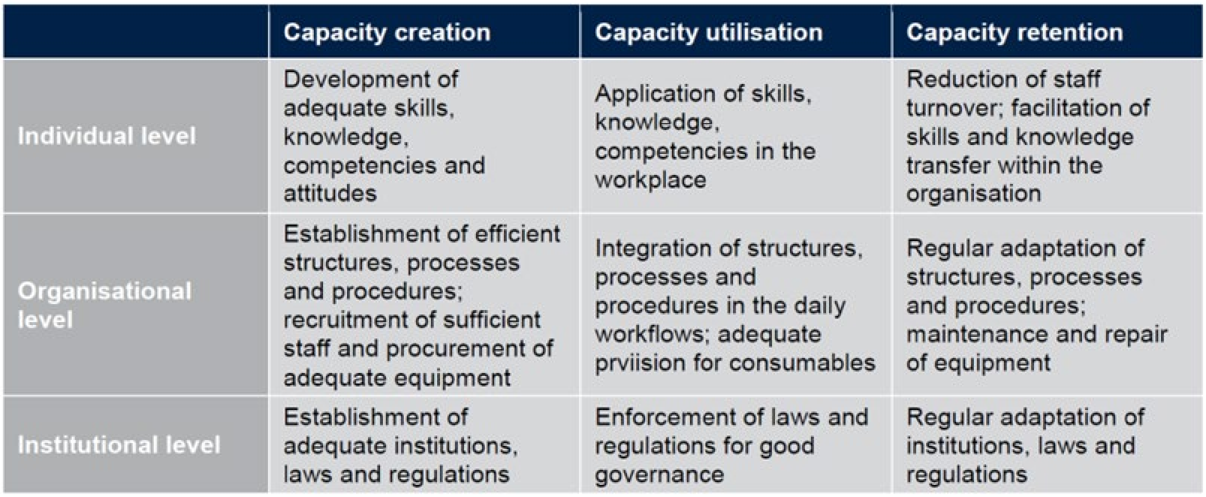
The TRANSFORM (2017) framework brings together three significant dimensions: a problem-based approach, a distinction of different levels of capacity and a temporal element. TRANSFORM (2017) and Kardan *et al*. (2017) go further than much of the literature, laying out a framework for understanding capacity at local level in Kenya. The TRANSFORM (2017) framework incorporates three useful features. First, it takes a problem-driven approach to capacity assessment. This requires assessing the adequacy of existing capacity, reviewing the actual current experience of service delivery, and identifying specific deficiencies as evidence of current capacity weaknesses. It is in sharp contrast to a theory-driven approach, which would begin by attempting to define a theoretically desirable level of capacity, examining current capacity and endeavouring to measure the gap between the two. This seems useful in FCAS where Hoffman and Kirk (2013) noted that we too often see the state as it should be (i.e. we have a theoretically desirable view of the state), not as it is. Second, TRANSFORM (2017) views capacity as a combination of institutional, organisational and individual attributes that converge in such a way as to enable tasks to be performed and objectives to be attained. According to TRANSFORM:

- The institutional aspect includes both the laws and regulations that establish an entity's mandate and define its responsibilities, duties, obligations and powers, and the procedural requirements (which may also have the force of law) that determine how critical functions are carried out. It also includes how working relations are managed between ministries, between ministries and other public bodies, and between different levels of central and decentralised government, and their arrangements for coordinating activities.
- The organisational aspect is concerned with how people are organised to enable them to play their individual roles within the entity, and includes considerations of structure, staffing, and processes and systems – such as, for example, communication, managing workflow, strategic and business planning, budgeting and financial control, reporting, monitoring and performance management, and the recruitment, remuneration, professional development and retention of staff.
- The individual aspect focuses on the personal capabilities of the people who make up the organisation, including their knowledge, skills and attitudes – all of which may be enhanced by training and development activities – and their actual behaviour in the workplace.

The categorisation of individual, organisation and institution is taken from capacity frameworks that were not developed with social assistance (or humanitarian response or social protection) specifically in mind. For more on these framings and their applicability to social assistance, see Annexe 2. The distinction has been used in capacity assessments of social welfare and social services – albeit largely outside of situations characterised by violent conflict, serious political shocks and climate-related disasters.

Third, TRANSFORM (*ibid*.: 7) introduces a temporal element to capacity: 'To gain a complete picture it is necessary to look not only at an entity's ability to create or acquire capacity (for example through training, recruitment or introduction of new systems), but also its ability to utilise this newly developed capacity, and finally to ensure it is retained'.

Table 2.2: Dimensions of capacity



	Capacity creation	Capacity utilisation	Capacity retention
Individual level	Development of adequate skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes	Application of skills, knowledge, competencies in the workplace	Reduction of staff turnover; facilitation of skills and knowledge transfer within the organisation
Organisational level	Establishment of efficient structures, processes and procedures; recruitment of sufficient staff and procurement of adequate equipment	Integration of structures, processes and procedures in the daily workflows; adequate prviision for consumables	Regular adaptation of structures, processes and procedures; maintenance and repair of equipment
Institutional level	Establishment of adequate institutions, laws and regulations	Enforcement of laws and regulations for good governance	Regular adaptation of institutions, laws and regulations

Source: Kardan et al. (2017). Reproduced with permission.

Models that differentiate between competence, capability and performance or bring a governance lens can be illuminating. Two further conceptual framings of capacity may be particularly useful for understanding capacity constraints to delivering social assistance in crisis situations – both come from outside social assistance. The first framing differentiates, at individual level, between three elements of capacity – described as capacity (but changed by the authors to ‘competency’), capability and performance to unlock how human resources can enable or disable the sustained delivery of programmes in crisis situations (Box 2.1). Caravani *et al*. (2021) make a similar case – for a focus on capacities on the ground, where all manner of complications arise that must be navigated, which are not simply technical; and for a focus on uncertainty and flexibility, rather than assuming predictability and stability.

Box 2.1: Why differentiating between competence, capability and performance is helpful in crisis situations

Beyond evidence about the impacts on human resource capacities in humanitarian settings outlined in BASIC Research Working Paper 14, *Sustaining Existing Social Protection Programmes During Crises: What Do We Know? How Can We Know More?* (Slater 2022) our literature review found no research exploring human resource capacities among government staff delivering social protection that focused explicitly on working in FCAS. However, from the health sector, Holsbeeke *et al*. (2009: 849) note ‘the importance of the context when measuring a person’s daily activities’ and differentiate between capacity, capability and performance:

Capacity describes what a person can do in a standardized, controlled environment. Capability describes what a person can do in his/her daily environment. Performance describes what a person actually does do in his/her daily environment. The person-environment interaction is the discriminating element between capacity, capability, and performance

This seems to be a highly useful distinction to understand why and how programme delivery is (or is not) sustained in crisis situations. Staff may have the capacity to deliver tasks but cannot negotiate safe travel to the villages where recipients of social assistance live and so find themselves unable to complete their tasks. Staff may have the capacity and capability to deliver tasks but do not complete them – perhaps they have not been paid and lack motivation, are burnt out, or are suffering mental health impacts from their own traumatic experiences or bereavement.

Understanding the overall capacity constraints to programme delivery, and tackling them, could go a long way to supporting sustained delivery of programmes. Where tackling deficits is unrealistic, at least recognising these deficits and measuring them provides an evidence-based – rather than assumption-based – justification for working outside or in parallel with existing systems to ensure delivery.

The second framing brings a governance lens by differentiating between adaptive delivery, programming and governance (Box 2.2) – predominantly at organisational level. While donor agencies and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) are increasingly incorporating adaptive approaches into their work, they are less common in national government organisations, except where international actors directly resource and staff project management units.

Box 2.2: Adaptive delivery, programming and governance

'**Adaptive delivery** is the daily, on-the-ground work undertaken by a delivery team, with its fingers on the social, political and economic pulses of the world in which they operate. Instead of implementing 'The Technical Plan,' they think politically, opportunistically and on their feet, continuously navigating through a fog of ever-changing conditions, many moving parts and players, ambiguity and uncertainty, and towards political ends (shifts in power imbalances).

Adaptive programming is a slower and more structured process, usually in the hands of the senior team within the programme office, and informed by frontline staff and the patterns and players they identify, or which emerge from delivery, as well as pressure from donors to deliver results.

Adaptive governance normally resides with the officer(s) in the donor agency responsible for funding the programme and following its progress. They must both manage upwards, coping with pressure for results, reporting and shifting strategic priorities, and downwards, ensuring that the programme accounts for how it is spending donor money, but also retains the freedom of strategic manoeuvre that lies at the heart of adaptive approaches.

The relationship between adaptive delivery, programming and governance is constantly evolving and can sometimes be fraught. The basic currency of adaptive approaches is trust between the various players and tiers involved, and confidence that the plan will remain realistic even as it changes. Equilibrium can be disrupted by any number of factors: a political or other exogenous shock; a change of leadership or policy; or a significant failure. Any of these events heightens the perception of risk and can trigger a reversion to more command-and-control-style approaches, which rapidly shrink the space for innovation, improvisation and 'dancing with the system'.'

Christie and Green 2019: 5. CC BY 4.0

Box 2.3: Adaptive, anticipatory and absorptive capacities

Adaptive capacity 'is the ability of social systems to adapt to multiple, long-term and future climate change risks, and also to learn and adjust after a disaster. It is the capacity to take deliberate and planned decisions to achieve a desired state even when conditions have changed or are about to change.' (Badahur *et al*. 2015: 13) because it has the ability to 'react to evolving hazards and stresses so as to reduce the likelihood of the occurrence and/or the magnitude of harmful outcomes resulting from climate-related hazards' (Brooks and Adger 2005: 168).

Anticipatory capacity 'is the ability of social systems to anticipate and reduce the impact of climate variability and extremes through preparedness and planning. Anticipatory capacity is seen in proactive action before a foreseen event to avoid upheaval, either by avoiding or reducing exposure or by minimising vulnerability to specific hazards' (Badahur *et al*. 2015: 23).

Absorptive capacity 'is the ability of social systems to absorb and cope with the impacts of climate variability and extremes… It refers to the ability of social systems, using available skills and resources, to face and manage adverse conditions, emergencies or disasters (TFQCDM/WADEM 2002). While anticipatory capacity comes into play before a shock or stress, absorptive capacity is exercised during and after a disturbance has occurred to reduce the immediate impact on people's livelihoods and basic needs. In conceptual terms, it is concerned principally with 'functional persistence' – that is, the ability of a system to buffer, bear and endure the impacts of climate extremes in the short term and avoid collapse (death, debilitation and destruction of livelihoods) (Blaikie *et al*. 2003; Folke *et al*. 2010; Bene 2012)' (Badahur *et al*. 2015: 30).

Another framing (Box 2.3) is commonly used to link social assistance to climate resilience, but is less useful here. It does help us think about capacities for social assistance preparedness and flexibility within the humanitarian and social protection systems, as shock-responsive social protection does (see O'Brien *et al*. 2018), but the focus remains systemic and technical.

This smaller number of clearer articulations of capacity cannot overcome the broader problem: **overall, limited definition and conceptualisation of capacity results in confused and unfocused applications of the concept, dominance of received wisdom rather than substantive evidence, and largely unhelpful, generalised and sweeping statements about solutions.** There is little distinction made between technical and functional capacities – between hard and soft skills – and attention paid to the intersection between physical and technical deficits versus political commitments. In general, the literature is simplistic, failing to clarify what or whose capacity we are referring to. That said, some of the frameworks identified above have features that could prove very useful to BASIC Research in seeking to understand capacity deficits and to find solutions to them.

For BASIC Research, we have adapted a framework for thinking through human capacity in situations of crisis from Holsbeeke *et al*. (2009).[1] This views overall capacity as comprising:

- Competency – what a person can do in a standardised, controlled environment.
- Capability – what a person can do in their daily environment.
- Performance – what a person actually does in their daily environment.

Without this distinction, we cannot identify the root of the problem (i.e. whether it is competency or capability or performance that is constrained). In a protracted crisis setting, staff delivering social assistance might be competent but not capable because they experience such frequent power and communications outages that they cannot send monitoring reports to head office, or complete paperwork to expedite transfers of funds. During the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, staff with children found themselves juggling work and childcare. Similarly, a climate shock or violent conflict might also affect staff's capability to work. Finally, especially in situations of protracted crisis, competent and capable staff may lose motivation and enthusiasm, becoming completely worn down by trying to keep going in a difficult environment, so they do not perform well.

This distinction really matters for FCAS: it could help to identify solutions that go beyond individual technical competencies, towards individual and organisational functional competencies and solutions that tackle behavioural, structural and environmental impediments to social assistance delivery. The framing also allows the introduction of disaggregated analysis to explore whether capacity deficits have gender, age and ethnicity dimensions and so on. For example, it became clear during the Covid-19 pandemic that in households where both parents work, women bore the brunt of childcare and homeschooling when schools were closed. Adding TRANSFORM (2017)'s elements of the individual, organisational and institutional to this framing, plus the focus on how capacities are created, used and sustained, further strengthens the framework to capture broader dimensions, including a temporal one. Figure 2.1 provides a possible representation, drawing on Gaventa (2006)'s Power Cube approach to articulate three different dimensions of capacity.

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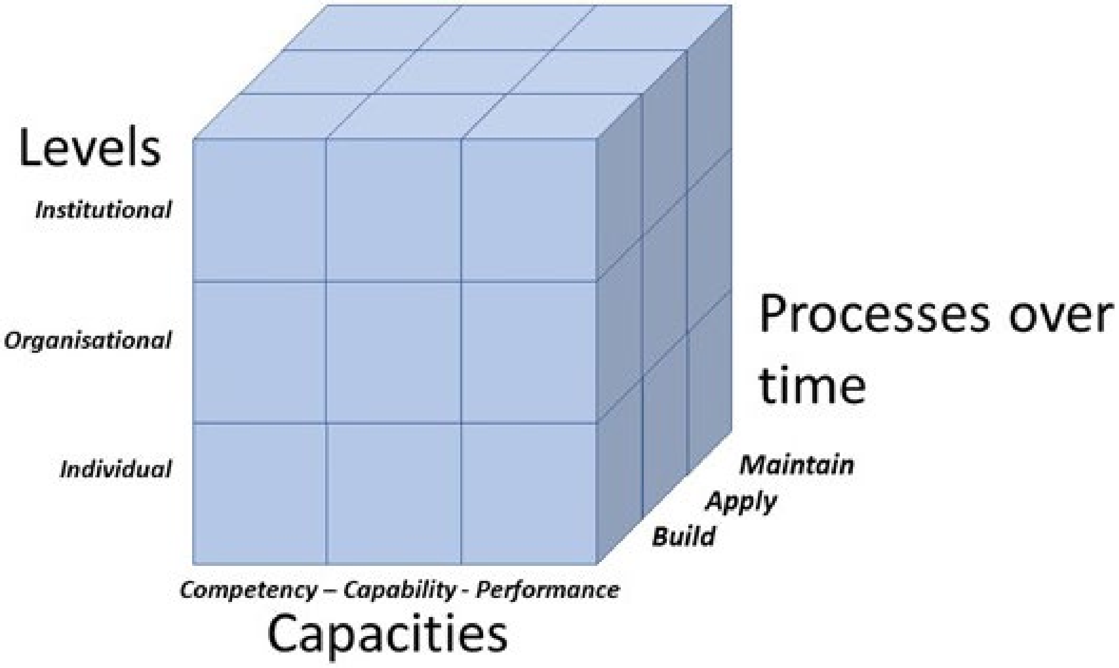
[1] The adaptation of Holsbeeke *et al*. (2009) is to change 'capacity' for 'competency'; and to view capacity as a combination of competency, capability and performance.

Figure 2.1: Framing capacity in crisis situations



Source: Authors' own. Adapted from Gaventa (2006).

3. Coordination

3.1. Introduction to coordination issues in social assistance in crisis situations

Coordination is widely acknowledged as important, but evidence and analysis about how to improve it is simultaneously ever-present but limited in substance. This section of the paper seeks to assess what is currently known about coordination of social assistance in protracted crises, and to identify knowledge gaps, which might contribute to better assistance in crisis situations if filled. It explores what the literature says about: why coordination is important; why it is difficult; what robust evidence on coordination exists (and what it says); and what features or elements of coordination are thought to be the most important and the most problematic.

3.2. What does the existing literature on coordination to deliver social assistance in crisis situations look like?

Overall, as with capacity, the literature is patchy on definitions, frameworks and clear approaches to conceptualising coordination. There are multiple areas in which humanitarian and social protection actors seem to be speaking at cross-purposes, with different understandings of the problem. The literature searches for coordination followed the same process as for capacity, with similar challenges associated with frequent use of variations on 'coordinat*' in research reports without any focused, detailed or significant attention to the issue in the report. More detail is provided in Annexe 1.

Beyond definitions, the literature search identified no explicit frameworks, save some options for coordination within the humanitarian sector (Steets and Ruppert 2017) to understand or guide assessments of work on coordination in crisis situations – with the supporting materials and guidance documents for cash working groups providing a specific example. The explicit treatment of coordination is often trivial and shallow, without depth or any granular analysis. Where it has some depth, it either does not consider crisis situations, or draws on definitions developed for analysis of high-income countries, or is subsumed as one of a set of relationships across sectoral institutions (see, for example, Box 3.1).

While the term coordination may feature in the vast majority of research, policy and other documentation on social protection, it is rarely treated in a clear, robust and systematic manner. For the exceptions to this general rule, the less common, more granular, focused and detailed work provides a very patchy evidence base covering a small number of specific crises or countries.

Box 3.1: Typologies of ‘coordination’ in the International Labour Organization’s governance of social protection systems learning journey

As part of the International Labour Organization’s learning journey for governance of social protection systems, the module on coordination differentiates between coordination typologies. In each typology, however, coordination is something subsumed within a wider schema but not explicitly defined. Generally, with reference to social policies targeted at children and families, coordination is described as:

- One of three forms of collaboration, along with networking and integration (Winkworth and White 2011).
- One of five types of collaboration identified in the ‘Western world’: communication, cooperation, coordination, coalition and integration (Horwath and Morrison 2007).
- In the middle of a continuum from cooperation to integration, with coordination and collaboration in between (Sandfort and Brinton 2008).
- One of six types of relationship: communication, cooperation, coordination, collaboration, convergence and consolidation (Corbett and Noyes 2008).

3.3. Why is coordination an important question in crisis contexts?

There are strong arguments for good coordination in individual sectors, including social protection, the humanitarian sector, and other sectors such as climate and disaster risk management. However, these arguments tend to focus on intra-sectoral rather than inter-sectoral coordination and are rarely considered or applied to the ‘nexus’ – the situation in which these sectors intersect. Some of the arguments are still important because operations in the nexus still apply, so are worth highlighting here. But overall, there is little analysis in spaces where social protection, humanitarian assistance, and climate and disaster risk management operate side by side.

In the social protection sector, the International Labour Organization (ILO) points to the role of coordination in achieving results, defining it as ‘the harmonious functioning of parts for effective results’ (2021: 1). For social protection donors, McCord (2013) argues that initiatives:

> to engender greater coordination and harmonization within the donor community through the development of practical steps to enhance joint programming, with, for example, shared data gathering and analysis initiatives, joint evaluations and common situation analysis instruments… are required to increase efficiency. Efficiency is achieved where social protection systems and programmes can draw on and share the institutional expertise of the agencies most experienced and skilled in specific work and activities. Increased cooperation along these lines would also reduce the opportunity costs of donor engagement on the part of national governments through a reduction in the multiple parallel analytical, data gathering, financing, programming and reporting processes which currently characterize donor supported social protection provision.
> (McCord 2013: ix)

In the humanitarian sector, coordination of cash is viewed as ‘crucial to enable the envisaged scale-up of cash transfer programs and to ensure they are implemented in an effective and efficient way’ (Steets and Rupert 2017: 6). CALP (n.d.b) explores why coordination of cash transfer programming is important in the humanitarian sector, articulating the outcomes and impacts of coordination challenges. Coordination can also avoid the neglect of specific geographical locations or regions (Grun, Saidi and Bisca 2020), a common concern about humanitarian agencies in particular. SPaN (2019) note how government and United Nations (UN) agencies in Mali share responsibilities for social assistance, with the UN covering those areas which are hardest to reach and might otherwise become disenfranchised.

Coordination is viewed as especially important in FCAS, where evidence suggests that the quality of what is delivered matters as much as the quantity (Leader and Colenso 2005; Slater and Mallet 2017). Where the focus is on quantity only, with programming reaching for low-hanging fruit (especially those people and locations within easiest reach), there is a risk of fragmentation. This in turn creates problems of overlap, duplication, inconsistencies in transfer levels, gaps, exclusion and a lack of accountability, with deleterious impacts on recovery, peacebuilding and state-building, especially caused by raising people's expectations about social assistance provision and then failing to meet them. Fragmentation also limits economies of scale and efficiencies that could reduce operating costs, increase transfer coverage and levels, and contribute to overall programme sustainability in situations where instability is already a key limiting factor to the reliable, sustained delivery of programmes (Slater 2022).

Table 3.1: Effects of ad hoc cash coordination

Challenges created	Impacts
• Delays in setting up cash coordination mechanisms such as cash working groups (CWGs). • Limited engagement of strategic decision makers early in the response (cluster leads; inter-cluster coordinators (ICCs); humanitarian country teams (HCTs); governments). • No clear mandate or role in the formal coordination architecture (especially among the ICCs and HCTs) for CWGs mean they are useful for technical or operational aspects but lack ability to fulfil strategic coordination functions – especially where CWGs lack links to or representation in clusters. • No clear locus for the planning and coordination of multi-purpose cash grants (MPGs). • Limited mobilisation of resources needed for effective cash coordination. • No designated leadership between aid agencies. • Reliance on implementing agencies for coordination, meaning particular sectors and expertise tend to dominate coordination decisions – which should be collective, neutral and not linked to the needs of a single programme or actor. • Lack of adequate links to national social protection systems or inclusion of host governments and local civil society in decisions.	• Lack of harmonised approaches to assessment and design, creating confusion among beneficiaries. • Duplication of efforts among agencies, reducing cost efficiency of the response. • Inter-agency tensions, extensive negotiations and disagreements between agencies. • Reduced ownership and buy-in for CTP from sectors. • Constraints on developing quality cash responses for all needs, and on multi-sectoral approaches that integrate MPGs and other complementary assistance. • Reduced legitimacy or status of CWG decisions, in particular around intersectoral coordination and MPGs. • Lack of resources for institutionalising cash coordination mechanisms outside of active responses, limiting preparedness planning. • Lack of strategic, joint analysis and decision-making on cash, the use of MPGs, or where these sit within multi-sectoral response programming, especially where CWGs are not connected to the cluster system. • Delays or mixed messages as governments are not on board with or not up to speed with CTP.

Note: CTP = cash transfer programming; CWG = cash working group; HCT = humanitarian country team; ICC = inter-cluster coordinator; MPG = multi-purpose cash grant.
Source: Authors' own.

3.4. Why is coordination difficult?

Coordination depends on a level of trust and alignment of vision and approach that may be in short supply, especially in FCAS. This can be particularly common between international agencies and governments, where the agencies view the governments as predatory or as parties to conflicts (Carpenter, Slater and Mallett 2012) and as a result international agencies avoid rather than directly engage with risk (OECD 2014). Among international actors there are also challenges; in the social protection sector, around the time of the establishment of the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board, McCord (2013) argued for more joint programming and basket funding at the national level, but noted the challenges for donors that this implies:

> This would require agencies to give up a degree of institutional autonomy and influence in terms of policy choice, design and implementation and would require a deepening of trust and commitment between agencies than currently obtains, and the agreement of areas of common vision and overlap in the sector.
> (McCord 2013: ix)

Similarly, while the humanitarian sector generally is more cognisant of the problems of competition between agencies, especially among INGOs and within the UN, competition can still undermine coordination as different actors seek to ensure funding and achieve high visibility for their interventions.

In the humanitarian sector, 'cash coordination' emerged initially in an *ad hoc* manner, with cash working groups established by international agencies that vary in leadership and institutional set-ups (Steets and

Ruppert 2017), with little progress made by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in shifting coordination from technical questions to more strategic ones, such as how to create links to longer-term social protection programmes most effectively (*ibid.*). Smith *et al.* (2021), drawing on lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic, reflect on the absence of memorandums, partnership agreements and procedures or guidelines setting out roles and responsibilities, among other factors. Between international- and national-level actors, the (perceived) challenges of maintaining impartiality and neutrality in humanitarian responses can limit coordination, especially where governments are viewed as predatory or parties to violent conflict.

3.5. What is known about coordination of social assistance?

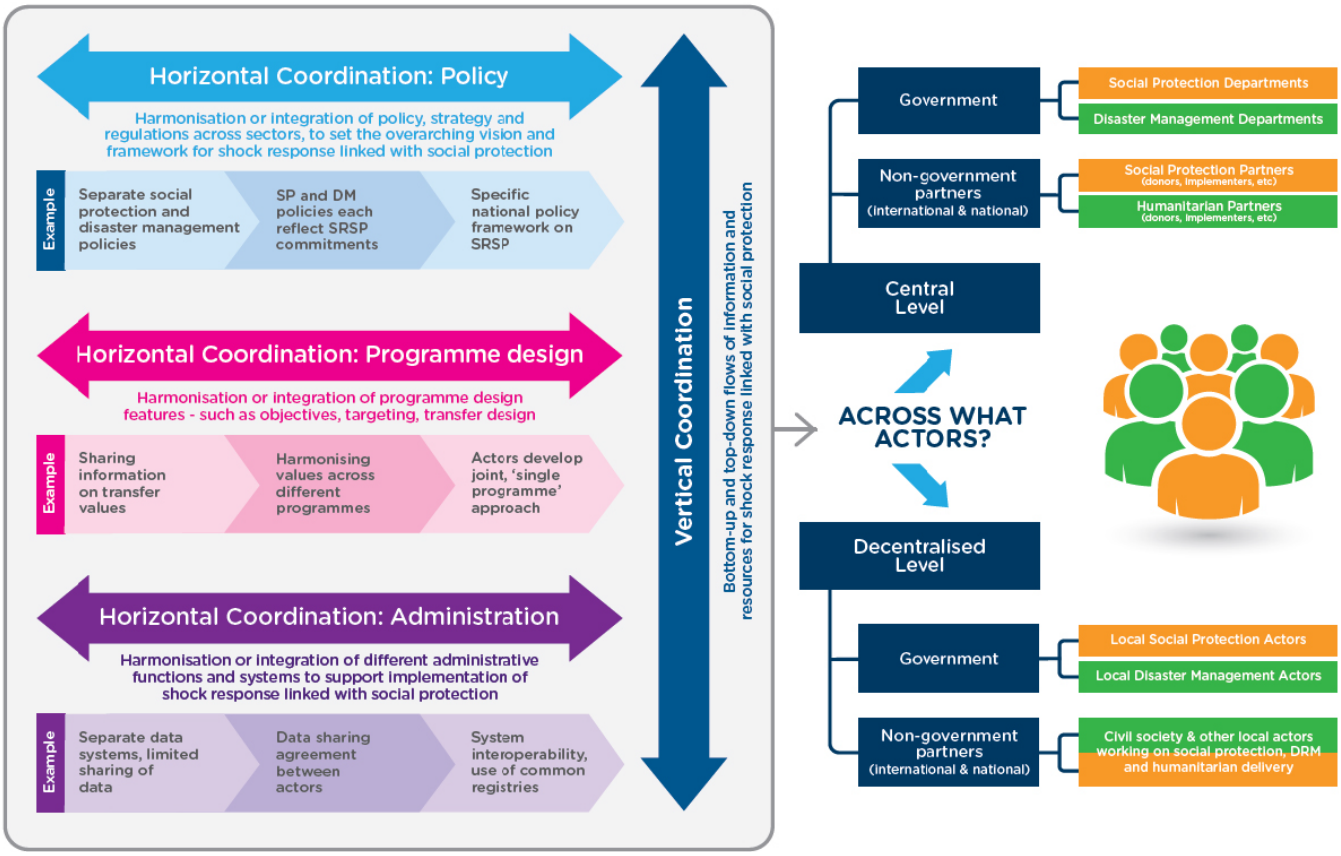
Coordination itself is rarely defined. Rather, it is assumed that audiences and stakeholders are all working to the same (unarticulated) definition. There are sectoral definitions, but these do not clearly translate to the space where humanitarian and social protection overlap. So, Smith *et al.* (2021) note that the TRANSFORM Social Protection Coordination Module describe coordination in the social protection sector as referring to: different stakeholders in policy, programming and delivery processes working together (conducting joint activities) with the aim of reducing vulnerability and alleviating poverty. It is defined in the module a*s 'the alignment and harmonisation of all stakeholder activities (at the programme and administration level) coherently and holistically to reach clearly identified and shared objectives'.*

Similarly, while there are definitions of coordination for the humanitarian sector as a whole, texts specifically focused on cash coordination do not define coordination. The High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers (ODI/CGD 2015) makes multiple recommendations about coordination but does not define what it means. The Cash Learning Partnership glossary (CALP n.d.a) does not include a definition of coordination nor does its *State of the World's Cash 2020* report (CALP n.d.b), which refers to variations on coordinat* 323 times. There is an assumption that everyone knows and agrees on what coordination is, but social protection and humanitarian cash sectors have not defined it, nor articulated its composite elements and features. CALP (*ibid.*: 67) notes that coordination of cash transfer programming remains 'ad hoc and contested… It is not clear which organization(s) should be responsible for CTP [cash transfer programming] coordination, or the extent to which the planning and coordination of MPGs [multi-purpose cash grants] should transcend sectors, and this limits progress'.

Across both humanitarian and social protection sectors it is often unclear what is being coordinated and through what mechanisms. Leader and Colenso (2005) note that coordination has become a catch-all term for a whole range of actions, from collaboration and information sharing between donors, to distribution of resources across humanitarian clusters, to a subset of actions to achieve harmonisation. Progress is being made to address this; in particular, for example, in the distinction between vertical and horizontal coordination made by Smith *et al.* 2021 (2); and in the ISPA CODI Diagnostic Tool (ISPA n.d.), where there is no explicit focus on FCAS, but nor is coordination defined.

There are multiple models for coordination of cash in the humanitarian sector, but only some offer prospects for linking humanitarian assistance with social protection. Among humanitarian agencies, cash and voucher transfers permeate multiple clusters, making them a cross-cutting coordination challenge rather than one that can easily be formalised. Steets and Ruppert (2017) identify multiple potential pathways or models for improved cash coordination – including inter-cluster/-sector coordination, wider reforms of humanitarian coordination architecture, independent cash working groups, intra-cluster coordination, and the creation of a separate cash cluster. Some pathways enable better coordination within the humanitarian sector, but Steets and Ruppert note that more ambitious structural changes (such as wider reform of humanitarian coordination architecture) are required if humanitarian cash and voucher assistance is to 'link more tightly to longer-term and government-led solutions' (*ibid.*: 24).

Figure 3.1: Levels and domains for coordination of shock-responsive social protection


Horizontal Coordination: Policy
Harmonisation or integration of policy, strategy and regulations across sectors, to set the overarching vision and framework for shock response linked with social protection
Example
Separate social protection and disaster management policies
SP and DM policies each reflect SRSP commitments
Specific national policy framework on SRSP
Horizontal Coordination: Programme design
Harmonisation or integration of programme design features - such as objectives, targeting, transfer design
Example
Sharing information on transfer values
Harmonising values across different programmes
Actors develop joint, 'single programme' approach
Horizontal Coordination: Administration
Harmonisation or integration of different administrative functions and systems to support implementation of shock response linked with social protection
Example
Separate data systems, limited sharing of data
Data sharing agreement between actors
System interoperability, use of common registries
Vertical Coordination
Bottom-up and top-down flows of information and resources for shock response linked with social protection
Government
Social Protection Departments
Disaster Management Departments
Non-government partners (international & national)
Social Protection Partners (donors, implementers, etc)
Humanitarian Partners (donors, implementers, etc)
Central Level
ACROSS WHAT ACTORS?
Decentralised Level
Government
Local Social Protection Actors
Local Disaster Management Actors
Non-government partners (international & national)
Civil society & other local actors working on social protection, DRM and humanitarian delivery

Source: Smith et al. (2021). OGLv3.0

The hierarchy of goals in relation to coordination is confused. In the absence of clear analytical frameworks, definitions and logical models, the hierarchy of terminology is confused and inconsistent. Coordination is simultaneously conceived of as an action and an outcome, as both a means and an end. Coordinat* can be deployed as a verb, adverb or noun. Terms such as coordination, harmonisation, alignment and interoperability are sometimes used interchangeably and at other times viewed separately. Schoemaker (2020) argue that increased interoperability could form the basis for a coordinated response. Owino (2020) suggests that ongoing harmonisation initiatives in Somalia provide opportunities for improving interoperability and sharing data. Pelly (2015) comments that 'goodwill and strong harmonisation efforts have been the driver of successful coordination outcomes as has the alignment of donors'. The examples in Box 3.1 from ILO (2021) add further variation. Overall, a lack of clarity on the sequencing of actions and outputs (i.e. whether coordination contributes to harmonisation or vice versa; whether greater interoperability enables better coordination or vice versa; and whether alignment results in a coordination outcome) results in confusion over what steps to take and in what order. In some cases, coordination is referred to as a means to an end – that end being more effective and efficient delivery of social assistance that in turn reduces hardship and improves the lives of poor and vulnerable households – but elsewhere coordination appears to be an end in itself.

Coordination is commonly treated as a technical rather than a strategic or governance issue. Steets and Ruppert (2017)'s survey of cash practitioners in the humanitarian sector notes that they predominantly identified technical challenges (Box 3.2). Technical elements could include partnerships, information sharing, harmonisation and standardisation among both humanitarian and social protection actors, but this is not explicitly spelt out, leaving the impression that the practitioners' preoccupation is with coordination within rather than outside the humanitarian sector.

Box 3.2: Requirements of cash coordination according to a survey of cash practitioners

Coordination requirements are predominantly technical:

- ‘Share information and lessons learned among aid organizations;
- Harmonize payment rates and targeting criteria;
- Standardize tools and delivery mechanisms;
- Build partnerships and negotiate jointly with the private sector;
- Conduct coordinated or joint assessments and monitoring for cash transfer programs;
- Identify gaps and avoid duplication;
- Conduct response analysis and make coordinated decisions on providing cash or in-kind assistance;
- Advocate for the appropriate use of cash in emergency situations with governments, donors and clusters;
- Establish links with host governments, including advocacy and connections to longer-term social protection programs.’

Steets and Ruppert 2017: 4.

As early as 2012, humanitarian cash actors were calling for differentiation between technical and strategic coordination issues when using cash transfers in emergency responses (Kauffman and Collins 2012). Steets and Ruppert (2017) find a little more cognisance of differences, noting that many actors divide cash transfer coordination functions into technical and strategic categories. However, although the distinction helps with recognising the different skill sets, expertise and levels of authority required for different activities, in practice they find that many coordination activities are not exclusively either technical or strategic. An example is harmonising payment rates, which ‘requires technical knowledge to determine the appropriate value, as well as strategic work to align payment rates with national social welfare programs’ (*ibid.*:10).

Coordination, especially in literature on shock-responsive social protection, and on linkages between humanitarian cash and voucher assistance and social protection, is understood in a highly practical, functional and instrumental way. Desportes, Mandefro and Hilhorst (2019), for example, highlight the discrepancies between the more visible ‘front stage’ of humanitarian action, which demonstrates an exemplary, neutral and technical response, and the ‘backstage’, where power dynamics intrude into decision-making and actions. A perspective that focuses on the technical and ignores what is happening backstage has significant limitations; for example, failing to understand where a specific structural/governance/political economy feature is blocking coordination or recognising that technical solutions may not be enough. Where politics, values, trust and so forth are discussed, there seems to be limited will or capacity to engage with them in depth. So, for example, we know little about whether coordination failures in social assistance in crisis situations result from information asymmetries, principal-agent problems or collective action failures, or some combination of all three. There are some insights from the literature – for example, Kedir (2011) focuses on principal-agent, collective action and other governance problems – but the governance literature has not been applied to the social protection sector, except in studies of countries that are relatively stable and not affected by conflict.

For social protection in FCAS, the view of coordination as a technical exercise is similarly problematic. Apart from work by the Effective Societies in Development Research Programme, which focuses primarily on non-conflict situations, there is little real depth to analysis of political features and institutional power relations that drive opportunities and obstacles to coordination. This is all the more surprising given that these issues receive substantial attention in other sectors such as health and education in FCAS. Concepts and theories from political economy analysis in low-income countries and fragile states are only rarely considered in relation to social protection, despite their potential application. Examples include: isomorphic mimicry, where one organisation (e.g. a group providing a coordination mechanism) copies the form of another, despite performing a different function; principal-agent challenges, where there is a conflict between the priorities of a person within a group and the agent representing them; premature loadbearing, where too much is asked too soon, often of a fledging service (such as social protection); and collective action failures, where the incentive to free-ride on the system outweighs the drawbacks and so hinders effectiveness (see, in particular, Pritchett, Woolcock and Andrews 2010). Other observations from the literature are listed below.

- **Data coordination is not only about registries and recipient data.** Grun *et al.* (2020) stress the critical role of logistics and intelligence insights, where the benefits of coordination are harder to quantify. In the case of the World Bank, they note that partnerships with humanitarian actors and the UN enhance access for social assistance operations and staff safety in hard-to-reach places. This is more challenging when working with and through national processes.
- **Both the humanitarian and social protection sectors face internal, sectoral coordination problems, which in turn make it difficult to precisely articulate what the specific coordination challenge is in the nexus of humanitarian and social protection.** There is a tricky paradox to navigate: part of the problem with coordination in the social protection and humanitarian sectors is that they already struggle to achieve intra-sector coordination, so prioritise an inward-looking approach to coordination that focuses on coordinating within their respective sectors rather than beyond them. For example, humanitarian actors focus on improving collaboration and coordination among themselves rather than with other sectors such as social protection. In the overlapping space between humanitarian and social protection, it is unclear whether there is a distinct coordination problem or whether it is some amalgam of the coordination problems in the two sectors.
- **Coordination challenges vary by geographical or governance unit.** For example, SPaN (2019) describes how the nature and extent of coordination should vary in Mali, with different configurations of actors in the north (where humanitarian and civil society organisations lead delivery and government provides a stewardship role) compared to the rest of the country. They stress the importance of defining and varying coordination mechanisms at national, regional and local levels.
- **Coordination is not just between organisations but between individuals in those organisations.** Pereznieto and Holmes (2020: 15) note that, across the Sahel, 'social protection, gender, protection, disaster response, climate and risk financing, and humanitarian specialists continue to operate in siloes'. A focus on individuals is also important in recognising that different people have varied capacities to coordinate (as discussed in section 2 of this paper) due to existing social and cultural norms, structural or motivational barriers, and skills gaps.

4. Towards a social assistance research agenda for capacity and coordination in situations of crisis

This paper has sought to distil what is known about capacity and coordination in FCAS. It finds a vast but frequently superficial literature, and goes on to identify frameworks for better understanding of capacity and coordination deficits, and what can be done about them in situations where social protection and humanitarian assistance intersect. This section proposes potential research questions for the BASIC Research programme.

It is difficult to read anything about social assistance, in either the humanitarian or development spheres, without hearing about capacity and coordination deficits undermining outcomes. However, the sheer quantity of literature mentioning capacity and coordination masks what is, in fact, very limited substantive assessment of capacity and coordination in FCAS beyond superficial diagnosis of problems. There are few clear analytical frameworks for understanding capacity and coordination challenges – especially in FCAS, where capacity is assumed to be weak and coordination problematic. In particular, for both capacity and coordination it is unclear whether each is a means or an end. This is a long-standing challenge for capacity: Over more than two decades the question of whether capacity development is a 'second-order means to first-order ends' or a development objective in its own right. (Morgan 1999; Lusthaus Adrien and Perstinger 1999).

It seems to increasingly be a problem for coordination initiatives, with lack of clarity over the logic of outputs and outcomes regarding coordination, harmonisation, interoperability and so on.

At the 2021 Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week, Nupur Ukreti of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) questioned whether those working in the overlapping humanitarian and social protection space frequently assumed a capacity deficit in governments but failed to actively and objectively assess national capacities to deliver social assistance in response to crises. So, it is clear that there is a knowledge gap: humanitarian and social protection stakeholders appear not to be actively investigating and exploring capacity in government, and seem to lack clear analytical frameworks – especially frameworks that go beyond technical elements to more political, structural and governance elements of coordination – to better articulate and tackle coordination problems.

The analyses of coordination and capacity that do exist rarely directly focus on issues specific to social assistance in climate change-vulnerable or conflict-affected contexts. There is some analysis of systems-building requirements in social protection to support climate change adaptation and response, especially within adaptive and shock-responsive social protection work, but much of it focuses on foundational and systemic social protection requirements, irrespective of climate change itself. There is also a substantial body of work on capacity and coordination in fragile contexts, but this is not about social assistance specifically. It does, however, provide useful concepts (e.g. isomorphic mimicry, premature loadbearing, principal-agent and collective action problems) that could be applied to support a better understanding of social assistance in FCAS.

There is more work to be done to develop a framework for understanding and tackling coordination challenges in the humanitarian-social protection space, but a framework for understanding capacity that focuses on competencies, capabilities and performance could help better understand the roots of capacity challenges, particularly in FCAS. As noted above, it could help to identify solutions focused beyond individual technical competencies, and rather on individual and organisational functional competencies and solutions that tackle behavioural, structural and environmental impediments to social assistance delivery. There is also a benefit to the BASIC Research agenda considering the temporal focus on how capacities are created, how they are used and how they are sustained in FCAS, to better understand the circumstances in which governments can best be supported to deliver social assistance to minimise the situations in which humanitarian agencies become the providers of last resort. A proposed research question is: '*How do competence, capability and performance challenges intersect to undermine social assistance delivery in crisis situations (and what steps can be taken to overcome this)?*'

For coordination, the lack of established, multi-faceted frameworks for assessing coordination that capture both technical or operational and governance or political or strategic elements of coordination, suggests that BASIC Research would do better to focus on action research with organisations delivering social assistance to: (1) build frameworks to better understand coordination challenges and capture their varied elements; (2) explicitly identify coordination challenges for overlapping humanitarian and government-led assistance; and (3) work out which coordination solutions lie in this overlapping space and which in the respective sectors themselves. CALP (2020) has stressed that:

> Coordination of linked programmes can be challenging in practice: linking humanitarian assistance to social protection systems requires the involvement of a range of actors with different mandates, concerns and priorities. It may need to bring together social protection and humanitarian response thematic areas within governments, donors and international organizations that more commonly operate as separate departments, with different mandates, sources of funding, and lines of reporting. It may also involve government departments responsible for managing any underlying databases/registries and setting programme regulations.
> (CALP 2020: 76)

While there is no disagreement about this overarching description of the coordination challenges i linking humanitarian and social protection programmes, what is missing is an understanding of how these challenges play out on the ground, in specific crises with particular configurations of stakeholders and with varied social protection programming regimes. Thus, the proposed research question on coordination is: '*What are the parameters of humanitarian-social protection coordination challenges in different crisis contexts and how can these be overcome?*'

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Annexe 1: Literature search

Literature searches of SCOPUS, Google Scholar and Google were carried out using the combinations of the keywords outlined in Table A1.1.

Table A1.1: Literature search approach – Capacity

Term 1: Social protection	Term 2: Capacity	Term 3: Other context	Term 4: Gender	Term 5: Country context
Social protection Social assistance Cash transfer Safety net	Capacity (capacity strengthen*) (capacity develop*)	Fragil* Conflict Climate resilien* Climate adapt*	Gender	Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Ethiopia Iraq Jordan Lebanon Mali Nigeria Niger Somalia South Sudan Syria Yemen

There were five main categories of terms. Varying combinations of the terms were searched together. This is to say that not each search was conducted using an entry for all five terms. Having a keyword for each of the terms narrowed the results considerably, so multiple searches were conducted, layering the terms to achieve a balance between generating too many or too few search results. For example, when the focus of the search was 'gender', using terms 1, 2, 3 (or 5) and 4 was often too restrictive and yielded very few results. Terms 3 and 5 were not used in the same searches because the countries in term 5 are of interest to BASIC Research because of their contexts. A follow-up search would then remove the context term and search for results using terms 1, 2 and 4. This would produce non-context-specific material that was then checked manually to see if it offered interesting material for the purposes of this paper under BASIC Research.

Finding the right balance required adjusting approaches in each of the search platforms to obtain optimum search results.

The main issues were that the term 'capacity' is a generic term and can be used in multiple ways, even in social protection. Refining the context to align with BASIC Research's focal contexts also proved restrictive because not all relevant literature was categorised using term 3. It required a more general search and a manual overview to collect results that were applicable. Likewise, results generated using specific country searches were intended to pick up grey literature, especially in Google searches.

The SCOPUS searches were restricted to title, keywords and abstracts because so many of the terms are too generic and might be used in multiple ways, even in work on social protection. We found that SCOPUS was very restrictive in producing relevant results.

In Google Scholar and Google, screening is more challenging because there are no mechanisms to restrict searches to title, keywords or abstracts. Therefore, only the first 15 pages of results were assessed for each search. In all cases, screening cut large numbers of results.

It should be noted that searches per combination of term were conducted simultaneously on SCOPUS, Google Scholar and Google, to allow for cross-referencing of results. This was required because assessment of results relied on manual checking. Cross-referencing results increased our confidence that checking only the first 15 pages of Google Scholar and Google was sufficient.

Literature searches of SCOPUS, Google Scholar and Google were carried out using the combinations of the keywords outlined in Table A1.2.

Table A1.2: Literature search approach – Coordination

Term 1: Social protection	Term 2: Coordination	Term 3: Other context	Term 4: Gender	Term 5: Country context
Social protection Social assistance Cash transfer Safety net	Coordinat* Co-ordinat*	Fragil* Conflict Climate resilien* Climate adapt*	Gender	Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Ethiopia Iraq Jordan Lebanon Mali Nigeria Niger Somalia South Sudan Syria Yemen

There were five main categories of terms. Varying combinations of the terms were searched together. Using all five terms narrowed the (useful) results considerably, so multiple searches were conducted, layering the terms to achieve a balance between generating too many or too few search results. For example, when the focus of the search was ‘gender’, using terms 1, 2, 3 (or 5) and 4 was often too restrictive and yielded very few results. Terms 3 and 5 were not used in the same searches because the countries in Term 5 are of interest to BASIC Research because of their contexts. A follow-up search would then remove the context term and search for results using terms 1, 2 and 4. This would then produce non-context-specific material that was then screened individually to see if it offered useful material for the purposes of this paper under BASIC Research.

Finding the right balance required adjusting approaches in each of the search platforms to obtain optimum search results.

As with ‘capacity’, the term ‘coordination’ is unhelpful in searching. Even screening titles and abstracts, it is not possible to distinguish whether a document includes a serious analysis of coordination. Refining the context to align with BASIC Research’s focal contexts also proved restrictive because not all relevant literature was categorised using term 3. It required a more general search and a manual overview to collect results that were applicable. Likewise, results generated using specific country searches were intended to pick up grey literature, especially in Google searches.

The SCOPUS searches were restricted to title, keywords and abstracts because so many of the terms were too general. SCOPUS produced few relevant results, perhaps indicating that work on coordination may be in predominantly grey, unpublished literature.

In Google Scholar and Google, screening is more challenging because there are no mechanisms to restrict searches to title, keywords or abstracts. Therefore, only the first 15 pages of the search results were assessed for each search. In all cases, screening cut large numbers of results.

It should be noted that searches per combination of term were conducted simultaneously on SCOPUS, Google Scholar and Google, to allow for cross-referencing of results. This was required because assessment of results relied on manual checking. Cross-referencing results increased our confidence that checking only the first 15 pages of Google Scholar and Google was sufficient.

Annexe 2: Vectors/dimensions of capacity and features of capacity frameworks

Capacity development is broadly recognised as: the improved or increased ability of individuals, groups, organisations and institutions to perform core functions and achieve desired results over time (Horton 2002; Wignaraja 2009); and to solve problems, define and achieve objectives, and sustainably meet development needs (Vallejo and Wehn 2016.) Capacity development is commonly characterised as a process: both non-linear and unstable (Zincke 2006), relating to internal growth (Morgan 1997) and focused on learning (Pearson 2011.) Widely noted as both a *means* and an *end* (Zincke 2006; Watson 2006), capacity is articulated as 'that emergent combination of attributes, capabilities and relationships that enables a system to exist, adapt and perform' (Keijzer *et al*. 2011), with capacity most commonly identified with performance or the *potential* to perform (Lavergne 2005 in Watson 2006).

Capacity development is frequently understood as specific and deliberate donor-led action – the sustainable ownership or effective absorption of technical assistance or resources (Dia 1996), with success dependent on stakeholder motivation and environmental context (Lusthaus, Anderson and Murphy 1995.) However there is equal recognition that due to its dynamic nature, capacity can develop and flourish in the absence of donor engagement or indeed any focused intervention (Vallejo and Wehn 2016). Taylor and Ortiz (2008) posit a more a dynamic, fluid conceptualisation wherein capacity development 'creates a sounding board to react to, challenge, learn and evolve hypotheses of change' over time.

A hierarchy of capacities has been articulated at different levels, typically featuring individual, organisation and institution. Additional levels identified include national and supranational (Horton 2002); network, state and societal (Neilson and Lusthaus 2007); policy and initiative (Berk and Rossi 1999; Know 1996 in Mackay *et al*. 2002); participatory (Lusthaus *et al*. 1999); and contextual (Morgan 1999). Many authors have pointed to the inter-connectedness and 'adaptive, complex, dynamic, chaotic' interrelations between the levels (Morgan 1997).

Montague (1997 in Mackay *et al*. 2002) also characterises capacity development by the *reach* or *intensity*[2] of interactions with clients or beneficiaries; while Robeyns (2006) incorporates a focus on degrees of *intentionality*.

Findings from the European Centre for Development Policy Management[3] revealed that concentration on performance (ability to generate development results) as a solitary aspect of capacity is inadequate. A broader range of capacity dimensions was identified, including the capacity to act and survive, to relate to other organisations and networks, to adapt and self-renew, and to achieve coherence. Most successful organisations exhibit a 'virtuous circle' featuring all five ECDPM dimensions of capacity, as illustrated in Table A2.1.

Table A2.1: ECDPM capacity dimensions – the 5 Cs

ECDPM capacity dimensions	Application in social protection
To produce results and performance	*Design responses, develop processes, establish mechanisms*
To survive (legitimacy)	*Raise awareness, create demand, empower access*
To relate	*Interoperability, cooperation across sectors*
To adapt and self-renew	*Adaptive soft capacities, knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation, demonstrate results to funders, public relations, political influencing, sustain and develop systems and management, continual*
To achieve coherence	*Evolution of mandate, quality, leadership*

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[2] Reach implies breadth of influence, number and type of client; intensity is associated with time, money and energy exerted.

[3] At a workshop in Maastricht, commissioned by the governance network of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee in the context of the Capacity Change and Performance research project.

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