
LINKING CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE WITH SOCIAL PROTECTION

A case study in Gaza

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In the Gaza Strip, 80% of the population receives humanitarian assistance. The level of need is overwhelming, and the political and socio-economic context has crippled the traditional social protection system. Efforts to build a stronger social protection system are under way, and cash interventions are on the rise.

This report explores the humanitarian cash assistance landscape in the Gaza Strip and how it interacts with social protection. It sets out a vision for a social protection architecture that supports coherence, protection, accountability and the building of resilient systems, and achieves complementarity between actors and programmes. The report also provides recommendations on how the implementation of programmes can be improved.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CVA	Cash and voucher assistance
CWG	Cash Working Group
GPC	Gaza Protection Consortium
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development
MPCA	Multipurpose cash assistance
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSR	National Social Registry
PA	Palestinian Authority
PMTF	Proxy means test formula
PNCTP	Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme
SRSP	Shock-responsive social protection
SPWG	Social Protection Working Group (under the LACS mechanism)
UVAT	Unified Vulnerability Assessment Tool

KEY TAKEAWAYS

PURPOSE

For more effective delivery of assistance to people in a context of complex crisis and to increase their resilience to future shocks, this case study explores the relationship between humanitarian cash and voucher assistance (CVA) and government social protection in Gaza. It discusses the current set-up, what the long-term goals for linking social protection and CVA might be and the short-, medium- and long-term steps needed to get there. The focus is on multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) and CVA that cover basic needs. More specifically, the topics addressed are:

- the similarities and differences between humanitarian CVA and the current social protection programmes in Gaza, and the benefits of linking them;
- understanding what the current system is working towards in terms of achieving equity, efficiency or fairness in the social protection system;
- policy and programme-related opportunities to align or integrate efforts;
- coordination needs and existing mechanisms;
- barriers to linking CVA and social protection;
- what nexus initiatives there are in CVA and social protection programming; and
- recommendations (short-, medium- and long-term) for policy and programme influencing coherent social protection programming.

BACKGROUND

The largest government-implemented social protection programme in the Gaza Strip is the Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme (PNCTP). At the same time, a proliferation of local and international actors also provide social assistance. These include various Arab, Western and other international donors and organizations, UN agencies and the Gaza Cash Working Group (CWG). The social protection ecosystem in Gaza can be described as fragmented, with the various social protection and CVA programmes differing in terms of purpose, duration, consistency, targeting and exiting. The Ministry of Social Development (MoSD)'s new plans include engaging CVA actors in increased collaboration.

METHODOLOGY

A total of 26 key informant interviews were conducted for this study to gather views, including those of the MoSD, humanitarian agencies, Arab donors, UN organizations, Western donors and social protection and CVA programme participants. A review of relevant documents was carried out and a validation workshop was held with key stakeholders.

FINDINGS

ENTRY POINTS

The highest level of cooperation is happening around the targeting of programme participants, with both Arab and Western agencies using MoSD lists. There are challenges resulting in some inefficiencies that need to be

addressed through better information sharing and increased communication, particularly at the strategic level; these are prerequisites for coordination. All parties agree that crucial communication and coordination are currently missing between many CVA actors and the MoSD; instead, temporary coordination and loose bilateral and multilateral linkages exist between them. Existing coordination mechanisms could be made more inclusive to bring together humanitarian agencies with the MoSD and UN agencies and better support nexus (interlinked humanitarian, development and peace programming). There is space for capitalizing on the experience of humanitarian agencies with CVA programmes and for greater transfer of technical expertise. There are upcoming opportunities for aligning CVA with government plans and the Social Development Sector Strategy. WFP and UNICEF are working in the social protection area by providing additional top-ups. Harmonized transfer values (the amount paid to participants) consistent with participant profiles and programme aims are also seen as important entry points.

BARRIERS

- Some of the barriers to linking CVA with social protection come from the limitations of the PNCTP itself. There is a lack of incentives for humanitarian agencies to link CVA with formal social protection. PNCTP has general limitations such as: it has limited type of data, it is not well updated, cash distribution process centralized with the Ministry of Finance that provides the final information on who receives the cash from the program and who is removed from the system. They also enjoy relative independence in their choices of targeting and implementation.
- A lack of technical alignment between institutions includes differences in data management and monitoring systems.
- With many actors engaged within the sector and with the recurrent nature of the emergencies, the MoSD requires further capacity strengthening and resources to continue leading a responsive and inclusive coordination mechanism. The absence of robust coordination mechanisms means that this task often depends on motivated individuals. Meanwhile, other actors are required to coordinate formally with the MoSD and other mutual actors.
- Politics and geographical division between the two different governments in Gaza and the West Bank complicate simple communication. The PNCTP is managed by the Palestinian Authority, yet it has a limited presence in Gaza. No-contact policies¹ also complicate coordination, while in addition, there are competitive tensions between stakeholders.

REFLECTIONS ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As the intention is to move away from an aid economy in the medium term, a planned process is needed to empower and capacitate the MoSD to take on its obligations as the national authority. Failure to support national institutions will risk prolonging aid dependency. Humanitarian agencies need to be included in consultations and planning in a complementary manner. Innovative economic interventions, with a focus on online efforts and seeking investments, are needed to cater for programme participants who could be economically productive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Improving coordination in this context will take time, and the recommendations are presented as a chronological process. Regularity, consistency and increased systemic accountability, given the governance structures available, will be more important than ambitious one-off efforts.

1 SOCIAL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN CVA IN GAZA: THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE

The situation in the Gaza Strip is constantly evolving, with implications for the population's economic and social status. In addition to the PNCTP, the largest government-implemented social protection programme, a proliferation of local and international actors provide social assistance in Gaza through cash and vouchers. These include various Arab, Western and other international donors and organizations, UN agencies and the CWG. The CWG is a non-operational coordination body that is part of the humanitarian coordination structure in Palestine, and it oversees multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) as one of its many CVA activities. According to the CWG 5Ws (who, what, when, where and why) from November 2021, 19 member organizations are currently implementing CVA within 45 projects across the Gaza Strip, working through local partners to address vulnerabilities across thematic sectors (Table 1).

Table 1: CVA actors operational in Gaza, according to the 5Ws

Organization	Number of CVA projects as of November 2021
ACTED	4
Action Against Hunger	3
AISHA Association for Women and Child Protection	2
Catholic Relief Services	2
Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe	1
Gaza Protection Consortium - Norwegian Refugee Council, Mercy Corps, Médecins du Monde France, and Humanity & Inclusion	1
Humanity & Inclusion	1
Islamic Relief	3
Mercy Corps	3
Norwegian Refugee Council	1
Oxfam	2
Palestine Association for Education and Environmental Protection	1
Palestinian Al Nakheel Association for Progress and Development	1
Première Urgence Internationale	3
Save the Children	7
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	1
United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)	5
United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)	2
WEFAQ Society for Women and Childcare	1
Women's Affairs Center – Gaza	2
ANERA (not in the 5Ws)	
Total	45

UN agencies UNRWA, WFP, UNICEF and the International Labour Organization (ILO) work with CVA programming and social protection either through direct implementation to cover the basic needs of the population and provide social security, or by supporting the MoSD to undertake this role. Several Arab donors and organizations have implemented or are currently implementing cash interventions, most notably the Government of Qatar, with monthly support of \$100 apiece to around 95,000 poor families in Gaza. There have been some connections

between actors, but programmes remain independent of one another, and actors are largely unaware of each other's actions and targeting mechanisms, so that implementation is uncoordinated. The social protection ecosystem can hence be described as fragmented.

2 FRAMING THE CONVERSATION AROUND LINKING CVA WITH SOCIAL PROTECTION

This paper frames the conversation regarding the links between CVA and social protection.

The topic may be approached with the assumption that linking CVA and social protection is automatically desirable, with the implication that CVA and social protection should move closer together. However, this may overlook a nuanced discussion on **complementarity**. In practice, **CVA and social protection have different purposes and there is a valuable space between them**, begging the question: in which situations, what kind of linking is desirable and what is not?

Linking social protection and CVA can be understood in a variety of ways, from adopting identical modes of functioning to **increased cooperation within a larger ecosystem of social assistance where actors' diversified roles leave space for operational differences**. The understanding in this case study is the latter, though the implications of both are discussed throughout the paper. Either way, it is crucial that moving forward, stakeholders articulate their intended meaning, because assumptions regarding the meaning of increased linkages will affect the willingness of actors to work towards this goal.

Third, **any future alignment of CVA and social protection requires an understanding of the current relationship in relation to a goal**. A simplified model of CVA and social protection places long-term, government-led social protection at one end of a spectrum and short-term emergency support at the other (Figure 1). Five key characteristics set these two things at either end of the spectrum: purpose, duration, consistency, targeting and exit from the programme.

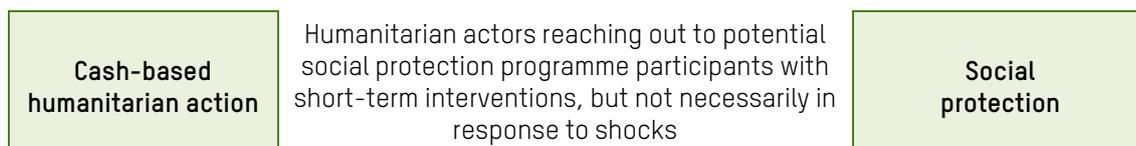
Figure 1: Simplified model of CVA and social protection

	CVA	What's in between?	Social protection
<i>Purpose</i>	To meet one-off urgent needs resulting from a shock		To contribute to regular ongoing household expenses
<i>Duration</i>	Short-term		Extended
<i>Consistency</i>	A single payment or a limited intervention		Ongoing, consistent and predictable support
<i>Targeting</i>	Poverty plus specific criteria (including but not always restricted to the impact of the shock)		Poverty
<i>Exit</i>	Everyone exits at the end of the intervention		Graduation is rare and usually driven by a change in household circumstances

The protracted nature of the crisis in Gaza has shaped the space in between, and this is currently filled by a variety of medium and long-term support provided by international (both Arab and Western) donors and humanitarian organizations (Figure 2). The situation is further complicated by factors such as the government handing out ad hoc payments during emergencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) targeting the

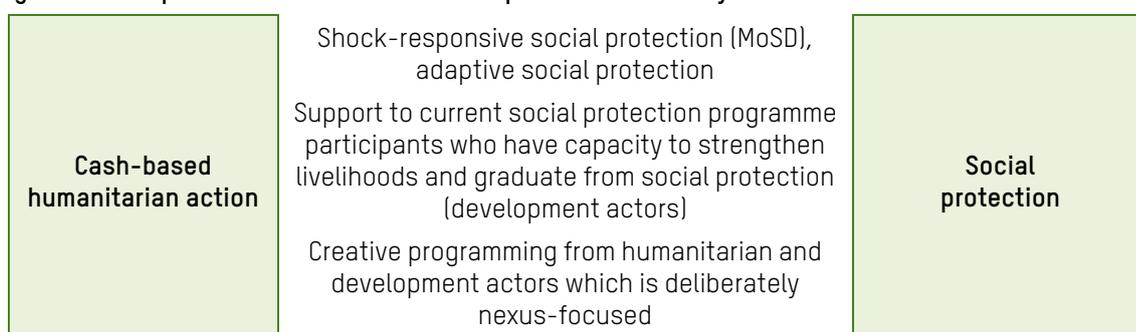
PNCTP waiting list. Repeated CVA programmes have blurred the boundaries between CVA and social protection because they serve a similar target group and are not limited to helping people recover from a shock.

Figure 2: The space between CVA and social protection – now



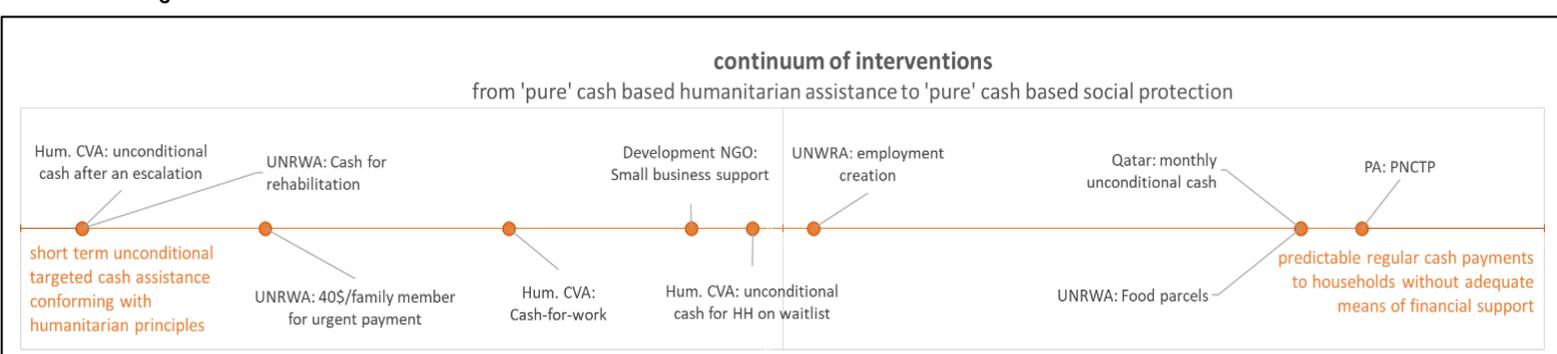
In the ideal scenario, shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) would see a well-funded and well-functioning social protection system take over some of the space currently occupied by CVA (Figure 3). However, this is not realistic now or in the near future, notably due to the social protection system's inability to cater for the number of people in need (the limitations are discussed below). This case study discusses navigating the relationship between social protection and CVA in the immediate and medium term, with the long-term view of achieving a solid SRSP system.

Figure 3: The space between CVA and social protection – ideally



The continuum illustrated in Figure 4 shows the various cash programmes currently in operation 'scored' against the five criteria – purpose, duration, consistency, targeting and exit from the programme – by the consultant team, based on information provided through the document review and interviews. All scores are subjective and provide an approximate visual location of each programme on the continuum. The programmes shown are selected as indicative examples of programme types and are not intended as an exhaustive list. The continuum shows the variety of programmes in terms of purpose, duration and consistency.

Figure 4: Continuum of interventions



The scoring shows the differences between various CVA and social protection programmes in the Gaza Strip in terms of the five criteria. Although social assistance players in Gaza are considered to be working towards similar objectives in terms of reducing poverty and vulnerabilities, they have different characteristics, agendas, funding sources and delivery mechanisms. The key similarities and differences are illustrated in Table 2. In addition, an important difference between Western donors and agencies and their Arab counterparts is that Arab donors/agencies are not restricted by no-contact policies, which restrict Western actors in dealing with the authorities.

Table 2: Comparison between types of CVA and social protection programmes

	CVA by UN agencies and Western NGOs	Arab donors	PNCTP
<i>Purpose</i>	Various: as a complementary safety net for very vulnerable households, employment schemes, shelter reconstruction, emergency response, etc.	Improvement of living conditions and poverty reduction	Poverty reduction
<i>Geographic scope</i>	Varies with institution and programme	Gaza	National: Gaza Strip and West Bank
<i>Frequency</i>	Typically monthly	Monthly	Quarterly: every three months
<i>Duration</i>	Short-term, 3–6 months	From five months to one year	Ongoing
<i>Value</i>	Depending on the programme – noticeably higher than PNCTP	\$100	NIS 750–1,800 (\$224–539)
<i>Conditionality</i>	May be conditional	None	None
<i>Targeting</i>	Selection according to vulnerability criteria, could be using MoSD lists; often excludes households receiving assistance from other sources	Criteria related to unemployed youth, breadwinners, partly those not receiving PNCTP payments; using MoSD lists	Proxy means test formula (PMTF). Details and weighting are not open information, but data collected includes household assets and 'poverty indicators'
<i>Information sharing/ coordination</i>	CWG, GPC, anonymized donor data	Bilaterally with the MoSD; recently with WFP	Information sharing through the Social Protection Working Group (SPWG); donors; bilaterally with actors

3 SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

The Palestinian national cash transfer programme (PNCTP) is the MoSD's main social protection programme, and also the focus of this case study. Besides the PNCTP, the MoSD offers other social protection services on a smaller scale, including support to small enterprises, health insurance and psychological and social support for women and girls; however, to date, most of these have been implemented only in the West Bank. Other parts of the MoSD's work receive dedicated financing from the Arab League. Social protection support in Gaza in 2021 targeted the following groups:

- 2,629 children exposed to violence;
- 244 children in orphanages;
- 105 children of unknown parentage;
- 170 multiple birth children of three (triplets) or more;
- 450 students in vocational centres;
- 127 teenagers involved in crimes;
- 1,000 elderly people;

- 2,561 disabled persons;
- 30,000 women, including 4,254 divorcees, 12,843 widows, 3,829 single and 670 separated women, 386 women suffering from domestic violence and 8,105 other women more generally;² and
- 58,000 households receiving health insurance.³

The PNCTP is considered to be a lifeline for 115,683 households across the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT); of these, 79,629⁴ (68.8%) are in Gaza, with 21% of Gazans depending on the quarterly payment.⁵ The programme is funded by the European Union (40–60%), the Palestinian Authority (PA) (40%) and the World Bank, which has provided close technical support since 2010. The PNCTP selects programme participants using the proxy means test formula (PMTF), which classifies households as living in 1) deep poverty, 2) poverty or 3) out of poverty, based on expenses and consumption data. Data for the 34 variables used in the selection calculation are weighted and the value of assistance of NIS 750–1,800 (\$224–539) is determined. The PMTF is complemented by verification visits which inform the final decision.

As part of the wider political landscape, the national social protection programme is subject to an internal division between the West Bank and Gaza, the former of which is governed by the PA from Ramallah and the latter by the de facto authorities. The governments in the West Bank and Gaza signed an agreement to implement the national social protection programme under the leadership of the PA's MoSD with its local representatives in the Gaza Strip. The effect of this division on the PNCTP is seen in differences in implementation between the two regions: for example, capacity, skills and the number of available staff in Gaza are lower than in the West Bank and do not yet seem to match the requirements of the new approaches that are planned.

Theoretically, the PNCTP is well set up and is able to cover 40% of households identified as poor and 80% of those identified as deeply poor.⁶ Practically, however, its efficiency is low and it is estimated that it is reaching only 44% of households in deep poverty.⁷ It has been shown to reduce poverty rates by 11.4% and rates of extreme poverty by 20%.⁸ Internal and external factors hamper the PNCTP's efficiency, including lack of funding, the political division, the high level of needs, and potential errors of 20% in the PMTF inclusion and exclusion mechanism, which affect in particular elderly people and disabled persons – although by international standards these margins are considered to be acceptable. In addition to the high rate of exclusion/inclusion errors, social protection services are failing to reach some poor households because the PMTF weightings in Gaza are reportedly known by social workers and are manipulated to favour inclusion for social assistance.

The immediate obstacle that the cash-strapped PNCTP faces is meeting its financial commitments: the economic and financial crisis, combined with heightened needs, prevented the programme from fulfilling its obligations towards those it was meant to support in 2021, when only one of four payments was given out. The programme's reliance on external financing, which has an uncertain future, remains a major threat. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) makes decisions about PNCTP payments and the execution of the budget, and this can have a negative impact on the programme's budget commitments. Most stakeholders consider that the PNCTP has not demonstrated an ability to respond effectively during crises such as the war of 2014 and COVID-19, where its response has been slow and has not matched the high level of needs. It lacks plans for emergencies, but UNICEF is responding to this with a shock-responsive readiness assessment.

MoSD communication around the social protection programme has been limited. The complaints system has been limited to a neglected complaints box, without any follow-up procedures and the programme does not reach out to potential participants, relying mainly on people seeking help. However, the MoSD, with support from the World Bank, is taking steps to improve communication. These efforts will address communication with other stakeholders and with the community, complaints management, and how to identify and reach out to potential participants.

The PNCTP is undergoing significant development, supported by the World Bank, to meet the needs of households more comprehensively, to support the transition from relief to development and to coordinate social assistance efforts by different actors. The MoSD is broadening its focus from monetary poverty to a multidimensional poverty approach that considers family size, the elderly and disabled, and links households to appropriate services. The National Social Registry (NSR), launched in December 2021, is described by the MoSD as the first place where applicants' data is entered on the system. This is a unified and interoperable database for processing, monitoring and documenting data and interventions linking with key public institutions such as the

Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Interior and private sector and NGO service providers, enhancing the optimal use of resources and coordination between relevant actors.⁹ Case management of programme participants will be introduced and carried out by professional counsellors, covering various social issues including protection, elderly people, children, early childhood, disability, and so on, with referrals to services provided by local community-based organizations or service providers, whose expenses will be covered by the MoSD. These new approaches have not yet been implemented in the Gaza Strip.

4 ENTRY POINTS TO LINKING CVA WITH SOCIAL PROTECTION

In a context where resources are scarce and donor fatigue with humanitarian funding is growing, there has been a general agreement that linking CVA and social protection is not just a convenient slogan but an essential step for the better use of existing resources and to strengthen Gaza's fragile social protection system. In addition to improved management of financial resources, the expected benefits of linking the two include reducing duplication, enhancing coverage and increasing the fairness and effectiveness of assistance provided.

The three principal linkages (targeting, additional top-ups, and technical assistance) are outlined below, followed by a discussion of additional possible entry points to establish linkages and integration across the social protection system.

1. **Targeting:** Humanitarian CVA actors, Arab donors and UN agencies mainly use lists of programme participants received from one of the ministries (MoSD, Ministry of Agriculture, or Ministry of Housing, depending on the project), which often include people on the waiting list for the PNCTP. This can be seen as 'horizontal expansion' of social protection. Organizations have additional sectoral focuses (protection, nutrition/food security) that guide their selection processes, whereas the PNCTP's current focus is solely on poverty, although it has been developing a shift to a multidimensional poverty approach that considers other vulnerabilities. The CWG and the MoSD have developed a Unified Vulnerability Assessment Tool (UVAT) that allows any humanitarian agency to run the data it has collected through the MoSD's PMTF and apply the organization's sector-specific criteria. The UVAT system also cross-checks for households assessed previously in the system. However, most humanitarian agencies do not use UVAT and some do not use MoSD lists, preferring to support vulnerable people of their own selection. Some Arab donors use separate targeting criteria defined by the MoSD instead of solely supporting participants in the PNCTP, in a deliberate attempt not to replace government efforts; for example, about a third of the Qatari programme participant caseload are from the PNCTP list.

The MoSD discourages parallel selection criteria outside of social protection and intends to centralize the selection of programme participants through the NSR. The use of additional non-poverty indicators could, on the one hand, improve targeting by better distinguishing needs, but it could also increase the number of known needs and add to an already unmanageable burden. Some actors promote social protection targeting of programme participants based on categories (e.g. elderly people, households with children under five) rather than poverty.

A number of practical issues give rise to criticism and frustration in the area of targeting:

- Partners have concerns about challenges in response efforts during emergency times related to potential affected beneficiaries' lists. These challenges include maintaining up-to-date information, duplication between actors, and lack of quality of data.
- Some humanitarian agencies and UN agencies question the validity of the PMTF as a selection tool even though the NSR is expected to improve targeting. In addition, the lack of funding for identified families will continue to hamper the PNCTP's functioning regardless of its accuracy.
- Unifying targeting criteria could mean the cessation of aid to some people currently targeted by humanitarian agencies who are not on MoSD lists, which may overlook some of those in need of assistance. Changes to social protection moving away from a focus on poverty could have the same effect

on extremely poor people who do not fall into a vulnerable category; as one person receiving PNCTP payments stated: 'MoSD cash assistance, even if insufficient, is important to cover household expenses.'

2. **Additional top-ups** are provided by some UN agencies to participants in the PNCTP (vertical expansion) and have related operational links. For example, WFP provides top-up payments to increase the transfer value of PNCTP payments, and UNICEF also provides child-sensitive top-ups.
3. **Technical support** and capacity sharing with the MoSD, notably by donors and international institutions, on strategic questions such as the renewal of the National Social Development Strategy (see endnote 9), technical and sectoral issues and implementation to improve the PNCTP can also be an issue. Not all topics are considered appropriate for humanitarian agencies to offer to the MoSD, such as information management.

Other possible entry points include the following:

1. **Better information sharing and increased communication** go hand in hand with building trust and are essential to improving coordination. All parties agree that crucial communication and coordination are currently missing between many CVA actors and the MoSD, with just temporary coordination and loose bilateral and multilateral linkages in place. Horizontally, there is some coordination between Arab donors (the Qatar committee)¹⁰ and the MoSD/Gaza and communication between some Western donors and INGOs with the MoSD in Ramallah. Different relationships can be discerned between the MoSD and the international community: Arab and some Western donors and UN agencies have closer relations with the MoSD, and they share information more readily than Western INGOs. The social protection programme is also better understood by UN agencies and donors that work closely with the system. NGOs experience difficulties in obtaining information about how social protection works and what their expected role is. Information includes decisions made at the MoSD level on approaches to targeting, approaches to responding to needs, changes in structures, etc. The MoSD says that there is a lack of reciprocity and that it does not receive feedback from CVA actors about which programme participants on its lists they have targeted, meaning that the lists are out of date. A key strategic priority in Gaza is the interface between humanitarian agencies and the MoSD in Ramallah and the local authorities in Gaza, with workarounds needed for the no-contact policy.

UNRWA provides a parallel assistance system serving the refugee population, but it has limited participation in coordination mechanisms and other actors know very little about its activities. Parallel systems lead to some tension and confusion among the population. New coordination was recently established between WFP and Qatari grant payments to poor households, which is a good starting point that could be built on. Attempts at collaboration also occurred between all parties to cope with and respond to COVID-19.

Meaningful dialogue about communication channels and differences in approach and practices is necessary, through multilateral meetings, to solidify robust working relationships and develop solutions to complex problems. Identifying the expectations, roles and objectives of each party will assist in understanding the concerns, opportunities and threats of working together and reduce assumptions about and mistrust of other actors. Contradictory information about the willingness of the parties to collaborate or share data has resulted from individual conflict, competing agendas and some actors being keen to keep the situation as it is. However, the underlying win-win situation, whereby both governments want funds and Western and Arab international organizations want information, sets a foundation for cooperation.

2. **Making existing coordination mechanisms more inclusive.** Existing coordination structures do not bring together all the actors needed to avoid fragmentation of the social protection landscape. The Social Protection Working Group (SPWG) under the Local Aid Coordination Secretariat (LACS) is chaired by the MoSD and EU, with technical support from UNICEF. The group has hitherto not included NGOs, and there have been discussions about inviting the CWG to participate in the SPWG as a representative of humanitarian agencies. However, this risks further excluding local NGOs, which have previously raised concerns about humanitarian coordination meetings being held in English, hence excluding Arabic speaking actors. In addition, coordination between the CWG and the MoSD over UVAT has not resulted in broad uptake among CWG members, so dealing with the CWG alone may not be sufficient. The SPWG has seen many attempts to include Arab donors, zakat and solidarity funds, but this has not been fruitful. Separate liaison efforts between the MoSD and stakeholders using different coordination mechanisms are commendable for their effort but can be exclusive and contribute to fragmentation. Actively expanding an existing structure such as the SPWG could help to bridge the gap between social protection and CVA actors and government departments.

3. **Harmonized transfer values that are consistent with participant profiles and programme aims.** Currently, transfer values differ between social protection (PNCTP), Arab donors and humanitarian agencies, while CWG members use a commonly agreed methodology based on the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB). There are significant differences in the amounts distributed by different projects, which are inconsistent with the poverty status of programme participants, calling into doubt the 'fairness' of the overall ecosystem. For example, families receiving assistance from the PNCTP assumed to be below the poverty line received just one payment in 2021 of NIS 750–1,800 (\$ 224 - 539) In contrast, those on the waiting list who were targeted by an NGO could have received more than three times this amount. This does not necessarily mean that all transfer values should be the same, as programme purposes differ (e.g. long-term vs short-term support). However, programme participants in similar situations should receive similar support consistent with the programme's aims, including long-term support to those living with chronic poverty, supplementing the PNCTP or recovery from shocks.
4. **Aligning CVA with government plans and the Social Development Sector Strategy.** Communication between stakeholders and the MoSD remains predominantly at the operational level and in the form of information sharing at SPWG meetings. Some UN agencies and donors provide strategic support, but strategic coordination has otherwise been limited. Aligning CVA with government plans and strategies under a participatory approach would require consultation and joint planning. CVA is part of the MoSD's strategy¹¹ and some activities and indicators could be carried out in conjunction with CVA actors, for example, in joint monitoring and evaluation. The renewal of the strategy is an opportunity to look at converging points, and all actors could take credit for any success. UN agencies are already involved in this process, but NGOs do not seem to be. Since the NSR seeks to engage with NGOs, it is crucial to include them in the planning phase.
5. **Further transfer of technical expertise from humanitarian agencies to the government.** Humanitarian agencies have learned lessons from experimenting with different transfer modalities and implementation methods. One example of how the MoSD could apply these lessons would be to strengthen its payment system. Expertise could be transferred through secondments, which have already taken place, or through different forms of technical support.

Upcoming initiatives present opportunities to improve harmonization between actors and to work towards an effective social assistance ecosystem:

- The MoSD sees the NSR as an entry point for all existing social assistance programmes to better cooperate for increased efficiency and to make additional services available to programme participants. This could be an opportunity for more links between Gaza-based projects and the national social protection system to share data and coordinate efforts. However, the process of developing the NSR has not been very inclusive, and NGOs are unclear about what their expected engagement with it is.
- The EU-funded Nexus project,¹² implemented by the ILO and Oxfam, aims to bring together all relevant social protection actors under existing coordination mechanisms.
- A renewal of the national Social Development Sector Strategy is planned for 2023, which covers the PNCTP and the role of CVA. This process could be enhanced through consultations and discussions with a wide range of CVA partners.
- The social assistance roadmap for operationalizing the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus in Palestine for 2021–24¹³ lays out key participatory steps for addressing areas for improvement.
- Other improvements to the PNCTP are supported by the World Bank, such as communication with programme participants.

5 BARRIERS TO LINKING CVA WITH SOCIAL PROTECTION

Lack of incentives for humanitarian agencies to link CVA with social protection: humanitarian agencies have some reluctance to what linking CVA with a social protection system could entail, despite recognising that humanitarian aid should complement country systems. Agencies have often expended considerable time and effort to develop technically sound delivery mechanisms, and the changes required to align with social protection would risk downgrading their quality. Without any detail on how they would align, they do not believe that this will necessarily achieve better results. In addition, agencies are required by humanitarian principles to protect the best interests of programme participants. These factors make certain compromises, such as using MoSD targeting or transfer values, difficult for humanitarians to accept. For example, the PNCTP-aligned UVAT selection system has not gained traction as agencies would have had to adopt a new standardized assessment and scoring process for MPCA.

Humanitarian principles could be used to argue both for and against linking CVA with social protection: independence and protection of programme participants on one side, and effective and sustainable aid delivery on the other.

A restricted official presence in the Gaza Strip: The internal political division within the MoSD in Gaza can be seen as an extension of the overall Palestinian division. This has resulted in no common vision for an inclusive coordination mechanism between different stakeholders. For example, the official presence of the MoSD in its current form in Gaza allows for loosely linked efforts between stakeholders to take place in the social protection sphere. There was a recent positive agreement to have the MoSD in Ramallah represented in Gaza by official personnel to improve the coordination and collaboration between the de-facto government in Gaza and the official Ramallah government. It is hoped that this agreement will provide increased steer and direction for all stakeholders.

The fragmentation and siloed provision of services results in a lack of synergy and duplicated efforts, which hinders the achievement of comprehensive poverty reduction goals. The shortage of funding is one factor, and without financing the implementation of social protection and the new NSR, which brings together social protection efforts, remains theoretical. In addition, the definition of the complementary way in which CVA actors should work in relation to the social protection system is complicated by the instability of the system. Budget crisis that the PA is suffering from places extra burden on social protection programmes as it is not being prioritized for funding. Some donors intervene directly in Gaza through infrastructure and construction projects or fund NGOs. All stakeholders expect high levels of transparency from the MoSD and, in some cases, are hesitant about accepting the MoSD as a central coordinating force, while recognizing that that would be ideal. This includes programme participants interviewed for this case study, among whom the idea of linking Western or Arab CVA with social protection raised concerns about favouritism, dishonesty and inefficiency.

Political and geographical division with two different governments: social protection is directly managed by the PA in the West Bank, while in Gaza the de facto government and representative staff of the PA carry out activities. Even though there are PA personnel in the MoSD in Gaza, most of the staff are from the de-facto government and communication is variable. Although there are clear lines of communication between the de-facto personnel and Ramallah personal, political instability can affect these communication lines. Some Arab donors only have a presence in Gaza, complicating their participation in coordination mechanisms based in Ramallah. The political and geographical divisions make communication and coordination difficult, rendering such efforts slow and complicated. The PNCTP's shift to multidimensional poverty has started in the West Bank with support from UNICEF, the ILO and WFP are going to introduce targeted services for disabled and elderly people. However, this multidimensional shift has not begun in Gaza.

Reliance on individual action in the absence of inclusive and comprehensive coordination mechanisms: The energy-consuming nature of coordination and the lack of a clear and inclusive coordination mechanism mean that coordination efforts rely on individuals believing in the importance of the issue. Individuals who hold key

coordination positions within the different representative parties are not always able, competent or aware of the actions needed, which hinders coordination efforts.

Lack of technical alignment between institutions: There is no clear resolution for the issue of transfer values, where raising them is financially unmanageable for the government and lowering them is unacceptable for humanitarian agencies and donors. The MoSD's poverty targeting differs from the targeting of the humanitarian sector. Arab donors are not traditionally part of coordination efforts as they approach aid to Palestine from a different angle. Humanitarian agencies follow standards in areas of work such as data management and monitoring that would raise the bar above what might be manageable for the PNCTP.

Competitive tensions: Regardless of intention, humanitarian agencies compete with the MoSD for funding and credibility. This competitive set-up needs to be recognized and addressed and efforts made at rapprochement. There are also contradictory ideas regarding the role of humanitarian agencies, and the lack of communication means that there is no space available to resolve misunderstandings. Conflicting agendas and a lack of coordination between donors also limit the ability to unite CVA efforts.

No risks were identified in linking social protection and CVA in principle. Still, if this is not done carefully, it could result in lower-quality support, a lack of accountability and assistance not reaching those in need.

6 POLICIES

The PNCTP is not grounded in legislation but it features in the National Social Development Strategy, last updated in 2021. However, the policies are little known to humanitarian agencies and other actors. The value of a legal framework is debatable given the stalled political and democratic processes, where all policies are passed by presidential decree. However, the planned 2023 update to the Social Development Sector Strategy provides an opportunity to include entry points for improved institutional arrangements regarding CVA and social protection links. In the Palestinian context, social protection is easily politicized, and political interests are seen to prioritize other issues, challenging effective policy change. The political division also hampers advocacy efforts. Public government documents reflect the intention to coordinate social protection efforts under a single umbrella, but until now this has not been seen in the experience of humanitarian agencies.

7 NEXUS INITIATIVES

Nexus initiatives have focused on developing a shock-responsive social protection system, but these efforts are only in their early stages. The MoSD's new approaches are contributing to the transition from relief to development and driving a shift towards a rights-based, cross-sectoral and shock-responsive model. The EU has drafted a social assistance roadmap for operationalizing the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus in Palestine for 2021–2024. It is meant to be led by the MoSD and is still being discussed. Oxfam is working on enhancing the responsiveness of the social protection system, including international communities and national organizations, through implementing social policy with a focus on SRSP. Oxfam supports continuous dialogue between all parties to inform a policy in which cross-nexus efforts can be harnessed to meet nationwide targets related to the provision of social protection. UNICEF is planning to conduct a shock-responsive readiness assessment that will examine the response of the social protection programme, including different aspects of financing, human resources (HR), data management, real-time monitoring and follow-up, and the legal framework and agreements.

The EU is funding the ILO, UNICEF and Oxfam to work with the government to strengthen cross-nexus coherence and responsiveness in the Palestinian social protection sector and to enhance coordination across government and non-governmental actors and initiatives to increase programmatic coherence for multi-year planning and

financing strategies.¹⁴ The MoSD has shown interest and a desire to improve the links between social protection and CVA interventions; however, the general challenges have hindered efforts to bring together the main actors for open dialogue about the nexus and mechanisms for enhancing SRSP. Fragmented funding sources for humanitarian and development causes make it difficult to measure the nexus and bridge the gap between interventions.

There is increasing realisation that nexus programming is relevant and required in emergency response set ups and plans. During the May escalation of conflict, humanitarian agencies struggled to obtain quality lists of vulnerable and affected people, and insufficient coordination between government departments led to delays. Humanitarian agencies have stated that if lists of programme participants are available, they can respond to an emergency within 24 hours. This highlights the importance of establishing preparedness measures to allow for smoother transition from relief to development,

8 REFLECTIONS ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE SOCIAL PROTECTION ECOSYSTEM

Opinions differ on the role of the MoSD in linking and coordinating CVA with social protection and also differ on whether it is appropriate for NGOs and INGOs to lead such initiatives. These perspectives cannot be easily reconciled. The authors believe that, as the intention is to move away from an aid economy in the medium term, a planned process is needed to empower and capacitate the MoSD as the national authority. This view is supported by the fact that this is a protracted crisis in a middle-income country whose administration is mostly functioning, where it is counter to good humanitarian practice for agencies to lead.¹⁵ Failure to support national institutions will risk prolonging aid dependency and will prioritize short-term results over long-term ones.

The MoSD can have a greater influence to demonstrate its effectiveness through strengthening the abilities of personnel working and liaising with humanitarian agencies and through enhanced transparency. This is likely to build stronger trust in working with Western and Arab donors to encourage more funding, collaboration, transparency and competency so that Western and Arab stakeholders can trust the working mechanisms of the MoSD will help to get more funding and encourage humanitarian and development partners to cooperate with it. With the MoSD in the driving seat and considering the problems raised by the internal division, some supporting leadership roles to be carried out by UN agencies or the CWG are welcomed and needed.

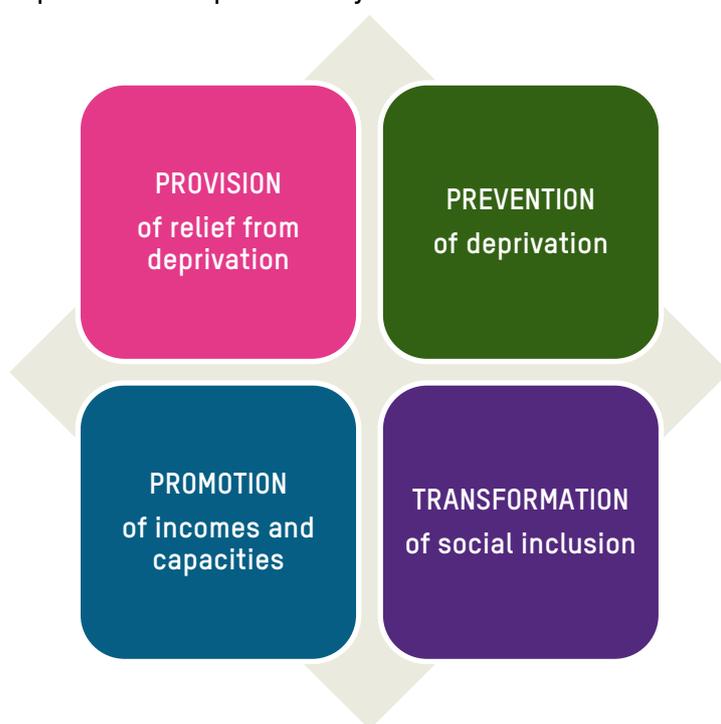
In terms of effective use of resources, targeting is one of the most critical coordination points. However, this does not mean that all actors would need to adopt the same targeting criteria. Some differences between actors are desirable since they supply complementary services to the programme. As it is widely accepted that the PNCTP has a stable and solid structure, which makes it less flexible. However, within the ecosystem there is a need for agile and attentive players who are close to communities and who can identify vulnerable people missed by the social protection system – this is the role of NGOs and local communities. There is a benefit when NGOs retain some flexibility in targeting to identify groups that the system may be missing. For NGOs delivering CVA, having a unique character to their programmes is crucial to demonstrate added value to donors. If CVA is well organised with humanitarian agencies, it could complement social protection in correcting exclusion errors.

Discussions about linking social protection to CVA are burdened by the fact that the number of people seeking social protection in Gaza is untenable. The common goal of the social protection ecosystem should be to cater to people according to their capacities and needs, and various actors playing diversified roles towards that goal.

The current social assistance programmes target people who could be economically productive but are unemployed or who need assets to recover from a shock. The disproportionate focus on providing relief from deprivation over other aspects of social protection, such as prevention and promotion of incomes and capacities

(Figure 5), makes the size of the needs unmanageable. Thousands of beneficiaries were on the PNCTP waiting list in the year 2021-2022 before the COVID-19 pandemic, and the May hostilities resulted in the deterioration of socio-economic conditions. Meeting such needs of vast numbers of people by expanding the PNCTP may perpetuate aid dependency. The NSR can be used to distinguish between the needs of diverse groups: those who cannot take care of themselves (traditional social protection programme participants), those in need of services, and those who can be engaged in a labour or income generation programme.

Figure 5: Aspects of social protection systems – in Gaza the focus has been on provision



Source: R. Sabates-Wheeler and S. Devereux. (2007). Social Protection for Transformation. IDS Bulletin 38, Issue 3, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Brighton. <https://gsdrc.org/document-library/social-protection-for-transformation/>

A common goal of the social protection ecosystem should be to keep people off the PNCTP and waiting list by providing economic pathways (promotion) to those who can be economically productive but who lack assets or opportunities: for example, providing CVA to cover basic needs during an employment programme. International and national partners must work together on concerted economic development efforts and ensure that these are linked with social protection and with CVA.

The implementation of government-coordinated social assistance requires mechanisms to ensure quality, transparency and representation of the target population's interests in evaluating PNCTP applications, the grounds for selection, how data is updated and verified, work oversight, data management systems and external evaluation committees. NGOs, including local civil society organizations, can play an important role in ensuring accountability of the system as part of the MoSD's plans around the NSR if enabled to do so. Some stakeholders close to the MoSD have said that they are open to such collaboration.

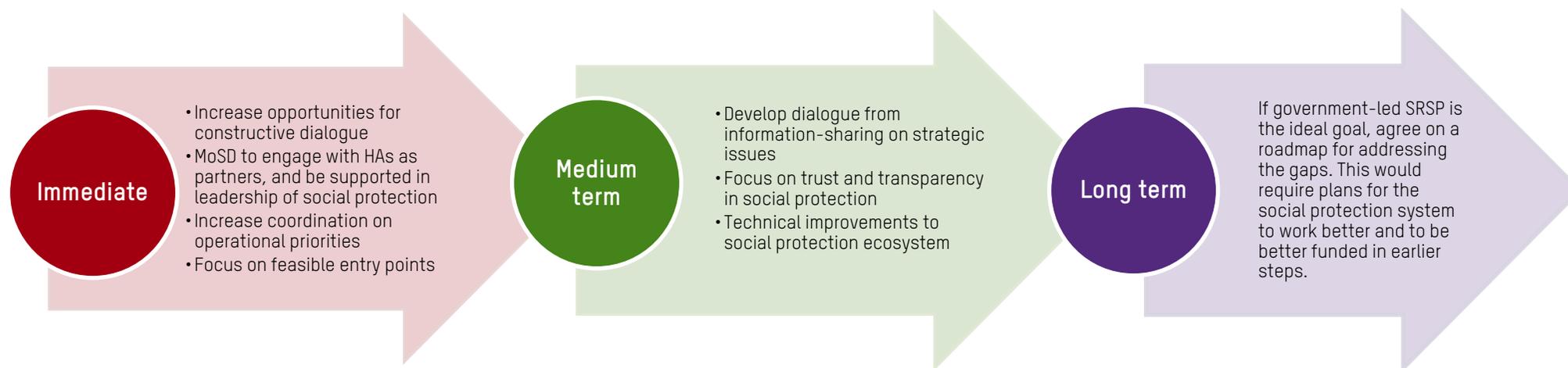
9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAMME AND POLICY LINKAGES

Improving coordination in this complicated context is a long process and must be a joint undertaking. It cannot be a one-off effort. Instead, it should be recognized as a process that ties together diverse efforts around social assistance and building mutual acceptance and trust over an extended period of time. If it is agreed that the

long-term goal is for the government to assist those members of the population who cannot support themselves, then the immediate and medium-term steps should pursue this goal. Hence the recommendations below are conceptualized as a chronological process.

The process is also a shift from an operational to a more strategic level. Regularity and consistency will be more important than a sudden ambitious jump to a harmonious system involving all actors, who may not initially be eager to join coordination mechanisms and explore constructive links of complementarity. The process can involve a smaller group of actors but remain open to anyone interested without forcing joint efforts, with smaller-scale action serving as a positive model, and then expanding it to the wider pool of actors. Fragmentation should be avoided, but this does not mean that everyone should aim to do the same thing. The recommendations below are aimed at the broad spectrum of social protection and CVA actors and outline steps, focusing on the immediate and medium-term, that are necessary to build a more coherent social protection ecosystem. An overview is presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Overview of a process to increase linkages between social protection and CVA



Immediate actions	Medium-term actions	Long-term actions
<i>Increase constructive dialogue and coordination between actors</i>		
<p>Lead: MoSD; co-lead: humanitarian agencies and Arab organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek opportunities for dialogue and information sharing between the MoSD and CVA actors, particularly Western humanitarian agencies and Arab organizations/donors. Topics of exchange include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information sharing between those social protection and CVA actors who do not usually communicate and update on new developments. Simply increasing contact can reap benefits in the medium and long term. ○ Clarifying data needs of each agency and mutual expectations (e.g. MoSD expectations regarding feedback on shared lists of programme participants and how it intends to use the data). ○ The aims of each agency in the social protection ecosystem need to be discussed, partly because 	<p>Lead: MoSD; co-lead and support: UN agencies and World Bank, donors, humanitarian agencies, Arab organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift dialogue from 'this is what we do' to 'this is what we plan' and eventually to 'how can we do this better together?' • Develop further the information sharing and coordination protocol from 'Immediate objectives' by identifying roles and responsibilities between social protection and CVA actors. These are likely to be developed through a series of discussions about the complementary roles and objectives of the actors. • MoSD to organise consultations and humanitarian agencies to input into the 2023 National Social Development Strategy and discuss practical and strategic linkages 	<p>Western humanitarian agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid protracting aid dependency by undermining national institutions. Supporting them and improving their capacity should be a primary focus.

<p>the role of the humanitarian agencies is relative too . This will also help identify areas of complementarity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Review common ways forward, e.g. using the social assistance nexus roadmap and inviting feedback on it from a diverse range of stakeholders, including humanitarian agencies, to truly enable it to be a collective effort. <p>Lead: MoSD, co-lead: UN agencies and World Bank, donors (EU)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise regular inclusive coordination meetings. These meetings should be led by the MoSD and supported by international organizations, UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs and representatives of donors and potentially other government departments. The SPWG seems to be best suited for this purpose. Inclusiveness is key: at minimum, consider a core membership and observer membership status that is open to any stakeholder; communicate openly about coordination mechanisms and invite all stakeholders to take part; and consider accessibility (e.g. possible language barriers for local civil society actors). Include local civil society to strengthen local capacities and voices. Focus initially on discussing and coordinating targeting and the quality of lists of programme participants. <p>Humanitarian agencies, Arab donors and organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly attend coordination meetings organised by the MoSD. • Identify common social protection advocacy objectives between Western and Arab humanitarian agencies and donors, capitalizing on the fact that the latter are not restricted by no-contact policies. <p>Lead: MoSD; co-lead and support: UN agencies and World Bank, donors, humanitarian agencies, Arab organizations</p>	<p>between the MoSD and humanitarian agencies using e.g. the social assistance roadmap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for emergencies by assigning roles and discussing data sharing and response trigger indicators. • With an existing coordination mechanism such as the SPWG, set up a learning agenda for improving working together e.g. evaluating responses to previous shocks such as COVID-19 and escalations of conflict. • Humanitarian agencies and donors should treat the West Bank and Gaza as a single entity, with sensible differentiation to fit the context. Promote changes to the PNCTP to be applied across the Palestinian territories, including implementation of the new approaches and unifying the NSR list across the OPT. <p>Humanitarian agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for humanitarian agencies having options in engaging with MoSD data on programme participants and targeting based on agreement and programme objectives: 1) the MoSD provides humanitarian agencies with initial lists for further selection according to their criteria (similar to UVAT) and verified data are fed back to the MoSD; 2) humanitarian agencies select directly from the community and then feedback their data to the NSR. A focus on the type of data needed for a specific sector or project can be agreed upon to avoid overly lengthy data collection forms and to avoid sharing unnecessary data. • Document agreed efforts for linking social protection to CVA in a case study to showcase any successes. This does not need to be comprehensive or to include all parties, but e.g. representatives from Arab donors, the MoSD, the de facto authorities, humanitarian 	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft initial information sharing and coordination protocols to be discussed and agreed on. Determine what information needs to be shared, why, how, with who, how it will be used and what possible bottlenecks there are that need to be resolved in order for actors to accept sharing data. Keep as a working document to expand according to the readiness of stakeholders. • Discuss targeting: Identify and agree on the lists that the MoSD should be holding, and who gets access to them; agree when the PMTF should be used for targeting and when not (this may require a conversation about roles and responsibilities – see medium-term recommendations). <p>Western humanitarian agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine an effective way to coordinate actions in Gaza given the no-contact policy and division, potentially proposing creative solutions such as communicating through Arab partners. • Investigate well-functioning coordination mechanisms between government and humanitarian agencies, such as that between the housing ministry and INGOs for shelter projects, and draw lessons from these. 	<p>agencies, and a UN agency. Present results to other actors and invite them to participate in coordination efforts e.g. raise awareness through the CWG among humanitarian agencies about what it means to align with the social protection system and what the benefits are.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for a social protection–CVA ecosystem where under the umbrella of an agreed strategy, actors play complementary rather than identical roles, implying possibly different but coherent programme designs such as transfer values and selection criteria. • Produce research on aid dependency and strategies for reducing this. • Conduct a comparison to study the parallel systems of social protection–CVA in Gaza to determine the real gaps, no-go areas and areas of agreement. <p>The MoSD and government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a governmental committee consisting of representatives of different ministries or departments that have positive or negative effects on the coordination process. The committee should be responsible for facilitating and supporting relationships and solving problems with humanitarian actors. 	
<p><i>‘Supporting and developing the MoSD as the central coordinating leaders’</i></p>		
<p>Lead: MoSD; co-lead and support: UN agencies and World Bank, donors, humanitarian agencies, Arab organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MoSD to continue work on the NSR as a participatory process by organizing consultations on how actors could engage with it: 1) ask for feedback on the plans and answer questions; 2) discuss expected collaboration around the NSR; 3) discuss mechanisms by which humanitarian 	<p>Lead: MoSD; co-lead and support: UN agencies and World Bank, donors, humanitarian agencies, Arab organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and agree with partners the concepts of accountability and transparency. Include in coordination protocols mechanisms by which transparency is ensured to demonstrate that the MoSD is a reliable partner. 	<p>Lead: MoSD; co-lead and support: UN agencies and World Bank, donors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore methods for innovative financing of the PNCTP.

<p>agencies and especially local civil society can feed back monitoring data, suggestions and concerns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue OCHA's initiative of secondments, exchanging employees between UN agencies and the MoSD to enhance understanding of the organizational structure, systems and strategies of the different parties. • Identify areas where social protection can benefit from the experience of CVA delivery mechanisms and ways of working, such as payment systems and monitoring tools. To link CVA and social protection, humanitarian agencies need to compromise on issues including data sharing and some degree of independence in order to cooperate on practical issues. <p>MoSD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to engage the gatekeeper MoF in coordination mechanisms where sensible and possible. • Frame the need for coordination as a financial incentive, especially when engaging with the MoF. For example, introducing stronger payment systems for the PNCTP would place the government in a stronger position in the eyes of donors. 	
<p><i>Create a technically sound social protection ecosystem</i></p>		
<p>Focusing advocacy on technical issues of the PNCTP at this point may have limited effectiveness given the financial limitations of the system.</p>	<p>Lead: MoSD; co-lead and support: UN agencies and World Bank, donors, humanitarian agencies, Arab organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a unified system that determines the transfer value for each intervention in line with expected fairness and the poverty status of programme participants. Transfer values should be coherent and in line with the purpose of the programme. A sound methodology is needed to determine them. • Establish a social protection–CVA external reporting system to enhance the concept of inclusiveness vertically and horizontally 	

	<p>between governmental and humanitarian actors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centrally document the sources of funding for social assistance in Palestine so as to be able to evaluate the efficiency of the social protection ecosystem. <p>Humanitarian agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for risk assessments before major changes to the social protection system such as moving away from poverty-based targeting for the PNCTP, as this may risk excluding poor people without other vulnerabilities. 	
<i>Enhance trust in and transparency of the social protection system</i>		
	<p>Humanitarian agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the interests of programme participants are fairly represented in the MoSD's new approaches: that the system is transparent and that participants are well targeted. <p>Lead: MoSD; co-lead and support: UN agencies and World Bank, donors, humanitarian agencies, Arab organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that there is a feedback mechanism to the MoSD for Arab, Western and local civil society and donors on the social protection system in general, e.g. in common coordination meetings or consultations on the NSR or other matters, to hold the duty bearer accountable and to ensure that diverse views are represented. Local civil society should be included in such efforts. 	<p>Humanitarian agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting MoSD targeting by conducting research and learning reviews.
<i>Reduce the social protection programme participant base</i>		
	<p>Lead: MoSD; co-lead and support: UN agencies and World Bank, donors (EU)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a part of the PNCTP conditional upon improving sources of income if the profile of 	<p>Humanitarian agencies, Arab organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create income generation opportunities by devising innovative, online-focused and/or large-scale employment strategies to shift

	<p>the participant is suitable for it, providing necessary services and support.</p>	<p>people in Gaza off the waiting list and off of social protection. This is likely to require a change in mindset and delivery mechanisms for many INGOs from small-scale local income generation projects. Include this in organizational strategies such as Oxfam's Economic Justice Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperate with the MoSD's Palestinian economic empowerment institution, Ministry of Labour, and Ministry of Agriculture. <p>UN agencies and World Bank, donors (EU)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the government in creating a large-scale labour programme that focuses on online exports of skills and products and work together with universities, perhaps focusing on candidates with large and poor family backgrounds, to encourage investments and start-ups, with the aim of injecting cash into Gaza from outside. • Engage with relevant Gazan institutions for quality work to improve the local economy and food production, to increase public trust in local institutions.
<p><i>Address structural barriers with duty bearers abroad</i></p>		
		<p>Western humanitarian agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step up political advocacy in Europe to address structural barriers, to defend the right of Palestinian civil society to voice criticism against Israeli actions and to counter efforts that aim to undermine international law and the rights of Palestinians. <p>Western donors (EU)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donors to review imposed no-contact policies, for themselves and as imposed on

		humanitarian agencies, which hamper effective aid coordination. For example, aim to waive the no-contact policy at least for the MoSD or other crucial coordination mechanisms and use evidence of the negative effects of such policies.
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This case study is very much the result of the reflections of various key informants, although it may not reflect fully or comprehensively the view of individual interviewees or that of their organizations. We want to thank them for their precious time and contribution.

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ANNEX 2: LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

No.	Name	Organization
1	Manal Ramadan	MoSD
2	Mohammed Nassar	MoSD
3	Salah Lahham and Jane Waite	WFP
4	Vanessa Moreira da Silva	World Bank
5	Luca Sangalli	Cash Working Group
6	Mikolaj Radlicki and Alessia Volpe	Gaza Protection Consortium
7	Iain Murray and Yaser Shalabi	UNICEF
8	James Canonge	ILO
9	Mamoun Bseiso	Consultant, Arab and Western NGOs
10	Ayman Abo Raey	Qatari committee (Gaza Reconstruction Committee)
11	Stephanie Rousseau	EU

No.	Profile	Affiliation	Men	Women	Total
1	Community leaders	Local committees, representatives of NGOs	1	2	3
2	Youth	Participants in CVA programme and social protection	1	1	2
3	Widows and divorced women Married women	Participants in CVA only Participants in social protection		5	5

4	People with disabilities	Participants in social protection	1	1	2
5	Elderly people	Participants in CVA only	2	1	3
	Total		5	10	15

NOTES

- 1 As a result of counter-terrorism legislation, a restrictive policy of no contact with Hamas is in force, whereby most international governments and donors have imposed restrictions on international and local humanitarian organizations in Gaza in order to prevent contact with Hamas. Hamas is the Palestinian political party which controls the government structures in Gaza and has acted as the de-facto authority there since 2007.
- 2 MoSD – Gaza. (2021). *Factsheet: Women; Factsheet on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in the Gaza Strip; Factsheet on the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons; Factsheet on the occasion of World Children's Day.*
- 3 MoSD – Gaza. (2021). *Factsheet: Cash Transfer Program.*
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 ILO. (2021). *On the road to universal social protection: A social protection floor assessment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.* https://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_831347/lang--en/index.htm
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Oxfam. (2019). *Responsiveness of the Palestinian national cash transfer programme to shifting vulnerabilities in the Gaza Strip.* <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/responsiveness-of-the-palestinian-national-cash-programme-to-shifting-vulnerabi-620989/>
- 9 World Bank. (2021). *International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Development Association, International Finance Corporation, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency: Assistance Strategy for the West Bank And Gaza for the Period FY22-25.* <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/west-bank-and-gaza-world-bank-country-assistance-strategy>
- 10 The Gaza Reconstruction Committee was established in October 2012 by the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It administers and implements grants from the Government of Qatar assigned to reconstruct Gaza Strip.
- 11 State of Palestine. (2017). *Social Development Sector Strategy 2017-2022.* <https://andp.unescwa.org/plans/1222>
- 12 The full title of the project is 'Increasing Public Awareness and Responsiveness in the Palestinian Social Protection System'.
- 13 Internal multi-agency document.
- 14 Oxfam. (2021). Concept note for the implementation agreement with Oxfam: 'Increasing Public Awareness and Responsiveness in the Palestinian Social Protection System'.
- 15 Sphere. (2018). *Sphere Handbook. Core Humanitarian Standard, Commitment 3.* <https://spherestandards.org/humanitarian-standards/core-humanitarian-standard/>

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