

# SISRI Knowledge Notes

*A series highlighting good practices in climate and disaster resilience in Small Island States*

## Building Resilience through Social Protection

**NOTE: #2**

**FOCUS: SOCIAL PROTECTION**



### OVERVIEW

Many Small Island States have basic elements of Social Protection systems in place, which can be deployed to support disaster preparedness and response. These include social safety net and labor market programs; social insurance to help mitigate against drops in well-being; social services to address the needs of affected populations; and service delivery instruments that can be used to support affected households. These basic system elements provide a foundation on which a well-functioning and responsive Social Protection system can be further developed. Social Protection's contribution to climate and disaster resilience is increasingly being appreciated in Small Island States. Countries such as Jamaica have scaled up Social Protection programs to respond to natural hazards, while others, such as Comoros have taken steps to adapt and scale up programs to build resilience. Small Island States can work towards adaptive and responsive Social Protection systems at varying levels of maturity and sophistication. By aligning Social Protection provision with resilience objectives, countries could more effectively help vulnerable households adapt to climate change, prepare for disasters, and restore livelihoods quickly should a disaster strike.

## IMPACT OF DISASTERS ON POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY IN SMALL ISLAND STATES

Natural disasters and climate change regularly affect households in Small Island States, contributing to the challenges that many of these countries face around poverty and hardship (Figure 1). Available data show national poverty rates ranging from 17.6 percent in Jamaica to 69.3 percent in Guinea Bissau. Vulnerable sub-groups such as women and children often bear the brunt of poverty. Unemployment rates in Small Island States often exceed regional averages—for instance, unemployment for the Latin America and the Caribbean region in 2013 stood at 6.2 percent, but ranged from 13 percent to 15 percent for Jamaica, Belize, and the Bahamas. The effect of natural disasters on livelihoods in Small Island States further complicates labor-market conditions in these countries, where large informal sectors oriented

towards climate-sensitive sectors such as tourism, agriculture and fisheries are commonplace.

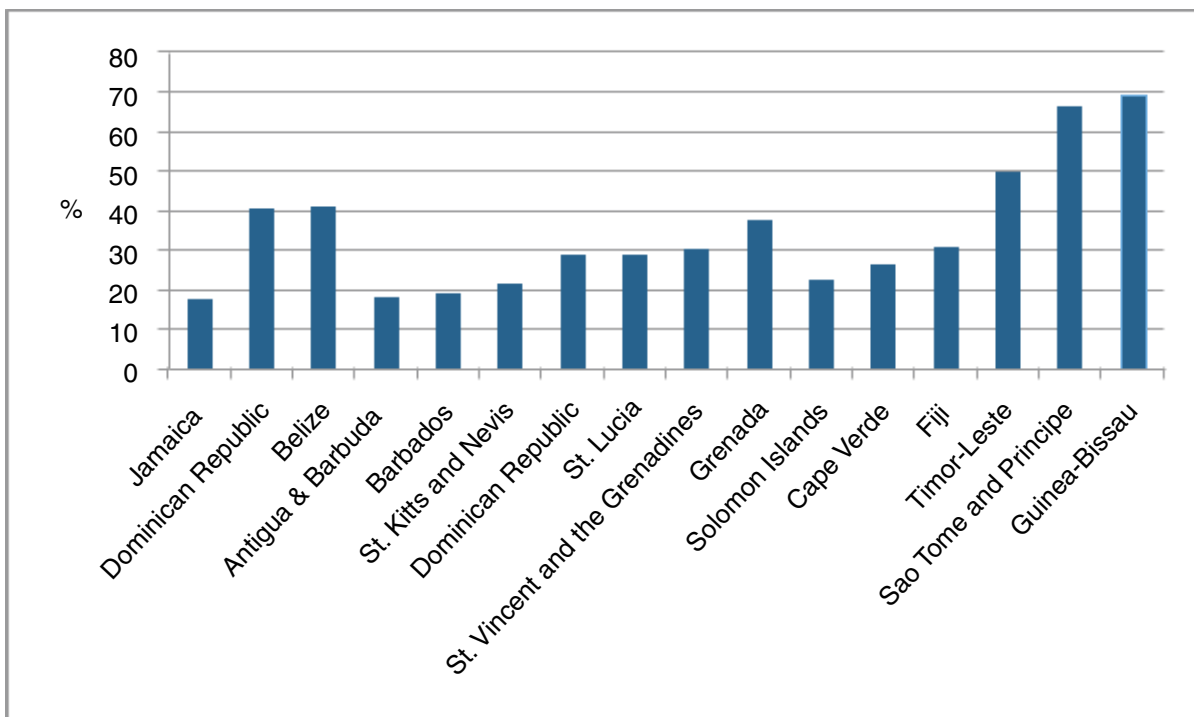
When a hurricane, flood, or other adverse event strikes, households that lack other options may resort to negative coping strategies. This can include reducing essential food consumption, health care attendance, and education investments or selling or depleting productive assets. Families typically use personal savings or access to credit as their first line of defense, while traditional support systems—such as reciprocal networks of gift-giving in the Pacific—also offer some protection from hardship.

Examples from several countries illustrates the disproportionate impact of natural disasters on poorer households and the need to help build their resilience:

- In Jamaica, 9 percent of households had home insurance in 2009, while 99 percent and 97 percent of households in the two poorest quintiles respectively were without home insurance. Access to credit is also lower among poorer

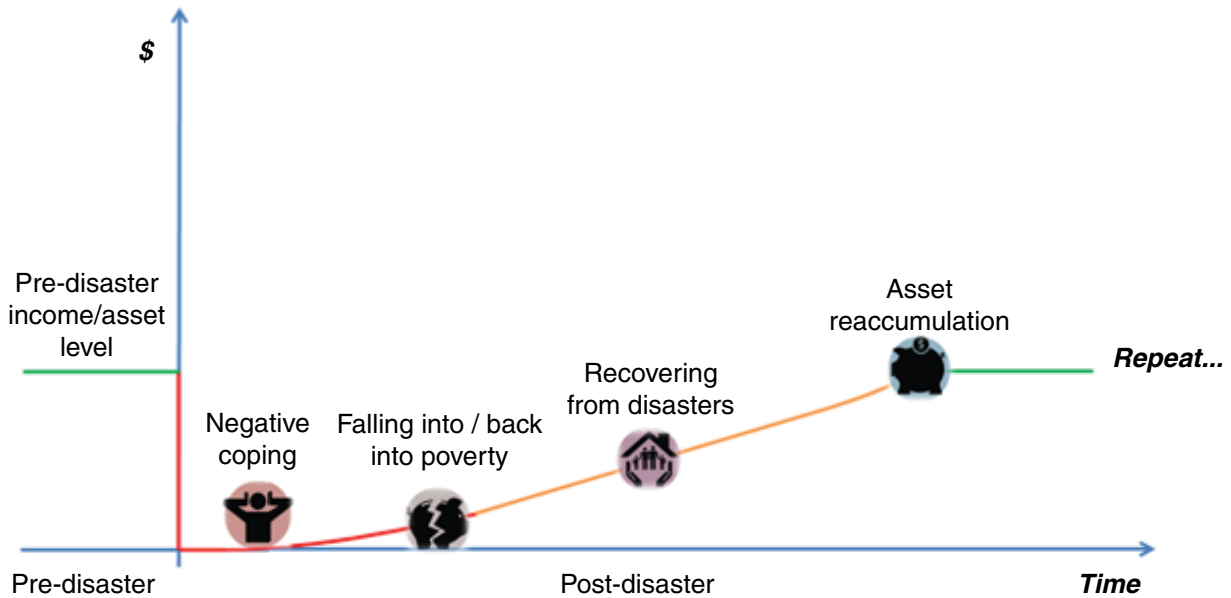
**FIGURE 1** Poverty Rates in Small Island States

Most recent available data



Source: World Bank Data, Caribbean Development Bank Country Poverty Assessments (2007–2011)

**FIGURE 2** Cycle of Poverty and Vulnerability Resulting from Natural Disasters



Source: *Responding to Disaster Together (R2D2) Community of Practice*

households, constraining their ability to borrow to re-establish livelihoods or rebuild homes.

- In Grenada, Hurricane Ivan (2004) illustrated that poor households typically face a higher risk of losing assets in a disaster event due to the location and construction quality of their homes. In the poorest fifth of the population, 95 percent sustained damage to their homes (of whom close to zero had home insurance), while 65 percent of the richest fifth saw their homes damaged (of whom one-third had insurance).
- In Haiti, poorer households were more dependent on temporary employment than wealthier households following the 2010 earthquake. Moreover, a 2014 poverty assessment showed that 23 percent of households in extreme poverty changed their nutritional profile in response to major shocks, providing evidence of negative coping strategies.

The regular occurrence of natural hazards and shocks in these countries, coupled with negative coping strategies (particularly among poor and vulnerable households), limits the ability of those

affected to effectively recover from the impacts of disasters when they strike. Often, the intervals between shocks are insufficient to ensure full recovery, while households continue to employ strategies, such as those outlined previously, that continually erode their resilience. This cycle often sends the poor further into poverty and non-poor below the poverty line. This trajectory is illustrated in Figure 2.

The poverty effects of natural hazards are projected to increase over time. This reflects the increased prevalence of multiple hazards—including tropical storms, drought, extreme heat and floods linked to climate change—and their role as drivers of risk in Small Island States. Given the share of poor households in some Small Island States, coupled with their exposure to hazards, it is important to ensure effective mechanisms to mitigate the risks they face.

The context of poverty, vulnerability, and risk in Small Island States illustrates the important role of Social Protection in protecting poor and vulnerable people from these impacts and helping them to reduce their exposure and vulnerability.

## UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL PROTECTION AND ITS RELEVANCE TO RESILIENCE<sup>2</sup>

Social Protection is defined as systems, policies, and programs that help individuals and societies manage risk and volatility, and protect them from poverty and destitution. Social Protection and Labor (SPL) programs include social assistance, labor market interventions and social insurance. These are supported by service delivery instruments that support essential functions along the implementation cycle of Social Protection programs and services, including beneficiary identification, benefit delivery, and monitoring. Countries are increasingly moving away from a program-driven approach to Social Protection, to one that is focused on the Social Protection system as a whole. This approach recognizes the importance of policies, programs, and delivery systems (actors, structures, rules, processes, tools) to build resilience, improve equity, and promote opportunity.

Social Protection can play a critical role to help households absorb, accommodate, and recover from the effects of shocks. To ensure the SPL is capable of effectively supporting resilience, a few key building blocks need to be in place. These include:

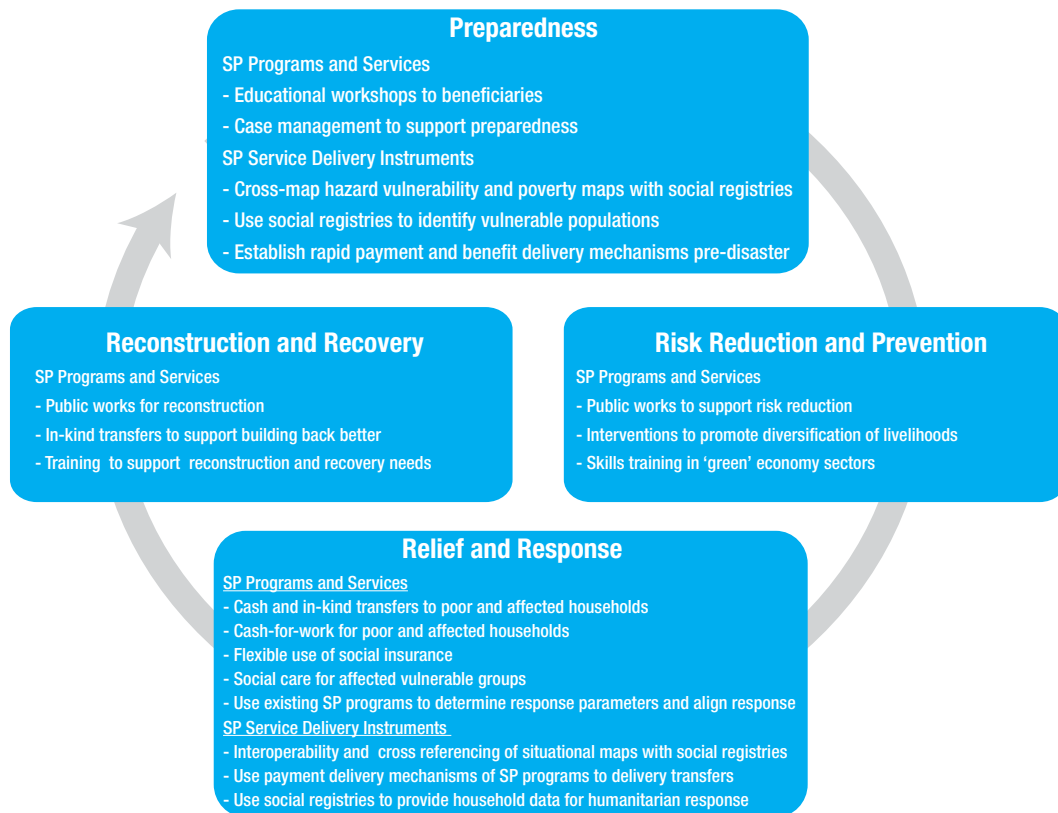
- (i) an established and appropriate social safety net program that can be scaled up or adapted to support disaster risk management objectives;
- (ii) a comprehensive service delivery system in place to support different implementation processes; and
- (iii) institutional capacity and inter-institutional coordination mechanisms, given the multi-sector nature of disaster risk management.

A related building block is the importance of risk financing instruments and resources, and ensuring that this financing supports delivery of SPL prior to, and following a disaster. While not discussed in detail in this Note, disaster risk financing is critical for facilitating timely and appropriate social protection responses in a resilience-building context.

Elements of the SPL system can be deployed at any stage of the disaster risk management cycle, and complement resilience objectives, as illustrated in Figure 3. This framework demonstrates that countries can use different SPL programs, services, and service delivery instruments to support disaster preparedness; help reduce the impact of shocks on poor households; support risk reduction and prevention efforts; provide adequate, timely, and coordinated relief to affected households; and complement efforts to build back better during reconstruction and recovery. The choice of programs and services that can be deployed would depend on a country's fiscal space, Government priorities, existing SPL service delivery instruments, and institutional capacity.

## SOCIAL PROTECTION IN SMALL ISLAND STATES: THE STATE OF PLAY

Provision of Social Protection programs varies across Small Island States. For some countries, there is a long established tradition of state-provided safety nets, labor market programs and social insurance. For example, cash transfers targeted to poor households are provided in Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Fiji, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Kiribati, Mauritius, St Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, and others. In-kind transfers, including school meals, school uniforms, and medical supplies are also provided in several countries. Public works are provided in several small island states, including Grenada, St Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago. Several other Pacific Island Countries also have experience implementing one-off or temporary public works programs, including Samoa and the Solomon Islands. Labor market programs, including skills training, entrepreneurship programs, and labor intermediation are also common in many of these countries. Social pensions are provided in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Fiji, Kiribati, Mauritius, Samoa, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

**FIGURE 3** SPL across the Disaster Risk Management Cycle

Source: Author's Illustration

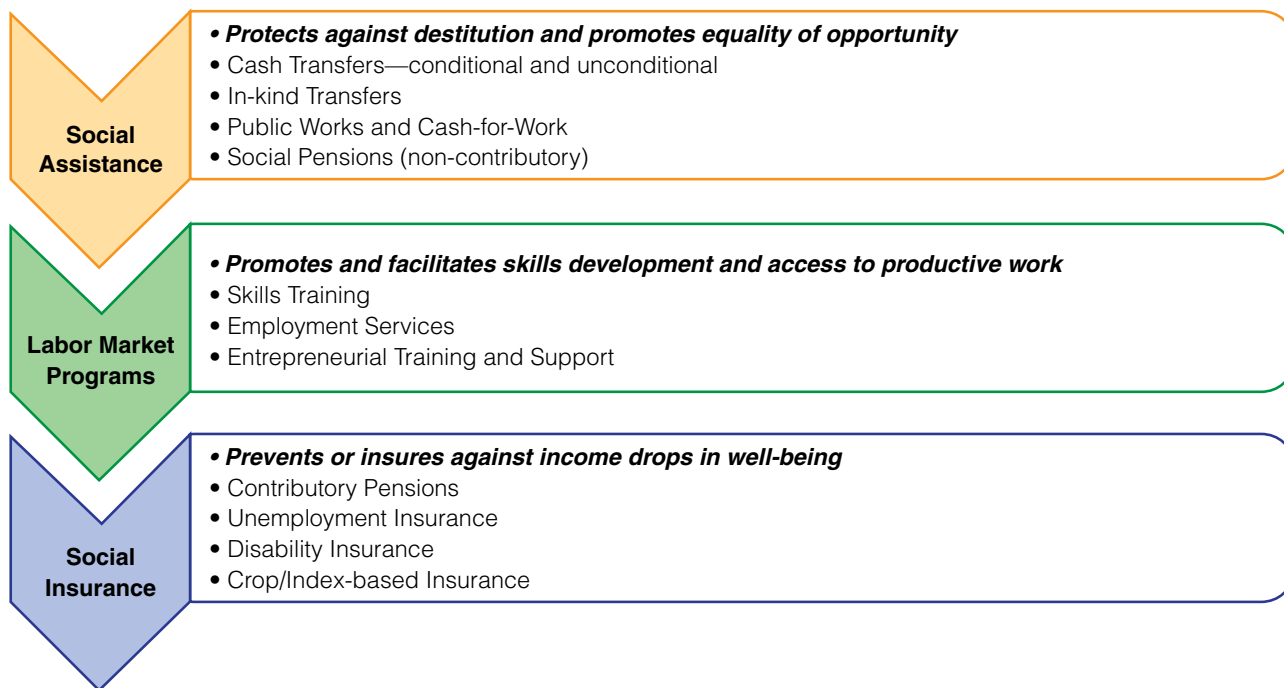
While Caribbean countries often provide a plethora of safety nets to different target populations, Social Protection in Pacific Island Countries has typically centered on informal safety nets and social insurance. There are exceptions: for instance, Fiji's provides established safety nets targeting the poor, elderly and disabled. One commonality is that most Small Island States have established social insurance schemes or provident funds that provide pension coverage, and other short- and long-term benefits, to contributors to those schemes (normally formal sector workers). This accounts for the bulk of Social Protection spending in many Small Island States.

Development of SPL service delivery instruments in Small Island States varies by country. Countries with cash transfer programs have payment mechanisms in place to deliver cash benefits, but delivery mechanisms vary. For instance, in Grenada, payments for the country's conditional cash transfer (CCT) are delivered in cash at Government District Revenue Offices across the country. In

Jamaica, payments for the Program for Advancement through Health and Education (PATH) CCT are principally provided by check at local post offices. Belize has partnered with credit unions to deliver beneficiary payments for its BOOST CCT, while Trinidad and Tobago's Targeted CCT utilizes a debit card to deliver transfers to beneficiaries.

Targeting mechanisms range from means testing in Dominica, and Guyana, to proxy means tests in Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, and St Lucia.<sup>3</sup> When Jamaica introduced a proxy means test, coverage and targeting improved. Belize, Fiji, and Jamaica have established Management Information Systems to support administration and management of their cash transfer programs. These are also being rolled out (or being planned) in other countries such as Grenada, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines. Social workers or similar staff provide accompaniment to poor households and program beneficiaries in Grenada, St Lucia, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, among others.

FIGURE 4 Types of SPL Program



For many small island states, reform of SPL systems to improve performance and coverage has been a priority. These include Grenada's recent introduction of a CCT and accompanying service delivery instruments. St Lucia is currently introducing a proxy means test to identify eligible households for its cash transfer program. Fiji has deployed a revised application for its Poverty Benefit Scheme, and is also reviewing beneficiary databases. The Comoros is introducing cash-for-work and rolling out service delivery instruments under a Social Protection policy. St Vincent and the Grenadines' reform includes introducing a targeting instrument for safety nets, with rules for accessing emergency support.

Financing of SPL programs is also a critical issue. In the Caribbean, most of the safety net is financed by Government. For instance, 75 percent of social safety net financing came from local revenue for Eastern Caribbean countries. Conversely, in the Pacific, countries are now moving to formal safety nets provided by Government, as distinct from traditionally informal and communal safety nets. Given fiscal constraints, Governments face tough choices about how many people can be covered by SPL programs and the size of benefits that can be provided.

## TYPES OF SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMS

Governments administer a range of Social Protection and Labor programs that help households and societies to manage the risks they face. Each type of program has a specific risk management function as shown in Figure 4.

## SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMS FOR RESILIENCE—COUNTRY EXAMPLES

Experience from Small Island States clearly shows the added value that Social Protection programs can bring as part of a strategic approach towards climate and disaster resilience.

**Cash Transfers.** Cash transfers are often the main social assistance program delivered in Small Island States. Well-targeted cash transfers can help to build household incomes, savings and human capital, and therefore help improve resilience to shocks. In times of crises, cash transfers have been effective at:

- Protecting livelihoods in early stages of a protracted, slow-onset crises;
- Contributing to households' overall ability to recover from shocks;
- Offering increased choice and rapid delivery when compared to in-kind assistance.

The types and levels of benefits provided need to be sufficient to meet basic needs and prevent households from resorting to negative coping strategies while they reestablish their livelihoods.

### Country Case

Jamaica provided a supplemental transfer of 2,000 Jamaican dollars (US\$28) to 90,000 beneficiaries of the PATH Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) following Hurricane Dean in 2007, and cash grants to non-beneficiaries screened through a damage assessment process using PATH's payment mechanism. Belize, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago also provide emergency cash transfers in the event of an unexpected shock.

**In-Kind Transfers** are an important social assistance response mechanism used by Governments and the relief community in the aftermath of disasters. In-kind transfers can be an important complement to limited income of poor households, and can include meals, housing assistance (materials or housing), medication and other support. After disasters strike, in-kind transfers, particularly in the form of relief items, food, and housing assistance, may be provided to poor and affected households to help with relief and recovery. These transfers are particularly necessary if there is little or no opportunity for affected households to purchase what is needed, or where products may be available, but prices are distorted. Provision of in-kind transfers can help to:

- Provide life-saving support and critical items for survival in the aftermath of acute crises;

- Mitigate against protracted nutritional deficiencies and other risks in a post-disaster setting;
- Help poor and vulnerable households to 'build back better'.

### Country Case

Following Hurricane Dean in 2007, Jamaica's Government provided vouchers to eligible households for hardware supplies for home repair. Households were identified through a damage assessment process and beneficiaries included PATH beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. The value of the vouchers ranged from 20,000 Jamaican dollars (US\$283) to 60,000 Jamaican dollars (US\$850).

**Public Works Programs** (also called cash-for-works) provide immediate cash support to poor households in return for labor and co-responsibilities (direct impact); and promote future opportunities by enhancing skills (indirect impact through skills acquisition). They are particularly useful when used to support climate adaptation investments. These can include hazard-resistant roads, embankments, gullies, hazard-proof schools or clinics, forestry investments, or other adaptation measures such as planting mangroves to protect coastal areas. Such investments generate a double dividend of building resilience while contributing to livelihoods. Public works help to:

- Meet immediate post-disaster needs through functions such as debris clearing;
- Facilitate risk reduction through activities like planting mangroves and combating erosion;
- Provide employment, where employment opportunities are limited;
- Provide continuity of income and labor activity to households post-disaster;
- Rebuild and restore critical infrastructure.

## Country Case

In the Solomon Islands, the Government scaled up public works under a Rapid Employment Project after severe flash floods, providing an additional 1,000 beneficiaries in affected communities with short-term employment. The activities focused on rebuilding damaged roads and community infrastructure, and improving resilience to future weather events. Following flash floods in 2014, Samoa introduced a cash-for-work pilot that provided income support to communities in exchange for labor activities aimed at cleaning and rebuilding.

**Social Insurance** includes contributory programs designed to help households ensure themselves against sudden reductions in income. It helps contributors to buffer the effects of disaster events. Social insurance can support climate and disaster resilience through:

- Providing compensation for damages to property or physical assets;
- Compensating for disability caused by a disaster;

- Providing unemployment benefits;
- Supporting surviving family members through funeral benefits, and mitigating income loss due to the death of a household member through survivors benefits;
- Smooth consumption by easing rules for withdrawing from the social insurance scheme. This is best supported only if there is fiscal space to replenish retirement accounts.

## Country Case

In Vanuatu, the Government permitted withdrawal of a portion of retirement funds from the Provident Fund after Cyclone Pam in 2015, with 5,000 workers applying to withdraw 20 percent of their retirement savings. Following Tropical Cyclone Winston in Fiji in February 2016, 51,000 people have applied to withdraw funds from the National Provident Fund. Such withdrawals may be considered on a case-by-case basis but with close attention to fiscal sustainability of the scheme and longer-term alternatives to protect the target populations against risk events.

## Key Guiding Principles to Ensure SPL Programs Effectively Support Resilience

Due consideration should be given to how an appropriate social safety net program can be used to prepare, prevent, and reduce the effects of predictable shocks; deployed for disaster response by reaching a larger number of beneficiaries (horizontal expansion) or providing a larger amount of benefits to existing beneficiaries (vertical expansion); and assist with reconstruction and recovery efforts to ensure building back better. Investments in contingency planning and institutional capacity are also essential.

- For **Cash Transfers**: Ensure that benefit amount are aligned to vulnerability of households. Ensure that service delivery instruments (targeting, payments, etc.) are well designed. Ensure transparency about adequacy of transfer amounts and rules for changes in selection and benefit allocation criteria.
- For **In-Kind Transfers**: Ensure delivery mechanisms are quick. Provide transfers that facilitate human development and building back

better. Ensure transfers are based on a comprehensive market assessment.

- For **Public Works**: Set wages below the minimum wage to facilitate self-targeting and participation of the poorest. Ensure projects respond to community needs, facilitate risk reduction and building back better. Ensure clarity on program rules and eligibility criteria pre- and post-disaster. Ensure public works are informed by disaster preparedness plans, hazard maps and other disaster risk management-related information.
- For **Labor Market Programs**: Ensure support for livelihood diversification. Link skills training and entrepreneurship programs to areas with identified market needs for supporting resilience objectives.
- For **Social Insurance**: Establishing a specific short term benefit or specific scheme for the purpose of disaster response is preferable to permitting withdrawal of long term retirement savings.



## DELIVERING SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMS

Social Protection programs are underpinned by a range of service delivery instruments, which support essential functions across the implementation cycle. These include:

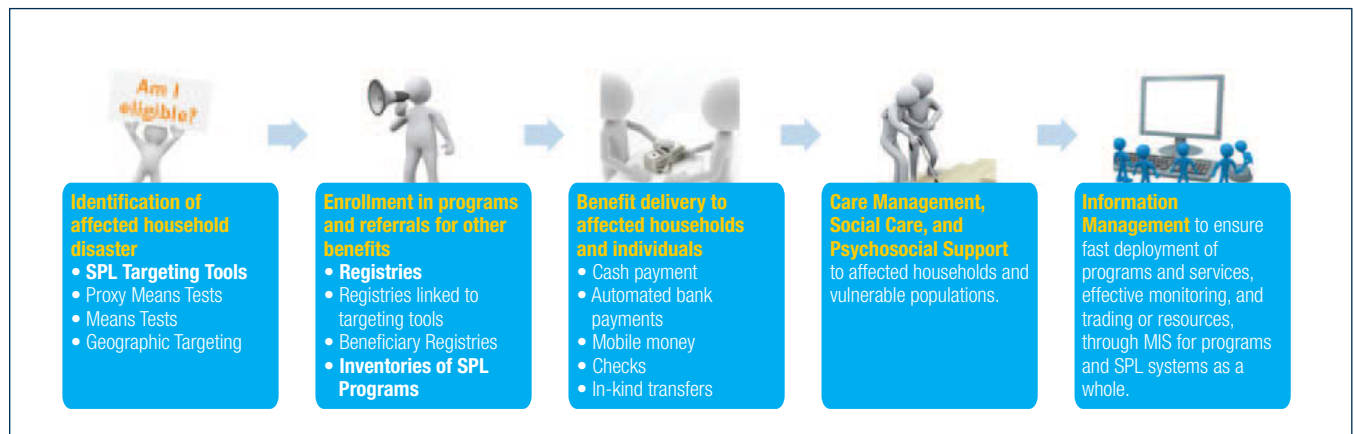
- **Targeting instruments** to ensure objective identification of the poor;
- **Social registries** that store information on applicants or beneficiaries and support referral processes;
- **Program inventories** that provide critical information on programs and services in multiple sectors;
- **Benefit delivery and payment mechanisms** that support delivery of transfers and benefits;
- **Case management processes** tailored to help beneficiary households address their specific needs;
- **Management Information Systems** that support information management to facilitate effective administrative, monitoring, and other implementation processes.

## SERVICE DELIVERY INSTRUMENTS TO SUPPORT RESILIENCE—COUNTRY EXAMPLES

The service delivery instruments that support Social Protection programs can also be tailored to serve resilience objectives and post-disaster response.

**Targeting Instruments and Registries:** Targeting instruments can help identify poor households before and after disasters, and set eligibility criteria for post-disaster support. Registries, which are a repository of information collected through application, targeting and enrollment processes, can help governments rapidly identify poor households in affected areas. It is important to note that while these instruments will help identify poor households in affected areas quickly, it does not erase the need for assessment of affected areas, as households that not captured by targeting tools and program registries may also be severely affected. However, making use of existing registries does help governments and responders rapidly provide support to those who are most

**FIGURE 5** SPL Service Delivery Instruments for Disaster Response



Source: Author's Illustration

vulnerable. Taking steps to strengthen registries prior to a disaster can help to channel support more effectively should a disaster strike, allowing effective and transparent identification of beneficiaries for scaled-up support. Cross-referencing hazard maps with poverty maps pre-disaster, could also provide an important repository of information pre-disaster to support SP-related preparedness and relief efforts.

### Country Case

St Vincent and the Grenadines' means-tested targeting process categorizes households eligible for emergency support based on an intake process and case assessment. Several countries have registries with information on applicants or beneficiaries of safety net programs that can be used to support resilience objectives, including Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines. Haiti utilized community committees to identify, inform, and verify beneficiaries following the 2010 earthquake.

**Payment Mechanisms** utilized by safety net programs can help quickly scale-up cash support following disasters. Payment modalities need to be adjusted to the context (such as whether beneficiaries have bank accounts and whether mobile banking is a viable option). To ensure a disaster-responsive system, payment channels need to be pre-identified with the assumption that standard mechanisms (ATMs, internet and mobile banking) may not operate as planned. Most Small Island States utilize a single payment method to deliver cash benefits; however, multiple payment mechanisms provide Governments and beneficiaries with choice to utilize the most appropriate method in the specific post-disaster context. Desirable traits in a payment mechanism include transparency, predictability and timeliness of transfers, linkages to established financial infrastructure, as well as ability to reach socially marginalized groups and those with mobility constraints (such as the elderly and people with disabilities).

### Country Case

In Jamaica, the PATH CCT's payment system is used to provide cash support to beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries affected by disasters. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security issues checks to affected households after being provided with household data collected during a damage assessment process. Checks are distributed to local post offices for collection.

**Case Management, Social Care, and Psychosocial Support:** Social workers and other staff that work on SPL programs are an important resource providing critical household accompaniment during regular program implementation. This package of services helps poor and vulnerable households and individuals address their risks, meet desired goals, and deal with complex problems faced due to their vulnerability. These services often include regular interaction with households and coordination with other service providers to facilitate referrals and monitoring. Prior to disasters, these services can be adjusted to support preparedness, particularly for identification, evacuation, and social care to vulnerable groups. Additionally, the regular interaction between social workers and poor beneficiaries, provides opportunities for educating poor and vulnerable households on disaster preparedness. In a post-disaster setting, these services can be scaled up to provide support to a wider group of beneficiaries. This includes, case management to help poor and affected households address challenges and psychosocial support to help affected households address stress and trauma triggered by disaster events.

### Country Case

In Jamaica, social workers are part of teams that collect data from affected households to assess damage, and determine support to be provided. Other countries such as Grenada and St. Lucia have social workers and other family support workers that regularly interact with beneficiaries. However, the use of these staff to complement disaster risk management efforts has been limited. An emerging example is São Tomé and Príncipe, where there is growing collaboration between social workers and adaptation experts assisting vulnerable coastal communities.

## Guiding Principles for Linking Social Protection Service Delivery Instruments to Resilience

*Ideally, there should be an established service delivery system in place with clear processes from identification to payments, with instruments that can be applied to disaster risk management and climate adaptation processes.*

- **Targeting:** The targeting instrument should be objective, avoid elite capture, and be accepted by the population. Application of the targeting instrument in poorest areas or hazard prone areas if resources are available.
- **Social Registries** are best able to support resilience objectives when there is data on more households (both applicants and beneficiaries), data is current and of high quality.
- **Management Information Systems** should be well-designed and adequately support critical functions of programs, with offline connectivity if needed.
- **Program Inventories** should ideally contain information on all available programs in key areas, with clear information on budget, enrollment processes, administrative contacts and locations.
- **Payment and Benefit Delivery Mechanisms** should be well-established, linked to established financial infrastructure where possible, accessible by across the country, and transparent, with a system of complains, accountability, and reconciliation.
- **Case Management** for social care and psychosocial support: Ensure staff is adequately trained before-hand, with established protocols that facilitate immediate deployment. Shelter care pre-identified, with protocols for use and management process in place.

## LESSONS LEARNED

While most Small Island States have at least one main safety net program (usually a flagship cash transfer program) that can be deployed to support resilience objectives, other key building blocks are often absent or weak, limiting the ability of these countries to effectively provide support to poor and vulnerable households to help them mitigate risks or receive adequate and timely SPL response after a disaster. For instance, cash transfers, in-kind transfers, social insurance schemes and labor market programs are provided in several Small Island States. However, institutional coordination and capacity for effective delivery is often weak, and key service delivery instruments—such as targeting and payment mechanisms—are not well-designed, limiting the ability for quick response after a disaster. Examples of this are targeting tools that do not effectively identify poor households; failure to store household data in social registries and management information systems; and single-method payment mechanisms that cannot channel resources quickly during disasters.

Nonetheless, Social Protection systems can play a scaled-up role in reducing vulnerability to natural hazards, as well as in protecting households after disaster strikes. Small Island States have already built stronger foundations for disaster-responsive Social Protection through improving targeting mechanisms of their national programs, improving the management of information on beneficiaries, and linking public works with climate change adaptation priorities. Jamaica's use of the PATH beneficiary registry, payment mechanism and social workers to identify affected households and provide cash support after Hurricanes Dean and Sandy is a good example. Even in the absence of all the building blocks, countries could formulate phased approaches to utilize SPL systems for resilience and tailored to their individual country contexts. This can begin with assessing how current programs, services, and service delivery instruments can support resilience objectives in the immediate term, as well as adopting a trajectory for improved responsiveness over time. The trajectory selected by each country depends on multiple factors, including budget availability, poverty levels, scale and types of disaster risk, implementation capacity, and political economy and cultural norms.

## Towards Disaster-Responsive Safety Nets: Lessons from Jamaica and Comoros

### *Practical Examples of SPL for resilience in small state contexts*

In Jamaica, the Program for Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) is the country's flagship conditional cash transfer program. First implemented in 2002, PATH provides education and health grants to children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women, and poor adults between the ages of 18–59 years.

The system was introduced as part of a flagship Social Protection reform that replaced overlapping and poorly targeted predecessors. PATH's service delivery includes:

- The PATH Beneficiary Identification System, which stores information on beneficiaries as identified through a Proxy Means Test, as well as applicants to the program.
- Payment delivery through post offices, which have a geographic spread around the country and national reach.
- A cadre of social workers that interact regularly with beneficiaries of PATH and other Social Protection programs.

Jamaica's Social Protection system also includes the contributory National Insurance Scheme, which provides long- and short-term benefits to contributors, including retirement, invalidity and survivor benefits.

Jamaica's programs have proved increasingly valuable as part of the country's national approach to climate and disaster-resilience. Examples of the use of Social Protection programs and service delivery instruments to support disaster response include:

- Payment of additional benefits to 90,000 PATH beneficiaries and 80,000 National Insurance Scheme pensioners after Hurricane Dean struck in 2007.
- Use of the PATH payment system to provide cash grants to affected households after Hurricane Dean (2007) and Hurricane Sandy (2012).
- Use of social workers to support household identification and payment delivery processes.

To date, more than 300,000 households in Jamaica have been provided with social safety net support as part of disaster response since 2007, providing a valuable tool for disaster and climate resilience.

In Comoros, the government is engaged in a reform process that involves preparation of a Social Protection policy focused on labor-intensive public works and cash transfers to rural households, as well as design of key service delivery tools, including a common beneficiary registry.

Two areas of focus include:

- Provision of longer-term productive cash-for-work to the poor and labor-constrained households in selected communities; and
- Provision of short-term post-disaster cash-for-work, including debris removal and road clearing.

The cash-for-work approach is able to provide both immediate benefits for households through creation of labor opportunities, and to leave communities with lasting benefits (such as improved community facilities and transport access) that increase their resilience to natural extremes. To achieve these goals, it was deemed necessary to tailor and strengthen service delivery instruments, including through use of geographic and community targeting for households identification; grievance mechanisms to receive and adjudicate complaints; Management Information Systems to support administrative, implementation, and monitoring processes.

Finally, while SPL programs and services can support various stages of the disaster risk management cycle, the focus is usually on response, albeit ad-hoc. Countries could capitalize further on their interactions with poor and vulnerable households through Social Protection programs to support disaster prevention (e.g. through labor market programs linked to risk reduction) or preparedness (e.g. utilizing interactions with beneficiary households to facilitate education on disaster preparedness). Social Protection therefore is yet to achieve its full potential to support improved resilience in Small Island States.

## WAY FORWARD—TOWARDS IMPROVED RESPONSIVENESS AND SCALABILITY

**To improve the responsiveness and scalability of SPL programs, the following key actions by Governments in Small Island States are recommended:**

- Where absent, Governments in Small Island States should consider implementing a flagship safety net program, which could serve as the main channel for delivering support following disaster. Alternatively, they could explore establishing a program that can be readily deployed only during times of disaster that can be linked to established service delivery instruments.
- Small Island States should invest in developing the building blocks of coherent SPL system, including targeting instruments, and payment, management information and integrated social information systems, linking these to the various stages of adaptation and disaster risk management efforts.
- Use the proximity to poor and vulnerable families that SPL programs provide to support effective prevention, preparedness and response objectives.
- Support improvements in multi-sector institutional coordination to facilitate risk reduction and disaster response.
- Mainstream disaster risk management and resilience objectives in SPL programs.
- Document and share lessons learned and best practices with other Small Island States.

**The World Bank and other development partners can support this agenda in Small Island States by:**

- Documenting lessons learned from country experiences on collaboration between SPL and resilience programs, and facilitating knowledge-exchange and learning on the topic.
- Investing in policy dialogue and knowledge-exchange on scalable SPL among Small Island States.
- Increasing the volume and improve the quality of evaluations (ex-ante and ex-post) to assess performance, and cost effectiveness.
- Supporting effective donor coordination to provide coherent support to Small Island States.
- Continue investments in enhancing SPL systems in Small Island States.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Prepared by Asha Williams and Francesca Lamanna, World Bank, edited by Nicholas Jones.

Comments to this note were provided by Margaret Grosh, Matthew Hobson, Carlo del Ninno, Veronica Silva, Oleksiy Ivaschenko, Jesse Doyle, Olivier Mahul, Barry Maher, and Gonzalo Reyes.

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<sup>1</sup>SISRI uses the classification for Small Island States used by the Alliance of Small Island States (see <http://aois.org/members>).

<sup>2</sup>The Note uses the International Panel on Climate Change's definition of resilience as: "the ability of a system and its component parts to anticipate, absorb, accommodate or recover from the effects of a hazardous (climate-related) event in a timely and efficient manner."

<sup>3</sup>The proxy means test is a targeting methodology that is widely used in Social Protection programs. Proxy means tests generate scores for households based on easily observed characteristics such as location and quality of dwelling, ownership of durable goods, demographic structure, and the education and occupations of adult members. The scores generated are used to target benefits to households at greatest need.

For more information, please see [WWW.GFDRR.ORG/SISRI-GROUP](http://WWW.GFDRR.ORG/SISRI-GROUP)

This note should be referenced as:

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