

Country report Nepal

“Evaluation of UNICEF’s work on cash transfer programming in emergencies”

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List of acronyms

DDC	District Development Committees
DoCR	Department of Civil Registration
ECTP	Emergency Cash Transfer Programme
EMOPS	UNICEF's Office of Emergency Programmes
GoN	Government of Nepal
LGU	Local government unit
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MIS	Management information system
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFAGA	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
NEPAN	Nepal Participatory Action Network
NPC	National Planning Commission
SSA	Social Security Allowance
TOC	Theory of change
UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VDC	Village Development Committee
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive Summary

Introduction: In recent years, the understanding that social protection and cash transfers programmes are appropriate programmatic options to prepare for and respond to emergencies has grown. UNICEF commissioned the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) to evaluate UNICEF’s approaches to cash transfers in emergencies, with detailed focus on four countries, Dominica, Malawi, Nepal and Yemen. This case study report is for Nepal.

Evaluation Purpose: The main purpose of the evaluation was to (1) to understand which UNICEF-supported (financial and technical) cash transfers in emergencies work and under which circumstances, i.e., where, when, why, for whom and how; and (2) to identify how UNICEF can improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its programming. Over the longer term, this evidence will help UNICEF to improve the impact of cash transfers on vulnerable populations affected by emergencies, and to bridge the humanitarian-development nexus by strengthening linkages between social protection and humanitarian cash-based transfers.

Key Evaluation Questions: The evaluation examined four questions:

- EQ1. What are the expected and unexpected impacts of cash transfer programmes on the most vulnerable boys, girls, men and women in emergency settings, and how can these impacts be further enhanced? (Objective 1)
- EQ2. To what extent do UNICEF-supported cash transfer programmes enhance the strengthening of national shock-responsive systems, and how can this be improved? (Objective 2)
- EQ3. What are the design features and implementation parameters that impede efficient delivery of UNICEF-run cash transfer programmes, and how can these be addressed? (Objective 3)
- EQ4. To what extent has UNICEF leveraged its comparative advantages with UN Sister agencies and other key partners for better coverage and more efficient delivery of cash-based programmes? (Objective 4)

Evaluation Methods. Using a comparative case study approach, the evaluation used a mix of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques to answer the evaluation questions. For Dominica, evidence was collected through a structured and comprehensive desk review and key informant interviews with UNICEF officials and key partners involved in social protection programme.

Key findings

Inter-agency collaboration and partnerships

UNICEF could optimise its preparedness by taking on a leading role in the promotion of dialogue on preparedness among all relevant actors.
Programme design, implementation, and management
Experience with the ECTP highlighted the limitations in the existing social protection system, specifically in the areas of coverage and targeting, the payment process, and weak, under-resourced human capacity particularly at the level of interface with communities and beneficiaries.
Monitoring of the programme in Nepal does not appear to have been especially robust.
It was suggested that UNICEF could improve its emergency response by increasing internal procedural flexibility with regards to allocating financial resources in disasters.
Both UNICEF and the GoN authorities underestimated the additional workload of the ECTP and limitations on local capacity to implement it at the palika level.
Strengthening shock responsiveness
While some steps have been made towards strengthening the enabling environment for the provision of cash, progress is slow and more practical guidance is required to put frameworks into action.
Ensuring sufficient resources and training are provided to personnel at local level could further improve the effectiveness of UNICEF’s programming.

Key recommendations

Inter-agency collaboration and partnerships
➤ Continue to advocate for and support better integration of the social protection system and actors with emergency response actors within the three tiers of government and beyond.
Responsible: UNICEF CO and partners in-county
Priority: Medium

Programme design, implementation, and management
➤ Address the identified operational barriers to success of the ECTP and strengthen the programme for future use.
Responsible: UNICEF CO and partners in government
Priority: Medium to high
➤ Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of emergency cash transfers and clarify the purpose and use of generated evidence.
Responsible: UNICEF CO, RO
Priority: Medium to high
➤ Continue to promote a better understanding of the relevance of cash transfers in emergencies, not only in the Social Policy and Emergency sections but across all UNICEF sections and continue to streamline procedures.
Responsible: UNICEF CO, RO, HQ
Priority: High
➤ Ensure that sufficient surge support is provided, including support to federal, provincial, and local government partners.
Responsible: UNICEF CO, RO, HQ
Priority: High
Strengthening shock responsiveness
➤ Enhance the preparedness of the national systems and strengthen their shock responsiveness.
Responsible: UNICEF CO
Priority: High
➤ Continue to build local capacity of each government tier across the country
Responsible: UNICEF CO and partners in-county

Priority: High

Chapter 1: Introduction and evaluation background

1. Introduction

In recent years, substantial progress has been made on emphasizing the need to leave no one behind by working towards common objectives and outcomes in development and humanitarian programming through the use of social protection systems and cash-based programming. Globally, social protection programmes, and especially cash transfers, have gained traction as instruments to reduce poverty, while achieving a wide range of multi-dimensional impacts. This increased importance of social protection and cash-based programming was also evidenced by the commitments made during the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. These commitments along with the heightened interest of donors to bridge the humanitarian-development nexus through the use of cash-based programming in emergencies, have incentivized many agencies to start exploring the use of cash as an alternative way of transferring resources, permitting individuals and households to acquire the goods and services that they most need, in emergencies. Moreover, enabling individuals to invest in rebuilding their livelihoods and boost their resilience to future shocks. With the shifting nature of crises from temporary to more complex, and with emergencies becoming increasingly protracted and chronic, the understanding that social protection and cash transfers programmes are appropriate programmatic options to respond to emergencies has grown.

In light of the need for evidence on what works and to provide organisational direction on cash transfers in emergencies, UNICEF's Evaluation Office at Headquarters worked with the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) to evaluate UNICEF's approaches to cash transfer programming in emergencies. Programmes in four countries – namely Dominica, Malawi, Nepal and Yemen – were selected as in-depth case studies for the evaluation. This document is the country report for Nepal.

The **first chapter** speaks to the evaluation's purpose and objectives and describes the approach and methodology that were adopted. The **second chapter** introduces the case study country Nepal and the Emergency Cash Transfer Programme (ECTP) which UNICEF supported in response to the earthquakes in 2015. The **third chapter** presents the evaluation findings and is thus the report's main chapter. Based on the evidence coming from Nepal, the chapter analyses UNICEF's approach to cash transfers in emergencies. The chapter is divided according to the overarching evaluation questions. Lastly, **chapter four** draws conclusions from the findings, and presents recommendations for UNICEF to strengthen its approach to cash transfer programming in emergencies in Nepal.

2. Purpose, objectives, scope

2.1. Purpose

The main purpose of this evaluation is twofold: (1) to understand what cash transfer programmes in emergencies with UNICEF inputs (financial and technical) work and under which circumstances, i.e., where, when, why, for whom and how; and (2) to identify how UNICEF can improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its programming. Over the longer term, this evidence will help UNICEF to improve the impact of cash transfers on vulnerable populations affected by emergencies, and to bridge the humanitarian-development nexus by strengthening linkages between social protection and humanitarian cash-based transfers. Moreover, evidence on what works can serve to strengthen UNICEF's global position in social protection in emergencies, focusing on cash transfers, and also enhance the capacity within UNICEF to design, deliver and coordinate these programmes.

The lessons learned from the programme's evaluation will be of primary use to the UNICEF Country Office in Nepal, as well as the Social Inclusion, Policy and Budgeting section under the Programme Division and UNICEF's Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) at Headquarters and the Regional Office. Secondary users benefitting from the evaluation will be the Government of Nepal, other UN agencies and development partners, carrying out programming in the area of social protection in emergencies.

2.2. Objectives

In addition to the overall purpose, the evaluation has the following objectives:

1. To assess the results of UNICEF-supported or UNICEF-run cash transfer programmes in emergencies;
2. To assess to what extent national capacities have been built in the design and implementation of these programmes, and in how far these results have been achieved in an efficient and sustainable manner;
3. To identify factors that drive or impede the successful achievement of results of cash transfers in emergencies in an efficient manner and how these factors can be applied to the current COVID-19 pandemic;
4. To identify what key comparative advantages and key lessons can be learned from UNICEF's work in cash transfers in emergencies.

The evaluation is summative and formative in its nature. The **summative evaluation components** focus on documenting the results achieved, especially in relation to UNICEF's inputs into the Emergency Cash Transfer Programme in response to the 2015 earthquakes. In turn, the **formative evaluation components** are forward-looking and identify key lessons that can be learned from UNICEF's work in cash transfers in emergencies, examining the design and implementation of the

programme, and provide actionable and practical recommendations on how UNICEF can strengthen its work in the area to in turn achieve more pronounced results.

2.3. Subject

The subject of the evaluation is social protection, focusing on cash-based transfers in emergencies. Four criteria guided the decision-making on which programmes to include in the evaluation:

1. UNICEF runs and/or provides technical support to the design and/or implementation of the cash transfer programme;
2. The cash transfer programme is responding to a sudden-onset or protracted emergency;
3. The cash transfer programme provided transfers typically more than once, and on a regular basis; and
4. The cash transfer programme has the aim to meet the basic needs of households and/or seeks to reduce the financial barriers to access of services.

In Nepal, the Emergency Cash Transfer Programme that was implemented by the Government of Nepal with support from UNICEF in response to the 2015 earthquakes was evaluated. The programme was implemented to respond to the natural emergency using the existing national social protection system. In total, 730,000 households were targeted by the programme and received a one-off transfer to cope with the aftermath of the disaster.

In addition to the evaluation's focus on the ECTP and UNICEF's inputs into the programme, which is the primary level of the evaluand, the secondary level of the evaluand focuses on the role of the wider context, such as the existing (shock responsive) social protection system, the type of emergency, and UNICEF inputs into the enabling environment, but not directly targeted to the programme (e.g. the capacity building of non-programme implementers or upstream policy work that UNICEF does in a country). Non-programme specific technical assistance to make social protection systems shock-responsive was also part of the second level of the evaluand.

3. Evaluation framework

3.1. Evaluation questions

On the basis of the evaluation objectives, four overarching evaluation questions and 29 sub-evaluation questions were developed. The four overarching evaluation questions are:

1. What are the expected and unexpected impacts of cash transfer programmes on the most vulnerable boys, girls, and women in emergency settings, and how can these impacts be further enhanced? (Objective 1)
2. To what extent do UNICEF-supported cash transfer programmes enhance the strengthening of national and shock-responsive systems, and how can this be improved? (Objective 2)

3. What are the design features and implementation parameters that impede efficient delivery of UNICEF-run cash transfer programmes, and how can these be addressed? (Objective 3)
4. To what extent has UNICEF leveraged its comparative advantages with UN Sister agencies and other key partners for better coverage and more efficient delivery of cash-based programmes? (Objective 4)

The report is structured around these four main evaluation questions and related sub-questions and presents findings for the case of Nepal. In *Annex I*, the evaluation matrix outlines the main evaluation questions and sub-questions, together with relevant indicators and data sources to answer each question.

3.2. Ex-post evaluation theory of change

In addition, an ex-post evaluation theory of change (TOC) was developed for each case study, which defines the specific pathways through which UNICEF's inputs in terms of emergency cash transfer programming and technical support in the areas of humanitarian cash transfer programming and shock-responsive social protection (evaluand 1) was expected to have led and continue to lead to outputs, in turn resulting in outcomes and impacts – all of which can be complemented with, and are influenced by, broader technical assistance to the government (evaluand 2). The TOC was developed on the basis of UNICEF's approach to cash transfer programming in emergencies, derived from organisational guidance documents, interviews and the online survey conducted during the scoping phase.

As shown in *Figure 1*, the TOC assumes that UNICEF provided a range of **inputs** into the ECTP in Nepal. These can take two forms, with one form focusing on designing and implementing the ECTP and the other form focusing on providing technical support for shock responsive social protection.¹ In the first form, where UNICEF supports the design and implementation of the emergency cash transfer programme, activities focus on designing a programme that addresses evolving needs. As part of this, a range of design aspects are assessed, including the level of the transfer, the timing and frequency of the transfer and the duration of the transfer, as well the systems through which the programme is delivered, including the payment system, monitoring and evaluation system and grievance redress mechanism. Each of which plays an important role in achieving the impact of the ECTP in Nepal. These features and how they (or their absence) influence the efficient and effective achievement of results are explained across key evaluation questions 1 and 3 as evidenced by the red- and yellow-coloured arrows, respectively.

The second form of inputs relates to UNICEF's technical assistance to the Government of Nepal (GoN) on shock responsive social protection. The pathways of change in this regard are reflected

¹ The two forms of inputs and how they impact outcomes and ultimately impacts can be read about in the accompanying synthesis report of the evaluation.

by key evaluation question 2 (i.e., purple-coloured arrows). These illustrate the direct effects such assistance has on sustainability, coherence, capacity and the integration of existing systems and processes, while also showcasing the resulting indirect effects of strengthened sustainability, coherence, capacity and systems on the efficiency and effectiveness of cash transfer implementation in emergencies.

All these inputs are expected to have resulted in a range of **outputs** (second level of the ToC). These include effective and efficient delivery of the ECTP to existing Social Security Allowance (SSA) beneficiaries in affected districts during the first round, and effective delivery to all households with children under the age of 5 years in affected districts during the second round. Moreover, the inputs are expected to have resulted in a sustainable and integrated delivery of the programme together with the GoN and strengthened administrative systems with enhanced capacity of national actors to design and deliver social protection and humanitarian cash themselves. Along the specified pathways of change, these outputs, in turn, are expected to have led to the provision of relevant support, meeting the multisectoral needs of vulnerable populations; enhanced linkages between humanitarian cash transfers and social protection systems and an overall improved national social protection system and underlying processes (**outcomes**, third level of the ToC). Ultimately, these outcomes are expected to result in meeting the immediate needs of the affected population, while also enhancing resilience of populations to future emergencies, increasing shock-responsiveness of the Nepalese national social protection system in order to provide support to populations in need, and enhancing the preparedness of national actors and systems (**impacts**, fourth level of the ToC). Lastly, it must be noted that all four levels of the ToC are influenced by non-cash transfer specific technical assistance as well as external contextual factors at the country, community and/or household level (evaluation 2).

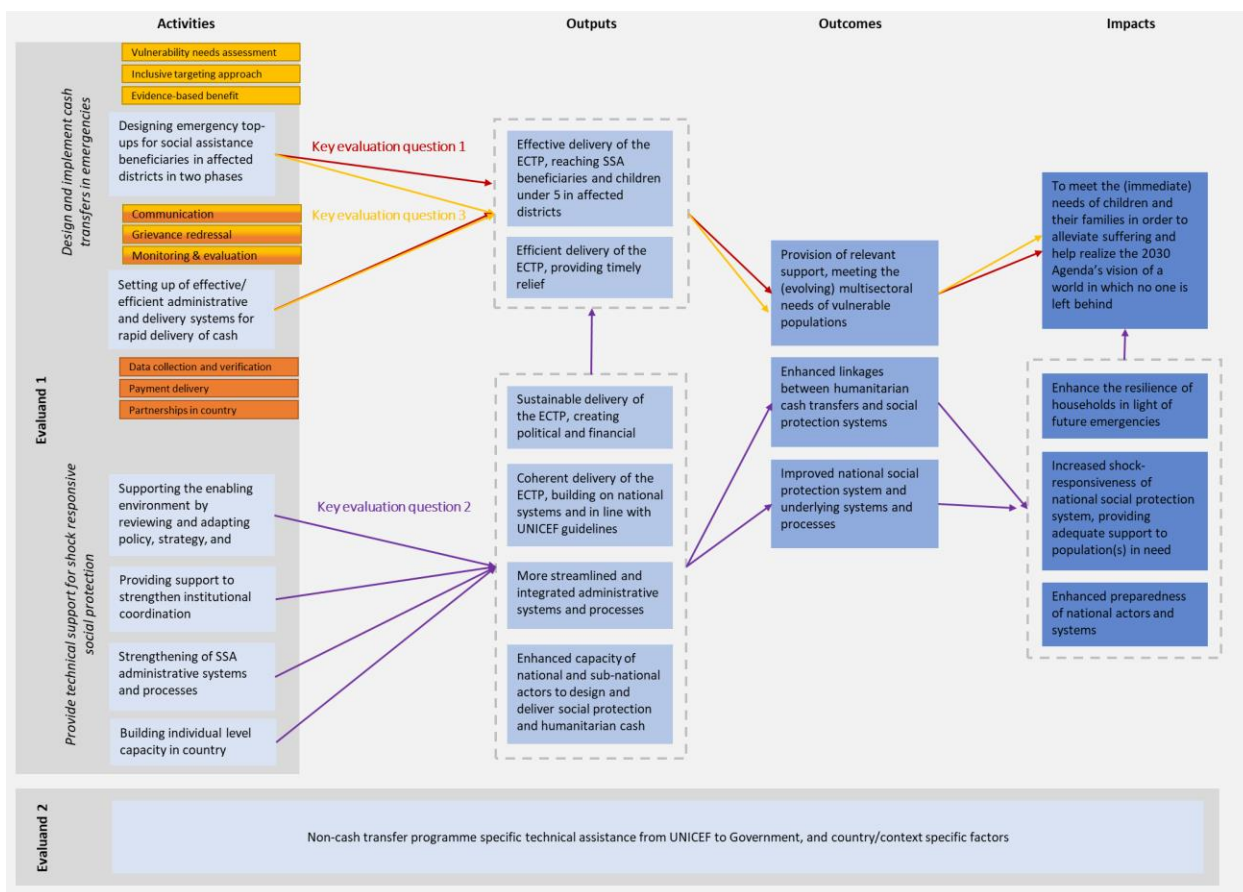


Figure 1. Ex-post evaluation theory of change for the ECTP in Nepal

4. Evaluation design and methodology

4.1. Comparative case study design

The evaluation employed a comparative case studies approach. The approach was selected given the context of this evaluation, covering multiple countries and cash transfer programmes, wherein the context and type of an emergency play an important role in understanding the factors driving or inhibiting programme success, as well as a focus on the how and why of processes and outcomes. Whereas the evaluation synthesis report presents evidence from all ten case studies, this report focuses on findings from Nepal.

4.2. Data collection methods

The evaluation uses primary and secondary qualitative data collection and analysis methods to answer the evaluation questions. For Nepal, evidence was collected through a structured and comprehensive desk review and key informant interviews.

4.2.1. Structured desk review

As part of the desk review UNICEF guidance documents on cash transfers in emergencies and UNICEF-specific organisational plans, strategies, and international commitments were reviewed. Among others, the desk review featured UNICEF’s *Programme Guidance on Strengthening Shock-responsive Social Protection Systems*, UNICEF’s *Humanitarian Cash Transfer Programmatic Guidance*, UNICEF’s *Strategic Plan 2018-2021*, UNICEF’s *2010 Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action*, the *Revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF* and the *2020 HCT Interdivisional Workplan*, among others.² In addition, ECTP programme documents, notes and reports were reviewed, including the *Evaluation of the Nepal Emergency Cash Transfer Programme through Social Assistance*³ commissioned by UNICEF, *Lessons from the UNICEF Nepal Emergency Cash Transfer Programme through Social Assistance*,⁴ UNICEF’s presentation on *Cash transfers as a response to the earthquake and a catalyst to consolidate Nepal’s social protection system*,⁵ and a paper on *The evolution of Nepal’s child grant: from humble beginnings to a real driver of change for children?*⁶ Other country-specific documents that were reviewed included, for example, *Shock-responsive Social Protection in Nepal; Programming, evidence gaps and priorities*,⁷ UNICEF’s working paper on *Strategies and options for scaling up and enhancing the child grant nationally in Nepal*,⁸ the *15th Periodic Plan of Nepal*, the *Draft Social Protection Strategy of Nepal*, the recent report on *Coverage of Social Security Allowances in areas at risk of floods and droughts*,⁹ the *Social Protection Budget Brief*,¹⁰ and the *UNICEF Nepal Social Protection Cash Transfer Narrative and Financial Report*,¹¹ speaking to the cash transfer response mounted in response to COVID-19.

4.2.2. Key informant interviews

Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with (1) UNICEF staff in the Country Office for Nepal; (2) government ministries, departments and agencies involved in the implementation of the ECTP and more broadly social protection and disaster response at national level; (3) government officials at sub-national level involved in programme implementation; and (4) representatives from WFP. **Table 1** below provides an overview of the KIIs carried out for the Nepal case study.

Table 1. Overview of key informant interviews

Location	Agency, number of activities	# activities
National level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration representatives (1)	15

² (UNICEF, 2019a); (UNICEF, 2018a); (UNICEF, 2017); (UNICEF, 2010); (UNICEF, 2020b)

³ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

⁴ (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁵ (Mathers)

⁶ (Garde, Mathers, & Dhakal, The evolution of Nepal’s child grant: from humble beginnings to a real driver of change for children?, 2017)

⁷ (Garde, n.d.)

⁸ (Rabi, Koehler, Okubo, & Dhakal, 2015)

⁹ (Bhandary, Carraro, Hebbar, Singh, & Thapa, 2019)

¹⁰ (UNICEF, 2020)

¹¹ (UNICEF & e-Sewa, 2021)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Home Affairs representative (1) • Ministry of Environment, Rural Modernisation and Kalinago Upliftment representative (1) • Ministry of Finance representative (1) • Member of Parliament, DDR Management Expert (1) • Danish Church Aid representative (1) • Nepal Red Cross Society (1) • WFP representatives (1) • World Bank (1) • UNICEF Chief of Social Protection, Evaluation and Evidence (1) • UNICEF Social Policy Specialist (1) • UNICEF Emergency Specialist (1) • UNICEF Emergency Officer (1) • UNICEF Monitoring & Evaluation Officer (1) • UNICEF Programme Specialist (1) 	
Sub-national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF Nepalgunj Field Office representatives (1) • UNICEF Siddharthanagar Field Office representatives (1) • Municipal DRR Officer (1) • Social mobiliser (1) 	4
Total activities		19

4.3. Data synthesis

NVivo was used by the evaluation team for integrated data analysis and synthesis of data from different sources. Firstly, all qualitative primary data collected through key informant interviews at national and sub-national level was transcribed and subsequently coded in NVivo. Next to the primary data, secondary data sources included in the structured desk review, were imported to NVivo. Data and sources were coded according to a node structure organized according to the different elements along the pathways outlined in the TOC.

4.4. Limitations

Triangulation of primary qualitative data: Travel and movement restrictions imposed due to COVID-19 limited primary data collection activities and the ability to include voices from affected populations in the evaluation. Unlike originally planned, focus group discussions with beneficiaries and community members were not carried out as part of this evaluation, in turn limiting a comprehensive triangulation of findings between different primary data sources and also limiting the incorporation of views and voices from beneficiaries and community leaders. To mitigate this limitation, beneficiary voices from secondary sources were included in the review and triangulated with primary data from key informants interviewed as part of this evaluation.

4.5. Ethical considerations

EPRI conducted the evaluation guided by professional standards and ethical and moral principles in line with the *Norms and Standards for Evaluation* (2016),¹² developed by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG), as well as the *UNICEF Procedures for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis*.¹³ The design of the evaluation went through an independent ethical approval process and data collection only started upon receipt of the official approval letter.

As part of its ethical procedures, EPRI gathered the informed consent of all key informant interviewees and provided them with elaborate and transparent information prior to the interview. Through the gathering of informed consent, EPRI assured the anonymity and voluntariness of answers to all potential interviewees. This also included informing the key informant of their right to not answer a question or to discontinue the interview if wanted. All members of the evaluation team, including UNICEF's evaluation manager, were bound by ethical research principles of impartiality, independence, credibility, conflicts of interest and accountability. No ethical issues arose during the data collection activities for Nepal.

Chapter 2: Context of UNICEF's work on cash transfers in emergencies in Nepal

1. A country prone to natural hazards

Nepal is a nation with decreasing levels of poverty and improving levels of human development. It embraces a unique socio-economic development model, which emphasizes equity as an integral part of attaining a higher level of growth. As such, Nepal has more than doubled its spending on social protection programmes from 1.5 per cent of GDP in 2005¹⁴ to approximately 3.5 per cent in 2018. About 1.4 per cent of GDP were spent on social assistance the same year, making it among the highest in South Asia.¹⁵ However, Nepal remains highly vulnerable to natural disasters and the effects on poverty and human development thereof. Overall, the country globally ranks 11th and 16th in its vulnerability to earthquakes and multi-hazards, respectively.¹⁶ In 2011, Nepal was ranked the fourth most vulnerable country in the world according to the Climate Change Vulnerability Index.¹⁷ As such, the country's inherent vulnerability to recurrent landslides, cold waves, floods, fires and earthquakes, and its lack of capacity to prepare for and mitigate the risks, increases the extent and duration of destruction as well as the risks to livelihoods. Although these calamities impact everyone, children face the most immediate risks both mentally and physically.

¹² (UNEG, 2016)

¹³ (UNICEF, 2015a)

¹⁴ (ILO, 2017)

¹⁵ (World Bank, 2018)

¹⁶ (UNICEF Nepal, n.d.)

¹⁷ (Ibid.)

2. Social protection environment in Nepal

Social protection has long been seen as a mechanism to reduce poverty and vulnerability, especially of children. More recently it is seen as a pathway to mitigate the impacts of emergencies. The country itself has long-established social protection policies including cash transfer programmes to support the most vulnerable. Following the country's 2015 revised constitution, which guarantees the right to social security, continuous investment into the expansion of its programmes has been seen. In the 2017/2018 fiscal year, the full cost of the social protection portfolio in Nepal was estimated to be 3.58 per cent of GDP, up from 3.2 percent in 2015/2016. Of this, social assistance programmes contributions grew from 1 percent to 1.38 per cent of GDP. Yet, it is to be noted that the social protection portfolio of the country consists of multiple highly fragmented programmes (**Table 2**), of which the majority are not yet adaptive to the country's vulnerability to emergencies; implying that they are not designed to build resilience or respond to emergencies.

Table 2. Overview of social assistance programmes in Nepal¹⁸

Allowance	Details
Child grant	NPR 400 (NPR 200 in 2015) per month per child under the age of 5 for up to 2 children per mother for all Dalit families and all families in selected districts
Disability allowance	NPR 3,000 per month for fully disabled persons and NPR 1,600 per month for partially disabled persons
Endangered ethnicities allowance	NPR 3,000 per month for all persons belonging to one of ten endangered ethnic groups
Senior citizens allowance	NPR 3,000 per month for all persons above the age of 70 and NPR 2,000 above the age of 60 for all Dalits and Kamali residents
Single women's allowance	NPR 2,000 per month for all single women above the age of 60 and widows of any age

Nevertheless, this did not stop the country nor the development partners from utilizing the Social Security Allowances¹⁹ to mitigate the effects of the 2015 Gorkha earthquakes – ones that shook the country, taking the lives of 9,000 individuals and injuring an additional 22,000. Of those that were killed, roughly a third were children. As it was covariate in nature, a disproportionate impact on the country's poor and vulnerable resulted.

3. Humanitarian action in Nepal

Prior to 2015, the Government of Nepal in collaboration with the United Nations set up a basis for disaster response in the form of the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Combined, these provided the country with analyses and data from previous development efforts and a needs analysis that aided in informing future responses to emergencies. While important, these efforts did not prepare the country for the 2015 earthquakes. Instead, in the immediate aftermath, aid was provided largely by first responders

¹⁸ (World Bank, 2018)

¹⁹ The SSAs include the provision of allowances to senior citizens, single women, individuals with disabilities, children, and endangered ethnicities.

who were members of local communities and non-governmental organizations. The latter used their extensive networks to provide information to humanitarian actors. With the help of the GoN, the United Nations, local volunteers and humanitarian agencies provided life-saving aid to affected communities. This included a flash appeal that was coordinated by the Humanitarian Country Team through which a total of 3.7 million individuals received assistance over the five months following the disaster.²⁰

Although an adaptive social protection system was not adequately developed at the time of the emergency, awareness of the importance of preparedness became increasingly widespread. As such, the country approved and enacted several new policies including the Local Government Operation Act 2017, the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017, as well as the National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2018.²¹ In addition to this, Nepal is a pilot country under the new Inter-Agency Standing Committee Emergency Response Preparedness initiative, which aims to provide the country with adequate tools and systems to strengthen engagement with communities during future emergency responses. Combined, these policies and initiatives have aided in making Nepal more adaptive and resilient to future emergencies, while ensuring that the voices of the affected are heard and the engagement amongst actors and the Government of Nepal improves.

4. UNICEF's response to the crisis

In the direct aftermath of the 2015 earthquakes, UNICEF Nepal focused its response on health, education, child protection, WASH and nutrition. However, identified gaps in the provision of in-kind support revealed that a majority of the affected population was struggling to meet basic needs. As market systems were functioning, UNICEF considered shifting to cash as a more relevant aid delivery modality. Under this response, UNICEF provided both financial and technical support to the Government in order to expand the existing SSA to disaster-affected areas.

UNICEF, together with the GoN, designed a two-phase emergency cash transfer response, with the objectives to: (1) provide immediate cash relief; (2) support the recovery process; and (3) identify the weakness of the existing social protection system and start building a model to increase future shock-responsiveness. The response was operationalised in two phases, a vertical expansion of the SSA programme followed by a horizontal expansion. The vertical expansion targeted existing SSA recipients for a cash transfer top up, and the second phase targeted affected household with children under the age of 5 years, which were not previously SSA recipients and therefore did not receive cash as part of the vertical expansion (**Error! Reference source not found.**). It was the first time that cash was provided to address the effects of an emergency in Nepal.

²⁰ (Ovesen & Heiselberg)

²¹ (Government of Nepal, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2018)

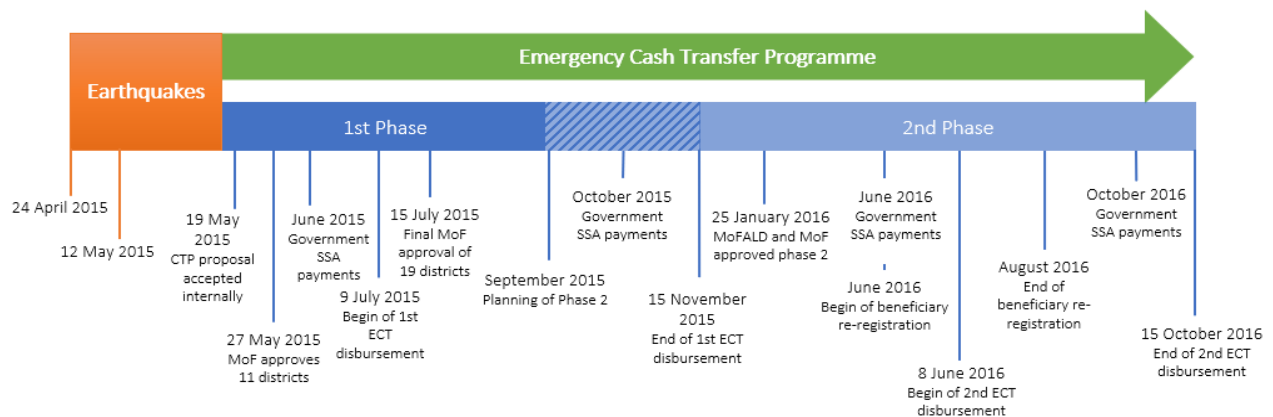


Figure 2. Nepal’s ECTP implementation timeline

In the first phase of the ECTP, UNICEF Nepal provided a one-off top-up of NPR 3,000 (approximately USD 30) to all current beneficiaries of the SSA – totalling approximately 434,000 individuals and at a cost of USD 14 million. During the second phase, UNICEF Nepal supported the undertaking of a census to compile a full registry of children under-five in eleven emergency-affected districts, identifying approximately 317,000 children. As a result, all households in these districts with children under five received a one-off cash transfer of NPR 4,000 (approximately USD 40). This totalled USD 11 million, bringing the total cost of the emergency response to USD 25 million.

During both phases, transfers were provided through the payment delivery channels of the existing SSA, a manual delivery of cash-in-envelopes through Local Government Units (LGUs) and community volunteers. At the time there was a lack of a widespread banking infrastructure and few households had bank accounts. UNICEF introduced two support mechanisms: (1) communication and awareness-raising campaigns in communities through women and elderly associations, scouts, radio, and child clubs; and (2) real-time monitoring via SMS. Further technical support for shock responsive social protection included coordinating cash delivery and resource mobilization, supporting the review and adaptation of policy, strategy and legislation in Nepal as well as generating evidence and undertaking context analyses.

The longer-term result was the establishment of a model of rapid social transfer to affected groups during future emergencies. In addition, the ECTP also constituted the first steps towards UNICEF’s objectives of helping the Government of Nepal establish a model of rapid social transfers to vulnerable groups during future emergencies, and ultimately to strengthen the social protection system for children in Nepal – a portion of the population that is disproportionately affected by shocks and multidimensional poverty.

Chapter 3: Evaluation findings

KEY EVALUATION QUESTION 1

What are the expected and unexpected effects of cash transfer programmes on the most vulnerable boys, girls, and women in emergency settings, and how can these results be further enhanced?

The ECTP was successful in achieving positive impacts on food security, coping strategies, debt, education, health, and livelihoods. The cash transfer was an appropriate response to the needs of most vulnerable populations at the time in which it was implemented, as markets were adequately functioning. However, the vertical expansion of the first phase suffered from exclusion errors and thus not all of the most affected boys, girls and women were reached. While the horizontal expansion during the second phase addressed this error, the sequencing of two separate phases of distribution with different beneficiary populations meant that some people in need were provided cash transfers within four months of the earthquake and others waited over one year.²²

EQ1

To what extent is the cash transfer programme relevant to the needs of the vulnerable population in emergencies? How did the programme evolve over time to the evolving needs of the population?

Finding 1.1.1. The cash transfer was an appropriate response for the needs of vulnerable populations within the context. The consensus was that a cash transfer was the appropriate response at the time in which it was implemented; markets were adequately functioning in the targeted districts and it was clear that the provision of in-kind support, such as the hygiene supplies UNICEF was distributing in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, was becoming less relevant to the needs of the affected population. Beneficiary satisfaction was notably higher with cash support compared to in-kind assistance.²³ Moreover, the programme design was informed by multiple, comprehensive, inter-agency needs assessments, which helped to identify the extent and impact that the emergency had on the needs of affected girls, boys, women, and men. These assessments included the Rapid Sector Damage Assessment, Post Disaster Needs Assessment, Shelter and Settlements Vulnerability Assessment and Nepal Joint Assessment on Food Security, Livelihoods and Early Recovery. This combination of assessments helped UNICEF develop a sufficiently clear understanding of the most pressing needs within the affected population.

Finding 1.1.2. The programme did not evolve over time to address evolving beneficiary needs, this was in line with the programme's objectives and its duration. The ECTP was not envisioned as a complete package to meet all the relief needs of households; rather, it was intended to be

²² (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

²³ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

complementary to other ongoing relief efforts in the country (*Table 4*). Moreover, it was designed as a short-term response and thus it was assumed that the needs of the population would not significantly evolve over the course of its implementation. Yet, there was no reassessment of needs or of the value of the cash transfer for the horizontal expansion despite the long delay in implementation of this phase.²⁴

Finding 1.1.3. The ECTP has made use of different means to involve affected populations in the design and implementation of the programme (*Table 3*). The affected population was partially involved in the needs assessment, was involved in monitoring and evaluation processes, and was provided with opportunities to raise complaints either in person or via a hotline.²⁵

Table 3. Involvement of the affected population in the ECTP

Means of involving affected population	
Needs assessment	Partially
Beneficiaries design activities	No
Beneficiaries jointly develop guidance or plans with the public and private sector	No
Beneficiaries develop evidence for advocacy	No
In (multi-)stakeholder meetings	No
In participatory monitoring, reflection, and evaluation processes	Yes
'Post box' where communities / beneficiaries can submit written complaints	No
A toll-free mobile phone number which people can phone and/or to which texts be sent	Yes
Certain locations where complaints can be either addressed verbally or written complaints submitted.	Yes
Follow-up sessions to share results and discuss findings	Yes

EQ2

To what extent are the most vulnerable girls, boys, women, and their families reached?

Finding 1.2.1. Targeting in the first phase was successful in reaching poor and vulnerable households that were already receiving social assistance, however, excluded newly vulnerable and not covered poor households. The first phase of the programme that was based on the SSA categorically targeted beneficiary list reached 93 per cent of regular social protection beneficiaries, and thereby exceeded the programme's own target of 85 per cent coverage.²⁶ In total, 434,000 beneficiaries were reached during phase 1. Still, the first phase was characterised by exclusion errors, as the SSA list itself excluded many households in need of humanitarian cash support, who were not prior beneficiaries of the SAA.²⁷ This was a known problem from the start, and together with the desire of government staff and implementers to design support for children, was the rationale for a horizontal expansion to be able to better reach those who were in need, but were not existing beneficiaries of social grants.²⁸ **Finding 1.2.2. The horizontal expansion,**

²⁴ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

²⁵ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

²⁶ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

²⁷ An example of such is evidenced when considering the child grant, which only covered Dalit children under the age of five. Yet, although these exclusion errors were present, UNICEF prioritized the use of existing beneficiary lists during the first phase of the response in order to provide speedy delivery of cash to affected individuals.

²⁸ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

which relied on a census of children under five in eleven affected districts specifically carried out for the ECTP expansion, was able to reduce exclusion errors and provide better coverage. On the whole, the census exercise successfully identified and registered roughly 85 per cent of eligible beneficiaries, with the remaining ones being registered through re-registration exercises.²⁹ As a result, a total of 317,000 children were reached during phase two. The census not only provided the data required for the horizontal expansion but was also subsequently used for the expansion of the Child Grant programme. In fact, in the case of the latter, Nepal has pledged to expand the programme to reach every family with children under the age of five by 2022. The increase in coverage is paramount for a country that is experiencing rapid demographic changes characterized by a growing youth and child population.³⁰

EQ3

What were the intended/unintended and positive/negative effects on beneficiary populations, especially the most deprived girls/boys and women/men?

Finding 1.3.1. The ECTP was mainly used by beneficiaries to meet daily needs, pointing to the positive and intended effects of the transfer. NEPAN data suggests that the most common uses of the cash transfer were to purchase food (77 per cent of respondents), medicine (45 per cent), household essentials (35 per cent) or clothes (31 per cent).³¹ The percentage of households using the transfer to pay back loans or to save was lower, by comparison.³² These self-reported spending patterns were also supported by post distribution monitoring (PDM). In total, the monthly value of the ECTP equated to NPR 750. While this has been found to be lower than the monthly per capita food expenses in normal times (*Figure 3*), it must be noted that the intent of the ECTP was to be complementary to the other relief efforts undertaken post-disaster. A total of 93 per cent of PDM respondents noted receiving support from other agencies during phase 1 of the ECTP.³³

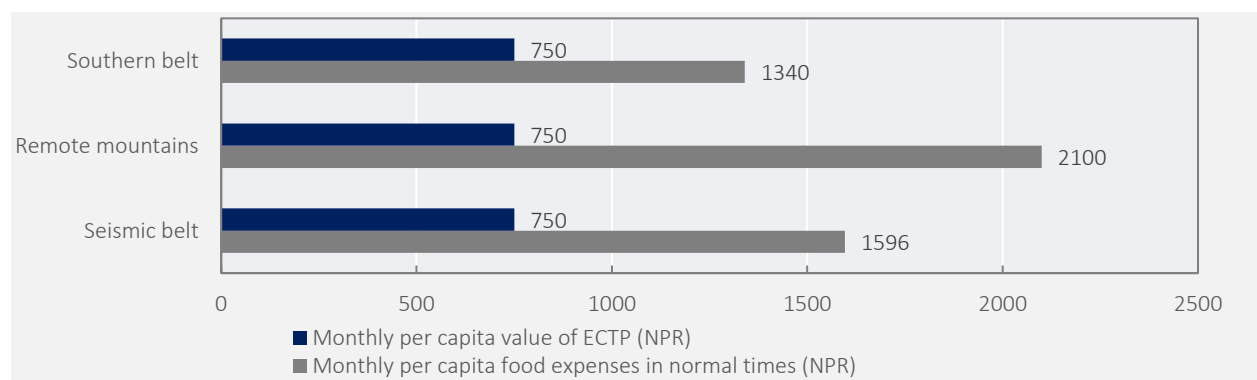


Figure 3. Relationship between per capita ECTP to food consumption expenses

²⁹ (UNICEF, 2016)

³⁰ (Garcia & Dhakal, 2019)

³¹ (Gurung, Tamang, Thapa, Sanner, & Magar, 2015)

³² (Gurung, Tamang, Thapa, Sanner, & Magar, 2015)

³³ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

Combined with the emergency relief efforts from other agencies (**Table 4**), a total of 3.7 million individuals were directly reached out of the 5.4 million affected by the earthquake – equating to 68.5 per cent. In combination with these efforts, evidence suggests that the ECTP was successful in achieving variable positive effects on food security, coping strategies, health, education, debt, and livelihoods of the affected population served by the ECTP.³⁴ There was further evidence of shifts in spending patterns between the first and second phase, but it is unclear if that was driven by the fact that the population receiving the transfers was different or because needs and priorities had shifted over the course of the year since the shock event. There is no evidence on the ECTP’s effects in the areas of WASH and protection.

Table 4. Emergency relief efforts undertaken in Nepal per sector, 2015³⁵

Agency	Relief efforts
Food and nutrition	2.8 million people provided with food assistance through general food distributions, cash-for-work and conditional cash transfers. Nutritional status of 373,550 children screened with cases of severe and moderate malnutrition referred for treatment.
Shelter	700,000 households provided with initial emergency shelter items (tarpaulins and tents). 93,000 households benefitted from safe demolition and debris removal. 105,000 households benefitted from restoration of critical public services such as establishing temporary local government offices and other public infrastructure.
Health	Essential health services, medicines and supplies provided to 3.4 million people (including indirect beneficiaries) communicable disease outbreaks mitigated and all damaged health facilities resumed services. 105 reproductive health camps provided check-ups, safe delivery, family planning and essential medicine to address reproductive health needs of 66,000 women including pregnant and lactating mothers.
WASH	2.6 million people reached with emergency water supply assistance and 2 million people provided with hygiene kits and hygiene education. Essential hygiene and safety supplies provided to 43,000 women and psychosocial services for 258,846 people
Child protection	3.7 million people reached with protection messages. 379 unaccompanied or separated children identified and either reunified with their families (353) or placed in alternative care (26). Prevented trafficking of 455 women and 338 children.
Education	300,000 children provided access to safe temporary classrooms, including gender sensitive latrines and handwashing facilities and over 395,000 children received emergency education supplies.
Cash assistance	31 partners distributed USD 28 million in the form of cash assistance in the 14 most-affected districts.

Finding 1.3.2. An unintended, negative effect was a modest and localised increase in frustrations among households with children in the affected districts that did not receive the transfer after the census exercise. As the census was unable to successfully register approximately 15 per cent of eligible children in the first instance³⁶ – which were included through a re-registration exercise –

³⁴ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

³⁵ (UNOCHA, 2015); (IFRC, 2016); (WFP, 2015a); (WFP, 2015b); (WVI, 2016)

³⁶ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

a sizeable part of the population was initially discontented, especially in instances where they did not understand why they had been left out or felt that they could not influence the final outcome.

KEY EVALUATION QUESTION 2

To what extent do UNICEF-supported cash transfer programmes enhance the strengthening of national and shock-responsive systems, and how can this be improved?

National capacities have been built as part of the ECTP and it is expected that the social protection system will benefit from the lessons learned and progress initiated during the implementation of the ECTP. As part of its support to the cash transfer, UNICEF has been advancing policy changes that have led to improvements in the national social allowance system. The experience with the ECTP also highlighted the limitations in the existing social protection system, which has led to efforts towards linking various civil and social registries managed by multiple Ministries, improvements in the quality of data collection at local level in disaster-prone areas, and steps towards expanding the coverage of the banking system and increasing the number of people with bank accounts. Despite these steps towards strengthening the enabling environment for the provision of cash, progress is slow and more practical guidance is required to put frameworks into action.

EQ1

What is the role of UNICEF in strengthening the enabling environment for the provision of cash (e.g., upstream policy work, general shock-responsiveness, or capacity building)?

Finding 2.1.1. UNICEF has been a key actor in advancing policy changes that have led to improvements in the national social allowance system. Prior to the 2015 earthquake UNICEF had fostered a positive working relationship with the GoN to provide policy and technical support for the child grant programme along with other programmes based on the 1996 concluded Basic Cooperation Agreement between the two parties.³⁷ The dialogue between these two parties on setting up the ECTP was an important mechanism through which UNICEF could further engage with government counterparts on strengthening and increasing the shock-responsiveness of the SSAs more broadly. Personnel in the UNICEF Social Policy Section and Emergency Section were instrumental in working with the GoN in drafting procedures and guidelines on cash transfers as shock responsive social protection.

Since 2015 there has been an increasing institutionalisation and expansion of social protection within the country. As part of UNICEF's Country Programme Action Plan 2018-2022, the organization supports the GoN in strengthening policies and programmes which address child poverty, vulnerability, and exclusion; thereby aligning itself with the Government's goal of strengthening the national social protection system for children and their families. These efforts include: 1) providing support to the National Planning Commission (NPC), ministries, and the

³⁷ (UNICEF, 2018b)

Central Bureau of Statistics to enhance their capacity to generate evidence; 2) providing technical assistance to expand the child grant programme until it reaches all children under the age of five; and 3) facilitating dialogue between stakeholders to co-create, share and use knowledge/data to support more effective child policies.³⁸

The adoption of such policies has been advocated for by UNICEF, the World Bank and others, and the experience with the ECTP had direct impacts on policy shifts towards these expanded programmes and a commitment from the Government of Nepal to work towards more shock responsive social protection in its 15th Periodic Plan of Nepal. As part of these commitments, the Plan calls for, among others, the development of insurance as one of the important pillars of social protection (this includes extending health insurance to all districts); the sensitization of social protection programmes towards the elderly, the disabled, single women and children, endangered ethnicities as well as the poor; the nationwide expansion of social assistance programmes; the adaptation of social security programmes to disaster risks; and the formalization of the informal economy.³⁹

Finding 2.1.2. While steps have been made towards strengthening the enabling environment for the provision of cash, progress is slow and more practical guidance is required to put frameworks into action. Prior to 2015 there was very little understanding of the linkages between social protection and disaster risk management, a situation which has since changed somewhat. Led by the National Planning Commission and supported by UNICEF, the World Bank, DFID and others, the GoN has been working on a draft National Social Protection Integration Framework, which places emphasis on making social protection shock responsive. While operationalisation of the framework remains slow, other documents also mention the use of cash in emergencies through the existing social protection system. The National Disaster Management Policy mentions the social protection mechanism as a possible option for the delivery of humanitarian cash transfers and the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration's (MoFAGA) guidance for local governments mentions the distribution of cash through the SSAs.

EQ2 To what extent has UNICEF been able to build capacities of national systems and actors?

Finding 2.2.1. By highlighting the limitations in the existing social protection system, specifically in the areas of coverage and targeting, the payment process, and weak, under-resourced human capacity (particularly at the level of interface with communities and beneficiaries), experience with the ECTP initiated a process of capacity building for national actors and systems. There is a wide recognition that improvements in social registries and greater financial inclusion are required to improve both the social protection system and facilitate emergency response. This acknowledgement has led to efforts towards linking various civil and social registries managed by

³⁸ (UNICEF, 2018b)

³⁹ (Government of Nepal, 2020)

multiple Ministries, improving the quality of data collection at local level in disaster-prone areas, and expanding the coverage of the banking system and increasing the number of people with bank accounts.⁴⁰ These achievements and improvements are the result of capacity building exercises targeted at local government officials, focused on data collection, civil registration and strengthening social protection registries.

Finding 2.2.2. Still, amidst a process of political restructuring, capacity-building of national systems and actors has been slow. The transition to a decentralized federalist system since 2015 has likely contributed to slow progress towards a more shock responsive social protection system. The responsibilities of identification, registration, and payments of social protection benefits have been shifted from the MoFAGA to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) and devolved to lower levels of authority. However, primary and secondary evidence highlight that at the time of the ECTP implementation, local levels did not have sufficient financial and human resources to entirely fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Moreover, with the devolvement of responsibility and division of oversight over social protection programmes across ministries, the advancement of the shock responsiveness agenda ran the risk of becoming atomized and fragmented. The recent National Social Protection Integration Framework Draft promises to provide more guidance for social protection within the federalist structures of Nepal and constitute a unifying framework, further clarifying roles and responsibilities of federal, provincial, and local government tiers, to which resources are aligned and accordingly allocated.⁴¹

EQ3

What is the relevance of the emergency cash transfer programme and more generally shock-responsive social protection in light of the recent COVID-19 crisis?

Finding 2.3.1. Experiences with the ECTP and subsequently initiated efforts to strengthen the shock responsiveness of social protection are relevant in light of the recent COVID-19 crisis. With the deepening of multidimensional child poverty due to COVID-19, the GoN recently announced to expand the child grant programme; which can be attributed to the Government's prior experience with social protection in emergencies and UNICEF's and partner's substantial advocacy efforts. From March 2021 onwards, the child grant will cover an additional 550,000 children under five – constituting an approximate 75 per cent increase vis-à-vis the existing coverage of 737,000 children.⁴² In spite of the fiscal crunch induced due to the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the GoN decided to expand the grant in response to worsening child poverty in the country. As evidenced by UNICEF's COVID-19 child and family tracker – a periodic household survey administered to households with children – multidimensional child poverty increased almost four-fold since the first survey wave in May 2020.⁴³

⁴⁰ (Government of Nepal, 2020); (UNICEF, 2018b); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016); (Practical Action Consulting, 2017)

⁴¹ (UNICEF, 2020)

⁴² (UNICEF, 2021)

⁴³ (UNICEF, 2021)

In addition to the expansion of the child grant to cover more children under the age of five, the Government of Nepal initiated the delivery of in-kind relief packages composed of food and hygiene items. As of May 2020, between 70 and 95 per cent of eligible households in the most affected provinces had received this package.⁴⁴

KEY EVALUATION QUESTION 3

What are the design features and implementation parameters that foster and/or impede effective and efficient delivery of UNICEF-run cash transfer programmes?

Overall, the use of the SSA system was considered a key driver in effectively reaching a large segment of the population affected by the disaster in the first phase of the ECTP. Within a few weeks of the earthquake UNICEF had resolved to provide humanitarian cash assistance through the government's social protection system, notwithstanding the recognized limitations of the existing system. The partnership strategy that UNICEF adopted for the ECTP also constituted a driver of effectiveness and efficiency and facilitated the achievement of programme results. Relying on local capacities with connections in the community and in-depth knowledge of local context and circumstances was critical for the implementation of the ECTP. However, at times, local capacities were overwhelmed, leading to localised delays in cash distribution. Another barrier to the effective and efficient implementation of the ECTP were gaps in the existing SSA beneficiary list on the basis of which the vertical expansion was carried out and the lack of data to target the horizontal expansion, hence requiring a large-scale targeting exercise, significantly delaying the second round of ECTP payments.

Box 1. Analysis of drivers and barriers to achieving effective and efficient results

To answer EQ1 and EQ6 on the operational drivers and barriers of effective and efficient results, a qualitative comparative analysis was carried out. The analysis tested a range of attributes in terms of their influence on the criteria of effectiveness and efficiency. These attributes are reflective of the activities related to designing and implementing social protection cash transfers in emergencies, providing technical assistance for shock-responsive social protection, and also non-cash transfer specific technical assistance, as included in the TOC.

Table 5 and *Error! Reference source not found.* **Table 6** present the attributes that were tested and whether they were found to be drivers (green), barriers (orange) or neither (yellow). These tables do not speak to specific characteristics of the attributes, but simply identify whether the presence of the attribute was assessed to be a driver or barrier to effective and efficient implementation of the ECTP in Nepal.

EQ1

What have been the organisational and operational factors driving or impeding the effective achievement of results and outputs, including when designing, implementing, and delivering cash transfers in emergency contexts?

⁴⁴ (Franciscon & Arruda, 2020)

Below, **Table 5** presents the attributes that were tested as operational drivers and barriers of effectiveness in the design and implementation of the ECTP in Nepal. The single attributes are subsequently further elaborated upon.

Table 5. Overview of drivers and barriers of effectiveness

Attributes for testing	Effect	
Benefit level and revision thereof	Neutral	
Targeting approach	Neutral ⁴⁵	Driver ⁴⁶
Communication towards beneficiaries and communities	Driver	
Complaints and grievance redressal mechanism	Barrier	
Monitoring and evaluation	Neutral	
Partnerships	Neutral	
Reliance on local capacity	Barrier	

Finding 3.1.1. While the targeting approach during the first payment round was not considered a barrier to effectiveness, the vertical expansion on the basis of existing SSA beneficiary lists resulted in exclusion errors. The vertical expansion targeted existing SSA beneficiaries, hence those who were vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion prior to the crisis and would therefore necessarily have fewer resources to recover from the earthquake. However, it was recognized that there were many exclusion errors and some inclusion errors in the SSA beneficiary list for regular social transfers, and the data quality of the registry was often poor. Thus, using the SSA beneficiary list was effective at enabling a quick response for those who were already receiving social assistance but was less effective at ensuring that the response reached all those who needed assistance because they were erroneously excluded from the regular SSA or because they were newly in need of support.⁴⁷

Finding 3.1.2. The horizontal expansion during the second phase was considered a driver of effectively reaching most vulnerable populations, as it included those who were in need of humanitarian assistance but were not reached through the regular SSA in the first phase. However, there was no reliable database from which to derive a horizontal expansion beneficiary list and therefore a large-scale targeting exercise was necessary. Targeting could not start before the expansion was approved by the MoFAGA and Ministry of Finance (MoF) in January 2016, more than nine months after the earthquake and five months after planning for the horizontal expansion phase started. Furthermore, the targeting exercise excluded several eligible households, which led to the re-registration of beneficiaries from June to August 2016. Combined, these factors, although reaching the most vulnerable populations, led to delays in disbursement and thus impeded the extent to which effective and efficient results were achieved. In fact, instead of two instalments of NPR 2,000, the plan was adjusted to solely pay beneficiaries a single instalment of NPR 4,000 given time constraints.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ 1st phase of the ECTP

⁴⁶ 2nd phase of the ECTP

⁴⁷ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

⁴⁸ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

Finding 3.1.3. The strong involvement of actors close to the community has shown to be a key factor in driving the effectiveness of communication with beneficiaries and the whole community.

UNICEF's communication campaign, relying on the radio, SMS messaging, VDC notice boards, Nepal scouts and social mobilisers in the communities, has shown to be relatively effective in reaching beneficiaries and communities across both phases of the programme. Yet, to be noted is that beneficiaries included in the vertical expansion were already familiar with the distribution system and therefore sensitization and communication requirements were reduced during the first phase of the ECTP, compared to phase two, in which new beneficiaries were targeted and introduced to the system.

Furthermore, some of the communication avenues chosen were more effective than others. For example, very few beneficiaries received their information through SMS messaging, the radio or the VDC notice board. Instead, word of mouth was identified as the most common channel of communication. This can be due to a number of challenges including the reach of mobile phones, target population literacy level, as well as the pace and duration of messaging.⁴⁹

Finding 3.1.4. Organisationally, UNICEF's presence before, during and after the emergency was identified as a key factor driving the effective achievements of results and outputs.

UNICEF had established, pre-existing relationships with the GoN and UNICEF's prior presence in the country facilitated an understanding of the "nuts and bolts of the social protection system", as one key informant phrased it. Given the organisation's long-term strategy to support the GoN- as evidenced by its 1996 concluded Basic Cooperation Agreement and the Country Programme Action Plan 2018-2022⁵⁰ - UNICEF could leverage on these relationships to work collaboratively on the ECTP.

Finding 3.1.5. UNICEF staff in Nepal had limited practical experience in the design and implementation of an emergency cash transfer, but prior experience with the national social protection system in Nepal supported the design of an effective response.

The ECTP was one of the first examples of an emergency cash transfer that used a national system – both globally and in the region. It was acknowledged by UNICEF personnel that there was a steep learning curve for those in charge of the programme in 2015.⁵¹ The UNICEF CO also received technical support from personnel in the Regional Office and Headquarters. Moreover, to account for shortages of staff on the ground, staff from UNICEF field offices were deployed to disaster-affected districts. However, as field staff was also responsible for other ongoing activities and could not focus their full attention on both phases of the ECTP, this resulted coordination and communication problems within UNICEF at times.⁵²

⁴⁹ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

⁵⁰ (UNICEF, 2018b)

⁵¹ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

⁵² (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

What is the role of monitoring and evaluation in achieving outputs and results effectively with these programmes, and how can UNICEF employ monitoring and evaluation best in emergency contexts?

Finding 3.2.1. UNICEF designed and developed a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan for the ECTP, involving multiple stakeholders, however, M&E activities were not used to affect outputs and results. The monitoring arrangements in both phases included real-time internal process monitoring and monitoring of outcomes through UNICEF, Department of Civil Registration (DoCR), District Development Committees (DDC) and the Nepal Participatory Action Network (NEPAN). In addition to this, UNICEF developed a comprehensive M&E plan which detailed the ECTP's theory of change, outlined the results framework, outlined the key indicators for measuring success, outlined the intended outcomes and expected outputs, as well as specified the intended sources of evidence.⁵³ Moreover, a post-intervention evaluation was carried out by an external third-party firm.

However, staff involved in monitoring and stakeholders outside UNICEF were unclear about how the information generated from monitoring activities was actually utilised.⁵⁴ The short duration of the intervention may have been an important factor in the limited use of monitoring results. In addition, the SMS-based monitoring system was set up, through which people had to register to provide feedback on the ECTP processes, however, the service was hardly used by beneficiaries and communities, due to a lack of mobile phones and/or illiteracy of the user, pointing to the need to design adequate feedback mechanisms. Furthermore, the provided funds by UNICEF were not sufficient to train enumerators and conduct monitoring visits. As such, the extent to which the latter were conducted was minimized.⁵⁵

Finding 3.2.2. The formalised complaints and grievance redressal mechanism developed for phase two was not adequate for communities and beneficiaries and knowledge of it was limited, and hence its uptake was low. During the first phase, the ECTP mainly relied on the existing grievance redressal system of the SSA system and no additional grievance mechanisms were set up specifically for the ECTP. As the beneficiary list was pre-determined for phase 1, there were very few cases of discontent at the community level and in instances where people had complaints, they relied on the existing system of communicating directly with Village Development Committees (VDCs)/ward secretaries or the village leader.⁵⁶ During phase two UNICEF designed and implemented a grievance redressal mechanism specifically for the ECTP on the basis of an SMS system and a toll-free number. However, since not everyone had access to the technology, or the literacy skills required, to use these services, beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries relied more

⁵³ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁵⁴ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

⁵⁵ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁵⁶ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

on traditional means of registering complaints through VDC secretaries or local political leaders.⁵⁷ Furthermore, PDM data indicates that 52 per cent of the survey beneficiaries did not know about the existence of a complaints and grievance redressal mechanism,⁵⁸ suggesting that communication around its existence was insufficient.

EQ3

To what extent was the partnership strategy adopted by UNICEF in pursuing the outcomes and outputs effective? What were key points of contention, also with regards to competition over resources and/or power dynamics?

Finding 3.3.1. The partnership strategy was generally effective and facilitated the achievement of programme results, but local level administrators were insufficiently resourced. Reliance on local capacities, connections with the community and in-depth knowledge of local context and circumstances was critical for the implementation of the ECTP. At times, local capacities were overwhelmed, leading to localised delays in cash distribution.⁵⁹ A capacity assessment of local actors was not undertaken prior to the start of the programme and LGUs described being overworked and under-resourced. While UNICEF provided some additional funds to cover increased administrative costs at local level, the Government did not provide additional resources, so that, overall, local administrators remained insufficiently funded.

EQ4

How can UNICEF improve the effectiveness of its programming?

Finding 3.4.1. UNICEF should seek to advance both vertical and horizontal expansions simultaneously. Rather than conceptualising the vertical and horizontal expansions as two consecutive phases, the organisation should start to work on the horizontal expansion at the same time as the vertical expansion, with the understanding that implementation of the horizontal expansion will take longer to operationalise. In order to do so effectively, UNICEF should continue to support efforts to build a comprehensive social registry in Nepal as well as to expand the Child Grant Programme to achieve universality.

Finding 3.4.2. UNICEF could furthermore better utilize monitoring expertise and tools. While UNICEF had put in place a comprehensive strategy for M&E for both phases, spanning multiple actors and activities, it did not have a clear plan of using and disseminating results generated from the activities. Thus, the organisation should look to develop an information dissemination strategy for process and impact monitoring results, speaking to the use of the generated evidence. Furthermore, in order to increase the representativeness of such results, UNICEF should ensure that beneficiaries of a horizontal expansion are aware of the various channels to file complaints. While 93 per cent of existing SSA beneficiaries were aware of these channels (given their prior

⁵⁷ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁵⁸ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

⁵⁹ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

knowledge of the SSA programmes and their components), only 34 per cent of newly identified beneficiaries reported being aware of a complaint procedure during phase two of the ECTP.⁶⁰

Finding 3.4.3. Ensuring sufficient resources and training are provided to personnel at local level could further improve the effectiveness of UNICEF’s programming. The organisation should assess capacities to scale up and deliver the emergency cash transfer programme and, if needed, sufficiently resource local personnel, including delivering regular ongoing training and providing surge support when necessary. UNICEF could further work towards their capacitation by promoting the mindset that local personnel are partners and not only service providers by actively encouraging their participation in and contribution to programme strategy and design.

EQ5 How effective was/is UNICEF’s response to COVID-19 when considering the utilization of social protection and cash transfers?

Finding 3.5.1. In its response to COVID-19 in Nepal, UNICEF’s effectively utilised social protection and cash transfers. Next to UNICEF’s successful advocacy efforts targeted at the Government of Nepal to expand the child grant, the organisation implemented the Child and Family COVID-19 Cash Transfer to provide relief and financial assistance to households. UNICEF implemented this transfer in response to the findings from UNICEF’s COVID child and family tracker, which repeatedly assessed the needs of roughly 7,000 households in over 650 palikas, showing growing needs as a result of the pandemic.⁶¹ Under the cash transfer, two payments of NPR 450 per child were distributed to 6,356 beneficiary households.⁶² UNICEF delivered the cash payments as mobile transfers – a payment modality that had not been used for any national programme in Nepal yet. The cash transfer payments were disbursed using bank accounts and e-Sewa digital wallets of the households.⁶³ Next to the cash transfers, UNICEF linked beneficiaries with the Childhelp hotline, supported birth registration, and undertook risk-informed communication.

EQ6 What have been the organisational and operational factors driving or impeding the efficient use of inputs and the efficient achievement of outputs and results?

Table 6 presents the attributes that were tested as drivers and barriers of efficiency in the implementation of the ECTP in Nepal, which are further elaborated upon in the following section.

Table 6. Overview of drivers and barriers of efficiency⁶⁴

Attributes for testing	Effect
Targeting approach	Driver
Data verification processes	Barrier
Payment delivery	Barrier
Partnerships with development partners and local organisations	Neutral

⁶⁰ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

⁶¹ (UNICEF, 2021c)

⁶² (UNICEF & e-Sewa, 2021)

⁶³ (UNICEF, 2021b)

⁶⁴ An explanation of the color-coded scheme of the table can be found in **Box 1**.

Partnerships with national governments	Neutral
Reliance on local capacity for implementation	Barrier

Finding 3.2.1. Using the well-established SSA system contributed significantly towards the speed of delivery and lowering of financial costs to UNICEF of the targeting for the vertical expansion and only partially of the horizontal expansion. The existing system was not well equipped for sudden onset disasters requiring a horizontal expansion to include disaster-affected population not already included in social protection registries. Compared to parallel emergency cash transfer programmes, albeit of a smaller scale, the implementation of the vertical phase happened more quickly but the implementation of the horizontal phase happened much more slowly.

Finding 3.2.2. Reliance on systems designed for non-emergency operations without providing sufficient financial and human resources to meet the increased workload meant that the process of identifying and selecting new beneficiaries was slow for an emergency response. The LGUs were significantly overworked since they were the main focal point at local level for much of the humanitarian assistance.⁶⁵ Excessive demands on the LGUs constrained their ability 1) to collect data for the targeting of the horizontal expansion and 2) to distribute the emergency cash transfers in a predictable and timely manner. As a result, programme delays as described under Finding 3.1.2 were encountered.

Finding 3.2.3. Furthermore, the SSA system relied on the secretaries of the VDCs to facilitate cash delivery, an approach that is not viable during a large-scale emergency where entire communities have been affected and those who volunteer under normal circumstances would likely have other priorities. A capacity assessment was not carried out and it was simply assumed that the LGUs would be able to implement the ECTP without significant technical support or additional staffing.⁶⁶ A lack of sufficient resources provided to the LGUs possibly contributed to reduced ownership at local level whereby some felt that the programme was an additional burden without sufficient compensation.

Finding 3.2.4. While the institutional agreements required to operationalise the vertical expansion were arrived at quickly, the approval of the design of the horizontal expansion took more than three months. This delay was, in part, because of the competing demands for time and attention of the GoN, yet a more expedited process is required for an emergency response. Issues with the management of financial flows also created some barriers to the speedy delivery of assistance. In order to manage financial risk, districts were required to have spent at least 60 per cent of funds before UNICEF would disburse the next tranche.⁶⁷ Some LGUs delayed the ECTP transfers to coincide with the timing of the SSA transfers to be more efficient with the time spent in managing distributions given the high demands on their time, which meant delays of upwards of a few months in reaching the minimum expenditure of 60 per cent. This approach of lump-sum rather

⁶⁵ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁶⁶ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁶⁷ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

than monthly payments triggered a cascade effect of delays in some areas. The decision to delay ECTP payments suggests a lack of understanding of the difference between urgent emergency cash transfers and regular social protection transfers that are normally delivered two to four times a year.

EQ7 To what extent did the emergency cash transfer programmes use resources efficiently?

Finding 3.7.1. The use of the SSA beneficiary list was viewed as contributing to an efficient implementation of the first phase of the ECTP. Efficiency gains resulted from using the SSA beneficiary list for the first phase of the ECTP in that a large-scale beneficiary selection process was not required. Using the SSA cash delivery channels also contributed to some efficiency gains in that a parallel system did not need to be set up. For example, beneficiaries included in the vertical expansion were already familiar with the distribution system and therefore sensitization and communication requirements were reduced compared to a new system. The LGUs were also familiar with the cash distribution process and limited additional training would be required.⁶⁸

Finding 3.7.2. Yet, these efficiency gains came at the cost of exclusion errors during phase 1 and considerable localised delays in effectuating the transfers. Some LGUs, for example, opted to align the timing of the emergency cash transfers with the distribution of the SSA transfers, since these are provided every few months. However, such alignment caused significant localised delays in the transfer of the humanitarian support to some beneficiaries.

Finding 3.7.3. The second phase of the ECTP was not implemented as efficiently as the first phase but it did not suffer from the same targeting errors of exclusion. The delay in the official approval process by the GoN and the time required to conduct the beneficiary selection for phase 2 resulted in an implementation process that was much less efficient when compared to phase 1. Given that the second phase of the ECTP required new processes and that simultaneous relief programmes being implemented, local authorities were insufficiently resourced to be able to carry out a large beneficiary selection process in an expedited manner.⁶⁹ Despite this, the second phase was able to successfully include disaster-affected persons who had been left out of the first phase. The census increased under-five birth registration from 48 per cent in the 11 districts to a total of 94 per cent; thereby laying the foundation for the universalization of the child grant programme.⁷⁰

EQ8 How can UNICEF improve the efficiency of its programming?

Finding 3.8.1. UNICEF should assess key bottlenecks to timely implementation in the existing social transfers system and seek ways to remove them. Findings suggested that many of the formal processes of institutionalization and implementation of the ECTP were slow as a result of

⁶⁸ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁶⁹ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017);

⁷⁰ (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

bureaucratic hurdles and the horizontal expansion phase was significantly delayed as a result.⁷¹ Identifying and removing some bureaucratic red tape that has been shown to delay programme implementation, particularly in scenarios of predictable emergencies, such as regular flooding in some locations, could increase the efficiency of UNICEF’s programming. Moreover, UNICEF could work to continue improving the various civil and social registries and increase the interoperability among them yet take measures to protect the privacy of valuable personal data and prevent misuse.

Finding 3.8.2. Ensuring local personnel are trained in, and sensitised to, the ways in which an emergency cash transfer programme differs from a regular social transfer programme, can further enhance efficiency. Findings showed that local capacities were overwhelmed, leading to localised delays in cash distribution.⁷² Technical training on humanitarian principles and the necessity of timely programme delivery, and in areas of financial management and reporting can help to better prepare local personnel. Part of this training should also be to empower local personnel to advocate on their own behalf to demand additional support when necessary.

EQ9

What are the effects of using a national system, a parallel system, or a mixed system on meeting the needs of vulnerable populations, and what requirements need to be met for UNICEF to use national systems?

Finding 3.9.1. Overall, the use of the SSA system was considered a key factor in reaching a large segment of the population affected by the disaster in the first phase of the ECTP. Within a few weeks of the earthquake UNICEF had resolved to provide emergency cash assistance through the government’s social protection system, notwithstanding the recognized limitations of the existing system. UNICEF aimed to simultaneously provide the necessary humanitarian assistance while strengthening the SSA system itself.⁷³

Finding 3.9.2. Using the national social protection system to deliver emergency cash transfers also increased government acceptance of the use of unconditional cash transfers, not only for the ECTP but also for future disasters. The acceptance of government officials and their active participation in operationalizing the programme is a vital requirement for UNICEF to use national systems. In this case, the decision to integrate the ECTP with the national system was quickly accepted by the GoN as an appropriate way to distribute emergency cash assistance in an expedited manner. The validity of this approach was not in question and it was widely accepted by the Nepalese population and, generally speaking, by the humanitarian community. Some government officials had and continue to have reservations about providing unconditional cash transfers out of fears of creating dependency, often preferring public work programs instead.⁷⁴ Yet, perceptions are changing, and acceptance is growing. Furthermore, there is an increasing recognition of the

⁷¹ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁷² (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁷³ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁷⁴ (Willitts-King & Bryant, 2016)

benefit of developing and maintaining a robust social protection system that can be activated in an emergency response.

Finding 3.9.3. Some key requirements to channel emergency cash transfers through the national social transfers system were only weakly present. The interest of GoN to route emergency assistance through the existing national system and the ability to quickly access a list of beneficiaries were crucial requirements and evident.⁷⁵ However, the ability of national partners to carry out programme activities effectively and efficiently, and to be able to adequately report on progress, including financial reporting, were weak and the ECTP did not sufficiently resource capacity building early on in the programme.⁷⁶

Finding 3.9.4. There is the potential to inadvertently reinforce existing weaknesses in the national social transfer system. By using the SSA beneficiary list for the first phase of emergency transfers, the ECTP reinforced and replicated the errors of exclusion in beneficiary selection. This risk was recognized in the inception of the ECTP but the long delay in the implementation of the horizontal expansion meant that a large number of similarly disaster-affected and vulnerable people did not receive the ECTP transfer for a year or more after the earthquakes.⁷⁷

EQ10

What has been the role of the characteristics of the emergency, the choice of implementation model and the level of preparedness been for the efficient use of resources?

Finding 3.10.1. The national systems were not prepared to respond to a mega-disaster of this kind where entire communities were affected. In total, it has been estimated that close to 750,000 individuals were pushed below the international poverty line of USD 1.25 per day with many more affected by a possible decrease in food security.⁷⁸ The combination of the suddenness and the magnitude of the disaster, along with a lack of preparation for such an event, meant that the national systems were overwhelmed by the scale of need. This earthquake exposed how ill-prepared national systems were to cope with a disaster of this size, leading to important discussions on ways to increase the shock-responsiveness of social protection systems.⁷⁹

Finding 3.10.2. Acute need of assistance was experienced by a wider group than those typically marginalized in society, and as such it was challenging to identify and reach those most in need in a timely and efficient manner. A large proportion of those within the quake zone did not have sufficient resources to be able to cope in the immediate aftermath nor to support early recovery.⁸⁰ The ECTP was not a universal grant and instead selection was based on pre-crisis vulnerability categories, despite there being a widespread need for cash support. Since resources are finite,

⁷⁵ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁷⁶ (Willitts-King & Bryant, 2016); (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁷⁷ (Willitts-King & Bryant, 2016); (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁷⁸ (Willitts-King & Bryant, 2016)

⁷⁹ (Willitts-King & Bryant, 2016); (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁸⁰ (Willitts-King & Bryant, 2016); (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

even for a mega disaster, difficult choices were made regarding how a balance could be struck between reaching as many people as possible while also providing meaningful assistance to those with the least means to support themselves. Given this trade-off and the fact that other humanitarian actors were providing various responses, including cash, to the disaster-affected population, it was decided that the ECTP act as a top-up grant to support the most vulnerable in earthquake affected areas – as explained under Finding 1.3.1.⁸¹ Yet, many of the affected population found it difficult to understand why some groups were receiving cash transfers and others were not despite the perception that needs were similarly high across much of the community.⁸²

EQ11 How can UNICEF optimize its preparedness for the use of cash transfers in emergency situations?

Finding 3.11.1. UNICEF could optimise its preparedness by taking on a leading role in the promotion of dialogue on preparedness among all relevant actors. Internally, UNICEF should ensure the active participation of all relevant UNICEF Sections in the development of preparedness plans. Externally, UNICEF should continue to facilitate and encourage intra-governmental dialogue between relevant ministries, departments, and working groups that may not be aware of the work of others and how their own work is relevant to increasing preparedness for the use of cash transfers in emergencies.

Finding 3.11.2. UNICEF should further work to ensure that preparedness work is carried out at all levels of government. In addition to policy support and advocacy work with the central government, UNICEF should continue to provide technical support for ongoing development of preparedness plans at local level and secure funding to expand these efforts to more palikas.

Finding 3.11.3. As part of contingency preparations, UNICEF could develop conceptual and administrative documents required to activate an emergency cash transfer programme, while consulting and refining previous documents. Among others, the organisation could conduct a comprehensive scenario analysis where emergency cash transfers may be part of an appropriate response from which to prepare agreement frameworks, standard operating procedures, and other formal procedural documents. This would allow for a more efficient and effective response to the next emergency as delays would be minimized, capacity strengthened, and coordination improved.

EQ12 Have preparedness and learnings from previous emergencies enabled UNICEF to respond to the current COVID-19 crisis?

Finding 3.12.1. UNICEF drew on its learnings from previous emergencies by acknowledging the relevance and significance of advocacy work towards the Government, ultimately resulting in the

⁸¹ (Willitts-King & Bryant, 2016); (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

⁸² (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

expansion of the child grant; however, for the Child and Family COVID-19 Cash Transfer, UNICEF did not rely on infrastructure and systems used during previous emergencies. In Nepal, previous emergency cash transfer programmes were based on the existing SSA programmes. This is not the case for the Child and Family COVID Cash Transfer, which is implemented through a parallel system and does not make use of the potential vertical and/or horizontal expansion of existing national programmes nor of the lessons learned in this respect.

Finding 3.12.2. Yet, the Child and Family COVID-19 Cash Transfer itself holds the potential for learnings and better preparedness. The programme used various electronic payment channels for the disbursement of funds to beneficiaries – the first time this was done in Nepal. In that way, the cash transfer piloted an innovative way of delivering cash in Nepal and will likely contribute to knowledge and evidence generation for future cash transfers in emergencies.

EQ13

To what extent has UNICEF, where feasible, worked actively to maximize the sustainability of the results stemming from its inputs? How has UNICEF done this?

Finding 3.13.1. As expected for a short-term humanitarian programme, sustainability of the impact on programme beneficiaries was low; however, more sustainable results were achieved in terms of systems strengthening. Advancements in the social protection system continue to be made both in policy (e.g., expansion of child grants as well as the introduction of social insurance and labour market schemes⁸³) and practice (e.g., social registry).⁸⁴ UNICEF's continued involvement with the relevant ministries has played an important role in maintaining momentum on improving the social protection system that was stimulated by experiences in the ECTP. This is evidenced, amongst many other efforts, by UNICEF's support of the *International Conference on Resilient Social Protection for an Inclusive Future*. This conference has resulted in a set of key commitments on shock responsive social protection⁸⁵ and aims to support the GoN in delivering its vision of a core package of social protection for all its citizens, especially children and the most vulnerable. Such advancements have the potential to make routine government systems become more reliable, to extend their reach, and to increase government capacity to respond to regular and irregular shocks.

Finding 3.13.2. UNICEF's support did not extend to matters of sustainable financing of emergency responses and sufficient resource mobilisation remains an important challenge to sustainability. The ECTP was funded by UNICEF and donors and no provisions for future financing of a similar response were made.⁸⁶ Hence, the lack of long-term, sustainable, and predictable financing is one of the major factors inhibiting the financial sustainability of shock-responsive social protection and emergency cash transfer programmes in the country. Yet, recent progress must be noted. While UNICEF continues to advocate for the inclusion of a contingency response fund into national

⁸³ (Government of Nepal, 2019)

⁸⁴ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁸⁵ These commitments are the foundation of the new Integrated National Framework on Social Protection Draft.

⁸⁶ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016); (UNOCHA, 2015)

budgets, the World Bank has also established a USD 50 million resiliency fund to enable the country to respond to future disasters.

EQ14

What lessons can be learned from UNICEF's work in terms of optimizing the sustainability of programmes and inputs in the area of cash transfer programming in emergencies?

Finding 3.14.1. Supporting local systems to improve existing practices and building local capacity to respond to a disaster are key ways to optimize the sustainability of the outcomes of a humanitarian programme beyond the implementation timeframe. Achieving greater sustainability of results is often a difficult challenge for short term emergency programs. However, working with existing local systems rather than setting up disconnected parallel aid delivery systems is one clear way in which emergency interventions can be designed in a way to leave a lasting impact.⁸⁷

Finding 3.14.2. Implementation of a humanitarian programme through social protection systems provides the opportunity to increase the sensitivity of existing systems, and those who implement the systems, to humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence. Implementing emergency support in this way also provides potential opportunities to better connect previously marginalised people with services and support that their governments provide as part of routine programmes.

Finding 3.14.3. The involvement of the GoN was important to foster a sense of ownership, if not at local level then at the level of the central authorities. A better appreciation for the linkages between social protection and emergency response was created, leading to greater sustainability in the momentum on making the social protection system more shock responsive – as evidenced by the GoN's involvement in the *International Conference on Resilient Social Protection for an Inclusive Future* as well as their dedication to the development of the Integrated National Framework on Social Protection Draft.

EQ15

What practical and concrete opportunities exist, especially in the field of cash transfers, that allow UNICEF to better bridge the humanitarian-development nexus thereby delivering more sustainable results?

Finding 3.15.1. UNICEF has the opportunity to take a leading role in promoting dialogue and collaboration across the humanitarian and development communities. It could foster more exchange between the more emergency-oriented cash coordination group and the more development-oriented social protection task team. UNICEF could further work to provide thought leadership on a multi-sectoral approach to emergency cash transfers and foster more exchange between the cash coordination group and other thematic sector groups, while also identifying opportunities for intra-governmental dialogue and encourage increased collaboration.

⁸⁷ (UNICEF, 2019a)

Finding 3.15.2. UNICEF also has the chance to work towards harmonisation and cross fertilisation between humanitarian and development cash transfer guidelines. Thereby the organisation can help to avoiding the atomisation of the development of cash-related guidelines, such as the cash distribution guidelines process led by the cash coordination group and the parallel standard operation procedures for emergency cash with and for the GoN.

KEY EVALUATION QUESTION 4

To what extent has UNICEF leveraged its comparative advantages with UN sister agencies and other key partners for better coverage and more efficient delivery of cash-based programmes?

UNICEF's positive reputation with the GoN and history of working with the Government across multiple sectors was a key feature of the agency's relevance and comparative advantage in working within the social protection system to deliver emergency aid. At the time of the ECTP, UNICEF had less operational experience in emergency cash transfer programming than it does today, but UNICEF's expertise in working at the policy level and working directly with governments in support of national and local systems was a strength. UNICEF should continue to use its audience with the GoN to advocate for increased cash in emergencies using the social protection systems and to further promote policy changes to advance shock-responsive social protection. UNICEF could further leverage its connections across multiple sectors to facilitate a national discourse on cash transfers and social protection.

EQ1

To what extent does the programme align with UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2018-2021, the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, UNICEF's global social protection programming framework and other key UNICEF guiding documents?

Finding 4.1.1. While many of the key UNICEF guiding documents were developed or updated after the ECTP, the programme generally adhered to the principles and objectives outlined in these documents. The ECTP aligned with the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 goals that every child survives and thrives and that every child has an equitable chance in life; the two goal areas that are most likely impacted in a shock event. In contrast, no explicit alignment of the programme was ensured to achieving Goal Area 2, 3 and 4.⁸⁸

Finding 4.1.2. The ECTP generally supported UNICEF's six core commitments for children in humanitarian action. The ECTP was most successful in contributing to the first commitment – improving humanitarian response through investing in preparedness – through the use of policy advocacy in the area of shock-responsive social protection⁸⁹ and was the least effectual for

⁸⁸ (UNICEF, 2017)

⁸⁹ Not only did this include sensitization activities, but also evidence generation and activities/events that allowed learnings from the ECTP to be institutionalized into the Integrated National Framework for Social Protection Draft. In addition to this, the country with the help of donors and agencies is looking to expand and improve the financial access of its citizens (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017).

commitment three – ensuring timely delivery of supplies. The latter was especially the case for second phase programme beneficiaries, who received their payments a year after the earthquakes given delays in design and implementation as described under Finding 3.2.4.

Improvements could be made on the involvement of affected children and families in the design and implementation of the programme. Beneficiaries were partially consulted during the needs assessment, were included in participatory monitoring and evaluation processes, and were provided a hotline and offices where verbal or written complaints could be submitted. On the other hand, no ex-post sessions were held to share results or discuss findings, something which could easily be done after the urgency of the crisis has passed. Furthermore, it is unclear to what extent efforts were made, or were necessary, to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse (*Table 7*).

Table 7. Alignment of the ECTP to UNICEF’s Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action

Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action	Degree of alignment
1. Improve humanitarian response through investing in preparedness with a focus on enabling effective and timely response, reducing costs, and reaching the most vulnerable	Well aligned
2. Support the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response, along with national and local stakeholders, and in compliance with humanitarian principles	Moderately aligned
3. Ensure the timely delivery and distribution of supplies and essential household items to affected populations, partners and/or point-of-use	Not aligned
4. Seek to establish and maintain humanitarian access, so that all affected populations can safely and consistently reach assistance and services ⁹⁰	Not applicable
5. Deliver on UNICEF’s commitment to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse	Moderately aligned
6. Ensure that affected children and families participate in the decisions that affect their lives, are properly informed and consulted, and have their views acted upon	Moderately aligned

Finding 4.1.3. Progress was made on all four of the key principles in UNICEF’s Global Social Protection Programme Framework. Through UNICEF’s support the ECTP made advances in supporting a rights-based approach, progressive realization of universal coverage, supporting national systems and leadership, and a commitment to inclusive social protection as outlined by evidence presented throughout this report (*Table 8*).⁹¹

Table 8. Alignment of the ECTP to UNICEF’s four key principles outlined in UNICEF’s Global Social Protection Programme Framework

UNICEF key principles of Global Social Protection Programme Framework	Degree of alignment
1. The best interests of the child – by supporting a rights-based approach to social protection.	Well aligned
2. Progressive realization of universal coverage – by helping countries to identify and expand programmes considering differing capacities, contexts, and challenges.	Well aligned
3. National systems and leadership – by supporting nationally-owned and led systems, and only in exceptional cases, consider the implementation of temporary programmes.	Well aligned
4. Inclusive social protection – by committing to inclusive social protection that is responsive to the needs of all children and sensitive to particular characteristics and identities.	Well aligned

⁹⁰ No evidence to assess alignment with CCC.

⁹¹ (Willitts-King & Bryant, 2016); (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

EQ2

To what extent are UNICEF’s inputs aligned with international commitments, especially the commitments in the Grand Bargain and WHS Summit outcomes?

Finding 4.2.1. The Grand Bargain was developed after the 2015 earthquakes, yet the ECTP contributed towards some of the internationally agreed goals. The ECTP mostly supported Goal 2 – more support and funding tools for national responders, and Goal 3 – increased use and coordination of cash programming. In fact, in line with these two goals, the ECTP utilized cash as its main method of delivering assistance, while also having used local infrastructure and networks of partners and government to do so. Notably, however, minimal contribution was made regarding funding tools for national responders (*Table 9*).⁹²

Finding 4.2.2. As often seen in sudden onset emergencies, there is little space made for participation by the affected population, because of the imperative to deliver assistance as quickly as possible. There was possibly a missed opportunity for better integration of input from affected populations included in Goal 6 – a participation revolution. In the context of a sudden, acute emergency, a balance must be found between the need to operationalize quickly and opening space for consultation. Finding 4.1.2 elaborates on how the ECTP tried to do so, yet also outlines potential avenues for improvement.

Table 9. Alignment of the ECTP with the Grand Bargain goals

Grand Bargain goals	Degree of alignment
1. Greater transparency (4 sub-goals)	Moderately aligned
2. More support and funding tools for national responders (6 sub-goals)	Well aligned
3. Increase use and coordination of cash programming (6 sub-goals)	Well aligned
4. Reduce duplication and management costs (3 sub-goals)	Moderately aligned
5. Improve joint and impartial needs assessments (7 sub-goals)	Not aligned
6. A participation revolution (4 sub-goals)	Moderately aligned
7. & 8. Enhanced quality funding (6 sub-goals)	Moderately aligned
9. Harmonise and simplify reporting requirements (3 sub-goals)	Moderately aligned

EQ3

To what extent is the emergency cash transfer programme relevant to needs, priorities and capacities of UNICEF?

Finding 4.3.1. Supporting humanitarian needs through cash assistance implemented via the social protection system was aligned with UNICEF priorities as outlined in multiple strategic documents and commitments. As an early adopter of emergency cash through social protection systems, the ECTP was the first cash transfer implemented by the UNICEF Nepal country office and for that reason initially there was limited in-country expertise in emergency cash transfer programming. Technical expertise and guidance were provided by UNICEF personnel from the Regional Office and Headquarters. It was acknowledged that there was a steep learning curve for those charged

⁹² (Willitts-King & Bryant, 2016); (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

with the programme and while the consensus was that the implementation was successful it was not without some challenges.

EQ4 What is UNICEF’s relevance, and its comparative advantage, in this area of work?

Finding 4.4.1. UNICEF’s dual mandate of working across development and humanitarian contexts, and ability to support both programme policy and implementation, is a notable comparative advantage. As in many countries, UNICEF maintains close ties with various ministries at federal level, spanning multiple sectors and within development and humanitarian contexts. Through working closely with government bodies at federal, provincial, and local levels, over the years UNICEF has developed a working relationship of high esteem with the GoN which has helped foster credibility and influence across sectors and levels of government.⁹³ UNICEF supports the GoN in policy and implementation, in both development and emergency contexts, and it was noted by multiple key informants that this is a notable comparative advantage of UNICEF in that they are one of the few agencies that can bring such diverse experience together. UNICEF’s role in development and emergency contexts, along with its commitments to increasing the use of cash as an assistance modality and to supporting government systems,⁹⁴ suggest that it uniquely suited to move the agenda forward in Nepal on shock-responsive social protection.

Finding 4.4.2. Coordination, outreach, communication, and advocacy were cited as some of UNICEF’s core strengths. Some key informants highlighted that UNICEF was uniquely able to act as an interlocuter across multiple groups of actors, including government, UN agencies, international NGOs, and donors. It was further noted that UNICEF was skilled at outreach, communication, and advocacy, particularly in comparison to other actors.

EQ5 How can UNICEF increase its relevance in this area of work and optimize its comparative advantages?

Finding 4.5.1. UNICEF is well acquainted with regular government systems and is therefore able to provide appropriate guidance on how to leverage these systems in times of crisis. Still, some key informants remarked that even though UNICEF was seen as a “cash expert” during the 2015 response, the organization is more adept at providing support to regular social protection programmes and systems strengthening than to emergency cash transfer programs. UNICEF’s competence in working directly with the GoN should continue to be utilized, however given the devolvement of authority to lower levels of government in Nepal, the target audience for UNICEF-provided technical support and even advocacy efforts should follow suit and also shift to the lower levels of government as well.

⁹³ (UNICEF, 2018b); (UNESCO, 2017)

⁹⁴ (UNICEF, 2019a)

Finding 4.5.2. The prevailing view was that UNICEF should also continue to use its audience with the GoN to advocate for increased cash in emergencies using the social protection systems and to further promote policy changes to advance shock-responsive social protection. Primary evidence noted that despite some shift in thinking, there was still a limited understanding by policy makers on how and why to implement cash transfers in emergencies and that UNICEF should leverage its connections across multiple sectors to facilitate a national discourse on cash transfers and social protection. Furthermore, it was noted that UNICEF should use its position of influence to work more on linking social protection to disaster response more clearly at the policy level.

Among the suggested areas for more technical support are: (1) to provide support at the federal level to set criteria to pre-identify potentially vulnerable households requiring support in the face of predictable disasters (e.g., annual floods); (2) to improve the monitoring system at sub-national level; and (3) to provide greater operational support and resources at the LGU level.

Finding 4.5.3. Finally, it was suggested that UNICEF could improve its emergency response by increasing internal procedural flexibility with regards to allocating financial resources in disasters, and that waiting for government approval can delay work, suggesting that some terms of engagement could be pre-negotiated as part of a preparedness agenda.

EQ6

To what extent is UNICEF's work complementary or in harmony with programmes of other agencies/donors to avoid duplication and ensure a comprehensive approach to addressing the programme's ultimate objectives?

Finding 4.6.1. The ECTP appears to have been well coordinated with the programmes of others responding to the aftermath of the earthquake and there was no notable, wide-spread duplication of assistance. The approach of integrating with the national social protection system and the associated efforts to support and improve the system itself were in line with the efforts of other actors such as the World Bank and the ILO, efforts which are ongoing today.⁹⁵ These include the establishment of a social registry by the World Bank, including the “enhancement of the civil registration system (which covers birth, death, migration, marriage and divorce) and linking civil registration with social assistance programmes”.⁹⁶ The ILO, on the other hand, has been responsible for the establishment of the National Social Security Fund as well as the design of the national employment programme.⁹⁷ In addition to this, UNICEF, the World Bank, ILO and other development partners are helping to address the financial viability of Nepal's social assistance programmes and schemes.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

⁹⁶ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

⁹⁷ (ILO, 2020)

⁹⁸ (ILO, 2020)

Considering cash-based programming, what lessons can be learned with respect to the level of integration of different actors (governments, UN, NGOs), the type of partnerships established, and the level of ownership by national institutions and local partners?

Finding 4.7.1. The partnership with the GoN was mostly positive; implementation delays were the most notable negative aspect. The high-level agreement between UNICEF and the GoN to partner on the principles of the ECTP was arrived at quickly but many of the formal processes of institutionalization and implementation were slow as a result of bureaucratic hurdles. The horizontal expansion phase was significantly delayed as a result.⁹⁹ On the other hand, the partnership with the GoN was instrumental in the quick mobilisation of the vertical expansion through the adoption of the SSA beneficiary list for the first phase of the ECTP.

Finding 4.7.2. Both UNICEF and the GoN authorities underestimated the additional workload of the ECTP and limitations on local capacity to implement it at the palika level. It appears that local level authorities were insufficiently resourced to be able to absorb the additional workload that came with the ECTP and that a capacity assessment was not carried out.¹⁰⁰ In addition to servicing other relief programmes, the horizontal expansion placed even further burden on local authorities by virtue of the need to engage in a beneficiary selection and registration exercise, something that was not required for the vertical expansion. This may have been an important contributing factor to the long delay of the horizontal expansion.

Finding 4.7.3. The sense of ownership of the ECTP was low among some local authorities, partially due to insufficient resources being provided to effectively implement the programme. It was noted that some local authorities viewed the ECTP as “yet another responsibility” with insufficient support or compensation, and therefore presumably engendered a low sense of ownership.¹⁰¹ Working with authorities at multiple administrative levels prior to an emergency can also foster greater ownership, as demonstrated in subsequent emergency cash programming in some flood-affected palikas. Yet, it is of importance that these authorities are formally recognized, and that their roles and responsibilities are clearly identified across the various levels of government as otherwise functions cannot be performed as intended and the build-up of ownership is threatened.

This has recently been evidenced with the country’s federalization and the introduction of the 2017 Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act. While the latter has allowed for more collaboration of actors, SSA actors have not closely worked together with humanitarian actors.

⁹⁹ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017); (UNICEF & OPM, 2016)

¹⁰⁰ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

¹⁰¹ (Merttens, Upadhyay, Kukrety, Karki, & Majeed, 2017)

Simultaneously, the changes in roles and responsibilities have been evidenced to lead to confusion in the implementation of an emergency response at local levels.¹⁰²

EQ8

How can UNICEF strengthen the compatibility of its cash transfer programmes in emergencies with other programmes within UNICEF, the broader social protection section, and the emergency section?

Finding 4.8.1. There was limited ability of the Country Office to seek ways to strengthen the compatibility of the ECTP with other programmes in UNICEF. The ECTP was a new type of humanitarian assistance approach for the CO and therefore much of the focus was on getting it operational, leaving little time to work on increasing compatibility of the ECTP with other programmes in UNICEF. As experience increased with this type of programming, it is likely that there will naturally be cross-fertilisation among the UNICEF Sections. One key element to reinforce is that cash assistance is a tool that can be appropriate and relevant for all sectoral objectives¹⁰³, provided the right circumstances are met, and that the questions of “why not cash?” and “why not through existing social protection systems?” should be asked when designing new programmes that address needs in all sectors.

EQ9

To what extent has UNICEF increased its relevance and leveraged its comparative advantage in this area of work during the current COVID-19 crisis?

Finding 4.9.1. UNICEF Nepal has leveraged on its strong advocacy role with the GoN to support the expansion of the universal child grant for children under five to additional districts. As described under finding 2.3.1., evidence from UNICEF’s child and family tracker, which pointed to the worsening of indicators for children as a result of COVID-19, helped to advocate for the expansion of the child grant.

Finding 4.9.2. UNICEF Nepal furthermore leveraged on its technical experience in the area of shock responsive social protection in designing and implementing its cash response to COVID-19. Not only increased UNICEF its relevance by committing itself to delivering cash transfers, it is also increasing its relevance and comparative advantage in the sector by being the first organisation to deliver mobile payments and work with the national partner e-Sewa for e-payments.

Chapter 4: Conclusions and recommendations

1. Conclusions

This case study set out to assess UNICEF’s approach to cash transfer programmes in emergencies in Nepal, where the Government of Nepal and UNICEF implemented the ECTP in 2015. The

¹⁰² (Holmes, Samuels, Evans, Ghimire, & Twigg, 2019)

¹⁰³ (UNICEF, 2019a); (UNICEF, 2019b)

purpose of this case study was to understand what UNICEF-supported cash transfers in emergencies work and under which circumstances, and to identify how UNICEF can improve the effectiveness of its programming. To understand these points, UNICEF's work on the ECTP in Nepal was assessed in light of the four evaluation objectives: (1) to assess the results achieved for vulnerable populations; (2) to assess the extent to which national capacities have been built; (3) to identify the drivers and barriers of success; and (4) to identify UNICEF's comparative advantages in this area of programming.

Objective 1: Assess the results of UNICEF-supported cash transfer programmes in emergencies

The decision to provide cash as a response to the earthquake and to channel it through the social protection system was appropriate and complimentary to other aid delivery modalities and mechanisms being provided. It is, however, unknown if the needs of the affected population had evolved over the one-year period between the earthquake and the latter stages of the horizontal expansion. Yet, reliance on systems designed for non-emergency operations require that sufficient financial and human surge resources be allocated to any emergency operations in order for them to function well.

The most commonly cited drawback to using the SSA system to implement the emergency response was the inability to immediately include those deeply affected by the earthquake who were not previously receiving social assistance. Furthermore, errors of exclusion in the SSA database whereby those who qualified for regular social assistance but were not receiving it, and poor-quality data were frequently cited as limitations in the existing system. Despite, and perhaps because of, the known issues with the SSA system, UNICEF's approach was to simultaneously deliver emergency relief and work to improve the SSA system, all while acknowledging the inherent trade-offs in that approach.

Using the SSA system for the vertical expansion was key to timely implementation, facilitating speedier cash delivery than some parallel cash transfer programs. Yet, the horizontal expansion lagged significantly primarily due to bureaucratic delays, with some beneficiaries receiving their payments 6-12 months after the earthquake. Other contributing factors were the need to carry out a full targeting process for the horizontal expansion, less than optimal financial flow management, and a poor understanding at local level of the necessity to distribute the emergency transfers immediately rather than bundling them with the timing of SSA transfers. In light of this lag, the horizontal expansion might be better characterised as an early recovery programme rather than an emergency response. The effect the delay in the horizontal expansion had on the ultimate impact of the response on beneficiaries is unclear.

Objective 2: Assess to what extent national capacities have been built in the design and implementation of these programmes

In the post-emergency period, the capacity of all stakeholders was overwhelmed with the enormity of the relief and recovery challenge. No emergency cash transfer guidelines had yet been established either in Nepal or in UNICEF and the sentiment was that personnel were learning on

the fly with support from more experienced personnel. The LGAs in particular were inundated with demands on their time and did not appear to have been able to cope. It is unclear what, if any, additional resources were provided to them, either financial or human, to implement the ECTP. While the time frame of the ECTP was too short to achieve visible improvements in capacity, it contributed towards highlighting the key areas where improvement is required. Subsequent emergency cash transfers implemented through the SSA have benefited from the lessons learned in the ECTP, most prominent among them is the need for more robust registries prior to a shock event.

The ECTP identified where systems strengthening efforts should be focused to increase the robustness of the social protection delivery system and to improve the effectiveness with which it can be mobilised in an emergency response. The main social protection system weaknesses identified during the earthquake response were poor coverage and targeting of social protection programmes especially regarding exclusion errors in targeting; lack of reliable data in registries of potential beneficiaries; limitations of cash-in-hand delivery systems in times of emergency; and insufficient and under-resourced human capacity at local level to deliver the programme.

While there is some support for linking social protection and disaster risk management and an Integrated National Framework on Social Protection was drafted recently, in the past dialogue between government bodies responsible for these two areas appears limited. In the period since the ECTP, there has been growing recognition among government officials of the benefit of a robust social protection system that can be mobilised for a more effective and efficient emergency response. Improvements are being realized but the pace of change is slow, and many gaps remain.

Sustainability of the impact of the ECTP was achieved to some extent in terms of: (1) shifting attitudes about the appropriateness of unconditional cash transfers as a humanitarian response; (2) identification and recognition of the weaknesses in the social protection system and a commitment to addressing them including efforts to improve and integrate various social and civil registries; and (3) the development of a national social protection framework document.

Objective 3: Identify factors that drive or impede the successful achievement of results of cash transfers in emergencies

Overall, the use of the SSA system was considered a key driver in reaching a large segment of the population affected by the disaster in the first phase of the ECTP. Within a few weeks of the earthquake UNICEF had resolved to provide emergency cash assistance through the government's social protection system, notwithstanding the recognized limitations of the existing system. Government acceptance of the integration of an emergency cash transfer into the national social transfer programme was critical to the success of the ECTP. UNICEF's pre-existing relationship with the GoN and their experience in both humanitarian and development programmes was a key driver of success. The partnership strategy that UNICEF adopted in for the ECTP also constituted a driver of effectiveness and efficiency and facilitated the achievement of programme results. Relying on local capacities with connections in the community and in-depth knowledge of local context and circumstances was critical for the implementation of the ECTP.

However, at times, local capacities were overwhelmed, leading to localised delays in cash distribution. Another barrier to the effective and efficient implementation of the ECTP were gaps in the existing SSA beneficiary list. As a result, programme coverage of the first phase was insufficient to reach all affected families and children due to pre-existing errors of exclusion in the SSA programme and because the population affected by the disaster was much wider than those previously receiving social assistance. Moreover, a lack of data to target the horizontal expansion for the second payment round necessitated a large-scale targeting exercise, significantly delaying the second round of ECTP payments.

Another barrier to programme effectiveness and efficiency included limited use of evidence generated through monitoring activities. Better monitoring of the programme, particularly process monitoring, could have improved the implementation of the programme. Moreover, Bureaucratic red-tape impeded success in terms of both programme implementation of the second phase of the ECTP and regarding putting policy changes into action. The slow uptake of policy changes at local level is due in some part to the long process of decentralisation. Finally, poor banking infrastructure and low financial inclusion meant that cash had to be hand-delivered which is much less efficient than a system of bank transfers to beneficiary accounts.

Objective 4: Identify UNICEF’s comparative advantages in social protection, focusing on cash transfers in emergencies and key lessons learned

UNICEF’s positive reputation with the GoN and history of working with the government across multiple sectors was a key feature of the agency’s relevance and comparative advantage in working within the social protection system to delivery emergency aid. Most recently, the success of UNICEF’s advocacy activities resulting in an expansion of the child grant attest to its relevance and advocacy role within the Government of Nepal. At the time of the ECTP UNICEF had less operational experience in emergency cash transfer programming than it does today which was perhaps one of its weaknesses. On the other hand, UNICEF’s expertise in working at the policy level and working directly with governments in support of national and local systems was a strength. Since UNICEF is involved in supporting the GoN in both policy and practice, and both development and emergency programs, it is well positioned to provide solid leadership in bridging the humanitarian-development nexus.

2. Recommendations

The following recommendations speak to the future use of cash-based programming in emergencies and the strengthening of shock-responsive social protection in Nepal. While they were developed on the basis of findings from the assessment of the ECTP implemented in 2015, they are still relevant for the current context.

Key finding	Recommendation
Inter-agency collaboration and partnerships	
Finding 3.11.1. UNICEF could optimise its preparedness by taking on a leading role in the	Continue to advocate for and support better integration of the social protection system and actors with emergency response actors within the three tiers of government and beyond.

<p>promotion of dialogue on preparedness among all relevant actors.</p> <p>Finding 3.3.1. The partnership strategy was generally effective and facilitated the achievement of programme results.</p> <p>Finding 3.15.1. UNICEF has the opportunity to take a leading role in promoting dialogue and collaboration across the humanitarian and development communities.</p>	<p><u>Responsible: UNICEF CO and partners in-county</u> <u>Priority: Medium</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Continue to provide support to the process of developing a roadmap to complement the national framework on social protection, as already initiated by UNICEF. (2) Continue to engage with actors such as the World Bank working on the single registry, UNCDT working on the banking system, and ILO working on improving policies within the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security. (3) Participate more in discussions around operationalising the Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act while advocating for the interests of children. (4) In the event of another crisis in which the cluster system is activated, encourage greater involvement of the humanitarian information management working group (IMWG) in discussions related to information interoperability pertaining to humanitarian interventions and social protection systems.
Programme design, implementation, and management	
<p>Finding 1.2.1. Targeting in the first phase suffered from exclusion errors which were addressed by the second phase horizontal expansion.</p> <p>Finding 2.2.1. Experience with the ECTP highlighted the limitations in the existing social protection system, specifically in the areas of coverage and targeting, the payment process, and weak, under-resourced human capacity particularly at the level of interface with communities and beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Address the identified operational barriers to success of the ECTP and strengthen the programme for future use. <u>Responsible: UNICEF CO and partners in government</u> <u>Priority: Medium to high</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Identify the range of social and civil registries that might be used for deriving beneficiary lists for emergency operations. (2) Assess what new selection criteria might be applied to ensure that segments of the affected population are not systematically excluded by not being typically considered vulnerable. (3) Evaluate registries for invisible processes of exclusion through biased targeting criteria or other ways exclusion errors might be introduced. (4) Evaluate coverage levels with different combinations of selection criteria.
<p>Finding 4.7.3. A sense of ownership of the ECTP was low among some local authorities, partially due to insufficient resources being provided to effectively implement the programme.</p>	<p>Enhance local ownership and accountability over the programme and single processes therein. <u>Responsible: UNICEF CO and partners in government</u> <u>Priority: Medium</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Continue to engage with, and capacitate, local governments and encourage greater involvement of local actors in the conceptualisation and design of beneficiary identification, data collection, and selection. Go beyond asking for the contribution of local actors only for the data collection process.
<p>Finding 3.2.1. Monitoring of the programme in Nepal does not appear to have been especially robust.</p>	<p>Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of emergency cash transfers and clarify the purpose and use of generated evidence. <u>Responsible: UNICEF CO, RO</u> <u>Priority: Medium to high</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) When designing the monitoring tools, include a strategy to ensure that the results of the monitoring are disseminated appropriately and are used to improve the programme in

	<p>real time or to improve future programmes. Be clear about the difference between process monitoring and impact monitoring, and how the objectives and audiences might differ. Be clear about what is required and what is feasible for an emergency programme.</p> <p>(2) Continue to support third party monitoring and monitoring visits both with and without (federal) government actor presence in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest.</p>
<p>Finding 4.5.3. It was suggested that UNICEF could improve its emergency response by increasing internal procedural flexibility with regards to allocating financial resources in disasters.</p>	<p>Continue to promote a better understanding of the relevance of cash transfers in emergencies, not only in the Social Policy and Emergency sections but across all UNICEF sections and continue to streamline procedures.</p> <p><u>Responsible: UNICEF CO, RO, HQ</u> <u>Priority: High</u></p> <p>(1) Ensure a basic minimum understanding of cash transfers as a modality of aid delivery across the entire organisation, and what role emergency cash transfers can play in improving the shock-responsiveness of social protection systems.</p> <p>(2) Identify opportunities to streamline and simplify procedures so that once approvals have been granted, disbursement delays are minimised, and financial flows are optimised.</p>
<p>Finding 4.7.2. Both UNICEF and the GoN authorities underestimated the additional workload of the ECTP and limitations on local capacity to implement it at the palika level.</p>	<p>Ensure that sufficient surge support is provided, including support to federal, provincial, and local government partners.</p> <p><u>Responsible: UNICEF CO, RO, HQ</u> <u>Priority: High</u></p> <p>(1) Consider options in the form of short-term missions, consultants, secondments, and standby partner agreements.</p> <p>(2) Consider building up a larger pool of experts in emergency cash transfers from which to draw surge support.</p>
<p>Strengthening shock responsiveness</p>	
<p>Finding 2.1.2. While some steps have been made towards strengthening the enabling environment for the provision of cash, progress is slow and more practical guidance is required to put frameworks into action.</p> <p>Finding 3.8.1. UNICEF could assess key bottlenecks to timely implementation in the existing social transfers system and seek ways to remove them.</p> <p>Finding 3.11.3. As part of contingency preparations, UNICEF could develop conceptual and administrative documents required to activate an emergency cash transfer programme, while consulting and refining previous documents</p>	<p>Enhance the preparedness of the national systems and strengthen their shock responsiveness.</p> <p><u>Responsible: UNICEF CO</u> <u>Priority: High</u></p> <p>(1) Continue to promote disaster preparedness, including self-organisation and self-sufficiency by the GoN (at central and provincial levels), specifically by supporting the GoN in the development of a practical action plan for the national framework on social protection.</p> <p>(2) Consider the appropriateness of pre-positioning resources in advance of predictable disasters (e.g., annual floods) and advocate for its uptake by the relevant authorities across the seven federal provinces.</p> <p>(3) Conduct scenario modelling for common disasters and/or conduct post-mortem analyses on past disasters to identify procedural bottlenecks to humanitarian response and seek to remove as many of them as possible through advance negotiated agreements and adjustments to procedural requirements.</p> <p>(4) Identify opportunities to streamline or simplify financial flows and reporting requirements while managing fiduciary</p>

	risks. Provide appropriate training and oversight as part of preparedness activities, including at the provincial and local level.
<p>Finding 3.4.3. Ensuring sufficient resources and training are provided to personnel at local level could further improve the effectiveness of UNICEF’s programming.</p> <p>Finding 3.8.2. Ensuring local personnel are trained in, and sensitised to, the ways in which an emergency cash transfer programme differs from a regular social transfer programme, could further enhance efficiency.</p> <p>Finding 3.11.2. UNICEF should further work to ensure that preparedness work is carried out at all levels of government.</p>	<p>Continue to build local capacity of each government tier across the country <u>Responsible: UNICEF CO and partners in-county</u> <u>Priority: High</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) In particular, continue to support federal, provincial and local governments in establishing emergency preparedness plans, establishing lists of potentially affected people, and conducting market assessments. (2) Carry out a rapid capacity assessment in disaster-prone areas to better understand how much additional workload local actors in province can reasonably undertake, in what aspects they require support and training, and how much and what kind of additional resources would be required in order to adequately resource an effective scaled-up programme. (3) Raise awareness about and advocate for the allocation of sufficient resources to provincial and local governments by the federal government in an emergency response. Consider options for providing technical and non-technical surge support directly to provincial and local governments. (4) Along with other international actors, develop and implement a training course for federal, provincial, and local government on financial management and reporting, including potential fiduciary risks, as well as good practices in data management. Integrate this into the development of preparedness plans and carry it out before the onset of a disaster.

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Annex I. Evaluation matrix

Relevance

Questions	Indicators	Attributes for testing	Data sources
1. To what extent is the emergency cash transfer programme relevant to the needs of the vulnerable population? How did the programme evolve over time to the evolving needs of the population?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Degree of inclusion of beneficiaries into coordination and decision-making platforms b. Alignment of programme objectives, modalities and expected results with perceived greatest needs of the vulnerable population as perceived by stakeholders and beneficiary households c. Extent to which core programme processes and delivery mechanisms respond to beneficiaries needs and priorities d. Number of and alignment of ECTP to needs assessments carried out before, during and after the emergency. e. Documented changes made to the programme in response to evolving needs and circumstances. 	<p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevance <p>Context specific factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Type of emergency - Needs of affected population <p>Humanitarian cash transfer design & implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alignment with needs 	<p>Primary data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with key stakeholders <p>Document review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic studies - Evaluation documents - Programme documents <p>Items to follow-up on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs assessments carried out by Government, UNICEF, and NGOs/IOs.
2. To what extent is the emergency cash transfer programme relevant to needs, priorities and capacities of UNICEF?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Alignment of the objectives, modalities and expected results of the programme with needs, priorities and capacities of the organization b. Extent to which the programme considers what is in the child’s best interest, and relevant to the needs of children 	<p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevance <p>UNICEF’s capacities and comparative advantage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacities of UNICEF - Priorities of UNICEF - Comparative advantage 	<p>Document review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic studies - Evaluation documents - Programme documents - UNICEF guidelines, principles, and frameworks
3. What is the role of UNICEF in strengthening the enabling environment for the provision of cash (e.g. upstream policy work, general shock responsiveness or capacity building)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Type of upstream policy work b. Trainings carried out for government officials and other national partners c. Activities in generating evidence 	<p>Context specific factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF upstream policy work <p>UNICEF’s capacities and comparative advantage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comparative advantage 	
4. What is UNICEF’s relevance, and its comparative advantage, in this area of work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Extent to which UNICEF’s guidelines, principles and frameworks differ from those of other agencies in relation to cash transfer programming b. Breakdown of beneficiaries covered by UNICEF (according to location, gender, vulnerabilities, etc.) c. Stakeholder perceptions on the specific skills and capacities that UNICEF (and only UNICEF) possesses in cash transfers in emergencies programming, and perceived impact of the absence of UNICEF in this area of work. d. Objectives and circumstances under which governments and agencies seek the input and collaboration of UNICEF with regards to cash transfer programming in emergencies e. Relative contribution of UNICEF to the effectiveness of the programme in delivering outputs and results f. The extent to which UNICEF’s comparative advantage was considered when designing the programme, and impact of considerations 	<p>UNICEF’s capacities and comparative advantage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacities of UNICEF - Comparative advantage 	<p>Primary data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with key stakeholders <p>Document review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic studies - Evaluation documents - Programme documents - UNICEF guidelines, principles, and frameworks - Guidelines, principles and frameworks from other agencies

5. How can UNICEF increase its relevance in this area of work and optimize its comparative advantages?	a. Stakeholder perception on ways in which UNICEF can increase its relevance in this area of work and optimize its comparative advantage in cash transfer programming in emergencies?	UNICEF's comparative advantage: - Capacities of UNICEF - Comparative advantage Results and lessons learned: - Relevance - Potential improvements for UNICEF - Opportunities	Primary data collection: - KIIs with key stakeholders
6. What is the relevance of the emergency cash transfer programme and more generally shock-responsive social protection in light of the recent COVID-19 crisis?	a. Reliance on cash-based programmes and more broadly social protection for COVID-19 response b. Relevant of social protection to respond to needs of affected population	Shock-responsiveness of system: - Level of preparedness Results and lessons learned: - Relevance	Primary data collection: - KIIs with key stakeholders
7. To what extent has UNICEF increased its relevance and leveraged its comparative advantage in this area of work during the current COVID-19 crisis?	a. Stakeholder perception on the extent that UNICEF has increased its relevance and leveraged its comparative advantage during the current pandemic b. Type of activities that were implemented to increase UNICEF's relevance c. Type of activities that were implemented to leverage UNICEF's comparative advantage	UNICEF capacities and comparative advantage: - Capacities of UNICEF - Comparative advantage Results and lessons learned: - Relevance - Opportunities	Primary data collection: - KIIs with key stakeholders

Coherence

Questions	Indicators	Attributes for testing	Data sources
1. To what extent does the programme align with UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2018-2022, the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, UNICEF's global social protection programming framework and other key UNICEF guiding documents?	a. Alignment of expected results from UNICEF's inputs and approaches and principles with the goals and commitments outlined in organizational guidance documents b. Extent to which inputs help achieve synergies within UNICEF's programming	UNICEF capacities and comparative advantage: - Priorities of UNICEF - Alignment with plans and commitments	Primary data collection: - KIIs with key stakeholders Document review: - Thematic studies - Organizational guidance documents - UNICEF guidelines, principles and frameworks - Programme documents - UNICEF country programme
2. To what extent are UNICEF's inputs aligned with international commitments, especially the commitments in the Grand Bargain and WHS Summit outcomes?	a. Alignment of expected results from UNICEF's inputs in these programmes with the goals and commitment outlined in the Grand Bargain and WHS Summit outcomes b. The extent to which inputs led to strengthened engagement between humanitarian and development actors when it comes to cash transfers (as measured by the extent to which actors are both represented in coordination platforms, MoUs, etc.) c. Alignment of UNICEF principles/guidelines/frameworks for cash transfer programming with the objectives identified in the Grand Bargain and the WHS Summit (such as commitments related to needs assessments, periodic reviews and reporting requirements)	Results and lessons learned: - Coherence UNICEF capacities and comparative advantage: - Alignment with plans and commitments	Primary data collection: - KIIs with key stakeholders Document review: - Thematic studies - UNICEF guidelines, principles, and frameworks - International guidelines and principles - Programme documents - UNICEF country programme and activities
3. To what extent is UNICEF's work complementary or in harmony with programmes of other agencies/donors to avoid duplication and ensure	a. Stakeholder perceptions of complementarity and harmonization between UNICEF's work and the programmes of other actors. b. Number of MoUs or partnership agreements signed with other agencies/donors	Shock-responsiveness of system: - Coordination and communication of different actors	Primary data collection: - KIIs with key stakeholders Document review: - Thematic studies

a comprehensive approach to addressing the programme's ultimate objectives?	<p>c. Existence and strength of linkage between programmes (as measured by frequency of coordination and exchange, shared guidance documents, use of same implementation structures and delivery mechanisms, etc.)</p> <p>d. The extent to which the programmes in the country complement each other, by covering different target groups or focusing on different vulnerabilities</p>	<p>Humanitarian cash transfer design and implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of integration - Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MOUs - Programme documents - UNICEF country programme
4. How can UNICEF strengthen the compatibility of its cash transfer programmes in emergencies with other programmes within UNICEF, the broader social protection section, the emergency section and other organizations active in this space?	<p>a. Stakeholder perceptions on what new partnerships, cooperation platforms or joint delivery mechanisms could be established, or existing ones used better, that would improve the coherence of UNICEF's programming with other partners?</p> <p>b. Stakeholder perceptions on how UNICEF can internally strengthen the compatibility of its cash transfer programming with other programmes in UNICEF, including its programmes in social protection and its programmes in emergencies.</p>	<p>Humanitarian cash transfer design and implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of integration <p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential improvements for UNICEF - Opportunities 	<p>Primary data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with key stakeholders
5. Considering cash-based programming, what lessons can be learned with respect to the level of integration of different actors (governments, UN, NGOs), the type of partnerships established, and the level of ownership by national institutions and local partners?	<p>a. Number and effectiveness of partnerships between different actors</p> <p>b. Existence and use of coordination platforms</p>	<p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coherence <p>Humanitarian cash transfer design and implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of integration - Partnerships - National ownership 	

Effectiveness

Questions	Indicators	Attributes for testing	Data sources
1. What were the intended/unintended and positive/negative effects on beneficiary populations, especially the most deprived girls/boys and women/men? To what extent are the most vulnerable girls, boys, women, and their families reached?	<p>Key results areas</p> <p>a. (perceived) changes in level of vulnerabilities</p> <p>b. (perceived) changes in food security of beneficiary households/girls/boys</p> <p>c. (perceived) changes in the health of beneficiary households/girls/boys</p> <p>d. (perceived) changes in the education of beneficiary households/girls/boys</p> <p>e. (perceived) changes protection, including in negative coping mechanisms</p> <p>f. (perceived) changes in shelter of beneficiary households</p> <p>Targeting effectiveness:</p> <p>g. Type of list/data base used for targeting beneficiaries</p> <p>h. Proportion of vulnerable girls/boys and women/men (poor, disabled, single mothers, etc.) reached per location</p> <p>i. Documented changes/adaptations to improve targeting and coverage of vulnerable populations</p>	<p>Humanitarian cash transfer design and implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target group - Alignment with needs - Effects/changes for beneficiaries 	<p>Primary data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with key stakeholders <p>Extant data analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme MIS administrative data on beneficiary household characteristics - IOM DTM IDPs - WFP Food Price database <p>Document review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring reports - Programme documents - Evaluation reports
2. What are the effects of using a national system, a parallel system or a mixed system on meeting the needs of vulnerable populations, and what requirements need to be met for UNICEF to use national systems?		<p>Humanitarian cash transfer design and implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivery system for emergency response - Alignment with needs <p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevance - Effectiveness 	

<p>3. What have been the organizational and operational factors driving or impeding the effective achievement of results and outputs, including when designing, implementing, and delivering cash transfers in emergency contexts?</p>	<p>a. Perceived operational drivers and barriers of the effectiveness and successful achievement of outputs and results of the emergency cash transfer according to beneficiaries, implementers and other stakeholders</p> <p>b. Perceived drivers and barriers of the efficient use of inputs with respect to programme coordination and capacity building</p> <p>c. Perceived organizational drivers and barriers of the effectiveness and successful achievement of outputs and results of the emergency cash transfer according to implementers and other stakeholders</p> <p>d. Expressed grievances and complaints, the extent to which these reoccur over time and beneficiary satisfaction with resolutions</p> <p>e. The extent to which any past UNICEF pre-crisis support portfolios, such as investments in preparedness and/or social protection programming, influence the effective achievement of outputs and results.</p>	<p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectiveness - Organisational factors - Operational factors 	<p>Primary data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with key stakeholders <p>Extant data analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme MIS administrative data <p>Document review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring/ progress reports - Programme documents - Evaluation reports - Country-level strategy documents and plans
<p>4. To what extent do cash transfers improve on, or offer an alternative to, the systems already in place for emergency response?</p>		<p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectiveness <p>Capacity of national social protection system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing delivery system 	
<p>5. What is the role of monitoring and evaluation in achieving outputs and results effectively with these programmes, and how can UNICEF employ monitoring and evaluation best in emergency contexts?</p>	<p>a. Stakeholder perceptions on the importance of monitoring and evaluation, how best to employ these techniques in emergency contexts and what is currently impeding this from happening.</p> <p>b. Extent to which the voices of the vulnerable are included in the M&E of the ECT</p> <p>c. Preconditions that need to be present in order to effectively monitor and evaluate an emergency programme</p>	<p>Humanitarian cash transfer design and implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring and evaluation <p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational factors - Potential improvements for UNICEF 	<p>Primary data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with key stakeholders <p>Document review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring reports - Evaluation reports - Internal audit reports - UNICEF guidelines, principles, and frameworks - UNICEF Country Office Programme
<p>6. To what extent was the partnership strategy adopted by UNICEF in pursuing the outcomes and outputs effective? What were key points of contention, also with regards to competition over resources and/or power dynamics?</p>		<p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectiveness <p>Humanitarian cash transfer design and implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of integration - Partnerships 	
<p>7. How can UNICEF improve the effectiveness of its programming?</p>	<p>c. Stakeholder perception on ways in which UNICEF can strengthen the effectiveness of its programming</p>	<p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectiveness - Potential improvements 	<p>Primary data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with key stakeholders
<p>8. How effective was/is UNICEF's response to COVID-19 when considering the utilization of social protection and cash transfers?</p>	<p>a. Extent to which the existing emergency cash transfer programmes and social protection system allowed for a mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic</p> <p>b. Extent to which a more effective response was achieved with respect to previous emergencies</p> <p>c. Stakeholder perception on how effectively UNICEF relied on social protection and emergency cash transfers to cope with the pandemic</p>	<p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectiveness - Opportunities 	<p>Primary data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with key stakeholders

	d. Perceived drivers and barriers of effectively mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through the use of the existing social protection system and cash transfer programmes		
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Efficiency

Questions	Indicators	Attributes for testing	Data sources
1. To what extent did the emergency cash transfer programmes use resources efficiently?	<p>Operational efficiency:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Number and type of resources (financial, human resources, operational systems, etc.) at the various levels used to deliver the programme Timeliness of programme activities, including registration, payment and grievance redressal. Quality of coordination with other actors and the resulting degree of programmatic alignment and avoidance of duplicative costs. Extent, where possible, to which existing (delivery) infrastructure was used. <p>Allocative efficiency:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which resources are used where they will have the largest benefit (in terms of reaching beneficiaries as well as in terms of organizational infrastructure and/or future preparedness) 	<p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Efficiency <p>Humanitarian cash transfer design and implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of integration - Use of human and financial resources - Timeliness of delivery 	<p>Primary data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with key stakeholders <p>Document review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring reports - Evaluation reports - Internal audit reports - Programme reports
2. What have been the organizational and operational factors driving or impeding the efficient use of inputs and the efficient achievement of outputs and results? What has been the role of the characteristics of the emergency, the choice of implementation model and the level of preparedness been for the efficient use of resources?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived drivers and barriers of the efficient use of inputs and achievement of outputs and results of the programme according to implementers and other stakeholders Degree (and ex-post relevance) of preparedness, including the number of pre-crisis preparatory and relevant programme design, implementation and systems strengthening activities conducted (such as pre-crisis capacity assessments, supplier mappings, etc.) Existence, use and relevance of operational guidance (templates, guidelines and frameworks), and organizational expertise and support structures on cash transfer programming in emergencies 	<p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Efficiency - Organisational factors - Operational factors <p>Context-specific factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Type of emergency <p>Capacity of national social protection system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing delivery systems <p>Shock-responsiveness of system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent of linkages between social protection and disaster risk management - Level of preparedness <p>Humanitarian cash transfer design and implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivery system for emergency response 	<p>Primary data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with key stakeholders <p>Extant data analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme MIS administrative data on beneficiary household characteristics <p>Document review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring reports - Programme documents - Evaluation reports - Country-level strategy documents and plans - Programme progress reports
3. How can UNICEF improve the efficiency of its programming?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder perception on ways in which UNICEF can strengthen its capacity to enhance the efficiency of the ECTP programming Stakeholder perceptions on preparedness measures that could be implemented at the respective levels within the organization to enhance the efficiency of delivery once a crisis hits 	<p>Results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Efficiency <p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential improvements for UNICEF 	<p>Primary data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with key stakeholders

	c. Stakeholder perceptions on what needs to be in place to be able to rely on existing structures, and what can be done before a crisis to foster their readiness		
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Sustainability

Questions	Indicators	Attributes for testing	Data sources
1. To what extent has UNICEF, where feasible, worked actively to maximize the sustainability of the results stemming from its inputs? How has UNICEF done this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Extent, where possible, to which the programme coordinates with or directly shares resources or systems with national programmes and stakeholders, or optimizes the potential for these resources to be taken over by national stakeholders in the future b. Extent to which UNICEF has made provisions or reserved resources (financial and human) to ensure the sustainability of its inputs as measured by the existence of multi-year funding plans, contingency plans, handover plans or sustainability strategies. c. Extent to which cash transfer efforts in response to the emergency have been linked to prevention, preparedness and disaster risk reduction d. Stakeholder perceptions on how UNICEF has maximized the sustainability of the results stemming from its inputs 	<p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability - Organisational factors - Operational factors <p>Humanitarian cash transfer design and implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivery system for emergency response - Level of integration - Linkages to national social protection system - Partnerships - National ownership - Use of resources 	<p>Primary data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with key stakeholders <p>Document review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic studies - UNICEF evaluation documents - Programme documents - UNICEF guidelines, principles, and frameworks - UNICEF country programme and its activities - Disaster management policies - Social protection policies
2. To what extent has UNICEF been able to build capacities of national systems and actors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Extent to which national actors (including governments) have seen their capacity to design and implement cash transfer in emergencies has improved b. Reports/documentation speaking to results and processes (if available) c. Number of documented improvements to national delivery systems, in the form of updated infrastructure, operational manuals and other elements d. Improvements in implementation processes and quality (e.g. improved targeting criteria, beneficiary selection processes, beneficiary lists, complaints mechanisms, adjusted transfer value, etc.) e. Extent to which UNICEF can capitalize on national systems better now in responding to future emergencies 	<p>Capacity of national social protection system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity of national actors - Existing delivery systems 	<p>Primary data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with key stakeholders <p>Document review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic studies - Operational manuals - National programme documents
3. What lessons can be learned from UNICEF's work in terms of optimizing the sustainability of programmes and inputs in the area of cash transfer programming in emergencies?		<p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability 	

4. How can UNICEF optimize its preparedness for the use of cash transfers in emergency situations?		<p>UNICEF capacities and comparative advantage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisational guidance and preparedness <p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential improvements for UNICEF 	
5. What practical and concrete opportunities exist, especially in the field of cash transfers, that allow UNICEF to better bridge the humanitarian-development nexus thereby delivering more sustainable results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identification of gaps within the emergency cash transfer programmes and how these can be closed keeping in mind the commitments set out in the Grand Bargain and the WHS Summit. b. Stakeholder perceptions on what practical and concrete opportunities exist, especially in the field of cash transfers, that allow UNICEF to better bridge the humanitarian-development nexus thereby delivering more sustainable results. c. Existence of best-practices/ lessons learned from other countries in terms of bridging the humanitarian-development nexus that can be applied to the four countries of the evaluation. 	<p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability - Opportunities <p>Shock-responsiveness of system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent of linkages between social protection and disaster management 	<p>Primary data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with key stakeholders <p>Document review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic studies - UNICEF guidelines, principles, and frameworks - International guidelines and principles - Programme documents - Monitoring reports
6. Have preparedness and learnings from previous emergencies enabled UNICEF to respond to the current COVID-19 crisis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identification of specific learnings b. Identification of challenges and opportunities of improvement for future emergencies c. Stakeholder perception on whether preparedness and learnings from previous emergencies enabled UNICEF to respond to the current pandemic d. Extent to which learnings and preparedness are sustainable in the long-run 	<p>Results and lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential improvements for UNICEF - Opportunities - Sustainability - Effectiveness - Efficiency 	<p>Primary data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with key stakeholders