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## Linking Social Protection and Humanitarian Assistance in the Philippines

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**WORLD BANK SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICY NOTE**

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## *Linking Social Protection and Humanitarian Assistance in the Philippines*

 Fernando Aldaba<sup>1</sup>

### I. Introduction

This study is part of a multi-country collection of cases showing that humanitarian assistance and social protection programmes are not necessarily mutually exclusive. As will be shown in the next section, there is an increasing amount of literature discussing the integration of humanitarian assistance into social protection systems or the linkage of disaster risk responses with specific social safety net programmes. The nexus maybe seen through synergies via common frameworks, platforms and systems utilized in such programmes.

The Philippines, a developing economy in Southeast Asia continues to tackle the problems of poverty and vulnerability among its 100 million population. It lies in the “Pacific Ring of Fire” and is visited regularly by typhoons, ravaged by flooding, and occasionally hit by destructive earthquakes. It also has two long running conflicts with rebel groups that have displaced thousands of its citizens in hot areas. Despite being a middle income country and owing to the recurrent nature of crises, the country has a permanent presence of humanitarian actors (UN agencies, international, and national NGOs) ready to complement government efforts during emergencies.

This specific case study will showcase the linking of humanitarian assistance and social protection in two instances where cash transfer for relief and recovery by two humanitarian agencies, the World Food Programme (WFP) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) successfully “piggybacked” on the Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program (4Ps), a lead social protection programme of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) during the aftermath of typhoon Haiyan.

**The Philippine Social Protection Note** series aims to disseminate experiences, good practices, and key findings from the Philippines on the topics related to social protection. It also aims to broaden the dialogue on social protection and stimulate public engagement in moving forward the policy agenda. The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the World Bank.

<sup>1</sup> This note was prepared by Fernando T. Aldaba, Dean and Professor of Economics, School of Social Sciences, Ateneo de Manila University, as commissioned by the World Bank and the World Food Programme.



Humanitarian assistance and disaster management in the Philippines is handled by the National Disaster Risk Reduction & Management Council (NDRRMC). The Council is a working group of different government, civil society, and private sector organizations mandated by Republic Act 10121 of 2010. It is administered and coordinated by the Office of Civil Defense under the Department of National Defense. The Council's main task is to ensure the protection and welfare of the people during disasters or emergencies. The Council utilizes the UN Cluster Approach in disaster management. The Chairperson is the Secretary of Department of National Defense with five Vice Chairpersons for each component: Disaster Preparedness (Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government); Disaster Response (Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development); Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology) and Disaster Rehabilitation and Recovery (Director-General of the National Economic Development Authority). The United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) plays an important role in coordination as it co-chairs the technical working group for the NDRRMC with its counterpart, the Office for Civil Defense, the lead government agency for coordination. However, over-all lead in disaster response is the DSWD. (See Annex A for the clusters with their lead agencies)

Meanwhile, in the realm of social protection, the Philippines has a relatively developed framework and system. In 2007, the Social Development Committee (SDC) of the Cabinet issued NEDA-SDC Resolution No. 1, Series of 2007 entitled "Adopting a Philippine Definition of Social Protection". The official definition of social protection—Policies and programmes that seek to reduce poverty and vulnerability to risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized by promoting and protecting livelihood and employment, protecting against hazards and sudden loss of income, and improving people's capacity to manage risks. It identified four major components—*labor market interventions, social insurance, social welfare and social safety nets*.

A year later, SDC Resolution No. 2 Series of 2009 established the Sub-committee on Social Protection which led to the crafting of a social protection framework and strategy. And in 2012, the SDC approved the Social Protection Operational Framework through SDC Resolution No. 3 Series of 2012. Seven years later a revised and enhanced framework was also approved by the same committee (see Annex B). The DSWD chairs and leads this sub-committee on Social Protection. The Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program (4Ps), a conditional cash transfer programme contingent on health and education requirements for their children has been a major social safety net and social welfare programme of the government since the Arroyo administration.

## II. The linkage between social protection and humanitarian assistance

While social protection programmes were originally established for formal sector workers, in recent years, it has expanded to the marginalized sectors especially those involved in the informal economy. With the onset of the food, financial and fuel crises in 2008, there has been increased discussion on forging better coherence between humanitarian assistance and social protection measures to reduce the need for recurring humanitarian assistance and to facilitate a more effective response in times of crisis (Kukrety, 2016).

Gentilini (2016) differentiates humanitarian assistance and safety nets in the social protection system. He notes that the general milieu in which humanitarian actors work is volatile and chaotic which immediately threatens the lives of affected people. Thus, humanitarian assistance programmes have short time horizons and survival objectives, and government funds for such are usually augmented by development partners. He notes, however, that safety nets are of longer term in duration and usually funded by government coffers.

Often times, both programmes have common target households and beneficiaries in a community. This is obvious as the two usually prioritize the transient and chronic poor and share similar programme elements (e.g. cash transfers) but using different institutional and delivery platforms. Again, according to Gentilini (2016), the linkage between social protection and humanitarian assistance is also necessary because of a financing standpoint. From a financing perspective, he asserts that an increasing number of donors are keen to transfer "humanitarian caseloads" into social protection systems as some of the current humanitarian functions may be better delivered through safety nets more effectively and efficiently.

<sup>2</sup> Final result of updating will be released in June 2017.

From the humanitarian assistance side, the use of an existing targeting mechanism and delivery platform may incur much lesser operational costs as compared to other parallel mechanism. At the same time, social protection programmes can readily provide mitigating mechanisms during shocks (e.g. micro insurance for shelter, crop insurance for damages incurred) reducing actual costs for recovery. On the other hand, disaster or conflict shocks easily negate the gains provided by social protection programmes on poor and near poor households. Integrating humanitarian assistance in case of such shocks provide a cushion for these households, so that they may be able to sustain their advance from a poverty or low- income trap.

Kukrety (2016), for example, suggests that an existing national social protection system can be tapped in an emergency response at a faster rate and could cover a larger number of people. At the same time this engagement with social assistance systems to deliver humanitarian responses can actually contribute to strengthening the state system in dealing with emergencies and in building resilience of households and communities. She further notes that across the developing world, practices that link social protection programmes and humanitarian assistance have been increasing through a common listing of beneficiaries or through joint delivery platforms for cash transfers.

### III. The Major Players in the Case Study

#### A. The Department of Social Welfare and Development

The DSWD is a major player in both social protection and humanitarian assistance. It has control of three platforms currently in use which fosters the linkage between social protection and humanitarian assistance. These include *Listahanan*, the cash delivery system for the 4Ps beneficiaries and the Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center (DROMIC). We discuss these three platforms in detail as they are the foundations of linkages between social protection and humanitarian assistance.

#### *Listahanan*

“*Listahanan*”, or the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR), is an information management system that employs geographic targeting, household assessment, and validation in order to provide national government agencies, development partners, and other social protection actors with information on who and where the poor are in the Philippines. The first survey was done in 2009 and then was later updated and expanded in 2015<sup>2</sup>. The budget for this most recent survey was P1.9 billion and carried out by 47,000 enumerators. *Listahanan* fully assessed 15.1 million families which is about 72% of the entire population of the country. It had 52 questions and gathered 139 variables. (It should be updated every four years after it was begun in 2009. But it was only recently updated in 2015).

This information is then used for the identification and selection of potential beneficiaries for various poverty alleviation and social protection programmes through means testing. *Listahanan* is “statistics based” as Dr. Aniceto Orbeta, PIDS Senior Fellow asserts. This is important to avoid politically motivated selection of beneficiaries which have been a perennial problem in the Philippines.

*Listahanan* is supported by a group of programmers who are managing a system that can actually process and organize data which can be used in crafting policies and decisions at local and national levels. “*Listahanan* is important because its impact is far-reaching across the Philippines. It was used by 59 national agencies to target programmes where they are needed most, including the 4Ps, and the PhilHealth subsidized health insurance. It enables transparent and fair selection of beneficiaries of government programmes... In addition to Pantawid and PhilHealth, *Listahanan* is also used by 1,095 Local Government Units, 56 Civil Society Organizations, 34 legislators, and 15 universities and research institutions.” (Speech of World Bank Country Director Dr. Mara Warwick during the launch of *Listahanan*)

<sup>3</sup> A thrust to give universal social protection coverage to all citizens can make the targeting tool not so useful.



The database is published and vouched by a National Advisory Council where research institutions like the Social Weather Stations and the Philippine Institute for Development Studies are members. It is certainly useful in terms of targeting the poor and vulnerable in other government programmes implemented by agencies like the Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Education, PhilHealth, and Commission on Higher Education. They can access the database to help them design and implement programmes at both the national and local levels.<sup>3</sup>

In 2016 however, sharing of the database with other NGAs was stopped because of the Data Privacy Act. This new law constrains data sharing by DSWD's *Listahanan* with other NGAs. It is allowed to share only 1000 names at a time, according to Assistant Secretary Noel Macalalad of DSWD. Aside from this, the National Privacy Commission has given a list of requirements before DSWD can be allowed to share its collection i.e. there should be a data privacy office within the Department, a data privacy agreement with those requesting the data, technical and security measures in place, privacy impact assessment among others.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) and its payment system**

The DSWD website describes the “Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program” (4Ps) as a human development measure of the national government that provides conditional cash grants to the poorest of the poor, to improve the health, nutrition, and the education of children aged 0-18.” It was designed based on the conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes mostly in Latin American countries particularly Brazil and Mexico. The programme has two main objectives: a) social assistance, by giving monetary grants to extremely poor families for their urgent needs; and b) social development, by investing in human capital i.e. the health and education of poor children through programmes such as:

- health check-ups for pregnant women and children aged 0 to 5;
- deworming of schoolchildren aged 6 to 14;
- enrollment of children in daycare, elementary, and secondary schools; and
- family development sessions.

The 4Ps has two types of cash grants that are given out to household beneficiaries:

- health grant: P500 per household every month, or a total of P6,000 every year
- education grant: P300 (elementary) - P500 (high school) per child every month for ten months (maximum of three children for the programme)
- rice subsidy of P600 (a recent addition from the Duterte administration)

The Pantawid Pamilya covers all the 17 regions in the Philippines, including 79 provinces, 143 cities, and 1,484 municipalities (from the DSWD website). Beneficiaries are selected through a proxy means test using the data collected in *Listahanan*. The payment mechanism of the cash transfer programmes uses account-linked cards provided by the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP). The LBP serves as the disbursing institution of the 4Ps. It is responsible for managing payments and reporting to the DSWD. As a result of the expansion of the coverage of the programme, other methods were then introduced. Some of the pressing challenges surrounding the payment mechanism of the 4Ps include: (1) accuracy; (2) timeliness; (3) remoteness; (4) and absence of banking institutions in some remote areas. Currently, in addition to the service provided by LBP, payment services are also supplied by the network of financial institutions (referred to in the literature as payment service providers) contracted by LBP i.e. rural banks, postal services and private lending and telephone companies.

<sup>4</sup> These include *Listahanan*, 4Ps beneficiaries, hazard vulnerabilities of geographical areas, mapping of population densities, mapping of DSWD warehouses and inventory of foodpacks, etc.

Catubig, Villano and Dollery (2015) in an assessment of the 4Ps payment system notes that “the present practice of 4Ps of pursuing systems of mixed payments that can be adapted to the conditions and circumstances of the geographical areas where the payments are made is laudable”. This addresses major challenges with the Programs in making precise payments on time. But payments to be made during emergencies is of course, a different matter. Zimmerman and Bohling (2015) notes that 4Ps alongside with Brazil’s Bolsa Familia has the lowest transaction cost among Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programmes across the globe i.e. 1.2% of every amount of transaction.

This payment platform can actually be used by other line agencies and LGUs in the delivery of other poverty and social protection programmes although protocols and memorandum of agreements still need to be forged. The limitation of the Pantawid platform is that it only lists and pays beneficiaries that include households with pregnant mothers or those with children in elementary and high school. Other poor households with elderly and PWDs are not included. Thus, there is a need for horizontal expansion when delivering grants of other social protection programmes or during emergency responses.

### ***Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center (DROMIC)***

Another important platform for the linkage of humanitarian assistance and social protection—the Virtual Operations Center (VOC) or DROMIC is a division of the Disaster Response Assistance and Management Bureau (DREAMB) of the DSWD. It is responsible for the gathering, curating, consolidation, presentation, and dissemination of information related to all phases of Disaster Response undertaken by the DSWD. The major objectives of this DROMIC include:

- To develop and deploy an information management system that generates reliable and accurate pre-disaster, during disaster, and post-disaster data;
- To generate and update Common and Fundamental Operational Datasets (CAFOD) for Disaster Response;<sup>5</sup>
- To exercise technical supervision over and provide capacity building interventions to Field Office (FO) counterparts responsible for the regional information management system;
- To coordinate and collaborate with other officials and units of the Department, other National Government Agencies (NGAs) and Local Government Units (LGUs), and with external partners and stakeholders engaged in disaster operations / humanitarian response activities;
- To share DRRM-related information to all DRRM governance stakeholders;
- To analyze and prepare reports, infographics, and other briefing or presentation materials; and
- To utilize ICT and social media for greater efficiency and effectivity.

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<sup>5</sup> These can be found in the Implementing Rules and Regulation of the Data Privacy Act



The DROMIC is like an online version of DSWD's Emergency Operations Center for Disaster Response which is the physical operations center based in its headquarters in Quezon City. Through this online facility, the DSWD is making available to the general public its disaster preparedness and response advocacies. It is accessible via the internet at <http://www.dswd.gov.ph> or <http://dromic.dswd.gov.ph>. Users may view and download information sourced from the NDRRMC and other partner agencies, including the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). Through the on-line site, even affected families from any region can confirm if they are exposed to hazards based on the information provided by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) and the DSWD *Listahanan's* figures. Data sets of evacuation centers and situational reports, status of relief resources in warehouses, and reserve funding available for emergency response can also be viewed in the website. Predictive analytics and maps for situational awareness and visualization can also be viewed from the same site. Predictive analytics is making predictions on potential disaster events to prepare humanitarian response using mathematical theories, scientific processes, and spatial technologies based on current and historical data (Castro, 2016). Through "machine learning" the aim of DROMIC is to go beyond knowing what has happened by delivering the best forecast of what will happen in the future (Interview with Director Felino Castro, DREAMB-DSWD)

## **B. The World Food Programme (WFP)<sup>6</sup>**

The WFP is a humanitarian organization of the United Nations focused on fighting hunger, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience. Annually, the WFP distributes approximately 12.6 billion rations among 80 million people in around 80 countries. WFP's efforts are also concentrated on emergency assistance, relief and rehabilitation, development aid, and special operations mostly in conflict-affected countries.

Aside from relief and rehabilitation, WFP works to strengthen the resilience of people and communities affected by long drawn crises through development interventions. It implements projects on nutrition, especially for mothers and children like school feeding programmes which provides school meals to around 25 million children across 63 countries. According to its website, in 2016 WFP raised US\$5.9 billion in voluntary donations. It has more than 14,000 staff globally, with 90 percent based in the countries where the agency provides assistance.

In the Philippines, WFP helps half a million people affected by the protracted conflict in Central Mindanao as well as typhoon-affected communities in Visayas and Mindanao via the Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO). It targets the most vulnerable in areas where poverty, nutrition and basic education indicators are lower than national standards. WFP implements market-sensitive food assistance-for-assets, school meals, and stunting prevention programmes for children under two years of age.

WFP also engages local government units (LGUs), academic institutions, civil society and NGOs in disaster preparedness and response (DPR) programmes under this PRRO. Examples of these programmes include capacity strengthening training, installation of early warning systems, and community-based risk mitigation activities. Aside from these, WFP partners with the government in policy development related to disaster response structures and policy frameworks.

WFP also assists national and local governments by strengthening the latter's disaster response capabilities in areas of logistics and supply chain management through technical assistance and trainings for government counterparts on practical, operational and strategic logistics. It also aided the government in the establishment of a network of disaster response facilities in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao in support of an improved and decentralised emergency response network.

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<sup>6</sup> Information in this section is mostly derived from [www1.wfp.org](http://www1.wfp.org)

### *C. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)<sup>7</sup>*

UNICEF is a United Nations’ agency focused on serving the rights and needs of the world’s children. Since November 1948, UNICEF and the Philippine government have been partners in promoting and protecting the rights of Filipino children. UNICEF’s mission is to provide the best quality of life for every Filipino child through programmes covering education, health and nutrition, disaster risk reduction and emergencies, HIV and AIDS prevention, child protection, communication, and local policy and institutional development.

UNICEF’s policy work and advocacy include support for legislation such as the Juvenile Justice Welfare Act (2006) and the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the National Milk Code (2007). It has also been actively involved in the Child-Friendly Movement through various campaigns to prevent malnutrition, promote good hygiene, initiate early learning, and encourage children’s participation. It also collaborated with government for the country to achieve polio-free status and to eliminate measles and maternal and neonatal tetanus. UNICEF’s education programme contributed to increasing the number of children attending day care. UNICEF focus areas are the most vulnerable regions in Visayas and Mindanao classified by the government. It partners primarily with local government units (LGUs) in delivering services and building systems so that interventions are sustainable.

UNICEF actively works with the government in both humanitarian assistance and disaster preparedness and response. It has membership in the 12 government-led response clusters under the Department of Social Welfare and Development; supports government leadership of the education cluster with the Department of Education; and supports the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health, nutrition, and psychosocial services ‘quad-cluster’ with the Department of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO).

UNICEF is currently using two approaches in its humanitarian strategy—the first relates to the emergency crises related to the Mindanao conflict while the second approach focuses in the preparation and response to natural hazards. These would include programmes on logistics and stocks and supplies, child-focused hazard mapping, preparedness activities and contingency planning. UNICEF tries to integrate disaster risk reduction, resilience building and system strengthening into its humanitarian programmes. As it is also active in the social protection arena, it also exerts efforts in linking this with its humanitarian assistance and disaster response mandate.

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<sup>7</sup> Information is mostly derived from [www.unicef.org/philippines](http://www.unicef.org/philippines)

<sup>8</sup> For a more detailed account of this partnership see Zimmerman and Bohlin (2016)



## IV. Two Cases of Social Protection–Humanitarian Assistance Linkage in the Philippines

### A. World Food Programme’s Emergency Unconditional Cash Transfer with the Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program (4Ps)<sup>8</sup>

On November 8, 2013, a super typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda is the local name) hit the Philippines. One of the strongest typhoons ever recorded, Haiyan inflicted great destruction and large casualties. It is estimated that around 6,300 people perished and 2.86 billion pesos in damages. As the level of Haiyan’s destruction became clear, both the DSWD and the World Food Programme, as well as other humanitarian actors realized they needed to act swiftly to meet the increasing needs of the affected populations. Pantawid Pamilya’s credible payments platform, targeting and coverage and WFP’s ability to rapidly assess the most affected areas allowed the partnership to plan and implement the Emergency Unconditional Cash Transfer Top-up (ECT) project within one and a half month<sup>9</sup>, a first in the country. Just 12 days after the typhoon hit the country, DSWD already planned the revalidation process for its beneficiaries in the affected areas<sup>10</sup> and also decided to lift the conditionalities for its grants (Zimmerman and Bohling 2015). Both parties went beyond their usual processes and procedures to be able to respond adequately to the times and was able to forge a Memorandum of Agreement on December 11, 2013. In the MOA, WFP agreed to disburse cash on time and pay DSWD for additional administrative costs incurred during the implementation of the project.

#### *Previous Partnerships between DSWD and WFP*

Before Haiyan, WFP was already a member of technical advisory committee for technical assistance to support the DSWD, and thus, there was a degree of familiarity with the existing system and its workings and there were already some discussions of its future utilization (Kukrety, 2016). DSWD has established this advisory council for Pantawid Pamilya Program with members coming from key stakeholders like academe and major development partners like the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the World Food Programme. In meetings, details of the Pantawid Pamilya systems were frequently discussed. WFP and DSWD also collaborated or coordinated in delivering relief and rehabilitation in disaster and conflict areas in Mindanao even before typhoon Haiyan.

Almost two weeks after the super typhoon hit the country, DSWD already decided to revalidate and re-identify 4Ps beneficiaries in the impacted areas. After this process, the 4Ps staff updated the profiles of these recipients and provided them temporary identification cards which they will use for payments. On the other side, WFP though its rapid assessments saw that markets recovered relatively quickly in the disaster areas and thus, cash transfers were the most logical step to follow. Seeking for possible partners among NGOs to assist them in their planned cash transfer, they saw none but found the prospects of partnering with DSWD greatly feasible.

#### *Implementing the Partnership for the Emergency Cash Transfer Top-Up*

The revalidation and re-identification process took longer than expected and the schedule for a first payment was eventually delayed. Some of the beneficiaries left their homes to go to other regions like Metro Manila. DSWD also needed additional staff, equipment, and financial resources to cope with the increased workload. However, despite the availability of financial resources from WFP to purchase equipment and hire staff, constraints in the procurement and hiring processes of the DSWD prevented it from availing this fund. Thus, it had to rely on its own resources and increased its costs and asked its staff to do overtime work. The first payment of emergency cash transfer top-up was eventually completed within the month of January. The second round of payments was implemented in February 2014.

<sup>9</sup> This process required locating and confirming the identities of beneficiaries among the larger population in the affected areas. DSWD took a longer time than expected in validating because of the scale of the disaster and movement of people to other areas.

<sup>10</sup> Originally scheduled to disburse 100 payments in December 2013 but even in early January 2014, less than 32,500 payments have been made (Zimmerman and Bohling, 2015)

WFP exploited DSWD's established partnership with the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), and LBP's linkage with other Payment Service Providers (PSPs) mentioned above; utilized the regular Pantawid Pamilya payment schemes and processes; and tapped the network of DSWD staff especially the municipal links already working with the 4Ps. The Family Development Sessions (FDS), which were conducted by DSWD regularly among the beneficiaries were also used for information dissemination on the top-up and the schedule and venues of pay-outs.

There were two types of disbursement—one with the LBP cash card system through Automated Teller Machines and the other, over-the-counter (OTC) payments. For the latter, DSWD required its staff and PSPs to make and maintain acknowledgement receipts as evidence of payment to comply with audit regulations. LBP needed to find alternative PSPs in some instances because current PSPs were not available (e.g. GCASH and Philpost) since their staff were also victims of the disaster (Zimmerman and Bohling, 2015). Thus, this also contributed to some delays in implementing the cash transfer. The OTC mode was mostly used during the implementation since ATM were still not operational in many areas at those times. However, one notes that in the latter stages of recovery, DSWD used mostly the cash card as this is the cheapest mode of transfer.

### *The Results of the Partnership*

Despite the delays, the use of DSWD's process of revalidation to identify disaster victims and its payment platform gave WFP better assurance in terms of security and savings in terms of costs as a parallel delivery system. Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries meanwhile, as they are already familiar with the system, showed sufficient confidence in the distribution of payouts (Zimmerman and Bohling 2015). "Piggybacking" on the DSWD's Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) platform, WFP augmented the government's Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) grant of a maximum of P1,400-P2,000 per 4Ps household by P2,600 given in two tranches.

The emergency cash transfer (ECT) paid nearly 100,000 recipients (reaching approximately half a million beneficiaries) through 197,996 payments totaling P257.39 million via cash card (31%) and over the counter (69%) modalities. These ECT payments were made between December 20, 2013 and February 28, 2014. Half were solely WFP payouts (98,663) and the other half (99,333) were made simultaneous with the DSWD payroll (Zimmerman and Bohling, 2015).

- WFP estimated the cost per cash transfer for one recipient was only P7.16 if done through DSWD but the cost done through an NGO was extremely high at P512.00. This is because DSWD absorbed some of the variable costs and was already covering the fixed costs. An independent study made by Bailey et al (2014) also confirmed that the cash transfer executed through DSWD was less costly. Since there are other households which are not 4Ps beneficiaries but were also affected by the typhoon, WFP also commissioned NGOs to deliver cash transfers to this group.
- The table below from such study shows the cost differences in terms of the various platforms that WFP used for their cash transfers—through NGOs (on this case two examples) and the DSWD. The NGO partners managed all aspects of the cash transfer programmes, including targeting, implementation, and monitoring. The DSWD partnership was again less expensive than the NGO modalities as seen in the table. Thus, the partnership with DSWD was a more efficient arrangement for WFP as compared to the NGO modalities since the administrative support in terms of operational costs to DSWD was only 1.5% of the total programme cost. DSWD did not charge overhead costs.



**Table 1. Costs of different WFP cash implementation arrangements**

	NGO 1 (2014)	NGO 2 (2014)	DSWD (2013/14)
Cash Delivery	\$9,155	\$153,743	\$56,295
Management and Administration	\$36,561	\$20,955	\$38,945
Overhead 7%	\$3,200	\$12,229	
<b>Total Cooperating Partner's Costs</b>	<b>\$48,916</b>	<b>\$186,927</b>	<b>\$95,240</b>
Duration (months)	2	2	4
Number of HHs	4,000	67,000	102,618
Cost per HH/Month	\$6.11	\$1.39	\$0.23
Transfer per HH/month	\$60.00	\$12.09	\$14.88
<b>Total cash delivered</b>	<b>\$480,000</b>	<b>\$1,620,000</b>	<b>\$6,106,816</b>
Total cost	\$528,916	\$1,806,927	\$6,202,056
<b>% operational cost</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
Cost per dollar transferred	\$1.10	\$1.12	\$1.02

Source: Bailey et al (2014)

### **Challenges encountered by the partnership**

However, there were several challenges that the ECT partnership encountered. Zimmerman and Bohling (2015) summarized these:

- The programme and PSPs underestimated the staffing capacities required to deploy additional payments in an emergency response with some PSPs needing to hire third party agents.
- Even with an existing list, DSWD's revalidation of recipients took longer than DSWD or WFP anticipated.
- Both parties underestimated costs, e.g. cover materials during the revalidation, and the procurement challenges to obtain necessary equipment (generators, tents, etc.) quickly.
- Neither parties anticipated procedural backlogs and payroll delays slowing the funds disbursement from WFP to DSWD and from DSWD to recipients. DSWD had to process two payrolls (one for WFP top-ups and one for the Pantawid Pamilya payment) requiring two separate payments rather than one.
- WFP internal procedures also delayed the disbursement of funds to DSWD; and different from DSWD's, WFP's reconciliation requirements created significant additional work for WFP. There were infrastructure constraints post-disaster that delayed payments, e.g. operational automatic teller machines (ATM); electricity was out for months. Some recipients incurred high travel costs just to get their payments because of damaged roads.

## ***B. UNICEF's Emergency Unconditional Cash Transfer (EUCT) with DSWD***

### ***UNICEF and DSWD before Haiyan***

UNICEF and DSWD have been partners in both social protection and humanitarian assistance. UNICEF through its Social Policy section has been providing technical assistance to the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Modified Conditional Cash Transfer (MCCT) programme. These include the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework for the programme. Piloted in 2012, the MCCT programme is an expanding social protection programme that helps families in need of special protection such as street families, indigenous people, and migrant families, and the like.

Since 2006, UNICEF has also rehabilitated and rebuilt more than 55 early learning centers in partnership with the DSWD in various regions of the country. Both have worked together in the disaster response clusters in the NDRRMC in various past disasters (e.g. typhoon Pablo) and crises especially in Mindanao (e.g. Sendong).

More than six months after Haiyan, the emergency unconditional cash transfer (EUCT) was conceived as an initiative to enhance the capacity of poor families to recover from the impact of the typhoon. Previous experiences in many countries confirm that the advantages of cash transfers spill over beyond the relief of households as the cash infusion could stimulate markets in the affected areas. As UNICEF-Philippines received donations all over the world, it decided to deliver additional cash grants to selected areas in Samar.

Thus, in July 2014, UNICEF and the Department of Social Welfare and Development signed a Memorandum of Agreement to provide Emergency Unconditional Cash Transfer to 5,801 4Ps beneficiaries who were also affected by typhoon Haiyan in five municipalities in Eastern Samar: Guiuan, Hernani, Mercedes, Balangkayan, and Salcedo. DSWD assessed that the province of Eastern Samar was the worst affected by Yolanda, and thus, UNICEF specifically chose it for the implementation of its top-up grants (Brown, 2015). The identified and targeted families come from vulnerable households who are unable to meet their food and essential non-food requirements.

Earlier, UNICEF contracted ACF International (Action against Hunger), an NGO to implement emergency unconditional cash transfer to 10,000 households. The objective of the UNICEF-DSWD partnership was to provide top-up money to vulnerable households who are currently receiving assistance under the DSWD's 4Ps amounting to Php 1,400 per month (maximum). The agreed modality was P4,400 per month for six-months and that it will run concurrently with 4Ps pay-outs.

### ***Implementing the Partnership on EUCT***

Each beneficiary household actually received 4,400 pesos each month in the period July- September 2014 and January-March 2015. Coming out of disaster, the EUCT proved to be a substantial component of household income. The total cash infusion by end of the sixth tranche was about P150M. Thus, the top-up complemented the recovery efforts of the 4Ps in improving human capital through the continued education of poor children, and granting them health and nutrition benefits, while at the same time giving urgent financial assistance to their families.

The project covered about 99.3 percent of intended beneficiaries and disbursed 98.9 percent of the total P153,146,400 for six months. A total of 41 target beneficiaries were missed for various reasons most of them due to relocation combined with inefficient tracing. Only P1,606,000 was unspent after the sixth tranche (Alcanz Consulting, 2015).



## Results of the Partnership

On the average, the cash transfer accounted for about half of family incomes of the beneficiaries. A post-programme evaluation showed that almost half of the transfers were consumed on food, while the rest were spent on shelter, health care, education, and savings. For the periods of EUCT distribution, recipient families also had low incidence of food insecurity. About 98 percent of the surveyed households said that the amount was just right for their needs and some savings and livelihood. In terms of education, the additional cash went to the following items: school materials, participation in school curricular and extra-curricular activities (academic projects, band, scouting, school fairs), packed lunch or snack and transportation money. Expenditure on these items were reduced after the EUCT stopped (Alcanz Consulting, 2015). It was also shown that the cash infusion has revitalized the local economy and helped in market recovery by stimulating trade and services. Market expansion was valued at P25.4 million pesos in the 5 barangays <sup>16</sup>.

The use of the CCT platform by the EUCT programme has been the major factor for the fast and simple targeting. In fact, all the 4Ps beneficiaries were targeted for the top-up regardless of how they were affected by the typhoon. The assumption was because they were already poor and that their area was badly hit, all of them deserved the top-up.<sup>17</sup> This was also the reason why the previous EUCT handled by ACF was costlier than the DSWD managed one.

**Table 2. Comparative Expenses for Emergency Unconditional Cash Transfer: ACF and DSWD**

Items	ACF (10,000 households)	Percentage	DSWD (5,800 households)	Percentage
Cash grant disbursement	262,200,000	77.54	153,537,600	88.24
Distribution Cost	6,000,000	1.77	5,795,400	3.33
Project Support Costs	47,807,000	14.14	14,667,000	8.43
Indirect Project Costs (overhead)	22,120,490	6.55	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>338,127,490</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>174,000,000</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Tables from the Powerpoint of Mr. Augusto Rodriguez of UNICEF

The table above shows that the total cost of ACF International in delivering the cash grant was definitely higher than that of DSWD. Note that some of the items given to DSWD actually enhance their capacity to deliver services.

## Challenges to the Partnership

A major challenge was the 3-month disruption in the payout from October-December 2014. The recipients were affected as their budgets were slashed for three quarters. There was no clear explanation on what caused this three-month delay. Foremost in the minds of household members was when the transfer will be resumed. The EUCT beneficiaries already approximated their levels of expenditures in anticipation of a six-month pay-out and thus when the disruption happened, savings and expenditure behavior of the households were altered. The main reason offered by the DSWD National office was the “overextended work plan commitments in the last quarter of 2014” by its staff as the same group of personnel took care of the 4Ps financial management and the processing of other projects<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> By Municipalities: Balankayan, P2.7M, Guiuan, P13M, Hernani, P2.6M, Mercedes, P1.4M and Salcedo, P5.7M. These figures were derived from the Powerpoint Presentation of Augusto Rodriguez

<sup>17</sup> interview with Mr. Augusto Rodriguez of UNICEF

<sup>18</sup> based on the interview conducted by Alcanz Consulting 2015

Other issues raised in the third party monitoring by the Alcanz Consulting of the EUCT project include:

- 1) The rushed implementation of the project brought about the lack of information dissemination even among the 4Ps staff i.e. municipal links and the lack of adequate staff at both the national and local level to cope with the additional workload which also became a major factor for the October-December disruption discussed above. In addition, the contracting of the third party monitor was also delayed.
- 2) Confusion about the unconditionality among implementers because of the lack of proper orientation resulted in some beneficiaries of the top-up not getting paid.
- 3) Liquidation issues occurred because the rushed implementation resulted into unclear set of requirements for accounting and reporting.
- 4) The 4Ps list of beneficiaries still had inclusion errors of around 7-10% and thus, this was carried over to the EUCT beneficiaries.
- 5) Buying behavior resulting to a spike in prices during payout days inflict pain and losses to both EUCT recipients and ordinary consumers who happen to be in the same markets on the same payout days are also design issues.
- 6) High transaction cost of payout for some of the grantees especially those coming from the islands wherein they need to go by boat to the payout location<sup>19</sup>.

### *C. Key Learnings from the two cases*

- 1) The targeting, verification, ID, delivery instrument, and payment channels with pre-existing contracts that are available through the DSWD platform have helped WFP and UNICEF reach more households and save time in terms of the processes mentioned above. However, the main drawback is the exclusion of poor and vulnerable households who were also victims of disaster but are not beneficiaries of 4Ps.
- 2) Due diligence and oversight: WFP also conducted an evaluation of financial service providers to check if the necessary risk management protocols were in place and also to have an alternative plan in case the government system was found to be deficient on any aspect (Kukrety, 2016). Even if the cash transfers were delivered through the government's social protection system, both WFP and UNICEF engaged NGOs as third party actors to do oversight, monitoring, and evaluation of the programme.
- 3) Setting the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and Reporting Requirements Before the Emergency: The MOA between WFP and DSWD was drafted relatively quickly and thus could be further improved for the next emergencies. The same is true with the arrangement between UNICEF and DSWD. SOPs and reportorial requirements<sup>20</sup> need to be arranged ex-ante. During the next typhoon Ruby, similar but refined SOPs were used by WFP and DSWD.
- 4) Sufficient financial and human resources needed for expanding response capability: Development partners and humanitarian actors must provide additional resources to strengthen the capability of the existing government platforms and systems to deliver disaster and emergency responses more effectively. In the Philippines, WFP and UNICEF provided administrative and other support costs<sup>21</sup>. This assistance enabled DSWD to widen and broaden its response<sup>22</sup>. However, the timeliness of the fund releases must be ensured.

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<sup>19</sup> The transaction cost of the grantee in this case was about P540 for one pay-out

<sup>20</sup> Liquidation reports including how monies were spent and documentation of payments received by households

<sup>21</sup> WFP provided about 1/6th of the total value of the humanitarian assistance delivered through DSWD as administration costs (Kukrety 2016).

<sup>22</sup> The DSWD staff was commended for their professionalism, resilience, commitment and dedication to their work but there should also be a system of augmenting administrative and staff support during these types of emergencies.



- 5) Strengthening the cash payment system: The cash delivery system for the 4Ps was not designed for disaster emergency response, which meant that there could be important constraints in payouts over a longer duration and to closer to where the affected communities lived (Kukrety, 2016). DSWD's agreement with Land Bank allowed a maximum amount for transfer in a day and thus needs some flexibility during emergencies. Also, some of Land Bank's partner PSPs may also be affected by the disaster and thus will not be able to deliver. A case in point was the delay caused by a cooperative PSP in the UNICEF-DSWD partnership (interview with A. Rodriguez)<sup>23</sup>. Cash cards maybe optimal during the recovery period but OTC payments in select cites are more practical if there is still no electricity and ATMs are not functioning.
- 6) Strong and effective coordination needed: Cross-sector collaboration is also critical in the response to the different types of risks and shocks affecting households and communities. With multiple stakeholders involved, there was a need for coordination at different levels: (i) coordination within and among the different departments of national government; (ii) coordination between different levels of the government system i.e. national, regional, and local government units; (iii) coordination among humanitarian agencies on various aspects of the disaster response including cash transfers and (iv) coordination between humanitarian agencies, the government, civil society, and private sector groups. Coordination entails both human resources and financial costs and thus, government must invest in coordination-related costs to increase capacity for coordination of the lead agencies in the disaster response clusters.

## VI. Moving Forward and Next Steps

The experiences of WFP and UNICEF in coordinating their response and recovery programming with the DSWD to enable vertical expansion of the 4Ps programme were indeed positive. The arrangement enabled them to rapidly reach a large number of affected households in a relatively least cost manner. The significance of the use of common platforms for targeting, payment delivery, and information management in both social protection programmes and humanitarian assistance was clearly shown in the two cases. It is also fortunate that the DSWD is the lead agency in these two programmes. To move forward from these encouraging experiences, here are some steps that can be taken by the government and humanitarian actors:

### *Policy and Programme related interventions*

The government needs to review its current social protection framework so that disaster response and humanitarian assistance can be linked or integrated. An "adaptive social protection"<sup>24</sup> approach which harnesses the synergies found in the separate programmes can be utilized. This can be followed by drafting an Adaptive Social Protection Action Plan to include ways of operationalizing new approaches in redesigning current social protection mechanisms and programmes. Capacity building measures required for this Adaptive Social Protection approach can also be made.

Social protection programmes will also be able to address emergencies if there is flexibility in their design and implementation mechanisms to enlarge coverage during shocks and to scale back upon return to normal times. Programme designs can also be reviewed with aim of integrating or linking procedures for vertical and horizontal expansion during emergencies. These programmes can be scaled up by increasing the benefit value of the subsidy e.g. cash grants or the duration of an existing programme (vertical expansion) or by registering additional beneficiaries (horizontal expansion) (OPM, 2016). This will also entail altering the type of provisions given and the conditionalities or selection criteria required as what transpired in the two cases discussed above.

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<sup>23</sup> The National Confederation of Cooperatives (NATCCO)

<sup>24</sup> See Ulrichs (2016) and Ziegler (2016) for more detailed discussion on adaptive social protection

These might also require defining terms of engagement with Cluster leads and donors to ensure rapid response and identifying trigger indicators to activate the mobilization of such emergency responses through the 4Ps programme (Smith, 2015). It can also be complemented by a study on how to go about horizontal expansion during emergencies using databases of *Listahanan* and the CBMS if available at the local government unit. Institutional implementation and delivery arrangements must also be readily adjusted during these times as was seen in the two case studies.

The future implementation of the National Emergency Cash Transfer Framework drafted by various government agencies, bilateral partners, and other disaster relief organizations in June 2016 can be used as initial phase of linkage and coherence. This could also entail the strengthening of the cash payment system to further lower transaction costs and to make them more timely and secure not only during payouts for social protection programmes but also for emergency cash transfers. DSWD may also want to review the exclusive arrangement with Land Bank in regard to its payment system as possible alternatives may also be feasible.

### **Harmonization of databases and information systems**

Empirical-based forecasts and predictions related to the possible location and communities to be hit by a shock are key to the timely implementation of social safety net programmes or humanitarian assistance. Targeting has been a costly and time-consuming activity, and this can also be facilitated if there is an existing database of poor and vulnerable households. If the data on households are also characterized by their vulnerability to shocks i.e. the likelihood of being affected by climate extremes or disasters, then it will be more useful since beneficiaries of social protection programmes may not be the same people to be affected by disasters<sup>25</sup>. Mapping of available resources and real time stocks of inventories are also important information needed during emergency responses. Information and data systems that are on hand and easily accessed by relevant actors can also facilitate the vertical and horizontal expansion of social protection programmes.

DROMIC is clearly an important initiative for policymaking and programme design. *Listahanan* can be updated or extended through the data generated by the 4Ps implementation and during emergency responses e.g. registry of Disaster Assistance Family Access Card (DAFAC) beneficiaries. After Yolanda, the coverage of the 4Ps' regular programming was also expanded by enrolling 20,000 households that were newly impoverished due to the disaster (Brown, 2015). This is another example of an update being done after emergencies.

Design of social protection programmes can take advantage of this integration of data and information convergence (e.g. microinsurance programmes can be introduced in areas where vulnerability to climate change is high). More accurate predictive analytics through this integration can also be used regularly for a more pro-active disaster preparedness and response. Harmonization of these information management tools on disaster response and social protection will further strengthen targeting, prioritization, and impact evaluation (Paqueo et al, 2015).

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<sup>25</sup> Although there might be big overlaps in certain circumstances



### ***Permanent provision for additional funding during emergencies***

Horizontal and vertical expansion of existing social protection programmes require the availability of financing mechanisms during the emergency whether funded by government solely or jointly with development partners through grants or soft loans. Standby funds during emergencies must be bolstered either through the General Appropriation Act (GAA) or through grants and credit line made available by development partners and the private/civil society sectors. Fundraising by the private and civil society sectors for an emergency fund tied to this mechanism can be done even before the crisis strikes so as such can be readily available during the shock. These funds can be used as “top-up” for social protection grants during emergencies or other “linked programmes”. Humanitarian actors may also develop a direct relationship with DSWD through this pre-agreed rapid respond fund (Smith, 2015).

### ***Documentation, monitoring and evaluation***

As empirical evidence on the benefits of the linkage between social protection and humanitarian assistance is still scarce, programmes that experiment on this synergy should be accompanied by rigorous monitoring and evaluation efforts so that policies and programmes related to such can be further refined. Both UNICEF and WFP commissioned third party organizations i.e. Bankable Frontier Associates (BFA) and Alcanz Consulting to monitor and evaluate the partnership with DSWD. The former documented the specific processes both parties went through including the challenges encountered. The latter also tried to capture the details of the cash payouts and even attempted to assess the change in expenditure patterns of beneficiary households during the payouts. Both organizations pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership and also proposed recommendations for future engagements of the two parties. It will be beneficial for DSWD and its partner humanitarian agencies to hire third party organizations to handle documentation, monitoring, and evaluation of future linkage initiatives.

### ***Political economy considerations for linkage and coordination***

These would include the politics of coordination, politics of humanitarian and development financing and other political factors affecting the building of effective and scalable social protection programmes (Oxford Policy Management, 2016). Issues of turfing and silo mentality are important obstacles for the linkage of social protection and humanitarian assistance. Political will and awareness of these political economy considerations are needed by the agency that will lead any linkage or collaboration efforts. Scaling up of social protection whether horizontal or vertical expansion may also require political decisions from both the national and local governments. Thus, political and power dynamics among them can impact on decisions about the targeting of scaled-up payments including how the amount of any social protection provided for shock response is estimated (whether this is adequate to meet household needs, compliance with regional wage standards, etc.). Additional or reserve funding required for risk financing has political consequences especially with limited resources which implies there will always be trade-offs in allocating the budgets of relevant government agencies. Another important consideration will be the choice of personalities who will lead in navigating the political environment to effect changes for this approach to happen.

## VII. Concluding Remarks

Social protection, disaster risk response and humanitarian assistance are programmes that tackle the problem of poverty and vulnerability, two issues closely linked together. Synergy among these programmes can lead to a sustained effort by government to lift millions of Filipinos out of the poverty trap. This study showed specific cases where the platforms of 4Ps, a social protection programme were utilized in the emergency operations of two humanitarian and development partners. There is indeed convergence between social protection and humanitarian assistance and the government must build on these positive experiences.

DSWD plays a prominent role in the national disaster risk management framework. It is the lead agency in disaster response activities which include prevention and mitigation, preparedness, relief, recovery, and rehabilitation. Concurrently, it also co-chairs four coordinating clusters of the UN cluster system—food security, shelter, camp coordination, and camp management, and protection. Another important factor is that the DSWD is the lead agency in the implementation of many social protection programmes especially the 4Ps and at the same time in the disaster response. Thus, it can and should be able to facilitate the linkage and convergence of more social protection, disaster response and humanitarian assistance programmes in collaboration with other relevant agencies.

Within DSWD itself, the key elements for linkage and convergence are in place—a database of poor households for targeting, a network of field personnel all over the country implementing a social safety net programme, a cash payment delivery system, a data and information management system for disaster response (the virtual operations center), a cluster mechanism for multi-stakeholder coordination and a financing conduit. While these platforms and systems are far from perfect, they have been operational, some even more than five years. They are just like pieces of puzzle waiting to be put together in specific programmes. At the same time, humanitarian assistance agencies may also be able to tap into these frameworks during disasters.



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## Annex A: Clusters and Lead Agencies

Cluster A: Food and Non-food Items (NFIs) - DSWD

Cluster B: WASH, Medical and Public Health, Nutrition, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (Health) – Department of Health

Cluster C: Camp Coordination, Management and Protection (CCCM) - DSWD

Cluster D: Logistics – Office of Civil Defense

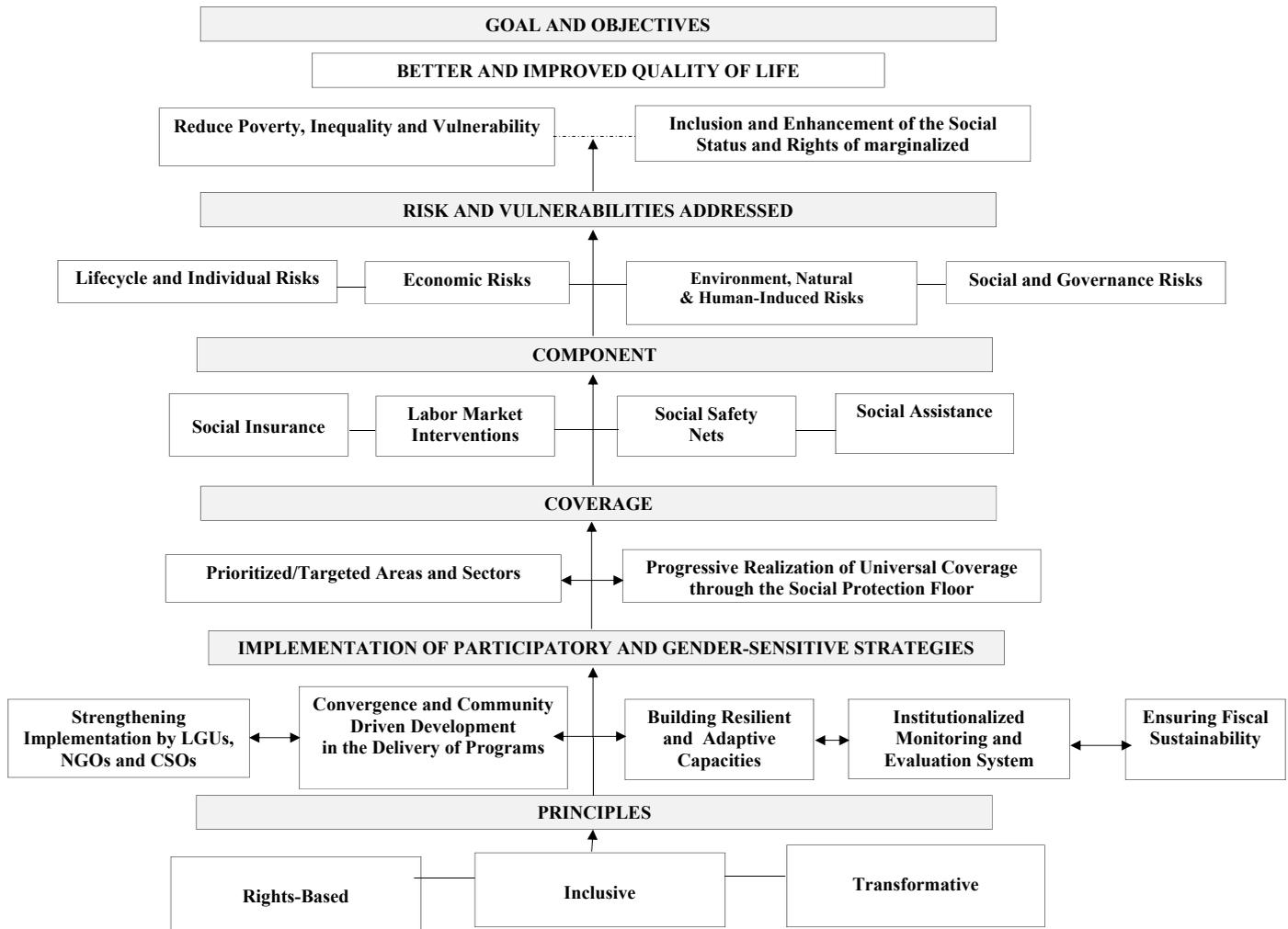
Cluster E: Emergency Telecommunications (ETC) – Office of Civil Defense

Cluster F: Education – Department of Education

Cluster G: Search, Rescue and Retrieval (SRR) – Armed Forces of the Philippines

Cluster H: Management of Dead and Mission (MDM) – Department of the Interior and Local Government

*Annex B: Social Protection Operational Framework v. January 2019*  
 Fernando Aldaba<sup>26</sup>



<sup>26</sup> This chart was prepared by Fernando T. Aldaba, Dean and Professor of Economics, School of Social Sciences, Ateneo de Manila University, as commissioned by the World Bank and the World Food Programme.

