

WORKING PAPER I**JOINT UNICEF-WB-WFP
RESEARCH PROJECT**

Exploring the impacts of
social protection on social
cohesion in the Sahel



HOW DOES SOCIAL PROTECTION IMPACT SOCIAL COHESION IN THE SAHEL?

A review of existing evidence and gaps

Authors

Ambika Sharma, World Bank

Jan Menke, World Food Program

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ABSTRACT

In the Sahel, social protection programs have been proven to improve several outcomes for beneficiaries such as boosting consumption, productivity, resilience to climate change, as well as health and education of future generations. They also yield positive impacts on local economies, benefiting local communities beyond beneficiaries. Beyond economic impacts, programs that seek to address poverty and vulnerability, such as social protection interventions, have the potential to strengthen social cohesion. Untangling this relationship is essential to maximize these programs' positive impact and prevent potential unintended detrimental dynamics. This paper examines the current evidence base in the Sahel to identify what is known about the impacts of social protection programs on social cohesion in the region, and what gaps in the evidence remain. The paper finds that social protection programs often improved social cohesion as reported by program beneficiaries, including more trust, cooperation for the common good, involvement in local associations, and a greater sense of inclusive identity. The sense of fairness and legitimacy of programs as perceived by non-beneficiaries varies by context. Finally, the selection of beneficiaries may result in social conflicts and tensions among community members, highlighting the importance of understanding the role of pre-existing contextual factors. In terms of evidence gaps, evidence of social protection programs' social cohesion impacts for non-beneficiaries are limited to few qualitative studies, which are not necessarily representative of the full programs. Also, most evidence exists around horizontal within-community social cohesion, and there is a gap in the evidence base on impact on social cohesion between different communities (out-groups) and between citizens and state (vertical social cohesion) in the Sahel.

JOINT UNICEF-WB-WFP RESEARCH PROJECT

Exploring the impacts of social protection on social cohesion in the Sahel



In the Sahel, vulnerability, poverty, competition over natural resources and lack of economic opportunities have distended social bonds and fueled conflict in the region. As a “threat multiplier”, climate change exacerbates existing social, political, and economic tensions and conflicts. Policies and programs that seek to address poverty and drivers of vulnerability, such as social protection, have the potential to support social cohesion. Untangling the relationship between social protection and social cohesion is essential to maximize this positive impact and prevent unintended detrimental dynamics. Social protection can have several effects on social cohesion, though few studies have evaluated such effects systematically in the Sahel. In addition, little evidence exists on the impacts of different program components and design features on different dimensions of social cohesion, and the importance of institutional and social determinants as enabling factors on these impacts.

Better understanding the relationship between social protection and social cohesion is essential for policy and program design, as well as to support advocacy. UNICEF, the World Bank, and the World Food Programme, which have forged a strong partnership in the Sahel to support social protection systems in the region, will jointly implement a research project focusing on identifying the multiple linkages between social protection and social cohesion. This research project will use a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to quantify the causal effects of social protection interventions (in particular social safety nets) on different dimensions of social cohesion while understanding the channels through which these impacts manifest and the perspectives and perceptions from communities. An operational assessment will also focus on understanding how specific design and implementation features can influence the program’s impacts on social cohesion– in other words, untangling the effects that are linked to the intervention in itself, and those that are influenced by the environment or specifically how an intervention is implemented.

The present paper is the first product of this research project, consisting of a literature review seeking to examining the existing evidence and knowledge gaps on the subject in order to define a conceptual framework for the overall research.



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INTRODUCTION

Social protection programs have proven to improve several outcomes for beneficiaries such as boosting consumption, productivity, resilience to climate change, as well as health and education of future generations. They also yield positive effects on local economies, benefiting local communities beyond beneficiaries.¹ In addition to these well-documented impacts, social protection programs can have an important role in improving social cohesion. Safety nets can help build institutional trust and strengthen the citizen-state contract by fostering “social inclusion, integration and greater accountability”.² This is particularly relevant in fragile contexts such as the Sahel region, where during post-conflict windows, state-building opportunities may arise where social protection can play a role.³ Further, societies that are more cohesive may be more resilient to shocks, especially during natural disasters or public health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴ Social cohesion can also improve local community development by enhancing the community’s ability to agree on public goods to be created. Finally, social cohesion has been found to foster societal peace.⁵

¹ See, for example, [Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Program Impacts Infographic, 2024](#).

² UNDP 2016, cited in Carter et al, 2019.

³ Carter et al, 2019.

⁴ See for example, Burchi et al, 2022.

⁵ Burchi et al, 2022.

PART 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Defining social cohesion for our review

In this review, we adopt the following definition of social cohesion proposed by Leininger et al, 2021:

“Social cohesion refers to both the vertical and the horizontal relations among members of society and the state as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, an inclusive identity and cooperation for the common good.”⁶

Social cohesion consists of three components:
trust, inclusive identity, and cooperation for the common good.



Trust refers to the ability to trust other people, both within and outside one’s social circles, as well as trust towards the state including its local and national institutions.



Inclusive identity refers to when individuals can identify with various group identities (e.g. gender, religion, village, ethnicity) but also feel a mutual belonging to a larger, broader identities such as a national identity. Different identity groups tolerate and recognize each other, while the state protects the rights of the various identity groups



Cooperation for the common good is defined as the cooperation among people or groups for interests that go beyond those of the individual or the group.⁷ This also includes a cooperation with the state, for instance through participatory community targeting processes in the context of social safety nets.

This definition of social cohesion aligns well with other recent conceptual literature, particularly in the context of social programs. For instance, a recent paper on social cohesion⁸ provides the following definition: “Social cohesion is a sense of shared purpose, trust and willingness to cooperate among members of a given group, between members of different groups, and between people and the state.” A social cohesion measurement toolkit for community driven development programs⁹ states that social cohesion is “a sense of shared purpose and trust among members of a given group or locality and the willingness of those group members to engage and cooperate with each other to survive and prosper.”

⁶ Leininger et al, 2021.

⁷ Definitions compiled in Burchi et al, 2022.

⁸ Chatterjee et al, 2023.

⁹ Kim et al, 2020.

It is broadly agreed in the conceptual literature that social cohesion has both horizontal and vertical aspects. Horizontal social cohesion refers to the relations and bonds within and across groups and communities. Vertical social cohesion refers to relations between citizens and the state, at the local or national levels. The “linking, bonding, bridging” framework¹⁰ captures the different types of horizontal and vertical social cohesion. Bonding refers to relations connecting individuals within a given community. Bridging refers to relations between individuals across different communities.¹¹ Linking refers to the connection between citizens and state. While bonding and bridging constitute horizontal social cohesion, linking refers to vertical social cohesion.

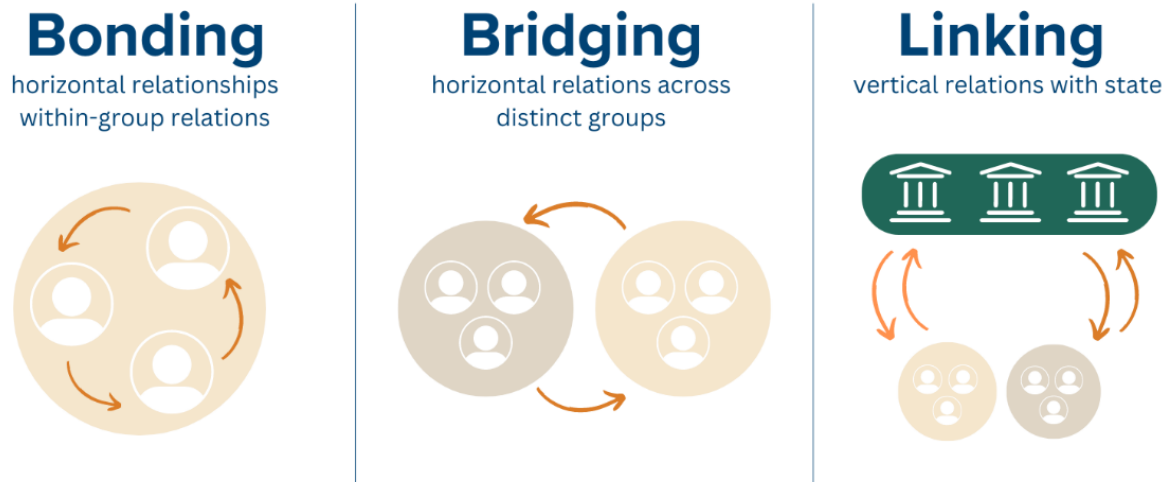


Figure 1: Bonding, bridging, linking

Source: Authors, based on definitions compiled in Chatterjee et al. 2023.




1.2. How can social protection affect social cohesion?

Social protection programs can affect social cohesion through many pathways, including directly through program activities and processes, and indirectly through program outcomes such as reduced poverty and increased income sources. The following table illustrates some of the ways social protection programs could, in theory, affect social cohesion. In theory, social protection programs such as social safety nets, productive inclusion interventions, and shock response programs, can lead to both positive and negative impacts on social cohesion, often depending on the context and on how the program is designed, communicated, and implemented.

¹⁰ See, for example, Chatterjee et al, 2023.

¹¹ Chatterjee et al, 2023.

Table 1: Some illustrative ways in which social protection programs may affect social cohesion

	 Tt TRUST	 Ii INCLUSIVE IDENTITY	 Cc COMMON GOOD COOPERATION
VERTICAL	<p>A shock-response program that repeatedly responds to droughts can increase trust in government.</p> <p>A safety net whose selection criteria or processes are not well communicated may negatively affect vertical trust.</p>	<p>A safety nets program perceived as provided by the local government can strengthen the sense of unity/belonging at the local level.</p> <p>A program communicated as a national-level effort, with local agencies integrated into the process, can strengthen citizens' sense of inclusion and engagement from both local and national institutions.</p>	<p>Cooperation between the citizens and state may be fostered through targeting processes where the government and the community work together to identify beneficiaries.</p> <p>A program which deploys a beneficiary identification process that asks questions that seem 'intrusive' or 'sensitive' may result in communities being reluctant to engage.</p>
HORIZONTAL	<p>A public works program that ensures different groups (e.g. refugees and host communities) work alongside and get a chance to interact in a cooperative setting can build trust.</p> <p>A productive inclusion program that groups beneficiaries into savings or training groups can result in strong bonds among participants but may fail to build trust between beneficiaries and those not selected for the program.</p>	<p>A safety net program can reduce inequality and boost a sense of belonging among the poorest in society.</p> <p>Social protection programs, by selecting a set of beneficiaries may lead to a feeling of exclusion in those who were not included (particularly if identification criteria or processes were not well communicated).</p>	<p>Public works programs can provide an opportunity for members of different groups to work together for a common output that benefits all the groups.</p> <p>Safety nets with accompanying messaging on good practices on human capital or climate change, for instance, can lead to non-beneficiaries also adopting these improved practices and thus improve outcomes across the community.</p>

Note:

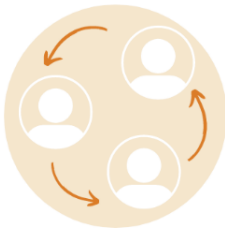
green = positive potential effects, red = negative potential effects,

PART 2: REVIEW OF CURRENT EVIDENCE ON HOW SOCIAL PROTECTION IMPACTS SOCIAL COHESION

This section presents a review of existing evidence on how social protection programs in the Sahel influence social cohesion. The review includes large-scale quantitative impact evaluations of major safety nets programs in the Sahel, and qualitative studies in specific sites.

2.1. Horizontal social cohesion – within groups

Results on beneficiaries



Safety nets in Mauritania improved participants’ trust and cooperation for the common good within the community. In Mauritania, a rigorous impact evaluation of the national safety nets program found that the program improved beneficiaries’ **trust** towards others and their **cooperation for the common good** in the community.¹² **Trust** increased as measured by a ‘social support index’, which captured whether the beneficiary could ask for and provide advice to others in the community on income generating activities and settling disputes. **Cooperation for the common good** increased as

captured by a ‘collective action index’ which measured whether the beneficiary was a member of local groups or associations, held positions of responsibility in local groups, donated or volunteered in community activities. Other measured aspects such as the ‘social cohesion and community closeness index’ which captures the existence of hostility or tensions with others and whether beneficiaries tend towards making decisions collectively versus individualistically, did not appear to be affected by the program.¹³

Economic inclusion interventions layered on top of the social safety net increased trust, social inclusion/inclusive identity, and cooperation for the common good for participants of the program in Niger and Burkina Faso. The program in Niger provided savings groups, entrepreneurship training and coaching, a lump-sum cash grant, and a ‘psychosocial’ intervention consisting of life-skills training and a community sensitization on aspirations and social norms, all layered on top of the social safety net. About 18 months after the program, **trust** improved as measured by the ‘social support index’, which captured the number of relationships where advice could be asked and given on topics of income generation and resolving disputes. **Inclusive identity** improved as captured in the ‘social standing index’ which captured subjective social status of the participants – the improvement in this index among the program participants, who were from poor households, indicates an improvement in their own perceived inclusion as a successful member of the community. Inclusive identity also improved as captured under the ‘social cohesion and community closeness index’ which measured social interdependence, collectivism, and reduced hostilities/enmities. Finally, participants showed an increased **cooperation for the common good** as captured by the ‘collective action index’ that measured

¹² This program provides transfers and social promotion activities addressing hygiene, nutrition, education, civil registration, and child development, over a period of 5 years.

¹³ Mauritania Tekavoul Program Impact Evaluation Draft Results 2023 (formal paper not yet released).

involvement in local associations, holding positions of responsibility in local groups, and volunteering or donating.¹⁴ In Burkina Faso, recipients of a very similar economic inclusion package layered on top of a social safety net program similarly reported an increased capacity to mobilize financial support in the case of shocks, which can signal underlying **trust and cooperation**.¹⁵ They also increased their involvement in local community activities such as participation in village associations, donating and volunteering, showing an increased **cooperation for the common good**.

There is quantitative and qualitative evidence that beneficiaries of social safety nets increase resource-sharing with non-beneficiaries, which may indicate cooperation for a larger good and inclusive identity in Mali and Chad. In Mali, a rigorous impact evaluation of the national safety nets program finds that beneficiaries increased their sharing of resources (money and food) with other households in the community.¹⁶ Two years into receiving the program, about 11 percent of beneficiaries were transferring money to other households (friends, family, or other members in the village), compared to 5 percent of the control group.¹⁷ Thus, the likelihood of making money transfers more than doubled for beneficiaries of the program. Further, 13 percent of beneficiaries gave out food to other households compared to 9 percent in the control group. While it is difficult to determine whether these transfers were made to households that were worse-off (positive redistribution) or better-off (negative redistribution) than the beneficiaries, the overall transfer amounts were small – about 4 percent of the program cash transfer value. The study notes that “while sharing with others in the community reveals strong sharing norms, ... the amount shared is small relative to the total transfer size”. The existence of sharing norms may indicate **cooperation for the common good and inclusive identity**, where households share resources with the community members so that benefits may go beyond the household alone. A qualitative study from the Logone Occidental region of Chad suggests similar patterns: beneficiaries of the safety net reported sharing resources with other households who did not benefit from the safety net, and investing in local public goods such as a school classroom and a well.¹⁸ Since poverty was widespread including among non-beneficiaries (97 percent of households of these villages were below the poverty line, and only 40 percent received the safety net), this sharing of resources may indicate a **cooperation for the common good** where resource-sharing for community public goods goes beyond just the interests of the individual or household.¹⁹ Whether such redistribution is positive (going from better-off to worse-off households) or negative, is a knowledge gap that can be better studied in future work.

Social safety nets were also found to improve beneficiaries’ subjective social standing in Burkina Faso, which can capture inclusive identity at the national level. In Burkina Faso, a rigorous impact evaluation of a social safety nets program demonstrated that it improved beneficiaries’ sense of their

¹⁴ Bossuoy et al, 2022. Extended Data Table 7.

¹⁵ Bossuoy et al, 2024.

¹⁶ The program provided transfers and accompanying bi-monthly information sessions on nutrition, investments, savings, water, and sanitation. Beneficiaries were enrolled for 3 years at a time.

¹⁷ Midline Report of the RCT evaluation of the Filets Sociaux (Jigisémèjiri) program in Mali. 2018.

¹⁸ Della Guardia et al, 2022.

¹⁹ Schnitzer et al, 2022.

social position, as measured by the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status.²⁰ In the control group, only 3 percent of respondents felt they were better off than the average citizen of the country; compared to 7.5 percent of respondents in the treatment group. The sense of social position thus increased by 2.5 times upon receiving the program. Because beneficiaries were among the poorest and most vulnerable, such an improvement can be seen as stronger inclusive identity as a succeeding citizen of the nation.

Results on non-beneficiaries

While many of the above-mentioned quantitative studies fail to capture non-beneficiaries' experience, this section outlines existing such insights from a select number of quantitative and qualitative studies.

Social conflicts and tensions among community members may be affected by the introduction of safety net programs, and it is important to study further the role of pre-existing contextual factors.

The prevalence of social conflicts or tensions in the community due to targeted safety net programs (which do not cover everyone) - which can stem from a breakdown of horizontal trust and/or a reduction in inclusive identity - varied widely across contexts. In Chad's Logone Occidental region, after the introduction of the program, 85 percent of households reported a social conflict occurring at least once among community members in the last year. However, in the Bahr-el-Ghazal region of Chad, another region covered by the same program, 40 percent of households reported such social conflict. In Niger, after a targeted social safety nets program was introduced, the share of households reporting conflicts in their communities over the past year decreased by 22 percentage points.²¹ These divergent experiences show that deeper understanding of pre-existing contextual factors and program design features is required to understand the pathways that lead to better or worse social cohesion outcomes.

Qualitative work from Southern Chad indicates lapses in trust and inclusive identity, with instances of beneficiaries facing hostile behaviors from non-beneficiaries.

On the one hand, as mentioned above, social safety net beneficiaries increased their sharing of resources and supported investments in public goods, and there were cases of acknowledgement of these positive spill-overs by non-beneficiaries in the community.²² On the other hand, not being included in the program resulted at times in jealousy and hostile behaviors, including cases of verbal or physical hostility towards beneficiaries around the time of the transfers, and instances of non-beneficiaries' refusal to pay back loans to beneficiaries. This may signal a breakdown of **horizontal trust** as to why some were selected for the program while others were not. Further, the sense of exclusion of non-beneficiaries signals a reduction in **inclusive identity**. The study site consisted of villages with widespread poverty where there was a lack of understanding as to the program's reasons for selecting certain households and not others. This may further indicate a reduction in **vertical trust** in the implementing agency in their reasons for selection.

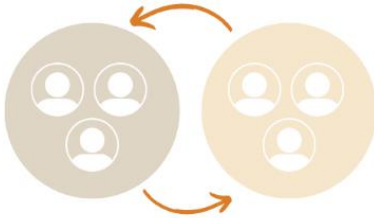
²⁰ The program provided support to poor households in the Nahouri province for 2 years. Akresh et al. 2016

²¹ Schnitzer et al. 2022. The decrease was reported by both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

²² The study was done in 2016 on the pilot social safety net rolled out in select regions in Chad. Della Guardia et al, 2022.

Qualitative evidence suggests that resource-sharing (cooperation for a common good) is higher and animosity lower (trust) within displaced communities. A qualitative study in Burkina Faso and Cameroon suggests that resource-sharing between safety net beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries was more prevalent among displaced communities in both countries, especially among those of the same ethnicity.²³ This signals a strong sense of pre-existing **inclusive identity** and **trust**, resulting in **cooperation** for the good of the larger community through resource-sharing. Non-beneficiaries were reportedly more sympathetic to beneficiaries in displaced communities than in non-displaced communities, as they did not perceive them to be responsible for their inclusion at the expense of others, further indicating strong horizontal within-community **trust**. While jealousy or animosity from non-beneficiaries were generally lower in Burkina Faso than in Cameroon, they were notably absent among displaced communities in both countries.

2.2. Horizontal social cohesion – between groups



Evidence is limited on the impacts of social protection on social cohesion between out-groups, such as displaced communities and hosts. Therefore, this section outlines some insights from available evidence beyond the Sahel.

The impacts of social protection programs on fostering ties between displaced groups and hosts (out-groups) have not been studied in the Sahel, but evidence from other fragile contexts suggest some limited success in this dimension.

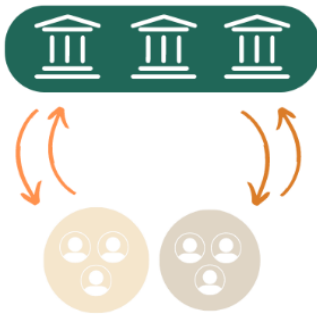
Results from Jordan and Lebanon indicate a potential for programs to improve horizontal social cohesion. Labor-intensive public works offered to refugees and hosts together improved social cohesion between these groups in Jordan. A mixed-methods study finds that the public works programs strengthened the sense of belonging (**inclusive identity**) and **horizontal trust** of refugees and hosts, and even that of non-participants, particularly among women refugees. Community members reported that local shopkeepers gave loans to both refugees and hosts, an indicator of **trust**.²⁴ An impact evaluation of technical and vocational education and training programs in Jordan and Lebanon finds that training provided to refugees and hosts together resulted in improved attitudes of refugees towards hosts, even though immediate impacts on employment were limited.²⁵ This could signal **trust**, built from the experience of going through the training together. On the other hand, the attitude of host participants did not change, raising the question about the capacity of joint programming to meet the needs of both communities.

²³ Della Guardia et al, forthcoming.

²⁴ Zintl and Loewe. 2022.

²⁵ Ferguson et al. 2022. This study was included in this review, despite the fact that the TVET was not a safety net program, because it aimed at improving employment, skill development and resulting in better jobs for marginalized groups, which many social protection programs attempt to do, albeit for poorer populations.

2.3. Vertical social cohesion – between citizens and state



The perception of the fairness of selection processes (**vertical trust**) among those *not* selected varies significantly across programs and contexts. Perceptions of fairness of the program’s selection process signals trust in the implementing agency, thus capturing **vertical trust** when the government provides the safety net. A meta-analysis on perceptions of selection processes in the Sahel finds that among those who were *not* selected, 40 percent perceived the selection process as fair in Senegal, and 75 percent in Burkina Faso and Niger.²⁶

In Niger, a majority (65 to 74 percent) of those *not* selected for the program exhibited vertical trust regarding the beneficiary identification process. An impact evaluation in Niger compared how different selection methods were perceived by community members: community-based targeting, proxy means test, and food insecurity formula.²⁷ The legitimacy of the different selection processes was very high among beneficiaries, with 99 percent reporting being “very satisfied” with the process, and 95 percent willing to repeat the same approach in the future, with no significant differences across the three methods. Among non-beneficiaries, 65 to 75 percent were “very satisfied” with processes, and 65-79 percent reported they would be willing to repeat the process in the future. Legitimacy of the selection methods among the community members indicates their **vertical trust** in the government. Overall, the appreciation of the formula-based methods was higher than that of the community-based approach. This could be explained by reported attempts by some members in the local committees to influence the process and favor their households’ selection.

Qualitative evidence suggests that vertical social cohesion varies based on how people attribute the program. The qualitative study on government-implemented safety nets in Burkina Faso and Cameroon found that when the government’s role was well known, as in Cameroon, beneficiaries expressed more positive attitudes towards, and higher expectations from, the government.²⁸ Thus, **vertical trust** and **vertical inclusive identity** (of being a citizen, receiving benefits from the state) were strengthened. Conversely, non-beneficiaries in this setting also reported feeling neglected by the government. In Burkina Faso, despite program efforts in communication and sensitization, respondents reported having little information about who provided the social safety net. As a result, the program failed to result in increased trust in the government. In Jordan, where public works programs were funded by foreign organizations, vertical trust in government did not increase, despite improved horizontal trust among beneficiaries.²⁹

²⁶ Schnitzer et al. 2022.

²⁷ Premand and Schnitzer, 2021.

²⁸ Della Guardia et al, forthcoming.

²⁹ Zintl and Loewe. 2022.

Table 2: Summary table of evidence reviewed on the impacts of SP on social cohesion in the Sahel.

	Tt TRUST	Ii INCLUSIVE IDENTITY	Cc COMMON GOOD COOPERATION
BONDING Horizontal social cohesion within communities.			
Mauritania social safety net	+		+
Niger economic inclusion layered on top of social safety net	+	+	+
Burkina Faso economic inclusion layered on top of social safety net	+		+
Mali social safety net		+	+
Chad social safety net	--	+ --	+
Burkina Faso social safety net		+	
Niger social safety net	+	+	
BRIDGING Horizontal social cohesion between communities (displaced persons and hosts). [<i>Not from the Sahel</i>]			
Jordan labor-intensive public works	+	+	
LINKING Vertical social cohesion between citizens and state.			
Senegal social safety net*	--		
Burkina Faso social safety net *	+		
Niger social safety net *	+		
Cameroon social safety net	+	+ --	
Burkina Faso social safety net	--		

* For these results, "--" denotes a low percentage (less than 50%) of respondents feeling trust in the safety nets selection method, and "+" denotes a high percentage (more than 50%).

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Social protection has demonstrated several positive impacts on social cohesion in the Sahel, but negative impacts and dynamics can also occur. Rigorous quantitative evaluations of social protection programs in the Sahel have found positive effects on social cohesion as reported by program participants. Other studies find that non-participants show varying levels of trust in the social protection program selection process, depending on the context. Qualitative work finds mixed effects on social cohesion, with examples of program participants actively sharing their resources for community projects, as well as examples of non-beneficiaries feeling excluded and hostile. Qualitative work also finds that trust in the government (when government implemented the social protection program) increases when the program is clearly attributed to the state, but also documents cases where despite communication efforts from the program, the community did not attribute the program to the state. The review finds a strong potential of social protection to impact social cohesion, and points to the importance of design and implementation features and the pre-existing conditions of social cohesion for the promotion of strong positive impacts.

The evidence base on how social protection impacts social cohesion in the Sahel has several gaps. First, several large-scale quantitative evaluations of social protection programs in the region only measure effects related to social cohesion for program participants. More research is needed to comprehensively evaluate the impacts of these programs on social cohesion as experienced by non-beneficiaries. Second, while qualitative studies typically capture the experiences of both non-beneficiaries and beneficiaries, their study sites and sample sizes are much smaller, and not representative of the full program. Third, most evidence exists around horizontal within-community social cohesion. There is a gap in the evidence base on how social protection impacts social cohesion between different communities or groups (out-groups). In particular, evidence on impacts for relations between displaced persons and hosts would be an important area for future work, given the large-scale displacement across the Sahel and the importance of social safety nets to support refugees and internally displaced populations. Further, the aspects of vertical social cohesion, regarding how community members perceive the government, is also a rich avenue for future work since state-building and strengthening the citizen-state contract are important issues in the Sahel, with social safety nets and other social protection having a potential to help build these aspects.

The research project jointly managed by UNICEF, WFP, and the World Bank’s Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Program (SASPP), focused on “exploring the impacts of social protection on social cohesion in the Sahel” aims to fill some of these evidence gaps and provide recommendations on how to tailor social protection programs to maximize the potential of positive impacts on social cohesion. Future work in the research project include a) a further quantitative analysis of existing secondary datasets from social protection impact evaluations in the region to understand program-wide effects that may not have yet been examined; b) qualitative fieldwork in selected Sahel countries to unpack the mechanisms and pathways through which impacts on social cohesion occur; and c) an analysis of operational design documents and implementation processes of selected programs to identify design and implementation entry-points for social protection programs to positively impact social cohesion.

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1818 H Street NW
Washington DC 20433
Telephone: 202-473-1000
Internet: www.worldbank.org

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