SAHEL ADAPTIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAM

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How does social protection impact social cohesion in the Sahel?

A review of current evidence and gaps

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PRESENTATION ON WORKING PAPER I

JOINT UNICEF-WB-WFP RESEARCH PROJECT:
Exploring the impacts of social protection on social cohesion in the Sahel

Sections of this presentation

Click on each section

I. Motivation for Joint Research

Why this joint research project?

Social cohesion has emerged as an important topic in the Sahel and for the social protection sector.

- In the Sahel, vulnerability, poverty, competition over natural resources and lack of economic opportunities have distended social bonds and fueled conflict in the region.
- 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.

Working Paper 1

A review on current evidence and gaps of how social protection affects social cohesion in the Sahel.

OBJECTIVES OF WORKING PAPER 1

I. Identify the multiple **linkages** between social protection and social cohesion.

II. identify **entry-points** in social protection programs to improve social cohesion outcomes

**This output is the first product of this research project and consists of a literature review seeking to examine the current state of the evidence and knowledge gaps on the effects of social protection on social cohesion in the Sahel.*

Click to read the paper

II. Conceptual Framing

What's our framework for social cohesion?

This review adopts the definition 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.**"

Photo: Simone D. McCourtie / World Bank

Social cohesion has three components:

Definitions compiled in Burchi et al, 2022

Tt

Trust: ability to trust other people, both within and outside one's social circles, and trust towards the institutions of the country.

Ii

Inclusive Identity: individuals can identify with various group identities (e.g. gender, religion, village) but still feel a mutual belonging to a larger national identity. The state recognizes and protects different identity groups.

Cc

Cooperation for the Common Good: when people and groups cooperate for interests that go beyond those of the individuals.

Social cohesion has vertical and horizontal dimensions:

See for e.g., definitions compiled in Chatterjee et al. 2023.

- Horizontal social cohesion refers to the relations and bonds within and across groups and communities.

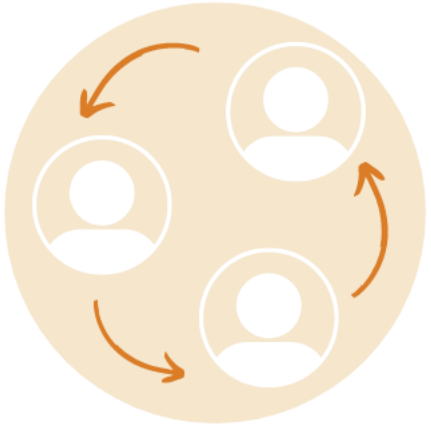
- Vertical social cohesion refers to relations between citizens and the state, at the local or national levels.

- The “linking, bonding, bridging” framework 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.
  - **Linking** refers to the connection between citizens and state.

The “bonding, bridging, linking” framework

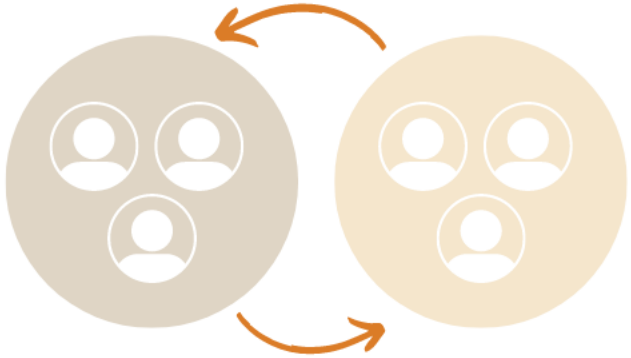
Bonding

horizontal relationships
within-group relations



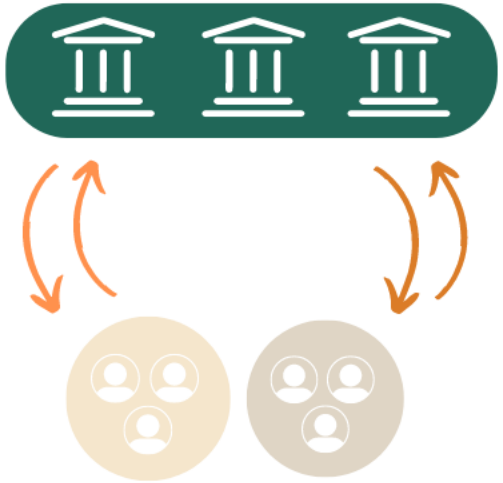
Bridging

horizontal relations across
distinct groups



Linking

vertical relations with state

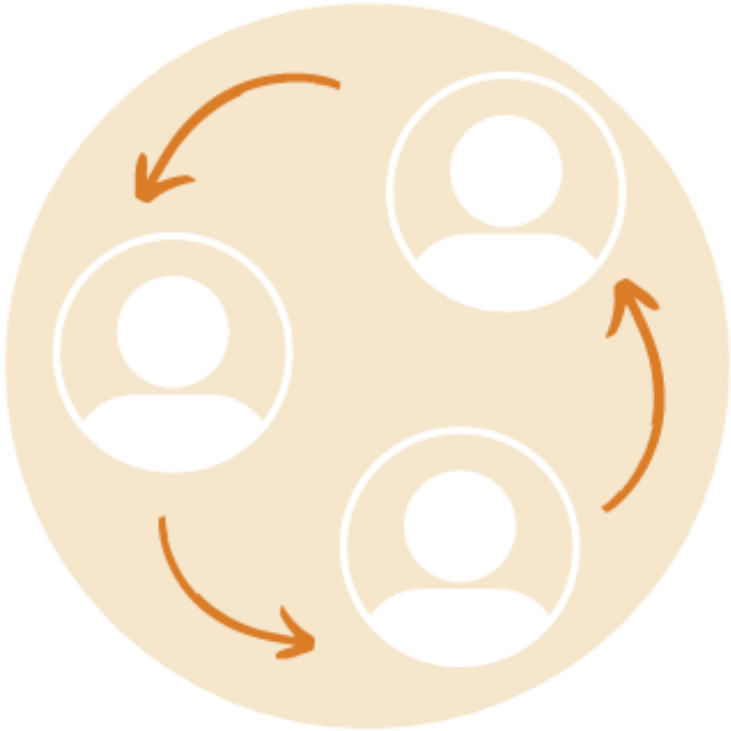


III. Evidence Review

1. BONDING

Social cohesion within the community

horizontal relationships within-group relations



Social cohesion measures for beneficiaries of social protection improved across many contexts:

- Economic inclusion efforts in Niger and Burkina Faso, combined with social safety nets, boosted **trust, inclusive identity (social inclusion), and community cooperation**.
- Safety nets in Mauritania enhanced beneficiaries' community **trust and cooperation for the common good** through local groups, donations, and volunteering.
- In Mali, social safety net beneficiaries increased resource-sharing of food (13% vs 9% control) and money (11% vs 5% control) with non-beneficiaries, **which may indicate inclusive identity and cooperation for a larger good.** Similarly, in Chad, beneficiaries invested in public goods like building a village well or a school classroom.
- In Burkina Faso, beneficiaries perceived social standing improved from 3% to 7.5% compared to an average citizen, potentially reflecting enhanced **inclusive identity**.

At the same time, targeted programs were sometimes linked to more social tensions in the community:

The prevalence of social conflicts/tensions in the community due to social safety nets programs varied across contexts:

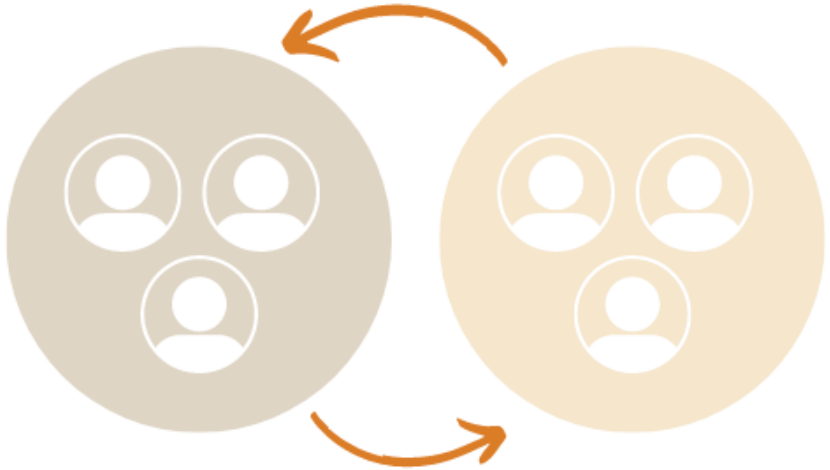
- In Chad's Logone Occidental region, 85% of households reported a social conflict occurring at least once among community members in the last year after intro. of SSNs.
- But, in the Bahr-el-Ghazal region of Chad, another region covered by the same program, a much lower 40 percent of households reported a social conflict.
- And in Niger, after a targeted social safety nets program was introduced, there was a 22-percentage point reduction in households reporting social conflicts.
- Qualitative evidence suggests that resource-sharing (cooperation for a common good) is higher and animosity lower (better trust) within displaced communities. (Burkina Faso and Cameroon).

The role of pre-existing contextual factors is important to study further.

2. BRIDGING

Social cohesion across groups

horizontal relationships across groups



No evidence exists from the Sahel, but in other contexts, some programs succeeded in fostering out-group ties, while others did not.

In Jordan:

- (+) Public works programs strengthened the sense of belonging (inclusive identity) and horizontal trust of refugees and locals, and even that of non-participants, particularly among women refugees.
- (+) Community members reported that local shopkeepers gave loans to both refugees and locals, an indicator of trust.

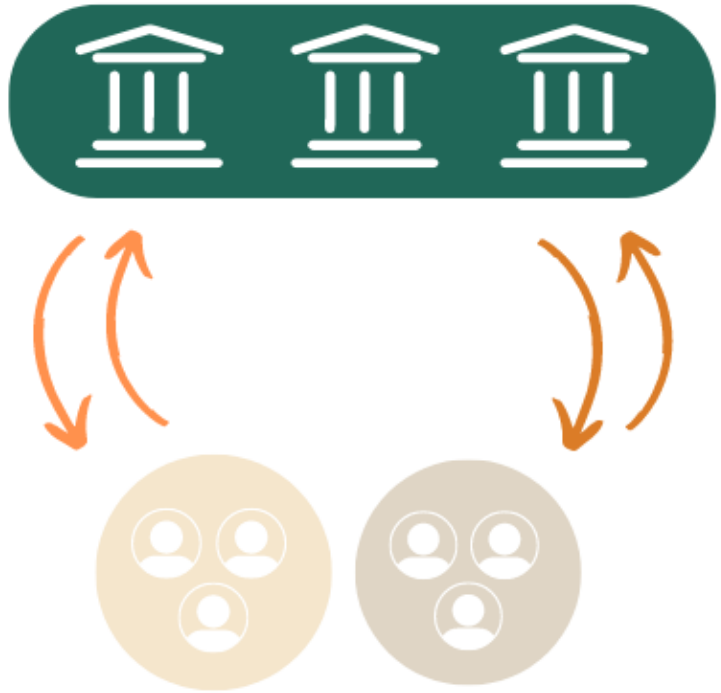
In Jordan and Lebanon:

- (+) Technical and vocational education and training provided to refugees and hosts together resulted in improved attitudes of refugees towards hosts, even though immediate impacts on employment were limited. 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.

3. LINKING

Vertical social cohesion

relations between citizens and state



The perception of the fairness of the beneficiary identification processes (vertical trust) among those *not* selected varies significantly.

A meta-analysis in the Sahel finds that among those who were not selected:

- 40 percent perceived the selection process as fair in Senegal.
- And about 75 percent in Burkina Faso and Niger.

- In Niger, a majority (65 to 74 percent) of those not selected for the program, exhibited vertical trust regarding the beneficiary selection process.

  **Non-beneficiaries felt formula-based methods (proxy means test, food security score) were fairer than community-based targeting.*

FIGURE 1.
Share of Individuals not selected by a targeting scheme that found the selection process fair

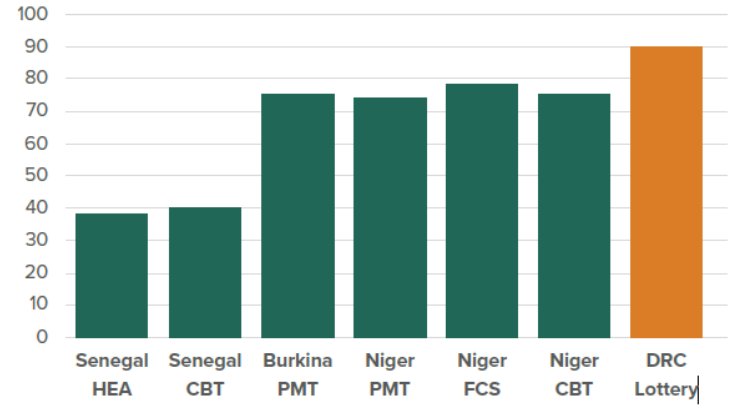


Figure is based on Diagne (2017) for Senegal, and Bank's own calculations for Burkina Faso, DRC, and Niger
The 'FCS' targeting method is based on a formula that aims to proxy the level of household food insecurity (as measured through the food consumption score).

Qualitative evidence suggests that vertical social cohesion varies based on how people attribute the program.

+ In Cameroon, where information regarding **the government's role in the program was better known,** beneficiaries expressed more positive attitudes toward and higher expectations of the government. Thus, vertical trust and vertical inclusive identity (of being a citizen, receiving benefits from the state) were strengthened.

- In Burkina Faso, despite extensive communication campaigns by the program, **respondents had little information about where the safety nets came from**. This created a missed opportunity to build trust in public authority.

IV. Takeaways and Next Steps

Takeaways

- Social protection has had several positive impacts on social cohesion; however, negative impacts and dynamics can also occur.
- Social cohesion dynamics are complex, with the same program potentially affecting some dimensions positively and others negatively.

KNOWLEDGE GAPS IN EVIDENCE BASE FOR SAHEL:

- **Beneficiary focus:** Most large-scale quantitative evaluations only measure results for program beneficiaries and not for non-beneficiaries.
- **Sampling limitations:** Some qualitative studies capture the experiences of both non-beneficiaries and beneficiaries, their study sites and sample sizes are smaller and not representative of the full program.
- **Dimension's imbalance**: Most evidence in the Sahel exists around horizontal within-community social cohesion, with gaps on cohesion between groups and on vertical social cohesion between citizens and state.

Next steps of the Joint UNICEF-WB-WFP Research project

Components

1. Current paper:

Literature review to examine existing evidence and knowledge gaps on the subject.

2. Qualitative analysis

To understand the causal effects of SP interventions on different dimensions of social cohesion, including the channels through which these impacts manifest and the perceptions of communities.

3. Quantitative analysis

To build on existing impact evaluations and quantify the impacts of safety net programs on different dimensions of social cohesion in the Sahel.

4. Operational assessment

To understand how specific design and implementation features can influence the program's impacts on social cohesion

V. References

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