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# Study on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean

## Guatemala case study

Ana Solórzano

July 2017

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This report is part of an assignment commissioned by the World Food Programme (WFP) to Oxford Policy Management (OPM [www.opml.co.uk](http://www.opml.co.uk)), with support from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), among others. The project manager is Rodolfo Beazley. Please contact Rodolfo for comments or additional information [Rodolfo.Beazley@opml.co.uk](mailto:Rodolfo.Beazley@opml.co.uk)

*The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the World Food Programme.*

## Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to the World Food Programme's (WFP) regional and local teams for their support and guidance, in particular to Francesca De Ceglie, Mario Touchette, Alessio Orgera, Philippe Serge Degernier, Irma Palma, América Cárcamo, Marcos López, Priscila Molina and Eugenia Palencia.

We are very grateful to the Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, and in particular the Minister José Moreno, for the extensive time they dedicated to us. We would also like to thank Carlos Vidal, Evelyn Robles, Gustavo Suárez and Margarita Mejicanos.

We are also grateful to German González, Chair of the Secretaría de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional, and Rafael Salinas. From the Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación Edwin Rojas, Edwin Ardón, Mario Mejía, Victor Orellana and Lázaro Felipe. To Leonel Galán from the Coordinadora Nacional para la Reducción de Desastres and Óscar Hernández from the Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales. We would also like to thank César George and Rosario Gómez from INSIVUMEH and the Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social.

We extend our gratitude to key informants Julia María Asturias (USAID), Milton Díaz (Oxfam), Maynor Estrada (FAO), Luisa Samayoa (FAO) and Gustavo García (FAO), Manolo Barrillas (OCHA), Alex Guerra (ICC), Juan Pablo Oliva (USAC), Fernando Paredes (World Bank) and Juan Alberto Fuentes.

We would also like to thank the Mayor in Jocotán municipality, José Fernando Carrera, and the different government officials in the municipality for the time dedicated to this study.

Our special thanks to people in the communities visited in the departments of Chiquimula and Zacapa affected by the drought in the Dry Corridor who kindly agreed to participate in this study and shared with us their experiences and views.

We hope that this research will contribute to strengthening the capacity of the Guatemalan social protection system to respond to emergencies and increase resilience to shocks. We also hope that it will provide evidence and inform practice throughout the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region and elsewhere.

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Oxford Policy Management Limited

Registered in England: 3122495

Level 3, Clarendon House  
52 Cornmarket St  
Oxford OX1 3HJ  
United Kingdom

Tel +44 (0) 1865 207 300  
Fax +44 (0) 1865 207 301  
Email [admin@opml.co.uk](mailto:admin@opml.co.uk)  
Website [www.opml.co.uk](http://www.opml.co.uk)

## Executive summary

### Introduction

There is an increasing global recognition within governments and partners on the potential linkages between social protection and disaster risk management (DRM) in responding to and mitigating shocks.

The case study in this report focuses on the protracted drought in Central America in the region known as the Dry Corridor. The El Niño phenomenon has worsened the situation in the region and for the third consecutive year there has been a very strong prolonged drought that has affected the harvest of hundreds of thousands of subsistence farmers in Guatemala. The experience of the drought in the Dry Corridor provides a useful case study because: first, it allows the assessment of a prolonged, slow-onset shock and its emergency response; second, it provides an insight into a complex vulnerability context which will allow an analysis of the response through a resilience lens, and not only from a shock-response perspective; thirdly, the Dry Corridor integrates other countries in the region<sup>1</sup>, and this case study could provide lessons applicable to them as well, and fourth, the fieldwork was conducted while the emergency response of the World Food Programme (WFP) was still ongoing, providing a deep understanding of the case study.

This case study forms part of a wider ***Study on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean*** (LAC) commissioned by WFP and undertaken by Oxford Policy Management (OPM). The objective of the study is to generate evidence and inform practice for improved emergency preparedness and response in LAC linked to more flexible national social protection systems. The main research question for the study is: **What factors enable social protection systems to be more responsive to shocks?**

### The role of social protection in drought response in the Dry Corridor

#### System preparedness

##### Targeting

The social protection targeting system in Guatemala is not designed to respond to the drought in the Dry Corridor. The current social protection programmes are spread out, low in coverage and lack continuity throughout the different administrations. However, efforts are being done to improve the targeting system of the different programmes.

The Ministerio de Desarrollo Social ('Ministry of Social Development' -MIDES) is increasingly taking the leadership of the social protection strategy in the country and is leading efforts to improve and make the recipient registries more transparent. The long-term aim is to consolidate the information into a single registry, although currently this is yet not possible.

One of the main social protection programmes, Bono Seguro ('secure grant' – Bono), has had national coverage in its initial stages, including all the departments in the Dry Corridor, reaching a substantial number of households (the department with biggest coverage reaches 40% of the population), although these departments have not been covered continuously. Given this coverage, Bono could scale up during an emergency. The biggest challenge is the systematisation

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<sup>1</sup> The Dry Corridor covers a strip along Chiapas, in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

of a robust and reliable programme data base. However, efforts on this direction are being conducted.

The other two main programmes managed by MIDES, *Transferencias Monetarias Condicionadas para Alimentos* ('Conditional Cash Transfers for Food' – TMC for Food) and *Comedores Seguros* ('safe canteens') do not cover the Dry Corridor region. However, the TMC for Food is taking several measures to improve the targeting such as applying a socio-economic assessment of the target population and geo-referencing the location of recipient households with their personal identification documents, as a means to systematise the targeting and reduce the risk of corruption.

## **Delivery**

The lack of a solid mechanism for the delivery of the Bono is one of the factors that inhibit most the emergency response through the social protection system. The existing payment system has several limitations which challenge prompt delivery in the context of an emergency. For instance, the payment of the Bono is through the banking system, but because the beneficiary households are very isolated and do not have access to financial services in their own communities, they have to be transferred to the nearest banking agency, incurring in an economic cost. Also, the payments are quite irregular, because the corresponding administrative and financial processes must be exhausted, and sometimes there are delays in budget release. These limitations not only erode the potential for rapid assistance during an emergency but also negatively affect its regular objectives.

Some efforts are being made to improve the delivery, especially of the TMC for Food programme. Moreover, MIDES wants to move away from in-kind transfers, implementing a card system in exchange. There is potential for using the card for emergencies in the region, although its focalisation is limited to urban and semi-urban areas of the Guatemala department.

## **Coordination**

The *Coordinadora Nacional para la Reducción de Desastres* ('National Coordinator of Disaster Risk' CONRED) is the entity in charge of implementing policies and actions to improve the capacity of inter-institutional coordination both at the central and the local levels in the context of disaster reduction. It focuses on rapid-onset shocks and not slow-onset ones such as the drought; therefore, its role in the Dry Corridor has been minimal.

The Secretary of Food Security and Nutrition (SESAN) is the coordinator of food security response and the *Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación* ('Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food') (MAGA) is the institution in charge of implementation. Highlights of the response are food assistance through the *Asistencia Alimentaria* programme and the food for assets programme *Alimentos por Acciones*. In general, these programmes are good efforts to respond to emergencies, although they are perceived as piecemeal interventions, which are provided on demand, with a lack of a systematic targeting and delivery.

In 2014, as a result of the heavy drought the government declared an emergency and established its national drought response plan. This was followed by the request by the SESAN and MAGA for the WFP's assistance in geographical areas not covered by the government. The priorities were identified in coordination with the government to benefit the most vulnerable populations.

As part of its mandate, Bono can be scaled-up in an emergency through the Bono Calamidad, in the context of MIDES's Institutional Response Plan. However, in practice this has not been used in the Dry Corridor, given that the government needs to declare a national emergency first and financing for the transfers has to be secured.

According to the different interviewees, during an emergency there is good communication between the international cooperation and the government. The response is agreed among the different stakeholders. At the central-government level, there is space for improved coordination of food and cash distribution.

## System response

Partner support through international cooperation was crucial for the emergency response in the municipalities in the Dry Corridor. WFP supports government response to sudden and slow-onset emergencies that affect the food and nutritional security and livelihoods of populations in the Dry Corridor, through the Regional Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) 200490.

The different types of humanitarian responses in the Dry Corridor did work through the social protection system and were adapted to deal with the drought in the Dry Corridor. A combination of two specific strategies were used:

- **Piggybacking:** WFP's emergency response through the PRRO used the administrative framework of SESAN, MAGA and MIDES to deliver assistance; and
- **Shadow alignment:** WFP's emergency response run parallel to the social protection system, with the government eventually taking over or replicating some aspects of the support.

WFP's PRRO has supported the government's drought response for the last three years, by providing Food Assistance for Assets (FFA). MAGA was responsible for the planning and technical supervision of household and community asset creation through the National Rural Extension System and the Alimentos por Acciones programme. The asset creation focused on natural resource management, including terraces, water harvesting ponds and life fencing. Recipients also attended training sessions on nutrition and health. Based on the positive results, MAGA later adopted the model of FFA.

WFP's strategy to use the administrative framework of SESAN, MAGA and MIDES and the creation of strategic partnerships with local stakeholders to deliver food assistance is perceived as a good practice. Inter-institutional coordination of the PRRO has a precedent in the Plan Operación Oportunidad (2014–2015).

This was a FFA in the form of food for assets tailored to the needs and preferences of the recipients. This project ran parallel to the government structures of MAGA. It left a well-structured emergency response plan in MAGA, as well as improved internal and external coordination.

## Resilience Impact

The approach in the Dry Corridor has been one of prioritising the emergency response to the impacts of the extended droughts, such as the loss of harvest of subsistence farmers and the risk of food insecurity, rather than one that also addresses the structural causes of vulnerability, such as water access and management and the environmental degradation in the region. National and international actors will face chronic and more frequent droughts in the region if structural causes are not addressed.

The government structures both at central and local level have considerable constraints, in terms of human and administrative resources, on actually achieving a sustainable impact through their programmes. This also affects the promptness of the programmes provision. To a large extent, the success of PRRO is due to the commitment of the different actors at the central and local level, but not to a consolidated structure that will respond rapidly and efficiently in a future crisis.

Once WFP's support has concluded, the technical support, maintenance and follow-up from MAGA, together with building community ownership, capacity and responsibility for assets is crucial to guarantee the long-term impact and the sustainability of the assets and activities implemented.

## Key lessons learned

- Potentially, the social protection system could create a platform to respond to emergencies, but currently it faces several challenges;
- These challenges should be a motivation to invest more in the social protection system. Having a strong social protection system means also investing in prevention and resilience;
- CONRED mandate is limited to rapid-onset shocks, therefore its role in the Dry Corridor has been minimal. In this light, SESAN is in charge of coordinating the emergency response in the Dry Corridor and MAGA implements the responses in the region, but it lacks a specific emergency fund to support its activities;
- WFP's piggybacking and shadow alignment with government structures have rendered positive results in the Dry Corridor in Guatemala; and
- The political will of local authorities and the working relationships between WFP, SESAN, MAGA, MIDES and the Municipal Councils for Food and Nutrition Security (COMUSAN) were instrumental in achieving effective emergency response in the Dry Corridor.

## Policy recommendations

- Priority should be placed on strengthening the current social protection system before moving on to making it more shock-responsive;
- Technical aspects and quality considerations of social protection programmes should be brought to the forefront to improve effectiveness and efficiency, taking into consideration the political economy that underpins social protection support and the decision-making processes in Guatemala.
- The Bono has the potential to become a robust and strong safety net that can support resilience to climate change of poor households.
- The Bono requires a regular, long term and systematic delivery of the support, in order to help to increase the resilience of households.
- The size of the transfer of Bono should be calibrated to cover the opportunity cost of parents and should be sufficient not only to cover consumption needs, but also to support livelihood diversification into activities that are less vulnerable to droughts.
- The Bono could be scaled up at early stages of an unfolding emergency, through the Bono Calamidad scheme, if the payment and targeting systems are strengthened;
- The Bono can schedule the payments to coincide with the lean season and the drought period, and support its recipients in times of crisis;

- The TMC for Food programme should continue its effort to transition to card payments and to consolidate the recipients' geo-referencing;
- TMC for Food and Comedores Seguros could progressively expand their coverage to other departments, including those in the Dry Corridor;
- The existing initiatives to improve the registry of recipients and targeting criteria should be supported;
- MAGA could focus on building its capacities, both at the central and local level;
- Learning and knowledge from previous successful experiences of emergency response should be formalised in coordination with international cooperation partners and government structures;
- FFA programmes should consider their longer-term resilience impact in the communities where they operate. This includes a review on the quality of assets and technical support to local government institutions;
- It is urgent to address structural vulnerability in the Dry Corridor and to move beyond the emergency response;
- Development partners should support government's institutional and financial capacity to respond to droughts, based on a multi-sectoral approach that tackles the structural causes of vulnerability in the region and build resilience in the long term; and
- The existing initiatives to strengthen the capacity of CONRED should continue. The formal role of MIDES and MAGA in emergency response as part of the CONRED, should be clearly established, including the institutional and financial support required.



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## List of abbreviations

ACF	Action Against Hunger International
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CBT	Cash Based Transfers
CCT	Conditional cash transfer
CEDESUD	Centro de Estudios de Desarrollo Seguro y Desastres
CEPAL	Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe
COCOSAN	Community Councils for Food and Nutrition Security
CODESAN	Departmental Councils for Food and Nutrition Security
COMUSAN	Municipal Councils for Food and Nutrition Security
CONRED	National Coordinator of Disaster Risk
DRM	Disaster risk management
ECLAC	UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus group discussion
FFA	Food assistance for assets
ICC	Instituto Privado de Investigación sobre Cambio Climático
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGSS	Instituto Guatemalteco de Seguridad Social
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSIVUMEH	Instituto Nacional de Sismología, Vulcanología, Meteorología e Hidrología
IPCC	Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MAGA	Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación
MIDES	Ministerio de Desarrollo Social
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
PAFFEC	Programme of Family Agriculture to Strengthen the Peasant Economy

PRRO	Regional Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
PWP	Public works programme
SESAN	Secretary of Food Security and Nutrition
SLP	Seasonal Livelihood Planning
SNIS	Sistema Nacional de Información Social
SPIAC-B	Social Protection Inter-agency Cooperation Board
TMC for Food	Transferencias Monetarias Condicionadas para Alimentos
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAC	Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organisation
WFP	World Food Programme

# 1 Introduction

There is increasing global recognition within governments and partners on the potential linkages between social protection and DRM, in responding to and mitigating shocks. This recognition has been clearly expressed, for example, in the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit by SPIAC-B's<sup>2</sup> commitment to 'support the further expansion and strengthening of social protection systems to continue to address chronic vulnerabilities and to scale up the utilization of social protection as a means of responding to shocks and protracted crises.' In the same line, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development clearly points towards the creation of social protection systems that allow all people to enjoy a basic standards of living.

In LAC, natural disasters have occurred increasingly frequently since the 1960s: 19 disasters per year in the 1960s and 68 per year in the first decade of the twenty-first century (UN Economic Commission for LAC (ECLAC), 2015). For this reason, the adoption of mitigation measures to reduce the population's exposure to natural disasters and to restore infrastructure, together with economic and social measures, is becoming increasingly essential.

Meanwhile, social protection systems in LAC have evolved and expanded substantially in the last few decades, with, for example, the percentage of GDP allocated to public social investment growing from 15% in 2000 to 19.1% in 2012 (ECLAC, 2015). Cash transfers have become part of virtually every social protection system in the developing world (World Bank, 2015), and LAC was a pioneer in developing sophisticated programmes with multiple objectives, such as conditional cash transfers (CCTs), which have been replicated worldwide. The proportion of the population benefitting from CCTs in LAC, for example, increased from 5.7% to 21.1% between 2000 and 2012 (ECLAC, 2015).

In this light, fairly advanced social protection systems and large-scale safety nets seem to provide a unique opportunity to support shock response in LAC. However, social protection systems can involve conflicting objectives, target populations and operational processes when compared with humanitarian interventions, which can impede their ability to play a role in accommodating additional demand for assistance during an emergency.

The Guatemala case study forms part of a wider ***Study on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in LAC*** commissioned by WFP and undertaken by OPM. The review includes a literature review of experiences in the region (Beazley et al., 2016), three case studies (Ecuador, Guatemala and Haiti) and a final report with recommendations for strengthening the role of social protection in shock response in LAC.

The objective of the study is to generate evidence and inform practice for improved emergency preparedness and response in LAC linked to more flexible national social protection systems. The main research question for the study is: **What factors enable social protection systems to be more responsive to shocks?**

The case of Guatemala is very significant since it is one of the riskiest countries in the world. It ranks fourth in the World Risk Index, given its exposure, vulnerability and low coping and adaptive capacities (UNU-EHS 2016). It is also one of the poorest countries in Central America, with more than half the population living in poverty (World Bank 2014). The case study in this report focuses

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<sup>2</sup> The Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) is an inter-agency coordination mechanism to enhance global coordination and advocacy on social protection issues and to coordinate international cooperation in country demand-driven actions. SPIAC's board is chaired by the World Bank and ILO and includes representatives of ADB, IFAD, IMF, ISSA, FAO, OECD, UN-DESA, UNDP, UNESCO, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO, WFP, and others.

on the protracted drought in the region known as the Dry Corridor in Central America, which covers the south of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. The El Niño phenomenon has worsened the situation in the region and for the third consecutive year there has been a very strong prolonged drought, which has affected the harvest of hundreds of thousands of subsistence farmers. Analysis conducted by WFP and partners indicated that more than 4.1 million people were affected by the protracted drought with 2.2 million people having moderate or severe food insecurity in 2015 (WFP 2016a). Climate change threatens to worsen the situation in the following years, making more demanding the need to increase the resilience of people in the Dry Corridor.

The experience of the drought in the Dry Corridor provides an interesting case study for four reasons: first, it allows the assessment of a prolonged and slow-onset shock and its emergency response; secondly, it will be the only case study that will also have an analysis of the response through a resilience lens, and not only from a shock-response perspective; thirdly, the Dry Corridor (and the response to the protracted drought) integrates other countries in the region, and this case study could provide lessons applicable to them as well; and finally, the fieldwork was conducted while WFP's emergency response was still ongoing, providing a deep understanding of the situation.

The content of this study is as follows: Section 2 describes the context in terms of poverty, vulnerability and social protection in Guatemala. It also considers the different shocks to which the country is exposed. Section 3 presents the theoretical framework employed and the methodology, including the methodological approach and the data collection tools. Section 4 studies the role of social protection in the response to the drought in the Dry Corridor, including its preparedness, assessing targeting, delivery and coordination issues. It also analyses the role of the social protection system in the response to the drought, including its impact on resilience. Finally, Section 5 provides some recommendations with the aim of making the social protection system more responsive and resilient in Guatemala.

## 2 Poverty, vulnerability and social protection in Guatemala

In this section, we briefly describe first the poverty and vulnerability context in Guatemala, and then the country's social protection system and its evolution in the recent years.

### 2.1 Poverty and vulnerability

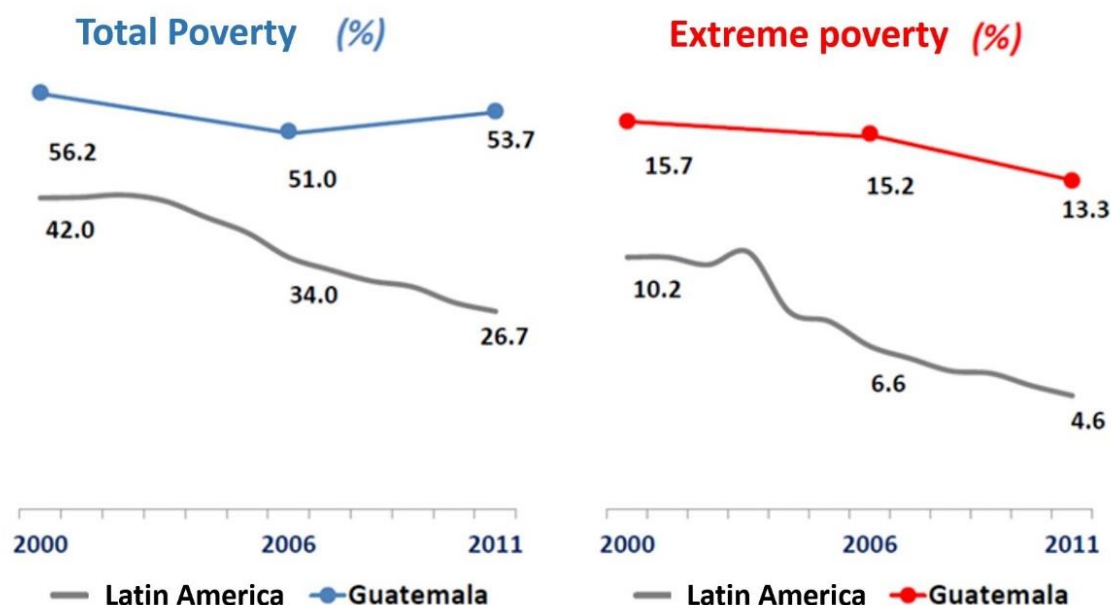
**With a population of 16.1 million, Guatemala has the second lowest Human Development Index score in LAC (0.49) and it is also one of the poorest countries in the region:** more than half of the 16.1 million Guatemalans are poor. In rural areas, seven out of 10 people are poor, and poverty is more widespread and extreme for the indigenous groups (World Bank 2014). According to the National Consumer and Housing Survey (ENCOVI) Guatemala's extreme poverty index for 2011 was 13.33% and that of extreme poverty for the same year was 40.38% (INE/SEN 2011). In 2006, three out of four indigenous residents were poor and one was living in extreme poverty (Escobar 2011). This is the case even though it is also the largest economy in Central America and has the status of lower-middle-income country.

In contrast to the trends in the LAC region, where poverty decreased from 34% in 2006 to 26.7% in 2011, in Guatemala it increased from 51% to 53.7% during the same period, even though the economy grew (see Figure 1). Multidimensional poverty has also increased: between 2011 and 2014, it moved from 64.3% to 66.6%. Extreme poverty, nonetheless, has been decreasing since 2000, reaching a rate of 13.3% in 2011, although not at the same pace as in LAC, where the rate was 4.6% in 2011 (World Bank 2014).

**Guatemala has the highest chronic malnutrition rate in LAC**, and fourth in the world, with a rate of 46.5%. The situation is worse in rural areas, where chronic undernutrition reaches 55% and 69% among the indigenous population. In the highlands of the country, seven out of 10 children under five years old are chronically undernourished (WFP 2016b). Moreover, there is an estimate number of 9.4 million people, or 58% of the population, at risk of food insecurity.

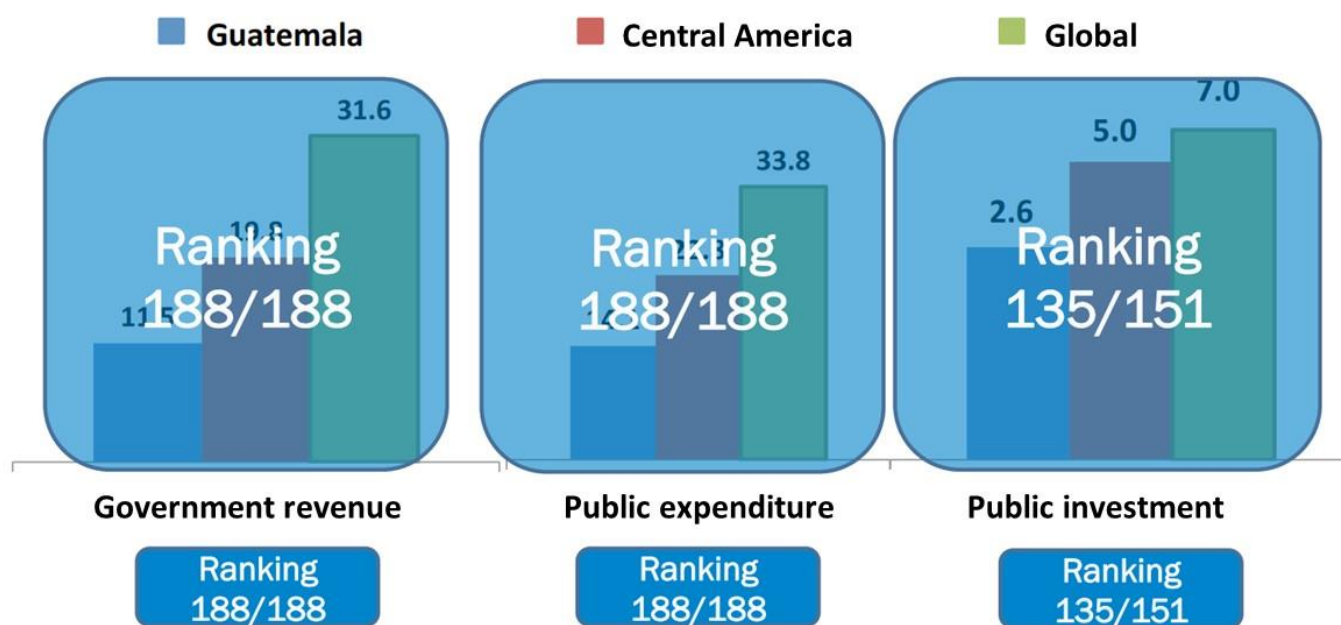
**The government raises the lowest proportion of public revenues in the world in relation to the size of the country's economy** (average 2010- 2013, 11.5% of gross domestic product). This in turn also affects public expenditure (and social development expenditure), which also remains the lowest in the world (World Bank 2014) (see Figure 2).

**Figure 1: Poverty and extreme poverty in LAC and Guatemala 2000–2011**



Source: World Bank 2014

**Figure 2 Macroeconomic indicators (average 2010-2013, GDP %)**



Source: World Bank 2014



**Guatemala is highly exposed to shocks.** According to the 2016 World Risk Index,<sup>3</sup> the country is the fourth riskiest country in the world (UNU-EHS 2016). It has 29 volcanoes and it is highly exposed to earthquakes. It is also part of an isthmus which is located on the route of hurricanes and tropical storms from the Caribbean and the Atlantic and Pacific. In the last 16 years (1998–2014), a cumulative total of eight extreme hydro-meteorological events impacted the country, including hurricanes and tropical storms Mitch (1998), Stan (2005) and Agatha (2010), and some major tropical depressions and droughts. The losses and damage amounted to more than US\$ 3.5 billion, distributed mainly in the sectors affected by infrastructure, agriculture and health. Between 1998 and 2010, climate variability caused economic losses in the agricultural sector in the order of US\$ 1.85 billion (Gobierno de Guatemala 2015).

**The Dry Corridor is an eco-region of dry tropical forest greatly altered by human activity.** It extends from Chiapas, in the south of Mexico, to Costa Rica, and covers a strip along Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua (see Figure 3). Cyclical droughts occur in this territory, many of which are closely related to the El Niño phenomenon.

The country is in an area of intertropical convergence and in the zone of influence of the El Niño and La Niña phenomena. Since 2014 the region has been experiencing a strong El Niño phenomenon. In 2015, it was categorised as 'very strong', producing prolonged droughts in Central America (Guerra 2016a), affecting in particular the Dry Corridor. The drought continued and in 2016 was considered the worse since the 1950s. By definition a slow-onset shock is one that “does not emerge from a single, distinct event but one that emerges gradually over time, often based on a confluence of different events” (OCHA 2011)<sup>4</sup>. If livelihoods are not fully recovered and restored between events, then households can enter a poverty trap, increasing their risk of chronic undernutrition.

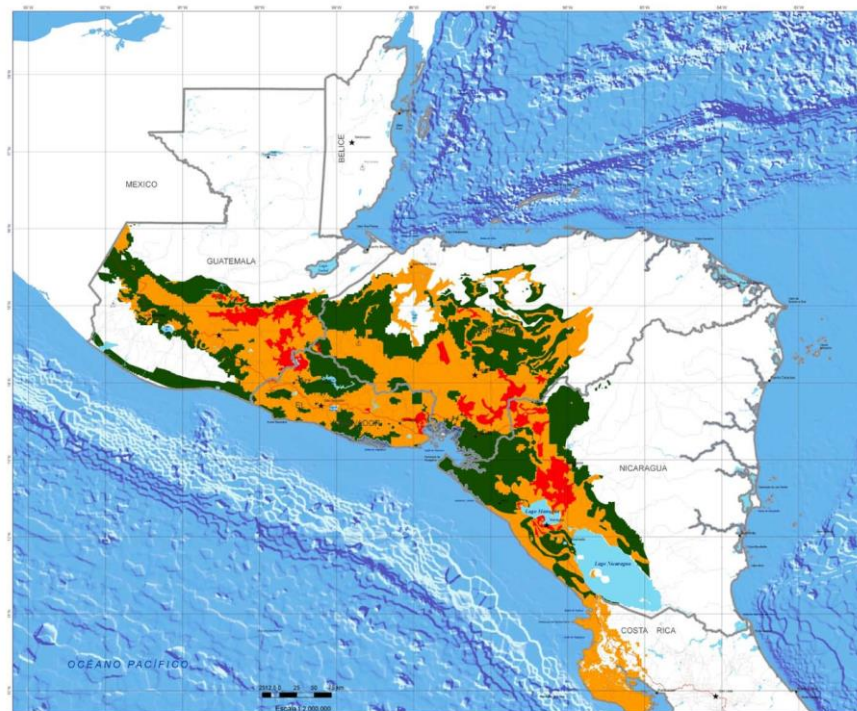
The periodic reduction of precipitation and/or irregularity directly affect the economy of 9.5 million Central Americans, including 1.2 million in Guatemala, whose main livelihood is the cultivation of basic grains such as maize and beans (Action Against Hunger International (ACF) 2014). This area is highly dependent on rain-fed agriculture and smallholders lost all or almost all their production in 2016. Droughts associated with the El Niño affect poor households in particular, increasing food insecurity due to the loss of crops, reducing the quantity and quality of the soil, and leading to a loss of cultural identity and traditional and ancestral knowledge.

**Guatemala experienced 36 years of civil war which ended in 1996 with the peace accords.** This prolonged conflict left many challenges in terms of democratic consolidation, corruption, violence and political instability.

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<sup>3</sup> The index integrates indicators of exposure, vulnerability, susceptibility, lack of coping capacities and lack of adaptive capacities.

<sup>4</sup> Drought is the most common example but other slow on-set shocks are increasing sea level rise, glacial retreat and related impacts, salinization, land and forest degradation, and in certain circumstances flooding, food and energy price spikes.

**Figure 3: Historic vulnerability to drought in the Central American Dry Corridor**

Source: ACF International, 2014.

The Dry Corridor in Guatemala covers a total of 10,200 km<sup>2</sup> in the departments of Quiché, Baja Verapaz, El Progreso, Guatemala, Zacapa, Chiquimula, Jalapa and Jutiapa. It includes a total of 46 municipalities.

## 2.2 Social protection

**The social protection system in Guatemala is stratified according to both the labour market and socio-economic status**, as most countries in the region. Formal sector workers have access to the country's social security system, which consists of several different schemes. However, this sector remains a minority in the country: only two out of 10 people are formal workers. Private insurance and services are also available for those with the means to pay. In the last decade, social assistance to the poor and informal workers have been introduced to reduce poverty and counter traditional exclusion patterns in social protection (International Labour Organization (ILO) 2016).

The country's contributory social security falls in the Guatemalan Social Security Institute (Instituto Guatemalteco de Seguridad Social – IGSS). It offers social security benefits to enrolled workers in the formal economy. IGSS coverage is low and continues to be limited mainly to the urban non-poor. According to the Institute's official data, there were 1.1 million members in 2012. The number of people who regularly contribute to the general social security scheme represents only about 25% of the economically active population. Financed by contributions from workers, employers and the state, the IGSS provides pensions to the elderly, the disabled and war survivors, and cash benefits and health services in the event of illness, maternity and accidents. It also guarantees health services for insured workers, their pregnant spouses during pregnancy, and their children below the age of seven. There are two other public obligatory social security schemes: one for civil servants (Clases Pasivas Civiles del Estado), and another for the military (Instituto de Previsión Militar). In addition, smaller schemes provide services to the workers of public enterprises, banks, municipal organisations and other public bodies, the members of which are also covered by the IGSS (ILO 2016).

**The origin of social assistance programmes in the country** emerges as a state policy with the aim of alleviating poverty, providing support for the consumption of poorest households through conditional cash transfers, mainly granted to women in rural areas with high percentage of indigenous population, in order to help break the intergenerational transmission of poverty, achieved through the accumulation of human capital among children and girls, through the conditionalities on health and education.

In 2012, MIDES was created as an effort to coordinate and articulate the different social assistance programmes that were spread across different ministries. These programmes target poor people who are not covered by formal social security schemes. MIDES is responsible for the following main programmes (see Table 1):

- The **Bono Seguro** ('secure grant' – Bono), created in 2008 (originally called Mi Familia Progres), is a CCT programme aimed at promoting assistance in health and education services for rural poor households, in order to increase the human capital of children and adolescents. It is not designed to eradicate poverty. Originally, it was designed to deal with the drought and associated acute malnutrition, which also coincided with the global economic crisis. In 2015 the transfer was equivalent to 300 quetzales (US\$ 40) and was disbursed three times throughout the year.
- The programme integrates the **Bono de Calamidad** ('calamity grant') provided to recipients of the Bono who inhabit areas that have been declared by the state as suffering from an emergency situation. It can top the value of Bono up to 50% and the conditionalities element is dismissed.
- The **Transferencias Monetarias Condicionadas para Alimentos** ('Conditional Cash Transfers for Food' – TMC for Food) aims to mitigate poverty and social risk in urban areas, as well as to facilitate food access and reduce the food insecurity of households living in extreme poverty. Until very recently, it provided a food kit on a temporary basis to urban families in the department of Guatemala and also during emergencies. To improve the delivery and make it more transparent, this year the programme now distributes food vouchers of 250 quetzales (US\$ 33) using a card system in four municipalities in the department of Guatemala. The payments were calculated in terms of the value of a food kit with 10 basic food products<sup>5</sup> that can be used in registered shops. The voucher has been delivered five times and is expected to cover 30,000 households by 2017 with ten deliveries in total throughout the year (WFP 2016c). The voucher is conditional on attending orientation talks three times per year, and by 2017 it will also include education conditionalities. The targeting focuses on a socio-economic needs assessment.
- **Comedores Seguros** ('safe canteens') provides servings of nutritious, balanced and hygienic food at low cost. The provision of the service is inclusive and gives special attention to the elderly, the indigent and in general to all those who need it because they are facing a particular crisis. Currently there are seven canteens in urban areas in Guatemala and Escuintla departments. This programme can also respond in emergencies by providing meals to the population affected.
- The MAGA is also responsible for other social protection programmes that are targeted at poor rural households. The **Programa de Agricultura Familiar para el Fortalecimiento de la Economía Campesina** (Programme of Family Agriculture to Strengthen the Peasant

<sup>5</sup> One pound of milk powder, one carton of eggs, five pounds of pasta, ten pounds of beans, five pounds of rice, five pounds of nixtamalized flour, five pounds of sugar, 750 milliliters of vegetable oil, one kilo of fortified atolls and one pound of salt.

Economy) (PAFFEC) started in 2012 with the aim of promoting the well-being of the rural, subsistence farmers and indigenous families with high vulnerability to food insecurity and poverty. It supports agricultural livelihoods through innovation, technification and productivity-enhancing activities based on traditional and modern practices.

- The SESAN oversees the two main programmes that focus on food security in rural areas. **Alimentos por Acciones** (food for assets programme) aims to improve the food and nutrition security and enhance the resilience of communities in order for them to satisfy their food needs. The programme is targeted at families at risk of food and nutrition insecurity and at poor families. The programme provides a food kit with six products equivalent to 1,200 daily kilocalories for a family. In exchange families need to engage in community work, which aims to reduce their vulnerability. This work focused on the production of assets that increase their social development, as well as environmental conservation activities. It prioritises the municipalities that are in regions with high food insecurity.
- **Asistencia Alimentaria** ('food assistance') is an emergency response programme that aims to reduce severe acute malnutrition and avoid mortality related to acute malnutrition. The municipalities with high food and nutrition insecurity are prioritised. It also distributes a food kit with six products equivalent to 1,200 daily kilocalories for a family. In rapid-onset shocks, the programme assists families whose food security is affected, providing food assistance. The programme complements the actions of the CONRED, when the latter cannot cover the nutrition emergency needs or the post shock stages.
- **There are also several foreign aid and humanitarian interventions run by international organisations and partners<sup>6</sup>** in coordination with MIDES and MAGA, mostly on a temporary basis, with the aim of supporting emergency response.

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<sup>6</sup> In this study, interventions in the Dry Corridor, funded/supported by WFP, World Vision, ACF, FAO, IDB, Oxfam and USAID were identified.

• **Table 1 Social protection programmes, budget and recipients**

Programme	Recipients	Institution
Bono	676,872 families <sup>1</sup>	MIDES
TMC for Food	263,994 families <sup>2</sup>	MIDES
Comedores Seguros	940,866 individuals <sup>3</sup>	MIDES
Bolsa de Alimentos (in-kind support)	263.994 families <sup>4</sup>	MIDES
PAFFEC	600,000 families <sup>5</sup>	MAGA
Alimentos por Acciones	55,168 families <sup>6</sup>	MAGA
Asistencia Alimentaria	270 000 families <sup>7</sup>	MAGA
Programa de Alimentación Escolar (School Meal Programme)	2,535,115 students <sup>8</sup>	Ministry of Education

- <sup>a</sup> Ministerio de Finanzas (2016), Proyecto de Presupuesto General de Ingresos y Egresos del Estado para el Ejercicio Fiscal 2017 y Multianual 2017-2021

- <sup>1</sup> Recipient families accumulated from 2012 to 2016. Data submitted by MIDES.

- <sup>2</sup> Recipient families of the food kit accumulated between 2012 and 2015. Data submitted by MIDES.

- <sup>3</sup> Individual recipients in 2015. Data submitted by MIDES.

- <sup>4</sup> Programme implementation in 2015. Data submitted by MIDES.

- <sup>5</sup> Recipient families, according to MAGA.

- <sup>6</sup> Recipient families in 2015. Memoria de Labores MAGA. Cuarto Año de Gobierno. 2015-2016.

- <sup>7</sup> Estimated number of families 2015. Memoria de Labores MAGA. Cuarto Año de Gobierno 2015-2016.

- <sup>8</sup> Total number of recipient students, 2015. Memoria de Labores Ministerio de Educación. Cuarto Año de Gobierno 2015-2016.

### 3 Research methodology

In this section, we present a framework clarifying the preparedness and responsiveness of a social protection system.

#### 3.1 Theoretical framework

##### 3.1.1 System preparedness

In this study we assess the level of preparedness of the social protection system based on three aspects that are essential for a timely and effective response: **targeting, delivery and coordination**. Below we describe each of these in turn. Although these are not the only three processes involved in effective preparedness, international experience and literature highlight how crucial they are (Bastagli, 2014; OPM, 2016).

**Figure 4: Typology of system preparedness for shock-responsive social protection**



#### Targeting

Social protection programmes tend to rely on a variety of targeting mechanisms, including demographic, geographic and poverty targeting. Many of these mechanisms are designed to detect well-established conditions – for example, chronic poverty or belonging to a certain age group – and rely on the use of administrative registries and household surveys. Consequently, they are not conceived as tools to detect sudden changes to well-being and livelihoods. In order to be effective in emergency response, it is necessary to engage during the planning and preparation phase in an assessment of existing targeting tools, and then adapting them or creating new complementary systems, to be able to reach recipients affected by different kinds of shock.

#### Delivery

Rapid delivery of benefits, either cash or in-kind, is of course crucial for effective support. During emergencies, the capacity to deliver faces challenges due to the urgency of the situation, the constraints imposed by the particular shock (such as infrastructure collapse), and the coordination of different actors (Bastagli, 2014).

Delivery mechanisms implemented by social protection schemes typically include manual transfers, delivery through a banking system, mobile money and other types of e-payments. Some of these mechanisms – e-payments, for example – have the potential to be rapidly scaled up during emergencies. However, these systems need to be developed prior to the crisis.



## Coordination

Preparedness should also include a significant level of planning and coordination among actors involved in emergency response. This includes not only actors in the social protection field but also those working in DRM and humanitarian aid. This involves international, national and subnational levels, and government and non-government organisations.

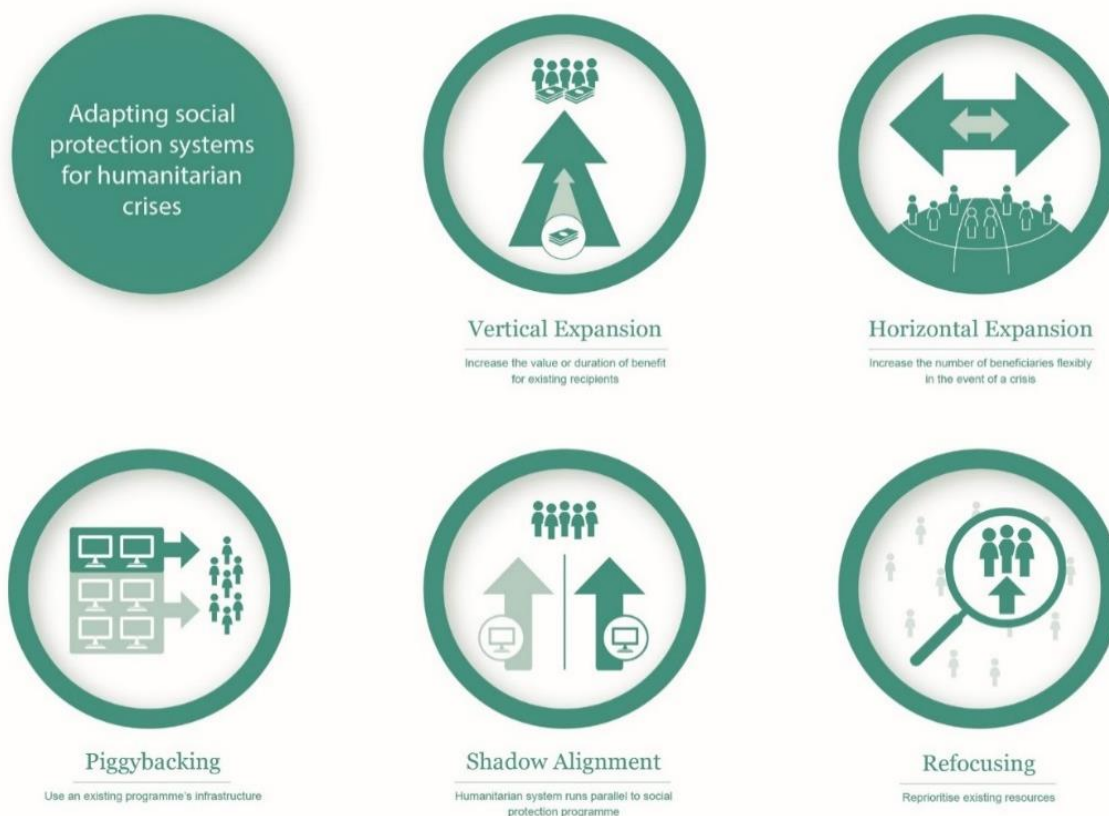
However, the challenge of achieving coordination among these different actors should not be underestimated. Social protection and DRM sectors not only have different objectives and target populations (with some areas of intersection, though not all areas intersect) and different methodologies and traditions, but most importantly they also involve different actors.

### 3.1.2 System response

When policy-makers consider the use of a social protection system to address emergency needs, there are a number of strategies that they may employ to scale up the overall level of support that the system provides to vulnerable people. Based on OPM (2015) we tentatively consider five main types of scale-up. These can be used in combination:

1. **vertical expansion:** increasing the benefit value or duration of an existing programme or system:
  - adjustment of transfer amounts/values
  - introduction of extraordinary payments or transfers;
2. **horizontal expansion:** adding new recipients to an existing programme or system:
  - extension of the geographical coverage of an existing programme or system
  - extraordinary enrolment campaign
  - modifications of entitlement rules
  - relaxation of requirements/conditionality to facilitate participation;
3. **piggybacking:** using a social protection intervention's administrative framework, but running the shock response programme separately
  - introduction of a new policy by the government, with or without support from humanitarian actors;
4. **shadow alignment:** developing a parallel humanitarian system that aligns as best as possible with a current or possible future social protection programme; and
5. **refocusing:** adjusting the social protection system to refocus assistance on groups most vulnerable to the shock.



**Figure 5: Typology of shock-responsive social protection**

Source: OPM (2015)

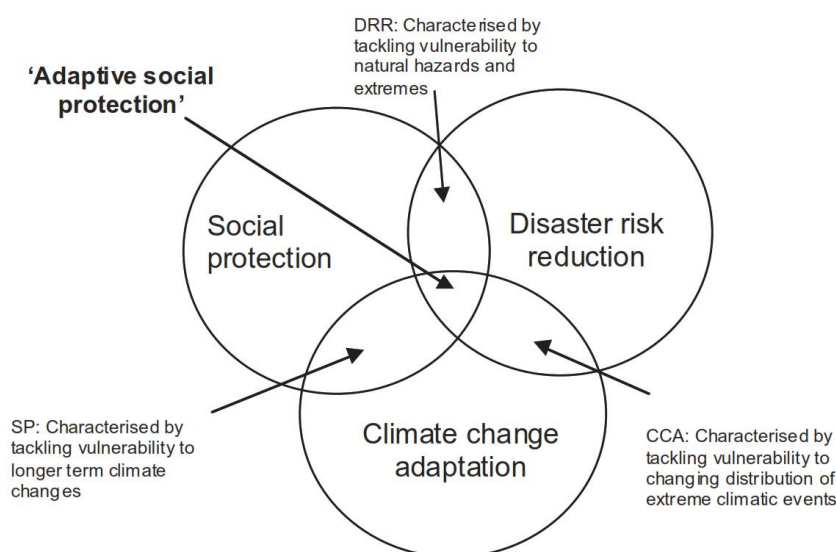
### 3.1.3 Resilience

**The Post-2015 Development Agenda includes recognition of the importance of building resilience and reducing risk by addressing the root causes of vulnerability.** Poor people are at risk of being the most affected group to climate change due to the combination of social and climatic factors that exacerbate their vulnerability. In this light, policy thinking on the role of social protection in increasing the resilience to climate change<sup>7</sup> of poor households has emerged in recent years.

**The Adaptive Social Protection framework (ASP) (Davies *et al.* 2009) explores the linkages between disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and social protection approaches.** It aims to accommodate the social protection interventions that support development and reduce vulnerability to climate change (see Figure 6). Climate change adaptation and DRR do not usually include a focus on the root or social causes of vulnerability, which social protection can add. This agenda moves beyond simply mitigating shocks, by taking vulnerability as its starting point and moving towards addressing structural poverty and long-term shifts in livelihoods (Davies *et al.* 2009).

<sup>7</sup> The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines resilience as 'the ability of a social or ecological system to absorb disturbances while retaining the same basic structure and ways of functioning, the capacity of self-organization, and the capacity to adapt to stress and change.'

**Figure 6 Adaptive Social Protection**



Source: Davies et al. (2009)

Recent research shows that the main conditions to potentiate the role of social protection in the resilience to climate change of poor households are (Solórzano 2016):

- **Predictable and regular safety net provided by social protection.** This safety net will work as a minimum income that will help poor people to manage risk and supporting them as active agents in creating resilience. **This preventive role of social protection is fundamental in order to provide the necessary stability in the household that then allows other factors to play an effective role in the potential adjustment of livelihoods** in a changing climate.
- **Other promotive transfers in the form of productive projects are very relevant for livelihood adjustment in the face of climate change,** but if they are implemented on their own (for example, there are no safety nets in place), the preventive element of social protection could be lost, thus affecting households' coping capacity. All social protection programmes that have both preventive and promotive objectives, face trade-offs between an effective, comprehensive and permanent safety net versus investing in livelihoods and entrepreneurship for poverty reduction and economic growth.
- **Livelihood innovation facilitated by social protection must provide a means to facilitate contexts to take up or create different livelihood options,** rather than reducing the options for poor people through pathways that undermine their traditional livelihood strategies.
- **Social protection should be flexible about recipients' use of the transfer** in order not to obstruct the autonomous adaptation strategies that households might be developing. It should also facilitate the participation of those most affected by climate shocks.
- **Social protection cannot achieve everything on its own.** Coordinated synergies with other productivity-enhancing activities, disaster risk reduction, climate-proofing projects, and other more transformative policy approaches are also necessary, especially if unprecedented levels of climate change are reached.
- **Social protection systems need to recognise the political structure and dynamics underpinning the resilience of households, in order to reduce vulnerability.** Power

relations and structural inequalities in different geographical scales, lead to different resilience outcomes. These should be addressed by an integrated strategy that tackles the accumulation of disadvantage of these households, in order to potentiate the resilience strengthening functions of social protection.

### 3.2 Overarching research questions

The main research question for the study is: **What factors enable social protection systems to be more responsive to shocks?** With this in mind, we have developed a number of overarching questions to guide the analysis.

- What relevant national and local laws and regulations and policies exist in relation to shock-responsive social protection?
- What priorities does the national social protection strategy signal, for example in addressing poverty, vulnerability, resilience, etc.? Does it offer a role for shock response?
- What targeting mechanisms are used by the largest social protection programmes? How are recipients identified? How frequently? Does a national database exist? Is it integrated with other databases?
- How are the benefits of the main social protection programmes delivered (both cash and in-kind)?
- What design and implementation features of the social protection system have elements of flexibility and adaptability to facilitate rapid and adequate shock response?
- What is the evidence of the effectiveness – in terms of promptness and adequacy (for example, coverage and transfer levels) – of social protection support in the event of each of the major shocks identified?
- Has there been any recent experience of coordination between, or integration of, social protection and DRM policies?
- Is there space for dialogue and collaboration between these two sectors? How could this dialogue be promoted?
- How can social protection help to strengthen the resilience of households?

### 3.3 Research tools and fieldwork

The case study in this research analyses the response to the prolonged drought in the Dry Corridor region in Guatemala experienced in 2016, although some references to the response of the drought in 2014 and 2015 will also be taken into consideration. The research design consisted of three phases: a literature review, fieldwork and data analysis.

**Literature review.** Based on the theoretical framework and following the research questions, a thorough review of legislation, policy plans and strategies, manuals of operations, periodic reports, and programme reviews, assessments and evaluations was conducted. The literature review of experiences in LAC conducted as part of this assignment (Beazley, Solórzano and Sossouvi 2016) and the global literature review conducted by OPM (OPM 2016) also informed this review.

**Fieldwork** was conducted from 21 to 30 November 2016. The research team was led by Ana Solórzano (OPM) and integrated by Alessio Orgera (WFP), América Cárcamo (WFP) and Marcos Lopez (WFP). The research tools used were:

- *Key informant interviews:* Key informants were interviewed from government institutions such as MIDES; MAGA; CONRED; SESAN; Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales; and the

Instituto Nacional de Sismología, Vulcanología, Meteorología e Hidrología. From international organisations such as WFP; FAO; Oxfam; USAID; Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; World Bank; and research institutions such as the Instituto Privado de Investigación sobre Cambio Climático and the Centro de Estudio de Desarrollo Seguro y Desastres de la Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala. In the communities, key informant interviews with village leaders, local government representatives, community structures in charge of the programme implementation, among others, were conducted. The list of key informants interviewed can be found in Annex A. *Field visits*: The team visited two departments in the Dry Corridor, Chiquimula and Zacapa, and a drought-affected community in each department. The purpose of this visit was to increase the understanding of the biophysical and socio-economic drivers of vulnerability to droughts, as well as the operations and performance of the emergency response and social protection interventions. Local implementation institutions and the local population were key informants in these visits.

- *Transect walks* in the communities provided contextual data and facilitated an understanding of both biophysical and socio-economic aspects of resilience. It provided information on resources use and the features of the area of study. It also provided a bird's-eye view of the different emergency response activities in the area.
- *Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)* were conducted at each site in order to understand the perceptions and views of recipients of both the Bono and the WFP Regional PRRO. The objective of FGDs is to gather data on community-level perceptions regarding programme efficiency and to target effectiveness and acceptability. The FGDs were designed specifically to undertake systematic listening to the poor and women by giving a voice to their priorities and concerns. For this purpose, a FGD with women was conducted in each community. Additionally, in the Chiquimula department, a FGD with subsistence farmers was also developed. Each FGD had six to eight participants. This minimised the challenge of ensuring the contributions of all participants due to over-crowding in larger groups or the dominance of one or two individuals in smaller groups. Open-ended questions to guide the FGDs were developed.

**Data Analysis.** The third phase consisted of analysing the data collected and findings from the literature review, and answering the research questions. By carrying out key informant interviews and FGDs on the various issues based on the research questions, this process documented the subjective views and perceptions of social protection recipients and key stakeholders. Information gathered from these sources was used to enrich the understanding of the social protection system and the drought response in the Dry Corridor. Therefore, although not representative, the findings are to some extent robust and useful in the likely performance of the programme.

## 4 The role of social protection in the response to the drought in the Dry Corridor

### 4.1 How prepared is the social protection system to respond to the drought in the Dry Corridor?

#### 4.1.1 Targeting

**MIDES is increasingly taking the leadership of the social protection strategy in the country and is leading efforts to improve and make the recipient registries of the programmes more transparent**, after several corruption scandals in the previous administrations, including clientelistic use of the programmes<sup>8</sup>. Systematisation of targeting and eligibility criteria has been gradual. Each programme has its own registry and use different targeting criteria. The long-term aim is to consolidate the information into a single registry, although currently this is yet not possible.

In the case of the Bono, the targeting criteria is being reviewed and will prioritise child malnutrition and chronic malnutrition in seven departments prioritised in the National Strategy for the Prevention of Chronic Malnutrition. They have also requested WFP's recipient registry and have used it to find overlaps with Bono, as a means of validation. These households will then be reintegrated to the programme recipient registry. Bono has a two-tier targeting system. First, it identifies the municipalities with a high level of risk of food insecurity. Second, families are selected using proxy means testing. It uses two official poverty lines: moderate poverty and extreme poverty.

Early this year MIDES sent a registry of 21 thousand recipients of the TMC for Food programme to the Registro Nacional de Personas ('National Registry of People' – RENAP) where they found that more than 28% of the recipients (six thousand) were registered with false data and the names did not match with the personal identification document, the legal and official document of identification of each citizen. This evidenced that some TMC for Food recipients were members of political parties and that they did not covered the eligibility criteria. In this light, MIDES is now improving the targeting criteria and registration of this programme by taking several measures such as applying a socio-economic assessment of the target population. They are also geo-referencing the location of the people and collecting the personal identification document of recipients.

The Comedores Seguros targets poor people in urban areas. It aims to be accessible and inclusive and for this purpose it uses self-selection, by locating the canteens in poor urban areas close to public hospitals and by charging a very low price for the food. For the breakfast the cost for recipients is one quetzal (US \$0.13) and lunch three quetzales (US \$0.40). However, given that the programme does not have a scheme for users to prove their economic situation, MIDES has realised the challenge to meet the objective to support the food security of poor people, while optimising their resources without setting up a complex verification system. By design these programmes accept a margin of "inclusion error", but the government also needs to maximise the limited resources to actually reach its target population.

**MIDES is also in charge of the Sistema Nacional de Información Social ('National System of Social Information' -SNIS), a single database that allows the collection, processing, analysis and administration of the information of all social programmes** implemented by 16 public sector institutions. It captures basic information on recipients and it ensures its security and

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.soy502.com/articulo/mides-denuncia-corrupcion-mi-bolsa-segura-plazas-fantasmas>



reliability. MIDES is in charge of its organisation and operation and is currently working for an interinstitutional agreement to support the SNIS as an integrated system for information management, given that the institutions are not obliged to report their information to the SNIS. According to the interviewees, this has affected the quality of the data for effective and efficient management.

**In terms of the coverage of the programmes, only the Bono operates in the Dry Corridor and it has covered all the departments in the region.** TMC for Food focuses only on the Guatemala department and Comedores Seguros also in Guatemala and Escuintla departments. In the case of the Bono, all the departments in the Dry Corridor are covered by the programme, reaching a substantial number of households. The department with a biggest coverage reaches 40% of the population (Baja Verapaz department) and the lowest 26% of the households (Santa Rosa department) (see Table 2). It should be noted that these figures are accumulated from 2012 to 2016, so there might be duplicated households.

Given this coverage, Bono could scale up during an emergency. The biggest challenge from a targeting stand point is the systematisation of a robust and reliable programme data base. However, efforts on this direction are being conducted.

**Table 2 Bono Seguro recipients in the Dry Corridor (accumulated from 2012 to 2016)**

Dry Corridor departments	Bono recipients percentage	Poverty percentage
Baja Verapaz	40.86%	72.54%
Zacapa	37.06%	71.64%
El Progreso	33.13%	44%
Jalapa	35.08%	77.34%
Chiquimula	39.76%	79%
Jutiapa	38.93%	60%
Santa Rosa	26.61%	62.61%

Source: author calculations based on Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas. Proyecciones y estimaciones de población basadas en el XI Censo de Población (2002), 2010; Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas Mapas de Pobreza, 2011. [www.ine.gob.gt/index.php/estadisticas-continuas/mapas-de-pobreza](http://www.ine.gob.gt/index.php/estadisticas-continuas/mapas-de-pobreza); and MIDES, Programa Mi Bono Seguro, 2016.

#### 4.1.2 Delivery

**Despite the existence of regulations and standard processes within the delivery of cash transfers of MIDES, it is necessary to streamline the processes for emergency response.**

The existing payment system for the regular social protection programmes has several limitations, which represent challenges to prompt delivery in the context of an emergency.

For instance, the delivery of the Bono is manual. The recipients are notified by a facilitator of the MIDES delegation at the local level. They have to collect the payment from a focal point, which usually requires them to travel. The transport cost is not included in the transfer and can represent one third of the value of the payment (100 quetzales, equivalent to US\$ 13). The programme does not use a banking system because the communities are very isolated and there is no access to financial services.

There are three payments throughout the year of 300 quetzales each (US\$ 40), but these are quite irregular. MIDES usually receives several budget advances, but not in a systematic way, which makes the delivery of the cash transfers very unpredictable. These budgetary release delays also affect programme implementation, since there is a risk that MIDES will not receive the full budget

before the end of the financial year. As a consequence, in certain occasions the transfers cannot be delivered as planned..

**These limitations not only erode the potential for prompt delivery during an emergency but also for the regular objectives.** The Bono aims to increase school enrolment and attendance by providing cash transfers to the families. Reducing the cash has consequences in terms of the opportunity cost of parents in terms of child labour, as the next quote illustrates.

*The fact that Bono reduced the size of the transfer did affect the motivation to comply with the conditionalities [...] Still, any help is appreciated and even if its reduced, the cash helps a lot.* Recipient woman, FGD, Zacapa

In theory, Bono can scale up in an emergency through the Bono Calamidad, however in practice this has not been the case in the Dry Corridor, given that a national emergency has to be declared in the first place and funds have to be secured to cover the additional transfers. Given the nature of the vulnerability in the Dry Corridor, it would be desirable that **Bono Calamidad is triggered at early stages of the drought, in order to prevent a foreseen crisis.** It is also important to secure funds for Bono Calamidad in a contingency fund.

The other two main programmes in MIDES (TMC for Food and Comedores Seguros) do not cover the Dry Corridor region. Even so, **some efforts are being made to improve the delivery, especially of the TMC for Food programme.** Furthermore, MIDES wants to move away from in-kind transfers, and, in exchange, bring in a voucher through a card system, as another measure to avoid corruption.

The Comedores Seguros programme has a mandate to respond to emergencies by providing a menu to affected populations. However, it currently faces severe administrative challenges even to develop its regular operations. For instance, it did not execute any of its budget during 2016 due to administrative issues. In this light, the programme is not prepared to respond to emergencies. MIDES is currently looking at some strategies to improve the efficiency of the programme.

#### 4.1.3 Coordination

**CONRED is the entity in charge of implementing policies and actions to improve the capacity of inter-institutional coordination both at the central and local levels** in the context of disaster reduction, as well as to draw up plans and strategies to guarantee the re-establishment of public services in case of disaster. It has a pure civil protection profile and some prevention mainly for rapid emergencies such as hurricanes and earthquakes (CONRED 2011).

CONRED's law is 20 years old and originated with a military entity before the peace agreements in the country.<sup>9</sup> It focuses on rapid-onset and not slow-onset shocks, such as the drought; therefore, its role in the Dry Corridor has been minimal.

**MIDES has a formal role specifically for developing strategies of prevention and focuses on the population that lives in precarious settlements and that is vulnerable to disasters and public calamities.** This derives from the legal mandates of the Social Development Law and its Social Development and Population Policy on Dynamics and Location of the Population in Risk Areas<sup>10</sup>. To respond to this mandate, the Ministry has designed the Institutional Response Plan,

<sup>9</sup> The law is currently being reviewed, and according to the interviewees the inclusion of facilitation of the response to slow-onset and small events is being considered. It will also be adapted to the current international framework such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Climate Change Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. A national risk-reduction plan, instead of the national response plan, is also expected.

<sup>10</sup> Decreto Número 42-2001, del Congreso de La República de Guatemala, Ley de Desarrollo Social, art. 37 and 38.



which aims at protecting and responding to the population affected by disaster, emergency, calamity, crisis or conflict, in urban or rural areas, according to MIDES capacities and through the programmes Mi Comedor Seguro, TMC for Food, the Bono (through Bono Calamidad) and Fodes<sup>11</sup> (MIDES 2016). However, it does not have a specific budget to develop these activities, but it has to rely on its own budget.

There is an emergency fund that sits in CONRED; however, it is not very clear how this fund is activated and when ministries will use their resources to deal with emergencies. The precedent has been that MAGA and MIDES will use their own resources to deal with emergencies, which can be a big burden for the institutions. Moreover, as it has been explained earlier, none of these mechanisms have been implemented in the Dry Corridor.

**SESAN is the institution in charge of coordinating the emergency response in the Dry Corridor.** Highlights of the response are food assistance through the Asistencia Alimentaria programme and the food for assets programme Alimentos por Acciones. In general, these programmes are good efforts to respond to emergencies, although they are perceived as piecemeal interventions, which are provided on demand, with a lack of a systematic targeting and delivery. However, the Sistema Nacional de Extensión Rural (National Rural Extension System), which is in charge of supporting the asset-creation component of the Alimentos por Acciones, has been key to support the emergency response by the international cooperation.

In 2014, as a result of the heavy drought, the Government declared an emergency and established its national drought response plan. This was followed by the request of SESAN and MAGA for WFP's assistance in geographical areas not covered by the government. The priorities were identified in coordination with the government to benefit the most vulnerable populations. WFP interventions were put in place and, through the PRRO, provided immediate support to the most vulnerable food-insecure populations, thus meeting urgent food needs, while also strengthening livelihoods to address the underlying causes of food insecurity, using central and local government systems (see Section 4.2 for more detail).

**According to the different interviewees, during an emergency there is good communication between the international cooperation and the government.** The response is agreed among the different stakeholders. At the central-government level, there is space for improved coordination for food and cash distribution. During normal activity, there are some challenges, given that the country needs are quite spread and the international cooperation is not very well coordinated in terms of what areas to prioritise.

## 4.2 How has the social protection system contributed to the drought response in the Dry Corridor?

**Even though the MIDES includes shock-responsive mechanisms, such as the Bono Calamidad, none of its programmes were implemented in the Dry Corridor to respond to the drought.** This was the case because the guidelines of its participation in emergency response are not clear and there is no extra budget for emergency response, as it has been explained in the previous section.

In this light, **support from the international cooperation was crucial for the emergency response in the Dry Corridor**<sup>12</sup>. In general, this support has been in the form of FFA. For

<sup>11</sup> Fodes is a fund attached to MIDES, which includes programmes and projects by which it can serve the population affected by disasters, emergencies, calamities, crises or conflicts.

<sup>12</sup> Assessing the effectiveness of these interventions goes beyond the scope of this study.

instance, Oxfam implemented a response to the El Niño programme based on a cash for work programme that paid recipient families 300 USD for work on land conservation and agroforestry system implementation. USAID also delivered vouchers for food in the region with the support of local organisations.

FAO implemented a regional programme to strengthen resilience to disaster risk in the Dry Corridor in Guatemala, which includes the development of risk monitoring systems for issuing early warnings. It also considers watershed management plans and the promotion of good practices and risk prevention and mitigation technologies to reduce the impact of extreme events. Country donors have also supported emergency response in the region. For instance, through WFP the governments of Brazil and Taiwan assisted MAGA in the delivery of food rations to affected families in 2015.

**WFP has supported government response to moderate and severely food-insecure populations unable to recover from the past three consecutive years of drought in the Dry Corridor.** It distributed conditional and unconditional in-kind food assistance, cash-based transfers (CBT) and vouchers<sup>13</sup>. Its objectives are to support and coordinate responses to shocks and help to establish and stabilise livelihoods and food security through recovery assistance.

**These responses did work through the social protection system and were adapted to deal with the effects of the protracted droughts on the food security and livelihoods of the households in the Dry Corridor.** In particular, two specific strategies were used:

- *Piggybacking*: WFP's emergency response through the PRRO used the administrative framework of SESAN, MAGA and MIDES to deliver assistance; and
- *Shadow alignment*: WFP's emergency response through FFA such as the PRRO and Plan Operación Oportunidad run parallel to the social protection system, with the government eventually taking over or replicating some aspects of the support.

The Regional PRRO has the overall function of supporting preparedness and emergency response, granting WFP the flexibility to respond rapidly to different types and scales of shocks in Central America. It has been implemented for three consecutive years in the Dry Corridor. Recipients in Guatemala are mainly subsistence farmers in female-headed rural households, households without access to land and dependent on daily wages, and small coffee farmers affected by the coffee rust crisis of 2014. Households with pregnant and lactating women, malnourished children and the elderly were prioritised.

**WFP's PRRO supported the government's drought response by providing FFA.** In 2014 MAGA was responsible for the planning and technical supervision of household and community asset creation through the National Rural Extension System. The asset creation focused on natural resource management, including terraces, water harvesting ponds and life fencing. Recipients also attended training sessions on nutrition and health. Based on the positive results, later on MAGA adopted the FFA model (WFP 2015a) (see Figure 7).

In 2015, WFP continued its assistance to the drought-affected populations, reflecting a shift back from recovery to relief interventions in response to deteriorating food security in the Dry Corridor. It aimed to offer immediate relief and support medium-term household food security. WFP provided cash, vouchers and food transfers to households participating in asset-creation and training activities. In addition, unconditional food assistance was provided using Central Emergency

<sup>13</sup> Food rations were generally aligned with the approved ration of cereals, pulses and vegetable oil, whereas the daily cash-based transfers (CBT) of approximately US\$ 0.5 per person per day was determined on the basis of actual local food prices (WFP 2015a).

Response Funds. Activities focused on soil and water conservation, livelihood diversification and the rehabilitation of community assets (ibid.).

### **Food consumption and dietary diversity of the targeted households substantially improved**

from April to August in 2015. The proportion of households with acceptable food consumption increased by 27%. Households receiving cash-based transfers, especially cash, could diversify their diets by accessing a variety of fresh foods, such as fruits and vegetables, meat and dairy products. The proportion of severely or moderately food-insecure households decreased by 31%, as measured by the Food Consumption Score (ibid.).

By 2016, the drought conditions in the Dry Corridor persisted, increasing the risk of food insecurity and malnutrition among poor households. In this light, the PRRO began a new cycle of emergency relief for 90 days over a period of seven months. The food assistance was implemented through five cash transfer deliveries at the outset when food was still available in the market at competitive prices; and two transfer of food plus cash in the period of food shortages and therefore, with an increase in market prices. The first delivery was in March 2016. WFP delivered the support to three departments in the Dry Corridor, Baja Verapaz, Chiquimula and Jutiapa, covering 23,918 families.

In order to increase the effectiveness of the response, WFP used the administrative framework of SESAN, the Departmental Councils for Food and Nutrition Security (CODESAN), Municipal Councils for Food and Nutrition Security (COMUSAN) and Community Councils for Food and Nutrition Security (COCOSAN), MAGA and MIDES, and also built constructive partnerships with local stakeholders to deliver the assistance (see Box 1). For instance, community-based targeting was coordinated at the local level and validated in the field by SESAN. At the time of enrolment, WFP confirmed the recipient personal information through the RENAP. MAGA delivered the food transfers and oversaw the monitoring and evaluation and MIDES was responsible for the delivery of the cash transfers. Assets were determined in participatory consultation with communities and used results of the planning methodology Seasonal Livelihood Planning (SLP) consultations to determine the timing and nature of asset-creation activities. The work focused on water and soil conservation, supported by the Sistema Nacional de Extensión Rural. Training also by MAGA ensured the transfer of technical skills for the construction, use and maintenance of the assets in question. In addition, training sessions by MIDES addressed underlying causes of food insecurity, such as nutrition and health, through the focal point *Madres Guías* ('guide mothers') (WFP 2015a). In order to support the continuity and impacts of the assets created through the PRRO, MAGA is planning to integrate the recipients into the PAFEC programme, after the PRRO support has finished, although by the time this report was created this was still work in progress.

The recipients of the programme had a positive assessment of the intervention.

*The programme has helped us to buy maize, beans, fruits, even chicken. Also to buy medicines for the children.* Woman, FGD, Chiquimula.

It should be noted that at the end of the intervention, acceptable food consumption increased from 52.4% to 75% and the percentage of households consuming less than five food groups also increased from 4.5 to 5.97 food groups (WFP 2016a).

**Figure 7: Soil conservation and humidity retention with support of the PRRO, 2016**



Source: Author, Chiquimula, November 2016

**Box 1: Role of government institutions in WFP PRRO's operation in the Dry Corridor in Guatemala 2016**

**SESAN**

- Coordination of actions at the local level
- Targeting and verification: CODESAN prioritised the municipalities; COMUSAN prioritised the communities and families; and COCOSAN verified the information.
- Monitoring and follow-up of processes and actions.
- Administrative support;
- Market coordination.

**MAGA**

- Livelihood assessment;
- Livelihood support;
- Asset creation;
- Land and water conservation activities; and
- Training and capacity-building by Sistema Nacional de Extensión Rural to support the continuity and impact of the assets created through the PRRO. A workplan is being established through the PAFEC programme to guarantee this.

**MIDES**

- Training to the recipients in food security and nutrition, use of cash, health and hygiene and gender through the guide mothers, MIDES's focal points at the community level;
- Community organisation and communication; and
- Monitoring of food consumption.

Source: Based on interviews

**There is a precedent for inter-institutional coordination of the PRRO in the Plan Operación Oportunidad (2014–2015), which shadow-aligned with some structures of MAGA,** according to government officials both at central and local level. This programme was a PWP in the form of food for assets, tailored to the needs and preferences of the recipients. Given this, different combinations were offered and the recipients chose the one most convenient to their conditions. These actions were based on the good forestry and agricultural practices developed by the Ministry. MAGA was in charge of validating the assets created and on the technical support. This programme left a well-structured emergency response plan in MAGA, as well as improved internal and external coordination. Nonetheless, this has not been institutionalised and remains as an 'informal' learning experience for the different actors that intervened in Plan Operación Oportunidad.

**The government structures both at central and local level have experienced considerable constraints in terms of human and administrative resources** to achieving a sustainable impact of their programmes, according to the fieldwork data. This also affects the promptness of the programmes provision. For instance, in the municipality of Jocotán, MAGA has only one motorcycle to reach the different communities and MIDES lacks a computer to do its work. Moreover, there is a high uncertainty on the local posts, where government officials are constantly removed, affecting the sustainability of the work and the consolidation of public policy.

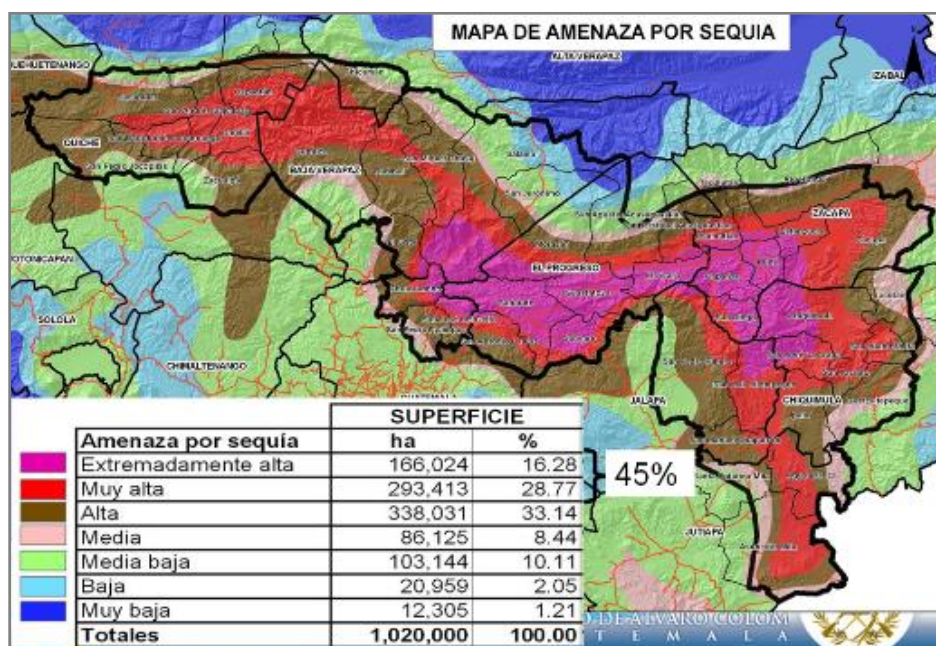
#### **4.2.1 How has the social protection system contributed to increase the resilience in the Dry Corridor?**

**The droughts in the Dry Corridor are due to both biological and human factors.** Much of the region has precipitation under 1,000 mm annually, a reason why the semi-arid climate prevails. The departments of El Progreso, Zacapa and part of Chiquimula have extremely high drought threats (MAGA n.d.) (see Figure 8).

El Niño phenomenon has contributed to the reduction in precipitation and an increased temperature in the region, which worsen the situation in the Dry Corridor, mainly in the form of less water availability, strong impacts on agriculture and increased risk of fire (Guerra 2016a).

Water scarcity is not only due to natural variability of rain associated with El Niño, but also to an increasing water demand, a reduced hydric recharge associated to deforestation, a lack of coordination in water distribution, lack of regulation of water management, river extraction and the extraction of superficial aquifers (Guerra 2016b). All of these factors increase the vulnerability of subsistence farmers, where any water shortage dramatically affects rain-fed agriculture. Land degradation, lack of access to irrigation systems and low land productivity also affect subsistence farmers. Slow on-set shocks, such as the protracted drought in the Dry Corridor, are often the result of cumulative socio-ecological drivers, increasing the vulnerability of households. If livelihoods fail to fully recover after a stress, households can fall into poverty traps, increasing their risk of food insecurity.



**Figure 8: Risk of drought in the Dry Corridor**

Source: MAGA n.d.

**The region can face more intense and frequent droughts to the point that they become chronic if the structural causes are not addressed.** Nonetheless, the approach in the Dry Corridor has been one of prioritising the emergency response to the droughts, rather than one of addressing the structural causes of vulnerability, such as water access and management and the environmental and land degradation in the region. There is no general water law that establishes the mechanisms to regulate and order water access, and no long-term programme or intervention that works in the corridor to address this. However, there are several development activities implemented by MAGA in the Dry Corridor, mainly in the form of livelihood support and capacity strengthening.

Some interventions that aim to increase resilience have been developed by partners from the international cooperation, although these are not permanent or long term. WFP's resilience-building approach aims to enhance capacities to absorb, adapt and transform in the face of shocks and stressors<sup>14</sup>. It aims to align its activities with the plans and actions of governments and partners (WFP 2015b).

The PRRO facilitates recovery through asset creation with a view to laying the foundation for a transition to resilience building through ongoing Country Programmes and capacity development activities at the regional and country levels. For instance, the **Resilient Communities** provides 100 days of food assistance (a mix of cash and in-kind support) conditioned to the creation of assets oriented to conservation – rehabilitation of land and water. In the Dry Corridor, a curtain that stores water was built with a capacity of 1,723m<sup>3</sup>.

Increasing resilience is very complex in a region of high vulnerability. It implies working on increasing the productivity of farmers, access to different assets, diversifying and strengthening

<sup>14</sup> WFP works with the following definition by the multi-agency Resilience Measurement Technical Working Group of the Food Security Information Network: "the capacity to ensure that shocks and stressors do not have long-lasting adverse development consequences". Food Security Information Network. 2013. *Resilience Measurement Principles: Toward an Agenda for Measurement Design*. Rome.

livelihoods, using local knowledge and modern techniques, and employment creation, among others. This requires a significant level of collaboration over a prolonged period.

WFP's expertise related to resilience-building includes vulnerability analysis and mapping, community-based programming and support to social protection systems (ibid.). In terms of the later, WFP's support to productive safety nets through FFA schemes is acknowledged as central to its resilience-building work.

However, in order to achieve an impact on the resilience, **there is a need to invest more in the quality and relevance of the assets created through FFA** (see Box 2). WFP considers five factors that are crucial for the success of FFA across livelihood types, geographical contexts, and countries, including: 1) ensure the quality standards for assets created, their sustainability and that they can withstand the exposure to climate and other shocks; 2) Strengthen local and government institutions' capacities; 3) Putting communities and people at the centre of planning; 4) An understanding of the local context, landscape and livelihoods; and 5) Integrating and scaling-up different assets and complementary activities.

In the case of the PRRO and Resilient Communities, once the WFP's support has ended, the technical support, maintenance and follow-up from MAGA is crucial to guarantee the long-term impact and the sustainability of the assets and activities implemented. This is particularly important for Guatemala, since the government structures both at central and local level have considerable constraints, in terms of human and administrative resources.

*We will not be able to see the results of the (assets created through the) PRRO until next year in the harvest. This is why the support should last the whole agricultural cycle, if we really want to see a longer-term impact.* Subsistence farmer, FGD, Chiquimula.

**In this light, development partners could support government's institutional and financial capacity to respond to droughts**, based on a multi-sectoral approach that tackles the structural causes of vulnerability in the region and build resilience in the long term. This would mean mainstreaming resilience in government programming, implementation and management.

**Payments should also be regular, predictable and flexible to achieve an impact on resilience.** The level of the benefits should also be sufficient not only to cover consumption needs, but also to support livelihood diversification into activities that are less vulnerable to drought. This is also the case for regular social protection programmes such as Bono and the in-kind support of the VISAN-MAGA. However, the transfer size is low and is not predictable. This affects the consumption-smoothing impact of the programme and its overall impact on resilience.

*There is no predetermined date for the payments of the Bono. This affects household planning.* Bono recipient. FGD, Chiquimula.

The activities to improve Bono would require strong governmental and institutional support, especially in the financial sphere. Nonetheless its importance, it was the only MIDES programme that experienced budget cuts for the 2017 financial year. In this light, for 2017 MIDES is undertaking interinstitutional efforts with the Ministries of Health and Education to strengthen the information systems, which will result in improved quality of information and cost reduction.



## Box 2: Requirements for positive impact of cash and asset construction of a PWP on recipients' resilience

### The specific requirements for positive impact of cash for short term resilience:

- (i) The cash level must be adequate to meet consumption needs;
- (ii) The opportunity cost of collecting the cash must be low;
- (iii) Payments must be regular, reliable and frequent;
- (iv) Employment must be of sufficient duration to have a significant impact;
- (v) The duration of individual employment should not be reduced by subdividing employment opportunities among the community; and
- (vi) The timing of employment should reflect seasonal variations in food security and domestic and market labour demand. In relation to increasing adaptive capacity, the cash enables investment in productive inputs and capital, which can support livelihood diversification into activities less vulnerable to climate change and enable recipients to move out of the poorest paid forms of casual labour.

To get a long-term resilience impact, the additional requirement is that the cash level must be sufficient to enable investment as well as to meet immediate needs.

### The requirements for the asset construction component to increase resilience are:

- (i) Assets must be relevant to local needs;
- (ii) Assets must be designed, located and constructed in line with technical specifications, with adequate capital inputs;
- (iii) Labour-intensive methods must be adopted;
- (iv) Adequate technical inputs must be ensured during design, implementation and maintenance;
- (v) Local government and/or community ownership and management of the asset must be ensured;
- (vi) Follow-up maintenance must take place to ensure ongoing functionality;
- (vii) Access to asset benefits must be equitable; and
- (viii) The functionality and usage of the asset must be monitored.

To get a long-term resilience impact, the additional requirement are:

- (ix) PWPs must improve returns to labour, either by increasing productivity or by enabling the adoption of alternative or diversified livelihoods which are less vulnerable to climate change.
- (x) Assets need not only to meet the requirements for coping capacity but may also require that functioning markets are in place to allow for the purchase of inputs and/or marketing.

Source: Beazley, McCord and Solórzano 2016.

## 4.2.2 Crosscutting issues

In this subsection, we briefly study the following crosscutting aspects of the response: gender, nutrition and accountability to the affected population.

Evidence shows that women and children are 14 times more likely than men to die during and following a disaster (UNDP 2010). In this light, understanding how the drought affected women, girls, indigenous groups, the elderly and people with disabilities, and how effective was the response in considering and addressing these issues in order to guarantee the inclusion of the most vulnerable individuals, is crucial. An in-depth assessment of these issues goes beyond the scope of this assignment, but in this sub-section we present a broad reflection mainly on gender

and ethnicity considerations both in the MIDES programmes and the WFP response to the drought in the Dry Corridor.

In terms of MIDES social protection programmes, **Bono mainly supports women, while the majority of recipients in TMC for Food and Comedores Seguros are men.** 97% of the Bono recipients between 2012 and 2016 were women, while only 3% are men (see Table 3). Likewise, the majority of the recipients are Mayan, 55%; 44% are mixed or non-indigenous (*ladino*)<sup>15</sup>. While this is quite an achievement in terms of coverage of vulnerable groups, the programme could consider in the medium term being more sensitive to intra-household dynamics, and could consider a differentiated payment in terms of gender, household size and age of children.

Women did not feel particularly burdened by the programme's conditionalities or that these interfered with their usual activities, since they recognised as a "parental obligation" to take their children to school. However, they did mention that the reduction of the transfer delivery did demotivate some families to comply with the conditionalities. The low quality of the health clinics was also highlighted during the FGD. If the programme's aim is to stimulate the use of health and education services, then the government strategy should also focus on the service provision and quality. Otherwise, the programme will be very challenged to achieve its objectives. Moreover, research in Mexico has shown that conditionalities can actually interfere with the autonomous adaptation strategies in the form of income-generating activities, developed by women that live in risky contexts (Solórzano 2016). Programmes like Bono that aim to influence recipients' behaviour should consider the indirect impacts on households' strategies that aim to cope with contexts of climate or environmental stress. Further research is required in order to understand how Bono interacts with the coping strategies of recipients that have been affected by the drought.

TMC for Food and Comedores Seguros programmes have mainly benefited men and mixed or non-indigenous recipients. For the TMC for Food programme, 93% recipients of the food kit between 2012 and 2015 were men and only 7% women, and the vast majority, 94%, were mixed or non-indigenous Guatemalans. In the case of the Comedores Seguros in 2015, 59% of the recipients were men and 41% women. As with TMC for Food, the majority, 79%, were mixed or non-indigenous Guatemalans.

The exclusion of indigenous groups in these programmes may be explained because of the geographical targeting which prioritises urban areas, where indigenous groups might not be a majority. Even so, the programmes should consider different mechanisms to integrate vulnerable groups. Otherwise these groups will be facing a double discrimination by not being able to access basic social services as well as social assistance programmes.

**In terms of WFP's PRRO, half the adult recipients were women and 52% were female children between 5 and 18 years of age,** based on the figures of 2015. Most of the participants of food for training and for assets were men (54%), while women were the main recipients of the general food distribution (51%) and cash-based transfers (51%) (WFP 2015a) (see Table 4). Data availability on ethnicity is limited.

<sup>15</sup> The mixed population or "ladino" is officially recognised as a distinct ethnic group in Guatemala.

**Table 3 MIDES social protection recipients by gender**

	Men	Women	Total
Bono Seguro <sup>1</sup>	17,638	659,234	676,872
TMC for Food <sup>2</sup>	246,309	17,685	263,994
Comedores Seguros <sup>3</sup>	263,947	676,919	940,866

1 Recipient families (head of the household) accumulated from 2012 to 2016.

2 Recipient families (head of the household) of the food kit accumulated between 2012 and 2015.

3 Recipients in 2015.

Source: data submitted by MIDES.

**Table 4 PRRO recipients by gender**

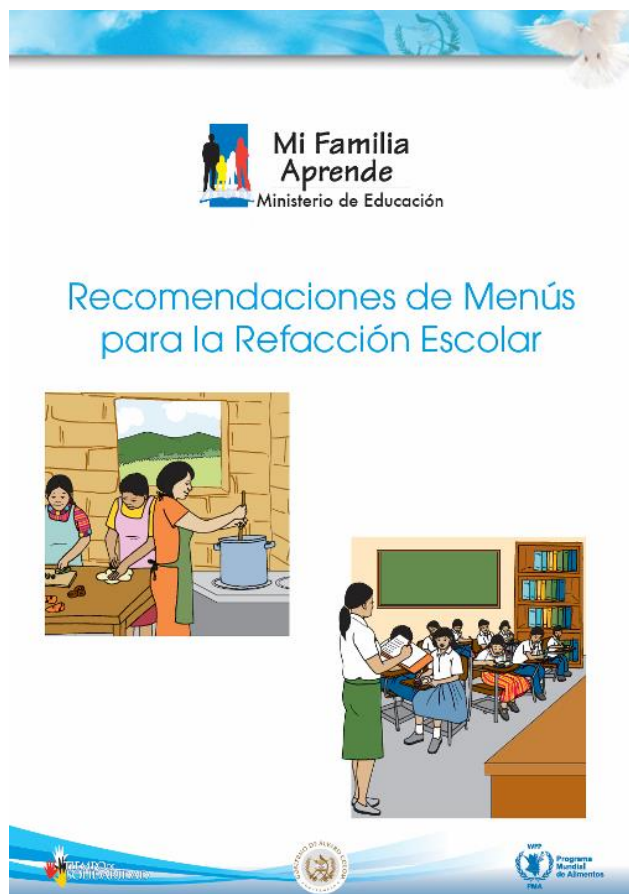
Beneficiary Category	Planned			Actual			% Actual v. Planned		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>Guatemala</b>									
Participants in Food For Training	30,826	32,084	62,910	73,139	63,928	137,067	237.3%	199.3%	217.9%
Participants in Food For Assets	30,826	32,084	62,910	73,139	63,928	137,067	237.3%	199.3%	217.9%
Beneficiaries of General food distribution (GFD)/ targeted food distribution/assistance (GFD-TFD/A)	38,416	39,984	78,400	21,997	23,683	45,680	57.3%	59.2%	58.3%
Cash-Based Transfer Beneficiaries	104,350	108,610	212,960	108,376	111,669	220,045	103.9%	102.8%	103.3%

Source: WFP 2015a

**WFP encouraged women's participation in project management committees** by engaging them in various activities and throughout all stages of the project. Women participated in planning exercises that identified the assets most needed in their communities. While most of the heavy soil and water conservation work was carried out by men, complementary activities were designed to suit the needs of women. WFP also strengthened the institutional capacities of the MAGA's Gender Unit in six departments of the Dry Corridor. MAGA facilitated training sessions involving its female rural staff regarding the implementation of the Healthy Home Program in the Dry Corridor (WFP 2015a). Moreover, vulnerable groups such as women with small children, pregnant women, elderly and disabled people, were given priority during the distribution process. Moreover, MIDES also participated in this process through its delegates and the "guide mothers" (*madres guías*).

**Female-headed households recovered at a slower pace due to fewer job opportunities and lower salaries compared to men**, despite that food consumption had been expected to improve equally in female- and male-headed households, according to monitoring data (*ibid.*). It is easier for men to get employment outside the community than women. Among other issues, fieldwork data showed that the roads are not safe for women due to increasing criminal activity in the region. Women therefore prefer to stay in the community instead of searching for work opportunities outside, given their heightened susceptibility to attacks.

In relation to nutrition, the government strategy has been focused on reducing chronic malnutrition. WFP has been supporting supplementary nutrition activities, such as nutrition for pregnant women, infants and children at the national level. WFP has also supported regular school meals activities. In particular, it has developed nutritious menus for school meals for the National School Meals Programme (see Figure 9). It has also promoted concepts of food and nutritional security in municipalities prioritised by their high level of poverty and malnutrition rates. It has also provided technical capacity on school meals during emergencies to the Ministry of Education.

**Figure 9 Menu recommendations for school meals**

In terms of recipients' rights to make any grievances against the programme, there is a formal complaint mechanism through suggestion boxes placed at distribution points, which then trickles down to the community. Recipients showed knowledge about the mechanism and expressed their will to use it if they found it necessary.

### 4.3 Key lessons learned

**In Guatemala, the social protection system faces several challenges to take centre stage when it comes to responding to an emergency.** Potentially, it could create a platform to respond to the emergencies, but currently it faces several challenges. As the system progresses to a more stable and robust system, it can increasingly take roles in response and recovery, but the milestone for this to happen is the improvement of its different systems, including targeting, payment and implementation.

MIDES has a mandate to respond to emergencies through its main programmes. While these interventions were not implemented in the Dry Corridor and so this study could not assess its efficacy in delivering support, it is important to mention that the study did find several constraints related to the normal operation of the programmes, which are also pre-requisites for the preparedness of the system in terms of shock response. Some of the main constraints of the social protection programme are: budget cuts; inadequate benefit size; and in the case of the Bono, financial and administrative resource constraint, among others. Under these conditions, overburdening the social protection system with shock-response mandates could actually compromise the operation of the regular programmes, if preparatory measures are not taken in order to strengthen the social protection system and plan for the emergency response actions.

**These challenges should be a motivation to invest more in the social protection system.**

There has not been a social consensus around social protection in the country. There are no legal schemes or plans in place to lay the groundwork for it. Following a mandate of social rights and the normative imperative to address poverty reduction in Guatemala, social protection should take centre stage of the development policy in the country.

**Having a strong social protection system means also investing in prevention and resilience.**

Three years of consecutive drought in the Dry Corridor is signalling the importance of shifting to more holistic responses that address the structural causes of vulnerability and that reduce risk. This also means investing more in the resilience of people and livelihoods. For instance, having a regular, predictable and flexible safety net is crucial to supporting the resilience of poor households (Solórzano 2016). This is not only in line with international DRM frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Climate Change Paris Agreement, but is also probably more cost-effective for the Guatemalan government, given that the economic costs of disasters are very high, although this would require more research for the specific case of the Dry Corridor. Also, in the case of an emergency, it is easier to use existing systems rather than to create new ones.

**Piggybacking and shadow alignment with government structures have rendered positive results in the Dry Corridor in Guatemala.** The experiences of WFP in the Dry Corridor with the PRRO and Operación Oportunidad have left a good precedent for emergency response, using government structures and with the government eventually taking over or replicating some aspects of the support.

**In the case of a slow-onset shock such as a drought, relying only on humanitarian response by the donors and international cooperation might be counterproductive,** since donor funding mainly shift into high gear when situations become very detrimental to people's well-being rather than at earlier signals of worsening food insecurity (Kardan et al. 2017). Strategies are required to complement and support government systems. For instance, CONRED does not have the capacity to respond to the droughts. This means that the government DRM mechanisms to respond to the drought should be strengthened both in terms of institutional and financial capacity, also with support from the international cooperation.

**The political will of local authorities and the working relationships between WFP and MAGA, COMUSAN and MIDES were instrumental in achieving a good emergency response** in the Dry Corridor. These dynamics had a precedent in the Operación Oportunidad, which left strong social capital among the different stakeholders and also effective knowledge which helped as a precedent for the operation of the PRRO.



## 5 Policy Recommendations

The recommendations of this study fall into three categories: strengthening the social protection programmes; making the social protection system more shock-responsive and adaptive; and improving humanitarian response and resilience in the Dry Corridor.

- **Priority should be placed on strengthening the current social protection system before moving on to making it more shock-responsive.** MIDES does not have the capacity to respond rapidly to emergency situations. It currently has several administrative and technical capacity challenges which severely constrain its regular operation. In this light, it is important to prioritise and sequence the actions and activities which are most important for its regular operation.
- **Technical aspects and quality considerations of social protection programmes should be brought to the forefront to improve effectiveness and efficiency,** recognising the political economy that underpins social protection support and the decision-making processes in Guatemala. Development partners could support this process and support the government review its programmes to achieve better results. The programme is already working towards some of these aims. It is planning to reduce the conditionalities from two to one, and is aiming to deliver the cash transfers systematically: three times in 2017 and four times by 2018.
- **The Bono has the potential to become a robust and strong safety net that can support resilience of poor households.** It would require a regular, long term and systematic delivery of the support.
- **The size of the transfer of Bono should be calibrated to cover the opportunity cost of parents and should be sufficient not only to cover consumption needs, but also to support livelihood diversification into activities that are less vulnerable to droughts.** It should also be sensitive to intra-household dynamics, and consider a differentiated payment in terms of gender, household size and age of children.
- **The Bono could be scaled up during an emergency, through the Bono Calamidad scheme, which should be considered for early stages of the drought in the Dry Corridor** if the payment and targeting systems are strengthened.
- **The Bono can schedule the payments to coincide with the lean season and the drought period,** in order to support its recipients in times of crisis.
- **The TMC for Food programme should continue its effort to transition to card payments and to consolidate recipients' geo-referencing.** It is desirable that the programme expands its coverage progressively, but without overburdening its capacity. If the plans to include conditionalities in the programme continue then its theory of change will need to reflect this, in order to inform design and operation carefully. It will also be desirable for this to be linked to the Bono programme and that TMC for Food remains a safety net for the department of Guatemala. The programme could potentially scale up for emergency response.
- **Continue the existing initiatives to improve the registry of recipients and targeting criteria.** MIDES is already undertaking some initiatives to improve these systems, such as having a more systematic recipient enrolment and clear targeting criteria based on needs assessment.
- **TMC for Food and Comedores Seguros could progressively expand their coverage to other departments,** including those in the Dry Corridor. As the improvement of systems is consolidated and operational capacities strengthened, MIDES could consider expanding these programmes.
- **Social protection recipients should not be excluded from emergency response programmes.** Fieldwork evidence did not show this is the case, but still there is no clear



instruction on whether recipients from MIDES or MAGA should be excluded from emergency response mechanisms if they are affected by a shock. Government benefits are complementary to partners' support, and as such they should be seen as a single support system.

- **MAGA could focus on building its capacities, both at the central and local level.** It could focus on the administrative and technical capacity constraints and set priorities.
- **Formalise learning and knowledge from previous successful experiences** of emergency response in coordination with international aid and government structures, such as the Operación Oportunidad. These good practices should be followed by an in-depth assessment among different stakeholders that should inform policy and decision-making, in an institutionalised way, in order to avoid them being lost. International cooperation in LAC provide both financial and technical assistance that can help to strengthen the country's institutions to respond.
- **FFA activities such as those implemented through the PRRO, should consider their longer-term resilience impacts in the communities where they operate.** They should improve the quality of the assets created and guarantee the technical capacity by MAGA in the mid-term. Initiatives such as the one being considered in MAGA where PRRO recipients will be linked to regular development programmes such as the PAFEC are key to ensuring that the impacts are sustainable. It is also very important to increase the technical and financial capacities of recipients.
- **It is urgent to address structural vulnerability in the Dry Corridor and to move beyond the emergency response.** Prolonged drought in the Dry Corridor is now three years long and the projection is that this will continue. If the drought is not approached structurally then the vulnerability of poor people in the region will increase and accumulate each year, despite the efforts of emergency relief. Structural interventions that aim to address and regulate water management and access should be a priority. Efforts to tackle water shortage from an environmental standpoint are also very important. Social development programmes should also focus on increasing the long-term resilience of households by providing opportunities for increasing their productivity and diversifying their livelihoods, increasing access to markets and jobs, among others.
- **Development partners should support government's institutional and financial capacity to respond to droughts,** based on a multi-sectoral approach that tackles the structural causes of vulnerability in the region and build resilience in the long term. This would mean mainstreaming resilience in government programming, implementation and management.
- **Support activities which aim to strengthen government capacity and link with longer term activities** which can support subsistence farmers' resilience, such as MAGA's plans to integrate the PRRO recipients into the PAFEC programme, after the PRRO support has finished.
- **Continue the existing initiatives to strengthen the capacity of CONRED.** This includes extending its mandates and responsibilities to include slow-onset shock response, as for droughts. It should also be binding and strengthen its presence at the local level. The formal role of MIDES and MAGA in emergency response as part of the CONRED, should be clearly established, including the institutional and financial support required.

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## Annex A: List of interviewees

Name	Position	Institution	Interview date
Julia María Asturias	Oficial de Seguridad Alimentaria	USAID	21 November 2016
Milton Díaz	Oficial de Incidencia Humanitaria, Programa de Reducción de Riesgos y Derechos en Crisis	OXFAM	21 November 2016
Maynor Estrada	Oficial de Programas	FAO	21 November 2016
Luisa Samayoa	Nutricionista	FAO	21 November 2016
Gustavo García	Director Nacional de Proyectos de Emergencia	FAO	21 November 2016
Manolo Barillas	Asesor Nacional de Respuesta a Desastres	OCHA	22 November 2016
José Moreno	Ministro	MIDES	22 November 2016
Margarita Mejicanos	Consultora	MIDES	22 and 25 November 2016
Carlos Vidal	Director Bono Seguro	MIDES	22 and 25 November 2016
Gustavo Suárez	Subdirector Bolsa de Alimentos	MIDES	22 November 2016
Evelyn Robles	Directora de Planificación	MIDES	22 November 2016
Alex Guerra	Director General	ICC	22 November 2016
Víctor Orellana	Enlace DICORER/PMA	MAGA	23 November 2016
Lázaro Felipe	DICORER/PMA	MAGA	23 November 2016
German González	Secretario	SESAN	23 November 2016
Rafael Salinas	Subsecretario	SESAN	23 November 2016
César George	Encargado de la Oficina Meteorológica	INSIVUMEH	23 November 2016
Rosario Gómez	Climatóloga	INSIVUMEH	23 November 2016
Juan Pablo Oliva	Director	CEDESYS/USAC	23 November 2016
Fernando Paredes	Oficial de Operaciones Senior	Banco Mundial	24 November 2016
Edwin Rojas	Coordinador de Unidad	MAGA/Unidad de Cambio Climático	24 November 2016

Mario Mejía	Especialista	MAGA/Unidad de Cambio Climático	24 November 2016
Erwin Ardón	Director	MAGA/DIPLAN	24 November 2016
Leonel Galán	Director de la Dirección de Gestión Integral de Riesgo	CONRED	24 November 2016
Óscar Hernández	Asesor del Ministro	MARN	25 November 2016
José Fernando Carrera	Alcalde Municipal	Jocotán	28 November 2016
Juan Alberto Fuentes		Consultor Independiente	30 November 2016