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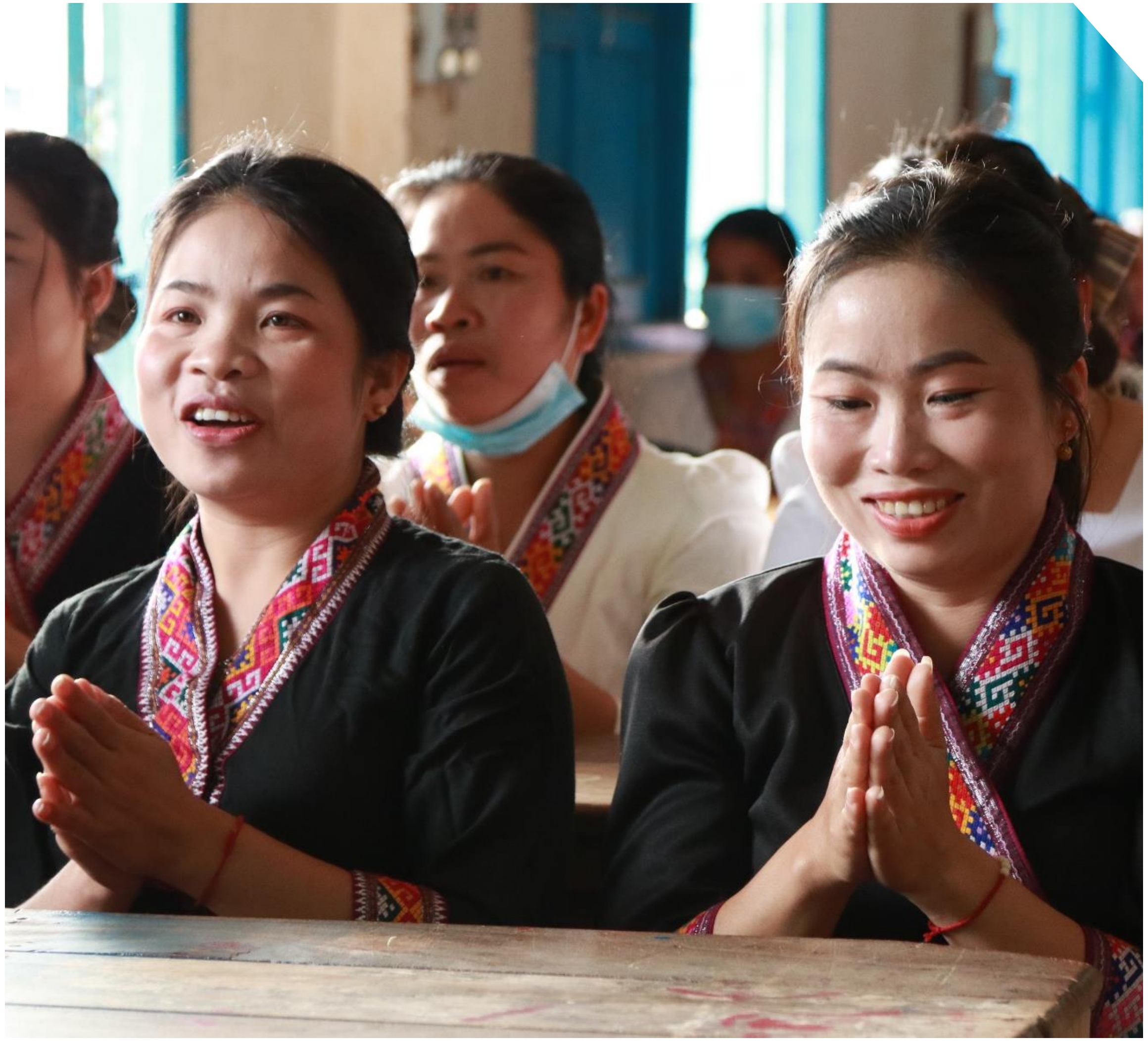
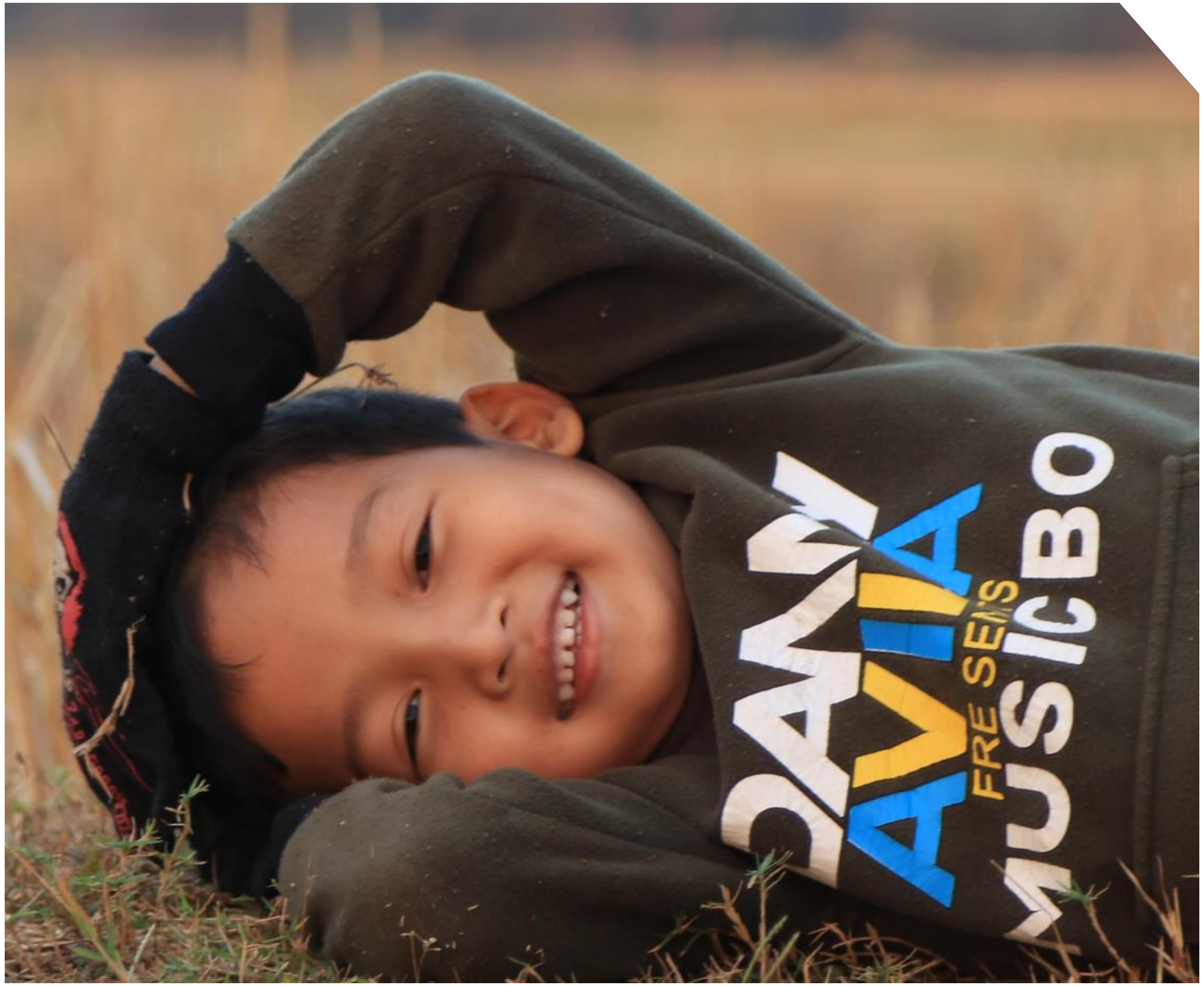
Social Protection Training for Lao PDR





Social Protection Training for Lao PDR

Module 1
Introduction to Social Protection

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Activity 10: Conditional versus unconditional

	Procedure:	1. Ask the participants, “What conditionality approach do you believe in?” 2. Encourage the participants to reflect on the previous sessions where risks and real circumstances were discussed. 3. Ask the participants to stand in front of the card with their answer: • Conditional • Soft Conditions • Fully Unconditional 4. Encourage people to share why they stood where they are.

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Session 6

Types of social protection

Learn about key elements of social protection, particularly cash transfers

What conditionality approach do you think is the most appropriate for this social protection program in Lao PDR?

- Conditional
- Soft Conditions
- Fully Unconditional

Types of conditions

Conditional cash transfers	Unconditional cash transfers	Soft conditionality
Require beneficiaries to comply with specific conditions to be eligible for the transfer. These are often related to school attendance or health care (e.g., 90% school attendance or pre-natal check-ups). Punitive measures or sanctions are imposed (e.g., transfers are stopped) if beneficiaries fail to comply with these conditionalities.	Do not require any specific actions to be undertaken by targeted beneficiaries.	A hybrid approach. The idea is that reminding people why they are receiving the cash transfer increases the likelihood of achieving the programme's goals, without the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) burden of a truly conditional programme. Unlike conditional benefits, failing to comply with the soft conditions does not result in the punishment or sanction of beneficiaries.

Source: Hemsteede 2018.

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- **Important policy choice: Whether or not access to benefits should be made conditional** on recipients complying with a set of criteria or behaviours determined by the government.

- Conditions are often **linked to school attendance** or **health check-ups**, where **non-compliance results in sanction:**
  - **Pakistan**'s Punjab Secondary School Girls Stipend is conditional on 70% school attendance.
  - In the **Philippines'** Pantawid programme, payment is conditional on 85% school attendance.

Source: *(UN ESCAP and Development Pathways, 2018)*

Why make cash transfers conditional?

- **Incorporated within programmes** when schemes are targeted at those living in poverty:
  - to **change the behaviour** of people living in poverty;
  - to **persuade taxpayers** that recipients are not receiving an undeserved handout.

Source: *(UN ESCAP and Development Pathways, 2018)*

Key issues on conditional cash transfers

- **Little evidence that conditions have an impact** on the behaviour of the beneficiaries.
- Provision of a minimum level of **income security** to families **enables them to invest in the wellbeing** of their individual members.

Source: *(UN ESCAP and Development Pathways, 2018)*

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Key issues on conditional cash transfers

- Use of conditions and sanctions also makes social protection programmes **significantly more complex**.
- **Examples:**
  - Collection of information and varying benefit payments **increase administrative costs** and **overburden teachers and other staff**.

Source: *(UN ESCAP and Development Pathways, 2018)*

Key issues on conditional cash transfers

- Conditionality **counters the purpose of social protection programmes**…
  - those who **can't comply** with the conditions are often the **most marginalized and vulnerable**.
  - **required public services**, such as schools or healthcare facilities, **would not be available or accessible** to all.

Source: *(UN ESCAP and Development Pathways, 2018)*

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Alternatives and recommendations

- **Increase investment** in schemes so that they become universal
  - **Example:** Mongolia – Child Money scheme

- **Offer incentives**, such as **a school stipend** , if children enrol in school, rather than withdrawing the benefit if attendance is not maintained.

Source: *(UN ESCAP and Development Pathways, 2018)*

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Alternatives and recommendations

- **Introduce nudges or symbolic encouragement** into the design of schemes.
    - **Example:** *Children could be enrolled in the social protection scheme on school premises to demonstrate the link between the benefit and the pursuit of education.*
- Ask caregivers to **sign a pledge to send their children to school**

Source: *(UN ESCAP and Development Pathways, 2018)*

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Case study 1: Mother and Early Childhood Grant (MECG)

- Part of a joint initiative between UNICEF, the ILO and UNCDF aimed at improving access to health and child protection services in Lao PDR for pregnant women and children.

- Total of 2,596 beneficiaries in southern Lao PDR are enrolled under the MECG pilot, a cash transfer for pregnant women and young children aimed at improving nutrition and the uptake of vaccinations and access to antenatal and postnatal care.

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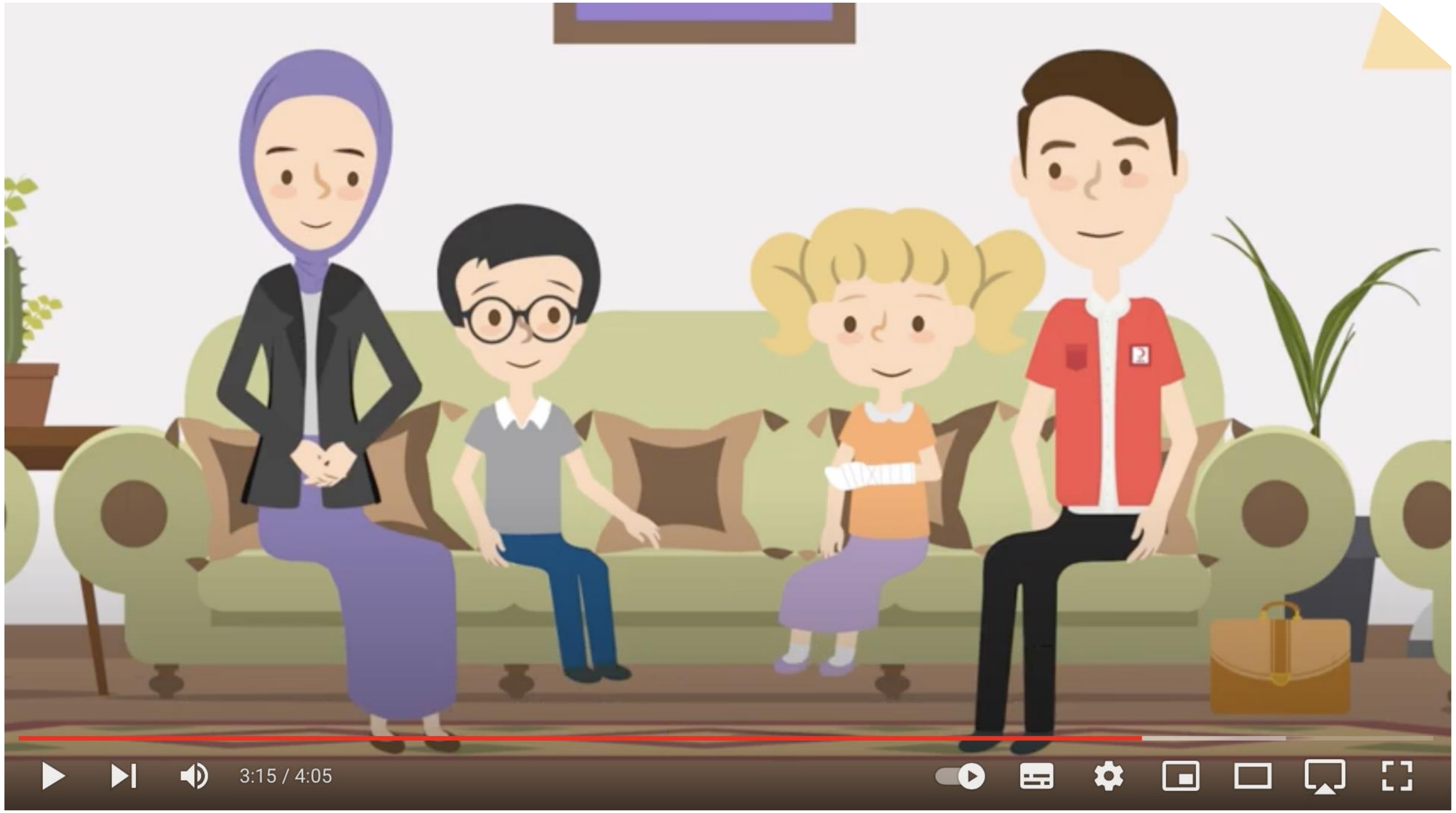
Case study 1: Mother and Early Childhood Grant (MECG)

- Beneficiaries directly receive a monthly benefit of 150,000 kips, made in bi-monthly payments of 300,000 kips, via U-Money or a cash-to-door approach provided by Star Fintech.
- Has only “soft” conditionality built into the design.
- No explicit conditionality attached to transfers, but clear message for MECG beneficiaries on the purpose of the programme.

Source: UN ESCAP 2018.

Case story: Conditional Cash Transfer For Education Programme (CCTE)



Case study 2: Conditional Cash Transfer For Education Programme (CCTE)

Turkey has implemented its **successful Conditional Cash Transfers for Education (CCTE) since 2003**

- Millions of families and children have benefited for nearly 20 years.
- The CCTE Programme was extended to cover school-age refugee children residing in Turkey under temporary/international protection.
- Eligibility rules and transfer values are the same for Turkish children and Syrian and other refugee beneficiaries.

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Case study 2: Conditional Cash Transfer For Education Programme (CCTE)

- Families receive **cash support every two months** through Kızılaycard
  - ***Condition:*** *Child has attended school regularly (at least 80%) in the preceding school months.*

- Students enrolled in Turkish public schools, temporary education centres, and Accelerated Learning Programs are all eligible to benefit from the programme.

Questions for reflection

Who carries the burden of complying with conditions? This goes both for the beneficiaries as well as for the implementing parties.

Do you think the absence of conditions can lead to dependency and complacency?

What could be some gendered impacts of the conditions?

Activity 11: “Skeptics” versus “believers”

	Facilitator’s Note	Debrief in plenary so that participants can present their points. Check whether the two groups have made similar points, and check to see how (and if) skeptics are being convinced by believers. Skeptics’ opinions are deep rooted, and we may have some of these as well – despite being social protection practitioners. Evidence alone is not always enough to convince people. We need to be able to fully understand their positions in order to reason with them, touching those “buttons” that will resonate. Ask participants to share any important mind shifts they may have experienced, and where and how they intend to use this change of mindset in their current work environment.

Session 7

Consolidating understanding of social protection

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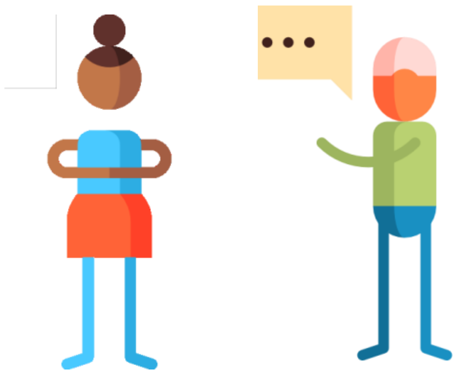
Activity 11: “Skeptics” versus “believers”

“I believe social protection is a handout and makes the poor dependent.”

“I believe social protection is an investment for the future.”



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