



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations



Climate  
Centre



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# SOCIAL PROTECTION,

EMERGENCY RESPONSE, RESILIENCE AND CLIMATE CHANGE



## A NEW INTERACTIVE LEARNING TOOL

# SOCIAL PROTECTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In recent years, **threats and crises** – due to both natural and man-made disasters – are not only more frequent but also increasingly complex.

The international community is progressively facing the need to respond to emergencies that combine multiple and compounding vulnerability drivers: chronic poverty, food insecurity, inequality, violence, instability, climate change, and weak governance as well as the negative impacts of climate change.

**Poor rural households are likely to be hit the hardest:** climate-related hazards can exacerbate their pre-existing economic and social vulnerabilities, forcing them to resort to negative coping mechanisms such as selling off productive agricultural assets, over-exploiting natural resources, dropping children out of school,

and/or fleeing the country as an attempt to meet immediate needs.

In this context, a key challenge for both humanitarian and development actors, including FAO, is how to effectively and rapidly meet immediate needs and increased caseloads, while at the same time, developing **interventions that can empower and strengthen the capacity to prepare, withstand and bounce back from complex situations.**

Hence, there is a consensus on **the need for a new approach to bridge the humanitarian-development divide and incorporate climate-smart policies in the agenda.**

One promising practice in this regard is linking humanitarian interventions with longer term social protection schemes.

**Risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection systems are a strategic priority for FAO.** These measures, if integrated into broader development strategies, can significantly **reduce families' vulnerability, severe food insecurity and exposure to climate related risks, threats and crises.** At the same time, social protection can reduce the economic barriers for the effective adoption of climate-smart and sustainable agricultural practices by farmers.

The number of climate induced disasters has increased significantly in the last decade.

25% of the damage and losses due to climate-related disasters in developing countries occur in agricultural sectors.

More than 80% of the damage and losses caused by drought is to agriculture.

## WHY A GAME ON SOCIAL PROTECTION?

FAO, in partnership with the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, is developing an **interactive tool** to facilitate learning on the potential benefits and trade-offs in linking social protection, resilience and climate change policies at local, national and global level. The tool allows national stakeholders and policymakers to **experience first-hand the challenges that smallholder farmers face** when dealing with scarce availability

of productive assets and deteriorating climate conditions. This will help participants be better equipped to **solve complex problems** related to social protection, climate change issues and resilience in an uncertain world. The tool captures the **essence of real-life complexity** simulating struggles and threats faced by smallholder farmers. It forces participants to make decisions that will have consequences;

and with that exploration of possibilities comes very deep learning which is owned by those who play the game. **The game is a simplified representation of reality.** It is designed to amplify certain aspects that matter for the purpose of learning about social protection, resilience and climate change while excluding other aspects of reality that, while relevant, would make the game too complicated.

**The objective of the tool is to explain complex and challenging issues in a fun and interactive manner.**

**INTENDED AUDIENCE:** National policy makers, social protection specialists, emergency officers, disaster managers, rural organizations representatives.

The tool is designed to be played in **groups of 4 to 5 people**

**Min 25 / Max 40 person**  
per session

The session takes  
**80 to 100 minutes**

## GAMEPLAY

Participants are divided into provinces which consist of **3 subsistence farmers, 1 commercial farmer** and **1 government official**.

They are given little tokens, which represent productive assets to cover the needs for a full year.

At the beginning of each round players have to toss the tokens (productive assets): if not enough tokens result to be productive, player have to deal with the consequences.

Depending on whether needs are covered or not, participants need to make decisions to prevent the loss of assets that would increase the exposure to vulnerabilities and poverty trap which would affect the entire cycle.

- 1 During the first cycle** provinces receive only Emergency Aid that will be distributed by the government official according to needs and priorities.
- 2 During the second cycle** social protection is introduced and discussion around targeting criteria and how to distribute help takes place within the groups.
- 3 During the third cycle** disasters and shocks induced by climate change are introduced together with Shock Responsive Social Protection interventions (bringing together social protection and humanitarian aid systems).
- 4 In the last phase of the game** a facilitated discussion will take place. It will be focused on the potential and limitations of using humanitarian aid and social protection instruments to provide support to farmers and to help them prevent and cope with crises. These interactions and discussions among participants will increase the understanding of how social protection systems can better channel humanitarian aid.



The whole exercise is based on the approach of taking the participants to the edge of confusion by pushing them outside their comfort zone in order to trigger curiosity and productive discussions on how to tackle important issues.

