Discussion note on Knowledge Management and Learning needs for linking Social Protection and Humanitarian cash

Commissioned by UNICEF on behalf of the Grand Bargain cash sub-group on linking social protection with humanitarian cash

February 2020

1. Introduction

At the WHS in 2016, social protection (SP) emerged as one of the ways to help strengthen the humanitarian and development nexus by addressing underlying poverty and vulnerability as well as by supporting localisation of humanitarian action. A subgroup on 'Linking Social Protection with Humanitarian Cash' was formed as a part of the overall Grand Bargain (GB) cash workstream to further these commitments and is co-led by UNICEF, IFRC and DFID.

The need for better dialogue and knowledge sharing across humanitarian and social protection stakeholders emerged as one of key areas of work for the subgroup. On behalf of the group, UNICEF initiated a process for knowledge management and Learning (KML) on the topic. This has included an assessment of priority needs and audiences as well as a mapping of KM platforms, with the aim of addressing gaps through different products and services. The assessment has led to a set of recommendations and an action plan to be populated collaboratively with sub-group stakeholders[1].

The objective of this note is to:

- Communicate the knowledge management and learning (KML) priorities identified through the assessment
- Generate consensus amongst GB subgroup stakeholders on these priorities
- Coalesce stakeholders to contribute to a joint action plan to take forward KML priorities
- Identify resources (financial and human) to contribute to the delivery of the joint action plan

It contains the key findings of the assessment of KML needs on the topic, a theory of change linking proposed KML activities to the overall objective of the subgroup and a section on resourcing and partnerships proposing how these activities can be taken forwards collaboratively.

2. Key findings of the assessment on KML needs

The findings of the KML assessment are based on 15 key informant interviews (consisting of representatives from the RC/RC movement, INGOs, Donors, UN agencies, and KM platforms), a desk review and an analysis across the data points highlighting any variations. The section covers the priority themes, priority audiences, KM platforms/forums to use for the functions, and ends with a summary of how the recommendations and action plan have been generated.

Priority themes

The preliminary analysis of the findings grouped the KM needs into themes. For ease of reference to existing frameworks, the themes were organised according to OPM's SRSP research toolkit (using Sections C (Diagnosis) and D (Factors guiding a response)), and CaLP's Guidance on Working with cash-based safety nets (using Steps 1 (Assessment) and 2 (Deciding humanitarian programme options)). Under each theme, key findings have been synthesised.

[1] Please email Nupur Kukrety, UNICEF co-lead for the full assessment report (nkukrety@unicef.org) and to contribute to the action plan

THEME		CONSOLIDATED ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

CONCEPTS		• Common glossary and/or frameworks for a joint understanding of concepts to identify entry points. In particular on:
		  ○ What is SP (including a life cycle approach, social transfers versus cash transfers etc)?
		  ○ The role of the government in SP and humanitarian response
		  ○ What does shock-responsive mean/when is a system shock-responsive?
		  ○ What does linking humanitarian cash to SP mean in different contexts?
		• Understand how SP links with development policies (i.e. macroeconomic and labour markets)

ASSESSMENT – *as per Step 1 of CaLP's guidance*	**The policy environment**	• Understanding the political economy that directs allocation of resources: how to get political buy-in/strategic alignment • Understand the economic investment case • Critically look at the policy making process that led to the development of social protection strategies • Explore the policy challenges of different forms of linkages
	Institutional environment (Mandates) – *Section C3; OPM toolkit*	• What do humanitarians need to know re: govts' responsibilities (concepts and commitments) towards citizens? • What are the roles of different ministries/agencies vis-à-vis SP (e.g. Disaster mgmt, social services, labour, public works)? • How to analyse and overcome silos within govt itself? How to support govts so that roles/responsibilities on SP clear? • What role have humanitarian actors been playing in building government capacity, how are they influencing government policy or transferring innovative systems or processes to the national system?
	Finance (instruments/ mechanisms) – *Section D1; OPM toolkit*	• Types of funding for SP at country and global level, from govt and external sources? • Mechanisms relevant for humanitarian response (Global Concessional Financing Facility, WB IDA 18 window, risk financing)? • How do govts fund emergency interventions (mechanisms, procedures, and channels); Implications for SRSP? ○ How can humanitarian funding instruments complement these? • What are the costs of strengthening govt SP programmes to incorporate humanitarian caseloads in different contexts?
	Tools and approaches to assessment	• What assessments are needed to evaluate the readiness of SP systems to respond to shocks? • How do assessments address scalability (e.g. coverage, of payment systems) as well as capacity constraints? • Do these assessments consider whether the system is robust enough to satisfy humanitarian donors? • How can these assessments be conducted jointly and/or shared publicly? • What practical tools exist to identify which systems to plug into and how? • What are the specific assessment considerations in refugee-hosting contexts and for displaced populations?
	Options for linking	• What are the triggers, risks and opportunities for linking in different contexts? • What are entry points for humanitarians in different contexts; i.e. nascent SP systems, emerging SP systems, significant SP systems? • What are the implications for humanitarians (and existing SP system) of each of the different options for shock-responsive adaptation? • What does it look like in practice to use only some elements of the existing SP system?

THEME		CONSOLIDATED ASSESSMENT FINDINGS
		• How can humanitarians design parallel systems with the intention of evolving towards greater alignment?
DESIGN – *as per Step 2 of CaLP's guidance*	**Targeting –***Section D2; OPM toolkit*	• How to balance potential differences between poverty and vulnerability-based targeting? • How to assess how transparent/leak-proof existing systems are? • How can humanitarian assistance link to SP to reach the most vulnerable groups, who by definition are often socially excluded? • How can specific refugees and displaced people be included? • How can humanitarians help improve the gender-sensitivity of targeting?
	Data management – *Section D3; of OPM toolkit*	• What is the minimum level of system functionality to allow for humanitarians to use the system? • What data protection measures exist? Do they meet humanitarian standards? Impact on access to data for humanitarians? • What preparedness measures are required to facilitate integration? • What concrete examples exist of linking humanitarian and SP data management? • What is the role of humanitarians in ensuring registries are as exhaustive as possible, so targeting criteria for different programmes with different objectives can apply on one single registry?
	Transfer values – *Section D4; OPM's toolkit*	• How can transfer values be adapted to meet humanitarian needs, under different options for alignment? • What are the specific challenges for refugees or displaced populations with specific needs?
	Coordination - *Section D6; OPM toolkit*	• Who is best placed/mandated to coordinate CVA and SP (humanitarians, e.g. CWG, or the government)? How might this vary by context, and at different times? • Who needs to be involved? • What is needed in terms of 'prepositioning' of coordination mechanisms? • What is the comparative advantage of agencies in each context; may mean loss of space for many humanitarian agencies? • What is the role of humanitarian donors - How should they engage? How should they phase out? • What are the ways to support leadership/engagement of govt (from strategic, technical and operational angles)? • How are different humanitarian/development organisations structured internally to coordinate the linkages and address silos?
	M&E - *Section D8; OPM toolkit*	• What types of M&E systems do humanitarians need to design to best link with SP systems? • How do existing SP M&E systems need to be adjusted to incorporate humanitarian caseloads?

Amongst the themes above, the needs analysis identified some foundational themes which need to be addressed to facilitate collaboration between humanitarian and Social Protection actors. These are *concepts, the institutional environment and options for linking*.

Beyond these themes, and with a humanitarian audience in mind, a few over-arching points cut across all themes:

- What do humanitarians need to understand about SP systems in a given context?
- How can humanitarians design parallel systems from the outset with the intention of evolving towards greater alignment?
- What has/hasn't worked in terms of linking, and why?

Priority audiences

Key informants were asked who the priority audience should be, bearing in mind that the focus of the Grand Bargain (GB) cash workstream sub-group is primarily on humanitarian practitioners. Along with this group, key informants felt that SP and government actors also need to be targeted with KML products and services to facilitate better dialogue and linkages between SP and humanitarian cash.

The table below disaggregates these audiences and synthesises the assessment findings on their priority learning objectives. This is not exhaustive and is inevitably influenced by the range of key informants consulted. It is a basis for informing the recommendations and action plan but for effective collaboration with SP actors, it should likely be complemented by a more in-depth analysis of audience needs.

AUDIENCE (by priority)	ASSESSMENT FINDINGS ON LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. **Humanitarian specialists involved in designing CVA**	☐ Address gap at response analysis level to ensure the right questions are asked and entry points identified for using/building national systems ☐ Creating a mindset shift towards working with govts and designing systems that can build the blocks for future nationally owned mechanisms
2. **Social protection specialists**	☐ Focus on strengthening their operational capacities ☐ Prioritise understanding of what a humanitarian response, in particular principles and standards
3. **Humanitarian senior managers** (Country/Ops Directors)	☐ Importance of understanding the bigger picture and the key concepts ☐ Creating a mindset shift towards working with governments ☐ Value of simple checklists
4. **Government agencies** (specifically those involved in humanitarian response)	☐ Awareness of how linking CVA/SP relates to global agreements (Grand Bargain) ☐ Value in sharing case studies/precedents, from their region or contexts ☐ Need to support the government to involve the private sector, civil society and academia in facilitating these linkages ☐ Engage with the govt on funding, to progressively build their contribution to SRSP (risk financing, Public Financial Management, taxes)
5. **Humanitarian and development donors** (not just the traditional ones)	☐ Reconsideration of the role of humanitarian donors - How should they engage and phase out? Role of donors that are relatively new in this space (e.g. WB)? ☐ Learning between donors on how they are addressing the silos internally, including across funding streams (hum/dev) with different management and approval processes, and the challenge of multiyear funding
6. **Humanitarian technical specialists** (sectoral/legal/ID)	☐ Relevance of their technical specialism for engaging with government systems – entry points, opportunities and challenges
7. **Global policy decision-makers**	☐ Awareness of field-level work and of economic case for linking CVA/SP ☐ Linkages between this topic and localisation agenda

An important point to note is that whilst the table presents audiences as siloed functions, the need identified is for a 'mixed profile' combining humanitarian and SP competencies. This profile is currently very limited, and the silo-ing within organisations between humanitarian and SP roles is seen as an impediment to more effective linkages. KML efforts should aim towards building this 'mixed' profile, by bringing humanitarian and SP actors together, and upskilling existing staff.

KM platforms

A range of different KM platforms/forums were assessed against set criteria[2]. The platforms considered were CaLP; socialprotection.org, ALNAP, RC/RC cash hub, World Bank (WB) and BASIC[3]. In addition to these platforms, informants reported referring to OPM, ILO and SPIAC-B websites, and to accessing information through their own internal mechanisms, google searches and social media. The platforms/forums were analysed according to the different functions that each provides, based on key informant insights on the priority KML products and services they would like to see on the topic. An analysis of who is contributing to and accessing each platform was also conducted.

Based on this, a sub-set of platforms (CaLP and socialprotection.org) were selected for further comparison and identification of which is best placed for reaching the priority audiences for each KML product/service. Further information and disaggregation of platform to function is reflected in the proposed action plan (activities below).

Recommendations and action plan

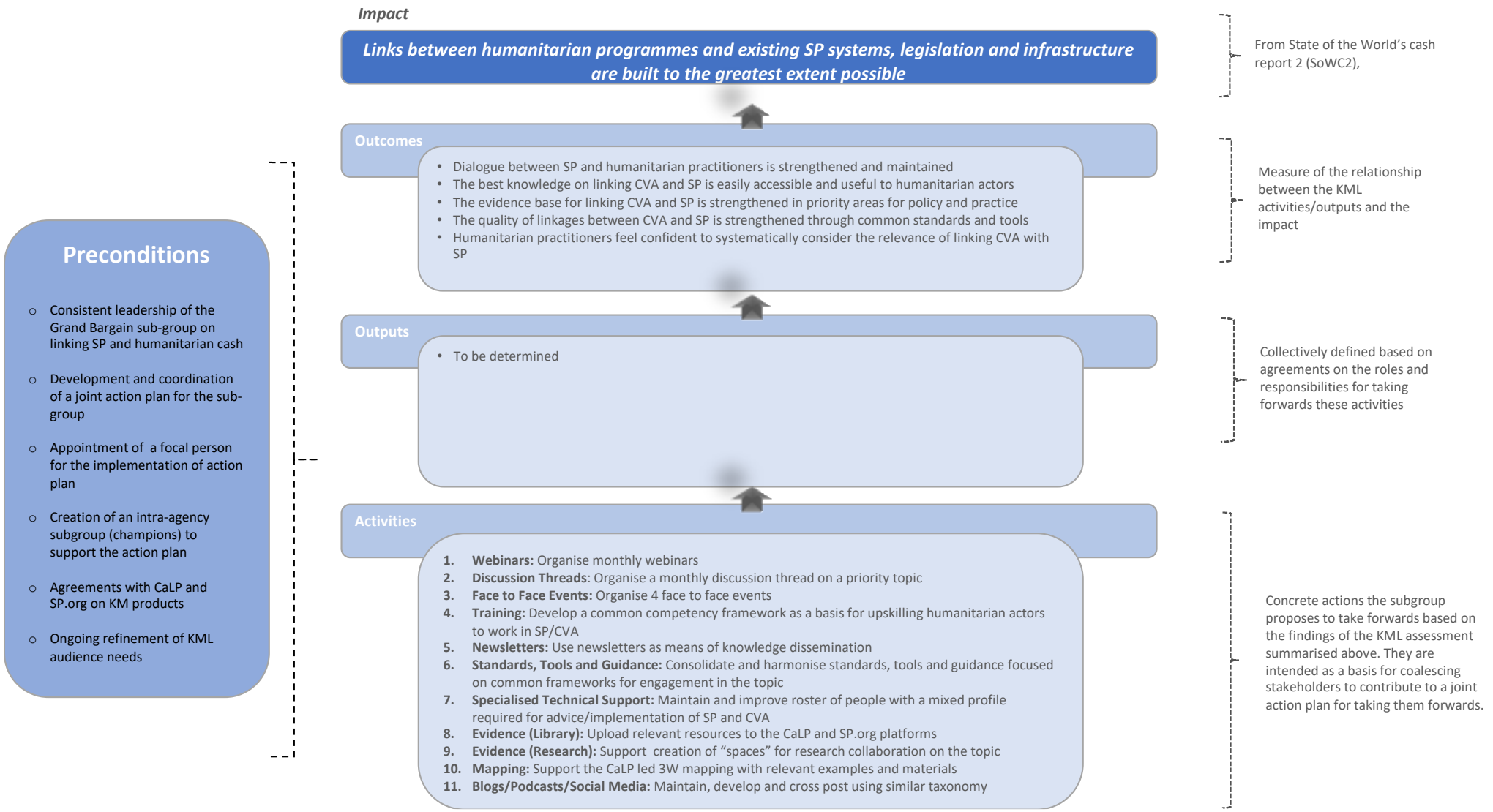
The recommendations are based on the assessment findings summarised above. They are intended to best meet audience needs and integrate priority themes, considering the importance of blending learning. The activities in the theory of change below (including the pre-conditions) are the recommendations. The action plan (template provided in Annex 1) will be discussed with subgroup stakeholders in a workshop to jointly amend and populate who will lead on which function.

3. Linking CVA and SP– the KML theory of change

The theory of change below depicts the relationship between the KML activities proposed by the sub-group, KML outcomes, and the broader intended impact of improved collaboration between CVA and SP practitioners. It is intended to cover the period till the end of 2021.

Please note that the **impact** statement is direct language of one of the actions within CaLP's Global Framework for Action, which is the basis for the State of the World's cash report 2 (SoWC2), which will be published in 2020. This means that progress towards this metric will be analysed in the SoW2 and going forwards.

[2] A full analysis of the platforms can be found in the assessment report (email nkukrety@unicef.org for access to the report)
[3] Service accessed through DfID but supporting the wider community


Impact
Links between humanitarian programmes and existing SP systems, legislation and infrastructure are built to the greatest extent possible
From State of the World's cash report 2 (SoWC2),
Outcomes
Dialogue between SP and humanitarian practitioners is strengthened and maintained
The best knowledge on linking CVA and SP is easily accessible and useful to humanitarian actors
The evidence base for linking CVA and SP is strengthened in priority areas for policy and practice
The quality of linkages between CVA and SP is strengthened through common standards and tools
Humanitarian practitioners feel confident to systematically consider the relevance of linking CVA with SP
Measure of the relationship between the KML activities/outputs and the impact
Outputs
To be determined
Collectively defined based on agreements on the roles and responsibilities for taking forwards these activities
Activities
1. Webinars: Organise monthly webinars
2. Discussion Threads: Organise a monthly discussion thread on a priority topic
3. Face to Face Events: Organise 4 face to face events
4. Training: Develop a common competency framework as a basis for upskilling humanitarian actors to work in SP/CVA
5. Newsletters: Use newsletters as means of knowledge dissemination
6. Standards, Tools and Guidance: Consolidate and harmonise standards, tools and guidance focused on common frameworks for engagement in the topic
7. Specialised Technical Support: Maintain and improve roster of people with a mixed profile required for advice/implementation of SP and CVA
8. Evidence (Library): Upload relevant resources to the CaLP and SP.org platforms
9. Evidence (Research): Support creation of "spaces" for research collaboration on the topic
10. Mapping: Support the CaLP led 3W mapping with relevant examples and materials
11. Blogs/Podcasts/Social Media: Maintain, develop and cross post using similar taxonomy
Concrete actions the subgroup proposes to take forwards based on the findings of the KML assessment summarised above. They are intended as a basis for coalescing stakeholders to contribute to a joint action plan for taking them forwards.
Preconditions
Consistent leadership of the Grand Bargain sub-group on linking SP and humanitarian cash
Development and coordination of a joint action plan for the sub-group
Appointment of a focal person for the implementation of action plan
Creation of an intra-agency subgroup (champions) to support the action plan
Agreements with CaLP and SP.org on KM products
Ongoing refinement of KML audience needs

4. Resourcing and partnerships

The implementation of the Theory of Change (ToC) will be overseen by the subgroup co-leads, under the leadership of UNICEF. This will be a highly collaborative process, which is reliant on the engagement of a wide range of interested stakeholders.

Commitments made towards the work plan will contribute to the outputs in the ToC/action plan. ---. To date, the subgroup co-leads have committed to providing coordination and resourcing for certain activities, whilst other activities require leadership and resourcing beyond the subgroup.

With these commitments in mind, you are encouraged to contribute to the implementation of the action plan and highlight resources (financial and human) which you can contribute to its delivery.

Annex 1. Action Plan Template

The action plan template below offers top line recommendations by each function, and where possible gives indications on priority, investment and prosed start and end dates. The action plan will be discussed with subgroup stakeholders to jointly amend and populate who will lead on which function.

#	Function	Action to take	Priority	Investment	Timeframe	Start date	End date
1	Webinars	Organise monthly webinars on SP.org	High	Medium	Short	01/03/20	01/12/20
2	Discussion Threads	Organise a monthly discussion thread on CaLP on a priority topic (linked to the webinar)	Medium	Medium	Short	01/03/20	01/12/20
3	Face to Face Events	Organise 4 face to face events over a 12 month period starting June 2020; this could include learning events, workshops, a side event at a conference or a networking event	High		Medium	01/06/20	01/12/21
4	Training	Develop a common competency framework as a basis for upskilling humanitarian actors to work in SP and CVA	High		Medium	01/04/20	01/08/20
5	Newsletters	Use newsletters as means of knowledge dissemination	High	Low	Short	01/03/20	01/12/21
6	Standards, Tools and Guidance	Consolidate and harmonise standards, tools and guidance focused on common frameworks for engagement in the topic	High		Medium	01/06/20	01/06/21
7	Specialised Tech Support	Maintain and improve roster of people with a mixed profile required for advice/implementation of SP and CVA	High		Immediate	01/03/20	01/12/21
8	Evidence: Library	Upload relevant resources to the CaLP and SP.org platforms	High	Low	Immediate	01/03/20	01/12/21
9	Evidence: Research	Support the creation of “spaces” for research collaboration on the topic	Medium	Medium	Immediate	01/03/20	01/12/21
10	Mapping	Support the CaLP led 3W mapping with relevant examples and materials	Medium	Low	Immediate	01/01/20	01/12/21
11	Blogs/Podcasts/Social Media	Maintain, develop and cross post using similar taxonomy (#hashtags) on different forums as much as possible	High		Short	01/06/20	01/12/21