

# LINKING HUMANITARIAN CASH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR AN EFFECTIVE CASH RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

To effectively mitigate the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, action to realise the [Grand Bargain](#) commitments to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response and 'leave no one behind' is vital. We, representatives of donors, the UN, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and INGOs comprising the Grand Bargain Cash Workstream's Subgroup on Linking Humanitarian Cash and Social Protection, call on Grand Bargain signatories to use all means at their disposal to act on the following:



**Scale up the use of cash where appropriate, in both the humanitarian and social protection response, to meet the needs of people affected by COVID-19:** Beyond

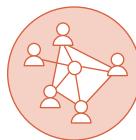
the immediate health impacts, the COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented socio-economic crisis. The pandemic is affecting individuals and households, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable including girls, women and displaced populations, but also those at risk of falling into poverty. Impacts include reduced household incomes and purchasing power, increased unemployment and underemployment, increased expenses for health, education and basic needs, increased food insecurity and use of negative coping strategies, as well as greater protection and psychosocial risks. Where feasible and appropriate, and in line with humanitarian and accountability principles and preferences of affected populations, humanitarian cash and social protection should be delivered and scaled up to meet these needs, alongside other forms of assistance. Conditionalities and restrictions on the use of cash should be removed wherever possible to promote safety, timeliness and maximise flexibility. As cash may not be appropriate in all situations, planning for in-kind assistance remains essential.



**Deliver humanitarian cash by using, linking or aligning with local and national social protection systems, where possible and appropriate:** Governments around the world

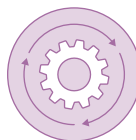
are introducing, adapting and expanding their social protection programmes and using cash transfers in response to COVID-19. Many countries where humanitarian responses to COVID-19 are being planned or implemented have

existing social protection schemes, whilst others are rapidly establishing them. Implementing actors should coordinate and link humanitarian cash with these social protection responses where appropriate and possible. Depending on the context this can reduce duplication and enhance capacity, coverage of needs, timeliness of assistance and inclusion, to help leave no one behind. Donors should coordinate humanitarian and development funding for a coherent and inclusive response that supports immediate humanitarian needs while assisting longer-term recovery of affected populations.



**Rapidly undertake coordinated preparedness and planning to ensure cash can be used to best effect:** Where feasible, humanitarian

actors, governments and development partners should collaborate to map and assess the strengths and constraints of social protection programmes, and their underlying operational systems and institutions, to explore potential linkages. This will help determine the feasibility and appropriateness of linking humanitarian cash with social protection, identify where common mechanisms for delivery of humanitarian cash and government social protection can be used, and effectively plan a coordinated response. Such efforts are complementary to and should not divert attention from planning for other critical aspects of the response, such as health and WASH.



**Partner with local and national organisations and reinforce capacities as needed, to support effective and timely implementation of a humanitarian cash response linked with**

**social protection systems:** This is particularly important in the COVID-19 response. This includes local government structures, Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, social partners, national NGOs, community-based and women's organisations and private sector actors. Many of these organisations have links with communities, expertise in humanitarian cash and/or experience engaging with governments on social protection. These partnerships can strengthen accountability to affected populations, help mitigate risks of social tensions and support social cohesion.