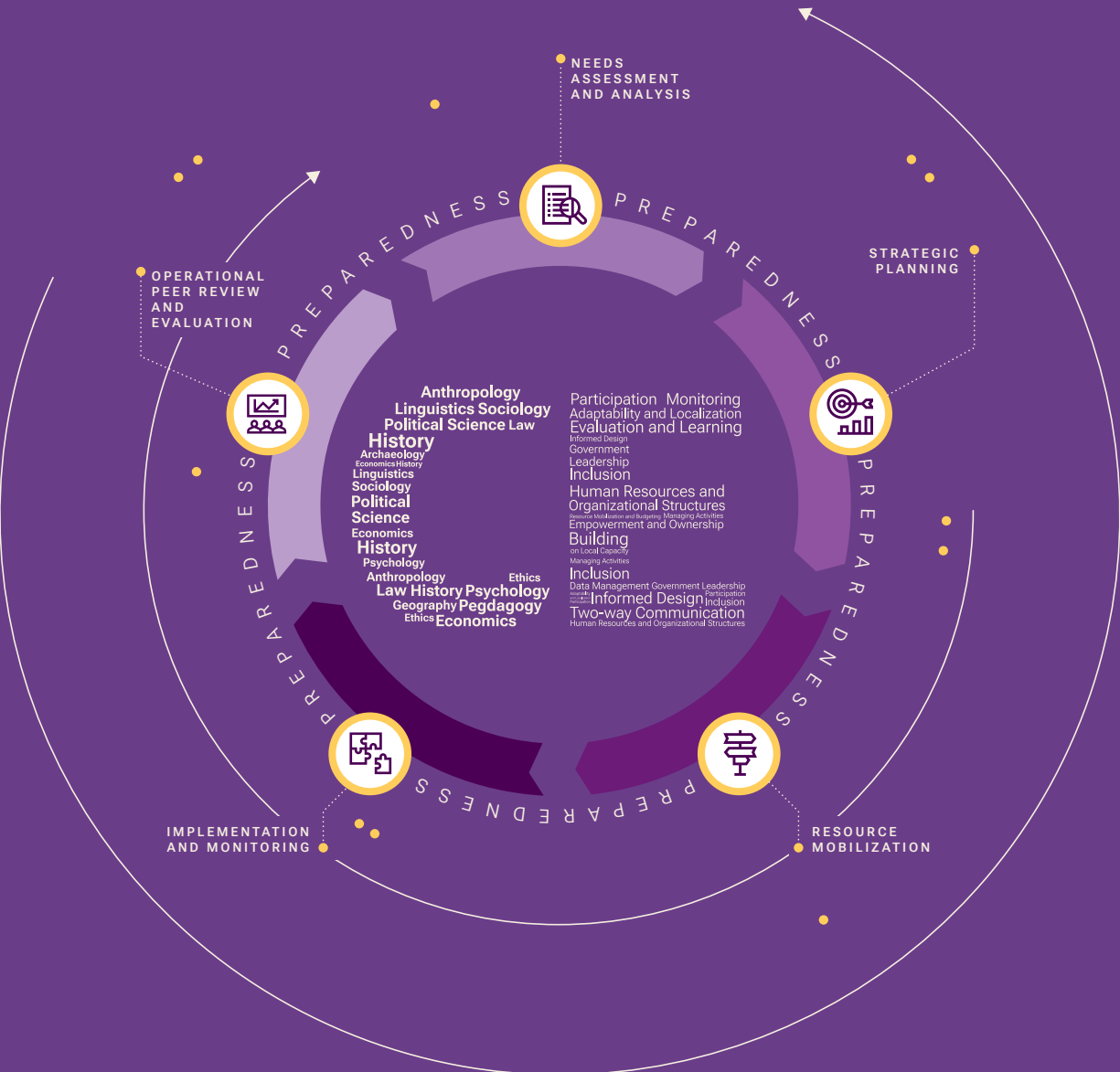


SOCIAL SCIENCES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND MAPPING OF SOCIAL SCIENCE TRAINING FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN CONFLICT AND HAZARDS



Social Sciences for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action

Capacity needs assessment and mapping
of social science training for community
engagement in humanitarian action in
conflict and hazards

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Contents

Foreword	2
Executive summary	4
Acknowledgments	10
Abbreviations and words	12
1.0 Introduction	14
1.1 Context of the SS4CE in HA project and Capacity Development subproject	15
1.2 The SS4CE in HA project	17
1.3 Subproject organization and aims	18
1.4 Scope of the report	20
1.5 Structure of the report	20
2.0 Project methodology	21
2.1 Capacity needs assessment	22
2.2 Mapping of relevant trainings	25
2.3 TWG meetings as part of the co-constructive process	26
2.4 Ethics	26
2.5 Limitations	27
Key findings	27
3.0 Mapping of SS4CE in HA trainings	28
3.1 Overall mapping of trainings	30
3.2 Detailed analysis of most promising trainings for SS4CE in HA relevance	30
4.0 How the social sciences can contribute to community engagement in humanitarian action	35
4.1 The social science 'lens'	36
4.2 Usage of different social science disciplines	41
5.0 Knowledge transfer and the application of the social sciences in community engagement	45
5.1 Different understandings, perspectives, language – a need for translation and a common space	46
5.2 Ambiguity about the social sciences and what they can contribute in community engagement	48
5.3 Temporality – (not so) slow social science in emergency response	49
5.4 Standardization	50
6.0 Institutional organization, structure and power	51
6.1 Localization, decolonization and the participation of communities	52
6.2 Efforts are dispersed, not in dialogue with one another and not sustained	54
6.3 Top-down decision making and resourcing	54
6.4 Issues of gender	56
6.5 SS4CE to support power shifts in humanitarianism and development	57
7.0 Recommendations for SS4CE in HA	58
8.0 Conclusion	66
References	68
Annexes	69
Annex I: Search terms used for SS4CE in the different languages	70
Annex II: Summary of content, target audience and learned capacities of most promising hybrid trainings in SS4CE	71
Annex III: Competency Framework for Social Science for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action (SS4CE in HA)	75

Foreword

Looking Ahead:
Bridging theory
and practice

The Social Science for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action Project (SS4CE in HA) is funded by the USAID BHA. As envisioned, the project has made substantive progress to systematically align social science informed CE actions to humanitarian architecture, tailored to different elements and enablers of the humanitarian programme cycle (HPC). The main objectives are focused on co-creation of global goods, through intentionally designed collaborative platforms that connect system-wide existing mechanisms, and harnessed active participation of humanitarian organizations, academic institutions and the donor community. The processes undertaken for the development of global goods are also further framed in the 'decolonization of aid agenda' and contribute to its implementation which are at the forefront of driving more people-centred and community-led humanitarian and development programmes.

Leveraging on the initial, exclusive Public Health Emergency (PHE) focus, due to the COVID-19 response, the SS4CE project developed a multi-pronged governance structure to inform all humanitarian crises (e.g., natural hazards, conflicts and PHEs). This governance structure also provides technical oversight on the development of SS4CE global goods while positioning with key humanitarian stakeholders, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), clusters and committees, for the uptake and mainstreaming within the humanitarian programme processes.

Capacity needs assessment, and mapping of SS4CE trainings, in HA for conflicts and natural hazards is a partnership with Sonar-Global, Amsterdam Institute of Global Health and Development (AIGHD) and members of Technical Working

Group-2 (TWG-2). This assessment was envisioned to guide strengthening of global and regional demand and capacity for social science integration into humanitarian programming for improved engagement of affected and at-risk communities. It challenges the status quo of humanitarian programmes wherein the affected communities' participation continues to be notional and reinforces capacity gaps to engage communities in their social-cultural realms. It underpins the need for HA to be more adaptive, contextually specific, sensitive to vulnerabilities and power relations, and is planned in consultation with affected communities and local institutions, based on social and interdisciplinary science evidence. Social sciences inform CE, not only in addressing participation issues and immediate needs of the affected communities but also strengthening community systems where marginalized groups are equal partners in finding solutions, having wider knowledge and understanding of social science disciplines, conceptual frameworks (e.g., historical, political, sociological, economical), and providing pathways to deal with systemic fallacies (e.g., social justice, gender equity, decolonization and localization).

We hope that this capacity mapping will be a call to reform CE processes, especially on the front of leveraging the benefits of social sciences for challenging humanitarian contexts. It will bridge the gap between theory and practice, and substantiate it with long-term perspectives, long-term-funding and partnerships that are required for 'communities to lead a central role in humanitarian action'. In today's world, this will be of utmost importance to respond effectively.

Sonar Global, Tamara Giles-Vernick
UNICEF, Vincent Petit

Key deliverables for the project are:

- Landscape report
- Ethics and Data Sharing Mapping Review
- Codes of Conduct Mapping Review
- Mapping of Capacity Development for the application of SS4CE in HA in Conflicts and Hazards
- Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Community Engagement
- Compendium of Case Studies on the Use of community engagement to Inform Decision Making
- Desk Review of Community Engagement Indicators Across Humanitarian Response Plans (2022) and Documentation on Community Engagement
- Vision Paper on Community Engagement for Accountability to Affected Populations and Social and Behavior Change.
- Common Principles and Code of Conduct for the Application of SS4CE in HA

Executive Summary



Introduction

This report describes the findings of an assessment of needs, gaps and capacity resources for integrating the social sciences for community engagement (CE) in humanitarian action (HA) and programming, including a derived competency framework for SS4CE. These activities were conducted by Sonar-Global's partner, the Amsterdam Institute for Global Health and Development (AIGHD) with support by Institut Pasteur, for the Social Sciences for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action (SS4CE in HA) project led by UNICEF, with funding from the U.S. Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance. The focus of the project and this report have been on integrating social science approaches for CE, primarily in conflict and hazard settings. The report is aimed at humanitarian practitioners and programmers at all levels (e.g., field, senior, HQ), donors, and social scientists working in applied humanitarian as well as academic settings. It intends to further inform the process of integrating and mainstreaming the social sciences in CE in HA.

A mixed-method approach was used, which included a preliminary scoping of peer-reviewed literature, interviews, a survey, a focus group discussion (FGD), a mapping of training resources and consultation with social scientists, humanitarian practitioners and community actors. This resulted in the identification of capacity needs and gaps, a database and analysis of existing SS4CE trainings and a competency framework. The body of the report presents the identified needs and gaps, and summarizes available capacity resources with details of selected SS4CE trainings and the competency framework in the Annexes.

Findings

Analysis of trainings: Of the 1,377 potential trainings that were identified, 60 had a title or description containing social sciences, CE and/or conflicts/hazards. Many of these were relatively superficial in either social science or CE content. Analysing their content, eight promising trainings were identified with high relevance to CE, social sciences and humanitarian content. These trainings appear dominantly focusing on public health, communication, and legal issues.

The social science lens: It was expressed that social scientists contribute specific values to CE, such as sensitivity, empathy, and communication skills, along with a critical understanding of a broader cultural, economic, and sociopolitical context that was referred to by many as 'the social science lens'. SS4CE is viewed as foremost about supporting community participation in decision making and data collection, ensuring a people-focused response, and including in-depth contextual knowledge in humanitarian action. Besides specific knowledge and skills from the social sciences, soft 'human' skills and competencies are also important in applying SS4CE in HA. These are, to some extent, person-driven and seen as hard to teach or develop.

Usage of different social science disciplines: Among survey respondents sociology and anthropology were the social science disciplines listed to have been used most frequently in CE in HA, followed by psychology and communication sciences. Political science is seen as beneficial mostly by social science researchers. Law and journalism are seen as beneficial by humanitarian practitioners and programme managers. Law and economics were more listed as relevant to disaster work and political science as relevant for conflicts. In general, SS4CE was noted to be particularly important during the "Needs Assessment & Analysis" and "Strategic Planning" phases. It is implicit that if SS4CE is integrated in the analysis and planning it will be articulated and integrated in the implementation of humanitarian programmes.

Different understandings, perspectives and language – a need for translation and a common space: While social sciences focus on comprehensive knowledge production, information collected in HA, in time-pressed contexts, needs to be 'fit for purpose' for humanitarian practitioners on the ground. This makes for a difficult transition from social science training to the language and operational speed of HA. The use of social science jargon could be restrictive in effectively communicating with humanitarian practitioners and affected populations and in describing the social complexities of the crisis. Social scientists are also typically not familiar with the way humanitarian programmes and how the system works, impacting the relevance of the knowledge they produce and its applicability. Differences between different humanitarian programming levels and location (e.g., Global North versus South) also need to be taken into account. Beyond the translation between social science language and perspectives, and the language and needs of humanitarian practitioners, a platform for common language or understanding could be provided by a shared space

created through, for example, multidisciplinary or 'blended' teams where different areas of expertise come together.

Ambiguity about the social sciences and what they can contribute in community engagement: From participants' experiences, it is often unclear what the social sciences can concretely contribute to CE in HA and how. It is also unclear what different social science disciplines can contribute in an interdisciplinary approach. Humanitarian practitioners might already use social science principles and tools, although they would not always refer to them as such, or ground them in social science theories and methodologies.

Temporality – (not so) slow social science in emergency response: CE relies on understanding context, building trust and sustainable (working) relationships in, and with, communities. Understanding such context as part of social science research can take years. It can be extremely helpful to have a network in a particular setting that one can connect to, to 'hit the ground running'. While action during a crisis needs to be rapid, dedication to the crisis throughout its cycle (including recovery and preparing for possible future contingencies), including funding, needs to be longitudinal. To social scientists, rapid ('good enough') collecting and reporting may jeopardise the robustness of their data; they fear to leave things out or not get it exactly right.

The standardization challenge: Academia-based social scientists tend to speak out against standardization, as it may utilise the social sciences to provide a sense of legitimacy to imposing a fixed framework on individual contexts. Instead, they argue that social sciences should help to provide context-sensitive interpretations that refine, adapt or challenge standardized approaches offered by global or international agencies and donors. Humanitarian practitioners, on the other hand, see standardization as a means to warrant the quality and efficacy of humanitarian programming, and see in it an opportunity for the systematic integration of social science approaches in SOPs or protocols, budgeting and project planning. They emphasize that it is important for social scientists to know how such SOPs as well as other humanitarian protocols (such as the Humanitarian Program Cycle) and standards operate, to know when and how social science methods and insights can inform these and steer steps in these protocols that can facilitate effective and inclusive community engagement. Accordingly a compromise towards the 'standardization for contextualization', recognizes the significance and need for community engagement to be systematically applied to identify nuances that expand the likelihood that communities lead on issues that affect them, especially during humanitarian action.



Localization, decolonization and the participation

of communities: While CE is well implemented from an instrumental perspective, it is not recognized by respondents as a transformative activity leading to localization and democratization. Two-thirds of survey respondents working on disease outbreaks indicated they had worked for a locally led or funded project, but only half of respondents who worked in conflict settings, and only one third working in hazard settings, had worked for locally led or funded projects. Community inclusion in social science research occurs in data collection and analysis, but still needs to improve in research design and dissemination. Communities are often not included in grant proposal writing, even if donors ask for community actors to be included. In addition, community leaders may be partisan, not representing all community members. For the sustained engagement of local actors, the support of international organizations, in terms of resources (i.e., funding) and capacity strengthening, was highlighted as essential to 'institutionalize localization'. Local actors often lack sufficient training in project management.

Efforts are dispersed, not in dialogue with one another and not sustained:

There are several examples of multiple and/or parallel efforts in training and data collection. At the same time, there is lack of oversight and participants worry that each independent effort to collect social science information only provides a partial picture depending on areas of expertise, organizational mandates and thematic clusters. The effectiveness of CE interventions is not measured, for lack of tools, time and/or intention, especially in the case of interventions with a project-focused, time-based character as is the case during most crisis character. The lack of follow-up also occurs when it comes to the use of capacity development tools. With trainings, efforts are often not sustained, and mechanisms to reflect on what trainees have learned and assessments on how they apply the knowledge and skills from training are lacking.

Top-down decision making and resourcing: There is a paucity of resources and efforts directed to CE in the evaluation and preparedness phases which appear related to issues of power. Donor understanding and perspectives of humanitarian action, research needs, and design, timeline and outcomes affect funding, prioritized interventions and programming

and ultimately set the agenda. Decisions made at the top not only have great effects on the life cycle of projects, but also on human resource decisions. Hiring practices guide the composition of teams and have a great effect on the expertise present within and of the team, the dialogue taking place and the approaches that this opens up. For example, women seem to have received fewer opportunities for social science work in CE. While multidisciplinary teams illustrate the value of social sciences for CE in HA, work still needs to be done, at the top, to hand over some control to communities or local actors and to allow more time and funding for activities that might not always render immediate, measurable results. To stimulate donors and management, as well as hiring managers, towards more inclusive and multidisciplinary practices, it is vital they understand the contributions SS4CE and participatory community-led practices can bring. Donors and management don't fully understand social science or CE needs or their value. An SS4CE advocacy culture, in which contributions of the social science and CE in HA are made explicit and their wider inclusion or mainstreaming can help decision makers, particularly donors and organizational leadership, can help them understand what is required.

SS4CE to support power shifts in humanitarianism and development:

There is a general critique concerning the role of humanitarianism and the tasks that it might maintain which could partly be solved by local actors taking up these roles. In addition, in many crisis contexts, there has been an encroachment of humanitarian agencies in the sphere of long-term or ongoing engagement, forming a structural presence. Yet humanitarian organizations do not collaborate on structural local efforts as they are guided by core humanitarian principles such as neutrality and impartiality, while development actors are considered partners with longer-term engagements with national governments and other local actors. There is little investment in how CE can boost preparedness. One of the most important things that needs to happen for inclusive, localized SS4CE is a shift in power and responsibility to local actors responding to, and planning for, humanitarian crises. A shift in thinking is needed towards sustainable, resilient and locally based systems in which international (humanitarian) organizations would play a supporting role or as one participant noted: "humanitarian organizations need to phase themselves out."



Conclusions

Social science approaches can help unlock community perspectives, needs and capacities. Social science methods and insights can generate operational knowledge and inform the redesign of methods and objectives of humanitarian interventions by providing an understanding of context and of community dynamics and beliefs. They offer rich insights and a special attentiveness to context, but the social science perspective needs to be translated for humanitarian operational relevance, for example by faster data collection, analysis and reporting, but also by shorter reporting in clear, unambiguous language. Shared language and understanding between the social sciences and humanitarian practitioners will benefit SS4CE in HA. Social scientists can benefit from training in the mechanisms of the humanitarian programme cycle, while humanitarians can benefit from training in social science methods and skills for data collection and analysis, as well as a different outlook – a ‘social science lens’. A SS4CE approach can help make visible community experiences and the resources needed for solutions, mobilize community knowledge and networks, and encourage institutional actors to centre people in programming.

Multidisciplinary approaches are key, as are collaborative efforts between different actors to improve coordination and knowledge exchange. Hiring staff from different disciplines for teams is helpful. On a management level, a cultural shift to valuing social science contributions across different stakeholder systems or institutions, with less short-term, project-bound investments and more support for local and structural efforts is key to stimulate sustainable community-centred efforts. To achieve sustainable change in crisis governance, effectively proven methodological approaches such as those from the social sciences, as well as community knowledge and capacity, need to be systematically integrated into all phases and levels of humanitarian crisis governance.

Recommendations

We close with seven major recommendations to inform and strengthen the integration of social sciences for CE in HA and programming in the fields of conflicts and hazards. In operationalizing and facilitating the uptake of these recommendations it is further recommended that existing platforms and partnerships with capacity development mandates are leveraged rather than establishing, or developing, new initiatives:

- Create a shared space with common language where understandings, language and approaches are exchanged, including developing different pathways for capacity development, and resource support (e.g., focal points) depending on stakeholders.
- Develop field-based training infrastructure on SS4CE in disasters and conflicts.
- Develop a better understanding of the specific contributions of the social sciences to CE in HA.
- Promote the effective and timely use of SS4CE within the often time-sensitive emergency context of HA.
- Develop context-sensitive principles that leave room for adaptation.
- Continue to build a more holistic, inter/multidisciplinary social science approach useful to HA.
- Advocate for sustained, coordinated and collaborative SS4CE efforts, defining clear accountabilities of different stakeholders.

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states on humanitarian response, the Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS) from Uttarakhand, the Evangelical Fellowship of India Commission on Relief (EFICOR), the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI), PALA, Doctors For You, and the Dhan Foundation.

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Abbreviations and Words

AAP	Accountability to affected populations
CE	Community Engagement
DRRM	Disaster Reduction and Risk Management
HA	Humanitarian Action
HPC	Humanitarian Programme Cycle
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PHE	Public Health in Emergencies
RAP	Rapid Appraisal Procedure
RCCE	Risk Communication and Community Engagement
SBC	Social and Behavioral Change
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SS4CE in HA	Social Sciences for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

Words:

A note on use of the word '*trainings*': In this report we divert from the use suggested by the Oxford English Dictionary, which does not recognise *trainings* in the plural form but only *training* an uncountable noun. We found there is no suitable alternative for the specific, sometimes multiple, units through which people are handed instructions, practices or exercises to develop knowledge and skills. *Courses* might come close, but not every training is a course. *Training package* might imply a set of courses. Just using *training* might cause confusion, as we're sometimes speaking about training in general, as an uncountable noun and the act of giving or receiving an instruction, and *trainings* as specific courses, workshops, packages of a set of instructions that are used in giving this instruction. We have therefore opted to use *training* and *trainings* to make that distinction.

1.0 Introduction



This report presents the findings and recommendations that stem from a year-long collaboration effort, conducted by the Sonar-Global consortium in partnership with UNICEF's SBC section global team, looking at needs, gaps and training resources identified for capacity development to (further) integrate the social sciences for CE in HA, specifically in the context of conflicts and hazards. The project mapped and analysed existing trainings¹ developed to integrate social science approaches for CE in HA. Additionally, a needs assessment comprising interviews, a survey and FGD explored what it is that social scientists, as well as humanitarian practitioners, need for effectively integrating social science methods and approaches in CE. This report summarizes the findings of the mapping and needs assessment. The findings are complemented by an XLS database with existing trainings. Based on the results, recommendations are suggested to inform and strengthen the integration of social sciences for CE in HA and programming in the context of conflicts and hazards.

This project component was led by the Amsterdam Institute of Global Health and Development (AIGHD) in coordination with UNICEF's Social and Behavior Change Section, supported by a Technical Working Group comprised of expert practitioners and social scientists in the humanitarian field, and specifically in contexts of conflicts and disasters. The project is part of a larger collaboration, initiated by UNICEF, to enhance the social sciences' active participation in CE in humanitarian contexts, called "Social Science for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action", or SS4CE in HA. Stemming from the signalled need for HA to be more guided by community experiences, knowledge and leadership, as well as (local) understandings of the contexts of humanitarian crises and the humanitarian system and responses, the SS4CE project seeks to gain insights into how social sciences can systematically form part of community-centric HA.

1.1 Context of the SS4CE in HA project and Capacity Development subproject

CE informed by social science approaches, methods, evidence and skills is expected to result in more holistic and effective action and programming (Batniji et al. 2006; Stellmach et al 2018) and contribute to the systematic integration of affected communities in humanitarian processes. The social sciences generally provide a much needed understanding of structures,

power, processes, beliefs, norms, attitudes, and behaviours in different contexts (Wilkinson et al. 2017; Le Marcis et al. 2019; Bardosh et al. 2020). Through its various disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, political sciences, economics, psychology or history, the social sciences can help populations to strengthen their role in voicing and addressing their needs, and provide tools to stakeholders including communities, professionals, consultants or policy makers, to better integrate communities in the preparation, response or recovery from humanitarian crises (Duncan 2014).

Humanitarian settings of hazards and conflicts often present unique scientific challenges and conditions. Studies suggest that relief efforts are often disorganized, and that they could be more effective if social science based evidence is included, a cadre of rigorously trained humanitarian professionals familiar with social science techniques are enlisted early in programme planning and coordination, providing social science based evidence from the onset of the humanitarian crisis (Morton et al. 2011; Woodward et al. 2017). Studies show that high quality social scientific research in humanitarian settings is possible using flexible methodologies and with the support of a local collaborative network of academic and humanitarian organization partners (Maffi & Groenendijk 2022). Applied social sciences could be employed to help establish dialogue, build trust with vulnerable and affected populations, ensure their participation in processes, navigate ethical difficulties both with humanitarians and communities, collect data on local systems of knowledge and community perceptions, and ensure that findings will contribute to assisting communities affected by a humanitarian crisis. Because humanitarian programmes are not implemented in isolation but exist in a social arena where actors, context and policy are all intertwined, social science approaches are crucial to understand how these dynamics affect people, the evolution of the crisis and consequent humanitarian endeavours. Social scientists are also of utmost importance to show the need to take local contexts into consideration and to support humanitarian teams in the most appropriate ways.

Although (the application of) social science research practices is critical for effective CE and for overcoming challenges, a research gap in the humanitarian contexts of hazards and conflicts exists (Maffi & Groenendijk 2022). Recent efforts to strengthen CE in humanitarian programmes has, through a UNICEF-led interagency consultation process (2018-2019), led to a set of CE Minimum Standards (UNICEF 2020).²



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These CE Minimum Standards seek to establish a common language for governments, local populations, donors, implementing actors and policy makers to facilitate the adoption

and acceptance of the range of practices falling under the CE umbrella. **The UNICEF consultation arrived at the following definition of CE:**

“CE is an approach to directly involve local populations in all aspects of decision-making, implementation, and policy. Building on a participatory approach, CE can strengthen local capacities, community structures, and local ownership to improve transparency, accountability, and optimal resource allocations across diverse settings. When done well, CE improves the likelihood that communities lead on issues that affect them, access and use services, improve their well-being, and build resilience. CE expands the influence of local actors, facilitates the acceptance of information and public education and communication, and builds on existing local capacities. CE promotes the accountability of development and humanitarian actors by facilitating and structuring ongoing communication on the appropriateness and effectiveness of initiatives.” —UNICEF 2020

While this understanding of CE is used in this project for operational purposes, what is meant by CE and how it is understood and integrated within an organization’s actions still differs greatly amongst stakeholders in the field. In addition, what exactly social science for CE means is an additional issue of debate with differing views.

The SS4CE in HA Capacity Development subproject aims to develop and strengthen the skills, abilities and processes of professionals, relevant institutions and organizations, and community members and networks to integrate and apply

social sciences in CE processes. In the humanitarian context this also means taking into account the time-pressured character of conflicts, hazards and disease outbreaks. Gaps and needs are expressed at multiple levels, including by social scientists working in academia or in the field, by humanitarian practitioners including local professionals, as well as by community representatives or networks, and taking into account different stages of the humanitarian programme cycle (HPC), during humanitarian response but also for preparedness and early recovery.

1.2 The SS4CE in HA project

The SS4CE in HA project is convened by UNICEF’s SBC section with the support of the USAID BHA. The project started in October 2020 and will end in December 2022.

The project objectives are to:

- i. Develop global goods to strengthen social science capacity and CE programming.
- ii. Establish shared principles for social science for CE ethics, data sharing, and codes of conduct.
- iii. Improve CE in HA data and uptake.

A process to identify SS4CE in HA global goods was undertaken in 2021. This process consisted of a landscape

analysis, three partner consultations with the WHO Social Science Working Group, AFRO and Social Science trainings for Humanitarian Contexts, in which 83 participants engaged. Additionally, a survey amongst 100 experts and practitioners, social scientists, and representatives from civil society organizations and governments collected insights regarding needs and gaps, as well as demand, for social science for CE in HA. The findings from the landscape analysis and the survey helped to identify eighteen global goods. Harmonizing and prioritizing these in dialogue with key partners led to an eventual list of the top five priority global goods (UNICEF 2021), shown in Table 2. Three technical working groups (TWGs) were formed to organize efforts and stakeholders around these global goods.

TABLE 2: Top five global goods

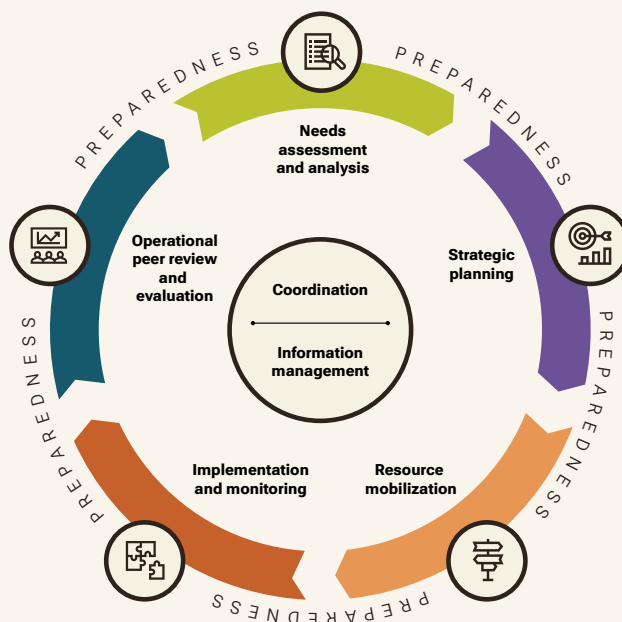
1. Data ethics and code of conduct	Global good 2	Common principles regarding social science ethics and data sharing in humanitarian contexts, inclusive of operations, operational research, and academic research	
	Global good 5	Code of conduct for social scientists working on CE in humanitarian contexts	
2. SS4CE capacity development	Global good 3	CE training packages for frontline workers	1. Mapping of SS4CE capacity needs for humanitarian practitioners and social scientists with recommendations on contributions from different social science disciplines in the HPC 2. SS4CE training database in Excel of existing training modules for humanitarian practitioners
	Global good 4	Training modules for humanitarian practitioners on using social science to strengthen CE	
3. CE data systems, tools and guides	Global good 1	CE data system tools and guides, including evaluation (Includes mapping of CE data systems, parameters to define CE data, CE Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Vulnerability Assessment tool)	

The second of the three TWGs is concerned particularly with strengthening the capacities of SS4CE across different humanitarian contexts and throughout programming. TWG-2 was formed within the project to drive the agenda for strengthening the capacities of SS4CE across various

humanitarian contexts and programming. This TWG includes humanitarian practitioners and social scientists from various disciplines from humanitarian organizations, international NGOs, and academic institutes.

Box 1: The Humanitarian Program Cycle (HPC)

The SS4CE in HA project seeks to advance CE through the integration of social science in all stages of HA, i.e., in all stages of the Humanitarian Program Cycle (HPC). The HPC is a tool to facilitate the preparation and provision of humanitarian assistance through five consecutive phases: (i) needs assessment and analysis (i.e., conducted collaboratively with all relevant actors, including from the local and community level); (ii) strategic response planning (i.e., the creation of management tools and strategy plans); (iii) resource mobilisation; (iv) implementation and monitoring; and (v) operational review & evaluation (i.e., both independent and internal assessment). Moreover, the HPC aims to foster accountability, funding, a focus on the vulnerable and a needs-based approach (OCHA, n.d.).



1.3 Subproject organization and aims

A dedicated research team affiliated with the Sonar-Global project, supported by the AIGHD, developed a set of complementary research activities to gather insights into the capacity development gaps and needs for SS4CE in HA. This subproject was carried out in close consultation with TWG-2 members and other stakeholders, consisting of an initial literature review, needs assessment and mapping of trainings, leading to a database and this final report. As shown in Figure 1, this process was co-constructed in collaboration with members of TWG-2. This process was jointly established by consensus of TWG-2 to understand what already resources already exist, instead of embarking on further development of more resources and making assumptions based on perceived gaps.

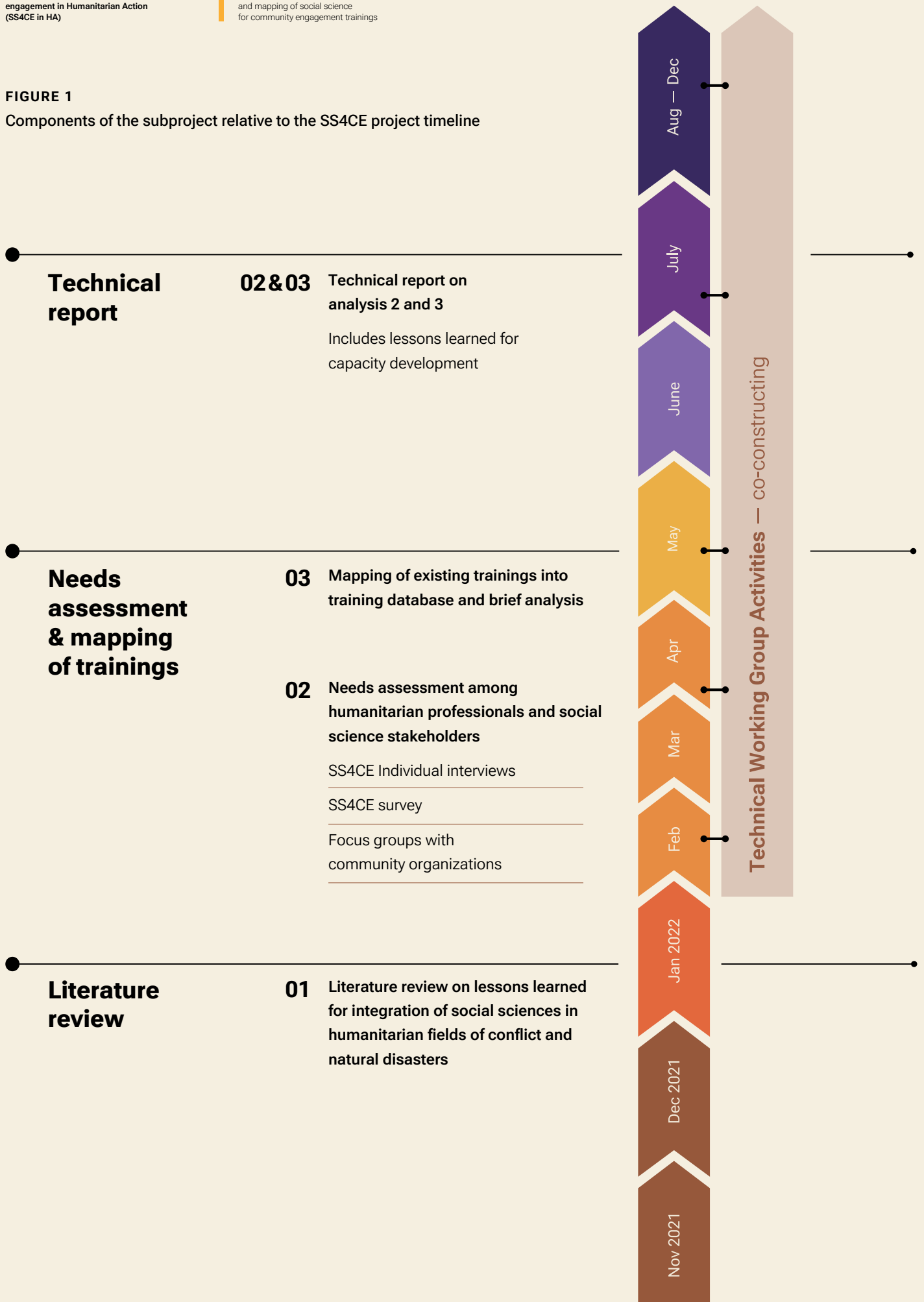
The initial scoping review of the academic literature mentioned was conducted before this subproject to map out operationally relevant capacity gaps and research priorities in the domain of CE in HA (Maffi & Groenendijk 2022). These findings were used to orient the subproject but are reported separately. It should be noted that the needs assessment and mapping of trainings focused on capacity needs in hazards and conflicts, and not

on a public health emergencies (PHE) or infectious disease outbreaks, as a PHE assessment has already been carried out by the Collective Service, and a mapping of training related to social science approaches in the context of infectious disease outbreaks has previously been conducted in the Sonar-Global project.³

The aims of the SS4CE in HA Capacity Development subproject are twofold:

- i. **Needs assessment:** aimed to identify needs, gaps and opportunities of social scientists and humanitarian practitioners concerning SS4CE throughout the humanitarian programme cycle, as well as unpack challenges to the integration of social science methods and tools to conduct CE in humanitarian interventions.
- ii. **Mapping and analysis of existing SS4CE in HA trainings:** aimed to identify existing trainings for hazards and conflicts with SS4CE in HA content, assess their content according to specific indicators and analyse for SS4CE in HA relevance, depth and quality.

FIGURE 1
Components of the subproject relative to the SS4CE project timeline



These aims were expected to serve to provide a critical and in-depth understanding on the existing capacity-related needs and expertise on SS4CE in HA and a next step to understand and set priorities for future actions to capacity development, with a focus on humanitarian practitioners and social scientists. It also forms the basis of a set of recommendations that aim to strengthen global and regional demand and capacity for social science integration into CE in HA. The findings of the project have informed a **competency framework**, which can be found in *Annex III*.

1.4 Scope of the report

Within the scope of this subproject, by **social science** we refer to any branch of academic study or science that deals with human behaviour in its social and cultural aspects (e.g., anthropology, sociology, psychology, political science, economics, and history). Social science can inform CE strategies and implementation, including monitoring and evaluation, across the different phases of humanitarian programming (e.g., preparedness, response and early recovery), in different types of crises, to have better outcomes and impact, ensure systematic, inclusive participation and engagement of affected populations and to contribute to better programming with affected communities.

This research tried to target HA in **conflicts and hazards** specifically.⁴ However, due to an overlap in interventions, topics, affected communities and the application of social science approaches in these three areas, we have not entirely excluded public health emergencies (PHE) in HA.

The research started with an open definition of who would be the **stakeholders** for capacity development, to co-define throughout the needs assessment and consultations where and for whom SS4CE in HA capacity was to be most urgently developed in order to strengthen actions for the systematic integration

of SS4CE at different phases of humanitarian programmes, recognizing the distinct operational and programme needs at different phases. Thus, our original stakeholders include social scientists conducting research on CE in the domain of HA, both in the field and in academia, as well as humanitarian practitioners leading, or taking part in, CE interventions in the field or 'community practitioners'. It was considered that both social scientists and humanitarian practitioners would, to some extent, need to acquire knowledge and capacity in the opposite field to understand its terms, principles and working methods, becoming implementers of and collaborators on the SS4CE in HA agenda. Equally important is the audience of affected communities; in SS4CE their capacities should be both empowered and strongly considered to ensure that these communities acquire a leading role in HA politics and programming. Because of a power imbalance between the humanitarian system, social scientists and affected communities, the position and possibility for participation of affected communities is often compromised and exacerbated during times of crisis. It is particularly important in this regard to understand the constraints faced by women and children and ensure the participation of people of all genders in all phases of the HAs.

1.5 Structure of the report

This report summarizes the findings of the consultation process for capacity development gaps and needs. After introducing the subproject, aims and scopes and context of the report/research in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 describes the project research methodology. Chapter 3 reports on the main findings from the mapping of trainings. Chapter 4, 5 and 6 report the main findings from all research components taken together, including the needs assessment with interviews, survey, FGD, the meetings with the TWG-2, and the mapping of trainings. Chapter 7 provides recommendations based on the insights gathered from the research.

2.0 Project methodology



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The project methodology was based on four different methods to collect data on needs and gaps:

1. Individual interviews.
2. Mapping of relevant trainings.
3. An online survey.
4. A focus group discussion.

The TWG-2 meetings were an additional source of input leading to many additional insights which formed part of the collaborative process. These different methodologies and perspectives of participants helped us to understand needs from key stakeholders in the field, such as humanitarian practitioners working on different levels of the humanitarian system, social scientists working in applied humanitarian as well as academic settings and communities affected by humanitarian crises.

2.1 Capacity needs assessment

For the capacity needs assessment, various methods were used to work with a diverse set of participants with different disciplinary, professional, organizational and geographic backgrounds to get a diversified perspective on what are the needs and gaps to integrate social sciences for CE in HA. These included interviews, a survey and a FGD. The insights from this process were presented and discussed in the TWG-2 meetings, which were used to collaboratively reflect and define next steps to facilitate the integration of social science in CE in HA.

2.1.1 Interviews

Eighteen semi-structured interviews were carried out with social scientists and/or humanitarian practitioners, involved in different levels of HA or working in an academic environment. Humanitarian professionals and social scientists were interviewed to better understand their existing approaches and needs to effectively communicate and collaborate with communities in the humanitarian context. Table 3 shows key characteristics such as the participants' professional background and whether they have direct experience working on CE. Interviews were conducted over Microsoft Teams and lasted approximately one hour. The interviews were recorded, and an automated transcript was generated, which was later revised and tidied up by a researcher of the Sonar-Global SS4CE in HA team. Transcripts were coded in a team coding exercise with the qualitative data analysis software Dedoose. Each transcript went through a first round of coding by one team member and a second round of coding by another team member. Codes were discussed within the team on a weekly basis. Additionally, four interviews were conducted with social scientists or professionals from civil society organizations in Colombia. These interviews followed a different format, taking a more reflexive approach on CE and HA from the perspective of community-based actors in the Global South. As these interviews were conducted in Spanish, transcription was done manually, and coding done separately.



TABLE 3: Interview participant background

	Humanitarian Practitioner (HP) or Social Scientist (SS)	Worked on CE (in HPC)	Organization
Participant 1	HP/SS	Yes	UN/intergovernmental agency
Participant 2	HP	Yes	UN/intergovernmental agency
Participant 3	HP	Yes	UN/intergovernmental agency
Participant 4	HP/SS	Yes	UN/intergovernmental agency
Participant 5	HP/SS	Yes	UN/intergovernmental agency
Participant 6	SS	Research with communities	Academic
Participant 7	HP/SS	Yes	UN/intergovernmental agency
Participant 8	SS	Yes	INGO
Participant 9	HP/SS	Yes	Academic
Participant 10	SS	Research with communities	Academic
Participant 11	SS	Research with communities	Academic/INGO
Participant 12	HP	Yes	INGO
Participant 13	HP	Yes	UN/intergovernmental agency
Participant 14	SS	Research with communities	Academic
Participant 15	HP	Yes	UN/intergovernmental agency
Participant 16	HP	Yes	UN/intergovernmental agency
Participant 17	HP/SS	Yes	Academic
Participant 18	SS	Yes	INGO

2.1.2 Survey

A 24-question survey was developed to obtain insights from a larger group of social scientists and humanitarian practitioners than we could reach with interviews, on their experience in the application of social sciences for CE in HA. The survey consisted of closed and open-ended questions and contained five sections, covering the respondents' training, their experience with, and needs for, SS4CE integration, and priority themes, such as localization and decolonization. The survey was disseminated through Qualtrics XM,⁵ an online survey tool, and was open for response from May 17, 2022, until the end of June 2022. The survey was distributed among the SS4CE Strategic Advisory Group, TWG-2 members, the Sonar-Global network and the

network of NOHA (an international consortium of universities seeking to enhance humanitarian professionalism). Participants were asked to distribute the survey within their respective networks and organizations. The quantitative data analysis involved collecting, collating and counting all anonymous responses to the survey. The data was primarily analysed descriptively. It is important to note that respondent selection for this survey was not random; people self-selected to participate. This means that the results cannot be generalized beyond the sample itself. The data does however provide indications of possible trends to be confirmed in further studies.

TABLE 4: Survey participant characteristics and general indicators

Indicator	Count n (%)			
Total number of respondents: 42 (100%)				
Gender (note: only options chosen by respondents are shown)	Female	28 (67%)	Non-binary	2 (2.4%)
	Male	12 (28%)		
Geographic basis location	Global South	25 (60%)	Global North	17 (40%)
Geographic region of focus (multiple answers allowed)	Sub-Saharan Africa	22 (37%)	Latin America and the Caribbean	2 (3%)
	South Asia	9 (15%)	Eastern Europe	2 (5%)
	Middle East and North Africa	6 (10%)	Pacific region	1 (2%)
	Global		Central Asia	1 (2%)
	East Asia	7 (12%)	North America	1 (2%)
	Western Europe	3 (5%)		
		4 (7%)		
Education level (note: only chosen options are shown)	Master's degree	22 (52%)	Bachelor's degree	5 (12%)
	PhD	14 (33%)	Other	1 (2.4%)
Education discipline (note: only options chosen by respondents are shown)	Other	14 (33%)	Art	1 (2%)
	Anthropology	11 (26%)	Biology	1 (2%)
	Psychology	4 (10%)	Economics	1 (2%)
	Philosophy	2 (5%)	Management	1 (2%)
	Political science	2 (5%)	Medicine	1 (2%)
			Sociology	1 (2%)
Type of emergencies worked in (multiple answers allowed)	Disease outbreaks	28 (38%)	Other	5 (7%)
	Conflict	22 (30%)	None	5 (7%)
	Natural hazards	14 (19%)		
Humanitarian field experience (OCHA clusters/ working groups) (multiple answers allowed)	Health	17 (23%)	Early Recovery	2 (3%)
	Protection	8 (11%)	Telecommunications	2 (3%)
	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support	7 (10%)	Shelter	2 (3%)
	Education	6 (8%)	Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group	2 (3%)
	WASH	6 (8%)	Food Security	1 (1%)
	None	6 (8%)	Logistics	1 (1%)
	Other	6 (8%)	Gender in HA Reference Group	1 (1%)
	Localization and AAP	3 (4%)	Global Cluster Coordination	1 (1%)
	Camp Coordination and Camp Management	2 (3%)		
	Primary role (multiple answers allowed)	Social science researcher	24 (39%)	Volunteer
Humanitarian practitioner		11 (18%)	Government official (local)	1 (2%)
Programme manager		8 (13%)	Community activist	1 (1%)
Frontline worker		8 (13%)	Community member	0 (0%)
Other		4 (7%)	Community representative	0 (0%)
Policy maker		2 (3%)	I don't know	0 (0%)
Donor		1 (2%)		
Years of experience in primary role	> 10 years	14 (33%)	2-3 years	5 (12%)
	6-10 years	12 (29%)	0-1 year	2 (5%)
	4-5 years	9 (21%)		

A total of 42 survey responses were received (see Table 4 below). More than 85% of respondents had direct, practical experience with CE in HA. Among the respondents, two-thirds identified as female and 60% of the respondents were stationed in the Global South. Respondents have working experience in all regions of the world and come from a variety of educational backgrounds, but all have completed university education. The respondents had experience in many different fields and positions in HA, with almost 40% identifying themselves as a social science researcher and 44% as a frontline worker, programme manager or humanitarian practitioner. Among the respondents, 38% had experience with disease outbreaks, 30% with conflicts and 19% with natural disasters.

2.1.3 Focus group discussion (FGD) with civil society organizations

One FGD was held with community-based civil society organizations working in a context of humanitarian crises. In this FGD, organized together with Sphere India, (a national coalition of humanitarian, development and resilience actors in India), seven Indian civil society organizations participated in work with communities in disaster-vulnerable or affected areas, particularly prone to flooding, cyclones and droughts. The objective was to learn from their experiences about gaps and needs in an integral, participatory and effective humanitarian response and how social science methods and skills can be used to include, and strengthen, community-centred (and led) approaches. As local actors with a key role in, and for, communities in humanitarian contexts, their perspectives on CE and using the social sciences in programming were valuable to capture experiences and inputs from community-based organizations on the ground. Representatives of these civil society organizations were asked about their experiences and insights on the application of social sciences for CE in HA. The discussion lasted two hours and was moderated by a researcher from the SS4CE in HA TWG-2 team.

2.2 Mapping of relevant trainings

Next to the capacity needs assessment, the project team conducted a mapping of existing trainings that included social science approaches for CE in HA. An XLS database of training resources was developed based on the results of the mapping. The mapping entailed:

- A comprehensive internet search with the help of a set of search terms, covering openly accessible trainings. This included trainings developed by all humanitarian organizations, international and national governmental agencies, international and local NGOs, academic and research institutes.
- Website search of these organizations identified, as well as websites of training platforms. The search terms were also put into search engines. The team looked for trainings in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Italian. [Annex I](#) shows the search terms used in the different languages.
- TWG-2 members recommended resources they used, developed or were familiar with, in the interviews and the TWG-2 meetings, as well as in the survey and in a dedicated Padlet (an online platform to provide feedback).

Throughout the mapping processes, the project team sought out available courses, trainings, workshops, seminars, manuals, as well as recommendations for contacts – individuals, organizations, networks and initiatives – that could contribute resources and participate in consultations. Relevance was determined based on the presence of social science approaches, CE and humanitarian/conflict/hazard in the title and training description. A set of indicators determined in dialogue with the TWG-2 members was used to assess relevance and quality of the components, shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5:
Quality and relevance indicators used for mapping and analysing identified trainings

Relevance
Social science relevance/presence
Humanitarian field relevance + link to Humanitarian Programme Cycle
CE relevance/quality indicator (eg. UNICEF Minimum Standards)
Focus of training
Operational, theoretical or hybrid
Targeted audience
Learning objectives
Do they cover social science, humanitarian and/or CE dimensions
Educators in course with social sciences or humanitarian background
Teaching format: online, residential, blended/hybrid
Student feedback & assessment
Self-guided, self-guided with quiz + feedback, teacher facilitated, teacher facilitated with individual assignments and feedback, teacher facilitated with working groups etc.
Accreditation: certificate, academic degree, etc.
Course contents, topics, modules, topics

These indicators are integrated in the XLS database which contains the mapped trainings. Through a comprehensive internet-based search using the search terms in [Annex I](#), as well as examination of trainings suggested by participants in the interviews, survey, Padlet and TWG-2 meetings, we found 1377 training resources. More details on the mapping pathway, including the identification, selection, categorization and analysis of trainings is further described in the Findings sections in Section 3.1, where the findings of the mapping are described.

2.3 TWG meetings as part of the co-constructive process

Throughout the research process, the SS4CE in HA team has been in dialogue with the TWG-2 members, comprising humanitarian practitioners and social scientists. The TWG-2 consisted of members of 7 UN/intergovernmental agencies, 4 INGOs and 10 academic institutions. The [member list](#) in the Acknowledgments shows the TWG-2 members and institutional affiliations in detail.

TWG-2 members discussed the research design as well as individual components. The TWG-2 has provided input for the specific activities such as the training mapping, the survey, advising on questions, indicating what they saw as most important issues to focus on and representing the latest knowledge in the field. The TWG-2 further assists in piloting and mainstreaming the capacity development resources across humanitarian networks and organizations. Meetings with members from TWG-2 were held on a monthly basis from February to June 2022, then resumed in September 2022 and ran until November 2022. Notes of the meetings, including notes of different discussion rooms by separate researchers, were used for coding and for meeting reports which were shared for reference and feedback with TWG-2 members.

2.4 Ethics

The researchers in the team adhered to research quality and ethical standards common to social science research (EC 2021). The team's researchers followed guidelines for data collection, storage and sharing laid out in a project data management plan. This data management plan ensured all the collected data in the project was processed and stored in a secure, orderly and uniform fashion. Considering the nature of the research topic and the subjects, the project was determined as not requiring a comprehensive ethical review process by the Amsterdam Medical Center's medical ethical review board (AMC METC).

At the beginning of the interviews and FGD, informed consent was obtained from participants for their participation in the research project, as well as for being recorded and having their contributions anonymously stored on the secure project server. Participants were made aware they could retract their participation at any time or request statements would be off-the-record, also in retrospect, and relevant passages of the

recording and corresponding sections in the transcript would be deleted. In the survey introduction participants were informed they could discontinue the survey at any time.

2.5 Limitations

The research methodologies were affected by the short time-span of the consultation, affecting what methodologies could be applied and how many participants could be consulted. Interviews being conducted online, as well as the workload of participants, meant interviews were scheduled to last an hour. Some of the questions asking participants about the application of social science tools or skills tended to elicit general answers. It might be difficult to determine what exactly one needs at a given point in a humanitarian crisis (or at any stage in the HPC), especially since these situations are highly diverse, complex and often fast-paced.

The framework of the project and demarcations set by the language might have generated some blind spots. For example, with the trainings mapping, certain trainings might be missed because they don't fit the characteristics of trainings included in the search, or the search terms used for inclusion. And as trainings are linked to existing infrastructure and resources, those that are offered by highly visible international agencies, using terminology dominant in the humanitarian landscape, have higher chances to be found (and included) than trainings that might phrase their objectives differently. This is especially the case for trainings given by actors that are less visible on a global scale and those given to researchers based in the Global North conducting desk research.

Additionally, the project team could only access trainings that were published online at the time of the mapping exercise and trainings that TWG-2 members shared with the research team.

We are aware that several trainings and workshops are internal to organizations and that some of these in-house trainings are tailor-made and given on 'one-time' occasions. These trainings remained outside of our remit.

In contrast to the survey, the majority of participants in the interviews were from the Global North and tended to be active at management and planning levels of humanitarian programming and research several layers away from the field, meaning limited direct contact with communities and/or humanitarian professionals or social scientists or other local actors from the Global South. In addition, the perspective of community-based actors is very limited, with no interviews done with community-based workers. The FGD with civil society organizations in India, as well as additional interviews with humanitarian professionals in Colombia were important additions to somewhat fill this gap. However, to further stimulate an inclusive, context-sensitive and participatory approach of CE, we suggest including more perspectives from communities, actors working directly with communities, and in the Global South in further SS4CE in HA efforts.

The survey contained many complex open-ended questions, and several of the open-ended questions were not answered by participants. Additionally, to some extent the survey became a scoping assessment of existing SS4CE in HA, rather than a needs assessment, evading its original objective.

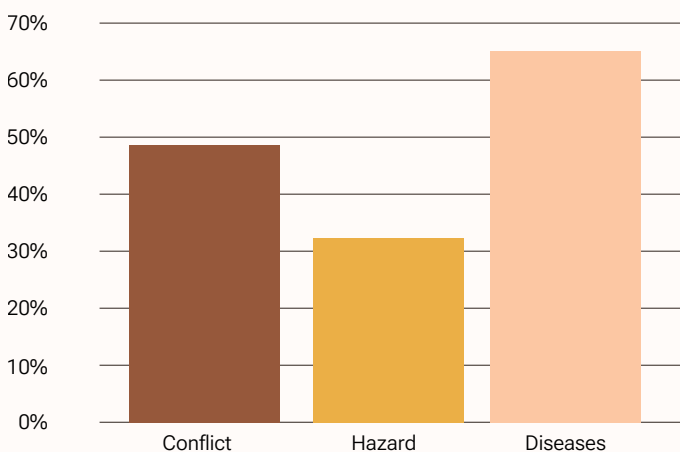
Key findings

Key findings emerging from the needs assessment as well as the mapping exercise are presented here. Input stems from the different needs assessment components: interviews, survey, focus groups discussion, as well as key points raised in the TWG-2 discussions.

3.0 Mapping of SS4CE in HA trainings

FIGURE 2
Percentage of survey respondents who received or gave training in CE per humanitarian area.

Have you ever participated in community engagement trainings as a student or trainer?

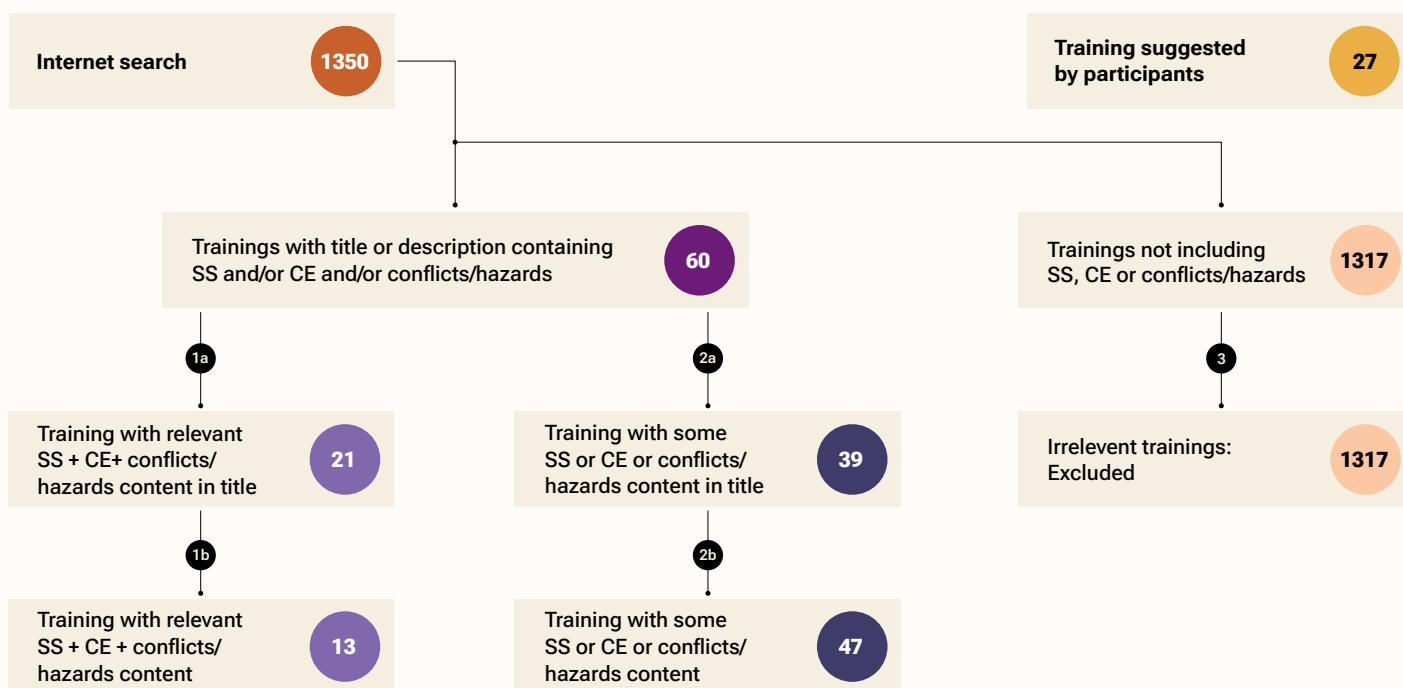


Overall, about half of the 42 survey respondents indicated to have received, or given, training in CE, but there are differences by humanitarian area, showing a particular lack of affirmative responses by people working in hazards, as shown in Figure 2.

Although the difference is small, in the overall group slightly more respondents who received or provided training were based in the Global South versus the North (70% versus 63%). When asked to what extent this training included social science related knowledge or skills, 42% mentioned “a lot” and 54% said “some”. Overall, respondents felt that their received or given training prepared them adequately to operationalize social sciences, although respondents from the Global South appeared more enthusiastic than those from the North. Also, respondents working in conflicts indicated feeling slightly less prepared due to the training than those working in disease outbreaks and hazards.

Unfortunately, we cannot distinguish between those receiving and training and the self-assessment of those giving them. However, findings indicate that overall, as shown in Figure 2, many respondents did not receive any training on CE, particularly in the hazards area. In addition, what is meant when respondents indicated that training included social science related knowledge or skills could not be directly ascertained from this survey. For this reason, we identified these trainings with the aid of the survey respondents and conducted a deeper analysis of their content. Key findings emerging from the mapping exercise are presented next.

FIGURE 3
Mapping pathway and selection of trainings.



3.1 Overall mapping of trainings

The research team found 1,377 potential trainings based on a comprehensive internet-based search using the search terms in [Annex I](#), as well as examination of trainings suggested by participants in the interviews, survey, Padlet and TWG-2 meetings. The mapping pathway is summarized in Figure 3 below. We determined relevance based on the presence of social science approaches, CE and conflict(s)/hazard(s) in the title and training description. Based on a screening of title and training description, the trainings were categorized into three groups:

- i. Relevant SS4CE in HA trainings that included a medium to high degree of social science approaches and CE and the application in conflict or hazards.
- ii. Trainings that included some social sciences approaches, CE or conflict/natural hazards, but did not explicitly discuss these elements in a significant matter, i.e., CE, conflicts or natural hazards and/or social sciences would be reduced to a few sentences in the training, if explicitly mentioned at all.
- iii. Trainings that were deemed irrelevant based on the title and/or training description.

Of the 1,377 potential trainings, only sixty had a title or description containing social sciences, CE and/or conflicts/hazards (Group 1a and 2a). Of these sixty trainings, the twenty-one trainings in Group 1a were initially identified as the most promising existing training materials related to the application of social sciences for CE in HA. Their title or description pointed to medium to high relevance of social sciences and CE and conflicts/hazards.

The next step focused on an in-depth content analysis of the trainings in Group 1. A finding of interest was that many of the trainings containing CE or social sciences in their title or training description, or suggesting a focus on these, were relatively superficial in either social science or CE content, with some of them not explicitly addressing these at all. Eight of the twenty-one trainings in Group 1a, and all thirty-nine trainings in Group 2a overall included some social sciences approaches, CE or conflicts/natural hazards, but did not explicitly discuss these elements with any significance. Mostly it was reduced to a few sentences in the training, if explicitly mentioned at all. This seeming contradiction between a claim to social science or CE content while content on social science approaches or CE was not substantial, might point to a shift in programmatic

priorities to integrate more CE and/or social science approaches in HA – as has been the case in public health emergencies – but not necessarily a joint integration of the two concepts. But it also may be indicative of the ambiguity that exists about both the social sciences and CE and the different understandings of social sciences and/or CE that organizations and other actors in the humanitarian field have, guided by their mandates and operational modalities. This differential approach to the social sciences and CE is a key factor in the elusive and hard to pin down essence, or even operational meaning, of SS4CE in HA.

Another finding was that in terms of conflict, hazards and infectious disease outbreaks or PHE, many trainings overlap. This led to some trainings being mapped that had been previously identified or created in other exercises to map and/or fill in gaps for capacity development resources in SS4CE. This overlap or duplication of efforts was also mentioned by participants and is something that could be minimized by synthesizing and consolidating projects and products across the institutional landscape.

After this content analysis, eight trainings were moved from Group 1a (very relevant, containing medium to high degree of SS + CE + conflicts/hazards) to Group 2b (not so relevant, containing low components of SS or CE or conflicts/hazards). In three cases, for example, social sciences amounted to nothing more than a mention of the importance of awareness of social, political or cultural context. After this selection process, thirteen relevant SS4CE in HA trainings were listed (Group 1b).

3.2 Detailed analysis of most promising trainings for SS4CE in HA relevance

The research team analysed the 21 trainings in Group 1a for relevant social science and CE in the context of conflicts and hazards in the title or description. The trainings seek to train a diverse audience in the social science dimensions of effective CE in HA. These included field-based humanitarian practitioners and staff in higher management, professionals in the field of disaster risk-management and climate-change adaptation, staff of civil society organizations, local government administrations, staff of UN agencies, and undergraduate and postgraduate students with a background in social sciences or HA or studies.

Figure 4 shows the score of the studied training, with 1 indicating low and 3 indicating a high relevance, against the indicators for CE, the humanitarian field and social science. Regarding relevance on the three indicators, these trainings mostly score in the medium range, with a few trainings scoring with high relevance.

Of these 21 trainings, about a third emphasized operational aspects, a quarter was more academically oriented and the rest of the training was a hybrid of operational and academic focus. Table 6 shows the complete list of all identified trainings categorized by these themes by name, hosting institute (or platform), expertise (discipline) offered, and targeted audience. From this it can be seen that there is a typical division between operational trainings, provided by humanitarian networks, and theoretical trainings, provided by academic institutes. Hybrid trainings, unsurprisingly, appear to be provided by a mix between either humanitarian networks and a few academic institutions.

FIGURE 4
Scores of relevance indicators for trainings in Group 1a and 1b combined

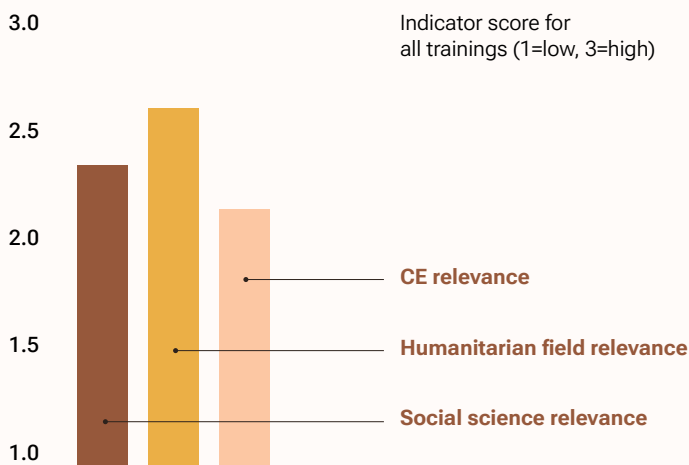


TABLE 6: Identified trainings categorized by dominant approach (operational, theoretical, or hybrid)

Name	Institute (or Platform)	Expertise (discipline)	Targeted audience
Operational			
BLAST DRRM: Mainstreaming DRRM in the Community (Module) => LOW	CODE (NGO)	Humanitarian programme support, governance	Civil Society orgs; NGOs; “people’s orgs”; local government officials coordinating w local DRRM bodies
DRRM Pathway for East Africa => LOW/Medium	KRCS, URSC, Makerere Uni, Nairobi Uni, Ardhi Uni	Humanitarian programme support, technical sector	Humanitarian professionals: Provincial admins, mid-level managers, NGO practitioners interested in designing and implementing people-centred DRRM
Global DRRM Pathway		Humanitarian programme support, technical sector	Provincial admins, mid-level managers, NGO practitioners interested in designing and implementing people-centred DRRM
CE in Emergencies Preparedness and Response	UNICEF		UNICEF staff (country, regional and HQ), UNICEF partners including government, civil society, private sector
CEA three-hour training package	IFRC	Medical relief	National Society staff, and PNS, ICRC or IFRC staff
CEA Three-day training package	IFRC	Medical relief	National Society staff, and PNS, ICRC or IFRC staff
Sustainable and Inclusive WASH in Schools - WinS	IPHDC	Hygiene and sanitation; public health	Programme staff of humanitarian and development agencies including project managers, officers, health workers, hygiene promoters, public health officers, education officers, teachers
Social and Behavior Change Communication for Health Promotion	IPHDC	Sociology/psychology, public health	Programme managers and officers of health-oriented programmes.
Theoretical			
Master GE-COP (Management and co-production of participatory processes, communities and proximity networks)	UNIBO (University of Bologna)	Social sciences, economics, politics, law	Students having completed post-graduate studies
Advanced post-university specialization in humanitarian missions and refugee intervention	Instituto Português de Psicologia e Outras Ciências	Psychology	Psychologists
BA Sviluppo Economico, Cooperazione internazionale socio-sanitaria e gestione dei conflitti	UNIFI (University of Florence)	Anthropology, sociology, geography, law, economics	Any student who passes the entry test (basics of taught disciplines)
MSc in Humanitarian Studies - curriculum Communities and Capacity Building	Fordham University	Human rights, conflict and memory studies, global health, gender studies, etc.	Individuals intending to build career in HA

Name	Institute (or Platform)	Expertise (discipline)	Targeted audience
MSc International Humanitarian Affairs (online)	University of York	Humanitarian studies, legal protection, law, social sciences	Applicants with at least a 2:1 university degree. Or candidates without a degree but with extensive relevant professional experience.
Hybrid			
Health Promotion and CE	Platform: Tembo (MSF)	Public health (health management); anthropology	HP managers and supervisors (mandatory within MSF for them); staff in all Operational Centres (OCs), but also for beginners
Managing climate risks through social protection	FAO (IGO)	Social protection, climate risk management	Professionals in the field of social protection, disaster risk management, climate change adaptation and mitigation (especially focusing on rural areas and agri-food systems)
Vulnerable groups: challenges and good practices for an inclusive HA	ISPI (Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale)	Humanitarian studies, legal protection	Undergraduate and postgraduate students, professionals in the HA field
Master's degree in permanent training in international solidarity action and social inclusion (Máster de formación permanente en acción solidaria internacional y de inclusión social)	Universidad Carlos iii de Madrid	Social sciences, law	Students with bachelor degree interested in HA
Máster interuniversitario en cooperación internacional para el desarrollo (Interuniversity Master's degree in international cooperation for development)	Universidad de Salamanca (among others)	Social and legal sciences	Current and future workers in NGOs, humanitarian and development sectors
Máster en desarrollo, cooperación y acción comunitaria (Master in development, cooperation and community action)	Fundación pere tarrés	Social work	Undergraduate and postgraduate students, intending to build career in HA
Communication is aid' training modules -- Technical training: Communication and CE in humanitarian response	CDAC	Communication	'Field-based, humanitarian programme staff' such as NGOs, UN agencies, donors, private sectors.
Collective Service RCCE Training package: Using social science for CE and/ or communication activities during an emergency response	Collective service (Co-produced with SSHAP)	Social sciences	Depends; this is a training package developed for facilitator and that can be editable/adaptable depending on the audience

When the categories are cross-referenced with the type of indicator for relevance, some patterns emerge, as shown in Table 7. Operation-focused trainings score lower on the social science indicator, while theoretical trainings appear to be less

relevant for CE, but still score medium to high on humanitarian relevance. It is clear from this scoring that hybrid trainings provide a more holistic perspective, scoring medium to high on all indicators.

TABLE 7: Indicator score for relevance relative to dominant focus of training (1=low, 3=high)

	Social science	Humanitarian field	Community engagement (CE)
Operational	1,5	3,0	2,7
Theoretical	2,1	2,6	1,8
Hybrid	2,1	2,6	2,4
Total	1,9	2,7	2,3

A similar analysis was done comparing the percentage scoring of the different types of training learning objectives, categorized by social, humanitarian, the HPC, and CE. Table 8 further confirms the patterns found in the previous table, with a lack of covering of social dimensions learning objectives in operational trainings, and a lack of CE in more theoretical trainings, and the unique position of hybrid trainings.

Although this mapping exercise provides only a rough indication of training emphasis, it is clear that the indication of a training as hybrid corresponds with the expected broader emphasis. However, it needs to be emphasized that **we only found 8 such trainings worldwide in a set of 1,377 trainings identified**. Taking a closer look at the character of these trainings, there appears to be a dominance of public health, communication, and legal-oriented trainings. It is clear from this that the Collective Service RCCE Training Package takes a rather unique holistic place in this set of findings. This training package, developed by the Collective Service and SSHAP with extensive input from the SS4CE project provided in an earlier stage of the project before the start of the Capacity Development subproject, was developed in the context of public health emergency response (PHE). However, it aims to be applicable in humanitarian settings, and because of its holistic approach and relevance for SS4CE in HA, the training package was presented to the TWG-2 in one of its monthly meetings. Detailed descriptions of this training, and the other most promising hybrid trainings, can be found in [Annex II](#).

TABLE 8: Indicators on percentage of learning objectives devoted to topic relative to the dominant focus of training

	Learning objectives covering social dimensions	Learning objectives covering humanitarian dimensions (generally)	Learning objectives relating to specific steps of the HPC	Learning objectives relating community engagement
Operational	14%	65%	44%	25%
Theoretical	41%	59%	0%	0%
Hybrid	48%	64%	35%	37%
Total	35%	63%	27%	19%

4.0 How the social sciences can contribute to community engagement in humanitarian action



4.1 The social science ‘lens’

It was common for participants to describe the specific values that social scientists contribute, such as sensitivity, empathy, and communication skills, along with a critical understanding of a broader cultural, economic, and sociopolitical context that was referred to by many as ‘the social science lens’:

“Social science skills I think are really useful. But I also think, and this is something that we’ve also discussed a lot and it’s somehow harder to pin down. This is the kind of anthropological or social science lens; generally around an element of critical thinking. Critical reflexivity, all of these positionality aspects... I think often the social science approach allows people to think a bit more critically around these things, like who we will be engaging with? How are we engaging with them? What are the risks? What are the unintended consequences if we do this? What might happen further? and a lot more. I don’t know how you call it, but sort of bigger picture thinking than often happens, typically within a kind of operational mindset, and I say that not in any way to discredit the operational mindset, because probably as purely social scientists we might never get anything done. But yeah, I think that’s a real benefit.”

— Participant 8

In the survey ten respondents filled in the question regarding what social science knowledge and skills they think can be useful/important to enhance CE, after which they scored these skills in importance relative to the Humanitarian Programme Cycle. Results, shown in Table 9 below, suggest that these experienced participants primarily view SS4CE as supporting community participation in decision making, data collection, providing a people focused response and including in-depth contextual knowledge. In addition, it can be seen that social sciences are seen as more important in particular during the ‘needs assessment & analysis’ phase, followed by ‘strategic planning’, ‘implementation and monitoring’ and ‘operational review and evaluation’.

Qualitative interviews also emphasize that the ‘social science lens’ is the basis of engaging with communities, understanding their needs and supporting them in meaningful, inclusive and effective response and preparedness and recovery. It can infuse humanitarian practitioners with a conscious awareness of their position and help create a bridge between communities and (international) humanitarian organizations. It stimulates the input and uptake of community perspectives.

In the interviews and in the TWG discussions, social scientists pointed to a combination of technical and analytical skills and methodologies which, together with the ‘social science lens’, bring attentiveness to social relations and variation, which helps in understanding context and connecting with communities. Besides specific knowledge and skills from the social sciences, from participants’ responses it appears that soft skills and competencies are at least as important in applying SS4CE in HA. Soft or interpersonal skills are often mentioned, such as empathy, patience, being able to work in a team, being able to build trust and report, and being able to ‘really’ or ‘actively’ listen to people were often mentioned as key (and sometimes, but not always, mentioned as specifically related to the social sciences). (Participant 4; Participant 17; TWG-2)

A participant referred to these as ‘human skills’. (Participant 13) They are person-driven and seen as hard to teach. One of the participants (Participant 18) stated that since interpersonal skills, valuable in engaging with vulnerable populations, are not really teachable skills, as opposed to technical knowledge, they might even be ‘more valuable’. This suggests that while transferring ‘human skills’ and the ‘social science lens’ through capacity development is more challenging than teaching trainees technical skills, the value of these elements merits an attempt to do so. As to how this can be done, participants did not have many answers. A participant trained as a social scientist and working as a humanitarian practitioner wondered if a ‘social science lens’ could be taught, and how the complete package of skills and attentiveness could be moulded into something ‘trainable’. She stated that if an attempt was made to transfer the complete package of skills, knowledge and attentiveness making up the social science mind, some kind of translation had to take place to make it “more amenable to humanitarian practitioners.” (Participant 5).

TABLE 9: Survey participant scoring (n=10, 23 separate entries) of social science knowledge and skills they think can be useful/important to enhance CE, scored in importance along the Humanitarian Programme Cycle, and ranked by overall score

Social science knowledge, skills and/or disciplines	Needs assessment & analysis	Strategic planning	Resource mobilization	Implementation and monitoring	Operational review and evaluation	Leadership and coordination	Information management	Preparedness	Overall score
Community participation in decision making	3	3	2	3	2				13
Data collection	3		1	2	2	1	1	1	11
People focused	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
In-depth context knowledge	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Critical mind	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	7
Data analysis	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	7
Political science	1	2		2	1				6
Social work	1	1	1	1	1				5
Sociocultural determinants	1				1	1	1	1	5
Learning / advocacy	1	1	1	1	1				5
Behavioural theories	1	1	1	1	1				5
Geography	1	1			1				3
Anthropology	1	1		1					3
Sociology	1	1			1				3
Strategic planning		1				1		1	3
Implementation and monitoring				1	1				2
Literature review	1								1
Resource mobilization			1						1
	19	16	9	16	16	7	6	7	

One social scientist described how the use of such a lens, in addition to (qualitative) social science methods, has become increasingly requested and applied in her work at an international NGO. As interest has grown, the spectrum of types of social science work applied in humanitarian programming has broadened since she started in her position. Initially, requests for social science support had a focus on the technical use of qualitative methods, as they were articulated around operational problems and the answers usually were in the format of research, but social science approaches have become more broadly applied:

“For example, my role started as a qualitative method implementer and then kind of gradually opened up to broader social science views, or incorporating broader perspectives on social science essentially. So, if there was something going on that people didn’t understand and suspect it might be a cultural problem, and then doing a study essentially to understand what the problem is, but I think that’s evolved a lot over time in terms of moments where social scientists are involved. They are the problem-solving parties there, but often more in terms of assessments, to evaluate evaluative work. And that has expanded beyond research to programmatic assessment. Also working with community-based programming or CE activities, so not purely in a kind of data collection, but more in terms of programmatic support around those community related activities.”

— Participant 8

So, while in this case technical skills for data collection and analysis, in qualitative research methods, were the starting point for social science approaches in humanitarian contexts, the value of an expanded use of social sciences in engaging with communities, as well as assessing, evaluating and planning comes from the integral and attentive understanding that the ‘social science lens’ brings – through a combination of technical, analytical skills and interpersonal skills.

Sometimes such person-driven approaches are also more about attitudes, which are often personality dependent⁶ but might be shaped by the moral focus, reflexivity, and attentiveness and sensitivity to power dynamics that form part of training in the social sciences. They are essential elements contributing to the ‘social science lens’ or ‘social mind’. Additionally, participants attributed to the social sciences numerous and important contributions and mentioned several tools and research methodologies, such as applied social science methodologies, co-constructive and participatory methodologies. Table 9 and 10 provide an overview of the social science knowledge and skills survey that interview participants identified as useful to enhance CE. The social science components mainly involve (the use of) assessment methods and improving interactions with, and understanding of, the community and context.



TABLE 10: How the social sciences can contribute to needs in CE – accumulate to social science lens

Social science contributions	Social science research skills and techniques
Understanding the context [P=Participant]	
Identify social or cultural values, tensions or norms [P3; P6; P13; P14]	Critical/analytical thinking [P1; P5; P6; P7; P8; survey]
Understand behaviour and beliefs [P3; P17] and local understandings [P6]	Behavioural theories [survey]
Examine political dynamics [P5; P8; P10]	Scientific rigour [P2; P5]
Governance structures [P3; P5; P7; P10; P13]	Rapid assessment techniques [P4; P8; P11]
Thematic analysis [survey]	Triangulation of data [P4; P7; P12; P13]
Gender issues and analysis [survey]	Documenting knowledge [P2; P8]
Community dynamics, community mapping and social networks, community leaders [P1; P4; P6; P9; P10; P12; P14; P17; survey; FGD]. Understanding intra-group dynamics, asking questions about exclusion and inclusions, being mindful of what is said and who is saying it and in front of whom, stake holder dynamics [survey]	Connecting the small to the big picture (micro-meso-macro), recognizing patterns [P5; P10]
Building trust [P7; FGD]	Ability to present results and analysis
A “social mind” [P5]	Participatory approaches for inclusion and empowerment (incl. in evaluation): PAR, participatory video evaluation [P4; P8; survey]
“Unpack implicit assumptions that humanitarian practitioners struggle with” [P5]	
Facilitate decision-making ownership [survey]	Roles and skills of a social worker [survey]
Politics [survey; P10]	
Learning from communities and advocate for their inclusion and ownership	
Soft skills	Data collection methods
Sensitivity	Qualitative data collection, including rapid data collection [P4; P8; P13; survey]
Reflexivity [P4; P5; P8; P10; P12]	Ethnography and observation [P4; P10]
(Really) listening [P4; P7; P9; P17; survey]	Interviewing techniques [P4; P5; P10]
Empathy [P7; P9]	Social media research [P4]
Take communities seriously [P6]	Literature review [survey]
Patience [P10]	
Flexibility [P10]	
Communication skills [survey]	
“Human” skills [survey]	

Table 11 lists specific tools that were mentioned by participants in the survey and interviews and by TWG-2 members in the monthly meetings as useful for CE in HA.

TABLE 11: Tools that participants find useful for CE in HA

Relevant social science tools	
Rapid assessment procedure (RAP)	Tool for rapid qualitative assessment based on simultaneous data collection and analysis. One of rapid research tools that can be easily applied in the field developed by RREAL ⁷
Human-centred design approach	Approach to collaborating with communities from the design level onwards
Conflict sensitive analysis	Adaptable framework considering context, causes and triggers of conflict
Knowledge, attitudes, practices (KAP) survey	A structured, standardized questionnaire that may include used to collect information on what is known, believed and done in relation to a particular topic in a specific population. Data tends to be collected orally by an interviewer and can be analysed quantitatively or qualitatively
Grounded accountability model	Approach to identify and include key community members, and unpacking diverse issues around inclusion, exclusion and marginalization
Social network analysis	Analytical tool to map and measure social relations. Can be used to investigate social structures and positions in networks by focusing on patterns of relations among individual people, organizations and states
Photovoice	Qualitative method used in community-based participatory research to document and reflect people's lived experiences and their perspectives on health, family, community
Standard operating procedure (SOP)	While not a social science tool, it was mentioned as valuable in combination with social science data to have context-specific data and a standardized approach for HA

Although not all responses are directly related to SS4CE (some are more CE or HA focused), Table 12 provides an overview of the needs and priority areas for further training that are listed by survey respondents. The wish for further training primarily concerned aspects relating to programming and critical perspectives.

TABLE 12: Areas survey respondents would like to be further trained in

Practical/programming:	Research perspectives:	Other:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Monitoring and evaluation • Specialized training on engagement • Humanitarian legal aspects • Including community in all HPC phases • Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Understanding donor priorities ▸ How to bring resources to communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social science 101 • Research ethics: "ethics of programme work to prevent exploitation, abuse, and harmful practices, and skill building for communities to self-finance resilience infrastructure" • Critical perspectives: "about the contexts in which actions are taking part, in terms of history of power and relations for example: typically, what it means today to work in postcolonial states for western institutions." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnopsychology • Art training • More resources on language, context, culture

4.2 Usage of different social science disciplines

Survey results show, in Figure 5, that among all respondents sociology and anthropology were the social science disciplines listed to have been used most frequently in CE in HA, followed by psychology, communication sciences, history, political science and geography. Law and economics disciplines were least used by the survey respondents. Other social science disciplines mentioned by the respondents were arts & culture, community organization/development and social work.

When looking at social science disciplines mentioned as beneficial in CE in HA depending on the respondent's roles (see Figure 6), it is striking how political science is seen as beneficial mostly by social science researchers, while no social science

researcher even mentions law as beneficial. Humanitarian practitioners make use of journalism, law, economics and communication science, while frontline workers emphasize law, history and geography. Finally, programme managers indicate to make use of law and journalism training.

Similarly, when controlling for emergency types, the distribution of social science disciplines differed somewhat between the categories (see Figure 7). Law and economics were listed as more relevant to disaster work, political science as relevant for conflicts. For disease outbreaks, geography and political science were listed as least beneficial.

FIGURE 5 Social science disciplines used in CE in HA

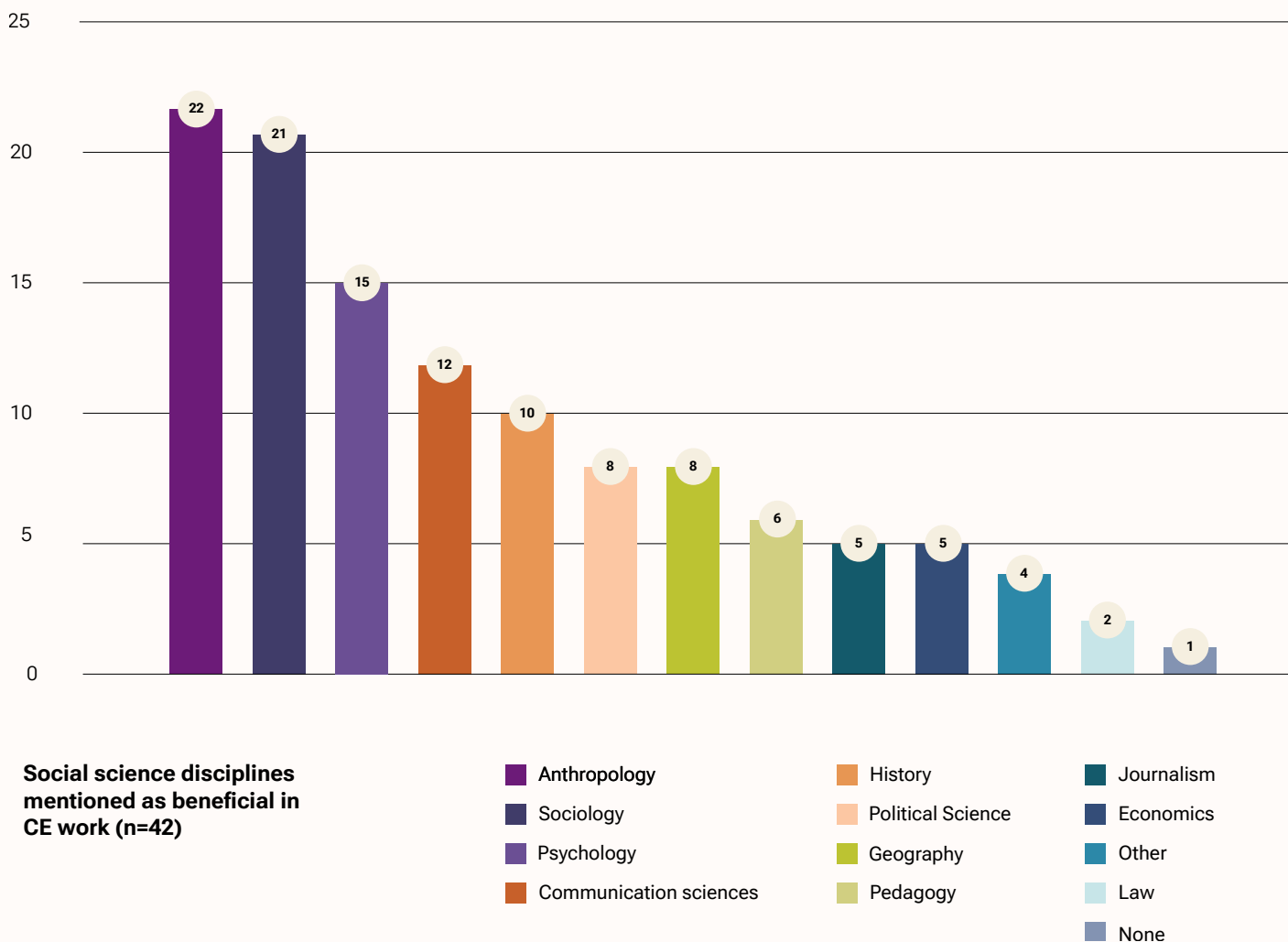
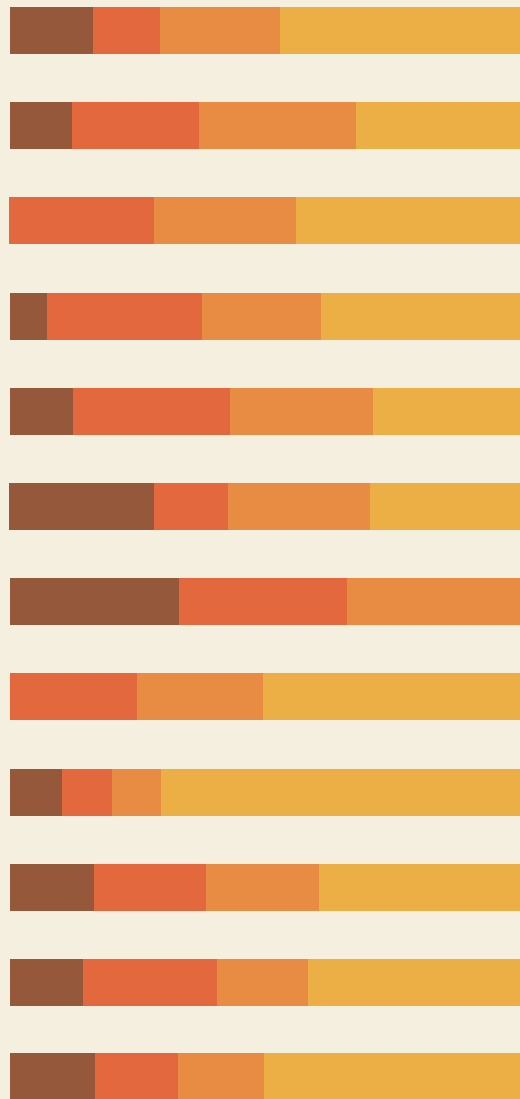


FIGURE 6
Social science disciplines used in CE work, broken down by respondent's role

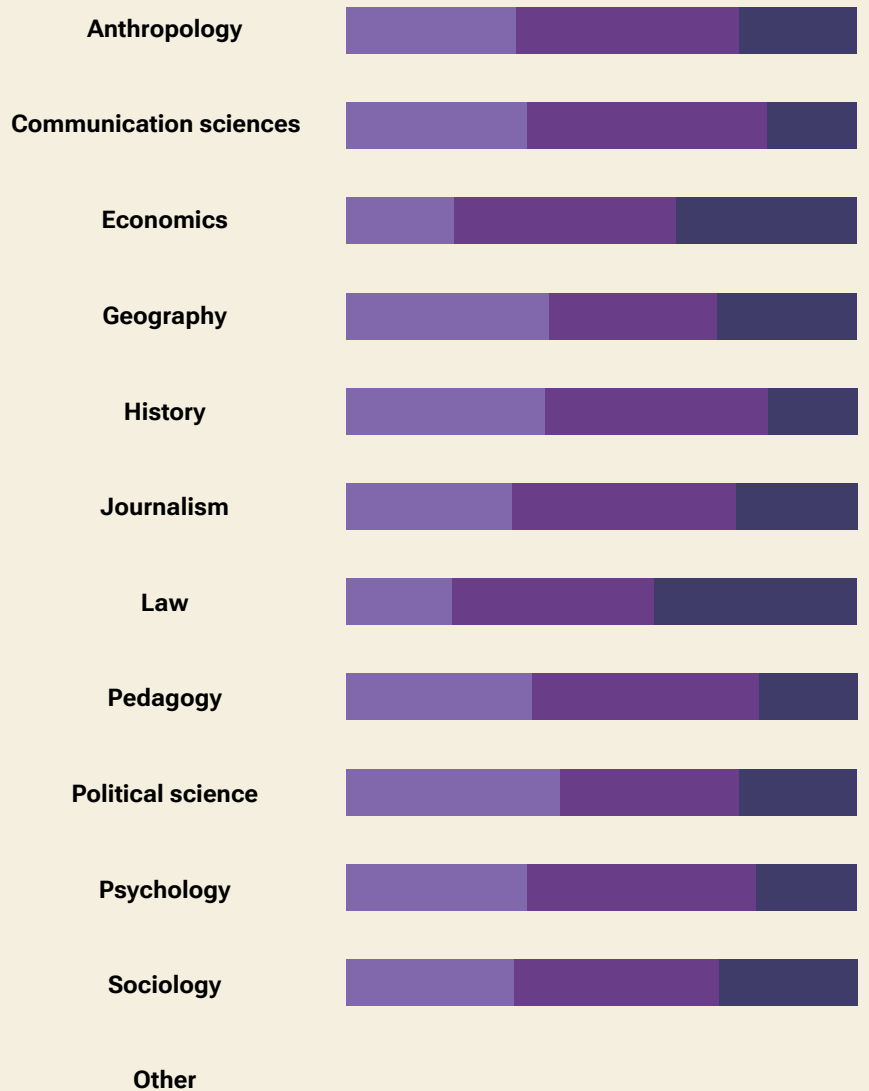


100% 80% 60% 40% 20% 0%

- Program manager
- Frontline worker
- Social science researcher
- Humanitarian practitioner

FIGURE 7

Social science disciplines used in CE work, by emergency type



0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

- Conflict
- Disease outbreaks
- Disasters

Figure 8 shows in which HPC phases participants think SS4CE should be prioritized. This demonstrates that, in general, survey respondents indicated that SS4CE could be particularly important during the ‘needs assessment & analysis’ and ‘strategic planning’ phases. This ranking did not change notably when comparing the different humanitarian areas of focus. The ranking showed only minor differences between the respondent’s roles. But as shown in Table 4, only a small number of participants were donors (2%) or (senior) programme managers (13%); the majority of survey participants were working as humanitarian practitioners or social scientists in the field.

The priorities given across the phases echo the gradually increasing demand and application of social science approaches across the HPC. For participants, all phases have at least some importance, but integrating the social science methods and lens is most important for collecting and analysing data and engaging with communities about needs and how to plan to address those needs. This seems to point to the importance of including communities from the beginning of the cycle. Figure 8 also shows that survey participants find ‘operational peer review & evaluation’ less of a priority when it comes to integrating the social sciences for CE. This may have something to do with the perceived value and applicability of the social sciences for peer review and evaluation, and/or with the role participants think communities could have in reflecting on, and evaluating, the operational process. While some of the participants in the interviews pointed to the importance of SS4CE in ‘operational

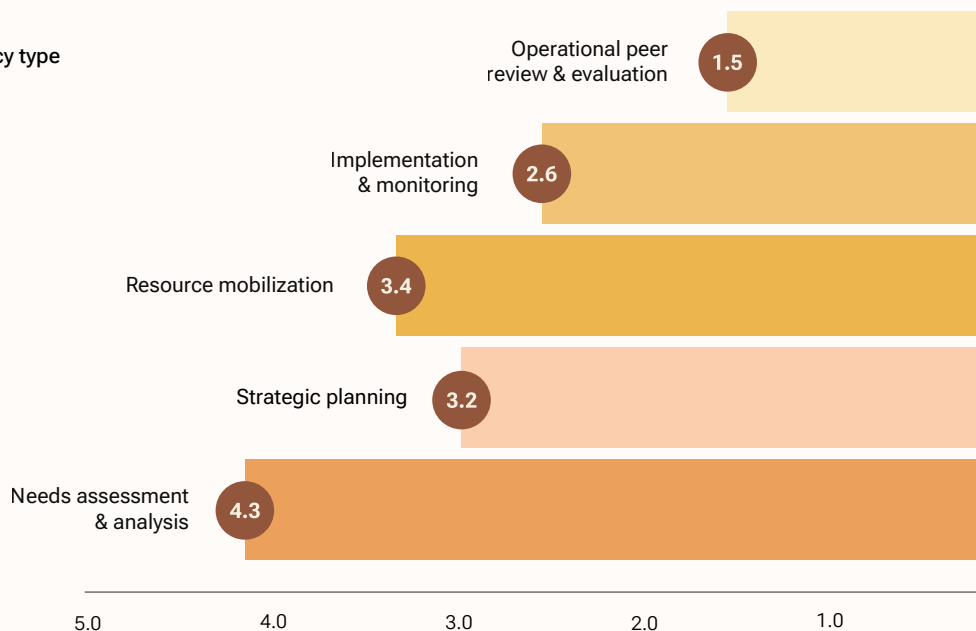
peer review & evaluation’, they also mentioned this was just a recent development, and even if interest in the application of social sciences for programmatic support has grown, donors and senior level management are not (yet) prioritizing investments and resources in these areas. Considering SS4CE from a systemic integration perspective, there is a gap between how SS4CE is, and how it can be, relevant for HA across the HPC phases and the actual needed resources and implementation mechanisms that are required for these approaches to be integrated in humanitarian responses and planning. This points to an area of attention that requires resources, including human and financial resources, capacities, CE, and time.

It is interesting to note some differences in the rankings when comparing respondents located in the Global South versus the North. Figure 9 shows that, on average, participants from the Global South ranked the relevance of SS4CE during ‘strategic planning’ quite a bit higher than participants from the Global North (2,1 versus 3,3), and ‘operational peer review & evaluation’ lower (4,8 versus 3,6) compared to participants located the Global North.

Similarly, shown in Figure 10, men ranked ‘strategic planning’ quite a bit higher (1,9 versus 2,9), but ‘implementation and monitoring’ lower (4,1 versus 2,7) compared to women. However, these detailed results shown in Figures 9 and 10 are likely due to the low number of respondents and are as such only indications of possible patterns that need further verification.

FIGURE 8
Social science disciplines used in CE work, by emergency type

In your opinion, during which phases of the Humanitarian Program Cycle should SS4CE be prioritized?



In your opinion, during which phases of the Humanitarian Program Cycle should SS4CE be prioritized?



FIGURE 9

Ranking of opinions where SS4CE should be prioritized in the HPC cycles contrasting Global North and Global South (1=highest rank, 5=lowest)



FIGURE 10

Ranking of opinions where SS4CE should be prioritized in the HPC cycles by gender (1=highest, 5=lowest)

5.0 Knowledge transfer and the application of the social sciences in community engagement



5.1 Different understandings, perspectives and language – a need for translation and a common space

Social scientists and humanitarian practitioners appear to have different understandings of core concepts, and they use different languages and methods based on the institutional contexts and the original aims they are grounded in. While the social sciences have been applied to generate social and societal impact with effects on wellbeing and health, their original driving force is to generate knowledge. With HA, the emphasis lies with action. Collected information primarily serves that action, and particularly in time-pressed contexts needs to be 'fit for purpose', or 'good enough' (Participant 1; TWG-2).⁸ To systematically integrate SS4CE in HA, it is key for social scientists to understand humanitarian programming and operations to be able to collect needed information for humanitarian programmes. At the same time, social scientists can use their work to generate positive change within the humanitarian system in relation to the way affected communities are engaged in humanitarian processes. A shared space, where different areas of expertise come together, can function as a bridge, translator and fertile ground for knowledge exchange and applying commonly developed frameworks to facilitate a common understanding.

The differences in ways of looking at HA and understanding the context of a humanitarian crisis were reflected in all the interviews as well as the FGD, but a gap between the different outlooks of humanitarian practitioners and social scientists was most clearly described by interview participants who were trained in the social sciences and working in humanitarian practice. One participant (Participant 5) talked about a difficult transition from social science training to the language and operational speed of HA. After many years of working to respond to, and prevent, conflicts, she was, at times, still struggling to 'marry' the theories, concepts and methods she had learned during her social science training with the conflict or peace building operations realities on the ground. In this context, standard operating procedures (SOPs) are carried out in limited time and the use of social science jargon could be restrictive in communicating with affected populations and describing the complexities of the crisis (Participant 5).

Language is an important factor, which can obfuscate findings and make them hard to use in 'real-life settings' (Participant 17). Social scientists might offer rich and meticulously researched insights written in abstract language for academic journals. The results they publish can be 'hidden' in discourse (Participant 7) and will need to be made tangible for application in humanitarian settings. The 'esoteric' way of writing in the social sciences (Participant 7) and the jargon used by social scientists might make it difficult to even identify findings, or to understand applications of those findings. Participants who worked as humanitarian practitioners did not think of the social sciences as concrete and operational. Journal papers tend to be too theoretical, lengthy and take too long to get published. To be more operationally applicable when dealing with concrete (humanitarian) crises, social science writing needs to be shorter, more 'focused on reports and less on academic publishing' (TWG-2). In line with the language issue described here and the issue of temporality mentioned below, this points to the need for social scientists to publish their insights in a clear matter that can be (immediately) applied by practitioners, at the right time.

This different language means that even when social science research might offer answers, the way they are presented might not be applicable for, or easily adoptable by, humanitarians. This is also in part because social scientists are typically not familiar with the way humanitarian programming works, including the HPC. If social scientists have better knowledge of what information or action is needed to engage communities at particular stages of the HPC, they can offer evidence that is more easily applicable in those instances (Participants 1, 2, 3 & 15). This can be information or data about how the crisis is affecting communities, but also instructions on the tools or methods that can be applied to gather that information, or to work with communities to respond to the crisis. For participants, the social science contribution to CE in HA needs to be employed in a matter that is attentive to context and at the same time applicable and operational within the humanitarian architecture/ HPC for the crisis at hand (Participants 1, 6 & 7). Social science understandings, methods, tools and skills are most valuable and applicable when they form part of an integral approach that combines different methods, tools and skills, in which the origin of the approach is perhaps less important. As one participant put it, 'humanitarian practitioners don't care what is a social science method and what not, as long as it works' (Participant 6). Emerging from both the interviews and the survey is a sense that there is a need for translation between social scientists and humanitarian practitioners in HA. For this

to be effective, there needs to be a dialogue from both sides, to capture understandings and needs from both social scientists and humanitarian practitioners. It is important that humanitarian practitioners understand how social science approaches can benefit CE in HA, but equally important that social scientists understand the humanitarian world, the functioning of the humanitarian system and its different actors, and the mechanisms of standard operating procedures in emergencies, to know what works and what is needed and see how social science can contribute.

Differences between distinct HA programming levels also need to be taken into account: HQ/global or senior management, middle management, country level officers and programme officers, field workers doing CE, communities, and whether they are located in Global North or South. Humanitarian practitioners who are working in the field directly with communities and those working on national or international levels, or in headquarters of intergovernmental organizations or international NGOs in Geneva or New York, have greatly different ways of working and thinking about communities, programmes, actions and implementations. They might think in overarching pictures or in day-to-day practical details. This is

also important to take into account when thinking about their (information and/or training) needs. Social scientists in academia might not only have a more conceptual approach but work in a different physical environment, with a different pace and language.

Besides translating, a shared space where different areas of expertise come together can provide a platform for common language or understanding. One of the ways to foster such an exchange and work towards a shared space is working in multidisciplinary teams. Some organizations have already created such teams, which are centred more around themes, topics or geographical focus rather than disciplines (Participants 8 & 16). Participants who work in blended teams in which social scientists, CE specialists, community health workers, humanitarian professionals, medical staff, epidemiologists and engineers work together described how they had to bridge a way of speaking about issues and ask questions with a broader outlook (Participants 4, 5, 8, 11 & 18). Participant 11 described how learning to communicate 'across' disciplines and learning to convey how she understood a situation to her colleagues who might bring a different disciplinary outlook to the table has helped her to unpack concepts and check assumptions.



Participant 18, a humanitarian practitioner trained in the social sciences, said ‘figuring out’ multi-disciplinary approaches within their team in headquarters, as well as in dialogue with country offices, had helped also to think about how to communicate about research and programming approaches when implementing (new) CE initiatives on a local level. To facilitate the increasing amount of mixed-methods work they do, this organization has held mixed methods trainings at headquarter

level but increasingly also at country level. In ‘method shops’ they often focus on a multidisciplinary approach, but also often with the “tandem of social scientists and epidemiologists and how to kind of integrate those two aspects of work”. A humanitarian practitioner described how teams in their organization working on CE are multidisciplinary and also embedded in the rest of the organization, rather than being a stand-alone unit:

“We also have a kind of multidisciplinary thing called community approach team rather than CE team, but I think we’ve also been really pushing this perspective of not silo-ing CE and not creating specific positions for it. And not saying it’s the responsibility of social scientists or any of the department, because I think for a long time also it’s been grouped in [our organization] in terms of health promotion and of course it’s a part of that, but it’s bigger than that in a way, so trying to kind of broaden out this and keeping this really as everybody’s business.”

— Participant 8

Recommendations to stimulate shared SS4CE in HA understandings, based on the insights from the interviews, mapping, survey and FGD, can be found in the Recommendations section (Chapter 7).

5.2 Ambiguity about the social sciences and what they can contribute in community engagement

From participants’ experiences, it is often unclear what, and how, the social sciences can actually contribute to CE in HA. It is also unclear what *different* social science disciplines can contribute in an interdisciplinary approach. This lack of detail was reflected in many of the mapped trainings of Group 1a and 2, claiming social sciences content, but not really providing any depth on social science methods, skills or tools. Similarly, in the interviews, while many participants think that social sciences can help with the SS4CE agenda and in general terms, when it comes to how to operationalize them for this purpose using specific methods, tools, or skills, participants could not always articulate clearly what the specific contributions could be, for their own social science discipline or in general.

Information about context is mentioned as key to delivering appropriate aid. Participants believed social sciences can help to contextualize interventions, particularly by contributing with a more critical and thorough analysis of actors involved, social and political dynamics and cultural factors that might influence

humanitarian response, resolve tensions, and provide sensitivity and reflexivity. Participants, however, provided little insight when it came to indicating which social science theories, tools or methodologies were well-suited for different HPC phases and humanitarian emergencies. It may have been difficult to recall or identify what social science tools and skills exactly they think would be needed in a given moment of the research and/or the humanitarian programme cycle. To help steer the inquiry, we asked people to think about what social sciences are relevant to ensure that we are clear about the disciplines that are essential for well-informed CE, but also to define the contribution of particular social science disciplines and how they could form part of an interdisciplinary approach. Further research, in which scenarios are presented to ask about the best fitting social science informed solutions, would be appropriate and might elicit specific responses. A long-term observation process in the field might help to highlight what is needed at what time and by whom, and further contribute to an understanding of how SS4CE will work in action (see Recommendations in Chapter 7).

Both social scientists and humanitarian practitioners mention that a certain awareness of the context and positioning in working with communities is key. This awareness, however, might have different origins for academic social scientists and humanitarian practitioners. While social scientists mention this awareness originates from their academic training, which has been polished and made specific in HA, humanitarian practitioners say they have gathered knowledge and understandings through working in the field. Therefore, humanitarian practitioners might already use social science principles and tools, although they would not always call

them as such or ground them in social science theories and methodologies. In the survey most people stated they had received CE training and social science trainings, although the contents and character of those trainings are unknown.

This lack of clarity about the contribution of the social sciences is further complicated because many participants were calling for a persistent need for conceptual clarity regarding CE. This need for conceptual clarity about CE was brought up in TWG meetings as well as in the interviews and in the focus group. The participants had many ways of seeing CE, stretching along an extensive CE continuum and various scales, and there was a dissonance between the UNICEF understanding of CE as given in 1.1⁹ and how some participants talked about CE. CE is a central concept in the project, however there is a lack of consensus not only around its definition but also its core criteria and its measurement (for operationalization).

Taken together, the research team noticed participants grappling with the definition of SS4CE (Participants 6, 9, 13 & FGD), which frames a potential area of expertise that includes two somewhat ambiguous concepts. This lack of conceptual clarity may have resulted in people skirting around the topic of CE and SS or it may have been a result of that lack of clarity. It could have also been affected by the framing of the project description and the questioning. Finally, it could have been an indication of the ambiguity of CE and the infeasibility of the task of standardizing approaches for context. It demands further clarity and uniformization of the understanding of CE in HA in a way that is inclusive and represents the needs of all stakeholders including those of communities.

This affected the ability to define what the contributions of the social sciences are. But it can also be an indication that people find it difficult to specifically think about why the social sciences are important and how social science methods, tools and skills can contribute to CE. This has several explanations:

- People struggle to identify social science needs in particular humanitarian situations as they might be different in each context, and/or can't recall what it is they need for a particular situation, context and community.
- Social science (methodological or even theoretical) contributions might not be so explicitly used. Rather, it is about a complete package, a standing or approach that is informed by certain characteristics, ways of looking at

things and people that might be part of a social science approach, plus understanding the context, in a way that is attentive to communities and context, equitable and sensitive to inclusion, more of a package (including soft skills not specific to the social sciences) or 'social science lens'.

- Social science language (in design, analysis and reporting) might be too esoteric.
- CE might not need social sciences to be effective.
- Our questioning with emphasis on conflicts/hazards, even if we used prompts and reformulated questions to elicit further responses.

5.3 Temporality – (not so) slow social science in emergency response

In a humanitarian crisis, aid needs to reach affected populations quickly and effectively. But because of the expected longitudinal engagement needed both for social science research and CE, especially by humanitarian staff not aware of rapid participatory methods, SS4CE is understood as necessarily time-consuming (Participants 2, 4, 8, 11, 13 & 17). CE relies on understanding the context, building trust and sustainable (working) relationships in and with communities, which can take years. When it comes to social science research, understanding context is often built on slow processes of data collection and analysis methodologies, so gathering insights and reporting can take too long (Participant 4). Some participants suggested alternative ways to access the networks and knowledge that often take years of work and field experience to acquire. It can be extremely helpful to have a network in a particular setting, that one can connect with, to 'hit the ground running'. This can be a network of contacts on the ground, often gathered through years of experience in the context. But it can also come from the ability to tap into a network of peers with pre-existing contextual knowledge in certain areas who can be rapidly deployed to be useful, in a 'network approach' (Participants 4, 8 & 11).

Understanding context and building trust and sustainable relationships can take up precious time for people who are outside of the community but can be expedited if adequate key informants, community representatives and relevant structures are identified.

Humanitarian practitioners in the middle of a response need everything quickly, because quick insights can save lives and because funding tends to run out after a (short) project-cycle. To address this, participants stressed the importance of advocating to donors that while action to address a particular humanitarian crisis needs to be rapid, dedication to the crisis throughout its cycle (including recovery and preparing for possible future contingencies), including funding, needs to be longitudinal. Mid-term milestones could still ensure timely reporting on findings.

To social scientists, rapidly collecting and reporting their data poses a risk of jeopardizing the robustness of their data; they fear to leave things out, or to not get it exactly right (Participants 6, 8 & 9). Specialized language and terminology they employ might further muddle their messages in the eyes of humanitarian practitioners. Some participants had been using rapid research methodologies such as rapid assessment procedures in which data collection and analysis happen simultaneously (Participant 4). Others suggested similar rapid methods, such as a participatory impact assessment (TWG-2).

5.4 Standardization

Standardization is both seen as a challenge and as an opportunity, or even the desired norm to aspire to, in applying social science insights and methodologies in CE in humanitarian settings.

Some participants – mainly academia-based social scientists – adamantly spoke out against standardization and warned the social sciences would be used to provide a sense of legitimacy by imposing a fixed framework on individual contexts. Rather they argued that social sciences should be helping to provide context-sensitive interpretations that refine, adapt or challenge standardized approaches offered by global or international agencies and donors (Participants 14 & 17). Remaining independent of the processes of global networks remains an important precondition for such a critical attitude.

However, humanitarian practitioners saw standardization differently, thinking more about the systematic integration of social science approaches in SOPs or protocols, or the need for systematic integration in budgeting programming. For this, the mainstreaming of SS4CE is necessary, as is the consolidation of different procedures across the humanitarian landscape. Pragmatically, if each organization has their own mandate

and protocol, it is harder to ensure each protocol includes a social science-informed, and community-centred, approach (Participant 1). A humanitarian practitioner stated that as standardization is an ‘intrinsic characteristic of humanitarian action’ which facilitates quick responses, it is key that social scientists understand these standards, to know what information is relevant in humanitarian programming and responses. If social scientists know which concrete actions need to take place, always, in the case of, for example, a flood scenario, they can think about the social factors that need to be considered when implementing a response, and how they can provide evidence to ensure the engagement of affected communities in support of humanitarian processes (Participant 1). Combined international standards can be invaluable in achieving stronger coordination during future responses. Standardization can be done through including social science in protocols or standards that already exist, such as the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS), a globally recognized voluntary standard that organizations and individuals involved in humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide¹⁰. Some participants saw an opportunity for such standards to frame CE in HA, with social science methods and gender sensitive approaches and knowledge providing the content. One participant provided an example in which SOPs were developed by a social mobilization pillar in conjunction with representatives from other response pillars, and SOPs clearly described how supportive CE was to be integrated into technical areas such as surveillance, contact tracing, case management, burials, child protection and psychosocial support. She saw an opportunity for formalizing, at response level, operational activities that already exist with a more articulated role of CE and understanding of context gained through social science methods. For her, social science methods could be then part of CE and SOPs as a priority from the earliest stages of a response, and not phased-in once biomedical pillars and protocols are established (Participant 4).

While standardization can help with mainstreaming, there are some critical points about homogenizing efforts, or efforts that are seen as such by participants. Standardization brings the risk of maintaining untenable bureaucratic standards imposed by western donors to transfer financial resources, which ‘must end’ (Participant 16 & FGD). Standardization requires headquarters’ staff and particularly donors to request and approve SS4CE activities so that it can be integrated as part of programming and budgeting, becoming general practice.

6.0 Institutional organization, structure and power



This section lays out findings related to institutional, infrastructural and political issues.

6.1 Localization, decolonization and the participation of communities

What clearly emerged from the interviews, discussions with the TWG-2 and the FGD, is the need to be more attentive to, and inclusive of, knowledge (including experiential knowledge) existing in communities. This demands truly inclusive and equitable collaborations. While social science approaches may facilitate opportunities for local knowledge to be included, expertise and ownership of local actors is not always accommodated. When the voices and knowledge of local actors are ignored, it can further reinforce pre-existing uneven knowledge and power structures.

Survey results do not show strong dissatisfaction with these issues. When asked which of the following components, shown in Figure 11 below, of CE were successfully met, the majority of respondents indicated a relatively high

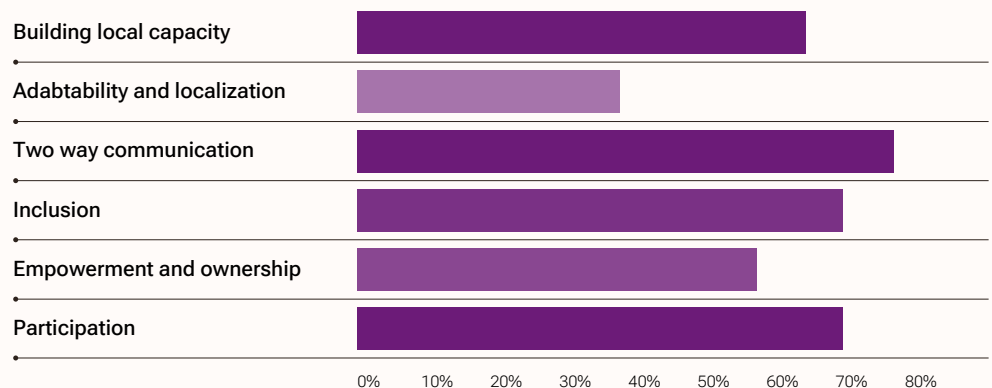
level of success across several indicators. However, the exceptions were adaptability and localization, followed by empowerment and ownership. What this may indicate is that while CE is well implemented from an instrumental perspective, it is not recognized by respondents as a transformative activity leading to localization and democratization.

This effect stayed the same even when contrasting social scientists versus humanitarian practitioners (including both humanitarian practitioners and frontline workers), as well as between different emergency types.

However, differences were seen when contrasting the extent to which respondents had worked for a locally led project and locally funded project. For both questions, two thirds of respondents working in disease outbreaks indicated to have done so, while this was half for conflicts and only in one third of the cases for respondents working in hazards. When asked to what extent respondents felt that coordination and leadership of a humanitarian project could be entirely up to local actors, shown in Figure 12, those within the field of disease outbreaks were least likely to agree, although half of all respondents strongly agreed across humanitarian fields.

FIGURE 11 The extent to which CE Minimum Standards were met by respondents in their CE work

In your experience, which of the following components of community engagement were successfully met? (n=42)



Building local capacity: capacity development tailored to local needs

Adaptability and localization: bi-directional, strong partnerships

Two-way communication: community feedback and listening to communities

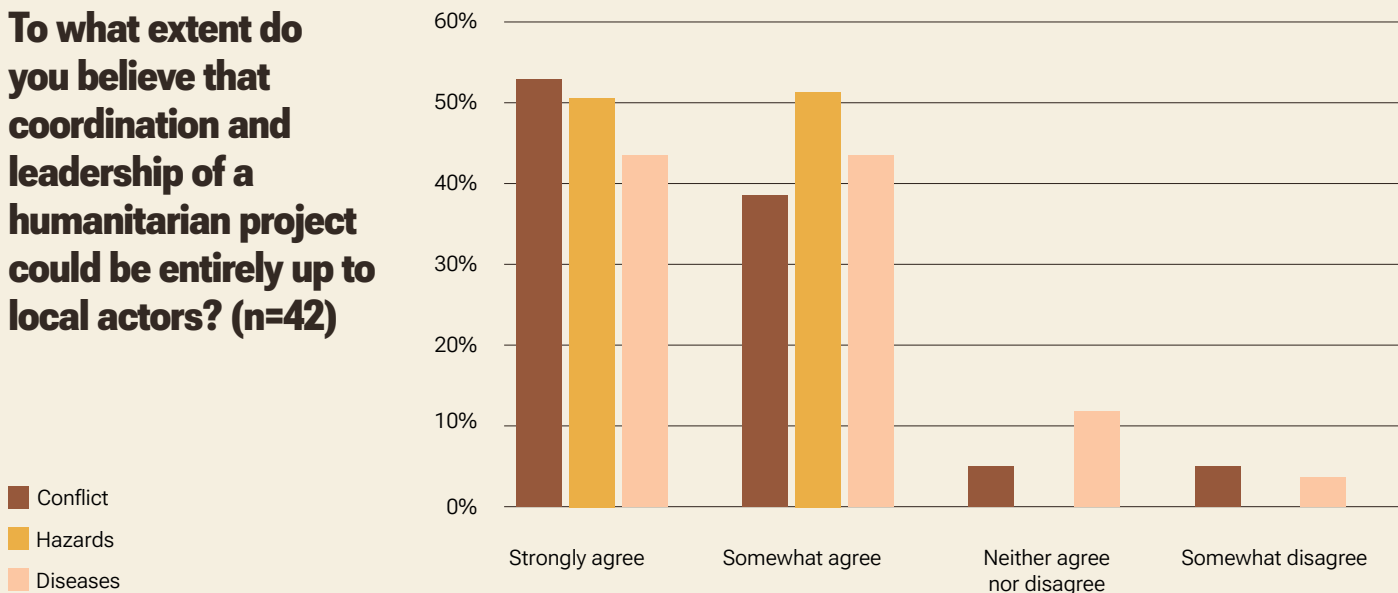
Inclusion: mapping vulnerable and excluded groups and equitable distribution of resources

Empowerment and ownership: communities are involved in planning or action for decision making

Participation: clear objectives are set and process are outlined for meaningful participation

FIGURE 12 Extent to which survey respondents felt coordination and leadership of a humanitarian project could be localized

To what extent do you believe that coordination and leadership of a humanitarian project could be entirely up to local actors? (n=42)



Regarding the inclusion of communities in social science research design, data collection, analysis, reporting and dissemination; participants mention that inclusion has improved in the data collection phase but needs to improve in the research design and dissemination phases (Participants 5, 8 & 12). “We have not always been giving back”, said one participant. She stated that donors have a role to play in this, as funding often does not allow for follow-up or reporting back to communities (Participant 5). But communities are also not included in grant proposal writing, and even if donors ask for community actors to be included in grant writing and thus have a say in the design of the research or project, who gets included as a community actor relies on the ambiguous definition of community and on the understanding of differences between and within communities. Community leaders may be partisan, not representing all community members. Within that frame, “we need to be careful not to confuse collaborating with leaders in the Global South with boosting local ownership” (Participant 6). And care needs to be taken when we engage with local actors to construct, not destroy, community resilience. For the sustained engagement of local actors, the support of international organizations in terms of resources (i.e., funding) and capacity-strengthening was highlighted as essential. It is important, however, that international organizations do not dominate but have a supporting and facilitating role, allowing local actors to be empowered financially and become the owner of change and sustain their own needs. A clear understanding of local power dynamics is essential to ensure equity and fair

process when engaging with community representatives. There is a danger of perpetuating unequal and abusive power structures, leaving the most vulnerable behind.

The value of using local networks and structures, as came up in the interviews and FGD, is that identifying key community members can aid the participative process and identify the communities’ needs. Social science research could be employed to identify key community members, knowledge and infrastructure and then work together through these channels to define relevant information needs and collect and analyse data. And fundamentally, these networks and structures increase the chances that locally co-designed, collected and analysed data relating to humanitarian crises feeds into locally (co-)formulated programming and context-appropriate policy setting through evidence sharing, recommendations and fitting initiatives (Participant 14 & FGD). This would support the ‘institutionalization of localization’ (Participant 14), making it more likely services are suitable and used. It is a step in strengthening local structures that should eventually help to make (most) international (humanitarian) actors become ‘obsolete’ (Participant 16). An example of a step towards further inclusion of communities in (research) projects is input from local actors on ethical review boards, as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) requires. This sets up a virtuous cycle of experience and influence (Participant 5) and is instrumental to have experiences and knowledge of communities systematically included.

For inclusive and effective CE in humanitarian aid, it is important to collaborate, provide support to local structures and help strengthen local government where possible. While the knowledge and capacities of communities should be acknowledged, for successful localization and decolonization it is also imperative to help with capacity development (Participants 6, 8, 18 & FGD). Participant 18 pointed to local actors' lack of project management skills as a shortfall that could be bolstered by additional training, while others argued it was not the lack of project management skills, but the structural barriers impeding local actors from effective humanitarian interventions (and prevention and recovery), leaving local institutions weak and without resources. This includes the funneling of funding for addressing humanitarian crises to international governmental agencies and NGOs, rather than local governments, due to the perceived lack of legitimacy or inefficiency of local political actors (Participants 13, 14 & FGD). The structural issues that participants point out are intertwined with the colonial legacy of the humanitarian system.¹¹

6.2 Efforts are dispersed, not in dialogue with one another and not sustained

Participants pointed out there are numerous different efforts to 'improve' HA and the humanitarian architecture. But often, these efforts exist in isolation from each other and are not long-term or ongoing endeavours. For example, in reference to our mapping of trainings, a participant mentioned a similar mapping exercise had been done for CE in PHE, and a list of hundreds of trainings had been identified. They undertook an analysis of trainings to identify their strengths, weaknesses or gaps, all the while communicating with stakeholders who participated in the mapping, including several intergovernmental organizations and INGOs. It was a time-consuming effort, and she was unsure of what was going to happen with the results of the analysis. There was no follow up and there did not seem to be much uptake of the mapping by other stakeholders. She felt similar mapping exercises, including for PHE, had already been done before and questioned the need for yet another separate exercise rather than one collaborative mapping effort (TWG-2 meeting; Participant 7). This exemplified the different capacity development efforts, including mapping, consulting and other forms of research that inform trainings. Between the many trainings there are multiplied and/or parallel efforts,

and participants expressed a need to avoid doing double the work and risk losing oversight. They also worried that each independent effort to collect information would provide only a partial picture, particularly focusing on their area of expertise, the organizational mandates and thematic cluster. There is a need to bring together and consolidate efforts by different actors across the humanitarian landscape.

A similar issue exists for follow up on CE interventions, where the effectiveness of CE interventions is not measured, for lack of tools, time and/or intention, especially in the case of interventions with a project-focused, temporal character.

Several participants emphasized that a lack of follow-up also exists when it comes to the use of capacity development tools. With trainings, efforts are often not sustained. After the patchwork of mapping exercises and other insights on capacity needs and gaps gathered in consultations are used to develop trainings, there is little to no support for implementation, i.e., giving the training (Participant 11 & 4). Assessment of impact is not operationalized and there are no indicators to measure the impact of capacity development tools (Participant 3 & 12). "What has a trainee learned and how do they apply it in the field? Most of the time, we have no idea. We don't know how our products land." (Participant 3) Some organizations have developed trainings that provide guidance to trainees. The READY Initiative, which trains local practitioners, offers guidance throughout the training but also afterwards, for example through offering the opportunity of a mentorship programme (Participant 11).

6.3 Top-down decision making and resourcing

Donor understandings and prescriptions of HA, its timeline, research design and outcomes affect funding and programming and ultimately set the agenda. The life cycle of projects is often curtailed by the understanding donors have of what a project should look like and what activities should be included. As noted above (6.1), feeding results back into the community, or following up with impact assessments (6.2), often fall outside of that as they are seen as costly, time-consuming and not specifically relevant to the research or project, especially when it comes to existing crises in the middle of the HPC. This is indicative of a paucity of resources and efforts directed to CE in the evaluation and preparedness phases. The neglect of design needs and dissemination phases cannot be "squarely solved by

using the social sciences for CE, as it is also a problem of power” (Participant 5). “Decision making is top down, resourcing is top down, financing is top down. If we don’t make a shift at the top, it’s not gonna happen at the bottom” (Participant 3).

Decisions made at the top have great effect towards the bottom, for example when it comes to human resource decisions. Hiring practices guide the composition of teams and have repercussions on the expertise within the team, the dialogue taking place and the approaches generated. Too often, “the people who can bring this baggage of knowledge are not necessarily hired in the positions in which they can make a difference. So it really just goes back to very simple HR screening processes” (Participant 5). Interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary teams and projects have been implemented by some organizations already, as described in 5.1 (Participants 4, 8 & 18). These show inclusive and innovative approaches towards CE in HA, where social science expertise blends with insights from humanitarian practice and other academic disciplines, such as engineering, disaster or conflict studies. Such teams avoid a silo approach: “We’ve also been really pushing this perspective of not silo-ing CE and not creating specific positions for it” (Participant 18). This could be linked to CE as much as to the social sciences, not only being a tool to a purpose, but an overall approach to deal with HA in a decolonised, localised and ethically sensitive way. Teams of humanitarian practitioners and social scientists

from various disciplines develop joint approaches towards CE, informed by skills, knowledge and perspectives from different backgrounds. While this has been an important way to get value from social sciences for CE in HA — essentially learning by doing — greater shifts in approach are needed ‘at the top’ (Participant 9). This should include willingness to hand over some control to communities or local actors (Participant 16) and allow more time and funding for activities that might not always render immediate, measurable results such as short-term project indicators.

To stimulate donors and management, including hiring managers, towards more inclusive and multidisciplinary practices, it is vital they understand the contributions SS4CE can bring. Donors and management don’t fully understand SS or CE needs and values. An SS4CE advocacy culture can help bring about a better understanding as well as actions on what is required to institutionalize SS4CE in existing processes. Making clear what is needed is therefore a prerequisite to the effective operationalization of SS4CE. The agenda needs to be perceived as beneficial, appropriate and a solution to needs and gaps on the field for the overall HA architecture to choose to operationalize it in everyday programming. This again points to the need for the concept of SS4CE and its components to be unpacked, explained, made understandable as we tried to do throughout the project.



6.4 Issues of gender

While issues of gender came up sporadically in the interviews, in the survey sample some discrepancies are noted between men and women that highlight possibly larger trends that need further exploration. While the women and men in the sample did not differ significantly on the number of years in their positions and their highest education, their reported experiences differ

somewhat. Table 13 gives an insight into the prior experience of the 28 women, 12 men and 2 non-binary respondents in the sample. It can be seen that women had participated less in CE-training, felt less prepared and had less opportunities working in locally led and funded projects.

TABLE 13: Summary of selected gender results from the survey

	Men	Women	Non-binary
Located in Global South	83%	54%	0%
Participated in CE training	75%	60%	100%
CE training adequately prepared you to operationalize social sciences	78%	48%	n/a
Has worked for a locally led project	92%	56%	0%
Has worked for a locally funded project	83%	48%	0%

Overall, this suggests that women have received fewer opportunities for social science work in CE. Indeed, women indicated to have less practical experience, as shown in Figure 13. Although this data is not from a random sample and cannot be easily generalised, it suggests that opportunities to work in this field have favoured men, although this could also be caused in the data by the fact that a higher percentage of men located in the Global South have CE roles. In addition, it should be considered that self-report bias might also play

a role in the differences between men and women. Adding gender understandings to the competences of staff at all levels but especially the competences of leaders, managers and decision makers is of paramount importance. Addressing gender imbalances requires sound leadership and strategic approaches in all programming aspects. This aspect may be underrated as managers and decision makers may face difficulties in leading processes of gender mainstreaming for which they are ill-prepared or unequipped.

FIGURE 13 Percentage of survey respondents indicating practical experience with CE in HA by gender (non-binary and other excluded due to sample size).

Do you have any practical experience with community engagement in humanitarian action?

■ Male
■ Female



6.5 SS4CE to support power shifts in humanitarianism and development

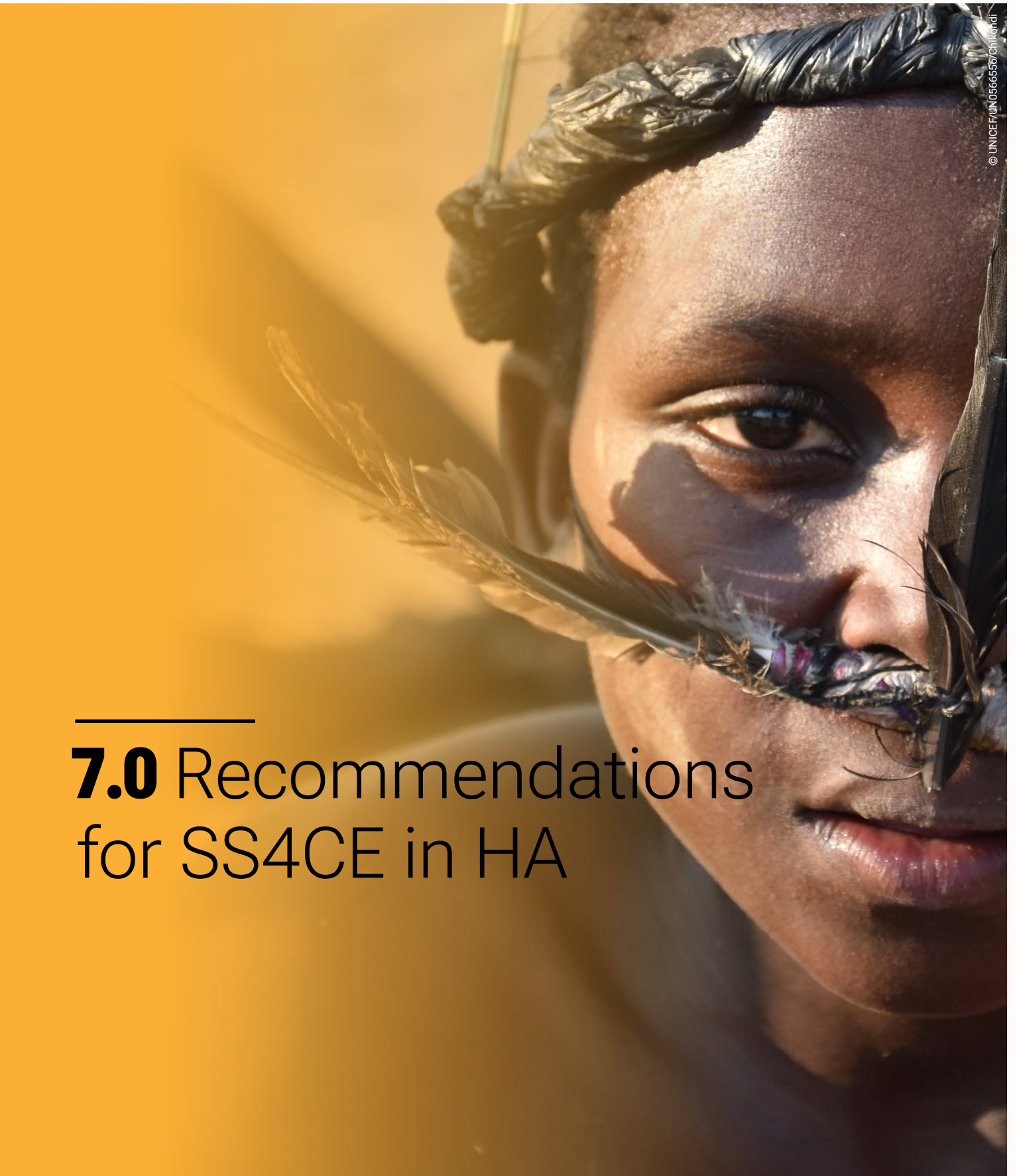
While diverse teams, and management that understands the contribution of SS4CE in HA, are key, a further power shift in power dynamics between recipients and donors is required. While all participants welcomed the concept of SS4CE in theory, some also placed critical question marks concerning SS4CE as one more top-down idea coming from a powerful actor in global HQ. This was accompanied with a general critique on the role of humanitarian tasks and their availability to local actors. In many crisis contexts, there has been an encroachment of humanitarian agencies into the sphere of long-term or ongoing engagement, creating a structural presence. This is partially related to the nature and complexity of contemporary humanitarian crises, which are often protracted, with the immediate medical, social and economic needs of affected communities intertwined with structural problems. Humanitarian practitioners are increasingly working in long-term situations and their task lists have expanded, taking up tasks that formerly fell under development aid, leaving little room for local (government or community-based) actors to take up these tasks.

Differences between humanitarian and development sectors in their mode of work, as well the way they relate to local infrastructure and government, mean there is little investment in local resources while the (protracted) crisis is ongoing. Humanitarian organizations do not collaborate on structural local efforts as they are guided by core humanitarian principles such as neutrality and impartiality, while development actors are considered partners with longer term engagements with national governments and other local actors. The effectiveness of any of the efforts that fall under humanitarian assistance dissipate when humanitarian organizations leave and there are no structural programmes or institutions set in place. While the humanitarian paradigm has shifted and the primary focus may no longer be on saving lives within the framework

of humanitarian principles but is now on ensuring dignified lives, saving for example people's houses, social networks and jobs, the international humanitarian system and coordination mechanisms that are established for HA are not equipped for setting up and supporting long-term infrastructure (Participant 16). This is not only the case for protracted crises but also for recurring ones, such as floods, cyclones and droughts. There is little investment in how CE can boost preparedness, and the social sciences can provide important insights here. One of the most important things that needs to happen for inclusive, localized SS4CE, is a shift in power and responsibility to local actors responding to, and planning for, humanitarian crises (Participant 16 & FGD).

To address the weak linkages of humanitarian efforts to local community structures, including development, several participants underlined the imperative to shift to thinking about setting up sustainable, resilient and locally based systems in which international (humanitarian) organizations would play a supporting role (Participants 4, 14, 16 & 17). This is what the humanitarian-development nexus agenda wants to achieve by supporting enhanced coordination and dialogue between peace, humanitarian and development actors. This way communities will be accompanied through a coherent process and their structural resilience can be built multilaterally and across phases, with the final goal to have international actors withdraw once the crisis is over and institutional capacity is robust enough. And for some participants, that means that "humanitarian organizations need to phase themselves out." (Participant 17). Effective CE (conducted with the nexus approach throughout all phases) is conducive to effective exit strategies for humanitarian actors from crisis contexts, and this should be the desired outcome of all humanitarian aid (Participant 16).

7.0 Recommendations for SS4CE in HA



Based on the identified needs and gaps for the integration of social sciences in CE in HA described in the previous chapters and summarized in Box 2 below, we put forward seven major recommendations and best practice examples to inform and strengthen the integration of social sciences for CE in HA and programming in the fields of conflicts and hazards.

Box 2: Summary of institutional, structural and operational challenges to SS4CE integration identified

The implementation of these recommendations will support a sustainable way forward in humanitarian crisis governance based on inclusive, equitable representation and participation in which lived experiences and knowledge of communities are systematically included. In operationalizing and facilitating the uptake of these recommendations it is further recommended that existing platforms and partnerships with capacity development mandates are leveraged, rather than establishing, or developing, new initiatives.

Challenges to SS4CE integration	
Chapter 5 Knowledge transfer and the application of the social sciences in community engagement	Chapter 6 Institutional organization, structure and power
Different understandings, perspectives and language of social scientists and humanitarian practitioners	Underutilization and exploitation of local actors, especially local community structures
Limited understanding of the value of social sciences and what they can contribute in CE in HA	Fragmentation of efforts between humanitarian agencies
Timing, speed of data collection and reporting	Reluctance to fund CE and structural investments outside of projects
Making social science insights applicable for CE in HA	Top-down decision making and resourcing, including human resource decisions and hiring practices
Standardization and context-sensitive approaches	Gender issues
	Humanitarian agencies in sphere of long-term or ongoing engagement otherwise taken up by local or development actors

A challenge is the disconnect between the needs and decisions of frontline workers, the teams in the field and the upper echelons of management. This is not to be solved within the scope of this project, but it is a key issue that emerges in both the technical and operational recommendations as well as the capacity development recommendations. The needs and objectives of those in the field are not the same as of those in technical and senior levels. This is reinforced through the multiple kinds of data collected in this project. It was clear that often the funds do not trickle down to the programmes and agendas they were intended for. In terms of capacity development that might indirectly affect structural changes that benefit operational SS4CE capacities, there have been some recent training courses developed for senior levels and also specifically

technical training for people who design and implement, notably through the READY Initiative. But it is also key to pay attention to the way accountability structures and connection between the organizational and technical levels can get senior leadership and decision-making levels as well as influencing donors on board.

This section starts with a summary of the recommendations for:

- 1. The strengthening of technical and operational SS4CE capacities throughout the HPC.**
- 2. Capacity development for SS4CE (curriculum, methodology, tools and skills).**

These are followed by a detailed listing of the recommendations.

Strengthen technical and operational SS4CE capacities

1. Create a shared space with common language where understanding, language and approaches are exchanged

- A. Create a glossary of standardized concepts and terms
- B. Co-create a toolbox focusing on commonly understood tools to translate the social sciences to humanitarian practice
- C. Foster multidisciplinary and interagency collaboration in a shared platform. Develop shared understanding of core competencies across agencies
- D. Motivate the creation of shared products and reporting mechanisms
- E. Communicate research findings in clear, operational language
- F. Develop different capacity development focal points tailored to varying information needs and skills, depending on the audience
- G. Consider roles and responsibilities for different profiles of humanitarian practitioners and social scientists

3. Develop a better understanding of specific contributions of the social sciences to CE in HA

- A. Examine disciplinary strengths, relative to needs in the field
- B. Concise case studies, defining outcomes and impacts from SS for CE

4. Effective and timely use of SS4CE within often time-sensitive emergency context of HA

- A. Continue development, evaluation and capacity building of rapid data collection and analysis methods
- B. Use pre-existing networks and knowledge structures for rapid social science engagement.
- C. Develop strategies to include SS4CE outputs routinely and systematically for decision making by stakeholders at different levels

5. Develop context-sensitive principles – leave room for adaptation

- A. Need for principles that leave room for adaptation
- B. Attention to differences between and within different communities
- C. Examine gender issues

6. Continue to build a more holistic, multidisciplinary framework

- A. Provide guidance for how multidisciplinary teams can be recruited, coordinated and employed
- B. Examine the specific disciplinary social science contributions to multidisciplinary teamwork (the right 'social science cocktail')
- C. Develop a multidisciplinary framework
- D. Continued support for ongoing collaboration, for example in multidisciplinary teams

Capacity Development for SS4CE

2. Develop field-based training infrastructure on SS4CE in disasters and conflicts

- A. Develop a shared, cross institutional training infrastructure

- B. Facilitate field-based, direct training experiences where social scientists and practitioners collaborate in mentoring roles

- C. Follow up on implementation and assessment of trainings to measure continuous impact

7. Advocate for sustained, coordinated and collaborative SS4CE efforts, and define clear accountabilities of different stakeholders

- A. Address the patchwork of SS4CE efforts by stimulating a partnership based interagency collaborative framework

- B. Build an advocacy culture for SS4CE in HA

- C. Include communities in all stages of the HPC and research cycle

- D. Promote decolonial and localized perspectives from communities, social scientists and humanitarian practitioners in/from the Global South

RECOMMENDATION 1.

Create a shared space with common language where understandings, language and approaches are exchanged

Create a glossary of standardized concepts and terms

The creation of a multidisciplinary glossary where concepts, terms, approaches and terminology are defined, will allow actors across various disciplines and sectors and roles in the humanitarian space to build a common understanding

Co-create a toolbox focusing on commonly understood tools to 'translate' SS to humanitarian practice

Promote an open-source toolbox to make social science concepts easily understandable to people in the field. Examples provided are the [Toolbox site for OCHA](#) and for IFRC, which often creates pages for [country operations](#). The Toolbox could also leverage earlier created resources, such as the [SSHAP Practical Approaches Brief](#). The toolbox should be based on agencies' perspectives and on concrete examples and experiential learning, with scenarios, simulation or a playbook that shows what social science tools or skills could be applied when and how. It should function as a guide with examples based on scenarios and best practices, and possibly be supported by workshops that provide guidance on the tools.

Foster multidisciplinary and interagency collaboration in a shared platform.

Develop a shared understanding of core competencies across agencies according to profiles and priorities of different agencies, agreement on who does what (see also Recommendation 7B)

A shared space that would allow humanitarian practitioners and social scientists to share resources from different areas. Many of the subsequent recommendations can be enacted using this platform.

RECOMMENDATION 2.

Develop field-based training infrastructure on SS4CE in disasters and conflicts

Develop a shared, cross-institutional training infrastructure

A shared, cross-institutional training infrastructure is desired in which the lack of current capacity development tools in these areas is addressed in a coordinated way, going beyond organization-specific needs. Training needs to be tailored differently to the specific needs of social scientists and humanitarian practitioners, yet also bring them together in a shared space. A field-based, direct experience multidisciplinary training infrastructure, with long-term mentoring, is seen as essential to achieve this. An example of such a learning infrastructure is the READY Initiative learning hub; while it is PHE focused, it might also be valuable for SS4CE linkages.

The training infrastructure can be linked or embedded within the shared platform demonstrating a common language. This will lay the groundwork for what could become a very extensive network of social science resources – both guidance/tools and HR – based upon shared understandings and shared principles of the contribution of SS4CE to the humanitarian space.

Facilitate field-based, direct training experiences where social scientists and practitioners collaborate in mentoring roles

A field-based, direct experience multidisciplinary training infrastructure with long-term mentoring is seen as essential to provide opportunities to learn humanitarian skills that cannot be taught in classrooms. Bringing practitioners and social scientists together in a co-working relationship in the field is one of the most effective ways to achieve this, particularly in emergency context settings. For many social scientists, access to the field is often difficult, and to some extent counterproductive, without coordinated linkage and support to a humanitarian actor.

Follow up on implementation and assessment of trainings to measure continuous impact

Follow up with trainees after trainings to continuously assess learned capacities and provide ongoing support. In addition, provide an in-service learning infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION 3.**Develop a better understanding of specific contributions of the social sciences to CE in HA****Examine disciplinary strengths relative to needs in the field**

The creation of a multidisciplinary glossary where concepts, terms, Conduct further research, such as scenarios, longer-term observations in the field, or evaluation of past consultancy hiring practices, to inquire which social science informed solutions would be appropriate under what humanitarian conditions. What social science contributions are needed and used at what time by whom? We need to get a deeper understanding of how SS4CE could work in action, relative to the HPC. Examples of possible methods to obtain more information about this include participatory observation or action research, discrete-choice experiments, decision maps, and scenario modelling.

Concise case studies, defining outcomes and impacts from SS for CE

Short, concise case studies or evidence briefs demonstrating SS contributions that inform meaningful CE, and their outcomes and impacts should be posted and/or exchanged on the shared platform. If open-sourced and publicized within humanitarian circles, social scientists can be encouraged to submit these short examples of their work to further build up an evidence base of what SS4CE contributions are and to advocate for wider inclusion and subsequent investments in SS for CE, during crises as well as broader humanitarian programming.

RECOMMENDATION 4.**Effective and timely use of SS4CE within the often time-sensitive emergency context of HA****Continue development, evaluation and capacity building of rapid data collection and analysis methods**

Continue to develop and evaluate different rapid social science data collection and analysis methods, including suitable tools (e.g., rapid qualitative data methods such as the [Rapid Assessment Procedure sheets developed by RREAL](#)). For CE to be effective, rapid data collection should be seen as a continuous or recurring engagement, which is already built into the preparation phase and maintained throughout. Ongoing engagement with communities and follow-ups on collected (rapid) data is not only important to ensure fast action is possible in case of an emergency, but supports sustainable collaboration with communities throughout all HPC phases.

Existing and new rapid methodologies can be published and advocated for on shared, common platforms.

Use pre-existing networks and knowledge structures for rapid social science engagement

Use knowledge and structures already existing in the community; support communities to build upon what's already there.

Build on earlier research and connect to pre-existing social science networks. Provide sustainable support to maintain those networks during preparedness and recovery times. In particular, highlight the need to develop a gender-equitable community of social scientists in the Global South who understand the local context and with the expertise to contribute to the development of interventions.

Develop strategies to include SS4CE outputs routinely and systematically for decision making by stakeholders at different levels

Identify strategies to systematically leverage, work with and build capacity for social science outputs in decision making for humanitarian programming. For example through behavioural and social insights information dashboards. This also includes locally or community-sourced knowledge and data.

RECOMMENDATION 5. Develop context-sensitive principles

Need for principles that leave room for adaptation

SOPs are important for rapid action in emergencies. Establish principles for when and how SS4CE is integrated in humanitarian programming processes. This requires the endorsement of, and integration in, humanitarian decision making bodies, (e.g., the CHS - currently under revision) as well as the IASC. Within those principles, provide room to adapt standards based on contextual, social science insights. While local contexts are 're-contextualized' to enable effective humanitarian practice, conversely humanitarian practices and decision-making frameworks must adjust and compromise standards based on social science insights. While such 'contextualized standardization' sounds like a paradox, it largely follows the social science tradition of empirical ethics.

Attention to differences between and within different communities

Social science engagement includes continuous assessment and (re)defining of community participation because of ongoing power dynamics in involved communities. For example, recruitment of study participants within and across communities needs to be done in a way that is sensitive to internal power dynamics, as no community is homogeneous.

Examine gender issues

Conduct a gender analysis of the state of the sector in all aspects from the management, decision making, policies, design of interventions, implementation and impact throughout all HPC phases. Facilitate the institutionalization of existing standards, such as the Inclusion standard in the UNICEF CE Minimum Standards, and provide operational support and investments for contextualization.

RECOMMENDATION 6. Continue to build a more holistic, inter/ multidisciplinary social science approach

Provide guidance for how multidisciplinary teams can be recruited, coordinated and employed

Develop guidance to human resource personnel and/or managers leading multidisciplinary teams to help them think about recruitment, coordination, and employment of different members in multidisciplinary teams including among others social scientists and practitioners. Build on insights on the contribution of different social science disciplines. Identify people in the field with experience on how to bring together different disciplines.

Examine the specific disciplinary social science contributions to multidisciplinary teamwork (the right 'social science cocktail')

For multidisciplinary practices to be implemented and maintained effectively, the specific conceptual and methodological contributions of different social science disciplines need to be better understood. It would be helpful to make a profile of which competencies, tools, and insights are needed from a particular discipline (e.g., in a competency framework, so that these roles and inputs can be coordinated in multidisciplinary teamwork). This way the most efficient 'social science cocktail' can be imagined and implemented effectively. Even in transdisciplinary work awareness of the disciplinary roots of participant views or scientific methods can be helpful to address different positionalities encountered. For example, while ethnography is used across various fields, its historical development is closely tied to anthropology which may influence expectations on usage.

Develop a multidisciplinary framework

Develop an effective framework for multidisciplinary action, taking into account multiple approaches and understandings from different social science disciplines and different ways of looking and analysing, (e.g., micro, more macro, social dynamics within communities, beliefs, political/power dynamics). Offer guidance on how this contributes to each phase in the HA cycle in different situations (e.g., conflict versus hazards).

Provide continued support for ongoing collaboration, for example in multidisciplinary teams

Multidisciplinary teams are excellent opportunities to foster spaces with common language to bridge the different worlds, cultures and time-spaces that (academic) social scientists and humanitarian practitioners work in. Provide continued support for such ongoing collaboration. Other options are, for example, exchange programmes and international conferences for both social scientists and humanitarian practitioners.

RECOMMENDATION 7.**Advocate for sustained, coordinated and collaborative SS4CE efforts, and define clear accountabilities of different stakeholders****Address the patchwork of SS4CE efforts by stimulating a partnership based interagency collaborative framework**

Bring together and consolidate efforts by different actors across the humanitarian landscape. Multi-disciplinary and interagency collaboration can be further stimulated in the shared platform (see Recommendation 1). Agencies have diverse operational strengths across areas according to their mission and based on the types of professional profiles they hire. A collaborative framework outlining how partnerships between the agencies would contribute to the integration of social scientists in multidisciplinary teams and the distribution across the agencies would expand the knowledge base within, and across, agencies in a way that is in line with the cluster approach.

Build an advocacy culture for SS4CE in HA

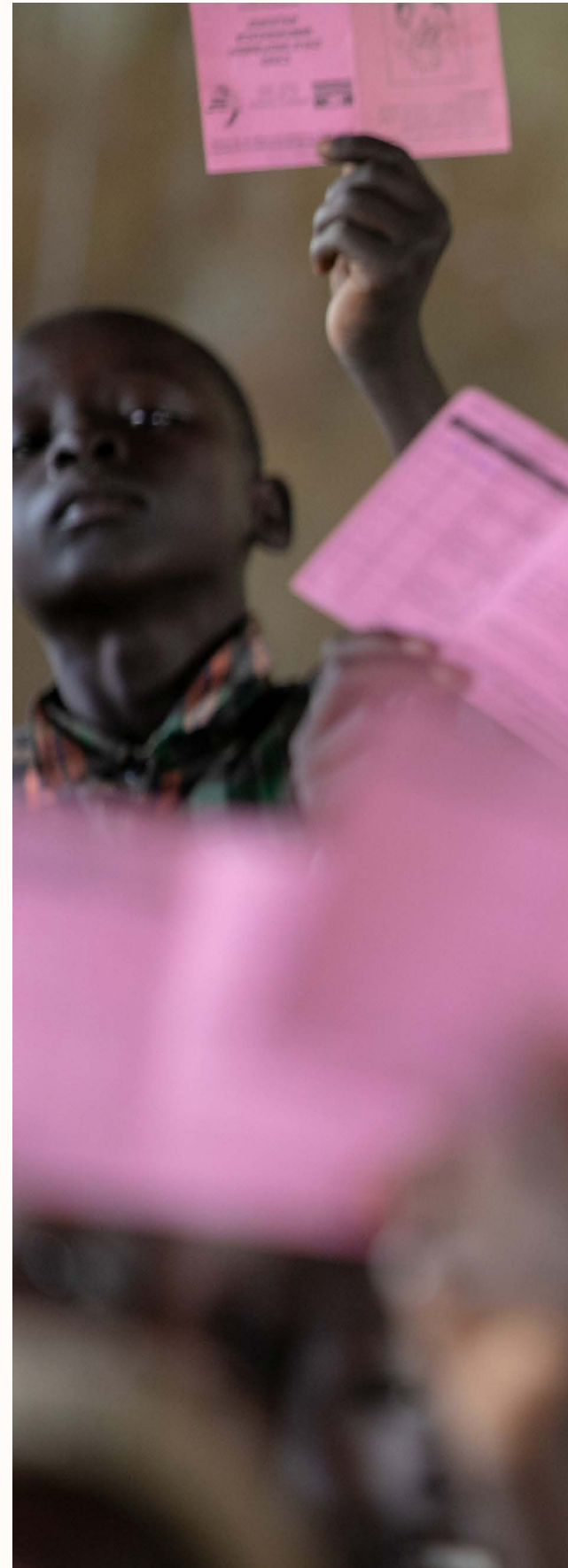
Communicate what social sciences can bring and advocate for their application in CE on all levels in the humanitarian system. Support professionalization of such an advocacy culture by establishing appropriate marketing and advocacy roles and opportunities regarding the relevance of social sciences knowledge to CE. Show donors why investments in SS4CE are important and what the priorities are. A deeper understanding of timing and history from a donor landscape; knowledge of which investments in this area have been done so far is desired.

Include communities in all stages of the HPC and research cycle

Ensure the inclusion of communities in all stages of research; design, data collection, analysis, reporting and dissemination; and especially in the research design and dissemination phase, which are lagging.

Promote decolonial and localized perspectives from communities, social scientists and humanitarian practitioners in/from the Global South

To further stimulate an inclusive, context sensitive and participatory approach to SS4CE, include more perspectives from social scientists and humanitarian practitioners from and working directly in the Global South. Promote awareness of the need for decolonial approaches that promote localization.





8.0 Conclusion

This report describes the SS4CE in HA project's research to analyse how social science approaches can further inform CE in HA. Using interviews, a survey, FGD and TWG-2 meetings, humanitarian practitioners and social scientists were consulted in a participatory process to understand needs and gaps for designing, implementing, supporting and measuring CE in HA. Feedback was sought from a wide range of experts, stakeholders and communities. Mapping and analysis of existing training resources showed what capacity development tools currently are offered for SS4CE training, and where additional training material is needed.

Findings show how social science approaches can help unlock community perspectives, needs and capacities, and what institutional structures and mechanisms facilitate community participation. Social science methods can generate operational knowledge and inform the redesign of methods and objectives of humanitarian interventions by giving a central role to communities, shifting power dynamics and demanding accountability. By making visible community experiences and the resources needed for mobilizing community knowledge and networks, they can encourage institutional actors to centre these areas in programming.

Main findings of the project are:

- 1. There is a need for translation between the social sciences and humanitarian practitioners** on different levels – community, field, local, national, senior, HQ – and a need for clarity on the social science disciplines that are critical at different stages of humanitarian programming, on the ground and in systems strengthening (eg. rapid diagnostics during emergencies vs. integrated SS4CE data in information systems of sectors).
- 2. Language (including terminology) is an important factor** which can obfuscate findings and make them hard to apply in humanitarian settings. Even when social science research might offer answers, the way findings are presented might not be applicable, or easily adoptable, by humanitarians. This is also, in part, because social scientists are often unfamiliar with the way humanitarian programming works, including the humanitarian programme cycle (HPC).
- 3. SOPs are carried out in time-limited circumstances** and the use of social science terminology could be restrictive in communicating with affected populations and describing the complexities of crises.
- 4. SS4CE relies on the inclination of donors and senior/global management** to invest in social sciences and inclusive CE. To catalyse this investment, it is vital to advocate for the value of SS4CE and overcome perceptions of the social sciences as slow or complicated and show what the social sciences can contribute.
- 5. Diverse teams and management are fundamental.** Hiring practices guide the composition of teams and have a great effect on the expertise existing within the team, the dialogue taking place and the approaches applied. Interdisciplinary, or multidisciplinary, teams and projects have been implemented by some organizations already and have shown to be attentive to CE approaches and inclusion.
- 6. There is a need to bring together and consolidate efforts** by different actors across the humanitarian landscape.
- 7. SS4CE can help shift power dynamics and demand accountability.**

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Annexes

- I. Search terms used for SS4CE trainings in different languages
- II. Summary of content, target audience and learned capacities of most promising hybrid trainings in SS4CE
- III. Competency Framework for Social Science for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action (Ss4ce in HA)

Annex I.

Search terms used for SS4CE trainings in different languages

English	Spanish	Portuguese	French
Community/-ies	Comunidades	Comunidades	Communauté
Community engagement (CE)	Participación de comunidades	Participação da comunidade	Engagement communautaire
Affected populations	Poblaciones afectadas	Populações afetadas	Populations affectées
Humanitarian	Humanitario/a	Humanitário	Humanitaire
Humanitarian response	Respuesta humanitaria		Réponse humanitaire
Humanitarian action	Acción humanitaria	Ação humanitária	Action humanitaire
Disaster	Desastre	Desastre	Désastre
(Natural) hazards	Riesgos (naturales)		Catastrophes (naturelles)
Conflict (armed)	Conflicto (armado)	Conflito	Conflits
Violence	Violencia	Violência	
War	Guerra		Guerre
Displacement	Desplazamiento Desplazado(s)/-a(as)	Deslocamento/Deslocados	Déplacement
Crisis	Crisis		Crise
Humanitarian crisis	Crisis humanitaria	Crise humanitária	Crise humanitaire
Emergency/-ies	Emergencia(s)		Urgence/s
Humanitarian emergency	Emergencia humanitaria	Emergência humanitária	Urgence humanitaire
Humanitarian aid	Ayuda humanitaria	Ajuda humanitária	Aide humanitaire
Training	Capacitación Entrenamiento	Treinamento	Formation
Course(s)	Curso	Curso	Cours
Research	Investigación	Pesquisa	Recherche
Participatory Action Research	Investigación Acción participativa	Pesquisa-ação participativa	Recherche-action participative

Annex II.

Summary of content, target audience and learned capacities of most promising hybrid trainings in SS4CE

1. RCCE Training package to use SS4CE during emergency response (Collective Service, co-produced with SSHAP)

The Collective Service RCCE training package 'Using Social Science for Community Engagement during an Emergency Response' is highly dense with social science components for CE in HA.¹² The training materials were created to target important social science competency domains for people working in CE and/or communications disciplines.¹³

Each of the seven modules in the Collective Service training package consists of several sessions. The modules are constructed to guide course participants from the basic definition of social sciences and approaches in HA and health emergencies through the ethics in operational research, the implementation of social sciences in HA, up to the evidence synthesis, the translation of knowledge into action and tracking of the uptake of social-behavioural change. It provides an excellent overview of social science importance and the main existing social science qualitative and quantitative methodologies as well as rapid strategies to understand the context in which the intervention has to be delivered. Therefore it is helpful for those working in the humanitarian field who are not social scientists by training. The training also promotes localized research and data collection methods involving the community. Most importantly, an entire module is focused on translating results into actionable findings that can be used to influence policy and practice, which is an aspect overlooked in most other trainings we found, although it is crucial, given the frequent disconnection between social science research and implementation in HA, an issue the interview participants alluded to as well (Participants 5, 7 & 11). Moreover, there are different examples of how to present the findings back to communities, to receive feedback, to enhance the uptake of the intervention and to represent community needs and perspectives. Lastly, a whole module is focused on tools and methods for keeping track of how emergency response actors use integrated evidence to improve operational decision-making.

Every session is built to be interactive, and many scenario-based examples are provided. No specific instruments are provided for contexts of conflicts or hazards. Therefore, as a recommendation for the future development of capacity development tools for SS4CE, this training could be a great place to start. However, the training is quite long, and the social science contents are very detailed and may be difficult to understand for those unfamiliar with social science approaches. Suggestions for improvement include the reduction of social science components, the detailed explanation of all social science tools (such as statistical analysis) may be unnecessary given the target audience, and the addition of scenario-based examples specific to conflicts and natural hazards, apart from health emergencies. This could be beneficial in providing a comprehensive overview of the diverse emergencies in HA and the capacities needed in those situations.

2. Training in Health Promotion and Community Engagement (MSF)

This training package consists of scenario-based learning. It is directed at health promotion managers and supervisors (mandatory within MSF) and staff in all operational centres, but also for beginners. It appears to be only accessible to MSF staff.

Training objectives include advocacy for health promotion based on CE, operational integration of CE in a HP project design and strategy, reflexivity of the health promoter positioning in a partnership with local community, and ensuring localized contextualization (local setting and priorities). Content is organized around key concepts of health promotion, health in emergency responses, anthropology's relevance in health promotion, health promotion and CE strategic work plan (designing intervention), different HPC stages of a health promotion & CE project, and setting up a team to lead HP & CE projects in partnership with locals. The training seems to be very relevant for SS4CE with a strong CE component as well many components based on input from the social sciences. A module on anthropology is explicitly referenced, and there is mention of attention to the overall contextualization of the intervention. The training description suggests that the training includes ways of measuring HP & CE programme impact. While the training falls under the 'public health in emergency' area, not conflict or natural disasters, these programmes are a fundamental part of humanitarian interventions. Anthropology is explicitly mentioned as part of an interdisciplinary approach with medicine, economics, and (international) public health or global health.

3. Master's Permanent training in international solidarity action and social inclusion (Máster de formación permanente en acción solidaria internacional y de inclusión social) (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid)

The master's programme is the result of collaboration between the Francisco de Vitoria Institute of the Carlos III University and three NGOs with extensive experience in the application of solidarity policies: CEAR Foundation, CIDEAL, and the Spanish Red Cross. The programme offers practices collaborating with institutions such as Oxfam, Doctors without Borders, Plan International, Action Against Hunger and Tierra de Hombre Foundation among others.

The Master has an introductory general part (International Relations and International Society) and four specific modules:

- a. Migrations, asylum, and refuge
- b. Development cooperation
- c. Humanitarian action
- d. Social inclusion and attention to vulnerable people and groups

The theoretical content includes legal, institutional, and socioeconomic frameworks for HA. The programme deals with the practical operation of solidarity mechanisms and the responses given to real situations, including the identification of problems, and the design, formulation, and evaluation of projects both at local and international levels. One of the modules explains the fundamentals of HA (including humanitarian architecture).

The programme includes experts and professionals who manage solidarity policies and carry out their work on the field to participate in classes, conferences, round tables, workshops, and work sessions. Their focus on solidarity policies and their technical/practical orientation is made possible due to the combination of efforts and resources of the university and NGOs.

Usually, more than half the students have experience in the humanitarian sector already, and come from a variety of backgrounds. More than a quarter of students are international (mostly from other European countries, but also some from countries in Latin America and Africa).

As for disciplinary focus, most of the conferences, round tables, workshops and work sessions (up to 65%) are given by active experts and professionals who manage solidarity policies and carry out their work on the ground. The university teaching staff comes from different national and European universities.

The focus of the programme is highly oriented towards teaching technical skills (high importance for their internships) including project management and evaluation tools (including qualitative and quantitative training). Although the main disciplines are not stated, the content of the programme clearly has a strong influence from political science and law (including public international law and protection of asylum and refuge, human rights approaches and analysis of government actors among others). The programme also mentions some anthropological perspectives for the analysis of violence, conflict, and socioeconomic factors.

The CE component is rather modest. It was considered present, but of low value, since the last module seems to have some CE content, but it does not clarify if any methodologies for CE are taught. They mention the analysis and visits to grassroots associations and civil society initiatives (e.g., soup kitchens, reception centres and grassroots associations linked to the Church, mutual aid, worker unions and neighbourhood associations among others). The programme also talks about participatory democracy and the role of new social movements and models of self-organization, reciprocity, and collective assistance. This final module has specific workshops on the management of social networks as tools for constructive mobilization, change and social inclusion of the most vulnerable people and groups affected by the economic crisis. In terms of methodology (and localization), the programme engages with grassroots and community-based organizations, and values social movements from a more horizontal perspective.

4. Inter-university Master's degree in international cooperation for development (Máster interuniversitario en cooperación internacional para el Desarrollo) (University of Salamanca and others)

The programme aims to train experts in international cooperation for development, capable of designing, managing and evaluating the different projects and instruments of international cooperation based on the analysis of the social, economic and political realities of the different societies in which these are contextualized. Graduates of this programme will have a better understanding of the language of the humanitarian field, skills to communicate results and appropriate programmes for this audience. Moreover, they will have the ability to understand the role of public and institutional agents involved in development policies and strategies.

The programme also intends to provide skills for knowledge and the proper use, application and interpretation of fundamental statistical tools, the understanding of the conceptual, legislative, and methodological contents of public policies for international cooperation for development, their design process and the role of the various institutions in formulating these policies. The programme also includes knowledge of project preparation methodologies and mastery of technical skills for the identification, formulation, planning, programming, management and monitoring of development cooperation projects. HA is also part of the modules, focusing on the history of HA and aid, and the links with humanitarian interventions (military interventions are mentioned during this module). However, the programme seems to have a very light focus on humanitarian aid and is geared more towards development (which has similar knowledge needs, but then there is no mention of humanitarian architecture, HPC, etc.). The class is intended for future workers of NGOs and the general humanitarian and development sectors, with a tendency to appeal to international students, who often make up more than half of participants.

Disciplinary focus: the programme is framed within social sciences and law. However, the aim is to have an interdisciplinary approach for students, anticipating this as a need in the

field, with an explicitly mentioned aim for an interdisciplinary approach as a valuable factor for international cooperation. With respect to CE, the programme includes training on participatory methodologies in cooperation, providing skills for facilitating participatory processes, understanding the theory and need of these methodologies for CE.

There is an introduction and explanation of actors in the humanitarian system, but it is not explicitly mentioned whether the course covers this in greater depth at a later date (and the degree seems to lean more towards development).

5. Master in development, cooperation and community action (Máster en desarrollo, cooperación y acción comunitaria) (Pere Tarres Foundation)

The master's degree trains students to understand the new paradigms in development, international cooperation and HA providing tools and knowledge to address challenges such as migration, management of cultural diversity, minorities, project management and new technologies. It also offers experience in national and international entities within the sector – through an internship period – that provides students with real experience in the field of cooperation.



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The contents of the programme includes geopolitical analysis, humanitarian architecture and community action that starts with the involvement of the communities themselves in the processes of social transformation. Understanding of sociocultural and economic factors around the main issues addressed in development and HA is provided through different lectures, influenced by different social sciences. There is an introduction to research methods along with tools for project management and evaluation. The master's degree includes the involvement of recognized experts in the field of development cooperation and community action, as well as the exchange of experiences with different organizations in the field to increase professional opportunities. It also has a wide range of internships in development cooperation entities both at national and international levels.

In terms of disciplinary focus, the programme is intended for students with different backgrounds who are interested in working on HA. No specific mention of interdisciplinarity, but as the programme is open for students of different backgrounds, it encourages a multidisciplinary approach.

The CE component is strong, focusing on a module of 'community action' which includes initiatives from civil society actors, knowledge on participatory methodologies and relevance of CE, along with tools to facilitate these processes. Social justice is indirectly addressed as part of the involvement of communities through participatory methods and community action. The programme includes an internship which can be done with national and international organizations, some located in the Global South. The topic of localization is not directly addressed. Regarding explanations as to how the humanitarian system works, in the master's programme there are modules that dive into the humanitarian architecture, main actors and functions.

6. Vulnerable groups: challenges and good practices for an inclusive HA (ISPI (Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale))

After further analysis, the course does not seem to have strong SS or CE components, but it should be noted that only the content of sessions and some learning objectives were available. The social sciences present are not mentioned explicitly, but insights and concepts from political sciences and anthropology can be identified in reflections on power dynamics, vulnerabilities, inequalities and inequities. CE is minimalistically described as the inclusion of all 'invisible' and marginalized populations

as beneficiaries of HA. Only one session focuses on the promotion of local communities' engagement and leadership in humanitarian interventions and provides a more ambitious view of CE. The link with HA, however, is very strong, with case examples used to showcase concepts. This is a summer course that has an interdisciplinary approach to humanitarian studies and legal protection. It is aimed at undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as professionals in the HA field.

7. Managing climate risks through social protection (FAO)

This course only covers a limited dimension of CE and SS and seems more relevant to development studies; it is an example of a training that only touches upon SS4CE topics superficially. This was one of the training courses that looked very relevant on first examination, but after further inspection of the content, capacities and audience, does not offer substantive SS4CE content. The training focuses on social protection and climate risk management and is geared towards professionals in the field of social protection, disaster risk management, climate change adaptation and mitigation (especially focusing on rural areas and agri-food systems). The training promotes social protection approaches as a way to ensure better natural disasters preparedness and response. Here, social protection is meant as economic and employment policies for local communities that take into account vulnerabilities, inequities and inequalities. This approach sits at the intersection of economics and political sciences which could be considered as a social science component, although no explicit reference is made to these disciplines as such. The CE component is very minimal and top-down in that it follows the idea of protecting and empowering local communities rather than engaging them in the design or the intervention.

8. Communication is aid training module (CDAC)

This course centres on disaster response, communication and CE. Its aim is to strengthen the capacity of practitioners, team leaders and managers so that communication and CE are part of normal operational practice and become a predictable, consistent and resourced element of emergency preparedness and response. The title and first screening of course modules pointed to a training with high SS4CE relevance, but upon closer examination this course does not explicitly offer social science theories, methods or skills, it just focuses on teaching participants practical skills to engage affected communities, help provide the information they need and establish communication mechanisms for dialogue with disaster responders.

Annex III.

Competency Framework for Social Science for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action (SS4CE in HA)

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

This Competency Framework including competencies and best practices for Social Sciences for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action (SS4CE in HA) is a product of a capacity needs assessment study led by TWG2 of the UNICEF project “Integrating Social Science in Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action in Conflicts and Hazards”. The framework

is to be considered in conjunction with the extended report “Capacity needs assessment and mapping of social science for community engagement training”, drafted by the TWG2 research team, which outlines the methodology and objectives underpinning the consultation process with experts, and its findings.

Consultation process

Competencies listed here are derived from the findings of this study. They include both competencies already in use (Abramowitz et al., 2015; Hewlett & Hewlett, 2007), and others that are most often missing or overlooked in the everyday practice of humanitarian action according to the consulted experts. The consultation process was conducted with social scientists and practitioners who have been working in community engagement in humanitarian action during conflicts or natural hazards. Nevertheless, this competency framework provides a broad outline of competencies required to lead social-science informed community engagement in humanitarian action, across all phases of the Humanitarian Program Cycle.



Intended audience

The audience for the framework includes the two aforementioned communities: social scientists and humanitarian practitioners. By social scientist we mean researchers based in research institutions working in support of community engagement activities in humanitarian (conflict and hazard) contexts, but for whom it is not standard practice. This is a large and diverse group from a diversity of disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, cultural geography, political science, history, pedagogy, psychology, communication sciences, etc. By humanitarian practitioners (HP) we refer to humanitarian staff working in community engagement who might in part have a social science background, although not necessarily. For both audiences, the framework is of relevance to staff ranging from junior to senior levels, although the emphasis lies on competencies for mid to senior level experts.

The competencies listed do not aim to characterize a single ideal profile for each of the indicated audiences. Rather they illustrate a comprehensive, transdisciplinary, and to a large extent collaborative set of knowledge and skills required to

achieve effective SS4CE as it emerges from the report's findings. Still, because not all competencies are equally important for each of these audiences, we have also noted an initial indication of relevance for each audience (using a coloring bar, with darker indicating higher relevance). However, it must be noted that in reality, relevance and prioritization are much influenced by context and existing capacities, and this element would need further adaptation by the user of this Competency Framework. Furthermore, all competencies are relevant to both audiences involved in social science research or social science-based support activities. As such, the competency framework outlines the synthesis of the mutual contributions of both audiences to achieve effective and substantive community engagement in humanitarian interventions.

Defining competencies and best practices

Competence is intended here as the ability to do something well and effectively. It is important to note that 'competencies' by themselves are always ambiguous when applied to various situations with different meanings (Winterton et al., 2006).

Or, in other words, different cultural contexts influence the understanding of what competence is. Furthermore, in this framework some of the competencies listed may read more like best practices, which are standards that are known to produce good outcomes if followed. We represent learning based on the project including some interlinkages of best practices and competencies.

How to use this framework

The idea of community engagement resonates with the rich literature and debates on community participation (McCloskey, 2011; George et al., 2015), with all its social, political, economic, and cultural nuances which can at best be captured partially in a competency framework relevant to a humanitarian context. The framework as such is a guide, a call for attention to and awareness of, but not an definitive list of competencies that should be seen apart from such context. Depending on organizational needs, existing capacities, goals and aims, the framework can assist in building SS4CE capacity by knowing what skills to prioritize in hiring, staff development, training, or human resource planning. It can also be used by program managers to derive indicators of social science informed community engagement, but it cannot stand in for lived experience in a much more complex reality.

Each humanitarian situation presents its unique and dynamic challenges, which should never be undermined by a rigid commodification of competencies that do not fit such complexity (Foth & Holmes, 2016). In this regard, competencies listed in the framework should not be viewed as boxes that must be ticked, rather they need to be proven in situated contexts. They are also not mutually exclusive, but rather iterative and highly interconnected. Only when enriched with experience, these competencies evolve in a humanitarian SS4CE professional. Moreover, the commitment to aspects of this framework should be made across the hierarchy of any organization using the framework, and not be limited to those deployed or working on ground.

Methodology

The SS4CE Competency Framework was drafted by three members of the TWG2 coordination team. Based on the report findings, a list of related competencies was extracted. These

competencies were regrouped under pertinent domains. The researchers individually assigned scores to each competency (from 1 to 3, with 3 being the most relevant) grading its relevance for each of the two reference audiences (humanitarian practitioners and social scientists). The allocated scores and the reasons motivating individual choices in grading were jointly discussed by the three members and members of TWG2, resulting in a final synthesis score for each competency and each audience. The competencies underwent multiple rounds of discussion with Technical Working Group members and consequent editing to ensure strict correspondence with the research findings of the Capacity Needs Assessment, SS4CE in HA relevance, clarity, and readability. When pertinent, competencies were grounded in existing literature. The compiled list was compared with competencies outlined in the Collective Service RCCE (Risk Communication and Community Engagement) Competency Framework (Collective Service, n.d.). With the purpose to optimize SS4CE efforts across the humanitarian spectrum, it was our priority to avoid duplication and to integrate important insights from this previous research project focusing on Public Health in Emergencies. Where we identified overlap between the two frameworks, or missing elements in ours, we tried to synthesize crucial input from the Collective Service RCCE Competency Framework with the SS4CE Needs Assessment findings.

Limitations

Represented here are the views of mid- and high-level professionals working in this field whom we were able to interview and have dialogue with through our technical working groups meetings for the larger project. This is also a limited and positional perspective. For example, some key voices are missing due to a lack of access during this project, notably those practitioners working closest to the community, and those at the opposite, highest level (e.g., donors or leadership staff at global institutions). Furthermore, this framework does not include behavioral indicators or proficiency levels. This would need to be elaborated upon further.

Overview infographic

The infographic below provides an overview of the domains listed in the framework, their various subdomains, and the overarching professional values (outer circle).

Core competencies and best practices







<p>01 Commitment to overarching professional values</p>		
<p>02 Social science 'lens'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Social science skills 1.2 People or 'soft' skills 	
<p>03 Knowledge co-creation, localization, and brokering</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Defending the community and community engagement 2.2 Localizing and empowering community resources 2.3 Bottom-up knowledge brokering 	
<p>04 Applied social science research method skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Designing and operationalizing research for humanitarian contexts 3.2 Interpretation and use of evidence 	
<p>05 Multidisciplinary and translational skills</p>		
<p>06 Knowing the context of humanitarian action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 Resilience 5.2 Infrastructural knowledge 5.3 Advocating for a supportive enabling environment 	

Table of core competencies and best practices

- HP** Indication of relevance score for humanitarian practitioners.
- SS** Indication of relevance score for social scientists.
- High relevance, meaning the acquisition and/or application of competence for this audience is urgent, a priority.
- Medium relevance, meaning the acquisition and/or application of competence for this audience is needed.
- Lower relevance, meaning the acquisition and/or application of competence for this audience is desirable or preferable, but not their primary responsibility or it is most often already happening in practice.

Commitment to overarching professional values

Humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence

Humanitarianism is based on the four fundamental principles of neutrality, impartiality, humanity, and independence (Pictet, 1979), which regulate the provision of life-saving assistance to victims of conflict and natural disasters (Barnett, 2014). Impartiality means that relief is given to those in need, not to those we like, or who look like us. Neutrality demands that humanitarian organizations refrain from taking part in hostilities or from any action that either benefits or disadvantages the parties to the conflict. Independence demands that assistance should not be connected to any of the parties directly involved in armed conflicts or who have a stake in the outcome. Humanity expresses the endeavor and commitment to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found, by respecting life and health and ensuring respect for the human being.

Equality, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization

While the term ‘equality’ allows for a comparative reading of relations of power in the workplace, the term ‘diversity’ draws attention to the multiplicity of strands of difference, and the term ‘inclusion’ adds a purposive and strategic dimension to the investigation of interventions to relations of power at work. Inclusion relates to the degree to which individuals feel part of critical organizational processes. This includes awareness and understanding of colonial history in science and knowledge of practices of decolonization (Özbilgin, 2009; Mbembe, 2010; Rumens, 2022).

Ethical practice

Ethics is about rules for distinguishing between right and wrong, or norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. In the sciences, the following are common, at a minimum: 1) No harm should come to research participants (beneficence, “do no harm”), 2) Participants should agree to participate and know what the research is about (i.e., informed consent), 3) Participants’ privacy should not be invaded, 4) Participants should not be lied to or cheated (no deception). Being ethical is an ongoing, never stopping process requiring honest efforts of researchers to be responsible for all possible outcomes (such as stigma, misunderstandings, unnecessary inducement). In humanitarian action, these social science standards are to be coupled and aligned with the fundamental humanitarian principles listed above. Ethical practice is rooted in the awareness and attention devoted to the application of these principles in the complex concrete reality of humanitarian action (Slim, 2015).

Research standards

Within emergency contexts, researchers should strive to commit as much as they can to provide trustworthy study results, yet also acknowledge the need to be ‘good enough’ to allow timely actions in rapidly evolving contexts. In qualitative social sciences, study results should be as credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable as possible in the context of the situation. In quantitative social science, data should be as valid and reliable as possible. This includes the capacity to evaluate the rigor of research (e.g., data collected, approach used).

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Domain: Social science “lens”



Social science skills

Critical thinking

Critical thinking is that mode of thinking – about any subject, content, or problem — in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them (Paul and Elder, 2001). It is a reflective and reasonable thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do and related to evaluation or appraisal. Critical thinking is formulation and use of criteria to make warranted judgments (Patrick, 1986).

Analytical skills

Problem-solving skills that help parse data and information to develop creative and rational solutions. According to Bloom (1969) this may consist of 1) the ability to classify and analyze significant elements, 2) the ability to relate concepts and reasons (relationship), and 3) the ability to search for principles of relationships between elements of information (organizations) (Bloom, 1984).

Reflexivity and positionality

Thoughtful, self-aware analysis of the intersubjective dynamics between the researcher and the researched. The ability to reflect and consider who one is in relation to others. Critical self-reflection on the way in which a social background, positioning, and behavior impacts research and humanitarian processes (Finlay and Gough, 2008).

Ability to build trust and rapport

In traditional ethnographic research, rapport is a skill that builds ordinary conversation and ordinary behavior in the researcher’s presence by ‘hanging out’. To some extent, rapport is a form of impression management useful to gain access to information during participant observation. Friendship is different from rapport and can confound research objectivity. Rapport is also useful for quantitative survey methodologies when respondents are felt at ease by the interviewer and more willing to open up. In the contest of community engagement, rapport leads to the ability to develop good working relationships with the community (Glesne, 1989). In the humanitarian context of conflict, it must be recognized that limitations of time and space may pose acute challenges.

Sensitivity to and interpretation of power dynamics

It entails recognizing that power operates at multiple levels and is manifested in several forms in a humanitarian context (i.e., who sets the agenda, nature of access to resources, communication flows, who can research whom and who is accountable to whom, etc.). Embracing the political nature of one’s work and negotiating the context ethically within a value frame is a skill set that needs to be cultivated. Taking power seriously means being attentive to and aware of these multiple facets and circulations of power and authority at the international and local level which affect and exist within societies and communities (Bigo 2016). It means embracing the political nature of research approaches and developing language and tools that make power, values, interests, and political agendas ‘discussable’ in the process of enquiry, be that the process of research, humanitarian engagement, or collaborative policy development (Strumińska-Kutra and Scholl, 2022). This includes an awareness and capacity to prevent, detect and deal with all forms of gender-based violence.

Knowledge co-creation and dialogic praxis

Engagement goes beyond participation: it involves collaboration between partners who share common goals (Tindana et al., 2007). Knowledge co-creation entails actively involving citizens or community members in dialogical praxis (De Sousa, 2008) in most or all steps of the scientific process and associated emergency intervention(s). For the researcher this means the ability to navigate between 1) pragmatism when focusing on concrete action, 2) social learning and social constructivism when emphasizing the importance of local knowledge, and 3) being a critical theorist when questioning established and dominant patterns of thinking and, in particular, seeking emancipation (Thomas et al., 2021; Strumińska-Kutra, 2016).

People or 'soft' skills

Active listening

The inception of active listening can be found in Carl Roger's humanistic theory. It has been described as a multi-step process, which includes techniques such as making comments, formulating appropriate questions, paraphrasing and summarizing, in order to express complete understanding - an empathic mindfulness - and verify the things said (Kourmoussi et al., 2017).

Empathy

"Participating in the mind of another human being" (in sociological terms, "take the role of the other") to acquire social knowledge (Lofland and Lofland, 1995). Empathy is being able to sense the emotional richness of other people. It is an irreducible intentional state in which both other persons and the mental states of other persons are given to us, perceived and experienced (McDaniel, 2014).

Patience

Engaging with communities requires patience (getting response), akin to the roles and skills of a social worker. Patience is the ability to endure difficult circumstances and may involve perseverance in the face of delay, tolerance of provocation without responding in disrespect/anger. Patience can also be strategic, to obtain certain goals.

Domain: Knowledge co-creation, localization, and brokerage



Defining the community and community engagement

Defining community engagement

Community engagement can be conceptualized as an ongoing continuum characterized by increasing community participation (outreach → consultation → involvement → collaboration → shared leadership) (McClosky et al., 2011). Social science research should provide conceptual clarity to the research team, humanitarian staff and other partners and stakeholders on what community engagement entails in humanitarian action. It should elaborate and define core criteria and measurements and bring awareness to different definitions and consequent approaches to facilitate and prioritize its systemic uptake. This might entail developing different platforms and plans for various groups.

Evidence on community context

Collect data and evidence on social, political, and cultural context (e.g., trauma, vulnerability, inequality, drivers, and barriers) (Farmer, 1996; Stellmach et al., 2018), using various social science techniques specific to humanitarian action. This data collection must tap into existing community interests and priorities (Garfield and Vermund, 1986).

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Systematic identification and inclusion

Develop sensitivity to who gets included to represent the 'community', understand differences between and within communities, and work to integrate key gender-diverse community members, knowledge, and infrastructures in research, programming and decision making. Actively support the setup of democratic and sustainable structures enabling ownership and participation of affected communities, with particular attention to their most marginalized or invisibilized components and constituents such as children.

Localizing and empowering community resources

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Translating ethical standards

Translating and operationalizing ethical research standards into local contexts (from the community's ethical lens), also known as empirical ethics.

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Promote community-based participatory research (CBPR)

Supporting community-sourced evidence and perspectives that give voice to communities' knowledge, capacities and needs, in a time-sensitive way. CBPR creates bridges between scientists and communities (shared knowledge and valuable experiences), promotes development of culturally appropriate measurement instruments, and establishes a mutual trust that enhances both the quantity and the quality of data collected (Thomas et al., 2021).

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Establish community engagement structures

To conduct engaged social science studies, partnerships need to be developed to create the conditions that ground the research in local needs and realities (Lijfering et al., 2021). This means moving from an expert-driven model to a facilitator-driven model of research. It includes knowing how to establish and develop a research team that shares a willingness to learn by doing while dealing with uncertainties and unknowns. It also includes bringing around the table scientific and coordination committees that include community representatives who are intimately involved with research design using gender, and culture-sensitive, participatory methodologies.

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Community capacity building

Support 'institutionalization of localization' by advocating for mainstreaming of community engagement, providing social science support to local structures, and help strengthen local government, community-based actors and actresses, and local researchers where possible (capacity building). Remain mindful of heterogeneity and diversity of the community as well as differential power centers within it.

Bottom-up knowledge brokering

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Bridging local to global

Create a bridge between communities and (international) humanitarian organizations, through being a spokesperson or mediating linkages. This is not to bypass localization efforts, which include community members directly, rather it is about enabling access to power and bridging to the community, bringing the community into this process.

Domain: Applied social science research methods skills



Designing and operationalizing research for humanitarian contexts

Qualitative data collection	Including participant observation, interviewing, FGDs, community feedback, working with qualitative data analysis software, stakeholder and communication mapping, social media research, etc.
Quantitative data collection	Including KAP/Perception surveys, survey design, working with quantitative data packages, social network analysis, etc.
Rapid research methods	Many humanitarian researchers work in environments that require the rapid sharing of findings. A number of tools have been developed for quick data qualitative collection, such as Rapid Assessment Procedures (Manderson, 1992), Participatory Impact Assessment (Catley et al., 2007), Rapid Ethnographic Assessments, the RARE model, Rapid Qualitative Inquiry, quick ethnography and short-term ethnographies. There are also techniques to reduce the amount of time required for data analysis, such as reducing the amount of time required for the transcription of interviews or combining data analysis methods with data collection to deliver real-time findings (Vindrola-Padros and Johnson, 2020; Johnson and Vindrola-Padros 2022; for specific resources see: RREAL, 2020).
Research methods specific to humanitarian contexts	For example, Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) (Leonhardt, 2002) or the Conflict Sensitivity approach (UK Government, 2016). Conflict Sensitivity is an approach to ensure that interventions do not unintentionally contribute to conflict, but that they rather strengthen opportunities for peace and inclusion.
Community-based participatory research	Applying experience with participatory research approaches. Participatory research entails going beyond community participation in data collection by involving communities in the research design and dissemination phases, as well as in grant proposal writing. An example of such an approach is the Human-centered design approach where collaboration with communities takes place from the design level onwards, starting with understanding the end-user needs and experience (Crandall, 2019).
Rapid literature reviews	Rapid reviews are a form of knowledge synthesis that follows the systematic review process, but components of the process are simplified or omitted to produce information in a timely manner (Khangura et al., 2012).
Using a collaborative, networked research approach	Utilizing a network approach in data collection that mobilizes pre-existing experts and ongoing relationships in the field to facilitate rapid data collection, analysis, and dissemination. It entails developing field access approaches to hit the ground running (including engaging local or internal IRBs for rapid ethical approval) through networks, contacts.

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Interpretation and use of evidence

Thematic and content analysis skills

Ability to identify and recognize patterns and organize sections of data, either qualitative or quantitative, into recurrent themes, and knowledge of systematic and rigorous methods for doing so (e.g., coding or using quantitative software packages). It also includes transcription, translation, and coding of data, and the ability to connect the small to the big (micro-meso-macro).

Writing of concise reports and other products

While social sciences focus on comprehensive knowledge production, information collected in humanitarian action in time-pressed contexts needs to be 'fit for purpose'. As a result, the use of social science jargon could be restrictive in communicating with humanitarian practitioners and affected populations and in describing the complexities of the crisis (see also: Billig, 2013). It is therefore essential that social science reports and publications minimize jargon, produce concise and visually appealing research products, adapted to target audiences of the research.

Rapid knowledge dissemination and communication techniques

Identify effective approaches and formats to present data to decision-makers by adapting it to their interests, language, and terminology (e.g., visual methods). Understand that the practice of data visualization is both a science in terms of humans' eyes and brains, which process visual content. Ability to use statistical methods behind collecting, processing, analyzing, and preparing data to generate graphs, charts, and diagrams. It also entails the capacity to mobilize an art in how we bring people into the visual, how we engage them, and how we make them care about the content we are communicating to them (Schwabish, 2021).

Attention to community accountability

Follow up and report back lessons learnt to communities who participated (e.g., the Grounded Accountability Model, which is an approach to identify and include key community members and to unpack diverse issues around inclusion, exclusion and marginalization). Grounded accountability involves devolving responsibility for defining goals to the third parties who can then realize their own self-determination (Scobie, Lee and Smyth, 2020).

Triangulation of data sources, mixed methods skills

Understand how to best sequence and rigorously integrate qualitative and quantitative and other evidence-based approaches in humanitarian contexts using triangulation, among other tools. Triangulation refers to the application and combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon (Denzin, 2015). It allows the social scientists to answer questions that other methodologies, taken singly, cannot.

Domain: Multidisciplinary and translational skills



Being able to work in blended teams

Learning how to communicate 'across' disciplines, learning to convey how you understand a situation to unpack concepts and check assumptions. This includes the ability to 'figure out' multi-disciplinary approaches, work with mixed methods, and understand integrated analytics. It also includes the ability to communicate what different social science disciplines/tools can contribute within an interdisciplinary approach (Stellmach et al., 2018).

<p>Knowledge translation and management</p>	<p>Documentation, dissemination, and archiving of social science results and knowledge to other interested parties, including sensitivity to the multilingual environments of humanitarian work (Federici, 2019). Being sensitive to bring together and consolidate data collection efforts by different actors across the humanitarian landscape. Know how to conduct translational work (Moore-Berg 2022). This includes the avoidance of social science jargon.</p>
<p>Good enough approach</p>	<p>Sensitivity to ‘good enough’ approach and ‘fit for purpose’ - making it work - while ensuring minimal quality control standards (see also research standards).</p>
<p>Advocate for appropriate hiring practices</p>	<p>Identify opportunities for blended composition of teams through appropriate hiring practices, including equal gender participation in SS4CE opportunities.</p>

Domain: Knowing the context of humanitarian action



Resilience

<p>Skills in dealing with the unexpected</p>	<p>Conducting research during emergencies often requires the capacity to deal with the unknown, the difficulty to plan ahead, the fear and impossibility to have a clear vision of the medium- and long-term situation, and to engage in efforts toward short-term and medium-term goals. Project management literature suggests that to deal with unexpected events, it is important to learn to take innovative action, apply detachment strategies, set up intensive meeting schedules and negotiate project conditions (Söderholm, 2008).</p>
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<p>Self-care & emotional resilience</p>	<p>During humanitarian conflicts and hazards researchers and humanitarian practitioners are exposed to different forms of stress and violence on themselves, and they witness horror, distress and anxiety experienced by others. Accumulated fatigue and exposure to mass suffering and mortality can change the perceived value of life and increase reckless, risk-taking, and suicidal behaviors. Post mission, it can complicate reintegration processes with loved ones, society, and careers (McCormack et al., 2009). This is particularly so for qualitative, immersive studies which are often seen as personal work. The capacity to be able to deal with this involves recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating emotions. It includes knowing how to access and foster peer support, change organizational cultures, address self-awareness (Cherepanov, 2022). Similarly, post mission, it includes a “reparation with self” to overcome long term psychological distress, such as shame, moral doubt, betrayal, and narcissistic coping (McCormack & Joseph, 2013).</p>
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Infrastructural knowledge

<p>Knowledge of the humanitarian architecture</p>	<p>Including pertinent coordination structures and how to position social science within it, the Humanitarian Program Cycle – a coordinated series of actions undertaken to help prepare for, manage, and deliver humanitarian response (OCHA, 2022) – and sensitivity to the role and place of humanitarian aid relative to longer-term development efforts (including its role in preparedness and recovery).</p>
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Understand the relevance of SOPs

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are intrinsic characteristics of humanitarian action. It is about knowing what information is relevant in humanitarian programming and responses and developing ways to integrate social science in Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to have context-specific data and a standardized approach for humanitarian action. It is equally about understanding how to create an enabling environment within the response pillars and technical clusters/sectors to systematically embed operational social science across the different phases of a community-centered response.

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Basic knowledge of humanitarian legal aspects

Being aware of humanitarian action legal frameworks international humanitarian law, humanitarian principles, international human rights law, protocols on ethical data management, use and sharing) to design appropriate and effective social science research and humanitarian interventions.

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Media communication skills

Basic knowledge of media relationships, risk communication skills, emergency communication skills. It entails knowing the different stakeholders and understanding the scientific, social, economic, and political factors and building relationships with journalists.

Advocating for a supportive enabling environment

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Advocacy skills to leadership and donors

While the agenda for SS4CE is often endorsed formally, its relevance is not always clear to organizational leadership and donors. Advocacy skills are important to bring these concerns to leadership and donors and advocate for sustained engagement. Advocacy means communicating the right messages to the right people at the right time. It is important to be aware of the central relevance of advocacy in humanitarianism (see also Gabrielsen Jumbert, 2020).

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Monitor and evaluate uptake of SS4CE

Understand how to develop and adopt appropriate strategies and tools to track and monitor the substantive uptake of social science research activities and recommendations to support community engagement. This includes the development of input, process and outcome indicators, developing a theory of change, and institutionalizing mechanisms to monitor progress.



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Endnotes

- 1 A note on use of the word “trainings”: In this report we divert from the use suggested by the Oxford English Dictionary, which does not recognise *trainings* in the plural form but only *training* an uncountable noun. We found there is no suitable alternative for the specific, sometimes multiple, units through which people are handed instructions, practices or exercises to develop knowledge and skills. *Courses* might come close, but not every training is a course. *Training package* might imply a set of courses. Just using *training* might cause confusion, as we’re sometimes speaking about *training* in general, as an uncountable noun and the act of giving or receiving an instruction, and *trainings* as specific courses, workshops, packages of a set of instructions that are used in giving this instruction. We have therefore opted to use *training* and *trainings* to make that distinction.
- 2 UNICEF Minimum quality standards and indicators in CE, accessible here: <https://www.unicef.org/mena/reports/community-engagement-standards>
- 3 <https://www.sonar-global.eu/trainings/>
- 4 We have consulted the OCHA Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Glossary (2011) for conflicts. For hazards, we have used the WHO Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management Framework (2019), which includes a comprehensive list of hazards.
- 5 <https://www.qualtrics.com>
- 6 The element of ethnicity, class or cast can also have a direct impact in this person-driven approach in contexts where these are factors that shape society and the interaction among people who are born and raised into this cosmopolitan. Local social scientists might be influenced by their social upbringing. These elements can play a critical role in setting the social science research agenda.
- 7 The Rapid Research Evaluation and Appraisal Lab, which aims to improve the quality and impact of rapid research in time-sensitive contexts, focusing on three areas of work, including global health and health emergencies.
- 8 The “Humanitarian Needs Assessment: The Good Enough Guide” by the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB) and Practical Action Publishing is a practical resource on “good enough” research that pulls together the main lessons learned from various humanitarian initiatives and experiences. It is available from: <https://www.acaps.org/humanitarian-needs-assessment-good-enough-guide>
- 9 CE as an approach to directly involve local populations in all aspects of decision-making, implementation, and policy. Building on a participatory approach, CE can strengthen local capacities, community structures, and local ownership to improve transparency, accountability, and optimal resource allocations across diverse settings. CE promotes the accountability of development and humanitarian actors by facilitating and structuring ongoing communication on the appropriateness and effectiveness of initiatives (UNICEF 2020).
- 10 CHS Alliance, Groupe URD and Sphere are the copyright holders of the CHS. CHS Alliance is a global alliance of over 150 humanitarian and development organizations committed to making aid work better for people. Groupe URD helps organizations to improve the quality of their programmes through evaluations, research, training, and strategic and quality support. Sphere brings together a wide range of humanitarian agencies around the aim to improve the quality and accountability of humanitarian assistance. The CHS is available here: <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard/language-versions>
- 11 As, for example, described by Smruti Patel in “Localisation, racism and decolonization: Hollow talk or real look in the mirror?” (2021): <https://odihpn.org/publication/localisation-racism-and-decolonisation-hollow-talk-or-real-look-in-the-mirror/>
- 12 The training package with all modules and materials can be accessed here: <https://www.rcce-collective.net/resources/trainings/social-science-training/>
- 13 As the Collective Service training package was developed specifically for health emergency interventions and does not focus specifically on conflicts or hazards, it was filtered out from the main group of thirteen SS4CE relevant trainings, Group 1b.

Social Sciences for Community Engagement in Humanitarian Action

Capacity needs assessment and mapping of social science training for community engagement in humanitarian action in conflict and hazards

