socialprotection.org

The role of socialprotection.org in fostering knowledge exchange and capacity-building in social protection through a knowledge brokering perspective

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The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) is a partnership between the United Nations and the Government of Brazil to promote South–South learning on social policies. The IPC-IG is linked to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Brazil, the Ministry of Economy (ME) and the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea) of the Government of Brazil.

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This publication is available online at www.ipcig.org.

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History of the socialprotection.org platform

The technological progress of recent years has opened up new possibilities and dynamics for knowledge sharing, particularly for organisations working with development. With the exponential growth of the Internet and the flourishing of online tools, knowledge and information on policies and their implementation can be disseminated with unprecedented speed and intensity.

Drawing from the experiences in the private sector and from the literature on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), development organisations started rapidly leveraging online tools for internal and external knowledge sharing (Hulsebosch, Turpin, and Wagenaar 2009). These new possibilities led to improved internal coordination, fostering learning and improving overall efficiency. Most importantly, the use of technology had an impact on the ability of organisations to respond to the changing contexts of vulnerable populations, and to influence on policy debates and the overall development agenda (Hovland 2003).

Recognising the exchange of knowledge as a crucial component for the development sector, including social protection, in 2011 the G20 Development Working Group recommended the "establishment of an effective knowledge sharing platform (...), to be hosted by, or in cooperation between, relevant international organisations, and building on existing mechanisms as appropriate, to facilitate the generation and transfer of knowledge on effective social protection approaches, drawing particularly on the experiences of middle-income countries for the benefit of LICs" (G20 DWG 2011).

In response to this request, the socialprotection.org platform was launched in September 2015, hosted by the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), with financial support from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Australian Government (DFAT). Not long after the start of its activities, the platform attracted sustained support from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit—GIZ GmbH, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry

for Economic Cooperation and Development (*Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung*—BMZ), as well as additional funding from other organisations such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the Word Food Programme (WFP), among others.

As a free and unbranded space, socialprotection.org has been fostering synergies and facilitating collaboration between institutions, governments and other related segments, while comprehensively supporting global inter-agency efforts to promote social protection, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection (USP2030), the Social Protection Inter-agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) Working Groups, the Interagency Social Protection Assessments (ISPA) Tools, and the TRANSFORM online training (Peres, Slingsby and Balboni 2019).

Over the years, socialprotection.org's has steadfastly upheld its mission and vision. Recently its objectives have been refined to include increasing efforts to offer curated content and develop training, while continuing to strengthen its role as a facilitator of exchanges and collaboration between different actors. Along with these refinements, there is a growing organisational understanding of the platform as a knowledge broker among its stakeholders.

By June 2022, socialprotection.org had brought together a community of over 11,114 registered members, directing access to thousands of resources across multiple formats, such as publications, webinars, events, online courses, and podcasts. It has organised over 240 webinars and 14 livestreams of global events with several partners, and it hosts over 60 communities of practice on different social protection topics. The platform also has a wide range of social media and communications channels, which are used to disseminate up-to-date and curated content to the social protection community.

This article aims to analyse socialprotection.org's capacity to deliver knowledge exchange and capacity-building services to the global social protection community, which has the potential to influence on social protection decision-making. It is subdivided into four sections: the first discusses the rationale behind the platform's development; the second presents the evolution of its vision, mission and strategy; the third offers an analysis of its outcomes and activities from a knowledge brokering perspective; and the fourth and final section provides some concluding remarks.

1.1 THE CREATION OF SOCIALPROTECTION.ORG

The platform was launched in 2015 amid a rise of global governance cooperation in the field of social protection. Deacon (2013) highlights a series of events that influenced the creation of socialprotection.org and discusses the context at the time:

- Since the early 2000s, the ILO had been spearheading an effort to bring several agencies together and consolidate the concept of Social Protection Floors (SPFs).

- In 2009, the UN's Chief Executives Board (CEB) launched the paper "The global financial crisis and its impact on the work of the UN system", calling for coordinated action across the UN system in eight policy areas, including social protection—culminating in the creation of a SPF Initiative (SPF-I);

- The Social Protection Advisory Group was established in 2010, under the Chair of Michelle Bachelet. In 2011, it published the report "Social Protection Floor for a Fair and Inclusive Globalization", also known as the *Bachelet report*, which specifically called for the creation of a mechanism for inter-agency coordination and the development of a digital platform for sharing of knowledge and experiences. The report explicitly welcomed the G20's "[...] commitment to promote exchange of information, experiences and knowledge through the development of a knowledge-sharing platform, which would include both specific cases of successful experiences

and technologies that could be transferred among countries." (Social Protection Floor Advisory Group 2011, 98);

- The **2011 Report of the G20 Development Working Group (DWG),** which recommended the establishment of a global knowledge-sharing platform and an inter-agency coordination mechanism (paragraphs 54 and 55, respectively):

RECOMMENDATION TO ESTABLISH A SOCIAL PROTECTION KNOWLEDGE-SHARING PLATFORM:

54. We recommend the establishment of an effective knowledge sharing platform before the Mexico Summit, to be hosted by, or in cooperation between, relevant international organisations, and building on existing mechanisms as appropriate, to facilitate the generation and transfer of knowledge on effective social protection approaches, drawing particularly on the experiences of middle-income countries for the benefit of LICs. The knowledge sharing platform should give particular attention to knowledge sharing with respect to (i) the financial sustainability of social protection mechanisms, (ii) the conditions for progressive realisation of comprehensive social protection coverage and (iii) the particular challenges faced by fragile states. It should also serve as a demonstration of concept for a broader G20 knowledge sharing for development platform.

RECOMMENDATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION MECHANISM

55. We recommend that the World Bank and the ILO, in consultation with other relevant international organisations that provide social protection financing and technical advisory

services to developing countries, develop before the Mexico Summit a mechanism to improve inter-agency coordination[1] in support of country-led social protection measures, taking into account existing institutional and cross-institutional policy frameworks and coordination arrangements.

- The creation of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors in 2012 gathered several international organisations, bilateral aid agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on a mission aimed at "Working strategically, collaboratively and in spirit of global solidarity, to provide a space and virtual platform for coalition members united by the common purpose of promoting the extension of social protection floors and systems." (Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, 2012).

By January 2012 the UNDP, the ILO, and the World Bank were asked by former AUSAID (now DFAT) to submit a joint proposal for the development of the knowledge-sharing platform, as they were identified in the 2011 G20 DWG report as lead international organisations with experience in the implementation of such interfaces. The ILO and the World Bank already had their own websites dedicated to social protection. As for the UNDP, the experience was anchored on the development of the South-South Learning on Social Protection Gateway, launched in 2010 by the IPC-IG, based in Brasilia, which at the time was a UNDP Global Thematic Unit[2] in partnership with the Government of Brazil.

The Gateway was a direct result of the "Brazil-Africa Cooperation Programme on Social Protection", a project financed by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and supported by the Brazilian Ministry of Social Development, as well as of the IPC-IG policy dialogues and knowledge-sharing products produced in the context of India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) (IPC-IG 2010) and other developing countries (IPC-IG 2013). The Gateway was an online collaborative platform

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1. The 'coordination mechanism' would soon become the Social Protection Inter-Agency Coordination Board (SPIAC-B). To read more on the SPIAC-B, see: <https://www.ilo.org/newyork/at-the-un/social-protection-inter-agency-cooperation-board/lang--en/index.htm>.

2. By June 2013, the IPC-IG was no longer a UNDP Global Thematic Unit, becoming administratively linked to UNDP Brazil, which replaced UNDP HQ in supporting the Centre's activities.

for policy dialogue and knowledge sharing among social protection practitioners in the global South, whose objective was to foster South-South cooperation, aiming to expand the knowledge base and capacities of developing countries to design and implement nationwide poverty reduction strategies, bridging the gaps between theory, policy and practice with accessible and comprehensive social protection information. In addition, it provided a space where practitioners could share ideas, experiences and resources (ILO 2010). The website was set up as a 'virtual bookcase', where visitors could find a searchable database of social protection materials from around the world, including tools, case studies, policy papers, and research papers. The platform was discontinued and its content has been subsumed into socialprotection.org.

According to the 2011 G20 DWG report, the new platform should focus on facilitating and transferring knowledge on effective social protection approaches, drawing particularly on the experiences of middle-income countries (MICs) for the benefit of low-income countries (LICs). Hence, it seemed natural for the IPC-IG to host the initiative, as it was the result of a UNDP partnership with the government of a middle-income country (Brazil) with a strong social protection and South-South cooperation record. In addition, the Centre was housed in a government think tank—the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea)—with a strong tradition in supporting knowledge production and advisory services on innovative social protection programmes, as well as on South-South and trilateral cooperation.

It was important for the platform to be built on—and linked to—existing works and processes to maximise its effectiveness and avoid duplication of efforts. Equally, early negotiations also highlighted that it should leverage the work of other relevant international organisations (such as UNICEF and the WFP), think tanks and countries.

A first prototype, the Social Protection Gateway (no longer available online), was developed by the IPC-IG with support from AusAID, in consultation with the World Bank and the ILO, and presented in the 2nd SPIAC-B meeting in October 2012, in India. During the meeting, participants acknowledged that the Gateway responded to the G20's request of establishing an effective knowledge-sharing
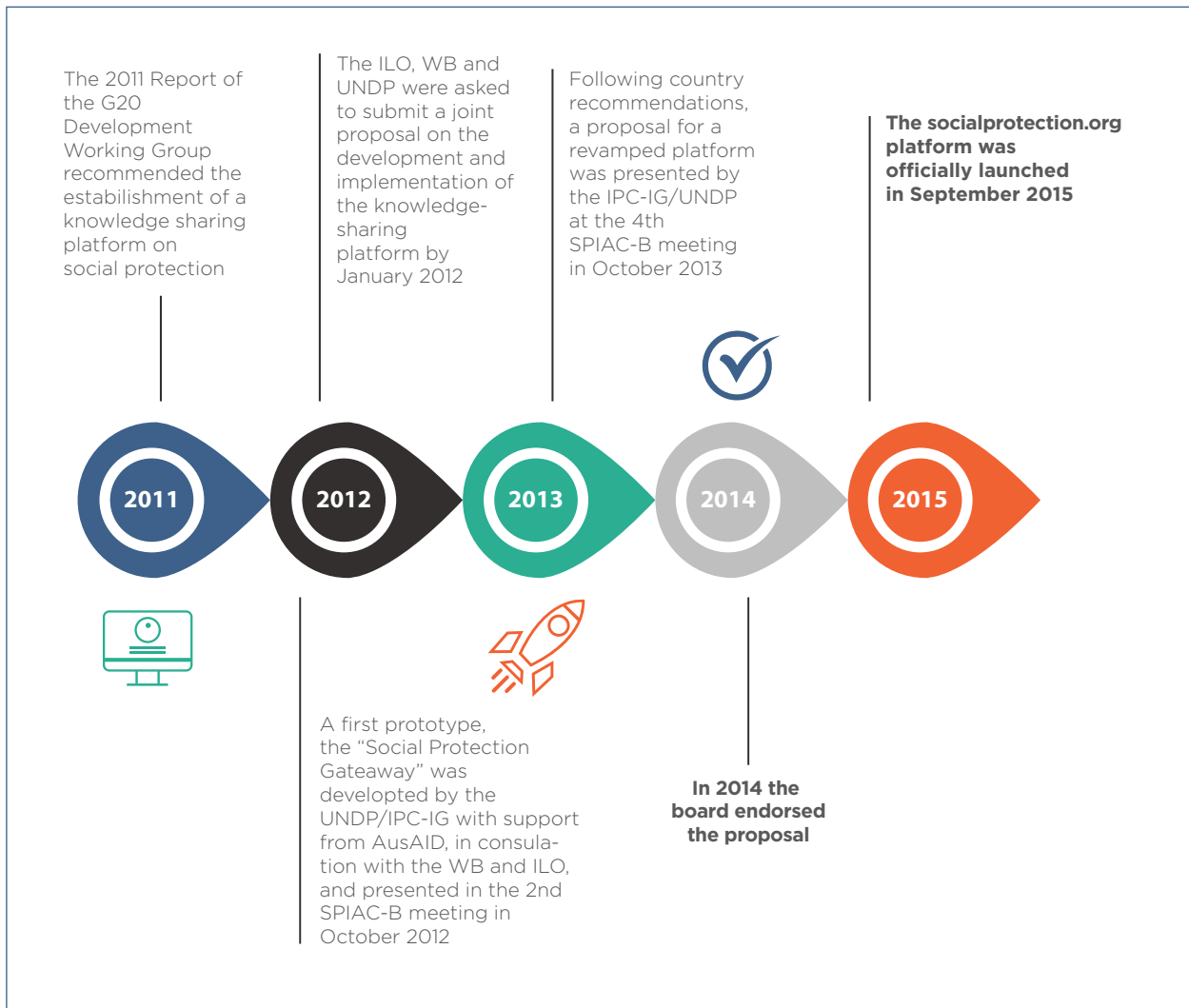
platform on social protection. However, countries also recommended that the original rationale for the platform (i.e. a portal that would be powered by automatic links to the websites of organisations working with social protection) should be revised. Nonetheless, further development would require securing mid- to long-term funding and the engagement of a member of the SPIAC-B to take the lead, which implied a multi-year commitment.

DFAT stepped forward to support a new proposal for the platform, together with the IPC-IG and inspired in the first prototype (Gateway). This reformulation envisioned the platform as a curated space to ensure the relevance of the publications included and consistency in the information provided. It was also designed to be 'unbranded', avoiding the ownership of knowledge and fostering collaboration among a broader group of partners and contributors. Special focus would be provided to country-level experiences that could inform learning missions and facilitate bilateral and triangular cooperation between developing countries. Additionally, Communities of Practice would be established to further foster networking and sharing of knowledge and information between members, who would be encouraged to actively collaborate with the platform.

The platform would be developed to **identify information gaps and create a common space where information on social protection could be easily shared and found**, aiming to gather contributions from various agencies, NGOs, national and international think tanks, and government bodies, with a view to share experiences from as many countries as possible to foster learning and sharing on social protection as a way forward. It was agreed that the IPC-IG was well positioned to continue hosting the new platform, as fostering South-South knowledge exchange was already one of the Centre's core activities.

The revamped proposal was presented at the 4th SPIAC-B Meeting, in October 2013 (SPIAC-B 2013). The IPC-IG submitted a round of feedback to start the process. In 2014 the SPIAC-B endorsed the proposal and an official agreement was signed between the IPC-IG and DFAT to further develop the platform. It was officially launched in September 2015. In December 2015, the GIZ also started funding socialprotection.org.

FIGURE 1. TIMELINE

The 2011 Report of the G20 Development Working Group recommended the estabilishment of a knowledge sharing platform on social protection

The ILO, WB and UNDP were asked to submit a joint proposal on the development and implementation of the knowledge-sharing platform by January 2012

Following country recommendations, a proposal for a revamped platform was presented by the IPC-IG/UNDP at the 4th SPIAC-B meeting in October 2013

The socialprotection.org platform was officially launched in September 2015

2011   2012   2013   2014   2015

A first prototype, the "Social Protection Gateaway" was developted by the UNDP/IPC-IG with support from AusAID, in consulation with the WB and ILO, and presented in the 2nd SPIAC-B meeting in October 2012

In 2014 the board endorsed the proposal

The IPC-IG's first agreements with DFAT and GIZ were focused on activities grounded on the platform's initial goals, such as the facilitation of South-South learning on social protection policies by fostering active and informed networks to share experiences, particularly across MICs and LICs.

Since its launch, socialprotection.org's progress and activities have been regularly reported in the SPIAC-B meetings, including its support to global inter-agency initiatives such as the SPIAC-B's Gender and Digital SP Working Groups, the ISPA Tools, the USP2030 Working Groups, and TRANSFORM.[3]

1.2 PLATFORM STRUCTURE

Aiming to serve as the online focal point on social protection knowledge sharing and capacity-building for the Global South, socialprotection.org was designed to provide a centralised gateway through which people could access the most up-to-date and comprehensive database on social protection, while providing opportunities for members to connect, learn and share information with a community of social protection practitioners, encouraging the highest level of user participation.

3. For details on the latest activities of the platform, including its important work during the COVID-19 response, see the platform's Annual Report 2021.

To this end, the platform was built around four pillars that were designed to provide various options for active engagement. The same structure is still used today, although many updates were carried out, including the addition of many different types of content, responding to the needs of its members and partners. The pillars are the following (as of June 2022):

1. Discover: Members can explore up to date and curated content on social protection across multiple formats (publications, news, events, jobs, programme profiles, blog posts, multimedia, databases, among others).

2. Connect: Members can find stakeholders in their particular field of interest and connect with other members through a social space or online communities of practice.

3. Learn: Members can learn more about social protection through webinars, online courses, livestreams, e-Conferences, podcasts, surveys, glossary, and academic opportunities.

4. Share: Members can upload material (their own or from third parties) to any of the platform's content types.

Since its first protype, the platform has continuously made technical and content improvements to improve its usability and user experience. Recent innovations include:

- Podcasts, with episodes created by socialprotection.org and its partners. This trending feature aims to showcase interviews and discussions on key issues of social protection.

- e-Conferences, gathering the virtual events organised by socialprotection.org.

- Databases, which facilitate the search for consolidated data on social protection.

- Multimedia, grouping materials in audio-visual formats (audio, infographics, photos, videos, and slides).

- Country Profiles, collating the platform's resources by country and presenting updated data on socio-economic indexes (for example, human development index, age dependency ratio, population growth, GDP).

- Legal and Policy Frameworks, collecting legal documents and frameworks for implementing social protection programmes and systems.

- Academic Opportunities, showcasing academic programmes and professional training opportunities in the field of social protection.

- Dedicated COVID-19 area, gathering various curated materials related to social protection and COVID-19, including an analytical matrix of social protection responses to COVID-19, developed in partnership with IPC-IG researchers, which displays the unique analyses conducted by the Centre's research team and collaborators. The matrix allows users to download the entire dataset, thus contributing to future research on the topic. This tool supports the creation of interactive dashboards and figures.

Today, socialprotection.org has 23 different content types, which are constantly reviewed. Some require more frequent updates, such as the publications database. Others, such as webinars, podcasts, online courses, and e-Conferences involve less frequent revisions, but nonetheless require massive teamwork.

1.3 THE EVOLUTION OF THE PLATFORM'S VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGY

Commonly, a vision statement pertains to 'where' an organisation would like to be, while the mission outlines 'how' it will get there. The platform's structure and its

available resources were strategically defined according to the platform's mission and vision.

When socialprotection.org was launched in 2015, its vision was "**to be the online focal point of social protection policies and programmes in and for MICs and LICs**", aimed at facilitating knowledge sharing on effective social protection approaches, as well as contributing to capacity building, by drawing on the experiences of LICs and MICs.

To this end, it defined its mission as: "**to serve as a single, well-known and established access point to promote key themes on social protection and encourage interactive engagement**", mainly by hosting contributions from various areas of social protection and providing opportunities for countries, institutions and individuals to participate and share their experiences.

Since its inception, it has aimed to provide users with the most comprehensive and up-to-date content on social protection to encourage interactive engagement, fostering the exchange of knowledge and experiences, informing networks and learning formats on a global scale.

To meet these goals, the platform is constantly evolving. Its original features have improved over the years and other initiatives started taking root following requests of members and stakeholders, and in light of changes in the global picture, such as increased virtual interactions during the COVID-19 crisis.

The field of social protection gained significant prominence during the pandemic, having proved essential for households to cope with the crisis, reducing risks and improving people's well-being. The COVID-19 outbreak has presented an opportunity for countries to foster the establishment of national social protection floors (IBC 2020). In this scenario, socialprotection.org quickly adapted its activities to focus on organising discussions, enabling opportunities for learning, cooperation and knowledge

sharing regarding countries' social protection responses to COVID-19.

Over time, these and other changes in the global context, in addition to various demands from interested parties, required the platform to quickly adapt to offer a more comprehensive and improved set of services, such as producing webinars in partnership with other organisations. The team also started producing blog posts featuring the webinar summaries to support the dissemination of the main discussions. The team's technical support to the webinars also improved, and the platform's services have become more comprehensive with each event.

After gaining significant experience on hosting webinars and faced with rising demand, the platform started organising and livestreaming other types of virtual events, which soon became the e-Conferences and Livestream areas of the platform. Social distancing measures resulting from COVID-19 pushed for more virtual interactions, and in 2020 socialprotection.org organised the e-Conference Turning the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity: what's next for social protection?, demonstrating the platform's crucial role in facilitating knowledge exchange to the global social protection community and intermediating discussions between relevant actors.

socialprotection.org also started playing a more active role in curating content, showcasing different topics and themes—based, of course, on the interests of its members and partners. The Podcasts and e-Learning features result from these efforts and the platform has gradually been adopting a more content production-oriented position. The team is always striving to ensure that multiple voices and perspectives can be heard, maintaining the platform's unbranded nature.

Although the platform's directives have remained stable since launch, with the diversification of initiatives—now also focusing on fostering exchanges more actively and on content curation and production—its mission and vision were revisited in 2021. This did not

result in radical changes, but now emphasis is also given to the idea of a 'global social protection community' and to the platform's purpose of actively fostering 'collaboration' and 'cooperation' among members. This review also highlighted the team's constant efforts to provide members with 'actionable content' through 'innovative formats' to stimulate action and increase reach.

The platform's updated vision is "**to be the main hub for knowledge sharing, learning and collaboration on social protection**", while its mission is "**to be an unbranded knowledge-sharing (and capacity-strengthening) platform which offers actionable content and promotes dialogue, learning and cooperation among the global social protection community through innovative formats, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries**."

The development of a new vision and mission was also part of an effort to define the platform's strategic planning and measure its impact on social protection policymaking. The main objective of this vision was to ensure that the platform keeps growing in a systematised way and to expand and strengthen its internal capacity to generate positive results for the community. Through strategic activities within the team, and with the help of specialised consultants, it was possible to:

- **Conduct a 'Regenerative Organisational Diagnosis'** with the internal team and key stakeholders to improve the organisational climate and expand our collective awareness of the project's

strengths and points for improvement and, as a result, expand our capacity to respond to the challenges that lie ahead.

- **Define strategic goals** in terms of:

  - **1) impact:** strengthen collaboration between social protection policy stakeholders; raise awareness about social protection; foster a collaborative network;

  - **2) user experience:** have the most relevant and effective database for social protection; encourage social protection actors to bring their own ideas into the platform; stimulate engagement through Working Groups; produce and disseminate actionable content; and

  - **3) the platform in general:** increase engagement numbers; increase traffic of logged users; increase the number of pieces of content and discussion threads shared outside the platform.

- **Develop a segmented strategy to reach and engage different categories of users,** tailoring communications and brokering efforts to meet the needs of each.

All these technical and strategic improvements have contributed to a refinement of the platform's mission and vision towards a knowledge brokering approach.

2.

Framework for analysis: socialprotection.org as a knowledge broker

Since its inception in 2015, socialprotection.org has been working towards being an online focal point for social protection policies and programmes that facilitates knowledge sharing, capacity building and interactive engagement, providing a space for countries, institutions and individuals to participate and share their experiences, with special focus on the experiences of LICs and MICs.

In recent years, and as a consequence of growing demand from within the global social protection community for a collaborative and synergistic environment that offers curated content and capacity-building (training), the platform has increasingly developed more substantive services focused on content curation and learning, and strengthened its activities to promote exchanges and collaboration between different actors. These efforts have resulted in a growing organisational understanding of the platform as a **knowledge broker**.

Knowledge brokers are intermediaries placed between knowledge producers and decision-makers, acting as the articulators behind the transfer of knowledge. Their role is to find, assess and interpret evidence, facilitating interaction and identifying emerging research questions (CHSRF 2003).

It is important to note that this is not a new role. socialprotection.org has always been more than just a database and since its inception has played a key role in facilitating networking and collaboration among countries and organisations working on social protection. What has changed is that, through processes of organisational learning, the team has begun to invest in strengthening brokering activities in a more intentional and strategic way. To better explain what knowledge brokering entails, we provide below a discussion on important concepts from the knowledge management literature.

According to Michaels (2009), knowledge brokering enables decision-makers to acquire, value and consider expertise that they would not otherwise obtain or incorporate into their decision-making processes. Knowledge brokers

are particularly useful where decision-makers lack the time or capacity to keep themselves informed of the evidence in the field (Litfin 1994). This is especially true in a context of vast amounts of data and information facilitated by technological developments.

It is also important to highlight the multiple meanings of 'knowledge' within this context, noting that effective brokering should incorporate as many as possible in each interaction. Jones et al. (2013) suggest that there are three main types of knowledge within development: 1) research-based knowledge, produced by scientists, academics and professional groups; 2) practice-informed knowledge, which builds on field work or hands-on experience of implementing policy and practice; 3) and citizens' (or participatory) knowledge, which is the knowledge of a place, a culture, a people, and their challenges, gained through direct experience.

socialprotection.org caters to all those knowledge types, to some extent. It maps and highlights research-based and practice-informed knowledge and encourages interactions between knowledge producers and people working in the field through webinars and events, for example. In addition, as a member-based platform, it fosters participatory knowledge, allowing members to update their own content, write blog posts, and engage in online communities of practice.

It is important to recognise these different types of knowledge to be able to balance them, as well as understand decision-making organisational structures to tailor the knowledge brokering strategy more efficiently to different segments.

Engaging those who directly, indirectly, or tangentially contribute to decision-making can be done through different brokering functions/strategies. According to Michaels (2009) and Jones et al. (2012, 2013), knowledge brokers act through six different strategies: informing, linking, matchmaking, engaging, collaborating, and building adaptive capacity. Each strategy represents an opportunity for drawing on information and expertise and, most importantly, outlines ways in which the

knowledge broker can add value and influence decision-making by intermediating information and expertise:

1. **Informing:** disseminating content, targeting decision-makers with information and making information easily accessible and absorbable.

2. **Linking:** linking expertise to a specific policy area's needs or a particular discipline, helping policymakers address any given policy issue by seeking out the relative experts.

3. **Matchmaking:** actively networking to match expertise to need across issues and disciplines, helping policymakers think more broadly about a topic, and finding experts with relevant knowledge from other areas, helping them provide a strategic overview to address the fullness of the issue and fostering rich communications.

4. **Engaging:** framing issues inclusively to bring a common understanding to the decision-making process, contracting people or organisations to provide knowledge on an as-needed basis; opening the decision-making process to encourage genuine participation and ownership.

5. **Collaborating:** expanding and deepening collaborative processes, strengthening relationships and formalising the process of ensuring that all sides jointly negotiate the questions to be asked around an issue.

6. **Building adaptive capacity:** cultivating long-term relationships, fostering organisational learning, and co-producing knowledge through, for example, co-management.

To assess the platform's capacity to accomplish its mission and influence global decision-making on social protection, the following section discusses its results and activities, presenting an analysis from a knowledge brokering perspective. Concluding remarks will also offer a discussion regarding remaining gaps and propose steps for future improvements.

3.

Analysis of socialprotection.org results and activities from a knowledge brokering perspective

3.1 KEY ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS BY BROKERING STRATEGY

Most activities carried out by socialprotection.org fit in more than one strategy. For the sake of space, only the main activities will be mentioned for each strategy, to provide a snapshot of the platform's much broader work. Further considerations on the challenges and opportunities faced by socialprotection.org will be presented in the closing section.

3.1.1 INFORMING

Disseminating content, targeting decision-makers with information, making information easily accessible and absorbable.

a) Knowledge database
Over the years, the socialprotection.org platform has established itself as one of the main hubs for obtaining information on social protection. For 65 per cent of respondents of the 2021 Annual Satisfaction Survey,[4] the platform is their main source of information on the subject.

4. See chapter 6 of socialprotection.org's 2021 Annual Report: <shorturl.at/cilW5>.

FIGURE 2. CONTENT GROWTH OVER TIME, BY FORMAT
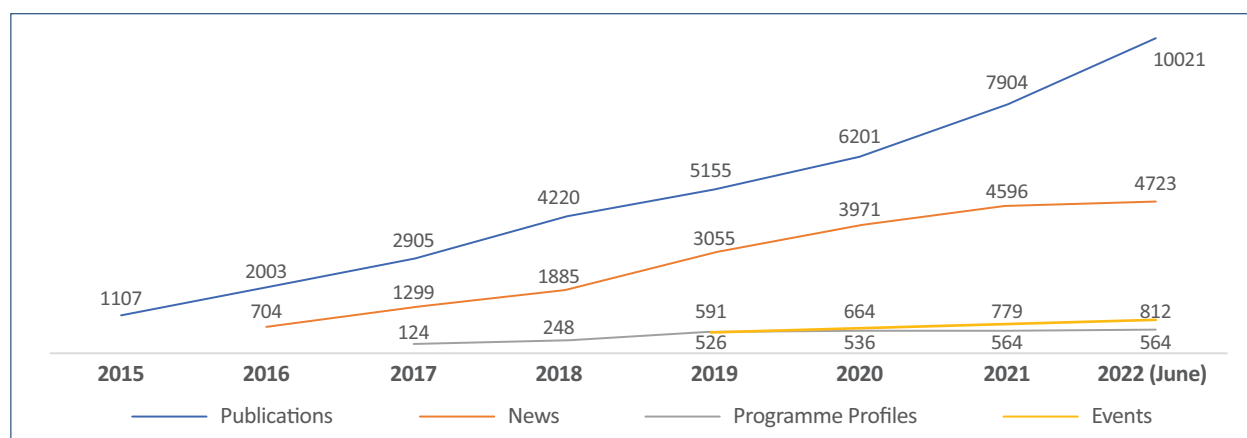
Notes: 1) Initial numbers vary by format due to distinct launch dates for each feature: Publications in September 2015, News in 2016, Programme Profiles in 2017 and Events in 2019. 2) The 'Events' feature has existed since launch, but numbers only started being compiled as of the Annual Report 2019. 3) Publications data also include Multimedia, Databases and Legal & Policy frameworks.

TABLE 1. CONTENT GROWTH OVER TIME, BY FORMAT

Content type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (June)
Publications	1107	2003	2905	4220	5155	6201	7904	10021
News	0	704	1299	1885	3055	3971	4596	4723
Programme Profiles	0	0	124	248	526	536	564	564
Events	0	0	0	0	591	664	779	812

The platform offers information in several ways, including through its extensive database, which provides access to up-to-date content related to social protection; 57 per cent of our annual Satisfaction Survey respondents reported that their reason to access the platform is to stay up to date.

Since the platform's launch, the team has been consistently mapping and adding relevant content to the database, which currently features over 10,000 pieces of content on social protection across various formats, such as publications, news, events, and programme profiles. The team also receives contributions from various members.

Figure 2 and Table 1 provide an overview of the materials that have been added to the platform, featuring growth over time.

In addition to the features listed above, new ones have been launched and implemented over the past few years to offer easily accessible and attractive content formats to the platform's members. Examples include Databases, Multimedia, Legal and Policy Frameworks, and Country Profiles. The latter was designed to display country-specific social protection and economic data and to allow members to browse through the different types of social protection resources related to each country that are available in the socialprotection.org database, hence contributing to optimise the exchange of experiences and information between countries.

These features are part of the platform's knowledge database, through which users can make relevant searches according to a taxonomy that covers a comprehensive list of social protection programme categories, along with operational and theoretical concepts and cross-cutting areas. Searches also incorporate filters related to population groups, year, country, region and more. By offering users the possibility of guidance through a structured framework while searching for materials, the platform makes it possible for practitioners, decision-makers, academics, and other actors to find the most relevant content in an efficient way.

Social protection is under constant change, both as a type of policy and as a field of study. New (or reformulated) approaches and frameworks to explain what social protection is or should be, and how to design and implement programmes and systems that are able to account for emerging societal issues and population needs, are constantly being devised. Therefore, socialprotection.org's taxonomy has recently been reviewed and updated to represent a clearer classification of social protection programme categories and to include a list of operational and theoretical concepts that reflect trending discussions in the field.

Finally, to increase the accuracy of search results and optimise the efforts of the team and members who add materials and manually classify them according to the platform's taxonomy, a machine learning system is being developed. The implementation of this automated mechanism for content classification, together with the taxonomy update, will be finalised by the end of 2022.

b) Digestible information

A high volume of information can make it difficult for decision-makers and other actors to make the right decisions, therefore the platform also invests in other formats to present its vast store of knowledge, such as in content curatorship, the production of webinar summaries, development of short-videos, podcasts, social media posts, and newsletters.

The webinars organised and hosted by the socialprotection.org team bring together actors from different segments to discuss a variety of trending topics, presenting emerging evidence. They are also an opportunity for social protection decision-makers and enthusiasts to gain insights into these topics. The webinars last approximately 1.5 hours. As decision-makers have a tight schedule, the team (or sometimes the partner organisation) carefully prepares summaries for the webinars, which are an easy way to catch up with discussions and present the key outputs of the meeting in a simple and concise manner. These summaries are some of the most accessed blog posts on the platform.

The platform's podcasts also offer a way to stay up to date on key issues and leading discussions. Episodes last no longer than 35 minutes and are structured in various parts to capture the attention of the listener. This content format is an innovative way to provide easily absorbable information that can be accessed from anywhere, at any time.

Furthermore, the platform has produced thousands of social media posts to disseminate the key discussions and research results of multiple social protection organisations and agencies. The platform's Communications team produces attractive graphic materials to advertise newly published blogs, publications and other content types, but also to summarise the main takeaways, as well as events taking place under the scope of socialprotection.org's activities and those of its partners. Its social media posts reach more than 18,000 followers, spread over Facebook (5,543), Twitter (6,065), LinkedIn (6,194) and Instagram (1,022).[5]

The platform has been issuing a monthly newsletter since December 2015. Initially, the newsletter provided subscribers with an overview of the platform's progress and activities, but since 2020 focus has shifted to showcasing curated content related to the most prominent topics in the field of social protection, which vary from month to month. Our newsletters are sent to 8,256 subscribers.

Another example of the platform's role in disseminating easily absorbable and curated information was during its Social Protection responses to COVID-19 Task Force.

In collaboration with DFAT, GIZ and the IPC-IG, from March to October 2020, the initiative organised 32 webinars with 26 social protection stakeholders, attracting over 6,000 live attendees and garnering over 15,600 YouTube views. It also mapped and disseminated over 3,800 pieces of content across various formats (such as news, blogs and various other publications) through a dedicated weekly newsletter and an Online Community, which was set to gather all the information collected.

5. These figures were current as of 30 June 2022.

After the Task Force was finalised, the platform developed a dedicated COVID-19 page, gathering further resources and a curated list of key readings on the topic, which are still being updated.

These efforts are important to support users' learning and capacity-building endeavours. According to 76 per cent of respondents to the 2021 Annual Satisfaction Survey, the platform has helped expand their knowledge on social protection.

It is also important to mention that these initiatives are essential to reduce information overload and offer decision-makers and other actors relevant and quality content by turning information into knowledge and making it meaningful for further actions.

Practitioners working in the field are often invited to share their experiences and insights through webinars, blogs, podcasts, and events, catering to practice-informed knowledge along—and often in interaction with—the research-based knowledge stemming from the platform's resources.
In addition, the platform also fosters participatory knowledge by allowing its members to contribute to its information dissemination efforts: besides the fact that any member can upload content to the platform, socialprotection.org also holds an annual Ambassadors Programme, through which selected volunteers support these activities, including writing blogs and social media posts about social protection in their local context.

3.1.2 LINKING

Linking expertise to a specific policy area's needs or a particular discipline, helping policymakers address any given policy issue by seeking out the relative experts.

Although the intent behind the platform's various activities and commitments is to positively influence policymaking on social protection, measuring their impact is very difficult.
One way to overcome this shortcoming has been to think strategically about ways to foster relevant discussions, bringing social protection specialists and policymakers to the table.

socialprotection.org has been making increasing efforts to facilitate interaction and collaboration between experts and decision-makers, to link knowledge and expertise to policy demands.

For example, in September and November 2021, the platform played a crucial role in organising a series of three regional workshops on digital social protection conceptualised by GIZ, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the African Union (AU), the World Bank, and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The workshops were held on different days to audiences from different regions (Asia, Africa and LAC), with the participation of speakers from ministries of development from more than 30 countries, as well as experts in digital social protection and other key people in the field. The audience was composed of government representatives and international organisations, adding up to 633 live attendees.

Titled "Towards a shared understanding of digital social protection: What are the lessons from the COVID-19 crisis and the implications for the future?", the workshops aimed to create a space for policymakers and practitioners to reflect on the innovative digital solutions that governments deployed in their responses to COVID-19, discuss how these innovations could become part of routine social protection delivery and programming, and build a shared understanding of digital social protection and the need for future investments.

Another example of linking efforts resulted in the adoption of crucial commitments for improving social protection in the Arab region. In November 2021, the platform facilitated the Arab Ministerial Forum 2021, titled "The Future of Social Protection in the Arab Region: building a vision for a post-COVID-19 reality". Representatives of all 20 countries in the region (including 10 Ministers) participated in the event, whose objective was to reflect and formulate a social protection vision and declaration of principles for the post-COVID recovery phase, as well as identify priority areas for UN support (at regional and/or country levels).

Other participants included representatives of employers and workers' organisations, members of civil society and regional social protection

experts. The Forum was made possible by the joint efforts of the Regional UN Issue-Based Coalition (IBC) on Social Protection, coordinated by UNICEF and ILO, in collaboration with UN-ESCWA and with support from the IPC-IG and socialprotection.org.

Prior to the open Ministerial Forum, a closed technical meeting had taken place in October 2021 with the participation of the highest technical staff from ministries responsible for social protection from the 20 Arab countries, who were also invited to take part in the Ministerial Forum. Both the technical meeting and the Ministerial Forum resulted in the formulation of a Meeting Declaration, where participating countries made specific commitments to working on the following four axes of reform and related principles for the future of social protection in the Arab region: 1) enhanced coverage; 2) shock-responsiveness; 3) improved financing; and 4) better governance and coordination.

More recently, on 16 and 17 March 2022, the platform connected more than a thousand experts during the e-conference "Disability – Social Protection – Inclusion: Dialogue for change", a 2-day event closing the 3-year joint activities of the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). With support from socialprotection.org, the conference brought together key actors working on the field to showcase current discussions on key issues of disability-inclusive social protection and take stock of where we stand and what are the next steps to ensure that adequate and comprehensive social protection benefits are accessible to all people with disabilities. Organised jointly by ILO, UNICEF, IDA, UNPRPD, DFAT, WB, ADB, FCDO, GIZ, Norad, HelpAge, EU, the UN Joint SDG Fund and UN ESCAP, the event was conducted in English, with simultaneous sign language interpretation and captioning. Most sessions also had simultaneous interpretation in French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic.

Furthermore, in our User Satisfaction Survey 2021, 93 per cent of respondents reported that they believe the platform hosts relevant discussions that

could directly influence innovation and policymaking on social protection. That said, reaching out to policymakers and making the platform's services known and used by them remains a challenge. Therefore, throughout strategical meetings with external consultants, the socialprotection.org team has brainstormed diverse ways to further engage policymakers and encourage them to use the platform to address social protection policy issues. Many concrete ideas are currently being drafted and will be implemented in the near future, such as organising more collaborative events and conferences to enhance cooperation and knowledge exchange among governments in the global South.

3.1.3 MATCHMAKING

Actively networking to match expertise to need across issues and disciplines, helping policymakers think more broadly about a topic, and finding experts with relevant knowledge from other areas, helping them provide a strategic overview to address the fullness of the issue and fostering rich communications.

The socialprotection.org platform can be considered a robust social protection community. It brings together 11,114 members[6] from different sectors, such as international organisations (26 per cent) and government institutions (18 per cent). It has also attracted more than 2,220 registered stakeholders. In general, when joining this large community, these professionals have similar and/or complementary interests, whether to access up-to-date content or participate in discussions with other actors. Nonetheless, regardless of specific interests, what they all have in common is the need for **exchange**.

Over time, the platform has functioned as an important matchmaker, enabling knowledge and expertise to be exchanged among professionals across different areas, such as governments, international organisations, NGOs and academia, by organising events/e-Conferences, and identifying possibilities to propose synergies between different stakeholders.

6. As of June 2022.

socialprotection.org's global e-Conference Turning the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity: What's next for social protection? is a great example of the platform's matchmaking work. Marking the end of the Social Protection Responses to COVID-19 Task Force, the e-Conference took place from 5 to 8 October 2020 and delivered 72 sessions across three different time zones, organised in collaboration with 50 organisations. The event brought together 183 speakers and 28 moderators across 72 different sessions, organised in collaboration with 55 partner institutions. It also attracted 2,150 registered participants (mostly from international organisations—54.8 per cent, 14 per cent from NGOs, 10 per cent from Academia, 9 per cent from governments) from 112 countries (33 per cent from Europe and Central Asia, 22 per cent from North America, 16 per cent from sub-Saharan Africa, 13 per cent from Latin America, 7 per cent from South Asia, 6 per cent from Asia and the Pacific, and 2 per cent from the Middle East and North Africa region—MENA).

To create synergies among those interested in presenting a particular theme, the socialprotection.org team invited several organisations to work together on conceptualising the sessions. These synergies fostered discussions, demonstrating that results are stronger when actors interact with each other, as opposed to individual efforts.

Some countries were invited to share their social protection responses to COVID-19 in specific regional sessions, which was a very important moment for the exchange of best practices, shedding light on the need to reflect collectively on each other's experiences and to think together about innovative approaches that could leverage the capacities of existing social protection systems.

Clinics proved to be one of the most cherished formats—socialprotection.org connected specialists with practitioners and policymakers in these sessions,[7] where they could obtain

tailored peer-to-peer advice on specific practical questions related to the design and implementation of social protection responses to COVID-19. They were also able to discuss key challenges, questions and pressing issues related to social protection responses to COVID-19 in the context of their countries.

This combination of panel sessions with inputs from policymakers and practitioners from countries of the global South, as well as international development partners and researchers, was very rich and allowed for direct dialogue between actors across various fields of expertise, fostering knowledge-sharing, networking and multi-partner collaboration.

As a matchmaker, the platform also organised a large social protection dialogue in November 2021, 'The big SP e-Vent: You spoke up, we listened - but what should we do next?'.

Prior to the event, which aimed to offer an inclusive space where actors from different segments could simply 'let off steam' about what bothered and/or motivated them while working in the sector during COVID-19, the platform created an online forum (the 'e-vent'). In this space, professionals were provided with an opportunity to honestly and anonymously 'vent' about their thoughts and difficulties in this period. Several interesting and thought-provoking discussions were shared in the forum.

Leveraging these discussions, the platform, in collaboration with SPACE, NORCAP and other stakeholders, organised a follow-up (live) event to formalise the main 'vents' shared and mark socialprotection.org's 6th anniversary.

This meeting brought together key stakeholders representing governments, UN agencies, donors, NGOs, and humanitarian actors to collectively reflect on the main identified challenges, such as the difficulties in

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7. Clinic sessions were open and collaborative Zoom meetings on specific topics, were staffed and moderated by designated 'resource people'. Registrants had the opportunity to submit practical and technical questions related to the session's topic beforehand and upvote questions already sent via the online audience interaction tool Slido. Questions were answered by the resource persons as well as by participants in the session, who were encouraged to join in. Each clinic had two sessions, to accommodate participants from different time zones.

strengthening the links between humanitarian and social protection responses, establishing cooperation among different agencies, and committing to the universal social protection agenda. The dialogue, which had the participation of 162 people, brought to light the need for integration and cooperation among different actors to optimise efforts. Participants also shared proposals to build forward better as a community.

This collaborative and constructive exchange stimulated synergies, the understanding of different perspectives, and contributed to a collective reflection on what is not working well, so that solutions could be jointly identified.

After the discussions that emerged from the e-vent and seeing professionals' willingness to interact and exchange experiences on a variety of issues related to social protection, the platform—in collaboration with administrators of the Social Protection in Crisis in Context Online Community—held a meeting with key people to discuss the possibility of initiating regular gatherings with stakeholders from different segments to share best practices and experiences in specific topics. After that kick-off meeting, it was decided that starting in March 2022, the Community would resume the informal Hangouts that took place from March 30 2020 to June 30 2021 and which had been suspended.

At the platform level, as there is a growing interest in generating 'matches' between members based on social protection interests, the team will invest on a 'expert-locator' system, which will also contribute to ongoing efforts to connect people with different areas of expertise, strengthening the social protection network.

The success of these initiatives underlines socialprotection.org's role in the social protection arena and its ability to gather the community and encourage it to think and learn collaboratively in face of new challenges. It also exemplifies how the platform has been working as an important matchmaker: it manages to unite actors from different segments towards this effort of gathering, organising and sharing knowledge quickly and efficiently.

3.1.4 ENGAGING

Framing issues inclusively to bring a common understanding to the decision-making process, contracting people or organisations to provide knowledge on an as-needed basis; opening the decision-making process to encourage genuine participation and ownership.

Through the promotion of networking and the dissemination and production of knowledge, the platform contributes to the framing of important debates, stimulating the exchange of experiences between different actors and fostering inclusive dialogues that can contribute to building a common understanding on particular issues related to social protection. To this end, the platform offers various tools, such as the Online Communities (OCs) and collaborative initiatives between stakeholders, such as the development of joint articles and blog posts.

OCs are important spaces for virtual engagement dedicated to a particular area of interest within social protection, where it is possible to interact and collaborate in a timely and effective manner. By enabling exchanges, including at the country-level, the platform contributes to mutual learning and cooperation between myriad actors, including from countries in the global South. It also enables the democratisation of information, which reaches beyond the members who are directly involved. Stakeholders are encouraged to take ownership of these collaborative spaces by getting actively involved in the promotion of discussions and activities. The platform currently hosts over 60 OCs,[8] which are administered by 43 different stakeholders.

Two particular OCs hosted by socialprotection.org can be mentioned as benchmarks: Social Protection in Crisis Contexts and the Community of Practice on SSC for Children (CoP-SSC4C).

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8. As of June 2022.

The first gathers over 360 members, representing a valuable opportunity for practitioners and researchers working in the humanitarian and social protection fields to connect to different initiatives and knowledge in the area, fostering cooperation and mutual understanding. One of the activities promoted by this OC are the 'Hangouts', which are informal meetings that offer an opportunity for practitioners to share ideas, and experiences. It has also hosted or contributed to the organisation of several webinars, including a successful series on "Linking Social Protection with humanitarian cash", which produced 16 webinars, garnering 2,287 attendees and over 7,400 YouTube views.

On the other hand, CoP-SSC4C brings together actors who promote and support South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC) to advance children's rights and well-being. More than 190 members, including a plethora of practitioners, experts, partners, and individuals from different sectors, have joined the group to share best practices, evidence, and knowledge, fostering global learning and exchange of expertise and assistance in this area. This OC features important documents on the topic and has promoted relevant discussions.

In addition to enabling direct engagement, the platform also stimulates the collaborative production of knowledge. After a large event or a series of webinars, the different stakeholders involved are invited to work on articles or blog posts to share the key points that emerged from the discussions. In general, more than one organisation is involved in setting up events/webinars, which means that before the finalisation of any joint written materials, they need to establish a dialogue and reach a common understanding. For example, in the case of articles, the separate pieces can be linked together into a cohesive whole—an issue of the *Policy in Focus* magazine. This magazine is one of the IPC-IG's flagship publications, a collaborative product containing a diversity of contributions and addressing different perspectives.

Through these initiatives, socialprotection.org contributes to increasing opportunities for active, genuine engagement and understanding among stakeholders from different regions, providing a variety of perspectives to confront similar challenges.

3.1.5 COLLABORATING

Expanding and deepening collaborative processes, strengthening relationships and formalising the process of ensuring that all sides jointly negotiate the questions to be asked around an issue.

Through its activities and tools, the socialprotection.org platform improves the reach of global initiatives and strengthens the work promoted by interagency mechanisms, contributing to coordinated work at the country level and fostering collaboration and synergies between various actors. Some examples are provided below.

The socialprotection.org team works closely with the SPIAC-B's Gender Working Group[9] in various activities to promote collaboration between social protection and gender practitioners, foster evidence-informed policy dialogue, build political commitments and capacity, and coordinate efforts to amplify the impact of the discussions promoted by the Group.

In collaboration with the socialprotection.org team, the Group administers the Gender-Responsive Social Protection Online Community, created in 2016 and revamped in 2020, which convenes 217 members, including professionals from the GIZ, ODI, UN Women, FCDO, the IPC-IG, the European Union Social Protection Systems Programme (EU-SPS), and the ILO. The OC offers a space for discussions and provides access to key resources related to gender-responsive social protection. With the platform's support, the group has also been involved in the organisation of 19 gender-related webinars, gathering 2,342 attendees and reaching more than 8,000 views of its recordings on YouTube.

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9. The Working Group was established in 2018 and is comprised of SPIAC-B social protection and gender experts. Its purpose is to make social protection more gender responsive, both conceptually and in practice.

Together with DFAT, the platform is also working to strengthen ongoing debates around gender. To this end, the socialprotection.org team has proposed the launch of a collaborative podcast series between DFAT and the Group.

The platform also supports the work of the SPIAC-B Digital Social Protection Working Group, which was formed in 2019 to enhance global coordination and advocacy on digital social protection issues and to coordinate international cooperation in country demand-driven actions. In 2020 it became the Digital Convergence Initiative (DCI), supported by USP2030, with the goal of building a global consensus around standards and guidelines for social protection information systems. Since March 2022, the platform has hosted the Dialogue Series "Talking interoperability", organised by the DCI, to facilitate in-depth technical conversations around designing for interoperability in the social protection sector. By bringing together digital social protection and technology experts from government agencies, software vendors, system integrators, and international organisations, the aim is to promote peer-based learning and problem solving.

Another example of collaboration is the Global Partnership the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection (USP2030), which the platform has supported since its 2016 launch. In July 2019, the platform released the USP2030 Webinar series in close collaboration with key partners, attracting 298 attendees and garnering over 2,500 YouTube views. Its outcomes were published in the Universal social protection: a target for all issue of Policy in Focus (IPC-IG 2019). The initiative has also been largely promoted through the platform's communication channels, including the development of a short video on the topic. In addition, universal social protection was also the main subject of 15 webinars hosted by the platform.

In addition, the USP 2030 campaign was launched in March 2022, aiming to raise awareness on the USP2030 partnership and universal social protection more broadly, and to present the topics around which the USP2030 working groups are currently working. Created as a collaboration between the USP 2030 Secretariat

and socialprotection.org, the campaign took place in the run-up to the Membership Assembly throughout March 2022, and included: (i) the USP2030 blog series, comprising 7 weekly blog posts presenting the work of the four USP2030 working groups; (ii) a podcast episode: What will it take to achieve USP by 2030?, reflecting on approaches that blur the traditional lines between social assistance and social insurance and what it might take to reach this ambitious goal; and (iii) a dedicated newsletter in April 2022: Achieving Universal Social Protection by 2030, which compiled and wrapped up all campaign activities. These initiatives were posted on social media and shared by partners, accompanied by cards and a video.

The socialprotection.org team also actively maps USP2030-related materials, making them available in the platform's main database, in addition to participating in the Assemblies, Digital Convergence Initiative and working groups dedicated to the theme.

It is worth mentioning the ongoing collaboration with ISPA, which has organised 15 webinars through the platform to promote its different tools, gathering 584 attendees and reaching over 1,800 views of the webinar recordings on YouTube. Recently, the socialprotection.org team developed a short video to showcase the use of the ISPA Tools, contributing to their wide dissemination.

As can be seen, the platform has become a relevant space to support global initiatives and interagency mechanisms, contributing to the strengthening of collaborative actions and fostering synergies.

3.1.6 BUILDING ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

Cultivating long-term relationships, fostering organisational learning, and co-producing knowledge through, for example, co-management.

The demand for online learning activities has grown steadily in recent years, especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. socialprotection.org has been investing in its

e-Learning capabilities since 2018 by bringing specialist consultants to the team, acquiring new technologies for its online courses and events, and adopting innovative methodologies to promote high quality learning. The platform currently undertakes two main activities focused on online learning: in addition to being frequently asked to lend its expertise to the organisation of online events, especially webinars, it has also become an important hub for the elaboration, promotion and delivery of online courses on social protection.

The organisation of webinars, which address a vast range of topics and are often organised with multiple partners, has always been one of the platform's flagship activities. Since launch, socialprotection.org has promoted a total of 252 webinars with more than 70 partner organisations. Most gathered over 100 attendees, who often take the opportunity to exchange best practices and lessons learned from their own professional experiences. During the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the webinars had over 500 live attendees, demonstrating their high relevance for the social protection community. As collaborative events, webinars showcase the plurality of voices and agendas in social protection, as well as the value of inter-agency cooperation in fostering organisational learning.

The platform's second online learning activity relates to what is commonly known as 'e-Learning'. Its first micro-course series, featuring original content, was launched in April 2020. Over the past two years, the *Social Protection Fundamentals and Topics Series*—sponsored by the GIZ—has produced five micro-courses on a variety of topics. Micro-courses are free, open, and self-paced, with a duration ranging from 2 to 5 hours. As of June 2022, a total of 812 people had received certifications through these courses. They were translated to Arabic In the first semester of 2022, in a collaboration with UNICEF MENA and

ESCWA, and offered as preparatory work for TRANSFORM activities.

In addition to course production, the platform has been offering its expertise on crafting learning experiences to the general social protection community. Its flagship e-Learning partnership is the e-TRANSFORM. The platform has been working with ILO, UNICEF, UNDP and other partners since 2017 to adapt this comprehensive training package to various contexts. So far, there have been seven runs of the course, delivered to 357 professionals from 46 different countries. To support its delivery, the platform has also offered two training runs for e-facilitators. Furthermore, as part of its pandemic response, it delivered a pilot e-TRANSFORM training on shock-responsive social protection during the first semester of 2022. Featuring synchronous and asynchronous activities, this training qualified 18 people from Malawi and Zambia, including four TRANSFORM Master Trainers.[11]

Additionally, over the past couple of years the platform has also offered two runs of FAO's course "Strengthening the use of Poverty Analysis to Achieve SDGs 1 and 2", which is now freely available through the Virtual Campus. More recently, the platform developed a series of courses focused on Adaptive Social Protection (ASP). The series is comprised of four courses dealing with each of the ASP building blocks developed by the World Bank ("Programmes and Delivery Systems"; "Data and Information"; "Financing"; and "Institutional Arrangements and Partnerships").

All these initiatives exemplify socialprotection.org's role in cultivating long-time relationships among different stakeholders, while also highlighting its commitment to the production and advancement of various types of learning activities, enhancing the community's capacities in this area.

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10. The TRANSFORM Master Trainers are a select group of experts qualified to deliver its training programmes. Together with the curriculum and its unique pedagogical approach, Master Trainers are a key component of the TRANSFORM initiative and play an important role in its promotion and development.

4.
Conclusion

The platform was envisioned a decade ago, in a context of growing global governance cooperation in the field of social protection. Since then, the use of social media and online communication tools has increased dramatically and has continued to grow, as the measures implemented in response to the COVID-19's pandemic, as well as humanitarian conflicts, such as the war in Ukraine, pushed for more virtual interactions. In addition, there has been growing recognition that collaboration and knowledge sharing are key components for the development sector. All of these elements have paved the way for socialprotection.org to flourish.

As per the 2011 G20 DWG request, the platform was created and has established itself as a neutral, unbranded and collaborative knowledge-sharing space where knowledge can be easily shared and found. By bringing together contributions from different agencies, non-governmental organisations, national and international think tanks, as well as government bodies, the platform has fostered dialogue, the exchange of best practices and learning on social protection.

Over time, it also has been flexible enough to quickly adapt and shape its activities and dynamics to meet emerging needs.

Recently, the platform has further refined its mission and vision, playing an increasingly prominent role in the promotion of discussions and exchanges between different actors, as well as in delivering curated content and developing capacity-building training. Investments were also made in strategic planning to expand and enhance its internal capacity to offer relevant services to the community. With these improvements, the organisational understanding of the platform as a knowledge broker was strengthened, as it increasingly acts as an articulator of knowledge transfer.

From a knowledge brokering perspective, the platform is adding value to decision-making processes by informing, linking, matchmaking, engaging, collaborating, and building adaptive capacities.

It is committed to **informing** decision-makers and other stakeholders in multiple ways,

including through its extensive database and by providing access to easily absorbable information. socialprotection.org also **links** experts/specialists with decision-makers, bringing them to the table to hold rich discussions. As a **matchmaker**, it encourages active collaboration and dialogue, organising events/e-Conferences and identifying possibilities to propose synergies between different stakeholders. The platform also fosters **engagement** and contributes to framing important debates through its OCs and by promoting collaborative initiatives. By supporting global initiatives and interagency mechanisms, it strengthens **collaboration**. Finally, it directly contributes to **building adaptive capacity** through its different activities, mainly webinars and e-learning.

Despite the significant efforts that have been made so far to provide relevant content and promote collaboration and learning to the global social protection community, several challenges remain:

- Collaboration between stakeholders from different regions is still weak, and sometimes efforts to find solutions to similar problems are duplicated and segregated within the community.

- Participation of government counterparts in multi-stakeholder discussions promoted by the platform is still unimpressive.

- Despite the aim of contributing to improve social protection policy globally, especially in MICs and LICs, it is difficult to capture and measure the platform's concrete impact on policymaking.

There is still a long way to go to achieve more solid synergies and effective involvement and cooperation between different actors. To this end, the platform is committed to innovation, both in terms of strategy and technology, adapting and adopting new ways to continuously improve its critical role as a knowledge hub and broker in the field of social protection.

On the strategic front, the following approaches are being implemented:

- new engagement mechanisms to foster exchanges in the OCs, which can contribute to innovative and effective social protection policies and programmes;

- a series of highly collaborative events to foster exchanges between stakeholders from different regions and segments;

- consultations with decision-makers to identify their information gaps and knowledge-sharing needs; and

- efforts to define metrics and ways to measure the platform's impact on decision-making, both qualitative and quantitative.

We expect that these initiatives and opportunities can further encourage decision-makers and other actors to participate in more multi-stakeholder debates, and cooperate in identifying common challenges and opportunities, framing common understandings that can benefit the decision-making processes related to social protection.

On the technical side, the platform is constantly evolving to improve knowledge transfer and sharing activities. The team is always attentive to new technological trends to bring effective updates to existing features, developing new functionalities, experimenting with new layouts and conducting performance enhancements, as well as improving the overall user experience. Soon, the platform will be migrated to a more modern Content Management System (CMS), which will significantly enhance overall performance and integrate new features and tools. Improvements in the platform's responsiveness on mobile devices, including the Virtual Campus, are also being planned. An Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being implemented to improve content mapping, categorisation, and systematisation, which will also provide insights into knowledge patterns and gaps.

Although the constant changes in the global context are challenging, they also represent opportunities for the platform to achieve its full potential in fostering collaboration and providing knowledge exchange and capacity-building services to the global community, while looking for more concrete ways to measure its impact on decision-making in social protection.

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