
Integrated Social Policy Report II: From Concept to Practice

Expert Group Meeting
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Amman, Jordan

Purpose of report

- *To define and refine the concept of integrated social policy:*

Dispel misconceptions surrounding social policy, emphasize integration of social equity and human rights considerations, demonstrate integrated social policy as indispensable to building equitable, stable and sustainable societies in the face of challenges confronting the Arab world.

- *To illustrate successful precedents:*

Provide concrete examples – regional and international - of successful efforts to develop integrated social policy.

- *To develop mechanisms and tools for integrated social policy-making:*

Draw on the three essential tiers of an integrated social policy (vision, shared consensus, and service implementation) so as to suggest ways of operationalizing components of an integrated approach, for discussion at this and subsequent meetings.

Goals

- To offer policy-makers, civil society organizations, regional and international development agencies and other interested stakeholders an institutional policy alternative for social policy-making where considerations of social equity and human rights drive the agenda for social change and development – rather than primarily economic growth models
 - To provide a succinct and practical informational and advocacy guide to integrated social policy.
 - To stimulate discussion and exchange of ideas about relevance and application in countries of the ESCWA region
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Contributions of integrated social policy:

- Social consequences of economic and public policies are systematically examined *within* public policy formulation.
 - “Social” issues are not regarded as residual or secondary to economic processes; instead, they integrate social equity and human rights concerns that inform public policy
 - People are brought into the center stage of policy-making and their voices and needs are brought into the development process.
 - A national government’s commitment to advancing human rights and social equity is established.
 - Sustainable economic development is enhanced by empowerment of all citizens
 - Integrated social policy is more effective than traditional approaches of poverty eradication and making progress toward the MDGs
 - Is the only guarantee to ensure long term and sustainable social peace by reducing sources of social, economic, ethnic or other tensions
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Challenges in the ESCWA region:

- Competition in the global environment
- Focus on achieving progress in the MDGs
- Preoccupation with social instability in isolation from economic development choices
- Meeting international obligations and priorities, at times at the cost of internal social disruptions and unrests
- Addressing dependence on foreign aid
- Other?

What are the implications for different countries?
Regionally?

Creating an enabling environment for social policy:

- Adapting changes to specific national contexts
- Creating or reforming institutions
- Developing the mechanisms
- Other?

How do these manifest concretely in specific countries?

Processes, mechanisms and tools of social policy – suggesting entry points:

- A. *Leadership and policy level*: Formulating social policy to integrate social concerns
- B. *Shared consensus*: Developing a shared consensus and enhanced citizen participation
- C. *Implementing service delivery*: Applying holistic approaches to service provision

Bottom line:

An interlocking approach that serves the purpose of upholding some sort of social contract - to limit the hegemony of profit, mainstream and support weaker and vulnerable groups, provide equal opportunities for all, and secure a minimum social solidarity and cohesion for sustaining social peace, stability and eventually higher dividends for all.

A. Strategic mechanisms and tools for social policy – Leadership/Vision

- Instruments and policy tools for transparent and accountable governance
 - Data and capacity building
 - Interdependence of economic and social objectives – contributions of a human rights perspective
 - Strategic analysis and national development plans
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Key mechanisms in social policy making

- Providing venues for citizen participation and holding government accountable, and suggesting mechanisms to incorporate citizens' input into public policy making.
 - Strengthening institutional and human capacity in the justice system, public administration and other government agencies, engaging and involving all relevant social and economic ministries in joint deliberation about the new social contract rooted in an integrated approach to social policy making within and across sector ministries.
 - Enhancing incorporation of human rights approaches in strategic analysis and capacity building on the interdependence of economic and social objectives and to integrate social outcomes and consequences of economic development directly into economic and development planning and in National Strategic and Development Plans
 - Strengthening capacity and support reliable data collection and analysis, disaggregated data, etc. and strengthen capacity for results oriented budget process (from revenue collection to allocations) which is consistent with a commitment to implement social policy.
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B. Strategic mechanisms and tools for enhanced citizen participation

- **Economic and Social Councils:**

To strengthen dialogue between citizens and policy makers, identify and monitor social outcomes, and hold government accountable.

ESCs represent a range of social interests. They assess the social impact of public policies and offer proposals for more effective promotion of economic growth and social justice.

- **Social Observatories:**

To offer shared space for citizen input; are independent, semi-government or government-dominated organizations whose purpose is generally to monitor social issues and trends in a particular country so as to inform, guide and evaluate social policy

- **Other types of social units?**

Key mechanisms for enhanced citizen participation:

- Involving a range of actors and create institutional spaces for community dialogue and learning, to foster community buy-in – by strengthening the role of the media, inviting input by a range of civil society organizations and by providing venues for citizens of all levels of society to voice their needs and concerns.
 - Reinforcing mutual commitment and social contract between citizens – as claims holders, and the state as the duty bearer, rooted in human rights and in the rights and responsibilities of each.
 - Developing institutional venues and capacity to invite regular feedback and monitoring of economic and social progress and build legitimacy; such as in the form of Economic and Social Councils, Social Observatories and other social policy units.
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C. Strategic mechanisms and tools for service implementation

- Mainstreaming social equity and cohesion
 - Integrated delivery, quality – investment in human resources
 - Efficient targeting (and universalism)
 - Results-oriented budgeting.
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Key mechanisms for holistic service implementation:

- Mainstreaming social equity and cohesion by ending discrimination against women and vulnerable groups, providing legal and institutional frameworks to advance equality of opportunity
 - Providing integrated services across departments and ensure quality by approaching service delivery within a comprehensive social action plan that is designed to enhance equitable human development.
 - Ensuring efficient targeting (and universalism) by ensuring provision of targeted services where needed to redress past discrimination or current inequalities (for example, against women or the unemployed), and investing in right of all citizens to basic services.
 - Allowing investment and capacity building in results oriented budgeting that closely monitors and evaluates the entire budget process – from revenue collection to program allocations, to check inequities and advance social equity and development for all.
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Conclusions:

- Poverty is not merely a residual outcome of economic development but is the result of a policy and structural denial of human rights and equitable human development
 - An integrated social policy approach rests on a vision of development that prompts policy makers and other stakeholders in the economic development process to go beyond questions of what should be done to increase economic growth, to reflect on “how” and “why” of their actions. It asks who stands to gain or lose and how to avoid making people lose as a result of any public policy.
 - An integrated social policy approach provides a compelling and legitimate starting point for engaging in dialogue between government bodies, civil society organizations, constituencies and citizenry on development goals and needs
 - An integrated social policy approach contributes to an accountability structure and the checks and balances for measuring progress in incorporating (“mainstreaming”) equity in development planning and delivery
 - An integrated social policy reflects a comprehensive (“holistic”) approach that links economic production to equity and equal opportunity and hence to social protection.
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Recommendations by the experts

- Focus on democracy building and cultivating values and institutions embodying social equity and justice
 - Investigate practical ways of addressing problems in implementation
 - Offer practical guidelines on operationalizing processes
 - Highlight human rights framework at core of social policy
 - Invest in research and building (academic) and other institutions of excellence
 - Promote opportunities for regional policy dialogue/develop research and evaluation agenda across region
 - Situate in context of specific countries of the ESCWA region
 - Investigate how – practically – we can learn from/apply experiences of other countries
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