

Extending social protection in developing countries- achievements, challenges and solutions

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Social protection has, until recently, been underused instrument for social and economic development. There is ample historical evidence of it as an essential element in nation building, social cohesion and socially sustainable economic development. Particularly during the last 10 years there has been increasing attention to the rights of people to since the financial crisis of 2008-09. Also Finland has been intensively involved in these activities.

The purpose of the WG is to gather together researchers and development practitioners to present practical and research based evidence on the successes and challenges of the development of social protection systems in low and middle income countries. The concept of Social protection is understood in its broad meaning: access to basic social security and essential services, and equality promoting policies and practices in other sectors.

The WG will call for inputs from both researchers and development practitioners. You are welcome to present research results, innovative practices and evaluations related to the challenges, solutions and achievements of social protection in development context.

One of the inputs will be a presentation on the recently THL launched EU co-funded development Programme that aims at supporting the development of inclusive and sustainable social protection systems in 10 developing countries.

The ‘new wave’ of interest in social protection systems as tools for development; The Background, current initiatives and what next

Dr. Timo Voipio is Director of Implementation Strategies and Partnerships of the EU Social Protection Systems Programme at THL

The presentation describes how the present high interest in social protection as a development instrument has evolved from the risk management frameworks of the end of 1990s to current, rather advanced social protection strategies of major international organizations. The current major initiatives by a number of donors are described. The EU Social Protection Systems Programme, implemented by THL and OECD Development Centre (2015-2018) will be discussed with the aim of gaining deeper understanding of the challenges, opportunities and ideas for innovative solutions for system-level reforms of social protection in developing countries. The partner countries of the EU-SPS Programme on which the discussion will concretely focus are in Asia: Cambodia, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan and Vietnam and in Africa: Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Togo and Zambia.

Social policy as peace negotiator? Development of social protection, societal inequalities and armed conflicts in Africa

Prof. Olli Kangas is Research Director at the Research Department of the National Social Insurance Institute of Finland

Prof. Joakim Palme is Professor at the Political Science Department of Uppsala University, Sweden

The aim of the research project is to study to what extent – if any – evolving social policy systems have downplayed the negative effects of various social ‘ills’ (income inequality, poverty, illiteracy, infant mortality etc.) in Africa. Research questions are as follows: 1) is there a positive correlation between fledgling welfare states and equality; if so, then 2) has all this any impact upon conflict propensity. Our hypothesis is that expanding social protection combats social ‘ills’, which in turn, yields positive results in terms of various conflicts (armed conflicts, civil wars, local riots, coups d’etats etc.)

The presentation is based on a data on almost all African countries. At the Department of Political Science University of Uppsala , we have gathered data on the extension of social protection (development of major social insurance schemes), social and educational spending, indicators of social ‘ills’ and conflicts 1960 to 2014. In the Helsinki meeting we can present preliminary results.

Social protection for informal African migrants within Africa: Is regional intervention possible

Christal Oghogho Spel (Ms) is Final year doctoral student at Social and Public Policy, University of Helsinki, Finland

This paper examines how basic social welfare can be extended to poor African migrants in other African countries. The poor migrants live without access to social support or national poverty reduction programs in their host countries, making them highly vulnerable to socio-economic risks that would otherwise be manageable. My argument draws from the findings of my doctoral study of how African migrants survive on the streets of Johannesburg, South Africa. Building on my findings, I argue that social welfare can be extended to the poor migrants if social policy is developed and implemented from a supra political agent like the African Union. My argument proposes a bottom-up approach to political interventions on the dynamics of African migration and migrants’ wellbeing with emphasis on social policy and migrants economic activities in the informal sector. The idea of social policy from a regional body like the African Union is new globally. The European Union and its directives on social policy is the closest similarity to this idea but with significant differences. However, the African context with enduring internal informal migration, huge informal sector, several politically and economically incapacitated states and high human vulnerability demands an innovative approach to social policy. The paper forms a background to my coming post-doctoral research.

Challenges in Improving Informal Social Protection Systems in the Global South

Mr. Markku Malkamäki is Senior Social Protection Expert of the EU Social Protection Systems Programme at THL. The topic stems from his PhD Dissertation to Bath University, UK

In the absence of formal social protection systems informal well fare, funeral, savings and savings and credit groups provide important informal social protection systems especially in Africa. These groups are very popular particularly among women, because they provide support to the families in the case of death or sicknesses, enable members to save, and access loans. For example in Kenya over half of women belong on one or several Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs) or Accumulating Savings and Credit Associations (ASCAs).

However, the research has shown that these groups also face many challenges, e.g. in 20% of these groups' members have lost part or all of their savings. Hence promoters have introduced capacity development initiatives that attempt to increase transparency and accountability in these groups in order to reduce the risks and increase their sustainability.

The aim of the research project was to study whether these new training and capacity development initiatives have enabled the adoption of new rules and whether this in turn has increased transparency and accountability and reduced risks. Findings indicate a high variation in rule adoption and performance. In order to explain the variation the role of promoters, trainers, power dynamics between the trainers and group as well as internal group dynamics was investigated.