

Chapter 6. A systems analysis of social protection (Module 5)

Building upon the findings of the assessment of needs, coverage, effectiveness and sustainability, this section looks at the potential for social protection systematisation. It provides the methodology for in-depth analysis of the sector's degree and modalities of systematisation across several dimensions and from several stakeholder perspectives. Based on this analysis, and on evidence from previous modules and other countries' experiences, recommendations for the enhancement of the social protection system can be made.

Analytical dimensions

Module 5 builds upon the evidence presented in the first 4 modules to identify key policy responses and explores their potential implementation to create a foundation for a robust social protection system. The objective is to enhance the extent to which social protection is comprehensive in terms of its various instruments, institutions and information-sharing platforms. This module also presents a political economy analysis, exploring the relationship between the government ministry tasked with implementing social protection and other relevant actors.

In many countries, fragmentation of social protection provision is a major challenge for policy makers and a critical impediment to establishing a social protection system that can be sustained in, and adapt to, changing social, demographic, economic and political conditions. Where social protection is implemented in a comprehensive manner, it can increase coverage while reducing duplication, link individuals to appropriate instruments and significantly increase efficiency using common information systems. Where it is integrated into the government's overall policy agenda, it can complement a country's development and reinforce its socio-economic gains.

Achieving this integration is not straightforward. Social protection instruments are usually established across a number of ministries or departments, by numerous pieces of legislation and over a long timeframe. This evolution reflects the typical social, economic and political transformation of countries as they develop, which often leads to a fragmented set of instruments and institutions that lack a co-ordination mechanism, do not form part of a coherent system and are not always responsive to changing national conditions. Lack of horizontal or vertical co-operation and co-ordination among actors at various stages of the policy cycle can negatively impact policy outcomes (Dayton-Johnson, Londoño and Nieto-Parra, 2011^[11]). It is also important to look beyond domestic actors involved in policy-making, and to understand and utilise the contribution of international agencies and donors in this context.

Social protection is increasingly important in countries' development strategies. Governments are beginning to establish mechanisms to enhance co-ordination across institutions, ministries and functions. Sharing data about beneficiaries or at-risk groups is an essential component of this process. Many countries are developing management information systems and social registries to be used across the government, with the aim of ensuring that individuals are accessing appropriate programmes as well as of gathering information about the demand and impacts of different schemes.

Social protection outcomes, such as reductions in poverty and improved access to basic services, cannot be attributed to any one sector; the coherence of social protection with other policies needs to be assessed to identify coverage gaps, overlaps, synergies and trade-offs. The example of conditional cash transfers is instructive: requiring that beneficiaries use health and education services might reinforce the potential of cash transfers to enhance human capital development, but only if these services are accessible, adequate and equipped for the associated administrative work.

Last, there is growing recognition that reforms to build inclusive social protection systems, however well informed and well designed, are unlikely to be sustainable or even implemented without full country ownership and a national consensus. Assessing the domestic political factors influencing social protection policy is needed to gauge the political feasibility of social protection extensions and identify pathways for social protection development under various scenarios.

Indicators and data sources

Data for this module are largely qualitative. Organigrams for the social protection sector and key ministries are very valuable if available. For political economy insights, media searches are often productive.

Methodology

This module conducts in-depth analysis of the degree and modalities of systematisation in the social protection sector across various dimensions and from various stakeholder perspectives. It also proposes ways in which the social protection sector, and systematisation in particular, can be enhanced, based on evidence from earlier modules of the SPSR and other countries' experiences.

Systematisation at an institutional level is analysed with reference to a country's social protection policy-making processes and the coherence and co-ordination that exist within and among ministries, between different levels of government and other actors in the sector. It identifies the existence of co-ordinating bodies and their effectiveness, not only in promoting coherence across the sector but also in aligning social protection with a government's broader policy framework, such as a development plan and sectoral strategies for education, health, employment, agriculture or economic development.

This analysis also identifies the extent and effectiveness of programme-level co-ordination and coherence across social assistance, social insurance, labour market programmes and health coverage mechanisms, assessing the extent to which these pillars complement each other, are appropriately resourced and provide continuous coverage across population groups to ensure that they serve as the basis for comprehensive coverage. The potential for individuals to move among pillars according to their needs is an important aspect of this.

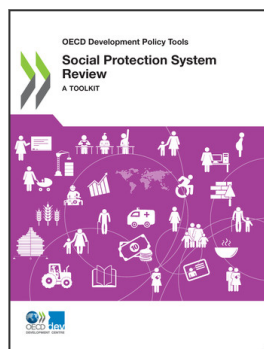
This module assesses information sharing across the social protection sector through management information systems, as well as linkages between social protection registries and other databases, such as civil registries or census data. It also examines the registration process for various programmes and the mechanisms used to target interventions at various groups, and evaluates monitoring and evaluation systems.

The module then examines the political economy around social protection, referring to previous reform processes and the broader political context. This analysis considers the attitudes of government, other national stakeholders and development partners involved in social protection to assess the alignment of their viewpoints. It also identifies the existence of, or demand for, other reform processes, such as health service provision, tax changes, subsidy reductions or fiscal decentralisation, which could affect social protection reforms positively or negatively.

The module concludes with specific options for enhancing the systematisation of social protection. It makes broad policy recommendations that respond to the evidence of the previous four modules, such as options for scaling up or reforming particular programmes, establishing new interventions to meet needs not addressed by existing social protection provision, and reprioritising sector resources to ensure the system's sustainability and optimise spending.

References

- Dayton-Johnson, J., J. Londoño and S. Nieto-Parra (2011), *The Process of Reform in Latin America: A Review Essay*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/5kg3mkvfcjxv-en.pdf?expires=1537186326&id=id&accname=ocid84004878&checksum=138D7D795A61113F7995CA3D19BEA0F2> (accessed on 17 September 2018). [1]



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