



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



***Social Protection
Policy and Research
in the Arab States:
from Shared Challenges
to Coordinated Efforts***

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* The Management of Social Transformation (MOST) Programme's primary purpose is to transfer relevant Social Sciences research findings and data to decision-makers and other stakeholders. MOST focuses on building efficient bridges between research, policy and practice.

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Foreword

In much of the Arab region, recent economic growth with its high volatility, has not guaranteed social benefits, thus poverty and unemployment continue to affect many people. Moreover, huge disparities in social indicators (maternal health, poverty levels, rural-urban divide) continue to grow (UN-ESCWA, 2003). The fragility of political, social, economic and environmental structures together with the lack of people-centered development policies undermine human security - the kind of material and moral foundation that secures lives, livelihoods and an acceptable quality of life for the majority in the Arab region (UNDP Arab Human Development Report, 2009).

Over the last 8 months political earthquakes have shaken the Arab region. Those revolutions have brought not only a political change and reforms but also reconfirmed that the dignity of people should be at the heart of social development. The challenges of social protection policy are more relevant and urgent than ever in our region.

UNESCO hopes to enhance the regional standard of the social protection by quality evidence based research through the Management of Social Transformation Programme (MOST) of the Social and Human Science Sector and as part of the UN Social Protection Floor (SPF) Initiative.

The United Nations Social Protection Floor Initiative promotes universal access to essential social transfers and services. This Initiative considers the provision of essential services and transfers for all individuals in need of protection in an effort to prevent them from falling into abject poverty or to assist them out of poverty. The agreed objective of the Social Protection Floor Initiative is to support policies and activities that extend countries' social protection systems and basic social services in line with the needs of their population, especially poor and vulnerable groups, through an integrated approach that responds to different crises as well as to countries' longer-term development needs and perspectives.

There is no best solution or "one-size-fits-all" formula. Each country has different needs, development objectives and the fiscal capacity to achieve them and will choose a different set of policies. But we all know that our region needs to enhance national social protection policies by seeking to ascertain that all people have a right to a life with dignity for all.

In fact, the World Social Science Report published in 2010 observes that social sciences have become truly global and their concepts and theories influence public opinion and public debates more than ever before. The same report observes that in the Arab region, most of social sciences research produced is

irrelevant to social policy issues. Authoritarian political regimes and conflicts and violence in some countries have hampered the healthy social science research.

We believe that the social science researchers and initiatives in the Arab region need to be supported and promoted to better inform social policy-making. For that, the regional coordinated approach is not an option but a necessity to efficiently address the research and policy gap in the area of social protection in the Arab region.

Abdel Moneim Osman
Regional Director, UNESCO Beirut

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Introduction

by Seiko Sugita, UNESCO Beirut

1. Stronger Research Policy linkage to address the challenges of social protection

Quantitative and qualitative research with reliable data is one important prerequisite for efficient social policy-making. However, in the Arab region, the linkage between research and social policy-making in general remains weak as dialogue and exchange between researchers and policy makers are not systemic in social policy-making in general. This missing link is due to different interlinked parameters: one can consider the dearth of data is caused by inconsistent indicators and measurements- often selective and politicized; others can criticize that not many social science researchers orient their research relevant to societal problems and public interest (WSSR, 2010).

The Social and Human Sciences Sector of UNESCO, through its intergovernmental programme on Management of Social Transformation (MOST), thrives to make a stronger linkage between social science research and policy formulation in particular in the area of social development.

In response to the most recent financial crisis in 2009, UN Chief Executives Board (CEB) agreed on the need for policy coherence and coordination and on nine joint crisis initiatives, out of which, the Social Protection Floor (and the Global Jobs Pact) has received the highest political attention and support by United Nations' Member States and the UN system. The objective of the Social Protection Floor is to promote and support the implementation of a basic set of social transfers (a basic set of social transfers, in cash and in kind, paid to the poor and vulnerable to provide minimum income security and access to essential health care) and the availability of and access to essential services (such as education and health, adequate nutrition, water and sanitation). As such, Member States of UNESCO have identified an immediate need to mitigate the serious social impact of the financial and economic crisis.

In much of the Arab region, recent economic growth with its high volatility, has not guaranteed social benefits, thus poverty and unemployment continue to affect many people. Moreover, huge disparities in social indicators (maternal health, poverty levels, rural-urban divide) continue to grow (UN-ESCWA, 2003). The fragility of political, social, economic and environmental structures together with the lack of people-centered development policies undermine human security- the kind of material and moral foundation that secures lives, livelihoods and an

acceptable quality of life for the majority in the Arab region (UNDP Arab Human Development Report, 2009).

Social dimensions are often treated as a residual outcome of economic production in the absence of a coherent social policy framework, in general. Social packages (safety nets, targeted social services) are delivered by sector-specific ministries and are designed in isolation of the state's economic and development process. The fragmented social provisions are far from responding to the growing needs of vulnerable populations in many countries in the region. The concept of the social protection floor is rather new in the Arab region. The debate has not yet matured both nationally and regionally.

In this context, UNESCO decided to respond to the challenge of Social Protection in the Arab States, by developing capacity of regional experts and social science researchers in policy research in designing, monitoring and evaluating social protection and cash transfer mechanisms.

Dr Hania Sholkamy and Ms Kristina Hellez prepared and submitted a discussion presented this discussion paper in the regional steering committee meeting (Cairo, 4 June 2010). Recommendations of a regional steering committee informed the design of the workshop.

2. The regional workshop in Beirut

The three day workshop was therefore designed at addressing the gap between social science research and policy making in the area of social protection and cash transfers policies and mechanisms in the Arab region. It was designed as a forum for learning and sharing knowledge among regional and international researchers and policy makers together and experts from UN agencies and civil society. Its objective was to identify the policy challenges and research needed in support of social protection policy formulation in the Arab region.

National reports were prepared to understand the policy context, research status and existing social protection mechanisms in 7 selected countries. Complementary experiences and lessons on policy, research and programmes were collected from different parts of the world (Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin-America and Arab region). A group of participants divided by sub-regions shared concerns and recommendations for policy-making and research on social protection in the Arab region.

3. Structure of the report

The present report is made up of 3 sections. The first section is to assess social protection policy and research context in the Arab region. In addition to the paper prepared by Hania Sholkamy and Kristina Hallez for the steering meeting, situation analysis was undertaken in 6 selected countries (Jordan, Syria, Algeria, Oman, Egypt and Sudan) Dr Madani Safar Zitoun reviewed 6 country reports and an existing studies (namely from Palestine) to analyze the trends and common challenges of social protection policies and research in the Arab region.

The second section of the report compiles the discussion by regional participants on the international experiences on social protection policies and research presented during the workshop, which served a basis to identify regional research priorities in the region.

The third section, finally, includes the recommendations drafted by the workshop participants on social protection policy formulation and research in the Arab region. They were made available through the participatory process, cited above, and thanks to many partners and colleagues, who provided constructive advice and much support.

Section One:

Policy Context for Social Protection in the Arab Region



I. Social Policy & Protection as Innovation: Informing social protection in the Arab region¹

*By Hania Sholkamy & Kristina Hallez
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Social protection is a “specific set of policy instruments devised to alleviate poverty and manage risk in poor and vulnerable communities” (Devereux et al. 2010: 2). Although developed as a policy and programming stream of international development cooperation by the donor community, social protection is quickly filtering through to national and regional policy making circles and is looming large as a set of policies that are implemented at the national level with money from the national budget so as to address inequity and poverty. Donor funding does not, by and large, drive the Arab world² growth or development. However international trends and technical know-how play a significant role in determining or nurturing policy choices. Social protection is such a choice; one which national and international policy makers are contemplating as an antidote to rising, persistent and unacceptable poverty.

This draft paper will identify and review the development in the theory and application of social protection initiatives over the past two decades in the global south, in order to inform development of Arab Social Protection. Ill-targeted social protection schemes plague the Arab World creating a thirst for innovation. This paper asks what lessons can be learned from other social policy programs in developing nations, that can benefit the Arab context. Particularly, in light of the continuing economic crisis. It also sets down some points for discussion and consideration so as to facilitate an Arab engagement with social protection options. First, however, the paper will quickly review the ‘state of the art’ on social protection in general to try to identify what it is and what it isn’t and what it can be!

1. Introduction on Social Protection and Policy

What is Social Protection and why do we need it?

Social policies are tools of government that serve to regulate rights and entitlements. They also provide a template for government decisions and

¹ The paper was originally prepared for the regional stakeholders consultation meeting in preparation for the expert meeting on Social protection policy and research in the Arab States (Cairo, June 2010)

² Except for the Palestinian territories, Sudan and Yemen where donor aid has been a substantial contributor to development.

priorities on social spending and the transfer of public goods. Social policies are the expression of citizenship rights as crafted through the political and constitutional processes that define the nation. Social policies must have aims and objectives. If a country has confirmed equality as an essence of citizenship then it is through social policies that opportunities, public goods, risks, services, and resources are equitably distributed and invested. Every social policy has a special provision for the disenfranchised, the disposed or the poor. There is recognition of the special entitlements of the under-privileged in all modern state policies. These special provisions take many forms. They may mean social assistance, fee waivers, social insurances, social pensions, direct transfers, subsidies, public works programs, quotas in the labor market or resources allocations such as land or loans. The aim of such provisions is to ensure that no one is 'left behind' in times of growth or that risk and scarce resources are fairly distributed in times of hardship.

Some analysts have conjured the image of a social protection 'floor'. That means a bottom line below which no citizens or resident is left to fall. The core content of this floor varies from a guarantee against hunger to one that promises a basic income. The floor may be hard and minimal or well-endowed and enabling. The European social model, for example, provides many more rights at the basic level including the rights to health, education, unemployment support, shelter, food security and pensions. The USA has just enhanced its social protection floor with a new health insurance scheme that is universal. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa cannot promise to thus protect their citizens and some do not have a provision that protects from hunger or natural catastrophes. India, as wealthy and vibrant as it is, is about to promise universal education to its citizens but has been an innovator in guaranteeing the right to information as a basic human right that has enabled the state to propose new social protection programs such as the public works program described below.

Although social protection is integral to social policy and specifically social security regimes, the genesis of protection in the domain of donors has created an artificial separation and delinking between protection and its wider policy context. However countries that have developed their own social protection models have linked them to economic and social policy in general. For example the Latin American countries that forged ahead with the no-longer new paradigm of conditional cash transfers did so as a response to sustained and high economic growth that was precipitating marked and widening inequalities and which, at the same time, afforded the government the luxury of increasing social spending.

Discussing social protection in a vacuum would be a mistake in a regional or national debate on the rights of the poor and the entitlements of citizenship. As Devereux et al. have noted, externally-driven and/or funded social protection programs have little domestic traction. They are either perceived to be unnecessary, too generous or too miserly, too small if introduced as pilots and on the whole unsustainable or insignificant. They are yet another donor band-aid

placed on a festering and deep wound (Devereux et al. 2010: 3). The experiences and experiments listed below in this paper bear testimony to the importance of 'home-grown' ideas and policies as they show the importance of local ownership and the critical engagement of all stake-holders.

Broadly speaking, social protection provisions have either been programs of transfers (conditional cash or unconditional cash, food, fuel, agricultural inputs), public works, or access to resources and services. The broad and evident lesson from all of these programs has been threefold:

- The quality of the implementation is key to the impact of the program
- The transparency and fairness of the program matter
- Monitoring and knowledge creation and evaluation when integral to the program are vital to its success and reform

2. Growth and Inclusiveness: The necessity of redistribution

Economic growth has been the objective of development for many decades. Prosperity and welfare are measured by the percentage by which an economy grows (GDP). But with growth has come inequity and a number of successive crises that have led observers to try to move 'beyond GDP' and look at welfare as the objective of development. Growth that excludes millions from its returns and which does not 'trickle down' or spread is problematic, un-sustainable, and cause for concern as it leads to inequity and social unrest. Growth that leads to dispossession, unemployment, deprivation, and social fragmentation is perhaps not growth at all but rather a reallocation of wealth from some sectors of the economy into another and a concentration of ability and security from some social groups to others.

Most Arab countries are pursuing a capitalist route to development and growth, one that is market-oriented and inclined towards liberal economic policies. Capitalist principles of private ownership, innovation, entrepreneurial acumen and social organization are effective in creating dynamic growing economies but they also produce inequities and poverty. Indeed capitalism produces both wealth and poverty (Harris-White 2006: 1241). One policy response to such social and market failures has been the promotion of pro-poor or inclusive growth. Countries and institutions are turning to social regulation, social policy and protection as both the antidote to economic failures and the rules that govern economic policy choices and directions. These are the instruments that minimize the social costs of growth and development and maximize the social benefits. Inclusive growth is not only a policy direction that recommends what governments and nations do with their economic gains but one that informs these economic decisions and policies themselves. For example, economic growth alone cannot alleviate poverty or secure the viability and prosperity of nations. Income distribution policies and transfers are necessary in order that growth becomes effective. According to Bourginion, "An arithmetic identity links the growth of the mean income in a given population, with the change in distribution – or in 'relative'

incomes - and the reduction of absolute poverty. In other words, poverty reduction in a given country and at a given point of time is fully determined by the rate of growth of the mean income of the population and the change in the distribution of income," (Bourginion 2004: p. 2). Poor growth will engender poverty but so will the disruption of mechanisms for just distribution. Despite relatively high and stable projected economic growth and the subsequent increase in GDP, levels of poverty will still remain high in developing countries unless there are structures in place to ensure redistribution of this wealth (Medeiros 2009). There is no trickle-down of prosperity or wealth unless there are policies in place to insure that growth is equitably distributed. There are other examples of economic decisions that are informed by social considerations such as labor creating investment, the creation of equal opportunities and subsidies for clean industries and socially responsible ones.

Additionally, it is widely acknowledged that "gender inequality causes and perpetuates poverty and vulnerability," (Jones et al. 2008). Efforts to stimulate and promote pro-poor growth should not fail to include components addressing gender equity in a comprehensive manner. Benchmarks, like the Millenium Development Goals, that only explicitly target women in two of eight goals and are marked by gender-blindness among the rest, may fail to secure gender equity in a holistic way. One of the many ways gender inequality and inequity manifests itself is the ongoing exclusion of unpaid care work into social protection. Care work, encompassing domestic chores and the provision of care and support for family members (generally children, as well as ill or elderly relatives), is most often considered the domain of women as they often shoulder the burden of such tasks. In Brazil, the vast majority of women spend an average of 20 hours a week on unpaid domestic work a week as compared to the 45% of men who do the same kind of work for an average of seven hours a week. In other Latin American countries (Bolivia, Guatemala, Nicaragua), women consistently spend more hours a day on domestic work, at least 1.5 times more time than men (Jones and Baker, 2008). Though this type of informal care work is generally not conceptualized in terms of economic worth, it is estimated that the monetary value of unpaid care work carried out by women (using domestic work wages as an approximation for the value of care-related work) falls somewhere between 10-39% GDP (UNRISD 2009 research policy brief 9). State policy decisions can deeply impact burdens on unpaid care-givers, simultaneously increasing care quality and affordability while guaranteeing rights and entitlements for those who engage in the unpaid care economy. Making care work more visible in the public sphere and highlighting the value of unpaid care work (and the uneven burden borne by poor women) can help ensure that such work receives more attention during policy creation.

3. Poverty, Capabilities and Inequity

Scholars have attempted to transcend the purely arbitrary and economist definition of poverty as a poverty line of one US dollar per day per person (Sen 1999, 2009, Nussbaum 2000, Hariss-White 2006, Sabry 2009). Income poverty is not in itself a useful measure nor is its eradication a sufficient objective. The capabilities approach developed by Amartya Sen and others conceptualizes poverty as deprivation of capabilities. People who do not have the capabilities to transform resources and assets into wealth or welfare are poor. In other words capabilities such as education, health, freedom, bodily integrity, choice and voice are the necessary conditions for poverty alleviation. Moreover, having these capabilities can enable individuals to overcome the burdens of poverty (Sen, UNDP, Nussbaum).

Social public goods are the services and deliverables by which the state distributes assets such as health, education, social protection and other citizenship rights thus ameliorating distribution imbalances and inequities. In other words, they deliver 'capabilities' to citizens and their absence or short-fall leads to capability or human development poverty³. If 34% of Egyptians are poor by this measure, then our public goods are missing a third of their target population. The fair distribution of these goods can insure that opportunities are equitably distributed across the whole population regardless of class or location. They can insure that people get an excellent education in a public school, that they can be healthy while living in a remote village, and that they have access to gainful employment and social security regardless of their origins or characteristics (Sholkamy in UNDP 2005). The transfer of assets through the delivery of public goods is an effective means to realizing social justice and equitable distribution and is complementary to the vision of a liberal market economy and to growth. Saad Nagi summarizes this position stating that social policy can guard "against market failures and excesses promoting balance in development and attaining equity in the distribution of associated gain and pain" (Nagi, 2001 p.236). The problem with this approach is that it imposes higher public expenditures, requiring more revenues, which may in turn make governments impose higher taxes and perhaps control resources and assets so as to finance these expenditures. Such an economic regime is discouraging for industry, investment and capital.

The pressure to reduce public expenditure and reduce tax rates so as to stay competitive on the global scene has led to many rich western countries dismantling some social programs and/or resorting to means-testing and other targeted schemes to meet their growth targets and at the same time meet their political and social obligations (Esping-Andersen 1996, Ghai 2002).

³ Meaning the capability to be well-nourished, healthy, educated, living in freedom and dignity.

There is an oft refrain that cites these trends in western, rich, and industrialized capitalist economies to argue that nations who are less advanced, have fewer means, and larger populations have all the more reason to revoke or reject public spending on social welfare.

This is not true for three reasons:

1. Western societies are reviewing their systems having achieved the targets for which these systems were designed. A century of social spending in Europe has consolidated the human capital of citizens, eradicated extreme poverty in many countries making destitution a limited phenomenon and creating a large pool of educated and healthy citizens.
2. Western societies are rich economies that provide for social contingencies in times of crisis and can afford to quickly respond to these contingencies and protect their own people from crises.
3. Western societies are adapting to a changing global scene in which they are major players. This is a new world order of which they are the beneficiaries. The wealth created is benefiting citizens in other ways. Despite which their systems remain embedded in national economic, social, and political structures and needs (Ghai, ILS, 2002).

But rather than see social welfare as an expensive luxury, we need to recognize social services and welfare as the bedrock for growth, prosperity and a better future. Perhaps the essential conceptual distinction is to recognize these services as a tool for achieving prosperity rather than a burden that stands in its way.

Worth noting is the current concern that all modern societies have for the efficacy and viability of their social security and welfare regimes. It is difficult to gauge the efficacy and value of social spending programs by weighing the costs and outcomes on an annual balance sheet. Glaring examples of success are rare but one lesson learned has been to view social welfare regimes as processes that evolve and adapt to the needs of citizens, markets, and the tight budgets that demand creativity, strong initiative and a political/humane will to meet these needs.

Poverty is multi-dimensional and amenable to a variety of interventions and forms of alleviation. While income poverty is an easy measure that can monitor the deprivation of peoples and communities and used for comparison over time and across places, it is not an accurate method of reflecting the needs of the poor. Income is a proxy for other human deprivations and its increase is not the sole objective of social policy or economic redistribution of assets and opportunities.

4. The Difference between Safety Nets and Social Protection

Social protection is a set of public actions that provide direct support to people to help them address risk, vulnerability, exclusion and poverty. Social protection encompasses the provision of social insurance (pensions, health care coverage, maternity and elderly care, unemployment and illness-related assistance), the codification of minimum standards to protect livelihood (legislation around labor and social security) and social assistance, or safety nets, for the poor (in-kind, cash, conditional or unconditional, housing subsidies). Safety nets are intended specifically for the poor, or those living near the poverty line, who are vulnerable to economic, social and physical risks and shocks that can undermine their livelihood. Safety nets should exist as an important tool and as a component of larger social protection strategies. As such, social assistance schemes cannot stand alone as the only insurance against poverty for marginalized communities and should be implemented in tandem with the provision of other protective measures.

As explained by Ferreira and Robalino, though perhaps theoretically for policy design social insurance and social assistance exist as two separate concepts, in reality, much overlap occurs between the two. "In short: the existence of a social insurance program designed to address risk will often act so as to reduce poverty – or prevent it from increasing; while the existence of a social assistance system designed to reduce poverty will often protect the poor from at least some negative effects from shock," (Ferreira and Robalino, 2010 p.3). In developing countries, there has been a trend toward social protection that is focused on poverty reduction (especially among the extreme poor) and targeting the causes of poverty rather than just the symptoms (Barrientos, 2010). These efforts are admirable as long as they also respond to greater systematic and infrastructural issues that perpetuate gross economic and social imbalances. McCulloch and Sumner (2009) emphasize concerns surrounding emergency funding in response to shocks and the need for more sustainable programs that function to address "structural vulnerabilities faced by the poor in each country."

It is possible to steer social protection program components away from their manifestation as remnants of a safety net system and instead move towards wider social protection. Armando Barrientos describes Latin American social assistance before the 1990's as a "conservative-informal" system, in which social insurance (paid to employees in the formal sector) was formally recognized in policy design but other elements of the welfare system were largely informal. Reliance of this type of social insurance excluded the poorer working class, formed mostly by laborers in the informal sector. The introduction of initiatives that targeted the poor (in-kind transfers, social funds, workfare programs, feeding programs) were welcomed but remained poorly coordinated with other social protection measures (in Bastagli, 2009). The need for safety nets highlights the necessity of targeting measures to identify those families and individuals most in need.

5. How is Social Protection being Repositioned in Light of the Global Financial Crisis?

In November 2009, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) held a conference entitled “Social and Political Dimensions of the Global Crisis: Implications for Developing Countries” which addressed how the global financial crisis has affected the developing world and assessed changing global and governmental attitudes and responses to the crisis in the realm of domestic social protection schemes. Certain themes emerged. Although the economic crisis originated in the United States with widespread default on sub-prime mortgage housing loans and trading of extremely risky assets, the developing world has been hit hard. Discussion within the UNRISD conference suggests that in assessing the impact of the economic crisis on developing countries, it seems the poor and vulnerable populations are hit hardest. As jobs became unstable, workers find themselves in increasingly vulnerable situations. In developing countries, the crisis had led to:

1. Reduced demand for labor (true also in developed nations)
2. Reduced remittances (from nationals working in other countries)
3. Reduced purchasing power
4. Reduced consumption
5. Reduced exports
6. Less direct foreign investment

It has also been suggested that the global economic crisis has interacted with current food and fuel inflation, engendering a multi-crisis state (McCord and Vandemoortele 2009). In addition to that, it is understood that the impact of a crisis does not end at the beginning of the recovery period. Often, it takes the labor market two or three times the duration of the crisis period to recover meaning a two year crisis could require four to six years for economic recovery.

Such global crises serve to inhibit the capacity of poor households to deal with the struggles they encounter on a regular basis. Subsequently, these crises are compounded and become a much heavier burden on impoverished populations. During these times of crisis, poor families will turn to certain harmful coping behaviors (discussed later in the paper). Well-targeted and efficient social assistance programs (within a wider social protection system) can prevent households from utilizing detrimental coping mechanisms. Indeed, understanding how poor families manage during periods of shock can inform policy that will aim to circumvent these behaviors by predicting and subsequently addressing them. Thus, to support vulnerable populations that are struggling under the repercussion of the financial crisis, it is in the best interest of the State to implement and maintain functioning social protection policy.

Additionally, it should also be recognized that during periods of economic crisis, it is often women that bear the burden of buoying themselves and their households more so than male counterparts (UNIFEM 2009). For example, in Asian countries,

like Thailand, the Phillipines, and Vietnam, there are much higher numbers of women working in jobs tied to export goods (textiles, footwear, electronics) as compared to men. These women tend to be temporary workers, engaged in low-skill work and are the recipients of low salaries thus marking them as expendable during times of sectoral financial distress. Additionally, social norms render male heads-of-household as primary providers for the household leaving female workers more at risk of losing their jobs during a crisis such as this (UNIFEM 2009). Social protection policy should be structured in a way that takes specific measures to work towards greater gender equality and that acknowledge the feminization of poverty. Relieving the unequal pressures placed on poor women, especially during times of crisis, can help to prevent already poor families from sliding further into indigence while promoting a social agenda that prioritizes human rights.

Many governments have responded to the crisis by initiating stimulus spending. Institutions like the World Bank and the IMF are discouraging countries with stimulus packages in place from discontinuing them, in fear of further recession. International institutions have been rallying together and promoting not only the use of stimulus packages to assuage economic downturn but encouraging developed nations to offer support to developing countries. Robert Zoellick, president of the World Bank, called for 0.7% of developed country stimulus packages to be devoted to supporting developing countries, with social protection featuring strongly in this support (Zoellick, 2009).

This kind of rhetoric is bolstered by recent campaigning for a Global Social Floor/minimum social protection package. A presentation by Isabel Ortiz of the UN DESA, entitled "A Global New Deal for People in a Global Crisis: Social Protection for All", called attention to growing numbers of people suffering from poverty and positions the financial crisis as an opportunity to demand basic social protection (social security, elderly and disability pensions, employment programs, child benefits, social services, etc.) for all people in all countries. Ortiz cited unacceptable levels of inequality and social security as a human right as compelling reasons to pursue a Global Social Floor, but also noted the economic incentives (strengthening domestic markets and growth by engendering a more robust, healthy, educated workforce) to establish basic social security. Additionally, a social floor would help diffuse social tension, migration, and conflict caused by inequality and could lead to greater political stability. The efficacy and cost benefits of cash transfers were highly lauded, buttressed by statements that "social transfers can make the difference between achieving MDG1 of halving poverty by 2015," (Ortiz 2009). The presentation also made a case for the affordability of basic social security, citing cost figures from the ILO of 2%-5% of GDP in developing countries and arguing for North-South transfers in consideration of concentrations of global wealth. This call to action is well-grounded in social, economic and political reasons to pursue a basic social floor and can serve as platform upon which governmental institutions can fight to secure more inclusive social protection. Subsequently, in April 2009, the UN Chief

Executive Board included an initiative to push for a Social Protection Floor defined as “a floor that could consist of two main elements: (a) Public services: geographical and financial access to essential public services (water, sanitation, health, education); and (b) Transfers: a basic set of essential social transfers...to provide a minimum income security” (GSP 2009).

Though the economic crisis has marked a period of global distress, it can be useful to position this occurrence as a foundation and a means by which to promote the implementation of sound social protection policy. This implementation can both diffuse current repercussions and provide a cushion against future uncontrollable external shocks. Countries with more inclusive policies in place were able to amplify the protective effects of those programs by directing stimulus funding in that direction. Deliberately directing the flow of stimulus spending can make a difference in its impact on the poor and non-poor alike. For example, Radhika Lal et al. argue that the more that recovery measures are specifically directed toward employment and the labor market, the more robust the stimulus effect on the economy (2010). The authors assert that such initiatives not only benefit the poor but actually improve the overall economy. It must be noted, however, that though some countries are taking an approach that prioritizes significant short-term spending on social protection, emphasis must be placed on the need for more systematic pro-poor initiatives which will act as more than just a temporary band-aid measure (UNIFEM 2009).

In general, the impact of the global crisis on the Middle East has not been as devastating as in other parts of the world. As a result of the crisis, growth in Arab economies slowed but did not dip into decline. That said, some countries have experienced serious attenuation of employment rates and household incomes. Decline in tourism, manufacturing and real estate construction (in the Gulf) has meant job loss and the return of migrant workers from Morocco, Jordan, Egypt and Yemen (Habibi, 2009). Other repercussions of the global financial crisis have manifested themselves differently within the various Arab countries as national economies are driven by a range of factors. Gulf countries remain tied to the oil market while countries like Lebanon, Yemen, Jordan and Egypt have a higher reliance on FDI and remittances. These economic drivers point to the importance of relative levels of domestic wealth among Arab countries and it is no surprise that Gulf nations have greater financial resources at their disposal than some Mashreq countries to enact policies to address economic downturn. As discussed by Ibrahim Saif and Farah Choucair, despite the variety of responses from Arab nations to the crisis, none have been sufficient (2009).

Plans to mitigate the effects of the crisis in the region, marked by a reduction in oil prices, exports, foreign direct investments, tourism, stock prices and labor remittances, have not pushed long-term goals and either fail to pursue a multi-sectoral approach or seem arbitrary and lack adequate resources. While Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries were able to synchronize fiscal and monetary policy, countries in the Maghreb and Mashreq have failed to pursue any such

coordination that could help them buffet these troubled financial times. Additionally, Arab nations have not incorporated the informal economy into policy decisions, leaving already marginalized groups to face further vulnerability and economic instability. (Saif and Choucair, 2009). Countries that have high rates of poverty like Algeria, Yemen, Egypt and the Palestinian territories will not be able to rely on economic growth alone to spur job growth and prevent, at least short-term, increases in poverty rates. Thus, the need for thoughtfully-designed and carefully implemented social protection schemes is apparent.

II. Policy contexts for Social protection and cash transfer mechanism in the Arab region, based on 7 country studies (Algeria, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Palestine and Oman)

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In order to draw the picture of social protection in the Arab region, two major problems are to be faced: lack of updated synthesis works on this topic that include most recent evolutions and heterogeneous materials presented in the 7 national reports drafted by experts who do not use the same indicators nor concepts. The review of international literature, namely some of the relevant summary notes, coupled with updated information included in the national reports, allows us to draw a picture of social protection in the region, in light of its historical evolution and links that were established throughout history between these systems and social sciences research.

1. A range of national situations: Weight of history in the establishment of social protection systems

Social protection systems in the Arab region, in their wide meaning suggested by the International Labor Organization, i.e. “The Social Protection Floor corresponds to a set of essential transfers, services and facilities that all citizens everywhere should enjoy to ensure the realization of their fundamental rights. It comprises measures to ensure access to essential services, such as water and sanitation food and adequate nutrition, health, education and housing, as well as social security transfers paid to the poor and vulnerable aimed at providing a minimum income and an affordable access to health services when needed” [UNCEB, 2009]⁴ have gone through different evolutions linked to the national states construction processes during the last 50 years.

⁴ Employment and social protection policies from crisis to recovery and beyond: A review of experience. An ILO report to the G20 Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting, Washington, DC, 20–21 April 2010, International Labour Office, Geneva, April 2010, 105 p., p 5. “The Social Protection Floor corresponds to a set of essential transfers, services and facilities that all citizens everywhere should enjoy to ensure the realization of their fundamental rights. It comprises measures to ensure access to essential services, such as water and sanitation food and adequate nutrition, health, education and housing, as well as social security transfers paid to the poor and vulnerable aimed at providing a minimum income and an affordable access to health services when needed”.

The analysis of these systems' evolution shows that poverty reduction policies, through specific transfer mechanisms and facilities, have only become a privileged intervention tool in the countries of the region twenty years ago, after the introduction of structural economic reforms in the 70's (Structural adjustment programs). In the majority of the cases (Tunisia, Algeria, Syria, Yemen and others) these programs, mainly the cash social transfer mechanisms (social nets) were one of the conditions set by the international institutional donors (World Bank). Before that, some countries adopted social protection systems that only targeted wage- earners, mainly in the public sector. Many writers highlight the fact that social protection systems that exist in the Arab world nowadays go back to the independence period, i.e. the 60's, when the so-called "social contracts" that establish social and political balance in the Arab nations were negotiated.

If we go back to the past, we see that political independence introduced social changes and a new political situation that contributed in modifying social protection regimes, in place during the colonial period, which had different priorities and objectives in light of different social structures.

Just like Destremau⁵ says "These contracts were frequently based on a populist or paternalist approach of politics, supported by strongly interventionist policies – the State intervening in all social and economic sectors. Political parties, syndicates and professional associations facilitated integration in political nationalist movements and allowed work regulation, while strengthening power of new elites, the army being the hard core. These types of social contract mainly contributed in determining the relationships between the State and the world of work – especially wage- earners, in cutting room for maneuver of private capital, in leading to practices, norms, obligations - not to say rights- that marked two or three generations".

During the founding years of the Arab nation states, social protection systems were built around a development ideology in which the State played a major role. The main objective of these systems was to protect but also to strengthen social classes the State used to build its hegemony over the community through redistribution of state privileges, i.e. civil servants and other recipient social classes. Destremau highlights in this regard "the ambiguity of the word *muwazzaf*, that means "civil servant" but that is also used for an employee with a stable position (in the public and private sectors) and that sums up the important social protection privileges, access to education and other forms of assistance that these States have provided to the social classes created by its own development.

⁵ Blandine Destremau: *Etat social, dynamiques des marchés du travail et protection sociale au Moyen-Orient*

But these institutional structures that developed methods and institutions before independence started to show signs of weakness and ineffectiveness because of a number of exogenous and endogenous elements, i.e. world and internal economic crisis, demographic growth, effects of structural adjustment programs, increase of unemployment and informal work, etc, that progressively affected social protection models built during previous stages.

Countries of the region led reforms and adjustments in order to adapt them to new situations, at different degrees and according to different models of intervention to allow them to meet their populations' new needs. The process has had unequal results since, in light of funding scarcity; the traditionally well protected categories saw their privileges melting importantly while new protection needs expressed by categories marginalized in formal protection facilities appeared.

In general, assistance and social aid systems addressed to destitute categories are second generation systems that superseded older social security systems protecting some categories of wage- earners and civil servants inherited from the old colonial power. The comparative table inspired from the work of B. Destremau gives an idea of the different institutional structures pertaining to social protection in the countries of the region in 2009.

The following comments ensue. We can notice that these social protection systems:

- Are mainly built around the protection of public jobs and, in a second stage, big private enterprises workers and employees
- That these contributory (Bismarckian) systems, i.e. based on collecting paid workers contributions, are those that provided for the wider social coverage
- That all these systems, without exception, suffer from 3 main problems: 1- Increase in youth unemployment, which reduces the contribution of this category of population that is supposed to fund the elderly social insurance and pensions. 2- Increase in informal work in all active categories of the population. 3- Ageing of population (that translates into more health care, in light of a higher life expectancy at birth).

That countries with state social protection systems, mainly oil Gulf countries that distribute pensions and benefits to their citizens, are those which have developed the most traditional systems, i.e. paternalistic systems that exclude migrant workers who sometimes make up more than 50% of the active population.

Types of social protection systems in the Arab countries

(Comparative table of social protection systems in the Arab countries

(according to B. Destremau, 2009)

	Type	Country	Covered categories	Coverage rate	Problems and challenges
1	Contributory with a wide coverage	Algeria Tunisia Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers (private and public sectors) - Independents (especially non agricultural) - Other categories (students, handicapped, elderly, etc) 	Algeria: 90% of the population Tunisia: 90% Egypt: ...%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decrease of the number of people paying contribution (protected workers) because of evolution - Unemployment - Informal work - Ageing of population - Mediocrity of repayment
2	Contributory with limited coverage	Lebanon Morocco Jordan Yemen Syria Soudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers (from the public sector (civil servants) - Big enterprises from the private sector 	20 to 30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficult coverage extension (funding) - Shrinkage of private sector - Women excluded
3	Category-based or paternalistic State system	Gulf countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paid citizens from private and public sectors - State pensioners 	100% of national citizens, 0% of foreigners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foreigners that often constitute more than 50% of the workforce excluded
4	Generalized system of insecurity	Iraq Palestine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No covered category - Monetary aid systems 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dependence upon external funding

We can also add some recent evolutions documented in the national reports. In answer to the following question “what support do public authorities provide to social security?”, the rapporteurs described different options adopted in the countries of the region, namely:

1. New funding solutions that move away from the older systems paradigms: oil fiscal system in Algeria to make up for the decrease in contribution, funds and private funds without capitalization and reserved to rich categories, etc
2. Abolition of some privileges provided to specific categories and widening of benefits to other categories
3. Setting up of public job creation systems, leading directly to an artificial widening of the contribution base according to salaries distributed by the Treasury.

This progress achieved in terms of social coverage access is however unfairly distributed among countries. Countries that have a successful social security system, like Algeria and Tunisia, widened up the coverage through existing systems after strengthening them. However, in the majority of the documented cases, “the success achieved by the poor in claiming new rights to social aid” has been in fact translated into establishing social nets that distribute cash assistance or specific health care programs. This issue was not documented in the national reports that only mentioned official existing systems and ignored various social movements pertaining to this idea.

Finally, regarding the question “What is the role played by social protection policies in keeping social peace?”, the national reports drafted by official representatives of social protection institutions did not tackle the political dimension of public social action. However, these national reports show the following:

- The important role of oil income redistribution systems as staple food subsidies (Algeria) and foreign financial assistance (Egypt) to face social discontent;
- A timid process of setting up systems to include foreigners in Oman, through community based associations that distribute aid and benefits to their members.

Thanks to these elements, we can conclude that countries of the region, because of a slow renegotiation of “founding social contracts” going back to the independence era, found themselves in a situation where too rigid and badly run social protection systems failed to take into account new protection needs of civil societies that were more and more precarious and fragile. Even systems once considered as the most successful one (like Tunisia’s) could not absorb discontent since they were not built upon efficient political participation structures. These rigid and centralized systems were based on political vote-catching and were only modern by name. The recent political changes in the region clearly showed how presumptuous it was to give social protection policies a legitimate political role while true political openness processes lack.

2. Poverty and poverty alleviation policies: regional perspective

1) General considerations on poverty and its measurement in the Arab world

If we talk today of poverty and we feel like we know what this notion covers, how to measure it, how to deal with it and alleviate it, regardless of the country we live in, it is because poverty has become, ten years ago, in the majority of developing countries, the main social issue, i.e. the one that draws the attention of governments, experts and even ordinary citizens.

For various reasons, such as the need to manage discontent and social claims of what used to be called in the 19th century “dangerous classes” (i.e. the poor), or for “technical” reasons related to economic adjustment programs imposed by international donors, or finally for “ethical and moral” reasons, based on ideologies and other discourses calling for solidarity and social mutual assistance towards the poorest, poverty has become an important issue in modern times.

The poverty discourse has been characterized, for the last 15 years in the world, by the fact that poverty and its alleviation have become THE social issue that is a concern for the “international community” through different programs run by big international organizations such as the United Nations and its specialized agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, etc) and the major world financial institutions (WB, IMF). Everybody knows, more or less, the Millennium Goal of reducing poverty in the world and everybody, including experts, political leaders, researchers and other social stakeholders are aware of statements focusing on poverty, if not of relevant programs and methodologies.

This comprehensive world culture gives the impression that poverty is known, identified, measurable through the magic of using some indicators that have become widespread thanks to international organizations: poverty below 1,25\$ or 2\$ a day, extreme poverty, cash poverty, general poverty, poverty incidence, etc.

The consequence of such an opinion is that these statements show on the one hand that the world poor, when considering them as solely units, are all the same all over the world. The poor in Bangladesh would be, according to this view, the same as the poor of Argentina or Nicaragua, which would give the impression that the poverty issue as a social issue is the same everywhere.

Poverty alleviation policies that target the poor of the same nature since they have been measured and determined in the same way are, on the other hand, interchangeable and applicable in all national contexts, after small local adaptation. This can be proven by the fact that the same words are used worldwide (social net, labor-intensive programs, map of poverty pockets, community development programs, etc.) and that they are based on the use of the same methodologies and intervention tools (participation, targeting, social care, etc.)

If, on the one hand, it is absolutely positive and commendable, from a moral and solidarity viewpoint, that the international community adopts the same objectives, the same vocabulary, the same concepts and methodologies to measure and compare, it is however noteworthy to pinpoint some undesirable and unexpected effects of this standardization and this approach towards poverty, some of which have been greatly documented by international research.

- i) The first effect, that is an important one, is the disjunction or the separation that these methodologies and conceptualizations create between the social issue and the poverty issue. By ignoring the (economic, social, political) factors that lead to poverty, these approaches ignore as well strong national characteristics of the studied communities, whether in terms of their social organization or the social contracts they have built upon their social protection systems.
- ii) The second effect is the implicit belief that there is only one “virtuous” economic and social organization model, the dominant neo-liberal model, in which all the “social” functions of the state are at their minimum. In this model, public intervention in economy is limited to activities and social policies regulation - whenever they exist- and to caring for categories excluded from protection provided to paid work. Other consequences can be highlighted, some being documented with lots of details by international experts who described and assessed experiences in Bangladesh, Kenya and other Latin American countries. Regarding all of these questions, the national reports did not take the necessary analytical step back to address these conceptual issues.
- iii) First, we notice that, despite the general dissemination of approaches and methodologies aimed at identifying poverty and the poor, there are no questions on the tools, indicators and other poverty identification and alleviation methodologies. Whenever information exists, it is approached in a technical manner, without taking the necessary step back.
- iv) We notice that these national reports badly translate the internal political and economic discussions in the relevant countries while we know to what extent issues of wealth redistribution and claims for new social contracts – political ones by definition- have indirectly been at the core of protest movements witnessed during the previous months in countries of the region.

Hence, we face a paradox. The reports described poverty alleviation policies with lots of details about the legal procedures and systems but this has not allowed however us to understand the nature of the fundamental stakes and challenges that these issues give rise to nor to have the slightest idea about poverty depth and incidence in these countries.

What is the current situation highlighted by these reports?

2) Poverty current situation in the Arab world: an imperfect knowledge

The submitted reports reveal different situations in terms of poverty identification and measurement. The following table that was prepared based on two accessible sources: international sources (World Bank database) and national sources (national reports) provides a clear picture of the poverty current situation in the Arab region. It suggests the following comments:

- i) Few Arab countries have data measuring the poverty line, based on conventional definitions (World Bank, UNDP) or on local definitions and measurement criteria.
- ii) The reports submitted by some countries do not allow us to compare nor to document the effects of some poverty alleviation policies, since the same indicators should be used to perform such an operation.

Definitions:

EP: Extreme Poverty (or cash poverty): minimum poverty level set according to the US Dollars value of a basket of food products needed for daily survival (the equivalent of 1800 calories a day)

GP: General Poverty: intermediary level of poverty set according to the US Dollars value of a basket of food products (the equivalent of 2400 calories a day) + the cost of non food products, including clothing, transportation, hygiene, water and energy necessary for daily survival.

P. : non determined poverty level

WB: World Bank (website: worldbank.org)

NR or N. : poverty data from the national reports.

This table leads to the following two explanations:

- Many countries are still reluctant to count their poor, such as Algeria before the structural adjustment program managed by the IMF in 1994 for "political oblivion" ("Poor do not exist in our country") or for lack of resources. Indeed, poverty measurement studies require heavy and costly surveys that all countries of the region cannot afford.
- Internal political considerations explain the inexistence of the culture of assessment and public policies audit by reliable and credible institutions.

Table n. 2: Poverty data in some MENA countries

Country	Data source	1st assessment	2nd assessment	3rd assessment	4th assessment
Egypt	WB				
	NR			GP (2005) : 20%	GP (2009):21,6%
Algeria	WB	EP (1998): 3.6% GP (1998): 12,2%	EP (1995) : 5,7 % GP (1995) : 14,1%		
	Other source			EP (2000): 3,1% GP (2000): 12,1 %	EP (2004): 2,8 % GP (2004): 6,0 %
Jordan	WB		-2 \$/j (2006): 0,6% GP(2002) : 14,2 %	GP (2006) : 13 %	GP (2008) :13,3%
	NR				
Syria	WB			- 1\$/j (UNDP 2004): 11,4%, - 2\$/j: 30,1%	
	NR				
Palestine	WB				
	NR			P. (2007) : 31,2%	P. (2009) : 21,9 %
Sudan	WB				
	NR				
Oman	WB				
	NR				
Tunisia	WB				
	NR				
Morocco	WB			EP (2007): 2,7 %	EP (2008): 3,2 %
	NR				

Other ideas can also be drawn from the national reports such as the fact that the countries that were interested in poverty measurement are those that have developed supplementary approaches expected to be more effective towards public action:

Territorial approaches towards poverty to determine geographic disparity in the poverty distribution: poverty maps to identify “poverty pockets” (Jordan and Algeria).

Social engineering approaches based on the use of targeting techniques and improved social work (Algeria, Morocco, Egypt)

3) Poverty reduction policies and programs: mixed results

In this regard, confusion in the concepts is noticed due to unclear definitions of words such as “social” and “social policies”. These two notions cover different issues: it goes from the “holistic” concept in which all kinds of direct and indirect, visible and invisible social transfers managed by public authorities are integrated (everything that is not related to economy, i.e. education, health, specialized training, family services, elderly care, student services, etc is considered as social expenditure) to restrictive concepts where only direct cash transfer systems targeting “the poor” are taken into account.

The documented cases can be classified as follows:

- i) Very wide concept of “social” excluding what is strictly “economic”. All expenses born by the State without financial compensation from the social sectors through budget are considered as “social”. This is the situation described in the Sultanate of Oman report. (It corresponds to the Destremau model considered as paternalistic and category- based that is in force in the Gulf countries)
- ii) Cash social transfer systems through the reinvigoration of traditional institutions such as Al Zakat. Many sub categories exist according to fund raising methods (State budget, Sudan) or individual donations through specific funds (Jordan, Algeria) and according to their nature and role in the system (main role in Sudan) or supplementary role, i.e. support to other programs
- iii) Classical “social net” systems consisting of redistributing cash social aid to a variety of vulnerable or poor social classes. Many local sub categories exist here too, funding being the different feature (budgetized expenditures (Algeria), special Funds (Tunisia, Jordan), international aid (Palestine)) as well as management type (local branches of central administration, ad hoc specialized agencies, autonomous Funds managed by NGOs, etc)
- iv) Last generation systems using more integrated social action approaches whereby the social dimension is not isolated but is integrated in different

economic development programs. Many sub categories exist here too, from community development programs targeting communities, social territorial groups, and the use of often sophisticated social engineering techniques that require a high level of expertise in project design and implementation.

The reports show however that within each country, odd combinations of systems exist; they often encompass ill- assorted institutions and methods linked to the "social" history of these countries. Some of the countries have just started implementing these processes while others started to reconsider and to reform old policies implemented since the 70's.

Two important factors ought to be pinpointed:

- i) Degree of financial well-off of the countries, i.e. their independence towards international donors and international aid, which allows them to have a bigger room for maneuver in their program design and funding.

- ii) Internal socio- political conditions, i.e. political alliances, democratization and social dialogue maturity level, since they play a major role in promoting the effectiveness of these policies.

4) Effects of these programs

This aspect is weakly covered in the submitted reports that are characterized by a descriptive approach. The few reports that are more analytical are based on assessment work commissioned mainly by donors who, contrary to national local authorities, want to know (technically) to which social categories (which recipients) social aid is being directed.

The documented effects highlighted in the reports show the following:

- Porosity of distribution systems: social aid is not reaching the real poor, i.e. the true poor and vulnerable categories, but is rather diverted since it is managed according to vote- catching and political logics (Algeria, Syria, Jordan)
- Awareness about the need for more expertise for impact assessment, i.e. the direct and indirect repercussions of these programs, through the use of more sophisticated and effective methodologies (Egypt).

Thus, the following conclusion can be reached. In all the countries of the region, there is resistance to the culture and practice of social policies assessment. There are no transparent and effective follow-up and management systems, few or no surveys and impact studies commissioned by official authorities, no encouragement to social sciences research in this field and on these aspects.

5) Possible alternatives

Regarding this issue, there are few facts and documented experiences in the reports. We can however highlight two important developments that prove that thinking about poverty reduction programs effectiveness has matured in the Arab countries:

- Search for and establishment of innovative systems in some countries (Egypt, Algeria) with the objective of improving the social dimension integration in all economic development programs, through “integrated social policies” or improvement of population targeting methodologies (feasibility issue, development of new jobs of social expertise, etc).
- Awareness about the need to adopt a “bottom-up” approach instead of the traditional “top- down” approaches, although there is still uncertainty about means and tools to use because there is no approach of a technical nature.

Such conceptual suggestions, though difficult to implement, highlight a major problem that is affecting poverty reduction policies: the governance issue in all its dimensions, i.e. general institutional reform or specific reform of specialized institutions, reform of the work method of the administration, etc.

3. Partial conclusion

A critical analysis of the national reports leads to the following conclusions:

1. The different, but often not effective, approaches towards the “social” dimension (poverty being one of its aspects) in the Arab region are mainly due to peculiar local contexts characterized by negotiation of national “social contracts” that reveal unequal maturity of the social issue in these countries
2. In light of these different communities and social contracts, more or less standardized poverty reduction policies did not achieve, in their majority, a successful adaption to the local conditions
3. Too centralized and too politicized poverty alleviation policies hampered their effectiveness
4. Countries of the region are not interested in assessing public poverty alleviation policies. The same lack of interest is shown by academics and social science researchers.

Section Two:

Key Challenges for Social Protection in the Arab Region:

Lessons Learnt & Thinking together



I. Lessons and good practices drawn from social protection policies implementation- Discussion summaries

The three regional discussion groups, one made up of the Gulf countries representatives (Oman and UAE), the second of experts from the Maghreb (Algeria, Tunisia, and Mauritania), and the third of experts from the Mashrek and the Red Sea (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Sudan) focused on the following three themes:

1. Challenges, opportunities and research priorities in the area of social sciences in the Arab region
2. Policy and research on better targeting and gender mainstreaming in social protection mechanisms and programs in the Arab states
3. Monitoring and evaluation of social protection policies, measurement of poverty and impact assessment in the Arab states

Discussions that focused on general issues and on other subsidiary but more delicate ones shed the light on concrete experiences, field practices of experts mainly in program implementation and difficulties in meeting different needs and pressing expectations of targeted populations.

Three general common points resulted from the discussions:

A first consensus emerged after participants admitted that there is a strong diversity in social assistance and aid systems that were set up and are currently functioning, with different degrees of success and effectiveness in the countries of the region. Despite the fact that these countries all belong to the same geopolitical sphere, they have all negotiated differently, each according to its conditions and its own constraints and internal resources, their own social policies. Despite the import of standardized intervention methodologies by international organizations and other donors, few common points can be found between different national experiences. In light of these conditions, good practices pinpointed by some based on their own experiences are difficult to disseminate, generalize and duplicate.

The second consensus goes in the same direction as the first one. It pertains to the lack of transfer of knowledge, experiences, assessment between the different countries of the region. National introversion constitutes, in this regard, a real obstacle to the dissemination of good practices and lessons drawn from program implementation.

The third consensus is the following: irrespective of the maturity level and the complex nature of social protection systems in the relevant countries, social policies set up and implemented urgently to calm down social claims that are often expressed violently do not leave any room for effective and reliable social assessment practices, even though such assessments would be used to correct any incoherence in political decisions. Professionals do not have enough time to take any step back to analyze their practices and decisions urgently adopted. Since they lack information coming from an effective social technical assessment during project implementation and information stemming from an independent and objective academic research, they only implement in a formal and superficial manner approaches that leave the door open to subjectivity, to interference of social forces and powerful local policies (corruption, nepotism, vote- catching) in public action.

As for more technical and accurate issues, “technical” answers appear mixed. The following are the answers mostly repeated.

- Population targeting is a recurrent theme since it is considered as the main element through which we measure the redistributive effectiveness, i.e. social equity in all social aid policies. If some consider this problem from a technical viewpoint, i.e. pertaining to conceptual and methodological capacity building of institutions and staff in charge of program implementation, other consider it as a more comprehensive and complex problem linked to governance, i.e. types of interaction between governments and governed ones. The best targeting methods and techniques can only succeed if they take place in an environment of real and effective participation of population to different sorting procedures.
- (Internal and external) assessment capacity building and improvement of social action in all its types do not only require institutional capacity building of institutions in charge of implementing poverty alleviation systems but also an effort to re-determine social action jobs, which requires their social rehabilitation and development. Social workers should have high technical skills but also real conceptual ones in order to interfere in a wise and innovative manner on the field. As such, they should be well paid and should have a real political authority.
- Social aid and assistance programs to the poor and vulnerable should drop their traditional paternalistic and charitable nature and their revenue distribution aspect that characterize them in the majority of the Arab countries to become more integrated and comprehensive. The best practices that can be recommended aim at developing programs that integrate social and economic dimensions reciprocally, i.e. to integrate the economic dimension, i.e. income generating activities in all social structures, and to integrate the social dimension in all economic programs, as soon as they are designed.

When grouped together, these ideas show that all participants considered that there was a need to start looking for the principles of a new social action paradigm in the Arab countries. Some of the speakers even called for the need to revisit and redesign founding “social contracts” upon which social protection systems in the Arab world have been built. All the participants acknowledged that social policies cannot be based solely on “technical” methods but on more comprehensive approaches focusing on a better transparency in social links.

In this regard, it would be extremely useful to focus on social sciences research because it uses an analytical and independent approach compared to the institutional actors practice. In this perspective, its new analysis tools and its approaches would be:

1. To analyze the situation between public policies and practices of the populations recipient of the State action in order to better understand each party’s strategies (public authorities and populations) and to improve effectiveness of intervention systems
2. To underscore the importance of qualitative and anthropological methods in the public policies impact assessment systems, while focusing on the participatory integration of social actors in program recipient communities
3. To analyze work methods and skills that social workers have learned on the field in order to promote their knowledge and know- how in the new social action jobs

II. International experiences and their duplication in the Arab world: reactions of the regional workshop

Participants in the regional workshop reacted to study cases presented by 6 speakers from Italy, Brazil, Ghana, Bangladesh, Great Britain and India by focusing mainly on the methodology. That was indeed the desired result of the participation of foreign experts who acquired knowledge about poverty alleviation project structures but also about more general topics such as possibility of duplicating these experiences and methodologies in the Arab social sphere.

Experts from the Arab region focused, in their comments and questions, on the following issues:

1. Advanced nature of projects presented by the foreign experts, in terms of the intervention methodologies used, compared to the programs and projects developed in the Arab region. All participants highlighted the important difference between the attitude of public authorities in these countries towards citizen participation and that of the countries of the region. Institutional structures, especially with regard to community development projects, are light and well adapted to local conditions, while at the same time integrating representatives of local civil societies, compared to the heavy and centralized structures used in the countries of the region.
2. A wide room for maneuver offered to technicians and experts in the design, follow up and assessment of projects and programs, which heavily reduces the interference of politicians.
3. Integrating, through innovative and not stereotyped methodologies, complexities and specificities of local realities: family structures, tribal networks, traditional power network in which technicians and decision-makers who represent the central power work together and manage projects, in addition to using qualitative assessment techniques (anthropology, etc).
4. The importance of project implementation assessment: social assessment at the beginning, mid- term and final assessment at the end of the project. Important methodological details on the nature of assessment indicators used according to the project implementation timetable and specific objectives have been documented. The project impact assessment method that resorts to a "witness group" has also been discussed, commented, and even criticized in terms of reliability.
5. Finally, the issue of duplicating these experiences and methodologies in the Arab region was also discussed and commented in technical terms but also in light of the nature of the social and political links in the Arab region. Some participants highlighted the issue of governance and how it translates at the local and community levels since it can delay the

implementation of these methodologies based on consultation, social dialogue and transparency.

Discussions that took place reinforced the idea that:

1. Social policies, mainly poverty alleviation programs, can only be effective if they are integrated in the sociological local conditions first and in other important dimensions of social life, mainly economic
2. Research, i.e. research-action, research-development, operational research, fundamental research, has to accompany every stage, moment and level of intervention in social projects, whether programs are local, regional or national.

III. Presentations and discussions

1. The challenges to local welfare systems: Social assistance, coordination and the balance of rights and duties

By Yuri Kazepov (University of Urbino, Italy)

In the last three decades welfare policies in Europe underwent relevant changes affecting in particular two dimensions:

1. the territorial re-organisation of social policies through the so called process of rescaling;
2. the increase of the number of actors involved not only in managing and implementing, but also in regulating specific measures giving rise to the so called new governance arrangements.

The joint effect of both changes can be labelled as the “subsidiarisation of social policies”. The concept of subsidiarity captures well the synergies of the two processes of change, because it points to increasingly complex multi-level governance solutions to social policy reform needs.

These changes show across Europe some converging and diverging trends and bear positive and negative consequences challenging the balance between rights and duties. This is particularly true when we consider social assistance schemes which are the policy field addressed in this paper.

Two sets of questions will be disentangled in the paper:

1. Is the subsidiarisation trend taking place homogeneously across Europe? What are the main similarities and what are the main differences? What windows of opportunities are provided by these changes?
2. Why is coordination one of the crucial elements in social assistance design, management and delivery? What do good practices of coordination share? Why are they positive and what are the contextual conditions to make them successful.

In answering these questions, I will present two case studies focussing on the specific issue of coordination as one of the emerging needs of the subsidiarisation process.

The paper and the case studies rely on data collected within in the Rescaling project, an international research coordinated scientifically by the author and carried in 8 European countries: Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Poland under the auspices of the European Centre in Vienna.

Guiding questions	Discussions summary
<p>What are the challenges and obstacles for applying social protection mechanisms to be tackled in the Arab region?</p> <p>List challenges and obstacles of social protection, according to beneficiaries/ Government priorities?</p> <p>What should be the right balance between distributional and empowering measures? between rights and duties? What rights should be claimable and fixed and how should institutions be more responsive?</p> <p>What are the key elements that should be considered when a reform is deployed? How to make out of any reform a well implemented reform?</p> <p>Which evaluation research themes are needed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An integrated reform of all sectors. - The private sector needs to be involved. - Programmes should be developed and implemented taking into consideration specific national policy contexts - "Poverty" and "marginalization" needs to be studied in-depth in different national contexts - Further research needs to be done on the impact of social protection programs from beneficiaries perspectives.

2. Combined targeting mechanisms: two experiences in Sub-Saharan Africa

Carlos Alviar
UNICEF Ghana

The development of Social Cash Transfer Programmes has grown with the perception of their ability to reach the poorest in a transparent and cost-effective manner. In theory, targeting also increases the poverty impact of a program when there is a tight poverty-alleviation budget. For these reasons, in recent years, targeting is seen by some to be an essential factor in the design of social protection programs, both to maintain political support and to ensure that scarce resources reach the poorest and most vulnerable.

Targeting mechanisms can generally be divided into three broad categories: i) individual/household assessment, ii) categorical targeting, and iii) self-selection. The required information for the selection of beneficiaries for social interventions is not produced in most of the poor and developing countries. In practice, some social cash transfers combine different targeting options in an attempt at enhancing performance and fill the information challenge. The main disadvantage with using multiple targeting instruments is the inherent complexity, the administrative costs and the possible time delays, especially in low capacity environments. The practice can also be seen as an effort to narrow down the eligible population to the most deserving cases and reduce the costs of the processes while increasing its effectiveness.

A similar process is followed by Kenya's Cash Transfer Programme for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC) and Ghana's Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) Programme and it is based on the combination of categorical, community and individual selection. First, Geographical areas are selected based on poverty levels. A community based targeting process is led by members of the community who are in charge of identifying eligible households within the identified geographic areas following specific guidelines. Enumerators go back to those households identified by the community committee as eligible, and collect systematic information on them. This verification form requests more detailed information on the household, including a number of proxy variables which reflect household welfare, and which were identified in focus groups with community representatives as well as through analysis using national household survey data. Evidence from quantitative studies and projections on expected effectiveness, efficiency and transparency illustrate the performance of the mechanism.

The case studies present the use of multiple targeting instruments—Categorical, PMT and community methods—in the high poverty and low capacity context of SSA. This relatively new paradigm integrates three elements that are thought to lead to good performance in targeting. First, as suggested by Coady et.al (2004), it makes use of three different instruments which has been shown to improve

targeting performance. Second, it incorporates a proxy means element in the targeting process. The strength of the PMT is that it uses multiple indicators which cannot easily be manipulated, are relatively easy to verify, and tend to represent long term or chronic well-being. Third, it takes advantage of local knowledge by incorporating the opinions of the local community, which also builds local capacity, increases 'buy-in' and potentially reduces conflict and resentment within the community.

Guiding questions	Discussions summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having in mind a hypothetic social cash transfer beneficiary population in your country, would there be sufficient financial resources to cover all eligible population available? Would it be justifiable? Would it make sense to define a targeting mechanism to select the eligible population? Which challenges can be foreseen? - Would there be sufficient information available? Would the administrative bodies have the capacity to undertake the targeting exercise? Which challenges can be foreseen? - Would the community accept the results of a targeting mechanism? Which challenges can be foreseen? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity development of researchers in policy research on social protection needs to be supported - More involvement of researchers in the diagnosis of the beneficiaries needs to be encouraged. - More research is needed on informal sectors in different national contexts. - Evolving "Arab family" and solidarity network should be studied. - Information and data on social protection is lacking in general. - Administrative bodies have difficulty in undertaking such studies against the resistance of conservative societies - Proxy -means testing may be limited given its lack of transparency and clarity . - The community will be receptive to the targeting mechanism if the SP programmes are long run, the process is transparent and the information is available and accessible (published). - The awareness of the community should be raised.

3. Gender and Social Protection in the Context of Egyptian State Administered Programs

Hania Sholkamy
American University in Cairo

Egypt is a country with high rates of poverty, a huge state apparatus, a long history of centralized administration and a new democratic order recently born! The role of state agents in the modern history of Egypt is a profound and unconsidered one. The paper describes the introduction of a new conditional cash transfers program as a tool for social protection as it is shaped by the views and experiences of the women and men who are social workers and part of a 240,000 strong workforce employed by the ministry of Social Solidarity (and Justice as it was recently renamed after the 25 January Revolution). The program itself was designed so as to enhance the capabilities and include the participation and creativity of the social worker. The paper will offer some reflections on the merits, motives, outcomes and mistakes of such a design.

The literature on social protection is rife with reflection on the clients of protection and on the modes and means of targeting, serving, monitoring and alleviating poverty. Less has been said on the supply side of the process of protection, specifically on the profession and problems of social work. But delivery and implementation are not simple questions that can be descriptively or pragmatically answered. The social workers themselves are political agents with their own understanding of their profession, their own cynicisms and disillusionments and their own complex relationships with state policies.

The Egypt program is similar to the Chile Solidario Puente program in that it is reliant on the notion of social worker as a provider of information, entitlements and succour to needy families. The social workers involved were interviewed, trained and observed over a two-year period. Their story is as important to an understanding of how social assistance programs structure citizenship, as is the story of those to who assistance and protection are availed. The paper presents the ethnography of the social worker that questions the viability of programs that do not render problematic the skills, ambitions, beliefs, desires, incentives and abilities.

Egypt is a country in which the state remains a large player in the field of social protection. The preponderance of the state and its employees and agents is evident in the sheer numbers of people employed by the state and public sector (6 million) of whom almost a million are considered to be at or below the poverty line and entitled to protection themselves. Social workers in some rural areas qualify as poor themselves! State led social protection relies on these agents, as does in many cases donor driven protection programs.

The paper describes Egypt as a welfare state where public sector, public goods, and public services are central to the notion of nationhood. But despite a

seemingly generous and universal system of transfers in cash and in kind including universal rights to health and education, poverty, deprivation, vulnerability and inequity have proliferated both in fact and in our imagination and self perceptions. Many new poverty alleviation efforts emerged to address this increasing burden of poverty and quieten the ever-increasing resentment and loud protests. Indeed social justice was one of the common slogans of the 3 weeks of civil disobedience and protest that began on the 25th of January and ended with the departure of President Mubarak. Moreover impoverishment was one of the drivers for the participation of millions in these protests. One of these initiatives was a cash transfers program introduced as a pilot in one slum area and later expanded to 65 villages in Upper Egypt. The program relied on what has come to be known as 'the social worker model'. The reason for stressing the role of the social worker and its impact on the workers themselves and on the program and its clients is the main focus of this analysis.

Guiding Questions	Discussions summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the role of social workers in effective social protection regimes? - How do the ideological and knowledge or value preferences of service providers, service beneficiaries and the state interact and what can be the outcomes of these interactions? - What are the dynamic relationships between civil society and the state in the context of social protection programs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social worker can guide the interaction of individuals/ family members. - Social workers need to be empowered and socially recognized so as to play a more efficient role in social protection programmes and to reach out the people in need. - The interactions among various service providers are crucial. - The civil society should be supported for their actions to reach out the poor. - The civil society organizations can be manipulated for political agenda - The State can support the civil society

4. Monitoring and evaluation of Cash Transfer Programme: The Latin American experiences

Fabio Veras Soares
Ministry of Social Affairs, Brazil

Monitoring and Evaluation are two important dimensions in the implementation of any (social) programme/policy. However, they are often overlooked during the design phase. Strategies to implement both are in general developed in an ex-post and ad hoc basis when one needs to respond to some basic questions about the programmes, such as coverage and monthly disbursement and find no answer or database that could inform these responses.

Monitoring and Evaluation are interconnected concepts but they do not mean the same thing. On one hand, monitoring is more akin to the implementation of the programme and to managerial decisions on how to overcome bottlenecks in the short term. Such decisions should be based on the analysis of a continuous flow of information summarized by key indicators. The indicators must provide timely and useful information on how the programme is evolving. Monitoring is also important for accountability and transparency and to foster evidence-based policy making and dialogue.

On the other hand, evaluation is a more complex assessment that aims to establish links or causal relations between the programme and its goals and objectives. Therefore, it comprises methodologies that try to establish a causal link between the programme activities and the outcome of the programme. It tells us whether or not and to what extent the programme is achieving its objectives. In the specific case of impact evaluation, the most important challenge is to find a good (and credible) counterfactual, i.e., an estimate of what would have been the outcome in the absence of the programme/policy. The difference between the observed outcome and the counterfactual outcome is the impact of the programme. A good monitoring system offers important inputs to an evaluation, but cannot replace it if one is interested in the impact of the programme.

In Latin America, the Conditional Cash Transfers programmes have relied heavily on Management Information System (MIS) to provide key information for both monitoring and evaluations in order to make programme management and decision making more evidence-based.

Conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes are known for their double objective of short run poverty alleviation and breaking intergenerational poverty in the long-term. It is a policy tool that became quite popular in Latin American countries in past 20 years with more than 14 countries adopting this type of programme. However, these experiences do differ a lot in terms of their actual implementation. Such heterogeneity is largely based on the different emphasis

put in the short-term objective and the long-term one. Some programmes like Bolsa Familia heavily emphasize the short-run poverty alleviation dimensions whereas other like Progres/Oportunidades in Mexico focus on the long term objective of the programme.

The key components of a CCT programme are summarized by three elements: 1) existence of some targeting mechanism; 2) monetary transfers (in kind can be complementary, e.g., nutritional supplements; 3) co-responsibilities, mostly on health and education. Monitoring and evaluation should cover all these aspects: objectives and goals as well as the implementation and short-term impact of the different elements. The short run effects on standard measures of poverty and inequality are relatively easy to assess, but it is quite difficult to determine whether long-term objectives are being met. Short- to medium-term evaluations can only provide indications of whether inputs that could lead to a break in the intergenerational cycle of poverty, such as higher school attendance, better nutrition and higher health service utilization, are being achieved.

Monitoring and Evaluation Systems have been an important tool to improve and consolidate Conditional cash transfers in Latin America. Many innovations were brought about by the need to show evidence that the programme was working, that beneficiaries were being selected in a fairly way (quality of the targeting) and that the expected results were being achieved without unexpected negative impacts. Management information systems with good registries have become the norm in the context of these programme and have put pressure on other MIS of related area either to be integrated with the MIS of CCT programmes or to be merged with it. This has led to an improvement in the quality of the data in other areas helping both the CCT programme as well the overall performance of the line ministries.

Guiding questions	Discussions summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the main differences between monitoring and evaluation? - What are the main challenges of an impact evaluation in the context of the Arab states? - What would be the role of cash transfers (existing and potentially new modalities) and how this type of programme could be evaluated.? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both monitoring and evaluation are to analyze the situation. - Evaluation is to find out the results of the monitored programmes. - The main challenges in the Arab region are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - absence of a consistent data base - lack of research - the reduction of poverty - Strengthening human capital - - Capacity building and empowerment

5. BRAC- Extreme poverty Reduction programme

Rabeya Yasmin
BRAC, Bangladesh

Despite commendable progress on poverty reduction and human development, there are still about 25% of Bangladesh's 160 million population who live in extreme form of poverty (BBS, 2005).

Drawing the ultra poor out of the poverty trap is a daunting task, requiring not only of a clear understanding of the socio-political forces that keep them perpetually trapped in poverty over generations but also requires innovation of a programmatic intervention that has multiple action points, all working in synergy, to deal with the varied forces so that the ultra poor have the required breathing space to gain confidence and acquire some asset before leveraging microfinance and getting enmeshed in the mainstream development.

Because of their (ultra poor) distressed condition, the traditional microfinance programme, which was used both by the government and NGOs as an ideal instrument for poverty reduction across the country, also preferred to leave the ultra poor out. Thus BRAC felt the need of an innovative strategy to address the livelihood security and specific constraints of the ultra poor. It also emerged that health protection and social development inputs tailored to meeting the specific needs of the ultra poor were fundamental to sustainable operation of the new productive assets, which eventually would provide them with the capacity to permanently move out of extreme poverty.

Since mid 1980s BRAC has been putting special effort to address extreme poverty problem in the country in innovative ways. IGVGD had been one such major initiative which was a joint collaboration between GoB and BRAC supported by the WFP; and IGVGD programme meant especially for the ultra poor. 20 years' rigorous lessons from IGVGD programme inspired BRAC to challenge the frontier of extreme poverty in a more aggressive, comprehensive and thoughtful manner; this is how from January 2002 BRAC has started a flagship program for the ultra poor called "Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction, Targeting the Ultra Poor" in short CFPR-TUP. CFPR -TUP is a full grant based approach for the Specially Targeted Ultra Poor (STUP) households who simply need complete tailor made supports and service to make any positive change in their livelihoods.

Guiding questions	Discussions summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do we perceive ultra Poverty in our own context? - What could be the best possible use of available resources to help the most deprived ones? - What are the major challenges in monitoring and supervision of extreme poverty reduction programmes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lack of justice in the societies. - Lack of opportunities for empowerment of individuals. - The information on characteristics of households and families to be collected to facilitate the targeting process of the poorest. - Lack of coordinated information system and limited access to it. The coordination of institutional actors is not systematic. - Lack of transparency and objectivity.

6. Asian Experiences on Social Protection

Nandita Gupta
Institute for Human Development, India

Asia is home to 60 per cent of the world's population, making it largest and most populous continent in the world. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, most of the Asian economies reported rapid growth rate, making East Asia one of the topper in the overall HDI performance in the world. Significant progress was also noted for the South Asian countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Nepal and Pakistan (Human Development Report 2010, UNDP). In spite of this, poverty remained widespread in many areas. Extreme poverty affects around 900 million people, and hunger affects over half a billion in Asia and the Pacific. This has questioned the long-term sustainability of the region's economic growth and development. About one in every six persons in the region suffers from malnourishment, and about one in three children is underweight. These problems are particularly severe in South Asia and South East Asia.

All this and the continued predominance of the informal sector in the Asian economy provided the backdrop for the emergence of social protection measures like cash transfers in the region. Some prominent cash transfer programmes of the region, for example, Samurdhi in Sri Lanka, Cash for Education Programme in Bangladesh, CCT in Indonesia and the Janani Suraksha Yojana (Safe Motherhood Scheme) in India, and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) in India have been taken up in detail for an understanding of the Asian Scenario. Although NREGS, strictly speaking is not a cash transfer programme, but given the fact that it is probably the largest public-works programme in the world and does contribute significantly to the income of the poor in India we have included it in this note.

7. Policy research to better connect social protection and climate change adaptation - a good practice case study

Chris Béné

Institute of Development Studies, UK

The concept and practice of Social Protection in developing countries have emerged in the last 10 years as a key element in developmental strategies. There is now no doubt that social protection can serve as a developmental response to address issues of chronic and acute poverty and vulnerability.

It is however increasingly recognized that Social Protection alone is not sufficient to address the increasing level of vulnerability that impacts the poor in developing countries. Global shocks and crises, such as the Food-Fuel-Financial (3F) crisis that affected the world in 2008-2009, but also more localised shocks (floods, droughts, hurricanes) are part of the more general 'climate change-driven events' that are increasingly impacting on local populations and deepening the risks already faced by many poor and vulnerable people in developing countries.

The concept of Adaptive Social Protection (ASP) derives from this recognition: it was developed at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in an attempt to support the combination of social protection (SP), Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and the view that combining components of those 3 domains in programmes and projects will help to simultaneously tackle unsafe living conditions, counter the underlying causes of vulnerability, and promote people's ability to adapt to a changing climate.

This paper reflects on some recent policy research that was implemented in the context of this concept of ASP. The objective of this analysis was to identify the conditions and processes that shape and influence (prevent or favor) the creation of synergies between SP, CCA and DRR. The analysis included 5 countries in Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan, and focused essentially on the agricultural sector. The goal was to provide a detailed assessment of the ways in which SP, CCA, and DRR approaches are brought together in development policy and practice. It was done by conducting a desk-based meta-analysis of 124 agricultural programmes and projects carried out in the five countries. The hope was to improve our understanding of the various administrative, political, social or structural obstacles and challenges that impede such synergy. The focus of the research was at the national level, looking at both policy and programmes, and consider both governmental and donor interventions.

To structure the analysis we used the conceptual distinction between the 4 categories of social interventions proposed by Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004), namely: Protection measures, which provide relief from deprivation; Preventive measures, designed to prevent deprivation; Promotive measures, aimed at enhancing income and capabilities; and Transformative measures, which seek to address concerns of social justice and exclusion.

The paper presents the result of the meta-analysis for the five countries, but also discusses the advantages and limits of using such a categorization.

Section Three:

Regional Research priorities in support of social protection policy formulation in the Arab region:



Regional research priorities in support of social protection policy formulation in the Arab region

*by Madani Safar Zitoun,
Hassan Hammoud and Seiko Sugita*

The regional workshop on “Policy research in designing, monitoring and evaluating social protection and cash transfers policies and mechanisms” (Beirut, 27-29 June 2011) dedicated a session to brainstorm on the regional research priorities and actions in support of social protection policy and research in the Arab region.

Regional participants and international experts, who interacted over selected country studies from the Arab region and international experiences on policy and research on social protection and cash transfers policies and mechanisms, recommended that a regional community of policy makers, researchers and practitioners in the Arab region to look more in-depth and pursue their efforts.

The regional workshop that focused on the link between social sciences research and social protection policies in the Arab world confirmed some universal truths, such as for example:

- i) The lack of strong links between social research and social policies
- ii) The fact that such research is confined to academic aspects not related to social realities
- iii) Lack of exchange of rare relevant studies and work published in the Arab region
- iv) Heterogeneous conceptual approaches and public intervention methodologies.

In addition to these gaps, the workshop was an opportunity to raise awareness on the challenges related to research in the region on social protection issues, solidarity, and equity in income redistribution, all these issues being behind social discontent and protests in the region.

By putting all cards on the table and by analyzing them while taking a step back, participants wanted, through recommendations, to raise the interest of countries of the region to this issue. They wanted to sound the alarm bell. Indeed, it is only through their own internal intellectual capacities, through developing scientific research on these issues that the countries of the region can develop conditions to master and control their own national fate.

As general recommendations, it was suggested as follows:

During the coming years, countries of the region have to adopt a common policy aimed at better coordinating their research efforts, with the aim of improving the

relationship between scientific research in social sciences on the one hand and the design of social protection policies in the Arab world on the other. It is therefore suggested that national academic institutions (universities, research centers) choose the following priority research themes, through the adoption of adequate conceptual approaches and qualitative/quantitative methodologies. Suggestions and recommendations are grouped in following four points sections:

1) Priorities research themes and questions:

At the macro- societal level:

- To analyze interaction types and modes between different institutional actors that have a role to play in increasingly complex and constantly changing social protection and governance systems with the aim of identifying reasons of bad functioning and ineffectiveness in public resources allocation
- To analyze changes in value systems regarding solidarity at different levels: "societal" solidarity at the nation level, traditional community solidarity, intergenerational solidarity, etc. To what extent are social protection systems in conformity with solidarity values and equity and social justice principles?
- To collect and analyze available information on cash social transfers, social nets and other social expenditures to be able to draw a comprehensive comparison table of social protection systems in the Arab region
- To design a series of socio-economic indicators based on a strong methodological thinking to measure and compare performance of social protection systems in the region
- To undertake research on funding sources and cost of social protection systems, in terms of economic efficiency
- To improve poverty measurement tools and indicators in order to devise a series of resources eligible to social aid in different national contexts

At the meso-societal level:

- To identify new social action jobs in the Arab world and to analyze training means of their members and their status in society (recognition, marginalization, mediation role, etc)
- To analyze social exclusion and marginalization processes, mainly through selection and sorting mechanisms and methodologies of categories eligible for social aid
- To develop more qualitative approaches to poverty and dignity facing quantitative approaches that reduce this phenomenon complexity
- To identify power and interest networks built around redistribution of social aid benefits, through they way they are articulated and built in the formal power structures
- To occasionally analyze environmental impact of poverty alleviation policies and programs, notably community development programs.

	National	Regional	International
Micro (individual)	Interaction of different institutional actors within the evolving Social protection and governance systems	Evolving social value and solidarity systems with relation to the social protection policies and mechanisms in the Arab region.	Interaction of different institutional actors within the evolving Social protection and governance systems from a comparative perspectives
Meso (community)	<p>Sociological analysis of professions of social protection</p> <p>Phenomena of exclusions and marginalization</p> <p>Sociological analysis of poverty and dignity to break the stereotypes of poor people</p> <p>Environmental challenges and SP policies</p>	<p>Comparative and exhaustive information collecting and analysis in a matrix on existing cash transfers, safety nets and social services in the Arab region.</p> <p>Impact assessment of existing social protection mechanisms from beneficiaries perspectives</p>	<p>Comparative Impact assessment of existing social protection mechanisms from beneficiaries perspectives</p>
Macro	<p>Needs assessment of different categories serving as a rationale for social protection policies</p> <p>Financing and costing of social protection mechanisms</p> <p>Social Protection Floor in the national contexts</p> <p>Measuring poverty</p> <p>Notion of solidarity, networks and the role of the State</p>	<p>Financing and costing of social protection mechanisms from a regional perspective</p>	<p>Financing and costing of social protection mechanisms in various regions of the world</p>

At the micro- societal level:

- To develop empirical studies aimed at identifying specific needs of the different social categories (gender mainstreaming) vis-à-vis social protection policies
- To assess the impact of improving living conditions through occasional surveys, existing cash transfer mechanisms, based on the viewpoint of the social aid recipients.

The following research priorities are to be undertaken both quantitatively and qualitatively at the national, regional and international levels.

2) Production and access to the knowledge

These research themes should rely on institutional mechanisms and action strategies that translate as follows:

1. Regarding knowledge production and access, it is recommended:

- To support research based on existing reports that should be revisited and analyzed from a comparative and exhaustive perspective
- To elaborate an electronic database on social protection in the Arab region and to make it accessible to all stakeholders
- To raise regional awareness on social protection issues and to build capacities of researchers in this field, particularly the new generation
- To integrate social protection issues in university curricula
- To centralize in one of the research centers of the region all existing documentation pertaining to that issue and to promote the implementation of a regional research project on the feasibility of a comparative and integrated social protection approach
- To create research promotion mechanisms on topics related to social protection such as research competition, study fellowships, prizes and grants
- To create a regional information management system on social protection

3) Mechanism of policy research

- Phasing and pilot social protection programmes should be researched
- Monitoring and Evaluation of SP policies and mechanisms internally and externally
- Learning from experiences (ex. field visits)

4) A regional coordination, network and partnerships

- Stronger linkage and complementary roles among research institutions, universities and policy makers to better guide policy orientations
- Comprehensive social strategy in a participatory policy making process

- Establish and support a policy research network bringing researchers and policy makers by involving media and working closer with civil society
- Advocacy and pressuring governments
- Involve private sector in funding research on social protection research

Annexes

Annexes (A)

- i. List of participants in the regional consultations meeting (Cairo, June 2010)
- ii. List of 7 experts, participated in the regional research
- iii. Agenda of the regional workshop
- iv. List of participants in the regional workshop
- v. Profile of resource persons
- vi. Evaluation of the regional workshop

(Regional workshop on "Policy Research in designing, monitoring and evaluating social protection and cash transfers policies and mechanisms" at Commodore Hotel in Beirut (27-29 June 2011))

i. List of participants in the regional Steering Committee Meeting (Cairo, 9 June 2010)

- Mr. Ahmed Abulkheir, Ambassador, Ministry of Social Solidarity, Egypt
- Ms. Rabab Al-Hussieny, Social Development Expert, Ministry of Social Solidarity, Egypt
- Ms. Amal Zein, Ministry of Social Solidarity, Egypt
- Mr. Mohammad Shabaneh, Director of Family Directorate, Ministry of Social Development, Jordan
- Ms Sawsan Karimi, Assistant Professor, University of Bahrain
- Ms. Hania Sholkamy, Associate Professor, Social Research Centre - American University in Cairo
- Ms Kristina Hallez, Assistant Social Research Center - American University in Cairo
- Ms Hoda Rachad, Research Professor & Director, Social Research Center American University in Cairo
- Ms Heba Nassar, Professor of Economics and Vice President, Cairo University President for Community Development Affairs
- Mr. Yousef Qaryouti, Director, International Labour Organization, Cairo
- Mr Roberto Benes, Regional Advisor for Social Policy, UNICEF MENARO, Amman
- Mr Mohammad Moheiddin, Poverty Unit, UNDP Regional Center, Cairo
- Ms Maha Yahya, Regional Advisor SDD, UN-ESCWA, Beirut
- Ms Seiko Sugita, Programme Specialist / Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO, Beirut

ii. List of 7 experts, participated in the regional research

- Ms. Rabab Al-Hussieny, Centre de Recherches Sociologiques de Criminologie du Caie (CNRSC), Cairo
- Ms Maha Kattaa ILO/ RBAS Project; Higher Institute for Business Administration, Damascus, Syria
- Mr Amer Hiasat, Ministry of Social Development, Amman Jordan
- Mr Sulieman Al-Ebari Ministry of Social Affairs, Muscat, Oman
- Mr Nacerddine Hammouda, Centre de Recherche en Economie Appliqué pour le Development (CREAD), Algiers, Algeria
- Mr Mohamed Ali Abd Elnabi Gareh, National Social Insurance Fund, Khartoum, Sudan

iii. Agenda of the regional workshop

Final Agenda of the regional workshop

Monday, June 27	
<p>8:30- 9:00 Registration</p> <p>9:00-10:00 Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome/ opening speech (10mn) - Objective of the workshop (10mn) - Conceptual Framework and setting the stage (20mn) <p>10:00-11:00 (1) Poverty Profile in the Arab States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 country case presentations (30mn) Syria, Egypt, Sudan and Palestine - Regional comparative perspective (15mn) - Q & A (15mn) <p>11:00 -11:15 Coffee Break</p> <p>11:15-12:10 (2) Policy context on Social protection in the Arab States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 country case presentations (25mn) Jordan, Oman and Algeria - Regional comparative perspective (15mn) - Q & A (15mn) <p>12:10-13:00 (3) Changing social assistance policy options- from European experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation (20mn) - Q & A (20mn) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr Abdel Moneim Osman, UNESCO - Dr Seiko Sugita, UNESCO - Dr Hassan Hammoud, LAU, Lebanon <p>Moderator: Dr Jihad Makhoul, AUB, Lebanon</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr Maha Kattaa, ILO, Syria - Dr Rabab El Hussieny, CNRSC, Egypt - Mr Mohamed Ali Abd Elnabi Gareh, NSIF - Mr Abdel Rahim Fadalla, MOSA, Palestine - Dr. Madani Safar Zitoun, University of Algiers <p>Moderator: Dr Hassan Hammoud</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Amer Hiasat, MOSD, Jordan - Mr Sulieman Al-Ebari, MOSA, Oman - Dr Nacerddine Hammouda, CREAD, Algeria - Dr. Madani Safar Zitoun, <p>Moderator: Dr Heba Nasser, Cairo University, Egypt</p> <p>Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr Yuri Kazepov, University of Urbino, Italy

<p>13:00-14:00 Lunch Break</p> <p>14:00-16:00 Group Discussions (I): Challenges, opportunities and research priorities in the area of social protection in the Arab region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction & Group work (60mn) - Presentation of group work (40mn) - Research priorities (20mn) 	<p>Moderators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr Jihad Makhoul - Dr Hassan Hammoud - Dr Madani Safar Zitoun <p>Rapporters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr Hassan Hammoud - Dr Amina Merah, CREAD, Algeria - Ms Rouba Arja, UN ESCWA, Lebanon
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Tuesday, June 28	
<p>9:00-10:15 (4) Better targeting beneficiaries and gender mainstreaming in the social protection mechanisms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation from African cases (20mn) - Presentation from Arab cases (20mn) - Questions & Clarifications (20mn) <p>10:15-10:30 Coffee Break</p> <p>10:30-12:00 Group Discussion (II): Policy and research on better targeting and gender mainstreaming in social protection mechanisms and programmes in the Arab States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group work (45 mn) - Presentation of group work and discussions (30mn) <p>11:30-12:30 (5) Monitoring and evaluation, Impact assessment of social protection mechanisms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation from Latino-American and Brazilian cases cases (20mn) - Presentation from Asian cases (20mn) 	<p>Moderator: Dr Maha Katta</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Carlos Alviar, UNICEF Ghana - Dr. Hania Sholkamy, AUC, Egypt <p>Moderators: Dr Hassan Hammoud, Dr Hania Sholkamy and Dr Madani Safar Zitoun</p> <p>Rapporters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Mohamed Ali Abd Elnabi, NSIF, Sudan - Dr Maha Katta, ILO - Dr Abdessatar Mouelhi, Univ. of Carthage, Tunisia <p>Moderator: Dr. Hania Sholkamy</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Fabio Veras, UNDP/ MOSA Brazil - Ms Rabeya Yasmin, BRAC, Bangladesh

<p>12:30-13:30 Lunch Break</p> <p>Presentation on SP in Asian cases (20mn)</p> <p>14:45 -15:00 Coffee break</p> <p>14:50-16:00 Group Discussions (III): Monitoring and evaluation, Impact assessment of social protection mechanisms in the Arab States Questions and answers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Nandita Gupta, Institute for Human Development, India <p>Moderators: Dr Hassan Hammoud, Dr Maha Katta and Dr Madani Safar Zitoun</p> <p>Rapporters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Abdallah Oud Mohamed Elvally, MOSA, Mauritania - Dr Rabab El Hussieny, CNRSC, Egypt - Mr Abdel Rahem Fadaleh, Palestine
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Wednesday, June 29	
<p>9:00-10:15 (7) How to adapt Social protection to the Climate Change Challenges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short Film Projection "Wet and Dry" and comments (20mn) - Presentation on Asian cases (20mn) - Discussions (35mn) <p>10:15-10:30 Coffee Break</p> <p>10:30-1:00: (8) Priority research topics and coordinated approach in the Arab region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority research topics (45mn) - Collaboration opportunities (45mn) - Feedback from international experts (25mn) - Individual workplan/ evaluation (15mn) - Concluding remark (5mn) <p>13:00-14:00 Lunch Break</p>	<p>Moderator: Dr Jihad Makhoul</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Najib Saab, Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED) - Dr Christophe Bene, IDS, Brighton, UK <p>Moderators: Dr Hassan Hammoud, Dr Jihad Makhoul & Dr Seiko Sugita,</p> <p>Rapporters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Rouba Arja, UN ESCWA - Dr Nacerradine Hammouda, CREAD, Algeria - Dr Muna Mutaman, Jordanian National Commission for Women Affaris, Jordan

iv. List of participants in the UNESCO regional workshop

Name	Institution, City & Country
Mr Madani Safar Zitoun	University of Algiers. Algiers, Algeria
Ms Maha Kattaa	ILO/ RBAS Project; Higher Institute for Business Administration, Damascus, Syria
Mr Amer Hiasat	Ministry of Social Development, Amman Jordan
Mr Sulieman Al-Ebari	Ministry of Social Affairs, Muscat, Oman
Mr Abdel Rahem Fadaleh	Ministry of Social Affairs, Ramallah, Palestine
Ms Rabab Hussieny,	Centre de Recherches Sociologiques de Criminologie du Caie (CNRSC), Cairo, Egypt
Mr Nacerddine Hammouda,	Centre de Recherche en Economie Appliqué pour le Development (CREAD), Algiers, Algeria
Mr Mohamed Ali Abd Elnabi Gareh	National Social Insurance Fund, Khartoum, Sudan
Ms Amina Merah	Centre de Recherche en Economie Appliqué pour le Development (CREAD), Algiers, Algeria
Mr Abdallah Ould Mohamed Elvally	Ministry of Social Affairs, Nouakchott, Mauritania
Mr Abdessatar Mouelhi	University of Carthage, Tunis, Tunisia
Ms Heba Nassar	Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt
Ms Asmaa Elbadawy	Population Council, Cairo, Egypt
Ms Mona Mutaman	Jordanian National Commission for Women Affairs, Amman, Jordan
Mr Hassan Hammoud	Lebanese American University, Beirut, Lebanon
Ms Jihad Makhoul	American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Mr. Adel Al Chabab	Ministry of Social Affairs, Beirut, Lebanon
Mr Najib Saab	Arab Forum for Environment and Development, Beirut, Lebanon
Mr Adib Nehmeh	UN-ESCWA, Beirut, Lebanon
Ms Rouba Arja	UN-ESCWA, Beirut, Lebanon
Ms Dina Tannir	UN-ESCWA, Beirut, Lebanon
Mr Rabih Fakhri	UNRWA, Beirut- Lebanon
Mr Fabio Sores	MOSA/ UNDP Internatioanl Poverty Center, Brazilia, Brazil
Ms Hania Sholkamy	American University in Cairo, Cairo, Egypt
Ms Rabeya Yasmin	BRAC, Dakha, Bangladesh
Ms Nandita Gupta	Institute for Human Development, New Dehli, India
Mr Yuri Kazepov	University of Urbino, Urbino, Italy
Mr Carlos Alviar	UNICEF Ghana, Accra, Ghana
Mr Christophe Bene	Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, Sussex, UK
Mr Abdel Moneim Osman	UNESCO Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon
Ms Seiko Sugita	UNESCO Beirut
Ms Rita Menassa	UNESCO Beirut
Ms Susan El-Louou	UNESCO Beirut
Mr. Cyril Khoury	UNESCO Beirut

v. Evaluation of the workshop

1. What aspects of the sessions/activities did you gain the most benefit?

- Presentations of experiences from other regions were complementary and useful;
- The connection between social protection and climate challenges was a new area, which needs further research in the Arab region;
- Small group discussions were useful.

2. Any suggestions to improve the workshop

- Sharing national reports and materials with participants prior to the workshop;
- More presentation and participation from Gulf countries;
- Presentations on Arab country contexts were too short. Fairer allocation of time among presentations is needed;
- To organize a field visit to within a workshop programme;
- Wider involvement of researchers and universities;
- Network of participants should be established through emails.