Integrated Social Protection Systems: Enhancing Equity for Children

UNICEF’s Social Protection Strategic Framework
Pratolino, February 2012
Key Messages

- Social protection strengthens **resilience** and helps achieve **greater equity**
- UNICEF supports **Progressive Realization of Universal Coverage**
- Social protection can be **affordable** and **sustainably financed**
- UNICEF promotes **integrated social protection systems**
- Social, as well as economic, **vulnerabilities** need to be addressed by social protection
- Starting point for a **collaborative agenda** on joint learning and action
UNICEF work on social protection

- UNICEF is engaged in more than 124 programs in 88 countries: extensive work on the ground and recognized policy leadership in social protection

Four areas of work:

1. Providing **technical support** to increase coverage and strengthen national systems

2. Making social protection programs more **child and gender sensitive** in policy and in practice.

3. Being a **global leader** and advocate, while forging alliances and bringing together key partners

4. **Linking** social protection programmes to other services, including birth registration, ECD, community awareness sessions, increased investment in health and education services in marginalized areas
Social Protection Strategic Framework

**Purpose**

- Provide a **clear framework** for UNICEF’s work on social protection
- Present and **argue case child sensitive** social protection, and articulate UNICEF’s position on key issues
- Outline a **policy agenda** for social protection and children, including UNICEF’s contribution within a broader agenda

**Consultation process**

- Internal consultation: sector and region-specific meetings, July-Oct 2011
- External Consultation with strategic partners Nov 2011 – Jan 2012
Social Protection Strategic Framework: Outline

- **The Case for Social Protection and Children**
  - Increased relevance, Child-sensitive social protection, returns to investing in children and social protection

- **UNICEF’s Approach and Principles**
  - Definition, components, principles (inclusive social protection; progressive realization and national ownership, sustainability and context specificity)

- **Integrated social protection systems**
  - multi-sector approach (social protection and equitable sector outcomes) and systems; Systems Approach (eg: institutional arrangements, M&E, participation)

- **Key Policy Issues & Challenges**
  - Financing, politics, sequencing & prioritization, institutional capacity

- **Inclusive Social Protection**
  - Dimensions of exclusion, inclusive instruments and design

- **Emerging issues**
  - Humanitarian action, urbanization, migration and adolescence and youth

- **The Road Ahead**
  - Collaborative Agenda for Action, engaging partners, UNICEF’s contribution

- **Case studies** and illustrations from different regions
- **Evidence on impacts** and overview of state of existing evidence
The Case for Social Protection and Children
Increased relevance in current context

- **Persistent inequality and exclusion**
  - Inequality across regions and within countries, uneven progress in MGDs

- **Increasing economic and political volatility**
  - Crises and instability disproportionately affect those already vulnerable, e.g. women, youth and children

- **Sustainable development goals and climate change**
  - Poor & marginalized communities, and children, particularly vulnerable to climate change

- **Population trends and demographic changes**
  - Youth bulge, strains in employment, migration and urbanization patterns, changing family and support structures
Child-Sensitive Social Protection: Helping all children realize their full potential

- **Social protection and children’s rights**
  - Rights to social protection recognized in international instruments

- **Multidimensional nature of children’s vulnerabilities**
  - Children share the risks and vulnerabilities of their families and communities, but also have specific (age and gender) vulnerabilities that need to be considered.

- **Equity**
  - Social protection addresses some of the underlying social and economic barriers to children’s well-being
  - Helps level the playing field, accelerating progress particularly for vulnerable and excluded populations

- **Intergenerational approach**
  - Child-sensitive does not mean child-exclusive
  - Addressing vulnerabilities of caregivers, households and communities also important
Investing in children now, reaping long-term returns

- Childhood is critical window of opportunity
  - Physical, cognitive and psychological development has lifetime consequences
  - The positive impacts of social protection on children’s nutrition, health, education & protection can lead to healthy and productive adulthood
- High costs of inaction
- Broader positive economic impacts
  - At household level, protects against shocks and supports productive investments and labour market participation
  - Multiplier and counter-cyclical effects in local economies
UNICEF Concepts and Principles
UNICEF understands social protection as:

"a set of public and private policies and programmes aimed at preventing, reducing and eliminating economic and social vulnerabilities to poverty and deprivation"

Key elements of definition:

- understanding of poverty and deprivation as a multi-dimensional and dynamic reality.
- Vulnerability entails both exposure to risk and the capacity to respond and cope.
- Both economic and social vulnerabilities are important, and often intertwined.
- Vulnerabilities are shaped by underlying structural social, political and economic factors.
Social protection components and examples

**Social Transfers**
- Cash transfers (including pensions, child benefits, poverty-targeted, seasonal)
- Food transfers
- Nutritional supplementation; Provision of ARVs
- Public works

**Programs to access services**
- Birth registration
- User fee abolition
- Health insurance
- Exemptions, vouchers, subsidies
- Specialized services to ensure equitable access for all

**Support and care**
- Family support services
- Home-based care
- Accessible Childcare services

**Legislation**
- Minimum and equal pay legislation
- Employment guarantee schemes
- Maternity and paternity leave
- Removal of discriminatory legislation or policies affecting service provision/access or employment
- Inheritance rights
Three Key Principles

- Progressive realization of universal coverage
- National systems and leadership
- Inclusive social protection
Progressive realization of universal coverage

• UNICEF supports the goal of universal coverage: all people should be covered by appropriate and effective social protection mechanisms.

• An universal approach has the potential to:
  – reduce exclusion errors
  – foster social solidarity
  – reduce stigma associated with some targeting methods

• Progressive realization
  – UNICEF recognizes the challenges in providing universal coverage: resource and capacity constraints, state of development of social protection structures
  – Supports countries in identifying and building the most appropriate approach or mix of interventions that will be more conducive to the ultimate goal of universal coverage
National systems and leadership

• UNICEF supports nationally-owned and led systems

• Includes supporting national leadership in development of long-term financing strategies

• No ‘one size fits all’
  – Identification of the most effective and appropriate mix of interventions given context-specific vulnerabilities, national priorities, and capacity.
Inclusive Social protection

• Inclusive SP responsive to different dimensions of exclusion
  – Social dimensions of vulnerability such as gender, ethnicity, HIV status, geographic location, and disability status fundamentally shape exposure to risk and resilience → barriers to secure livelihoods and accessing essential social services.
  – looks at shared causes of exclusion across different groups, while considering the added vulnerabilities associated with specific dimensions

• Inclusive SP enhances inclusive and equitable outcomes through:
  – Using instruments that explicitly promote social inclusion and equity, e.g. parental leave, anti-discrimination policies
  – Design and implementation that is sensitive to the added vulnerabilities that stem from social exclusion
Integrated Social Protection Systems: Enhancing Equity for Children
Integrated social protection systems

Highly effective for addressing multiple and compounding vulnerabilities faced by children and families

• Address both social and economic vulnerabilities
• Provide a comprehensive set of interventions
• Go beyond risk management interventions and safety nets: address structural as well as shock-related vulnerabilities
• Facilitate a multi-sector approach and coordination
• Coordinate with appropriate supply-side investments
• Frame social protection strategies within a broader set of social and economic policies that promote human development and growth
Integrated social protection systems:
Contributing to the Social Protection Floor

- In response to the global financial and economic crises, the UN system Chief Executives Board (CEB) established the **Social Protection Floor Initiative**

- A **Social Protection Floor (SPF)** is the first level of a comprehensive national social protection system that helps to realize human rights for all through guaranteeing: universal access to essential services and social transfers in cash or in kind

- UNICEF’s work on integrated social protection systems contributes to the SPF Initiative
  - Particularly by supporting countries to develop their own context-specific social protection floors
Integrated social protection systems

Systems

Multi-sector

Integrated Social protection Systems
Systems approach

- Strengthens the institutions and mechanisms necessary to effectively address multiple vulnerabilities in an integrated manner
  - Vulnerability and poverty assessments for selection of appropriate design
  - Institutional frameworks and mechanisms: national policy/strategy, administrative mechanisms (e.g. MIS, single registry systems), horizontal and vertical coordination
  - Monitoring and Evaluation
  - Participation and accountability
Systems: Institutional frameworks & mechanisms

• An effective institutional design is crucial to the successful implementation of a social protection system.

• Elements to consider (examples):
  
  – comprehensive **framework/policy** that clearly defines and delineates the country’s/region’s approach to social protection
  
  – appropriate **structures to provide strategic guidance**, oversee implementation, and facilitate multi-sector coordination. For example:
    
    • inter-ministerial high level committee to provide strategic guidance and define interventions priorities;
    
    • ministry/government agency with a specific mandate and/or technical expertise on particular groups or thematic approach
    
    • specialized agency/unit under planning department
  
  – Structures and incentives to facilitate horizontal and vertical coordination. For instance
    
    • common targeting systems
    
    • developing regional and local implementation models of social protection
UNICEF acknowledges the importance of monitoring and evaluation systems, as well the challenges faced by many countries in building effective M&E systems.

Framework discusses some key elements to consider in development and strengthening M&E system including:

- identification of the most **effective design**, responsive to the systems’ and/or objectives; motivation
- definition of a **M&E plan**, in the early stages of design, that outlines what particular areas need to be monitored and/or assessed, what information is needed, what is the best way to collect it, how to involve strategic stakeholders, etc.
- **MIS systems**: role in monitoring and evaluation
- **Institutionalization** of evaluation for social programs
- **Learning** within and across countries and regions; experience documentation and exchange
Social protection policies and their redistribution mechanisms need to be justified and validated by citizens – beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Participation enhances the relevance, appropriateness, ownership, and effective implementation of programs.

**Design**
- Participation when *defining polices and strategies*, identifying vulnerabilities and needs.

**Implementation**
- Community case workers, civil society organizations can support beneficiaries, to increase *their knowledge* of programs’ operations and processes and their *capacity to claim rights* to social protection.

**Accountability & Monitoring**
- What appeals processes are in place? Can women and children access these in practice, and are their appeals addressed?
- Civil society groups can play an important role in *monitoring and providing feedback on the effective delivery of interventions* and programs, as well as ensuring *transparency*.
Multi-sector Approach

Identifies and maximizes linkages between SP and sectors - child protection, HIV/AIDS, ECD, education, health, WASH, etc.

Children survive, develop and thrive

Social Inclusion  Equitable access to services  Equitable access to goods/resources  Behavior patterns/change  Supply of services

Social Protection

Direct impact: Contributes to removing barriers to access

Indirect impact: Fosters improvements in supply and quality of services; contributes behavior change

Enabling factors
As an example... how can social protection contribute to equitable outcomes in Health?

- Supply-side interventions need to be complemented with demand side policies to achieve health equitable outcomes
- Social protection can contribute to removing barriers of access to health services, and increase demand and use
- Health Insurance, removal of user fees, cash transfers – **impacts on** use of health services, reduce/avoid catastrophic health expenditure, decrease incidence of illness, maternal and newborn health outcomes, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes/determinants of health-related vulnerabilities</th>
<th>Barriers: manifestations</th>
<th>Social protection interventions: Child mortality/ill health and nutrition (Examples)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial and income poverty barriers to access health and nutrition:</td>
<td>Poor families not able to afford health treatment and related services; transportation costs and medicine; purchase food and diversity diet to enhance nutritional intake; mother’s are forced to cut exclusive breastfeeding to meet work responsibilities and generate income</td>
<td><strong>Social transfers, removal of user fees, as well as health insurance</strong> can contribute to remove financial and income related barriers to access health care services; can help families address food insecurity; improve dietary diversity; increase expenditure on high quality foods; maternity benefits to ensure economic wellbeing of mothers and proper nutrition</td>
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<td>Distance and location of services</td>
<td>Families living in remote areas are not able to access services; high transportation and time costs associated with reaching nearest health facilities</td>
<td><strong>Cash transfers</strong> can help cover costs of transportation as well as time and energy costs associated with health visits</td>
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<td>Gender and social norms</td>
<td>Gender dynamics and traditional social norms may prevent vulnerable groups from accessing services</td>
<td><strong>Policy reform</strong> as well as changes in key legislation can contribute to ensure equal access to services for men and women; indigenous/non-indigenous, etc.</td>
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Similar analysis provided in Framework for:

- Child Protection
- HIV and AIDS
- Education
- Early Childhood Development
- Water and Sanitation
Key Policy Issues & Challenges

- Financing (costing, financing and affordability)
- Politics of Social Protection
- Sequencing and Prioritization
- Institutional Capacity
Key Policy Issues: Financing

- Social protection systems can be sustainably financed. "Affordability and financing are not only technical questions but also political choices."
  - Where and how resources should be spent to maximum benefit?
  - What long-term financing strategies are feasible for progressive expansion of coverage?

- **Cost estimates and cost-benefit analyses** of different policy options
  - Include not only immediate effects of social protection, but also **indirect and long-term impacts**

- Domestic and international **financing options available**
  - raising domestic tax revenues, reallocating public expenditure, international assistance
  - Political, administrative and fiscal feasibility of different options need to be assessed in each country context
Key Policy Issues: Sequencing and prioritization

• The choice of strategies and building blocks will depend on:
  – national social protection objectives
  – current political and institutional context

• UNICEF supports countries considering the implementation of a national Social Protection Floor – guaranteeing access to essential services and social transfers – as an initial step.

• Selection of the most appropriate programmes should be based on:
  – assessments of poverty and vulnerability
  – institutional capacity
  – existing programme evaluations
Emerging global issues

• **Humanitarian Action and Social Protection**: what is the potential role of social protection in the different stages/contexts of humanitarian action (risk management, response, transition, fragility, etc)?

• **Adolescence & Youth Development**: Adolescent and youth specific vulnerabilities? How can SP enhance capacities, including access to secondary education and reducing skills gaps?

• **Social Protection and the Urban Poor**: How to adjust programs and policies to better serve the urban poor?

• **Migration**: SP strategies for migrant children and their families?
The Road Ahead
Collaborative Agenda for Action: Proposal

• Expand and strengthen **integrated social protection systems** to respond to the multiple and compounding vulnerabilities faced by children and their families.

• Identify effective and **sustainable financing for expansion** and strengthening of social protection.

• Address **social dimensions of vulnerability** in SP programmes.

• Improve **coordination**.

• Improve practice in linking **humanitarian action** and SP.

• **Knowledge** exchange and learning.
Collaborative Agenda for Action: UNICEF’s role

- Support consolidation and innovation in practice to strengthen integrated social protection systems
- Convene multiple partners and facilitate coordination
- Lead efforts to promote child- and gender-sensitive social protection
- Advocate for and support measures that address social and economic vulnerabilities together
- Facilitate practice, learning and evidence in linking social protection and humanitarian action, including in fragile contexts
- Facilitate knowledge generation and exchange