

# The Road to Pratolino IV

---

Suggestions from the blog for UNICEF's  
work in economic and social policy

Presented by David Anthony, Chief, Policy Advocacy, DPP

# 1. Reinforce the centrality of human rights principles to equitable social and economic policy

“... the whole purpose of development is not growth, not the MDGs, but the realization of human rights of every girl and boy, woman or man, without exception.”

– *Liz Gibbons, former Deputy Director, Policy and Practice, UNICEF*

“Thinking of children’s rights over the last 20 years one story stands out: that of Iqbal Masih, who escaped brutal slavery at 10, joined the Bonded Labor Liberation Front of Pakistan, helped free 3000 children from bonded labor, became a worldwide spokesperson against child labor and was murdered in 1995 at age 13.”

*Thomas Pogge, Director of Yale's Health Impact Fund*

“In a moment of crisis which is not just economic and financial but also a crisis of ideas, this debate is encouraging in the amazing way in which the basic principles (human rights, rights of children, equity, sustainable development) have been reaffirmed in order to... provide policy recommendations”

- *Roberto Bissio, Director Social Watch*

## 2. Be responsive to a volatile, changing world

“This is a time of unprecedented transformation, challenges and opportunities... The origins of the Arab Spring are rooted in long-standing, day-to-day struggles of those living in the region for food, jobs, security, participation and freedom. These unprecedented revolutions united people from all social groups against social and economic systems that created and perpetuated inequalities. The public demands for dignity, freedom, and social justice which rang out in Tahrir Square were echoed across the region.”

**Roberto Benes**, *UNICEF Regional Office Middle East North Africa*

“One very important conclusion of the path breaking Cannes G20 summit was the call made in paragraph 31. “We call on international organizations, especially the UN, WTO, the ILO, the WB, the IMF and the OECD, to enhance their dialogue and cooperation, including on the social impact of economic policies, and to intensify their coordination”

**Bob Deacon**, *Emeritus Professor of International Social Policy, Sheffield University*

“ Strengthening UNICEF’s social policy work will require a greater focus on linking social policy actions to results for children. UNICEF needs to foster its capacity not only to react to changes and crises, but also in reading the changes that are about to happen and contribute to agenda setting and prospective planning.”

**Joaquin Gonzalez-Aleman**, *Ramya Subrahmanian*, *UNICEF India*; **Andrea Rossi**, *UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia*; **Beth Verhey**, *UNICEF Nepal*

### 3. Leverage resources for children

“Since the Paris Declaration we donors have committed ourselves to supporting the capacity of the national and local governments to deliver social services - instead of doing the job for them. Development partners are expected to pull out from field level implementation and to focus on policy making and capacity development.”

– *Timo Voipio, Chair OECD-DAC POVNET*

“The emergence of a larger group of middle income countries means that aid as resource transfer is becoming less significant over time to many countries as domestic resources evolve...child poverty is increasingly turning from an international to a national distribution problem, means that UNICEF and other donors have an ‘upstream’ role to play as child advocates and increasingly, having difficult conversations on issues beyond money such as governance and domestic taxation and redistribution policies which becoming more important to child poverty reduction than ‘traditional aid’.

- *Andy Sumner, IDS*

“How with our limited human and financial resources we can influence decision-makers in what can often be a very complex, large, sophisticated, rapidly changing and decentralized context with great disparities?”

- *Niloufar Pourzand, Chief of Social Policy and Monitoring, UNICEF Indonesia*

## 4. Refocus on equity in a broad sense

“Equity is a good principle and critical given all we know about where the benefits of growth have fallen but as Sakiko Fukuda-Parr notes - it is an ambiguous term. It is heartening (and important) in this exchange to see the focus on universalism, since there is a risk that discussion of equity might encourage an overly narrow focus on targeting”  
- **Paul Dornan**, Senior Policy Advisor, Young Lives

*“Assessing poverty from only an economic perspective undermines its multidimensional nature. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has defined poverty as: “a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.”*  
- **Beatrice Duncan, Nicolette Moodie and Nicola Brandt**. *Gender Rights, UNICEF*

“Horizontal inequalities... children in groups that are discriminated against or marginalised. For example, children of unscheduled castes or tribes in India; children of minorities in China; indigenous children in Peru; Roma children in Europe”  
- **Frances Stewart**, Professor of Development Economics Oxford

## 4. More equity!

“Equity -what are the implications of an equity strategy for macro-policy, tax policy and impact on the upper levels of income distribution, as well as on those in poverty”  
- **Sir Richard Jolly**, former Assistant Secretary General, UNICEF

“Responding to governments’ requests to support development of overarching child and youth policies provides opportunity to promote an equity-focus... mainstreaming child and youth focused policies across government sectors”  
- **Mereia Carling**, Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Pacific

“UNICEF's Social and Economic Policy has played an incredibly constructive role, in four different ways: (a) by clearly strengthening the people-centred - or child-centred - focus of its partners' thinking; (b) by substantially strengthening equity analytics; (c) by successfully challenging and encouraging the IFIs (IMF and World Bank) to join in the brainstorming for a new shared vision of inclusive, equitable and sustainable development - this has not been an easy task but the UNICEF Social and Economic Policies Team has done a really remarkable job in this area; (d) fourthly, thanks to its dense country office network and presence in nearly all countries of the world UNICEF has been able to draw evidence from country realities and to expose the emerging elements of the new thinking for much needed reality checks in country contexts.”  
- **Timo Voipio**, Chair OECD/DAC POVNET

## 5. Promote child-sensitive social protection

“The series of pilot social cash transfer programmes several UNICEF countries manage in East Africa are a examples of team work between country, regional and HQ producing evidence for policy advocacy”

- **Roger Pearson**, Chief of Research, Policy and Monitoring, UNICEF Ethiopia

*“A strong case for a new type of universal child benefit...of course relates to this year’s efforts on social protection floors. It offers a child-centred, equity policy oriented policy instrument – and might be a politically pragmatic approach for high and middle income countries.”*

**Gabriele Koehler**, IDS

“This is where I think UNICEF has a unique niche, because you are multisectoral, because you are global and because you have a single goal in mind: the well-being of children, you should be the prime promoter of the global social protection floor.”

- **Steen Jorgensen**, Director Human Development, the World Bank

“Today, with the impact of the economic crisis, the enormous gap in the distribution of wealth, in the income redistribution from the state (through taxes) and in public benefits (through the access to social services) are growing ever wider, reflecting a general trend that is morally unfair, politically unwise and economically unsound. Is social protection the solution to all this?”

- **Remy Pigois**, Chief of Social Policy, UNICEF Senegal

## 6. Retain economic and social policy as a separate, complementary strand of work

“There is a range of areas of cross-sectoral work that would not likely occur if policy work were only conceived of as part of a sectoral approach... this includes partnerships and advocacy with counterparts in IFIs, Ministries of Finance, analysis of economic trends and development of guidance in areas such as social budgeting, social protection, multidimensional poverty analysis and other of the original Pratolino priorities.

– **Erika Strand**, Chief, Social Policy UNICEF Mexico

UNICEF's policy work is essential to contribute to the fulfillment of its mission... and I would like to call your attention to rising food prices”

- **Nora Lustig**, former Director at UNDP and the World Bank

“Since 2009, we have worked with six countries across the Pacific to monitor the impact of external economic shocks on the most vulnerable children and women... food prices were cited as the main cause of financial stress for families. Based on this evidence, UNICEF Pacific was able to generate both public visibility and a regional response. Interest in the issue of food prices was immediate and widespread... The experience demonstrated that UNICEF's ‘upstream’ work can resonate with the public and supporters in the same way that our health, education and programme and emergency work does”

- **Samantha Cocco-Klein**, Chief, Policy Advocacy UNICEF Pacific

## 7. Continue to challenge the prevailing economic and social wisdom

“Now what is required is a reverse mission creep of the social agencies into the territory of the economic. Conventional pure economic analysis and forecasting and modeling have been found wanting. Debates about alternatives are now the order of the day. UNICEF has a long and honorable tradition in the regard.”

- **Bob Deacon**, *Emeritus Professor of International Social Policy, Sheffield University*

“At the global level, our voice on the equity agenda last year was powerful. We should continue to contribute at the forefront of development debate, particularly when the post-MDG agenda is being designed, and at a time when global development cooperation seems most at threat from austerity measures, protectionism, and increasing security concerns.”

- **Sarah Hague**, *Chief of Social Policy, UNICEF Burkina Faso*

“While there is a lot of good work on macroeconomic policy in DESA, UNICEF is actually quite unique in continuing to focus on the consequences of macroeconomic policy choices on human well being, distribution and poverty. So I do applaud UNICEF's work on fiscal austerity. Does anyone know any other UN agency that is working on this issue from the human centered perspective?”

- **Sakiko Fukuda-Parr**, *Professor and former Director UNDP Human Development Report*

## 8. Strengthen UNICEF's focus on governance, decentralization and closing the implementation gap

“...it would be critical to place governance and decentralization at the heart of UNICEF's Social Policy agenda, with a view to translate equity-focused social policies into concrete actions and results for children.”

- **Mizuho Okimoto-Kaewtathip**, Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF LAO PDR

“Achieving equitable outcomes for children is not only about formulating policy goals, plans and strategies (what needs to be done) but just as much about the process of implementing these (how things are done).”

- **Natalia Adler**, Knowledge Management Specialist, UNICEF Mozambique

“Under our new Social Policy and Governance programme in Vietnam we are making a modest attempt to address policy governance by introducing a ‘Social Audit Approach’ to the monitoring and evaluation of socio-economic development plans, which are at the core of UNICEF support around an integrated approach to children's issues”

- **Paul Quarles van Ufford**, Chief of Social Policy and **Samman J. Thapa**, Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Vietnam

## 9. Broaden the scope of social policy work to address the evolving challenges of the changing world

“Other emerging issues include young people and their transition from school to the labour market, the situation of vulnerable groups of children that are often being overlooked such as children with disabilities, as well as the implications of climate change.”

– **Petra Hoelscher**, *Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Namibia*

“But that is not enough... international trade and investment policies; agriculture and commodity price policies... land rights; and also... financial flows, and fiscal and monetary policy... The time is ripe for Unicef to move ahead of the curve and speak with confidence, evidence and passion in international fora on international policy decisions that affect the world's 7 billion people, and the 2.2 billion children among them.”

– **Gabriele Koehler**, *IDS*

## 10. Link research, data and evidence, through advocacy and advice, to decisions and policies

“Research is central to credible evidence and hence to effective policy making. [Evidence knowledge / research findings]... should be fed into the decision making space through use of advocacy architecture like networks and national discourse.”

– *Usha Mishra, Chief-Policy, Advocacy and Communication Section, UNICEF Cambodia*

“We should also, as conditions permit, be supporting the strengthening of civil society such that it can ultimately take over much of the role we currently need to play, which - once it happens - will mean our role will solely be the broker of international knowledge and expertise”

– *Mark Hereward, Representative, UNICEF Azerbaijan*

# 11. Bring child and youth voices to policy makers... and strengthen UNICEF's advocacy voice

“UNICEF’s leadership in engaging children and youth in policy making is critical. The CRC provides a solid platform to ensure that children and youth have a seat at the policy making table, and that, as key stakeholders, their voices are heard”

– **Rafael Obregon**, *Chief, Communication for Development Unit UNICEF*

“In order to bring these inequalities to public discussion, as a prelude for legislative, policy and civic action, UNICEF needs to develop and/or use its capacity as a political actor, but one with a non-partisan agenda—i.e. the agenda of the child. Sticking closely to UNICEF’s agenda of universal realization of child rights allows it to be political while being seen to be non-partisan. Political work is most successful with allies, be they in the government itself, in the UN system, with churches and other local actors for social justice, media and academia”

- **Liz Gibbons**, *former Deputy Director, Policy and Practice, UNICEF*

## 12. Be bold, dedicated and determined

“If we want to be relevant, we need to make sure we are bolder in joining the conversation, even when it may be easier to not say or do anything. We need to make sure, just like the time of James Grant, that we are clearly on the side of the poorest and most vulnerable children.

And often, especially these days, our voice and moral stand, far out weighs our programme contribution, especially in shaping the longer term agenda for kids and the type of society they will grow up in. And, if not, then we not only risk failing our mandate but like other parts of UN, be perceived as irrelevant.”

– *Shantha Bloemen, Communication Chief, Africa Services Unit, UNICEF  
Johannesburg*

# Keep sharing your views

Share your thoughts about the  
Consultation and the issues discussed  
at: [roadtopratolino.blogspot.com](http://roadtopratolino.blogspot.com)  
[socialpolicy@unicef.org](mailto:socialpolicy@unicef.org)