

Egypt's Path To Social Policy

A Presentation to the Arab Forum
on Social Policy

ESCWA, Beirut, 28-9 October
2009

Outline

- Egypt is a Welfare State
- The Ministry of Social Solidarity
- Current Challenges
- Current Initiatives
- Lingering and un-addressed obstacles to better policy

What has happened in Egypt!



Ministry of Social Solidarity

- Responsibilities
 - Social Security
 - Social Protection
 - Crisis Management
 - Supplies and Subsidies
 - Poverty Alleviation
 - Managing Civil Society
 - Banking for the Poor

Challenges



- 40% + reported subjective poverty
- Young poverty and inter-generational transmissions of poverty



- Poor capacities in implementation
- Lack of political coordination
- Lack of sound policy making
- Poor participation ethics



- Few experimental designs
- Poor publication records
- No audience
- Conceptual confusions

New Initiatives (all poverty Focused)

- 1000 villages
- Smart cards
- Ministry restructuring and capacity building and new social security law
- Targeting and proxy means testing for poverty
- More efficient food subsidies
- More generous food subsidies
- Conditional Cash Transfers

What are CCT's

Social policy intended to break the intergenerational transfer of poverty, enable families to invest in education and health of children

- Social policy implemented in dozens of countries (Latin America, Yemen, Turkey, Morocco, etc.)
- Provides regular cash payment to poor families in exchange for fulfilling health and education conditions:
 - Children under certain age attend school
 - Children receive vaccinations and preventive health checkups
- Cash given to female head of household

Why are CCT's popular

- Appease the tax payer through co-responsibility
- Give cash to the poor
- Efficient ?? (if supply is able to meet new demand)
- Monitored (learning opportunity)
- Innovative (opportunity to avail the very poor to citizenship rights)
- Address the dynamics of poverty (given to the working poor/women)

CCT Program Pilot in Egypt

- First comprehensive (health and education) CCT in an Arab country
- Rigorous design and impact evaluation
- 2 yr pilot to test if CCT is:
 - Appropriate
 - Effective
 - Empowering
 - Cost efficient

tool in the Egyptian context.

**EXPERIMENTAL
RANDOMIZED
CONTROL
STUDY**

in UPPER EGYPT
(Assiut and Sohag)

Gaps and Omissions

- *Growth vs. distribution*
- *Poverty alleviation vs. development*
- *Implementation and class contests*
- *Legitimate policy making and consensus building*
- *The fatal attraction of populism*

Thank You

