



ESCWA



# **Inclusive Social Development in the Arab Region – report overview**

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# Background

- Political changes imply significant consequences for public policy and welfare systems at a time when **long-term vulnerabilities** – including **high levels of unemployment, political instability** and a **dual disease burden** are increasing in the region.
- But main focus of policy makers has been on **security, Islamists and sectarianism**.
- **Social policy and reform** is being **neglected**
- Some of the main drivers of tension pre 2010/11 are key pillars of public policy - **employment, access to social protection and healthcare**.
- Some evidence to suggest that **uprisings** have been a **step back** in development terms.

# Background

- **Major challenge now:** governments which must respond to both long- and short-term vulnerabilities while accommodating a much greater degree of public scrutiny and accountability.
- **Inclusive Social Development** a key element in the post 2015 **Sustainable Development Goals**.
- **BUT** few resources, data, policy guides or tools available for decisions makers to draw on in determining the range of policy options available to them over the coming decade.

# Report aims

- Provide evidence **‘tool kit’** and guide for policy makers to assist in **policy design** and **implementation**.
- Consists of comprehensive evidence review and mapping of the key issues for the development of social inclusion and social cohesion in the region.
- Use regional and international case studies of *what works, why and for who* in social policy.
- Use evidence base to design and implement rights-based inclusive social development policies across the ESCWA region.

# Report overview

## Chapter One

- Key socio-economic challenges and trends over the past ten years in the region.
- Future governing trends and drivers of change both internal and external.
- Overview of the Arab uprisings and demographic, economic and political changes brought about by the conflicts in the region
- SDGs/post 2015 UN development Agenda formulation and the need to influence them from an Arab regional perspective fleshing out regional priorities including the call for Social justice and inclusive social development

# Chapter One

- Highlights data and evidence gaps.
- Lack of evidence from the region on the linkages between policies such as:
- How does employment / unemployment affect health / wellbeing? What are the costs to economies of ill health?
- What are the economic benefits of investment in health?
- What is the effectiveness of ALMPs to economies and individual wellbeing?
- How does housing and planning affect community cohesion?

## Chapter 2 – What is Inclusive Social Development?

- Discusses history and relevance of ISD to the Arab World.
- International experience, UN, the International Development Agenda, including the Copenhagen Summit 1995, the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, the Rio plus 20 outcomes and its deliberations.
- How citizens see the role of the State and current priorities for the public.
- Uses case study examples from outside the region where inclusive social development policies have been introduced in resource constrained settings - Brazil, Thailand, Mexico – Pensions / Universal Health Care.

## Chapter 3 – Governance and social policy structures

- Examines the role of the State.
- Overview of social policy regimes operating across the region.
- Social actors in the provision of policy – formal / informal institutions and non state actors
- Policy mechanisms and instruments.
- Patterns and levels of social expenditure.
- Forms of entitlement: universalism vs. targeting; contributory vs. non-contributory.



## **Chapter 4 - Generating inclusive labour markets: bridging the gap between formal and informal employment sectors**

- Overview of labour market characteristics in Arab countries - over reliance on public sector and migrant labour from Asia, under developed private sector, formal and informal sectors, high levels of unemployment.

### **Case study examples:**

- Nationalisation programmes in GCC countries.
- Use of active labour market policies – Tunisia.
- Labour market and protection reform – scaling down of the Kefala system in Kuwait.
- Development of unemployment insurance in Jordan.

## **Chapter 5 – Generating inclusive social protection**

- Overview and examples of the types of social protection regimes in the region.
- Need for Social Safety Nets.

### **Focus on three pillars of SP:**

- Pension Schemes
- Unemployment Insurance Schemes
- Universal versus targeted health care
- Discussion of possible financing mechanisms and policy levers to enhance social protection - Social Protection Floor (SPF) Jordan.
- Classical International case studies: Vietnam, Mexico and Thailand.

## Chapter 6 – Enhancing access to education

- Why is access to education essential for development, reducing inequality and exclusion and improving social mobility and overall equality and inclusion.
- Overview of main education challenges by country / region and main social groups that suffer from education challenges.

Regional example case studies:

- Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco.

International examples case studies:

- Thailand, Mexico, Brazil

## Chapter 7 - Strengthening access to land and housing

- The links between land and housing in the region and relation to development goals and MDGs.
- Overview of the main land and housing challenges – price, supply, political disputes, affordability, habitability.
- Regional examples: upgrading slums to reduce the share of slum population and housing financing schemes.
- Morocco and Tunisia upgrading slums and to reduce the share of slum population.

## Chapter 8 - Better together? Generating social cohesion in Arab countries

- Overview and discuss the 'contested' concept of social cohesion and its linkages with ISD.
- Social cohesion and social capital, Fractionalisation/ethnic diversity and links to economic growth.
- Provides social cohesion 'snapshot' in the region.
- What are factors that erode and promote social cohesion?
- Possible indicators for monitoring social cohesion in the ESCWA region.

## **Chapter 9 - Options for generating and sustaining inclusive social development and cohesion in Arab countries**

Discussion of key lessons and future challenges:

- Mass population movements placing socio-economic burdens on countries.
- Demographic and political instability / conflict.
- Increased spending on security away from social welfare – ‘crowding out’?
- Ageing populations.
- New technologies and medical progress.
- Dwindling natural resources – water.
- Increasing expectations of populations for reforms.

# Some possible policy options and lessons from previous transitions

- Need to convince policy makers that social protection policies are cost effective investments for economic growth – *'The dead don't do much'* (Amartya Sen).
- Ensuring adequate resources are put into welfare system development, at a time when there are many competing spending priorities – defense and security.
- Guard against rapid socioeconomic change in the interests of radical reform.

# Options for promoting inclusive social development?

- Promoting effective government and supporting governance reforms.
- Reprioritisation of spending and political attitudes toward welfare and social protection systems.
- Tackling vested interests.
- Increasing transparency and monitoring through stronger and up-to-date national information and data collection on key social and economic issues – health, labour markets, vulnerable populations.
- Universal Health Care and Active Labour Market Programmes.



## A few questions to think about...

- What do you understand by Inclusive Social Development? How is it defined in your country, organisation/agency, sector?
- How important / significant is each policy area – health, education, land, housing, labour markets to the delivery of ISD? Can we prioritise certain sectors?
- How do you define social cohesion? What do you understand by cohesion and how does your sector affect cohesion?

## **A few questions to think about...**

- How to promote and implement Inclusive Social Development when they are competing policy and political priorities / ideologies – security, defense and austerity?
- What will the long term effects of the current conflicts and instability have on key pillars of ISD such as healthcare, education, access to housing, land, the labour market?
- What policy outcomes do we want? Hard economic outcomes – GDP, job entries or supposedly more ‘soft’ outcomes such as health and wellbeing?
- Which outcomes matter most for ISD?

Thank you!

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