



Health, Education, Social Protection

Basic social protection against poverty

The challenge

Formal social protection systems in developing countries and emerging economies are often rudimentary and exclude people working in the informal sector, agricultural workers and the very needy. The sick, the elderly, the unemployed, orphans and those unable to work therefore rely mainly on support from traditional and informal networks for a modicum of social protection. However, these informal structures are breaking down due to HIV/AIDS, migration and new lifestyles.

Missing formal social protection systems often lead to families taking on negative coping strategies such as taking children out of school and sending them to work instead. What's more, extremely poor households often slip through conventional safety nets: self-help, employment or vocational training schemes, for example, often do not reach them at all.

Our approach

In response to these challenges, we are promoting innovative approaches which facilitate access to social services and social protection for previously excluded population groups. We see basic social protection as a fundamental pillar of social security. It includes social transfers, especially for poor families, e.g. in the form of needs-based cash transfers, child benefits and non-contributory pensions for the elderly.

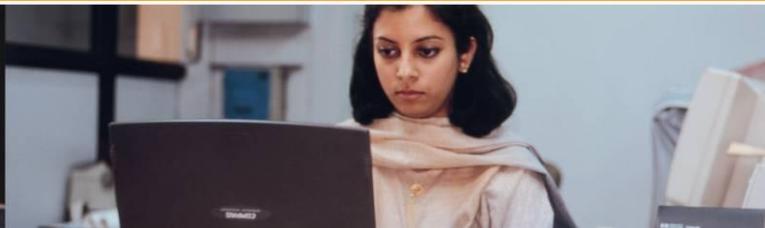
Basic social protection also includes non-monetary transfers such as voucher schemes which provide no-cost access to specific health or education services. In many countries, school meals and supplementary food are provided for undernourished children, for example. In this context, GIZ supports public employment programmes which ensure basic food security, such as 'food-for-work' and 'cash-for-work' programmes.

Our services

We can draw on our comprehensive expertise and wealth of experience in implementing social protection systems, specifically, basic social protection. When designing our services, we take account of the social protection system as a whole, to ensure that measures do not take place in isolation. The overall system of social protection usually encompasses, besides public schemes, also community based (co-operative) and private sector schemes. We also consider the synergies between public schemes and informal forms of social protection, such as those provided by family or community networks. We ensure that there is linkage between basic social protection and other social development topics, e.g. education and health, modernisation of government, and economic reform.

We particularly support the development and reform of basic social protection systems. To this end, we advise ministries and implementing organisations in our partner countries in the following areas:

- We analyse existing approaches to basic social protection and develop strategies in order to integrate poor population groups into social protection systems more effectively.
- We provide policy advice on the introduction of basic social protection programmes on a strategic level and as process support.
- We provide advice on the selection, adaptation and coordination of targeting methods (needs analyses and disbursement systems) and link existing elements of basic social protection together to form a comprehensive system. We also support the requisite institutional capacity building in this context.



- We provide advice on the conditioning of social transfers, the expansion of the supply side of social services, and the introduction of accompanying social policy measures (such as linkage between labour market policy and social and educational interventions, and linkage with microfinance services).
- Through the design and implementation of training and professional development measures, we help to establish sustainable social protection structures.

The benefit

You benefit from our many years of experience and national and international contacts with specialised ministries and institutions working in the field of social policy and development cooperation. In this context, we are guided by current developments – our approaches are needs-oriented and always take account of current thinking.

We target our measures towards the ‘poorest of the poor’ and include them in solidarity-based social protection systems. In this way, social protection helps to overcome the illness-poverty trap and safeguard an acceptable standard of living for the next generations. It also provides impetus for demand-oriented growth and peaceful social relations.

An example from the field

In El Salvador, on behalf of BMZ, we have supported the introduction and implementation of the national Poverty Reduction Strategy since 2005. The strategy provides basic social protection via social transfers. The target group consists of 100 of the poorest municipalities in this Central American country. The project currently reaches more than 100,000 households in 77 municipalities.

The core of the strategy is the ‘Red Solidaria’ programme, which builds on the positive experiences gained with similar programmes in other Latin American countries. The payment of social transfers is conditional on children attending school and preventive health care services being accessed. The social transfers are only paid to female heads of households.

In the first year, the number of enrolments at pre-school increased by 23 per cent in 15 municipalities. In classes 1-3, the number of pupils increased by 6 per cent, and in classes 3-6 an increase of 9 per cent was recorded. In the health sector, too, an increase could be observed: the number of precautionary check-ups for the under-5- year- olds increased by 47 per cent, while the number of pregnant women attending pre-natal check-ups increased by 42 per cent.

In order to ensure that the scheme is incorporated into a regular programme, the quality and quantity of social services and the Social Development Fund, which is responsible for implementation, have been expanded. Linkage with other social and economic policy measures has also been strengthened. In this way, ‘Red Solidaria’ is progressively establishing a sustainable system of basic social protection to counteract the poverty trap faced by many families.

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