

Report

Extending and Institutionalising Social Protection in Asia: A Regional Policy-Research and Network Building Program

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Recipient Organisation

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Collaborating Institution

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Other donors: Ford Foundation (US\$1.5million)

Participating Institutions

Ten research institutions participated in this research programme. Details of research partners are available at www.socialprotectionasia.org

Synthesis:

IDRC support is to compliment the research grant in terms of expanding outreach of research outputs beyond academic community to policymakers. Towards this end, several activities have been undertaken during the reporting period to facilitate interaction between researchers and policymakers. A brief summary of the same is given below.

1. At the 10th anniversary conference of the Chronic Poverty Research Center, held in Manchester during 8-10 September, 2010, SPA research findings were shared in a session chaired by Prof. Naila Kabeer, Programme Director, SPA. The session saw three presentations from China and one from Indonesia.
2. SPA organised its annual conference in Bangkok from October 27-29, 2010, in collaboration with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). The meeting provided a platform for policymakers, researchers and the civil society to exchange their views on social protection and its role in the development of the countries in the region.
3. **Regional SPA dissemination workshops** were also held at Beijing, Colombo (for South Asia) and Jakarta (South-East Asia) in December 2010, February and March 2011 respectively. These events were crucial as they shared the findings of the SPA research with local policymakers and other stakeholders in the regions and also explored issues for future research in the area.
4. SPA hosted a panel discussion on **Labour Markets and Social Protection in Emerging Economies: Experiences and Issues in Brazil, China, India and South Africa** on 16 December, 2010 on the eve of the 52nd Indian Society of Labour Economics Conference at Dharwad, Karnataka (India). It sought to compare challenges and solutions in social protection in these four emerging economies for evolving a further comparative research among the participating institutions.
5. During the period, SPA regional coordination team (IHD, New Delhi) was also engaged in dissemination activities in the form of newsletters, organisation of events, maintenance of the SPA website and production activities pertaining to publication of

a book on SPA – tentatively titled **Social Protection in Asia: Experiences and Lessons in Extension** (under production).

6. SPA was instrumental in designing and providing intellectual and academic base and support for the UNESCO inspired work on social protection in South Asia. SPA team and researchers from the region contributed to setting the agenda of these UNESCO meets. The **Research Meeting on Social Protection Policies in South Asia** held during 19-19 March, 2010 in New Delhi, was jointly organised by UNESCO and ICSSR within the framework of UNESCO's Management of Social Transformation (MOST) programme. The meeting sought to provide support material and expertise in view of the meeting of the Third Ministerial Meeting of the UNESCO Forum of Ministers in Charge of Social Development from South Asia in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2011. This preparatory meeting saw the participation of over 40 scholars and experts from across South Asia. Twelve research papers and presentations, having a focus on implementation, innovations and extensions of social protection in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and South Asia as a whole, were debated and discussed. The material collected for the meeting, including a Summary Report of the debate and the recommendations from researchers, was compiled in a working document to provide inputs to the Ministerial Meeting. It is available online, along with the full research papers, concept note, agenda, list of participants, at: www.unesco.org/newdelhi. The summary report of the meeting is given in Annexure 6.

The Third Ministerial Meeting of UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia was held during 20-22 February, 2011, with the objective of providing the opportunity for social policy dialogue among South Asian countries in the field of social protection policies. The meeting was jointly organised in Colombo, Sri Lanka by Sri Lanka's Ministry of Social Services (MSS) and UNESCO. The agenda and concept note of the meeting are given in Annexure 6.

Objectives

The main purpose of this programme on Social Protection in Asia is to fund a set of activities that will:

- Support action and policy oriented research on Social Protection ideas, experiences and practices in the Asia region;

With specific reference to IDRC support, it is anticipated that SPA research would contribute to:

- Support networking activities among Asian institutions working on Social Protection leading to the creation of a stable basis for future collaboration within a strong regional network for research and policy advocacy;
- Through the research and related activities of the network, develop a strong regional voice on Social Protection and an institutional presence that can engage in policy dialogue and advocacy with national governments and international institutions.

Project Progress and Output

1. The SPA research findings were shared at the 10th anniversary conference of the Chronic Poverty Research Center, held in Manchester during 8-10 September, 2010. In the session, '**Social Protection in Asia: Responding to Vulnerability**', chaired by Prof. Naila Kabeer, Programme Director, SPA, three presentations from China and one from Indonesia were made on:

- i. Mobility Patterns of Rural-Urban Migrants and Their Social Protection in China: Beyond the Extension of Urban Based Approaches
- ii. Conditional Cash Transfers for the Alleviation of Chronic Poverty: The Experience of Indonesia
- iii. The Organisation of Community Support for the Rural Aged in the Time of Economic Transition
- iv. The Impact of Natural Disasters on the Social Protection System: Empirical Evidences from the Wenchuan Earthquake

These research papers were part of the CPRC research material for wider dissemination. The conference hosted by the Brooks World Poverty Institute (BWPI) brought together leading poverty researchers and actors for poverty reduction to: (i) review the 'state of the art' in poverty reduction; (ii) showcase CPRC's key research findings on chronic poverty; (iii) set the research and policy agenda on poverty research for the next 10 years (2010-2020). The conference programme is given in Annexure 1.

2. The annual conference of SPA was organised in Bangkok from October 27-29, 2010, in collaboration with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). Titled '**Social Protection as Development Policy in Asia: The Long Term Perspective**', the meeting sought to provide a platform for policymakers, researchers and the civil society to exchange their views and experiences on social protection and its role in the development of the countries in the region. The highlight of the three-day event was the unveiling of the SPA Synthesis Report and presentation of its key findings. The event gave visibility to the SPA research outputs as they were being shared within a larger platform comprising of policymakers, civil society leaders, academics and international NGO leaders. A small write on the conference was carried out in the SPA Newsletter No. 8, December 2010 issue, a copy of which is given in Annexure 2.

3. Regional SPA dissemination workshops were carried out in Beijing, Colombo (for South Asia) and Jakarta (South-East Asia).

Social Protection in Asia: Southeast Asia and China Regional Workshop, was held during 18-19 December, 2010, at Beijing Normal University, China, to present the findings of the five SPA teams in China and Vietnam and also deliberate on the issues generated thereof with government officials from the two countries. The workshop particularly intended to reach out to local officials on the ground level, who are often excluded from such deliberations. The idea was to bring the on-the-ground perspective of the frontline social protection practitioners to help shed a new light on the research findings. About 40 scholars and government officials from China and Vietnam gathered for eight sessions in issues ranging from an overview of social protection, challenge of migration, impact of natural disasters on social protection, old age and social protection, social protection in Vietnam, health insurance and social

protection, etc. The workshop concluded with the research teams deliberating on areas of future research and key policy issues that need to be addressed.

Social Protection and Inclusive Development: Emerging Issues and Perspectives in South Asia, a one-day consultation workshop was held in Colombo on 23 February, 2011 to explore the issues of inclusive development and social protection in South Asia. The workshop was attended by about 30 participants from South Asian countries (mainly India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka) and representatives of ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, IDRC and other governmental and non-governmental organisations. The participants discussed the synthesis report of the SPA and based on the discussions and learning, raised issues for further research and study.

Social Protection in Southeast Asia: Emerging Issues and Perspectives for Research and Policy, the final dissemination event in the series, was held on 30 March, 2011 in Jakarta in collaboration with the SMERU Research Institute. The aim was to engage with policymakers from countries in the Southeast Asia region on key messages of SPA and share experiences in expanding social protection in the region. The workshop was attended by policymakers and relevant stakeholders from India, Cambodia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia. The workshop comprised of three inter-connected sessions on dissemination of SPA key learning, exchange of cross countries experiences in expanding social protection and presentation of studies on impact and effectiveness of several social protection interventions.

Reports of these three events are given in Annexure 3.

4. A panel discussion on **Labour Markets and Social Protection in Emerging Economies: Experiences and Issues in Brazil, China, India and South Africa** was hosted by SPA on 16 December, 2010 on the eve of the 52nd Indian Society of Labour Economics Conference in Dharwad, Karnataka (India). The panel aimed to compare challenges and solutions in social protection in these four emerging economies for evolving a comparative research among the participating institutions. These countries have different labour market structures, institutions and histories, and different political and economic environments, but much can be learnt by analysing and comparing the different policy issues and research approaches in each country. Three main themes were addressed:

- the effects of integration in the global economy on the pace of employment creation;
- the universalisation of social protection; and
- changing patterns of inequality in the labour market.

Four presentations were made by Alexandre de Freitas Barbosa of the University of Sao Paulo, Haroon Bhorat of the University of Cape Town, Ajit Ghose of the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, and Wei Zhong of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. A report of this panel discussion is given in Annexure 4.

5. The regional coordinating team was also involved in communication activities like newsletters, editing of reports, maintenance of the SPA website, etc. An important highlight in this is the publication on SPA – tentatively titled **Social Protection in Asia: Experiences and Lessons in Extension** (under production).

Till date, nine newsletters have been brought out under the programme, providing information on various SPA activities. These newsletters are uploaded on the SPA website under the link: <http://www.socialprotectionasia.org/newsletters.asp> and also disseminated through the mailing list.

SPA Final Research Papers, written by SPA research partners, provide relevant background information for readers unfamiliar with the area being researched. They include the context - political, economic and social environment, the institutional and policy context – and the preliminary research findings of each project. Summaries of 13 working papers are also available and provide a brief overview. These papers are uploaded on the website under the link: <http://www.socialprotectionasia.org/SPA-Final-Research-Papers-2011.asp>

SPA niche publication, **Social Protection in Asia: Experiences and Lessons in Extension** (currently under production), identifies regional and country-wise performance of social protection policies and programmes. This volume starts with tracing the evolution of the concept of social protection, various issues under it, and regional overviews of social protection in South Asia, South-East Asia and North-East Asia. This is followed by country specific studies of seven Asian countries, namely, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Korea, Indonesia and Vietnam.

Details of the newsletters and the draft publication are given in Annexure 5.

- 6. SPA provided intellectual and academic support to UNESCO for its work on social protection in South Asia. SPA team and researchers from the region contributed to setting the agenda of the following UNESCO meets: The **Research Meeting on Social Protection Policies in South Asia** held during 18-19 March, 2010 in New Delhi, was jointly organised by UNESCO and ICSSR within the framework of UNESCO's Management of Social Transformation (MOST) programme. The meeting sought to provide support material and expertise in view of the meeting of the Third Ministerial Meeting of the UNESCO Forum of Ministers in Charge of Social Development from South Asia in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2011. This preparatory meeting saw the participation of over 40 scholars and experts from across South Asia. Twelve research papers and presentations, having a focus on implementation, innovations and extensions of social protection in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and South Asia as a whole, were debated and discussed. The material collected for the meeting, including a Summary Report of the debate and the recommendations from researchers, was compiled in a working document to provide inputs to the Ministerial Meeting. It is available online, along with the full research papers, concept note, agenda, list of participants, at: www.unesco.org/newdelhi. The SPA contributed in the preparation of the research report, which was shared for wider dissemination amongst the ministries of governments of South Asia and among the civil society. The SPA regional coordinator also contributed to the preparation of the policy recommendations of this meet.

SPA Programme Co-Director and IHD Director Prof. Alakh Sharma and Programme Coordinator Mr Upendranadh were closely involved in the preparation of the **Third Ministerial Meeting of UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia**, held in Colombo during 20-22 February, 2011. Prof. Sharma was member of the Advisory Committee, constituted for organising this meeting.

The summary report of the New Delhi meeting and the agenda and concept note of the Colombo meeting are given in Annexure 6.

Project implementation and management:

- The Regional Coordination team successfully managed the CPRC conference (participation from SPA partners), annual conference and dissemination event. Details of the events are provided in Annexures below.
- The regional coordination team also liaised with IDS in preparation of the closure report of Ford foundation grant and also corresponded with IDRC on extension of the grant time period (until March 2011)
- Other activities like updating of database, newsletters, dissemination of material, website maintenance, etc have been undertaken regularly as per the plans.

Project outputs and dissemination (recent activities)

SPA Final Research Papers, written by SPA research partners, provide relevant background information for readers unfamiliar with the area being researched. They include the context - political, economic and social environment, the institutional and policy context – and the preliminary research findings of each project. Summaries of 13 working papers are also available and provide a brief overview. These papers are uploaded on the website under the link: <http://www.socialprotectionasia.org/SPA-Final-Research-Papers-2011.asp>