

WHAT IS SOCIAL PROTECTION?

Social Protection is a collection of measures to **reduce poverty** and **foster economic growth**. These measures target individuals, households, and communities to better

- manage the income risks that leave people vulnerable
- increase access to basic services such as health or education
- provide income stability.

Social protection is implemented through three main avenues:

- **Legislation:** such as regulatory policies.
- **Social assistance:** regular and predictable transfers provided as cash, in-kind (often food) or as vouchers to vulnerable individuals or households.
- **Social insurance:** if the individual or the family experience a shock or negative change in circumstances, they receive financial support. Social insurance is based on prior contributions and therefore is mostly financed by formal employers and employees.

In recent years, the concept of **Social Protection Floors (SPF)** is favoured to implement social protection. It includes

- a basic set of social guarantees for all (horizontal dimension), paying particular attention to vulnerable groups in areas such as health, education, housing, basic income and nutrition
- the gradual implementation of higher standards (vertical dimension), such as social insurance, social security benefits and other contributory schemes.

REMOVING BARRIERS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Benister lives in Meghalaya in India and is visually impaired. In India like in many countries, persons with disabilities have great difficulty finding employment and are often obliged to depend on their families for housing and subsistence. Benister joined the **National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme** that provides a guarantee to at least 100 days of employment per year for adults at minimum wage. Joining the scheme was a way for Benister to **show people that he can work just like others**, if the environment is accessible and conducive.

„The scheme has given me confidence to **challenge stereotypes** in my community. I am proud to lead a dignified and **independent life**, without being a financial burden to my family.“

Benister is now working in Hyderabad as a tour guide. It is crucial to **remove physical and other barriers to social protection schemes**, so that persons with disabilities can participate, become empowered and financially stable and make an important contribution to society.



UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, ARTICLE 28

“...States Parties recognize **the right of persons with disabilities to social protection** and to the enjoyment of that right without discrimination on the basis of disability, and shall take appropriate steps to safeguard and promote the realization of this right...”

TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY



The main argument for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in social protection is the **clear interlinkage of poverty and disability**. Especially in developing countries, persons with disabilities are more likely to be poor, unemployed and have little access to education. There are 1 billion persons with disabilities worldwide with an estimated 80% living in developing countries. Failing to include this numerous group into social protection schemes is not only problematic from a human rights point of view, but economically counter-productive for the development of societies.

There are fears among disability rights advocates that social protection might be considered as handouts that reinforce the common assumption of persons with disabilities as dependent, passive, and unable to care for themselves.

But from a rights-based perspective, social protection measures are vital to **achieve equalization**: social transfers can **reduce vulnerability** and **enable greater participation** in economic and social life. By covering additional costs that incur as a result of a disability (for example assistive devices) social protection measures can help to **overcome discriminatory barriers** which persons with disabilities experience in society.

Social protection is not charity. It is a human-rights based tool to support people's independence. Its main goals are **empowerment** and **income stability**. It is both crucial that persons with disabilities are included in mainstream social protection schemes, and that targeted action is taken for disabled members of the community.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- 50% of the world's population lack access to any type of social security protection.
- Only about 10% of workers in developing countries enjoy any insurance coverage for occupational safety and health.
- About 470 million of the world's working age people have some form of disability.
- In developing countries an estimated 80-90% of persons with disabilities of working age are unemployed.
- Social Protection Floors cost between 1% and 5% of the GDP and can be customized for the context of every country.

SOME BARRIERS FACED BY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO ACCESS SOCIAL PROTECTION

- Physical inaccessibility
- Complex and hostile administration
- Poor and unclear communication
- Poor governance
- Eligibility assessment methods
- Means testing
- Low funding levels
- Low awareness

For more information on the End Exclusion project, visit www.endexclusion.eu



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