

STUDY GROUP: SOCIAL PROTECTION

Colleagues working in the area of social protection, including all dimensions of social security, are invited to join this study group. The work of the group should be of specific interest to academics, researchers and experts, policy-makers and -implementers, courts and other adjudicators, social partners and civil society, government agencies/institutions, multilateral bodies (ILO, ISSA, UNDP, UNICEF), human rights bodies, continental and regional institutions and bodies. Involvement of interested persons from both the global south and the global north is encouraged.

Access to social protection is central to ending poverty. The International Labour Organisation and World Bank organisations define ‘universal social protection’ to include the integrated set of policies designed to ensure income security and support to all people across the life cycle, with particular attention placed on poor and vulnerable persons (ILO / World Bank “A shared mission for universal social protection” *Concept Note* accessed at http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/social-security/WCMS_378991/lang--en/index.htm). Although the scope of research and related activity of the study group is to be determined by members of the group themselves, on an ongoing basis, it is suggested that ‘social protection’ be broadly defined, also to include issues such as the need for economic security. In this way, policies and programmes aiming to manage various risks and volatility and designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by enhancing the capacity to manage economic and social risks (including all dimensions of health care) are included in the envisaged scope. Following the approach of various global agencies, countries and regions, issues directly related to the labour market (including matters such as public works programmes, employment guarantee schemes, skills development activities and other matters associated with employability) and to the extension of social security to workers in the informal sector are also specifically included as part of the intended scope. Other possible focus areas include, but are not restricted to, issues of coverage and access, the inter-relationship between social protection and the plight of migrant workers, and social protection in ageing societies.

Participants’ work may be grounded in a range of disciplines including law, economics, finance, taxation, public administration, human resources, social development, politics and history. It is expected that the activities of the group will contribute in advancing the frontiers of knowledge in areas such as social assistance, social insurance, employment guarantee schemes and public works programmes, and that reforms designed to enhance social protection will be proposed. In this way it is hoped that the work of the study group will address pressing socio-economic challenges such as unemployment and inequality, utilising a variety of approaches and methodologies. Scholars focusing on international, regional, comparative and institutional dimensions of social protection are particularly encouraged to contribute to the work of the study group, as are academics and policy makers from the developing world.

The study group plans to explore how different modalities to advance the achievement of social protection are emerging in different parts of the world, including through country studies, regional- and continental-focused work, and by investigating the role of international standards. The study group will focus primarily on joint research and discourse and will also liaise through online discussion groups and seminars, and may consider joint publications and presentations. The coordinators hope,

in this way, to draw on expertise from a range of different contexts in order to provide a sound platform for future (and ongoing) collaboration and the exchange and publication of innovative research in order to address the significant social protection challenges experienced globally.

The Social Protection Study Group will be convened by Avinash Govindjee, from the Nelson Mandela University in South Africa. The Study Group meeting will take place on 23 July between 14h00 – 15h30, as part of the ILERA World Congress in Seoul, South Korea. The venue for the meeting is Room 314. Please let Avinash (Avinash.govindjee@mandela.ac.za) know if you are interested in attending and / or making a short input on a topic related to social protection when the group convenes. It would be particularly interesting for colleagues from different jurisdictions to make brief inputs / present a case study or overview on their country / regional / continental experiences. All contributions, presentations or discussion starters will be welcome.