ASIA-PACIFIC SOCIAL PROTECTION WEEK 2023
Social Protection in a Changing World
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unicef
for every child

From Evidence to Action

The Role of Evidence and Research to Strengthen Social Protection Systems in Asia and Pacific

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Social Protection in East Asia and Pacific: From Evidence to Action for Children

Lessons from strengthening social protection systems

Distilling experiences

- A **curated selection** of some of the most interesting research produced by UNICEF

- Takes stock of both **policy impacts and results for children** generated by that work

- Presents the **on-the-ground story,** based on real experiences

- **For practitioners, by practitioners** involved in the policy process in each country

- Cambodia, China, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam. India, Sri Lanka, Uganda. Innocenti.

ide ADB with appropriate permission.

Following the Path of Evidence Based Social Protection policies

Use and **Impact** of research on social protection policies

Generate **strong** evidence for social protection policies

Importance of **evidence** for social protection policies

Costing, design

Myth Busters
UNICEF funded research , RCT

Influencing national governments
Political Economy Analysis
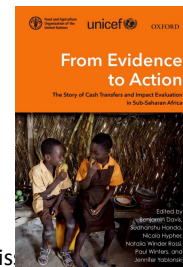Innovative approaches
Climate change, Gender
Financing

Latin America

Africa

Asia-Pacific

Compared with Africa, there is limited research and evidence generate in Asia and Pacific

Evidence-Based Policy

To make well informed **decisions** about policies, programmes and projects by putting the best **available evidence** from research at the heart of policy development and implementation

In the era of **Artificial Intelligence** (AI) and Machine Learning, the capacity to generate **questions** asked by humans matter more than the capacity to generate **answers** provided by ChatGPT.

Policy – B(i)ased - Evidence

Relies heavily on either the selective use of evidence (e.g. on single studies irrespective of quality) or on the untested views of individuals or groups, often inspired by ideological standpoints, prejudices, or speculative conjecture.

Justin Parkhurst The politics of evidence : from evidence-based policy to the good governance of evidence, 2016

How we do it? 1

We **test our hypothesis**
using solid **scientific approach**,

Cash transfer	**No** intervention

Myth-busting

How we do it? 2

We **test our hypothesis**
using solid **scientific approach**,
to assess the impact of **alternative** options

| **No** conditionalities | **With** conditionalities | **No** intervention |

New direction of Social Protection Research

AI and Big Data	Admin and secondary data	Political Economy Analysis
Qualitative Research	M&E Post-distribution	Foresight

" There is nothing
a government hates more
than to be well-informed;

for it makes the process of arriving
at decisions much more
complicated and difficult."

John Maynard Keynes

From Knowledge to Action: **Building Policy Impact**

❑ **We need policy skills**

Policy skills are not about the kind of in-depth knowledge of a subject area that typifies the lifetime of an academic.

Policy skills are about being able to absorb relevant high-level information quickly, make informed judgements and advise policy-makers on the most effective way to implement public commitments made to voters.

❑ **We need to invest in evidence policy impact**

- How much **time and money** you invest in **research**?
- How much in the **policy process**?

Understand and focus on policy makers:
✓ Different environment
✓ Different language
✓ Different priorities

The Research process is part of the solution:
✓ Build Relationships
✓ Share ownerships
✓ Document

The focus of **decision-making is shifting** from data, numbers, and facts **to genderate knowledge**

the importance of **nurturing human skills** that complement these new capabilities

Humans bring **critical thinking**, **creativity**, and **empathy** to the table

Investing in research and evidence generation becomes vital to equip individuals with the necessary **skills**

Cutting edge of Social Protection Research

- Going beyond indicators (they don't explain)
- Going beyond the impact evaluation design
- RCT not always possible (Money Ethics)
- Different methods of quasi experimental design (propensity score matching, regression discontinuity design etc
- AI as a great opportunity to improve efficiency and effectiveness, if well used
- Focus on the change generated by knowledge

Thank you

For every child   Social Protection

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