Welcome to the webinar

The politics of gender-responsive social protection

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The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID)
socialprotection.org presents:

The politics of gender-responsive social protection

Speakers:

Laura Alfers, Director, Social Protection Programme, WIEGO

Nicola Jones, Principal Research Fellow, Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) programme, ODI

Lía Limón, Founder of the program on day care centres for working women's children at the Ministry of Social Development, Mexico

Moderator:

Rebecca Holmes, Research Associate, Social Protection and Social Policy Programme, ODI
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The politics of gender-responsive social protection

Presenter

Nicola Jones
ODI

Nicola Jones has a PhD in Political Science and is a Principal Research Fellow in the Gender and Social Inclusion Programme at ODI and is the Director of the Gender and Adolescent: Global Evidence (GAGE) programme, a multi-year longitudinal mixed methods research programme focused on what works to support the well-being of adolescent girls and boys in the Global South. She has co-authored/co-edited three key books on social protection including Gender and Protection in the Development World: Beyond Mothers and Safety Nets (2013) with Rebecca Holmes; The Social and Political Potential of Cash Transfers with Maxine Molyneux and Fiona Samuels (2017); and a forthcoming book entitled Social Policy in the Middle East and North Africa Region and the New Social Protection Paradigm: Change and continuity in the quest for universal coverage with Rana Jawad and Mahmoud Messkoub.
Laura Alfers is the Director of the Social Protection Programme of the global research-action-advocacy network, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO). In her work for WIEGO over the last nine years she has worked with organizations of informal workers in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia to better understand the risks faced by these workers and the possibilities for developing holistic solutions which cross the domains of social protection, public services and urban infrastructure. Laura completed her PhD at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, and currently holds a position as Research Associate in the Department of Sociology at Rhodes University also in South Africa. She is the co-editor with Jim Midgley and Rebecca Surender of the forthcoming Handbook of Social Policy and Development (Edward Elgar).
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**Presenter**

*Lía Limón*

Mexico Government

Lía Limón has a Masters Degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. She is the founder of the program on day care centers for working women’s children at the Ministry of Social Development in Mexico. She is also the former vice minister of human rights at the Ministry of the Interior, and former local and federal Congress Woman in Mexico.
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Moderator

Rebecca Holmes
ODI

Rebecca specialises in social protection, gender and livelihoods. With a geographical focus on south Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, her recent research includes leading studies on gender and social protection effectiveness, women’s economic empowerment and leadership, and the effects of social protection on social inclusion and cohesion.
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Ideas, Institutions, Interests

Dr. Nicola Jones, Principal Research Fellow and GAGE Director
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Why is a gendered political economy lens important?

An exploration of ‘how households, markets and states as gendered institutions are created and regulated in part by socially constructed norms at local, national and international levels’ (Roberts and Waylen, 1998: 184).
Rosendorf’s (2005) 3Is political economy framework

**Ideas**
- Diverse discourses
  - Rights + citizenship
  - Empowerment + inclusion
  - Human capital investments
  - Poverty reduction
  - Conditional support
  - Contributory programmes
  - Charity model
  - Social cohesion

**Institutions**
- Formal
  - Electoral arena
  - Legislature
  - Constitution
  - UN agencies
  - Inter-agency working groups
  - Donor strategies
- Informal
  - Religious practices
  - Community
  - Family and tribe/clan
  - Old boys networks

**Interests**
- Stakeholder gains
  - Fulfilment of mandate & values
  - Votes
  - Budget resources
  - Prestige/visibility
  - Professional advancement
- Stakeholder losses
  - Budget resources
  - Votes
  - Professional reputation
  - Organisational power
Ideas are central to the ways in which public policy discussions are framed, and in turn shape policy and programming parameters.

- National social protection systems reflect diverse ideas about poverty and vulnerability and their underlying causes, the purpose of social protection and the role of the state and other actors in its delivery (Hickey and Bracking, 2005).

- When adding a gender lens, ideas often play a particularly powerful role, as they are embedded in complex sociocultural norms surrounding understandings of family, care and social reproduction (Folbre, 2009; Holmes and Jones, 2013).

- ‘Mothers in service of the state’ (Molyneux, 2006) vs a rights-based framing has curtailed transformative potential of social protection programmes. Moreover, key silences for caregivers of esp. vulnerable household members, e.g. with disabilities.
Promising practices

• ‘Labelled’ cash transfers aimed at behavioural nudges offer some opportunity to draw attention to specific gender vulnerabilities (e.g. Ghana’s LEAP and UNICEF Jordan’s Hajati cash transfer)

• Cash plus approach for forcibly displaced adolescents focused on cash plus child-safe spaces for girls and boys to protect them all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation funded by EU’s Enhancing Rights programme

• Expanding framing of public works to include community education, investments in time-saving community infrastructure, skills building (Ethiopia PSNP, South Africa public roads programme)
Institutions or institutional arenas encompass formal institutions (e.g. elections and party politics, the legislature, constitution, the judiciary) as well as informal institutions (e.g. old boys networks, families, clans, Zakat) and the opportunities or constraints they present in the negotiation of social protection policy and programme development.

- Social protection policy frameworks, programme design and resourcing are mediated through these formal and informal institutions but the ways in which institutional frameworks shape programme outcomes are highly context-specific.

- Gendered outcomes are linked to the ways in which gender norms and practices are embedded within these institutions – explicitly and implicitly.
Promising practices

- Evidence suggests positive relationship between women elected as local representative and decision-making roles championing social policy issues (Nazneen and Mahmud (2015).
  - E.g. Bolsa Familia CT beneficiaries (Sugayama 2016).

- Some evidence of constitutional reform processes providing spaces for gender-responsive social policy reforms. (Domingo et al., 2017).
  - E.g. Kenya and inclusion of maternity leave provisions under revised labour laws.

- Some evidence of stronger inter-agency cooperation between donors and government agencies implementing large-scale social protection programmes, providing scope for gender mainstreaming
  - E.g. Rwanda’s VUP and Ethiopia’s PNSP public works programmes.

- Some potential in social audit approaches which promote beneficiary feedback loops to strengthen gender-sensitive targeting, guidance and questions
  - E.g. India MGNREGS public works; CARE International in Egypt community score care initiative.
**3Is Interests**

*Interests of key actors* who are likely to gain or lose from policy shifts (e.g. political elites, bureaucratic agencies, donors, civil society champions) and the relative balance of power between them (e.g. power imbalances between officials in ministries of finance and of social welfare).

- Evidence of increased willingness and urgency of elites to extend social assistance in contexts of political legitimacy crises, and social assistance then seen as a potential solution (Hickey et al., 2018).
  - Rwanda’s failure to translate economic growth into inclusive development and build a post-ethnic society;
  - South Africa’s use of the welfare state as badge of legitimacy for the democratically elected government.
  - Peru’s Juntos as a way to promote social cohesion and redress legacy of political violence in impoverished communities.
- Limited incentives for elites to push for gender-responsive social protection agenda.
Promising practices

• Interests of the executive branch:
  ▪ E.g. In Chile, President Bachelet was able to make significant progress in gender-responsive policy areas, e.g. pensions and child care (Staab and Waylen, 2014).

• Interests of the legislative branch:
  ▪ In India, female councillors in Bangalore actively promoted women’s welfare issues, such as widow’s pensions (John, 2008 in Nazneen and Mahmud, 2015).

• Interests of party elites:
  ▪ In South Africa, ANC support of gender equity translated into Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) to include domestic workers (primarily women) (e.g. Plagerson et al., 2017)
How can we be more politically savvy?

Recommendations for Action

- Invest in support for gender-focused civil society organisations to become more established voices in social protection dialogues
- Invest in capacity building with programme implementers to promote buy-in re gender-responsive features
- Invest in documentation of not just technical but also political negotiations and calculi underlying programme design and implementation
- Routinely embed political economy expertise in programme design and roll-out teams
- Map social protection and gender actors in each context, including power, interests, discursive strategies, to identify strategic entry points
- Ensure all programme evaluations routinely adopt a gender- and lifecycle lens to identify gains and silences
- Routinely embed political economy expertise in programme design and roll-out teams
Resources


FURTHERING GENDER RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION: THE ROLE OF GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS OF INFORMAL WORKERS

LAURA ALFERS
DIRECTOR, WIEGO SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME
WIEGO and Social Protection

- WIEGO is a global network of membership based organizations (MBOs) of informal workers, researchers and development professionals working to improve the status of informal workers, particularly women, through:
  - Supporting organization
  - Supporting representation of informal workers in policy processes at various levels
  - Research, Policy Analysis, and Improved Statistics

- For women informal workers, social services are as important to protecting incomes as insurances/assistance – WIEGO therefore has a broad SP agenda.
  - The intersection of work and gender
Grassroots Participation: Why is it Important?

- Through alliances MBOs can create a strong social mobilization for gender-responsive social protection.
- Can push governments to think “from the ground up” about the design of social protection policies & programmes so that they better reach intended beneficiaries.
- Through their own programmes can challenge governments and wider society to expand their ideas about what is possible.
Factors Shaping Participation

- The role of grassroots organizations in furthering a gender responsive SP agenda shaped by two key factors:
  - The presence and nature of spaces for civil society participation.
  - The internal politics of civil society. Whose voices matter? How capacitated are grassroots organizations to engage meaningfully in policy processes?
Spaces for Civil Society Participation

- Strategies of grassroots organizations shaped by the nature of policy spaces:
  - HomeNet Thailand, the Nine Network and the Universal Coverage Scheme: Opening of political space due to an election.
  - KENASVIT and the National Hospital Insurance Fund in Kenya: Limited space opens up due to NHIF’s need to expand membership in the informal economy.
  - When political is very limited/non-existent, organizations can provide their own services to members as an influencing and awareness raising strategy.
    - Asmare Waste Picker Co-operative and Child Care in Brazil
    - SEWA’s Health Co-operative in India
Internal Politics of Civil Society

- Whose voices count and how much space are grassroots organizations given to represent themselves?
  - Tripartite spaces on social insurance include trade unions. Informal worker organizations – even if affiliated to the TU – are not directly represented.
    - e.g. Ghana National Health Insurance, same in Zambia?
  - Social assistance space dominated by NGOs and “experts” – informal workers are not targeted limiting space for engagement.
  - Gendered politics of informal worker organizations
    - Marginalizing women’s concerns such as maternity benefits & child care
Capacity of Grassroots Organizations to Engage with SP

- How much capacity do grassroots organizations have to engage?
  - SP can be highly technical – are grassroots organizations equipped with the tools and language to engage meaningfully?
  - Capacity building support aimed at government, but what about grassroots organizations?
THANK YOU!

www.wiego.org
Estancias Infantiles programme (Federal Day-care Programme for Working Mothers)

Lía Limón

Founder of the program on day care centers for working women’s children at the Ministry of Social Development, Mexico
Federal Day-care Programme for Working Mothers

**Objective: to reduce gender inequality and poverty by facilitating women’s entry into the labour market**

- Launched in 2007, spearheaded by President Felipe Calderon
- Individual women provided with cash grants to renovate and equip homes or facilities to operate as safe day-care centres
- Government pays part of the cost, in combination with mothers payment, determined by mothers income status and expenses incurred by the centre.
- By 2012, 9,565 *Estancias* was providing care for over 330,000 children.
- However, new administration in Mexico effectively closing down the programme as of 2019: the mode of delivery has been changed to direct cash transfers to mothers (that can be spent on any needs), and the value of transfers has been reduced, and the supervisory role in the centres has been removed (no guarantee that the centres are secure).
- These changes have met with fierce opposition by women’s civil society organisations and NGOs.
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Q&A Session

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Thank you for joining

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