

Social Protection from Birth, through the lifecourse: where doe the family fit in the Arab region?

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What is social protection?

- Social policy turn in international development discourse fuelled by need to address rising inequalities and renewed emphasis on the role of the state to alleviate social and economic needs especially in times of crisis and shock (Asian Financial Crisis in early 2000s)
- Social assistance, employment-based social insurance and labour market policies
- ILO Social protection floor: minimum levels of income security and access to key health and education services

SDGs 2030

- Few direct references to the family: mainly in relation to women's rights, most notably failures in legislation
- Important statistic: **64%** of family-based homicide victims are women (SDG report, 2019)
- Livelihoods: family-based for example in rural areas
- Welfare mix: family unit as provider of care and social welfare of last resort

SDGs 2030 that are relevant to family policy

- SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing e.g Maternal Health, elderly care
- SDG 4: Quality education
- SDG 5: Gender quality (MENA worst performer)

Changing family structures in Arab Countries

- Higher age of marriage
- Decreased fertility but not yet an aging population
- High level of youth
- Higher female participation in labour force
- Male-breadwinner models of social policy
- Marriage services are priority for social assistance services across the Arab world

Key Social Protection Implications

- Childcare and care of the elderly
- Unemployment
- Maternity benefits
- Adequate protection services for women within the family
- Role of extended family

Lifecycle: The Place of the Family

- Change across the lifecycle: social protection programmes can attend to fluctuations in need and income
- Family circumstances and income changes over time, hence it is important to consider the role of social protection in maintaining family wellbeing and income levels
- For example, maternity benefits may affect the decision to have children and how many
- Maternity leave can also improve health outcomes for children

International Comparisons: Maternity Policies

- The United States, Papua New Guinea, Swaziland, Liberia and Lesotho are some of the only countries in the world that provide no type of financial support for mothers

Germany has very generous maternity leave but lower fertility rate (1.47 children) in comparison to the USA (1.88 children)

(Source: World Population Review, 2019)