



## Social Policy for Development Planners within the context of COVID-19 Pandemic

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

### Announcement in Brief

- Type: Short Term Course
- Program Area: Social policy
- Beginning of the course: 05 October 2020
- Duration: 9 Weeks
- Language: English & French
- Location: Web Based E-Learning
- Fee: Covered by the UNECA
- Application Deadline: 18 September 2020
- Specific target audience: Technocrat in the fields of social Policy
- Website: <http://services.unidep.org/e-idep/>
- Applications: <https://www.unidep.org/?apply>



## PROGRAM RATIONALE

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Over the last decade or so, the African social policy landscape has witnessed several significant new developments. At one level, in November 2008 and after several false starts, the first African Social Development Ministerial Conference, in Windhoek-Namibia, approved the African Union's African Social Policy Framework (SPF). The SPF is a document that seeks to give an expansive understanding to the idea of 'Social Policy' and its multiple functions for meeting Africa's inclusive development objectives.

At another level that is closely related to the SPF, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) has invested tremendous resources on a deepening of policy reflections on the place and roles of social policy in the development context with a view, inter alia, to bridging the gap between the literature and body of knowledge in mainstream Social Policy and Development Studies. UNRISD's output has demonstrated the mutually embedded and virtuous connection between social policy and economic policy and argued the case for a "transformative social policy" agenda for the countries of Africa and the global South that are categorized as late developers.

Moreover, there are new developments in Social Policy globally such as the new AU Social Policy Framework in accordance with Agenda 2063, and the social dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations Agenda 2030 (SG<sup>1</sup> on "End Poverty in all its forms everywhere for all people" and SDG8 on "Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth, full and productive Employment and Decent work for all").

On the domestic policy front, most African countries give special attention to social policy questions, and social protection as their National Development Plans are anchored in the achievements of UN SDG Agenda 2030 and AU Agenda 2063.

Furthermore, the course on Social Policy is taking part in a very particular context this year, the COVID-19 pandemic; a severe respiratory acute disease that originated from Wuhan, China and has since spread across all continents. The specificity of this pandemic is its mitigation measures (confinement, curfew, social distancing etc.) to limit the strain on health services cause major disruptions in countries' and world Economy.

While the immediate health impact is still evolving, the indirect consequences beyond health already bring a heavy toll. These include food insecurity, lack of medical supplies, loss of income and livelihood, difficulties in applying sanitary and physical distancing measures, a looming debt crisis, as well as related political and security risks.

Economists predict that recession and drop in GDP are inevitable because of the economic impacts (suspended flights, disruption of the supply chains; new low in decline of crude oil; businesses closing down) leading to Social impacts with unprecedented unemployment rate, loss of income; higher poverty rate with millions of people relying on food banks.

According to ECA, COVID-19 employment effects are likely to be severe in urban areas. With urban-based sectors of the economy (manufacturing and services) which currently account for 64% of GDP in Africa are expected to be hit hard by COVID-19 related effects, leading to substantial losses in productive jobs. In particular, the approximately 250 million Africans in informal urban employment (excluding North Africa) will be at risk. Firms and businesses in African cities are highly vulnerable to COVID-19 related effects, especially SMEs which account for 80% of employment in Africa. These risks are compounded by a likely hike in the cost of living is expected as shown for example by some initial reports of up to 100% increase in the price of some food items in some African cities.

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<sup>1</sup> Secretary General Policy Brief on "COVID-19 Impact on Africa", May 2020.

The impact on African economies could be the slowing of growth to 1.8 per cent in the best case scenario or a contraction of 2.6 percent in the worst case. This has the potential to push 29 million people into extreme poverty<sup>2</sup>

Even if the spread of COVID-19 is suppressed in Africa, its economic damage will be unavoidable. The price of oil, which accounts for 40 per cent of Africa's exports, has halved, and major African exports such as textiles and fresh-cut flowers have crashed. Tourism which accounts for up to 38 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) of some African countries has effectively halted, as has the airline industry that supports it. Collapsed businesses may never recover. Without a rapid response, Governments risk losing control and facing unrest.

To protect and build towards our shared prosperity at least a \$100 billion fiscal stimulus is needed to immediately address the urgent healthcare needs, provide safety net for the most vulnerable, protect jobs and support economic activity where possible.

The above-mentioned issues highlight the importance of social protection mechanisms such as unemployment benefits, but also investment in health care and digital education as millions of children in Africa are out of school, especially in Africa.

Several initiatives are currently being pursued across the continent around social insurance schemes, contributory pension schemes, and non-contributory social transfer schemes. A majority of the social protection initiatives are driven by international actors (bilateral and multilateral) keen to invest in the fight against prolonged poverty and exclusion or simply contribute to efforts at supporting some of the more poorly-endowed African states to achieve the SDGs and Agenda 2063. However, strong domestic political and policy constituencies have also emerged within African countries themselves to build a strong stake in social policy and social protection. The context of electoral politics has provided a boost to this growing domestic interest.

Clearly, social policy, and social protection as an integral part of it, has become a central concern in the policy community, making it imperative to invest in the enhancement of the capacity of African policy officials to grasp, respond to and apply them effectively. In the face of the menu of initiatives which are being promoted across Africa involving admixture of actors each with its own specific points of entry and pre-occupation, it is even more urgent to equip African policy officials with a robust capacity not only to engage but also develop instruments that suit their national contexts whilst delivering on Africa's agenda of inclusive development.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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The overarching objective of the course is to contribute to the development of a critical mass of highly skilled middle and senior development officials and decision makers who have a strong social policy consciousness and orientation, and who will be suitably or better equipped to design and manage development plans in which social and economic policies and strategies are fully interfaced to deliver the kinds of transformative outcomes desired. By the end of the capacity-enhancement training programme, the participants are expected to have acquired:

- A robust understanding of the history, diversity, and conceptual underpinnings of social policy;
- A strong appreciation for the interconnections between economic and social policy, and economic development objectives and social development outcomes;
- A full appreciation of the value of integrated and holistic public policymaking;
- An understanding and appreciation of the multi-dimensionality of social policy instruments and social policy functions, including, in particular, the ways in which social policy instruments produce multiple outcomes;
- A robust capacity to design social policy instruments for implementation;
- Skills for assessing and evaluating competing social policy instruments, their strengths and limitations; and

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<sup>2</sup> ECA Report "COVID-19 in Africa: Protecting Lives and Economies", April 2020

- An improved knowledge of Social Policy in the international compacts to meet the SDGs and Agenda 2063.
- Tackling Social Policy within the context of the coronavirus pandemic
- Economic development objectives and social development outcomes;
- A full appreciation of the value of integrated and holistic public policymaking;
- An understanding and appreciation of the multi-dimensionality of social policy instruments and social policy functions, including, in particular, the ways in which social policy instruments produce multiple outcomes;
- A robust capacity to design social policy instruments for implementation;
- Skills for assessing and evaluating competing social policy instruments, their strengths and limitations; and
- An improved knowledge of Social Policy in the international compacts to meet the SDGs and Agenda 2063.
- Tackling Social Policy within the context of the coronavirus pandemic

## CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

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The course consists of the following key modules:

- **Module 1**: The Principles and Political Economy of Development Planning
- **Module 2**: Introduction to the Political Economy of Social Policy and Origins of Social Protection
- **Module 3**: Social Policy: Typology, Diversity of Instruments
- **Module 4**: Social Policy in International Compacts: Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030
- **Module 5**: Social Protection : Domains, Dimensions, Instruments and Tools
- **Module 6**: A comparative Analysis of the Experiences of Social Policy in East Asia
- **Module 7**: The African Social Development Index (ASDI)
- **Module 8**: Financing Social Policy
- **Module 9**: Towards a Transformative Social Policy Framework for Africa
- **Module 10**: Demographic Dynamics and Development

## METHODOLOGY

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This self-paced course will be delivered from 05th October to 4th December 2020. The course will be moderated asynchronously on a weekly basis and participants are required to participate in weekly on-line discussions. In addition, each module has interactive lessons that provide the core content around the topic for that module. The lessons are designed in a way that learners are also able to self-assess their understanding through built-in quizzes. Additional resources such as bibliographies, web links and optional readings are provided for participants who wish to deepen their knowledge of the course topic

## TARGET AUDIENCE

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The target participants are as follows:

- Middle and senior level policy officials and managers directly connected with or responsible for planning, designing, managing, monitoring and evaluating development policy and instruments in their countries;
- Officials outside the core planning institutions who play key roles in economic and/or social policy formulation broadly defined.

## PROGRAM RATIONALE

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### Acceptance to the Course

Applicants to the course are expected to have, as a minimum, a bachelor's degree preferably to social policy or Economy. In addition, two years of work experience in the field will be required. Qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

Until the registration deadline, participants are accepted to the course on a rolling basis and subject to availability of slots.

Applications must be completed exclusively on IDEP online application platform at <https://www.unidep.org/?apply>

### Certificate of Completion

A Certificate of Completion will be issued by IDEP to all participants who successfully complete the course-related self-assessments presented for each module.

### Technical Requirements

Access to internet is an essential condition for participation. The following specifications, as a minimum in terms of hardware and software, are required to take this e-Learning course, please consult your Network Administrator or Systems person to ensure that you have the following:

- Platform: Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT, ME, XP or superior; Mac OS 9 or Mac OS X; Linux
- Hardware: 64 MB of RAM, 1 GB of free disk space
- Software:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader
  - Adobe Flash Player
  - Microsoft Office (Windows or Mac) or Open Office
  - Browser: Google chrome, Firefox 36 or higher or Internet Explorer 7 or higher
- Modem: 56 K
- Note that JavaScript, Cookies and Pop-ups must be enabled

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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