

Child Poverty and Social Protection Conference, 10-11 September 2013, Jakarta.

Conclusion

- Child poverty, vulnerability, and deprivation are among the greatest challenges we are facing now all over the world. This is true from both developmental perspective as well as from human perspective.
- A child's experience of poverty is very different from that of an adult. Children who are considered vulnerable include orphans, street children, child workers, disabled children, and children from excluded families or communities. Hence, it is no wonder that poor and vulnerable children are more likely to have worse adult outcomes than non poor children.
- Child poverty and vulnerability are also closely link to the dynamics of poverty. Households move into and out of poverty due to various risks faced by people across their lifecycles, and this impacts on children.
- There is a recognition that the nature of child poverty is multidimensional. Therefore, to understand child poverty, it is important to look at deprivations beyond monetary poverty.
- This implies that there is a need to assess children by the extent of deprivation they suffer from. This is the only way to develop a flexible system that is capable of meeting individual and group specific needs.
- However, profiling multiple child deprivations without considering household consumption levels may miss important associations that is crucial to understanding child poverty. Therefore, an integrated approach does not have to abandon the monetary poverty approach, as it provides a less arbitrary definition of near poverty, a better understanding of the role of deprivations, and an improved assessment of poverty risk.
- To achieve equal opportunity for children, providing universal access to education, health, and protection for children is imperative. In this aspect, governments' roles to provide public services are crucial.
- The choice between providing targeted program or universal services is the other face of the same coin with a political economy choice between having a low taxes or a high taxes economic system.
- Given the multidimensional nature of child poverty, policies and programs for child poverty reduction must go beyond sectoral approaches and promote an integrated strategic vision.
- Child-sensitive budgeting, monitoring, and analysis can be used to promote child equity. Nevertheless, the main component of social security for children is social transfer in the form of child benefit.
- Social protection policies and programs are powerful instruments for investing in the future, while at the same time reducing poverty, vulnerability and deprivation among



children and their families today. This is because social protection has prevention, protection, promotion, and transformation roles.

- Child protection is different from social protection. Hence, the policy areas of child protection and social protection have largely developed separately. However, it is increasingly recognised that this dichotomy compromises the effectiveness of the response to the needs of vulnerable children. Therefore, opportunities for synergies and linkages are plentiful, and should be taken advantage of to their full potential.
- Indeed, greater synergies between social protection and child protection are necessary and feasible, but it firstly requires more critical thinking about the impact of social protection on child protection and translation of such thinking in design of social protection programmes, and secondly it also requires innovative solutions for the provision of a comprehensive response for children.
- An example of this is to integrate social protection policies for children in poverty with authentic engagement for non-poor children and adolescents to move beyond the dialectic of benefactor-beneficiary.
- In addition, it is also very important to link social protection with broader development.
- In the context of Indonesia, there are indications that the overall poverty reduction strategy and the different social assistance programs currently being implemented lack the ability to address specific risks experienced by children living in poverty as well as to address vulnerabilities that would otherwise enable children to escape poverty in the future.
- Despite national laws and policies guaranteeing specific services and interventions, a large number of children is still deprived of access to birth registration, basic education, nutritional, and health services.
- They are also still prone to a number of vulnerabilities such as falling to early marriage and unfavorable child labor.
- Therefore, policies that are needed should be able to address children vulnerability as well as gender-based and regional disparity by distributing services not only on ratio-based but also by taking into account need projections.
- The policy agenda should adopt a comprehensive approach to reduce poverty that recognizes and addresses potential shocks faced by children, and that strengthens the capacity of family and community to protect and care for their wellbeing.
- This also includes support for poor families to participate in broader social networks to obtain better social supports in implementing better parenting and childcare practices.
- There are also low-hanging-fruit policies that Indonesia can implement with immediate impact on improved welfare of poor children. Some examples of these are providing free birth certificates automatically for any newborn baby, promotion of exclusive breastfeeding by professional health workers, operational fund assistance for pre-schools and early childhood education facilities, fostering an environment that supports healthy eating and lifestyle, revitalization of food and nutrition surveillance system, developing drop in centers for street children, and many more.

