

# Building a culture of social protection

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals on universal social protection through South-South and Triangular Cooperation

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*Why should I contribute to social security if I am young and in good health? What happens to my family if I get sick and I cannot work? Why should I sign an employment contract? These are just a few of the questions for which every citizen should know the answers.*

Experiences around the world show that creating a culture of social protection contributes to the extension of coverage and the realization of the human right to social protection.

Legal international instruments and frameworks that promote the human right to social protection state that it is the government's obligation to inform its population of this right. This is the case for the ILO's Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Hence, creating a culture of social protection can be considered an obligation for countries as a part of implementing the right to social protection.

***Why is creating a culture of social protection important?***

People who are well informed on the benefits of social protection are more proactive on defending their rights and more willing to enrol in social protection systems.

Citizens living in a culture of social protection:

- know their rights to social protection and its inherent obligations;
- understand how social protection works and its founding values;
- are well informed on the ways to access available benefits; and
- participate in the social construction of systems and understand reforms.

However, creating a culture of social protection through education, awareness raising and communication is effective only when all the conditions are in place to extend coverage and where systems can respond to the demands of the population.

## ***A diversity of experiences***

Creating a social protection culture is a country-specific process that concerns society as a whole and relies on strong political will over time. At the time of designing social protection education and awareness raising programmes, each country builds its own strategy based on its social contract, specificities and needs. Programmes' objectives and scopes differ from one country to another. For example:

**Uruguay** launched the programme called "Know Your Rights and Obligations to Social Security" in 2007. Today, the programme reaches all children, adolescents and adults attending learning



## Social protection awareness raising campaign in Mongolia

Almost 18 per cent of Mongolians are between 15 and 24 years of age. As part of the strategy to extend social protection to the informal economy and the self-employed, every year the Social Insurance General Office (SIGO) organizes information sessions in high schools, universities and technical and vocational schools to give young people basic but precise information on the importance of social and health insurance.



institutions starting from the age of 5. The programme is part of a wider strategy articulated on three axes: education, awareness raising and capacity building of social security institution staff.

**Mongolia** designed an awareness raising programme aimed at adolescents and young adults as part of their strategy to extend social protection to the informal economy and independent workers.

In 2014, a coalition of civil society organizations in **Belgium** launched a national campaign called “Social Protection for All” to convince Belgian and European policy-makers to take action on putting the right to social protection for all into practice. As a result, in May 2016 the Belgian Federal Parliament adopted a resolution that requests the Government to give a clear and central place to social protection in Belgian international policy.

At the **regional level**, a group of social protection institutions in Latin America launched the Guatemala Declaration with the aim of disseminating social protection values and principles through education programmes. The Declaration calls countries to celebrate a Social



Education on social protection is a key element to raise awareness of beneficiaries on their rights and obligations.

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Security Week every year during the last week of April. Eleven countries in the Americas endorsed the Guatemala Declaration.

### *Social protection education and South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC)*

Sharing knowledge and experiences on social protection education in the context of SSTC will allow more countries to consider the importance of creating a culture of social protection as part of their extension strategies. Despite the fact that creating culture is a country-specific issue, the large variety of experiences makes it possible to develop a set principles and lessons to be shared.

At the international level, SSTC can mobilize development actors to engage in awareness-raising initiatives that support national efforts to extend coverage, thus facilitating realization of the human right to social protection.

The ILO Global Flagship Programme on “Building Social Protection Floors for All”:

- implements structured communication actions for policy-makers, practitioners, donors and beneficiaries;
- supports countries to design and implement social protection awareness-raising programmes;
- develops a good practices guide on social protection education based on country and regional experiences; and
- promotes the global adoption of a “Social Protection Week”.

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