

Towards Improved Impact of Poverty Alleviation Efforts

By

Hoda Rashad

Research Professor and Director
Social Research Center
American University in Cairo

To

High Level Panel Discussion on Poverty Eradication
50th Session of the Commission for Social Development
United Nations, New York, 1 February 2012

Introduction:

Appreciating Progress → Moving Forward to achieve impact

↗ New Strategic directions

PROPOSAL: 3 Priority Areas for Action

1. Engagement with Implementation: Expanding the Space and Opportunities for Informed Actions.
2. Integrating Impact Evaluation in Policy Cycles.
3. Embedding a Social Justice Frame in Public Policy

Introductory Note

Significant Progress

- Global Advances: Agenda setting, methodologies, conceptualization, approach, sharing experiences
- Country Responsiveness: Acknowledgement, breaking the measurement trap , MDG national goals going beyond \$1 a day as indicator of success, PRSP
- Implementation approaches going beyond protection

But

- Impact not yet satisfactory

Egypt Experience: A case study Illustration

- Since early fifties: Universal Programs for social development and poverty alleviation (education, health, subsidies, employment, transfer)
- Eagerly nineties: Plagued with Problems. Public spending not enough, not reaching poor, inefficient, inequitable, costly.
- Early Eighties: economic reforms (liberalization + market forces) + growing informal sector
- By the year 2000: Economic growth driving reform agendas
Economic growth + social dissatisfaction

Egypt Experience: A case study Illustration

-Mid 2000:

- Social policy reforms gaining momentum
- Stated commitment to social spending
- Upgrade of public services (Educ., Health, ... Reforms)
- Targeting (geographic + households)

1000 Poorest Villages

- Upgrading of public services(education, health, water and sanitation, environment and water management, ...etc)
- Special initiatives (income opportunities for youth, illiteracy, training, ...etc)
- Reaching to poorest households (basic entitlement + CCT)
- Science + governance + legislation + budgetary allocation
- Highest political commitment

But Elusive Success

Implementation Constraints

- Top down, mismanagement
- Not Reaching Poor (CCT): Data base, capacity of social workers, responsive interventions.....
- Structural income generation impediments (agricultural sector, investments, ...)
- Not adequately addressing social constraints (illiteracy, skills, values, ...)

But Elusive Success

Poverty Trends

	Growthrate	% poor
1996	5.0	19.4
2000	5.9	16.7
2005	4.5	19.6
2009	4.7	21.6

+ Shallowness

But Elusive Success

Political Sphere

- ▶ **Hidden political agenda:**
Mistrust, no buy in, no com. ownership, no participation
- ▶ **Causal Foundation bet Democracy and Wellbeing:**
Whose Agenda, Accountability, Selection to Office (Implementer Competencies).

1. Engagement with Implementation {Building Capacities}

“What” to do ?

“How” to do ?

Universality

Integration of Social and Economic Policies.	How
Facing Financial Constraints	How
Reforming Social Policies	How
Facing Inefficiency, Corruption, Exclusion	How

Special Initiatives

- Capacity of Institutions (entrenched paradigms + structures)
- Practical Local Responsive tools (Eligibility criteria, prioritization process, costing participation)
- Beyond government monopolies (weak academia + civil society + no channels for partnerships)

2– Integrating Impact Evaluation in Policy Cycles

- Global Reporting Modalities (MDG, CRDAW.) not on wider public screen
- Not Supporting Improvement of Performance of Particular Initiatives

Urgent Need:

Timely, Independent, Informative, Participatory Impact Evaluation.

Effective accountability Modality

Mexico Experience

3– Embedding a Social Justice Frame

High Burden of Deprivation

“A Toxic Combination of Poor Social Policies and Programmes, Unfair Economic Arrangements and Bad Policies”

Implications

- ▶ Poverty as a Result of State Violation of Responsibility (not just moral duty + ethical obligation)
- ▶ Actions at the level of socio economic political context (governance, policy cultural, social norms + global forces)
- ▶ System of allocation of resources, modality of economic growth, social & cultural space, international treaties)

Social Justice Framing

Practical Implications

- ▶ Causes of the Causes
- ▶ Emphasis on Distributional Aspect of Resources (Beyond Limitations)
- ▶ Positive Discrimination
- ▶ Economy + Services + Social & cultural space
Breeding Marginalization
- ▶ Equity lens in MDG 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
- ▶ Bringing together 3 fields public health, poverty and human development

Concluding Remarks

- ▶ Poverty Alleviation is a Human Right
- ▶ Failure of State Traced to More Generic Causes Beyond Lack of Will and / Absence of Policies
- ▶ All Governments Can Do Better

Social Justice → Beyond Fixation of Financial Constraints



Fairness : Not Just in Allocation of Resources

But also: Good Governance

participatory, Inclusive, Respect of Rights, Dignity



Democratic Accountability

Effective Government Implementation

Concluding Remarks

- ▶ Egypt Story
- ▶ Growth --→ Progress
- ▶ Poverty Alleviation is not only about economic and social policies
- ▶ It is also about a political sphere capable of gaining the trust and participation of its citizens through its enforcement of justice and human rights Principles