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## Social Protection In Asia Newsletter May 2008 Issue 1

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### Welcome to the SPA programme newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of the SPA Quarterly Newsletter which follows the successful launch of the Social Protection in Asia (SPA) Programme. A public launch was held in Delhi on February 20th, followed by an initial workshop of partners from across the region, organized by the Regional Coordinator of the SPA programme – the Institute of Human Development (IHD) in Delhi. This has been followed by a recent Research Methods workshop for project participants co-organised by BRAC and held in BRAC's peaceful conference centre outside Dhaka.



SPA is a Research, Advocacy and Network Building Programme funded by the Ford Foundation and IDRC. Our main purpose is to undertake research and policy advocacy which contributes to overcoming barriers to the extension of social protection to poor and marginalized groups across Asia. We seek to identify and promote innovative forms of social protection which contribute to sustainable poverty reduction and long-term development.

The SPA programme is composed of a number of innovative, policy relevant research projects (listed in this newsletter). It also aims to build an Asia-wide network of interested groups – including researchers, policy makers or donors, and civil society – to exchange ideas and information, and engage in advocacy and policy

dialogue.

This quarterly newsletter will provide regular updates on the SPA programme as well as relevant news and information on the field of Social Protection in Asia more generally. This could include new publications, forthcoming events, and comments by readers or invited experts on current issues. We encourage all readers to contribute any information they would like to see shared through this forum, or to send requests for information that they would like to see included.

Sarah Cook

Upendranadh

SPA Director, IDS

SPA Programme Manager



## News of the SPA Programme - Research Topics and Themes

A competitive call for research proposals on Social Protection in Asia was made in September 2007. Ten projects have now been selected and are in their initial stages. The countries covered currently include India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Vietnam and Indonesia. We have plans to develop work in Cambodia and Laos, and are exploring ways of linking to existing work in other countries such as Nepal and Sri Lanka.

### Research topics

The range of topics covered by the research includes:

- expanding coverage to excluded groups such as migrants in China and Vietnam;
- exploring ways in which housing and land security acts as a mechanism for access to, or mobilization around, social protection in Pakistan and India;
- community based models of providing for an aging population in rural China;

- assessments of new cooperative health care schemes, also in rural China;
- preliminary evaluations of India's new National Rural Employment Guarantee Act through an institutional analysis of its implementation, and from a gender perspective;
- examining the gender dimensions and impacts of Indonesia's conditional cash transfer programmes; exploring lessons for graduating the poor from social assistance to developmental approaches (such as micro-finance) based on the work of BRAC.

A short summary of the projects and research partners is provided here. Further information can be found on the SPA website. (<http://www.socialprotectionasia.org>)

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## Research Topics

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### *Moving Ahead: Social Protection in an Era of Mobility*

Xiaojiang Hu and Miguel Salazar at The Institute for Social Development and Public Policy (ISDPP), at Beijing Normal University, China ([www.bnu.edu.cn/eng/](http://www.bnu.edu.cn/eng/)) will undertake research which aims to develop a coherent, institutional framework for incorporating issues raised by migration and labour mobility into national social protection planning and programming.



### *Social Protection for Rural-Urban Migrants in Vietnam and China*

Le Bach Duong of the The Institute for Social Development Studies, Hanoi, Vietnam (<http://isds.org.vn/home.asp>) and Yu Zhu of the Center for Population and Development Research, Fujian Normal University ([www.fjtu.edu.cn/contents/English/](http://www.fjtu.edu.cn/contents/English/)) China will undertake a comparative study aimed at assessing the current provision of social protection measures for migrants in China and Vietnam in the contexts of increasing mobility.





***Institutional and Governance Challenges in Social Protection - The Right to Work Programme in India.***

Alakh Sharma and colleagues at The Institute for Human Development (IHD) in Delhi, India (<http://ihdindia.org/>) will explore mechanisms for increasing the impact of the National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREGA) - a universal rights-based programme which guarantees employment to rural households



***Examining the NREGA: Women's Participation and Impacts in Himachal Pradesh and Kerala.***

Ratna Sudarshan and colleagues at The Institute of Social Studies Trust, Delhi, India ([www.isst-india.org/](http://www.isst-india.org/)) will examine women's participation in the NREGA to assess the impact of the programme on well being, mediation by women's groups, and wider development impacts



***Inclusive Urbanization – Social Protection for the Slum and Pavement Dwellers in India.***

Led by Darshini Mahadevia CEPT University and in collaboration with Mahila Housing Trust, and SEWA Bank, Ahmedabad, India, ([www.cept.ac.in/](http://www.cept.ac.in/)) will explore the linkages between vulnerability and multi-dimensional forms of deprivation in urban slums, and explore the role of social protection programmes in addressing the insecurities faced by slum-dwellers. "



***Residential Land as Social Protection: Local Mobilisation in Pakistan.***

Haris Gazdar and colleagues at The Collective for Social Science Research, Pakistan, ([www.researchcollective.org/](http://www.researchcollective.org/)) will examine the relationship between residential land security schemes and the mobilization of socially excluded and marginalized groups.



***Social Support for the Aged in Rural China – The Role of Local Communities***

Xiaomei Pei of Tsinghua University, Beijing ([www.tsinghua.edu.cn/eng/index.jsp](http://www.tsinghua.edu.cn/eng/index.jsp)) will lead a team

seeking to understand the role of local community, culture and tradition in existing institutional arrangements for elderly care in rural China, in order to identify more effective and affordable mechanisms for meeting the needs of the rural elderly



### ***Caring for One Billion: Assessing the New Health Protection Programme in Rural China***

Led by Linxiu Zhang of The Center for Chinese Agricultural Policy, Beijing, ([www.ccap.org.cn/english/index.asp](http://www.ccap.org.cn/english/index.asp)) and in collaboration with North-West University, Xian, this project will assess the implementation of a new rural health care scheme, and provide recommendations for improving the system for delivering quality and affordable health care to the rural population.



### ***The Dynamics of Intra-household Decision Making Processes in Indonesia's Conditional Cash Transfer Programme***

Led by Stella Aleida, researchers at the SMERU Research Institute, Indonesia (<http://www.smeru.or.id/>) will evaluate the effectiveness of two Government of Indonesia pilot Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programs to understand their gender impacts through an analysis of intra-household decision-making dynamics.



### ***Building Pathways for the Poorest: Operationalizing the Concept of Graduation***

CGAP and Ford have carefully studied BRAC, CARE, and other institutions with experience working with the poorest and have concluded that combining the comparative advantages of good safety net programs with those of microfinance can create the basis to successfully graduate the poorest out of chronic food insecurity. This "graduation" model builds on the fact that the poorest must satisfy basic survival needs that require food aid or grants from safety net programs. Researchers at BRAC (<http://www.brac.net/>) will be looking to develop an analytical model of "graduation, hopefully to provide answers to the following : What is graduation? What are the different stages of the ladder? What is the specific process of graduation and what are the indicators that tell us that graduation has occurred?

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## Programme Themes



A number of key themes have emerged from the initial discussions of the research projects. We hope that developing these cross-cutting themes will strengthen both the comparative value of the research programme as well as SPA's contribution to region-wide debates about social protection.

Themes currently identified include

- Institutional analysis, actors and approaches to the provision of social protection
- Relationships, associations, collective action and mobilisation as determinants of access and exclusion, as well as the terms of access to social protection.
- Resource mobilisation and the financing of social protection
- Rights and citizenship as underpinnings of social protection.
- Assessing the longer term and wider socio-economic impacts of social protection interventions

## SPA Networking and Communications

To support the research and advocacy activities of the Programme, a number of networking and communications activities are being initiated: These include

- the SPA quarterly newsletter
- a database of relevant contacts, institutions and programmes on social protection
- maintaining a SPA website (<http://www.socialprotectionasia.org/>)
- convening meetings of researchers, policy makers and other actors
- managing a website and e-newsletter on social protection



- publishing and disseminating policy briefs and advocacy materials on social protection

Further information on these activities will be provided in forthcoming newsletters and on the [website](#).

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## News and Events

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### SPA LAUNCH AND WORKSHOP – 20 FEBRUARY 2008



The SPA launch event was held at the close of the International Conference on Universalizing Socio-Economic Security in South Asia in Delhi and was attended by approximately 100 academics, policy makers and other experts working on social protection from across the region. Prof. Abhijit Sen, Member of the Planning Commission of India, gave the key note address, identifying a core challenge in extending social protection to marginalized and vulnerable people in ways which promote their livelihood security while enhancing their voice and citizenship. He drew in particular on the the Indian experience with a 'rights' agenda, as reflected in the recent National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.

### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: UNIVERSALISING SOCIO- ECONOMIC SECURITY IN SOUTH ASIA, DELHI

Organized by the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague and the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, this Conference considered the case for developing a more holistic approach towards the universalization of socio-economic security, analyzing diverse elements, forms and categories of socio-economic insecurity and vulnerability, and examining the current body of knowledge, experiences and interventions for addressing them. Details of the conference with the agenda, concept note and list of

**17 – 20 February, 2008**

**Tackling risks and vulnerabilities: The Role of social protection, 29 - 30 January 2008, Bhopal, India**

**Social Protection in Asia Research Methods Workshop, 28<sup>th</sup> April- 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.**

**Boulder Executive Training Program for Development Professionals "Integrating Microfinance in Development"**

participants can be viewed at the IHD website (<http://www.ihdindia.org/>). Papers presented at the conference can be obtained from IHD by sending a request to [ihd@vsnl.com](mailto:ihd@vsnl.com).

A two-day workshop on Social Protection was hosted by the DFID in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, on 29 & 30 January 2008. The aim of the workshop was to deepen the understanding of current challenges to Social Protection in Madhya Pradesh, by sharing national and international best practices, and identifying ways in which existing programmes and schemes can become more effective in reducing risk and vulnerability.

A workshop for SPA research project members aimed to identify and discuss approaches to practical research and methodological challenges for undertaking research which combines quantitative and qualitative methods, and which aims to be policy relevant. The 3-day workshop was organised jointly by the Institute of Development Studies, and BRAC. A report will be available shortly on the SPA website.

The Boulder Institute of Microfinance and the Institute of Development Studies are pleased to announce that the registration process for the Boulder Executive Training Program for Development Professionals "Integrating Microfinance in Development" is now open at [www.bouldermft.org/sussex/](http://www.bouldermft.org/sussex/). The Integrating Microfinance in Development training program is offered to development professionals and specialists in Agriculture, Health, Education or Livelihoods who need to understand microfinance for their work. Integrating Microfinance is a short intensive program that will explore the

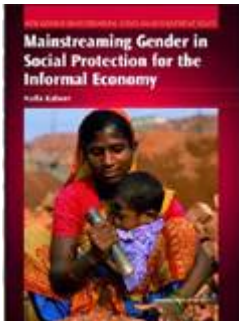


role of microfinance in the lives of poor families, identify where and when it can be effective and understand how to fit it into development programming. This training program will be held from September 1st to September 5th, 2008 and hosted by the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, Brighton, UK.

Registrations will close on August 1st. Early registration is advised due to limited number of spaces. For more detailed information please see the attached electronic flyer and visit [www.bouldermft.org/sussex/](http://www.bouldermft.org/sussex/)

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## Recent publications



[Mainstreaming Gender in Social Protection for the Informal Economy](#)  
[New Gender Mainstreaming Series on Development Issues](#)  
[Naila Kabeer \(2008\)](#)

In *Mainstreaming Gender in Social Protection for the Informal Economy* Naila Kabeer explores the gendered dimensions of risk, vulnerability and insecurity and hence the need for a gender perspective in the design of social protection measures. Her emphasis is on the informal economy because that is where the majority of women, and indeed the poor, are to be found while also being where official efforts for social protection are most limited.



[Economic Growth, Social Protection and 'Real' Labour Markets, Sarah Cook, James Heintz and Naila Kabeer \(eds.\) \(2008\), IDS Bulletin - Vol 39 No 2](#)

Thinking on social protection, concerned about possible distortions of the labour market, has done little to stem the spread of informal employment. Despite policy commitment to poverty reduction through labour-intensive growth, the gains for the poor have been ambiguous. These themes were explored in a 2007 workshop convened by IDS and WIEGO. Bringing together researchers, practitioners and policymakers, their contributions now make up this IDS Bulletin. Articles cover the changing nature of the global economy, flexible labour market policies in different regions of the world, conceptualisation of labour markets, implications for macroeconomic policies, and the scope for social protection. The conclusion is the need for a better understanding of the way labour markets function in the 'real' world if we are to find policies that will better deliver on the outcomes they promise.



[Social Protection through a Livelihoods Lens](#)

Social protection has come a long way in a short time. Ten years ago, it was a new phrase for social safety nets, and was limited to interventions that provided short-term support to people lacking the capacity to cope on their own

Since then, both social protection thinking and practice have taken several new directions. The collection of briefing notes that go together to make this issue of In Focus explore and contribute to some of these.



**[Social Protection for the Poor and Poorest Concepts, Policies and Politics](#)** edited by Armando Barrientos and David Hulme (2008) Palgrave Macmillan

Social protection is fast becoming one of the most important themes in development policy. This collection examines the political processes shaping the formulation of social protection policies; compares the key conceptual frameworks available for analysing social protection; and provides a comparative discussion on the policies focused on the poor and the poorest. Drawing on key case studies from Africa, Latin America and Asia, the contributors outline solutions for the future of social protection in developing countries.

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## Future plans

In future Newsletters we plan to include additional sections on:

Forthcoming events

Highlights of Social Protection programmes by governments, donors, NGOs or communities

Hot topics in social protection

## We welcome your contributions!

Please send us any news, events, publications or related information that you would like to share with others. Please send your inputs to [socialprotectioninasia@ids.ac.uk](mailto:socialprotectioninasia@ids.ac.uk).

### Unsubscribe

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please reply to this email with the word **UNSUBSCRIBE** in the subject line and we will take your name off the mailing list.

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## Wenefrida Widyanti



Our colleague, beloved friend Wina (Wenefrida Widyanti) has passed away at 14:15pm on Friday, May 23, 2008 at Abdi Waluyo hospital located in Menteng, Jakarta. She had heart failure during backbone surgery and was in a coma for about 12 hours before she died. She will be buried in Salatiga on Sunday, May 25, 2008 at around 14:00pm. She would be 38 years old in November

Best regards,

Sudarno Sumarto

The SMERU Research Institute

Jakarta – Indonesia

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## SPA Programme Management

The programme is managed by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, UK ([www.ids.ac.uk/go/centreforsocialprotection](http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/centreforsocialprotection)), and the Institute of Human Development, New Delhi, India (<http://ihdindia.org/>). Key personnel include:

Programme Director: Sarah Cook

Co-Directors: Alakh Sharma, IHD  
Naila Kabeer, IDS

Programme Manager: Upendranadh, IHD  
Programme Coordinator : Deborah Shenton, IDS  
Network Management: Upendranadh, IHD and Mark Davies, IDS  
Communication Management: Shashikala Menon, IHD