



Inter-American Social Protection Network



Poverty and Protection in the Americas

Social protection consists of policies and programs to reduce poverty and vulnerability. The recent expansion and improvement of these social safety net programs in the Western Hemisphere have enabled millions of people to rise from poverty. The World Bank credits innovative social protection programs for reducing poverty rates by as much as 8 percent in Ecuador and Mexico. Even so, countries in the Americas have the largest gap in the world between rich and poor. The implementation of effective and innovative social protection strategies helps to break the cycle of poverty, allowing society to realize its full civic and economic potential by reducing exploitation and insecurity of the most vulnerable citizens.

Establishing the Inter-American Social Protection Network

Recognizing the vital importance of social protection programs in reducing poverty and creating the foundation for stable societies, heads of state and government endorsed the Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN) at the Fifth Summit of the Americas in 2009. Former Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton and the presidents of Chile and Colombia inaugurated IASPN later that year. A vehicle for regional partnership on social protection issues, IASPN enables countries to develop pioneering strategies to fight poverty through technical assistance programs and by sharing best practices.

IASPN: Promoting Social Protection

Through better social protection policies and programs, countries can improve access to education, food and nutrition, basic health services, decent work, early childhood care, housing, and financial services for vulnerable populations. Successful strategies now provide models for the design and implementation of new or enhanced social protection programs, making notable improvements to other countries' efforts in fighting poverty. Through IASPN, governments, international organizations, and experts from across the region

have collaborated to create an international professional training program in social protection, a virtual community of practice, and several bilateral and trilateral technical assistance programs.

U.S. Support of IASPN

The U.S. government has invested more than \$3.5 million in establishing and expanding IASPN, including the creation of the IASPN Knowledge Portal, a regional platform that provides a virtual community space for practitioners and experts to share social protection best practices and innovations. This support has also enabled South-South cooperation, such as Chile's technical assistance to strengthen Paraguay's social protection system. Social protection programs are only as good as the social services to which they provide access, so the U.S. government also directly supports health and education systems throughout the region in a comprehensive approach to fighting poverty.

IASPN's success demonstrates the potential of cooperation and exemplifies the U.S. commitment to partnership in the Americas. Through collaboration, we can help reduce poverty, improve social justice, ensure access to job training and employment opportunities, and increase citizen security, thereby laying a foundation for further stability, democracy, and economic growth in the region.

For more information, visit the IASPN Knowledge Portal:
www.socialprotectionet.org.



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