SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL SERVICES

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By Professor Edwin Kaseke
Conceptualising social protection

- UNICEF (2012:14) defines social protection as: “the set of public and private policies and programmes aimed at preventing, reducing and eliminating economic and social vulnerabilities to poverty and deprivation.”
Components of social protection

- Social insurance
- Social assistance and/or universal benefits
- Labour market interventions
- Livelihoods support
- Social services
Examples of social services include education, health, housing and personal social services that focus on meeting individual human needs.

Social services constitute an important cog in the social protection system of a country as they serve to promote human well-being.
Social services seek to address the problems of poverty, vulnerability and inequality.

Poverty and inequality are endemic in Africa and are barriers to the realisation of the full potential of individuals.

Social services are therefore instruments of social policy that can be used to promote the redistribution of income and wealth in society.
Social services cont’d

- Social services are also instruments for addressing social exclusion with a view to promoting social inclusion.
- The challenge for every society is how to create a just and more inclusive society.
- This is particularly pertinent given the realisation that contrary to expectations, the benefits of economic growth and development have not trickled down to all.
Education is critical for human capital development and social stability in society. Education helps to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Therefore the state should ensure that everyone has access to education whilst paying attention to the quality of education.
In order to improve enrolments and completion rates the state needs to:
- Provide free education, particularly at primary level; or
- Introduce fee exemptions and waivers for children from poor and vulnerable households;
- Introduce feeding programmes in schools;
Policy directions—Education contd

- Introduce grants and loans at tertiary level to support students of limited means.
Improving access to health care by:
- Introducing free health services for all; or
- Introducing fee exemptions or fee waivers for the benefit of the poor and vulnerable groups such as older persons or children under five years.
- Providing subsidies to non-state actors providing health services to poor and disadvantaged groups.
Ordinarily housing responds to demand and not need and this a barrier to meeting the need for housing.

- The state can intervene by providing social housing e.g RDP housing in South Africa.
- Alternatively the state can provide housing subsidies to the poor.
Policy directions–personal social services

- Personal social services are designed to enhance human social functioning.
- Personal social services thus provide social support and care to persons who are not able to help themselves.
- Examples of groups targeted include children, older persons and persons with disabilities.
- The state provides subsidies to non-state actors providing social support and care.
Conclusion

- There is need to ensure that social protection responds to needs in a holistic manner.
- This suggests the need for a comprehensive social protection system that focuses on the different components of social protection.
- The different components of social protection complement each other.
THE END

THANK YOU