Training course on Designing Universal Social Protection Systems: Pathways and Challenges

Professional Development Training Course Outline

Category	Social Protection	**Duration**	10 Days
Base Fee	$3,000 USD	**Delivery Mode**	Online / On-site Hybrid

Course Introduction

In an era of increasing global volatility, universal social protection systems are recognized as foundational pillars for fostering human dignity, achieving equitable development, and building resilient societies capable of withstanding diverse shocks. Moving beyond targeted interventions, the vision of universal social protection (USP) aims to guarantee income security and access to essential services for all, across the lifecycle, regardless of their employment status or other vulnerabilities. Training Course on Designing Universal Social Protection Systems: Pathways and Challenges demands a deep understanding of policy design principles, strategic pathways for expansion, and the foresight to navigate significant political, fiscal, and institutional challenges. USP is not a one-size-fits-all solution; its successful implementation requires careful contextualization, innovative financing, and a robust commitment to social inclusion. In Kenya, with its ongoing efforts to strengthen social safety nets and work towards universal health coverage, the journey towards comprehensive social protection offers both opportunities and complex hurdles, including extending coverage to the informal sector, ensuring fiscal sustainability, and building administrative capacity. This course is meticulously designed to equip senior policymakers, social protection strategists, development practitioners, researchers, and civil society leaders with the expert knowledge and advanced tools to design, analyze, and implement pathways towards universal social protection systems, addressing key challenges and leveraging global best practices. The program focuses on conceptualizing universality, exploring diverse design models (e.g., universal basic income, universal social insurance), developing inclusive financing strategies, building robust delivery mechanisms, and navigating political economy dynamics, fostering the strategic acumen to build comprehensive, equitable, and sustainable social protection frameworks in Kenya and internationally. This comprehensive 10-day program delves into nuanced methodologies for assessing national fiscal space for universal schemes, mastering sophisticated techniques for modeling the distributional impacts of different universal benefit designs, and exploring cutting-edge approaches to building resilient and adaptive universal systems capable of responding to climate shocks, pandemics, and economic downturns. A significant focus will be placed on understanding the interplay of cash transfers, social insurance, and social care services in achieving comprehensive coverage, the specific challenges and opportunities in African contexts (e.g., leveraging informal sector contributions, utilizing digital payment systems like M-Pesa for broad reach), and the practical application of

universal design principles to address local needs like poverty reduction, health access, and food security in Kenya.

Programme Curriculum

Training Course on Designing Universal Social Protection Systems: Pathways and Challenges

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This comprehensive 10-day program delves into **nuanced methodologies** for **assessing national fiscal space for universal schemes,** mastering **sophisticated techniques for modeling the distributional impacts of different universal benefit designs,** and exploring **cutting-edge approaches** to **building resilient and adaptive universal systems capable of responding to climate shocks, pandemics, and economic downturns.** A significant focus will be placed on understanding the interplay of **cash transfers, social insurance, and social care services in achieving comprehensive coverage, the specific challenges and opportunities in African contexts (e.g., leveraging informal sector contributions, utilizing digital payment systems like M-Pesa for broad reach), and the practical application of universal design principles to address local needs like poverty reduction, health access, and food security in Kenya.**

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to:

1. **Analyze core concepts and strategic responsibilities** of **universal social protection (USP)** within national development and global solidarity.

2. **Master sophisticated techniques** for **evaluating different pathways to universality**, including progressive expansion and foundational floors.
3. **Develop robust methodologies** for **assessing the fiscal space and financing options** for designing and sustaining universal social protection systems.
4. **Implement effective strategies** for **designing inclusive and equitable universal programs** that reach all segments of the population, including marginalized groups.
5. **Manage complex considerations** for **building robust administrative and delivery mechanisms** suitable for universal coverage.
6. **Apply robust strategies** for **integrating social protection with other public services** (health, education, care) to achieve comprehensive well-being.
7. **Understand the deep integration of political economy analysis** in navigating the challenges and opportunities of implementing universal schemes.
8. **Leverage knowledge of international experiences and lessons learned** from countries that have successfully expanded social protection towards universality.
9. **Optimize strategies for promoting public understanding, political will, and stakeholder consensus** for universal social protection reforms.
10. **Formulate specialized policy recommendations** for **designing universal social protection components** (e.g., universal child benefits, basic pensions) in diverse contexts.
11. **Conduct comprehensive assessments** of existing social protection fragmentation to identify opportunities for integration and universalization.
12. **Navigate challenging situations** such as **fiscal constraints, informal sector complexities, data limitations, and resistance to redistribution.**
13. **Develop a holistic, evidence-based, and politically astute approach** to **designing and advocating for universal social protection systems, with a focus on pathways and challenges in Kenya and globally.**

Target Audience:

This course is designed for professionals interested in Designing Universal Social Protection Systems: Pathways and Challenges:

1. **Senior Policymakers & Strategists:** Leading national social protection and development agendas.
2. **Government Officials:** From Ministries of Finance, Social Affairs, Labor, Health, and Planning.
3. **Social Protection Program Leaders:** Managing large-scale social welfare and insurance schemes.
4. **Development Practitioners:** Working with UN agencies, World Bank, and bilateral organizations on social protection.
5. **Researchers & Academics:** Specializing in social policy, economics, and public administration.
6. **Civil Society Organization Leaders:** Involved in advocacy and service delivery related to social protection.
7. **Economists & Public Finance Experts:** Focused on social sector expenditure and fiscal sustainability.
8. **International Relations & Aid Professionals:** Engaging with social protection funding and technical assistance.

Course Duration: 10 Days

Course Modules:

- **Module 1: Conceptualizing Universal Social Protection**
    - **Defining Universality**: Moving beyond targeting to rights-based and comprehensive coverage.
    - **Historical Evolution of USP**: Lessons from pioneers like Bismarckian and Beveridge models, and contemporary global movements.

    - **The Case for Universality**: Benefits for poverty reduction, inequality, economic growth, and social cohesion.
    - **Principles of USP Design**: Adequacy, comprehensiveness, sustainability, equity, and solidarity.
    - **Debates and Critiques**: Addressing concerns about fiscal affordability, disincentives, and administrative complexity.
- **Module 2: Pathways to Universal Social Protection**
    - **Progressive Realization**: Incremental expansion from basic social assistance to comprehensive systems.
    - **Foundational Floors**: Guaranteeing minimum levels of social protection for all through universal benefits.
    - **Horizontal vs. Vertical Expansion**: Broadening coverage versus increasing generosity.
    - **Hybrid Approaches**: Combining contributory and non-contributory elements towards universality.
    - **Contextualizing Pathways**: Tailoring strategies to national socio-economic and political realities (e.g., Kenya's journey).
- **Module 3: Fiscal Space and Financing for USP**
    - **Assessing Fiscal Space**: Methodologies for identifying financial resources for social protection expansion.
    - **Taxation and Revenue Generation**: Progressive taxation, value-added tax, and other domestic resource mobilization.
    - **Innovative Financing Mechanisms**: Exploring options like financial transaction taxes, solidarity levies, and climate finance.
    - **Costing and Budgeting Models**: Developing projections for different universal benefit scenarios and their long-term sustainability.
    - **Efficiency Gains and Prioritization**: Reallocating existing budgets and optimizing spending for greater impact.
- **Module 4: Designing Universal Social Assistance Schemes**
    - **Universal Child Benefits**: Pathways for non-contributory cash transfers to all children, regardless of household income.
    - **Universal Basic Income (UBI)**: Exploring different UBI models, pilots, and their implications for work and welfare.
    - **Universal Social Pensions**: Designing non-contributory pensions for all older persons.
    - **Disability Benefits**: Moving towards universal or near-universal coverage for persons with disabilities.
    - **Delivery and Payment Mechanisms**: Efficient and transparent systems, including digital payments (e.g., M-Pesa in Kenya).
- **Module 5: Expanding Universal Social Insurance**
    - **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**: Pathways to ensuring all citizens have access to essential health services without financial hardship.
    - **Unemployment Insurance**: Designing universal or broad-coverage schemes for formal and informal sector workers.
    - **Maternity and Sickness Benefits**: Ensuring universal access to social insurance provisions for health-related contingencies.
    - **Extending Coverage to the Informal Economy**: Innovative models for contributory or hybrid schemes for informal workers.
    - **Role of Public and Private Provision**: Balancing state responsibility with complementary private sector involvement.
- **Module 6: Building Robust Administrative and Delivery Systems**
    - **Unified Social Registries**: Developing comprehensive, integrated databases for efficient targeting and service delivery.

    - **Digitalization of Social Protection**: Leveraging technology for registration, identification, payments, and grievance redress.
    - **One-Stop Shops and Integrated Service Delivery**: Streamlining access to multiple social protection and social service programs.
    - **Capacity Building and Human Resources**: Strengthening institutional and human capacities for effective administration.
    - **Monitoring and Evaluation for Universality**: Adapting M&E frameworks to track coverage, equity, and impact of universal schemes.
- **Module 7: Political Economy of Universal Social Protection**
    - **Political Will and Leadership**: Understanding the critical role of political commitment in driving USP reforms.
    - **Stakeholder Mapping and Engagement**: Identifying and engaging with beneficiaries, civil society, labor unions, business, and political parties.
    - **Building Coalitions and Consensus**: Strategies for forging broad support for costly and transformative reforms.
    - **Communication and Advocacy**: Developing compelling narratives and public campaigns to build social legitimacy for USP.
    - **Overcoming Resistance**: Addressing opposition from vested interests and navigating electoral cycles.
- **Module 8: Universal Social Protection and Resilience to Shocks**
    - **Adaptive Social Protection (ASP)**: Designing systems that can flexibly respond to climate shocks, pandemics, and economic crises.
    - **Early Warning Systems and Triggers**: Integrating risk data to activate social protection responses pre-emptively.
    - **Vertical and Horizontal Scalability**: Mechanisms for rapidly expanding benefits or coverage during emergencies.
    - **Shock-Responsive Delivery Mechanisms**: Adapting payment systems and outreach to reach affected populations quickly.
    - **Lessons from Recent Crises**: Applying insights from COVID-19, droughts, and other shocks in designing future USP.
- **Module 9: Gender, Equity, and Inclusion in USP Design**
    - **Gender-Responsive Design**: Ensuring USP addresses specific needs and constraints of women and men.
    - **Addressing Intersecting Inequalities**: Designing for inclusion of persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, indigenous populations, and migrants.
    - **Recognition of Unpaid Care Work**: How USP can support carers and address the care economy.
    - **Promoting Agency and Voice**: Empowering beneficiaries in program design and grievance redress mechanisms.
    - **Monitoring Equity Outcomes**: Using disaggregated data to assess the distributional impact of USP on different population groups.
- **Module 10: USP and Complementary Public Services**
    - **Linking Social Protection to Health Systems**: Ensuring access to healthcare, nutrition, and public health interventions.
    - **Social Protection and Education**: Supporting school enrollment, attendance, and learning outcomes.
    - **Social Care Services**: Integrating social protection with childcare, elder care, and disability care services.

- **Labor Market Policies**: Connecting social protection with active labor market programs for decent work.
- Upcoming Scheduled Sessions

Start Date	End Date	Location	Price
23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Online	$2,000
23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Physical	$3,000
23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Physical	$6,000
23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Physical	$6,000
23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Physical	$12,000
23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Physical	$9,000
23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Physical	$12,000
23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Physical	$12,000

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