DEVELOPMENT ANALYTICS
Tools for Evidence Based Policy Making



Development Analytics

The Development Analytics Interactive Social Policy Simulator (ISPS)

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Development Analytics Supports Evidence-Based Policy Making with the Interactive Social Policy Simulator (ISPS)

Development Analytics has developed the Interactive Social Policy Simulator (ISPS) to help policy-makers design, test and communicate policy options using evidence from household surveys, administrative records and service delivery data. ISPS translates technical models into a user-friendly interface where users can adjust benefit levels, eligibility rules, service parameters and targeting choices without writing code.

ISPS integrates household-level, administrative, programme and service-costing datasets to produce real-time calculations based on policy parameter selections. It supports scenario analysis, distributional impact assessment, cost estimation and stakeholder dialogue across social protection, pension programmes, child poverty, early childhood development, service provision and shock-responsive programming.

What opportunities can ISPS bring about for policy teams?

ISPS helps teams move from static analytical outputs to an interactive decision-support process. It enables country offices and partners to test assumptions, compare trade-offs, and communicate the likely coverage, poverty, cost and equity implications of policy choices.

- Experimenting with statistical models for targeting social protection programs without requiring advanced coding skills.
- Improved engagement with data and better visualization of evidence presented by the Development Analytics team.
- Increased capacity to simulate multiple policy outcomes under varying benefit levels and targeting options.
- Password-secured web link for easy engagement with stakeholders globally regarding research findings.

What kind of datasets can be used for modelling in ISPS?

The type of datasets required for designing modelling in ISPS may vary depending on the research questions and needs of UNICEF offices.

However, the following data types can be used with the ISPS tool:

- Household or administrative datasets that contain information on household or individual welfare, such as income and expenditure.
- Surveys addressing access to services such as early childhood development or health services.

How long would it be required for Development Analytics to carry out the analysis and design an ISPS tool?

The duration required for the Development Analytics team to conduct an analysis and design an ISPS tool depends on several factors, such as the complexity of the research questions, the availability of data, and the specific needs of the client. However, Development Analytics strives to deliver the ISPS tool within roughly 2 months while ensuring that the tool meets users' needs and is of the highest quality. Additionally, Development Analytics provides ongoing support to UNICEF offices throughout the process, including training on how to use the ISPS tool and interpreting the results of the analysis.

Watch the video demonstrating highlights from the ISPS with a short illustration of the poverty-reducing impact of several cash transfer scenarios targeting different groups at varying benefit levels.

Watch the ISPS Video

What are the previous project references where Development Analytics used ISPS for policy simulation?

Development Analytics has recently used ISPS as an ex-ante evaluation tool to assess targeting options for social protection, pension programmes and humanitarian cash transfer programs for various stakeholders, such as UNICEF, ILO, UNHCR and IFRC. ISPS showcases the poverty-reducing impact of different cash transfer scenarios by targeting different groups at varying benefit levels, which can be interactively changed based on the preferences of inter-governmental organizations and INGOs.

ISPS's functionality has been proven by allowing international organisations and governments to visualize and experiment with the results of household surveys, which enables them to simulate multiple outcomes without relying on predetermined scenarios set by technical experts. Development Analytics has designed several web applications for program and policy analyses to address the diverse policy needs and approaches of policy makers. Some of the projects that we have worked on include:

- **UNICEF Türkiye - Shock-Responsive Social Protection After the Earthquakes:** A simulation model assessed geographical, universal and categorical targeting options to inform programme choices, technical preparation and advocacy with government, donors and international financial institutions.

- **UNICEF North Macedonia - Child Cash Benefit Adequacy and Coverage:** Development Analytics developed microsimulation analysis and an interactive policy tool to test reform options for child-related cash benefits, including coverage, adequacy, poverty impacts, distributional effects and fiscal implications.

- **UNICEF Iraq - Integrated Child Benefit and Cash-Plus Scenarios:** The model combined household welfare simulations with regression-linked estimates for non-monetary outcomes, helping examine how cash and plus components could influence child poverty, service use and programme design choices.

- **ILO Iraq - Making the Case for an Old-Age Social Pension in Iraq:** Development Analytics designed an ISPS-based microsimulation tool for ILO Iraq to evaluate alternative social pension models. The simulator enabled real-time assessment of coverage, poverty reduction, fiscal costs, and cost-effectiveness across multiple pension design options, providing evidence to inform discussions on expanding social protection for older persons and strengthening resilience among vulnerable households.

If you would like to receive more information about the ISPS and how it can be used in your country context, please click to register your interest.

Register your Interest

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