Changing Perspectives on Social Cohesion: Implications for Emerging Partnerships between the Public and Private Sectors

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This report will examine changing perspectives on the elements of social cohesion as they pertain to developing partnerships between: a) public and private sector social security systems, and b) social security and social support systems. The discussion will focus on four specific areas: 1) the social, economic and political factors that are contributing to a reduction in public schemes, 2) the policy and program expectations implicit in this shift, 3) the potential negative consequences inherent in the shift, and 4) establishing responsive and sustainable partnerships based on a systemic approach to the process of program development. A conclusion will also be provided. The analysis will emphasize developments in industrial nations with references to selected transitional economies.

I. Factors contributing to shifts in mechanisms of protection under social security schemes.

A. Increasing government program expenditures.
   1. Demographic shifts.
   2. Unemployment rates.

B. Political pressure for shifting responsibility from state to local government and the private sector.
   1. Declining confidence in state government systems.
      a. Inefficient/unaccountable.
      b. Ineffective.
c. Creates dependency.

II. Expected outcomes from program reductions and organizational restructuring.

A. Reduced tax burden on employees and employers.

B. Shift to private savings.
   1. Loss in defined benefits compensated through an increased in defined contributions and related saving mechanisms.

C. Increase in in-kind social support programs that compensate for loss of income protection.
   1. NGOs service agencies and organizations.
   2. For profit services provision (in-home, day-care, etc).
   3. Community-based services (partnerships among professional service providers).

D. Increased focus on employment-related services/initiatives.
   1. Training.
   2. Rehabilitation.
   3. Social support.
      a. Day-care, respite care, constant attendance allowances.
      b. Treatment and prevention approaches.
         1. Substance abuse treatment programs.
         2. Mental illness treatment programs.
         3. Transportation related to work and job placement.
         4. Anti-discrimination provisions to protect minorities/disabled.
   5. Special provisions for women workers.
      7. Pension protection for informal work sector.

III. Potential Negative Consequences.

A. Increases in poverty rates.

B. Increases in marginalized populations and social exclusion.

C. Limited or ineffective responses by anticipated programs, such as:
   1. Investment in pension funds and personal savings.
   2. Social support systems (NGOs, for-profit agencies, etc.).
IV. Developing Responsive and Sustainable Partnerships.

A. Systemic process approach to program development.
   1. Appropriate mix of interdependence between sectors and systems.
      a. Income and social support systems.
      b. Public and private sector.
      c. National and local government programs.
      d. Program coordination at administration and at the point of implementation

   2. Complementary systems.
      a. Single entry and assessment into the system of social protection.
      b. Team (inter-disciplinary) treatment/case management.

B. Examples of Successful Partnerships and Social Cohesion.

   1. National examples.
      a. Rehabilitation programs that merge income support, training, work, and social support systems.

   2. Local examples
      a. Joint state and local government projects administered by a broad-based participants from commerce, education, and professional service providers.

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