Call for papers for a workshop on

Pension Reform in the Middle East and North Africa

German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), Bonn, Germany, 27 August 2020

In co-operation with Bielefeld University
and the International Labour Organization (Regional Office for the Arab States)

The social policies of countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have so far been insufficiently researched. This gap in research is also made visible by international data sets containing hardly any data on social policies in MENA countries. The problem is all the more astonishing since recent research shows that the MENA countries spend a relatively large amount of government budgets on social policies but focus on other instruments than countries in other parts of the world – in particular energy and food subsidies. In addition, social protection systems in many MENA countries are highly inefficient and require comprehensive reform. This holds also for the pension schemes in the region.

The German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) will therefore hold a workshop in co-operation with Bielefeld University and the International Labour Organization (Regional Office for the Arab States) on 27 August 2020 to discuss the origins of pension schemes in the MENA region, understand their trajectories, identify options of systemic and parametric pension reforms and explore the complex politics behind them. Even though it is difficult to draw generalizing conclusions from single country cases on the whole region, we still believe that many countries in the region face similar challenges. These issues, including the rapid demographic transition, the extraordinarily low female labour force participation rate and particular nature of political regimes, make the technical and political economy dimensions of pension reform in the MENA an extremely interesting topic to be studied from a comparative perspective.

We invite researchers in any country and from any relevant discipline (sociology, economics, politics, law etc.) to submit scholarly written abstracts (500-600 words) of papers in the making (not yet published!) to socioeconomic@die-gdi.de before 31 March 2020. The papers should deal with the pension schemes of Arab countries (including the Palestinian territories), Israel, Iran or Turkey. Single case studies and comparisons of Middle Eastern countries with non-Middle Eastern countries are also welcome. And the abstracts should provide information on (i) the research question, (ii) the hypothesis, (iii) the methodology and (iv) the findings.

Authors of accepted papers are requested to send their full papers by 15 July 2020.

Participants are fully responsible to organise their own travel and accommodation but DIE will provide logistic support in this regard. In addition, DIE will cover the travel and accommodation costs of a limited number of applicants from outside Europe. Once you apply, please let us know if you would need such support.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us:

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