Business intelligence for social protection - the Tunisian case

Faced with effectiveness and efficiency requirements, the Tunisian social protection system is increasingly having to streamline and update its information system, still reputed to be fragmented, divided and complex. This is why the Centre for Research and Social Studies (CRES) has committed to setting up a Business Intelligence System (BIS), whose goals are to support and guide national know-how development action plans in order to improve the Tunisian social protection system. The CRES is nonetheless aware of the fact that the reliability of data and the centralisation and proper dissemination thereof is a prerequisite for any accurate evaluation of developments based on these data. At the heart of this Business Intelligence System is a data-warehouse capable of centralising and standardising the data coming from the three social security funds: the National Social Security Fund (CNSS), the National Pension and Social Welfare Fund (CNRPS) and the National Sickness Insurance Fund (CNAM).

The system has already provided researchers and policy makers with the elements and tools required to analyse the issue of reforming the social protection system in Tunisia. It has enabled research teams to improve the quality and the relevance of their tools and products, such as technical and evaluation reports, educational publications and other contributions focussing on social protection policy, thus enhancing the debate between the various stakeholders (government and social partners).

SOCIEUX is supporting the transfer of expertise in order to develop the organisational, individual and technical capacities of the CRES in the field of statistics, and their interpretation through informative analytical reports. For these purposes, a CRES delegation was sent to visit Belgian institutions of excellence in social business intelligence.

Common approaches to similar problems

Given the age pyramid that typifies modern day Belgium, total pension expenditure is enormous. The baby boom generation born after the Second World War has already retired, or will retire in the next few years. Our social security, and certainly mandatory pension schemes, based on the contributions of active people, are under pressure, and it is therefore crucial that we are able to predict future expenses. Moreover, it is...
important that we assess the impact of the different legislative reform options, such as increasing the statutory retirement age or setting stricter conditions for taking early retirement, in order to ensure a sustainable and affordable level of social protection for future generations.

Similarly, in Tunisia, pension funding and social sickness insurance are facing major challenges, partly owing to the demographic transition taking place, but also wage developments (particularly in the public sector) and the pressure thus put on the national budget. Today, pensions represent 5.1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and funding them is seen as unsustainable. Without reform, the deficit will rise to almost 2% of GDP and resources will be depleted by 2018.

Although the challenges faced are similar, the responses enacted by decision-makers in their choice of reforms must be a sound compromise adapted to the socio-economic background of each country. In Belgium’s case, we are lucky enough to work with entirely digitalised systems. In other words, an abundance of data is available, hidden in our servers. However, we still need a computer system which enables us to extract the most relevant data and organise them in ways which would ensure reliable and quick decision making.

The new Federal Pension Department (merger of the National Pension Office and the Public Sector Pensions Department) will have a new tool: the “Theseos” computer application. This data-warehouse has a specific module for processing pension rights and is the point of entry for any citizen who wishes to make enquiries - mypension.be. The advantages for all data users (citizens, researchers, managers and decision-makers) have now been proven. We can only recommend that the CRES reinforce its own information systems by creating a similar centralising mechanism that saves but also automatically processes data to be used by decision-makers [and users].

Aymeric Peltzer
Attaché Walloon Brabant and Brussels Office
National Pension Office

Social protection research and forecasting

The Federal Planning Bureau (FPB) is a Belgian public interest body. Its main mission is to produce analyses and economic, social and environmental forecasts, notably to support political decision-making. Its scientific expertise is made available to the government, the parliament, Belgian social partners, and other national and international institutions. It could be considered to be the Belgian counterpart of the CRES. Its experience therefore offers valuable lessons for the CRES and its partners.

The FPB has several models characterised by consistency between the macro-economic framework on the one hand, and the budgetary framework on the other. Public finances and social spending thus feature prominently. This set of models is used not only used in forecasting analysis (baseline scenario), but also variant analysis (impact of a measure, alternative scenario).

Budgetary outlook is produced on the basis of three macro-economic models focusing on different timeframes: short-term (current year), medium-term (over 5 years) and long-term (up to 2060). The long-term model focuses on the evolution of social spending in order to study the budgetary impact of ageing.

The impact of ageing and more specifically pension adequacy in the long-term (up to 2060) are studied using a dynamic micro-simulation model, in the context of scenarios similar to those chosen for the long-term macro-budgetary model (demographic, socio-economic, macro-economic and social benefits increase scenario).

The results of these complex but essential models are particularly interesting for the CRES, which has to provide the same information to Tunisian decision-makers. The exchange between the FBB and the CRES is therefore a partnership which responds to relevant and pressing needs.

Nicole Fasquelle and Christophe Joyeux
Social Protection, Demographics and Forecasting
Economic Analyses and Outlook
Federal Planning Bureau
A new social contract
Since 2012, Tunisia has put in place measures that pave the way for reforming social protection and labour policies. In May 2012, the government launched a social dialogue process that reached a significant milestone in January 2013, with the signing of a new “Social Contract”. The Social Contract agreement lays out critical areas of reform for several key themes, including social protection and labour reform. A draft law was also prepared in 2014 for the creation of a national social dialogue council, which would have tripartite representation from the government, labour unions and the private sector.

The development of the Social Contract framework represents an important step towards modernising the social protection system more comprehensively by (i) enhancing implementation and delivery platforms; (ii) strengthening institutional capacity and governance; and (iii) improving financial sustainability. While enhancing service delivery platforms can help improve implementation and efficiency in the short term, building evidence based consensus should be achieved in order to improve the financial sustainability of the overall system in the long term.

Decision Support System for Social Protection in Tunisia

Tunis, Republic of Tunisia, October 2015 to March 2016. - Technical collaboration continues with the Centre for Research and Social Studies (abbreviated in French as CRES), to upgrade its information system as well as to improve data management and analytical report creation procedures. SOCIEUX recently organised a professional study visit to Belgium, the latest in a series of training and capacity-building activities carried out in recent months.

The professional visit was an opportunity for CRES representatives to come together with experts from various Belgian social protection institutions with expertise in business intelligence, information management and research in the fields of both health insurance and pensions. Particular attention was paid to data quality control as well as data analysis, monitoring, forecasting and modelling techniques. These models should allow drawing conclusions, for example, about the performance and sustainability of a pension system, which would be valuable insights to inform future reforms in the area. Representatives from the CRES have said that, in this way, they were able to share experiences in all the fields in which their institution operates.

The recent visit links in with other capacity building activities carried out at CRES headquarters. A first training workshop on social sciences statistical modelling and analysis techniques familiarized the CRES with econometric tools for evaluation and impact research. Other training sessions focused on the creation of specific instruments for risk management, such as dashboards, which predict the risk of exceeding the annual budget and the causes of this imbalance, so as to be able to adjust it in time. The technical assistance cycle will end in the coming months with technical guidance on producing analytical reports, the purpose of which is to draw conclusions about the evolution of the health insurance and pension system in Tunisia and provide with information to policymakers to tailor policy responses accordingly.

As a result of these activities, the CRES is on track to develop analysis and simulation tools which ultimately fuel the debate between the government, labour unions and the private sector on the issues of the evaluation and reform of social protection in Tunisia. In addition to the CRES, the National Health Insurance Fund (Caisse nationale d’assurance maladie, CNAM), the National Social Security Fund (Caisse nationale de sécurité sociale, CNSS) and the National Pension and Social Welfare Fund (Caisse nationale de retraite et de prévoyance sociale, CNRPS), the three social security funds, also participated in the training courses.

Experts deployed
- Mr. Eric Delattre, Head of the University of Cergy-Pontoise (UCP) Bureau of Statistics
- Mr. Marco Geraci, Expert from the Pensions Advisory Council, France
- Ms. Claire el Moudden, Lecturer and Researcher, Lower Normandy Caen University, France
- Mr. Michel Vigneul, Actuarial Advisor and Project Manager, COOPAMI, Belgium

Acknowledgements
Strengthening social assistance in Ivory Coast

Abidjan, November 2015 and March 2016.- SOCIEUX has started to collaborate with the Ivorian Ministry of State, Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Vocational Training (MEMEASFP) in identifying its needs in terms of reinforcing the social assistance sector in the country. Two priority areas have been defined for this approach: developing a basic social services package and assessing the current state of local structures responsible for social services.

The Ivory Coast authorities are well aware of the need to revitalise local structures in order to improve the range of social services available to the population. This is why the main focus of the collaboration with the MEMEASFP is geared towards analysing existing local structures and drawing up proposals ahead of the adoption of a unified framework for the nationwide provision of local services. The analysis began by mapping social centres (128 in total), which are the first point of entry into the care system and the cornerstone for launching current social reforms.

To this end, interviews have been carried out with staff of the MEMEASFP and the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, Children and Families, which monitor social centres, and their decentralised services. Moreover, data have been collected on the number and professional categories of the centres’ employees, their budget and operational resources, as well as the socio-demographic and socioeconomic indicators for each area of intervention.

In the coming months, these data will be analysed in order to develop proposals for ensuring that care is organised and distributed more efficiently and fairly throughout Ivory Coast, based on objective criteria. This analysis should also enable basic social assistance and the services package, which is to be offered and accessible to all, to be defined in following missions.

Social Protection in Ivory Coast

Over the past four years, Ivory Coast has made an impressive transition from crisis to relative stability, and from fragility and low equilibrium to aspiring emerging economy status. In 2013, the Government approved an ambitious and comprehensive National Social Protection Strategy centred on the overall objective of progressively establishing a social protection system which would increase the capacity of the most vulnerable individuals and allow the population to manage risks more effectively. However, it still faces shortcomings in the institutional, legal and structural framework of the social welfare sector, and capacity building is seen as relevant to the development of a sustainable social protection system in Ivory Coast.

Experts deployed:

- Ms. Cécile Chaumin-Ernst, retired Chief Inspector of Health and Social Affairs, France
- Mr. Jean Yves Hocquet, Director-General, Special Advisor to the Director of the DARES, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Vocational Training and Social Dialogue, France
- Mr. François Sentis, Chief Executive Director, Institut Régional du Travail Social PACA et Corse, France

The view of our partners

“The work carried out will, without a doubt, improve knowledge of, and esteem for, social action. What is important now is not to space out the work too much and to keep the momentum going. Furthermore, I strongly believe that the ministerial authorities should be informed of progress made, so as to achieve recognition at the highest political level of the strategic value of social centres for more inclusive development.”

Mr. Amara Coulibaly
Director-General of Social Action

Social centres: a SWOT analysis

From the study carried out, the main observation made is that social stakeholders believe that social centres are the unit capable of taking charge of social action, since they are present throughout a large part of the country. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that their staff are enthusiastic and dynamic, although to a certain extent, this strength is weakened by the fact that human, financial and operational resources are lacking. Furthermore, the fact that responsibility is shared between two ministries undermines coherence in defining their objectives and abilities. Nonetheless, the most important conclusion is that, in the current context of growth (thought to be 8% for 2016), owing to their widespread presence and accessibility for the public, social centres have come to constitute a true lever for inclusive social development in the country.
For the coordination of Mexican pension systems

Guanajuato, Mexico, November 2015 and March 2016. In November, SOCIEUX collaborated with the Social Security Institute of the State of Guanajuato (ISSEG) in organising the International Pensions Seminar, with a view to motivating coordination of pensions at national level. Conclusions pointed to the need for a new framework law to ensure a coordinated pension system under the authority of an official public body. It is to this end that SOCIEUX is continuing its collaboration with this and other Mexican institutions in the field of pensions.

The more than 600 participants in the International Pensions Seminar spoke of the need to work towards establishing a new framework law containing general principles aimed at guaranteeing a “decent” and coordinated pension system for all Mexicans and which is disassociated from salaries. These regulations should include sustainable criteria, be approved by all social stakeholders and be flexible enough to face current economic and demographic challenges.

Moreover, a coordinated pension system would operate under the authority of an official public body in which the various pension and health institutions would participate. This body would facilitate the exchange of information, experience and good practices between the different Mexican pension schemes on issues such as the portability of pensions and the reciprocal calculation of contributions and payments. Other conclusions drawn from the seminar pointed to the need to supplement pension rights with greater contributions or personal savings and the need for pension institutions to diversify their fund investment without affecting the risk/return ratio.

Following the seminar, the ISSEG continues along the path to the coordination of Mexican pension systems, with two firm proposals already presented. Firstly, the drafting of a National Pensions Act which would constitute a “law of minimums” to harmonise the different systems and which would include formal public and private sector workers, informal workers and those not entitled to a pension. The second proposal advocates the creation of a National Pensions Council as an authoritative advisory body.

Both proposals have been peer-reviewed by SOCIEUX experts and will be presented to the National Conference of Governors (CONAGO) in the coming months. The timing also coincides with the development by the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit of a National Register of Pensions as a basis for the Act.

Experts deployed
- Mr. Carlos García de Cortázar, Deputy Director General for Social Affairs, Education, Culture, Health and Consumption of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
- Mr. Antonio Ojeda, Professor of Labour Law and Social Security at the University of Seville, Spain
- Mr. Borja Suárez, Professor of Labour Law and Social Security at the Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain

The need for state coordination
Today, 2.7 million Mexicans are pensioners. This represents thirteen million pesos per month for the state (around 715 million euros). Mexico has a pension system which is highly fragmented in all its aspects as a result of a disparate social policy which is focused on the short-term and has undergone many consecutive reforms. 90% of workers are members of reformed pension systems. This context means that different pension systems with different requirements coexist between states.
Extending the RISE Families Programme in Saint-Kitts and Nevis

December 2015 - The Nevis Department of Social Services requested SOCIEUX’s assistance in order to strengthen the capacities of its staff in the implementation of the R.I.S.E. (Restore, Inspire, Secure and Empower) Families Programme. Following an initial mission, experts have not only reported on what the training needs of staff are, but have also recommended the development of work systems and protocols for all levels of the organisation.

The R.I.S.E. Families Programme is an adaptation of the Chilean Puente (Bridge) Programme that aims to ‘build a bridge between the most vulnerable families and their rights’. It embraces a multidisciplinary approach to family support that goes beyond standard cash transfers and focuses on the empowerment of families. As a new holistic approach, it requires new skills and working procedures from the social workers and their supervisors. Moreover, the Nevis Department of Social Services, in charge of scaling up the programme, is under-resourced and its staff is undertaking responsibilities outside of official job descriptions.

The first SOCIEUX mission served to make a general assessment of the state of social services on the island. A series of individual and group interviews and home visits were held, which, as the experts declared, were immensely helpful in clarifying the nature of interaction between social workers and clients and gave better contextual information on the high degree of poverty and vulnerability being addressed by the R.I.S.E. programme. Moreover, four days of training sessions were held concentrating on Communication Skills and Family Assessment. The training used a large number of participatory exercises and role plays, with the experts highlighting that the trainee group responded with energy and enthusiasm to the approach.

The sessions were also used to make a general assessment of social work in Nevis and discuss the likely way forward for future SOCIEUX support. Experts’ recommendations in this sense include a wide range of training activities as well as providing assistance to the current management team on how to effectively consolidate different cash assistance programmes into one unified programme and develop more systematised working procedures and protocols for the smooth operation of the R.I.S.E. programme at all levels.

Experts deployed

- Ms. Ana Obradovic, Social worker at Centre for Social welfare, Osijek, Croatia
- Mr. Christopher Horne, Social Protection Expert Consultant, United Kingdom

The experts say

“From direct observation in the training sessions, we realised that the levels of skill and “natural ability” are very high. Almost universally, participants showed a “natural” understanding of some of the issues involved in the provision of high quality social work, and understanding of the situation of vulnerable clients. In this sense, this first mission has left an impression of great optimism both for the future of social work in Nevis and of the impact and likelihood of success of any further technical assistance which may be provided under the SOCIEUX programme. It is also important to mention that with all the pressures on the Nevis Social Services Department and in the context of a general lack of resources, the workforce appears to function excellently as a team.”

Ms. Ana Obradovic
Prolongation of SOCIEUX
SOCIEUX – Social Protection EU Expertise in Development Cooperation - is a technical assistance facility to support the efforts of partner countries to better design and manage social protection systems by means of short-term peer-to-peer expertise. Since its creation in January 2014, SOCIEUX has provided technical assistance by experts drawn primarily from the EU Member States’ public administrations to over 20 countries in a wide variety of areas, under the umbrella of social protection. SOCIEUX will be operational up until December 2016, when it will be incorporated into a new broader technical assistance facility, SOCIEUX+, which will include employment in its field of action.

Submit your request!
SOCIEUX targets public authorities and mandated bodies in charge of social protection at a national and regional level. Interested partners are invited to send their requests by email, letter or fax. Requests should give a brief outline of the area of assistance, needs and estimated timing. Please download the SOCIEUX Guide for Partner Country Institutions and SOCIEUX Request Form from our website and contact the SOCIEUX team at contact@socieux.eu.

On social protection
Launch of the ISPA tools
The Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment (ISPA) is a set of practical tools that helps countries improve their social protection system by analysing its strengths and weaknesses and offering options for further action. ISPA includes individual tools and outcome metrics to provide rapid diagnostics at three levels: social protection systems, programmes, and delivery mechanisms. All the tools are designed to work together and countries can even apply the tools periodically to track performance over time. ISPA tools have developed at the request of the Social Protection Inter-Agency Coordination Board (SPIAC-B). More information at www.ispatools.org.

Other ongoing and upcoming actions
SOCIEUX has a long list of technical assistance collaboration projects with the following institutions:

Latin-Africa and the Caribbean
- Barbados – The Ministry of Social Care, Constituency, Empowerment and Community Development, in reinforcing staff capacity in terms of the Monitoring and Evaluation of Social Protection Programmes.
- The Colombian Department for Social Prosperity, the organisation resulting from the merger between the National Agency for Overcoming Extreme Poverty (ANSPE) and the Special Administrative Unit for Territorial Consolidation (UACT). In addition to the "Development of capacities for improving and implementing the UNIDOS Strategy", activities are also being carried out relating to improving the targeting mechanisms for social facilities of the new organisation.

Africa
- Gabon - The National Social Assistance Fund (Fonds National d'Aide Sociale – FNASI) to provide capacity-building support for assessing, monitoring and evaluating income-generating activities (IGAs) projects.
- Ghana’s Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) in drawing up the National Social Protection Policy.
- Mali - The Technical Union of Mutuals in Mali (L’Union Technique de la Mutualité Malienne - UTM) to increase its capacities in the management of a new universal health insurance coverage.
- Togo’s National Health Insurance Institution (INAM), the Togolese Government's mandated body, in order to advise the organisation on the extension of health insurance coverage at national level.
- The Zanzibar Ministry of Empowerment, Social Welfare, Youth, Women and Children (MoESWYWC) in the elaboration of an implementation plan to set up a social pension scheme for the elderly in Zanzibar. The Zanzibar Universal Pension Scheme (ZUPS) is intended for those aged 70 and over.

Middle East & Asia
- The Jordanian Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) in the development of its new internal strategy and the related Action Plan, which should include the setting of solid principles, priorities and strategic objectives for the coming years.

Europe
Azerbaijan
- The Scientific Research and Training Centre on Labour and Social Problems (SCRTCLSP) through the exchange of European expertise on the good practices of research centres on social policy in EU Member States. The lessons learned from this exchange should reinforce the SCRTCLSP so that it is better equipped to build the capacities of institutions in Azerbaijan, disseminate knowledge and provide qualitative research to support policy-making.
- The State Agency for Mandatory Health Insurance (SAMHI) in the introduction of mandatory health insurance in the country and implementation of the health financing reform.