

Intergenerational fairness: from today to tomorrow

Introducing a methodology to assess public policies from the perspective of intergenerational fairness

BACKGROUND

In 2018 the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation launched the “From Today for Tomorrow” programme aiming to ensure that today’s political decision-making processes take future generations’ well-being into account.

Central to this work is one question: What makes a public policy fair from an intergenerational perspective? To date, there is no applicable standard or approach that allow policy makers in Portugal to assess policies or proposals from an intergenerational perspective.

**A practical methodology to
evaluate the impact of public
policies from the perspective of
intergenerational fairness**

THE PROJECT

The Gulbenkian Sustainability Programme and School of International Futures, leading experts in strategic foresight and long-term thinking, are developing an innovative methodology to evaluate the long-term impact of public policies. The new methodology will allow governments, parliaments, civil society and citizens to systematically and impartially assess the distributional impacts of public policies on current and future generations. The project runs until September 2020.

**Developed by the Calouste
Gulbenkian Foundation and
School of International
Futures**

OBJECTIVES

The main goal of this project is to develop a methodology that allows for a systematic and impartial assessment of public policies, based on the key consideration of intergenerational fairness. The methodology will be applied by policy practitioners – that is, politicians and civil servants, whether in central or local government, national or international institutions – to perform meaningful intergenerational impact assessments of proposed policies before they are adopted. It can also be used by civil society, think-tanks, the media, academics and other interested parties, including in the private sector, to evaluate proposed or existing policies in a wide range of policy areas, from healthcare reform to environmental policies to fiscal budgets, for intergenerational fairness.

The end result will be that policies are better designed today to either avoid, or mitigate, potential intergenerational imbalances tomorrow. Our aspiration is that it can be used globally, but in the first instance will be applied in Portugal.

The methodology will balance qualitative and quantitative approaches to assessing individual policies, including general principles against which they should be assessed. Operational rules and measurement indicators will help users assess impact. A toolkit will be developed for policy-makers with examples with guidance on applying the methodology in practice. We will also produce a simplified version of for use in the media and by citizens, to enable them to scrutinize policies and to help build awareness of intergenerational fairness.

THE WORK AHEAD

The project consists of four stages, each with specific deliverables:



i. Design: A working definition of intergenerational fairness, together with an understanding of its applicability in Portugal today and tomorrow. Exploration of different design options for the project;

ii. Outreach: Assessment of existing methods, good practice in Portuguese and international policy making processes. Development of possible frameworks for application in Portugal.

iii. Develop: A beta version of the methodology and toolkit. Test its application to existing policy.

iv. Finalise: A final framework and application to “live policy” issues – current policies under development in Portugal.

A framework ready to be used in the policy making process by September 2020

SUPPORTING THE PROJECT

The project has the potential to become a foundation for far-reaching impact outside its lifetime. However, success will depend on uptake in Portugal by policy and decision-makers. Throughout the four stages, we will engage with policy-makers, experts, academics and civil society across Portugal and internationally.

Participation of policy-makers, experts, academia and civil society is crucial for the short- and long-term success of the project in Portugal and beyond

Your input, ideas and feedback will be crucial to the success of the project, ensuring good awareness, understanding and uptake of the methodology, and helping it to have a significant impact on Portuguese policy making.

For more information on the project & to get involved email Rahul Chandran, Principal (rahul@soif.org.uk) & Ellen Shepherd, Tech Expert (ellen@soif.org.uk).