Capacity building for social protection

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Question

Identify literature on impacts and lessons from efforts to support sustainable government capacity building of the social protection sector. Include literature on both programmes and systems if available.

Contents

1. Overview

Research for this rapid literature review was unable to find specific material on impacts and lessons for supporting sustainable government capacity building of the social protection sector in general. There is, however, general guidance material on social protection, and lessons and impacts from specific programmes and projects. Consequently this report identifies recommendations and insights across the literature which could have relevance to supporting sustainable government capacity.

Material was identified through web searches using keyword combinations related to 'capacity building' and 'social protection' as well as contacting experts for literature recommendations. Social protection covers a wide range of development interventions and this review focuses on that literature which explicitly uses the term 'social protection' and literature related to the key types of social protection programmes such as cash transfer or public works and employment programmes. The material identified for this report is not a comprehensive mapping of available literature but instead a sample of literature that presents relevant insights. The material identified on social protection largely focuses on what should be done in relation to social protection as opposed to impacts of social protection capacity building support by donors.

The range of types of social protection programmes, approaches and contexts means that there are no universal recommendations or insights. Within the relatively small sample of literature covered in this report there does seem, however, to be common issues which arise throughout the material, including:

- **Coordination:** A consistent challenge seems to be coordination between different ministries and sectors, and different levels of government (i.e. central, regional, district) (Soares & Britto, 2007; Soares et al. 2013; ILO, 2013; Rawlings et al., 2013). There have also been coordination challenges between partner governments and the multiple donors they work with (Subbarao et al., 2012). Recommendations include donor harmonisation processes (joint working groups, pooled funding, memoranda of understanding) and donor support of partner government (internal) coordination mechanisms (Samson et al., 2010; Subbarao et al., 2012).

- **Evidence and data:** These can inform about the type and needs of beneficiaries (DFID et al., 2009). It can help support arguments in favour of the programme and dispel popular concerns (e.g. that cash transfers undermine employment levels) (Save the Children, 2010). Evidence and data, both from domestic and foreign social protection programmes, can inform policy-makers but also support political will by feeding directly into the debate (Samson et al., 2010).

- **Supporting national dialogue:** Social protection programmes are often politically controversial. Supporting and guiding a national dialogue on social protection can maintain the right political climate to implement large social protection programmes (ILO, 2013; Yablonski & Marcus, 2007).

- **Legislation:** Several references highlight the need for legislative reform to construct a framework for social protection programmes (DFID et al., 2009; ILO, 2013; Carswell & De Neve, 2013). This can help move social protection approaches from a 'charity'-type approach to a 'rights-based' approach to social protection (ILO, 2013; Roelen & Devereux, 2013).

- **Centralisation vs localisation:** There are advantages and disadvantages to centralising different aspects of social protection programmes (Samson et al., 2010; Winter & Engen, 2013). Most literature identifies the need of a balance between centralisation and localisation, for example a central registry of beneficiaries but local service delivery (Samson et al, 2010; Rawlings et al., 2013).

- **Long-term funding:** Social protection programmes need ongoing funding. Donors can support this by providing funds themselves or through supporting domestic revenue mobilisation (Save the Children, 2010; ILO, 2013).

2. Cash transfer programmes

Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes
Samson, M. van Niekerk, M. & Mac Quene, K. (2010). 2nd Edition. Economic Policy Research Institute.

http://epri.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/EPRI_Book_4.pdf
This book was written to assist government policymakers and donor agency officials in designing, implementing and managing cash-based social transfer programmes. Rather than specific lessons learned the book outlines suggestions for improving social protection programmes.

In terms of building capacity for social protection, the key capacity needs at different levels are:

Level and Objective	*Activities*
Building capacity for evidence-based policymaking Policy design and implementation functions within the relevant ministries and other government institutions.	▪ Inter-regional evidence and lesson sharing ▪ Technical expertise in policy analysis ▪ Within-country cross-ministerial linkages
National-level design and implementation capacity A policy coordination process that ensures coherence and appropriate integration, and includes a strong monitoring and evaluation function.	▪ Targeting mechanisms ▪ Delivery systems ▪ Fiduciary risk management ▪ Monitoring and evaluation systems (M&E)
Local-level delivery capacity Cross-cutting delivery institutions, mechanisms or structures that ensure efficiency and effectiveness.	▪ Delivery infrastructure ▪ Human resources ▪ Training ▪ Communications

Social protection programmes require: i) durable political commitment; ii) the political influence to secure resources, negotiate trade-offs and to defend the framework's priority; as well as iii) the institutional capacity to manage the framework of the development. In terms of capacity constraints the book highlights the following needs and recommendations:

- **Centralised management information and systems:** Countries should develop a centralised 'single registry' management information system and centralise key payment functions through a national bank. This would need to be based on a national set of policies, procedures and systems.

- **Non-fragmented funding:** Fragmented funding places a greater stress on administrative capacity resources, absorbing attention and resources from core government responsibilities. Investments in government capacity can have multiplier effects if donor requirements are sufficiently harmonised. They generate direct implementation benefits, but also encourage donors to shift towards greater reliance on sectoral and general budget support.

- **Data:** There may need to be increased capacity for data gathering and analysis for making evidence-based policy decisions.

- **Building an evidence base and sharing lessons of global experience:** Evidence can be mobilised in a manner that facilitates an understanding of likely impact of the social transfers instruments. This can help build political will and enable support for social protection.

- **Technical support:** Policymakers may also require technical support in making decisions at a policy level. There may need to be support to strengthen national systems for targeting, delivery, fiduciary risk management and monitoring and evaluation. Development partners often support systems for managing fiduciary risk and effective monitoring and evaluation.

- **Local government infrastructure and staffing:** Local social protection-related government offices often lack adequate staff, office equipment, information and communications technology and vehicles. Building capacity can involve increasing the number of staff members at local level, but also training them in the key elements of social protection.

In terms of lessons for successful delivery of social protection the book identifies the following:

- Commitment and leadership from the political sphere.

- Adaptation, and a willingness to learn from experimentation and adapt to new information.

- Reliable information management.

- An appropriate mix of centralised management and decentralised implementation.

- Good communication with top officials who are open to criticism as well as a transparent process that tackles problems rather than obscures them.

Confronting Capacity Constraints on Conditional Cash Transfers in Latin America: the cases of El Salvador and Paraguay
Soares, F.V & Britto, T. (2007). Working Paper 38. Brasilia: International Poverty Centre.

http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/IPCWorkingPaper38.pdf

This working paper highlights the challenges of implementing conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes in the cases of El Salvador and Paraguay. There are coordination challenges among line ministries and among different layers of government. The role of municipalities can be unclear. Municipalities sign an agreement with the programme implementing agency from the national government, but in practice their participation can be limited. The working paper finds that it is not clear whether this is caused by a lack of resources or a lack of political will. There is little coordination at the local level among the respective institutions of the various line ministries, the municipalities, and the representatives of the programme. This lack of institutional capacity at the local level, in addition to being a problem on its own, puts pressure on the funding of the programme. Establishing institutional capacity can take resources away from the cash transfer component, and this might lead to a reduction in the target number of beneficiary families.

Recent Developments in the Role and Design of Social Protection Programmes
Soares, F.V., Lal, R. & Higgitt, R. (2013). Policy In Focus 25. Brasilia: International Poverty Centre for Inclusive Growth.

http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/IPCPovertyInFocus25.pdf

This article seeks to draw lessons, identify good practices and discuss advances and future challenges in conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes by analysing experiences in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay. The article finds that it is important to integrate different social programmes (e.g. education, health, nutrition, employment and housing) under an umbrella programme to improve coordination, efficiency, transparency and impacts. In addition to CCTs there may well need to be reforms in the tax system to further reduce structural poverty and inequality. An inclusive public policy for social protection must go beyond cash transfers to greater integration with other programmes aimed at tackling both the social risks and the needs of human capital faced by poverty-bound households.

3. Public works and employment programmes

Public works as a safety net: design, evidence, and implementation

Subbarao, K., del Ninno, C., Andrews, C., & Rodríguez-Alas, C. (2012). Washington: World Bank Publications.

http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/11/22/000333037_20121122005648/Rendered/PDF/NonAsciiFileName0.pdf

This book provides an overview of public works programmes as a form of social protection. It looks at the impacts of these programmes and provides a review of design features and implementation methods. The authors argue that the success of public works programs depends on careful design and establishing the relevant implementation structure. It is important to ensure transparency and accountability, and such programmes need strong checks and balances against possible error, fraud, and corruption. In most cases public works programmes were established from scratch, drawing on available capacity and related experiences in safety net operations. In other cases existing large-scale programmes were revised and scaled up. Public works programmes were customised to a variety of contexts, including low-income, middle-income, and fragile settings.

Recent public works programmes have incorporated a number of design and operational 'innovations'. Examples include programmatic linkages with employment and community services, and advances in information technology. In low-administrative capacity contexts, smart technology applications can help overcome challenges in beneficiary selection, payment processing, and programme monitoring.

In terms of donor support, donors pooling their financial and technical resources can be beneficial and help partner governments work better with donors. This was the case in Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program where the approach made it possible to harmonise all donor efforts in Ethiopia and enhance supervision and monitoring of the programme. It also avoided excessive transaction costs for the government and donor agencies. Another aspect was a memorandum of understanding, where the rights, obligations, and coordination arrangements of this government-donor partnership were spelled out in a memorandum of understanding. There were several joint bodies to administer the programme, which also minimises costs.

A case study of Cambodia highlighted the importance of inter-ministry and inter-institutional coordination; donor harmonization; and coordination between national and subnational governments. The establishment of national-level institutions such as the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) have helped integrate public works programmes in nationally owned development strategies. Donor partners are helping to strengthen CARD, which has now become the anchor for coordination of all activities relating to policy development and implementation of safety net programmes.

Coordinating social protection and employment policies: Experiences from Burkina Faso, Cambodia and Honduras

ILO. (2013). International Labour Office (ILO).

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_216145.pdf

This synthesis report covers an ILO/EU project on improving social protection and promoting employment. The report finds that for the development of coherent employment and social protection policies there needs to be a series of institutional developments: i) institution building; ii) human capital development;

iii) strengthening social dialogue; iv) developing vertical and horizontal policy coordination mechanisms; v) creating the necessary fiscal space; and vi) democratically debating and approving laws. Specific lessons from initial experiences are:

- Attention needs to be given to linking employment and social protection in the planning and policy-making frameworks.

- Additional institution building will allow for more coherence at the levels of both formulation and implementation.

- Social dialogue can play a key role. This includes supporting the participation of civil society and a role for the private sector.

- Financing employment and social protection policies requires the development of domestic fiscal space and capacity.

- The approaches used should contribute towards institutionalising rights (i.e. a rights-based approach, transformative social security).

There is no single recipe for employment and social protection programmes. The strategy to extend social protection and the opportunities for linking with regional and global developments will vary from country to country. However, in all cases the implementation will require the gradual building, step by step, of institutions and capabilities which is a mid- to long-term process. There needs to be comparative learning, by adapting good practices to the national context. A social consensus needs to be developed and cultivated, the legal foundations and institutions built, and the fiscal sources developed.

The report recommends further comparative learning and policy design processes, bringing countries together in regional groups, particularly those with a common culture, external economic environment, and/or similar resource endowments. Technical assistance can help to strengthen the knowledge of the social partners regarding the need to integrate social protection and employment policies, as well as how to do it. Social dialogue and institution building are long-term processes.

Employment guarantee as social protection: lessons from Tamil Nadu, India
Carswell, G. & De Neve G. (2013). Brighton: University of Sussex.

https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=employment-guarantee-as-social-protection.pdf&site=11

This policy briefing includes some lessons from the Tamil Nadu experience of the design and implementation of employment-based social protection policies which follows the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The briefing argues that factors likely to lead to more successful outcomes include:

- **High-level political will and competent bureaucratic and administrative structures:** In Tamil Nadu MGNREGA implementation has benefitted from cross-party support from the state government and a well-functioning state bureaucracy. Tamil Nadu is a state with a long-standing commitment to pro-poor politics and also has a well-developed and integrated bureaucracy at all administrative levels. Administrators in the state have extensive experience in the implementation of rural development programmes and welfare schemes.

- **Legal regulations are available that reduce opportunities for corruption:** In Tamil Nadu, the ban on the use of contractors is believed to have kept 'leakages' (i.e. corruption) at a minimum, while

weekly public payments in cash at the worksite enhance transparency and are popular with workers.

4. Child-focused programmes

Social protection and child survival
Save the Children (2010). London: Save the Children.

http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Social_Protection_and_Child_Survival_1.pdf

This policy brief looks at the role social protection has to play in tackling child mortality and provides recommendations for effective programme design that maximises benefits for children. The brief notes that in Africa, only a few of the small-scale, externally resourced and well-designed pilots have become government-owned programmes with national coverage. They find that a lack of commitment from developing country governments is partly based on concerns about cost, fears of household dependency and the need for more directly productive interventions. This is even though such concerns have largely been answered by evidence, according to the authors. The authors find that donors can be reluctant to fund recurrent costs in low-income countries. They suggest that donors should support the expansion of country-owned social protection systems based on national priorities and provide predictable, long-term assistance where appropriate, in combination with increasing mobilisation of domestic resources.

Advancing Child-Sensitive Social Protection
DFID, HelpAge International, Hope & Homes for Children, Institute of Development Studies, International Labour Organization, Overseas Development Institute, Save the Children UK, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank. (2009).

http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Advancing_Child_Sensitive_Social_Protection_1.pdf

This joint statement by donors, international organisations, NGOs and research institutions lays out the importance for social protection to be sensitive to children's needs. It outlines approaches and suggests steps for achieving child-sensitive social protection. Social protection systems should ensure that institutional capacity and resources are available to efficiently and effectively implement appropriate instruments. Instruments can be social transfers, social insurance or social services. There is also a need for policies, legislation and regulations that protect families' access to resources and promote employment.

Design and implementation features of child-sensitive social protection include choice of instrument, targeting mechanism, use of conditionality and phasing. They will need to respond to contextual factors such as: the economy; poverty and vulnerability analysis; demographic data and trends; HIV and AIDS prevalence rates; resource availability; existing services; the political and institutional context and administrative capacity; and the available evidence base. There is a need to further build the evidence base to support the case for child-sensitive social protection and to ensure that appropriate data is available. This would involve ongoing research, data disaggregation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Children and Social Protection: Towards a package that works
Yablonski, J. & Marcus, R.. (2007). London: Save the Children.

http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Children_and_Social_Protection_Jan_07_1.pdf

This briefing on designing social protection systems, with a focus on children, emphasises national ownership and sustainability of social protection programmes. The design of social protection systems requires a national dialogue, which will inherently be an extremely political process. Analysis of the political bases of effective social protection programmes requires the following:

- Define programmes in **national contexts**, responding to specific configurations of vulnerability and deprivation. This can require situation analyses and examining key vulnerabilities, local risks, and sources of support and opposition.

- Take into account the **prevailing political climate** on specific issues. Frame approaches in line with the political debate, for example whether there is popular support for a targeted approaches or conditional transfers

- Build on **existing social protection/welfare programmes**, even where these are seen as ineffective, too narrow. These already have some political support which could be mobilised in favour of an extended package.

5. Additional social protection material

Common Ground: UNICEF and World Bank Approaches to Building Social Protection Systems
Rawlings, L., Murthy, S. & Winder, N. (2013). World Bank and UNICEF.

http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/UNICEF-WB_systems_note_formatted(1).pdf

This briefing note looks at building a common World Bank and UNICEF approach to developing and strengthening social protection systems. The note defines social protection systems as a coordinated portfolio of interventions to address different dimensions of poverty and deprivation. These aim to reduce vulnerability across the life-cycle and ensure cumulative benefits across generations. Key challenges are: (i) challenges of political economy and differing donor views and practice; (ii) risks of excessive centralisation, and (iii) potential costs of transactions and limited transparency.

The note argues that a more integrated system requires a gradual and contextual process and consideration of different levels of system coordination (i.e. policy, programme and administrative). There is no one-size-fits-all in terms of operationalisation of systems, and pathways will differ according to country contexts, capacity and needs. Approaches need to be country-led. In terms of donor coordination the note argues for donors to:

- Work together to present coherent support to countries.

- Maximise synergies and common agendas, recognising different organisations' added value.

- Jointly support sustainable, scalable, and evidence-based interventions.

- Enhance and share analytical work on systems development.

- Promote South-South learning and cooperation for knowledge sharing and capacity building.

Local Government and Social Protection: Making Service Delivery Available for the Most Vulnerable

Winter, M. & Engen, J. (2013). UN Capital Development Fund and United Nations Development Programme.

http://asia-pacific.undp.org/content/rbap/en/home/library/poverty/local-gov-social-protection.html

This discussion paper conceptualises social protection as part of overall public service delivery, and examines the role that local governments can play in implementing social protection related policies. It identifies a number of ways in which local government capacity can support social protection programmes. This includes:

- **Beneficiary targeting.** Due to their proximity, local accountability and vital registration functions, local governments are well placed to reduce inclusion and exclusion errors in safety nets.

- **Grievance and redress processes.** Local governments can provide a framework for more effective grievance and redress mechanisms.

- **Information availability and disclosure**. Local governments offer significant opportunities for greater transparency and accountability.

- **Monitoring and evaluation.** Local-level monitoring may be qualitatively better than centrally administered monitoring, as local staff and offices may have a greater knowledge of the community and greater incentives to follow up on service delivery performance.

- **Taking into account local conditions and circumstances**. Local governments can better tailor safety net parameters and outputs based on their local knowledge.

- **Linking supply and demand.** Local governments can provide necessary infrastructure and service delivery, to link suppliers to users.

- **Experimentation and adaptation.** Local discretion can allow local governments a natural 'laboratory' for experimentation and innovation through testing different arrangements.

- **Existing arrangements.** Local governments are already on the ground which can reduce or eliminate any administrative and management costs.

The paper argues that safety net programmes can also in turn strengthen local government capacity. There are several features of safety net programmes that can bring added value to local government and to local governance, and to local service delivery and performance, in particular:

- **Strengthening local government capacities.** The implementation of safety net programmes can, in and of itself, considerably enhance local government capacities and strengthen existing service delivery functions.

- **Enhancing accountability.** Locally administered safety nets require regular interaction between local governments and their citizens, which may contribute to enhanced accountability and better local governance.

- **Demand for public services.** Safety net programmes (especially conditional cash transfers) can help local governments and users identify bottlenecks and other problems, and meet other

sectoral objectives, such as higher enrolment rates in schools and more frequent use of local health clinics.

- **Operations and maintenance issues.** Workfare programmes have the potential to help local governments address infrastructure maintenance.

Promoting Inclusive Social Protection in the Post-2015 Framework

Roelen, K. and Devereux, S. (2013). IDS Policy Briefing 39. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies (IDS). http://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/PB39.pdf

This policy briefing, part of the special Millennium Development Goals series, examines how the post 2015 development framework should promote 'Inclusive Social Protection', both to guarantee universal access to social protection and also to ensure that social protection and complementary programmes address the structural causes of poverty and vulnerability, rather than merely responding to the symptoms. The paper outlines a number of policy recommendations including legislation to underpin a rights-based and demand-driven social protection approach and better integrating social protection into national social and economic policies. With regards to integration, the effectiveness of social protection is multiplied when it is part of a package of support to poor and vulnerable people.

6. About this report

Key websites

- **World Bank – Rapid Social Response Programme**
  http://go.worldbank.org/2DPZ4H67Q0
  A multi-donor programme to help countries build effective social protection systems in partnership with the World Bank.

- **Inter-American Development Bank – Social Protection**
  http://www.iadb.org/en/topics/social-protection/social-protection-and-the-idb,1909.html

- **International Centre for Inclusive Growth - Social Protection**
  http://www.ipc-undp.org/social-protection

- **Inter-American Social Protection Network**
  http://socialprotectionet.org/

- **HelpAge International**
  http://www.helpage.org/social-protection/

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