

Strengthening coherence between agriculture and social protection

Emerging lessons

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Presentation outline

- What do we mean by coherence?
- How (small-holder) agriculture and social protection interact?
- What is the role of policy in strengthening coherence?
- What is the role of design and delivery in strengthening coherence?

What do we mean by coherence?

- Coherence another development buzz word?
- OECD working definition: “policy coherence is the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions across government departments and agencies creating synergies towards achieving the agreed objectives”.

Framework for understanding linkages between agriculture and social protection

We can explore linkages between agriculture and social protection from four angles:

- Interdependent objectives (eg. objectives of one sector/policy are unlikely to be achieved without the other);
- Complementary roles
 - Evidence of social assistance contributing to agricultural production outcomes
 - Evidence of agricultural interventions boosting incomes and reducing vulnerability
- Explicitly integrated interventions
 - Home-grown school feeding
 - Integrated livelihoods programmes
- Potential conflicts and trade-offs
 - Land acquisition policies can exacerbate farmer's vulnerability and poverty
 - Mistimed public works programme

Other considerations when thinking about synergies

Synergies can occur with or without targeting the same population

- Policy support for “more productive” food producers can ensure food availability and access to cheaper food for poor consumers

Functions of instruments can overlap

- Pro-poor land policy is promotive agricultural measure with socially protecting effects (via risk management)

Instruments can simultaneously adopt multiple functions

- Public works protects household against income shock (via transfer), contributes to livelihood promotion (via asset creation) and builds resilience to shocks and stresses (via natural resource management)

Policy coherence between agriculture and social protection: current trends

- Systematic approaches to strengthen multi-sectoral coherence at policy level are still relatively rare in Africa
- Synergies are typically pursued through programmes
 - Eg. Productive safety nets
- But there are exceptions: eg. CAADP, Framework for Africa Food Security; Ethiopia's Food Security Programme; Malawi NSSP; Rwanda's VUP

The role of policy in supporting coherence

While policy coherence is not essential, there are important benefits ...

- More efficient use of resources
- High level discussions place issue of the importance of coherence on the policy agenda
- Opportunity to establish consistent and long-term political and economic support for complementary development policies
- Policy provides necessary guidance and strategic direction for stakeholders; it facilitates design and implementation (eg. Malawi coordination between FISP and Public Works Programme)
- Creates enabling environment to promote a cross-sectoral coordination and integration: by committing resources, budgets, institutional arrangements with clear roles and mandates etc.

Factors influencing policy coherence

Many factors shape and determine opportunities for coherent policy action:

- Institutional fragmentation (eg. ministerial silos)
- Competition for resources and different funding modalities
- Different mandates (eg. increasing yields vs reducing vulnerability)
- Different mindsets (eg. degree of commitment to small-scale agriculture as the engine of growth and poverty reduction)
- Institutional and political balance of power (social welfare vs agriculture ministries; commitment to social protection)
- Capacities and incentives (eg. is MoA viewing social protection as relevant to their own mandate)
- Lack of knowledge and evidence (eg. weak understanding of productive impacts of social protection)

Entry points to policy coherence

There is a range of context-specific entry points ...

- Developing a ‘unified’ policy/strategic document (often in the context of food security strategies; resilience building strategies (case of Lesotho);
- Ensuring agriculture is part of the social protection system and/or integrating it into SP strategies (case of the Zambia’s National SP Policy 2014)
- Mainstreaming social protection into National Agricultural Development Plans (case of Sierra Leone, The Gambia)
- Incorporating specific objectives for strengthening cross-sectoral linkages (case of Malawi’s NSSP)
- Mainstreaming risk management in agricultural development plans (case of AFIRM)

Coherence at programme level

- Synergies between agriculture and social protection are typically pursued through specific interventions and programmes
- Synergies can be pursued through different design modalities:
 - Single interventions (eg. public works focusing on ag asset creation)
 - Layering interventions (eg. cash transfers, home gardening support and nutrition training)
 - Sequencing interventions (eg. protective support followed by gradual expansion of livelihood promotion measures such as microfinance and agricultural skills)
- The choice of programme modality is highly context-specific and informed by programme objectives, technical, political and financial considerations

The role of design modalities in strengthening coherence

- Thus far, synergies are typically pursued through ‘single’ interventions
 - Productive elements are incorporated into the design of social protection scheme to increase the impacts of agricultural productivity and poverty reduction eg. Malawi’s public works programme
- Interest is emerging in more comprehensive approaches especially within social protection programming
 - Policy support to Malawi’s NSSP
 - Resilience Strategy of Lesotho; resilience programme in Senegal

What design and delivery features are important to bear in mind when strengthening coherence?

- Objectives
- Conditionality and messaging
- Theory of change; graduation / exit strategies
- Targeting
- Transfer size and type of transfer
- Seasonality
- Regularity and predictability
- Timing of transfer
- Referral systems
- Complaints and feedback mechanisms

The importance of well-defined objectives

- Clarity and alignment of programme objectives
- Importance of not overburdening programmes with too many objectives
- How best to mix interventions?
 - Importance of defining theory of change; sustainable graduation/exit strategies
 - Poverty and vulnerability assessments

The role of targeting in strengthening coherence

- Effective targeting system is a critical tool for achieving synergies and mitigating conflicts
- In reality, targeting is often fragmented, leading to gaps in coverage and/or 'leakage of benefits'
- Importance of clear and synchronized targeting criteria (eg. FISP and public works)
- Coverage vs impact trade-offs ('fair distribution' and 'double-dipping');
- Politics of targeting process (entitlement issue, elite capture; time and resource intensive)
- Harmonizing targeting for stronger impacts? (case of Malawi's NSSP)

The role of transfer size and type in strengthening coherence

- The **size of a transfer** is important (this does not necessarily mean 'bigger' but rather more 'adequate' size matters)
 - ensuring monetary transfer is large enough to enable households to make agricultural investments (but unclear what the optimum threshold is)
 - ensuring size of the transfer is adequate to the needs of a user (eg. fertiliser package)
 - incremental vs lump-sum transfer trade-offs (managing consumption needs vs making business investment)
- In rural contexts, selecting carefully **type of transfer** which is aligned to the agricultural needs of beneficiaries is important; sometimes a combination works the best
 - food vs cash in the context of weak markets (effects on incentives to produce food)
 - consideration of agro-ecological specificities/modes of agricultural production

The role of delivery in strengthening coherence

- Synergies fail and conflicts arise often as a result of weak implementation
- Importance of timely and predictable delivery of schemes cannot be overemphasized
- Effective coordination is critical to allow the two domains to harmonize the *timing of programmes and interventions* in order to exploit synergies (eg. FISP and public works in Malawi)
- Putting monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to track progress and avoid potentially negative outcomes
- Access to complementary goods and services is critical eg. transport, energy, water and sanitation, health, education

The importance of the operational 'system'

Collaboration and coordination between programmes and policies can be achieved with well-resourced institutional arrangements, processes and 'simple' tools

- Multi-sectoral platforms and entities (harmonized committees, working groups, horizontal and vertical coherence)
- Unified digital registries / MIS
- Evidence and learning/knowledge sharing mechanisms; joint M&E
- Clear incentives to promote collaboration and clear communication strategy
- Effective referral systems
- Grievance mechanisms

Our websites

From Protection to Production Project

<http://www.fao.org/economic/PtoP/en/>

The Transfer Project

<http://www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/transfer>

