

- Adaptive Social Protection -
Independent Evaluation of the World Bank ASP programme

Summary Report
of the Evaluation of the ASP programme
in four countries of the Sahel
and
Key Recommendations for decision-makers

Summary Report of the Independent Evaluation of the World Bank ASP programme

Background and evaluation questions

This document is the Summary Report of the Synthesis of the second-round evaluation completed by ITAD in Oct 2017 as part of the independent evaluation of the World Bank's Adaptive Social Protection (ASP) programme. It follows an initial baseline evaluation conducted in March 2016. The Synthesis Report is complemented by four country-level reports, one for each of the four countries in which the ASP programme has been assessed, namely Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. Altogether these different documents are part of the overall Evaluation Activity No.4 (EA4) of the BRACED Evaluation Plan.

The purpose of the EA4 was to conduct a **system-level evaluation** of the World Bank-executed ASP programme with the objective to identify some lessons and recommendations for the current ASP programme and any future extension of the programme. More specifically the aim was to provide DFID –which commissioned the evaluation- and the leading implementing agency of the programme (the World Bank) with a clearer understanding of the potential and effective contribution of ASP programming in general and the ASP programme in particular in strengthening the overall capacities of national institutions to reinforce the resilience of households to climate-change and disaster-related shocks and stressors in the Sahel.

To achieve this objective, the EA4 has completed a 20-month long evaluation exercise that focused on the **system-level changes** –which are characterised as changes in the policy processes and institutional arrangements- that occurred in the social protection sectors in the countries where the ASP programme has been operating. As agreed with DFID and the World Bank, the EA4 evaluation was structured around two main evaluation questions (EQs):

- EQ1: To what extent has the World Bank executed ASP activities and outputs contributed to system level changes in relation to ASP policy and programming in the countries where the ASP programme is being implemented?
- EQ2: What lessons can be learned from the ASP programme about ASP policy and programming?

The first evaluation question (EQ1) and related sub-evaluation questions are concerned with outcomes and system level changes observed at country level. These are addressed directly at country level through a formal Contribution Analysis. The key-findings are detailed in the four country reports and only summarized briefly in this report.

The second evaluation question (EQ2) refers to lessons that emerge across the four countries. It is the subject of this report.

For analytical purpose EQ2 was broken into three sub-evaluation questions (SEQs) as follows:

- SEQ1. What are the main drivers and constraints to the advancement of the ASP concept at national level?
- SEQ2. What lessons can be derived from the implementation of the ASP programme across the four countries?
- SEQ3. How do these lessons relate to the general literature on development and humanitarian assistance, and in particular to the growing interest for concepts such as climate or shock-responsive social protection or even resilience building programmes?

These three SEQs provide a framework for synthesising lessons across country studies and drawing out general conclusions.

Methodology

To address the two main evaluation questions, a theory-based evaluation approach was adopted and a Contribution Analysis (CA) framework was developed. The data and information necessary for this evaluation were collected through a three-pronged approach. First, a closed-ended survey structured around a Behaviour, Attitude, Skills and Knowledge (BASK) questionnaire was administered online to experts and key actors in each of the countries. Second, a series of open-ended Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) structured around an Actor/Narrative/Interest framework was administered to personnel of ministries and other key players identified as the potentially most influential actors driving the agenda on ASP. Third, a specific meeting was organised with the World Bank team in each country to confirm the intended ASP programme's theories of change, which were then used in the CA.

The overall emphasis of the EA4 evaluation was on the 'lessons-learning' element of the assessment as opposed to programme performance for accountability. Also, as a system level assessment, it did not attempt to establish impact at the beneficiary level, which was the remit of the World Bank ASP evaluation team.

Evaluation constraints

The main limitation faced by the EA4 team was the misalignment of the evaluation timeline against the ASP programme implementation timeline. While the implementation period of the ASP programme was Oct 2014-Dec 2019, the EA4 evaluation timeline has run from February 2016 through to Oct 2017. This misalignment means that this evaluation is based on data that was collected at a time period that is roughly 3/5ths of the way through the ASP programme implementation. Pragmatically this means that this evaluation is restricted to early changes (immediate or in some cases intermediate outcomes), and to providing an early indicator of trajectories to progress.

Three additional limitations come with the nature of the qualitative research methodology, and the demands of the design. First, the fact that the sampling adopted in the surveys was small and purposive induces some inherent biases, mainly around the evaluators' choices of respondents. Second, time and resource constraints effectively limited the number of days it was possible to stay in each country, thus also limiting the number of actors that could be interviewed. Third, several of the countries that the EA4 visited are currently (or have been in the recent past) ranked as 'high-risk' countries. This restricted the movement of the EA4 team and forced its members to remain in the capital cities, thus potentially missing the opportunity to interview key informants currently based in the field.

Key-findings

Summary of EQ1 key-findings

The first evaluation question EQ1 relates to the question of the contribution of the World Bank to the system level changes observed at country level. A rigorous Contribution Analysis (CA) framework was developed in each of the countries in order to determine the relative contribution of the ASP programme to system level changes (SLCs) in relation to other possible rival theories. The results of this analysis are presented in detail in the four country reports. In this synthesis document we present a summary of these key-findings. Table A provides a synopsis of the findings from the CA at each of the country levels.

Table A. Synthesis of the system level changes (SLCs) intended to be achieved by the ASP programme in each county, the status of the current trajectory toward these SLCs; and the level of contribution of the World Bank ASP programme to these SLCs. In blue are SLCs for which the trajectories toward the SLCs are ‘initiated’ or ‘confirmed’ and for which the contribution of the World Bank is ‘moderately strong’, or ‘strong’. In light orange are SLCs for which the trajectories toward the SLCs are ‘initiated’ or ‘confirmed’ but for which the contribution of the World Bank is still ‘undetermined’.

| Niger: System level change | Trajectory toward impact | ASP programme contribution to SL change trajectory |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| SLC1: General awareness about the concept of ASP among the different actors increased | Confirmed | Strong |
| SLC2: Consensus among actors on targeting and vulnerability characteristics increased | Initiated | Undetermined |
| SLC3: Consensus among actors on the adoption and use of a common RSU by all actors achieved | Initiated/ Confirmed | Moderately strong |
| SLC4: Consensus among actors on Early Warning System indicators created and mechanisms enhanced | Initiated | Undetermined |
| SLC5: Design and implementation of <i>adaptive</i> Cash for Work projects by the Government | initiated | Undetermined |
| SLC6: Design and implementation by the Government of accompanying and productive measures for existing conditional and non-conditional Cash Transfers | Initiated | Undetermined |
| SLC7: The CFS is able to scale up in case of shock | Not-yet-started | N/A |
| SLC8: A better dialogue between Government and non-governmental ASP-related actors at national levels | Initiated | Undetermined |
| Senegal: System level change | Trajectory toward impact | ASP programme contribution to SL change trajectory |
| SLC1: Increase in the general awareness around the concept of ASP among key actors | Confirmed | Strong |
| SLC2: Increased collaboration between relevant actors for ASP | Initiated | Moderately strong |
| SLC3: Consensus among relevant actors around vulnerability and targeting characteristics for a national ASP system | Initiated | Moderately Strong |
| SLC4: Consensus among relevant actors on the adoption and use of the common RNU capable of capturing vulnerable groups | Initiated | Moderately Strong |
| SLC5: Consensus is built amongst actors on the appropriate triggers and response to shocks | not-yet-started | Undetermined |
| SLC6: Consensus among actors regarding the temporary / emergency features of the National CCT | Initiated | Undetermined |
| SLC7: Design & Implementation of a Productive Safety Net program by GoS | Initiated | Undetermined |
| SLC8: GoS safety net able to scale up in face of shocks | Initiated | Undetermined |
| Mauritania: System level change | Trajectory toward impact | ASP programme contribution to SL change trajectory |
| SLC1: General awareness about the concept of ASP among the different actors increased | Confirmed | Strong |
| SLC2: Targeting criteria including vulnerability dimensions are identified and used to build the Social Registry | Confirmed | Strong |
| SLC3: The Social Registry is functional, updated with adequate coverage database: Coverage Functionality | Initiated Confirmed | Moderately strong |
| Updating | Not yet started | Undetermined |
| SLC4: Early Warning System (EWS) indicators and thresholds identified and designed, and CSA/OSA implement and share EWS data integrating shock-relevant factors | Initiated | Moderately strong |
| SLC5: Design and implementation by the government of productive activities project | Initiated | Strong |
| SLC6: The government (ministry of finance) implement shock/disaster financing strategy | Initiated | Undetermined |
| SLC7: Synergy and collaboration between emergency and development actors increased | Confirmed | Moderately strong |
| SLC8: Design and implementation by the government of “filets sociaux réactifs aux chocs” project | Confirmed | Moderately strong |
| Mali: System level change | Trajectory toward impact | ASP programme contribution to SL change trajectory |
| SLC1: General awareness about the concept of ASP among the different actors increased | Initiated | Moderately strong |
| SLC2: Inter-ministerial Working Group creates an action plan for financial mechanisms in relation to shocks | Initiated | Weak |
| SLC3: Knowledge on vulnerability helped to the consolidation of the common registry that allows relevant targeting mechanisms and includes vulnerability characteristics. | Initiated | Undetermined |
| SLC4: Design and implementation by Gov of HIMO and accompanying measures | Initiated | Undetermined |
| SLC5: Design and implementation by Gov of IGAs and accompanying measures | Initiated | Undetermined |
| SLC6: Consensus among actors on targeting and vulnerability characteristics | Initiated | Undetermined |

The CA revealed that while the majority of the World Bank activities appeared to have been successfully initiated –thus supporting the argument that the ASP programme is now ‘taking off’ after a slow initial phase-, a bit less than half (46%) of the 30 intended system level changes (SLCs) observed so far across the four countries can be linked with ‘strong’ or ‘moderately strong’ evidence to these World Bank activities. For another 50% of these SLCs, the contribution of the World Bank ASP programmes is ‘undetermined’. This means that **based on the existing available evidence at the time of the EA4 data collection, the ASP programme’s contribution could not be established clearly, either because it remains too early to determine whether these actions will result in system level changes or because the contribution of the different mechanisms expected to lead to these changes are currently unclear or undocumented.** This headline finding is most likely a reflection of the fact that the implementation of the ASP programmes is still underway, operating in difficult political climates, and that there has been only a relatively short time (20 months) elapsed between the EA4 baseline and this second round of data collection.

Summary of EQ2 Findings

SEQ1. Main drivers and constraints to ASP advancement at national level.

The first of the three sub-evaluation questions related to EQ2 is concerned with the main drivers and constraints as observed in the four countries where the World Bank has been rolling out the ASP programme. To respond to this SEQ1 the general context within which the ASP programme has been evolving since 2016 was reviewed, based on data and information collected during both the baseline and second-round surveys. The analysis, structured around an enablers-constraints framework, revealed a relatively complex and dynamic environment in which various actors, processes and factors have been interacting and influencing, either positively (enablers) or negatively (constraints), the ability of the World Bank to establish the ASP programme in the four ASP countries.

The following positive enablers were identified:

- (i) the growing attention paid by national decision-makers in the Sahel region to the potential role of Social Protection (SP) programmes for human development and poverty alleviation;
- (ii) the strong support provided by the international development community to the SP agenda in the region (along with their support to humanitarian interventions and food security) and their genuine interest for the concept of ASP;
- (iii) the larger SP support programmes implemented by the World Bank in the six ASP countries, within which the ASP programme had been embedded; and
- (iv) the general consensus established amongst the key national and international actors in the countries around the need for a unique/common SP registry.

In parallel to these positive factors, a series of constraints was also identified during the baseline. These included:

- (i) the generally relatively poor level of collaboration observed between the different actors involved in ASP activities, within and outside the governmental institutions;
- (ii) the risk of instrumentalization or politization of SP programmes and institutions at national level;
- (iii) the general instability that affects the Sahel region and may shift governments’ priorities away from SP agenda at any time;
- (iv) the difficulty of the World Bank to create enough space for dialogues and discussions with other organizations and institutions; and
- (v) (v) the initial interest of the World Bank for specific poverty-focused targeting approaches.

Amongst those constraints some are outside the control of the World Bank -such as the general level of insecurity and the risk that some governments in the region shift attention and resources away from the SP agenda. Others have been addressed relatively successfully by the World Bank, in particular the initial lack of communication and the poor collaboration with other partners. Reports from key-informants confirm a noticeable improvement in this domain. **There remain, however, a few important issues that require attention and others which have emerged since the initial assessment at the baseline level.** Amongst those that still deserve attention, the unsettled debate around targeting is affecting the willingness of certain partners to cooperate fully. The new issues that have emerged are: the low attention paid so far to the importance of updating the database of the unique registry; and the lack of clear strategy around risk financing mechanisms and contingent funds which are necessary to ensure a rapid and effective response to shocks.

Lessons learned across the four countries

The second sub-evaluation question focuses on the lessons that can be derived from the implementation of the ASP programme across the four countries. To address this question we used the main results of the country level CAs. The evaluation was structured around two specific questions:

- (i) How effectively has the ASP programme achieved the intended changes in the theories of change?_ and
- (ii) How closely has the World Bank managed to align the ASP programme activities with the five ASP principles?

(i) ASP programme achievements of intended changes

Cases where the efforts of the World Bank are clearly leading toward the intended SLCs.

Keeping in mind that the implementation of the ASP programme is still underway, the data shows that **across the four countries a certain number of intended SLCs (14 out of 30) already show trajectories that are at least “initiated” and for which the contribution of the World Bank is at least “moderately strong”.**

Raising awareness and increasing knowledge of ASP: The World Bank has been very successful in terms of raising the general awareness and general knowledge about the concept of ASP among the different actors in most of the ASP countries (with perhaps slightly less success so far in Mali). Yet, even though there is almost unanimous agreement that the World Bank has been the main contributor to the gains in overall awareness around ASP, several actors in the four countries also pointed out that the World Bank is somewhat selective in those who are invited to participate in the forums and discussions.

Increasing actor collaboration: The second major SLC intended by the World Bank which has been done relatively well in every ASP country revolves around the need to facilitate collaboration between the different relevant actors. In this case, the analysis across the four countries reveals that the World Bank has had some successes in getting the conversation started. There is more to be done however. In particular a notable absentee from discussions to date in the four ASP countries have been ministries of environment. It would be important to ensure their systematic inclusion in the future.

Improving targeting: The third important thread of work implemented by the World Bank in all the ASP countries relates to the inclusion of populations vulnerable to shocks into the targeting mechanisms of the national safety net programmes. The World Bank has approached this task by commissioning series of analyses to fill knowledge gaps pertaining to the levels of poverty and

vulnerability, and to assess the best means by which to target vulnerable populations with the objective to create some level of consensus. This was achieved with only partial success as in almost all instances the targeting mechanisms are still disputed. At baseline this point of contention was highlighted by many actors. During the second round of data collection, some clear change in the World Bank tone regarding how to best target vulnerable populations among all actors was noticed, and while there are still many disagreements and points of discussion, several key-informants also noted that the World Bank seems more receptive to ongoing conversation regarding targeting mechanisms.

Establishing Unique Registries: The fourth common area of work across the four ASP countries which shows some reasonable success is related to the effort made by the World Bank to support the creation of functional unique Registries. In all four countries the World Bank has been successful in building momentum and consensus around the utility of a single registry, and in articulating (and in some cases demonstrating) the potential of adaptive features. Countries differ however in the degree of implementation of this Unique Registry, which reflects the different contextual conditions, and starting points with respect to this registry.

Cases where World Bank Contribution to SLCs is less clear

Beyond these 14 cases for which the World Bank can be considered having contributed effectively to the first steps of the changes, another large number of these SLCs (15 out of 30) indicate cases where the trajectories toward the long-term impacts are also “initiated” but the contribution of the World Bank remains “undetermined”. These cases mean that, based on the existing available body of evidence, the contribution of the World Bank to the observed changes is difficult to establish. **This situation is essentially the consequence of the short timeframe (20 months) that separates the baseline (Feb-April 2016) from the second-round survey (Oct 2017) and the fact that more time would be necessary to determine more conclusively whether the actions of the World Bank contribute effectively to the observed SLCs. An ex-post evaluation would be required to generate this information.**

The analysis also shows that the degree to which the World Bank has been effectively contributing to the initial progress toward the SLCs varies greatly from country to country, suggesting that **contextual factors unique to the countries in which the programme is being rolled out continue to affect the rate at which change can take place.**





















(ii) Alignment of the World Bank ASP programme activities with the five ASP principles

The second component considers the extent to which the World Bank has managed to align the ASP programme activities with the five ASP principles. Those five ASP core design principles are:

1. Promote institutional coordination of social protection agencies with relevant climate change and disaster risk management actors;
2. Ensure the scalability of programs in the face of an extreme event;
3. Target households that are most vulnerable to natural hazards and climate change related risks;
4. Design programmes that increase the adaptive capacity of households and communities;
5. Ensure the swiftness of the response by e.g. operating through existing SP programmes
(ITAD 2016a pp.11-12)

These five key design principles formed the basis of the 'check-list' against which the EA4 team assessed the “adaptive” nature of the World Bank ASP programme at country level, using a Red, Amber or Green (RAG) rating system. Table B synthesizes the results of the RAG across the four countries.

Table B. Synthesis of the RAG Scores for the 5 Principles across the four ASP countries

| Principles | 1. Promote institutional coordination of SP, CC & DRM actors; | 2. Ensure the scalability of programs in the face of an extreme event; | 3. Target households that are most vulnerable to natural hazards and climate change related risks; | 4. Design programmes that increase the adaptive capacity of households and communities; | 5. Ensure the swiftness of the response by e.g. operating through existing programmes |
|-----------------|--|---|--|---|--|
| Countries | | | | | |
| Mali |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mauritania |  |  |  |  |  |
| Niger |  |  |  |  |  |
| Senegal |  |  |  |  |  |
| Recommendations | The World Bank should make sure there is sufficient consultation and engagement with actors from SP, DRM and CC sectors. More effort may be needed especially in relation to CC. | Further work is necessary in building the capacity of the national EWS. There is also an urgent need to work more closely with ministries of finance to establish both a contingency fund and contingency plan. | As vulnerability to climate and shocks is dynamic, the frequency with which the registry is updated should be reassessed and the World Bank should engage more actively with national and internal partners to secure both the technical and financial additional resources required for the more frequent updating of the registry. | There is a need to ensure that programme designs are built within the technical capacity and financial capabilities of the national systems to promote sustainability, and that their impacts on beneficiaries' adaptive capacities are properly evaluated. | The absence so far of clear contingency financing mechanisms, and a relative absence of emphasis or dialogue regarding speed of response suggest the timeliness of response is an area where the World Bank needs to focus activities going forward. |

For ASP Principle 1 (on coordination between and within sectors and ministries) the RAG rating across the four countries (one green, three ambers) shows that some good progress have been made within the respective country studies in terms of coordination *within* each sector, as well as efforts to align the vision and operations *between* sectors. However despite these efforts, both the face-to-face and online interviews in the four countries also revealed that these efforts have not been homogeneous across the countries and that some important partners have been ‘left out’.

For ASP Principle 2 (on the importance of ensuring the scalability of the programmes), the RAG exercise across the four countries (four ambers) suggested that while progress have been accomplished, there is still space for more. The World Bank has been successful at improving or strengthening existing national-level EWS in several countries, co-developing tools that support scalability (registry and questionnaire) as well as initiating series of pilots in order to demonstrate the potential of the EWS and RNU in response to shocks. Yet there is no clear and tangible actions that are proposed to foster the institutionalisation of this scalability through for instance the establishment of contingent funds or the establishment of comprehensive plan of response.

ASP Principle 3 is about the ability of the programme to specifically target households who are vulnerable to climate change and natural hazards. This is the principle for which the RAG rating is the highest across the four countries (three greens and one amber). The World Bank ASP programme has

contributed significantly and relatively successfully to the understanding and momentum that exists in all countries around the importance of including vulnerable populations in the ASP programmes.

ASP Principle 4 is about the importance of considering activities which strengthen and/or develop the adaptive capacities of households and communities in the face of shocks and stressors. The RAG scores (two greens, two ambers) indicate that the World Bank ASP programme has made some good progress in this area. In all countries, packages of accompanying measures that focus on building capacity through context specific coaching, training and access to information about employment are being tested. It is too early however to determine with rigor whether these activities will effectively enhance the adaptive capacity and strengthen the resilience of the beneficiary communities.

ASP Principle 5 is about the recognition that a swift response to shocks requires the pre-existence of a functional set of tools at the national level. At this stage the overall RAG rating across the four ASP countries (one red, three ambers) needs to be improved. While all countries have begun to build some of the necessary preconditions (for example single registry being initiated), the relative nascence of these single registries, the lack of tangible actions around the creation of strong contingency financing mechanisms, combined with the absence of emphasis or dialogue in any of the countries on ensuring speed of response suggest that this Principle 5 is an area where the World Bank need to focus more attention in the future.

Additional issues

In addition to these analyses, the evaluation of the ASP programme revealed some other issues which were not necessarily well identified through the contribution analysis or the RAG framework but that fall under the SEQ2 on lessons learned. The two most prominent ones are (i) the question of the sequentiality in building an ASP programmes, and (ii) the political economy of establishing an ASP programme.

The issue of sequentiality relates to the question of when is the optimal moment to introduce some adaptive elements in a SP programme. Two approaches can be considered: either the “A” of the SP programme is built as an integral part of the programme, i.e. from the beginning; or, a strong and effective SP programme can be built first before incorporating some element of adaptability. The pros and cons of both options are discussed in this report. In the case of the World Bank ASP programme, the activities have been embedded into the larger IDA programme that supports already-existing national safety net programmes. In those conditions the adaptive element can only be added *ex-post* to the existing safety net programmes. **The current struggle encountered by the World Bank in several of the ASP countries to establish the proper conditions for the scalability and swiftness of the safety net’s response may illustrate the potential consequence of having adopted a sequential approach.**

The political economy of establishing an ASP programme refers to the fact that encouraging or promoting any system level change is generally likely to create winners and losers. This issue, which is not specific to the nature of the change and in particular not exclusive to the adaptive element of the social protection programmes, is however relevant for our discussion in the sense that it is likely to strongly influences (or even limits) the ability of the World Bank to operate freely (and likely to do so in any other country where an ASP programme would be started). In these conditions creating space for real consultation and strong dialogue is crucial in order to reduce the risks of rejection / opposition to the new programme. In the case of the World Bank ASP programme, evidence collected during the face-to-face interviews (especially at baseline) as well as informal conversations indicate that **the recognition of the importance of establishing these dialogues and open consultations has taken more time to emerge in some countries than others. This resulted in some lost opportunities**

for cross-learning and has been the reason why some consensus around important element of ASP such as targeting are still not achieved in all ASP countries.

Summary of SEQ 3 Findings: Linking the lessons to the wider literature on development and humanitarian assistance

The third sub-evaluation question focused on the lessons that emerged from the EA4 evaluation revisited in the context of the general discussion on humanitarian assistance and longer-term development objectives found in the current literature. The first part of this analysis raises the question of whether the five ASP key design principles provide the necessary and sufficient conditions for a SP programme to be adaptive. To answer this question, we relied on the published literature on climate- or shock-responsive social protection and looked for evidence regarding the relevance of these five principles.

The review of the literature points to both conceptual and empirical evidence that confirm the pertinence of the five principles, thus corroborating the necessity of their inclusion as key elements for the establishment of an effective ASP programme. The literature also indicates that as part of these five principles, the establishment of contingency funds and/or risk funding mechanisms is critical to ensure the inclusion of discussions around the financial element of the scalability of ASP programme.

Second, **the analysis highlights the existence of likely trade-offs between these ASP principles**, for instance when limited resources may make it difficult to satisfy ASP principles 3 and 5 simultaneously with principle 4. On the other hand the analysis also demonstrates the importance of cross-ministry and partner coordination/cooperation (ASP Principle 1) and identifies it as a generic underlying principle which has synergy with at least three other ASP principles. As such **Principle 1 is expected to be at the basis of every effective ASP programme.**

In the second part of the SEQ3 analysis, we widen the discussion to consider two concepts which have received growing attention in the past 5 to 7 years by both practitioners and donors -these are: shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) and resilience- and we discuss the link between the ASP approach and these two concepts. The analysis shows how SRSP programmes constitute a sub-set of ASP programmes that focuses more narrowly on the role that safety nets and SP programmes can play to absorb the negative effects of shocks and disasters on affected households and communities. ASP more broadly includes not only this absorptive element but also adaptive and possibly longer-term transformative changes. **As such ASP programmes are more apt to build the three dimensions of resilience (absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities) than SRSP.**

The recent decision of the World Bank ASP programme to invest in productive activities as part of their ToCs could therefore be perceived as a promising first step toward building resilience. It will be important however to assess rigorously the actual effectiveness of these activities in building households' resilience. Indeed, **the current evidence on how social protection tools can contribute to strengthen household resilience is still anecdotal. More systematic rigorous evaluations are needed to strengthen the case.**

Summary of the Evaluation

Conceptually ASP brings together the expertise of SP, DRM and CC, with the objective to integrate the ideas and operational expertise of these communities of practice to provide a national system that is capable of mobilising a timely, scalable, coordinated programme which successfully targets vulnerable households affected by shocks and stressors, and increases their adaptive capacity.

Overall, the ASP programme implemented by the World Bank in collaboration with national partners in the Sahel has made some important initial contributions to establishing the national level elements required for such adaptive social protection system, in an institutional contexts which is often challenging. The analysis reveals however a situation where the approach has focused on building elements sequentially, in most instances strengthening safety net systems first before integrating shock responsive features, and with little emphasis on the longer term sustainability of the system (how to pass from a WB/DFID funded programme to a public funded sustainable system) in a context of Sahelian limited public resources. On the ground this approach has run into difficulties, and there are views amongst key actors that a more integrated/integrative approach might have facilitated the synergy that is required from an early stage between the different tools and actors, to ensure both the technical and longer term financial viability of the system.

Key recommendations for Decision-Makers

At programmatic level

Awareness raising - A better understanding of the concept of ASP is the primary step toward the wider adoption and ownership of this concept by national actors. In the four ASP countries evaluated, there has been a significant increase in the general awareness around the concept of ASP.

Recommendation 1

The World Bank should pursue their efforts to advocate and promote the concept of ASP at country and regional level. The organization of frequent open events and technical committee meetings constitutes a good mechanism to improve awareness and knowledge, and make progress on ongoing debates amongst the relevant actors.

At regional level, the World Bank teams should continue their effort to maintain an active knowledge-exchange process with the objective to exchange experiences on best practices and to continue raising awareness and knowledge amongst other countries. It is important however to take into account countries own specificities in the way to use (or not) specific strategies shared during these exchanges.

Understanding the institutional landscape - Setting up a programme with objectives to foster system level changes is challenging, especially when working within a difficult and volatile political and institutional landscape as it is the case in several of the countries where the World Bank is implementing the ASP programme

Recommendation 2

The World Bank teams should, from the start, have a very clear understanding of the ‘institutional landscape’ in which the ASP programme is operating in each country (there is no “one size fits all”) and be aware of changes over time. For that purpose, the relevant key actors (ministries, technical partners, donors, NGOs) should be mapped in each country, but this mapping exercise should be reviewed and adjusted regularly to reflect the dynamic nature of these institutional landscapes as well as the emergence of new constraints and/or enablers. Recognizing that partnerships is a critical ingredient of resilience building in general, and of ASP system establishment in particular, is key.

Dialogue and true collaborations - The acknowledgement of the importance of establishing dialogue and relying on consultation with partners is key.

Recommendation 3

The World Bank needs to pursue their efforts to establish a constant dialogue with the different ministries, technical and financial partners as well as international NGOs involved in the domains related to ASP. Conducting consultations is important but not sufficient. Mechanisms for real exchange and taking on board the views and opinions of these other actors is critical to ensure the proper appropriation and ownership of the ASP programme by the governments of the countries and full support from the different ministries and other key actors including technical partners and NGOs.

Resolving targeting issues - The ASP programme has made a good start on targeting vulnerable households through the provision of technical knowledge and a platform to discuss targeting vulnerable populations.

Recommendation 3

To address the remaining targeting challenge, more efforts needs to be made at country level to achieve greater consensus. In that regard, clear and open debate needs to happen around PMT/HEA approaches in order to reach an acceptable solution between all actors involved. The World Bank at higher level and DFID should be part of this discussion.

Overall, reaching a consensus on a single targeting mechanism should be an early goal of an ASP programme.

Establishing single registries is a high priority - While the ASP programme posits the creation of a single registry as a critical building block for achieving efficient SP and ASP, there is also an acknowledgement amongst all partners that vulnerability is dynamic, and therefore may require more frequent updates to the database than is currently planned. Work is needed to find the balance between what is appropriate given the transient nature of vulnerability in the face of shocks, against what is sustainable given the financial constraints.

Recommendation 4

The World Bank will need to move this issue of updating single registries at the top of their priority list and act to establish rapidly a plan of action in each country to ensure that this issue becomes a priority also for other actors involved in the ASP discussion, including relevant ministries (in particular the ministry of finance) as well as technical and financial partners.

Funds will be needed to provide both financial and technical support to update registries. It is unlikely that governments alone will be able to fund those with appropriate frequency –at least in the short run. In the design of future ASP programmes, the funding of the unique registry (and the conditions for its sustainability) needs to be considered at design as part of the long term planning with ministries of finance.

Contingency funding key to scalability - Given the importance of a dedicated contingency fund as a central element of any scalable safety net programme, the lack of clear emphasis in the World Bank's strategy on building such contingency funding element and on the ways it should be embedded in a comprehensive plan of response is an issue.

Recommendation 5

The World Bank will need to make the issue of contingency funds and their long-term sustainability a high priority and rapidly establish a strategy in each country to ensure that funds are identified to support the establishment of these contingency funds. Those discussions need to take place with all relevant ministries (in particular the ministry of finance) and technical and financial partners.

In the design of future ASP programmes, these contingency funds will need to be considered at the design stage as part of the long-term planning with appropriate input from ministries of finance.

Early Warning System - A functional and reliable EWS with appropriate triggers is a key component of an adaptive social protection system. At national level these have tended to be weak in capacity and in need of support technically.

Recommendation 6

DFID should encourage current (and future) ASP programme implementers to work with actors concerned with EWS as a priority. There is potential to tap into regional risk financing mechanisms already in place such as ARC, which should be explored with a long-term sustainability objective in countries that may face financial and technical constraints.

Overall, the early establishment of a functional national EWS should be linked to project deliverables. Potential donors should explore co-financing options during the design phase to make best use of pre-existing mechanisms.

Contributing to the evidence base on SP contribution to broader resilience building - Current evidence on how social protection tools can contribute to strengthen the adaptive capacities of households and communities is still anecdotal.

Recommendation 7

The World Bank should ensure that robust and rigorous resilience-focused evaluations are put in place to document the potential contribution of the ASP activities on the different dimensions (absorptive, adaptive and transformative) of beneficiaries' resilience capacities. The implementers of these evaluations should build on the recent progress that has been achieved in the wider community on resilience measurement.

Alignment with the 5 ASP principles

Building on the analysis of the alignment of the World Bank ASP programme with the five ASP principles, several recommendations can be made.

Principle 1: Promote institutional coordination of social protection agencies with relevant climate change and disaster risk management actors. Effort should be pursued to ensure that (i) World Bank country-level teams are encouraged to lose prominence and foster collaboration, especially with actors involved in humanitarian interventions; and (ii) that collaborations with strategic actors but also legitimate ones (including ministries and agencies engaged in the Climate Change agenda) are more systematically and effectively established. Roles, support (capacity strengthening) and resources should be distributed accordingly.

Principle 2: Ensure the scalability of programs in the face of an extreme event. Governmental and non-governmental actors involved in humanitarian interventions should be invited to identify opportunities for synergies around national EWS and fund registry updating mechanisms, and to test and give feedback on the targeting in order to strengthen the registry and foster its longer-term use by all actors. At a more strategic level, a concrete strategy to deal with potential political uncertainty and to convince governments of the need for long-term political and financial support to ASP should be developed.

Principle 3: Target households that are most vulnerable to natural hazards and climate change related risks. Efforts in improving knowledge and fostering discussions with key stakeholder should be continued to achieve consensus on vulnerability targeting (and associated tools such as registry and questionnaire). There is also a need to develop a clear strategy on how to scale up from pilots to the national territory. The scaling down can be achieved through synergies with existing national programmes that aim at enhancing adaptive capacity at household and community level. Attention needs to be paid on how to merge beneficiaries' databases without creating inconsistencies.

Principle 4: Design programmes that increase the adaptive capacity of households and communities. Strategies need to be developed to expand (scale up) pilot projects at the national level seeking for synergies with government programmes and institutions (ministry of agriculture, for instance) in which such activities are implemented. Assessment needs to be made on the effect of cash distribution on beneficiaries' adaptive capacities. Discussions need to take place to decide whether this component is a priority over other component of ASP (such as shock responsiveness) in a Sahelian context of limited resources.

Principle 5: Ensure the swiftness of the response. The World Bank in Washington and the teams at country level will need to engage more actively with the governments and other supportive donors in each country and possibly the region to establish how contingency funds could be secured, including alternative options such as public/private funds. This can be an option to address the limited governmental fund.

Recommendations for DFID (and other donors) beyond the current World Bank ASP programme

Understanding the Political economy of system changes - A Political Economy Analysis and Stakeholder Analysis is an important first step towards establishing the foundations for an ASP system. A common theme through the current ASP country reports concerns the difficulties of negotiating the politics of pre-existing systems and avoiding a winners/losers situation. It is also essential in order to ensure that actors from the distinct thematic spaces that comprise adaptive social protection are adequately represented.

Recommendation 8

Future funding of ASP programmes should specify the importance of collaboration with key actors related to ASP. Terms of reference should require ASP implementing agency to conduct actor/stakeholder mapping as part of the design phase, with a subsequent strategy to engage those actors/stakeholders and possibly some clear actions incorporated in the programme's theory of change.

Acknowledging the context specificity of each country - The evaluation of the World Bank ASP programme reveals considerable variation between countries in their respective contributions to system level change. This suggests that contextual factors unique to each of the countries play a substantial role at affecting the rate at which change can take place. It also means that trying to transfer a unique 'ASP model' as a blue print approach is not advisable.

Recommendation 9

DFID and other donors considering further investment in ASP should insist that a thorough analysis of the country existing SP system and wider socio-political context is completed before the implementer offer their first draft of the programme Theory of Change.

Relevance of the five ASP principles - Both the experience of the World Bank ASP programme and the review of the wider literature confirm the programmatic relevance of the five ASP principles as being key structuring elements of effective ASP systems. Ensuring that any new SP programme is closely aligned with these five principles *from the beginning* is the best way to build the bases for a strong and operational ASP system.

Recommendation 10

DFID and other donors considering further investment in ASP interventions should require that the five ASP principles constitute the initial structural elements of the intervention planning. Terms of Reference could require for instance that the Theory of change of the intervention proposed by the implementing agency provide clear pathways supporting these five principles.

Sequentiality - The question concerning the optimal moment to introduce adaptive elements into a SP system is critical. Empirical experience suggests that the introduction of some structural flexibility in the system *from the beginning* can be an effective mechanism to ensure the system becomes truly adaptive. Yet, attempting to build an adaptive system adds complexity, and where human and institutional capacity are weak this may jeopardize the existence of the entire system.

Recommendation 11

More empirical research/analyses are needed to better understand the implications of introducing the "A" in an existing or a new SP system and at what time is this optimal. Focus should be on finding the conditions that ensure an appropriate balance between countries' specific financial and institutional constraints, against the level of complexity that is required to create the structural flexibility needed for an operational ASP system.