



STRENGTHENING COHERENCE BETWEEN SOCIAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE TO COMBAT FOOD INSECURITY AND RURAL POVERTY

Poverty, hunger and food insecurity are most heavily concentrated among rural dwellers. To address these problems, in recent years, countries have set up a number of social assistance programmes to help extreme poor households manage risk more effectively and protect their consumption and assets without having to resort to negative coping strategies in the face of a crisis. Cash transfers and other programmes have been implemented at scale; and it has been demonstrated that these programmes make a positive difference in the lives of the rural poor. At the same time, it has become increasingly evident that despite their positive contributions to shielding the poor from shocks and helping them avert destitution, social protection programmes by themselves are insufficient to fully unleash productive potential and help small farm and other poor rural households embark on self-sustaining livelihood pathways out of poverty. In the light of these issues, the project aimed to explore and document the benefits of articulating social protection and rural development interventions, in order to provide evidence to policy-makers and donors on better programme design, sequencing, and institutional design for supporting rural poor alleviation.



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WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project covered seven countries: Colombia, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mali, Mexico, Peru and Zambia. FAO undertook a series of studies, based on the analysis of primary and secondary data collected in the target countries in Africa, from programme participants and implementers, local authorities and policy makers, as well as key policy and programme documents. Most of these studies were presented to and validated by government officials in the respective countries, as part of a thorough review process. The project generated extensive policy-relevant knowledge, in order to improve the planning, design and implementation of policies, programmes and institutional arrangements geared towards promoting stronger complementarity between social and productive interventions targeting poor small farm households. As a knowledge generation and management project, it successfully linked specialized agencies of the United Nations (UN), academic institutions and researchers, and representatives from government entities around a common agenda; and leading experts from various countries and backgrounds came together as members of the Project Scientific Committee, to give guidance to the work carried out by the country research teams.

KEY FACTS

Contribution

USD 480 001

Duration

September 2018 – June 2020

Resource Partner

Universidad de los Andes (UNIANDES),
Colombia

Partners

Ministry of Social Development/Welfare and
Ministry of Agriculture/Livestock in the
participating countries, International Fund for
Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food
Programme (WFP), United Nations Children's
Fund (UNICEF), UNIANDES

Beneficiaries

Government officials from social and
agricultural sectors in the participating
countries; various United Nations (UN)
agencies, donor partners, researchers and
practitioners

IMPACT

The project was largely implemented before the outbreak of COVID-19. The social and economic fallout from the pandemic has therefore given even greater currency to the project findings. As this project has shown, social and productive interventions can complement and reinforce one another, creating synergies that enhance the impact that each set of interventions would have on their own. Hard evidence on when these synergies occur and under what conditions has been scarce. The generation of robust evidence to fill this critical knowledge gap was the key contribution of the project, which has provided practical knowledge to policy makers and programme implementers on how to improve the lives of the extreme poor in rural areas, and ultimately worked towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 and 2 on poverty, hunger and food insecurity.

ACTIVITIES

- One social protection programme and one productive intervention identified for in-depth analysis in each country, in consultation with local stakeholders.
- Project Scientific Committee set up to guide and advise project teams responsible for each country, and research protocol agreed on, comprising at least one impact evaluation and one institutional analysis in all project countries.
- In four target countries in Africa, project activities involved, among others: i) research design, including selection of specific programmes to be evaluated; ii) design of survey questionnaires, sampling strategy and detailed plan for field work; iii) institutional assessments of key social and productive programmes and coordination mechanisms between social and agricultural sectors at central and local level in each country; and iv) internal and external peer review, consultations, revision, validation and finalization of draft reports.
- Programmes selected as case studies for countries in Africa included: i) Ethiopia: Improved Nutrition through Integrated Basic Social Services with Social Cash Transfer (IN-SCT); ii) Lesotho: Child Grants Programme (CGP) and the Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Income, Nutrition and access to Government Services (SPRINGS) project; iii) Mali: Cash+ and resilience project in Nioro du Sahel Circle; and iv) Zambia: Conservation Agriculture Scaling-Up (CASU) and Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) programmes.
- Findings from studies presented at three international events: i) Research Workshop on Social Protection, Cash Transfers and Long-Term Poverty Reduction (Arusha, Tanzania, April 2019); ii) the Annual International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association (Boston, United States of America, May 2019); and iii) the Interregional Workshop on Promoting Synergies between Social Protection and Rural Development in Latin America and Africa (Rome, Italy, October 2019). All products shared with UNIANDES, and disseminated in respective countries.

Project Code

FAO: MTF/GLO/937/ULA

Project Title

Improving the articulation between social protection and rural development interventions in developing countries: lessons from Latin America and Africa

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Partnerships and Outreach

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