ETHIOPIA

RURAL SYNERGIES

Building bridges between social and productive inclusion policies

Improving coordination and synergy between social protection and agriculture in Ethiopia

KEY MESSAGES

The articulation between social protection programs and productive rural development can help poor and vulnerable households breaking the cycle of disadvantage and preventing the intergenerational transmission of poverty. The complementarity can also contribute to increasing the resilience of households in the face of external shocks, such as the one we are currently facing as a result of COVID-19.

The study of the linked implementation of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and the Improved Nutrition through Integrated Basic Social Services with Social Cash Transfer (IN-SCT) pilot highlights the recent adjustments in the fundamental principles that underlie the country's approach to agricultural development and poverty reduction as positive steps.

The impact evaluation results showed positive impacts, especially in the livestock sector, where both the share of households owning some livestock and the average herd size increased substantially. Additionally, the study found positive effects of the combination of PSNP and IN-SCT on other productive variables such as ownership of farm tools, crop production / diversification, and non-farm entrepreneurial activity.

Despite the positive results, and the increasingly understood role of coherence between social protection and agriculture at higher levels, few shortcomings related to the design and implementation of the PSNP + IN-SCT undermined the effects.

Several opportunities can be utilised to improve the coherence between the two sectors: i) Strengthen the delivery and accessibility to improved agricultural inputs, services, and technologies for PSNP clients; ii) Put in place clear roles and responsibilities for relevant actors; iii) Ensure that the right actors are included into the coordination mechanisms; iv) Address weak coordination at mid-level bureaucracy, and v) adjust the value of the PSNP transfer.

World Bank data for 2015/16

109,2
MILLION PEOPLE

79%
LIVES IN RURAL AREAS

25%
NATIONAL POVERTY

26%
RURAL POVERTY

15%
URBAN POVERTY

Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)

- **Target population:** Chronically food-insecure households
- **Institution in charge:** Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA)
- **Goods and services provided:**
  - Public work conditional transfer
  - Unconditional direct support' transfers
  - Income-generating activities
  - Social services

Improved Nutrition through Integrated Basic Social Services with Social Cash Transfer (IN-SCT)

- **Target population:** Temporary direct support (TDS) and permanent direct support (PDS) clients of PSNP
- **Institution in charge:** Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA)
- **Components / goods and services:**
  - Integrated package of nutrition services
  - Linkages to health services
  - Nutrition-sensitive agricultural activities

RESULTS

Impact Evaluation

- The study focused on productive effects. PSNP + IN-SCT has produced some productive impacts on the mother-child sample but not on the households with children under-5.
- Both the share of households owning some livestock and the average herd size has increased substantially. It also led to increased production of livestock by-products and increased crop diversification. These outcomes are indicative of increased savings/accumulation (livestock) and increased adaptive capacity (diversification).
- Paid labour supply declined in both the agricultural and non-agricultural sector, while non-farm entreprenurial activity increased.
- There were no impacts on the proportion of children who had access to minimum acceptable diets or dietary diversity and other variables such as household resilience to crop-related shocks.

Institutional analysis

- At federal level, there are relevant coordination bodies of PSNP. Key sub-national implementing bodies of PSNP (i.e. Public Work Technical Committee and Livelihoods Technical Committee) were excluded from the IN-SCT design and implementation and this undermined overall institutional coherence. This has limited the opportunity to liaise and secure the support of these committees for the IN-SCT.
- At woreda and kebele subnational levels:
  - The woreda PWTC and LTC were also not involved in the IN-SCT coordination. Instead, the programme has established a new coordination mechanism called woreda steering committee. The committee was composed of relevant woreda offices including WoLSA, Woreda Agriculture, Food Security, Health, Education, among others, and it has led to a good coordination at woreda level.
  - At kebele level, Food Security Task Force, FSTF is an existing PSNP structure and was a relevant coordination body that has supported the IN-SCT. In the IN-SCT implementation kebeles, social workers were recruited by the programme and included in the kebele FSTF. They worked closely with development agents, health extension workers and school teachers to ensure the referral and linkage of TDS/PDS with social services. This was one of the key value additions of IN-SCT to PSNP4.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that the right actors are included into the coordination mechanisms programs. Actors with the right experience in agricultural development as well as financial institutions, particularly the Microfinance Institutions, are important to be included into the local coordination mechanisms of the program to address the informational constraints faced by small holders and capital shortages.
- Address weak coordination at mid-level bureaucracy. Efforts to improve the coherence between social protection and agriculture should give adequate focus to mid-level bureaucracies such as those at the regional level. Coordination received limited attention among the mid-level bureaucracy at the regional level because these are close to neither the policy/programme design nor grass roots implementation of the designed policies and programmes. As these mid-level bureaucracies are crucial to providing coordinated supports (i.e. technical and managerial) to the grassroots level implementers, the necessary training and capacity building effort should be provided to them to ensure this.
- Increase MoLSA's workforce at the grassroots level. In the IN-SCT pilot areas, significant improvements were observed in ensuring coherence between social protection and access to health and nutrition services, mainly because of increased number of social workers. Severe shortage of budget lies at the core of under-staffing within MoLSA and its lower structures. Therefore, it is crucial to properly resource MoLSA, including the deployment of an adequate number of frontline staff.
- Strengthen the delivery and accessibility to improved agricultural inputs, services, and technologies for PSNP clients. The livelihood component of PSNP4 should move back to the Extension directorate. The Food Security Coordination Directorate (FSCD), within the MoA, can continue overseeing the overall PSNP, leaving the technical livelihoods planning and execution to the extension directorate. Tailored extension package should be designed for PSNP clients and implemented by the extension directorate. The FSCD and the Extension Directorate should actively work together to ensure coherence between social protection and agriculture in the PSNP setting.

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