

Targeting social protection and agricultural interventions: potential for synergies

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There is evidence that the impacts of social protection programmes and agricultural interventions can mutually reinforce each other when they are implemented jointly (Tirivayi, Knowles and Davis 2016). Nevertheless, they often operate in isolation. A recent article by Cirillo et al. (2017) discusses how an alignment of their targeting mechanisms can help boost programme coordination and coherence and potentially build synergies to reinforce their impacts.

Non-contributory social programmes (e.g. social cash transfers) largely combine broader-level targeting mechanisms (such as geographical and categorical targeting) with household-level ones (such as community-based targeting, means testing or proxy means testing), while agricultural interventions tend to focus on broader geographical and categorical targeting. In practice, two different approaches could be used to trigger cross-sectoral synergies through coherent targeting: (i) using the same targeting criteria, through a single registry of beneficiaries for both types of programmes or by integrating sectoral registries/databases; or (ii) targeting the same areas for intervention, without necessarily targeting the same households within these areas. Cirillo et al. argue that the decision regarding which approach to adopt should depend on whether synergies are expected to arise at the household, local economy or macroeconomic level.

Synergies can arise at the household level when social protection programmes alleviate credit constraints and thereby allow families to invest in better agricultural technologies. For this to happen, families need to have access to both programmes. This can be achieved by using the same targeting tools, possibly with different cut-off points.

Synergies can also emerge at the local economy level—for example, when social transfers increase the demand for (local) agricultural products in a community, thereby supporting local agricultural producers. Agricultural interventions, in turn, can help non-poor (non-beneficiary) family farmers to respond by increasing their production to meet this increased demand from social transfer beneficiaries, but also keeping food inflation low to ensure an increase in the real income of beneficiaries. When synergies are likely to emerge at the local economy level, geographical overlapping would suffice, without necessarily targeting the same households.

Similar synergies may be expected at the macro level, with the addition of a fiscal impact, as greater revenue in the agricultural sector could be used to finance social protection programmes.

Cirillo et al. (ibid.) present five case studies where targeting coherence between social protection programmes and agricultural interventions was intentionally sought to foster synergies. In Peru, the rural development programme *Haku Wiñay* targeted rural communities with a high proportion of beneficiaries of the conditional cash transfer *Juntos*. This approach acknowledges the fact that not all *Juntos* beneficiaries would be eligible for *Haku Wiñay*, thus prioritising local economy synergies without excluding the potential for household-level ones.

In Brazil, household-level synergies in rural areas have been sought based on the merging of the single registry of beneficiaries for social programmes (*Cadastro Único*) with the family farmers' registry for rural credit purposes (DAP). Extremely poor families in rural areas who both benefited from the *Bolsa Família* programme and were engaged in agriculture were targeted to benefit not only from rural productive inclusion interventions of the Brazil without Extreme Poverty (*Brasil sem Miséria*—BSM) plan implemented by the Ministry of Social Development (e.g. extension services, investment grants and access to improved seeds) but also from well-established agricultural interventions such as rural credit and institutional procurement implemented by the Ministry of Agrarian Development.

In Ethiopia, the government made a conscious effort to link the country's main social protection scheme—the PSNP, whose major component is a public works programme—with its flagship agricultural/rural development programme (HABP, formerly OFSP). After attempting to link the beneficiaries of the PSNP with HABP through common geographical targeting and finding that just 33 per cent of them were able to access it, reforms such as allowing beneficiaries to access HABP's extension services even without using its credit scheme were implemented to facilitate the access of PSNP beneficiaries to the HABP programme.

In Lesotho, the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) was used to identify potential beneficiaries of kitchen garden infrastructure and training to complement the Child Grant programme, to promote food security. In the case of the pilot Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA Africa) programmes in five African countries, school feeding programmes were supported by local purchases from smallholder farmers, to improve not only the food security of local children but also enable local family farmers to gain access to an institutional market, increasing local incomes and the food security of beneficiary farmers.

These case studies illustrate interesting ways in which targeting coherence, through (i) geographical targeting, (ii) the use of unified or integrated databases to identify potential beneficiaries and (iii) the use of an existing list of beneficiaries, has been used to foster synergies between social protection and agricultural interventions at different levels. However, it is important to bear in mind that the evidence on synergies at different levels is still thin and that targeting is only one element of a potentially successful coordination strategy between agricultural interventions for family farmers and non-contributory social protection programmes. Finally, programme objectives and implementation details need to be aligned and coherent to avoid unexpected negative effects.

References:

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- Tirivayi, N., M. Knowles, and B. Davis. 2016. "The interaction between social protection and agriculture: A review of evidence." *Global Food Security* 10: 52–62.