

Addressing food insecurity in Africa: Strategies for ensuring child-sensitive social protection

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Abstract

Recognized as a multifaceted challenge, food security is high on the political and socio-economic agendas of many countries. Gaining a better understanding of the multidimensional nature of the challenge of food insecurity in Africa, especially its complex impact on children, can facilitate concerted actions and better targeting of interventions by national governments, international agencies and civil society organizations aimed at child-sensitive social protection.

Keywords

Addressing poverty and hunger, Africa, child-sensitive social protection, food insecurity, framing policy, ICSW

Recognized as a multifaceted challenge, food security is high on the political and socio-economic agendas of many countries. A range of different national perspectives on food security as well as analyses of responses to food insecurity have been presented in several recent analytical studies (Christoplos and Pain, 2015; FAO et al., 2020b). However, the effective targeting of these responses to ensure that they meet the needs of all – especially the most vulnerable, and children in particular – remains a challenge. Child-sensitive social protection requires, among other actions, specific programme design and interventions, accessing links between poverty and malnutrition, emphasis on the gendered nature of poverty as well as the size and frequency of cash transfers (UNICEF, 2019).

Food and nutrition security is one of the key issues among the development priorities of many African countries. The ‘2019 African Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition’ done by FAO et al. (2020a) provided evidence on the annual rise in food insecurity and its key drivers such as conflict, climate extremes and economic slowdowns and downturns. According to the fourth annual ‘2020 Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC 2020)’ prepared by the *Global Network Against Food Crises* (co-founded by the European Union, FAO and WFP), Africa remained as the continent most affected by food crises, accounting for 54 percent of the global total number of people in

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crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) and with the largest numbers of acutely food-insecure people in need of assistance (Global Network against Food Crises and FSIN, 2020).

Developing and identifying best strategies and tools to deal with these crisis supporting social protection efforts in the region therefore remains a top priority.

Like many national governments, international agencies and civil society organizations (CSOs), the International Council on Social Welfare (ICWS) views food and nutritional insecurity among people as detrimental to the goals of creating well-being and development for all and such insecurity poses significant challenges to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Together with partners, ICSW has organized an online conference in September 2021 to explore and debate new ways in addressing food insecurity and child-sensitive social protection in Africa, to highlight evidence and propose new policy approaches. The outcome could bring an improved understanding of the whole spectrum of policy issues and trade-offs in the above context and could be used by ICSW and its partners in their advocacy and policy advice. It reflects the renewed emphasis of the ICSW on agenda-setting and capacity-development issues and activities.

The literature review below is intended to provide a background and inform the readership about the existing challenges in this area. The purpose of this article is to inform the research and practice communities about the content of this event, flagging some key issues.

Key conceptual features

While there is no universally accepted definition of food security or its measurements, in the context of this article the FAO definition of food security is adopted, namely “when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (World Food Summit, 1996). Sustainable poverty eradication cannot be achieved without addressing the threats to food and nutrition security and implementing a well-focused set of mutually reinforcing social and economic policies attuned to the national circumstances and implemented in an integrated manner.

According to UNICEF (2019), to be effective child-sensitive social protection schemes must include a strong focus on social vulnerabilities, with particular emphasis on children who are both socially and economically vulnerable. Some key action areas include impact evaluations, social protection system assessments and social poverty measurement and analysis. Policy and strategy development measures for social protection include supporting national dialogues on social protection laws/policies; promoting and providing technical advice on cash and in-kind interventions and instruments; assessing and supporting development of national capacities and coordination mechanisms and working with governments to increase (as well as improving efficiency and equity of) resource allocation for social protection, including in humanitarian contexts (UNICEF, 2019). Expanding and improving cash transfers for children also involves supporting programme design and building political support as well as advocacy and stakeholders’ engagement. The interaction of the state, civil society and the private sector is crucial in this regard.

The authors of the edited volume *Social Protection for Africa’s Children* published several years ago presented not only theoretical and empirical evidence essential for building the case for child-sensitive social protection in Africa but also highlighted such schemes as an integral part of the social policy menu and existing trade-offs in this area (Handa et al., 2011).

Recent research demonstrates that malnutrition continues to be a major determinant of child health and survival in low- and middle-income countries and is strongly associated with household wealth and education. Following calls from UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), indicators such as Stunting and Wasting were included to reflect progress towards SDG target 2.2.

Unfortunately, little progress has been made on that front. The co-occurrence of different forms of malnutrition in young children is known to carry differential risks of morbidity and mortality (Pomati and Nandy, 2020).

In its most generalized form food security could be seen as the vector of movement of any national food system towards an ideal state. In this sense, the pursuit of food security is a continuous process. At the same time this strategy requires adjustments or even shifts in development priorities and implementation mechanisms of agricultural policy.

Scope of the challenge

The existing food insecurity in Africa is a huge and complex challenge that is closely linked to the risk of malnutrition, health care, education, political stability, poverty as well as overall national development priorities and directions. According to the recent report ‘The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World-2020’ prepared jointly by FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, the prevalence of undernourishment in Africa was 19.1 percent of the population in 2019, or more than 250 million undernourished people, up from 17.6 percent in 2014. This prevalence is more than twice the world average (8.9 percent) and is the highest among all regions (FAO et al., 2020b). In terms of the distribution of total food insecure (moderate or severe) people in the world, out of the 2 billion people suffering from food insecurity, 675 million are in Africa (FAO et al., 2020b).

In 2019, more than 9 of 10 stunted children lived in Africa, representing 40 percent of all stunted children in the world (FAO et al., 2020b). Inadequacies in the nutrition of children, especially, have intergenerational consequences as the deficits that occur in childhood could continue to have consequences over a lifetime. With its population of almost 1.4 billion, and a projected child population that will reach 1 billion by 2055 (UNICEF data), Africa’s efforts to ensure food security for the region will need to focus sharply on its burgeoning young population. Identifying and implementing effective child-sensitive social protection policies must be a top priority of governments, civil society and international organizations.

The comprehensive multi-agency report ‘2020 Global Report on Food Crises’ provides analysis of drivers of acute food insecurity, including obstacles in food access and availability. It also highlights the situation in specific countries, including African countries, facilitating understanding of both general and country-specific problems and possible policy responses (Global Network against Food Crises and FSIN, 2020).

Nutritional insecurity in the times of pandemic

The full impact of COVID-19 pandemic is still unclear, but due to this global calamity, the nutritional status of the most vulnerable population groups is likely to worsen and their risk of falling deeper into poverty is likely to increase, adding millions of people to the ranks of the hungry and undernourished (UNICEF, 2020). In order to address the impact of COVID-19 on food security in the long term, Africa will need to build productive capacities to address underlying economic vulnerabilities and strengthen the region’s capabilities to better manage food, pandemic and/or health-related crises (Akiwumi, 2020). The pandemic has exacerbated existing systemic weaknesses and it has both direct and indirect impacts on food security and economic well-being.

COVID-19 has had a negative impact on all dimensions and interrelated constituent elements of food security, in terms of availability, access, utilization and stability. In many food insecure-countries in Africa the pandemic further disrupted food supplies making *availability of food* problematic both in terms of quantity, quality and diversity of food. COVID-19 has jeopardized *economic and physical access to food* and disrupted stability in terms of reliable food supply.

Utilization closely linked to person's health, including feeding practices has been also negatively impacted. The above-mentioned '2020 Global Report on Food Crises' identifies multiple impacts of COVID-19 on food security and economic well-being. Pandemic negatively affects health and nutrition, food availability and food access, also having impact on displaced populations, social tensions and conflict. In terms of indirect impacts, the pandemic could drive further conflict due to high unemployment, increased poverty and social unrest. The pandemic may well devastate livelihoods and food security, especially in fragile contexts and particularly for the most vulnerable people working in the informal agricultural and nonagricultural sectors (Global Network against Food Crises and FSIN, 2020). Almost all African countries (92.7 percent) announced social protection measures in response to the COVID-19 crisis but their effectiveness differed depending on national circumstances. The above measures included benefits for workers and/or for dependents; benefits for poor or vulnerable population groups, subsidies for utilities and other measures (ILO, 2021). At the same time the crisis vividly demonstrated the highly uneven capacity of governments to provide emergency response in terms of enacting and financing income and health support to marginalized and most vulnerable groups, including children.

Multidimensional perspective

Several factors, such as rising food prices, disruption of livelihoods through conflicts, climate change or economic policies, declining agriculture, growth of informal economies, extreme poverty, inadequate opportunities for education and employment and the absence of affordable health care, contribute to the generation and deepening of food insecurity.

Poverty and hunger are closely connected. According to FAO's (2020) definition, hunger

is an uncomfortable or painful physical sensation caused by insufficient consumption of dietary energy. It becomes chronic when the person does not consume a sufficient amount of calories (dietary energy) on a regular basis to lead a normal, active and healthy life.

It leads to a distress associated with a lack of sufficient nutrition. Economic growth, along with factors such as literacy, population growth, access to food and women's empowerment, is important for fighting hunger. Not only is availability of food important, but also availability at affordable prices (Chatterjee et al., 2010). Chronic malnourishment of children appears to be a contributing cause of reduced infant and child survival rates. Inadequate access to food, including nutrients, insufficient maternal and child care, and lack of essential health services represent key factors explaining child malnutrition, but adverse political, economic and cultural environments also play a role (Chatterjee et al., 2010). In view of the above, child malnutrition requires a multidisciplinary approach.

Chronic hunger and food insecurity also imply the violation of human rights, as food constitutes a basic social and economic right, enshrined in national constitutions and international covenants. More recently, 'Zero Hunger' has been adopted as a key sustainable development goal to be met by all nations over the coming decade but the world is not on track to reach this goal by 2030 as has been anticipated earlier.

Gaining a better understanding of the multidimensional nature of the challenge of food insecurity, especially its complex impact on children, can facilitate concerted actions and better targeting of interventions by national governments, international bodies and CSOs (Lawson et al., 2020). In addressing these issues, the collaboration of all these stakeholders is important because child poverty and food insecurity is intertwined with multiple social, cultural and economic determinants. Addressing it in a decisive manner requires complex solutions and the commitment of multiple

stakeholders to child-sensitive social protection strategies (Khurshid et al., 2020; Nébié et al., 2019; Roelen et al., 2019). The collaborative action of national governments, international bodies and CSOs, especially, is also essential to address child poverty and vulnerability in a way that can break the cycle of disadvantage across generations and build intergenerational solidarity that facilitates overcoming adversities such as food insecurity within families and communities.

Measurement efforts and predicaments

The accurate measurement and tracking of food security, hunger and related indicators is important to measure progress and come up with policy adjustments. Equally important is measurement of sufficiency of dietary energy consumption related to both children and adults.

Countries and the organizations of the UN system must have at their disposal reliable, high-quality data to access progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, and particularly SDG 2.2, which is, by 2030, to 'end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons'. But quality data must be available also at the national level to facilitate better policy decisions and necessary intermediate adjustments. Availability of such data may be problematic: according to recent analysis, the conventional indicators of malnutrition among children may 'miss' substantial numbers of children who experience malnutrition, making the scale of the challenge facing communities, governments and international agencies even greater (Pomati and Nandy, 2020). Child malnutrition measured by such indicators as low weight and lack of sufficient energy consumption is often used owing to the availability of data. Getting reliable data and evidence could be seen as an important policy goal by all stakeholders.

Widely used Global Hunger Index (GHI) scores, for example, are based on the values of four component indicators: undernourishment (share of the population with insufficient caloric intake), child wasting (share of children under age 5 who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition), child stunting (share of children under age 5 who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition) and child mortality (mortality rate of children under age 5, partly reflecting the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments) (Concern Worldwide, 2020).

According to 2020 GHI scores, hunger is considered a major threat in several African countries, with 'alarming' levels of hunger. The report submitted on this issue by NEPAD secretariat et al. (2016) is aligned with these conclusions and it also identified several countries on the continent with the most precarious situation.

Affecting diet adequacy and quality, including the quality of children's and women's diets, food insecurity is a threat to survival, development and well-being of people. Moderate food insecurity is generally associated with the inability to regularly eat healthy, nutritious diets. Severe food insecurity is more strongly related to insufficient quantity of food (energy) and therefore strongly related to undernourishment or hunger (FAO, 2021), and FAO measures severe food insecurity by the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) (Roser and Ritchie, 2019).

Universal social protection

The ultimate solution to mitigate multiple risks and vulnerabilities and resolve the issue of food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition is universal social protection. The ILO (2012) recommendation 202 on social protection floors (SPFs) provided an important boost to the discussion on the feasibility and affordability of such schemes and systems, including in the African context. SPF schemes

have become an important element of the Agenda 2030 and are closely linked to achieving several SDGs. While efforts at increasing social protection coverage are present on the political agendas of many African countries – admittedly with different time horizons – a practical, down-to-earth approach aimed at satisfying basic food requirements at the household level is an affordable and achievable solution in most poor countries. Cash transfers to the poorest or direct feeding programmes for the weakest groups (including school feeding schemes) could be appropriate steps in many African countries to improve food security and child-sensitive social protection.

The FAO study ‘Nutrition and Social Protection’ concludes that social protection schemes – when they are well-designed and well-focused – can help address the multiple dimensions of malnutrition, being ‘the most effective means to reach marginalized, resource-poor and nutritionally vulnerable populations’. Children definitely belong to such population group. By reducing poverty and improving food security, social protection schemes can address the root causes of malnutrition. By stimulating economic activity, enhancing social inclusion and increasing access to sanitation, health and education, it further promotes better nutritional outcomes. Social protection will be most effective when embedded in such a multi-sector approach (FAO, 2015).

According to the GIZ analysis based on national case studies, social protection systems improve the quality of nutrition, cushion immediate risks of poverty, contribute to better education of women and girls, improve the productive and social infrastructure in rural areas, conserve resources and galvanize the rural economy (Rohregger, 2017). Food insecurity is clearly a multifaceted challenge that requires multifaceted response.

Social protection is a human right. It could be seen as an investment into human capital rather than expense and is one of the best ways to deal with deprivation, poverty, inequality and their dire consequences for society. It requires both domestic resource mobilization and international efforts, including ODA in the context of better coordination and policy coherence. The defensive, sustaining and transformative functions of social protection are realized in a better manner when the key stakeholders work together from the inception to the implementation of the respective schemes (Zelenev, 2020).

The critical role of stakeholders: Three-pronged approach

Overcoming food insecurity is impossible without the active engagement and a concerted action of all key stakeholders such as the state, the private sector and civil society. While public policy and action have an important impact on the extent and magnitude of hunger and food insecurity, effective state policies are also essential in promoting child-sensitive social protection. The role of other key partners and stakeholders has also been significant in both areas.

Public policies

Government involvement and improved public institutional capacity are essential for strengthening food security through fighting poverty, promoting productive employment and policies aimed at reducing social exclusion and inequality as well as reducing market volatility, better land management, agricultural rehabilitation, water governance and other security-enhancing measures. In many cases, public policies have a direct impact on the supply of food and its price. The state commitment to a rights-based agenda might be equally important for strengthening food security through human rights (Christoplos and Pain, 2015).

This comprehensive role of social protection is an acknowledged factor in the broader development context in Africa. Government involvement in this area is indispensable. Neither food insecurity nor hunger problems can be resolved without a simultaneous, coordinated provision of

services and public investment to poor and marginalized population groups, accompanied by actions on several fronts as mentioned above. Lessons learned in the countries with similar circumstances in other world regions provide a vivid manifestation that all government agencies must be involved including those concerned with agriculture and irrigation; health care issues, including reproductive health, food supply and distribution; water and sanitation, education and literacy; and welfare on women, children, minorities and socially excluded groups (Chatterjee et al., 2010).

Given that extreme poverty and hunger in Africa are mostly rural phenomena, investment in agriculture and rural development are vital pre-requisites for eradicating hunger. Improving agricultural production and integrating social protection schemes for ‘consumers’ with social protection for ‘small/local producers’ could be seen as a way to address the poverty and insecurity of the latter in the context of promoting sustainable development.

When millions of people face increasing food insecurity, preventing food loss and waste happening in many countries, including African countries becomes an important task. Such waste happens due to various structural reasons, including deficiencies in infrastructure, transportation and other supply chain gaps, and efforts to improve the situation become one of the key practical objectives in achieving food security.

The private sector

The improved cooperation of the state and private actors has multiple benefits. There should be some specific strategies designed by the state to involve the private sector as well as specific schemes to encourage its participation. Promotion of private sector investment along the whole food chain (recognizing the heterogeneity within, from subsistence farming through monopolistic traders), especially improved agricultural trade logistics, fostering public-private dialogue to unlock investment bottlenecks, is particularly relevant in the food security context (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2011). For example, better water and energy usage, improved access to potable water or more efficient irrigation or land reclamation in many cases could be achieved with involvement of the private sector. Improved cooperation could help with overcoming the digital gap to address food insecurity in a better way with the use of artificial intelligence practices. Such advanced technologies can play an important role in transforming food systems by performing tasks that are otherwise conducted by people such as planting and harvesting. This can help to increase productivity, improve working conditions and use natural resources more efficiently with better knowledge, planning and management (Lubetkin, 2020).

Digital technologies may also be used to improve efficiency of agrifood systems, which is critical to food security. Mobile applications (e.g. M-Farm application in Kenya, www.mfarm.co.ke) can provide timely weather-based agroadvisory messages and facilitate provision of price information to farmers, can lessen market distortions and can help farmers to play with their production planning as well as adjusting their cropping patterns.

Growing role of CSOs

CSOs can play an important role in moving forward the fight against poverty and food insecurity. The ICSW has a special interest in analysis of their role and potential. Their focus on specific communities and issues gives them in-depth knowledge and expertise needed to devise practical interventions. Their role in advocacy is also critical in changing existing approaches. Use of evidence is essential when advocacy strategies are conceptualized and implemented. CSOs are typically highly motivated when working together, particularly when joint advocacy activities are undertaken.

When the engagement of nonpublic stakeholders such as civil society and communities results in a meaningful involvement in an effort to reduce food insecurity, the results are beneficial for society as a whole. This involvement might be partially effective to address the needs of socially excluded groups, but it goes much beyond that in promoting improved service delivery by government agencies.

According to a study based on the project done by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in Washington DC, a policy framework in this area focusing on capacity strengthening of CSOs for 'lobbying and advocacy' could enhance the overall effectiveness of CSOs by joining forces with strategic partners 'to coordinate their lobbying and advocacy goals, instruments and methods'. Improving the immediate environment is often the first goal; contributing to country structural change by 'embedding community interest into policy and practice' and 'by improving the position of affected groups, or the organizations that represent them' may be a longer-term goal (IFPRI, 2020).

The objectives of this policy framework may include *empowering CSOs to have a greater voice as advocates*, and to effectively serve the interests of the people they represent; *influencing agenda-setting, policy design and implementation* by stimulating collaboration and accountability among CSOs, governments, the private sector and other relevant parties; and *improving government and private sector service delivery* towards inclusive development. Main intervention strategies envision *strengthening of CSOs' capacities in areas such as training, external coaching, peer-to-peer learning; evidence creating and dissemination for use in advocacy; and updating advocacy plans and CSOs' activities during capacity-development and learning events* (IFPRI, 2020).

Another important venue of CSOs' activities might be *engagement with media*, essential in conveying advocacy messages and in gaining public support. *Engaging with authorities at sub-national level* (either local or even district) often goes hand in hand with national engagement. Civil society organizations can help with increasing the efficiency of the food system, reducing the production costs and contributing to a better service delivery and in preventing food loss and food waste (alone or in collaboration with the private sector). Moreover CSOs can also engage with universities and academic centers to develop and distribute open source and not-for-profit technological advances as the ones described above.

Close cooperation with other stakeholders in implementing these goals is essential. Local hunger organizations and food banks can be game-changers in this context.

Civil society organizations are particularly important in representing community interests, both short- and long-terms, in the context of fighting poverty and hunger. They can contribute to domestic structural changes and transformational policies. CSOs are fully capable of representing best interests of a given community and weaving community interests into policy and practice at the national level. The CSOs focus on community interests and community-specific issues gives such organizations an in-depth knowledge and expertise indispensable in devising effective practical interventions.

High level of food insecurity in Africa and recent pandemic-related reversal of gains made earlier in poverty reduction makes the task of building effective partnerships very urgent in an effort to join forces before existing immediate threats and severe resource constraints.

Partnerships can help with the effective focusing of national policy measures to ensure they meet the needs of the poorest and most marginalized, and among these groups, children in particular. Key stakeholders could facilitate the development or strengthening a system of shared responsibilities between families and households striving to mitigate food insecurity, as well as between the community, national and local governments, and the private sector. The shared vision and mutual trust are the pre-requisites for success in this area. Building such a network requires

extensive dialogue between the various groups to develop new forms of solidarity at various levels. Civil society organizations can play an important role in creating an environment for social mobilization and the effective delivery of social protection schemes.

But a word of caution is in order here. While using the ideas of “partnership” and “collaboration” as positive attributes is intuitively appealing, building partnerships should not be used as an excuse for government scaling down on social services delivery, including social protection schemes. There is a need to dig deeper into exact responsibilities of partners at the inception of the project to avoid a lack of commitment and tangible results at a later stages. Moreover, the issue of transparency regarding the shape and obligations of partners should come to the forefront and should not be overlooked to avoid concerns regarding potential abuse of information and data collected for public purposes but used by private companies for variety of unrelated purposes.

Issues

The conference addressed a range of specific issues in the context of food security and child-sensitive social protection in Africa and provided perspective on areas of particular importance. The discussion focused on the role of key stakeholders and their interaction, including programme design, policy and strategy development, and impact evaluations.

Two major sets of issues were addressed at the conference. First, the conference focused on the conceptual and general issues pertinent to food insecurity in Africa, analysis of vulnerabilities, measures aimed to promote inclusive growth, strategies to strengthen cooperation with various stakeholders and to improve capacity development. Second, the conference highlighted national case studies that illustrate changes in the approaches to the aforementioned issues, various dimensions of the existing situation and national best practices.

Some specific questions raised as pointers for contributions were as follows:

1. What are the most effective policy responses at the national level to the existing risks of food insecurity?
2. How could national policy formation and approaches to poverty and food insecurity be improved, taking into account a multidimensional perspective?
3. What have national studies demonstrated regarding the existing trade-offs and synergies in the transition to sustainable food security?
4. What are evidence-based policies in country-specific contexts regarding social vulnerabilities due to gender, disability, race and other attributes in the context of child-sensitive social protection?
5. How could public institutional capacity be strengthened to overcome hunger and insecurity?
6. What role do conditional and non-conditional cash transfer programmes play in improving child-sensitive social protection?
7. Beyond cash transfers: the quest for an appropriate social protection policy mix to improve child development outcomes.
8. What are the pros and cons of the school feeding programmes?
9. How could the partnerships between various stakeholders be strengthened to address food insecurity?
10. What are the best ways for building the capacity of CSOs to improve their activities?
11. What are the cross-cutting themes in the context of food security and child-sensitive social protection at the national level?

12. What are the differences between addressing food insecurity in rural and urban contexts? Are children's vulnerabilities different across these contexts?
13. What are the policy recommendations on priority measures that could be addressed to key stakeholders and policy-makers?
14. Long-term impact of child deprivation: a life-cycle approach.

Social workers have a crucial role to play in the quest for improved welfare and child-sensitive social protection, in Africa and beyond. Nowadays the competence of social work professionals cannot be limited exclusively to interventions helping the poorest families in vulnerable situations. The prevention of emerging risks and identification of potential vulnerabilities for currently non-poor but potentially unstable families, particularly single-parent families, could be equally important. Broad-based social work in the context of a wider analytical framework could be seen as a platform for facilitating structural transformation that raises growth rates and productivity in agriculture thus reducing food insecurity. In fact, such measures should become part and parcel of a 'toolbox' of a contemporary social worker, contributing to the improved well-being of individuals, families and society at large. If these interventions are well-focused and well-implemented, they may prevent weakening of the resource base and correct some inequalities in the initial distribution of assets, including human resources, fostering better social protection and, in the long run, more inclusive socio-economic development.

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