Adaptive Social Protection – linking social protection and climate change adaptation

By Susanne Ziegler

1. Introduction

Social protection has received a lot of attention in recent years at international level, e.g. in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in the context of comprehensive risk management, and at operational level in form of specific policies and programmes in many developing countries and emerging economies. Germany sees social protection as a human right and as the basis for sustainable economic development and the successful fight against poverty (BMZ 2009). A sustainable and inclusive system of social protection should be designed in such a way that it protects a person from risks that may occur during its course of life. These risks include life cycle risks (old age poverty, disability, temporary or permanent incapacity for work, death of a family member), health risks (illness, accidents, epidemics), economic risks (unemployment, price shocks) as well as natural and ecological risks (such as droughts, floods, storms) (BMZ 2009). Especially the frequency and intensity of climate and weather-related extreme events have increased in recent years due to climate change.

Climate change is expected to have significant negative impacts on human society over the next decades, in some areas potentially reversing years of progress in human development (IPCC 2014). It can push people into poverty and force them to adopt negative coping strategies like selling their assets, taking children out of school, reducing food intake to unhealthy levels etc. The risk that poor people will lose their life and livelihoods during disasters or due to slow-onset changes related to climate change, such as land degradation or reductions in water availability, is also increasing.

There is urgent need to develop new approaches for pro-poor policies that will help the most vulnerable groups adapt and thrive in the years to come (Heltberg et al. 2010).

Social protection presents one approach where some of these solutions might be found particularly when social protection policies are linked with climate change adaptation measures. Instruments of social protection (e.g. cash transfers, pensions, employment guarantee schemes) can be used to help individuals and households that are hit by climate related disasters. Unfortunately, evidence that shows how these measures help those affected to adapt to and cope with climate challenges is still limited (Béné et al. 2013). According to the World Bank (2013), countries that have social protection systems in place before a shock hits are better able to respond in particular if they have been designed to respond to climate change, as it has been demonstrated by Ethiopia’s Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP).

This paper argues that climate change and social protection policies should be closely interlinked particularly in regions and areas that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. If designed appropriately, social protection programmes can help population groups living in areas that are particularly vulnerable to climate change, e.g. flood prone or mountainous areas as well as arid or semi-arid zones, to adapt their livelihoods to climatic changes and cope with the

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1 The author would like to thank Elke Kasmann, Susanne Schwan (both GIZ) and Gaby Ramm (consultant) for the review of this paper and their valuable comments and contributions.
negative impacts of climate-related extremes. In addition, linkages to other areas such as agriculture for livelihood diversification and disaster risk management for local adaptation measures needs to be considered as well.

In the following, the paper takes a closer look at the concept of Adaptive Social Protection linking the policies of social protection, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management (chapter 2). This is followed by chapter 3 which describes how instruments of social protection can integrate climate aspects and how they can be used for adaptation to climate change and responses to climate related shocks. Chapter 4 on country examples highlights first approaches on linking social protection and climate change adaptation implemented in a number of countries. Chapter 5 concludes and provides recommendations on future policies and programmes.

2. The concept of Adaptive Social Protection

The term “adaptive social protection” (ASP) was created by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID). Its principal idea is that synergies can be gained if social protection, disaster risk management and climate change adaptation are brought closer together. Coordination with all actors in order to derive at a consolidated strategy would need to take place.

For instance, in order to manage the risks of income losses of smallholders in the event of drought, the concerned government institutions would train farmers in local water harvesting and community composting for improving the soil quality. Extensions services would provide farmers with drought-resistant seeds (disaster risk management) and weather forecasts. A national Climate Change Adaptation Plan (climate change adaptation) would have strategies in place for larger irrigation projects or afforestation activities implemented through public works programmes (social protection). These measures would already reduce the climate-related vulnerability of smallholders and enhance the income of poor. Other social protection programmes would have offered skill training for diversifying the livelihoods of farmers in less disaster-prone businesses as defined and financed by the climate change adaptation plans – hence making people resilient and contribute to climate change adaptation.

Although similar in approach, climate change adaptation, disaster risk management and social protection policies and interventions are often designed and implemented in a ‘silo’ mentality.

The concept of ASP can be illustrated as follows:

**Figure 1: concept of adaptive social protection**

Source: Adapted from Arnall et al 2010 b with inputs from GIZ.

An ASP approach to vulnerability and poverty reduction can2

1. Transform and promote livelihoods;
2. Target communities with tailored assistance;
3. Incorporate a rights-based rationale for action;
4. Introduce a longer-term perspective for social protection and disaster risk management interventions;
5. Improve coordination between ministries which are responsible for social protection, disaster risk management and climate change;
6. Improve efficiency and decrease duplication of similar interventions;
7. Make use of already existing structures or systems (e.g. use social protection systems to channel emergency support to affected population groups).

Social protection, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management measures use similar and complementary instruments (similar instruments include building of assets, cash transfers; complementary instruments include early warning, new crop varieties) and often target the same population groups – namely the most vulnerable and chronically poor. Arguments that call for an integration of the three approaches include cost-effectiveness, efficiency and long-term sustainability criteria.

2 Source for points 1-4: Béné 2012, points 5-7: author.
Social protection can play a preventive role by increasing the resilience and coping strategies of vulnerable population groups e.g. through a diversification of livelihoods. After shocks and disasters have taken place, social protection instruments like cash transfers and public works programmes can help people who are severely affected from sinking deeper into poverty (protective role). The promotive role of social protection helps people to engage in income-generating activities, to build skills and to promote opportunities arising from climate change. The transformative role of social protection relates to changes of social, political and economic relations that drive and underpin poverty, inequality and vulnerability. Here, similar to climate change adaptation, longer timeframes are necessary to achieve transformation. The following table summarizes how these four roles of social protection instruments can complement climate change adaptation and disaster risk management efforts:

Table 1: Social protection (SP) categories and instruments, and associated benefits for climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk management (DRM):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SP category</th>
<th>SP instruments</th>
<th>CCA and DRM benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preventive (coping strategies)</td>
<td>Social transfers Micro-insurance Livelihood diversification</td>
<td>Prevents damaging coping strategies as a result of risks to weather-dependent livelihoods</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective (coping strategies)</td>
<td>Basic social transfers (food / cash) Pension schemes Public works programmes</td>
<td>Protection of those most vulnerable to climate risks, with low levels of adaptive capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotive (building adaptive capacity)</td>
<td>Social transfers Access to credit Asset transfers / protection Starter packs (drought / flood resistant) Public works programmes</td>
<td>Promotes resilience through livelihood diversification and security to withstand climate-related shocks Promotes opportunities arising from climate change</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transformative (building adaptive capacity)</td>
<td>Promotion of minority rights Anti-discrimination campaigns Social funds</td>
<td>Transforms social, political and economic relations to combat poverty, inequality, vulnerability etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Arnall et al (2010 a)

Climate change and natural disasters put additional pressure on governments as well. The immense costs after natural disasters have a significant negative bearing on the annual budgets of various ministries. Budget reallocations after disasters have impacts on people as well e.g. when education or health budgets are used for reconstruction or emergency responses. In order to avoid ad hoc budget reallocations, governments could apply various disaster risk financing measures such as national reserve funds for disasters, CAT Bonds (catastrophe bonds) for quick access to credit after disasters or index insurance in order to avoid liquidity problems.

3. Designing climate adaptive and responsive social protection systems

A range of tools and instruments is used for each social protection system. They range from small scale in-kind or cash transfers to large public works programmes. The choice of instruments depends on a number of factors including the overall objective of the social protection system, the intended target group, the financial budget, the choice of delivery methods etc. In most countries, social protection instruments are already in place, sometimes even on a large scale as it is the case in India, Brazil and Ethiopia. In theory, it would be possible to make use of already existing instruments and to adapt them in order to take climate change related factors into account. In this chapter, a closer look is taken at frequently used social protection instruments and how they can be linked with climate change followed by five design features for adapting social protection programmes.

Social cash transfers

In general, cash transfers are regular non-contributory payments of money provided by governments or non-governmental organisations to poor and vulnerable individuals and households. The role that cash transfers can play in the context of climate change has not been well documented yet (Béné et al. 2013). Further research and piloting of concepts accompanied by evidence-based analysis is still necessary. Nonetheless, the following approaches would be possible:

- **Adapt to climate change:** since poor and vulnerable individuals and households are the ones most affected by climate change, cash transfers could increase their financial capacities to adapt to changing environmental circumstances, e.g. by investing in different crop varieties or in small-scale assets promoting livelihood diversification. Cash transfers could thus increase long-term resilience to climate related shocks and help people to slowly move out of extreme poverty. Conditional cash-transfers could further promote education on climate change, adaptation measures, as well as
community-based early warning (e.g. communities receiving funds for cash transfers under the condition of setting up a local early warning system).

- **Respond to climate related shocks**: cash transfers can also be used to help affected individuals and households after climate related shocks have occurred. Disaster response measures or (index-based) insurance mechanisms could be built into an already existing social transfer programme. Key features of these mechanisms could be a) an increase of cash transfers to compensate for the loss of agricultural yield or assets; b) to make quick insurance pay-outs in case of an emergency to those already targeted by a cash transfer programme; making use of already existing cash transfer infrastructure as pay-out delivery mechanisms; and c) the ability to scale-up assistance beyond the core target group (usually the chronically poor) and include households that are temporarily pushed into poverty as a result of an extreme weather event. This could be done using geographical targeting. Potential built-in disaster response or index-based mechanisms could be weather insurance (e.g. African Risk Capacity) or emergency funds coming from governments, donors or relief agencies.

**In-kind transfers**

In-kind transfers that are distributed in the context of climate change can include assets like seeds, cattle and small-scale tools, such as solar-water pumps. Levine et al. (2011) argue that caution has to be paid to the idea that the adaptive capacity of people can be built by giving them assets. Stories from the field show that people rather tend to sell assets since the wrong in-kind transfer had been provided and they were more interested in the cash value of that transfer.

Based on the lessons of existing in-kind transfer programmes, Béné et al. (2013) suggest that donors should not support asset transfers in isolation. Instead, a holistic approach that combines livelihood protection (consumption support, savings services) with livelihood promotion (skills training, asset transfer, access to credit) should help poor households to graduate from extreme poverty towards sustainable livelihoods (Sabates-Wheeler et al. 2011).

**Social pensions/ social transfers for elderly people:**

Older people are particularly vulnerable to climate change but there is not much research on the relevance of pension schemes for climate change. Usually, social pensions do not cover immediate livelihood needs of poor people like expenditures for food and health treatments, let alone for climate change adaptation measures. Nonetheless, it can be assumed that cash transfers to elderly people in the form of a pension will help them to adapt to climate change and to help them after natural disasters and climate related events.

HelpAge (Hartog 2014) has supported older people in Kenya after the droughts in 2011 by giving them unconditional cash transfers for a limited period of five months. The project was designed as an emergency cash transfer, but gave people also the opportunity to invest in livelihood activities. At the same time, beneficiaries were trained in business skills, since elderly people are often economically active even in old age, and disaster risk management which enhanced their capacity to invest in resilience-building.

**Public works programmes**

Public works programmes exist in several countries and can – depending on the size of the programme – reach large population groups. Usually, a public works programme is publicly financed and supports poor and food insecure people by providing cash or in-kind transfers in exchange for (usually manual) labour. In developing countries and emerging economies, public works programmes are a key component of a social protection system.

Public works programmes that link social protection and climate change already exist in several countries. They can be aimed at providing public works-based employment to people living in areas prone to weather extremes and climate change as an additional source of income. Further, they can provide a public good or service that benefits the majority of the local population (e.g. drainage systems in urban areas to prevent flooding, irrigation systems, renovation of water bodies, and dams in rural areas). Public works programmes can also be aimed at environmental rehabilitation and conservation of natural resources (e.g. by planting mangroves to reduce flooding and coastal erosion, afforestation to prevent soil erosion, percolation tanks to improve groundwater recharge) or at climate-proofing infrastructure (adapting infrastructure to the risks of climate change) such as roads, buildings and bridges.

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3 In 2014, GIZ carried out a mission to look at the potential of linking social protection and climate change in Mozambique. After disasters, Mozambicans receive emergency in-kind transfers like food and blankets. The mission team learned in qualitative interviews, that many Mozambicans sell emergency in-kind transfers and personal assets in order to get cash and to be able to e.g. reconstruct their house.
Social protection programmes that take climate change features into account should be designed according to the following features:\(^4\):

1) **Coordinate institutional capacity:** coordination between agencies and actors working on social protection, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management or management needs to take place. Effective government disaster risk management measures can also have an effect on a social protection system. For example, if governments of drought-prone countries support afforestation programmes (or discourage deforestation) the water-retention capacity of soil increases and ‘normal’ droughts would not affect farmers that often. Hence, they would not be pushed into poverty, they would not need to adopt negative coping strategies like selling assets and would therefore not be dependent on a government’s social transfer programme.

2) **Scalable and flexible programmes:** programmes must be flexible enough to be rapidly scaled up during or shortly after a disaster or shock and scaled back once the crisis is over. They need to be capable of increasing support to existing beneficiaries in the event of major shocks. Achieving scalability requires targeting, registry and payment systems that can identify, enrol and make transfers to additional eligible participants, e.g. persons living in zones affected by disasters. It also requires financial arrangements than enable the quick disbursement of resources, e.g. additional resources from governments such as emergency loans for house reconstruction or productive investments, donors or through insurance.

3) **Ensure good governance and accountability:** extreme weather events and natural disasters put additional pressure on social protection systems and often disrupt existing systems therefore increasing the potential for leakage, fraud etc. Special attention must be paid to governance and accountability mechanisms, including through extensive communication with outreach to and training of beneficiaries and implementers.

4) **Increase adaptive capacity at the household and community level:** the social, physical and natural assets of households and communities need to be strengthened in ways that increase resilience to shocks, support viable livelihoods and ensure long-term sustainability considering the medium- and long-term impacts of climate change.

5) **Climate-smart targeting:** usually, social protection programmes target vulnerable and poor populations groups using a number of targeting methods like proxy-means testing, self or community based or categorical targeting (e.g. women, children, older persons). In the case of climate change, certain areas will be more affected than others, therefore geographical targeting may be a useful approach to deliver assistance to persons in need.

**Insurance and linkages to social protection**

Agricultural and climate risk insurance schemes are becoming increasingly important. Agricultural insurance services – usually in the form of crop insurance – often form an integral part of public support systems that help to protect farmers from financial losses. In the context of climate change, public actors increasingly recognize the potential of insurance solutions to provide protection from damage caused by extreme weather events or other natural disasters.

Such schemes and products can be linked to a social protection scheme e.g. through a public works programme (see the below described R4R-Initiative). Another solution is the already mentioned mechanism of delivering pay-outs from climate risk insurance through social transfer schemes.

### 4. Country examples

Most social protection policies and programmes do not yet take climate change into account and vice versa for climate change policies. In countries and regions that are particularly hit by climate-related extreme weather events, first approaches of linking climate change and social protection exist. The following chapter describes some examples and case studies which are currently being implemented in a number of countries. There is lots of potential for further development and application in countries and regions with similar environments and circumstances.

**Link social protection and climate change in policies and strategies: Mozambique**

The prerequisite for every social protection system is political will and commitment for its creation as well as the will to finance and to operationalize policies and programmes. It is difficult to bring different policy areas together, in particular when they have emerged

\(^4\) Adapted from Kuriakose \textit{et al} (2012) and World Bank (2013).
at different times and when different ministries are responsible for their implementation. Attempts on linking social protection with climate change and disaster risk management exist, but it is not yet common place to take an ASP approach (Vincent et al. 2012).

Mozambique is in the process of developing appropriate pre-conditions for the implementation of an ASP approach. The country has institutional frameworks for social protection and climate change but as in other countries they fall under the responsibilities of different ministries. The Ministry of Women and Social Affairs is responsible for social protection and the Ministry for the Coordination of Environmental Affairs for climate change. Likewise, disaster risk management falls within the remit of the National Disaster Management Institute under the Ministry of State Administration.

The context for linking social protection and climate change in Mozambique is set by the 2013-2025 National Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy which states that “social protection can play a key role in increasing the resilience of the most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change” (República de Moçambique 2012). Actions enlisted in the National Strategy that are intended to increase the adaptive capacity of vulnerable people include the following:

- Developing and implementing innovative community-based adaptation approaches;
- Strengthening existing social protection systems with respect to climate change as well as strengthening the capacity, orientation and emphasis of basic social protection programmes so that they can increase the resilience of vulnerable people;
- Strengthening linkages between social protection systems and those related to natural disasters, including early warning systems.

Unfortunately, the above section of the National Strategy has not yet or only partially (see below example concerning the African Risk Capacity) been implemented. There is however large interest from the government and development practitioners in operationalizing this in Mozambique.

As the case of Mozambique shows, the practical implementation of an ASP approach is often hindered by a number of challenges and barriers. According to Vincent et al. (2012), the following barriers are most common:

- **Institutional barriers:** different ministries are responsible for social protection, climate change and disaster risk management which hinders coordination and implementation. This can lead to similar programmes which target the same population groups but fall under the auspices of different ministries.
- **Insufficient policies and legislation:** in most countries, the extent to which policies and legislation exist for the three domains differ from each other. Usually, disaster risk management policies have been in place before policies related to social protection or climate change. These policies are usually not complementary or streamlined which makes the implementation of coherent approaches more difficult.
- **Technical barriers:** people are usually specialized in one area. Technical knowledge that links social protection and climate change adaptation is missing which makes the implementation of an ASP approach difficult.
- **Political commitment:** government timeframes for decision-making are usually rather short and follow legislative periods. In contrast, climate change and social protection policies require a long-term, forward-looking perspective.
- **Financing:** competition for budget allocations and financing between ministries is also an issue, particularly if ministries have overlapping responsibilities (like in the case of a Ministry of Health and a Ministry of Social Affairs) or if they need to work together in order to achieve a common goal, like the implementation of an ASP approach would require.

**Use social protection payment systems for payouts from climate insurance: the African Risk Capacity (ARC)**

More and more governments insure themselves against the impacts of climate and weather-related disasters. Payment systems, which have been created for social protection programmes like social cash transfers, can be used to channel funds from climate insurances to the affected population groups in a timely and resource-efficient manner.

The African Risk Capacity (ARC) is a specialized agency of the African Union (AU) which assists AU member countries in adapting to climate change by using finance mechanisms such as risk pooling and risk transfer. It aims to help improve a country’s capacities to plan, prepare and respond to extreme weather events, in particular droughts, through an index-based weather insurance mechanism. Countries which want to join the ARC risk pool have to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, commit premium
payments and draft operations plans for the use of pay-outs from the ARC.

Several countries, including Kenya and Mozambique, have committed themselves to using their already existing social protection payment systems for pay-outs from the ARC or to upscale social protection programmes. Kenya and Mozambique entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the ARC in 2012.

In cases of emergency, Kenya will scale up its Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP), an unconditional cash transfer programme.

In the case that a pay-out to Mozambique is required, the three main activities that will take place, according to the country’s operational plan, are: 1) upscaling of the already existing public works programme “Productive Social Action Programme” (Programa de Ação Social Produtiva, PASP); 2) distribution of food to the most vulnerable; and 3) distribution of short-cycle seeds for households in arid zones.

Use existing social cash transfer programmes for emergency response: Kenya’s Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP)

Emergency cash transfer programmes are schemes that provide cash transfers to households in cases of emergency. An already existing cash transfer system – including its targeting and payment methods – could be upscaled by an emergency response mechanism which would trigger additional funds in cases of emergency.

Key features of such an approach are a) to make quick extraordinary payments in case of an emergency to those already enlisted/targeted by the cash transfer programme; and b) the ability to scale-up assistance beyond the core target group (usually the chronically poor) and include households that are temporarily pushed into poverty as a result of an extreme weather event.

In cases of emergency, targeting mechanisms like community and categorical criteria should be combined with geographical targeting which identifies areas where damage is extensive and most households are affected. Using existing cash transfer or other social protection schemes, emergency cash transfers can build on existing registries of poor and vulnerable households expanding the selection criteria to include geographical targeting.

Kenya’s Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) provides unconditional cash transfers through biometric smart cards to chronically food insecure households in four counties which are the poorest in Kenya and among the most vulnerable to shocks. The Kenyan government has allocated USD 22.5 million out of a total payout of USD 30 million from the African Risk Capacity to the HSNP in order to scale up HSNP in cases of emergencies (mainly droughts).

In April 2015, the HSNP began emergency weather shock payments for sub-counties badly affected by drought since January. In less than 2 weeks after the trigger, around USD 4 million was transferred electronically into the bank accounts of additional cases of more than 90,000 temporary beneficiaries. It is critical to note that it has taken quite a long time until administration, financing and targeting mechanisms of HSNP were mature enough to reach the point where the programme can be scaled up in response to emergencies.

Climate and weather insurance as an add-on to a social protection programme: Ethiopia’s Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative

Climate and weather insurances can be offered to individuals who are engaged in public works programmes. Instead of receiving financial or in-kind support, individuals can opt for a climate or weather insurance. They could also “buy” this insurance by working additional days in the respective public works programme.

The R4 Rural Resilience Initiative (formerly Horn of Africa Risk Transfer for Adaptation/HARITA) in

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5 The Productive Social Action Programme (PASP) focuses on extremely poor households and consists of public works programmes aimed at building or upgrading infrastructure in poor and vulnerable communities and by providing training and other educational opportunities.


8 Adapted from Slater et al (2015).

9 This paragraph is taken from: Warner, K., Yuzva, K., Zissener, M., Gille, S., Voss, J. and S. Wanczeck (2013). Innovative Insurance Solutions for Climate Change: How to integrate climate risk insurance into a comprehensive cli-
Ethiopia is an insurance mechanism for farmers. Farmers can buy this insurance by working additional days in Ethiopia’s largest public works programme, the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). R4 was launched in 2007 to assist farmers in building their resilience to climate change (Oxfam America 2011). It integrates insurance with risk reduction, credit and savings, whereby the poorest farmers can use their labour to pay for the premiums. Those farmers who bought insurance work extra days on community projects such as planting grass and trees to mitigate soil and water erosion, while more prosperous farmers pay their premiums in cash.

In turn, farmers benefit even when there are no payouts because these risk reduction activities contribute to improved yields and minimize vulnerability to drought. Additionally, with the security that insurance provides, farmers are in a better position to make riskier but more profitable investments in e.g. new crop varieties that allow them to build a more secure future for their families. Today, the programme aims to expand in Ethiopia and move into other countries (e.g., the R4 Pilot 2013 project in Senegal) in the coming years. When the pilot project was first launched in Ethiopia, 200 households in one village were enrolled. In 2012, the R4 exceeded its goal of reaching 15,000 farmers by successfully extending insurance services to more than 70 villages in 11 districts in Tigray, Ethiopia (Oxfam America 2012).

Public works programmes that link social protection and climate change: India’s Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

Public works programmes that include a climate change component exist in a number of countries. Examples are Ethiopia’s Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and Mozambique’s Productive Social Action Programme (PSAP) that aim at providing public works-based employment to people living in areas prone to weather extremes and climate change. Though India’s Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was not explicitly designed to address climate change, it has the potential to generate benefits for adaptation:

The MGNREGA is a key element of India’s social policy and aims to guarantee the “right to work”. It was introduced in 2005 and has an annual budget of around Rs. 42,000 crores (approx. 5 billion Euros).

The objective of the Act is to ensure livelihood security of rural households by guaranteeing at least 100 days of wage employment per household per year. With benefiting approx. 50 million rural households whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work, it is the largest public employment scheme in the world. The secondary objective is to enhance sustainable rural livelihoods through rejuvenation of the natural resource base – land, water and forests.

Works carried out under MGNREGA that have the potential to generate climate or environmental benefits are land development, flood control, irrigation works, afforestation etc. MGNREGA also aims at empowering women: one third of all employment opportunities are reserved for women and the wages between men and women are equal.

Box 2: GIZ programme support to MGNREGA

GIZ, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), has been advising the Indian Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) through the programme “Environmental benefits through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA-EB) since 2013. The main objective of this programme is to improve core processes of MGNREGA in order to ensure environmental benefits. Works carried out through MGNREGA have the potential to generate environmental benefits and reduce climate vulnerability of rural communities provided that work design, site selection and implementation are technically sound; but the potential impacts of climate variability are not yet considered sufficiently in selecting and planning MGNREGA works. Together with the Indian government and other stakeholders such as local institutions, GIZ carries out several activities including the following: 1) development of a monitoring and evaluation system in order to quantify environmental and gender benefits of MGNREGA, 2) capacity building of stakeholders, 3) improving capacities at local level in implementing MGNREGA works with environmental benefits, 4) review of existing technical designs of MGNREGA works with regard to environmental benefits and testing of adapted technical designs in selected pilot districts.

Source: GIZ (2014).

5. Conclusion

Climate related extreme events are projected to increase in the coming years with developing countries and emerging economies being most affected. Therefore, climate change has to become an integrative part of a country’s policies and the efforts of development...
practitioners. This includes social protection policies and programmes. In order for ASP to be effectively implemented, inter-ministerial and interdisciplinary collaboration is essential as responsibilities for climate change adaptation, humanitarian and social protection interventions lie with different ministries in most countries. Potential linkages between social protection, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management vary from one country to another, depending on the design and the objectives of social protection programmes and the specific climate risks a country is facing.

An often discussed ASP approach, which is also highlighted in this paper, is to utilize existing social protection programmes for emergency cash transfers. Although the idea is rather straightforward and has been integrated into policies by several countries, the actual implementation remains challenging. Slater et al. (2015) argue that an extension of social protection programmes is unrealistic when delivery mechanisms are disrupted by the crisis or the objectives are too different between climate change adaptation and social protection. Nonetheless, there are opportunities in countries with safety nets and routinely high volumes of humanitarian aid as a consequence of the repeated incidence of extreme weather events, as Ethiopia and Kenya show (ibid.).

Attention also has to be paid to public works programmes which have the objective or bear potential for either building climate-proof infrastructure (ex ante) or rebuilding destroyed infrastructure after a disaster has occurred (ex post). Such programmes can be an important pillar of rural adaptation strategies. This requires, however, that the specific risks of climate change are integrated and addressed by the works implemented. Otherwise, even small-scale infrastructure can be maladaptive. Promoting groundwater extraction in areas at severe risk of extended drought periods, as an example, can have negative effects in the medium- and long-term if groundwater recharge is not ensured. Identifying projected climate change impacts, for example through risk assessments that include vulnerability analysis, is thus an important first step for the design of any public works programme aiming at addressing the risk of climate change. Further, it needs to be considered that public works programmes are less cost-effective than direct cash transfers due to higher administrative costs. Another challenge is that the average income transfer to beneficiaries is usually too low and unpredictable to induce beneficiaries to step up their investments (Gehrke et al. 2015), or to cover incurred costs (e.g. transportation cost to the public works site).

Despite these challenges, governments increasingly recognize that challenges for poverty reduction will increase as a consequence of climate change and that the resilience of poor and vulnerable population groups needs to be strengthened. An integrated approach linking the policy areas of social protection, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management and ranging from short to medium and long term interventions is likely to be an effective strategy to promote climate resilience and poverty reduction. Such an approach also bears great potential to increase resource efficiency in contrast to implementing particular interventions in isolation.

In the short term, efforts can focus on the community level, e.g. by implementing micro projects to build climate-proof infrastructure and housing, by installing early warning teams or by making agricultural insurance available for low-income population groups.

In the medium and longer term, more ambitious interventions are required. At operational level and in order to address climate-related extreme events, the distribution of pay-outs from climate risk insurance or the usage of social cash transfer programmes for emergency response interventions can be a realistic solution. Further, ASP should be designed in a way that it enhances rural livelihood security and income opportunities despite of negative climate change impacts. At policy level, synergies between social protection, disaster risk management and climate change adaptation should be created and utilized, e.g. through the implementation of an Adaptive Social Protection Action Plan or by combining ASP with National Adaptations Plans right away from the beginning. This would allow the further operationalization of new ASP country approaches (e.g. ARC operations plans) and development and upscaling of already existing social protection mechanisms and programmes. A first step into that direction would be capacity building measures on disaster risk management and climate change adaptation particularly regarding social protection and linkages to integrating an ASP approach in policies and frameworks.

As empirical evidence on the benefits of ASP is still scarce; programmes should be accompanied by rigorous monitoring and evaluation efforts ensuring continuous improvement of policies and programmes. Monitoring and evaluation efforts should also regularly (re-)assess the latest climate science in order to ensure alignment of ASP programmes with respective climate change impacts in the project region. This would enable a proactive adaptation approach addressing the negative impacts of current climate variability and future climate change.
Bibliography


