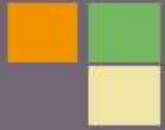




Seasonality Revisited

Perspectives on Seasonal Poverty



Politics of Seasonal Safety Nets in Southern Africa



Stephen Devereux

Philip White



“Old” and “New” Social Protection Agendas

Social protection in Africa in 1960s/70s :

- was largely designed and implemented by governments
- took seasonality explicitly into account
- supported production as well as consumption
- operated at system level rather than individuals.

Social protection in Africa in 2000s :

- is largely designed and financed by international donors
- sometimes notices but more often ignores seasonality
- supports consumption but not production
- targets individuals and not systems.



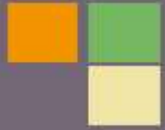
The “Old Social Protection Agenda”

“Productivity–enhancing safety nets”

- General input subsidies (fertiliser, seeds)
- Pan–territorial food crop pricing

Consumption smoothing interventions

- Export bans from grain–producing food deficit areas
- Strategic grain reserves & buffer stock management
- Pan–seasonal food pricing & food price subsidies



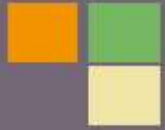
The “New Social Protection Agenda”

“Productivity–enhancing safety nets”

- Targeted input subsidies (e.g. TIP in Malawi)
- Inputs–for–work (mostly pilot projects)

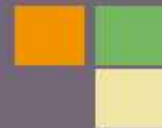
Consumption smoothing interventions

- Food– or cash–for–work projects (e.g. PSNP in Ethiopia)
- Seasonal food aid or targeted cash transfers (rarely index–linked to compensate for food price rises)

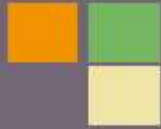


Social Protection and Seasonality: A Contested Agenda

- Seasonal (like other) safety nets inevitably politicised:
 - *negatively*: systematic distortion via patronage networks
 - but also *positively*: a site for electoral competition
- Donors favour targeted unconditional cash transfers, but African govts. want universal ‘productive safety nets’ not ‘handouts’
- African govts increasingly challenging neoliberal donor agendas
- Govts. in turn challenged by emerging rights agenda, but this ‘aseasonal’, with only weak civil society support



Case Study Programmes	Seasonality?
Old Age Pension, Lesotho	Permanent monthly cash transfer, could smooth seasonal food prices
Public Works Programmes, Malawi	Timed during the hungry season, to bridge seasonal food deficits
Dowa Emergency Cash Transfer, Malawi	Timed during a seasonal food crisis, index-linked to local food prices
Urban Food Programme, Zimbabwe	Food-denominated vouchers that protect access when prices rise
Input Subsidy Programme, Malawi	Seasonal govt. initiative, limiting high input & food prices & low wages
Food Security Packs, Zambia	Seasonal inputs transfers, too small to affect food prices, not countercyclical
Small livestock transfers, Zimbabwe	Asset provision insulates against intra- and interseasonal livelihood threats



Social Protection and Seasonality: A Way Forward?

- Seasonal risk reduction as part of “social/political contract”
 - govts. with poor farmers and with traders
 - *predictable* Govt. interventions in input, food, labour, asset markets
 - e.g. index-based insurance, hedging contracts, SGRs, market infrastructure/info, employment guarantee schemes etc.
 - to diversify livelihoods, build resilience
 - emergency social transfers (‘cash +’) as backup
 - potential for synergies with year-round welfare programmes
 - civil society mobilisation and legislation to entrench entitlements
 - *long-term* donor support without policy intrusion

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