



Harnessing the synergies between social protection and agriculture in Zambia

KEY MESSAGES

The promotion of coherence and articulation between social and productive interventions simultaneously targeting the same group of poor smallholder farmers can trigger synergistic effects that are greater than the standalone impacts of the programs. The complementarities 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.

Zambia's Conservation Agriculture Scale-Up (CASU) project met its objectives on several dimensions including farmers' adoption of conservation agriculture practices, productive outcomes, market participation and earnings accrued to program participants, and household food security and nutrition. By contrast, the Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) program may be considered to have met its objectives only partially. But the two components of the HGSF seem to have worked at cross purposes, triggering unintended effects that ended up prejudicing the farm households that took part in the program.

These results highlight the need for action to improve coherence not only between programs but also within individual programs. The fact that the combination of CASU and HGSF led to positive impacts on many outcomes, often higher than the effects of each program on its own, suggests the potential for strong synergies if adjustments are made to the HGSF program, including the introduction of complementary interventions to support farmers' post-harvest and marketing activities and more deliberate, intentional linkages between the program's own components and these other complementary interventions.

Ensuring multisectoral arrangements and planning to enhance coherence and articulation in program design and implementation is needed.

This includes ensuring that market access programs such as Purchase for Progress (P4P) provide effective communication and consistent and timely support to enable farmers and cooperatives to meet the output targets set in the contracts. While P4P provides a market for legumes, CASU promotes legume integration as part of its programme, but market incentives to grow legumes are weak. Thus, potential for complementary impacts.

Agreements to design two complementary programs should be followed with continued efforts to maintain permanent communication flows and active collaboration between their operational staff throughout implementation, within technical committees or other similar arrangements including at operational field levels throughout the duration of the programs.

Combining the HGSF with agricultural programs like CASU presents high potential for benefits, but must be designed and implemented in a coordinated manner, paying particular attention to targeting and coverage aspects, as well as smallholder capacity building, in order to fully harness the potential of synergic effects.



World Bank data for 2018 / International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) data for 2010

17,3
MILLION PEOPLE

56%
LIVES IN RURAL AREAS

60%
NATIONAL POVERTY

78%
RURAL POVERTY

28%
URBAN POVERTY

RESULTS

Impact Evaluation

CASU project

- Increased farm production and food security without having significant effects on schooling (attendance or drop-out rates).
- Increased the time they dedicated to on- and off-farm activities, as well as that spent in school and studying.



HGSF

- The program created a market for legumes and increased farmers' revenues from these crops, given an increase in their production and sales.
- This, enabled farmers to shift land out of low-value cereal production toward higher value legumes, as a smaller number of farmers were growing maize and there was a drop in the average amount of maize and other crops harvested.
- The programme reduced herd size and the share of farmers owning livestock.



School meals

- HGSF program diversified the diet of school-going children, and other household members, probably through spillover effects.
- Meals also contributed to attracting and keeping children in school.



Combination of CASU and HGSF

- When farm households participated in both programs, they tended to exhibit positive impacts on a large number of farming and food security outcomes.
- The combination of HGSF and CASU did not manage to reverse the negative effects that were observed among HGSF households, since it still produced sizable negative impacts for primary school-aged children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure proper targeting of productive interventions, in deciding the beneficiaries of the HGSF purchases, planners should target smallholders with productive potential or those that are already producing a surplus in the required crops in order to meet the market demand.



- Design HGSF programs with complementary interventions aimed at easing or circumventing supply-side constraints. The CASU project, or other agricultural livelihood programs currently operating in Zambia, is a good example of promoting complementarity between social and productive programs supporting smallholder farmers.



- Provide management support through production along with adequate and predictable post-harvest support services, and extend additional marketing support to farmers, considering that they often struggle to meet the quality and quantity requirements of public food procurement.



- Calibrate the incentives and improve cross-program coherence with the aim of reducing the unintended detrimental effects, such as those on schooling, when combining programs like HGSF and CASU. Increasing women's role in both CASU and HGSF might lead to greater female control over income and resources, which increases the chances that the extra money will be spent on food and education. And introduce soft conditionalities, for instance, in the form of messaging aimed at promoting school attendance.

Conservation Agriculture Scale-Up (CASU) project

- **Target population:**
Conservation agriculture (CA) lead farmers (LFs) and small-scale follow farmers (FFs)
- **Institution in charge:**
Implemented by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)
- **Services provided:**
 - › Conservation agriculture practices,
 - › Mechanization,
 - › Business management

Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF)

- **Target population:**
Conservation agriculture (CA) lead farmers (LFs) and small-scale follower farmers (FFs)
- **Institution in charge:**
Managed by the World Food Program (WFP) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education
- **Services provided:**
 - › The provision of nutritious cooked meals to school children,
 - › Market access to smallholders organized in aggregates

info

sinergiasrurales.info

For more information about the Rural Synergies Project, write to:

- **Jorge Maldonado**
jmaldona@uniandes.edu.co
- **Viviana León-Jurado**
dv.leon10@uniandes.edu.co

For more information about the case of Zambia, write to:

- **Alejandro Grinspun**
Alejandro.Grinspun@fao.org
- **Christine Legault**
Christine.Legault@FAO.org
- **Ervin Prifti**
Ervin.Prifti@FAO.org

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