

**2021
Conference**

August 26th & 27th



**Concept
Note**

**Hybrid
Convening**

Tamarind Tree, Nairobi
& Virtual

Innovative, Inclusive, and Afrocentric Social Protection in Africa

Leveraging Voices and Representation
in the era of COVID-19 Pandemic



The Africa Platform
For Social Protection

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Context and Rationale

COVID-19 provided a natural experiment for critically reviewing the place and purpose of Social Protection interventions in Africa and indeed across the world. Emerging evidence shows social protection can successfully address poverty and vulnerability globally. Despite the positive outcomes of social protection measures, issues such as limited coverage, inequity, and fragmentation persist, particularly in the African environment. Addressing these challenges requires **continuous dialogue and engagement** with all stakeholders, including beneficiaries, grass-roots leaders, non-state actors, and policymakers, to carefully reflect on the **design, delivery, sustainability, and accountability** of social protection measures consistent with African indigenous knowledge, values, and aspirations. This conference aims to **foster a constructive environment**, leveraging on the **voices and representation of all actors**, to progressively refine existing social protection framework in Africa, and **articulate the post COVID-19 Social Protection Agenda for Africa**.

What is new and What needs to change?

Inclusive & Just Social Protection in Africa (IJSPA) is a conference focusing on progressively refining the Social Protection agenda in Africa to realize the “right fit” that is sustainable and unlocks its transformative potential.

The theme of the conference:

“Innovative, Inclusive and Afrocentric Social Protection: Leveraging voices and representation in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic”

This central theme reflects our desire for new frontiers of social protection in Africa. The theme centres on bringing to the policy dialogue table the knowledge and experience from grass root and civil society environments that were evidently critical in bridging the identified gaps in social protection in Africa in addressing adequacy, coverage, and equity. The theme also reflects the changing nature of vulnerabilities and the -emerging challenges of COVID-19.

Drawing on three commissioned research papers on the state of social protection in Africa at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference will seek to refine the “right fit” Social Protection for Africa in light of the gaps and opportunities documented from the lived experiences.

The policy dialogue will be guided by six key reflective questions whose answers will contribute to articulating the post COVID-19 Social Protection Agenda for Africa.

1. How can Africa transcend the informal – formal dichotomy to overcome exclusions?

Raison d’etre: The African Union has made commitment to an inclusive social protection agenda for the continent through their Agenda 2063 Framework, ‘The Africa We Want’. Target (ii) of the framework seeks “To increase contributory social security benefits to cover households in the informal economy and rural sector.” This calls on African governments to design social policies within an integrated system of informal and formal social protection. Informal interventions are often complex and convoluted within dynamic social networks making it hard to institutionalize and regulate. However, these informal mechanisms continue to be critical sources of support in many of Africa's poorest countries, and sometimes the only source of social protection. This sub-theme will focus on picking the successful informal social protection practices and using the lessons to remodel formal social protection schemes – aiming for a hybrid framework for Africa.



CASE STUDY:

Innovations in inclusive social protection: The case of South Africa

The Basic Conditions of Employment Amendment Act (BCEAA) (2002) shows South Africa's commitment to protect marginalised and previously excluded informal sector workers.¹ Some of the informal sector workers covered by the Act includes domestic workers, farmworkers, public sector employees, and members of the South African Police Services. The Act is considered a major win for these informal workers. Following the BCEAA, South Africa enacted the Unemployment Insurance Amendment Act, 2003 which led to the creation of the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

While the South African case of social security coverage for domestic workers and other informal sector workers remains one of the topmost examples of an inclusive social protection framework in Africa, it is worth stating

¹ Clarke, M., Godfrey, S., & Theron, J. (2002). Workers' Protection: An update on the situation in South Africa.

that there are several domestic workers who are yet to be covered (only 20% of the domestic worker population have been registered). The situation is attributed largely to compliance with the regulations.

2. How can Africa realize scalability and ownership of experimental innovations to unlock their transformative potential?

Raison d'être: Africa is transforming its approach to social protection, with the African Union providing critical policy frameworks to guide national practices. There are emerging innovations addressing coverage (i.e., issues of gender, disability, and informal sector workers) and equity concerns. However, concerns about the scale and influence of other actors in the design and implementation of social protection continue to exist with innovations largely driven and funded by development partners. Further, there are sustainability implications for ownership-based social protection innovations, as their conceptual and theoretical underpinnings are largely influenced by western models. Decolonizing social protection concepts and practices to promote ownership is critical in supporting bottom-up scalability.



CASE STUDY:

Realizing scale through optimizing benefits and delivery channels: The case of Tanzania

The Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) is a flagship social protection program in Tanzania. There are three components including, conditional cash transfers (CCT), a public works programme (PWP), and livelihood enhancement (LE). The program is funded through the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), a government agency for implementing social assistance. During the pilot phase the program paid conditional cash transfer to household heads who were mostly husbands or male partners. However, during the scale-up, there was a shift in implementation arrangements to deliver the cash to wives or female partners, or female headed-households. Therefore, women or wives became the preferred

recipients who manage the cash benefits on behalf of the household. Since rollout in 2013, PSSN has benefitted 1.1 million households (51% female-headed) and around 5.4 million individuals (52% being female), and is expected to expand to 1.4 million households. To consolidate their access and strengthen their empowerment, women receive the cash through a digital platform, enabling them to gain more control. However, simply giving the cash to women does not necessarily empower them. There is ongoing dialogue to address social norms that constrain women's control over resources. Overall, while the PSSN is a success worth celebrating, there is work to be done to ensure effective implementation, and monitoring and evaluation to learn any positive and negative impacts all the sub-intervention of the PSSN are making.

3. How can Africa optimize the opportunities and mitigate the challenges of leveraging digital technology in the design, delivery, sustainability, and accountability of Social Protection programmes?

Raison d'être: African countries are increasingly relying on digital technology platforms to provide social protection. Cash transfers and other safety-net payments are now being paid through what is known as mobile money transfers, which are supported by national level policy and regulatory reforms. Despite advancements in using digital payment platforms, there are potential consequences for systematic gender-based exclusion of technologically disadvantaged beneficiaries, particularly women, if measures are not taken during the intervention's design and implementation process. Developing user-friendly digital applications and capacity building of beneficiaries become critical (Myamba, 2020).



CASE STUDY:

Leveraging on digital technology to consolidate social registers and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of social protection programmes: The case of Kenya

Different components of social protection delivery are affected by digital technology, the most prominent of which are information systems, financial services, direct delivery, and grievance or accountability procedures. Kenya's Single Registry is an example of a cutting-edge information management system for social protection enabled by digital technology. The Single Registry collects and consolidates information on five social assistance programmes that include the Hunger Safety Net Programme; Persons with Severe Disability Programme; Older Persons Cash Transfer; Urban Food Subsidy Programme; and Orphans and Vulnerable Children Programme.

The Single Register is used for: Targeting of service recipients, Registration and enrolment, Cash payment to recipients, Change management and as a complaints and grievances platform. Kenya's Single Registry addresses two important issues for social protection: increase harmonisation and consolidate fragmented schemes and enhance the responsiveness of social protection initiatives to increase its capacity to quickly scale-up in response to rapid-onset crises. Regardless of the benefits of the Single Register, it is important to assess its integration with larger public data management systems to simplify identification. In the case of Kenya, connecting a single register to the Integrated Population Registration System (IPRS) will add another layer of verification for programme beneficiaries' eligibility

4. How can Africa effectively leverage the voices and representation of the citizens in decision making and accountability for social protection?

Raison d'être: Participation of citizens in the formulation and implementation of any policy or programme, such as social protection, is regarded as a right and a responsibility. Thus, democratic governments throughout the world provide opportunities for citizens to participate actively in the decision-making processes that influence their lives, either directly or through their representatives. Representation can take place at a variety of levels, ranging from informal local and community contexts to official state and non-state entities.

The notion of inclusive and just social protection is considered an integral part of citizenship and social contract, requiring the needs for citizenship participation in the design and implementation of interventions

(Sabates-Wheeler, Wilmlink, Abdulai, De Groot, & Spadafora, 2020). Citizens are considered rightful owners of state wealth, and social protection is a mechanism for the distribution of these resources. Viewed this way, social protection becomes a rights-based struggle for the just distribution of resources and opportunities (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2020). This understanding of social protection as a rights-based initiative provides an opportunity for citizens to participate in decision-making and to hold duty-bearers accountable, making social protection a transformation agenda. Having a voice in social protection ensures social accountability. This sub-theme will explore the opportunities to integrate citizens' voices and their representation in social protection conversations.



CASE STUDY:

Harnessing voices and representation of citizens for accountability of social protection programmes: The case of Ghana

An example of citizenship participation (voice and representation) in social protection is the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) LEAP cash transfer program in Ghana. The programme was established as the flagship social Protection programme of Ghana's Social Protection Strategy. The LEAP programme is implemented in a three-tiered manner to assure participation. There is a Community LEAP Implementation Committee (CLIC) comprised of community leaders and Assembly members, and a District LEAP Implementation Committee (DLIC) comprised of the District Social Welfare officer and representatives from cognate social agencies and civil society. The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection is the national implementing agency through the LEAP program office. In addition to the DLICs and CLICs there is now a Community Focal Persons (CFPs), who are community health volunteers. The reliance on the DLIC, CLICs and CFPs has allowed communities to give their input in the program increasing their participation.

Overall while this implementation arrangement (governance of the programme) has been praised across the continent, there are concerns about the capacity of the members of the CLIC to effectively ensure social accountability. This notwithstanding, the LEAP implementation strategy is a demonstration of how countries may leverage on voice and representation to deliver social protection.

5. How can African states rebalance their balance sheet to sustainably finance social protection?

Raison d'être: Africa is developing a growing portfolio of social protection innovations including programs that meet effective delivery, inclusivity and underpinned by right-based perspective (Myamba, 2020). The sustainability of social protection innovation is however of a great concern to policy makers across the African continent because these innovations have largely been driven and funded by development partners with limited public funding opportunities. To address sustainability arising from financing challenges, African countries must develop sufficient domestic resources to invest in accelerating growth and covering the costs of social protection for large numbers of poor and vulnerable people. Increase domestic resource mobilisation through broad-based progressive taxation and other revenue sources to strengthen social investment financing and gender-responsive budgeting, and to recognise the contribution of communities and diaspora bonds while considering geographic disparities.

A transformative financing agenda entails policymakers revisiting and revising their current philosophy, design, and implementation of social protection in Africa. It entails repositioning social protection in the states balance sheet **from a social policy liability to an economic policy asset** of using social policy instruments such as publicly financed education, universal healthcare, land reform, labour market relations, affirmative action interventions and national cohesion initiatives to increase the productivity of citizens and raise the revenue to fund them and make the universal welfare system sustainable.



CASE STUDY:

Innovations to promote sustainability through fiscal policies: The case of Zambia

One of the good practices worth acknowledging is the fiscal policies of Zambia. Zambia dedicated Natural Resource Taxes to expand the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) Program. In 2013, Zambia's extractive revenue was

US\$ 1.5bn annually, representing 30 percent of total government revenue. Helped by the extractive industry revenues, the government of Zambia increased the budget for the social cash transfer schemes substantially, from ZMW 55 million in 2012 to ZMW 199.2 million in 2014. Through the taxation of natural resources and the expansion of social protection spending, the government reduced poverty rates and improve health indicators far above African standards. Zambia is cited as one of the prominent examples of a country having raised various taxes on mineral resources and thus generated significant government revenues among others funding social protection. Zambia achieved this by strengthening the tax collection authority and the revenue collection framework of the government. This reduced tax leakage, which contributed to further increases in government revenues and the creation of fiscal space for social protection measures.

6. What can African states learn from the resilience of indigenous social protection systems in the design and delivery of a sustainable and accountable social protection framework in Africa?

Raison d'être: Social Protection is not new to Africa. The most enduring and often most reliable social protection in Africa is the traditional informal social protection system, practiced in all African countries. Many Africans rely on family and kin, and many rely on religious organisations to help them when in need. These associations frequently assist with burial and funeral expenses, assist widows and orphans, and protect individuals who are disabled or ill. These enduring social protection systems are embedded in intricate yet dynamic social networks anchored on reciprocity "I help you today, you help me tomorrow". Because of their ever evolving nature and extended non-standard definitions of family and social networks dynamic these systems are often hard to institutionalize and regulate. On the surface social protection may seem as a widely agreed-upon term in development. However, further interrogation will show that social protection is not a value neutral term.

Different actors give different meanings and interpretations to social protection (McCord, 2013). This difference in conceptualisation has contributed to differences in design, which is largely a reflection of power and interest differentials, for which in the African context includes the disruption of social structures through colonialization

Perhaps, the most important question for the future of social protection in Africa is: what can we learn from informal social protection practices? Which aspects of informal social protection are useful for modelling a hybrid social protection?



presenting ideological differences between various actors. To address this, there is a need to re-examine the dominant concepts in the social protection debate such as inclusion, voice and representation (Devereux, Roelen, & Ulrichs, 2015;), human needs and capabilities (Barrientos & Hulme, 2009), development and freedom (Amartya, 1999), protecting basic levels of consumption and facilitating investment in human capital (Mitullah, 2021) to determine those that are fit for African purpose.

of mutual aid groups in Botswana are burial societies and informal savings and borrowing schemes. In Botswana, burials are highly labour intensive, and communities have developed a very robust and complex process of supporting members in the event of death. The funerals require massive revenue mobilisation and responsibility sharing. Membership to these funeral association is contributory based. Members of the Association nominate up to six members of their families as beneficiaries.



CASE STUDY:

Resilient, Afrocentric, Mutual Aid Systems in Africa: The case of Botswana

While informal social protection is widespread, we have singled out Botswana's mutual aid system to demonstrate how such practices can inform the design of an Afrocentric social protection.

Mutual aid systems in Botswana are formed to address emerging vulnerabilities.² They are underpinned by the values of humanity, reciprocity, solidarity, and sometimes contribution obligation and entitlement.³ Some example

Apart from the well-coordinated funeral Associations, there are informal saving and loan practices often called "Metshelo" This is a rotational savings group where members agree on an amount of money per period. The members agree of how they take turn to benefit from the savings. The popularity of Metshelo is because of the limited opportunities for formal loan systems for poor and vulnerable families¹².

The overall success of these informal social protection systems is their enduring character underpinned by strong cultural and moral values. It is also about their ability to foster solidarity and cooperation in times of

adversity. Perhaps, the most important question for the future of social protection in Africa is: what can we learn from informal social protection practices? Which aspects of informal social protection are useful for modelling a hybrid social protection?



Expected outcomes

At the end of the two half days convening, we should have:

1. Articulated the "post COVID-19 Social Protection Agenda for Africa."
2. Deepened trust and common understanding of the social protection agenda for Africa among both state and non-state actors.
3. Identified strategic follow-up actions to see to the implementation of the post COVID-19 Social Protection Agenda for Africa.

² Mokomane, Z. (2018). Indigenous Social Security Systems in Botswana. Indigenous Social Security Systems,

³ Mupedziswa, R., & Ntseane, D. (2013). The contribution of non-formal social protection to social development in Botswana. Development Southern Africa, 30(1), 84-97.



The Africa Platform
For Social Protection



THEME

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VENUE:
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