The Malabo Declaration emphasizes agriculture-led growth as the engine for poverty reduction in Africa. But even the most inclusive growth may not be enough to lift everyone out of poverty. To take part in and benefit from the growth process, households need to have some basic level of capital and security. Social protection programs—public or private initiatives that aid the poor and protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks—can effectively be used to assist those trapped, or at the risk of being trapped, in chronic poverty.

Social protection has three objectives – the three P’s of social protection

1. Protecting households against hunger
2. Preventing household asset depletion
3. Promoting livelihoods

Social Protection Across the Globe

As most Africans still make their living from the land, they are particularly vulnerable to weather related shocks and natural disasters. Food insecurity is a daily reality. Yet, in contrast to other regions, coverage of social protection is extremely low in African countries.

Cash Transfers by Region in Africa

Cash transfers are the most important form of social protection in Africa, but important differences exist in terms of types of social protection offered across regions.
Social protection programs typically target the poorest households or individuals. Graduation programs are the most consistent in making significant positive impacts on the extreme poor across sites and in the longer-term.

![Impact vs Cost Graph for All Programs]

Programs with impacts after 1+ year

![Impact vs Cost Graph for Programs with impacts after 1+ year]

An emerging trend in many countries on the African continent is the progressive move from fragmented programs to nationally-owned social protection systems. For these systems to be successful some design features should be considered.

Universal targeting may be preferable in areas where the income or asset distribution is flat.

Heterogeneity in household type, in location, and in population group means that a one-size-fits-all social protection program is unlikely to work.

Initiatives that evolve out of (or are adapted to) domestic political agendas and respond to local conceptualizations and prioritizations of need are more likely to succeed—in terms of their coverage, fiscal sustainability, political institutionalization, and impacts.

To graduate, households often need additional support that is not part of the basic cash transfer program.

Universal targeting

Promote graduation

Country owned and led

No one-size fits all

**KEY LESSONS**

1. African countries can and must make substantial progress in developing functional social protection schemes in the coming decade; the stability and growth of their economies depend directly upon it.

2. Social protection systems that are well-designed and implemented can powerfully shape countries, enhance human capital and productivity, reduce inequalities, build resilience and end inter-generational cycles of poverty.

For more information, please read ReSAKSS' 2017-2018 Annual Trends and Outlook Report (ATOR): Boosting Growth to End Hunger by 2025: The Role of Social Protection.

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