Design and Implementation Features of Public Works Programmes

What do we know about the drivers of success and failure to achieve programme objectives?



Published by



Contents

List	of Tables	4
Acr	onyms and Abbreviations	5
1	Introduction	6
2	The role of design features	
	2.1 Selecting the appropriate PWP ty	/pe 9
	2.2 Opportunity cost of PWP particip	ation 9
	2.3 Wage level	10
	2.4 Duration	11
	2.5 Payment modality: cash or food?	12
	2.6 Timing of PWP activities and pay	ments 13
	2.7 Targeting	13
	2.8 Monitoring & evaluation	15
3	The role of linkages	16
	3.1 With savings promotion	16
	3.2 With promotion of access to cree	dit 16
	3.3 With index-based weather insura	ance 17
	3.4 With cash transfer programmes	
	without labour requirement	17
	3.5 With agricultural extension servi	ces 18
	3.6 With humanitarian assistance	18
4	The role of implementation features	19
5	The role of the assets created	21
	5.1 PWP activities	21
	5.2 Determinants of quality and	
	the relevance of assets created	22
6	The role of the skills acquired	25
7	Cost effectiveness considerations	27
8	Conclusion	28

34

List of Tables

Table 1:	Typology of PWPs	7
Table 2:	Advantages and disadvantages of	
	cash and food payment modalities	12

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany)
FFA	Food-for-Assets
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
HABP	Household Asset Building Programme (Ethiopia)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MGNREGA	Mahatma Ghandi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (India)
MGNREGS	Mahatma Ghandi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (India)
OFSP	Other Food Security Programme (Ethiopia)
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme (Ethiopia)
PWP	Public works programme

1. Introduction

Under the term 'public works' and similar terms, a wide range of interventions are lumped together that share certain common objectives but differ in terms of their prioritisation, exact programme design, and mode of implementation. In practical terms, they all 'entail ... the payment of a wage (in cash or in kind) by the state, or an agent acting on its behalf, in return for the provision of labour' (McCord 2012a, p. 8).

In a nutshell, public works programmes (PWPs) are expected to yield positive impacts through three main vectors: first, through the wage that is paid to those working on a public works site and that may have a more or less effective insurance function; second, through the productive assets created, which are intended to benefit the wider community or a more specific group; and third, through the skills learned by participants that improve their employability or their capabilities to boost income from self-employment.

A companion study by the same authors (Beierl and Grimm 2018) and published by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) includes a systematic stocktake of what is currently known about the effectiveness of public works programmes (PWPs) based on rigorous (quasi-)experimental evidence. This systematic review reported results for the following seven outcome areas: income, consumption and expenditure; labour supply; food consumption and food security; nutrition; asset holdings; agriculture (technology and production); and education. For all the outcome areas that are expected to be positively influenced by PWPs, there are in each case several studies which indeed confirm that these expectations are met. However, in almost all areas there are also examples of situations where these expectations have not been fulfilled. For all outcome areas, we found at least some

programmes that meet their objectives. We take this as evidence that PWPs are not ineffective per se, but rather that they can be effective under certain conditions. These conditions include in particular the PWP's specific design and implementation features. However, when it comes to answering questions of exactly how these conditions mediate programme effects, the systematic review remains rather vague due to the dearth of (quasi-)experimental evidence and the heterogeneity of the limited findings that exist. Furthermore, the review was unable to fully clarify what role is played by the wage, asset and skills vectors in this respect.

This complementary study adds to the systematic review by highlighting what conclusions can be drawn regarding these important outstanding questions. To this end, the range of studies considered was broadened to also include gualitative studies, and process and implementation reports. Furthermore, theoretical considerations were introduced, especially where empirical insights are particularly scarce or ambiguous. The findings from these different types of sources and perspectives have been cautiously synthesised with the (quasi-)experimental evidence. The discussion of design and implementation features and their role for the three main vectors is by no means exhaustive; it is limited to those aspects that were identified in the reviewed literature as being linked to the impacts of PWPs. While attempts are made to draw meaningful inferences regarding the cost-effectiveness of different PWPs, particularly of specific policy features, the extent to which this is possible is severely limited by the lack of (comparable) data on impacts and costs. The same holds for comparisons with alternative social protection interventions, such as cash transfers.

The systematic review was restricted to low-income and lower-middle-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. While the focus of this complementary study remains the same, at times we decided to cautiously draw on literature covering South Africa and India, because these countries have well-researched PWPs that offer a number of valuable lessons for the country contexts treated herein. To further ensure consistency, this study also adopts the same definition and typology of PWPs as that used in the systematic review. For this reason, it focuses on programmes that can be classified as 'social protection instruments ... with the dual objectives of providing temporary employment and generating and/or maintaining some labour-intensive infrastructural projects and social services' (Subbarao et al. 2013, p. 3). To account for the heterogeneity of these programmes' objectives and programming, we differentiate between PWPs with a shortterm focus (Type 1) and those with a medium- to longterm focus (Type 2). The key difference between these two Types is the duration, continuity and predictability of the employment offered to individual beneficiaries. If the employment offered is accompanied with complementary measures, the programme is classified as Type 1 Plus or Type 2 Plus respectively.

In Type 1 programmes, employment continuity in the sense of employing more or less the same households across many work cycles is not a core element of programming. Instead, targeting is ad hoc and often based on a self-targeting mechanism that entails the deliberate setting of low wage rates, and re-targeting is commonplace. As a result, there is typically considerable movement of households in and out of the programme from one work cycle to the next. Type 1 programmes are mostly implemented in contexts of acute crisis to enable short-term consumption smoothing. However, particularly in the past, they were often also implemented in contexts of chronic poverty.

Type 2 programmes, on the other hand, are mostly implemented in contexts of widespread chronic poverty. In reality, they are much rarer than Type 1, although the best-researched programme in the region of interest - Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) - is of Type 2. Such programmes have a medium- to long-term focus in the sense that they place strong emphasis on keeping initially targeted households on the programme for several years. Retaining households in this way enables the accumulation of savings and assets, which can then be used to proactively protect against livelihood risks and to promote livelihoods. The continuity and predictability of Type 2 programmes is therefore high. Targeting is typically carried out by means of a wealth ranking exercise, because pure self-targeting effected through a low wage rate stands at odds with the promotive objectives of these programmes. Some Type 2 programmes also have an additional emergency component that makes it possible to temporarily scale up the programmes to cover households affected by acute shocks.²

In reality, many PWPs are not a pure Type 1 or Type 2, falling instead somewhere between these two. Moreo-

Туре	Key design feature	Primary objective	Example(s)
Туре 1	Single short-term episode of employment	To enable consump- tion smoothing	Most past PWPs that were supported through social action funds in Africa – e.g. the Malawi Third Social Action Fund's (MASAF III) PWP
Type 2	Repeated or ongoing employment	To provide a form of income insurance	Ethiopia's PSNP
Plus	Additional measures to complement the core public-works component – e.g. training or access to credit or extension services	To enhance or sustain the gains of the core public-works com- ponent in order, ulti- mately, to facilitate graduation	Ethiopia's PSNP + other food security programmes (OFSPs) or household asset building programmes (HABPs) World Food Programme's R4 Rural Resilience Initia- tive, within which the Food for Assets (FFA) compo- nent is embedded

Table 1: Typology of PWPs

Source: Adapted from McCord (2012a)

²¹ Employment guarantees (EGs) like India's well-known Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) programme are a third type of PWP. Instead of offering the continuity of Type 2 programmes, MGNREGA offers a maximum of predictability by giving every citizen a legally enshrined right to 100 paid days of work in MGNREGA projects. However, EGs do not exist in the region of interest of this paper and are therefore not discussed in detail herein.

ver, there are many programmes that offer various kinds (and, sometimes, combinations) of complementary measures aimed at enhancing and sustaining impacts (e.g. by promoting access to savings groups, loans, insurance, training or various kinds of extension services). In principle, such measures can be attached to both types of programme. Henceforth, we will refer to Type 1 and Type 2 programmes with such complementary measures as Type 1 Plus and Type 2 Plus respectively. This typology is summarised in Table 1 on Page 7.

This study is structured as follows: First, the role of the core design features of PWPs is discussed one by one, with the connections between these features highlighted throughout. Particular emphasis is placed on considering the mediating role of the opportunity cost that might be incurred by participation in a PWP. Second, we reflect on the evidence regarding the linkages between public works and other programmes, instruments and institutions, and we discuss the merits but also possible downsides of these linkages. Third, we look at how certain key implementation features mediate the short- to medium-term impacts of PWPs on the ground, and we briefly discuss how the implementation of a PWP can affect developing countries' planning and implementation capacity for better or worse. Fourth, the role of the assets created is examined more closely and, fifth, the role of the skills acquired is reviewed. Sixth, some general considerations are made regarding the cost-effectiveness of PWPs. Lastly, by way of conclusion, we cautiously determine a number of policy implications by linking the key insights from the broader review of the literature on PWPs back to the findings of the systematic review.

2. The role of design features

2.1 Selecting the appropriate PWP type

Needs assessment: Social protection programmes should ideally be based on a clear understanding of "who needs what type of assistance, when, where and why" (Devereux & Macauslan, 2006). PWPs are no exception. Different PWP types are suitable in different context (McCord, 2012a). In many low income countries, chronic poverty levels are high and, on top of that, a large share of the rural population is chronically vulnerable, especially those that rely on farming. As a result, many households that are not chronically poor are likely to be in need of assistance at one point or another. In other words, need patterns vary considerably during and across the years, but a substantial share of the population is in more or less constant need of support. Furthermore, it is important to recognise the heterogeneity of the poor and vulnerable in the sense that different types of households may need different forms of support at different times. Due to the potential opportunity cost of participating in PWPs (further discussed below), the spare labour capacity of households during the course of the year is a particularly important factor (McCord & Farrington, 2008). Therefore, in order to combat poverty, countries ideally need social protection systems that are, on the one hand, flexible enough to accommodate this heterogeneity and to address vulnerability without crowding out other economic activities, while, on the other hand, offer sustained and predictable support to certain segments of the population, especially the chronically poor. This is the context

in which PWPs and other social protection programmes operate in low and lower-middle income countries in Africa and the MENA region.

Programme design that addresses the needs and fits the clearly prioritised objectives and country context: Each programme needs clearly prioritised objectives that have been chosen in full awareness of the needs of beneficiaries and communities, the involved trade-offs, and the financial and capacity constraints (McCord, 2012a, p.31; Devereux & Macauslan, 2006; McCord & Slater, 2009; Train4Dev, 2010; World Bank, 2015). For example, tradeoffs might exist with respect to:

- tensions between treatment intensity of individual households and programme coverage
- tensions between social protection objectives and the quality/type of the assets created
- tensions between short-term and long-term objectives³

In particular, it has to be spelt out clearly whether the programme aims at short-term consumption smoothing or at more significant social protection impacts, because these objectives require quite different programming. The fundamental criticism levelled by McCord at many PWPs in Sub-Saharan Africa is that there is a "serious mismatch between problem and policy response" (2009, p.329). In particular, Type 1 programmes have often been wrongly heralded as poverty reduction instruments in contexts of chronic poverty

2.2 Opportunity cost of PWP participation

While it is not a design feature it is critical to reflect on the role of opportunity cost at this point because it has a bearing on the wage level as well as the duration and timing of PWPs. It cannot be taken for granted that each Euro transferred in wages to a beneficiary increases the total household income by the same amount. The real transfer value depends on the opportunity cost of partic-

3 | For more information on trade-off in PWPs see Barrett et al. (2002), Koohi-Kamali (2010) or Lieuw-Kie-Song et al. (2010, p.29).

ipating in the PWP. These costs have received insufficient attention in most impact evaluations, potentially undermining the validity of results regarding the wage effect of PWP participation. This important caveat should be borne in mind.

Types of opportunity cost: First, PWP participation may lead to foregone income if participants decide to reduce their time spent on other income-generating activities. The small global evidence base indicates that even if the wage level has been deliberately set below prevailing market wages for unskilled labour, labour displacement may occur in contexts where irregular and unpredictable piecemeal employment is the alternative to working in PWPs (Datt and Ravallion, 1994; McCord, 2012a, p.64; Mc-Cord, 2004a). While studies from India and South Africa found this cost of PWP participation to be substantial, studies in other countries (e.g., Liberia and Malawi) found them to be negligible (Andrews et al., 2011; Beegle et al., 2015; Chirwa et al., 2004a; Datt and Ravallion, 1994; McCord, 2012a, pp.67; McCord, 2004a; Murgai et al., 2013; Ravallion, 1999).

Second, PWPs may lead to a reduction in subsistence activities on people's own farms (and, thus, potentially lower yields) if the possibility of immediate consumption through the PWP wage trumps the attractiveness of deferred income from selling farm produce. Although there is no robust evidence, this may have happened, for instance, in Zambia and Ethiopia (Hoddinott et al., 2009; Subbarao et al., 2013, p.66; World Bank, 2015). Third, as anecdotal evidence from Malawi suggests, the participation of women in PWPs may lead to the neglect of important household activities, such as child care and food preparation (Chirwa et al., 2004b; McCord, 2004b). Fourth, PWP participation may have direct costs, such as for transport or the use of one's own tools (Chirwa et al., 2012).

Key determinants of opportunity costs: One key factor in determining the incidence and size of the first three types of opportunity cost is the degree of flexibility in terms of time and task allocation within the household of the PWP participant. Another key factor is the nature of the labour market during the course of the year.

Implication: All in all, the limited evidence that exists from Africa and MENA suggests that the opportunity cost of PWP participation may, on average, be lower than in other regions due to the severe slack in the labour market. However, the opportunity cost may be high for members of poor, labour-constrained households. Therefore, a good understanding of the characteristics of targeted households and the nature of the labour market throughout the year is needed in order to accurately estimate the real value that the PWP wages would have for (potential) beneficiaries. Generally, the first two types of opportunity cost can be reduced if the PWP activities take place outside the planting and harvest season when other employment opportunities are rare (Bezu & Holden, 2008; Gilligan et al., 2009b; Holden et al., 2003). However, in some cases it may not be necessary to fully scale down PWP activities during these periods, because even then there appears to be a certain degree of excess labour supply albeit much smaller than outside the agricultural peak season (Beegle et al., 2015).

2.3 Wage level

The role of the wage level is discussed at length in the systematic review and, therefore, not repeated here in full. The main take-away message is that the wage rate and work duration should be set in a way that is commensurate with the programme objectives, the nature, extent and depth of poverty and vulnerability, and the labour market context in the country. This includes giving consideration to the various types of potential opportunity cost that participating in a PWP may entail (discussed above). The social protection impacts through the wage channel depend on the real value of the transfer for the household (i.e., excluding opportunity cost) in relation to the household poverty gap.⁴ The purchasing power of cash payments should be monitored regularly and ideally adjusted to ensure that it is sufficient to achieve the stated

⁴ I The poverty gap is a measure of how much the consumption of the household falls below the consumption level defined as sufficient to cover basic needs for a household of a given size in a given region.

programme objectives. Many studies cite low wage rates as the key factor in explaining limited impacts (Bloom et al., 2005; Chirwa et al., 2012; Chirwa et al., 2004a; Chirwa et al., 2004b; Gilligan et al. (2009a), White & McCord, 2006; World Bank, 2015). A frequently made theoretical counterargument against increasing the wage rate is based on the fear of distortionary economic effects, especially of crowding out workers from the regular job market, e.g., low-skill casual agricultural work. However, in the African context there is little empirical evidence that this risk materialised in practice. Given the severe slack in (especially but not only rural) labour markets, there are indications that distortionary economic effects would be minimal even if the wage is set moderately above the wage paid for some casual (agricultural) work - provided that targeting does not rely exclusively on self-targeting, and the policy recommendations on how to minimise the opportunity cost of PWP participation (stated above) are considered. Thus, the question is rather whether or not higher wage rates are financially and/or politically feasible. Political feasibility in this case pertains to the national discussion as well as the acceptance of the wage rate among the local communities, especially of those segments that cannot be enrolled in the programme.

2.4 Duration

Programme duration can either refer to the number of working days beneficiaries are allowed to work in a PWP each year or to the number of years individual beneficiaries remain on the programme.⁵ From a social protection impact perspective, the sparse and geographically heavily concentrated global evidence indicates that longer is better for both policy aspects (Devereux, 2002; Gehrke & Hartwig, 2015; McCord, 2012a). This being said, conclusive high-quality evidence is lacking, partly due to the general caveat that it is difficult to disentangle the role of duration from the income effect. There are indications from the Indian context that the income security offered by longer PWP participation creates added value over the pure income effect, especially if access is granted on demand (income insurance function), because it has been shown to encourage more risk-taking in entrepreneurial activities (Gehrke, 2014; Zimmermann, 2014). This is linked to the importance of predictability. Predictability is greatest in employment guarantee schemes, such as India's Mahatma Ghandi National Rural Employment Generation Scheme (MGNREGS), which offer a substantial number of working days each year (100 per beneficiary) on demand. In Sub-Saharan Africa, there is no large-scale employment guarantee scheme (McCord & Slater, 2009). The programme that comes closest is Ethiopia's PSNP, in which beneficiaries worked for an average of 82 days each in 2010. The beneficiaries of the PSNP can be fairly certain of remaining in the programme for several years if they are found eligible in the first place.⁶

Number of years beneficiaries can be sure to remain in the programme: In one review of global experiences it is argued that, if productive investments are to be made, beneficiaries should be kept in the programme for at least three years (Gehrke & Hartwig, 2015). A study from Malawi puts the minimum duration at 18 months, i.e., long enough to cover two planting and lean seasons (Chirwa et al., 2004b).⁷ However, extending the duration that individual beneficiaries stay on the programme may come at the expense of lower coverage, i.e., a smaller share of the population being covered. In addition, it may conflict with deeply rooted local equity considerations that result in rotation being practiced even if it is not foreseen in the programme design. Unofficial rotation tends not to be detected through the regular M&E frameworks of PWPs. Policy makers must not ignore gaps between design and practice in this respect as it may have implications for achieving programme objectives.

Number of working days beneficiaries are allowed in a PWP each year: The only robust evaluation of a randomised control trial where the number of workdays was deliberately varied finds that offering 48 instead of 24 days did not lead to better food security outcomes in the Malawian context (Beegle et al., 2015). However, less rigorous studies in the same context found indications that increasing the maximum number of working days per worker per year

- 5 I Of course, it can also refer to the number of years a PWP is running or to the number of days during which PWP activities take place each year, irrespective of the number of days individual beneficiaries work. These two aspects are not further elaborated because they are less important from an impact perspective.
- 6 I A word of caution: The arguments in favour of more working days per year and multi-year employment are largely informed by Ethiopia's PSNP being frequently heralded as a success story. However, as highlighted in the systematic review, the most robust evidence with respect to the performance of the PSNP is not unequivocally positive. Furthermore, one should note that the jury is still out whether the PSNP alone or combined with HABP/OFSP can deliver sustainable graduation at a significant scale. The performance of the PSNP during the recent multi-year food crisis in the country has not yet been investigated in any of the included evaluations.
- 7 I This finding is in reference to the Central Region Infrastructure Maintenance Programme (CRIMP) pilot.

from around 12 days to 48 days allowed beneficiaries to save more of their earned income (World Bank, 2015). Furthermore, if the goal is to increase the total transfer value received by a beneficiary but it is politically too sensitive to increase the daily wage rate, extending the work duration may be a 'workaround' that is more acceptable.

2.5 Payment modality: cash or food?

PWP participants are typically either paid in cash or in food although in some cases also in assets (e.g., farm inputs) or access to insurance (e.g., index-based weather insurance or health insurance). The available evidence highlights that cash and food both have their strengths and weaknesses (see Table 2). Given that these strengths and weaknesses are highly context-dependent, different payment modalities may be appropriate in different situations. A number of lessons, especially from Ethiopia, are instructive. First, other contextual factors of importance are the characteristics of food markets in the beneficiary areas in terms of accessibility (cost factor), food availability and, relatedly, the prices of staple foods (Subbarao et al., 2013). Second, in non-acute settings cash led to relatively more asset accumulation and investments in human capital, whereas food led to relatively more consumption (Save the Children UK, 2008; Slater et al., 2006). Third, in settings where there are acute food shortages, the purchasing power of cash quickly erodes and food may be preferable over cash (Maunder & Wiggins, 2006, p.27). This might explain why one guasi-experimental study found that PSNP households that received food only or as a mix of food and cash did better in some respects (especially total income) than those that received cash only (Sabates-Wheeler & Devereux, 2010). However, it should be noted that food payments in acute crisis situations make self-targeting (further discussed below) nonviable as a mechanism for reaching the poorest (Koohi-Kamali, 2010). Fourth, the implied value of food tends to exceed that of cash payments, because the former is more often chosen to meet basic needs than cash payments. This is particularly problematic in countries with high inflation rates. Fifth, combining food and cash may be considered, as done in Ethiopia, because it allows flexibility in adapting to changing circumstances but it may be more costly to administer (World Bank, 2010).

	Cash	Food
Advantages	 Typically more cost-efficient than food Allows beneficiary more choice Encourages production Stimulates the market 	 Donor food surpluses are available Immediately increases food availability Directly addresses nutritional deficits Transfer value less affected by inflation Usage favours women, children, older persons Lower security risk
Disadvantages	 Limited donor resources are available Losses from inflation Can be used for non-food consumption More difficult to target Usage favours men Heightened security risk 	 High transport and storage costs Losses from spoilage and theft Less easily exchanged than cash Disincentive effects on production Competes with local markets and trade

Table 2: Advantages and disadvantages of cash and food payment modalities

Source: Adapted from Sabates-Wheeler & Devereux (2010)

2.6 Timing of PWP activities and payments

With respect to the timing of PWP activities, it should be noted that the needs and availability of the workers do not necessarily align with the appropriate time to implement certain work activities. Programme implementers must be aware of this potential trade-off. To maximise direct social protection impacts, the timing of work should reflect the needs of workers (Chirwa et al., 2004b). In countries where subsistence farming is the main activity, this means that PWP activities should be timed with the agricultural cycle in mind in order to offer employment when opportunity cost is lowest (i.e., outside the peak planting and harvest season) and make payments when money for productive investments, especially farm inputs, is needed the most (i.e., just before the planting season) (Chirwa et al., 2004b; Gehrke & Hartwig, 2015; Sharp et al., 2006; Subbarao et al., 2013; World Bank, 2015).

Not surprisingly, the timing of activities and, thus, of payments, may influence the use of payments (Chirwa et al., 2012). If payments are made when there is acute food insecurity, earnings are most likely spent on food consumption. If they are made at different times, it is more likely that money is saved or spent productively. Depending on the programme objectives, one or the other or both may be desirable. However, the above-mentioned evaluation of a randomised control trial in Malawi found no evidence of improved food security, irrespective of whether the PWP activities took place during the lean or the harvest season (Beegle et al., 2015). Fertiliser use also did not increase, even though the timing of activities was specifically chosen so that it would enable workers to access subsidised farm inputs (especially fertiliser). While delays in activities and payments (further discussed below) have been shown to have undermined the linkage to the farm input subsidy in other studies (Chirwa et al., 2012), it cannot explain the disappointing results in this study. To maximise the quality of the assets created, the more direct social protection considerations need to be balanced with the timing suitable for the chosen PWP activities (ibid.). If public works activities are meant to contribute to an integrated catchment management approach (as they ought to in the context of Ethiopia's PSNP but increasingly also elsewhere), the coherence of the package of activities should not be compromised by delaying or skipping activities to accommodate the preferences of PWP beneficiaries.

2.7 Targeting

Due to the severe slack in the labour markets of most developing countries in Africa and the MENA region, the demand for additional income, as offered through PWPs, exceeds the number of available programme spots by far.⁸ Therefore, some form of targeting or rationing mechanism is needed. Given that this is a topic of its own, the discussion is restricted to a few key insights that highlight how targeting can enhance or undermine the social protection impacts of PWPs.

Several options are available to target beneficiaries at the community level. First, self-targeting through low wages is based on the reasoning that setting the wage below the prevailing market wage for low-skilled labour attracts only those in need who have no other employment opportunities (Subbarao et al., 2013). Second, community-based targeting approaches try to capitalise on the local knowledge of who is most deserving and suitable to participate in PWPs. Third, means testing determines eligibility on the basis of an explicit catalogue of criteria. It usually involves a wealth ranking in settings where demand exceeds employment opportunities. Furthermore, these options can be, and often are, combined in various ways. While the first two options are popular in PWPs in developing countries, the latter is mainly used, in a simple form, to guide or verify the beneficiary selection through community-based approaches.

Commonly, PWPs try to reach the poorest of the poor who are able-bodied and have spare labour capacity. Targeting effectiveness in this case is determined by how well this target group is reached. This has two aspects: Most importantly, exclusion errors (i.e., the non-participation of people who are eligible) should be as small as pos-

⁸ I The findings of Beegle et al. (2015) confirm that rationing takes place in the context of Malawi's biggest PWP. The fact that PWPs are the only large-scale social protection instrument accessible to the able-bodied working-age poor with spare labour capacity raises the question what could or should be offered to those who are in need of income support but fail to access PWPs (McCord & Slater, 2009).

sible. On the other hand, there should be few inclusion errors (i.e., participation of people who are not eligible). In a country where most rural households are chronically vulnerable and many even chronically poor, targeting is inherently difficult (Chirwa, 2007). All approaches are more effective at reaching the poor than the extremely poor (Lembani & Mandali, 2006). In other words, exclusion errors are especially hard to avoid. Thus, there is no perfect approach. In a nutshell, the evidence suggests that in settings of wide-spread chronic poverty and underemployment community-based targeting is more effective than pure self-targeting through low wages even though community targeting also faces a number of risks and challenges that may undermine (cost) effectiveness (Chirwa et al., 2012; Chirwa et al., 2004a; Chirwa et al., 2004b; Lembani & Malanda, 2006; Lieuw-Kie-Song, 2014; McCord, 2012a; McCord & Slater, 2009).

Self-targeting through low wages: In most cases where it has been examined, self-targeting through low wages has led to exclusion errors. One reason is that the excess demand for work required rationing of the work available under the PWP, which was often either done arbitrarily (e.g., through a lottery) or without regard to the poverty profile of the potential workers. Another reason may be that the poorest, who are also often socially excluded, are not aware of the programme (Lembani & Malanda, 2006; Lieuw-Kie-Song, 2014). In many cases, "significant" inclusion errors have been observed (Chirwa, 2007; Devereux & Solomon, 2006; Lembani & Malanda, 2006; Lieuw-Kie-Song, 2014; McCord, 2012a; McCord & Slater, 2009). While some argued that this is due to a failure to set wages low enough, a study from Ethiopia demonstrated that in settings with dysfunctional labour markets self-targeting may result in structural inclusion errors, even if the PWP

wage rate is successfully set below the market wage rate (Barret & Clay, 2003). In any case, setting the wage rate below the prevailing market wage rate is rarely desirable from a social protection standpoint as it limits programme impacts through the wage channel. Even if the duration of programme participation is substantial, impacts are unlikely to amount to anything beyond satisfying basic consumption needs, if at all. In order to make self-selection work 'effectively' in contexts of wide-spread chronic poverty and underemployment wages would have to be set so low that they would no longer have a meaningful social protection impact on those that still opt to work at these very low rates. It is difficult to argue that this is effective in a broader sense than effectively avoiding exclusion and inclusion errors.

Community-based targeting: A critical advantage of community-based targeting is that it is more flexible with respect to the setting of the wage rate in a way that makes certain broader social protection objectives attainable (Lieuw-Kie-Song, 2014). Furthermore, if done well, community-based targeting tends to be more effective in reaching the poorest (Lembani & Malanda, 2006). However, truly participatory targeting processes are more costly and time-consuming than self-targeting approaches (Chirwa, 2007; Kardan, 2015; Lembani & Malanda, 2006; Wahenga, 2007). A number of factors have been identified as critical for an effective community-based targeting approach. First, targeting criteria must be developed such that they are compatible with local practices and perceptions, e.g., when it comes to equity considerations and, relatedly sharing practices. Second, the targeting criteria and the objectives of the programme need to be clearly communicated (Chirwa, 2007; McCord, 2012a). Third, the heterogeneity among the un(der)employed must be reflected in the targeting criteria, e.g., in terms of gender, age, and labour availability (ibid.). Fourth, good facilitation skills are needed to inform communities about the programme, manage the targeting exercise (especially if it involves a wealth-ranking), and stick to the foreseen targeting guidelines. In some countries, the presumption that everyone is poor is quite entrenched. Here, one key challenge for facilitators is to overcome the resulting reluctance of community members to categorise themselves (Chirwa, 2007; Lembani & Malanda, 2006). Fifth, the process should minimise the risk of elite capture (Chirwa et al., 2012; Chirwa, 2007; Chirwa et al., 2004a; D R Consulting, 2013). Elite capture is problematic because the excessive influence of local leaders can result in substantial targeting errors and undermine their role as a neutral arbiter when it comes to resolving conflicts that arise among community members, e.g., in the context of the PWP. Sixth, an alternative, or complementary, way to counter the influence of local leaders and to increase transparency could be the introduction of simple (proxy) means testing or some form of categorical targeting that can be easily verified by the communities (Chirwa et al., 2012). Lastly, given that effective targeting cannot be taken for granted regardless of the chosen approach, targeting outcomes have to be monitored, e.g. through sporadic verification exercises (McCord, 2012a). While it may be unrealistic and inefficient (due to the high cost) to add all these extra layers of verification to a single social protection programme, it may be at least partly possible if a harmonised approach is adopted that combines the targeting for several programmes into a single targeting exercise.

Lastly, irrespective of the targeting method, attention should be paid whether the attempts to target the poorest

come at the expense of asset quality or durability. For example, if a lot of the poorest are labour constrained in one way or the other (e.g., elderly, disabled or chronically ill), they may not be able to well execute physically demanding labour tasks. Other social protection instruments, such as cash transfers, might be better suited to serve such households. Moreover, sometimes it may be worth to consider favouring those in the beneficiary selection process that are most likely to take ownership of the assets created, for example, because the performance of the asset is particularly strongly tied to their own wellbeing (see section 5.2). Hence, the targeted group should fit the type of work activities and vice versa.

2.8 Monitoring & evaluation

A shortcoming of the M&E frameworks in many PWPs is the preoccupation with process and output indicators over impact (McCord, 2012a, p.48). As this study and others before have highlighted, there are many knowledge gaps that would need to be closed, or at least narrowed, in order to base future programme design on solid evidence, rather than anecdotal observations and assumptions. In addition to broadening the range of indicators in the regular M&E reporting, conducting more rigorous impact evaluations may be advisable where design factors are (cross-) randomised. Furthermore, the institutional memory of the global and regional PWP community of practice needs to be strengthened. A lot has already been tried in the field of PWPs over the past decades and it is important to continually take stock and draw lessons. While the learning process facilitated by the World Bank that culminated in the publication of the study by Subbarao et al. (2013) was a critical step forward, the learning must not pause or even stop there.

3. The role of linkages

A 2009 review found that 100 out of 167 PWPs reviewed in Sub-Saharan Africa had complementary measures and 57 had multiple measures (McCord & Slater, 2009). In a context of chronic poverty, linkages to other complementary interventions outside the core PWP activities are indispensable if sustainable poverty reduction is to be achieved on any scale. While it goes beyond the scope of this report to discuss these in detail, key insights from the analysis of the reviewed literature are presented here.¹⁰

3.1 With savings promotion

There is no doubt that savings are critical for graduation, given their role in asset building, risk diversification, risk insurance, and investment promotion.

Compulsory savings component: Globally, some PWPs have a compulsory savings component, i.e., a certain fraction of the wage earned from the PWP is withheld and put into an individual or group savings account. While it is certainly most effective in maximising the savings rate, this design feature should only be considered if it is safe to assume that the remaining disposable PWP income (after deducting the saved share) lifts the total household income of all beneficiaries above the subsistence level. Otherwise, an overemphasis on savings may be detrimental to household welfare if it forces households to adopt negative coping strategies, such as taking children out of school or compromising on the quality and quantity of food consumed (Gatsinzi, 2013).

Voluntary savings component: Demand-driven voluntary savings components appear to be better suited to heterogeneous beneficiary groups with consumption levels near or below basic subsistence levels because they give more leeway to households to determine their own priorities between consumption, savings, and investment. In many PWPs across the globe, workers are encouraged to join savings groups. One lesson has been that workers are more likely to join such groups if the promotion takes place well before the first payment is received (Chirwa et al., 2012). While savings groups can, and are, also successfully promoted independently of PWPs, the linkage to PWPs may add value by exerting peer pressure on the beneficiaries to reflect upon how to use their PWP wages.

Some PWPs in other countries incentivise savings by offering matching grants (Bertrand et al., n.d.). However, such an approach is not financially sustainable for PWPs that aim at high coverage rates.

Insurance: Evidence from the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative pilot in Ethiopia (a PWP Plus programme) shows that farmers covered by weather insurance tripled their savings compared to their pre-intervention savings levels and increased them by 123% more than uninsured farmers (Madajewicz et al., 2013). Hence, complementary insurance may facilitate the accumulation of savings, which can be ultimately used for productive purposes because farmers do not have to draw on their savings when faced with shocks as their insurance covers them (e.g., against drought in Ethiopia's case).¹¹

3.2 With promotion of access to credit

Compared to the gradual accumulation of savings over time, taking out a loan is a shortcut to productive investment and, thus, to faster graduation from the programme. Consequently, PWPs have tried to leverage the impact of wages by linking workers to credit instruments of various sorts. However, this has had mixed results. Complementary credit components that are specifically tailored to address the needs and constraints of the target group appear to be an effective way to enable livelihood improvement (Gehrke & Hartwig, 2015). In Ethiopia, access to credit was meant to be facilitated for PSNP households through complementary components.¹² As the systematic review by the same authors has highlighted, the robust

- 10 | Unfortunately, there is a lack of robust evidence on the role of most complementary measures in enhancing impacts, and even more with respect to their cost-effectiveness.
- 11 I Index-based weather insurance is further discussed below.
- 12 | First through the Other Food Security Programme (OFSP) and later on (since OFSP was replaced by the Household Asset Building Programme (HABP)) through local NGOs operating outside the HAB.

evidence as to whether or not these components enhance impacts is quite mixed (Beierl & Grimm, 2018).

In large parts of rural Africa, village savings and loans groups are (perceived as) the best and, in fact, often the only channel through which the poor can obtain loans at affordable rates (Hashemi & Rosenberg, 2006; Kabeer, 2009). Access to loans through microfinance institutions or commercial banks is patchy and especially in the latter case their financial products rarely fit the needs and capacity of the poor (and thus also PWP participants) (Banerjee et al., 2015; Banerjee et al., 2013). What we know about whether and when training may have a complementary role to play when it comes to improving access to credit in the context of PWPs is discussed further in Section 6.

3.3 With index-based weather insurance

As part of the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative, WFP offers beneficiaries of its FFA programme, among other complementary components, the option to work in exchange for access to index-based weather insurance. The shortterm evidence from Ethiopia and Senegal is encouraging. After two years, poor farmers with insurance in Ethiopia were better off than poor uninsured farmers in a number of ways although the specific impacts varied geographically and were not transformative (Madajewicz et al., 2013). Despite these caveats, the link between PWPs and index-based weather insurance seems like a promising way to overcome some of the constraints, especially cash and credit constraints that previously limited access to or take-up of index-based weather insurance among poor farmers and, thus, kept them from sustainably strengthening their resilience (Carter et al., 2014; Binswanger-Mkhize, 2012; Giné & Yang, 2009). From a lender's perspective, coupling their credit offers with this type of insurance may be attractive because it lowers the default risk of loans given out to poor farmers and may increase the access to credit at affordable rates (Giné & Yang, 2009).

3.4 With cash transfer programmes without labour requirement

Following the example of the Ethiopian PSNP in which public works and unconditional cash transfers are combined in one programme, other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have moved towards a closer integration of these two instruments. The observed benefits have been as follows: First, once the integrated programme is up and running overhead costs may be saved, e.g., for targeting, administering transfer/wage payments, M&E reporting, accounting and other administrative tasks (Lieuw-Kie-Song, 2011). The saved resources can then be invested in broader programme coverage, for example. Second, close links and an easy transition between both interventions makes them more responsive to variations in the labour availability of individual households (ibid.; McCord & Slater, 2009). In particular, the labour requirement can be adjusted flexibly, e.g., in the event of sickness or to minimise the opportunity cost of participating in PWPs during the course of the year (McCord, 2012a, p.47). Effective referral mechanisms may, for instance, mitigate the risk of increasing child labour and of compromising education among poor labour-constrained households that hitherto only managed to gain access to public works and not cash transfers without labour requirement. Furthermore, the presence of public works and a cash transfer programme in the same area mitigates the risk of overburdening the PWP with too many and possibly competing objectives. If the cash transfer programme serves as the primary vehicle to reach the poorest of the poor with a specific focus on labour constrained households, it gives more flexibility to the PWP to select people that are fit for the work tasks and particularly well-placed to take advantage of the assets created and, thus, most likely to take ownership. In other words, if need be, the emphasis in the PWP can be somewhat shifted from short-term social protection objectives pursued through the wage channel to medium-term objectives linked to the asset channel - without leaving the most vulnerable excluded from access to social protection.

On the other hand, there are **challenges** that should not be underestimated. First, **tensions between** protective and productive objectives may arise in an integrated programme to an even larger degree than they already do in separate programmes (World Bank, 2010). To avoid the dilution of the programme's focus, a comprehensive and realistic graduation strategy is needed that has been developed in full awareness of the heterogeneity of the beneficiaries, possible trade-offs between objectives (and between the policy features adopted to achieve these), and the potential and limitations of complementary measures and linkages in playing a good role in the graduation strategy.¹³ The Ethiopian graduation strategy is an example of how that could look like. Second, the integration process may be costly (Kardan, 2015). Third, coordination problems may arise because stakeholders, including various government ministries, who sometimes have no history of previous cooperation are now working closely together. This may lead to confusion, lack of accountability, conflict, and, ultimately, ineffective implementation. To ease the transition process, tasks and responsibilities need to be clearly assigned, hierarchies among government ministries and agencies clarified, and an integrated implementation structure put in place.

3.5 With agricultural extension services

Agriculture or agriculture-adjacent activities are the main source of livelihood in large parts of Africa and especially among those population segments from which PWP participants are selected in rural areas. Given the limited scope for income diversification into non-agricultural activities, any realistic large-scale livelihood promotion strategy must include measures aimed at sustainably boosting farm income through increased agricultural productivity. The linkage between PWPs and government agricultural extension services is often deemed to play an important role in this. This being said, findings of a study on the PSNP in Ethiopia highlight the importance of predictable income over several years to enhance the impact of complementary agricultural extension services offered through HABP/OFSP on agricultural investments, input use and yields (Hoddinott et al., 2012). However, more research is needed to substantiate this, given that other results were somewhat contradictory with respect to yields. One

may look to Ethiopia's HABP/OFSP or Malawi's Irrigation, Rural Livelihood and Agricultural Development Programme (IRLADP) for lessons on operational matters (Posthumus et al., 2014).

3.6 With humanitarian assistance

In recent years, emergencies caused by covariate shocks such as droughts and floods have become the rule rather than the exception in large parts of Sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, the distinction between chronic and transitory needs becomes increasingly arbitrary. Similarly, the rationale to have regular social protection programmes to address the former and a separate emergency response to address the latter is getting weaker. While most stakeholders agree on the need to better coordinate these policy responses, in many countries it has not led to many changes in practice. Meanwhile, recurrent emergencies keep eroding the benefits of regular social protection programmes and the annual emergency response consumes immense resources, which may be put to better use by a better coordinated or integrated - programme. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss this issue in greater detail, it should be pointed out that there are examples, first and foremost the Ethiopian PSNP, of how such an integrated approach could look like.¹⁴ In particular, the performance of the PSNP during the previous multi-year drought in Ethiopia could offer lessons on whether or not, and to what extent, Ethiopia's programme is indeed a model to be followed. Unfortunately, to date there appears to be no study that looks into this in a robust manner.

14 | See Slater et al. (2015) for more information on how emergency responses can 'piggy-back' on social protection programmes.

4. The role of implementa-tion features

Regularity and predictability of payments: A primary implementation concern must be to ensure predictable and regular payments in line with what the programme design foresees in terms of when payments are made and in which amounts. Programmes that fall short in this respect are unlikely to achieve the expected impacts – or even cause harm if beneficiaries have to revert to negative coping strategies as a response to sudden unexpected income gaps (Barrett et al., 2002; Chirwa et al., 2012; Chirwa et al., 2004a; Chirwa et al., 2004b; Gehrke & Hartwig, 2015; Gilligan et al., 2009a; Gilligan et al., 2009b; Gilligan et al., 2008; Koohi-Kamali, 2010; McCord, 2012a; World Bank, 2010). For example, in emergency situations, the quickness and reliability of payment is crucial for preventing the distress sale of assets or taking children out of school.

Implementation through government structures: In the interest of sustainability, PWPs should be implemented through government structures as much as possible to create government ownership and build planning and management capacity from the national to the local level. Ethiopia's PSNP is a good example of how to create a safety net programme that combines multiple funding streams and multiple implementing organisations in the context of an ongoing decentralisation process, while still being perceived as a single programme led by the government. When working through government structures, experience shows that the following aspects should be considered. First, adequate funds should be earmarked for capacity building measures that are based on a sound and comprehensive capacity development plan spanning all governance levels involved in implementation (World Bank, 2010). Second, existing capacity constraints should be reflected in public works programming to avoid unrealistic expectations concerning the ability of government bodies to perform certain tasks of a certain quality and quantity. Third, in order to avoid civil servants having to compromise on other duties, their PWP-related activities should but be fully integrated into their work plan (ibid.). In many ways, government extension workers are the transmission belt between government policy and local communities. Therefore, heeding the lessons captured in the first three points is particularly important when it comes to government extension services (ibid.; Ng'ong'ola et al., 2015). Fourth, horizontal integration across the government ministries involved and full commitment by non-governmental actors to respect and strengthen these institutional structures has proven critical. The implementation process needs to be steered by an institution that not only has the capacity to do it, but also the necessary domestic political clout. The same applies to the local level. Moreover, single programme documents are instrumental in ensuring coherence and minimum standards.

Donor coordination: The case of the PSNP in Ethiopia is often also put forward as a best practice example of good coordination among donors that helped to minimise the government resources needed to coordinate its own actions with the donor community because the latter spoke with one voice (World Bank, 2010). More precisely, this may include institutional setups that facilitate agreement on common principles and long-term goals, the allocation of roles based on the comparative advantage of each stakeholder, and basket funding arrangements to enable multi-annual financing with uniform accounting rules. Donor coordination is particularly critical with respect to linkages, e.g., when it comes to intensified coordination of PWPs with humanitarian assistance and regular cash transfer programmes where payments are not conditional on labour.

Private contractors: Mixed experiences with involving private contractors in the implementation of PWP activities highlight the need to ensure that the social protection objectives of PWPs are not undermined, e.g., through the systematic exclusion of the very poor (Chirwa et al., 2004b; Kabeer, 2009; McCord, 2012a, pp.48-49; McCord, 2004b). Contract conditions and incentive structures need to explicitly address this risk.

Granting flexibility to local agents: Some PWPs aim to focus on hotspots, i.e., relatively small geographical areas where (often environmental) challenges are particularly pronounced, and then implement various inter-related sub-projects in this area to address them (e.g., through soil and water conservation, gully reclamation, afforestation, irrigation and road works). Especially such intense and geographically focused approaches to public works are likely to interact strongly with community dynamics and existing activities. On the one hand, this introduces the risk that the PWP undermines them. On the other hand, it presents an opportunity to create synergies. In such cases, the programme should be flexible enough to allow the local agents (e.g., local development committees, local leaders or extension workers) to capitalise on the potential. This can be facilitated through a participatory planning and implementation approach (further discussed below). To be clear, granting flexibility requires a good working relationship based on mutual trust among the local agents and between the local agents and those at the upper implementation levels.

5. The role of the assets created

What sets PWPs apart from cash transfer programmes is their benefits accrue not only from the transfer paid (wages), but also through the assets created or services provided. Depending on the type of asset created or service rendered, the expectation is that they: a) generate direct or indirect income opportunities for beneficiaries and their communities, b) shield beneficiaries and their communities against the impact of shocks, such as floods and droughts, and/or c) improve the quality of, or access to, social services. Unfortunately, very little is known about the extent to which, and under which conditions, these assumed benefits actually materialise, especially if one looks for robust (quasi-) experimental evidence (Beierl & Grimm, 2018; McCord, 2012a; Subbarao et al., 2013). The little that we know is largely based on anecdotal evidence and community perceptions collected shortly after programme completion. Furthermore, many aspects linked to design and implementation features are highly contingent on the type of asset created or service rendered. Therefore, an exhaustive discussion is beyond the scope of this study and would require a different methodological approach. Instead, we limit ourselves to what can be extracted from the general public works literature.

In a nutshell, the patchy empirical picture suggests that the expected medium to long-term social protection benefits transmitted through the asset vector can by no means be taken for granted. In fact, they may often be merely "wishful thinking" (McCord, 2012a, p.100).¹⁵ For instance, in many cases assets were found to have degraded quickly (Arnold et al., 2011; Bloom et al., 2005; Devereux & Macauslan, 2006; KfW, 2009; World Bank, 2015; World Bank, 2008). In other cases, however, there are positive examples, at least in the short-term, in various outcome areas, such as agricultural productivity, access to markets, social and financial services, and water, environmental regeneration, school infrastructure, and health (Ahmed et al., 1995; Arnold et al., 2011, p.52; Bloom et al., 2005; Christian et al., 2013; EU, 2015; FAO, 2013; Fouillard et al., 2014; Kabeer, 2009; McCord, 2004a; National Planning Commission, 2012; World Bank, 2015; World Bank, 2010, Nepal National Planning Commission pp.34-36; World Bank, 2008).

5.1 PWP activities

The choice of appropriate project activities depends on their expected impacts, their employment creation potential, the programme objectives, and the needs of the communities and beneficiary groups that are supposed to benefit from the assets created or services provided (Subbarao et al., 2013). Additional consideration should be given to capacity and the resource and time constraints that may impede the effective implementation of activities within the envisaged period and under the envisaged programme design. Furthermore, the PWP activities should not crowd out the provision of similar outputs through other channels, especially the private sector or the communities themselves.

Who benefits from the assets created: The incidence of benefits conferred through the assets created (i.e., the question who benefits from the assets created and over what time horizon) has generally received little attention (McCord, 2012a). However, the question matters, because different types of activities may benefit different people and some activities may even create 'losers', as findings from India and Somalia have highlighted (Gehrke & Hartwig, 2015). Whereas Indian land owners in close proximity to the PWP sites have benefited from irrigation and water conservation activities, the landless poor saw their casual agricultural employment opportunities shrink (Gehrke, 2015). In contrast, flood control activities have benefited the landless poor. In Somalia, the construction of wells led to tensions between farmers and shepherds (FAO, 2013). With respect to the time horizon,

15 | See McCord (2012b) for an insightful account of why PWPs are so popular despite their mixed track record in achieving their objectives.

some assets may benefit the poor near PWP sites in the short-term without contributing to broader development objectives, while other assets may have a less immediate impact on poverty alleviation because they mainly benefit the less or non-poor, e.g. traders and small business owners, but potentially improve the livelihoods of the poor in the medium to long-term (McCord, 2012a). The policy implication is that PWP activities should be selected in full awareness of the expected incidence of benefits and, thus, the underlying theories of change should account for them. Unfortunately, policy makers often dodge this issue in programme documents and instead revert to "fuzzy and loosely articulated expectations that PWPs can contribute to both local and national growth and development objectives" without specifying who benefits when and how (ibid., p.94).

Employment generation: Gehrke and Hartwig (2015) synthesised the findings in the literature with respect to how different types of PWP activities perform in terms of short-term employment (i.e. high labour intensity during programme implementation) and long-term employment (i.e., beyond the programme duration due to their productive impacts, such as on market access and agricultural production output). Activities that appear to perform well in the short and long-term are irrigation and water conservation, land development and rehabilitation, flood control, and road construction. Land terracing was also flagged as promising in relation to both short and longterm employment, but this has not been empirically tested. Flood control, water conservation and reforestation were deemed effective in the short-term but their longterm employment effects are unclear. Drainage works and the construction and maintenance of public buildings appear relatively ineffective in the short and long-term. Maintenance projects in general may offer opportunities for continued employment for a significant number of PWP participants beyond the programme implementation period, but this may conflict with the objective of creating a sense of ownership among the users of the asset (McCord, 2012a).

Services: Service provision through PWPs is rare and consequently has received even less attention in the evaluation literature than asset creation. Therefore, little can be said about it apart from a few general comments. First, compared to infrastructure-related assets, for some services there may be a high risk of duplicating, or even undermining, the regular job sector for that service or the work of non-governmental and community-based organisations engaged in that sector (Lieuw-Kie-Song et al., 2010). Thus, an initial scoping study is critical to find out whether or not the services created by the PWP will actually add value. Second, service quality in most sectors depends on long-term employment and experience. The design of only a few current PWPs is suitable to deliver this and it is questionable whether PWPs are preferable over more classical vehicles of service delivery. Third, strong local involvement in the service selection and provision has been identified as a critical success factor. On balance, service provision through PWPs is likely to remain an exception, because it does not appear to be systematically superior to asset creation theoretically or empirically. In cases where too few suitable asset-related PWP projects are identified, services may be a viable alternative.

5.2 Determinants of quality and the relevance of assets created

Given the wide variety of different activities conducted under PWPs, few generalisations can be made.¹⁶ Irrespective of the type of PWP activity, a few factors have been identified in the literature as critical for sustainable impacts through the asset vector, because they jointly determine the quality and relevance of the assets created.

Quality of materials: First of all, the materials used in the construction of assets by PWPs must be of a decent quality standard in order to create durable assets. While local procurement of materials is commendable in principle, alternatives should be considered if quality standards cannot be met locally rather than compromising on quality as it was observed at times (e.g. LDF, 2013).

¹⁶ I It goes beyond the scope of this report to discuss the experiences with different types of PWP activities in detail. Instead, the focus lies on general aspects that apply to all or most activities.

Labour intensity: There may be a trade-off between PWP coverage and the quality of assets created. While high labour intensity¹⁷ is desirable in principle, it should not be increased at the expense of the quality of the assets created (Chirwa et al., 2012; Gehrke & Hartwig, 2015; Lieuw-Kie-Song, 2014; McCord, 2012a; McCord, 2012b; Train4Dev, 2010; White & McCord, 2006; World Bank, 2015). As a point of reference, the labour share was found to be higher than 60% in two-thirds and below 40% in less than a guarter of the 38 PWPs in developing countries for which these data were available (Subbarao et al, 2013). Some PWPs have a cap on the share of non-labour costs. Such caps should be commensurate with the capital requirements of the chosen PWP activity and allow for some leeway to accommodate changing needs, for instance by setting a cap for the district-wide average rather than for the individual project (McCord & Slater, 2009).

Technical expertise, management capacity and construction oversight: The skills level among PWP participants, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, tends to be low (Mc-Cord, 2012a). Depending on the complexity of the activity, adequate resources should be allocated to employ and, if necessary, train technical experts, management staff and supervisory staff for the implementation phase (Gehrke & Hartwig, 2015; Lieuw-Kie-Song et al., 2010). Given the capacity constraints at the local level, sufficient external technical expertise should also be provided during the planning phase. A balance needs to be struck between providing room for expert input and facilitating a participatory planning approach. Furthermore, technical manuals and management guidelines have proven instrumental in ensuring minimum quality standards across project sites (World Bank, 2015).

Community participation: From a theoretical perspective, community participation can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, involving the community in the project selection process strengthens local ownership and may, for instance, increase the likelihood of communities taking responsibility for the maintenance of the assets (Costella & Manjolo, 2010; Gehrke & Hartwig, 2015; Shuka, 2014; World Bank, 2010). On the other hand, it comes with a risk of elite capture and, if it is truly participatory, it may be more time consuming (Devereux & Macauslan, 2006; McCord, & Farrington, 2008). An empirical study in Ethiopia found that the quality of the assets created through the PSNP improved in cases where the communities played an important role in planning and implementation (Shuka, 2014). Community involvement in usage and maintenance did not make a difference. With respect to technically demanding decisions and steps, there are some indications that community participation may negatively affect asset quality if the communities lack technical expertise (Khwaja, 2009; Khwaja, 2004; Mansuri & Rao, 2013).

Maintenance: Probably the most critical lesson from past experiences with asset creation is that maintenance considerations have to be an integral part of project planning from the very beginning. PWPs are not cost-effective vis-à-vis alternative social protection interventions, if the assets created do not deliver long-term benefits to the communities. While this should be obvious, a reality check shows that this basic insight often has not been taken to heart. Effective maintenance requires adequate funding, maintenance plans, technical expertise, and community ownership. Lack of funding has been identified as the most critical constraint on maintenance (Chirwa et al., 2012; Chirwa et al., 2004b). There are several conceivable options to address this. One option is to earmark funds for maintenance works in each project budget. An example from social funds is to deposit a certain fraction of the overall project budget into a separate bank account specifically dedicated to the maintenance of the assets created by the respective project (Subbarao et al., 2013). These funds can be subsequently accessed if a maintenance plan is presented.¹⁸ However, what happens when the initially earmarked funds run out? The more sustainable option would be to clearly attribute responsibility for maintenance to a permanent institution or level of government. Many developing countries are currently unable to finance all maintenance activities

17 I Labour intensity refers to the share of the total expenditure on PWPs that is spent on labour wages.

from domestic resources alone without compromising on other essential expenditures. Therefore, external support of some kind is needed for the time being. However, this does not preclude the need to assign responsibilities and build capacities, e.g., for distributing the funds, for planning maintenance, and for contributing within each party's respective means. External technical expertise may be needed to assist the local level to develop maintenance plans. Given that communities are likely to play a key role in implementing any plan, this process should be participatory to ensure widespread community buyin. In some countries, communities have formed various committees tasked with maintenance (EU, 2015, p.9; Subbarao et al., 2013). As a general rule of thumb, those benefiting the most from the assets should be part of the maintenance group to capitalise on their inherent interest in maintaining the asset (Lieuw-Kie-Song, 2014).

Embedding PWP activities in national and local development plans: PWP activities should reflect national development priorities and ideally be integrated into the national development plan (von Braun et al., 1991; McCord, 2012a; McCord, 2012b). Multi-year programming of activities has proven critical for consistent and strategic planning (Clifton et al., 2011; McCord, 2012a). However, this top-down framework should be complemented by a probably even more important bottom-up component that allows communities to choose (possibly from a pre-defined catalogue of activities in a national guideline document) in a well-facilitated process that leaves enough flexibility to fully reflect the local conditions. In the end, the objective is that the selected activities are not only consistent with national, but also with local, priorities.¹⁹ In this respect it is advisable that the public works activities are not merely included in a PWP-specific local work plan but in a general local development plan that comprises and coordinates all development activities in the area. The expectation is that this leverages the impact of the PWP activities and, thus, enhances the benefits through the asset channel although robust evidence is lacking whether this materialises in practice.

- 18 I Unfortunately, such plans were frequently not put forward and thus the money was not accessed.
- 19 | See the case study of project selection in Ethiopia's PSNP (Subbarao et al., 2013) for an insightful account of how a bottom-up and top-down approach can be combined in practice.

6. The role of the skills acquired

Tangible positive impacts through skills acquired may manifest themselves either in the form of improved market-based employment prospects or as a sustained increase in income from self-employed micro-entrepreneurial activities or on-farms activities as a result of the application of newly learned or upgraded skills. In principle, there are three main channels through which skills may be imparted to PWP participants: first, learning-by-doing through the regular PWP activities, second, more elaborate on-the-job training closely linked to the regular PWP activities, and, third, complementary off-thejob training that is more detached from the regular PWP activities, but primarily targeted at PWP participants. Generally, the conveyed skills range from soft, to technical, to business skills (Blattman & Ralston, 2015). Unfortunately, robust evidence is rare. In particular, few studies attempt to separate the roles played by the wage paid and skills gained respectively. A few key observations and their implications, based on the weak global evidence base, are as follows.

First, the skills gained through regular PWPs in the absence of a specific skills development component are unlikely to enhance future income prospects in developing countries (Betcherman et al., 2004; Gehrke & Hartwig, 2015). Therefore, if skills are to be a factor in PWPs, more sophisticated efforts are needed. This being said, there are indications from Ethiopia that the training on forestry and soil and water conservation received by PSNP participants led them to apply the knowledge in their own community and on their own farms (Andersson et al., 2011; Lieuw-Kie-Song, 2011).

Second, skills development components, regardless of the type of training and type of skills imparted, have rarely lived up to the expectations placed on them in terms of enhancing future employment prospects (Betcherman et al., 2004; Blattman & Ralston, 2015; Kabeer, 2009). An evaluation of a randomised control trial implemented in a semi-urban context in Côte d'Ivoire did not find any evidence that offering additional wage employment training or self-employment training had any added value over just offering access to a Type 1 PWP - neither in the short nor in the medium term (Bertrand et al., 2017; ibid., 2016). The fact that unemployment in Africa is not primarily due to a skills gap (i.e., a mismatch between demanded skills and the skill sets of the unemployed), but rather the outcome of a severe labour market slack further limits the potential of PWPs to serve as a bridge to market-based employment (Gehrke & Hartwig, 2015; Lieuw-Kie-Song, 2014; McCord, 2012a). Therefore, emphasis should best be placed on skills and knowledge that are useful to increasing income from micro-entrepreneurial activities or, in predominantly agrarian regions, from agricultural production. This in turn presupposes the delivery of quality training that is tailored to the specific labour market context and the needs and capabilities of the participants.

Third, the effectiveness of formal training components is often limited by the difficulty of fitting it into the restricted timeframe of short-term PWPs (Gehrke & Hartwig, 2015; McCord, 2012a). A minimum amount of contact time is needed to effectively impart knowledge to participants. If the delivery of the training would disrupt the core PWP activities, it may be advisable to decouple the training from the PWP, while maintaining a degree of coordination between the PWP activities and the training, e.g., in terms of timing and training content (McCord, 2012a, p.113).

Fourth, prolonged programme participation or access to credit on reasonable terms might be needed in order to

raise the necessary capital to translate gained skills into higher income from micro-entrepreneurial activities.

Fifth, judging by their performance with respect to boosting incomes beyond the duration of PWP participation, investments in skills enhancement appear to be less (cost-)effective than facilitating access to credit (Gehrke & Hartwig, 2015). Although there are some indications that business skills training can give an extra boost to income if combined with access to credit, more research is needed to substantiate this and to better understand the relative importance of each component, as well as how to best combine them (Blattman & Ralston, 2015; Cho & Honorati, 2013). For example, a descriptive assessment of savings and investment groups in Malawi found that groups that had received training performed better than those that did not (D R Consulting, 2013). Sixth, one non-robust study found that training positively affected the choice of economic activities. Environmentally-damaging activities, such as selling firewood and grass, markedly decreased, whereas more capital-intensive activities increased (Chirwa et al., 2004a).

While more research is needed, it seems that the option of adding training components to PWPs should not be dismissed a priori but they certainly require thorough planning and good implementation to be successful. In particular, the training must address knowledge gaps, schedule sufficient contact time, and be geared towards enabling beneficiaries to capitalise on actually existing and attainable economic opportunities. On top of that, cost effectiveness relative to alternative uses of the funds spent on skill development should be critically reflected upon.

7. Cost effectiveness considerations

Due to a lack of (comparable) data on impacts and costs, the extent to which meaningful inferences can be made with respect to the cost effectiveness of different public works schemes, particularly of specific policy features, is severely limited (Arnold et al., 2011; McCord, 2012a; McCord & Slater, 2009). The same holds for comparisons with alternative social protection interventions, such as social cash transfers. Notwithstanding the severe methodological limitations²⁰ and the substantial variations in cost estimates, it is safe to conclude that the cost per dollar transferred to beneficiaries is substantially higher than it is for cash transfers (Bloom et al., 2005; McCord & Slater, 2009; Murgai et al., 2013; Smith, 2001; White & McCord, 2006). Hence, to justify the use of PWPs as social protection instruments vis-à-vis cash transfers, it is critical that the extra impacts through the assets created or skills transferred are commensurate with this cost premium (Alik-Lagrange & Ravallion, 2015; Gehrke & Hartwig, 2015; Koohi-Kamali, 2010; McCord, 2012a). However, this cannot be taken for granted and currently cannot be empirically substantiated due to the dearth of evidence on the asset and skills vector. In addition, the opportunity costs of PWP participation must be factored into the cost-benefit calculation (Alik-Lagrange & Ravallion, 2015; McCord, 2012a).

Another angle from which to approach cost effectiveness is to compare the costs of constructing a given asset through a PWP with the costs of constructing it in an alternative way. While some studies found that the costs in PWPs compare favourably, it should be noted that these studies do not account for the quality of the assets created (Costella & Manjolo, 2010; World Bank, 2015). This is an important caveat given that the overemphasis on labour intensity may come at the expense of asset quality as other studies have found (Chirwa et al., 2012; White & McCord, 2006; World Bank, 2015).

8. Conclusion

This study aimed to highlight what the literature tells us about how different design and implementation features mediate the effects of PWP programmes in low-income and lower-middle-income countries in Africa and the MENA region. It was designed to complement the systematic review produced by the same authors (Beierl and Grimm 2018), which takes stock of what is currently known about the effectiveness of PWPs based on rigorous (quasi-)experimental evidence. The systematic review found that for all outcome areas that are expected to be positively influenced by PWPs, there are in each case several studies which indeed confirm that these expectations are met. However, in almost all outcome areas there are also examples where these expectations are not fulfilled. For all outcome areas, we found at least some of programmes that meet their objectives. We took this as evidence not that PWPs are ineffective per se, but rather that they can be effective under certain conditions. These conditions include in particular the PWP's specific design and implementation features. However, statements regarding the role these conditions play in mediating programme effects remained rather vague in the systematic review due to the dearth of (quasi-)experimental evidence and the heterogeneity of the limited findings that exist.

Shedding more light on this mediatory role issue was the core objective of this complementary study. Compared to the systematic review, the range of studies considered was broadened to also include less rigorous quantitative assessments, qualitative studies, and process and implementation reports. Furthermore, theoretical considerations were introduced, especially where empirical insights are particularly scarce or ambiguous. The findings from these different types of sources and perspectives were cautiously synthesised with the (quasi-)experimental evidence that is reflected in the systematic review. To account for the heterogeneity of PWPs' objectives and programming in a consistent manner, the same typology as that used in the systematic review was adopted. This typology differentiates between programmes with a short-term focus (Type 1) and programmes with a medium- to long-term focus (Type 2). The key difference between these two types is the duration, continuity and predictability of the employment offered to individual beneficiaries. If the employment offered was accompanied with complementary measures, the programme was classified as Type 1 Plus or Type 2 Plus respectively.

The following summarises the key insights of the broader review of the literature on PWPs and cautiously determines policy implications by linking this broader review back to the findings of the systematic review.

First, the overall cost-effectiveness of PWPs hinges on the benefits arising from the assets created or services rendered. If substantial benefits are not derived from these sources, PWPs amount to nothing more than inefficient conditional cash transfer programmes. In light of this, it is astonishing how little the asset vector has been investigated in the public-works literature - be it (quasi-)experimental or not. The little that we do know is largely based on anecdotal evidence and community perceptions collected shortly after programme completion. This evidence suggests that the assumed medium- to long-term benefits can by no means be taken for granted. In fact, in many cases the above-mentioned benefits appear not to have materialised because of a failure to pay sufficient attention to the quality, maintenance and, to a lesser extent, usefulness of the assets created. That said, there are some positive examples - at least in the short term in various outcome areas such as agricultural productivity, water, environmental regeneration, school infrastructure, health, and access to markets and social and financial services.

The choice of appropriate project activities depends on their expected impacts, the programme objectives, and the needs of the communities and the beneficiary groups that are supposed to benefit from the assets created or services provided. In addition, any capacity, resource and time constraints that may impede the effective implementation of activities will also influence this choice. Activities that appear to be particularly attractive (because they are labour-intensive and tend to have productive impacts) include irrigation and water conservation, land development and rehabilitation, flood control, road construction, and possibly land terracing. Due to the manifold constraints that obstruct development in the region, broad and sustainable productive impacts are most likely to be realised in situations where (a) several of the above activities are combined within a participatory and integrated approach that is tailored to the needs and endowments of a particular area and (b) public works is just one of several complementary instruments used to address identified (environmental) challenges and development needs.

In addition to the above, the following set of factors determines the quality and relevance of the assets created:

- Use of quality materials.
- A labour intensity²¹ that does not undermine the quality of the assets created.
- Availability of adequate technical expertise, management capacity and construction oversight.
- The involvement of communities in the selection process to strengthen local ownership.

• Effective, sustainable and adequately financed maintenance arrangements that are agreed upon, financed and implemented as much as possible by the users of the assets and/or the adjacent communities.

• Embedding of the public works activities not only in a PWP-specific work plan, but also in a general

local development plan that reflects the priorities of local communities and comprises and coordinates all development activities in the area.

2 Second, any well-designed and well-implemented PWP in the region should:

 have clearly defined and prioritised objectives that have been chosen in full awareness of the needs to be addressed and of the trade-offs between different objectives (and also between the policy features chosen to achieve them);

 be designed in a way that is grounded in the empirical evidence on 'what works best' in a given context to achieve these objectives (to the extent that this knowledge exists – which is often not the case as we have highlighted);

• be based on a good understanding of rural labour markets, especially in terms of spare labour availability and how it varies throughout the year, in different areas and for different household types;

 schedule the bulk of the public works activities during periods when other employment opportunities are rare (i.e. outside the planting and harvest seasons) to reduce the opportunity costs of participating in the PWP (although, given that certain work activities are best undertaken during peak labour-demand periods and that there still appears to be some – albeit small – excess supply of labour in most countries, there may still be room for some limited public works activities at these times);

• apply a targeting mechanism that is more sophisticated than self-targeting through low wages, as this will enable the poorest to be reached and, at the same time, to derive tangible benefits from the employment;

· carefully weigh up the benefits of investing con-

siderable resources (time and money) in reaching the poorest against other relevant considerations such as identifying those who are most willing to take ownership of the activities or who are physically capable of performing the work tasks;

• be flexible enough to allow local agents (e.g. local development committees, local leaders or extension workers) to capitalise on the potential of creating synergies between the PWP and other community activities and practices;

 have a monitoring and evaluation system (which includes impact evaluations) that provides the information needed to detect implementation shortcomings and unintended effects, such as child labour on public works sites, and that, ideally, yields information that is indicative of impacts, rather than solely of processes and outcomes.

3 Third, with respect to the wage rate, the following can be concluded:

• The total transfer value (wage rate plus employment duration) should be commensurate with the programme objectives, the nature, extent and depth of poverty and vulnerability, and the labour market context in the country.

• The social protection impacts realised through the wage transfer depend on the real value of the transfer for the household (i.e. excluding the monetary and non-monetary opportunity cost of PWP participation) in relation to the household poverty gap.

 Wage rates do not necessarily need to be set below the market rate if an effective targeting mechanism is in place to prevent substantial inclusion errors.

• If increasing the wage rate is not politically feasible, extending the number of workdays offered may be a good workaround.

• Implementers must ensure that payments are made regularly, as planned and in the planned amounts. Otherwise impacts are likely to be eroded.

• The purchasing power of cash payments should be monitored regularly and, where it is deemed necessary to achieve programme objectives and if it is financially and politically feasible, should be adjusted.

• There are good reasons why cash should be the standard payment modality, but there may be situations, especially in times of acute food shortages, where payment in food may be preferable.

It is important, however, to qualify these conclusions: while it seems conceptually plausible that the impacts would be substantially higher and long-lasting if all these criteria were fully met, it should be noted that no robust empirical evidence has been identified to date that supports this claim.

4 Fourth, with respect to the question of which PWP model is appropriate in what context, the following can be concluded:

• Irrespective of whether one considers the wider literature or solely the robust evaluations, programmes offering short-term employment at low wages (Type 1) only seem suitable in contexts of acute poverty and to achieve a few basic objectives, such as enabling short-term consumption smoothing. However, some of the rigorous studies show that even this is not guaranteed, especially if the wages paid are low in relation to the household poverty gap (which is typically the case in countries where chronic poverty and underemployment are widespread and persistent almost year-round).

• Judged on the basis of the wider PWP literature, in contexts where chronic poverty and underemployment are widespread and persistent throughout the year, having PWPs that pay adequate wages over an extended period (Type 2) may enable beneficiaries to (a) accumulate enough savings and assets to build a certain level of resilience against minor shocks and (b) accumulate assets and make productive investments that are at least sufficient to marginally boost post-PWP income. However, such PWPs are unlikely to reduce poverty on any significant scale and are not a complete substitute for responses to severe (especially covariate) shocks. If it is the poorest who ought to be reached and, at the same time, who particularly need to be able to draw tangible benefits from employment that improve their livelihoods, the targeting mechanism needs to be more sophisticated than a system that relies solely on self-targeting based on low wages.

• If we focus on the positive findings contained in the rigorous evaluations of Ethiopia's PSNP - the only Type 2 PWP implemented at scale in the region of interest - and consider what they indicate in terms of the potential of Type 2 PWPs, the statements made on the basis of the wider literature hold true. However, if one looks at the overall picture presented by the rigorous literature, the conclusion is less optimistic. In the systematic review the PSNP seems to perform somewhat better in terms of improving food security and education than do the Type 1 PWPs. However, the findings are inconclusive regarding asset accumulation and disappointing regarding agricultural outcomes (technology adoption as well as production). The rigorous evidence overall does not therefore strongly support the assertion that Type 2 PWPs are better than Type 1 programmes at facilitating asset accumulation and, thus, at putting households on an upward trajectory.

• If sustainable poverty reduction is the objective in a context of chronic poverty, Type 2 Plus models, which offer complementary measures and deliberately capitalise on linkages with other programmes, are the most promising option – but they offer no panacea. This conclusion has been drawn on the basis of both the wider public-works literature and the robust evaluations. • To be precise, the robust studies show that the Type 2 Plus variant of the PSNP (i.e. plus OFSPs or HABPs) does well in terms of food security, asset accumulation (especially of livestock) and agricultural technology adoption. However, there are no strong indications that it generates an increase in income or agricultural output in the medium term. In fact, no robust evaluation of a Type 2 Plus programme has yet been conducted that investigates whether such programmes can sustainably strengthen the livelihoods of beneficiary households well beyond their time on the programme. In particular, there are no robust studies that aim to explicitly capture the benefits arising via the asset or skills vectors. Additionally, more research is needed to better understand which complementary measures, accompanying a Type 2 PWP, may best facilitate successful graduation.

Finally, the following are some observations gleaned from the wider public-works literature with respect to PWPs aimed at livelihood promotion:

• PWPs and their complementary Plus components should be embedded in a broader graduation strategy that effectively capitalises on possible linkages with other programmes and that has been developed in full cognisance of people's heterogeneous needs, vulnerabilities and capabilities, and of the strengths (and limitations) of various instruments and measures.

• If a PWP targets the poorest (i.e. households whose basic needs are not adequately met), the approach for encouraging, rather than compelling, PWP participants to save (by joining savings groups) is well-grounded in the evidence.

• Complementary credit components that are specifically tailored to address the needs and constraints of the target group can be a promising way to leverage the impacts of PWP employment. The weak evidence base shows particularly promising results for village savings and loan groups. • While there is a lot of scepticism in the literature about the (cost-)effectiveness of offering complementary skills training in PWPs, there are a few encouraging examples which suggest that such Plus components should not be dismissed outright.

• Any realistic large-scale livelihood promotion strategy for the rural areas of countries under consideration must include measures aimed at sustainably boosting farm income through increased agricultural productivity. The linkage between PWPs and government agricultural extension services may have an important role to play in this regard.

• Better coordination between the PWP and the social cash transfer programme (e.g. through the establishment of an effective referral mechanism) is needed, as is the expansion of the harmonised targeting approach to more districts in the medium term.

• The PWP could be better coordinated with humanitarian assistance to exonerate the emergency response system and to avoid recurrent emergencies undermining the benefits of regular social protection programmes. • Forging a link between PWPs and index-based weather insurance in an attempt to shield farmers from income losses due to drought or flooding sounds promising but requires closer empirical scrutiny.

Taken together, this study and its accompanying systematic review show that the existing literature provides a number of important lessons. However, it has also become apparent that the evidence base is often quite small and the external validity of some of the findings is unclear, especially considering how context-dependent PWPs are in many respects. Therefore, more research and thorough evaluations are needed to determine under what conditions (focusing in particular on design and implementation features) and over what time frame PWPs are likely to realise their full potential. This review is a starting point for this endeavour. Looking ahead, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and the University of Passau are planning a collaborative research project on PWP experiences and experiments in Malawi, the aim of which is to close many of the remaining knowledge gaps.

References

Alik-Lagrange, A., & Ravallion, M. (2015). Inconsistent policy evaluation: A case study for a large workfare programme. NBER Working Paper Series, 21041. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). Retrieved from http://www18.georgetown.edu/data/people/ mr1185/publication-80990.pdf.

Andersson, C., Mekkonnen A., & Stage J. (2011). Impacts of the Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia on livestock and tree holdings of rural households. Journal of Development Economics, 94(1), 119–126.

Andrews, C., Backiny-Yetna, P., Garin, E., Weedon, E., Wodon, Q., & Zampaglione, G. (2011). Liberia's Cash for Work Temporary Employment Project: Responding to crisis in low income, fragile countries. SP Discussion Paper, 1114. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Arnold, C., Conway, T., &, Greenslade, M. (2011). DFID Cash Transfers Literature Review. London: Department for International Development. Retrieved from http://r4d. dfid.gov.uk/PDF/Articles/cash-transfers-literature-review.pdf

Banerjee, A., Karlan, D., & Zinman, J. (2015). Six randomized evaluations of microcredit: introduction and further steps. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 7(1), 1–21. Retrieved from https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/publications/AEJ%20 Banerjee%20Intro.pdf

Banerjee, A. (2013). Microcredit under the microscope: What have we learned in the past two decades, and what do we need to know? Annual Review of Economics, 5(1), 487–519. Retrieved from http://economics.mit.edu/ files/9071 Barrett, C., & Clay, D.C. (2003). How Accurate is Food-for-Work Self-Targeting in the Presence of Imperfect Factor Markets? Evidence from Ethiopia. Journal of Development Studies, 39(5), 152–180.

Beegle, K., Galasso, E., & Goldberg, J. (2015). Direct and Indirect Effects of Malawi's Public Works Program on Food Security. Policy Research Working Paper, 7505. Washington, DC: The World Bank. Retrieved from http:// www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContent-Server/WDSP/IB/2015/12/02/090224b0839967d6/1_0/ Rendered/PDF/Direct0and0ind0ram0on0food0security.pdf

Beierl, S., & Grimm, M. (2018). Design and implementation features of public works programmes: What do we know about the drivers of success and failure to achieve programme objectives? Bonn and Eschborn: Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

Bertrand, M., Crépon, B., Marguerie, A., & Premand, P. (n.d.). Short-term impacts of Labour-Intensive Public Works for Youths in Côte d'Ivoire [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/presentation/wcms_418993.pdf

Bertrand, M., Crépon, B., Marguerie, A., & Premand, P. (2017). Contemporaneous and Post-Program Impacts of a Public Works Program: Evidence from Côte d'Ivoire. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. Retrieved from https:// openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28460

Bertrand, M., Crépon, B., Marguerie, A., & Premand, P. (2016). Impacts à Court et Moyen Terme sur les Jeunes des Travaux à Haute Intensité de Main d'oeuvre (Thimo). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. Retrieved from http:// documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/410241467994679522/ Résultats-de-l-évaluation-d-impact-de-la-composante-THIMO-du-Projet-Emploi-Jeunes-et-Développement-descompétence-PEJEDEC-en-Côte-d-Ivoire

Betcherman, G., Olivas, K., & Dar, A. (2004). Impacts of Active Labor Market Programs: new evidence from

evaluations with particular attention to developing and transition countries. Social Protection Discussion Paper Series, 402. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Bezu, S., & Holden S. (2008). Can food-for-work encourage agricultural production? Food Policy, 33(6), 541-549.

Binswanger-Mkhize, H. P. (2012). Is there too much hype about index-based agricultural insurance? Journal of Development Studies, 48(2), 187–200. Retrieved from http://www. tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00220388.2011.625411.

Blattman, C., & Ralston, L. (2015). Generating employment in poor and fragile states: Evidence from labour market and entrepreneurship programs. Unpublished. Retrieved from http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_ id=2622220.

Bloom, G., Chilowa, W., Chirwa, E., Lucas, H., Mvula, P., Schou, A., & Tsoka, M. (2005). Poverty Reduction During Democratic Transition: The Malawi Social Action Fund 1996–2001. IDS Research Report, 56. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies. Retrieved from http://www. ids.ac.uk/files/Rr56.pdf

von Braun, J., Teklu, T., & Webb, P. (1991). Labour-intensive public works for food security in Africa: Past experience and future potential. IFPRI Working Papers on Food Subsidies, 6. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). Retrieved from http:// ageconsearch.umn.edu/handle/45871.

Carter, M., de Janvry, A., Sadoulet, E., & Sarris, A. (2014). Index-based weather insurance for developing countries: A review of evidence and a set of propositions for up-scaling. Background document for the workshop "Microfinance products for weather risk management in developing countries: State of the arts and perspectives" in Paris. Retrieved from http://www.afd.fr/webdav/shared/ PORTAILS/EVENEMENTS/Ferdi-AFD-working-paper-on-index-insurance.pdf Chirwa, E. (2007). Targeting and Exclusion Experiences in Public Works Programmes in Malawi. Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme's Regional Evidence Building Agenda.

Chirwa, E., Mvula, P., & Kumwenda, H. (2012). Tracking study on public works cash transfer in Malawi. Lilongwe: Local Development Fund Support Team.

Chirwa, E., Mvula, P., & Dulani, B. (2004a). The Evaluation of the Improving Livelihoods Through Public Works Programme. Wadonda Consult.

Chirwa, E., McCord, A., Mvula, P., & Pinder, C. (2004b). Study to inform the selection of an appropriate wage rate for public works programmes in Malawi. Report submitted to National Safety Nets Unit, Government of Malawi.

Cho, Y., & Honorati, M. (2013). Entrepreneurship Programs in Developing Countries: A Meta Regression Analysis. Social Protection and Labour Discussion Paper, 1302. Washington, DC: The World Bank. Retrieved from http:// www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/ WDSP/IB/2013/05/02/000333037_20130502132940/Rendered/PDF/771680NWP0P127077289B00PUBLIC001302.pdf

Christian, S., Janvry, A. de, Egel, D., & Sadoulet, E. (2013). Quantitative evaluation of the Social Fund for Development Labour-intensive Work Program (LIPW). Mimeo. Berkeley: University of California at Berkeley.

Clifton, J., Mènard, S., de Souza, A.Q., Chanje, D., & Amine, M. (2011). Evaluation of European Commission's cooperation to the Republic of Malawi 2003–10. Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from https://ec.europa. eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/evaluation-cooperation-ec-malawi-1297-main-report-201111_en_0.pdf

Costella, C., & Manjolo, I. (2010). Design and Implementation of Public Works Programs through Social Funds. Social Funds Innovation Notes, 6(1). Washington, DC: The World Bank. Retrieved from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTSF/Resources/395669-1124228277650/SFInnnotesV6No1.pdf

D R Consulting Services. (2013). Tracking Study on Public Works Cash Transfer in Malawi. Lilongwe: Local Development Fund.

Datt, G., & Ravallion, M. (1994). Income gains for the poor from public works employment: evidence from two Indian villages. LSMS Working Paper 100. Washington DC: World Bank. Retrieved from http://documents.worldbank.org/ curated/en/836791468774927061/pdf/multi-page.pdf

Devereux, S. (2002). From Workfare to Fair Work: The contribution of public works and other labour-based infrastructure programmes to poverty alleviation. Issues in Employment and Poverty Discussion Paper, 5. Geneva: International Labour Organization. Retrieved from http:// siteresources.worldbank.org/INTTSR/Resources/disc5.pdf

Devereux, S., & Macauslan, I. (2006). Review of Social Protection Instruments in Malawi. A desk study for DFID Malawi. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies. Retrieved from https://www.ids.ac.uk/files/MalawiSocial-ProtectionReview.pdf

Devereux, S., & Solomon, C. (2006). Employment Creation Programmes: The International

Experience. Issues in Employment and Poverty Discussion Paper, 24. Geneva: Economic and Labour Market Analysis Department, International Labour Office. Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/ documents/publication/wcms_120673.pdf

EU. (2015). Action Document for Rural Roads Improvement Programme (RRImP). Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/ files/annex3-ad1-malawi-2015_en.pdf

FAO. (2013). Like a good trip to town without selling your animals: A study of FAO Somalia's Cash for Work

Programme. Impact Evaluation Report. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Office of Evaluation. Retrieved from http://www.alnap.org/ resource/8821.

Fouillard, A., Lewis, C., Daku, M., & Mgaye, K. (2014). Evaluation of the Impact of Food for Assets on Livelihood Resilience in Senegal (2005 - 2010): A Mixed Method Impact Evaluation. 0EV/2013/009. Rome: WFP Office of Evaluation.

Gatsinzi, J. (2013). Rwanda: Wage setting – from policy to practice. In K. Subbarao, C. del Ninno, C. Andrews, & C. Rodríguez-Alas (Eds.), Public works as a safety net (pp. 197–211). Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Gehrke, E., & Hartwig, R. (2015). How can Public Works Programmes create sustainable Employment? DIE Discussion Paper, 11/2015. Bonn: German Development Institute/ Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE).

Gehrke, E. (2015). Can public works infrastructure affect employment outcomes? Evidence from the NREGA in India. DIE Discussion Paper, 9/2015. Bonn: German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE).

Gehrke, E. (2014). An employment guarantee as risk insurance? Assessing the effects of the NREGS on agricultural output decisions. BGPE Discussion Paper, 152. Nuremberg: Bavarian Graduate Programme in Economics (BGPE).

Gilligan, D. O., Hoddinott, J., & Taffesse, A. S. (2009a). The Impact of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme and its Linkages. Journal of Development Studies, 45(10), 1684–1706.

Gilligan, D. O., Hoddinott, J., Kumar, N., &, Tafesse A.S. (2009b). An Impact Evaluation of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Nets Programme. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute.

Gilligan, D. O., Hoddinott, J., Kumar, N., &, Tafesse A.S. (2008). The Impact of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme and its Linkages. IFPRI Discussion Paper, 00839. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute.

Giné, X., & Yang, D. (2009). Insurance, Credit, and Technology Adoption: Field Experimental Evidence from Malawi. Journal of Development Economics, 89(1), 1–11. Retrieved from http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/ S0304387808000898.

Hashemi, S., & Rosenberg, R. (2006). Graduating the Poorest into Microfinance: Linking Microfinance and Safety Net Programs to Include the Poorest. Focus Note, 34. Washington, DC: Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP). Retrieved from https://www.cgap.org/sites/default/files/CGAP-Focus-Note-Graduating-the-Poorest-into-Microfinance-Linking-Safety-Nets-and-Financial-Services-Feb-2006.pdf

Hoddinott, J., Gilligan, D., & Taffesse, A.S. (2009). The Impact of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program on Schooling and Child Labour. Retrieved from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1412291

Holden, S., Barrett, C.B., & Hagos, F. (2003). Food-for-Work for Poverty Reduction and the Promotion of Sustainable Land Use: Can it Work? Working Paper, 3003-16. Ithaca: Department of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University. Retrieved from http://ageconsearch. umn.edu/handle/14759

Kabeer, N. (2009). Scoping Study on Social Protection: Evidence on impacts and future research directions. DFID Policy and Research Division. Retrieved from http://r4d. dfid.gov.uk/pdf/outputs/misc_humansec/social_protection_scoping_study_nk_09final.pdf

Kardan, A. (2015). Streamlining targeting mechanisms and processes across national social protection programmes: Developing and concept. Oxford, UK: Oxford Policy Management Ltd. Khwaja, A. (2009). Can good projects succeed in bad communities? Journal of Public Economics, 93(7–8), 899–916. Retrieved from https://EconPapers.repec.org/RePEc:eee:pubeco:v:93:y:2009:i:7–8:p:899–916.

Khwaja, A. (2004). Is increasing community participation always a good thing? Journal of the European Economic Association, 2(2–3), 427–436.

Koohi-Kamali, F. (2010). Public Works and Social Protection. European Report on Development. Retrieved from http://erd. eui.eu/media/BackgroundPapers/Koohi-Kamali.pdf

LDF. (2013). Quarterly Progress Report (#18): July to September 2013. Lilongwe: The Local Development Fund.

Lembani, M. and Mandala, C. (2006). Malawi: Some Targeting Methods in Public Works Programmes. MASAF Policy Infobrief, 1(1). Lilongwe: Malawi Social Action Fund. Retrieved from https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/9590

Lieuw-Kie-Song, M. (2014). Study on the Labour-Intensive Work Programme in Yemen. Working Paper. Geneva: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), International Labour Organization (ILO). Retrieved from http://www.escwa.org.lb/divisions/div_editor/Download. asp?table_name=divisions_other&field_name=ID&-FileID=1680.

Lieuw-Kie-Song, M. (2011). Integrating public works and cash transfers in Ethiopia: Implications for social protection, employment and decent work. IPC-IG Working Paper, 84. Brasilia: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPCIG). Retrieved from http://www.ipc-undp.org/ pub/IPCWorkingPaper84.pdf

Lieuw-Kie-Song, M., Philip, K., Tsukamoto, M., & van Imschoot, M. (2010). Towards the right to work:

Innovations in Public Employment Programmes (IPEP). Employment Working Paper, 69. Geneva: International Labour Organisation (ILO). Retrieved from http://www.ilo. org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_strat/--emp_invest/documents/publication/wcms_158483.pdf

Madajewicz, M., Tsegay, A.H., & Norton, M. (2013). Managing risks to agricultural livelihoods: Impact evaluation of the HARITA program in Tigray, Ethiopia, 2009–2012. Boston: Oxfam America. Retrieved from http://www. oxfamamerica.org/static/media/files/Oxfam_America_Impact_Evaluation_of_HARITA_2009–2012_English.pdf

Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. (2013). Localizing Development: Does Participation Work?. Policy Research Report. Washington, DC: The World Bank. Retrieved from https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/11859

Maunders, N., & Wiggins, S. (2006). Food security in southern Africa: Changing the trend? London: Overseas Development Institute. Retrieved from http://www.odi. org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/14.pdf

McCord, A. (2012a). Public Works and Social Protection in Sub-Saharan Africa: Do Public Works work for the Poor? Tokyo: United Nations University Press.

McCord, A. (2012b). The politics of social protection: Why are public works programmes so popular with governments and donors? ODI Background Note. London: Overseas Development Institute. Retrieved from http:// www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7795.pdf

McCord, A. (2009). The Anatomy of Public Works: An exploration of the social protection function of public works programmes in contexts of chronic poverty. Thesis Presented for the Degree of DPhil. School of Economics, Department of Commerce, University of Cape Town. April 2009. Retrieved from https://open.uct.ac.za/handle/11427/5755.

McCord, A. (2004a). Policy Expectations and Programme Reality: The Poverty Reduction and Employment Performance of Two Public Works Programmes in South Africa. ESAU Working Paper, 8. London: Overseas Development Institute. Retrieved from http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org. uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/2507.pdf

McCord, A. (2004b). Setting the Public Works Wage in Malawi: The Challenges and Contradictions of Social Protection, Self-Targeting and Market Distortion in the Context of an Imperfect Labour Market. CARE Malawi Working Paper. Unpublished. Retrieved from http://www.saldru.uct.ac.za/ documentation/public-works-and-social-protection-1/130setting-the-pwp-wage-in-malawi-mccord-2004/file.

McCord, A., & Farrington, J. (2008). Digging holes and filling them in again? How far do public works enhance livelihoods? Natural Resource Perspectives, 120. London: Overseas Development Institute. Retrieved from http:// www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/3435.pdf

McCord, A., & Slater R. (2009). Overview of Public Works Programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa. London: Overseas Development Institute. Retrieved from http://www.odi. org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/5764.pdf

Murgai, R., Ravallion, M., & van de Walle, D. (2013). Is workfare cost effective against poverty in a poor labor-surplus economy? Policy Research Working Paper, 6673. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Nepal National Planning Commission. (2012). Assessment of Karnali Employment Programme. Kathmandu: Government of Nepal. Retrieved from http://www.npc.gov.np/ images/download/kep_book.pdf

Ng'ong'ola, D., Kumambala, P., Makoka, D., & Nalivata, P. (2015). Irrigation, Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Development Project (IRLADP): Independent Endline Survey and Impact Evaluation – Final Report. Lilongwe: Professor D. Ng'ong'ola & Associates. Retrieved from http://www. irladp.org/download/end-line-survey-and-project-impactevaluation-report-june-2015/ Ravallion, M. (1999). Appraising Workfare. The World Bank Research Observer, 14(1), 31-48.

Sabates-Wheeler, R., & Devereux, S. (2010). Cash transfers and high food prices: Explaining outcomes on Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme. Food Policy, 35(4), 274-285. doi:10.1016/j.foodpol.2010.01.001

Save the Children UK. (2008). Cash, Food, Payments and Risk: A Review of the Productive Safety Net Programme. Retrieved from http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/ default/files/docs/Cash_Food_Payment_and_Risk_in_the_ PSNP_-_10_Oct_08_1.pdf

Sharp, K., Brown, T., & Teshome, A. (2006). Targeting Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme. London and Bristol: Overseas Development Institute, and The IDL Group. Retrieved from http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/ files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/3966.pdf

Shuka, Z.S. (2014). Community participation and project outcomes: The case of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme. Unpublished paper.

Slater, R., Ashley, S., Tefera, M., Buta, M., & Esubalew, D. (2006). PSNP Policy, Programme and Institutional Linkages. London and Bristol: Overseas Development Institute and the IDL Group.

Smith, W. (2001). Spending on safety nets for the poor: how much, for how many? The case of Malawi. Africa Region Working Paper Series, 11. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank. Retrieved from http://documents.worldbank. org/curated/en/2001/01/1561488/spending-safety-netspoor-much-many-case-malawi.

Subbarao, K., del Ninno, C., Andrews, C., & Rodríguez-Alas, C. (2013). Public Works as a Safety Net: Design, Evidence, and Implementation. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi:10.1596/978-0-8213-8968-3

Train4Dev. (2010). Public works programmes and social protection. Train4Dev / OECD DAC POVNET Joint Learn-

ing Event: Promoting Pro-Poor Growth. Policy Instrument Note, 3. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/dac/povertyreduction/47466739.pdf

Wahenga. (2007). Public Works Programmes, Malawi. Regional Evidence Building Agenda (REBA) Case Study Brief, 11. Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme (RHVP). Retrieved from http://www.wahenga.net/sites/default/ files/ briefs/REBA_Case_Study_Brief_11.pdf

White, P., & McCord, A. (2006). Cost Comparison of Cash, Food and Agricultural Input Transfer

Schemes in Malawi and Zambia. London: Department for International Development (DFID). Retrieved from http:// www.wahenga.net/uploads/documents/library/Transfer_ Schemes_Malawi_Zambia_2006.pdf

World Bank. (2015). MASAF 3 APL 2: Implementation Completion and Results Report. Washington, DC: The World Bank. Retrieved from http://www-wds.worldbank. org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/20 15/03/31/000477144_20150331144321/Rendered/PDF/ ICR32210P1104460Box385455B000U0090.pdf

World Bank (2010). Designing and Implementing a Rural Safety Net in a Low Income Setting: Lessons Learned from Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program 2005-2009. Washington, DC: World Bank. Retrieved from http://wwwwds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/ WDSP/IB/2012/06/19/000426104_20120619144719/Rendered/PDF/701390ESW0P12100Net0in0a0Low0Income.pdf

World Bank. (2008). MASAF 3 APL 1: Implementation Completion and Results Report. Washington, DC: The World Bank. Retrieved from http://documents.worldbank. org/curated/en/2008/12/10271788/malawi-third-social-action-fund-project.

Zimmermann, L. (2014). Why guarantee employment? Evidence from a large Indian public-works programme. Mimeo. Athens, GA: University of Georgia. Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn / Germany

GIZ Eschborn
Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1 – 5
65760 Eschborn
Germany
T +49 6196 79 - 0
F +49 6196 79 - 11 15

Sector Initiative Social Protection E social-protection@giz.de I www.giz.de

As at November 2018

Authors Stefan Beierl and Michael Grimm Chair of Development Economics University of Passau

Cover Design and Layout Bettina Riedel / briedel64@gmx.de

Photo credits © Stefan Beierl

Address of the BMZ offices Bonn and Berlin / Germany

On behalf of Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) Division 404 – Health, Population Policy and Social Protection

Address of the BMZ offices Bonn and Berlin / Germany

BMZ Bonn	BMZ Berlin
Dahlmannstraße 4	Stresemannstraße 92
53113 Bonn	10963 Berlin
Germany	Germany
T +49 228 99 535 - O	T +49 030 1 85 35 - 0
F +49 228 99 535 - 3500	F +49 030 1 85 35 - 2501

poststelle@bmz.bund.de www.bmz.de

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.



Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn

E info@giz.de I www.giz.de

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 36 + 40 53113 Bonn, Germany T +49 228 44 60-0 F +49 228 44 60-17 66

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1 – 5 65760 Eschborn, Germany T +49 61 96 79-0 F +49 61 96 79-11 15 On behalf of



Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development