INEQUALITY MATTERS AND PREPAREDNESS COUNTS

According to many reports, lack of preparedness contributes to the breadth and depth of some of the impacts we see from changing weather and climate patterns. What we do know about food (in)security, climate change and human health suggests that key social sectors dependent on human capital formation, rely on preparation to (i) maximize positives and (ii) mitigate negatives.

Climate change presents a unique opportunity to transform Africa’s development path and to safeguard the livelihoods of over 70% of the people living within the SADC region that depend on agriculture for food, income and employment.

As increasing consensus arises about the investment needed in climate-smart agriculture (CSA) in Africa, including the use of innovations as well as soft and hard technology, the relevance of education becomes very clear. 60% of the Members of Parliament (MPs) we surveyed believe that producing necessary expertise through education is essential for effective adaptation solutions to climate change creating a great foundation for necessary policy reforms.

Food security and education co-linkages create a singular opportunity for public-private sector partnership, rural-rural and rural-to-urban trade exchanges that can provide critical support structures for long-term transformations of the sector. MPs play an effective and mediatory role in building such new coalitions and enabling a pro-active and no-regrets approach.
In this Brief, the agriculture sector is explored through the lens of food security, and mainly through its social and economic relevance that can deliver climate-smart or climate-resilient agriculture along with wider environmental sustainability and development co-benefits. Strengthening the forward and backward links between agriculture and other sectors could also minimize cascading effects through the development value-chain. Doing so, could help to build resilience in the long-term and for the substitution of public goods for services in time of shocks.

**Policy Incoherence on Inequality and Preparedness Costs**

Policy frameworks in SADC are simply not coherent enough and SADC member states’ capacity to sustainably fight hunger is generally middling to poor. In ActionAid’s Hunger Free Scorecard for 2013, Malawi, Mozambique, Lesotho, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia and Democratic Republic of Congo received grades from C to E (on a scale of A-E). Where they did score well was in the area of budgetary commitments to agriculture (mainly Malawi); they scored poorly on investment in social protection and legal empowerment mechanisms.

The links between food insecurity and education are shaped by two key interactions: (i) the limitations that education places on the productivity of key actors in the agriculture sector e.g. in the case of women farmers and women farmer workers and (ii) the limitations that the lack of consistent access to food places on the capacity to maximize learning through education and thus the type of economic opportunities one can access.

More than 1 in every 3 persons in Malawi survives on 0.75c a day. In Swaziland, it is almost every 1 in 2. Any factor that affects that already limited earning capacity will affect household investment and prioritization of education. Education is an integral contributor to societal and individual development. Research has found that it is not education in itself which is fundamental to development, but rather the equity of access to schooling.

Moreover, equity in the quality of education has also been an inhibiting factor to human development while at the same time, the lack of education is a barrier to development at a broader scale. Lack of education also ranks amongst the main reasons identified for the underperformance of the agriculture sector. Counter-intuitively, higher education attainment would have a direct impact on agricultural productivity as well as household income and nutrition. Important system inputs for dealing with shocks, particularly those with enduring impacts on households and livelihoods include:

- **Risk management**: education can also play a preventative and enabling role for adaptation and resilience building for enhanced food security.
- **Self-reliance**: moreover, education has a multifold role particularly in defining those responses relating to self-help solutions (not waiting for government to move on a particular issue, but people taking action themselves).
- **Backwards and forwards linkages**: Social safety nets that link development, health and education of the poorest and most vulnerable groups are increasingly playing an essential role in human and physical development.

**Anticipating and Managing Risk: Resilient and People-Smart Production systems**

The two largest risks to food security come from global volatility and related speculation and the impact on food prices and from the expected climate variability and change which is expected to affect the entire food production system creating costs, volatile results and limiting incomes and fracture livelihoods.
Targeting key points of vulnerability, like the food and nutritional needs of mothers and children is sound risk management and a sound risk-society approach in the long-term with positive spill-overs for human development and productivity. Steps that should take any SADC member state beyond greening through emissions reductions alone. Taking a broader approach could also include making the local population a catalytic force in maintaining local water sources, helping in the management of water-climate-food risk.

Two key opportunities for path-linking (see Brief No. 2 in the Policy Brief Series) green pathways can be found in those activities which seek to deliver growth, and those which seek to expand access to the basic tools and capacities for sustainable human development. Proven mechanisms for achieving such linked outcomes are: more inclusive legislation and institutions.

Examples from Zimbabwe and Brazil (in the Box that follows) shine a light, briefly, on how these can work to deliver more than the sum of individual green and or social interventions. They are more than the sum of their parts.

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**Zimbabwe Approach to Food Security (Path-linking).**

The Zimbabwean government has implemented an innovative urban food security programme that utilises the observed market dependency for distribution as a food provider. The severity of the drought-flood fluctuation cycle in Zimbabwe has reduced food production and exacerbated food insecurity and pressure on the land. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the Zimbabwe government responded to the 2001/2002 drought and 2002/2003 cropping seasons by providing agricultural inputs such as seed and fertilizers to smallholder farmers. Research found that a significant number of seeds were either not planted due to unfamiliarity or negatively affected by the drought. Researchers concluded that extension services (in this case, training on water conservation and adaptive agricultural strategies) provided by the government are fundamental to the implementation of input aid programmes in order to ensure successful production.

**Brazil’s Social Protection Approach to Linking Food Security and Education (Path-repair).**

The Brazilian official concept of food security is anchored in its Organic Law of Food and Nutritional Security (LOSAN). Among the Brazilian government’s initiatives are:

- Zero Hunger (Fome Zero) strategy and in the National Food and Nutritional Security Policy (PNSAN), which underpin the guidelines and objectives of the national public support to food security.
- PNAE, the National School Feeding Programme, requires that each meal must be made with at least 30% foodstuffs from family farmers, linked through PAA (the Food Acquisition Programme).
- In 2011, more than 160,000 farmers sold their crops to the PAA, for nearly 16.8 million people. Moreover, 70% of the food consumed in the country also comes from local farmers.

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