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Social Safety Nets: A Possible Pathway to Foster Household Resilience to Emerging Shocks. Evidence from Malawi and Zambia

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A B S T R A C T

Social safety nets are a useful weapon in the fight against poverty. The purpose of this study was to examine the types of safety nets that exist in response to addressing poverty alleviation and vulnerability in Malawi and Zambia. Also, to explore various policies and practices that can be implemented to foster societal resilience to emerging shocks, particularly those of climate change and Covid-19. The study established that in both countries, safety net programmes have had some positive impact on the vulnerable households, as well as acting as a major source of income, especially for older beneficiaries. Similarly, these programmes have enhanced productivity and food security for smallholder farmers. The study concluded with policies that can be implemented to foster household resilience, to emerging shocks in both countries.

INTRODUCTION

The Bretton Woods institutions first coined the phrase "social safety net" (SSN) to refer to structural adjustment initiatives pertaining to its lending programmes. Developing nations implemented SSNs, in order to lessen how structural adjustment strategies affects society particular low-income groups. Initially, they were designed to support three goals: institutional reform, increasing the political acceptability of adjustment programmes, and reducing poverty (Vivian, 1994).

Although the number of poor and vulnerable people in Sub-Saharan Africa has been decreasing, millions still live in poverty. As part of their fundamental development strategies, each and every country in the region, has now implemented SSN programmes to address this persistent and complex problem. Since the middle of the 2000s, the number of programmes has increased dramatically, even though many of the initiatives remain small in scope (Beegle et al., 2018).

The acceptance of SSNs by governments and other stakeholders has been strengthened by local data, demonstrating their efficacy in reducing food insecurity and poverty while boosting resilience and agricultural output. Governments in Africa have pledged to institutionalise SSNs. Social safety nets are now a vital component of any plan for combating poverty and vulnerability, addressing shocks, boosting output, and investing in human capital (Peterman et al., 2019).

SSN programmes refers to social service programmes that provide short-term vulnerability and shock relief to individuals, including those with reduced incomes (Sifat, 2021). They are focal programmes, primarily through cash transfers, that assist low-income and vulnerable households (Bird, 2023). There are two types of public SSN programmes: formal and informal safety nets. Typically, statutory triggers determine whether safety nets are formal or informal. In contrast to informal safety nets, which are not legally required but offer the possibility of support to ensure that people achieve the minimal standard of living, formal safety nets are those that legally ensure people's access to social or economic assistance (Paitoonpong et al., 2008).

There is proof that social safety nets in Africa are a useful weapon in the fight against poverty. Even though the region is home to some of the fastest growing social safety net programmes in the world, the majority of the poor and vulnerable people have not yet benefited from these programmes, despite the fact their number has grown significantly (Word Bank, 2018).

The objective of this study are twofold; (i) Examining the types of safety nets that exist in response to addressing poverty alleviation and vulnerability in Malawi and Zambia. (ii) Exploring various policies and practices that can be implemented to protect the vulnerable and foster household resilience to emerging shocks in Malawi and Zambia.

Two-Country Case Study

The scope of this study is limited to Malawi and Zambia for several reasons. First, both countries have about an equal population, Malawi (20.4 million) and Zambia (20 million). Second, both countries are in Southern Africa and became independent in 1964. Third, both countries have implemented social safety net programmes. Lastly, despite their shared history, the two countries have taken distinct paths towards economic development since 1964.

Malawi is located in Southern Africa, and is one of the 23 low-income countries in Africa (Yeboua et al., 2022). According to the 2021/2022 Human Development Report, Malawi is one of the world's poorest nations, coming in at number 169 out of 191. According to the Malawi Poverty Index Report 2021, 61.7% of

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Malawians are classified as multidimensionally poor, with rural areas having the highest rate of poverty at 70% (GIZ, 2024).

Agriculture is a vital sector of the economy, 85% of the labour force is employed by it, and contributes roughly 39% of GDP. The economy of Malawi is heavily reliant on the success of the smallholder subsector, as smallholders comprise 90% of all farmers and possess 78% of all cultivated land (Asfaw & Maggio, 2018). Malawi has achieved minimal progress towards goals 10 (reduced inequality) and 1 (no poverty), and faces formidable development obstacles (Yeboua et al., 2022). In the face of chronic poverty, food insecurity and frequent climatic shocks, Malawi's efforts to provide social support remain inadequate and fragmented. Despite the progress made, nearly two thirds of the population continue to live below the $1.90 daily international poverty threshold (Jakob, 2017).

In the case of Zambia, the country is located in Southern Africa, with a population estimate of 20 million people (World Bank, 2024). The country has struggled to eradicate poverty and provide a sustainable pathway to growth, despite periods of strong economic expansion, especially during the spike in the demand for copper globally. High levels of regional inequality, reliance on the copper sector, and low agricultural productivity are only a few of the structural problems that limit this ability (Shahrukh et al., 2024).

Safety nets in Zambia are essential for shielding the impoverished from the consequences of numerous crises and the expected shock to food prices. The government acknowledges that social safety nets shield the most vulnerable and impoverished populations from disruptions to their consumption patterns. Furthermore, the cash transfers under the social cash transfer (SCT) serve as the foundation for the adoption of "accompanying measures" that address climate adaptation, human capital development, and economic inclusion (World Bank, 2022).

Theoretical Perspectives of Social Safety Nets

A Theory of Change is a model of a change process. It explains the causal linkages between a programme or research effort and its desired results, formulated as a series of testable theories explaining the mechanisms and causes of change (Claus et al., 2001). Weiss popularised the term "theory of change" through the work of the Roundtable on Community Change and the Aspen Institute (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020). The theory was developed to assist evaluators in overcoming the difficulties that arise when working on complex projects in complex environments. The strategy has shown promise and is being applied more frequently both inside and outside of the evaluation industry (Ofek, 2017). It is commended as a focal point, in the design of any evaluation (Wilkinson et al., 2021). The fundamental components of a theory of change include; need, participants, interventions and outcome.

A more efficient approach to reducing poverty is desperately needed in developing nations. There is growing agreement that revitalised broad-based economic growth is a prerequisite for reducing poverty, though this is not enough on its own.

There is evidence of research showing how social safety nets in Africa impacts, resilience, equity and opportunities, among the poor and vulnerable communities. An extensive body of recent research supports the notion of effective programme design, scalability, and social safety net funding (Andrews et al., 2018). The overarching goals of social safety nets—equity, resilience, and opportunity.

The general goals of social safety nets—which are condensed here into a simplified framework that emphasises resilience, equity, and opportunity—can be used to frame the effects of related programmes. First, the goal of resilience aids households in risk management and poverty avoidance. Good social safety net implementation provides insurance, which supports resilience (Abay et al., 2022). Second, the goal of the equity aim is to make sure that the poorest and most vulnerable households are able to meet their basic needs and attain a minimal level of consumption (Inchauste & Victor, 2017). Third, the opportunity goal is to enable households to undertake investments that they otherwise would not have been able to. Undoubtedly, these goals can be worthwhile investments, as demonstrated by the expanding body of evidence in realising the full potential of social safety nets in Africa (Beegle et al., 2018).

METHOD

Data Sources and Searches

This study conducted a desk systematic review of existing literature from the search string on "(Social safety nets OR Safety nets OR Social protection) AND (Household Resilience OR Household shocks)" on Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Google Scholar Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Web of Science. Likewise, given that there is a dearth of scholarly work on SSN, the study reviewed reports from institutions like the IMF, UNICEF, the World Bank, and other relevant research institutions. The scope of this review involved identifying relevant SSN programes in Southern Africa dating back to 2000.

Furthermore, a review of the websites of relevant Ministries, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, was conducted in each of the two countries. Once all pertinent literature was compiled, the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) approach was used to filter the literature, retaining only the relevant resources. The selected resources was meticulously reviewed to examine the main types of safety nets that exist in response to addressing poverty and vulnerability.

The study limited itself to the main Social Safety Nets (SSN) programmes in both countries; the Social Cash Transfer, and Food Security Pack programme in Zambia, and the Social Cash Transfer, and Farm Input Subsidy program in Malawi. Finally, the study only focused on two key emerging shocks: climate change and Covid-19, due to the worldwide effects of these shocks. Climate change is a global threat to all nations and to humanity. The global COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a significant loss of human life and posed an unparalleled threat to public health, food systems, and the workforce. The pandemic had disastrous effects on the economy and society.

Types of Emerging Shocks and their impacts

- ***Climate change related shocks in Malawi***

Extreme and frequent natural catastrophes are becoming more common due to climate change, and the demand for humanitarian aid is only growing. Malawi and Zambia are among the countries most severely impacted by the negative consequences of harsh weather. Droughts, dry spells, and flooding affects both countries (Coulibaly et al., 2015; Ngoma et al., 2024). These catastrophes have exacerbated rural poverty in

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Malawi and put the viability of rural livelihoods in jeopardy. The impact is substantial on low-income subsistence farmers (Mulwa et al., 2017).

Also, farmers became vulnerable to these extreme weather occurrences as a result of the drought that happened in 2015–2016 and the floods that occurred in 2014–2015 growing season. Over 2.8 million individuals (17% of the population) in 17 districts hit by flooding were unable to meet their daily food needs between April 2015 and March 2016. While, it was predicted that during the April 2016–March 2017 timeframe, over 6.5 million people (or 39% of the population) in 24 districts hit by the drought would not be able to meet their food requirements (McCarthy et al., 2021).

The drought caused by El Niño in Southern Africa in 2016–2017 resulted in a poor harvest and acute shortages of both food and water. A third of the 18 million people living in the nation were in severe need of food aid due to the dry spell brought on by the El Nino weather phenomena in the 2016–17 season (Ocha, 2017).

- *Climate change related shocks in Zambia*

In Zambia, 18–20% of the GDP is derived from agriculture, which also employs roughly two thirds of the labour force and is a major source of income for 50% of the population (Ngoma et al., 2021; USAID, 2022). Over the past 20 years, the majority of the nation's farms have had poor, irregular, and inconsistent rainfall, making them more vulnerable to droughts. There is a rise in crop loss and food insecurity as a result of shorter rainy seasons and more frequent droughts. Food production is also at risk due to flooding caused by significant rainfall occurrences (USAID, 2022).

Due to Zambia's extreme poverty and lack of agricultural diversification, it is anticipated that climate change would have a detrimental impact on food security and nutrition (Ngoma et al., 2021; Verhage et al., 2018). Currently, cereals provide for over 63% of Zambia's energy needs, but basic foods like maize are particularly susceptible to climate change (Ngoma et al., 2021).

Climate change and variability, are significant factors contributing to Zambia's high rate of poverty (76.6%) in rural areas. The high rate of poverty among smallholder farmers and in rural Zambia is a result of their reliance on rainfed agriculture. Due to this reliance, rural households are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change (Ngoma et al., 2024).

During the 2022 rainy season, severe flooding occurred in several areas of Zambia, resulting in the displacement of people and serious damage to agricultural crops. Between these episodes of flooding, the 2022 drought had a further detrimental impact on agricultural output. Also, millions of people in Zambia are impacted by the ongoing drought, which has dire consequences for the country's economy as well as crop failure, animal fatalities, and shortages of food and water. The drought that occurred in 2018–19 caused Zambia's GDP growth to drop to roughly 2% in 2019, a substantial decrease from the 4.6% average growth rate that was realised between 2011 and 2018 (IFPRI, 2023).

- *Covid-19 shock in Malawi*

The Covid-19 epidemic in Malawi caused a number of shocks to households, many of which were unable to cope (Mnyanga et al., 2022).The first Covid-19 case in Malawi occurred on April 02, 2020, and it was imported from India (Nyasulu et al., 2021). By this point, public gathering limits, border entry requirements for visitors, the need for hand cleanliness at borders, and school closures were all part of Malawi's national response and readiness (Gadabu, 2020). Malawians opposed the Covid-19 lockdown measures' implementation with widespread protests and a court order that prevented it since the plan was unclear, few stakeholders were included, and most believed it was inappropriate for the nation (Mehtar et al., 2020).

A number of significant covid-19 impacts were noted in Malawi, including declining socioeconomic status and population health; problems with the health system, such as insufficient funding and staff; disruptions to vital services; an increase in mental health disorders and suicide rates; adolescent pregnancies and young marriages; and modifications to certain health regulations (Chiumia et al., 2022). Other effects include a rise in the cost of business and farming inputs, a halt to operations related to farming, raising livestock, or fishing, and a rise in the cost of the main foods consumed (Mnyanga et al., 2022).

To lessen the effects of the epidemic, the Malawian government implemented a number of socioeconomic measures. The Social Cash Transfer Programme, which was unconditional, was the subject of the most significant policy reactions. Additional policies included financing facilities for small and medium-sized businesses and tax waivers (Happiness & Zilire, 2023).

- *Covid-19 shock in Zambia*

The first documented case of Covid-19 in Zambia included a married couple who had visited France and were under surveillance at the port of entry. Following their arrival, travellers with a history of international travel were then monitored remotely for a period of 14 days. Following the development of respiratory symptoms during the 14-day surveillance period, they were recognised as having probable cases on March 18, 2020, and tested positive for Covid-19 (Chipimo et al., 2020).

In 2020, the government of Zambia, like those of many other nations, implemented containment measures in an effort to stop the Covid-19 virus from spreading. The economic activities and earnings of individuals were severely harmed by these lockdown measures as well as the cascading effect of the decline in trade and tourism from other nations (Geda, 2021). Amidst the Covid epidemic, the copper-rich nation made history in 2020 by becoming the first country in Africa to default on its external debt payments, following the failure to make a US$ 42.5 million coupon payment (ZIPAR, 2023).

In July 2020, the government added the Covid-19 Emergency Cash Transfer, a six-month scheme that augmented the current Social Cash Transfer programme, to lessen the negative impact on households that were already vulnerable. Additional social protection measures included the waiver of tax fines and interest on tax penalties, as well as the suspension of custom duties and VAT on additional medical goods used in the fight against Covid-19 (UNU-Wider, 2024).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Types of Main Social Safety Net Programmes in Malawi and Zambia

1. The Social Cash Transfer Programme in Malawi

The Malawi Social Cash Transfer (SCT) is an unconditional transfer targeting extremely impoverished households with limited labour resources. The SCT programme aims to maximise school enrollment while simultaneously reducing hunger and poverty. The programme was first implemented as a trial in Mchinji District in 2006, and in 2007 it was extended to six more districts. By September 2017, the programme was serving more than 1,777,000 beneficiaries in more than 174,500 households across 18 districts in the country, with around 430,000 of those beneficiaries being children (The Transfer Project, 2017).

The programme seeks to support the 10% of households that are most vulnerable, in each of the districts of Malawi. Furthermore, the programme offers monthly cash transfers to nearly 1.3 million people each year, thus helping ultra-poor families satisfy their basic requirements and develop resilience—and ultimately move them out of poverty. Also, the local economy gains from this monetary transfer. According to studies conducted in Malawi, the local economy generates USD $1.69 for every USD $1 spent on cash transfers (Pamela & Clare, 2015).

2. Farm Input Subsidy Program (FISP) in Malawi

This program was launched in 2005/06 agricultural season by the Malawi Government, in the wake of a bad maize harvest season and a high import bill, so as to increase the availability of smallholder farmers with limited resources to agricultural inputs. The initiative is an extension and continuation of earlier subsidy programmes that had the same goal as the current initiative. FISP gives low-income smallholders improved maize seeds and inexpensive fertiliser (Cassim & Pemba, 2021; Mulula et al., 2017).

In the beginning, the FISP primarily offered subsidies for improved maize seeds and fertiliser; but, starting in 2008, it also covered legume seeds. In 2020, the Affordable Inputs Programme (AIP), introduced by the new Malawian government, took the place of the FISP. It is more inclusive, covering all smallholder farmers, as opposed to only those who are targeted, and it expands the subsidy on maize and fertiliser to include sorghum and rice seed (Matita et al., 2021; Walls et al., 2023).

3. Social Cash Transfer programme in Zambia

Since its launch in 2003, the SCT has had a number of design changes. The programme has had three quite distinct formats. Originally, between 2003 and 2010, it started out with five pilots and with little links between them. The design adhered to the ultra-poor concept, because it was intended to serve the lowest 10% of the population in the districts it covered (Arruda & Dubois, 2018; Tesliuc et al., 2013).

Thereafter, from 2010 to 2014, the programme then included two distinct streams, each with unique characteristics. A separate grant, known as the Child Grant (CG), was designed especially to help households with children, while the Multiple Category Transfer Grant (MCTG) focused on other types of vulnerability. Ultimately, the initiative has been running in a third version since 2014. It is referred to as harmonised targeting since it has developed a single selection criterion (families with high dependency ratios) in an effort to reach out to various types of vulnerable households (Arruda & Dubois, 2018).

The transfer amount was only revised twice between 2014 and 2020. Nevertheless, between 2021 and 2022, the transfer amount has been revised three times. A K110 monthly transfer amount was approved in the 2021 Budget. Later, this was revised to K150. The transfer amount was increased to K200 in the 2022 Budget. That amount has gone up to K400 for people with disabilities. These sums are paid every two months. Additionally, the number of recipients has been rising, and by 2023, it is anticipated to reach 1,374,500 (UNICEF, 2019).

4. Food Security Pack programme in Zambia

The Food Security Pack (FSP) initiative was designed in 2000 with the intention of helping 200,000 households, or around 20% of the vulnerable but viable small-scale farmers in the districts of Zambia. The three main elements of the programme are: Wetland agriculture, rainfed agriculture, and the Alternative Livelihood Initiative (ALI). Every one of the 116 districts in the country implements these FSP programming components (Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2024).

The FSP offers households agricultural inputs and associated social services, in order to guarantee food security and nutrition for households at the household and community levels. The food security pack is not meant to be a free gift, the project offers 10% payback or recovery after the beneficiary has received assistance. By 2021, after more than 20 years of implementation, the project beneficiaries amounted to over 200,000 households (Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2024; UNICEF, 2019).

Impacts of Social Safety Net Programmes on Households in Malawi and Zambia

1. Impacts of the social cash transfer (SCT) programme, and farm input subsidy program (FISP) on households in Malawi

The SCT has had some positive impact on the household economy. As an example, the SCT is a major source of income, especially for older beneficiaries. Also, significant benefit for some households has been the decrease in the necessity of short-term agricultural work. Several beneficiaries were able to employ on-farm labour. Furthermore, beneficiaries were able to investment in small, non-farm enterprises as well as in livestock, such as chickens and goats. However, this effect was mitigated by delayed payments. Also, unpredictable transfer payments put household planning at risk (Pamela & Clare, 2015).

In the case of FISP, the program has enhanced productivity and food security for smallholder farmers (Shively et al., 2013). Also, FISP has greatly improved household nutritional status (Novignon et al., 2021). FISP assists relatively poor farmers in increasing, household per capita consumption closer to that of the relatively rich (Mwale et al., 2022). However, positive indirect effects outweigh positive direct effects, in corn-growing regions with high rates of poverty incidence and significant land pressure (Dorward & Chirwa, 2013).

2. Impacts of the social cash transfer (SCT) programme, and food security pack (FSP) on households in Zambia

In its existing form, the SCT initiative already contributes significantly to the eradication of extreme poverty. It lowers the

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rate of extreme poverty by 1.55 percentage points, but it hardly makes a dent on inequality. In actuality, the Gini coefficient indicates that the SCT programme has very little impact on national inequality. Using the Gini coefficient measure, the existing SCT initiative lowers inequality from 0.545 to 0.535 (Kampamba et al., 2024). In addition, SCT amounts might not be sufficient to significantly lower poverty levels, though, given the mounting inflationary pressures (UNICEF, 2019). Overall, social cash transfers have been a useful tool for increasing the productive potential and general well-being of society's most vulnerable members in Zambia (Zulu, 2016).

The Food Security Pack Programme has enhanced both land cultivation and the output of maize crops significantly (Royd, 2021). Also, while not all households' beneficiaries reported achieving food security, most said that their involvement in the FSP programme had improved their situation in some way. Also, in beneficiary households, it also assisted in raising the quality of food. All things considered, the FSP is an important initiative that has helped farming households attain food security (Chilala, 2017).

Shortcomings of the Social Safety Net programme in Malawi and Zambia

1. Shortcomings of the social cash transfer (SCT) programme in Malawi

While Malawi is gradually transitioning from a manual to a digital cash transfer process, most areas in the country still use a manual method to transmit cash to recipients. With the manual payment methods, some recipients have been attacked and their money stolen since robbers quickly identify the persons who got the money through the physical payment platforms. These instances make it abundantly evident that electronic payments are better compared to manual ones. However, the undeveloped physical infrastructure is what is preventing digital distribution from progressing further. Also, the very fragmented cash transfer funding system in Malawi, is the cause of institutional barriers to e-payment (Brenda, 2023; Roeland, 2018).

The welfare of cash-dependent beneficiary households and household planning are put at risk by unpredictable transfer payments. The legitimacy and power of the offices in charge of administering these payments are threatened by inconsistent payments. The success of the SCT project depends on ensuring consistent and predictable cash transfer payments. Inadequate integration of the SCT programme with other social services (agriculture, education and health) prevents them from optimising their overall impacts. Due to this, their ability to make long-lasting improvements in their livelihood and well-being of beneficiaries is limited By itself, the SCT project cannot enhance the living standards of vulnerable households indefinitely (Pamela & Clare, 2015).

2. Shortcomings of the social cash transfer (SCT) programme in Zambia

The main drawback of the SCT initiative are; excessive administrative costs, delayed transfers, and the inclusion of recipients who are not eligible. In terms of expenses, sustaining such a system may not be fiscally feasible given the finances required. In addition, between 2014-2017, beneficiary transfers were delayed by eight to three hundred and thirty-two. Lastly, during the same period, K2,053,800 to 2,284 ineligible beneficiaries received payments for durations ranging from two to one hundred and forty months. Many eligible individuals are left out of the benefit programme because targeting is riddled with exclusion errors (Leya, 2020). Furthermore, there is a dearth of such programmes specifically designed for the urban poor; although urban poverty is not as severe as it is in rural regions, specific and similar interventions are likely still required (Musonda, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the types of safety nets that exist in response to addressing poverty alleviation and vulnerability in Malawi and Zambia. Also, to explore various policies and practices that can be implemented to foster societal resilience to emerging shocks, particularly those of climate change and Covid-19.

The study found that, shocks linked to climate change, including droughts and floods were prevalent in both countries. These shocks have exacerbated rural poverty and put the viability of rural livelihoods in jeopardy. Also, the Covid-19 shock in both countries, negatively impacted the socioeconomic status and population health. Both Malawi and Zambia established safety nets to mitigate the impacts of the covid-19 pandemic. Malawi adopted the Social Cash Transfer Programme, while Zambia implemented the Covid-19 Emergency Cash Transfer.

Besides, the study established that both countries have a Social Cash Transfer (SCT) programme in place, targeting extremely impoverished households with limited labour resources. The SCT programme has had some positive impact on the vulnerable households as well as acting as a major source of income, especially for older beneficiaries.

Further findings show that Zambia has a Food Security Pack (FSP) initiative designed to help around 20% of the vulnerable but viable small-scale farmers in the districts of Zambia. The FSP initiative has enhanced both land cultivation and the output of maize crops significantly. Also, while not all household beneficiaries reported achieving food security, most said that their involvement in the FSP programme had improved their situation in some way. Also, in beneficiary households, it also assisted in raising the quality of food.

Whereas Malawi has a Farm Input Subsidy Program (FISP) which gives low-income smallholders improved maize seeds and inexpensive fertiliser. This programme has enhanced productivity and food security for smallholder farmers. Also, FISP has greatly improved household nutritional status.

The research findings presented above have a range of policy implications. First, policy measures should focus on strengthening the adaptable and productive design of social safety net programmes. This should have a comprehensive safety net system with a well-thought-out plan and a policy framework to direct various social protection initiatives, aimed at economic inclusion. Second, the need for policymakers to invest in social protection programmes and incorporate them into their national shocks responses so as to strengthen the resilience of the poor, who are most susceptible to economic shocks, including those of climate change. Finally, there is need to bolster fiscal frameworks in order to finance for safety nets. This may assist in addressing the financial difficulties safety net programmes face. Also, this may facilitate the inclusion of more vulnerable and poor households on social safety net activities,

thus fostering household and societal resilience to emerging shocks.

Although this study offers some new perspectives, it has a number of limitations. First, future research can assess how social safety nets, such as public works, school meals, and food for assets, assist households become more resilient to emerging shocks in both of these countries and beyond. Second, the necessity of analysing the effects of the Russia-Ukraine war shock, and how it has affected households in the two study countries as well as other countries in the southern region. This is due to the fact that food products in Africa make up the majority of the contents of many household consumption baskets, and the continent is a net importer of food. Third, the focus of the study can be expanded to focus on other countries in the same region (southern region), since the region is especially vulnerable to climate change shocks, because of its location and level of socioeconomic development. Last, this study acts as a compelling case to rigorously explore possible pathway to foster household resilience beyond social safety nets.

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