

Improving effectiveness of social protection and human capital investments: recent lessons from Bangladesh

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The problem

- Successful approaches to reaching the moderate poor (eg microfinance) have had less success for the poorest 10-20%
- Bangladesh (and elsewhere) persistently challenged by the twin problems of:
 - how to reach the poorest so as to endow them with assets and materials resources
 - how to do so without massive leakage, corruption and elite capture resulting, so that resources are spent cost-effectively

The response

- BRAC's Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction/Targeting the Ultra Poor (CFPR/TUP) Programme
- Emerged out of learning and experimentation with antipoverty programmes, eg IGVGDP, micro-credit

Key elements of CFPR/TUP

CFPR/TUP is a carefully sequenced combination of:

- Multi-method, participatory targeting and beneficiary selection processes
- Provision of assets, training, mentoring and stipends support
- Social and community support
- Health support and other services
- Leading to 'graduation' into microfinance





A participatory wealth ranking exercise, part of the highly accurate multi-method targeting and selection process of the CFPR/TUP

A key innovation:

Getting the Local Politics Right

1. Community participation in targeting and beneficiary selection
 - Creates local ownership of the programme
 - Generates transparency around beneficiary selection
 - Reduces conflicts over resource distribution
 - Ensures a good degree of accuracy and sensitivity to local knowledge about extreme and chronic poverty and vulnerability

Getting the Local Politics Right

2. Local elite engagement in supporting the programme and the ultra poor beneficiaries
 - Provides local-level security and protection of programme assets and activity
 - Creates social/political capital and networks for the poorest
 - Catalyses and coordinates existing local charitable and other action for the poor

Lessons

- Local political contexts matter
 - For reaching the poorest
 - And for providing them with meaningful support
- It is possible to engage local elites in support of antipoverty programmes
 - But successful interventions emerge out of knowledge and learning about local political contexts
- Field staff and their management are crucial
 - Their knowledge of local society and skill in mobilising local political support are vital ‘soft’ technologies of success

Applying the lessons elsewhere

- CFPR/TUP being replicated in Haiti, Honduras, India, Kenya, Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere in Bangladesh with BRAC technical support
- Emphasis is being placed on engaging local elite support, even in these diverse contexts