

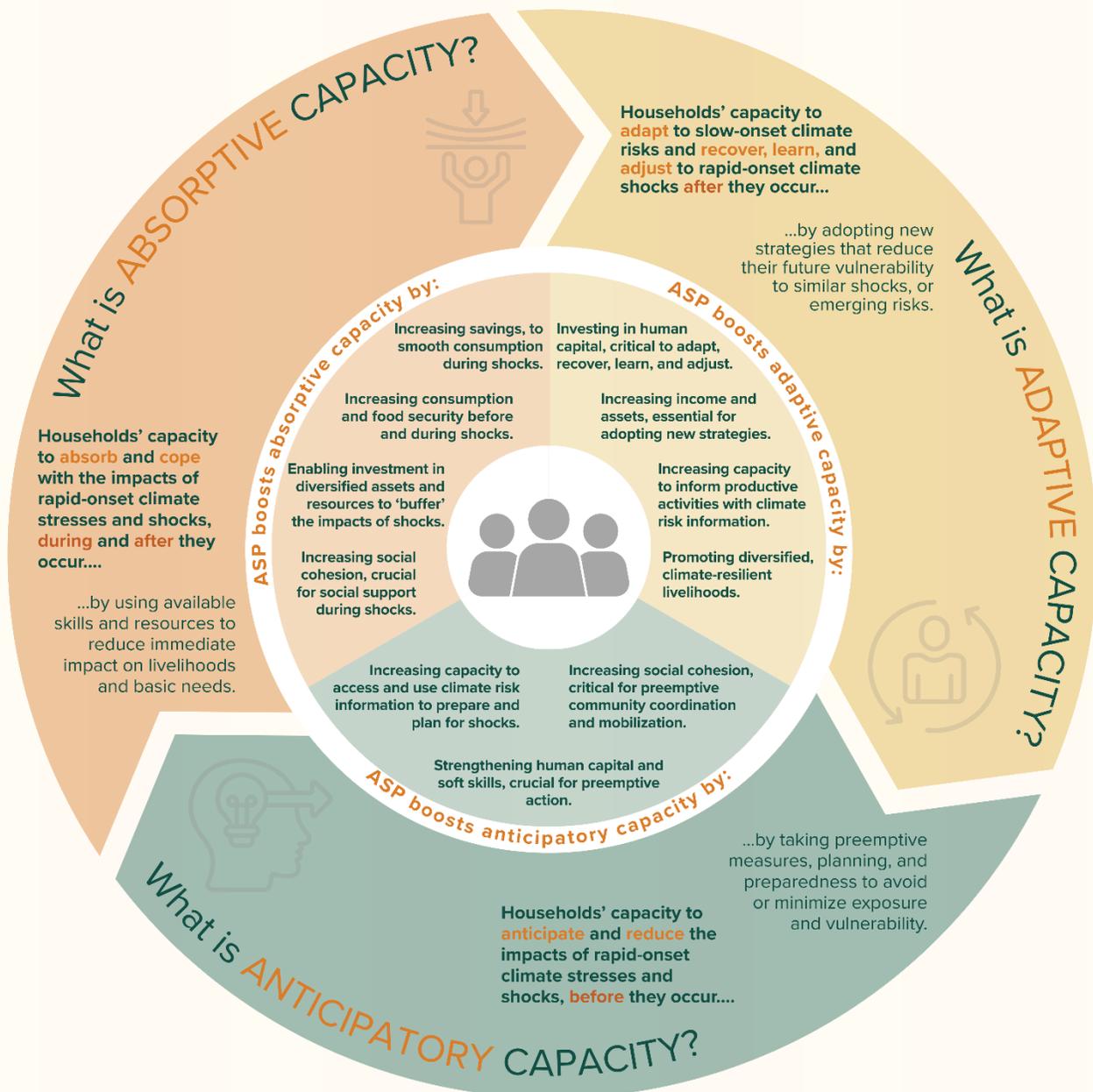
# MAPPING IMPACT IN THE SAHEL:

Regional Impacts of Adaptive Social Protection Programs on Capacities for Resilience to Climate Change

## A CAPACITIES APPROACH FOR ENHANCING RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

Enhancing resilience to climate change is an urgent imperative in the Sahel. Temperatures in the Sahel are rising 1.5 times faster than the global average, leading to extreme temperatures and more erratic and intense rainfall. Climate-related shocks are becoming more frequent and severe, particularly droughts and floods. These crises risk pushing 13.5 million more Sahelians into poverty by 2050 and deepening cycles of fragility and vulnerability, if urgent adaptation measures are not taken.

In the Sahel, adaptive social protection (ASP) is a proven instrument to enhance the resilience of the poorest and most vulnerable members of society and address the unequal impacts of climate change in the region. Through the delivery of three complementary types of ASP programs — **regular social safety nets**, **economic inclusion interventions that support jobs for the poor**, and **shock-responsive programs** — ASP strengthens households' capacities for resilience by equipping the poor and vulnerable with the **capacity to anticipate**, **capacity to absorb**, and **capacity to adapt** to the rapid and slow onset impacts of climate change (following Bahadur et al. 2015). This note maps key pathways through which ASP enhances households' climate resilience capacities, as illustrated below:



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## IMPACT OF ASP PROGRAMS ON ENHANCING CLIMATE RESILIENCE CAPACITIES:

In the Sahel, government-led ASP programs have demonstrated significant impacts on enhancing households' climate resilience capacities, including as follows:

**#1 | ASP programs strengthen poor and vulnerable households' economic basis, as reflected in increases in consumption and food security — enhancing their absorptive capacity.**



**ASP programs have increased households' consumption and food security, enhancing their absorptive capacity ex-ante – before shocks occur – ensuring more stable access to food during rapid-onset climate shocks.** In Senegal, the national safety net program (PNBSF) increased per capita consumption by 8% (and reduced extreme poverty by 5 percentage points in rural areas) over a period of three years and reduced by 7% the share of households negatively affected by shocks (such as droughts). Similarly, in Niger, safety net beneficiaries increased their consumption by 10.4% during normal times, and were able to maintain their consumption during droughts, while non-beneficiaries had to decrease theirs by 24%. In Chad, regular safety net programs significantly impacted food security, reducing by 38% the share of households who reported often foregoing food during a day for lack of resources.

**#2 | ASP programs significantly boost poor and vulnerable households' savings, essential to face shocks and invest in income-generating activities — enhancing their absorptive and adaptive capacities.**



**Savings are a critical resource for reducing the immediate negative impact of rapid-onset climate shocks on livelihoods and basic needs as they can be used to maintain levels of wellbeing and protect investments. Savings also enable investments in productive assets to increase earnings and buffer against the financial impacts of shocks. ASP programs have enabled households' increased savings, enhancing their absorptive capacity.** In Senegal, an economic inclusion intervention demonstrated strong impacts, with household savings increasing by 92%, an impact that was sustained even 3 years after the end of the program. The amounts borrowed and lent by savings groups also increased, reflecting more dynamic participation and practical use of funds by group members. In Chad, 53% of women who benefited from regular transfers and economic inclusion activities remained active members of savings groups, even 18 months after the end of the intervention (a 44% increase relative to non-beneficiaries), saving 64% more than non-beneficiaries. In Burkina Faso, even after the end of the safety net program, beneficiaries' participation in savings groups was 134% higher than that of non-beneficiaries, and the value of their savings was 65% higher. Similarly, in Mali, safety net beneficiaries were 57% more likely to save than households not benefiting from the program.

**#3 | ASP programs support poor and vulnerable households in adopting more diversified and less climate-vulnerable economic activities — enhancing their adaptive, absorptive, and anticipatory capacities.**



**ASP programs have improved households' adoption of more diversified and less climate-vulnerable agricultural methods and businesses, including off-farm income generating activities, critical for protecting income and assets from climate stresses and shocks, and enhancing households' absorptive and adaptive capacities. Increased use of climate risk information enables households to prepare and plan for shocks and informs the adaptation of their economic activities, strengthening their anticipatory and adaptive capacities.** In Senegal, social safety nets led to a 44% increase the ownership of tropical livestock units, which are more adapted to climate change, contributing to resilience to drought through diversified livelihoods. In Niger, households who benefited from safety nets were better able to adapt to droughts by increasing their use of fertilizers, boosting their agricultural sales 57% higher than other households.

Households also diversified their activities more effectively, with 27% more households also engaging in non-agricultural activities. Among women who benefited from economic inclusion support, earnings from non-agricultural activities sustainably increased by 62% to 107%, even after the end of the program. In Mauritania, beneficiaries of safety nets and economic inclusion measures had a 29% increase in their earnings, partly driven by a 35% increase in earnings from non-agricultural business activities (for which they increased the number of days worked by 32%). In Mali, safety net beneficiaries were 46% more likely to invest in small animals and non-agricultural assets.

**#4 | ASP programs significantly strengthen and protect poor and vulnerable households' human capital — enhancing their adaptive and anticipatory capacities.**



**Human capital – good health, nutrition, education, and skills – is critical for enhancing individuals' capacity to adapt, learn, and adjust to long-term climate risks, and to better anticipate and prepare for stresses. Yet the negative impacts of climate change threaten existing investments in health, nutrition, and learning. ASP programs have increased enrolment, attendance, and nutrition in the Sahel.** In Burkina Faso, the safety net program led to improvements in the nutrition of children under 5, particularly during poor harvest years, as evidenced by medium-term anthropometric indicators. It also led to an increase in school enrolment among children ages 7-15 by 14 percentage points and a reduction in school absenteeism by 42%. In Senegal, the national safety net program, which includes awareness-raising sessions on school enrolment, increased the enrolment of girls ages 6 to 12 and reduced absenteeism among boys ages 13 to 16, when recipients were women. Similarly, in Mali, the safety net program had strong positive impacts on girls' education, with significant increases in school attendance, especially among younger (ages 6-9) and older (ages 15-18) girls, as well as a 56% increase in the likelihood of adolescent girls advancing to the next grade.

**#5 | ASP programs foster social cohesion — enhancing communities' anticipatory and absorptive capacities.**



**Social cohesion – mechanisms that bind households within and across communities and with the state – is critical for enhancing households' capacity to anticipate and absorb the negative impacts of rapid-onset climate stresses and shocks. ASP programs promote social cohesion, which can strengthen collective, preemptive action to avoid or minimize exposure and vulnerability ex ante and improve social support during and after crises occur.** In Chad, safety nets and economic inclusion, strengthened community solidarity mechanisms, which are essential for community coordination and mobilization. Beneficiaries demonstrated greater community involvement, including participating in associations. In Mauritania, safety nets improved beneficiaries' trust toward others in their community and their cooperation for the common good within the community, through involvement in local groups or associations, donation, and volunteering activities. In Niger, economic inclusion interventions increased participant's trust, social inclusion, and cooperation for the common good. In Mali, beneficiaries of social safety nets were more likely than non-beneficiaries to transfer food (14% vs 9%) and money (11% vs 5%) to other households.

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