

Summary of Workshop ‘Methodological issues in evaluating the impact of social cash transfers in sub-Saharan Africa’ Naivasha, Kenya; 19 – 21 January

Major emerging themes from the Workshop

- 1) We DO need more impact evaluations for a variety of reasons:
 - We have not reached the point of consensus on the impact of health, education and productive impacts – more impact evaluations will strengthen this consensus
 - Some issues and impacts are unclear or still debated – for example, the impact on nutrition and child labour. We need to unpack some of these questions.
 - We need to have a better assessment of the long term impact beyond the current impact evaluation focus, looking at impact over 5/10/15 years
 - We need evaluations of new programmes to inform the political economy of social cash transfers and the role/rationale in each country
 - To answer programme design issues and to ensure continued improvement of a policy.
- 2) Poverty and vulnerability – these two terms need to be better defined and vulnerability analysis should be strengthened. Vulnerability tends to be the underlying rationale of a programme (e.g. in the Kenyan CT-OVC) but targeting and evaluations focus on poverty, should combine income-based poverty measure with vulnerability.
- 3) We need to further develop theory-based approach at programme design stage as well as in evaluations. This should include examining the causal change and the likelihood and magnitude of impacts, using ex-ante analysis and would allow an understanding of impact we would expect before evaluating the impact. If we have a good model of how an economy works we can use it to simulate impacts of programmes (such as ex-ante cost-benefit analysis and estimates on distribution of impacts).
- 4) Making the most of existing data and building in modules into existing data surveys. Linking and adding on questions to address the data needs of social protection evaluations will provide ongoing analysis to allow an evaluation of the longer-term impacts.
- 5) There needs to be greater recognition of the importance of mixed methods and integration of qualitative and quantitative analysis. Qualitative analysis should complement quantitative analysis to address the why and how. There is a report on integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies from the South Africa evaluation.
- 6) Disaggregated analysis and looking into heterogeneous impacts, including by household size, gender, wealth, impact of different transfer levels. This will allow a better understanding of the differential impacts on different groups. Disaggregated analysis needs to be built in from the start, especially as there are implications on sample size. Also, are there differences in impacts between orphans (and different types of orphans) and vulnerable children?
- 7) Research to policy and policy to research - Policy discussions should inform the research and the findings from impact evaluation should be better used and be better linked to changing policy . Interpreting results requires an understanding of underlying policy shifts and processes. A non-result may be important in responding to policy concerns and, therefore, should be given sufficient attention (e.g. the finding of no impact on fertility).
- 8) What will be useful for taking forward the discussion? Broader group? How structured? Aim to create a public good on impact evaluations.

Methodological impact evaluation points

- **The impact evaluation should shape the programme design and implementation where possible.** For example, to have sufficient units may require the programme to operate at a lower administrative level, however this may not be administratively or politically feasible, unaffordable and may impact on effectiveness. Self-selection/community validation may be difficult to replicate in the impact evaluation.
- **Challenges in data collection** – These include issues such as contamination (for example where benefits given prior to baseline). To avoid these issues it is crucial to have Government ownership in impact evaluations, working with both central and local governments as appropriate. Also, there may be administrative challenges (names missing from data collection) related to Government capacity. The use of different consultancy firms between surveys may lead to challenges due to the need for additional training. Double entry and supervision in the field can minimise data collection problems. Management information systems are crucial to impact evaluations, through providing ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
- **Behaviour changes of comparison group** – if the comparison group are informed that they will be part of the programme at a later stage they may alter their behaviour. Also, attrition from a programme will not be random.
- **Changes during implementation** – in designing and carrying out impact evaluations it is important to bear in mind that there will be further roll-out and programme refinements.
- Data analysis may be affected relationships between indicators. Also, as there are multiple components to policies, they may have **interrelated outcomes**.
- Lessons from analysis can play a role in **improving surveys/modules**, in particular to answer some of the policy questions that have emerged from original analysis
- Data should be made **publically available** and be housed at national universities to allow analysis of the data by students on an ongoing basis.
- **Propensity score matching** is seen as a way to get a better estimate, but there is a trade-off, under which conditions is PSM a better estimate?
- The use of **treatment and control/comparison groups** may be impractical in some instances based on specific realities and if there is a constitution right to a programme or it has been fully scaled-up.

Policy points – national level

- Mozambique PSA – use of geographical targeting within districts to improve targeting, review of double orphanhood criteria for indirect beneficiaries, limited impact on some indicators, potentially related to low transfer value.
- Kenya CT-OVC - What influence does the CT-OVC have on alternative family care for orphans (no impact?) What about children that aren't orphaned but do not live with their parents? There is evidence from the programme that young women are leaving, does this enable widowed mothers to leave and have a second marriage?

- Malawi SCT- Implication of increased investment – does this mean that not the poorest/destitute/labour-constrained? Or does increased investment imply that destitute households better able to with risk. Also is there a problem if a programme is substituting for informal social networks that existed previously or providing assistance that are seen as a drain on other households – equally as poor households that are not (less) labour constrained able to keep this income that they need.
- South Africa CSG – the evaluation will look into why there are low take-up rates among young children, important also to look at the impact of the child support grant on risky sexual behaviour.

Broader policy lessons/considerations

- **Implementation** – Importance of relative strength of the relevant Ministry in determining policy design and implementation. Implementation is crucial in determining the effectiveness of a programme and of the targeting mechanism.
- **Targeting** - There are problems in measuring age, therefore, categorical targeting is not necessarily straight-forward. Is the policy retargeted, and if so, when? Is targeting based on national or local poverty levels? Often there are multiple targeting methods, this needs to be taken into account when assessing a particular targeting mechanism. At the community level there are concerns about exclusion and communication, this should be picked up in the qualitative component.
- Implication of changes (particularly increase) in **child labour** – which children are working, older children may be expected to become financially independent. What is the impact of working in the household (non-chores) on studying and schooling outcomes.
- An understanding of the impacts requires a separation of income and **time preference** aspects of spending behaviour changes, therefore questions on time preference should be incorporated into impact evaluations.
- Assessing **local economy impacts** is crucial for work around cost effectiveness and advocacy around cash transfers (especially with the Ministry of Finance). To get an idea of local economy impacts we need data on social networks, including market, insurance and family. This is also useful for assessing social exclusion of the poor. How do cash transfers compare with alternative interventions. Look at WHY there is an impact (beyond if).
- In assessing **impact on HIV** it is important to look into social networks and self-esteem and to ensure the right instruments for young adolescents. Is community based targeting HIV/AIDS sensitive?
- **Fertility** - Implication of the fact that children may act as a form of social insurance, does this mean social protection schemes will help in reducing fertility levels? Is there any evidence from longer established programmes?
- In **communicating/disseminating results** – co-publish with Government and include Government response on or what has changed/will change, rather than making recommendations.